

statue? Are you going to disobey me after all these years of faithful service?"

But James only continued to scrutinize the parquet floor. Mr. Browne's face flushed with wrath.

"James, answer me this minute. Where is Miss Edythe?"

The old butler swallowed hard, and finally announced, in a voice as hollow as the Subway:

"Miss Edythe, sir, has run off and married Mr. Alfred's chauffeur, sir."

Mr. Browne's jaw dropped, and he sank back into his chair.

"And Mr. Alfred—where is he?" he gasped.

The butler turned away his face as he answered:

"I must tell you, sir, that Mr. Alfred has run off, sir, and married Miss Edythe's maid, sir."

Then, as he saw Mr. Browne bury his face in his napkin, the trusty old butler, unable to stand by and witness his master's grief, slipped quietly out of the room, brushing a tear from each eye.

No sooner had James disappeared than Mr. Joseph Morton Browne, with a dramatic gesture, tossed his napkin until it fluttered against the ceiling, and proceeded to execute a highly artistic dance, resembling a cross between a fandango and a Scottish hornpipe.

"At last, at last!" he cried. "At last I can marry my housekeeper without setting a bad example to my children!"

"A Portrait—Artist Unknown"

BY HOWARD P. ROCKEY

IT was an unusual day, even for Christie's. All London, it seemed—that is, the London that talks feelingly about "genre," and "impressionism," and "high lights"—had turned out to see the famous Craighead collection dispersed under the hammer.

As I let my glance run down the catalogue, I felt not unlike one who stood before the treasures of some world-celebrated gallery. Great names there were in abundance—I marveled at their presence, so many of them in a single collection. I marveled still more that Sir John Craighead—a wealthy man, to be sure—had commanded the immense sums represented in these pictures.

And then my eyes caught a word in the list of masters—"Unknown." The title of the picture was equally uninformative—"A Portrait."

A portrait of whom?—by whom? It was strange that Sir John should have an unidentified canvas in his collection. "A Portrait" became immediately the most interesting work of art in London to me; I was impatient for its appearance under the red velvet canopy at the end of the gallery.

"Some choice bits, sir," a voice at my elbow ventured. "The best we've had this season."

It was Ferguson, an attendant, gray in

the service of Christie's, whose discourses on art and artists had often enlightened my browsings in the great galleries.

"An amazing collection, Ferguson, and it seems to have attracted every connoisseur in the kingdom."

"That it has, sir," he said, "and a lot as aren't connoisseurs. I've shown a dozen American millionaires to chairs up front. There'll be big prices bid to-day, sir, and our galleries'll lose some treasures!"

His tone was sorrowful. Ferguson counted as lost forever any masterpiece that found its way into a Fifth Avenue salon. He shed real tears when a good canvas left the shipping-room with a Lake Shore address stenciled on its case.

"Ah, sir, a gem!"

Ferguson gazed rapturously at a Dupré on which the auctioneer was asking bids—a landscape all green and meadowy, and breathing of kine and shallow brooks. As he finished his short introduction—lamentably inadequate to describe this magnificent example of the Barbizon school—he looked inquiringly out over the audience.

"Twenty guineas!"

It was a timid, squeaky little voice. I started in surprise, and Ferguson, noting the disgust in my face, smiled.

"No, sir, it isn't the director. They let him go a little 'igher nowadays!"

I laughed outright at this sally at the National Gallery.

"But who can it be that bids twenty guineas for a canvas worth several hundred?" I demanded.

"Aye, sir, there's a bit of a story there—a story as will touch your heart, sir. That bid came from old Caspar Trenwith."

"Trenwith?" I cried. "Not the—"

"The very same, sir; the Trenwith who painted 'Gloria,' and 'The Coster's Girl,' and a dozen other pictures that have held you and me, sir, speechless before 'em."

"Do you know him?" I asked, for Ferguson had paused reflectively.

"Know him!" he exclaimed. "I should say we did. For years he's never missed a sale day, and his is always the first bid that starts a new canvas. He bids very low, sir, so as it can't be knocked down to him, for he hasn't a shilling to his name. He finds his only pleasure, sir, in this room. When he bids on pictures he thinks he's a patron of art. And in his day, sir, he could get life and blood out of a tube that's filled with nothing but color when ordinary men squeeze it. Only last week, sir, Lord Fenwicke—we were talking just as you and I are now, sir—said he'd give a thousand pounds for a certain canvas by old Trenwith—something he wanted particular."

"A thousand pounds!" I murmured. "It would be a godsend to the old man."

Trenwith interested me. Noting a vacant chair by his side, I bade Ferguson adieu, and seated myself beside the old painter.

I lost interest in the sale in watching him. Eagerly he followed each item in the catalogue, and his bid was usually the first to be heard. Sometimes twenty guineas on a Harpignies, or a Mauve—then thirty, forty, fifty guineas, even a hundred, when some superb Maris, some rare Daubigny, some rich Rousseau, was placed against the post where the greatest pictures of the world have reposed.

Always offering but a fraction of their worth, always far from any possible selling-price, this old man by my side was withal keen in his delight, uplifted by the fact that he was offering, at least, a price for the treasures of his beloved craft. He was a patron of art, a connoisseur; his soul was satisfied.

As the sale drew toward the end of the morning session, "A Portrait" was placed

before the post. I immediately turned my attention to it. It was a small canvas, beautifully executed, and showed a little girl standing by the lodge gate of an imposing estate. The auctioneer had little to say. It was by an artist unknown to Sir John, who had bought it from an obscure dealer purely because it had struck his fancy. It was unsigned; the subject was unknown.

"What is the bid?"

"Twenty guineas!"

There was a breathless silence. I glanced at old Trenwith, and then at the auctioneer. Not another bid was heard, and Trenwith looked up in amazement. No bid of his ever went so long without a raise.

"Do I hear another bid?"

I thought the auctioneer glanced at Trenwith pityingly. The silence was unbroken. Panic seemed to seize the aged artist. He turned to me.

"Isn't that No. 64?" he asked. "My eyes aren't what they were."

"No," I replied, "this is No. 63—'A Portrait, artist unknown.'"

"Heavens!" he cried. "I took it for that Bosboom. What have I done?"

"Is there any other offer?"

The auctioneer seemed to understand, and tried to coax another bid. Trenwith turned to me with abject fear.

"Oh, sir, I haven't twenty guineas! What can I do?"

"Going at twenty guineas!"

The auctioneer's voice was softened. He hesitated longer than was his wont.

"Sold!" It came hesitatingly. "Sold to Mr. Trenwith for twenty guineas!"

An attendant removed the little canvas. A score of habitués turned with smiles and whispers. The old man's face was a picture of terror.

"You didn't wish 'A Portrait'?" I ventured.

"No, sir, nor any of them, for I couldn't buy the frames. I'm ruined now, sir. I daren't show my face here again!" His eyes were moist. "I haven't a farthing to pay for that canvas, and here he comes!"

I saw Ferguson approaching, and determined upon a bold stroke. Taking a bank-note from my pocketbook, I forced it into the old gentleman's hand.

"Oh, sir, I couldn't—" he began.

"Only temporarily," I whispered. "Ah, Ferguson!" I added, as that worthy came

up. "Mr. Trenwith made a lucky purchase."

"That he did, sir;" but there was a look of incredulity in the attendant's eyes, as he turned them full upon the aged artist. "Shall we send it, Mr. Trenwith?"

"No, thank you," he stammered. "It is small. I'll carry it. Here's the money," and he passed my crumpled note into the astonished Ferguson's palm. "Sir," he added, turning to me, "I don't know you. I'm out of my senses to take your money. I can never repay you!"

He gazed helplessly at the porter who approached us with the canvas packed for carrying.

"Come," I said briskly, taking the package. "I'm going to help you with this." Somehow I felt a keen interest in the old painter, and resolved to learn more about him. "Do you live far from here?" I asked, as we reached the street.

"Only a step, sir," he replied wearily, and led the way along King Street to a narrow court, into which he turned. He paused in front of a tenement-like house that spelled poverty in every brick.

"I live very humbly, sir," he said. "Perhaps you will leave me here?"

"Only if you dismiss me," I rejoined. "There is no shame in humble living."

Without further words, he led the way up four flights of pitch-dark stairs, and pushed open the door of a single room.

"My studio, sir," was his welcome, spoken with much gravity.

I took it all in at a glance. Neat, well ordered, but poor—just poor. Near the dingy window stood an easel, on which there was an unfinished canvas—a street urchin of the abyss.

"They give me shelter, sometimes, for painting their youngsters. My hand's unsteady now, sir. I did better once."

"Now to see the purchase," I cried, and I unwrapped the little canvas that had brought but a single bid.

Old Trenwith bent over the rickety table as I laid the picture down. For fully a minute he peered at the painting without comment.

"Strange!" he muttered. Seizing the picture, he held it close to the uncertain light that struggled through the window. "It is!" he exclaimed. "This, sir—this is my own—something I did when I was no more than a boy!"

I was excited by this time, and the old man trembled with nervous joy.

"You painted this?" I demanded. "Where? Who is it?"

"The first good thing—you'll pardon an old man's pride—the first good thing I ever did, sir. The little girl was the Earl of Ayrshire's daughter—that's his seat there in the background. I was born on the place, and lived there till my father drove me off—for wasting my time at this," and he waved a bony hand at the portrait before him. "He took this picture away from me. He said the master would give me a thrashing, if he caught me painting the young folks of the manor. I never knew what became of it, and I vowed to paint the young master—Lord Fenwicke now; but I—"

"Fenwicke!" I almost shouted. "Then this is a portrait of his sister?"

"The same, sir—Lady Constance. She died very young, a year or so after I painted this. Why, sir—"

"This is very important, Trenwith," I said, grabbing up my hat. "Wait until I return."

I bounded down the dark stairs at the risk of my neck, and was back at Christie's in less time than it takes to tell it.

"Ferguson," I cried breathlessly, as he met me at the entrance, "can you find Lord Fenwicke for me?"

"He's just come in, sir. I'll call him."

Ferguson departed, to return a moment later with the peer, whom I recognized at once.

"You wished to see me, sir?" he inquired.

"I do, my lord," I replied. "I've found the Trenwith portrait which I understand you desire so much."

"Impossible, sir," he frowned. "I've searched every dealer's, every gallery in England—the one of Lady Constance, my sister, you mean?"

"Of Lady Constance—sold here to-day for twenty guineas, and bought by none other than Caspar Trenwith himself!"

Lord Fenwicke stared at me blankly.

"Caspar Trenwith alive? Why, I thought him dead these many years! And he bought his own canvas?"

"A mistaken bid, my lord; he's very poor."

"That he is, my lord," chimed in the sympathetic Ferguson. "If I'd known

about it, sir, I could have told you where to find him long ago."

"Come, take me to him. There'll be no mistaken bid this time!"

And there was not, for old Trenwith has ceased to paint gamins for bread and butter,

and spends his days in painting flowers, and trees, and meadowy green landscapes. When he goes to a sale of pictures at Christie's it is with a generous leeway, and some of the treasures of Glenster Hall are of his selection.

Sport Culver's Waistcoat

BY RALPH BERGENGREN

IT is distinctly unpleasant for a young man of the world to confront the possibility of having an indignant father lead him by the ear to the woodshed and administer discipline with a strap. Yet such was the picture that startled Harry Culver when he suddenly remembered that the pawn-ticket which still distantly connected him with his watch was in the pocket of the fancy green and yellow waistcoat which he had just sold to the old-clothes man.

Although nominally his own watch, the timepiece was really his grandfather's—a precious possession which the old gentleman had loaned to Harry's father when he went to college, and which Harry's father had in turn handed on to Harry six months before, when that young gentleman entered one of our well-known institutions of learning. If he lost it, Harry knew what would happen, even to a college "man" like himself.

Harry had an ambition to be called "Sport Culver" by his admiring classmates, but his father had not properly financed it. Hence the pawn-ticket, and now the careless sale of the green and yellow waistcoat in which Harry had placed it.

There was nothing for it but to follow the old-clothes man and rescue the pawn-ticket. Sport though he wished to be, the little freshman had a horror of unfamiliar adventures. He felt more than uncomfortable as he looked the place up in the directory, for he had never penetrated into that part of the town where old-clothes men reside.

An untidy boy, sitting cross-legged in a gloomy basement—where the ceiling dripped trousers as Harry had seen pictures of the Mammoth Cave dripping stalactites—looked up when Harry at last ventured to open the door. He was recognizably the son of his father. Yes, he remembered the green and yellow waistcoat. A fine bit of goods, that! Already it had found a purchaser, and had

gone forth into the world, beautifying the figure of a local celebrity known as Mike the Bite, from certain animal propensities which he displayed when unduly aggravated. Mike was, it appeared, of about the same general proportions as Harry, but of a more athletic development.

In the judgment of the untidy boy, it would not be until seven o'clock that Harry could hope to find the present owner of the waistcoat. He was wont to spend his after-dinner leisure in Flannagan's saloon and billiard-parlor. Flannagan's was on Green Street, and you knew it by the owl in the window.

About seven o'clock that evening, Flannagan's establishment gleamed crudely. A row of gas-jets illuminated the stuffed owl, holding a bottle of whisky and supporting a printed card which announced that Flannagan catered to the family trade and welcomed ladies. Several of the gentler sex, as Harry noted when he pressed his nose against the window, were already present. They took refreshment at small tables, beyond which he saw the billiard-room in a rear extension.

At another of these small tables sat a thin young fellow, square of jaw, keen of eye, and close-cropped as to head. A brilliant stone sparkled aggressively in his striped shirt front, and over his shirt was tightly buttoned an unmistakable green and yellow waistcoat. Unquestionably Mike the Bite, practising his accomplishment on a large porterhouse steak! He chewed peacefully, but Harry Culver felt a sensation of cold as he watched.

"Suppose Mike were angry with the steak!" he reflected; and at the thought he withdrew from the window, crossed the street, and sat down in a deserted doorway.

An hour passed, and then another, and the end of Harry's spine ached from sitting

on it; but he had formulated a plan of action. Come what might, he would wait till the green and yellow waistcoat emerged from Flannagan's, and would follow it at a safe distance until he reached the neighborhood of a policeman. Then he would accost the wearer, explain the situation, and, if worst came to worst, rely on the strong arm of the law for protection. Mike might bite on occasion, but surely he would not bite with a policeman looking at him.

At last the door of Flannagan's swung open to permit his egress. Two others of his kind came with him, all laughing uproariously. They caught a street-car, and Harry, looking in vain for the sight of a blue uniform, desperately swung himself on the rear platform.

The car was well filled with men, but Harry hardly noticed them; nor did it strike him as curious that nearly all of them, singly or in groups, dropped off within a couple of blocks. The car was running through an empty street when Mike and his companions signaled the conductor and jumped to the pavement. Harry, after an instant's hesitation, followed from the other side of the platform.

The three men plunged so suddenly into the shadow of a large building close to the street that Harry must needs hurry to keep within sound of their footsteps. He had recognized the building as a former skating-rink, now abandoned and useless. How he found the courage to follow them into its gloomy shadow he could hardly have told you. His heart beat anxiously; his steps hesitated; but he kept groping along the wall with the three dim figures just ahead of him.

Suddenly a crack of light illuminated the first of them, and Harry shrank back against the wall and held his breath. A door opened slightly, and he saw the three men exhibit tickets and enter. Then the door closed, and he was again in the dark, but acutely conscious of somebody else coming up behind him. He bent over, jumped away from the wall, almost as the next comer's groping hand would have touched him, and made himself as small as possible against a fence that bounded the other side of the narrow alley. Several other men felt their way along the wall and were admitted into the building.

Patient watching had by this time accustomed Harry's eyes to the darkness. He looked at the gloomy building and experienced a compelling sense of curiosity. The

light of the stars dimly illuminated the shadow, and he made out a window; if there was one window, there must be others. Harry decided to investigate.

Marveling at his own reckless daring, he went carefully along the wall until he turned a corner—and there, sure enough, three window-spaces beyond the turning, was a single faint gleam of light. He put one eye to it, but he could see nothing except that the rink was lighted, and that the window was covered with some thick substance which had not quite fitted. A muffled shouting reached him, as of many men in excitement. There came a wild burst of cheering, distinctly audible—like the noise of a football-game when you're outside the enclosure, thought Harry, catching the contagion, and jumping up and down excitedly.

This movement brought him back from the window and whacked his head against something solid; and as he now looked upward, he saw what had hitherto escaped his attention—a lighted window in the upper story. The ladder into which he had bumped reached to this window, and at the top he saw a pair of heavily shod feet just disappearing into the building.

Harry no longer hesitated. He went up the ladder; an aisle opened before him, and he tiptoed down through an empty gallery to the edge of the balcony, whence he peered over into the skating-rink.

Sport though he aspired to be, Harry Culver had never seen a prize-fight. Now he saw one through the blue smoke rising from pipes, cigars, and cigarettes in the mouths of some two or three hundred men and youths gathered on settees around the four sides of a roped enclosure. Some of the spectators leaned back in comfortable enjoyment; others stood up and shouted; the eyes of all were focused on two half-naked figures that moved, cat-like, around each other in the space behind the ropes.

Now and again the figures glided closer together, and their fists, covered with small red gloves, thudded on each other's bodies. The exchange of these amenities was surprisingly cold, vicious, and businesslike. They gave Harry an unpleasant feeling at the pit of his stomach, and he ducked his head back behind the railing. He forgot the green and yellow waistcoat, and wished he was at home again.

Then a sudden shout again brought him to his hands and knees, with his eyes over the balcony. The scene had changed.

Around the roped enclosure the spectators clustered like excited bees. Inside the ropes, one half-naked figure lay stretched on its back. A little apart from it, calm, watchful, grimly alert to catch the first movement of resurrection, and padded fist ready to rebuke the presumption of it, stood the other gladiator. Between the victor and the vanquished, watch in hand, was Mike the Bite. He wore no coat, but the green and yellow waistcoat blazed in all its glory. He was loudly counting the seconds—one, two, three, four, five—

Only Harry, from his post in the gallery, observed a group of other spectators who had chosen this moment to come out from under it. They advanced rapidly, and spread themselves—so far as twenty of them could do it—entirely around the audience, a thin blue line of stout figures ornamented by shining brass buttons. If Harry, earlier in the evening, had looked in vain for a policeman, he now saw several!

From the advancing line a single figure detached itself and stepped toward the arena, just as Mike the Bite dropped his watch in his pocket, and the recumbent gladiator sighed and stirred uneasily. The eyes of the police-captain met those of the wearer of the green and yellow waistcoat, and, with admirable presence of mind, the Bite put his fingers to his lips and emitted a shrill

whistle. The lights went out, even as Harry saw the much-desired waistcoat jumping nimbly over the ropes of the arena. Darkness came down like a curtain, and men swore and scuffled. In the balcony, Harry groped his way to the window, found the ladder, and with a sob of thankfulness, half slid, half climbed to the bottom.

About an hour later, Harry Culver dragged weary legs up the stairs to his own room. He ached all over; his clothes were torn, and his finger pained him as he turned the door-knob. The light of the hall fell on a square patch of the floor, in which the postman had dropped a special-delivery envelope. Harry groaned as he picked it up, and turned pale again as he noted in the upper corner a request to return it, after a decent interval, to "Flannagan, Wines and Liquors, 19 Green Street."

He opened it reluctantly. Inside was his own address, on a bit of linen such as tailors sew into garments; and with it—could he believe his eyes?—the precious pawn-ticket. Also a letter:

MR. H. CULVER:

SIR:

As one gent to another I take the pleasure to hand back the enclosed memento. I've been there myself, as the song says.

Yours for the square deal,

MICHAEL J. BREGAN.

The Victory

BY KATHERINE HOFFMAN

THE bishop, well within the chancel's shadow, looked down upon the mourning church. Roses and violets, lilies and laurel, banked the rails, massed the pulpit from which the dead man had been wont to speak his own simple messages of faith, hung from the desk where he had read words more authoritative than his own, draped the pall that covered him, lying in state where he so long had served.

It was not merely the funeral service of one of the good shepherds of his diocese that the bishop conducted that afternoon; it was the funeral service of an ancient friend, of an overmastered rival. His tearless eyes, reviewing the vista of more than forty years, saw them both youths again in the old seminary at Alexandria; saw them both as-

sistants in busy city parishes; saw them called to modest charges of their own in the same State. They had been friends—intimates; he who now stood in the shadowy chancel, curiously untouched by this last pageantry of life—this last solemnity of religion—forced himself to remember how fully they had been friends.

He had been Aleck's best man when Aleck married—much too early, much too impulsively! Sylvia, to be sure, had been a winning creature, but for a clergyman on eight hundred a year to marry a penniless school-teacher—what was that but arrant folly? He, the Right Rev. John Radcliffe, had been guilty of no such madness. No, he had waited until he had something of reputation to offer a woman, and with that