

stalled his retinue of strange people as servants in the town house; but the duties of some of them kept them away much of the time. When they returned it was to report to Carl, and one day Carl reported to Richard Courtney:

"The man we looked for is in town. He belonged to one of the clerical orders disbanded by the French Government. He has found employment here, and is living quietly, and almost unknown, with his niece."

"And his niece is—"

"Yes," said Carl.

A number of the colony families were in town, and the Courtneys continued their social relations with them; formed one of the set, after the manner of the present division of New York society. Indeed, their social relations with the set were improved, for the fact of occupying by invitation the Van Alstyne town house counted in their favor with some of the colonists who had been a bit conservative in accepting the newcomers.

The Van Alstyne trademark is just as good a thing as was ever put on us, Dick," said Betty, eagerly observant of the effect mentioned.

"Yes," assented Richard, "and the best part of

the deal is that it has made the Hardees chummy."

"And I think Gene cares a great deal for him,"

Betty said.

"Meaning George Hardee?" asked Richard.

"Of course. He's a nice young man, and is so domestic!"

"As how?"

"Oh, he cares for all the things Gene cares for, and always gets ahead of everyone else to help his mother on with her wrap. I've always hoped Gene would marry a man who is always ahead of all other men in doing polite acts for his mother. They never go in for euneforming."

DELANCY appeared at several houses where the Courtneys were invited, and made no effort to avoid Richard; though he did not seek him, as before. He continued politely insistent in his attentions to Gene, but Betty devised ways to prevent these from becoming marked, and her efforts to that end were made easier because she had a co-worker in Mrs. Hardee. The latter, indeed, was almost as watchful of Gene as was Betty, and the latter, discovering this, sighed as she thought of the infinite, constant, watchful protection thrown about the

girls of the set she found herself a member of,—a sigh of relief because of Gene, a sigh of self pity too.

"It's a good thing I was the kind of youngster I was, Dick," she said, telling him of these things. "I had some wit in those days, some courage, some intuitions as to what the world was. God pity the girls who lack those—and are without protection!"

"Amen!" said Richard fervently. "Here we are by chance—by the favor of Banker Hall, if you please—mixing with the people who are known as the quiet set; for that's what we learn they are, now. But even here some other kind of chance lets in a bouncer,—worse than bouncer.—Herbert Delancy. Sure a girl who hasn't her own kin to fight off the wolves needs God's pity and help."

This was one of the longest and most serious non-professional speeches Betty had ever heard her husband make. She looked at him anxiously. "You've heard something!" she said.

"I got this letter," he answered.

The letter was from Delancy, politely expressing his wish to call on the Courtneys the following evening to discuss a subject of the "greatest personal interest" to him and to them.

To be continued April 12

# "SOLD AT CHRISTIE'S"

By W. G. FITZ-GERALD



Christie's Auction Room—From a Print by T. Rowlandson.

**S**INCE James Christie and his friends Sir Joshua Reynolds, David Garrick, and Thomas Gainsborough received Lord Chesterfield in Pall Mall, as he descended from his coach and six, the most precious things that money can buy have changed hands in the famous rooms that bear Christie's name.

In those days Christie took great pains to attract only the "elect," and the cards of visitors were carefully scrutinized by liveried flunkies at the door; for here was an exclusive club where men of rank and fashion often gathered to exchange courtesies and

the gossip of court and camp, quite apart from mere bidding for great estates and palaces of many nations, jewels of princes, and plate of great families, pictures and porcelain, statuary and curios. Who does not remember the sale of Gainsborough's "Duchess of Devonshire," when Lord Dudley wired a bid of fifty thousand dollars from Paris, but was beaten by Agnew the dealer? And then came the dramatic theft, and the equally dramatic recovery of the portrait years afterward in this country.

It is a place of beautiful things, of discreet hush, of subdued mystery. Almost every great work of art in the world that comes into the market finds its way there. Long before 1766 Christie's was a going concern,—none too flourishing, be it said, for has not James Christie himself left it on record that his good friend David Garrick tided him over a bankruptcy with a loan of fifty thousand dollars?

The priced catalogues of the house have been and are the standard record of values in works of art for the last two hundred years. They show extraordinary fluctuations. Thus in 1755 a copy of the Rembrandt etching, "Christ Healing the Sick," sold for only thirty-five dollars; whereas in 1887, at the Duke of Buccleuch's sale, an inferior example brought no less than sixty-five hundred dollars. Art collections worth ten million dollars and upward have frequently been offered for sale in these classic rooms. On such occasions Emperors and Kings, with men of wealth from every nation, commission the greatest of experts to go to criticize and bid for treasures which may not come under the hammer again in generations.

The value of property knocked down under the old cracked ivory hammer that Dr. Johnson and Goldsmith must have handled baffles all calculation. A curious record was the seventy-five thousand dollars paid in 1885 for the Dudley Raphael,

"The Three Graces," which measures only seven inches square. Of course, this was extraordinary; yet enormous prices have been paid at Christie's for pictures, as everybody knows.

Another record in its day was the seventy-three thousand seven hundred and sixty dollars paid for Hoppner's three-quarter-length portrait of Louisa, Lady Manners, afterward Countess of Dysart. And then there was the famous jeweled cup of rock crystal which brought the enormous sum of eighty-one thousand three hundred and seventy-five dollars at the Gabbittas sale. Amazing prices have also been recorded for porcelain. In a recent season the art worlds of London and Paris were startled by a Sevres vase bringing twenty-one thousand dollars,—proof positive that the *pâte tendre*, the plaything of Louis the Well Beloved, the Pompadour, and du Barry, retains all its fascination for the collector.

### Fakes Up for Bidding

**R**ARELY indeed have fakes been offered at Christie's; yet a few classic cases are on record. Some years ago art loving capitals were startled by the announcement that four superb gallery pictures by Constable and two by Turner were to be offered for sale in Christie's rooms,—the property of a private gentleman, and never before exhibited. It was indeed an event. The vender's name was withheld; but this is a common occurrence, seeing that very exalted personages indeed, not to say the occupants of thrones, frequently send works of art to these famous galleries. Pressed on the subject, however, Christie's gave out that the seller was a "well known connoisseur of high social rank." On the day of the sale every art critic, collector, and dealer of note, from London to Moscow and from Stockholm to Madrid, assembled before the pictures, chattering excitedly in many tongues.

Truly they were imposing, these gorgeous canvases,—five feet wide and high in proportion. The four Constables formed a series of superb English landscapes, while the two Turners were classical subjects, said to be of the "middle period" of the master. But about them all there was a certain "I know not what," as the French say, that baffled the keen critics. Round all six appeared to hover a curious kinship; certain peculiarities of touch and coloring, "as if," in the words of a Paris dealer, "Turner had worked on Constable's pictures, and Constable on Turner's."

The faces of the experts were a droll study as their first admiration gave place to helpless bewilderment. One or two they might have swallowed;

but six! Before long a Viennese artist made himself heard above the hubbub by pointing out that the pictures were largely painted with very modern pigments,—fashionable, newly invented colors unknown in the days of Turner and Constable. The excitement grew greater. This was surely an unlucky slip if the collection were forgeries.

There was yet another test, however. A cunning Venetian dealer years previously had given the art world a hint in testing an authentic example of Guardi. He would take a pin and try to stick it into the fattest and most unctuously painted part of the picture. "If it sticks in," the dealer said, "it is new paint; but try it on a real Guardi, and you might as well try to force a pin into a China plate." The moment that hint was remembered it was acted upon. One of the Constables was tested—and proved to be a veritable pin cushion.

The authorities of Christie's at once closed their doors and posted a notice abandoning the sale.

The history of the forgeries leaked out afterward. They had belonged to a rich and eccentric collector, Joseph Gillott, a millionaire manufacturer of steel pens of Birmingham, who afterward left the London National Gallery a magnificent series of real treasures. In his latter years, however, the old man had fallen into the clutches of an unscrupulous dealer whose exploits had long been notorious. Both the Turners and the Constables had been manufactured under this man's direction by a needy but exceedingly clever artist, and then sold to the aged and credulous amateur for half a million dollars. When later some doubts were cast upon their genuineness Gillott was greatly troubled, and resolved to give them the public test of auction at Christie's. After the dramatic fiasco their owner contemptuously packed them off into a warehouse, which three months later was burned to the ground; and then, strangely enough, it turned out that Gillott had insured his "masterpieces" for the entire sum he had paid for them, so by a curious turn of the wheel of fortune he was not a penny the loser.

### Many Experts Caught

**B**UT there have not been half a dozen such cases at Christie's during a century of sales. And who shall be altogether exempt from fraud in the domain of art? It was only the other day that Sir Edward Poynter, President of the British Royal Academy, bought with Government money for the National Gallery in London a bogus Perugino; and some may remember the authorities of the Louvre paying a million francs for the so-called "Tiara of Sathaphernes," which turned out to have been a fraudulent copy by a Russian goldsmith of Odessa, who later came forward and confessed the forgery.

Who can be certain of his purchase, indeed, when Michelangelo himself stooped to deception, chipping and burying his "Child Hercules," and digging it up later to sell it as an "antique" at an enhanced price to Cardinal Riario, who cared for nothing new? But as far as may be possible the pedigree of all articles offered is known and guaranteed at Christie's, as the founder wished it to be.

And by the way, just inside the superb pillared portico on King-st., St. James's, one will see a picture of the courtly old dandy himself,—tall and distinguished in silk knee breeches with low shoes and buckles, blue silk coat, and delicate lace ruffles, with full wig and horn spectacles, as befitted his association with aristocratic cognoscenti.

Chesterfield was his patron then, as he had been Dr. Johnson's. The great arbiter of elegance, although retired from public life, was renowned all over Europe as a connoisseur, and when old Christie pleaded with him to lend his aegis to a great sale, the stately coach and six, emblazoned with the Chesterfield arms, would soon be at the door. The rooms

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