

## Our Contributors.

### CRITICISM AN EASY THING TO DO.

BY KNOXIAN.

"Criticism, however brilliant, is a comparatively easy thing. It is easier to criticize the greatest things superbly than to do even small things fairly well."

That was one of the many sensible observations Dr. Stalker made to the students of Yale in his excellent introductory lecture. It was a good thing to say and will stand illustration and rubbing in.

It is easier to criticize the work of the engineer who built the Victoria bridge across the St. Lawrence at Montreal than to make a plank crossing over a ditch.

It is easier to criticize the architecture of the finest building in Toronto than to make a hen coop.

It is easier to criticize the building and management of the Grand Trunk and Canadian Pacific Railways than to make a wheel-barrow and run it straight for one-eighth of a mile.

It is easier to criticize the management of the Allan or Cunard Line than to paddle a birch bark canoe ten yards without upsetting.

It is easier to criticize the management of the largest farm in Ontario than milk one kicking cow or drive a live hog out of a potato patch.

It is easier to criticize the management of a bank or any other financial institution than to earn ten cents honestly. Many a man does criticize financial concerns who never earned ten cents honestly during his natural life.

It is easier for a corner grocery loafer to say how every business concern in town should be managed than to take off his coat and split one armful of stove wood for his wife.

It is easier for some electors to say how this Dominion should be governed than to mark their ballots in such a way that a county judge can decide which candidate they voted for.

It is easier for some delicate citizen to tell Mr. Mowat how the liquor traffic should be put down than for them to get safely through a mild colic without the use of ardent spirits.

It is easier to criticize any newspaper in the Dominion than to write one paragraph for its columns or make a readable report an inch long of a public meeting.

It is easier to criticize the best article ever published in the Dominion than to write the first sentence of the article or select a suitable heading for it.

A cheeky priggish fellow can easily criticize the style of any speaker or writer, though his own style may be so bad that it absolutely defies criticism.

It is easier to criticize the management of a school than to spell a monosyllable correctly. We have known some very severe critics in educational matters who displayed marked individuality in spelling. Individuality is not a bad thing, but it is possible to have too much of it in the spelling and pronunciation of words.

It is easier to criticize the work done in a theological hall than ring the bell for the students to come down to their morning hash. All you need do in the one case is wag the unruly member; in the other you must work all the muscles of the arm.

It is easier to criticize the best book ever written than use "shall and will" correctly, or be sure that you always get your pronouns properly connected with their antecedents. We have heard people talk quite oracularly about books who punctuate as if they put their commas in a pepper-box and shook the box over their manuscript.

It is easier to criticize the manner in which a doctor treats a difficult case than make one bread pill. Thousands of people say they know exactly what the doctor ought to do who don't actually know how to make a bowl of oat-meal gruel.

It is easier to sit on a back seat in a court-room and say how Mr. S. H. Blake, or Mr. Osler, or Mr. Kerr, or Mr. McCarthy should conduct a difficult law suit than stand up in court and say "my lord" with the proper inflection.

It is easier to criticize the best speech ever delivered in Canada than rise with elegance before a thousand people and say "Mr. Chairman." Thousands of people do the one every day who could not do the other if their lives depended on the success of the effort.

It is easier for people who have no children to say how a family of twelve should be trained than to give a cross baby one dose of soothing syrup.

It is easier to criticize the best choir in Canada than sound "do" correctly.

It is easier to make regulations for all the Sabbath schools in Canada and star at a dozen conventions than keep one small boy from fishing on Sunday if the small boy inclines that way.

It is easier—much easier—for some people to criticize the best sermon ever preached in Canada than find the text in one of the minor prophets.

Criticism is always cheap and easy. To make small remarks about the way other people do things and do nothing yourself is just about the smallest business a mortal ever engaged in. As a rule the business is as useless as it is small. The Church and the world would be mightily helped if all people who profess to be rational would try to realize how much easier it is to criticize the greatest things than do even the smallest things fairly well.

## SERMON REVERIES.

NO. VIII.

Richter, otherwise affectionately known as "Jean Paul" by those thousands of English readers which he possesses body, soul and spirit in so far as their German reading goes, figured in the sermon on Sunday p.m. last. Those impulsive Germans call him "the largest, softest, most loving heart in literature—heart pure, too, of the purest—Richter the unique—the only." His prose is of the most poetic character, and while it makes excellent reading if you have patience and diligence, it is middling serious as a whole. When the preacher mentioned Richter I thought of these few notes which I had of him, and could not help thinking, as I often have done. Well, if Richter were French, would he be even appreciated? Such is the difference between the north-east and south-west of Western Europe in so far as the people are concerned. Some one has said truly that "Richter's reason was all imagination, and his imagination was all fancy." The trouble was it remained all fancy, and never assumed that completeness and form of eternal fitness which would commend itself to us in this practical age. The sermon was based on the martyrdom of the saints, and was a touching exposition of the trials of the early fathers from John on Patmos downwards. Of course such a sermon meant lots of historical and other points as illustration periods; the work was well performed. The reference to Richter of course occasioned in my mind a reference to bygone days, spent so happily in German literature; that vast mine so freely offered to English readers, and I am afraid not quite appreciated, excepting of course Goethe and Schiller, who mayhap have many followers among us. Take Heine. He was one of the greatest of German *litterateurs*. True he was very unfortunate, but his genius was of a very high order, and makes up fully for all his mishaps. Of course the French might with a certain propriety claim Heine, for the reason that many years of his life were spent in Paris. Ah! what a life to lead. Bedridden for eight years in a small chamber, dying a slow, miserable death; what wonder is it that we find among his verses one such as this:—

How wearily time crawls along  
That hideous snail that hastens not,  
While I without the power to move,  
Am ever fixed to one dark spot.

His wit, however, made him much esteemed in Paris, and he earned the sobriquet of a second Voltaire. He jested constantly at all nationalities, and especially so at England. "He verily believed," he said, "that God was any day better pleased with a cursing Frenchman than a praying Englishman." Of his adulation for the great Napoleon surely every one has heard. It was his grand passion, and can be comfortably borne with by latter day Englishmen.

It is far greater pleasure to turn to Schiller. His was indeed a career to be proud of, and yet he was not proud of it, although he wanted to be very much. He was determined to be great, and died at forty-five, before he saw his sun at its highest point. For it reached the very highest possible point in German literature, and to-day even is still stopping there, as if stilled by the command of a second Joshua of literature. One of Schiller's grandest traits was his honest belief in a higher ideal and state; as opposed to Voltaire's scoffings, although he suffered from that blight which the brilliant Frenchman threw over all energetic young minds in both countries, his poem of three words, "The Words of Faith," is very helpful:—

Man is Free created—is Free—  
Although his cradle may be a prison,

And Virtue, is Virtue an empty sound?  
Man's life is to follow her teaching.

And God, in holy, eternal love,  
Reigns when humanity falters.

Oh trust in these words of mightiest power  
They are the wide world's treasure.

On Goethe, Uhland, Lessing, the brothers Grimm, the Schlegels, the great myth delineator Hoffman, we will not at this time enlarge, nor is this indeed the place for even as much as we have done; but circumstances seemed to urge us that way.

Of other allusions of this sermon which struck me forcibly enough to leave an impression, there is one more only of which I shall speak, and that is the living martyrdom suffered by many a tired and anxious mother in even our cheerful land to-day. Oh those corner-loafing habits, how they must wear out the truly thoughtful, loving mother. And how much of it is being done. Why, go along any of our streets on a Sunday afternoon, and dozens of active, energetic young men are standing unconcerned, spitting and smoking, and making a general nuisance of themselves. Now, how such a condition of things is to be prevented is a problem. They might of course be invited into Sunday school or Bible classes, and are, no doubt, dozens of them taken in that way; but the fact remains that the very ones who most need the looking after not only scorn any invitation to go to meetings of any kind, but do so in very saucy and at times insulting manner. The mothers of such as these undergo martyrdom of a severe and heart-rending kind; and merit our heartiest commiseration.

A short sermon surely presages the return of summer with its vacations, and yet last Sunday felt anything but summery. A cold, lasting and piercing north wind crept over the land

with a truly March-like howl. I was just thinking that these summer vacations play havoc with our Church revenues, and yet how are you going to prevent it? There appears to be latent in the general breast the idea that during an absence from the kirk it is not necessary to provide for the carrying on of the Church expenses. So many a very thoughtful person in other matters is quite the reverse in Church matters. In a Church of ordinary description the revenue falls off from June until September fully fifty per cent., so that treasurers have to arrange temporary advances to tide over the hot spell. This should not be, and we hope our friends in leaving for the summer will remember their Church promises.

The *Record* was spoken of on Sunday, and this reference is timely for me. I often used to wonder when Brother Croil was in charge whether he would ever make any change in the paper. In fact whenever the bundle came to hand I used to speculate on a probable change, but no, always the same old familiar face greeted one. The new *Record* is not a great advance, not yet good enough, Brother Scott. We want a better paper if more has got to be charged; if we are to have one, why not combine one or two of our excellent papers, and have something worthy of Presbyterianism?

CURLY TOIP.

## DOWN THE CARIBBEAN.

BY REV. JOHN MACKIE, M.A.

IX—TRINIDAD.

On board the steamship *Australian*, the heartiness of whose genial Scottish captain and the attentions of whose officers and stewards anticipating all wants and desires, ensure the full enjoyment that a voyage can impart, we quickly lose sight of the gentle slopes of Barbados in our onward rush to Trinidad. Long-looked-for rain has been falling in the night and early morning hours, and the air is cool, and the sky still cloudy, making it uncertain whether showers or sunshine will be the order of the day. Our course is considerably further north than that taken by the great Genoese navigator 400 years ago. On waters never before traversed, and certain as was his wont that they would bear him to lands never before trodden by European foot, he vowed that he would dedicate the first-discovered to the Holy Trinity. It was on the last day of July, 1498, when not only water, but the hearts of all save one were beginning to fail, that the joyful shout of land was heard from the sailor at the mast-head, and curiously enough not only three distinct mountain peaks were seen, but on approaching, these three were found to be the summits of one great mountain. No marvel that to a man of Columbus' mind it was a sure and certain sign that heaven had approved his vow and accepted the name "La Trinidad"—the Trinity.

These mountains are on the southern shore. Our approach will be by the northern, and if no head winds arise, tomorrow morning early will reveal to our eyes, not longing certainly for the sight like those enduring and daring mariners of long ago, yet longing also, the coast of a new world full of strange things, but having also familiar faces, and loving Christian hearts.

## THE DRAGON'S MOUTH.

Quickly the day and night have passed, and on our left hand there is now stretching a beautiful range of serrated wooded hills, some of them mountains breaking abruptly at the touch of ocean into huge precipitous cliffs. Here and there, but far between, are tiny bays with yellow sand, a little cottage and the feathery heads of lofty palms. Before us are the Bocas, a huge rocky promontory covered with cacti and aloes, cut into four islands by the opposing forces of the Caribbean and the Orinocco, and through the middle one of the channels, called the Dragon's Mouth, we enter the Gulf of Paria. From close to our sight, and sweeping away into invisibility, is the peninsula of Paria, part of Venezuela; and on our left is an almost semi-circular shore, at first fretted with islands and rocky, then low and sandy and widening into a plain fringed along the sea with coconut palms, and dotted with cottages that grow thicker and thicker, till the capital, Port-of-Spain, is reached, fronted with a forest of masts, while behind hills upon hills rear their hooded heads into a cloudless sky.

## ST. ANN'S MANSE.

As we stand on the bridge, lost in admiration, a welcome to the strong Doric accent of Scotland's eastern coast rises from a little boat below, dancing on the yellow waters—yellow as ever the waves of Tiber were—and looking down we see the kindly face not only of a fellow-countryman, but of a fellow-presbyter. Soon we are on the shore, and courteously treated as usual by the customs officials. We are driven without delay to the Manse of St. Ann.

Who Saint Ann was, and how her supereminent virtues came to be recognized by the Presbyterian Church, we are not careful to enquire. We have indeed heard a voice both strong and loud declaring that she was "the grandmother of God, the tallest in devotion, the deepest in humility, the largest in charity, and of the most pleasant odour in sanctity; whose treasure and crown was the giving being to her who gave it to God; who was by her daughter exalted into so dazzling a throne of glory that there is only, about it the Trinity of uncreated persons, the humanity of Jesus Christ, and the holiness of her daughter, Mother of God; that through Saint Ann we must address ourselves to the Virgin, and by the Virgin to Jesus Christ, and by Jesus Christ to God the Father, who can refuse nothing to His Son, and