

story, *A Study in Scarlet*. In this, as it will be remembered, is an incident concerning a box of pills, some of them innocent, and some deadly. Could this story have given Harris his idea? At any rate, this is the suggestion of a distinguished clergyman—and clergymen, I have observed, are assiduous and intelligent students of crime.

The young schoolgirl happened to take the three harmless capsules on the first three nights. She became convinced that they were doing her no good, and proposed to throw the other away. By a piece of tragic irony, it was her mother who advised her to take the fourth and last. That night she did so—and died before morning.

Mr. Harris, as soon as he was arrested, brightly produced the harmless capsules which he had retained—or, at least, one of them. But instead of establishing the innocence of this “clear-eyed boy,” it only helped to show that the chemist had made no mistake. The case against Harris was purely circumstantial—and, as usual, it was violently assailed by people who have but a foggy notion

of what constitutes evidence. Those who were in court had no doubt of the prisoner’s guilt.

In the end, the too-clever Mr. Harris went the same way that—twenty-five years later—the scientific Mr. Small was to go. Both of them were brilliant exponents of the perfect murder.

Final advice to those contemplating murder would be: *Don’t* follow the detective novelists. Avoid elaborate and “scientific” methods. Be direct and ruthless, and, instead of fearing witnesses, get as many around you as possible. The more, the luckier.

There are countries (notably in the British Empire) where the murderously inclined know that the consequences of a murder are swift, certain, and almost invariably unpleasant. Only in such countries does the potential killer often decide to refrain altogether. A faint hope prevails that this may some day be true in the United States of America.

Today, however, it is still a very faint hope.

The Exiles

TRISTRAM LIVINGSTONE

. . . the dogs sleeping, and the marrow-chill
We noted; shoulder to shoulder, the dozing guards . . .
The somnolent hall the weary echo fills,
And hung in sleep with their webs against the wall,
Pale weavers and the dark . . . the drowsing flies.
Saw in a dreamless torpor the grizzled king,
The gleeman’s song unsung . . . the staring eyes.
And the queen, the word asleep, enchanted, unsaid,
The courier burdened with suspended flight.
Then found the wonder woven silence hid:
The princess screened with cobwebs on her bed.

Awake only the slow unraveled yearning,
The imperious horn voice tumbling down the stair
Squandered, and slumber, and the quenchless burning.
We knew then, spun on heel and hastened hence,
Our footsteps chiming after as we passed
The stallions sleeping belly-deep in grass . . .
And took to ship that were not sons to kings;
Weighed anchor and spread our canvas in the noon
To snare the breath of those capricious winds.
And wept who saw the towers falling down the cool
Far sky, that land devoured by the sea.

Silently sank the sun beyond those shores
No longer home, and in the lowering east,
Night and the starry void shone through the door.

Scribner's American Painters Series

No. 5—"DON JUAN, SANTO DOMINGO," BY GEORGE BIDDLE

THE Groton-Harvard tradition often seems a bit stuffy to some people, but it does occasionally turn out a George Biddle or a Franklin Roosevelt. And not only has George Biddle "lived down" his Groton-Harvard background, but he has also made people think of him as an artist rather than as a socialite—perhaps an even more difficult accomplishment. George Biddle was born in Philadelphia in 1885 and entered Groton in 1898. A few years later (at sixteen) he had a nervous breakdown and went to Southern California to receive his first rodeo experience and a healthy taste for luxuriant semitropical scenery. His subsequent experience at Harvard Law School brought about a second breakdown (at twenty-three). The following year was spent on a ranch near the Rio Grande where he indulged in horse wrangling and cattle herding—facts that account, in some measure, for his great interest in animals.

He began to paint while still in law school, and although he was formally admitted to the bar, has never practiced. Academically, the artistic career of Biddle covers a period of study at the Julian Academy in Paris, two years at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, and a few years of travel in Italy, France, and Germany, where a good deal of time was spent in copying the old masters. From these he went to the impressionists, a fact evidenced in the clean and vivid colors that he prefers.

In 1917 he was married for the first time and shortly after enlisted in the army. There he was able to put his previous artistic training to use in the production of fine military maps. Upon his return, he was divorced and, like a great many people at that time, wanted very badly to get away from everything. He went off to Tahiti for two years. In between exhibitions of his work in various American and European centers since 1922, Biddle has made trips to Mexico, Cuba, Porto Rico, and Haiti, the results of which are shown in the subjects of many paintings and lithographs.

The water color reproduced in this issue is typical of his love of tropical vegetation and coloring, as well as his intense understanding of the nature of animals. Although the Biddle cow is perhaps better known than the wild donkeys in this scene from Santo Domingo, the artist has fully realized the humorous possibilities of the curiously hobbled animals. With an absolute minimum of human participation in the scene, Biddle has outlined a psychologically interesting situation in which the efforts of certain of the animals to free themselves of the confining sticks, and others to barge into a house or to try to chew the bark from a wisely protected tree, compose themselves cleverly within a brilliant, sun-drenched landscape.

Biddle's contact with the socially conscious art of Mexico seems to have turned him toward mural painting for public buildings. In this field he has distinguished himself with such works as the agricultural mural shown at the Chicago World's Fair in 1933 and the recently completed decorations for the Department of Justice Building in Washington. Biddle, incidentally, is now president of the American Society of Mural Painters. Although he is not a muralist of the quality of his friends, Orozco and Rivera, he is a most significant figure in the development of mural painting in this country. Biddle is not only the initiator of the government's present policy of subsidizing artists to do work of this sort, but is probably the spiritual godfather of one of the most significant activities under the W.P.A., the Art Project.

Personally, Biddle is a bit of a haranguer, having the ability to gather groups of people about him and, with the force of his ingratiating personality, convince them of his point of view. He hates like fury to be outdone in any activity, whether games, art, or politics, but is one of the most pleasant and good-humored people in the world. At present he is living at Croton-on-Hudson, New York, and is married to Helene Sardeau, the sculptress.

"Scribner's American Painters Series" is edited and supervised by Bernard Myers.

Pictures, courtesy of George Biddle.