

ouleurs du u bec... in uand Deux peintre

GASTON REBRY I.A.F

Gaston Rebry, calm, relaxed, a slight smile, hovering over a moustache, always seems happy with his lot. He goes along with the interview as he would with a friend. His family was ... *“A sports-oriented family, a good family headed by a father who may have been rather strict as in the old days, all in all rather understanding parents. My father was one of the great Belgian cyclists... a champion in the history of European sport in the years thirty- thirty-four: he took part three times in the Paris-Roubaix circuit.. etc. That was his profession from the age of eighteen to that of thirty five and, between times, he had opened a kind of inn, a pub.. That’s what it was!. We were four children in our family.”* As a child, Gaston was rather patient but would become aggressive if anyone so much as tread on his toes... *“I remember quarrelling with our maid and throwing scissors at her.. and the scissors had stayed stuck in the door with her hair...Oh I was rather boisterous, children always have a slight streak of wickedness....I’d flare up now and then and afterwards would become gentle again”* He was a very good student in primary school.. The first year, but things took a turn for the worse when he developed a greater interest in sports than in school. Following his fathers example, he was mad about bicycling and, at twelve, already took part in some races. He quit school at fourteen but went to the Académie des Beaux-Arts of Menin (Belgium). At that time, the minimum schooling required under Belgian School was eight years. *“All I could think of was a sport, that’s why I left school, I was too active, I wanted to become a bicycle racer because of my father was one and I felt I had what it took to be one. At fifteen and sixteen I would race in the summer and work in a chocolate confectionery plant in the winter...that’s all I did. Oh yes! I was in racing until I turned nineteen, which was when I came to Canada.”* His sister

who had lived in Canada for some time suggested he come visit her to see what job or career opportunities were available. Gaston liked to travel so he accepted her invitation and arrived in Montreal in nineteen-fifty-three. Although he had some trouble adapting at first, and despite nostalgia for bicycle racing, he gradually settled into his new life style. He began to work as a travelling salesman of fine china. With a trailer attached to his car, he took to the road throughout Québec to show and sell his goods. A little later, he took night classes at the Beaux-arts school. *“I’d come home from the school and often paint until, two, three o’clock in the morning; the next day, I’d be off to work. Then, I was travelling with the trailer, I remember I would paint on the jute cloth- that was the ‘in’ thing at the time. I would do business with some people, stop every now and then in some stores to show my work and sell a few pieces here and there... I had to start somewhere. I didn’t have anything to lose and, after a while, I quite my job to devote myself exclusively to painting. It didn’t bring in a lot of money but we managed just the same. Oh! This was around nineteen seventy; seventy-two things really didn’t take off until seven or eight years ago. I explored for a long time to find a style I liked, I tried all painting styles before finding this one, then... Well, that’s what I like. I like to take my time to paint a picture.”* Gaston feels that the society in which we live *“isn’t all that bad”* as he says. He isn’t interested in working only for money. *“...income tax wise, the more you work, the more you pay. It becomes...Heavens, at a given point, if you earn more than a certain amount, you go up a percentage point and pay more than ever...now, I don’t agree with that!”* Gaston Reby is a loner, he is happy to be alone in the woods. He neither hunts nor fishes... *“I like to eat fish providing I didn’t catch it, in fact I even had to kill a fly that bites me, its true that I really love animals.”* Emotional, sensitive, calm and very friendly, Gaston Reby is what one would call a thoroughly decent man but never, in any way a weakling...

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