



ICE-CUTTING ON THE ST. LAWRENCE, NEAR MONTREAL.

RED AND BLUE PENCIL

CHERRYFIELD, March 24th, 1891.

DEAR EDITOR,—It is not good, with his memory revived, who is mourned by all who knew him, that the palmy time of the "Ephemerides," or the "Red and Blue Pencil," should be forgotten.

"LACLEDE."

When he fails from the earth who made all its dark scenes brighter,—whose presence lent to the shade what it borrowed from the sun; who felt the glow, and spoke the language of, the purer affections,—looking on all beautiful forms with beautiful eyes, even gilding that which was not golden; whose lyric soul made all worlds revolve in music,—ringing up his morn with some joyous prelude, and ushering his evening softly in with some tender "Epicdium"; who stood for the right, as he saw it, his true heart rejoicing in the truth; whose constancy was a begetter of confidence; who, in friendship, ministered hope and consolation, not withholding because he too felt sometimes needy; who said to the unprophetic soul,—"Hush! we have just passed the sacred gate; our feet are on the porch,—the Temple is just before us!"—whose touch was courage, whose step was reverence, whose march was faith, whose hand it was good to grasp, whose face to look upon was youth, was morning, was the thing dreamed of and yet attainable;—when he, I say, who included all these things, who, being once of this world's best brotherhood, has become a brother unto the heavens, there remain the ones who walked with him—O, yes! and there are others, still, to feel his absence, who never came into the circle he made magical, who never were associates save in the spirit, who never felt the pressure of his hand, who never received the welcome of his exhilarating voice, whose image of his person is but fanciful. This is why the eyes of Pastor Felix moisten and grow dim, and his heart falters at the message of a friend,—"Laclede is dead!"

And is this the end? Must we vainly reach out hands and cry: "Come back, gracious deed, kindly word, loving presence!" Come back! and there be nothing to abide, or to return? I hear some one singing,—

"Love is eternal, and all in all,
And the flowers of earth forever endure!"
Thanks! confident spirit! as I go on my way I will repeat these words over to lighten the journey—
"Love is eternal—*eternal*—ETERNAL, and all in all,
And the flowers of earth forever endure."

And why not? Then, if flowers, why not souls? Is anything so good, so blessed to believe? Ah, dear flowers, and dear friends, may you not have the privilege of putting off your mortal vestures without our doubts and suspicions? Cannot I have the liberty of the eternals without being a scouted alien of time? Let me fill myself with this song out of the air before I go to you, O man, before whom the music ceases, and put the microscope in place of faith—or, if you will, of fancy! I know the hills are wearing away, and all is changing—changing! I hear that belief is perishing, that all ideals of the past lie waste, that poesy is an old device! but,—shake the nightmare off! The snap of a triumphant thumb and finger! lilt along,—

"Winds of Arcady, softly blow!
Waves of melody, round me flow!
Wafted out with the tide I go
Down to the tranquil heart of night;
Alone, afloat in a shadowy boat,
From the light and the sound of day remote,
I drift with the nightingale's rapturous note
From the land whence Love and Joy took flight."

Here are the heights, and here the deeps; and who hath measured them? And when it comes to things most real wherewithal shall they be measured? For the eye may deceive us, the ear may play us false, the mind be silent to us, while the heart shall speak us true. Must I, then, suppose that when bereavement utters the sobbing cry, "Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness," that "dust to dust" is the sorrowful and ultimate conclusion? this is the end of him "whose eyes sparkled with genius, whose lips were full of truth, whose feet were swift on errands of mercy, and whose hands were outstretched to the poor?" that he was an

early-day dreamer, of chaotic mind, who said, "I know that my redeemer liveth, and though these elements be consumed, yet embodied shall I see God." Has the soul no voice, and can it hear none, that ought to be attended? Ought I to have no faith in an ultimatum beyond dust and ashes? O, my God, Thou knowest the things of hope and desire! Thou seest where burn the stars, and where, under wildest seas, the pearls lie buried; yes, the invisible things of the creation are before Thee. Thou knowest how souls hang tremblingly upon Thy promise, and in the darkness wait and long for the light; how in this bewildered and bewildering world, here in the midst of theory clashing with theory, of infidel thought and infidel practice; here in this hospital, this madhouse, this dry-as-dust school, in which doubt is the beginning and damnation the end of the curriculum, this endless analysis and dissection, these burnt-out ashes of fair forms, this double-beaten dust; this question as to whether, when we breathe no more, we shall rot or burn; help the weak souls, O God, who must cut through scoff and scorn, conquering their own misgivings; keep them from the whirl of the outer flying circle, draw them to Thy center and hold them there! Hark! I hear again the singer, and after all this strife, it is the singing which makes us whole:

"White were the blossoms we gave to death
In the land of tears and of sobbing breath;
'They are thine forever,' this singer saith,
And the stars re-echo it o'er and o'er.
And far and clear, O nightingale dear,
Falling from every silvery sphere,
The song thou singest in earth I hear
As I drift in my dreams to this tranquil shore."

After all have retired, I, who have followed him from afar, advance to the grave of John Lesperance, and lay on it my sprig of laurel. I ask not whether it shall fade, so it bear friendly record. He is of that gracious company who not having seen we love. The friends who have the truest right to mourn will come again, and with good reason, since—

"Well may they grieve who laid him here,
Where shall they find his equal?"

But I shall not return to celebrate these obsequies. He was of one religious order; I of another, and diverse; but