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LES AMIES

By Dorothy Weiner

"I say one spade." Mrs. Guggenheim looked around the bridge table placidly. She was content. Her auxiliary chin nestled in powdered roundness on a well padded chest, that rose and fell slowly if a bit asthmatically. One looked at her from her chest upward instead of the usual way, from the face down. It was such an imposing chest, with its Valenciennes lace covering a well corseted bosom. It seemed to support with a heroic air the large brooch that sat upon it. Mrs. Guggenheim wore pince-nez. Her round dark eyes glowed from behind them. Her skin, despite the ravages of time and dyspepsia, was soft and pink. Only her nose, long and slightly aquiline, revealed a firm character. It said, "I am accustomed to having my way."

This afternoon she was in good temper. Here were Sadie, Arabella and Josephine—her friends. Here was a shining new deck of cards. The salad reposed in its luciousness in the ice box. The cake was a treasure. The lace doilies—Heavens! She had forgotten the lace doilies! Or had she—yesterday—the ten-cent store—ah. They were in the drawer. She turned her head to the left graciously.

"Well, Sadie, my dear—I said one spade."

"Yes—yes, Carrie—I know—I am figuring—" Sadie's face had a far-away look. She spoke as though from a great distance. Forty years ago she had used that same expression when an admirer had praised the loveliness of her charm. The expression which had cast a nebulous look over her large grey eyes had intrigued them. It seemed full of mystery. It suggested passion. Now she was counting prospective tricks. Sadie was still petite, though her face had become wrinkled, and her neck thin. Her delicate prettiness had not withstood the years as well as Mrs. Guggenheim's robust beauty. Perhaps that is why her husband had sought the more smooth cheeks of other young women with half her brains. Sadie was a very sensible woman who played bridge well because

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THE ART LEAGUE AND THE UNEMPLOYED ARTIST

It is doubtful whether the St. Louis Art League any longer exercises a cultural influence upon the people of St. Louis; even its apologists will admit that the "organization is passing through a temporary crisis." Nor do the artists of the city have any faith in the present leadership of the League. Their mistrust is evidenced by the general antipathy of professional groups towards the organization.

With no significance in the cultural life of the city, and without the trust and confidence of sincere artists, this organization remains in control of the Old Court House, which the city of St. Louis has set aside to be used as a St. Louis art center. Why the majority of the rooms should be turned over to a group like the St. Louis Art League is a question we cannot attempt to answer. The League has not made use of many of the rooms that they have at their disposal. They claim that they are marking time, that they have extensive plans for the utilization of the Old Court House as an art center. It would appear, from an examination of their 'exhibitions' and halls in use, that they have been marking time since their inception.

A group of unemployed artists and students, who have secured Joseph Jones as instructor, have petitioned the Art League for the use of one of the rooms. These students are in no position to pay tuition, and Mr. Jones has agreed to serve as their instructor, without compensation. The group has secured the endorsement of many of the artists of the city. They have patiently waited for some response on the part of the Art League to their request; but the League, in the person of Mr. Curley, clings to the dust-laden rooms. They are still too 'busy with their plans' to admit this group.

We have no quarrel with the St. Louis Art League; we have not embarked on a holy crusade against this organization; but we do believe that provision should be made in the Old Court House building for this group of unemployed artists and students. If the St. Louis Art League were a dynamic and progressive organization with real leadership, the plea of 'plans that will necessitate the use of all available space' might have some weight. As we see it, the whole question is very simple: here are available quarters, with thirty or forty unemployed artists and students standing outside.

While we do not wish to be considered propagandists for any particular organization, the issues involved compel us to give our whole-hearted support to the struggles of this group to secure a studio. Let the skeptical reader examine the condition of the Art League rooms, the quality of their exhibitions and classes, in the Old Court House; and he will realize the need for an art that is not dust-laden. The League's dances, if the recent costume ball is any indication, are more suited to Hopkins Center than to a city like St. Louis. One questions the right of the League to its title of "Art" League, if judgement can be passed on the remark made to a male model who was refused work: "You know," he was told, "there are many subtle

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"OH, DEM GOLDEN SLIPPERS"

By Gordon Sager

My Aunt Emily, who lives with us, is very mad at Louella Simpson, one of her closest girl-friends. She calls all the women she knows "girl-friends" even though most of them have been thirty-five for the last ten years. And now, as I say, she's mad at Mrs. Simpson, irrevocably and eternally. Just now, in fact, I can hear her explaining again to Mother what a wretch Mrs. Simpson is. And after all my Aunt Emily has done for her, too. (My Aunt Emily firmly believes that she was the one who found a husband for her girl-friend Louella.) My mother says, it just goes to show you—you never can tell.

It all started about six years ago, when my Aunt Emily mentioned to Mrs. Simpson that she was going to have to wear black slippers with her mauve evening dress because those were all she had and she certainly wasn't going to buy shoes for one night and the Lord knew when she'd need them again. So Mrs. Simpson, taking into consideration possibly all my Aunt Emily has done for her, in my Aunt Emily's own words, said that she would be tickled to lend her her golden slippers, and my Aunt Emily thought it was a very good idea, but of course it was only right that Mrs. Simpson should do that. That's how my Aunt Emily feels about things.

But somehow by the time Mrs. Simpson had brought the shoes over and my Aunt Emily had seen them, she decided that after all she would not wear them. The fact that they were pretty well scuffed and that Mrs. Simpson had said, "I do hope that they look nice on you, poor dear," when she left them probably had nothing whatever to do with my Aunt Emily's changing her mind, but nevertheless change her mind she did, and she called Mrs. Simpson up right away to tell her so. Mrs. Simpson said all right, and had my Aunt seen "Daisy Mayme" down at the Shubert. My Aunt Emily said no, she hadn't. And they spoke no more about the shoes. My Aunt Emily found out later that they were three sizes too small for her anyway.

Well, you might think that that is all there is to say about the golden slippers, but no, last Tuesday night Mrs. Simpson called up my Aunt Emily and asked her to get out the shoes as she would need them for her daughter's graduation dance. My Aunt Emily said, "What shoes?" Mrs. Simpson said, "What do you mean—'What shoes?'" because the golden slippers were the only ones she remembered lending my Aunt and she didn't see any reason for confusion. "I mean," said my Aunt, who was getting pretty peeved by this time, "just what I said—you ninny." Mrs. Simpson, who has just as much pride as my Aunt Emily resented the implications created by "ninny" and said so. My Aunt Emily said, "What of it?" and Mrs. Simpson told her. Finally, however, the identity of the shoes was established, but my Aunt did not remember borrowing them and if she had (which was very doubtful) she would certainly have returned them. Mrs. Simpson remembered distinctly lending them and failing to get them back, so would my Aunt please look in all her closets for them. My Aunt Emily replied testily that she had just cleaned out her closets and would undoubtedly know if she had them. Well, Mrs. Simpson didn't know where they were, but she wanted them back. My Aunt told her she hoped that she would find them and said firmly, "Good-bye, Louella."

And still the episode did not end. Mrs. Simpson happened to be out rid-

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"REPRESENTATIVE" AMERICAN PAINTERS

By Joseph Crocker

The Twenty-Eighth Annual Exhibition of Paintings by American Artists recently held at the St. Louis Art Museum was characterized by mediocrity of subject matter and slavish French technique.

Only too rarely did the artist turn aside from his flower pots and landscapes to actually paint native scenes. Thus John S. Curry with his circus scenes, *The Runway* and *Passing Leap*, gave a view into one of the side streets of American life. Reginald Marsh who utilized clothing models and oil fields was the other artist that drew upon the American background for subject matter. The other paintings, for the most part, were so devitalized that they might well be painted in England, France, or Italy. This does not mean that I advocate a nationalistic art on the basis of Old Glory-may-she-fly-forever. But I do believe that good art must truly reflect the society which gives it birth. Nor do I, as some may infer, believe that the study of still life and landscape is tommy-rot. I have the utmost respect for the aesthetic contributions of Cezanne, Van Gogh, Gauguin and even Matisse and Picasso. It is the flock of little Cezannes and Picassos, living in the America of to-day, that ought be given jobs digging ditches. Henry McFee, however, profits by Cezanne without becoming a mere window artist. The paintings, *Striped Curtain* and *Still Life, Greenfruit*, are excellent studies in still life.

Curry, Marsh, and McFee were the only artists that had any real contributions in the whole exhibition. The other 'representative artists' still follow the Post Impressionists. With the craftsman's devotion to technique the best of these second-hand Cezannes and Matisses have emphasized presentation instead of subject matter. As Rivera would say, "They draw the track instead of the train." Did Giotto, Michelangelo, El Greco, Goya, and Daumier spend their time gilding the lily or painting the buttons on the gentleman's waistcoat?

It may be that these emasculated artists follow the French school because they can do nothing else; because they are essentially craftsmen and not artists. Their devotion to the fly in-the-lower-left-hand-corner has naturally resulted in a paucity of subject matter. Thus, one is not surprised to discover that the majority of paintings are studies in still life and dull landscapes. Of course we have our antiquated academicians present — just good honest painting and that is about all. However, there was one painting that should have been placed in the basement with the other examples of early American monstrosities. I do not remember the title or artist—it was a locomotive rushing around a bend, the engine in the foreground. The picture really belongs in the depot room at Four Corners. If there were more color to the thing it might be used on some railroad calendar.

Unfortunately the showing of the St. Louis artists was on the whole so poor that no amount of local patriotism can raise them from their lowly resting place. However, Joe Jones has done much better work. For example his *New Deal*, a striking composition, was not placed on exhibition. Alvin Metelman's *Homebrew* composition fails because of his use of outworn theatrical tricks.

On the whole I have never seen a poorer, a more exhausted exhibition of what is supposed to be representative American painters. And the villain behind the scene is the French tradition. The antiquated American schools

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The Pilgrims Celebrate Thanksgiving

Where subway thunders ourselves into day
and white rails arrow upward lifting trains,
we halt, voiceless, and see the calm gray
evening burst with fire on windowpanes;

we listen to the horns and answering cries
of motors chiming, hear the vendor's hail,
watch autos pass and sink to dustgrain size,
believe such gestures are to no avail;

and stopping here as night floats in, recall
the earlier day when mixing shouts we landed,
felled oak trees, gathered wood in the bright fall,
built lintels through the forest empty handed.

—Clark Mills.

Les Amies

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she did not let it get under her skin. She calculated without letting anyone know.

"There is nothing I like better," Mrs. Guggenheim observed to the room at large, "than a snappy game of bridge. Brisk, clever—the hand is bid— coup d' etat, it is made, and on."

No one answered. She reddened, slowly. The corpuscles had to spread themselves over many obstacles. Mrs. Guggenheim was getting irritated.

"Gott in Himel, Sadie. Are you planning a war that you must think so intensely?"

"Three diamonds," Sadie said. Mrs. Guggenheim removed her challenge to her partner. Her calm had left her. It always did after the first bid.

"Pass," said her partner. Mrs. Guggenheim's face was resigned with that tolerance which intimates that nothing more was expected from such a source. Poor Arabella was such a fizz at bridge. Poor Arabella was merely a cautious person who never took chances. Mrs. Guggenheim, an incurable gambler, always lost as a result of her susceptibility to taking chances—or the incurable habit, indulged by an intimidated husband, of getting her desires gratified. *She* termed herself a sport. Now she fixed skeptical eyes upon Arabella.

"I'm sorry, Carrie, but my hand—"

"Don't, Arabella, tell everyone what you have in your hand."

"I suppose *you* pass, Josephine?" A pause. Josephine, still looking at her cards stretched out a closed fist and tapped highly with her knuckle on the table.

"Three spades," said Mrs. Guggenheim, looking at Sadie.

"Four diamonds," came in a matter-of-fact tone from her.

"Fight it out between you," said Arabella. "I'm just sitting here resting till you're ready."

Mrs. Guggenheim knew she shouldn't. It was the old feeling though—there was no stopping her.

"Four spades," she said in a deep voice.

"O. K. It's yours, Carrie. And we shall take you for a ride very nicely."

"Humph," said Mrs. Guggenheim.

"I gave you *no* assistance, Carrie."

"I know, my dear." Now that she had gotten the bid Mrs. Guggenheim's calm had returned. "You never do." The game was on.

"Playing bridge is a gamble and an

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"Representative" American Painters

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of art have done much to aid the Eastern galleries in fostering on America an alien and decadent art. I do not claim that one should renounce the contributions of the French impressionists and post-impressionists. Diego Rivera did not become ensnarled in Cubism along with Picasso; and it was when he turned to his native America for inspiration and subject matter that he really began to paint. If the American painter would select scenes from American life that have significance and epic quality his paintings would have a force and vitality that is sadly lacking at the present time. In a period of tremendous social upheaval—the mechanization of American industry, the passing of the small town, the depression, strikes, racial conflict, and class war—for American artists to continue to paint pasty nudes, apples, bottles, and Arcadian landscapes, is indicative of their moral and aesthetic collapse.

THRESHOLD

When the mind
Wandering its known and labyrinthine
halls,
In some uncautioned hour,
Shall find
Doorways till now unseen and strange,
— Withdraw its hand. . .
Where over these narrow sills
An alien light
Stretches its painful gold
Along the dark,
Intolerable and bright
To face,
— Turn back. . .
Turn back the mind,
— Lest, there,
Its feet
Walk the wide floors of giant rooms,
Ancient and uninhabited,
— With no retreat.

— JOSEPHINE W. JOHNSON.

Unemployed Artists

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curves in the female body which the male lacks."

Their boasted plans have not materialized. They seem to fear the competition of classes, more enthusiastic, more vitally interested than their own: and the smallness of their attitude is best seen in their apparent objection to Joseph Jones. Mr. Jones's work may be as experimental as its critics say; but his willingness to conduct this class deserves a different encouragement from that offered by the Art League.

Next Month: A calendar of coming lectures, concerts, exhibitions and plays.

"Oh, Dem Golden Slippers"

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ing with some of her girl-friends, who were girl-friends of my Aunt Emily also, and she told the whole story in full and unexpurgated detail, ending her story with the implication that if my Aunt needed the slippers that badly, she should have told her and she would have given them to her rather than have her steal them. This was dutifully retold to my Aunt Emily by Miss Tremaine, who possibly used a bit too much gusto in the narration. At any rate, as Miss Tremaine finished her story with her eyes shining and her cheeks flushed, my Aunt Emily was speechless, but she got back to normal in a second and called Mrs. Simpson on the phone. Miss Tremaine says some of the words she used were worse than "ninny" and I am inclined to believe it. Mrs. Simpson finally apologized, but my Aunt Emily doubted very much if she would ever speak to her again, and as she hung up the receiver she began the refrain that has carried her through this crisis: "Well, after all I've done for Louella . . . "

Les Amies

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art," Mrs. Guggenheim commented, as she looked at her partner's hand.

"Art—what do you know about art?" retorted Arabella settling back in her chair and lighting a cigarette. "Do you ever visit the Art Gallery? Too busy—always busy. Yesterday I went alone because all of my friends were too busy for Art—"

"Shut up, Arabella. You're getting me confused."

"That portrait—Whistler's "Mother" —I tell you it is worth more to me than all of this." A wave of the hand took in the whole room but apparently was meant to include the universe. Suddenly she sat up, dropping ashes all over herself.

"I say—who do you think I saw at the Art Gallery yesterday!"

Arabella's expression hid a plum of gossip. Even Mrs. Guggenheim ceased taking tricks to listen.

"Well—who—whom?" Arrabella ignored the correction.

"Mamie and her beau. They were browsing in a corner looking at an Egyptian mummy when I came on them. He is quite nice—but bald, and sort of vacant-looking—if you know what I mean."

"Money?" grunted Mrs. Guggenheim as she lost her third trick to Sadie.

"Scads—simply scads. Mamie told me that she has known him for ten years. She says they're just very good friends. But believe me, when a man takes you out every Sunday and gapes at your every word it means business".

"Feature it—and at her age." Mrs. Guggenheim straightened sternly as Sadie took another trick.

"Down one," observed Sadie.

"She's forty-five if a day." Mrs. Guggenheim rasped at Sadie.

"Nonsense, Carrie, she's younger than Josephine, and Josie is forty-three."

"Forty-two until the seventeenth."

"My dear—Mamie Freund is forty-five because she is five years younger than brother David and ten years younger than Alfred. Coincidentally, their birthdays all come on the same day."

"Down two." Sadie flipped the cards down with a pat. "Two hundred."

"The rest of the tricks are mine. There's a king of clubs and two spades."

"One more for me, Carrie," said Sadie. "I still have the jack of spades."

"You must have renigged, Sadie. I pulled trump."

"Twice, Carrie, twice—and I had three—jack high. That's three hundred for us—honors—thirty for you." Sadie set down the score efficiently.

The game went on with a change of partners. The gossip had just about unwound the end of the ball. The freshness of the diversion had lost its bloom.

"Just this round," announced Arabella. "I must fly home to Hans. He is coming home early."

"And must you welcome him with a marital kiss?"

"He likes me to be home when he comes—it is the least one can do for hard-working husbands."

"Heaven deliver me from exacting men. Rupert needs no welcoming committee—he knows where the bedroom is."

"He should," commented Sadie, "after thirty-five years—"

"Thirt-y-seven years of complete happiness," returned Mrs. Guggenheim distinctly, "and no pampering. I could never bear to pamper. My children are not pampered. I was never pampered. That is all bosh and tosh. Marigold—Marigold!"

"Yes Ma'am."

"We are almost ready for coffee." Mrs. Guggenheim always called it coffee. She liked to term salad, hot buns, potatoes au gratin and three hundred calorie cake, "coffee." It was a way

of saying that this was merely a snack and that one should really see what she could produce in the way of luncheon —dinner—her famed dinners—

"C'est fini, Carrie—" said Sadie. "I believe I win four dollars, three, ten from you."

"That's the way it is—take my hospitality and my money." Mrs. Guggenheim, in the expectancy of nourishment could afford to be benevolent. Marigold arrived with a laden tray.

"Carrie—delicious. My mouth is watering," Josephine murmured smacking her lips delicately. She was a bit worn with the afternoon activity. They all needed invigorators—back stiffeners, so to speak.

"Fall to, girls! It isn't much, but it's of the best."

"I shall never be able to eat a bite of dinner," sighed Josephine, sinking back into her chair like a sleek terrier. The sides of her mouth glistened slightly with melted butter from a hot bun.

"I shan't eat any." This from Sadie. "My digestion doesn't warrant it. The doctor has forbidden me to eat more than two meals a day."

"No wonder you're nothing more than skin and bone." Mrs. Guggenheim snorted her defiance of the profession. "I eat whatever I wish whenever I want it. Doctors are—suckers!"

"Carrie, such vehemence!" Sadie reproached her, laughing.

"Sorry, ladies, but I must go." Josephine arose. "Give anybody a lift?"

"Now Josephine — must you take them all?" remonstrated Mrs. Guggenheim.

"It is five-thirty Carrie. After all we do have children, if husbands mean nothing to you." There was a general rush for hats and coats—a tornado of incoherent sound.

"Love' aft'noon — enjoyed it *so* — chicken salad surpassing—must come to m' house next."

"Sadie, here's my thirty-seven cents."

"Mine is fifty-three—these debts—" Mrs. Guggenheim was suddenly in a conspiracy with Marigold. Sadie jingled the change in her hand nonchalantly, then more vigorously, as a gentle reminder.

"Three dollars and ten cents short," she mentioned in a loud voice looking amusedly at Mrs. Guggenheim.

"Oh—yes—yes—Sadie. I shall owe you ten cents. One—two—three—my last cent—"

"Call me up." Mrs. Guggenheim's asthma gave a wheeze to her voice as she shouted. She shut the door and paused for a moment, then tapped her stomach. "That dratted liver." She walked heavily upstairs to the bathroom. She took down a small box from a shelf near the door and extracted two small brown pills. Filling a glass with water, she placed a pill far down into the back of her mouth and took a gulp of water—then another. She looked at herself in the mirror and spoke solemnly to the reflection, "Little snip—fifty years old! As if Arabella Schultz wasn't always jealous of my complexion!" She ran a finger slowly down her cheek and leaned toward the mirror, scrutinizing her face closely. Her lower lip trembled, as suddenly a tremendous belch thundered from deep within her and shattered against the glass.

The Faculty Speaks Department

"Notwithstanding the hardships of some farmers, present agricultural conditions hold out the promise of as rapid progress in the future as has taken place in the past."—page 159, *What the Farmer Needs*, by Isaac Lippincott, 1928.

"Like Druids of old, with voices sad and prophetic."