



A TWILIGHT SKETCH AT ILE-AUX-NOIX.

### A Twilight Sketch--Ile-aux-Noix.

Business called me one morning last summer to Rouse's Point. Taking the morning train from Bonaventure, we were soon scudding away across the alluvial bottom of the St. Lawrence, the picturesque hamlets half-buried in pale rich spring tints, the sweet-scented lilac leaved on by the groups of passing school children, the slow labouring plough or harrow, groups of rich, glossy cattle, all combined beneath a spring sky to breath hope and happiness of spring. Ye happy creatures—yclept Crackers *et al*—what do ye know of the absolute happiness of spring in a northern clime? The weary weeks of waiting and watching for the first robin, for the ice to shove, snow floods to come down, and then presto! as by magic the land lies bathed in blossom and verdure. At St. Johns we get the first glimpse of the Richelieu beyond the walls of the Infantry School Barracks, and following up its wooded shores the scenery changes. Through rifts of morning mists come glimpses of the Green Mountains where they slope eastward to the waters of Memphremagog Lake, while to the south they fringe the blue waters of Lake Champlain. Leaving the cars at Rouse's Point we find ourselves in a thriving little go ahead border village—in touch with the Grand Trunk, D. & H. and Canada Atlantic railroads—at the point where the historic Richelieu river floods with full lip the grassy shore and takes its course to the St. Lawrence. Business ended earlier than expected, a stroll to the Windsor and lunch in that comfortable hostelry is in order, and, having half a day to wait the train, can't possibly do better than take up the invitation of a barge captain to drift down the stream with him and strike the evening train somewhere. A delightful chord of uncertainty, appealing to the inborn nomad of my being.

Drifting down with a gentle breeze, we take a farewell glance at the Adirondack peaks to the south, still white with snow and curling up in the warm sunshine on deck give ourselves up to reverie. Champlain and the Iroquois! But yesterday, as Time counts, these wooded coves and

forest paths were trod by their fierce, stealthy feet, their canoes launched at Lac Sacrement (Lake George), maybe shelved overnight on this sandy point we are passing. What seems strange, that so few Iroquois or other Indian burial mounds or relics of war or chase should be traced, especially on the shores of this, their great highway. Perils of ambush must have been great, for the shores then were woody walls. But here our canal boat ties up for a load to a cranky old dock in the shade of a group of Balm of Gilead trees, and late afternoon shadows slant across the river. A visit to a neighbouring farm reveals the fact of a row-boat being in existence, or was last year, at another farm below, and here the said boat, being in existence, but very leaky, a contract is entered into with a Canadian you'h to put us across the river after he has done his chores (*fuit le train*). My earnest desire is he shall be on time or the train behind it. The bars are let down, the dark-toned, sweet-smelling kine drift out afield, lights glimmer as we pull out in the flood of saffron and opal, eddying in countless rings as the greedy lacéche swarm up at shad flies. It is not in the contract, but our youth has an errand at the island, and while he goes whistling away I climb up the bank and find myself on the edge of the old moat, now in ruinous decay. A line of dark elms across the glacis lie reflected in the lily-covered waters, where a solitary bittern is picking up his evening meal. A French chanson carols out of the old gateway a curious relic-evoking air, and almost too soon the spire of St. Valentine's breaks the deep violet of the sky and our day's pilgrimage is at an end.

### Carlyle's Description of Thackeray.

In the "Life of Lord Houghton," just published, is to be found Carlyle's account of his last sight of Thackeray. "Poor Thackeray," he says, "I saw him not ten days ago. I was riding in the dusk, heavy of heart, along by the Serpentine and Hyde Park, when some human brother from a chariot, with a young lady in it, threw me a shower of congratulations. I looked up—it was Thackeray with his daughter; the last time I was to see him in this world. He

had many fine qualities, no guile or malice against any mortal; a big mass of soul, but not strong in proportion; a beautiful vein of genius lay struggling about in him. No body in our day wrote, I should say, with such perfectness of style."

### A Compliment to a Canadian.

The Ottawa *Journal* contains the following:—The New York *Independent* of this week contains a review of the poetry contained in the prominent magazines for the month of December. The concluding paragraph relates to a poem by one who is a native and a resident of Ottawa. The critic thus expresses his opinion:—

It was reserved for the editors of *Scribner's Magazine* however, to produce the best poem of the month, a poem full of feeling and music exquisitely modulated, and serene as a night in late spring. Since Mr. Boner's lyric on Poole's cottage at Fordham, published in the *Century* a year ago, our periodical literature has contained nothing to match "The Reed Player," by Mr. Duncan Campbell Scott.

Mr. Scott is a son of Rev. Wm. Scott, of Ottawa, and a nephew of Dr. McCallum, of Montreal.

### King Kalakua.

As becomes good republicans, our neighbours to the south are rejoicing over the possession of a "real, live king" in San Francisco. King Kalakua, of the Hawaiian islands, has been féted and made much of, and his every movement chronicled for the benefit of his inquisitive admirers. He seems, however, to be rather an unsatisfactory sort of monarch in some respects. The reporters have endeavoured to make his stay pleasant by asking questions regarding the annexation of his kingdom to the States, the loss of his sugar market by the new American bounty system and other pleasing topics; but the only answer vouchsafed by his dusky majesty is "I am here for my health," which has the merit of being at least explicit, if not altogether revelant. He has now gone to San Diego, where he has spent the holidays, and it is understood that he intends visiting British Columbia before long.