

change came rapidly; to me she was ever the same gentle spirit, but her life had lost its sweetness, her step had lost its vigour, and long e'er the summer had reached its noon-tide she grew weak and wan. One night at gloaming time she tried to sing to me, but after a few low liquid notes she ceased, and I knew that the voice of my nightingale was silenced forever. Those joyous days of spring fell rapidly into perspective, summer deepened into autumn, and each day found the weary little pilgrim farther on her way.

With pious lowly care she had lain away the sacred Stradivarius. One evening she softly asked to have it, and as I lifted it gently into her hands, she, who had never before deemed herself worthy to touch the soul piece of her beloved, wailed forth the strains of the "Marcia Funebre," which were even yet vibrating in our hearts as they had done on that memorable day when they fell from the master's hand. Then gently, softly, sweetly stole forth the shadow of hope, and we knew that Antonius was with us, even speaking in tender accents through the medium of his loved one. Ah! if all could know how near to us are those dear ones, would they hurt them and retard by selfish moaning and regret? These gentle spirits dwell about us ever, they greet us with soft endearing touch, they breathe upon us and inspire us, though too often our eyes are so filled with earth light that we cannot see their beseeching glances nor follow where they softly lead. Every night at sunset I carried my precious child to the balcony, and every night the burden grew lighter, a feverish light shone in those eyes that was not the light of earth or sky. The knowledge of the master's presence gave a momentary impulsion to her life, but she soon grew too weak to interpret him in music, though she often whispered in my ear rare gems of thought, the fruit of this farther sight. One evening in the autumn as I bore my darling in my arms her whole frame seemed strangely etherealized, and we knew that death was hovering near, though to each of us the thought was destitute of fear. This terror of Death is so much of our own creation. He is not the cold, cruel thing we paint him, but a warm, living presence, a princeling, who comes with a wand of light to liberate the poor-world weary spirit, to accomplish its identity, then to waft it onward and lose it in that infinite whole which we call eternity. To every atom of this whole there comes the sunset of existence, with a craving for peace and a longing for rest, and the slumber of death is but a mid-summer night after a day of toil. Yes, when death comes to each, the icy hand is warm and its clasp is truer than the grip of friendship.

As we sat for the last time, her hand clasped in mine, together quaffing the beauty of our southern home, and watching the descent of the sun as he neared the gleaming sea, her tiny hand quivered in my grasp, we understood each other without words, and I placed the violin at her side. She caressed it lovingly, and fell shortly into a fitful slumber. The sun, as if loath to mock my grief, stole out of sight, the fading daylight died gradually away, and the gentle hush of night was creeping softly on, her eyes opened and sought mine; one glance that pierced my heart, one tender pressure of the hand, one gentle sigh that lured the last breath from the weary body, and the soul had burst its prison-house. With grief too deep for movement, I still held her hand and gazed at my broken flower in the waning light. A low sob rose at her side, the chords of the faithful violin fell asunder. The messenger of death had touched it likewise with his wand, and the spirit released had joined its twin. These gentle souls born here to music are re-incarnated in immortal love.

CORA BETHUNE LINDSEY.

THEN AND NOW.

If it should hap, dear heart, that you and I,
In some dim distance when these days are done,
When Fate to the last thread her web has spun
And all this life and light behind us lie,
Meet and make known beneath another sky—
Shall we count o'er these moments, one by one
And say, this sweet—"that golden—sands have run
But harsh since these were sifted"—with a sigh?
Or shall some unknown and far-future joy
Lift us and fill us with such perfect power
That it must reign alone, all else forgot?
Dear, we know not: Time's task is to destroy
More than to give; snatch we this living hour
To build a memory no time can blot.

ANNIE ROTHWELL.

Kingston.

THE RAMBLER.

AN extraordinary statement is that recently made by our well-known Canadian artist, Mr. J. W. L. Forster, to the intent that we shall have no distinctive Canadian art among us until we have art critics. How is this statement proved by the record of past ages? It would appear, rather, that the creative and executive age is, in the history of most nations, not contemporaneous with the analytical and critical age. The great masters—creators of the Italian, Spanish, Flemish and other schools—certainly did their work for the most and best part unconscious of the thing we call criticism. Turner had to paint his pictures before Ruskin could analyze them. Lessing appeared—how many centuries subsequent to the moulding

of Laocoon? Art, like literature, has to become history before true criticism can be achieved. Mr. Forster has referred to Hamerton. Have the earnest disquisitions of the latter writer made any sensible difference to the position of various well-known painters, or to the intrinsic value of certain accepted aesthetic doctrines? Even in this connection the statement does not tally.

What Mr. Forster doubtless meant, and what we servants of the public have—many of us—contended for, during a long period of patient waiting, is that the position of Canadian art might be much assisted by current criticism of a more discriminating nature. Our artists must work away, not heedless, perhaps, of local opinion, but certainly not depending upon it either for inspiration or undue panegyric. How would the appearance of a highly developed critical individuality among us in all probability affect our artists? About half-a-dozen would receive a high meed of praise; the rest—damned with faint praise or scarified. But while the fortunate six would, no doubt, hasten to make hay while the critical life-giving and life-sustaining luminary shone, the others would work just as they were working before. Many of them, having no other resources, would naturally keep on at what, at least, brought in bread and butter, while others would be too thick-skinned to acknowledge the propriety of the "letting-down-easy" system. In point of fact, the advent of even a Ruskin will in no sudden or genuine way affect our local artists. Those who have it in them will go on quietly achieving; those who haven't will, perhaps, never discover the fact. For, in order to be great in any work, one has to be critical oneself.

Indeed if we can number half-a-dozen first-class painters for the Dominion of Canada in this year of 1891, we shall do very well. We have not a single animal painter. Have we a historical painter of any style or eminence? Supposing we allow two portrait painters, three landscape, and one composition or story painter—will it be deemed too small a list?

Improved standards of criticism are undoubtedly necessary. This reminds me that a friend of mine once wrote an article on this subject, boldly and tersely expressed, for a local musical paper. The editor paid for it, admired it, and promised to use it *some day*, when musical matters should improve. "At present," said he, "the publication of your paper would ruin my struggling journal; it would arouse the deadliest antagonism of the local press and do more harm than good."

I suppose art critics are a good deal like musical critics after all; it is a question who would suffer the worst treatment—the critics or the artists. 'Tis better to be neither.

A Symposium of Canadian Poets. Subject "March."

MARCH.

Shall Thor with his hammer
Beat on the mountain,
As on an anvil,
A shackle and fetter?

Shall the lame Vulcan
Shout as he swingeth
God-like his hammer,
And forge thee a fetter?

Shall Jove, the Thunderer,
Twine his swift lightnings
With his loud thunders,
And forge thee a shackle?

"No," shouts the Titan,
The young lion-throated;
"Thor, Vulcan, nor Jove
Cannot shackle and bind me."

Past the horizon,
In the palm of a valley,
Her feet in the grasses,
There is a maiden.

She smiles on the flowers,
They widen and redden;
She weeps on the flowers,
They grow up and kiss her.

She breathes in their bosoms,
They breathe back in odours;
Inarticulate homage,
Dumb adoration.

She shall wreath them in shackles,
Shall weave them in fetters;
In chains shall she braid them,
And me shall she fetter.

I, the invincible;
March, the earth-shaker;
March, the sea-lifter;
March, the sky-render;

March, the lion-throated,
April the weaver
Of delicate blossoms,
And moulder of red buds—

Shall at the horizon,
Its ring of pale azure,
Its scurry of white clouds,
Meet in the sunlight.

MARCH.

Over the dripping roofs and sunk snow-barrows,
The bells are ringing loud and strangely near,
The shout of children dins upon mine ear
Shrilly, and like a flight of silvery arrows
Showers the sweet gossip of the British sparrows,
Gathered in noisy knots of one or two,
To joke and chatter just as mortals do
Over the day's long tale of joys and sorrows;

Talk before bed-time of bold deeds together,
Of thefts and fights, of hard times and the weather,
Till sleep disarm them, to each little brain
Bringing tucked wings and many a blissful dream,
Visions of wind and sun, of field and stream,
And busy barn-yards with their scattered grain.

MARCH.

With outspread, whirring wings of vandyked jet,
Two crows one day o'er house and pavement pass'd.
Swift silhouettes limned against the blue, they glass'd
Smooth beak and ebon feather in the wet
Of gaping pool and gutter, while, beset
By nestward longing, high their hoarse cry cast
In the face of fickle March's treacherous blast,
Till all the City smelt the violet.

Then, through that City quick the news did run,
Great wheels ran down, vast belts were stopped in mill
And fire in forges. Long ere set of sun
Dazed men, pale women sought the open hill.
They thronged the streets. They caught the clarion cry:
"Spring has come back—trust Spring to never die!"

ON A MARCH MORNING.

Our elm is heavy with ice,
The mountain is hid in a mist,
And the heaven is grey
Above, and away,
Where the vapours the hill-tops have kissed,

The fields are bleak patches of white,
Our stream is still shut in his prison
Of ice and of snow,
And the sun, half-awglo,
Scarce over the forest is risen.

But there is something abroad in the air,
Perchance 'tis the spirit of spring,
That fills me with fancies
Of blue skies and pansies,
And songs that the meadow brooks sing.

Some spirit the season has sent,
With visions of blossom and leaf,
And song—as a token,
Of feeling unspoken,
In this time of the aged winter's grief.

Under the head of "Suggestions to Contributors," the well-known *Youth's Companion* tells about its latest scheme or Folklore Competition, and certainly leaves nothing unsaid.

"What is your old home story? What family story best pleased you when young, and how was it told? Who told it? Nearly all old towns have anecdotes or stories of local interest, which have passed from one generation to another, and have been told by household fires. Such stories in other lands, from the days of Homer and the 'Arabian Nights,' have been collected and have become a kind of pictorial history of the home life and character of the people. The English and Scottish minstrels and balladists used to sing such stories; the brothers Grimm collected the household tales of Germany, and Hans Christian Andersen those of the North. The 'Vicar of Wakefield' is a village tale. Irving has given us the quaint old humours of Early New York, and Hawthorne, in his 'Twice-told Tales,' has done for America what Scott did for Scotland in his 'Tales of a Grandfather.'"

"The *Companion* is the oldest literary paper in the country, and its editors wish to make a collection of stories that belong to the people, and have become a part of local tradition and history, like the legends of John Alden or 'Sleepy Hollow'; of Mosby's wig that terrified the Indians; Whittier's 'Skipper Ireson's Ride.' And not only these, but tales of old colonial houses and farms, and Southern plantations; old French legends of the rencontres; stories of sailors and seafaring people; pioneer cabin stories," etc., etc.

CORRESPONDENCE.

TRAINING INSTITUTES.

To the Editor of THE WEEK:

SIR,—Your correspondent, "Phalacrocorax," might have criticized the policy of the High School Board in the matter of training institutes, without misrepresenting its members. That he differs from them in opinion is not a good reason for charging them with acting inconsiderately or hastily, or for characterizing them as "thoughtless." As a matter of fact this question has been with them one of grave, earnest, and careful consideration. It was thoroughly discussed at a meeting of the school management committee, with the high school inspector and the principals of the schools present. The extent and kind of interference with the ordinary work of the schools that would be caused by the adoption of the scheme were accurately arrived at, and the advantages likely to accrue were as thoroughly appraised. The proposal was afterwards subjected to a very long discussion at a meeting of the Board, which by a majority of thirteen to three resolved to try the experiment. In all this there can be no cause for alarm, for if the scheme does not work satisfactorily it can be dropped at any time on giving notice to the Department.

I am free to admit that the presence in the schools of teachers in training will be somewhat of a disadvantage, but I must emphatically deny that in admitting them the Board has been actuated by a desire to help the Education Department out of a difficulty. The matter has been discussed from first to last as one concerning Toronto alone. Any thoughtful and competent observer will admit that the system has from our own point of view advantages as well as drawbacks, and the question is simply whether the