



CHERRYFIELD, November 4th, 1891.

DEAR ILLUSTRATOR,—

FUNDY and I are on good terms again. His maritime godship smiled, in passing, and so did I. You have heard of imputed rivensness, and a surliness of disposition; but this is "the bubble reputation," which is sometimes blown by the breath of Envy. You have been told he makes no distinction with poet or humourist, and you perhaps come on occasion to prove the truth of rumour, and have cast up half your illustrations. We, ourselves (as editors) thought we had tasted that original "sprout,"—*mal de mer*—making gall of what was honey on our tongue; but we are now inclined to think that something else was the matter. Fundy has certainly reformed, and is now most gentle and considerate, depriving you of no advantage from your dinner, whatever, and rendering the slightest accommodation of that very commodious "Monticello" all that your beautiful condition can require. Without a qualm I looked through two volumes of photographic views; without languor I stretched myself at length in the gentlemen's cabin; with unshrinking gorge I encountered the whole bouquet of nautical smells; I walked the steady deck with level head and uncompromised dignity; when, lo! the genius of the serene and constant flood rose up, and said,—"They lie about me; I never did so; give me your hand on it!"

Fundy and I will be friends,—at least till we meet again; he shall never change me into a churlish scribe by a few humours. I would be glad to encounter him oftener, and would be as reckless of his moods as he is of mine. In his most ungracious guise he is but the warden to my native shore, who opens the garden-gate at Digby and welcomes me to Acadie,—

"Where many a tourist wins, I vis,  
Thy ling'ring charm, Annapolis;  
Where white the apple-orchards blow  
By furtive, lurking Gaspereau;  
Where leaps the breaker from the sea  
On Sable, dark, or Scatarie;  
Where wide the teeming marshes spread,  
Redeem'd from Ocean's oozy bed;  
Where Fundy's tides rush up the shore,  
And Blomidon stands shagg'd and hoar."

Indeed, Fundy, and this unexampled autumn, shall be a luxury out of which the most benumbing touch of Winter cannot take the flavour: I have felt his softest breath, and seen his sweetest light. The morning of approach is like a lily framed in gold; the evening of departure, a rose set in ebony. Watching from the deck, the blue coast seems to lift itself up, and approach, though I hasten away,—as if it said: "Go whither you will, I am still before you." The white foam-path we leave behind us, reaching to that Acadian portal, most unethetically termed the "Gut," suggests,—"There lies the way your thought would go;" and the horizontal telephonic column fulminated from the funnel beside me, and piled away to the dreamy hills in Ethiop masses, assures me that connection will never quite be broken, till, like the smoke, this life vanishes away.

Your pick of master mariners,—seen through a mist of idealty, of course,—is a good fellow, nobly spirited, abundant in manliness. Delightfully unconscious of himself, unconstrained and prompt in action, and of exquisite courtesy, his compact figure and sunny face bless all who look thereon. Your mother, or wife, *en route*, are safer in his hands than in your own. Cannot he make them comfortable! Some such sail out of various ports of the Dominion, and help to "link the golden chain of love that reaches round the world." One or two were school-mates of mine. Instinctively you feel that of such are the twain who issue from the "Monticello's" saloon, while now the shadows are falling, and a few stars dimly appear. They come deftly and stalwartly, bearing a venerable, but still unwrinkled matron, cosily nestled in an arm-chair,—a lady in their eyes, who smiles her thanks for a service to one who, like the aged Peter, must be borne whithersoever she

would go. With all due praiseworthiness to the saloon of the "Monticello," it was duller than she wished, and inferior to the starlit one of evening, with its carpet of gray-wrinkled sea, and all the spacious, oft-unnoted glories to which they bore her. Nature, dear to us, is dear to others, wherefore we love her the more; and this crippled mother's new seating was with a quiet satisfaction that delighted me. The knights of her chair crouched beside her, for a few moments, in mutually agreeable converse, and then withdrew, leaving her to Nature and her serene meditations. She looked away shoreward to the fading hills most steadfastly; and I could but fancy, from the pensiveness of her winsome face, sheltered by waves of silvery hair, that she too looked with me on the land of earliest love, and felt the gentle drawing of those tendrils of the soul, so finely tempered, so reluctantly broken. Happily, wherever she goes she will make an instinctive appeal to respect and sympathy; for her's is the mien both of a chastened and a sweetened life, gratefully sensitive to every influence that can please

"A mind at peace with all below,  
A heart whose love is innocent."

I stood, in the golden afternoon, on a high ridge overlooking a forest-theatre of wondrous maze, when the carnival of colour was at its height, and the season's spectacular play was at its most interesting act. The leaves, drenched in the late autumnal bath were but the fresher, and gayer of lustre. The slopes below me were pitched with golden tents, draped with hangings gorgeous as if torn from myriad rainbows: they are worthy of the conference of crimson, brown and yellow, scarlet and purple; tree and bush everywhere on fire with colour. What glorious prospect this!

"Circling forests, by ethereal touch enchanted,  
Wear the livery of the sky."

Let poet burn and despair; let artist mark how God can paint, with sunbeams for pigment, and frost for pencil! I steep my fancy in these deepening hues, profuse and various; I lay therein these mosses, ferns, and lichens delicate, and dyed so wondrously; these mimic shrubs abloom,—the undergarments and frills of the forest, and little ruffs and spangles with which sylvan Beauty loves to adorn itself. All these help to refine this gorgeousness, making these woods a dream of Fairyland. Kilmeny might lie here; happed in enchanted slumber, or in this suite of boudoirs Undine might dress her locks. See, where the summer shade of the maple—pride of leafy things—in merging richness breaks to flame! Its brow of statelihood is not quite ready to dash down its fiery crown. What wonders are here accomplished in a single night! It is the maple's royalty that arrests you, afar off, standing single and alone. It is Mrs. Browning's realization of a bush on fire, instinct with God. Its blood is not anemic,—see, where it flows! It has fed on goblets of wine, till it is purpled; its garments are auriferous. It bespeaks the wealth of that Land of which it is the symbol. It is an anthem of colour, running through the whole scale; softening, here; there, rising into brilliancy. It mingles not less attractively with clustered multitudes. A limb, pleated with these broad particoloured leaves, stippled and dashes the duskier green of the firs and spruces. The rarer ash now and again variegates the scene with soberer tint.

The elm may be the premier of trees, in his stately urbanity; "lady of the forest is the silver birch," vide Gerald Massey,—and Lowell assents that she is "most shy, most lady-like." But I assume to say that the maple is home and fireside and good wife, all in one. She is at all times a wholesome matron, but just now I dote upon her. Give her for background a guardianship of fir and spruce,—those grim and dusky sachems of the forest,—and let a warrior-pine be at her elbow, and she shall be a sylvan monarch in undisturbed dominion. A few white birches shall loiter around for maids of honour. But well out in front, in rounded splendour, must stand our Queen Maple, with her crown of rubies; that, seeing her, I may bow down, take off my shoes, and uncover my head. I will not ask for Sinai, nor the bush that glowed with unconsuming fire.

A brother poet teaches how to gather in brightness from this sunny side of the year, for use when the "stormy winds do blow":

— Arthur Weir: "Hope and Despair."

"I tread the maze of the changing wood,  
And though no light through the maples plays,  
Yet they glow each one,  
Like a rose-red sun,  
And drop their leaves, like a glittering flood  
Of warm sunbeams, in the woodland ways."

"Poor human heart, in the year of life,  
All seasons are, and it rests with thee  
To enjoy them all,  
Or to drape a pall  
O'er withered hopes, and to be at strife  
With things that are, and no brightness see."

"Sarepta," in the *Week*, and in this journal, has strung for us sonnets in rosaries, and given us much valuable and curious poet-lore. Just now, we are told how the night-ingle looks and sings, has been heard, seen and mis-seen, dreamed and fabled about, until it would appear that Pope is not the only poet who has written with his back to the window. The alleged misrepresentation of fact on the part of such poets as have attributed to this bird a plaintive or mournful note may have some palliation in the sentence quoted by our author from Burroughs: "To the melancholy poet she is melancholy, and to the cheerful she is cheerful." Even the august Milton may be accused of going to books, rather than to nature, and thus of making Philomel's notes to seem "most musical, most melancholy." But is this altogether just criticism? Is not this characteristic of his mood to external nature one of the prime attributes of the poet, as also the absorption of universal nature in himself? He sends his mind abroad, and wins all home. "He feels as if he grew in the grass, and groves; as if he stood on yonder distant mountain-top, conversing with clouds, or sublimely sporting among their imaged precipices, caverns and ruins. He flows in that river, chafes in its cascades, smiles in the water-lilies, frisks in the fishes. He is sympathetic with every bird, and seems to feel the sentiment that prompts the song of each; and from this ability to transfuse himself into every object around him in a certain sense he inherits all things." This is one phase of the matter, as given by John Foster, and termed by him *physiopathy*: a kindred one is given by Coleridge, in the lines:

"We receive but what we give,  
And in our life alone doth nature live."

Where, then, is the essential untruth? Is not nature in the heart and spirit of the man, as well as in the bird? If the aim of the poet is, or should be, to convey scientific fact with accuracy, these forgetful lapses make him indeed liable to censure; but the time is recent when, with the growth of the scientific spirit on the part of the poet such accuracy demands his close attention.

(Of all the poems in Mr. Arthur Weir's recent volume best we like "The Valedictorian,"—which seems, indeed, the most finished and thoughtful of all his productions. The readers of the *DOMINION* will remember it as a strong impassioned plea put into the lips of a "sweet girl graduate," for the full emancipation of her sex from the fetters of law and custom that restrain her from a fair field in competition with man. It is not easy to tear away fragments from the body of any writing the texture of which is so firm and fine, so generally good, nor will such fragments best exhibit its quality; but lack of space is our necessity, and so we pluck a few tufts by which you may judge of the fleece, whether it be floss of gold or not:

"Gowned and happy, capped and hooded, radiant with the glow of youth  
Flute-voiced, like a bird full-throated, she upholds the cause of truth."

"By the beard she plucks the greyheads, laughs to scorn the pride of man,  
'Woman free is woman victor, let him rival her who can!'"

"Crying: 'Be woman shall have freedom;' crying: 'Cease—less be her strife  
That, as unto man, be opened unto her the walks of life."

"On the maid, as on the stripling, Nature doth her gifts bestow."

"Man hath many a mortal conflict, equal conflict hath the maid;  
Shall she not in equal armour for life's warfare be arrayed."

"When man holds the moon at mid-day, like a cloud—  
wraith faint and white,  
Nobler than the silver splendour of the harvest moon at night,

\* Burdette avers that here the original germ of sea sickness was sprouted; but I saw no proper official recognition of its quality at the Exhibitions of either St. John or Halifax.