

# THE CRITIC:

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## THE CRITIC

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## EDITORIAL NOTES.

Miss M. E. Braddon, after patiently seeing fifty novels of her writing reprinted in America without the slightest pecuniary advantage to herself, has been aroused to the point of writing a letter to *Public Opinion*, protesting against having her name put to stories that she did not write. This is adding insult to injury, and Miss Braddon is perfectly right to protest against it. A settlement of the copyright question is urgently called for.

While the advent of the McKinlay Tariff Bill cannot be regarded as anything but unfortunate for Canada, yet it is not by any means a knock-down blow. The United States is not the only country we can trade with, and who knows but what we may find as profitable a market for our products elsewhere? At any rate the effort will be made, and shortly. No time is being lost in preparing exhibits for the Jamaica Exhibition, and it is probable that the West Indies will, in consequence, become better informed of the products which Canada is able to export, and will become large customers. We do not believe that the McKinlay Bill was dictated by any particular ill-feeling towards Canada, any more than to any other country. It is simply the carrying out of a party principle and may not exist for very long.

The *Montreal Witness* treats of the need of rapid ocean transit in connection with the question of new markets in such a sensible way that we reproduce the note:—"The new need for rapid transportation of eggs and poultry, if a market is to be found for them in Great Britain, will reinforce the old demand for rapid transportation of butter, cheese, and more rapid despatch of the mails between Canada and the Mother Country. The project of establishing a swift line of passenger and mail steamships between the Dominion and the United Kingdom, which has been attempted, will, no doubt, be immediately carried out, though perhaps on a more moderate and reasonable basis as to speed than has hitherto been proposed. The time has come for a strenuous effort to establish a quick passenger and packet service. It is to be hoped that one or other of the old and well established steamship companies will see its way clear to afford the service with the aid the Government will no doubt propose. Now that there are short and direct railway lines to the Maritime Provinces, it is probably that an ocean port in Capo Breton would offer the best all year round piece for transferences from railway to vessel and vessel to railway. This would only apply to what is known as the package trade, and would probably not diminish for long the total business of the St. Lawrence ports."

The success of lady students at colleges is no matter for surprise nowadays. We have passed that stage, but it is always pleasant to hear of their continued advancement. An English paper informs us that by unanimous resolution of the Council of Queen's College, Belfast, Ireland, the medical classes were this year for the first time thrown open to ladies. Five in all availed themselves of the opportunities thus afforded them of preparing for medical degrees, and the President, Dr. Hamilton, states that they have applied themselves to their work with the most laudable assiduity and success, and that the results have been good in every way. Two ladies attended art classes, making seven in all who were enrolled on the college books during the session. All the classes in the college are now open to both sexes.

The law against the use of tobacco by youths under the age of sixteen years, which came into operation in the State of New York last month, is one of the straws which shows the direction of the wind. It is a consummation devoutly to be wished that the use of tobacco by youths should be done away with, but it appears to us scarcely a matter for legislation. In the good old times these things were attended to by parents, with results better probably than will follow the action of the State. Parental authority seems to have totally collapsed, and the State has to come forward and impose arbitrary laws to take the place of wise bringing up. "Once upon a time," as old stories tell, the boy who indulged in the use of the weed and was in due course detected, was forthwith subjected to a course of sprouts, in which a father's chastening hand and a mother's tears and prayers played an important part. Now that the matter has been taken in hand by the State, parents will be likely to take less responsibility upon themselves than formerly. But apart from this, the use of tobacco is either right or wrong. If right why legislate upon the subject, if wrong why are the boys alone to be restricted? And what about the girls? They sometimes smoke cigarettes. There are so many ifs and ans about this piece of legislation that it has been resented as an impertinence by society in general and has become already a dead letter.

The purest and sweetest of poets, Longfellow, has been receiving very harsh treatment from some of the school principals in the city of Brooklyn. They take objection particularly to his poem, the "Building of the Ship," and would if they had their way exclude it from the school books. Steps have been taken to this end, but it is altogether unlikely that they will succeed. Here are some of the passages which these worthies think will corrupt the minds of their youthful charges:

And for a moment one might mark  
What had been hidden by the dark,  
That the head of the maiden lay at rest,  
Tenderly on the young man's breast.

In describing the ship the poet says:

She starts—she moves—she seems to feel  
The thrill of life along her keel.  
And spurning with her foot the ground,  
With one exulting, joyous bound,  
She leaps into the ocean's arms!

Take her, O! bridegroom, old and gray,  
Take her to thy protecting arms,  
With all her youth and all her charms!

How beautiful she is! How fair  
She lies within these arms, that press  
Her form with many a soft caress  
Of tenderness and watchful care!

And thus the beautiful lessons of the poem are overlooked by these purists. In New South Wales the same thing is being done on religious grounds. There is such a feeling against the teaching of religion in the schools that even the name of the Deity is banished. The school authorities recently cut out of Longfellow's "Wreck of the Hesperus" the touching stanza of the child in its distress:

"Then the maiden clasped her hands and prayed  
That saved she might be,  
And she thought of Christ who stilled the waves  
On the lake of Galilee."

This is positively pitiful; if the moralists and the religionists could get their way the brightest gems of literature would either be mutilated beyond recognition or else banished altogether. There is nothing in the description of the purest religious feeling to point to any special doctrine, and it is worse than absurd to exclude the finest works of literature on this account, and as to morality, most people will be surprised to find Longfellow being accused of anything improper.