ARTICLE.

To John Creble Leech,
Omaha, Neb., Xmas, 1888.

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SUBJECT.

"The Count and I".
The Countess

To

John Steele Lock

Omaha, Neb., Christmas, 1882.

I love these clear and starry skies,
The snow that crisp and creasing lies;
It takes me back to days of old,
When hands and feet oft ached with cold.
But eyes were bright and hearts were warm,
And rosy cheeks grew fresh in storm.
The skates would course the winding crest,
And shouts of joy the silence break.
The sleds from tops of hill would glide
And sleighs chase out the evening tides.
Now shouts of laughter free and full
Relieve the weary upward pull.
The rising moon, the jingling bells,
The happy boys, the pretty girls,
The neighbor house, the gathering throng,
The round, round, round, gained and gladsome song.
The trembling lips and timid voice,
As beating hearts young love beguiles,
The pawns and forfeits hint the door,
With bolder cached on open floor;
One might go on for days and nights
And have one's fill of happy sights.
Yet, visions sweet and full of joy,
When Count and I were lively boys!
You know 'twas Maine with colder clime,
Where rocks and hills rise up sublime,
Where virgin forests still exist,
And Moosehead adds the summertime;
For ample game in winter days
Or other sports with warmer rays.
Good, Maine, my state, my native land
Whose snow-bound coast one still command
To look for past and future mead,
For boyhood joys and sunset need.
The Count, your sire, from southward came.
To every country owes its name.
To friends and peace the land was given.
For now are the hills are given.
And coal thence flows to all the world.
Where stars and stripes are ever unfurled.
In youth we met, the Count and I,
Where Hudson's homely breathing sighs,
Near Poes house we learned the skill,
And nested and marched, for both our skill.
Joined hand to hand in many a hope.
Or breathless toils to mountain tops,
Or coming for the lesson sweet,
With dead, examiners to meet.
The play and work to memory bright,
The year to make their ceaseless flight,
Return to mental chambers clear.
Called up by greetings of the year.
For now indeed the time had come.
Which brings to mind this only son.
For Christmas festive times agree
That Count and I had choicest glee!
When he and I were but nineteen,
And he'd not yet had Fairie beaux.

Oh, how they've sped those years gone by!
From school to Arsenal facing Troy,
Where gentle wife completes the joy.
To Maine for months and then return,
With Connie bay the eastern born.
Then comes the first of parting grief!
Yet soon to coal yields relief
So, by way of compensation,
Put in orders, new relation,
To teach the youth on Hudson's shore.
What could the waiting heart endure!
Meanwhile my friend had sailed forth
To try his luck 'mid civil war.
In crowds and work 'till sight I smirled.
But heard one day that he'd been shot.

By this, a lovely dark-eyed maid had from her choicest home come 'mid herself, the rich and precious life, to my good friend, a charming wife.

But then! The Count and I, still young, as still we track and trade among

The Hudson and the folks of Noyan,

And mingling age with youth and men

A boding sound comes thrilling through

The Southern land and Northern, too,

A sound the like you never heard,

Of surging sea, of multitude,

From Georgia's reef to Maine's north sound,

From Northern lake to Southmost sound,

From coast to coast the world half o'er

The air is full of—raging, roar!

But all! my son, how stop the car

If war all grip the empire's fire.
Enough that now my friend the Count
On stalwart steed was quick to mount;
And he a thousand men before
Chid lead them bravely out to war.
His comrade too in true and equal men,
Joined hand to hand his friend again.
On many a field in deadliest strife,
Where blood goes out and human life,
The Count himself brave, true and bold
Paid well his part to save the Fold.
We held the Father's gift in gage
And kept the children's heritage.
The war is past, and peace is come,
And happy triumphs turns us home.
The wife, the farmers with welcome greet,
With dewy eyes, returning feet.
And for a time my friend and I
Would all the merry elves defy,
To greet our joys, so nice our friends!
These blessings God upon us sends.
But, still the war had left its scars,
Profigured friends; the mangled maim.
With one gun halting thro. the years,
Your mother's heart is filled with fear.
My wounds without, but his within,
No help availeth from Kith or kin.
The fell destroyer sets his seal,
No care or care brings back his heal.

He too, my friend, like many other,
Father, comrade, son and brother,
Gave up this love, his noble life.
His country had the sacrifice.

Hear then my son this simple story
Of your father's youth and glory.
And go you for the bold and brave.
Prepared to fill the hopes he craved.

Now that you see all strife doth cease.
Be loyal to the Prince of Peace!

As Christmas brings you many a thought,

Of those who have your battles fought,
Make of your life the most you can.
Be filial, strong—a manly man!
For God will bless and knit the band
By his own, his loving hand.
Where all our yous the Hudson shall love
And keep best gifts we bought with blood.