



CHERRYFIELD, Aug. 13, 1890.

DEAR EDITOR,—The Dodona groves give forth scarcely a whisper, and most of the many rills of Helicon are running dry in this parched season, wherefore the verse I send you may have a "ground out" quality, scarcely permissible, whether for trade or friendship. For you remember the sagacious and sage Mr. Wegg, who enlightened Boffin's Bower with this bit of wisdom: "When a person comes to grind off poetry night after night, it is but right he should expect to be paid for its *weakening effect on his mind*." When I dropped into poetry I should ask to be considered in the light of a friend."

P. F.

OUR DOCTOR.

It is time for recess! or, perchance, the nooning hour has come, for they are pouring out of the school-room with the gurgling glee of water out of a bottle. *They!* have I said, school-fellows? Are they not *ourselves* that rush out, to leap, and fling their arms abroad, and whoop, and hurl the ball or stone? Hark! there is a rattle of wheels along by the roadside apple trees yonder, and those that droop over the fence from the Crowell farm, where we were glad to pick up the crabbedest knurlins, and then pelt the branches for more.

"Here come the doctor!" It is the general cry, and then they set off to meet the advancing carriage as soon as it is in sight. It is Dr. Brown,* our village Esculapius, and a venerable favourite among the boys and girls. He is a standing rebuke to all disease—that spreads its melancholy vans to be away on his arrival. A "noticeable man" is he, with a face and figure to command attention, at the hustings and in legislative halls, as well as in invalids' chambers. And he wins many a nod and smile as he sits stoutly erect in his buggy; for, though his place by right of years may be among the elders, wanting their tameness and gravity, he is likely as not to be classed with the boys—being a dear lover of all lovers of bat and ball. Under his seventy winters he stands, in his brown wig, without a visible sprinkle of frost or one flake of the snow that boreal Age commonly sifts upon us before our three score years are told; so he will assert his former boyhood and maintain a perpetual youth. And well he may do this, for under the aforesaid wig shines his sagacious and rubicund face—a very sun of good humour, whence little rays of cheerfulness come streaming wherever he goes. Tennyson describes the "busy wrinkles" round the face of his miller, and surely the wrinkles round our doctor's were busy and merry. He looks like a good piece of oak, well seasoned. Let him choose to alight, and, like the Farmer of Tisbury Vale, face and figure will be like a pleasant medicine to the eye:

"Erect as a sunflower he stands, and the streak Of the unfaded rose still enlivens his cheek. 'Mid the dews in the sunshine of morn, 'mid the joy Of the fields, he collected that bloom when a boy; There fashioned that countenance, which in spite of a stain That his life hath received, to the last will remain— A farmer he was; and his house far and near Was the boast of the country for excellent cheer."

Yes, he was brought up on a farm, and his lusty youth was nourished on fresh milk and brown bread, with sights and scents of barn and byre, and clover fields and breaths of spring mornings, and crisp November airs; farmer he still is, as well as doctor, and man of affairs; so he will, indeed, bloom brightly to the last, like an everlasting flower.

As he comes rattling up abreast the school-house, followed by his young body-guard in laughing commotion, he shakes—a very mirthful jelly—and cries out: "Oh, you whipper-snappers! you whipper-snappers! get on here if you can!" Then he starts up his horse, and the children stream after him in full cry, and he slackens his pace directly and leans over to banter them. In they climb, over the back or any other way they can, till the buggy is full, and he is happy. Why did he never have wife or children, while so many of narrow or shrivelled social natures are scowling on both? "Here, you rogues!" what are you doing?" he exclaims, as a copy of "Felix Holt, the Radical," that has been lying open on the seat, is thrust to the ground by their shuffling feet, when the wheels pass over it. It is restored; and, as he is already overloaded, he starts up again at a good pace, the rest running still behind, while he leans laughingly to snap his whip at the stragglers, slowly lagging at last, unable to hold on. "Get away! get away!" he exclaims, in an ebullition of buoyant spirits. "Get away; the old mare has enough of you." The little fellow with the s'raw hat, ragged and rimless, is helped to the seat beside him; and the little miss, a pert pet, is taken on his knee to be kissed, and to have him pull her ringlets and talk sweet, amusing nonsense to her. So I see him ride on through the village and down the descending road, where, from the hill's green brow, you may notice how Hantsport shows whitely and the bending river sparkles in the sun.

Dear, old bachelor doctor! You are among the unfortunates. Where you were and one other there was always reason for laughter. What if the joke were sometimes re-

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torted, you were always ready when the time came round again.* But where is the face that shines like Katrine's morning mirror,† but sometimes it bears the shadow of a cloud? And so I have seen even upon *your* face, deemed by you unobserved, looks sadly serious enough. You could not cut brother-flesh nor stand by dying neighbours without emotion. Prompt, executive, when anything was to be done; a man of affairs, dealing closely with such as closely deal; not altogether without spotted garments or giving cause of offense; yet were you warm, friendly, companionable—yes, and generous, too. Dear, old bachelor doctor! *my* companion, friend and comfortable physician in many an hour that delighted and tried my soul! My host and mentor—often my charioteer—had I the pen of a genius I would make you immortal; you should shine with the Galens of the past, as worthy of them. I, at least, have not forgotten you; and to me your rosy face seems almost as real and present to-day as if I had seen it but yesterday. Whatever your faults—and I shall not disclose them—you loved children and the dumb and helpless things of the earth; with you dwelt the old humanities; the flavour of precious books was in your thought and speech, and to you "the poetry of earth was never dead," or the muse's tongue silent. In my breast you abide tenderly for you helped to awaken in me the slumbering desire of song, and you showed me where many a poetic treasure lay hidden. How you gloried in Poet Burns and in Poet Butler! How you exalted the masters, and alternately petted and scouted the poetlings! And when I recounted my childish gains and hopes, or poured my schoolboy sorrows into your ear, you encouraged, praised and soothed me, tenderly judicious. How you entertained me, and gave me the very quintessence of pedagogic lore! Through you I learned to know and love Goldsmith. That picture in your home of the Irish school-master, with upraised switch, and your familiar recitation of:

"Well had the boding tremblers learned to trace—"

Are they not among the choicest of memory's treasures? Here shall I find in modern elocution the fine *éclat*, the magnificent gusto, with which you endowed the matchless, immortal lines of "Tam o' Shanter," as we rode at evening in sweet solitude together by the red winding banks through which the Gaspereau debouches into Mines, and by the marshes of Avonport? With what gesticulations and wild peals of laughter did you do it! And how you would recite "Willie Brewed a Peck o' Maut," or other of the bacchanal rollicking strains of social, tipsy Burns! And now I hear you compliment Tom Moore and depreciate him almost in the same breath, by singing:

"Keep this cup, which is now o'erflowing,
To grace your revel when I'm at rest;
Never, oh, never its balm bestowing
On lips that beauty hath seldom blest.
But when some warm, devoted lover
To her he adores shall bathe its brim,
Then, then around my spirit shall hover
And hallow each drop that foams for him!"

Then, turning to me, and saying in a tone of mock disgust: "There! isn't *that* pretty nonsense. Sound! sound! not a rational idea in it." How often have I seen you flourish your whip, growing magniloquent, as did ever Wilkins Macawber, Esq., over some ludicrous screed from your favourite, Hudibras!‡ But this mirth dies in the distance, and a silence falls. It is not far from laughter to tears, and there is a spot at last where pure *bonhomie*, like animal courage, evaporates. Stay! stalwart form, mirthful presence! Did I ever see you sad? Sad for others you had often need to be, and even yours was the end appointed for all living; but where did I ever behold a face that could be so radiant, save one, on which the light of Heaven itself was then shining? When you return in memory how often it is with a semblance of Wordsworth's "Gray-haired Man of Glee":

"The sighs that Matthew heaved were sighs
Of one tired out with fun and madness;
The tears which came to Matthew's eyes
Were tears of light, the dew of gladness."

Surely the lines might have been written for you! Still, to me you remain as I used to see you, and as you were on this school-boy day of mine, your lips, your eyes gave no hint of the "speechless dust" to which they have since gone. Of late, I stood beside a mound named for you behind the little chapel upon that fair eminence overlooking the sylvan beauties of your home, and read a familiar symbol cut in marble. A white hand, with index finger pointing upward:—*Sic itur ad astra*.

"Can it be
That these few words
Are all that must remain of thee."

*"Ye'll find no change in me," he had said, humorously, to one who applied to him, as road-commissioner, for "a little change" to repair a bridge. "Faith, Doctor," was the reply, "ye've often changin' yer coat since I knew ye."

†Are you going to vote for me?" he asked an inconsequential coloured man, just before election, merely to hoax him. "No, Doctah, I don't vote fer no one; I jes' stan's *mutual*."

‡Not Katrine, in her mirror blue,
Gives back the shaggy banks more true
Than every free-born glance confess'd
The guileless movements of her breast.—SCOTT.

‡Such for instance as:

"Whe, pulpit-drum ecclesiastic
Was beat with fist instead of a stick," etc.

Indeed, I had learned from his lips a considerable part of the first Canto before he gave me the volume. He frequently talked with me about this poet and gave me much of his sad history.

But the wheels have rattled out of hearing; the doctor is away to his patient's; the children come trooping back; the bell calls, while from the shelter of apple trees and the Balm-of-Gileads, the humming human bees buzz, eddying into the hive.

PASTOR FELIX.

SONNETS.

I.

LESCARBOT.

While we followed on our course, there came from the land odours incomparable for sweetness, brought with a warm wind so abundantly that all the Orient parts could not produce greater abundance. We did stretch out our hands, as it were, to take them, so palpable were they, which I have admired a thousand times since.—*Marc Lescarbot's Journal*.

Old voyager! to Acadie's virgin shore
The forest-muse bade welcome! Sunny-soul'd,
The magic of thine eye turn'd all to gold;
Enriching the quaint, cheerful fancy's store,
Filling Port Royal with romantic lore,
After the length'ning sea, beclouded, dim,
The warm July with joy thy heart did brim;
Like climbing roses looked the breakers frore.
What odorous winds, incomparably sweet,
From wide woods hail'd thee, gladly sailing near,
Till thou didst stretch thy hands forth to receive
The palpable gift—the smiling coasts to greet,
Dressed in the gayest garments that the year
Doth from her bloomy wardrobe deign to give.

II.

MARY.

No man who has had the love and companionship of such a one as my dear saint for twenty years, can complain of not getting all, and more than all, he deserves in this world.—*From a brother's letter on the death of his wife*.

My love, so late,—*my life's best ornament,
By whom my spirit out of dust was raised*—
The jewel of my dark. Now Heaven be praised,
By whom thy shining goodness was sent!
My lode-star,—for a little season lent,
Then soft withdrawn into thy guardian sky,—
Shed thy ripe influence on me silently,—
Sweet minister, with so benign intent!
The love I could not speak, the faith I meant,
I feel thou knowest, wheresoe'er thou art,
The undivided homage of a heart
Whose confined days in solitude are spent,
Is thine—thine only; while all thoughts are blent
With thee,—*my love, my life's best ornament*.

VISION.

Ever before us move the luminous shape
Of our Ideal,—as the column'd flame
Lighted their camp who out of Egypt came,
Rosy as sunset on some cloudy cape,
Let not the alluring form our eye escape;
Let us press to its mark, all girt and shod,
Wing-footed, as the young magnetic god—
The message-bearing Hermes. Who would ape
Or woo the past forever? Who would grope
In mouldy vaults, or ruin'd vaults explore,
Or gaze on deserts bare from side to side?
Beckon, thou bright Unseen!—give space and scope!
Men perish, visionless; celestial-eyed,
Lo! deep on deep, life's star-set portals ope!

ARTHUR J. LOCKHART.

A REGRET.

THAT TWO NATURE-LOVERS COULD NOT MEET WITH THE
AUTHOR AT OSSIPPEE PARK, MOULTONBOROUGH, N.H.

I have just come up from the brook with two gallons of water better, I fancy, than the nectar of the gods. It is pleasant to go for this water, down through the alders and then through the pines, feeling the air grow cooler and seeing the woods grow dimmer,—down to the mossy brook, which makes a babbling music, and seems to be, except one's self, the only living thing. Whenever I am at the brook I think of Izaak Walton and the sweet little poem in which he says:

"These crystal streams shall solace me."—LETTER.

If they were here among those hills with me,
Then perfect here would my contentment be;
I long to-day for their society.

How much to me their absence has denied!
O, that they could have laid their oars aside,
And left awhile their galley to the tide.

I know their love of nature equals mine;
I know they see in Nature a design
To raise us up to that which is Divine.

I know they hold that God, with wise intent,
Created all, o'er which well-pleased He bent,
That beauty is no simple accident.

That unto them of quickened ear and eye
It does His love and goodness testify:
How dull the sense that does this creed deny!

*Those beautiful words of Edmund Spencer apply most fitly to her whom this sonnet commemorates; who did, indeed, become the salvation of her husband, and as an ornament of gold about his neck.