

very existence, miserable as it is, is proof of how I protest against cruel, bestial punishment. *Ah, mon amie* —” His eyes dimmed with tears, his voice shook with anguish. “That my sole subsistence must be gained, my salvation attained, from making instruments for torturing men — is it not pure irony?”

Irony! Words failed me as I looked at the cunning modeling of the dog’s head which served as handle for that whip. For into that implement of black hate and human ugliness I perceived that Henri had put as much beauty as he could.

I fumbled in my purse for a bill

which would buy the half dozen whips in his bundle. These at least, he should know, would never scar the unfortunate backs of an exploited people. I mumbled awkward, scarcely coherent phrases meant to comfort. I would have bought the two figures also.

“Not *la Vierge*”, he said gently. “I keep her always. But the other — with pleasure, madame.”

His rare smile of hope, as I handled his lovely work with the respect which was its due, tore my heart. Thus began my strange friendship with Henri Beaudin, ex-convict, whose incredibly brave soul the worst that men can do had failed to kill.

A PRAYER FOR RONALD

By Katherine Burton

SAINTE FRANCIS, you who understood
 The shy, sweet creatures of the wood,
 To whom each wild bird was a friend,
 Who taught that love is means and end,
 Saint Francis, who to Heaven hast won,
 Watch thou above my little son.
 Shy as the birds who came to thee,
 He presses to me lovingly;
 Safe as thou in thy hilltop shrine,
 Is he with me, his life in mine.
 But from his shrine, which is my heart,
 Life will in future make him part.
 I ask a guerdon for my boy:
 Give him thy heavenly sense of joy.
 Saint Francis, who to Heaven hast won,
 Watch thou above my little son.
 For Sister Hare and Brother Bird
 Always thou foundst the loving word;
 Find then within thy prayers some space
 To guard his shyness and his grace,
 To keep his joys and sorrows fine,
 To lift his soul on wings of thine.
 Saint Francis, who to Heaven hast won,
 Watch thou above my little son.

WRONGING THE MUSES

By J. Frazier Vance

IT is, perhaps, reactionary to insist that the nine muses of tradition are sufficient for present day civilization. In this age of representative government many will insist that the membership of that body should be determined as is the membership of our Congress: one muse for each block of so many thousands of population. This arrangement would certainly make it easier for the muses. How they must have to scurry about nowadays! It might even be practicable to rearrange the whole system of liberal arts on the twentieth century cafeteria pattern. This would be a great convenience for the musician or painter or author. One can fancy a poet entering an Inspiration Automat and dropping his nickel in the sonnet slot. That sounds, as I write it, like a constructive suggestion. I must develop it when I have more leisure.

At the moment, it seems most important that I register protest against an unprincipled practice now frequently resorted to by so called artists in all the media of expression, and to call particular attention to the abuses of writers.

In general, this practice may be compared to the old "rotten borough" system in English politics. Just as large numbers of people were unrepresented in Parliament while nonexistent townships had a vote, so now vast regions of art must remain substantially inarticulate while their logical advocates plump for individuals who represent no art whatever and have no honest claim to membership in the council of muses. It is in this way that

Moronia has won to a place beside Calliope, and with her loud, insistent chatter has drowned out much that the world would have liked to hear.

To be explicit:

There is much to be said in support of the theory that all varieties of art find their truest expression in very childish manifestations; that the mature artist is subject to restraints and inhibitions that do not stifle the child. This has been demonstrated so frequently and so conclusively that it is hardly open to question any longer.

True poetry is more than sound. It is feeling, as well, and it has, too, a generous strain of song within it, inherent. It is to be witnessed in its purest form in the group games of childhood and in the simple dances of the primitive and unsophisticated, where the movements of the dancers are accompanied by rhythmic intonations.

True story telling (which is the essence of literature) is also a very simple, unlettered recital. An imaginative child can enthrall an adult audience as the most gifted writer cannot. Perhaps the choicest gems of "literature" have never been transcribed. They may be incongruous, absurd, bawdy even, but they are adequate, accurate, artistic, as related by the garrulous child.

I have a niece, for example, who at five could entertain a room full of relatives for hours at a time with plausible tales of her imagined domestic adventures: the unruly children — seven,