

bunco men, the jugglers, the drunken soldiers, the market women—all, in fact, who make up a city's throng. We go with Alciphron into the houses of the Bohemian set and take part in their jolly dinners at which poets and artists eat and drink and talk and sing; and as

we watch them, all the centuries that lie between us melt away, and we see once more that human life and human nature are essentially the same in every age and every land, and that the fascination of them is unalterable and eternal.

Harry Thurston Peck.

## "A POOR THING BUT MINE OWN."

**A** LITTLE over a half a century ago, a purchaser of a landscape by Constable thus wrote the artist:

"Some time ago, as I did not quite like the effect of the sky, I was foolish enough to have that obliterated, and a new one put in by another artist." He then coolly continues with the admission that "the new sky, although extremely beautiful, did not harmonise with the other parts of the picture," and begs Mr. Constable to remedy the trouble by painting once more his own sky to the painting. Whatever may have been the language indulged in within the privacy of his studio, publicly at least the artist assented to this odd request with a rare graciousness, even going so far as to refuse any compensation for the additional labour. That the writer of the letter had been the first stranger to purchase one of Constable's canvases may have accounted in some measure for the artist's amiability, still as another of his landscapes was cut into two and sold as two separate pictures, and so far as we can learn the dealer escaped either hanging or tarring, it seems probable that the sanctity of a work of art fifty years ago was not what it is to-day.

Let the owner of a painting to-day try to change it to suit his own fancy and he will be restrained by the decree of the Supreme Court. The victory obtained by William de Leftwich Dodge in restraining others from altering his mural decoration in the new Montreal hotel must meet with well-nigh universal approval. Solomon himself never rendered a wiser decision, and, speaking of Solomon, we are reminded of one of his most popular decisions in recognising the claims of the true parent, for the creations that are born of the throes of artistic

labour tug at one's heartstrings with an appeal that is all but human.

But I have lately been considering what might have been some of the consequences of a defeat for Mr. Dodge. Let us suppose it had been decided that the purchaser of a picture had the right, while retaining the signature of the artist, to have it changed in any way to suit his ideas of fitness or beauty, how interesting, not to say fascinating, would it be to visit the art gallery of a Chicago pork-packer, how positively exciting to follow the career of—let us say a Symphony of Whistler, from the time it first hangs before the adoring eyes of a Boston spinster until such time as it adorns the mansion of a Seattle magnate.

Then what an opportunity has been lost to the publisher of books! Here it almost seems as if the Public has a clear grievance. How delightful, how inexpressibly delightful, could all the weaknesses of our favourite authors be overcome, all their shortcomings be obliterated, by just the right antidotal pen!

Let us see how it might work: A good deal of disappointment was expressed over Mrs. Ward's parsimony in giving her readers the brilliant conversations of Julie Le Breton. It was the universal opinion that a little more revelation of her wonderful conversational powers other than mere "hearsay evidence" would have been relished. How delightful had the publishers of *Lady Rose's Daughter* been permitted to supply this deficiency by engaging the services, say, of the author of *The Dolly Dialogues*, or of *Concerning Isabel Carnaby*! Think of the selling qualities of a novel by William Dean Howells with one or two really attractive women put in by the skillful hand of Henry Harland or Elinor Glynn? How would the mild detective

stories of Mary Wilkins "look up" if re-touched by the master hand of "the one and only!" How attractive would be an edition of George Meredith "Englised" by Brander Matthews or Professor Woodberry! Or one of Thompson-Seton worked over in certain particulars by John Burroughs. And might we not hope to have a set of Fenimore Cooper with the Indians rewritten by Hamlin Garland, or the *Leaves of Grass* done into rhyme by Austin Dobson? These are only a few of the choice attractions that might have been offered us. But why limit the delightful idea to the realm of books? Extend it to the region of

sculpture and might we not have a "Bourgeois of Calais" transformed at the touch of a strict academican to a group of Dancing Fauns? Or the painful "Two Natures" of Barnard softened into "Two Greek Youths Wrestling?" Or in music think of the possibilities of a score of Richard Strauss with insertions by the melodious Victor Herbert!

But all this is denied us. The strong arm of the Law interposes. In Art, only the hand of Time and the touch of sun and air may be suffered to do their transforming work. Our pleasant little dream is but a dream.

Annie Nathan Meyer.

## GEORGE C. HAZELTON, JR.

MR. GEORGE C. HAZELTON, Jr., the lawyer-dramatist, probably best known as the author of *Mistress Nell*, has put the finishing touches to a drama on the life of Edgar Allan Poe, entitled *The Raven*, which is to appear in New York early in January. It was on the evening of the ninth of October, 1900, that Miss Henrietta Crosman, favoured by the failure of a play booked for a long run at the Bijou Theatre, introduced herself and Mr. Hazelton, the playwright, to a New York audience. The first night's receipts were but \$69.00. Defied by a theatrical syndicate which fought her with Miss Ada Rehan in a play with the same historical heroine and which declared it would drive her out of town in a week, Miss Crosman established a metropolitan reputation for herself, *Mistress Nell* and its author, by playing in *Mistress Nell* for over two hundred nights in four of New York's leading theatres, while *Sweet Nell of Old Drury*, Miss Rehan's play, was withdrawn after a three weeks' run.

On the opening night when the handful of people went "wild," after the first act, and the dramatic critics awakened to the fact that a fine piece of dramatic writing was being interpreted by a finished actress, Mr. Hazelton stood passively in the back of the house, leaning on the railing, "watching the jury come in," as he expressed it. For about seven years he had tried in vain to have

his play accepted by New York and London managers.

It was in *Gloriana*, in Chicago, that Mr. Hazelton first saw Miss Crosman act. He became enthusiastic about her, and when she came to Washington he submitted his play to her. In it Miss Crosman believed she saw a vehicle that would carry her into New York on the top wave of popularity. Mr. Campbell, Miss Crosman's husband and manager, who was then on the New York *Herald*, was determined that she should have the play. His belief in *Mistress Nell* is shown by the following incident. One night Mr. Paul Kester called at the *Herald* office and asked him to read his play woven about the life of Nell Gwyn. (This play, then called by that name, and afterwards *Sweet Nell of Old Drury*, was eventually produced in London by Madame Rehan and later by Julia Nielson and Fred Terry, subsequent to *Mistress Nell* in this country.) But Mr. Campbell refused to read it, saying it would not be fair to Mr. Kester, as he had been trying to arrange to secure Mr. Hazelton's play on the life of the mistress of Charles II. "I have never ceased to congratulate myself on my refusal," said Mr. Campbell; "it would have been a serious charge to have been accused of having stolen in the least from Mr. Kester." *Mistress Nell* made her bow before the footlights of the Tabor Opera House in Denver, Colo., on June 3, 1900. That night Mr.