

RED AND BLUE PENCIL

CHERRYFIELD, November, 1890.

DEAR EDITOR,—I here beg leave to celebrate a bewitching stream, by whose brink I lived out part of my romantic period; and, also, to commemorate an old friendship, which yet is not worn out. Did he speak wisely who told of a more exalted friendship,—of his

"Affection of the tomb,
And his prime passion for the grave?"

Then, neither may I err; for, though not a "prime passion," one such grief may speak for many. It may seem—this poem of mine, if you can call it such—is better suited to the time it describes than to that in which the leaves are falling; and yet, when should we more incline to lively thoughts and images than when these fading emblems of ourselves are floating from us? And as to the sobering reflections contained, they have become universally appropriate to autumn. Therefore, in season or out of season, the insistent rhymers asks for a hearing—and, in this age, he often gets it, so long as he can make his terminals clink and chime respectably together.

Outside I hear the dripping rain and the sigh of the night wind. The glory is departing from our forests. But have they not been glorious,—these lingering greens, contrasted with the blaze of gold and crimson—this purple flush of October? Surely our autumn is not Quakerish in its garb!—or so it appears to—

PASTOR FELIX.

BY PENNAMAQUAN.*

A SUMMER MEMORY.

Come back, O day, whose rosy glow
Flush'd broad, and faded, long ago!—
In Mem'ry's shrine and Fancy's glass
Your shadows now transfigured pass;—
Come back, O day of song and dream,
Beside the softly murmuring stream!—
The glancing stream, that flows the same
As babbling of its Indian name.

Soft nursling of the bounteous sky,
Still mid thy green hills cradled lie!
Though much be lost and many gone,
Since I was thy companion,
No change, it seems, thy wave hath known;
Wayward as youth, yet calmly slow
As musing maid, I mark thy flow,
Scarce moving, in thy mild unrest,
The languid lilies on thy breast.
Oft have I longed, as once when free,
To launch my pigmy bark on thee,
And trace to realms of song and dream
The windings of thy silver stream!
Still let thy morning chorus break
From feathery flutes round thy clear lake;
Still let the thrush's evening bell
Rise, with love's star, in plaintive swell;
Still let the wild-fowl, as of yore,
Fearless frequent thy shadowy shore;
And still may Fancy's voyager lave
His paddle in thy glassy wave,
Where images of dark fir-spires
Contrast with tinted sunset fires.

Though soon thy poet-mood be gone,
When thou to labour loiterest on;
Though,—like a fair and frolic child,
Reluct from woodland sports beguiled,
Captive in Mammon's drear abode,
Harness'd to an untimely load,—
In yonder groaning, fiery mill
Thou drudgest at another's will;
Yet in the woody vale unshorn
Where bright thy infant wave is born,
Or in the wide world, far or near,
Wherever singing streams are clear,
There is no shape of purer glee,—
No wilder, lonelier thing can be!

After the years, I catch the strain,
And list thy ancient voice again;
Upon the bridge,—than thine less fleet,—
Linger my late returning feet;
I walk along the cindery street,†
Salute each well-known form I meet,—
Noting how Time doth subtly trace
His changing lines upon the face;
I mark each home,—and some are known
Open familiar, as my own;
I make my pause and take my stand,

To clasp full many a friendly hand;
I faintly hear thee flowing down,
Skirting the wild edge of the town,—
Catching beside thee, from the breeze,
The rustle of yon poplar trees;
I hear the mill bell sound, where grim,
Toil-sweated forms, mid shadows dim
Lurk, moving in each furnace glare,
Like Dante's children of Despair;
Where roll the wheels that never tire,
And each dark chimney belches fire.

One place, of well remembered name,
Agaud I see it—still the same!
I enter at the open door*
Through which I've often passed before;
Here, at the hospitable board,
How oft hath friendship's wine been pour'd!
Here have I joy'd in eve's delay,
Then slept the lingering night away;
Here in the garden's wealthy shade
My own with his own children played,—
Who once had quickly come to greet
The sound of my returning feet;
Who smoked his pipe, or did unbind
The fragrant pipkin's golden rind,
The while we sat and talked, till eve
Did round us its sweet shadows weave.
An! 'mid the ranks of breathing men,
Shall I ne'er see that form again?

Then, in that shop,* where, blithe of heart,
The brisk mechanic plies his art,
I think to clasp the outstretch'd hand,
And hear the cheery voice, and bland,
That never-failing welcome gave—
Blent with my river's joyous stave:
For can he fail me with his tone,
And leave thee singing on alone?—
O, surely, 'tis his hammer's sound
Thou answerest, in thy jocund round;
Running beneath us in thy track
Of limpid light, and answering back
Our merriest laugh:—Ah! here no more
Our voices mingle, as of yore;
And yet the laughing waves express
No minor of man's mournfulness;
Thou trippest blithely on, as bent
To croon thy ballad of content.

Come back, thou summer afternoon!
Leave me still list'ning to the rune—
The legend of my poet-river,
That said: "Life, Friendship, are forever!"—
Still singing, singing, till my heart
In the wild music bore a part;
And let us sit—my friend and I—
Uncaring how the moments fly,
Still talking free, as friends will talk
At fireside ease, or woodland walk,
Of trifling things, the glad, the gay,
And then, again, in serious way,—
Of folks we knew, of books we read,
Of fairest scenes once visited,
Of hours of peace, and hours of pain,
Of friends we ne'er might see again.

Still shine, in fadeless memory clear,
The summer hours when he was here.
For once, talk-tired, I turned aside,
And dia...nd-script but stiffly tried,
Scrawling my name on dingy glass,
Through which we saw the river pass;
Coupling it, for my comrade's mirth,
With England's bards of noblest worth,
"Ah, yes," he laughing said, "I see!
The names of genius well agree;
But whose is his, with loftier claim,
The first upon your roll of fame!
Must Avon's bard, and Horton's too,
Their lofty laurels doff for you?
Then, with my banter, I rejoined:—
"How well you understand my mind!
For I am Avon's bard, forlorn,
Since by that river I was born;
And I am Horton's bard, I ween,
For Horton, too, my home has been."
With that I wiped the dusty pane,
And all our chat renewed again.
Meanwhile the saw and plane he plied,
Or hammer'd briskly at my side,
And, like the river flowing near,
Maintained his strain of mirthful cheer;
For, though the shadow mortals dread
Had late been ling'ring near his bed,
And in his breast the seeds he bore
From which Death reaps a plenteous store,
No melancholy mien had he,
No unilluminated gravity.
And oft I mark'd how still he kept
A gladsome heart, and lightly slept,
And talked of woodland walks alone,
Of streams where peaceful hours were known,
Of rod and rifle, sail and oar;
Tramps around Kineo's granite throne,
Or on Mount Desert's savage shore.

From care released, from labour free.
We planned for summer days to be,
When stream and lake our walks should bless,
Far in the sweet-breathed wilderness.
How many a forest-dell we sought,
How many a mountain top, and spot
Of sylvan beauty, in our thought?
How oft the lithe trout, in our dream,
Came painless from his native stream;
But, after we had mused our fill,
I came, and found him busy still,
He talked of social trips with me
Down to my native Acadie;
Where, many a tourist wins, I wis,
Thy ling'ring charm, Annapolis;
Where white the apple-orchards bow
By furtive, lurking Gaspereau;
Where wide the teeming marshes spread,
Redeem'd from Ocean's oozy bed;
Where Fundy's tides rush up the shore,
And Blomidon stands shagg'd and hoar.

With lighted pipe, he paused awhile,
The hours of labour to beguile;
Then, seated close in our retreat,
Some poet's rhyme I would repeat;
Such strains my earliest boyhood knew—
Fond Hinda, dusky Roderick Dhu,
Fair, hapless, Constance, Lady Clare,
O' Shanter, and his luckless mare.
And he, with many a kindling glance,
Would praise the masters of romance,
Naming each to me he loved the best;
Telling of Hester's letter'd breast,
Mortality's old mossy graves,
And stern Mohician withering braves.
Thought kindled thought, our words took wing,
Fancy uprose and touched her string,
And all about th' enamour'd air
The Muses hung their banners rare;
While down the litter'd floor did stream
The sinking sun's retiring beam,
And, underneath, the social river
Sent loving comment up forever.

O haunted river!—Pennamaquan!
I wander far,—the friend is gone!
From thy companionable stream
I distant roam, and, musing, deem
I hear a voice, gone silent now,
And see a slender form, a brow
Whose dark crisk locks are touch'd with gray.
O river! tranquil summer day!
O earth, so sad! O heaven, so sweet!
Where shall our kindred spirits meet?
Afar I rove, and dream my dream,
While days and years like moments seem;
He—sleeps beside thy murmur'ing stream!

Peace! peace to thee, in that repose
Which comes to us when cares shall close!
No more, O friend, of long ago!
Thou askest of the earth to know,
Save that the one's who mourn thee here
May meet thee in yon blissful sphere.
Thou heedest not how fade and fall
The leaves round lonely hearth and hall,
Nor how the lonesome robins call;
Nor how the stream that glanced and gleamed
Below the spot where once we dreamed,
The same forever flows along,
And sings the old, eternal song,
Longing, through flowery vale and lea,
For the deep bosom of the sea.

ARTHUR JOHN LOCKHART.

A Proposed Excursion to Isle-aux-Noix.

At the regular monthly meeting of the Numismatic and Antiquarian Society, held on the 17th inst. at the residence of the Hon. Edward Murphy, the notes on Isle-aux-Noix which appear in another column were read by Mr. Lyman, who, at the close of the paper, asked an expression of opinion from members present as to the desirability of having an excursion to this historic spot, somewhat after the manner of the excursions of the Archæological Society of Great Britain. It was suggested that other historical and literary societies might be asked to co-operate, or perhaps better still, the Natural History Society, which is in the position of a sort of mother to these younger and smaller societies. The proposition met the approval of members present, and Mr. J. A. U. Beaudry, who is a member of the councils of both the societies, was deputed to lay the suggestion before his *confrères* of the senior society. If the difficulties in regard to transportation can be overcome there is no doubt that it would be a very enjoyable spot to visit, taking for granted that great desideratum for all open air undertakings—favourable weather; though even should a shower or two intrude on the meeting uninvited, the picnickers would probably be less incommoded than anywhere else within reach of Montreal, as they would have a range of fine substantial buildings at their disposal, extensive enough to accommodate several regiments.

*A small stream flowing through the town of Pembroke, Maine, near which the author once lived. Its upper waters were tided in by hills and woods, and well calculated by their sylvan quietude to please the boatman who paddled on their breast at evening. It takes its rise in a small lake a few miles only from the point at which it merges with the sea.

†The river street was dark with slag and cinder from the iron mill. The mill is gone, and the scene greatly changed.

*The residence and place of business of the late William P. Hunt.