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All articles, contributions, and letters on matter pertaining to the editorial department should be addressed to the Editor, and not to any person who may be supposed to be connected with the paper.

CURRENT TOPICS.

THE WEEK deeply regrets the necessity of publishing either the brief letter of "Play-Goer," which appears elsewhere, or any comments upon the performance to which that letter calls attention. Under the circumstances we could hardly decline to publish either without failing in our duty both to true art and to pure morals. From all we have learned of it, some parts of the entertainment in question were of such a kind as must have been offensive to every person of good taste in the audience, and as must tend to bring what should be an elevating and refining amusement into disrepute. If those who had the management of the affair can see nothing objectionable in such matters to which so many who are neither prudish nor puritanical have taken exception, it would probably be useless to appeal either to their good taste or to their sense of propriety and responsibility. The constant rehearsing of a play of such a stamp by those who appealed to their audience on the ground of the performance being an

amateur one presented by ladies and gentlemen, must be the reverse of improving to either the manners or morals of those taking part; and, as regards dress, we cannot help wishing that some of the members could have overheard the club-room criticisms to which our correspondent refers. The remedy might be severe but it would be, we are sure, effective.

If closer relations between Canada and her sister colonies in the East and between all these colonies and their common Mother, are not promoted by the visit of the Hon. Robert Reid, of Victoria, Australia, it will certainly not be for the want of an earnest and eloquent advocate. Mr. Reid's speech before the Toronto Board of Trade, on Monday, presented the subject in a shape so patriotic, and so attractive, that it can scarcely fail to command for the projects with which he dealt more serious consideration than they have yet received in Canada. We have the transcontinental road and the Pacific steamships; we want the swift Atlantic line and the Pacific cable, says Mr. Reid, in effect. These supplied, the main constituent parts of the Great Empire, so far at least as the Anglo-Saxon elements of it are concerned, will be drawn together in a real and lasting union such as is impossible without those bonds. True, the wants are pretty large and expensive ones, but if Canada, single-handed, has been able to provide one great link, or rather, including the C. P. R.'s Pacific line, two great links, the other partners in the concern should be able to furnish, with her help, the other two. And able they are, if the commercial judgments of all can but be convinced that the enterprise will be a paying one. Many practical questions will have to be asked and answered before the period of full conviction and action is reached. Especially will the question of commerce, of the actual products which may be profitably interchanged between the antipodal colonies, have to be considered on a matter-of-fact basis. The first stage, that of advocacy on patriotic and sentimental—we use the word with no disparaging connotation—grounds must give place to the second. We do not mean to hint that our guest should have gone into figures and statistics. That may be left for the coming conference at Ottawa. Meanwhile it may be observed that the American Congress, by its manifest tendency to relapse into McKinleyism, is helping on this movement powerfully.

We find that we have unintentionally omitted to notice the strong circular in

which the Dominion Live Stock Association bring before the people of Canada the very serious disadvantages under which they are placed, in carrying on the important business of exporting cattle to Great Britain, in consequence of the uncertain and sometimes extortionate freight-rates exacted by the steamship companies which have a practical monopoly of this carrying trade. In the circular it is stated that "every state of the market, or exigency of the cattle trade, seems to be taken advantage of by the vessel men to levy excessive rates." Buyers cannot ascertain before buying what the rate will be. It may be \$7 a head, or it may be \$17.50—a margin which is evidently wide enough to span the distance between a fair profit and a ruinous loss on the transaction. Montreal being the only Canadian shipping port, the vessels few, and competition consequently small and easily done away with by combination, the shippers have no resource. It is manifest that no trade can flourish under such conditions. One would suppose that self-interest would lead the vessel-owners to see the danger of killing the goose which lays the golden eggs, as they will surely do if they persist in so selfish and suicidal a policy as that ascribed to them by the Committee which has prepared the circular. Of course the other side is entitled to a fair hearing. The attention of all who would like to see the business prosper is particularly directed to the fact that nearly all the vessels in question are subsidized by the Canadian Government, i.e., from the pockets of Canadian rate-payers. As we have often maintained in the case of railways, it seems clear to us that the right and power of control of rates is or should be a logical accompaniment of the bestowal of aid from the public funds. When Mr. Mulock's Bill to correct this abuse comes before Parliament, the people's representatives will be remiss in duty if they do not see to it that it, or some substitute, is passed into law, to secure the rights of the farmers and shippers in this matter.

"Five or ten thousand men have no right to dictate to the other 65,000,000, or to dictate to the Government which the other 65,000,000 have established. . . We can recognize no master except the Commonwealth itself. Certainly no body of men less than a majority of the entire people can call upon us to act otherwise than in accordance with our own judgments."

So says Senator Hoar, of Massachusetts, writing to one of the Coxeyite leaders in his own constituency. The reasoning seems