

Dear Slaughter

For your Cinnard's
Good.

Ed

Rec'd April, 1935

PAREJA *** GOMEZ *** AND *** CAMPECHE

FRAGMENTARY TRIBUTE TO ~~THE~~ SPANISH NEGRO PAINTERS OF THE

SCHOOL OF SEVILLA .

BY

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Negro Paulina of the School of Sevilla

Whatever may be the distinctive style of art which a nation's distinguished artists in the realm of painting may be portrayed and known to the world, the Spanish school of Sevilla, better known by Murillo and Velázquez, its scintillating stars, "have never yet been surpassed in their own style and it seems highly improbable that they will ever be so in the future." As Curtis says, "the coloring of the school of Sevilla is what arrests the eye of the observer. It fixes itself in the mind, and charms the imagination." To this school belongs the picture of the Spanish artist Campaña, entitled "Descent from the Cross", in which we see a Negro aloft with a face full of love and charity tendering his arm to help Christ from the cross where he suffered his martyrdom at the hands of Roman and men who to-day are outspoken for his teachings.

One of the greatest art institutions of the old world is the Museum of Madrid, which is a Walhalla for all royal treasures and occupies a building erected by Charles III in the eighteenth century. Here are located the jewels of the Spanish nation. During Napoleon's piratical excursions into Spain the various museums gathered their rare paintings and had them taken to Madrid for safe-keeping and protection, but notwithstanding this measure of precaution we know that Napoleon removed many rarities to the Louvre in Paris. The exigencies of war may have caused any place to be looted or destroyed, Divine Providence

has spared us a few canvasses by men of a race held in the lowest scale of humanity and I believe it is my duty to review their work before my fellow men since the dust of the ages has buried them so deep that they are almost forgotten.

We are indebted to Palomillo ("Museo Historico") for leaving to posterity the annals of the Spanish school of painters, giving to Cean Bermudez, the eminent critic, the tools with which he worked upon the mind of the nation, the lasting impression of the exemplary life of those impecunious fellows whose mind was inspired by the church to hand down to us evidences of their st understanding and adaptability to Christian life. We need not dwell upon the life of Velazquez nor Murillo. Suffice it to say, their names are columns upon which the Spanish school of painting is known throughout the world of arts. No gallery or museum of repute can boast of its greatness unless among its silent masters the name of Velazquez and Murillo are included. For this reason that great treasure house, the Imperatorski Ernstagh, better known to us as The Hermitage at St. ^{Peloo grad} Petersburg, Russia, is another of the greatest museums of Europe for its unsurpassed collection of real rarities in old masters. Among its cherished canvasses is a "Provincial of the Capuchin order in a black robe holding a book (cat. No 427) This painting is the work of a Negro, the subject of this sketch.

In the ^{EL} filed of the Fine Arts our men of the Negro race are laboring painstakingly

and receiving merited recognition. Sometimes a great amount of adverse criticism has forced them to the front, as shown by the American disease called prejudice, which does not permit others to enjoy the opportunity to work and perfect their individual faculties but rather seeks to close the door against their advancement. There are quite a number of persons who have won distinction in painting and it is timely to bring to the notice of the members of the Academy the little that is extant of the slave of Velazquez. Again Sevilla, Spain, comes to the fore for having been the cradle of another distinguished person, Juan de Pareja, as well as it was for Sebastian Gomez, the mulatto of Murillo, and for a number of persons who had achieved fame long before Columbus gathered his crew in the port of Palos.

Juan de Pareja was born of slave parentage in the year 1606. The records do not show how Diego Velazquez, the eminent Spanish court painter to Philip IV, came into possession of him, whether as a legacy from his grand parents or as a purchase from the slave market. But it is known that as a house slave he was seen during 1623 grinding the pigments, preparing the canvasses and cleaning the brushes for the illustrious artist which he delighted in doing, long before his master was called to Madrid by Count-Duke of Oliveres. Pareja having spent his boyhood among canvasses and noted artists, it is not strange that there should have been awakened consciousness and aptitude for the art which he possessed. We are told his humble conditions were such as not to permit him to aspire to higher honors.

At times, hidden away from the gaze of the curious, he would devote his time to "lights and shadows" copying the best examples of his master's work. Taking advantage of the two trips of Velazquez to Italy in 1629 and during 1648, undertaken by order of King Philip IV, Pareja studied zealously the works of the great masters during this precious interval. He returned to Madrid in 1651 and, not so timid as until then; he thought it would be a fine idea to discover whether he had any ability as a painter. It was customary for King Philip the IV to take trips to the studio of Velazquez and distract his mind from the matters of state by observing the eminent painter use his brushes. Whenever the king saw a canvass turned facing the wall, in any out of the way ^{LA} palace, his curiosity was aroused and he would request that it be turned around. Many times he did this himself to admire or criticize it. Pareja, who had often observed this action of the king, painted with great pains a small canvas and placed it so as to arouse the attention of the great visitor. The king arrived this day and noticed the canvas and was about to turn it over when Pareja advanced and, placing himself at his feet, confessed to have been the author of the work, pleading that he should intercede in his behalf with his master not to punish him for having learned the art of painting without his knowledge. It was recognized that slaves were not permitted to go beyond the rudiments of mechanical arts. Velazquez when informed of his slave's accomplishment, immediately manumitted him. From that moment, the historian Bermudez states, he worked side by side with his ^{former} master, not as a slave but as a disciple,

a favor for which Pareja was grateful, showing his great personality by not leaving him until his death. Even afterwards, he served his daughter, who was then married to Juan Bautista del Mazo, also a ~~painter~~ student of the great master. In the canvass known as the Family of ~~Murillo~~ Velazquez, which is in Vienna, Pareja is one of the figures. He was one of the most noted of the students of Velazquez to the point that many of his portraits were taken for those of his master. Even today there exists great doubt concerning a number of canvasses as to whether they are to be attributed to the brushes of Velazquez, Pareja or Mazo.

Pareja's work has a great resemblance^{LA} to the Venetian, Genoese and Flemish schools because of the force and vividness of color as well as by the inclination of the author to portray in his work nature as he was privileged to see it. Some of Pareja's paintings are to be found in the Sanctuary^{c/} of the Abbey of the Monastery of Benedictines of Eslonza. There is a canvas of Santa Catalina, signed by Juan de Pareja 1669, and of various saints. In the Museum of the Prado there is today the Calling of St Matthew which came from the king's palace at Aranjuez. In the National Trinidad^s in the Baptism of Christ, signed J. de Pareja 1667, In the Sacristy of the Trinity Convent of Toledo, there are to be found "The Presentation of the Child God" and a Battle Scene. In the Museum of St Petersburg (The Hermitage) A Provincial Father. Pareja also painted St John the Evangelist

San ^NOroci^o and Our Lady of Guadalupe for the chapel of Santa Rita in the Recoletos at Madrid. The list of Pareja's pictures so far is ~~is~~ interesting but far from being complete. In catalogue number 134 of the Museo de Madrid is mentioned the Calling of St Matthew, which is reproduced for my readers to see what the original must be. The picture of Philip IV was probably painted by command of the king for his palace at Ar^Jranuez. In Paris, during the sale of the Marquis de las Marismas at the Agusdo Gallery in volume 2, 1843, three canvasses are described for auction, painted by Pareja, No 90 bust of a gentleman standing near a table, No 91 portrait of a nun and number 92, portrait in bust of a young man. There is another canvass noted by Dr. Waagen (Treasures of Art in Great Britain etc., 3 vls. London 1854) "Isabella of Bourbon" painted by Pareja. It belongs to the Earl of Yarmouth.

The description of the picture of Pareja by the eminent Spanish painter Madrazo as given in the catalogue of the Royal Museum follows: "Jesus, passing before the table where Matthew is occupied as a publican or collector of tribute, turned to him and said, "Matthew, follow me," and Matthew immediately leaving everything followed Him. Matthew is shown dressed in oriental garb. A Madrid official in Venetian dress and a third subject who wears the picturesque dress of a Spanish captain in Flanders. ~~They~~ The three look upon Jesus, who, standing beside Matthew, speaks to him. (No 935. 2.25x3.25)

Mazo. who married the daughter of Velazquez, was a painter of merit. His canvasses

are said to have arrived at the Museum of the Prado at the same time as those of Pareja. The paintings of our slave are so well executed and finished that many of his works have been taken for the product of Velazquez. At present, one painting in the museum attributed to the master, has been assigned to the slave. Palomillo says that the canvas of Joseph Reiter a Madrid architect, was often taken for a work of Velazquez. In the Dulwich Gallery there is a bust of a Boy about five years of age, formerly ascribed to Velazquez but now to Pareja on the authority of a very competent judge, J.C. Robinson. Mr Burger says "That Pareja is the author of a picture in the Munich Gallery (Cat. No 361) "A ~~fair~~ Gentleman and a Lady Palying Cards" which was before attributed to Pareja".

The portrait of Juan de Pareja has been preserved to us perhaps by accident because it is the work of the Master Velazquez. It is stated by Palomillo that when Velazquez was sent to Rome by Count de Olivares he expressed a desire to paint the picture of the Pope and being a stranger among so many artists of renown, he determined to exhibit a picture at the annual exhibition, the festival of St Joseph in the Rotunda. Inspired by the faithfulness of his servant, he transcribed to canvass his picture and sent it for exhibition. When the recipient opened the package he was struck with the perfect likeness of the bearer of the bundle. It brought honors immediately to the artist and the Academy of St Luke bestowed upon Velazquez ^Membership in 1650. This canvass is known as the Moor with the green doublet and the other canvass in the gallery of the Earl of Carlyle has

a green doublet with white collar. (Palomillo v.3 337. Waagen 3-325. Cean Bermudez 4-51)

The picture in the collection of the Earl of Radnor, which Mr Ernest Braxton has copied, is presumably the picture which was exhibited in Rome. We find in Buchanan's "Memoirs" (v.II p.76) "Is this the picture of the Moorish slave who was in the service of Velazquez and became a great painter ? (From the Baranello Collection Naples sold at Sir William Hamilton's sale, March 27, 1801, 39gs.)

The principal work of Velazquez in Rome was the picture of Pope Innocent X by whom he was greatly distinguished. "This picture is a complete symphony in red, the face, cap, cape and chair are all presented with red curtain for background, and yet with such unpromising materials the artist has produced a marvel of portraiture. Sir Joshua Reynolds pronounced it the finest picture in Rome. This and St Michael, by Guido, are the only ones he condescended to copy" (Lord Russell "Memoirs of Thomas Moore V.iii p.62)

The life of the mulatto of Murillo is wrapped up in a fine romance which has spread throughout the world. It is claimed that Sebastian Gomez spent his boyhood days doing similar work for his master as Pareja did for Velazquez, grinding his colors, preparing his canvasses and cleaning his brushes. He spent his time, when not engaged in his menial duties observing the life classes and during the interval of cleaning the studio, would try his hands on the many inspiring things he could grasp from the master's students. His

constant application to study, his painstaking attention to detail and his forbearance to await his opportunity are elements in the character of Sebastian Gomez which have endeared him to the Spanish people.

His fame came by accident. One afternoon, while attending his usual vocation, he saw an error in one of the canvasses painted by one of Murillo's students and, taking a brush in hand he corrected it. The next day the student came fresh to his palette, expecting to overcome the fault that baffled him, and behold it was no where to be seen. Calling his co-workers and accusing them of tampering with his work, the matter came to the notice of Murillo who was for a long time unable to discover the culprit. At last one day it became known that it was customary for Gomez to practice at the close of day with the brush in so able a manner that the students apprized Murillo, who was much enthused to know that his lessons had taken root in the mind of his own servant. The news spread throughout the city and the fellow students were overjoyed to know that in Sebastian Gomez they had a companion who was familiar with the tools and brushes. Step by step this wearer of the "livery of the buffnished sun" improved himself and some of his paintings are this day to be seen in the various museums of Europe.

It is to be regretted that the early life of Sebastian Gomez is shrouded in mystery because of the odious curse of slavery, that repressive institution which has killed the

noblest aspirations of so many. Some further information may, however, be found in the Historical Dictionary of the Most Illustrious Professors of the Fine Arts in Spain, written by Juan Cean Bermudez, and published by the Royal Academy of San Fernando, Madrid 1800, in six volumes. We quote his cheerful words, written more than a century ago:-

"Sebastian Gomez, called the muletto of Murillo, was a Spanish painter". He was a "slave of that great artist, and by his application was able to imitate his master in the moments of his servitude. In this manner he became a famous painter, with good taste, a heavy brush on his canvasses and an exactness in his drawing. The Virgin and Child, located in the portico of the church of the Mercenarios Padres Descalzos of Sevilla, painted by his ^{HAND} hand, is very charming. The canvass "Christ attached to a Pillar" and "St Peter Kneeling at His feet" are in the vestry of the Capuchines Monastery of that city. A St Joseph and a St Ann in the choir below the monastery are noted for their harmony of color, masterly handling of light and shade and their remarkable fidelity to life. It is believed he outlived his master and died in the city of Sevilla 1680."

We find it difficult to locate a number of painters of Negro descent in the world to add to these two ~~pioneers~~ pioneers. We know of Jose Campeche (born Jan 6 1752 died Nov 7th 1809) at San Juan, Puerto Rico, whose paintings many and varied are to be seen and admired to this day in the several churches and reredoes beautified by his hands.

When the Spanish court painter Louis Parades visited Puerto-Rico he wanted to take Campeche to Spain. James O'Daly pleaded with him to give up his work and go to London, where 1,000 guineas were promised him; but all these offers he refused. Why? The historian Salvador Brau has unfolded the secret: "The seed of prejudice had taken wings and the virgins painted by Campeche were subjected to indifferent admiration." Yet his works are to be seen in the sacred cloisters, alters, reredos of the island; in the Athenaeum there are a number of excellent canvasses that evoke the admiration of visiting critics by the fine drawing and the charm of color. Beside those noted, in the Consistorial Hall the picture of Raimon de Castro, governor of the island; in St Francis Chapel, the Queen of the Angels; in the Episcopal Palace quite a number of Bishops are to be seen demonstrating the genius of our artist. Alejandro Tapia y Rivera in his biographical address delivered more than fifty years thereafter at the election of Campeche to honorary membership in the highest literary society of the island, said, "More than 500 canvasses were painted by Campeche who lived as an example of virtue, a charmer of his countrymen to be imitated by posterity; his name represents talent and virtue, palms of glory to his existence as an artist in Puerto-Rico; a fertile oasis in the midst of a desert. Happy is he who has drawn with the ability he may have, the brief picture of his life; if he can awaken in the artistic youth the generous desire to scatter in said desert the fecundity and beauty of the oasis." (El Bardo del Guamaní p.540 Habana 1852)

Murillo has given us Sebastian Gomez, characterized as the mulatto of Murillo, and Velazquez the faithful Juan de Pareja, known as the slave. When we examine the Ecclesiastical and Secular Annals of Sevilla" we find that city had a Negro village with its church and other useful edifices for its social comforts. The archbishop Mena, who died during the year 1402, was so devoted to them that when he died the Negroes followed his funeral cortege to Cartuja in the snow-covered mountains to pay their last respect and sympathy for his devotion to their welfare.

We cannot but admire the spiritual feeling and humanity of the Spanish character in dealing with men of the Negro race in so early an epoch of their history; not, that they were unknown, having been in contact with them for centuries in and about the seaports of the Mediterranean. They have served Sevilla and Spain wonderfully well, going so far as being the first slaves who came to America with Columbus to develop and open the new country in the false position of being able to supplant the aboriginals in the golden paradise the Spaniards believed was within their grasp. It is no wonder that Pareja and Gomez were able to fructify in such atmosphere and give evidences of the softening influence of the church in the amelioration of their servile condition. These opportunities being present, the aptitude of Pareja and Gomez was natural for development and recognition; the fact that their paintings were to be ~~xxxx~~ shown later on exhibition in the great museums of Spain

and Europe should fill the bosom of the Negro with a great deal of pride.

We trust the future will find many followers of Pareja and Gomez who will wield a brush which will carry the race further in its onward march of progress. The work of these two blackx painters of Spain bears silent testimony of the Negroes right to walk in the schools of Fine Arts and sit at the feet of able preceptors, as a vehicle through which race men will resolve to be more determined to compete for an opportunity to demonstrate their right to partake of things within their natural gifts. When these points have been gained we should strive to help them perfect themselves and support their various activities toward independence. We should not forsake them, as is generally the custom with our present struggling artists and writers, left to their own resources and damned for not being successful men afetr leaving college.

This fragmentary paper will be illustrated with photographs of as many of the pictures of Pareja, Gomez and Campeche as have been obtainable ^{to serve as an inspiration/} for those interested in the Fine Arts, to help keep fresh the memory of those men who were able to pass the forbidden gates of the restricted institutions of learning, and to show the talented people of proud America that the greatness of a nation is safely lodged in the freedom of education, with Christian toleration to all its children, in order that those gifted with the spark of precocity or genius may flourish in our virgin fields and bless our efforts toward their utilization of the faculties Providence may have placed within our sphere of activities.

Gomez Pictures.

Holy Family Confraduria of the Cathedral of Sevilla.

Concepcion with group of angels Museum of Sevilla

St Francis of Assis The Hermitage Petrograd, Russia

St Francis half length with his hands crossed on his breast looking down towards a cross
a skull before him (62x82)

Bust of young Man

A Saint

The Virgin (Aguado No 217 2.20x110)

The Magi Adoring the Infant Jesus 8 figures. This picture belonged to M Fumaroli,
whose collection was sold in Paris Dec 16th 1843

Velasquez

Juan de Pareja. Earl of Radnor

Bust of a mulatto in dark green doublet with white collar (30x25)

Royal Academy 1787. (Curtis p.327-328)