

critic, possessed of good judgment, a salary large enough to put him beyond any financial worry and give him a free hand and good backing. As it is now, the so-called criticisms or reviews in our papers and magazines are absolutely worthless as a guide to the merits of any particular book. This applies not only to Canadian but to American and all other papers and periodicals, to a greater or less degree, as, for instance, to the review in the *New York Herald* of the works of a professor in a Western university, which attributed Freytag's "Rittmeister von Alt-Rosen" to the Professor, with the information that he was considered by competent critics to have written even better than the German. Many other egregious blunders and indiscriminate puffing were in evidence throughout the article. The public has, therefore, a right, and a most just right, to complain of the ignorance of reviewers. If a distinction is ever to be made between criticism and advertisement, honest, capable critics must do the work. I am well aware of the hue and cry raised against latter-day criticism, part of which I believe to be justified, but by no means all. Criticism means passing judgment after weighing evidence, and presupposes in the judge a previous training. Who would think of elevating a hodcarrier to the bench in our courts of justice because those who are to be hailed before the tribunal do not want one versed in the law? Yet a good deal of the scorn hurled at latter-day criticism partakes of this nature.

One great difficulty which critics here in Canada have to contend against, is that there is just now a demand, in a certain sense a pseudo-demand, for a Canadian literature. What is a national literature? We may answer, one that reflects national characteristics. In what do these consist? The passion of love manifests itself in much the same way, whether the Romeo and Juliet be English or Greek, German or Chinese. There can be little difference in that. But the setting in which it may be found will differ in different countries, where the habits of thought, the climate and the perspective differ, and here is where we may, indeed must, look for national characteristics. And yet, that is after all an outward trapping, which must not be allowed to exceed certain well-defined limits. And so it is with the other passions and *motifs*. Here is where style and technique have their place, and hence our authors must be trained, and must always train themselves, that is, exercise relentless self-criticism.

Still another difficulty is a proper appreciation of what literature really is, and what is its true aim. Now, it is the height of folly to insist that all books are literature, unless we are willing to accept De