

Although he has an assistant who relieves him of most of his pedagogical duties except occasional lectures, he writes very little except in his summer vacations. He has a cottage in the pine woods somewhere along the New England coast, and there every summer he gives himself up to his work.

The verses written under the titles of most of the collection of "Sea Pieces" are his own. He has written a good deal of verse from time to time though he has published very little, and is an omnivorous reader of verse, French, German and English; his catholic taste including pretty much everything that is good from Heine, whose form is flawless, to Walt Whitman, who has no form at all.

I never heard of any recognized verse that he did not like except Swinburne and Stephen Phillips; and he objects to these as "effeminate and unsound."

He has written the words for some of his own songs, though singers claim that his songs are most of them wanting in melody and practically un-singable.

On the whole, he is an instrumental writer rather than a song writer; and is most successful when he makes the instrument do his singing; but no one who has heard his exquisite "To a Wild Rose" or "From an Indian Wigwam" can doubt his gift of melody.

The Heroic and Tragic sonatas and several of the Sea Pieces are certainly the highest and strongest work that any American has done in instrumental composition; and there is very little that is better in all contemporary music.

He has not a trace of the florid or exotic, governing all he writes by a sort of Puritanic self-control and a relentless melancholy that is but half expressed. The New England conscience, maybe, transmuted into art at last and put behind the throne where the Greeks set fate.

#### A New Drought Theory.

Will H. Price of La Cyuga, Kansas, offers a new theory as to the cause of the excessive drought prevailing in Kansas and Missouri.

He believes that the weather conditions were brought about by the great oil gusher opened at Beaumont four months ago, just prior to the beginning of the unprecedented hot spell. He points to the fact that for some days before the oil well could be brought under control, it was sending into the air immense quantities of oil that broke into spray, vaporized and was distributed into that strata of air where the rain clouds are usually born, and that these fumes were augmented by the continual opening of new wells. This gas, he says, was of slow combustion and contained an immense quantity of heat, enveloped the moisture in the air and prevented it from uniting in sufficient mass to be precipitated as rain.

This theory sounds well enough on paper, but an unanswerable argument to the contrary is that the heat and the drought in Pennsylvania during the past four months have been more excessive than ever they were in the fiercest throes of the oil boom, and that the vapor from oil wells in that state has been injurious only to the foliage and vegetation within the immediate vicinity of the well, say within a radius of five miles at most.

#### Chase.

William Chase is another painter whom the people love and whom the Young Art Student affects to hold in scorn because he has the tricks of pleasing color, and because his pic-

tures convey no lofty message. Mr. Chase is not, indeed, a poet; much less is he a seer. He is an admirable colorist, and he believes that there is a sort of divinity in color itself. He has at least marvellous facility and craft, and it ill becomes young folk with large ideals and scant technique to belittle him. Technique is the base of every art, and the noblest sentiment may be shipwrecked in that perilous voyage from the brain to the hand. Pretty little girls daintily posed and painted with exquisite refinement of color have as good a right to exist in the catholic kingdom of art as the pale, primeval shades of Puvis de Chavannes.

It is not unlikely that the Chicago Art Institute, with its splendid collection of casts and pictures, has done more for the people of the middle west than any of the city's great industries. Every farmer boy who goes into the city on a freight train with his father's cattle, and every young merchant who goes into the city to order his stock, takes a look at the pictures. There are thousands of people all over the prairies who have seen their first and only good pictures there. They select their favorites and go back to see them year after year. The men grow old and careworn themselves, but they find that these things of beauty are immortally joy giving and immortally young. You will find hundreds of merchants and farmer boys all over Nebraska and Kansas and Iowa who remember Jules Breton's beautiful "Song of the Lark," and perhaps the ugly little peasant girl standing barefooted among the wheat fields in the early morning has taught some of these people to hear the lark sing for themselves.

Some of the most appreciative art criticisms I ever heard were made by two sunbrowned Kansas boys as they looked at George Inness' "Prairie Fire," there in the Cyrus H. McCormick loan exhibition. Of all the light houses along the Great Harbor, there is none that throws its light so far.

#### Chicago Art Institute.

Paderewski's theory of buying pictures and getting people to look at them has been exemplified in at least three cities in the United States: New York, Chicago and Pittsburg. As a result those three cities contain nearly all the important private collections in the United States.

There is no reason why Pittsburg, for instance, should display any greater interest in art than Kansas City or Denver or Omaha or San Francisco. It is not a city of culture; the city is entirely given over to manufacturing industries, and the only standard of success recognized is the pecuniary standard. But one thing Carnegie did; he bought pictures and got people to look at them.

Whether art itself can be propagated by infusion or no, has not been proven; but in some measure taste can be.

There is no reason why the common people of Chicago, the people who read Marie Corelli and go to see "The Pride of Jennico," should know any more about pictures than the people of any other big city, but they do. Any stranger in the city who spends much time about the Art Institute must notice the comparatively enlightened conversation of the people who frequent the building on free days.

For some reason the institution is much nearer to the people of Chicago than the Metropolitan art gallery is to the people of New York. Perhaps because the spirit of caste is less

perceptible in western cities, and the relations between employers and employees are more cordial. When any one of the Deerings or McCormicks buys an Inness or a Corot, he exhibits the picture in the Art Institute and their workmen drop in to have a look at it some Sunday and decide that they could have done something better with the money, if it had been theirs. The convenient and attractive location of the building may also have something to do with its popularity.

The collection of pictures is such that it would be impossible to cultivate a false or florid taste there. With the exception of several Beaugereaus, there is not a poor picture in the gallery. Yet there are hundreds of pictures there that the veriest philistine can admire, and, to a great extent, appreciate; people who read "Under Two Flags" and enjoy comic opera and ice cream soda.

The real fault of popular taste, when we get down to the heart of the matter, is that the people prefer the pretty to the true. That is a fault, certainly; but not so grave a one as the young art student makes it. Indeed, there are times when I would take the philistine's word for a picture, long before I would the young art student's; for the philistine is always governed by moderation, and he is always honest with himself.

There are certain painters whom the philistine seem to get quite as much pleasure from in his way as the Art Student does in his. Take, for instance Josef Israels' dutch interiors, and especially his pictures of mothers and children. The simplicity and directness of his treatment and the sombre tenderness of his coloring are by no means lost on the philistine, though he may not stop to reason about it and may attribute all the pleasure he experiences to the mere beauty of the subject.

H. O. Tanner, the colored painter, who handles Biblical subjects with the power and conviction of the old masters, is another favorite with the people. I have seen country preachers and solemn old ladies in ill-fitting black gloves stand before his "Suicide of Judas" with visible emotion.

There is something about Tanner's work that makes the people and places and life of Palestine real to us as nothing else has ever done. The Old Masters painted Italian Christs and Dutch Marys and Spanish Josephs; but this man paints the Orient, not the Orient of the Midway and bazaar, dressed up and tricked out for a show, but the work-a-day Palestine, where men plowed and sowed and prayed.

There is a tradition that Biblical subjects should be painted in a highly decorative manner, and that Orientalism means crimson and ultramarine; but Mr. Tanner produces his most Oriental effect with low colors. He paints with a realism so unaffected, a sympathy with the life of the people that there seems to be an almost national touch in his pictures. There is something about his insistent use of the silvery gray of the olives and the parched yellow clay hills of Palestine that recalls Pierre Loti's faculty of infusing absolute personality into environment, if one may compare two such different mediums as prose and paint.

Another great favorite with the philistine is gay master Rico, whose name to the Young Art Student is as the red rag to the bull. Now Master Rico chooses to be pretty, and that in the eye of the art student, is an unpardonable sin. You will find a copy of one of his Venetian scenes in every

picture loving home of the middle class; very blue skies, a silvery canal, white and red houses, bridges and gay gondolas, and in the foreground the dear Lombard poplars, the gayest and saddest of trees, rustling green and silver in the sunlight. The people like to think of Venice as a pretty place, where people forget their troubles, and therefore they like Master Rico's pictures better than those of greater painters than he who have darkened the canals of the city with the shadows of her past.

The Young Art Student can find no place in life for the dainty, the trivial or the gay; but would have us live in Gothic cathedrals and marry the noble but angular ladies of Puvis de Chavannes. Rico is only a humming bird, if you will, or a yellow rose in June; but the philistine will stand by him because he adds somewhat to the gayety of life.

Painters sometimes call Gari Melcherr a hard painter, but the people know his worth, and they feel the poetry in his subjects, even if they do not know the tricks of craft by which he presents it.

Every woman who has ever carried a baby will stop and smile at his young Dutch Mothers, with their plump, uncorseted figures and their pudgy little children with wooden shoes on their feet.

The densest person cannot miss the beautiful and homely sentiment in "The Sailor and His Sweetheart." The philistine is partial to fireside scenes and domestic and sentimental subjects generally. He knows that sentiment is the most vital motive in society, in his own life and in the lives of his friends. That it wrecks banks and controls the markets, directly or indirectly, and he demands that the comings and goings and courtings and festivals and farewells that make up the gladness and sadness of his life he somehow put into art. He will accept it even when it is badly done for the sake of the sentiment; but I believe that in time he will prefer it well done. Do we not all admit that the man who can make these homely subjects into art is the greatest of all artists, and that the peasant folk of Millet are worthier a man of genius than the ballet dancers of Degas?

#### The Deterioration of a Composer.

No manager seems anxious to be responsible for Miss Alice Nielsen's destiny for the coming season. Mr. Pearley, Mr. Englander, Mr. Frohman have one after another declined that honor. To admirers of Miss Nielsen's kittenish art this may seem incomprehensible; but the facts are that managers have begun to realize that the vogue of graceless angularity and hoydenish coquetry must be brief, and that for some time Miss Nielsen has been walking on very thin ice.

In view of Miss Nielsen's present straits what will become of those meritless compositions "The Fortune Teller" and "The Singing Girl," and of the income of their misguided composer, Mr. Victor Herbert?

Four years ago Victor Herbert went to Pittsburg to conduct the symphony orchestra there. The managers of the orchestra had received several personal letters from Anton Seidel stating that he considered Herbert the most promising orchestra material among the young men of this country, and that no concert-meister under him had ever shown such marked ability to manage the personnel of an orchestra and keep each man up to his best work. At that time Herbert was still one of the best concert cellists in America, had written several admirable suites for