

## Max Nordan's "Degeneration."

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A book which has recently attracted all the attention it deserves, and perhaps a little more, is the English translation of Max Nordan's work on degeneration. "Degenerates," he writes, "are not always criminals, prostitutes, Anarchists, and pronounced lunatics; they are often authors and artists." It is with the latter class that Max Nordan deals, proposing to show that they "manifest the same mental characteristics, and, for the most part, the same somatic features" as the former. He would apply the term "degenerate" to the originators of all the *fin-de-siècle* movements in art and literature. Those who sympathize with these movements, admire the originators, and profess an exquisite appreciation that the Philistine cannot feel, are also to be considered degenerate; the appreciativeness of which they are so proud is to rank only as a disease. Among those who come in for Max Nordan's severest criticisms are Wagner, Tolstoi, Ibsen, Ruskin, Rossetti. It may at once be conjectured that the book is exceedingly entertaining.

But it can hardly be said that the book is completely convincing. Max Nordan is at once a man of literature and a man of science; and the one spoils the other. The man of science who commits the indiscretion of falling in love with his own theory should not write about that theory until his