



SAND BANKS, Ont., August, 1890.

To Heloise:

We have just returned from a pleasant after-dinner stroll in the tree-shadows past the cottages and on out to the point—and now I am come to rest awhile on the rocks to tell you all about the Sand Hills—the white dunes that stretch away northerly from the Lake Shore House. The great Lake—the fair Ontario—is calm to-day, only quiet waves drift languidly in, vanishing with a restful sigh as they touch the shore—and, as far as the eye can see, the waters are blue and limpid, and full of that same beautiful colouring you see everywhere in the Great Lakes, and down the grand St. Lawrence.

Near me the birds are singing—there is not a cloud in the sky—and what with a wealth of sun-gold, and a soft, perfumed wind stirring the woods to music, the summer day is ideal! I told you the dunes were white. Ten miles away, down in Picton, reviewed from Macaulay's Hill, they seem so in contrast with all that is dark about them, but really they are of a delicate fawn shade. Composed chiefly of quartz, the sand is fine and heavy, so that once, when a barrel of it was sent away several hundred miles distant, the barrel reached its destination—empty. The chain is composed of many hills, both large and small—the highest measuring perhaps more than a hundred feet, and here and there a growth of evergreens shadows the sands, which in dry weather sink away beneath one's feet, making the descent easy, but the climbing tiresome if the mercury is high.

Yesterday I climbed one of the hills, and rested there to read awhile from an old volume, and my thoughts soon filled with the poet-soul that had passed this way more than sixty years ago—in 1828—and how wild the great shore was then! And I sought the mood which was his at the time of writing—for this, to me, is the one true way to enjoy an author—and read again his verses, written here in 1828:

Here Nature in some playful hour,
Has fondly piled these hills of sand,
Which seem the frolic of her power,
Or effort of some magic hand.

For o'er the wide extended shore,
The hills in conic structure rise,
And seem as never trod before,
Save by the playmates of the skies.

And while the waves' reflected shade
Is flung along each rising mound,
I watch the curling figures made,
Which half proclaim 'tis fairy ground.

Here Oberon, and Mab, his queen,
Have colonised their infant train,
From Scotland's hills, and Erin's green,
Where many a happy day they've lain.

But joy be theirs—I will not bring
One recollection to their view,
Or of their harp touch one soft string,
Or thoughts of other days renew.

Enough for me to gaze upon
The wild-fruit nodding on each hill,
Where thou, most generous Oberon,
May'st sport and skip at pleasure's will.

Then fare thee well—still light and free
As summer winds that fan the lake,
On, onward to eternity,
May grief nor care thee overtake.

Then in a note he calls these great wastes of white sand
"a wild curiosity."

The writer is Adam Kidd, who in 1830 had printed at the office of the *Herald and New Gazette*, Montreal, a volume of 216 pages, dedicating it to Thomas Moore. The great Irish poet, too, enhanced the charm of Canadian scenery with the soul's creation of beauty—and there still is growing in the city of Kingston an old thorn tree, under whose shade he composed one of his odes.

I am digressing, but I have told you all I know of this wonderful shore, except that it is one of the relic-places of old pottery. I picked up several pieces of it this morning, across the sands yonder, where a white hill has drifted away, leaving the brown earth almost bare. It used to be made here—it may be a hundred years ago—it may be thousands—by the Indians, or by people who lived here before them—the Aztecs, or Toltecs, perhaps, driven south one day by tribes supposed to have come across the straits from Asia. And, you know, some go even so far as to believe our Indians to be the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel.

However, no one yet has told us surely who fashioned this pottery years ago here by the great Lake—and, perhaps, it will remain a mystery till the last day when, in keeping with a northern myth, Surtur shall come from Muspelheim—the flame-world—and destroy gods and earth with his fire. You remember those verses in Voluspa:

"Sutur, from the South, wends
With seething fire;
The falchion of the Mighty One
A sun-light flameth."

But, while I write, a dark figure comes across the white dunes—an Indian princess, beautiful as the summer day—her long hair full of dusky shadows—her eyes black like black velvet. At each step her small, bare, brown foot sinks in the hot sand; but a smile is on her lips, and her song is sweet like the voice of June. Years ago Iduna passed this way with her youth-giving apples, and, touched by the princess' beauty, gave her eternal access to her golden shores.

Onward she comes—the hills are cleared, and she passes away into the shadows of the forest, and I can hear her song no more. After all, she is only a creature of the imagination, you know, and the Sand Hills are without a foot-print; but the birds are still singing, and the great, blue lake, within touch of my hand, is real.

HELEN M. MERRILL.

The Real Italy of the Renaissance.

The Italy of the Renaissance as we see it in the works of our tragic playwrights is a country of mysterious horror, the sinister reputation of which lasted two hundred years; lasted triumphantly throughout the light and finikin eighteenth century, and found its latest expression in the grim and ghastly romances of the school of Ann Radcliff, romances which are but the last puny and grotesque descendants of the great stock of Italian tragedies, born of the first terror-stricken meeting of the Eng'and of Elizabeth with the Italy of the late Renaissance. Is the impression received by the Elizabethan playwrights a correct impression? Was Italy in the sixteenth century that land of horrors? Reviewing in our memory the literature and art of the Italian Renaissance, remembering the innumerable impressions of joyous and healthy life with which it has filled us; recalling the bright and thoughtless rhymes of Lorenzo dei Medici, of Politian, of Berni, and of Ariosto; the sweet and tender poetry of Bembo and Vittoria Colonna and Tasso; the bluff sensuality of novelists like Bandello and Masuccio, the Ari-tophanesque laughter of the comedy of Bibbiena and of Beolco; seeing in our mind's eye the stately sweet matrons and noble senators of Titian, the virginal saints and madonnas of Raphael, the joyous angels of Correggio;—recapitulating rapidly all our impressions of this splendid time of exuberant vitality, of this strong and serene Renaissance, we answer without hesitation, and with only a smile of contempt at our credulous ancestors. The Italy of the Renaissance was, of all things that have ever existed or ever could exist, the most utterly unlike the nightmare visions of men like Webster and Ford, like Marston and Tourneur. The only Elizabethan drama which really represents the Italy of the Renaissance is the comedy of Shakespeare, of Beaumont, and Fletcher, and of Ben Jonson and Massinger; to the Renaissance belong those clear and sunny figures, the Portias, Antonios, Gratanos, Violas, Petruccios, Bellarios and Almiras; their faces do we see on the canvases of Titian and the frescoes of Raphael; they are the real children of the Italian Renaissance. These frightful Brachianos and Annabellas and Ferdinands and Corombonas and Vindicis and Pieros of the "White Devil," of the "Duchess of Malfy," of the "Revenger's Tragedy," and of "Antonio and Mellida," are mere fantastic horrors, as false as the Counts Udolpho, the Spalartos, the Zastrozzis, and all their grotesquely ghastly pseudo-Italian brethren of eighty years ago.

And, indeed, the Italy of the Renaissance, as represented in its literature and its art, is the very negation of Elizabethan horrors. Of all the mystery, the colossal horror and terror of our dramatists, there is not the faintest trace in the intellectual productions of the Italian Renaissance. The art is absolutely stainless: no scenes of horror, no frightful martyrdoms as with the Germans under Albrecht Dürer; no abominable butcheries as with the Bolognese of the seventeenth century; no macerated saints and tattered assassins, as with the two Spaniards; no mystery, no contortion, no horrors; vigorous and serene beauty, pure and cheerful life, real or ideal, on wall or canvas, in bronze or marble. The literature is analogous to the art, only less perfect, more tainted with the weakness of humanity, less ideal, more real. It is essentially human, in the largest sense of the word; or if it cease, in creatures like Aretine, to be humanly clean, it becomes merely satyrlite, swinish, hircose. But it is never savage in lust or violence; it is quite free from the element of ferocity. It is essentially light and quiet and well regulated, sane and reasonable, never staggering or blinded by excess; it is full of intelligent discrimination, of intelligent leniency, of well-bred reserved sympathy; it is civilized as are the wide well-paved streets of Ferrara compared with the tortuous black alleys of mediæval Paris; as are the well-lit, clean, spacious palaces of Michelozzo or Bramante compared with the squalid, unhealthy, uncomfortable mediæval castles of Dürer's etchings. It is indeed a trifle too civilized; too civilized to produce every kind of artistic fruit—and here comes the crushing difference between the Italian Renaissance and our Elizabethans' pictures of it—it is, this beautiful literature of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, completely deficient in every tragic element; it has intuition neither for tragic event nor for tragic character; it affords not a single tragic page in its poems and novels; it is incapable, after the most laborious and conscientious study of Euripides and Seneca, utterly and miserably incapable of producing a single real tragedy, anything which is not a sugary pastoral or a pompous rhetorical exercise. The epic poets of the Italian Renais-

sance, Pulci, Boiardo, Berni and Ariosto, even the stately and sentimental Tasso are no epic poets at all. They are mere light and amusing gossips, some of them absolute buffoons. Their adventures over hill and dale are mere riding parties, their fights mere festival tournaments, their enchantments mere pageant wonders. Events like the death of Hector, the slaughter of Penelope's suitors, the festive massacre of Chriemhild, the horrible deceit of Alfonso the Chaste sending Bernardo del Carpio his father's corpse on horseback—things like these never enter their minds. When tragic events do by some accident come into their narration, they cease to be tragic; they are frittered away into mere pretty conceits like the death of Isabella and the sacrifice of Olympia in the "Orlando Furioso;" or melted down into vague pathos, like the burning of Olindo and Sofronia and the death of Clorinda by the sentimental Tasso. Neither poet, the one with his cheerfulness, the other with his mild melancholy, brings home, conceives the horror of the situation; the one treats the tragic in the spirit almost of burlesque, the other entirely in the spirit of elegy.—*Vernon Lee.*

Some Old Canadian Customs.

Some old beliefs that once existed among the *habitants*, are, M. LeMay, the translator of *Evangeline*, tell us, fast dying away. One of them was that of the temporary resurrection, at Christmastide, of the last *curé* of the parish, who, with his dead flock around him, recited the office for the day, his ghostly audience repeating the responses. Another tradition is that on Christmas night the light of the stars penetrates the opened recesses of the earth, sometimes revealing hidden treasures. The supposed genuflections of the oxen at that sacred season are common to most Christian communities. With Christmas among the French-Canadians, as among other peoples, are connected many curious rhymes which have been handed down from generation to generation. The strangest of these is what is known as *La Guignolle*, of which there are several versions. It is more immediately associated with New Year's Day than with Christmas, but formerly the two holidays were closely related. The Christmas season may, indeed, be said to terminate only with Epiphany, which by many is still called Old Christmas Day. The origin of *La Guignolle* is unknown. The explanation *au gui, l'an neuf!* (the one generally given) would carry the custom back to the Druids and the gathering of the sacred mistletoe (*gui, viscum*) to which Pliny makes reference (*Nat. Hist.*, xvi., 249). The custom is still kept up, M. Sulte says, in some parishes of the Province of Quebec, of singing the *Guignolle* on the evening of St. Sylvester's day, that is New Year's Eve. As the words of this ancient invocation may be new to some, I append one of the versions contained in the *Chansons populaires du Canada* of M. Ernest Gagnon:

"Bonjour le maître et la maîtresse
Et tout le monde de la maison.
Pour le dernier jour de l'année
La Ignolé vous nous devez.
Si vous voulez rien nous donner
Dites-nous-le,
On emmènera seulement
La fille ainée.
On lui fera faire bonne chère,
On lui fera chauffer les pieds,
On vous demande seulement
Une chignée,
De vingt à trente pieds de long
Si vous voulez-e.
La Ignolée, la Ignoloché,
Mettez du lard dedans ma poche!
Quand nous fum's au milieu du bois,
Nous fum's à l'ombre;
J'entendais chanter le coucou
Et la Coulombe.
Rossignolet du vert bocage
Rossignolet du bois joli,
Eh! va-t-en dire à ma maîtresse
Que je meurs pour ses beaux yeux.
Tout' fille qui n'a pas d'amant,
Comment vit-elle?
Elle vit toujours en soupirant
Et toujours veille."

J. R.

The International Chess Tournament at Manchester.

Writing in advance of this interesting contest, which began on the 25th ult., the *London Times* says:—Chess players generally will be pleased to hear that Captain Mackenzie, the United States chess champion, has signified his intention of playing at Manchester. He had engaged to leave New York on July 20. Since gaining first prize at Frankfort in 1887 and second at Bradford in 1888, Captain Mackenzie has been compelled to abstain from match chess, and could not participate even in the American International Chess Tournament at New York last year, though when well enough he was on the spot watching the proceedings with great interest. His chivalry in coming from America to take part in the forthcoming competition seems certain. A powerful list of entries seems certain. Representatives from Berlin, Vienna, Paris, and Holland are announced, and there will be a fair array of British masters.