

Christmas Buying Should Not Be Delayed

By the end of the present week every Eaton Mail Order customer should have received a copy of our complete and attractive Christmas catalogue. It is not large, being composed entirely of goods essentially "Christmassy." The entire selection of gifts for the family may easily be made from its pages, as it covers every taste. The toys are, of course, the chief attraction, the range of choice being particularly comprehensive.

It is not a good policy, as hundreds thousands of mail order buyers have come to realize, to postpone Christmas shopping until the last hour. The most elaborate preparations are always made for the holiday season, this year more than ever, but it is entirely impossible to keep all lines complete right up to the last, and some one may be a trifle disappointed in not receiving the actual goods ordered. There is one good way to entirely remove the smallest chance of disappointment. That is to order now.

As soon as the catalogue comes to your hand is an excellent time to make all holiday purchases.

It is, perhaps at Christmas more than any other season, that the advantage of having a great city store available is appreciated. It is no small benefit to be able to make your own selections, from the daintiest and most attractive gift offerings gathered together from two continents.

We strongly advise all who have received catalogues to order at once, and those who have not, through any chance, received theirs to send for it without delay.

THE T. EATON CO. LIMITED
WINNIPEG CANADA

when left to himself. It is so like the Francois Bigot I once knew! But tell me, woman, what said he further? Did you see him, did you hear him? Tell me all he said to you."

"I saw him, lady, and heard him," replied La Corriveau, taking the bouquet in her fingers, "but he said little more than I have told you. The Intendant is a stern man, and gives few words save commands to those of my condition. But he bade me convey to you a token of his love; you would know its meaning, he said. I have it safe, lady, in this basket,—shall I give it to you?"

"A token of his love, of Francois Bigot's love to me! Are you a woman and could delay giving it so long? Why gave you it not at first? I should not have doubted you then. Oh, give it to me, and be blessed as the welcome messenger that ever came to Beaumanoir!"

La Corriveau held her hand a moment more in the basket. Her dark features turned a shade paler, although not a nerve quivered as she plucked out a parcel carefully wrapped in silver tulle. She slipped off the cover, and held at arm's length towards the eager, expectant girl, the fatal bouquet of roses, beautiful to see as the fairest that ever filled the lap of Flora.

Caroline clasped it with both hands, exclaiming in a voice of exultation, while every feature radiated with joy. "It is the gift of God, and the return of Francois's love! All will yet be well!"

She pressed the glowing flowers to her lips with glowing kisses, breathed once or twice their mortal poison, and suddenly throwing back her head with her dark eyes fixed on vacancy, but holding the fatal bouquet fast in her hands, fell dead at the feet of La Corriveau.

A weird laugh, terrible and unexpressed rang round the walls of the secret chamber, where the lamps burned bright as ever; but the glowing pictures of the tapestry never changed a feature. Was it not strange that even those painted men should not have cried out at the sight of so piteous a murder?

Caroline lay amid them all, the flush of joy still on her cheek, the smile not yet vanished from her lips. A pity for all the world, could it have seen her; but in that lonely chamber no eye pitied her.

But now a more cruel thing supervened. The sight of Caroline's lifeless

form, instead of pity or remorse, roused all the innate furies that belonged to the execrable race of La Corriveau. The blood of generations of poisoners and assassins boiled and rioted in her veins. The spirits of Beatrice Spara and of La Voisin inspired her with a new fury. She was at this moment like a pantheress that has brought down her prey and stands over it to rend it in pieces.

Caroline lay dead, dead beyond all doubt, never to be resuscitated, except in the resurrection of the just. La Corriveau bent over her and felt her heart; it was still. No sign of breath flickered on lip or nostril.

The poisoner knew she was dead, but something still woke her suspicions, as with a new thought she drew back and looked again at the beautiful form before her. Suddenly, as if to make assurance doubly sure, she plucked the sharp Italian stiletto from her bosom, and with a firm, heavy hand plunged it twice into the body of the lifeless girl. "If there be life there," she said, "it too shall die! La Corriveau leaves no work of hers half done!"

A faint trickle of red blood in threads ran down the snow-white vestment, and that was all! The heart had forever ceased to beat, and the blood to circulate. The golden bowl was broken and the silver cord of life loosed forever, and yet this last indignity would have recalled the soul of Caroline, could she have been conscious of it. But all was well with her now; not in the sense of the last joyous syllables she spoke in life, but in a higher, holier sense, as when God interprets our words, and not men, all was well with her now.

The gaunt, iron-visaged woman knelt down upon her knees, gazing with unshrinking eyes upon the face of her victim, as if curiously marking the effect of a successful experiment of the aqua tofana.

It was the first time she had ever dared to administer that subtle poison in the fashion of La Borgia.

"The aqua tofana does its work like a charm!" muttered she. "That vial was compounded by Beatrice Spara, and is worthy of her skill and more sure than her stiletto! I was frantic to use that weapon, for no purpose than to redder my hands with the work of a low bravo!"

A few drops of blood were on the hand of La Corriveau. She wiped them impatiently upon the garment of Caro-

line, where it left the impress of her fingers upon the snowy muslin. No pity for her pallid victim, who lay with open eyes looking dumbly upon her, no remorse for her act touched the stony heart of La Corriveau.

The clock of the Chateau struck one. The solitary stroke of the bell reverberated like an accusing voice through the house, but failed to awaken one sleeper to a discovery of the black tragedy that had just taken place under its roof.

That sound had often struck sadly upon the ear of Caroline, as she prolonged her vigil of prayer through the still watches of the night. Her ear was dull enough now to all earthly sound! But the toll of the bell reached the ear of La Corriveau, rousing her to the need of immediately effecting her escape, now that her task was done.

She sprang up and looked narrowly around the chamber. She marked with envious malignity the luxury and magnificence of its adornments. Upon a chair lay her own letter sent to Caroline by the hands of Mere Malheur. La Corriveau snatched it up. It was what she sought. She tore it in pieces and threw the fragments from her; but with a sudden thought, as if not daring to leave even the fragments upon the floor, she gathered them up hastily and put them in her basket with the bouquet of roses, which she wrested from the dead fingers of Caroline in order to carry it away and scatter the fatal flowers in the forest.

She pulled open the drawers of the escritoire to search for money, but finding none, was too wary to carry off aught else. The temptation lay sore upon her to carry away the ring from the finger of Caroline. She drew it off the pale wasted finger, but a cautious consideration restrained her. She put it on again, and would not take it.

"It would only lead to discovery!" muttered she. "I must take nothing but myself and what belongs to me away from Beaumanoir, and the sooner the better!"

La Corriveau, with her basket again upon her arm, turned to give one last look of fiendish satisfaction at the corpse, which lay like a dead angel slain in God's battle. The bright lamps were glaring full upon her still beautiful but sightless eyes, which, wide open, looked, even in death, reproachfully yet forgivingly upon their murderers.

Something startled La Corriveau in that look. She turned hastily away and, relighting her candle, passed through the dark archway of the secret door, forgetting to close it after her, and retraced her steps along the stone passage until she came to the watch-tower, where she dashed out her light.

Creeping around the tower in the dim moonlight, she listened long and anxiously at the door and window to discover if all was still about the Chateau. Not a sound was heard but the water of the little brook gurgling in its pebbly bed, which seemed to be all that was awake on this night of death.

La Corriveau emerged cautiously from the tower. She crept like a guilty thing under the shadow of the hedge, and got away unperceived by the same road she had come. She glided like a dark spectre through the forest of Beaumanoir, and returned to the city to tell Angelique des Meloises that the arms of the Intendant were now empty and ready to clasp her as his bride; that her rival was dead, and she had put herself under bonds forever to La Corriveau as the price of innocent blood.

La Corriveau reached the city in the gray of the morning; a thick fog lay like a winding-sheet upon the face of nature. The broad river, the lofty rocks, every object, great and small, was hidden from view.

To the intense satisfaction of La Corriveau, the fog concealed her return to the house of Mere Malheur, whence, after a brief repose, and with a command to the old crone to ask no questions yet she sallied forth again to carry to Angelique the welcome news that her rival was dead.

No one observed La Corriveau as she passed, in her peasant dress, through the misty streets, which did not admit of an object being discerned ten paces off.

Angelique was up. She had not gone to bed that night, and sat feverishly on the watch, expecting the arrival of La Corriveau.

She had counted the minutes of the silent hours of the night as they passed by her in a terrible panorama. She pictured to her imagination the successive scenes of the tragedy which was being accomplished at Beaumanoir.

The hour of midnight culminated over her head, and looking out of her window at the black, distant hills, in the

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 AGE Co. Incorp.
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