

THE PAINTER'S DREAM

By MARTHA BROADHURST

The sun was rising pure and white over Italy's slopes, the hour was early; the boat would be sailing presently. The wharf was crowded with humble men and women there to say farewell to friends and relatives. Standing aloof from the crowd was a beautiful woman who held by the arm a tall, dreamy-looking young man unquestionably her son, who remained by her side until the very last moment—"Mother, farewell. I shall go to the new country, the free country, where there will be need of painters, and there I shall become great. I will paint in America. Bid me God-speed and smile me a good-bye."

Little did he know what it was to ask a lonely mother in Florence to smile him a good-bye. One's own and only son! To be dreaming of everything in another country being so wonderful, so perfect! Youth fancies that the "far country" one longs to live in holds no disappointments.

Thus did Lorenza Lairee come to America. Thinking that new freedom in life and money so easily made (how many illusions the foreigner has of our wealth!) would early help him to—in his own words—"paint in America."

Standing on the deck of the Italian liner, the tall young man was first to sight the Statue of Liberty. "Ah, I have come, I have come—and here I will be great—a great artist. I will paint in America!"

The hundreds of men and women gathered their belongings and trooped off the boat. One wondered where they would set foot and at night find shelter for their heads. "What can you do?" was the hard, cold inquiry of the government official. Being slight and more a dreamer than a laborer, it was more difficult to place this man. And so it happened that he was settled out in a mixed colony of truck farmers and flower gardens and stone cutters. Everything imaginable they did for home and bread. As life grew to be a harder struggle, Lorenza Lairee found it harder to paint.

Next door to his lodging place was a truck farmer whose entire family did the gardening. Were they from his old country? "No," the fair-haired, rosy-cheeked, stalwart young girl said—"from Holland." And thus did the dreaming, lonely, poor young painter work near the garden, and, as youth draws youth, one day he married Amina, the pretty girl who had never dreamed a dream or had a vision—who only saw the growth of the lettuce, celery and radishes with earthly eyes. Amina would never know in the future why or how Lorenza suffered—so long as she, his faithful wife, looked after the gardens and marketed their products. Such natures never understand, and "feet of clay" has been their names.

The years slipped rapidly by, and in the little, low-thatched house where Lorenza and Amina lived there had been born a blessed baby girl. She was growing up so wonderfully beautiful that Lorenza secretly longed to paint her face. The years had been so hard. Long after Amina had fallen asleep he would creep up into the attic with a candle and paint, paint, paint. The only notice his wife ever gave to his slipping up there was when she would say: "Prices are better and better every day for everything in our garden. Why do you not sleep at night, the better to work tomorrow? Ugh, lucky for the both of us my poor father left us this little patch to call our own—sure 'twould be none of ours for your getting."

Days wore along. The mornings found Amina in the garden, wondering why Lorenza was whiling away the sunny hours and not working alongside her and the hired man. She did not know that up in his attic there was a trap-door opening to the skylight, and when the blue sky called in the morning to her, it only said, "The plants, the gardens, better truck, better prices."

Not so with Lorenza. He heard only the call to the attic window, "To paint—to paint—to paint in America!" This he had said for all these misshapen years. Amina only saw daubs of blue and red and yellow in the sketches of her husband. Loving him, though, in a mater-

nal sort of way; shielding him, yet fussing—more to herself than to him—she, by her toil and bustle, brought in the living. Lorenza would spend hours trying to help her, and to Amina they were golden hours, spent by her side in the truck garden. He would often tell her of Italy, and how some day he hoped they could go, for she, too, was foreign-born and would like a glimpse of Holland.

While the couple talked and worked, little Willena would come home from school and join them, working in the gardens, growing in body and mind. She was the pride of her teachers, not only because of leading in all her classes, but for her beauty—both physical and spiritual. And so at 17 she soon would be going into the city to study. She would dream of fanciful things. She imagined great clouds, sunlight, storms, flowers—and always her own face vaguely mixed with all these things. How was she to know that some day and soon her face would be—but this later.

Standing in the fading sunlight with Lorenza and Amina on a spring day, suddenly she saw two men on horseback. So handsome were they that Willena fancied they were knights in search of Beauty. How truly she guessed!

"My son," spoke the older man of the two, "my dream in life is over for myself. In my work I have had great success, thank God! But my dream is for you—to see you a great artist. My name is heard and known a great way 'round the world, but I crave for you the greatest name in your own native America. I would give all my glory and success as a portrait painter if by so doing you could catch a new light, a new dream for great buildings in our cities. My cup of joy would be brimful, if you could be deemed worthy to be commissioned to paint upon the walls of America's Cathedral one living picture."

"Ah, my dear, good father, how could a son of yours—you, the great Sarjine—be ever anywhere save in your shadow?"

"Son, I shall hope and pray that you may find a new way, a new day, a new face—a face never seen on canvas—some day, please God, you will find in a byway a face no artist has ever found—and your time will come. You will find!"

"Father, look, look, look into the garden there in the valley—such a face!"

Drawing nearer, the great Sarjine smiled and called to the man, who was none other than Lorenza. Heaven seemed coming down to the hungry heart as he looked into the face of the master of whom he had heard so long. As like meets like, and spirit answers to spirit, the humble man said, "Will you not come to my attic and see the sunset from my skylight?" Of course he would. With a look of discovery in his fine eyes as he glanced around the walls, Sarjine said: "My man, you have done what others are striving everywhere to do. You've mixed a blue. Little do you know what you have done. Your blue! Your blue! Come into my studio tomorrow, bringing these sketches with you."

And so, on the glorious tomorrow, Lorenza, Amina, and Willena set out for the studio of Sarjine. The great joy that filled Lorenza's heart seemed to overburden his frail body. More money than he had ever thought of had been paid him for his sketches—just for his blue, the blue that is the craving of every young artist.

That night, calling Amina to his bedside, he said: "I'm so tired, so tired! My heart seems bursting with something bound up for years. I see my mother. She was young when I left Italy. I see her again." And, taking Amina's strong, working hand, he said, as in a dream, "Mother, farewell. I shall go to the new country, the free country. And there I shall become great. I will paint in America!"

Opening his eyes, he saw Amina and not his mother. "I was dreaming of starting to America. I'm so tired. I'm so tired. But in just a little while, this money will buy us passage and we will go to—to—. We are going now. Why, I did not know we were going so soon! Don't you feel the boat starting?—the slush of the water, listen, Amina, against the wheels."

The tired eyes closed. "We are going now to Italy to tell mother I painted in America!" And the silence of death

enveloped the little room in the lodging-house that night.

In the upper room of Sarjine's studio the Commission of Selection for America's Cathedral was gathering. The son of Sarjine was exhibiting to them his great effort. Would it fail? Would it be worthy? Only God's eyes saw the anguish and His ear heard the prayer of the renowned artist for his son's success.

As the gauze was pulled aside by the young painter, the men on the Commission looked, and, doubting, looked again, and again—until the silence grew tense and choking. "Ah! My young man, you have found a face never artist found before. Surely this will be seen and known as the great American picture. We are at your feet to accept and honor your work. How long you must have dreamed to bring from canvas such a face as that!" said the greatest connoisseur of all.

"Sir, it was the dreams and sufferings of another longing soul whose face looked into this face"—going to a half-open door, the young artist called, "Willena, may I not show to my distinguished friends, and above all, to my honored father, the face in which I found my new vision?"

A MIDNIGHT DISCUSSION

Last night I was awakened by a heated "current event discussion" between my text-books. The conversation was something like this:

"Oh, that doesn't compare with mine," said Geometry. "Listen to this: Once a general in the French army was wrongly accused of a scandal that occurred over some political paper. This man was publicly dishonored and shipped to 'The Duaille' for life. Since he wanted to apply his mind to science but was given no books whatever, he made up for himself the elements of the integral and differential calculus. After five years he was given his freedom, and numerous honors were publicly bestowed upon him. This celebrated prisoner was Captain Alfred Dreyfus." Whereupon the other book clamored for the rest of the political episode, except a "Petite Contis de France," who piped, "Oh, you took my current event!"

"But listen to mine!" interrupted English. "Anatole France, recognized pacifist, whose writing for the last ten years was all directed against militarism, was buried to martial music rendered by a cavalry band, and other military honors. Mitronce, in all of his wills, specified his desire for a simple funeral, with no demonstrations, no flowers, no speeches. His bier was completely covered with flowers, unequalled by any in Paris. Orators spoke for three hours continuously, seven speakers rendering homage to the famous writer."

Science, who is ever on the alert for new discoveries, chimed in with: "Let me tell you of an interesting article I read recently concerning me. A noted scientist, in proof of cures by radiation, took a case of rats that had been fed on a diet producing rickets and they had developed the disease. He put half of them in a cage and fed them radiated food until they got well; he then put the rats that had been cured in with those that had not. The cured ones radiated those uncured and in that way cured them. Foods are radiated by exposing them to sunlight or to ultra-violet rays; the light acts on phosphorus, causing it to radiate similar to the way radium acts. Phosphorus is present in all living things require an abundance of sunlight."

By now, old Morpheus' wife had become stronger than mine, and I wandered back into Dreamland with French, History, Science, Geometry and English contending for first place in my consciousness.

ELIZABETH UMBERGER.

Mother (solicitously): "What did you have for your luncheon today, dear?"
 Daughter: "I don't know—I ate at the Cafeteria."

One: "Is he from the jungles?"
 Another: "Sure; he thinks Wheeling West Virginia is a hard job."

"To err is human," but many a guy gets slapped in the face just the same.

A VALENTINE TRAGEDY

By ELIZABETH STONE

In dear old Kingshire town there lived, full fifty years ago, A maid whom I shall designate as Mistress Phoebe Snow. She loved a lad who had his home in this same Kingshire town; His name I shall announce to you was Mister Thomas Brown.

One wintry day as Mistress Snow was walking down the street, A merchant's window, filled with hearts, her pretty eyes did greet; She viewed it long, and pondered deep, her face drawn in a frown, And tried to find a valentine to send to Mister Brown.

So many pretty hearts were there, she could not well decide, Until she saw two dainty ones that sat there, side by side; Inside, 'mid lace and paper frills, there was a little sign— "If you won't have me for your love, return this valentine!"

She took it home, and tied it up, with ribbon blue and sweet, Just as this Mister Thomas Brown was strolling down the street. He spied the twin of that fair heart that she for him had bought; "A valentine for Phoebe!" was the ardent lover's thought.

The morning dawned both bright and fair, when lovers were to send A valentine to their true love, or to their dearest friend. Our lovers sent their missives sweet, not knowing Fate's intent; Each thought the heart he got was that same one that he had sent!

When Mistress Snow received her heart, she wept, she sobbed, she cried, While Mister Thomas Brown resolved she'd hurt his manly pride. So now the erstwhile lovers hate; no more fair hearts they send; Their rose dreams have all collapsed, their romance met an end.

SOUNDS IN THE WOODS

Once my section of the Girl Scouts chapter in Badin, a town where I once lived, decided to go on an overnight hike. It was to be the last one of the summer. School had begun and at the end of the first week we felt so tired and abused that we thought we needed the rest.

Accordingly, we set out on Friday afternoon and after about three hours of tramping we came at last to a finger of land jutting out into the lake, which promised to be a good camp site. It was covered with fir and balsam trees and was very lovely. The ground was thickly padded with needles, which gave no sound but a slight rustle when walked upon.

After the sun went down it was chilly, so we decided to appoint different patrols to watch our "grub" and replenish the fire. It was during my patrol that I slipped quietly away down to the lake shore alone, and sat watching the water to listen and think. The wind was blowing through the reeds which twanged and clanked against each other. The wind also swept along under the low-hanging boughs of the trees, causing a melancholy, plaintive, moaning sound like weeping. Across the lake I could actually hear nuts dropping from the trees to the ground, the night was so clear and cold and the water so calm. Evidently it was a lone wildcat that screeched madly from a thicket, for in a moment I saw a long, sleek body move noiselessly about a few seconds, then vanish into the thick woods that were just behind. A dog howled dismally at regular intervals and gave one a creepy feeling that something was lurking in the shadows and underbrush. I could hear the other girls around the fire talking in a monotonous, steady, droning way. Occasionally a half-suppressed burst of laughter broke the smooth stillness. Many insects hummed, and this, blended with the gentle dashing of the waves against each other, made a sort of hissing sound. A cold, pale moon shone on the scene, giving it the aspect of being the land of a half-stupefied, half-living race.

MILDRED NASH.

HIRAM'S LETTER

Dear ma,
 I aint hed time to rite you I been a studin so hard. They is gettin along fine with our new stable. They got the rafters up already. Say ma did I ever tell you bout that railroad what us back of the school house? Well hits the cutest thing. Hit comes along and blows nearly ever time when I aint got my lessons witch is sure comfortin.

I sure am glad pa aint here cause hit is so damp it would make his rumatism hurt.

See ef you kin read this.
 "Parly-vow Fransais."
 Well thet is french.
 Say ma aint you ever gonna rite me?
 Your sophisticaly inclined son,

HIRAM.

P.S.—I wisht you would give this here potry to Hank sos he kin say hit to Mandy. I found hit on the floor at the school house.

(Enclosure)

*Do you love me
 Or do you not?
 You told me once,
 But I forgot.*

*But now I ask you,
 If not before,
 So tell me now
 Whom you adore.*

*Maybe I do,
 Maybe I don't.
 I thought I told you,
 But now I won't.*

*Well, if you don't,
 How will I know
 Which way that I
 Should ought to go?*

*If you had asked me,
 I might have told,
 But now I wouldn't
 For love nor gold.*

AT THE FOOT OF THE RAINBOW

Once upon a time Faerie Captain Kidd had no hiding place for a bag of stardust which he had stolen from the Sandman.

He sat perched on a toadstool, the bag carefully guarded by two Fairy Pirates, while he thought and thought for a place to hide his stardust. It was raining in big shining drops, and a big one striking him on his nose caused him to start, and look up. Just then the sun came out radiantly, and a huge rainbow, recently painted by an elfin artist, hung across the sky. Captain Kidd sprang to his feet.

"I know!" he shouted joyously, turning a handspring over the back of a shiny black beetle, "we'll hide it at the foot of the rainbow!"

And that's how stardust, which of course you know is the fairies' gold, may still be found at the foot of the rainbow.

MARJORIE VANNEMAN.

THE PLOT

It is dusk. A dark-skinned man with a bolshevik look creeps upon the porch very quietly. In his hand he holds an object, which in the shadows resembles a bomb. What plot can be afoot this night? And who is to be the unsuspecting victim? See! The mystery man drops the thing and flees. A dark hand stretches out from the doorway. Will the thing explode? But wait! A dusky-skinned girl is standing inside the door holding it in her hand. "Mah Sambo am per'lous timid when Valentine Day comes!" she cries ecstatically.

HELEN FELDER.

"Waiter, bring me the nine things I like."

"What are they, sir?"
 "Hash."

Dumb: "What's your roommate like?"
 Bell: "Darn near everything I've got."

Q: "What can I do to avoid falling hair?"
 A: "Jump out of the way, dumbell."

"Mother, am I a canoe?" asked little Harry.
 "Certainly not, Harry. What ever put that idea into your head?"

"Well, you are always saying you like to see folks paddle their own canoes, and I thought I must be yours."

Love is like a trunk—if you don't check it in time, you have to express it.