

But possibly the weakest points of the subject and the most exasperating to any one who has the true interest of art in view, is the art criticism of the public press, with its indiscriminating praise and blame, and its flippant, not to say jocular way of disposing of some struggling artist's principal work of the year in half a dozen lines of excellent nonsense.

It is difficult to say which of the two styles of criticisms most in vogue is the worst, that of the utterly ignorant reporter taking in the exhibition as part of his day's work, along with the police court, or an accident on the street, who dashes in, often where angels fear to tread, and getting what he calls pointers from any artist that he knows, lets his facile pen run away with him and while praising to the skies the man who supplies him with "pointers," comes down with heavy hand on all of whom he or the said *man* disapproves; or that more lofty and pretentious style of affected knowledge built on the slight foundation of the art articles in the current magazines, which looks down with lofty scorn on all things Canadian, but especially Canadian art, and quoting from said articles the names of well-known European artists, Jaque, Corot, Monet, etc., wants to know, "you know," why our artists here do not produce works of similar merit, value and importance.

More, however, to be dreaded than both is the case, happily rare, though not unheard of here, where an artist writes the criticism himself and takes the opportunity to vent his personal spite in the assumed shape of fair criticism.

But, after all, as to the former and more ordinary critics, and the fantastic tricks they play, when dressed in a little brief authority, it cannot be helped and must be expected and accepted as part of the Canadian artist's fate and a condition of his surroundings. Great artists like great poets may arise anywhere and at any time, but great or competent art critics cannot possibly arise or exist apart from the great art centres of the world. They are the product of education, and of education alone, and if the public who look to be enlightened by them could only be impressed with this fact they would not expect the same amount of intelligence when art is under discussion in the daily papers as they get when political meetings or prize pigs and cabbages form the subject of discourse.

At the same time, it is a sad state of things when, as during the present season, the hardness of the times curtails the demand for pictures and artists generally have as much as they can do to keep afloat, the difficulties should be aggravated by the unfriendly attitude of the self-constituted critics, and it is no wonder if artists such as Lawson, Bruce, Fraser, and the lamented Peel are lost to their country, and that the two first mentioned send no pictures to undergo the damning with faint praise which passes for criticism in Toronto.

However, we can console ourselves that we are not the only ones who suffer, as the following remarks, taken from the *Graphic's* Royal Academy number, show: In a previous paragraph modern art criticism is described as "the new system of contemptuous and insulting dismissal of whole classes of work upon which able and sincere men spend their lives," the article proceeds: "Such writing could not endure for a week if the public once realized its cruelty, its dishonesty and the bitter wrong it inflicted thereby. There is no reason in the nature of things why half a dozen men of

whose bona fides and disinterestedness nothing favorable is known, who have no public record of efficiency or knowledge, who acknowledge no responsibility and who invariably shield themselves behind the journals in which their writings appear, should be allowed to exhaust the vocabulary of insult under the guise of criticism."

But enough of this unpleasant topic, there is a brighter prospect ahead; the surplus art of Canada will shortly have a wider field to fill, for although at present the artists of Canada have to compete with all who choose to send pictures here for sale while their product cannot enter the United States under a twenty per cent. duty, it is expected that this duty will be shortly removed and the multitude of towns larger than Toronto to the south of us will be opened to receive Canadian exhibits of paintings and the arduous task of the critics will be proportionately lightened.

In the meantime our motto must be Westward, Ho! if we would cover this broad land between the two oceans in any reasonable space of time, and whether we follow the water courses round the lakes or take the broad and fertile plains of mid Ontario, or further north strike through the old Laurentians, again we have in any case abundance of picturesque material to draw from.

First, then, upon our road toward the setting sun, taking the most southern course, let us wander by the smooth lake shore, and passing High Park and the lily-dotted Humber river, follow the lake shore road to the mouth of the Credit river, where the stone hookers, the old weather-worn schooners and cutters that steal along the shore and gather stone from the bottom of the lake congregate in their little harbour, when "the stormy winds do blow," for in rough weather the men cannot even see the stones from the churning of the mud and sand near the shore.

They have worked so assiduously for so many years that between Toronto and Hamilton, more than forty miles of coast, all the movable stone has been collected out to a depth of nearly eighteen feet, and it must require good sight and clear water to find it there.

But, all the same, the old boats make a fine group, with the little bridge in the foreground, the cottages and church on the west, and the small but useful lighthouse behind.

And on again, passed Bronté, where a noted Toronto preacher lived, past Oakville and past Burlington with its fruit grounds, and, what a splendid stretch of country we have traversed by the time we come in sight of Hamilton, lying in its gently curving bay, and presenting its worst and most begrimed buildings to the entering stranger, after the manner of Canadian towns and cities. All along the forty miles of shore are numbers of delightful sites for residences—the fair lake lying in front, good rolling land behind to be had at moderate price, capable of producing all kinds of fruit. A mild, healthful climate with easy railroad and steamboat accommodation. Surely there must be thousands of people who would come and live here if they only knew of it—people of moderate incomes who cannot afford to own their own places in expensive countries, and who live cramped up in all sorts of suburban spots, with meagre outlook and no possibility of growing grapes, melons and peaches without hothouses and glass frames. Here they could be inde-

pendent and happy, living in their own homes, yachting and canoeing on the lake, and sending their children to school at Toronto or Hamilton by the railroad at reduced fare.

At one time, years back, I walked, sketchbook in hand, from Toronto to Hamilton and many pretty bits I discovered—an old Indian burying ground under the pines, along by the Credit, the old Indian church and market house that belonged to the Chippewas before they migrated to Ramah on Lake Couchiching—a fine wooded hill and winding stream meandering through the valley near Oakville, a rapid streamlet coming out from the dark, shady woods and crossing the sunlit road, with cattle drinking in the foreground, an old stone mill with a background of fine old willows near Burlington, the old mill at Bronté—these are a few I remember, but there were many more besides.

Hamilton lies snugly on the slope at the foot of what is proudly denominated the mountain, but what is really the edge of the tableland, which lies between Lakes Ontario and Erie, through which, at some ancient date, the Dundas valley has been eroded, as mentioned in my last paper. It (the mountain) makes a fine background for the city, as seen from the lake, and seems to reach its highest elevation, about three hundred feet, just across the Dundas valley at Picnic point, whence a fine view can be obtained of the beautiful valley with its little river and with Hamilton lying off by the lake in the distance.

Indeed, few spots in Ontario can give a better idea of the rich agricultural and fruit-growing lands of Ontario than this fertile valley. Seen when the wheat fields are ready for the sickle, or rather for the self-binder, and when the orchards are loaded with fruit, it is a picture of peace and plenty. And as peaches and grapes thrive and ripen finely in its mellow autumn, it is a wonder that land of good quality for grape growing can be bought for one hundred dollars an acre, in ten or twenty acre lots. In parts the soil is somewhat stony, as may be seen by the collected heaps and occasional stonewalls, but the soil itself yields excellent crops of all the ordinary farm products of Ontario. Taking what is known as the mountain road from Hamilton to Ancaster, one commands a view across the valley nearly the whole way, and at one point, where a stream comes tumbling down through the rocks and disembogues into the valley, an old stone bridge forms one of the most picturesque subjects possible. Elms, maples and pines hang over it and cast their shadows across the road, and under it the stream foams among the rocks as it emerges from the dense shady woods into the sunlit meadows dotted with wild flowers. It has been drawn, etched and painted a number of times. Farther on is the old lime-kiln, near Ancaster, looking against the evening sky like an old castle keep of the dark ages. It is built, for convenience, close to the rocky escarpment that supplies it with material, and a quiet, thoughtful life the solitary being who I found attending to the fires through the still summer nights must have of it, watching the lights in the distant farm houses through the valley go out, as the tired farmers go to rest and he is left alone with the chirping crickets and the fireflies. Ancaster itself seems almost to have been imported whole from some quiet English county; it has been so long settled (before Hamilton), it lies so prettily on the