

Beauty's votary

BY JOHN JOSEPH MATHEWS, '20

Pawhuska, January 3

I had spent several days along the shore of Lago Maggiore. I had delighted in its many moods; the early morning mists hanging over the water at the foot of the mountains, stretched there like gossamer, melting away as the sun appeared; the sparkling expanse over which sailed fishing boats, their dirty sails white against the dark mountains, and the smooth waters on calm days giving back the blue of the Italian sky and mirroring both boat and sail. I had climbed the foot-hills rising from the lake, and from the eminence, watched the alpenglow on the peaks to the north turn from roseate, gradually to mauve, then disappear, leaving the water inky and viscous, leaving the islands far out in the lake as mere illusions.

At last I was ready to explore Isole Bella. I would visit Isole Bella first, of the three islands, because the name fascinated me.

The boatmen swarmed around me, each assuring me of his skill and the comfort and all round worthiness of his particular boat, pointing to them as they lay rocking gently at the waters edge. Some knew the English necessary to their profession, and with a mixture of English and Italian implored and gesticulated. Others knew French, and rolling their "R's" claimed knowledge of those things which would interest a tourist.

I stood in the circle watching the anticipation on their faces, and listening to the jabber. I thought that the harsh accent of "banana english" might become tiresome on the long trip to the island, and since the morning was beautiful, and I was in the mood for talking, that I should much prefer the softer accents of the French. I finally chose a large peasant-like fellow who seemed to speak the language well.

He was tall and very strong. His hands were large and horny with thick stiff fingers; the hands of a peasant. His face was very heavy and dull, and his eyes were crossed; one good eye crossing a blind one.

There was something hard and soulless about him; something bovine and bestial. His thin hair was dull and seemed badly nourished on the small low browed head. The faint spirit which had shone in his face during anticipation, had suddenly disappeared after he had been chosen as boatman.

We had been out about ten minutes. I had lost all interest in talking with this stupid insensitive fellow, and had begun to feel that I might have chosen some one more alert; anything would be better than this giant ox. I knew there was no use attempting to talk with him. Whatever interest his life might hold, or how filled with interest his back-ground, he would not have enough imagination to give information. I knew from experience that there was only one question that would not be answered in stupid monosyllables. I watched the graceful movements of his arms and body against the small sail for a few seconds, then asked him if he knew anything about the history of the island; anything of the story that one knows of the island. It seemed that he waited for a few seconds before my words could penetrate his thick skull, then without change of expression he began to tell me the story as he had learned it; the story necessary for his profession. Listlessly he recited the story with the facility of one who has recited the same thing many times, adding nothing and forgetting nothing. There was not even the expression of relief on his face as he finished. His words just died away and he rowed on as though he had never spoken. For the rest of the trip I got what I could out of the picture he made there against the white sail, with his graceful movements.

I walked around the island until I was tired. There had not been much to see, except the ruins of a ducal palace and gardens, but there was dreaminess and romance in the air. I was made happy by the picture of a white peacock standing with dignity on some crumbling steps in the garden, and thought with pleasure of

some vague lines in Fitzgerald's *Omar*; something about wild asses now stamping where kings had drunk. The connection was not exactly clear but the thought was pleasing.

I sat at a table overlooking the lake and ordered chianti and food. I was filled with contentment as I watched the waters change in the light of the late afternoon. I was wondering if I would be able to find Pietro with the fishermen among their nets at the end of the island, when I suddenly became aware of three figures standing before my table. A strange trio. The two men took off their hats and bowed, then began to take their guitars out of their cases. A pretty brown-legged girl with dark eyes and flashing teeth waited for the men to tune up. She sat nonchalantly on the back of one of the chairs, so self satisfied and ready to challenge with her eyes and body any male who might question her appeal. A red handkerchief was tied around her head, and she wore a multi-colored wide skirt. She had many cheap bracelets and her neck and chest were tarnished by a cheap chain and pendant, and the tarnish on her ankles seemed to be the shadows of the brass anklets she wore.

When the music started she swirled and spun on her bare feet till her skirt stood out and her baubles clinked. The music was fast and merry and she become more and more excited as she danced. I watched until she flopped into a chair as the music ended. I was wondering if one lira would be enough to give them, when Pietro came up to me and solemnly suggested that monsieurrr-a would perhaps like to return before the night became cold, and when I answered that I would wait, he seemed disappointed and turned away.

Encouraged by my apparent delight with the dancing and the throaty singing, indicated by the five lira which I had given them, the trio gave me more music and this time the brown legged girl danced and sang more boldly. I guessed by the animation of the musicians as they winked knowingly at me that the song was suggestive of Latin love.

They had gone on to another table, when Pietro came up again and with an ingratiating manner foreign to his stupid indifference, asked if the monsieurrr-a did not wish to get back to the main-land before the storm came up.

"Storm, what storm? One can see that the weather is good."

"Ah, monsieurrr-a does not understand; storms come so quickly on the Lago, and it is very difficult to row in the storm, and the sail cannot be used; there is the danger of tipping."

"I have hired you and your boat for the day, and I shall leave when it seems good to me." I was annoyed with him and his petty trickery, as I watched his great stupid face.

"It is good," he said dismally, "if mon-

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creased as rapidly as it did, the stock market boom (based on higher profits and fed on bank credit) would not have occurred, and we would not have had much credit inflation. Installment buying would not have been as great, neither would the balance of foreign trade have been as large; but the home demand for consumers' goods would have been supported by actual money received rather than by artificial means.

Time will not permit me to discuss the difficulties in the way of recovery from the present depression. However, I must say that I do not agree that the present widespread unemployment situation would be relieved materially by lowering wages. The larger part of the present unemployment is due to the closing down of industry which in turn is due to the excess of goods in the markets.



SPOTLIGHT

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Muhlbach's rodeo. He indulges in neither war-whoop nor song of the "lone prairie." But he swings a mean rope and the breath of the prairie is in his sandy hair.

He sticks his head around a prop, and the audience receives the pleasure and the shock of recognition. His awkwardness is not foreign to America. Here again is that which was lovable in Lincoln. With his ruffled hair and protruding lip Rogers too has the charm of ugliness.

Of the professional funnymen it has

been said that only Rogers and Cobb suggest their calling: they alone have the "anxious air of getting ready to cut the plate with a hot one." There is about Rogers however none of the profitable cheerfulness and the busy briskness of American citizenry. The slouch suggests his vast indifference to time. His is the easy fellowship of the leisured class: that club life made up of a male countryside which humanized Lincoln's wisdom and made his expression popular. Rogers too has the gift of dramatizing experience that springs from the swapping of yarns with one's neighbors. And with the good-nature, strength, and innocence of the average Western American, he too gives the impression of possessing in addition something of that personal, moral, and intellectual discipline that Herbert Croly claimed places Lincoln with the classic types of consummate personal distinction.

Will in person is irresistible. He is the friend of college presidents and the Prince of Wales. He ropes, hog-ties, and brands his audiences. And they like it, in the capital of the United States as well as in the University of Oklahoma. He pricks the collegian's sophistication, jokes at Oklahoma's traffic rules, jibes at Washington's social wrangles. He is initiated into the collegian's pet fraternity, has hotels and statues raised to him in his home town, and is in on whatever is served at Capitol tea-parties.

Ambassador of the United States to Europe, without Portfolio: Will Rogers, ready to crack his gum on any joke "from Birth Control to Mass Production."

More than any other funnyman of his period he represents the Great Typical American. Like Charlie Chaplin he too is

a symbol. But Charlie's comedy is one of manners; and though he wanders on and off the screen in an eternal isolation, his is the great tradition of the *Commedia dell'Arte*. Rogers has no tradition. And he is never alone. Behind him always are the people. Gauche, wise, friendly, he is the people.



BEAUTY'S VOTARY

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sieurrr-a wishes, but the storm will surely come." I have never seen a man's face resemble so much the face of a disappointed trail-hound.

"Oh, good then let us go. I have seen all and I am very tired."

His face lighted up incredibly, and he was all attention to my comfort as we got under way. He became excited and as happy as a boy. He was alert to every movement I made and anticipated my statements. I became suddenly interested in him and his changed mood. He lost some of his graceful movement by sudden quick jerks at the oars, and his one eye actually became bright and intelligent. He took one of his hands from the oar to wipe the sweat from his forehead, and before taking the oar again pointed to where the placid water was splashed pink by the after-glow.

The air was soft and the evening calm, and the grinding of the oars in the locks seemed exaggerated. One could hear the voices from the fishing boats far out on the lake.

"Pietro," I said suddenly, "you are

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happy that we are returning, and I am glad, but of course you were a little crazy when you told me of the storm. I see of course that all is tranquil, and that a storm will not come. You have a reason for returning at this time. Perhaps you have a family, is that not so?"

He beamed with good nature. "Yes that is so monsieurrr-a, I have a family."

"I hope that there is no one ill, that you would hurry so."

"No monsieurrr-a there is no one ill, thank the good Lord."

"Then tell me how many are there at your home?"

"There are seven, monsieurrr-a, and one *en voyage*." He said this smiling very happily.

I felt suddenly interested in Pietro and his family. "Good then, I shall go home with you and take presents to your wife and children."

"Monsieurrr-a is good, but I live a long way and monsieurrr-a would not care to go so far."

"No, Pietro I don't mind. I shall take pleasure."

His face was troubled. "Monsieurrr-a will understand; tomorrow perhaps he will come and eat of our food, but tonight no. I cannot go home till late tonight."

"Then you will go to the wine shop and drink with the others till your head has no sense; you will waste all your money. You will tell your wife you stayed

late on the island." I could picture Pietro at the wine shop sitting around a table with others of his kind, laughing at coarse, obscene jokes, or talking of politics. I could hear the arguments and smell the acrid odour of the sour wine, smoke and dried sweat. I could visualize Pietro leaning on his elbow, listening with mouth agape, while some glib member of the party talked drivel.

His face brightened and he was quick to assure me; he seemed transported by happiness.

"No, truly monsieurrr-a, I shall not waste the money; I work all day and give to my wife the money. Me, I care nothing about the people at the wine shop. It is not for me, such things. But tonight there is the moonlight, and there will be much beauty. Everything will be silver and the warm air will carry the perfume of the flowers." He took his hands from the oars and spread his arms as though he would include the universe. "The night-birds and the trees will whisper, and the moon will rise like a beautiful lady." He seemed unaware of my presence for the moment. "It will be a night for *amore*. Me, I go with Luca and Guisepe and Pietro Benzalli, under the window of the second floor of the Hotel Barromeo. There we will sing of *amore*; there we will sing of the night to a beautiful lady, to the playing of our guitars. A beautiful lady has come to Stresa and we will sing of the night under her window."

VISITING MASARYK

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ing. In Europe, where this is rarely done, Mr Masaryk's performance in earning all of his way through school was a remarkable performance.

"His impressions of Brentano were still fresh, for he had cultivated his acquaintance in every way open to him, on walks, and in visits in Brentano's home. His characterization of Brentano was that he had never known a keener mind, 'like a knife,' to use his phrase. He made the interesting point that one could not appreciate the quickness and sureness of Brentano's mind from his books—when one writes a book he polishes and refines the 'quickness' away. He told of how Brentano had stood behind him in his own efforts to find himself in a religious way, and of Brentano's friendly and helpful criticism of his own early publication," Doctor Eaton writes.

Doctor Eaton was amazed to find a statesman with the genuine interest in philosophy that President Masaryk possessed. Earlier, Mr Masaryk had written an important contribution to philosophy, his *Concrete Logic*, but even in his busiest years in this century, the president has not put aside his interest in philosophy and seems anxious to exchange opinions with wandering philosophers.

Franz Brentano was born in 1838 near

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