

The Red Gods Called

PN the bulletin board of the Graphic Arts' Club in Melinda street is pinned to-day this notice :

IN MEMORIAM
NEIL MCKECHNIE
DROWNED JUNE 24TH, 1904

SOMEWHERE in those dark spruce woods that called him every spring, by a tumbling rapid, will be, by now, an axe-hewn cross with a similar inscription :

NEIL MCKECHNIE
DROWNED HERE JUNE 24TH, 1904

THEY will call the place McKechnie's Falls, perhaps, and with time the thing will grow into a legend. And a fit hero for legend was "poor old Mack."

DOWN at the Arts' Club they say the world—the artists' world, at any rate—one day would have had a high place for Neil McKechnie. They say he was a Canadian, a real Canadian, of a type of which we have but few. Foreign-taught painters of Canadian landscape have we, and Canadian-taught painters of foreign landscapes, but an artist with the spirit of Canada's youth in his heart—wild, free, strong, untrammelled of convention—where is he? Mack, they say, had been that artist one day, had not the Red Gods called.

FEW could tell what lay in his conviction as sturdily, as honestly and with as frank a gaze as Mack. None could contradict so flatly, and yet no contradiction gave so little offence as his. With him principle and truth counted alone. No respecter of persons was he, youth or age, or station or degree; a truth was a truth, and out it must. But his eye was ever as frank as it was blue, as kindly as undaunted.