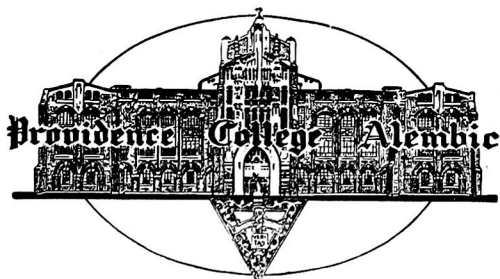


THE ALEMBIC



MARCH, 1951

THE ALEMBIC



PUBLISHED QUARTERLY

BY THE

STUDENTS OF PROVIDENCE COLLEGE

PROVIDENCE, R. I.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

VOLUME XXIX

MARCH, 1951

NUMBER 3

EDITORIAL 3

FICTION

THE EYEGLASSES 7

Richard A. Audette, '51

SEASONS CHANGE 47

Edgar A. Kelley, '52

TRANSITION AT NOON 60

Vincent C. Trofi, '52

THE DWELLERS 65

M. Howard Gluckman, '52

NON-FICTION

SOME NOTES ON MODERN RELIGIOUS ART 35

LeRoy C. Hoinacki, Special Student

JAMES STEPHENS 53

William H. Plummer, '51

VERSE

POEM 43

Thomas Wright, Special Student

THE RISING OF THE SUN 46

Austin P. Nagle, '51

THE PARABLE OF THE SNOW 51

Paul F. Fletcher, '51

SILENCE POND 52

Paul F. Fletcher, '51

A BALLAD OF FALL RIVER 56

Paul F. Fletcher, '51

THE SCHOOL OF LOSS 57

Paul F. Fletcher, '51

A PROMISE, YET WITH PAIN 58

Paul F. Fletcher, '51

REFLECTIONS 63

Thomas Wright, Special Student

DEUS CARITAS EST 64

Thomas Wright, Special Student



THE standards of literary criticism by which the Providence College publications have been evaluated by the student body have always provided a source of wonder to the editors of the *Cowl*, the *Veritas*, and, most of all, the *ALEMBIC*. The first two deal primarily with fact and are thus less vulnerable to qualitative criticism, but the *ALEMBIC*, since it is purely a creative work, provides a fertile ground for the would-be literary critics of the student body.

Most students fail to realize that the *ALEMBIC* is a magazine for the students and *by the students*. That it does not measure up to the standards of the *Atlantic Monthly* is entirely natural, since the editors and contributors of the *ALEMBIC* are not expected to have achieved the degree of expression that can come only from experience and long, arduous years of plain work. And yet the attitude still prevails among the reading students that unless the *ALEMBIC* produces an issue comparable to the *Atlantic Monthly*, it is to be considered as a sub-standard, slightly insipid volume, perpetrated by hacks and read only so that when someone mentions the issue, one may say ". . . and did you read that trash by K . . . , boy has he got guts."

We have made a psuedo-investigation of the adverse criticism that have received recently, in an attempt to discover what, if anything, will serve to raise the quality of *THE ALEMBIC*, and make it

The Alembic

more acceptable to the average student. Without any misgivings we readily admit that our investigation was a failure in regard to the end for which it was conceived, but we were more than gratified by the insight that we gained into the sources of the criticism from which we have suffered. Let it suffice that our minds are at ease once again and that henceforward, most detrimental comments relating to our efforts will be taken with a grain of salt. We have recorded some of the more outstanding instances uncovered by our probe and will present them below to provide example.

The first critic-type we met was holding forth over a cold cup of coffee in the cafeteria. He should rightfully be called Joe-College but we prefer to call him Joe all-College. He was nattily dressed in blue blazer jacket, oxford grey pants, and white buckskin shoes. The friend to whom he directed his well modulated harangue was dressed in blue blazer jacket, grey oxford pants . . . etc.

" . . . you have to look at it this way; they have to meet a deadline, see, and when it comes up they haven't got a decent thing to print—so what do they do, they print whatever they can get their hands on. You know, some day I'm going to sit down for a half an hour and rip off something and give that magazine a shot in the arm . . . "

Another master-of-all will usually be found in the rotunda, regaling a select group of obvious inferiors. He will probably carry a number of very obscure books under one arm, and gesticulate wildly with his free hand. He wears his clothes negligently and his hair is very long—he needs a shave.

" . . . I just happen to have with me a volume of that *odious* excuse for literature . . . Please listen to this . . . (with a flurry of motion he places his books on the bench beside him and picks up the *odius* volume. Said odious volume falls open to a page that has marked, liberally, with red and black pencil, ink both blue and green, and fingerprints. He reads, dramatically, a few sentences from a short story). 'The car moved slowly down the street. In it, were the two people in the world who would ever mean anything to him.' How doltish is it possible to be!! Think of the possibilities of these lines. He could have made that a point of departure for a stream of consciousness theme . . . he could have been descriptive and made the car move 'sluggishly through the lowering shadows' . . . he could have been philosophical, 'wondering whether this were

From the Scriptorium

the culmination of a series of events started long before, or the first movement of another series . . . ' But no, he has a 'car move slowly down the street.' No imagination!! and they wonder why I don't contribute to this . . . this *thing*. (This is not, of course, the total of his remarks, since there remain about eight full audience minutes before classes resume; but it does give the general trend of his argument).

A particularly outstanding group of critics is usually to be found among the politicians. It is almost impossible to get a direct statement from them and all their opinions must be formulated from inference. Take, for instance, the friend we met in the corridor, scanning the bulletin board. He smiled benignly and greeted us warmly (a vote is a vote) with, "Well, hello there, how's it going? Say, that was a fine issue you put out uh . . . last week, uh . . . fine issue, fine issue . . . by the way, I didn't get what the fellow . . . uh . . . Joe . . . uh . . . Jack . . . well you know the impressionistic thing . . . I didn't get what he was driving at . . . a little vague wasn't it? Oh, and while I'm thinking about it . . . uh . . . we (ambiguous 'we'), we were wondering . . . er . . . well we were wondering whether or not you fellows couldn't put in a few things that might appeal more to the student . . . you know . . . er . . . a few newsy little things about individuals in the school . . . now don't get the idea that we . . . er . . . want to"

Now, these are only a few of the instances of what we consider ungrounded criticism. They are not at all unusual. The wonder of the situation is found in the fact that there are so many who will listen to such tripe. You can hear their oratorical offal being repeated and quoted at all times by their well meaning adherents, to our supposed detriment and the general uplifting of the listeners.

This is the real crime. This is where one ceases to treat the subject lightly and wishes that the average student were able to establish for himself a stable principle of judgement that will recognize the fact that we are not in competition with larger, independent literary magazines; we are competing among ourselves, we are competing with other colleges, each man on our board and each contributor is competing with his past achievements. We ask only that we be judged by the criterion that these integral competitions establish.

E. A. K.

THE STAFF

Editor-in-Chief

EDGAR A. KELLEY, JR., '52

Associate Editors

RAYMOND D'AMBROSIO, '51

PAUL F. FLETCHER, '51

WILLIAM H. PLUMMER, JR., '51

Editor Functus Officio

HAROLD E. VAYO, JR., '51

Literary Board

LEROY C. HOINACKI, *Special Student*

M. HOWARD GLUCKMAN, '52

The ALEMBIC is published bi-monthly by the students of Providence College, Providence, Rhode Island. Entered as second-class matter at the Post Office, Providence, Rhode Island, December 18, 1920, under Act of March 3, 1879. Subscription \$2.00 the year. "Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Section 1103. Act of October 3, 1917; authorized April 9, 1932." Printed at the Oxford Press, Providence, Rhode Island.

The Eyeglasses

By RICHARD A. AUDETTE, '51

Les hommes sont si nécessairement fous, que ce serait être fou par un autre tour de folie, de n'être par fou.

Pascal: *Pensées sur les Philosophes.*

Part One

DOCTOR Scaramouche felt something like cobwebs slowly forming in his throat. It was due, he was certain, to the New England humidity of these June days. All during M. Dauteux' eye-examination, the Doctor had hoped that something would be offered him to ease this dryness. M. Dauteux had been too nervous to be a very entertaining host, however, and his wife had spent her time crocheting one of the motto-pieces that were still popular in 1911. The doctor was all but abashed by their silence.

Putting away his lenses and frames, Scaramouche was inclined to be sceptical of the Dauteux' manners. Yet, proof that they could afford to entertain was all about him: the whatnots loaded with bric-a-bracs, the heavy flare for sea-green and dusty-yellow cut and glazed glass, the intense affection for flowered wallpaper and carpets, and the portraits of entranced women and of contemplative knights. Although the Doctor was of the opinion that these products of the *art nouveau* would make a very showy window-display for any antique dealer, he was convinced that each of these articles must have had a dignified price tag. The Doctor took out a slip of paper and sat down in a horrible mauve chair that

was most uncomfortable; he would give them another chance to be hospitable.

"I'll have to write this down," he said drily. "I'm always forgetting things nowadays. Terrible to have to grow old." He glanced hopefully in the direction of the kitchen. "Your left eye, Dauteux, has improved a bit. Very slightly. Not enough to bother changing the strength of the lens. You understand, of course, that it'll take a few days before your eyeglasses are ready. They're so thick! Where did you get all that astigmatism?" Scaramouche shook his head sympathetically.

M. Dauteux, his forty years well-kept like the handlebar mustache he waxed agitatedly, shook his head also. "I don't know . . . I never went without my lenses for such a long time before. I never realized how handicapped . . ."

The Doctor looked at Madame Dauteux, who was still occupied counting the innumerable small squares to be done in a delicate turquoise.

"I'm glad," Dauteux continued, "I didn't venture to your office, Doctor. Who knows what could have happened! Why did I have to get my glasses caught in that wisteria trellis! We're never too careful, are we? Never too careful."

"You are always unfortunate, Edouard," his wife said, glancing up from her work and tenderly tucking in a loose strand of her pompadour. "To think of the money it will cost! Two or three days from your work at the office will make a difference in your pay. You know, *M. le docteur*," she announced proudly, "Edouard never missed a day's work before today."

The Doctor was all but convinced that he would have to retreat without having been offered refreshments. Mishap had indeed made them inconsiderate! "The effects," he said

The Eyeglasses

slowly, "mustn't be too unpleasant, Dauteux? It must be interesting to see familiar wrinkles smoothed, diffused. Probably it wouldn't be such an evil if we were all a little blind to some things in this world."

"*Bien*," Madame said pontifically, "reality doesn't scare me." She coughed, apparently looking forward to the Doctor's leaving. She had succeeded in being civil this far; but she had not failed to notice the ashes that had fallen from the Doctor's pipe, the corpulent and not-too-clean hands resting on the arms of her favorite mauve chair, and the large, unshined shoes which had soiled one of the many rose designs in her Persian rug. "Edouard," she said, defeated, "get the Doctor some wine. We must not forget our manners even if his visit will cost us money."

"I'll call the maid, *ma chère*," her husband replied.

"She's out. She wanted the afternoon. There's a John Bunny movie in town, it seems. She can't read a bit of English but she said she laughs just seeing him. Ah, what is the younger generation coming to?"

The Doctor nodded sagaciously. He had learned long ago always to listen, seldom to discuss, and never, by any means, to argue with a woman. Besides, he had no intention of jeopardizing his chances at a glass of wine.

"I've found," Madame resumed, "that servants work harder if they are permitted a few congès. And seeing that it was her first day here . . ."

"First day!" Dauteux exclaimed. "A new maid! This is news to me, Donald. Come to think of it, I asked her at breakfast this morning if she had a cold. I thought it was Fabiola."

"*Voilà!*" Madame said. "Men never notice anything." Scaramouche smiled condescendingly.

"Will you have some wine, *ma chère?*" Dauteux asked, rising to his feet.

"You know, Edouard, I only drink wine at the dinner table. *M. le docteur* will excuse me?"

"Of course," the Doctor said magnanimously trying to hurry Dauteux' departure!

The host finally left the room, cautiously making his way to the kitchen.

"I have heard, Madame," Scaramouche said, punctuating a few minutes of silence, "that your new maid is Cleobuline Nadeau?"

"Yes," Madame answered. "I had good references regarding her," she added quickly.

"Oh, undoubtedly a very good girl," Scaramouche reassured her. "She . . . hasn't been blessed with the most captivating of features, it's true. Some might even go as far as calling her 'plain'. Most unfortunate! The poor girl either does not care or does not know . . . So much the better."

The grandfather's clock with chubby cupids chasing pastel butterflies on its face rang three as Dauteux returned with two glasses.

"You took the largest glass I have, Edouard." Madame blandly remonstrated. "And that is new vintage."

"The glasses didn't seem large to me, *ma chère,*" Dauteux said.

"It would be a shame to dirty other glasses," the Doctor pointed out. "I'll . . . I'll force myself to drink it all." After selecting the glass with the greater amount, the Doctor casually sipped its content.

"How do you like it, *M. le docteur?*" Dauteux inquired.

more truth in them than in my hours of sensibility."

Having regained her aplomb, Madame retorted with, "Then, M. le docteur, you do not approve of marriage? Probably, the refusal of one woman has set you against it? Or do you regard it as a mistake?"

The Doctor shook his head and waved his hand, commanding interruption. "No, no, Madame. Not a mistake—a misfortune." She did not catch the inflection of his phrase, he noticed.

"History and custom are against you," a flushed Dauteux added.

"Since when does one marry to follow history and custom? That is something new to me. *Après tout*, there are only three reasons for marriage: necessity, convenience, and love." The Doctor wondered, but only for a moment, if it was the wine or the subject which started him moralizing. "Everybody is in love before the marriage," he kept on. "But with what? Money. Children. Position. Physical charms. So very seldom with the person one is marrying. I have often asked myself if there are some foolish enough to think they marry for only one reason."

"And why do you think Edouard married me?" Madame asked absently.

Dauteux, uncomfortably warm, frowned.

"An unfair question, Madame. So very few people love us for what we really are."

"My suspicions," Madame said ruefully, "are confirmed. No one would want to spend a lifetime with you. A woman would find it unbearable."

"I do not doubt it. At times, even I find myself boring," the Doctor confessed. "But," he said lightly, turning the conversation to its former course, "as regards women, I

The Eyeglasses

am of the Church's opinion. In Her places of worship and in my home, a woman is not allowed—merely tolerated.”

“W-e-l-l!” Madame exclaimed, giving voice to the diapasonic range of her larynx and bringing her handkerchief to her mouth.

“*Ah, ma chère Donalda.*” Dauteux said consolingly. “The Doctor is not serious. Look at him smile”—and turning to the Doctor—“*Les femmes, ces belles créatures, elles sont si délicates.*”

“Delicate!” the Doctor shouted. “I hold another opinion: *elles m’effrayent!* In close to fifty years on this planet I have not met one man who understands them. Not one! And I’m always afraid of what I don’t know, especially if others don’t seem to know either. Change! Change! They don’t have enough of their styles. No! They come to my office and they want to change it. They want to touch this, move that. They want to change me, also! Can’t they let well enough alone?”

“Christian charity perhaps,” Madame offered, asking herself if he would ever leave.

“Charity! They ascribe too much power to their words, then and not enough to their prayers. And what tells them I wouldn’t change for the worse? At my age, Madame, nothing is more repulsive to the mind than change. In my youth, I must admit, I wished to get somewhere too quickly. Now, I desire to go nowhere slowly . . . and comfortably.”

“Then,” Madame interrupted, “at your age, I don’t see why women should bother you at all.” She noticed disconcertingly the dried lobes on the polypody plant in the corner.

“I’m not that old!” Scaramouche said gamely. “Besides, I’ve always discerned too much of the adolescent in

me. What French writer was it—I forget his name now, ah, but my memory is indeed severely impaired,—who wrote: ‘*Si la jeunesse savait, si la vieillesse pouvait*’? I have grown old, I suppose because there have been so few children about me. If marriage is a misfortune, children definitely make it less unpleasant. Don’t you approve of large families, Madame?”

“*Certainement*—when they are the neighbor’s,” she replied, wondering if the Doctor was not quoting greater fools only to make his own folly more acceptable.

“If I don’t leave,” Scaramouche said, this time getting to his feet, “I’ll be lucky to have one patient left. Your wine, Dauteux, your delicious wine has made my stay more pleasant but my parting . . . my parting all the more difficult. I’m afraid it has loosened my thoughts as well as lubricated my tongue.”

Dauteux, also rising to escort the Doctor to the door, discovered a sudden numbness in his legs and a lightness of head which were completely foreign to him. He asked himself how being without eyeglasses could affect so many and such diverse parts of the body.

Doctor Scaramouche bowed, a bit over-affectionately, to Madame, wishing her a pleasant day and, on the way to the door, whispered to Dauteux not to misplace that wine.

When Dauteux returned to the parlor, he found Madame walking about the room, padding the sunken cushions and scraping off the Doctor’s ashes which had fallen on the chair and rug.

“*On peut remercier le bon Dieu, he’s gone!*” she said. “He’s such a big man. Why does he have to carry most of his weight beneath his belt? I’m going upstairs to take a

The Eyeglasses

nap, Edouard. I can't stay down here with that dreadful smell of tobacco!"

"What am I going to do with myself?"

"Lie down. The wine has probably affected you also. No, no. Don't come any closer. The odor of wine on top of this would turn my stomach."

With Madame gone, loneliness made inroads upon the highly-spirited Dauteux. His greatest divertissement, reading, had now been curtailed. Examining the many paintings about the rooms was futile and strained his eyes. And he dared not do any work in the garden for fear of damaging a plant or bud. The clock struck off the slinking hours and he found himself patrolling the house, wishing strongly for some company. Finally, he heard someone humming in his library and proceeded to investigate.

"How do you do," he said to the girl dressed in grey and assiduously busying herself about the bookshelves.

"Oh!" the maid screamed, jumping noticeably. "Oh, Monsieur! I did not hear you."

"Apparently. What, may I ask, are you doing?"

"Dusting, Monsieur. There is so much dust flying in with all the windows open."

"Oh, you are the new maid?"

"*La même*, Monsieur: Cleobuline Nadeau."

"I didn't notice you this morning," Dauteux confessed. "Really noticed, that is."

The maid, not looking at him but keeping on with her work, felt, after a while, the steadiness of her employer's gaze. "Is something wrong, Monsieur? Is my face dirty?"

"No. No. Not that at all."

"Then why does Monsieur keep staring at me? Does

my plainness strike you?" she asked indifferently, her arms continuing their familiar momentum over the bookshelves.

"Plain? But you are not plain."

She laughed slightly.

"It's true. I am very serious."

"Serious . . .?"

"Donalda—my wife—showed good taste in hiring you. The earlier maids were really something. You should have seen them; horrible witches!"

"Really, Monsieur?"

"But you . . . you are lovely . . ."

The maid attempted to suppress her giggle. "No one has ever said that of me. Monsieur is a flatterer." She left the bookcase and went to the chairs. "Has Monsieur sprained his ankle?" she asked, noticing her employer's unsteady gait.

"You could call it an illness."

"It's not contagious?" she asked furtively.

"You have nothing to fear," he assured her. Time made a gap in the conversation but presently Dauteux said: "Watching you work is like looking at a swan gliding through the room. Your hands flutter over everything. How old are you, Cleobuline?"

"Nineteen, Monsieur."

"A child. A sweet, innocent child! You are like a flower. And I like to grasp flowers," he added, attempting to touch her hand. But she was already at another chair.

"Flowers die, Monsieur," Cleobuline instructed him, "when you clutch them."

"You are really beautiful. And I like beautiful things!"

At first her employer's compliments had struck Cleobuline as comic but his persistence and the pleasantness of

The Eyeglasses

his remarks soon found her acquiescent. The motion of the turkey feathers on her duster slowed and then stopped.

"You are soft and tender like a breeze," Dauteux said, touching the inanimate hand. "And I love to be caressed by a breeze."

The maid hurriedly withdrew her hand from his. "Please, Monsieur! You must not hold my hand. I have work to do. This room has to be dusted and the supper—Madame will certainly punish me if supper is late," she stammered, the duster taking on a more agitated motion.

"My wife does not know beautiful things; she does not love them. She has not seen the beauty in you. The sparkle of your eyes. The invitation of your lips. The delicateness of your cheek. And your hair! Your hair like a giant, brown chrysanthemum!" Dauteux reflected that Doctor Scaramouche had been right about the wine. "You are like a swallow," he continued; "you fly from me when I approach. Don't you like me?"

"Yes . . . yes . . . I like you . . . though you are rather different from my other employers. It must be due to your illness. I cannot help thinking, though, that it would have been better Monsieur, had you gone to work today."

Her smile took the sting out of her words, Dauteux told himself. She couldn't possibly hurt anyone. "You have not heard of my accident . . .?"

"Accident! And illness! You are most unfortunate, Monsieur."

"Can't you keep still a moment!" Dauteux said impatiently. "Don't you know I am your employer, that I pay you?"

"*Oui, Monsieur.* You pay my wages, but your wife inspects my work. I must please both of you."

"Does my wife frighten you so?"

"At present, Monsieur, you frighten me more than she does."

"Me? Frighten you? You poor bird. I could not harm you. It is just a little kiss I wish from you . . ."

"*Mais, pourquoi?*" the startled maid asked.

"To prove our amicability."

"I am sure we can be good friends without it, Monsieur."

"Certainly, you cannot refuse, Cleobuline," he said advancing towards her.

"No! No! Monsieur! You had better get to bed. I think your illness is getting more serious."

"You are the cause of it. You cannot refuse your employer . . ."

"I do refuse!" Cleobuline said sternly, slapping his face. Her lack of experience in this matter was immediately evident by the wounded condition of her employer's mustache once the blow had been parried. A flush crossed her face as the doorbell rang. "The door . . . The door, Monsieur," she said sheepishly.

"The door! The door!" Dauteux bellowed. Well, go answer it!"

The frustrated maid obeyed, pausing before the parlor mirror to straighten her cap and apron. Nervously, she opened the door to find a slim man with heavily greased hair. His dark-blue suit was immaculate and he looked a bit startled, apparently expecting to see someone else.

"Is Monsieur Dauteux in?" he inquired.

"Yes . . . Come in, please. Who shall I say is calling?"

"I'll announce myself," he said deliberately, walking into the parlor. "Ah, there you are, Dauteux." He placed

The Eyeglasses

his large package on a chair and turned to Dauteux with an extended hand.

"And what do you want, Parletrop?" Dauteux asked gruffly.

The other's dignity was not to be easily swayed. "The heavens are really smiling upon you today, my man."

"I think," said Cleobuline, who had followed the man into the room, "I think Monsieur is not at all well today."

"Not well? He looks in perfect condition to me. Probably a bit flushed, but that's due to the heat."

"Yes . . . the heat," Dauteux acquiesced. "But what has brought you here?"

"I heard about your misfortune," Parletrop sympathized, "and thought you'd be home. So I came right over with this painting."

"Tut tut," Parletrop commanded. "A man who knows beautiful things as you do could select a masterpiece with your eyes closed," Parletrop soothed.

"I would rather have them open."

"Naturally. It's not everyday, though, you get a chance like this. Just take one look at it. That'll be enough to convince you it's a masterpiece." Parletrop removed the covering of the painting. "Just look at the purity of the lines, the coloring, the third dimensional effect, the fine chiarascuro. Why, I wouldn't have brought it over if I could afford to keep it."

"I was not looking for a new painting, Parletrop," Dauteux said protestingly. "I don't think there would be room to hang it."

"You mean to tell me you wouldn't have room for a masterpiece!" Parletrop said, noticing the maid in front of the mirror, looking at herself closely, arranging her hair,

wetting her eyebrows. "I didn't know you had a new maid, Dauteux?"

Dauteux nodded. "Her first day."

"She looks odd to me."

"Odd? *N'est-elle pas jolie?*"

Parletrop stared at Dauteux, quite certain now of a sale.

"Cleobuline," Dauteux called, thinking this a means of leveling the barriers that separated them. "Cleobuline, come here and look at this painting, won't you?"

"Dauteux . . . a maid . . . what can she . . .," Parletrop argued.

"Cleobuline," Dauteux explained, "this is Monsieur Parletrop, one of my closest friends. He has brought me a painting and I would like to know your opinion of it."

The maid examined it and asked, "*Mais, qu'est-ce-que c'est?*"

"A work of art, wench!" Parletrop said forcefully.

"You don't like it, Cleobuline?" Dauteux inquired.

"*Bien* . . . if Monsieur is giving it to you . . ."

Dauteux laughed. "Giving it to me!"

"Dauteux," Parletrop insisted, "what would a common scrub-maid know about art!"

Cleobuline admitted to herself that this was a very strange house. When the maid had to be an art critic, well . . .

"*Ecoutez-moi, Dauteux!*" Parletrop pressed. "For three hundred dollars it is a give-away."

"No, no, Parletrop. I would not spend that much money on a painting without examining it more closely."

"Do you have to examine a genuine Chaubré?"

"You say, Chaubré . . . ?"

"*Bien oui!*"

The Eyeglasses

"You know, of course, that he is my favorite artist; his paintings have always held a deep fascination for me."

Parletrop rubbed his hands commercially.

"As you say, Parletrop," Dauteux agreed, "she could not know art. You will accept a check?"

"*Certainement!*"

"You will excuse me then, I'll have to go for my check-book."

When Dauteux was out of hearing distance, Parletrop, moving languidly before the paintings in the room, snickered audibly. "It's too bad, too bad," he mumbled. "If only I could have sold these to Dauteux under the same circumstances . . . Think of the profit! Ah, you—Cleobuline, is it?—how I envy your position."

"My position, Monsieur?"

"Yes. A maid has such ready access to loose change hanging about the house, to sugar bowls, to flower vases. Not large amounts, I agree; but a steady income. How I do envy your position!"

"Do you suggest stealing, Monsieur? How can you, one of Monsieur Dauteux' friends . . . ?"

"And by whom are we robbed most? Ordinary thieves steal our money and jewels; our so-called friends rob us of our wife, our honor, our name. One has to be practical. You don't think that this painting is really worth three hundred dollars, do you? In this world, we do not eat sumptuously on our virtues."

"*Monsieur ne vivrait pas pras, j'en suis sûr.*"

"It seems to me that, as a maid, you should know more of this trade than I. For you, I make an exception. You parade your ignorance as others do their knowledge."

Why shouldn't you feast when the banquet table is set? Why shouldn't I capitalize on Dauteux' blindness?"

"His blindness?"

"Does a stranger have to inform you of what is going on beneath your own roof? Dauteux broke his eyeglasses this morning."

"Oh!" Cleobuline sighed, the pungent reality delivering a mortal blow to the dream and leaving only a disappointment to mourn its passing. Cleobuline turned towards the window, averting the eyes of her employer, who re-entered the room.

"I had a little difficulty making it out," Dauteux said apologetically.

"You won't regret this, Dauteux," Parletrop assured and, looking more closely at the signature, he muttered, "I hope the teller can make this out." He folded the check neatly. "*Au revoir, Dauteux. Say bonjour to Madame for me. Et, bonjour à toi, ma jolie!*" Unescorted to the door, he left, his sardonic laughter lingering in the house long after the front door had closed.

"This is indeed my lucky day," Dauteux admitted proudly.

All Cleobuline could say was, "*Vous êtes impossible, Monsieur.* Maybe, though—maybe Monsieur Parletrop is right . . .," she added.

Meanwhile, upstairs, Madame Dauteux reclined leisurely on a billowy feather-bed. She had fallen into a deep and complicated slumber from which she awoke at the sound of M. Parletrop's departure which she mistook for the arrival of unexpected guests. Hurriedly, she rose, straightened the trough in the bed, brushed her hair into place, and

The Eyeglasses

gingerly dabbed some fragrant powder on her face and neck. She noticed in the reflection of the mirror the copy of da Vinci's *Madonna Litta* and lowered her eyes instantly. She was glad to have won the argument with Dauteux as to where the painting should be hung. It would have bothered her conscience no end had it been placed where her gaze travelled more often.

In front of the mirror, she wondered if she should change her dress, for she had creased it somewhat in her sleep. But she thought better of it and, fearing that it would be discovered that she indulged in afternoon naps, she hastened below.

She could hear voices from the parlor and strained to catch the flow of conversation so as to identify the visitor. She heard her husband saying, "If it is money you want . . ." And then a feminine voice answered, "*Comme cadeau pour mes services.*" Madame thought it sounded very much like the maid but tried to make certain. "You are a little thief," her husband said and the other replied, "No, Monsieur, not a thief! I am . . . sweet . . . and innocent."

Madame had heard quite enough. Though she did not grasp the essential meaning of the words, she did not like their tone. After all, it was not proper for Edouard to be speaking to the maid in such friendly fashion, especially if no one else was there. She straightened her dress once more and walked in.

The drama that greeted her eyes sent her gasping to a nearby chair, her voice straining for words powerful enough to convey its horror. To see her husband kissing the maid! One hand at her throat, Madame fell limply into the chair. Like two surprised culprits, her confused husband and the questioning maid were, alas, speechless. "Don't!

... Don't!" she said meekly, her voice slowly returning. "Do not dare touch me!" she warned her approaching husband. "I think I'll die! How could you do this to me, Edouard! How could you do this to a wife who has been faithful to you all these years! And . . . and with that *belle tête frizée avec rien d'dans!*"

It was not surprising that Madame mistook her husband's silence for that of a victim of circumstances and soon turned her ire towards the maid. "I would not be surprised if you were entirely responsible for this!"

"I was merely doing my work," Cleobuline shot back.

"You are very efficient at it!"

"Monsieur was responsible for it all!" the maid was quick to state.

"Is that right, Edouard?" Madame asked, carrying her handkerchief to her eyes.

"Yes . . . yes. Let me explain, Donaldal . . ."

"Explain! What is there to explain? I saw it all!"

"You do not understand, Donaldal!"

"Too well! Oh, why didn't I enter the convent as Maman wanted me to do. This has been too much, Edouard! I will take no more from you. I shall write to Maman and when the arrangements are made I am leaving!" She sobbed heavily. "You can have her!" she screamed, leaving for a more cloistered room in which to shed her tears.

Dauteux, surprised at this change of events, went to follow her; but Cleobuline retrieved him in good time, reminding him of a pecuniary obligation due her.

"I am getting a headache," Dauteux confessed feebly, placing his hand in his pocket and withdrawing some bills. "There has been too much activity here." With his duty discharged, he went in search of his wife, his legs wobbling

The Eyeglasses

because of the wine, his head reeling from all these novelistic and romantic proceedings.

II

Sobriety had brought regret. Dauteux found his days being spent in either offering explanations to his wife or trying to avoid Cleobuline. However, Madame was adamant to his excuses and Cleobuline would burst out into a giggle whenever she saw him, which was too often for Dauteux.

He noticed, also, that Madame had begun packing and the third day after the incident in the parlor, a trunk of Madame's clothes and articles had already been sent. In the middle of that forenoon, Madame descended with two satchels. She wore a black bombazine dress and a hat replete with ostrich feathers. It was a false note for the season, but it apparently suited her mood.

"*Les hommes! Les hommes!*" she wept, coming into the parlor, a supplicating Dauteux at her heels. "They trample upon our virtues; they laugh at our delicateness. They want everything from us and they give nothing in return, except pain!"

"Do not talk this way, Donaldal . . ." Dauteux begged doggedly.

"If the people only knew, Edouard, what I am suffering because of you . . . ! No! They think I have nothing to ask for, nothing to desire because I am not out on the streets begging!"

"*Ma chère, Donaldal!* You must not shout so! *Les voisins! Les voisins!*"

"You worry about the neighbors at a time like this! How ungrateful! They will know more of the story than I do . . ." she warned.

"*Mais, comment . . . ?*"

"That . . . that maid! Do you think she will keep her mouth shut? Didn't I extract from her what happened at the Roué's down the street, what drove Monsieur Nigeault to grow fond of the bottle? Do you think others won't get from her what went on here? Oh, Edouard, Edouard, how could you wound me like this!"

"Donalda! You will not listen to my explanations."

"You men are all alike. I thought—I had wanted—you to be different. The disgrace of it! No wonder I couldn't sleep these past two nights."

"Neither could I, *ma chère*. You don't know how hard that mattress in the attic is . . ."

Madame burst into tears again. "You are so cruel. I am convinced you have no heart."

"Of course not. I have given it to you. This is all a mistake, a weakness upon my part. Forgive me and say that you will not go away. You can fire Cleobuline . . ."

Madame examined him shrewdly. "Fire her? Your reputation certainly would be known far and wide then—What does it matter? Nothing could hurt me as much as you have. Or," she asked, blowing her nose delicately, "or is it that you want to get rid of her? Do you tire of her so quickly?"

"Why are you so difficult, *ma chère*! I promise you I will not approach her again."

"Promises! What good are they when I have lost all faith in you?"

Cleobuline entered the house, announcing to Madame the arrival of the hansom.

"Good!" Madame said. She noticed immediately the maid's new dress and could not suppress her curiosity.

The Eyeglasses

"That's a new dress you are wearing, isn't it? It looks expensive."

"I bought it," Cleobuline answered readily, "with the money your husband gave me. I had enough to buy a hat also. Do you want to see it?"

"Oh!" Madame sobbed, grasping her satchels and leaving the room.

"Donalda! Donalda!" Dauteux shouted—but the door had already slammed shut. Discouraged, he went to the window, saw his wife off, and then returned to his chair by the table.

"Has Madame left?" Cleobuline asked, returning with a broad-brimmed leghorn hat that was at the height of fashion.

Monsieur nodded.

"I wanted to show her my new hat. Isn't it lovely?"

Again Monsieur nodded without looking up.

"Oh Monsieur! How can I ever thank you? I never had such beautiful clothes." She waltzed about the room, the ribbons of her hat fluttering above her billowing skirt. "You look so sad, Monsieur. Is it because your wife has left you?"

Monsieur assented.

"*Ah, c'est d' valeur.*" Finding her employer in this uncommunicative mood, the maid left him but shortly returned with M. Parletrop's painting. "I would like to know what Monsieur intends to do with this painting? It is in my way when I am dusting. Madame would not bother finding room for it."

M. Dauteux heard footsteps coming up the walk and, confident that it could be no one but his wife, raced to the door.

Doctor Scaramouche saw the lines of disappointment spring across his patient's face.

"Oh, it's you, Doctor!"

"*Bonjour, Dauteux.* I thought I'd bring your eye-glasses before you get into any more trouble."

"You have heard?"

"More or less."

Showing the Doctor a seat, Dauteux informed Scaramouche: "You were a wise man, Doctor, never to marry."

"Oh . . . ?"

"You don't have to worry about a wife; you never suffered the pangs of love . . ."

The Doctor smiled. "Would you say, Dauteux, that marriage does not have its assets as well as its liabilities?"

"*Oh, probablement.* I am at a point, though, where I think its trials far outweigh its compensations."

Scaramouche agreed that Dauteux was very much like the rest of mankind: a miser with his happiness, a prodigal with his unhappiness.

"I am not looking for an acme of joy," Dauteux continued; "just peace."

"Well, some men marry to find it, others remain single to assure themselves of it.—Here, try your lenses."

"This is not a time for love, Doctor," Dauteux said dourly, his eyes squinting beneath the thick lenses.

"It never has been—Look here a minute. The world has generally managed to kill the greatest lovers. *Après tout*, love is but divine craziness, and you know how the world regards divinity.—A little adjustment here. You'll have to agree with me, Dauteux: love has made more fools than saints."

"*Mais, my Donalda!* What will bring her back? Her

The Eyeglasses

words were so biting. I have never heard her speak like that before."

"Try these on again. Apparently, she has confused the Third Party in the marriage ceremony with the mother-in-law! A very popular habit nowadays. And these mothers-in-law! They are like our modern philosophers: *elles savent tout et elles ne connaissent rien*. How can marriage succeed, though, when its participants are constantly trying to disprove the fact that nearness often divorces what time and distance could not separate?"

"If she does not return, what shall I do?"

"Then, Dauteux, you will no longer have to envy my state of life. How do your eyeglasses feel?"

"Strange . . . very strange!"

"*Miséricorde!* We become adapted to our ailments in so short a time!"

"I think I could get along without my eyeglasses better than without my wife."

"Evidently, she had never faced reality before now. No wonder she was not afraid of it."

"You must not be unkind towards her, Doctor. She discovered my defects. Is that not reason enough to leave me?"

"And does not one love the rose even if it has thorns, *hein, Dauteux?* In matters of love, however, *chacun à son goût*. Speaking of taste, you wouldn't be out of that wonderful wine you treated me to last time I was here?"

"There is some more. I will get you a glass. You will have to drink alone. I am in no mood . . ."

Love, the Doctor pondered, after Dauteux had left, was indeed a serious affair if it kept anyone from enjoying a glass of wine.

When Dauteux came back, the size of the glass in his hand was very modest. But at the first sip, the Doctor was not sorry. It was sacrilege! Such good wine—it had been. And now: mouthwash!

"I . . . I think your eyeglasses could be straightened a bit, Dauteux," the Doctor said, removing the heavy spectacles. The Doctor was a man who, though he believed in closing doors, did not approve of locking them. He walked to the corner of the parlor, nearer the window—and the polypody plant. "This will be better," he said, putting the now-empty glass on the table and replacing the lenses on Dauteux' nose. The Doctor cleared his throat. "Did you hear what happened to M. Parletrop?"

"No. I could not read the papers. I know very little about what has happened outside this house."

"It seems that he acquired a certain sum of money—three hundred dollars, some say—and bought himself one of those gas-buggies. The fool was out yesterday and raced it up to twenty-five miles an hour—*une vitesse épouvantable*—and poof! He hit a fence, fell out of his car, and broke a leg—I forget which one. It will keep another fool like him from doing the same thing."

"Ah, le pauvre diable!"

"He'll be in the hospital a good four weeks. He is a good prospect for my daily game of chess . . . If your eyeglasses bother you, let me know. I'll mail you the bill. Don't get up; I'll let myself out. *Au revoir, Dauteux.*"

Dauteux mumbled a farewell. It was true, he realized as he sat there looking about the room, that he had grown accustomed to his ailment. He rose with the intention of taking the Doctor's glass to the kitchen; but Cleobuline entered the parlor, trying to tidy the house without ruffling

The Eyeglasses

or dirtying her dress. Dauteux checked himself; for, at first, he did not recognize her; and when he did, he could only gasp: "You aren't Cleobuline!"

"Of coure, Monsieur—Oh, Monsieur, has his eyeglasses."

"But . . . but she *was* . . . beautiful . . . and . . . you you are . . ."

"Don't you still think I'm beautiful? My eyes? My cheeks? My hair?"

"For all I know, it might still be there. It might still be in your eyes, your cheeks . . . But their arrangement! And I gave up Donalda for you! *Je suis fou! Je suis fou!*" he said mournfully, falling back into his chair.

At the moment, something else weighed more urgently on the maid's mind. "There . . . there is something," she stated nervously, "which I must ask you, Monsieur. *Vous voyez*, when I bought this dress and hat, there was a parasol that went with the outfit. I spent all the money I had and I would need new shoes and a purse . . ."

Dauteux was momentarily stupified by the forthrightness of her demand; but when he regained possession of his senses, he said tersely: "Do you expect me to pay for your clothes as well as your wages? I'll give you no more money!"

"But . . . I need these things," the girl protested. "They are so expensive, and Monsieur is so good."

Lose one woman, Dauteux thought, and you get caught with a worse one. "Pay for these fineries yourself," he told her curtly.

"Perhaps Monsieur would not want a story of our incident told—with a few added details?" Cleobuline said with

all the sweetness, if not the innocence, which her employer had formerly ascribed to her.

"You wouldn't!"

"A white handbag and shoes would go well . . ."

"How could I ever think you tender and harmless. You are a blackmailer! How much will you need?"

"Ten dollars should be enough."

"I suppose if I must have you around, Dauteux remarked, giving her the money," I should break my eyeglasses to dull the edge of my remorse."

"Monsieur is so generous," Cleobuline soothed femininely. "He has a good heart if he does not have good eyes." She kissed him playfully on the forehead as the front door slammed violently.

Madame stood there, in the parlor doorway, dissecting each of them with her unwavering stare.

"Oh, Donald!" Dauteux cried, rushing to her. "You have come back. I am so glad!"

Madame, however, was not noticeably affected by this luxurious display and withdrew her hand from his grasp.

"I am so happy that you are here!" Dauteux reiterated.

"You will have sufficient time to change your mind," Madame replied. "Why should I suffer for your eccentricities. There are other ways of keeping you from that maid. *J'ai faite une folle de moi-même,*" she confessed.

"*Moi aussi.* Maybe it is only Cleobuline who has not made a fool of herself," Dauteux said jokingly.

Madame did not protest. "I see that you have your eyeglasses, Dauteux."

"Doctor Scaramouche was just over with them," Dau-

The Eyeglasses

teux said, noticing, much to his discomfort, the impersonal 'Dauteux'.

"Then you will be able to start to work after dinner."

"There is no hurry, Donaldda."

"You shall start after dinner! I think I am capable of putting my nose into your affairs without bringing my heart into them also." She took her luggage and then, thinking better of it, put it down again and proceeded to the stairs. "Dauteux!" she called severely from the top of the stairs. "Dauteux, bring my things to my room!"

"Of course, of course," Dauteux accepted gladly. Hastening out of the parlor, he tripped and fell over the painting which Cleobuline had unconsciously placed beside the couch. He saw upon examination that there was a large tear in it. Instead of shedding tears, Dauteux burst into laughter. He wouldn't bother now, he admitted, to look at what he had embraced in his blindness.

"Dauteux!" his wife shouted impatiently.

"*Oui, oui, ma chère,*" he said racing to her.

Later, Cleobuline left the house for some afternoon shopping. There was a smile on her face, probably due to the money she squeezed tightly in the heart-shaped pocket of her dress rather than to the infectious domestic tranquillity which had resettled itself over the household. She opened her parasol, though the sun was not insistent, and hastened down the path that was edged in early-blooming magenta rhododendrons, across the lawn that was spotted with greening forsythia bushes, and turned into the street that was heavy with the sweetness of roses.

A Pear Orchard In Spring

By PAUL F. FLETCHER, '51

There's infinity in a pear orchard . . .
Substance dies away,
But there's a form remaining:
Memories all white and golden,
Spiders' foam and wood bark olden;
Petals sound their lay.
Somnolent bees their droll complaining . . .
Memories to cheer some still-born day.

I guess that's why lovers love a pear orchard . . .
Words take on flowers
And fall, like the falling petals,
On glebe a golden loam;
And memories build a home:
The what-you-said calls hours
To live again and honey settles . . .
And married languor gains renascent powers.

There's infinity in a pear orchard . . .
The this-life and the after;
Snatches of pear blossoms lighting
Life on earth and then a rotting:
Crumpled petals dead with spotting;
Love and hate, tears and laughter,
Then eternal life bedighting . . .
White crisp petals heaven's rafter.

Some Notes on Modern Religious Art

By LEROY C. HOINACKI, Special Student

THE contemporary scene in religious art is rather confused. Part of this confusion results from the fact that almost all the religious art of today is derived from two main sources: the past, which furnishes art objects which are copied, and the present, which produces original work and copies of this work. The former source copies almost all its work from the renaissance, a period in history in which the art of the time derived almost all its inspiration from the pagan past and added, from time to time, ostensibly Christian subject matter for its work. It is this limited body of pagan work, Christian only in name, which furnishes us today with the bulk of our religious art, either in direct copies or in conscious imitations.

And within this comparatively small body of work there is the work of one man, Raphael, which overshadows everything else in quantity and popularity with the contemporary public. It is thought by many that Raphael, especially in his Madonnas, has painted some of the most beautiful religious art of Western Europe. Is Raphael really this good or is he too a pagan in spirit? I tend toward the latter view, although it might possibly be conceded that his work expresses certain aspects of Christianity, in preference to others which I would rather see in religious art.

We might take a representative work of his, the "Madonna in the Meadow," and analyze it for pagan or Christian content. Probably the first thing in the picture to strike one is the perfection of composition, built up of a heavy triangular

mass in the foreground, cut and balanced in the deep landscape background by the horizon and masses of foliage and buildings. The heavy, triangular, sculptural mass of the Virgin, St. John, and the Child, perfectly balanced, tends to establish a general tone of peace, serenity, and repose. The general design of the lines of the three figures considered as a unit, and, more especially the lines of design of the figures themselves, tends toward one thing only: physical perfection of attitude and form. That is to say, these figures are placed in the most harmonious attitudes possible, and they are made to be the very essence of Raphael's idea of feminine and infant physical perfection. But the perfection of this woman and of these children is wholly natural. It is a physical perfection which has nothing to do with spiritual perfection, unless one admits that physical perfection is the symbol for spiritual perfection.

Incidentally, we might ask a question which is never asked in the presence of Raphael's work: What is the purpose of religious art? I think that St. John of the Cross wrote that religious art has a twofold purpose: to give honor to the subject portrayed and to lead the viewer to God. Does the "Madonna in the Meadow" give honor to its subjects? The Virgin is a woman who is filled with the grace of God, eminently happy caring for her divine Son, and radiating the *spiritual* beauty of His presence at her feet. None of these things is seen in this painting. This woman needs no grace to perfect her nature, for Raphael has already made her as perfect in her order as she can be. She would have to become a different woman in order to be filled and perfected with grace. She seems to be calmly happy caring for a healthy, fat, Italian child, but there is no indication of happiness caused by the divinity of her Son. This woman reeks with the physical beauty of sixteenth century Italy. But there is nothing spirit-

Some Notes on Modern Religious Art

ual in the beauty portrayed here. It is not that physical beauty, as such, excludes spiritual beauty, but that Raphael has in fact excluded any possibility of the supernatural appearing in his idealized types.

Much of the honor reflects upon Raphael. We admire him for adapting certain pagan ideals of physical perfection to his own age and style of painting. Also, this painting does not give honor to the reality of its subjects because it cannot have any symbolical meaning. All religious art is symbolical, leading us to a reality beyond that of a sensible representation of something. But in this picture we become bogged down in the subject matter as it exists on canvas because of the obvious attempt at technical and physical perfection. Does it lead one to God, that is, to prayer? The foregoing adequately answers this question.

This sort of thing comprises the main body of religious art which we are copying. But we have also evolved some definite schools of religious art. The main one of these is what might be termed the sentimental sugar-and-tear school. Like almost all European art, this school has definite antecedents in the art which preceded it. It is derived almost completely from the school of Raphael. But it is a kind of watered down Raphael. It has taken certain things from the surface of Raphael—his sweetness, love for physical beauty, mildness—and adapted these to the exigencies of its own mood and times. In addition to using only surface qualities of Raphael, this school adds only surface qualities of its own to its religious art. It supplies such things as the facial type, the coiffure, the clothing, and attempts to assemble them into some kind of semblance of physical beauty. Since the fads in female physical beauty of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have not been as lasting as the classical ideal of the

renaissance, the religious art of this school becomes dated every generation or so.

In addition to not having any lasting qualities for an ideal, this school also has no ideals of spiritual depth. Its art does not become a symbol for expressing the deep and profound truths of its religion, but rather a series of, for the moment, pretty pictures and statues. They are pretty in the sense that they are artificial, petty, and shallow, not beautiful with the depths of spiritual splendor.

There is another school which now seems to be in the ascendancy. This might be called the pin-up school and stems directly from Hollywood. It has a very definite ideal which is unashamedly physical beauty of the Hollywood formula, with a varying amount of sex added. Raphael had his pagan world which offered him inspiration, and the artists of this school have their pagan world. The difference is that the modern pagan world is infinitely more petty, base, and sinful, since it has been exposed to the Word and has rejected Him. This art is accordingly more petty, base, and sinful, in addition to being much more imperfect technically than Raphael's art.

In some of the renaissance religious art it is possible to identify contemporary persons painted to represent various mythological and religious figures. In this art today it is possible to identify various Hollywood sluts and male morons portraying all the figures of Christian iconography, although the more general tendency is to create figures who combine the physical characteristics of a number of living degenerates.

When one applies the criterion for the purpose of religious art mentioned above, the effects are rather devastating. None of this work gives honor to the subjects for whom it stands. It is rather the reverse, since it degrades and drags

Some Notes on Modern Religious Art

in the mire the real subjects whom it portrays. And how can this art lead to God when it immediately reminds one of some moral idiot?

But the real danger in this art is the fact that it selected these ideals in the first place. It attempts to portray something in terms that are contradictory to the reality which is supposed to be manifested. Therefore, those viewing this art will form ideas of this reality—the Christian religion—which are foreign to it. They will be misled, receiving entirely erroneous ideas. In other words, this art is pernicious.

Is there any remedy? There are two major things which can be done: Copy truly good Christian art of the past, and encourage good contemporary Christian artists. We have great Christian art in the past. The French in the thirteenth century created the most exalted, the most intellectual, the most pure Christian art ever produced. The Italians of the late Gothic period executed some very fine religious art which is, in addition, quite charming. Some early Italian renaissance figures, including Fra Angelico, are not too much tainted with the ideals of the renaissance to be good religious artists. In the baroque period we have El Greco, the painter of that aspect of Christianity represented by St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila, among others. El Greco is becoming more popular, and it is to be hoped that he is also becoming better understood. These are only a few things which can be copied. Almost all aspects of Christianity have been adequately handled in the past. But nothing created in the past will completely fill our need for a vital, purposeful religious art. This must be supplied by ourselves since our needs are, in a sense, peculiar to our times. We need a religious art which is a valid expression of our age.

There is one artist today, a Catholic, who in my esti-

mation is painting religious art that will eventually be placed alongside the greatest creations which Europe has produced in the past. This man, Georges Rouault, has produced paintings which are powerful, dedicated, religious, beautiful and packed with meaning. His works are powerful. They derive their power from two sources: their intellectual and their sensual content. Their intellectual content is based primarily on their subject matter which, in the case of his religious subjects, has the entire tradition of Christianity behind it giving it force and meaning for the Christian of today. This intellectual content is also realized through symbolism. A good example of his symbolism may be seen in the two soldiers in the painting "Christ Mocked by Soldiers" at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. These two men are presented as gross, evilly sensual, almost obscene in their ugliness, as only Rouault can paint such ugliness, yet they are completely impersonal. They are not Jews or Romans or Italians of the period of some artist, but rather are symbols for all of us. We have all mocked Christ by our sins and Rouault wants to show that this is what we look like when we sin. The idea is symbolized here with terrible intensity and feeling. We cannot escape it.

His power is also derived from the sensual content of his work, for Rouault has found the real secrets of expressionism. Although, to one who looks at his work for the first time, it seems ugly and repulsive, yet, in its own way it has great eye appeal, greater probably than the eye appeal, although it is of a different kind, of Matisse. Rouault strongly affects our senses with his strong colors, heavy lines and forms contorted to express a particular idea or feeling. In some of his work, as in the "Christ With Arms Raised," the paint seems to be boiling and seething on the figure because of its intense

Some Notes on Modern Religious Art

inner feelings. In the etching "Jesus Always Scourged," he uses his heavy outlines and slight distortion of form at his best in order to express the idea of Christ, beaten, abject, continually under the pain of our sins, now as in Jerusalem, yet there is nothing in the etching except the single figure of Christ.

His art is dedicated. Everything he does is done for a purpose, has a message to convey, is filled with conviction. Rouault is dedicated to exposing the horrors of social ills in addition to portraying subjects from his religion. Art does not exist in a vacuum for him but rather has a definite place in society and in the Church, and he means to fulfill his function as a useful member of both to the best of his ability.

All of his art is religious, but that portion of it which is confined to religious subject matter is more explicitly so. It was noted above that religious art ought to give honor to its subject and lead one to God. It is my opinion that Rouault's art fulfills both these functions in an eminent manner. Much of his religious art portrays one subject: Christ. We might take the "Christ Mocked by Soldiers" mentioned above as an example. In the first place, we know and Rouault knows that Christ did not look like the figure in this painting. Since religious art is essentially symbolic, not representational, this figure is meant to be a symbol for Christ being mocked. The figure's shoulders are bowed, he is completely submissive, abject, humble in the face of the horrible mockings by the brutes on either side of him. By the manner of his portrayal, we know that this person can represent no one other than Christ. It honors Christ because it is impossible to think of anyone else in the presence of this work.

Does it lead us to God? Yes. We are lead to God through two sources: the figure of Christ and the two soldiers.

We are lifted by the sight of the passivity of Christ—caused by love, and we are moved to contrition by the sight of the cruelty of the soldiers, in whom we see the cruelty and contempt of our sinning selves.

The beauty of his work may ever remain a controversial issue. But there is beauty in pain, in suffering, because of the pain and suffering of Christ. Rouault's work participates in this pain and suffering and has developed a visual language to express all the anguish of the reality. Insofar as the reality of pain is beautiful, to that degree is the tortured visual language of Rouault beautiful.

It was implied above that Rouault is filling our need for a religious art today. This is true. Rouault is a very definite product of his age and can only be understood in relation to it. It was only in a terrifying age that had placed God aside that someone could emerge with so powerful an expression of religious belief, centered in Christ. This is the age of the worship of Mammon, of brute force spread over a global scale, of the middle class with its smug and contemptible mores, an age in which every thinking man becomes acutely conscious of something to which he can cling. Rouault is excruciatingly conscious of the suffering of Christ and of the moral chaos and suffering of the world today. This is the source of his art and its meaning for us.

Poem

By THOMAS WRIGHT, Special Student

'I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for without me you can do nothing.'—John 15, 5-6.

There is a cloud across the sun:
A film so grey that hides the light:
A smothered soul in shadow dark:
A stifled cry, so muffled-soft;
We hear but what He wants us to—
The sounds are mixed with bruised-sighs

A soul is sealed—
But to One Else:
One more alone
Can open it.

A touch, a taste,
A smell, a sound:
All strip it clear
Of naked-show

No blinds are left,
No closets closed,
Not even dark
Can keep it dimmed:

He sees it rise
To heights untouched:
The mountain peaks
Become its nests.

The scales are gone,
Are burned away;
They fall to ash
Without a sound,

Where once was death,
Now lives a flame;
A diamond
With lustre-white!

A sightless wind
That passes soft,
With whistle-slight,
With breezy-hush.

A voice so strange:
It speaks no words:
There is no tongue
That speaks to Him:

No language borne
Among a race—
No mortal phrase
Can praise the Word.
So free this soul
Becomes at death:
It would consume
The body-cold

Poem

This eagle climbs
The heights of space:
An earthly heart
Would burst apart.

The sight! The sound!
The incense-rich!
The ravished-sense!
The palate-pure!

And there: before
This burning-bird:
Ecstatic-love!
The sight of God . . .

But down, and down:
Mortality:
The tortured man
Of soul and flesh.

The God he thinks
He knows and loves:
This God is lost—
Mosaic-Cloud:

A circle-Wide:
A Being One:
A Wave-Unchecked:
A Stormy-Sea:
A King of dwarfs:

A Cause-Uncaused
A Mover-Source:
The Reason-Clear
The Only Faith:

Triangle One
Of love Unknown!
The Father *is*:
The Son is made:

The Spirit known!
'I AM WHO AM'
His Name is Love!

The Rising of the Sun

By AUSTIN P. NAGLE, '51

Awake, and to the window stealthily
To watch with awe, a battle in the skies;
Now sleeps the darkness cautiously,
Now creeps the dawn with static in her eyes.
 Two goliaths, one youth, the other age,
 One, fiery, brilliant, and aloof,
 The other, feeble, grey, and sage
 Enact a timeless battle on the roof.
First hints and subtle fragrance of the light,
Bestir the ancient to a slow retreat;
Then shafts of stinging bundles blind his sight,
And trip him to a flushed defeat.

Seasons Change

By EDGAR A. KELLY, '52

HE watched her come toward him, her brown legs flashing in the last reflected rays of the dying sun and the darkening shadows blending with the short, blue corduroy jacket she wore over her startling white bathing suit.

She came straight to him, stopping directly in front of him and then dropping, almost without transition, to her knees in the soft warm sand.

"Day-dreaming again . . . I think if I were to come here in the middle of the winter I'd find you sitting right here, staring at nothing."

He smiled sadly, "That's what I like about you, I guess, none of the usual subtleties."

"So?"

"Yeah, so. And for God's sake will you please drop that gilt-edged, bound in brass, Boston 'so'? You sound like someone who wished she had gone to Vassar."

"Temper, temper," she sang. And then in a more serious tone, "I thought we had this out last night?"

"Sure, sure, we had it out last night. We grabbed the old faucet marked 'gush', turned it on and let it drip for a while and then turned it off. Simple. Then we turned to each other and said sweetly, 'How about the beach tomorrow to wind it up?' "

"Well? . . . It's worked before; and remember, it isn't as if you didn't know about it from the beginning."

"Yeah, I know, it worked before, I knew all about it

from the beginning. I can go home now and in two days all I'll have is a nice memory and another name for my Christmas card list. Look, has it ever occurred to you that there might be something wrong with this system, that maybe it doesn't work every time?"

She watched him quietly for a while as she stared past the disarranged halo of her hair at the sea beyond. Finally he turned to look at her squarely.

"Well?"

"Well what? . . . Do you want me to argue with you? . . . Sure, there might be something wrong with it but I don't think I can change it. What I mean is I don't think either of us can change it. You *will* go home with just a nice memory. We're young, we're supposed to have summer romances . . ."

"But do you realize what that means . . . we thought we were in love—we really did . . . and I think we were . . . and now I know that we aren't . . . we can turn it off and on when we want to . . . we don't *have* to feel anything or want anything. That makes us just like machines; turn it on, turn it off; use it, don't use it; it works, so why worry about it? Good Lord, don't you see what I mean?"

"I don't think so. Are you trying to tell me that you would like to . . . well . . . to go on . . . even when we go back?"

"No, I'm not, that's just it!"

"That doesn't clear it up much."

"I . . . Oh hell! . . . let's forget about it, huh? Let's just talk about what a nice summer it's been . . . or, even better, tell me what you intend to do when you get back."

She looked at him quizzically for a moment and then turned slowly away from him and spoke out at the sea.

"You know what I'm going to do. I must've told you

Seasons Change

fifty times so far . . . have you decided what you're going to do?"

"No"

"Don't you think you should?"

"No . . . it's bad enough knowing that I will have to do something without making it worse by knowing what."

"Oh look, can't we end this thing up without dragging in your damned philosophies? Why can't you take things at their face value without trying to make them fit into a set of rules? You'd be a lot happier that way."

"I suppose I've explained this before, but look . . . the 'things' don't fit the rules. The rules fit the things . . . they're the story of how things are."

"If that's true, then this must be in the rules, too."

"Yeah, yeah, it must be."

They were both staring out at the water now. A chill breeze was coming in off the water. It was getting darker now that the sun had set. She drew her knees up under her chin and locked her wrists around her legs.

"Which boat are you taking?"

"Tuesday."

"Going to see me off tomorrow?"

"No"

He reached out and let his fingers play gently with the short, bleached yellow hairs at the nape of her neck.

"Will you send me that picture when it's developed?"

"No"

"Why?" he asked in a slightly dull tone.

She turned now and looked at him. His tanned face was even darker in the evening shadows. She released her wrists and placed one of her hands in the sand beside her and reached her other hand up to his forearm. Gently, she

drew her fingernail across the smooth, dark skin leaving a faint trailing white line.

"Why?" he repeated.

"Because you really don't want it."

He seemed to be about to say something for a few seconds, but instead he rose slowly to his feet. She rose with him and for a moment they stood looking at each other in the closing twilight. Finally, she broke away from his gaze and stooped down to pick up his worn old leather jacket that had been half covered by the shifting sand. She shook it out and threw it over his shoulders.

"Do you want to walk back with me as far as the sea wall?" she asked quietly.

"No. I don't think . . . well, it's best that we . . . just let it go . . . here."

"Uh-huh, all right . . ."

"She leaned toward him slightly, hesitantly, and then turned away from him slowly and walked down the beach, receding quickly into the deepening shadows. He watched her until she was a small blue and brown figure blending with the sea and the damp wet sand.



The Parable of the Snow

By PAUL F. FLETCHER, '51

I watched the sea sway the length of carmine along the concave of Horseneck,
And the sky a colossal mackerel loomed ominously over the ocean,
Thrashing its scales of scarlet and crinoline and the pale blue armor of war.
And it flayed the water to fury till its great tail bled and reddened the sand.

Sandpipers and semi-palmated plovers flitted along the surf,
Their match-stick legs in head-splitting motion—and they picked up snails.
The sea-grass, red at the throat with the storm-morning sun,
saw its shadow on the sand,
And maddened by the sight of blood whipped itself into a frenzy.

Gulls stared with unseeing eyes at the outgoing steamers,
And the violence of the wind splintered their feathers.
And they shook their salt-crusted heads and sought refuge inland,
For today would be a day of frozen huddling . . . and lean pickings.

Then the snow came. Whirring in a lust-shot whirl;
The flakes merging and separating, alive only to the sensations of their own frail bodies;

Living their lives while they lasted . . . and then the damnation of cold waters . . .
Yet some fell on the land, and they glorified God on a jewelled tomorrow.

Silence Pond

By PAUL F. FLETCHER, '51

The monarch rides the fall-shot currents of tantalus air
That falls wedge-cut by the flocks of Canada geese
That blue-chip the heavens and, at sunset, gild it with old gold . . .

Oh mark that mobile speck that blurs to blue, and rest refreshed on the chasm of the heavens.

This is the hour when the hawks cease to shriek their philippics;
And the mink, glutted with blood-letting, leave their stains like roses on the forest floor;
And the winds no longer ravage the withered fields, for long since

They have ceased to be fruitful and now they fester, fruit despoiled, and await the cleansing of snow.

Men's tongues wag like winter winds that lash the leaf,
And either shatter it and call it cripple or rip its bloodless veins from root,

And spit it out, broken and half-digested, to generate hate.

Yet here by the pond called Silence there is peace . . .
and even the trees have ceased to point.

James Stephens

By WILLIAM H. PLUMMER, '51

THE notice of James Stephen's death came as a surprise, principally, I suppose, because he had taken his place in my mind among the immortals and the thought of either life or death in connection with such a legendary figure never occurred to me. Such a man is sent us infrequently. His picture showed he looked exactly as he should, like a leprecaun, a wee, fairy creature with big ears and a comical, sad expression, in whose soft eyes could be discerned the fires of a divine madness. A gentle, wild thing who preferred the company of animals to that of men, he was meant to be loved and venerated and protected from the harsh winds.

Of course he was born in Ireland. No country of the West could have nurtured him except that land where spirits still walk abroad and the old legends are repeated and believed, or, at least, not doubted. A place where progress has not yet dammed the rivers or withered the sod. It is to be regretted that he was born in a Dublin slum instead of in the country; that he was forced to struggle for an education and then tied to an office stool as though he were an ordinary man, as undeserving of such a fate as his predecessor Lamb had been. He was only fortunate in being born at that particular period of his country's history when the awakening nation, too long subjected to foreign rule, sought inspiration for the conflict in the legends of a heroic past. Here was a spokesman for the gods, a man who could pass from world to world; to whom nothing was a mystery and all was wonderful. Maeve

and Cuchalain were alive to him. He saw Angus Og in the clouds and if Pan was not native to the place he was well known to Stephens, who could hear his song on the breeze and see his mark in the earth.

The Crock of Gold will always be my favorite of all James Stephens' books, perhaps because it was the first of them I read, and that many years ago, before time had clouded the imagination or dulled the edge of enjoyment. How pleasant it was then to look in on the philosophers in their deep wood, each with his Xantippe. Into that place, shadowy as Plato's cave, the sun streamed through one opening in the trees making a bright circle for Seumas and Brigid to dance in with all the friendly beasts. Where the leprecauns lived was called *Gort na Cloca Mora*, which is not unknown to American theatre-goers. It was there Pan stole Caitilin Ni Murrachu and there she left him to go with Angus Og. At an opposite extreme to fantasy of that sort stands *Etched in Moonlight*, a book of stories so cruelly realistic as to strike terror into the reader. I read the story called "Hunger" to a small audience one evening and when it was done we wept together. Not sentimental tears but tears of heartbreak and despair. We wept for ourselves and for the world, but most of all, I think, we wept for James Stephens. Because he was not merely telling a story. He had not imagined what he wrote, he had experienced it. However changed it was, whether for effect, or secrecy, or to safeguard a name, we knew it had happened. That was the most unusual thing about James Stephens stories. Whether by art or lack of it the man made the reader share the related experiences with him. He did this completely in *Etched in Moonlight* and *The Charwoman's Daughter*. But even in *The Crock of Gold* and *In the Land of Youth*, a retelling of old tales, in *The Demigods* and in his

James Stephens

poems he gave the impression, although the allegorical character of those stories was evident, of complete and unquestioning belief in the gods and fairies he wrote about. When he described a satyr, one knew that, if he had not seen a satyr, he had seen something. If Angus Og was not passing, Stephens felt he was. This can be explained simply enough as mythopoetic fancy but who can explain the naturalness of it? Yeats was self-conscious, Russell was self-conscious, but Stephens was not. He wrote not as an artist using a means of expression but as someone who had seen something wonderful and must tell it.

Oliver St. John Gogarty once said that the park in Dublin should have been named after James Stephens. It is a fact that he has not been given the recognition he deserves. There may be reasons why he has not been honored, reasons of either a religious or a political nature, or other reasons known only to a small circle of cognoscenti. The greatest and most lasting memorial that could be given him, however, would be that his works should be more widely read. This happy condition may come about now that he is safely dead, since most people prefer great artists so. The world would be better for it, since it is surely better to see gods and heroes, even if they do not exist, than not to see them if they do. And it is better to see them through another's eyes than not to see them at all.

A Ballad of Fall River

By PAUL F. FLETCHER, '51

The maples green the hills
That leap above the mills,
And the sunsets hide the sewerage
Of Mount Hope Bay.
The Highland mansions grace
Stalwart Durfees of the race,
And their architectural wonders
Cheer the slums across the way.

The bluebirds flee the sparrows
That rob their nesting-place.
The Irish and the French
Hold their sectors in the trench;
Yet we're pleased to call them Catholics
That worship race and race.

And yet I may say
There's beauty there in May,
And maidens dab their lipstick on
When coming home from work;
And many there's a flower
(Through a trifle wan and dour)
Yet they gamely hide their nylon runs
And hunt a homebound clerk.
Now some, I'm sure, will say
I'm a cynic, and blasé,

The School of Loss

And a man who'd knock his birthplace
Would surely beat his mother.
But its not quite that dramatic:
I was cleaning out the attic,
And I came across *Don Juan* . . .
Blame Lord Byron, please—none other!

The School of Loss

By PAUL F. FLETCHER, '51

Leaves turning, turning, cross-veins of poetry,
Of calendulas and woodbine and red cherries,
Fluting thrushes and robins stained with berries,
Silken roses rustling a heavy scented lay to me.

Turn the pages pulsating in the dewspun morn—
Pages of D. H. Lawrence—and envision cloud-dipt hills,
A girl and a haystack and a bough of esoteric thrills:
A man who could tap the Vision and still go forlorn.

Wessex, land of billowing orchards mad with blossoming,
Undulating wildwood of Hintock and breathing Egdon
Heath,
Cider-drippings on the pine-muffled dragon's teeth,
Druidical revisions to long lost nights of revelling.

Hardy, architect of Wessex—so much substance gone
And lost to dying, dying for want of a form—a purpose of life,

Wraiths of Casterbridge and Bournemouth devoured by strife:
And Tess and Jude are lost in helpless curse—nor by *Him*
mourned.

Why must those who catch the rainbow and weave it with
the pen
Into the point and counter-point that nerves our kind,
Know the yearning, quench its golden cup . . . then weakly
whine
That morning flushed to afternoon meets darkness . . . then
the end.

A Promise, Yet With Pain

By PAUL F. FLETCHER, '51

I watched a falcon fleck the hills with shadow
And careen down the frost-caked vista of cider-logged
orchards;
And I walked the meadow nailed at the knee with frost;
And earth, winter crucified, yet stirred its bloodied hands.

For earth, like that falcon, sought the sun,
And immobile in a mesh of liverwort and fungus
Heard the far off call of sun—of far off spring
That looses earthy lips and leaves all to music and motion.

And yet my hands were numb with February chilblains;
And the height of the mountain giddied my frozen brain

A Promise, Yet With Pain

Till I fancied I saw a distant steeple shaking a bloody finger
at me . . .

Spread as it was by the crimson of the setting winter sun.

The clouds, great bats of the night, already hovered danger-
ously close;

And one great one smeared the sun to running blood and
sucked it dry;

And the enemy camps of the night pain-pricked the hope of
spring;

And their pale white emblem set the seal of ghostly death on
earth's poor lips.

And yet I know the moon will soon be a mandelay,

Strung by the tender fibrils of zephyrs, its handle some gold
cloud picturesquely placed;

And the stars will be simply so many notes materialized into
visible music. . . .

And earth will celebrate its yearly mass and transubstantiate
its crust and wine.

DEBUT . . .

THOMAS WRIGHT, Special Student, whose
verse we have published on pages 43, 63 and 64, is a pre-
ecclesiastic student who came to P. C. from Villanova Col-
lege where he was a contributor to the THE LYNX, the
literary publication of that school.

Transition at Noon

By VINCENT C. TROFI, '52

“WHAT'S wrong with you this morning?” the lady with the greying hair said. “Is something the matter? You're awfully quiet,” she added, this time with a note of kindness.

The young man was disturbed and said, as if the fact that she noticed something wrong worried him, “There's nothing wrong, nothing really.”

His embarrassment increased, for she continued, “Don't hand me that; you can't fool me.” She leaned forward over her desk that was to the side of, but facing his, “I know you young people, I have a son your age. I bet you've got a luncheon date. Young people are always non-committal before a date,” she whispered slyly.

The young man smiled faintly; he said nothing.

“Silence is no denial, you know,” she remarked, this time quite loudly.

Again he forced a smile that indicated nothing.

The morning seemed longer than usual. It seemed to him that it would never pass, and he wished it to pass fast, very fast. It's understandable then that he felt better when he was outside at noon-time. He walked a bit, quickly, through crowds of people which, however, thinned out before he reached his destination.

Once there, he opened a great door and when he entered he waited a few moments to get accustomed to the dark-

Transition at Noon

ness. Then he climbed a few steps and dipped his right hand into some water which was contained in a large stone vessel. He touched with his right hand his forehead, his chest, his left and then his right shoulder.

Supported by his right hand he touched his right knee to a stone floor. Presently both his knees were on wood. Soon afterwards, his fingers were on wood also; small, round black pieces of wood, held together by a wire. But unlike his knees which were solidly planted, his fingers moved slowly, equally timed over the separate pieces of wood. His lips moved too and his mind worked. He addressed his hardly audible words toward the far end of the place that was flanked with tall columns and windows of blazing color.

He stayed there for what seemed to his knees a long time; to him a short time—too short a time. Before he left he repeated the process with his right knee and then again the right hand in the water.

Outside it was bright. After a short walk that brought him again through the steadily increasing crowds of people, he was indoors once more.

"Well, that's better," the lady with the greying hair said after looking at the young man for a few minutes. "Now you look more like your old self. Yes sir." she surveyed him suspiciously. "I notice a definite change," and with a sparkle she added, "and my aging, though still active, woman's intuition tells me this transition is to due to a woman. It's a woman's work, I can tell."

This time the young man smiled, without force.

"How did the date turn out? But I know you, you'll deny it or else you tell me some ridiculous story, probably, that you visited your long-neglected mother," she said, with a de-

cided playfulness that carried with it a fair amount of impatience.

The young man looked at her. He smiled quietly and drew a short breath. "Yes I did visit my mother,"—a slight hesitation, then almost wistfully he repeated, "yes, my mother."

DEBUT . . .

AUSTIN P. NAGLE, '51, who is the author of "The Rising of the Sun", is a Social Science major and will receive his degree this June. He prepped at De La Salle Academy in Newport, where he makes his home.

Reflections

By THOMAS WRIGHT, Special Student

I

The world has gone and left us—
Gone and left us far behind.
Yet in our shadowed caverns,
Where the night can never leave,
Some swift, but pond'rous rhyme
Comes again to haunt and taunt:
 For lost and tortured lovers
 Who never knew the Lover:
 The One for Whom you lived on
 Your foolish, senseless decades . . .
 If Love had only been your
 Continual wish—your sole hope!

II

We watched the world
 behind a window:
We saw the rain,
 yet never felt it.
And knew the worst
 (all in the rank-cloud)
And yet we wept
 for every lost-leaf:
The least and most
 in life are thought-full.
O Nature: senseless,

Unthinking, faithless!
God made us all—
In His great image:
The soul-enchained
So sinful-mankind!
It is this sight:
The sight of spent-sense—
All on a hell
Of comprehension!
Such wisdom-foul;
What useless thinking!

Deus Caritas Est

By THOMAS WRIGHT, Special Student

Stretched across a Cross of wood—
(Heaven made a cruel day!)
Christ could move His Head in joy.
Yes! In joy, that Love had done
Miracles which man could not:
God became a Man to die
In a Way that saved us all
From our sins and brought the Lord—
(Same Divinity of Old)
Brought the great Immanuel
In our midst, and linked us to
That Infinity once lost:
The Separated One!

