

SECOND PRIZE WINNER: ROBERT HANDICOTT

PAINTING IN A CAFE RESTAURANT

A 'pleasant scene' — the city from the sea —
In oils, above my table; priced to be
Attractive to the tourist passing through.
A 'local artist's' work. I wonder who
Might be prepared to part with such a sum
To take that picture proudly to his room.
No-one, I think, conversant with the art.
Someone — more likely — choosing from the heart
Much as an older man might choose a wife:
A widower, the children married off;
Time on his hands to travel and to share
Some interest in the arts, but not to care
For critics or for critical reflection.
A man of deeds, not given to introspection;
Content to like and take what he can find,
Conform it to the prospect in his mind,
And never doubt the purchase price well spent.
Happy the man so artlessly content.