

Library
Mrs. Ryan

Masterpiece of the Month, April 1951

LA TOILETTE

At the age of twenty three Mary Cassatt decided to go to Europe to become an artist. She studied the old masters in the museums but did not attend any of the art schools. As she explained, "I had already recognized who were my true masters. I admired Manet, Courbet and Degas." Degas became her friend and influenced her draughtsmanship and composition. But occasionally he was piqued at her success and once said, "I cannot admit that a woman can draw so well as that!" He might well have made that remark about **La Toilette** which displays not only her mastery of these formal elements but also her ability to show the depth of maternal love without sentimentality.