



CHERRYFIELD, May 30, 1890.

MY DEAR BRO. EDITOR,—Somehow I feel like greeting you personally—not as editor, but as friend. Surely we are kindred, by so much as likeness of heart and mind makes us such, if blood be lacking. I look fondly for larger results of your pen,—for other traces of you, literary and poetical, in the DOMINION. You give us excellent things of others. That was a noble poem of Duvar's; those are charming papers of Lemoine. Give us your choicest self. My brother's poem was very well and correctly printed; and though it was written some years ago, and while he was yet at college, I thought it would interest your readers. I have just come from Decoration services. The ceremonial is impressive to a thoughtful spirit, and the custom one most beautiful. An oration was delivered by a capable speaker, and martial music was furnished by the band and a choir of singers. The day has come to greater prominence, and is more ardently observed, than even Independence Day. . . . I ought to give you a smiling good-morrow, as does the sun after the drench of another night; for this is the anniversary—moving as that once so exquisitely greeted:

"Tenderly the haughty day
Fills his blue urn with fire."

For, with the renewal of the year, the liberation of streams, the return of birds, and the birth of flowers, comes ever this festival of sorrow and of memory, the visitation and decoration of myriad graves wherein lie the defenders of the Great Republic, whose lives went up a sacrifice within the cloudy shrine and upon the streaming altar of war. But, ugh! there is a polar breathing, and the prospect of traipsing the chilly grass is not heartening to our patriotism. Still when I see the broken remnant go forth, to the wail of fife and tap of drum, laden with flowers to scatter where their brothers sleep; I, who, when the events they commemorate were transpiring, was far from them—a child in an Acadian valley—bearing no part in that most important contest of the century—I will remember the worth of true soldiery, of courage and self-devotion under any banner that has a particle of right to consecrate it; that—

"Whoever fights, whoever falls,
Justice conquers evermore,
Justice after as before,—
And he who battles on our side,
God, though he were ten times slain,
Counts him victor glorified,
Victor over death and pain."

How we pause to listen for the recurrence of a sweet voice that has charmed us! And when we are told that the singer lives on, with the longing soul shut in and the musical impulse restrained, we long for the unnatural spell to be broken. Has any one asked, Where is VIVIEN? By the shores of Isle Madame, where the eloquent waters were forever whispering in her ears, and where, to quote her own words,—

"From the west, where the loyal clouds had spread
A gorgeous path for the sinking sun,
Came a voice like the glad voice of one
Who had never wept,"

her harp gathered no rust; but, amid other scenes, and, perchance, foreign cares, it has fallen into silence. Here are some lines that indicate the fondness with which, poet-like, she turns to the home of her childhood:

LILAC MEMORIES.

The red sun sinks adown the heights,
The city noises cease,
And slowly through the quiet room
Floats twilight's balm, and peace.

While somehow all my womanhood
Slips from me in the gloam;
I am a thoughtless child again
Within my village home.

Once more I hear my father's voice,
I see my mother's smile;

Your footsteps have not wandered, Fred,
From that low, wave-kissed isle.

But, stretch'd below the dear old boughs,
In happy, boyish ease,
You picture all the wonderments
That lie beyond the seas.

Ah! how the fairy-castles rise
'Neath fancy's subtle spell,
When all our wealth's the tansy gold
That grows about the well.

And I, half-joining in your dreams,
Stand tip-toed on the grass
To grasp the purple blooms that bend
To greet me as I pass.

While toddling up the garden path
Two tiny pilgrims haste—

Whence come these fancies!—from this spray
Of lilacs at my waist?

The flower around the old home, Fred,
Of our first smiles and tears!
Methinks there's never one as sweet
In all the after years.

And yet, old fellow! these same years
Have brought us wondrous calm;
Large-eyed Experience hold our hands
Within her wiser palm.

We build no more our fairy walls
In summer's pleasant hours;
The fragrant lilacs bloom afar
For other eyes than ours.

We know that youth, and youth's desires,
Once holding kingly sway,
Are fragile as the scented buds
Which wither in a day.

Vain hopes and idols, falling fast
'Neath Time's unerring wand,
While we, with tranquil hearts fare on
Toward the twilight land.

Not wishing now; not sorrowing,
Or joying overmuch;
Glad only that sometimes, old boy,
Our friendly fingers touch.

Well, yes, there is here the indefinable aroma of poetry and of old times; so there is in this sweet-briar-bush growing on the bank outside my window, which is just putting forth its tender-scented leaves. Easily as that of the lilac, it creeps into the heart and mingles with the memory. Laurel, fern, wild-briar—these were the frequent wildings of my boyhood! And who, missing something out of his life that once "put splendour in the grass" and "glory in the flower," will not wish to join in the search of VIVIEN for

THE LOST COMRADE.

By a bustling, crowded highway,
Where the autumn sun declining
Showed a space his rosy visage
Through the interlacing boughs,
Slowly passed a weary pilgrim.

Thick the dust lay on his garments,
And the snows of many winters
Lay above his wrinkled brows,
Asking always "Tell me, neighbours,
"Have ye seen a comely stripling
Hurry by with joyous footsteps,
"And with bonny locks of gold?
"We were comrades many seasons
In a fair, and fruitful valley
Girt about by lofty mountains,
"Stately mountains, grand and cold.

"Glad his laughter in their shadows;
"And he fain would linger ever
Mid the simple joys of nature
Strewn about our tranquil way,
"Joys of crimson sunsets stealing
Far adown the purple summits,
"Ere the white moon threw her mantle
Where the silent waters lay.

"But, my eager eyes grew tired
Of the valley's quiet beauties,
"And I longed to seek that city
Way beyond the mountain height;
"Longed to mingle with the voices
That fell softly down the twilight
Bidding me gird on my armour
Forth! And mingle in the fight.

"When at last with road-worn footstep
We attained that distant country,
"Lo! I half forgot the comrade
Who had climbed the heights with me;
"Till he loosed from mine his hand-clasp,
"Loosed his gentle, clinging fingers
And with tender eyes averted
Left my presence silently.

"Then, learned I his face was fairer
Than a hollow world's ambition;

"Tinkling gold, and fading laurel,
"Fairer far his grace, and truth.
"So I wander, vainly wander;
"Seeking for that pleasant valley,
"Seeking for my lost companion;
"Neighbours! have you seen my youth?"

Will you never come to the bottom of your treasure-box, O Pandora; or is it forever replenished with picture, essay and poem? Multitudinous are the beauty-spots on the face of this, Our Canada, and the panorama moved before us once a week without staling its variety, and bringing delight to many eyes. Still exalt the pencil of the painter, and pour the wine of the muses, and I will be counting my pennies to make sure I have enough. Boys can always find money for the show.

An old proverb runs to the effect that "A cat can look at a king." The rule works both ways, and so it follows "A king can look at a cat." But if, indeed, His Royal Highness shall do this it will add to pussy's importance for all the remaining days of her life. Thus, when the sovereign lady, Victoria, stops her carriage to amuse herself with dancing Bruin, as she did lately, Bruin's antics suddenly acquire celebrity and dignity, and he steps up to the London Royal Aquarium to dance to the tune of \$225 per week. And now some other bear, just as good as he, eats humble pie, when he can get it, but must continue to sigh: "Oh, for a peep from royal eyes!"

But I see the veterans are moving, and our village is astir from this hill-nook to where the covered bridge spans the stream that lurks below among its willows. The day mellows as it grows, and is becoming more soothing and propitious; while a milder wind is running its fingers through the long shining grasses of yonder ridge, and just beyond, the ranks of dandelions smile at them and laugh with their laughter. The flowers that fall to-day from the hands of children will not easily wilt, more than the "memorial blooms" of a loving recollection. So let me find no fault with summer's tardy approach, nor with these softening skies; but, though I be deemed an alien, let me give praise,—let me bestow sympathy here, and admit that,—

"One morn is in the mighty heaven
And one in our desire."

Then I greet you, my brother of pen and lyre. The Narragauques, in its somewhat hurried flow, flings a handful of its friendly spray toward the St. Lawrence, and with it the fraternal hail and adieu of

PASTOR FELIX.

SONNETS.

I.

EMERSON.

If nought, amiss in this wide breathing world,
That thou, calm soul, wand'rest no more abroad
In dim wood-paths, thy mild foot softly trod;
Looking, when sunset's quivering valves were fur'd,
On Assabet's gleaming bosom? Now, unpearl'd,
Shall Thought sink back into some tamer way?
Shall wave and breeze have something less to say
Where the rich vine its tendrils green have curl'd,
And 'mid the fresh-blown tresses of old pines?
Who shall the mystic legends longer give
Of cowslip and of violet, or who
Unfold the shy rhodora? Who Earth's shrines
Upbuild for poet-worship? Who shall live
Like thee,—so simple, abstinent and true?

II.

MAYTIME RAINS.

Sodden the fields, with hollows rankly green;
Great drops still linger on the dark'ning pane;
And strenuous robins, prophesying rain,
Pipe 'mid the trees that toward my window lean.
Hoarse rolls the swollen river, dimly seen.
Mottled with frothy patches, while its breast,
Filled like my own with musical unrest,
Is thinly covered with a misty screen.
Crouch'd 'neath umbrellas go the passers-by,
In gloom lone-vanishing; a wheelman flies
Swift as a shadow of approaching Fate;
Low swamps are vocal with a carping cry,
And various notes of Spring-tide minstrelsy;
Lambs bleat aloof; the village clock strikes eight.

III.

MY SYLVAN STUDY.

This is my oratory; studious, oft
I come, at morn, at eve, to this retreat;
Wild is the bower, and ancient is the seat,
My chair a rock, with grass and mosses soft