

THE subject of the preservation of the forests of Ontario is to be brought before the Ontario Legislature on a motion of Mr. Meredith. The motion it is expected will give rise to earnest—not, let it be hoped, partisan—discussion. The matter is one which deserves the fullest and most anxious consideration. The same question is receiving such consideration in the United States. As the result of long deliberation by a body of men specially appointed and thoroughly acquainted with the subject, an elaborate bill has been introduced into both Houses of Congress. The changes proposed are radical. An entirely new system of management of the public lands is to be introduced. All such lands if covered with forests are to be withdrawn from sale pending careful inquiry into their character and value. As a result of such inquiry they are to be divided into three classes. The first class is to comprise those lands not near the head-waters of important streams but yet covered with timber and more valuable for forest purposes than for cultivation. The second class embraces lands partially or wholly covered with timber, but suitable for homesteads, and more valuable for agricultural purposes than for timber. The third class is composed of mountainous woodlands, those by the head-waters of streams, and others, which, for climatic, economic, or other reasons, should be kept permanently in a forest condition. Lands of the first and third classes are not to be sold, but only the timber upon them, under a system of licenses. Those of the second class are to be restored to entry and sale under the Homestead or other laws, but the timber upon such lands is to be paid for by the settler at an appraised valuation, with the exception of that on five acres. For carrying out the purposes of the bill a Forest Board forming a bureau in the Department of the Interior is to be formed. The whole scheme is carefully and elaborately wrought out, and the bill merits, as it will no doubt receive, careful study by our own legislators.

AMONGST other interesting topics touched upon by President Eliot, of Harvard University, in his last annual report, is the influence of the intercollegiate athletic contests which have become so rife in the United States. These contests are, happily, as yet rare in Canada, though the tendency is, it may be feared, in the direction of increase. What is to be the ultimate effect of elevating athletic games to the dignity of professional pursuits, in the moulding of character and the development of true manliness, is a question well worth considering. There is scarcely room for doubt that the influence of intercollegiate athletic contests upon student life in the United States has been of late years almost wholly injurious. Amongst other serious evils, one tendency clearly is, as pointed out by the *New York Nation*, "towards the erection of a false standard of superiority among colleges, according as one or the other 'carries off the cup.'" The idea of such a test of merit being set up in an educational institution of the highest class would seem too absurd to warrant a moment's consideration, were it not for the fact that, as the *Nation* says, the feeling which is the outgrowth of this idea has come to be a perfectly serious feeling amongst students. They are actually found discussing with all earnestness the injury that will result to Yale, or Princeton, or Columbia, if its students continue to take only second or third place in prize-winning. Dr. Eliot enumerates approvingly the various sports which are beneficial if pursued with proper ardour by the students, but adds: "Three of these sports, namely, football, base ball, and rowing, are liable to abuses which do not attach to the sports themselves so much as to their accompaniments under the present system of intercollegiate competitions. These abuses are: extravagant expenditure by and for the ball-players and the crews; the interruption of college work which exaggerated interest in the frequent ball-matches causes; betting; trickery condoned by a public opinion which demands victory; and the hysterical demonstrations of the college public over successful games. These follies can best be kept in check—they cannot be eradicated—by reducing the number of intercollegiate competitions to the lowest terms. The number of these competitions is at present excessive from every point of view. Wrestling, sparring, and football—games which involve violent personal collision—have to be constantly watched and regulated, lest they become brutal."

It is somewhat bewildering to an onlooker to note the different impressions produced upon different minds in the Republican Party of the United States by Mr. Blaine's letter stating that for personal reasons his name will not be submitted to the forthcoming Republican Convention as a candidate for the Presidency. Some accept the declinature as in good faith and final, and begin to look about for the next best candidate. Others see in the letter only another proof of the astuteness of the writer, in putting himself into a position to say that his choice as candidate was not of his

own seeking, thus discounting in advance any unpopularity likely to arise from his being suspected of selfish ambitions. A third class, amongst whom is Mr. Chauncey M. Depew, himself a possible choice of the convention, are shrewd enough to conceal the latter view if they privately hold it, and take the middle course, representing Mr. Blaine as sincere in his protestation, but falling back upon the paramount obligations of party loyalty, or, more euphemistically, of patriotism. "If," say they, "the delegates of the Great Republican Party at the convention with practical unanimity call upon Mr. Blaine to lead the party, he cannot possibly refuse." Probably that is the feeling of the great majority of those who are friendly to Mr. Blaine's candidature. The event may prove at the same time their sagacity and that of the great Maine leader. To a superficial observation, Mr. Blaine's "surprise" leaves the party at sixes and sevens, and greatly diminishes its previously slender chances of success. Observed more closely, and in the light of subsequent events, it may appear that in thus making clear to the party that he is their only really conspicuous man, and showing them how difficult it would be to find grounds for a choice amongst the half-dozen or more names of about equal prominence suggested by his withdrawal, Mr. Blaine has really taken the most effective means of silencing hostile criticism within the ranks, and of securing the greatest attainable degree of unanimity and enthusiasm.

STANDARDS OF CHARACTER.

MISREPRESENTATION of dramas, in the acting-versions, in written critiques, and books, and in painted pictures, is only too frequent. May it be permitted, not without every apology for taking so great a liberty, to suggest that in the Paris Letter of 31st December, in THE WEEK of 19th January, the correspondent may have been misled by one or more of these causes? We find it said: "How pitiful is the fate of the gentle Desdemona! What had she done to merit her sad end? To have married against the wish of her father—not an unpardonable fault, since the fault can be involuntary, while being tender and natural." All the rest admitted, "natural" it can hardly be said to have been. In the case of Desdemona there has been especial misleading. There is a book which came out with much prestige, and obtained a large degree of credit and favour. The authoress labours hard to prove that the marriage was natural. (Let it be said, once for all, that every word that is here written is to be tested by the play itself.) The lady's own precept is fully adopted—"no stage acceptance, but a conscientious study in the leaves of the great master's 'unvalued work.'" Othello is "black" and "thick lipped," and more than old enough to be her father, "advanced into the vale of years." These characteristics are suppressed, and we have instead a "complexion like the shadowed livery of the burnished sun." This is appropriated from another Moor in another play. There are Moors and Moors; some black, else whence blackamoor? Hero-worship? Yes, Othello "beguiled" Desdemona with moving tales of his own exploits and of "men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders." Yes, hero-worship, but marriage between such a couple! *Mensa et thorax!* The whole blame is thrown on Brabantio, her father, for neglecting her and leaving her affections, discouraged and crushed by him, to pour themselves out in some other direction. Not only is there not a shadow of authority for this—find it who can, it is all pure invention—but the play contradicts it. She was "opposed to marriage," and "shunned" her suitors, no heroes perhaps, but suitable matches for her. But this is far indeed from being all. The book attributes to Brabantio "cold malignity of natural disposition—unforgiving cruelty, which he keeps to the last that it may sting and wound more surely." Nay, it follows him, in this spirit, into the grave, and tells us that "self-reproaches" hastened his end. We shall see presently upon how secure a foundation this cutting structure of bitter words is raised. What sort of thanks would Desdemona owe for this? What would she have said to it? That we may have the full force of contrast, we read, "Whatever may have been Emilia in life, we cannot but feel for her now."

By Desdemona's elopement and marriage—she steals away from home at midnight—her father, aroused from sleep by messengers of the news, is overwhelmed with incredulity, amazement, and grief. The play alone can show how much and how great. When the father and daughter are brought face to face in the Council Chamber he says:

I pray you hear her speak;
If she confess that she was half the wooer,
Destruction on my head if my bad blame
Light on the man!—Come hither, gentle mistress;
Do you perceive in all this noble company
Where most you owe obedience?

Just, you see, even to the man who has brought such affliction upon him. For she had been more than half the wooer, as Othello plainly declares.

She thanked me:
And bade me, if I had a friend that lov'd her,
I should but teach him how to tell my story,
And that would woo her. Upon this hint I spake.

Where is the "cold malignity" here, where the "unforgiving cruelty"? There is not one angry word, not a sign of irritation even. He makes one more short speech, and that is all.