

## RED AND BLUE PENCIL.

"Pictor Præcox" writes to us on the subject of Christian iconography, with special reference to the last three hundred years. He asks us whether, in our opinion, religious art has, on the whole, improved during that period, and cites the verdicts of some great names in favour of a negative reply. We must avow our utter incompetence to discuss such a question, which, apart from its bearings on art, touches rather delicate ground. All we can do is to give the opinion of one who has made a special study of this very question, with the caution, however, that there is always a risk in trusting implicitly to individual judgment, no matter how highly it may seem to be qualified. After the sixteenth century, says Müntz, art, as the people's interpreter of religious beliefs, plays but an inferior rôle. There are still masters who illustrate with indisputable talent the scenes of Scripture—Rubens, Van Dyck, Poussin, Lesueur, Rembrandt, Murillo, Overbeck, Cornelius, Flandrin, etc. But the current of sympathy that kept the artist in unison with the multitude is broken, and it is to amateurs that the modern painter directs his thoughts. The art of later times seduces us by refinements of drawing and colouring, rather than by the depth of their convictions. Individual fancy has taken the place of those strong rules that gave to primitive Christian art, as well as to the art of the Middle Ages, its *raison d'être*, its character of urgent necessity.

"P. P." puts some other questions, of which we must defer the consideration. From his somewhat long communication, which is marked here and there by fine reflections, we select an interesting piece of information. He tells us that "one of the most ancient examples of the pictorial art of the Romans is a volume of the Gospels in illuminated manuscript, preserved in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. To that institution it was presented by Matthew Parker, twentieth Archbishop of Canterbury. One authority is of opinion that this is one of the very books sent to Augustine, in the closing years of the sixth century, by Gregory the Great. With the exception of a fourth-century manuscript at Vienna, the drawings in that copy of the Gospels are the oldest instances of Roman Christian iconography that have been met with." We shall be happy to hear from "P. P." again, but will he kindly send us his name?

We have received a letter from the elder of the gifted authors of "The Masque of Minstrels," which is such welcome evidence that the art epistolary is not yet lost that we present it to our readers in virtual integrity:

"Dear brother," he writes (and we feel the better for being so addressed), "who would have been born under the editor's star—which cannot have been a lucky one, considering the flood of rhyme, wilful and woeful, that is set against him, and the correspondence for which no wastebasket can have a proper capacity. I pity you for all my heart is worth; and, while you are ready to breathe a malediction on the whole race of poets (not yet canonized, of course), lo! I come in, leading another by the hand, and produce unto you—'Vivien.' What! don't you know her? Her light has been visible in Maritime regions for some time, twinkling with occasional lustre where her loved ocean washes the shore of her native Isle Madame. She comes with a tremulous modesty that is very pretty, and that does somewhat to recommend her, and will hardly believe herself possessed of 'a spark of nature's fire,' unless she be assured. I can further certify that 'Vivien' (Augusta Bellam) is now married and in exile, being Mrs. Stearns, and resident in Cambridge, Mass.

"If it were not fulsome, I would continue to praise the DOMINION ILLUSTRATED, which maintains its charm and gives signs of permanence. What elegance of illustration! What delicate morsels of literature, frequently, such as Carman's 'Wraith of the Red Swan!' I count myself small among the poets, but I think I know poetry, as I do spring weather, and that is the pure juice. Why does not Mr. Kirby write something? His 'Canadian Idyls' are so good as to justify a demand for more of the same kind from his pen.

"I send you a bit of the devotional, hoping that it may not be found void of merit. I had a curious and interesting thing, not long since, in 'English and Latin Hymns,' from the translator, Rev. Silas T. Rand, of Hantsport, N.S., the Micmac missionary. Of the Latinity I cannot presume to judge, but surmise that it is generally good, and, in some instances, excellent. Excellent, for example

—from the sound of it, at least—is the closing stanza of Addison's magnificent paraphrase of Psalm XXIII.:

Ridentes solitudines,  
Cum flores coronatae stant  
Et circum fontes murmurant.

"I fancy to myself the intellectual, to speak of no higher, pleasure that this little volume represents to the venerable author. For it is not unknown to me that

There is a pleasure in poetic pains  
That poets only know.

Nor is it, in my estimation, by any means an unmanly or profitless exercise to teach noble thought and emotion to flow in the mould of that heroic language from which so many of our strongest terms in English speech have been derived. So did Milton, Cowper and other English poets exercise themselves at times, while some of the finest hymns of the early Church were, as we know, written in Latin, which, if it be called a dead language, is certainly not among the dearest of dead things.

"I Vignajuoli' has an old-friend look. You say well; we haven't the match of the quaint man of Hernewood in his way.

"I am glad to hear further of the Society of Canadian Literature. It is a needed thing and should be made to prosper. An indefatigable mover is my friend Wilfred, who will have his ideal made actual.—Yours fraternally, A. J. L."

In another part of this issue our readers will find "Vivien's" fine historic poem, "Constantine." The choice of the Grand Duke is, for the most part, associated with its immediate political result, the attempted military rising of December, 1825. The Dekabrist, as the authors of the conspiracy were named, from the Russian name (Dekaber) of the month fixed for their proposed *coup d'état*, comprised some of the noblest, both by birth and character, of the leaders in society and thought of the Russian capital. Some of them did not return from exile or issue from the safe-keeping of their fortress cells till chagrin at the discomfiture of his plans had helped to send the autocrat Nicholas to his account. Some of the Dekabrist have told their own story, and it is a story that even to-day cannot be read without emotion.

Mrs. Stearns, however, turns our thoughts in another direction. We are invited to accompany the heir to the throne of all the Russias into his love-cheered seclusion and to witness the happiness which he shared with his beloved and devoted Julia, for whom, as the poet makes him say, he lost a kingdom, with whom he found a heaven:

I lose a kingdom but to find  
A heaven on thy breast.

Our correspondent's own poem, "A Willing Worker," is in harmony with the vocation and lofty aims of one who accepts the name of "Pastor Felix" and makes it more than a name.

"Peccator" writes us: There was one judgment which Mr. Saint-Pierre, in his eloquent arraignment (in the Benson case) of infidelity on the part of married women—as deserving of death by the laws of many more or less civilized communities in the past—did not think it well to quote. The law-book from which it is taken is entitled "Sanctum Jesu Christi Evangelium secundum Johannem," and it is found in chapter 8, section 3: "Adducunt autem scribæ, etc." Our attention has been drawn to it by an article in the *Nineteenth Century* (reproduced in the *Popular Science Monthly* for April) from the pen of Prof. Huxley. He says: "It is that touching apologue, with its profound ethical sense, of the woman taken in adultery—which, if internal evidence were an indefatigable guide, might well be affirmed to be a typical example of the teachings of Jesus. Yet, say the revisers, pitilessly, 'Most of the ancient authorities omit John vii., 53, viii., 11.'" Yes, indeed; he may well characterize such criticism as pitiless, for, as he points out, it was typical of that higher law which it was the mission of Christianity to proclaim to mankind. But, on account of variance in the records that have handed down from century to century the story of the incident, millions of believers are to be robbed of the comfort of that "Go and sin no more" which has been for ages a message of healing to sick souls.

"Delphinus" contributes a word or two to the controversy of the day: To expose or refute the doctrines of the Jesuits would require some study. The reading of a few articles in reviews or maga-

zines would be but a poor equipment for a task which has engaged some of the world's greatest intellects. To gain even a passable knowledge of their tenets, as set forth in Jesuit writers, whom the Society acknowledges as having authority, would demand years of close reading. The "Institutiones Philosophicæ," and the "Institutiones Ethicæ et Juris Naturæ," by Father Liberatore, may, however, be accepted as containing a fair exposition of the view of the Order, as taught in the Jesuit colleges. The former work is in two volumes and comprises Logic and Metaphysics; the latter consists of one volume and comprises Ethics and the Law of Nature. "Delphinus" adds that he has a set of these volumes, with Father Liberatore's autograph on the title-page.

Joseph Octave Crémazie was the subject of a paper read before the Society of Canadian Literature, on the 8th inst. The essayist was Mr. William McLennan, well known as an earnest student of the French Canadian poets, and as the author of "Songs of Old Canada." He treated his subject with judgment and sympathy. Mr. W. N. Evans, author of "Mount Royal," presided, and there was a goodly attendance, comprising many ladies.

## CONSTANTINE.

1820.

"The sway of empire! Ah! methinks  
That were a goodly life—  
To mount a throne, to grasp new crowns  
In battle's glorious strife!  
Yet they are proven worthless toys  
By thy fond arms, dear wife.

"The Russian land from Arctic sea  
To broad Pacific lies!  
But I have found a grander world  
Within thy tender eyes,—  
A world, where lasting love and peace  
Is life's unrival'd prize.

"Let Nicholas wear the royal robes,  
And sport the royal crest;  
I lose a kingdom but to find  
A heaven on thy breast!  
I yield the purple, knowing, sweet,  
That thy pure heart is best."

So, once again, young Love has proved  
Himself a generous giver;  
And once again young Love is lord  
Beside the Neva river.

Two lives—the one, lo! history  
Shall yield his deeds to thee,  
Where wifely groans and maiden tears  
Have writ his elegy;  
Where bloody knout and mangled corpse  
His fitting emblems be.

And one—when summer skies are blue,  
When summer fields are green,  
Full many a lass shall sing his praise;  
And many a maid, I ween,  
Shall vow in blushing beauty's ear  
To love like Constantine.

'Tis thus young Cupid often proves  
Himself a generous lover;  
And crowns are lost, when hearts are won,  
The whole wide Cosmos over.

VIVIEN.

## HUMOUROUS.

Little Dot: "I's writin' a letter to Santa Claus, tellin' all the things I want. Shall I put in the chimney?" Little Dick (2 years older): "Naw. Put it where mamma will find it."

"Did you read my novel, Smithers?" "Yes. I enjoyed it very much. It is very like Hawthorne." "O, my dear fellow, you—" "Don't get mad, Scribuler. It was like Hawthorne, but by no means a literal transcript."

Young Wife: "My love, I have a delightful surprise in store for you! You cannot guess what it is." Young husband (full of the pleasantest anticipations): "What is it, darling?" Y. W.: "I've invited mother to spend the holidays with us."

Mr. McPelter: "My dear, what do you think of marriage, is it a failure?" Mrs. McPelter: "I have not quite made up my mind. It depends on so many things. Let me ask you a question before I answer yours. Am I to have that seal sack this winter or not?"

Stranger: "I hear that this is a great section for fox-hunting." Oak Tree Inn Host: "Yes, siree; parties come down from the city every fall; come in grand style, too; been coming for years. 'Isn't there danger that you will run out of foxes?" "Not a bit. We are still using the fox we began with."