

New Books by Canadian Women

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the footlights were reeking coal-oil lamps, and only the zeal of romantic youth enabled one to inhale kerosene fumes and breathe out—sentiment."

In 1892, Miss Alexander launched her first Western tour amid many hardships, for there was but one through train a day, and it often did not fit in with concert hours; but, through the courtesy of Mr. afterwards Sir, William White, she secured permits to travel on "freights"; but, after spending the best part of a day in a "caboose," she says, "I felt too much like freight myself to electrify the audience at the jumping-off place."

"In another town, it had been customary to ring the town bell four times a day, and under no circumstances would the old bell-ringer omit the nine p.m. ringing, so on the stroke of the hour the brazen tones pealed out in the middle of a selection. I couldn't resist the temptation of shaking my fist in the direction of the noisy tower, and declaiming sternly, 'Curfew should not ring to-night!' I learned afterwards that the town council, fearing a repetition of this public ridicule, abolished the curfew

on concert nights from that evening."

On later visits to the West, Jessie Alexander had the pleasure of seeing mere hamlets grow into thriving towns, and cities like Winnipeg and Vancouver develop into metropolitan centres of distinction. On her visits to England she had many engagements in the drawing-rooms of the aristocracy, where she was usually requested to give New World selections, Whitcomb Riley's poems being then the favourites.

Miss Alexander was married to Mr. Charles Roberts, Professor of Elocution in Union Theological Seminary, New York, with whom she had studied, and was absent from Canada and from the platform during the earlier years of her married life; but on the death of her husband she returned to the concert stage and realized the loyalty and love of the Canadian audience.

In her youthful days, Jessie Alexander aspired to give classic compositions to satisfy her literary sense and display her own attainments, but the old Scotch body's exclamation after a humorous selection, "Hech! that tak's the cobwebs aff ma hairt," gave her a

new cue, and she has been brushing cobwebs from the hearts of responsive Canadian audiences ever since.

The book comprises ten original sketches, chiefly of a humorous nature, and the numerous other selections which she has adapted for concert purposes have been thoroughly tested and warranted to receive a warm welcome from Jessie Alexander's lips. Whether others can "get them across the footlights" depends upon the talents of her disciples. (Published by McClelland, Goodchild & Stewart, Toronto.)

A YEAR ago last September, a little collection of poems by Canadians, edited by Mrs. William Brooks, was published under the title of "A Band of Purple," in aid of the Red Cross, which was so successful that the proceeds have already been \$700, and it is still selling. The money has gone to assist in the furnishing of a reading and rest room in the hospital at Buxton, and is known as the Canadian Poets' Room. It was originally a chapel, and contains beautiful stained glass windows, and is 40 x 25 feet. Surely a fitting setting for the commemoration of Canadian poets, and one that reflects great credit on the editor of the "Band of Purple" for the work she has done in the interest of both poets and soldiers.

further away from the spot where he had last fired and pulled an extra clip of cartridges from his pocket.

The blood was flowing hot over his face. He made no effort to staunch it or even to feel with his fingers to find exactly where or how badly he had been hit. He jerked the empty cartridge clip from his pistol butt and snapped in the other. He swept his sleeve over his face to clear the blood from his brows and eyes and stared through the dark with pistol at arm's-length loaded and ready. Blood spurted over his face again; another sweep of his sleeve cleared it; and he moved his pistol-point back and forth in the dark. The flash of the firing from the other two revolvers had stopped; the roar of the shots had ceased to deafen. Eaton had not counted the shots at him any better than he had kept track of his own firing; but he knew now that the other two must have emptied their magazines as well as he. It was possible, of course, that he had killed one of them or wounded one mortally; but he had no way to know that. He could hear the click as one of the men snapped his revolver shut again after reloading; then another click came. Both the others had reloaded.

"All right?" the voice which Eaton knew questioned the other.

"All right," came the reply.

But, if they were all right, they made no offer to fire first again. Nor yet did they dare to move. Eaton knew they lay on the floor like himself. They lay with fingers on trigger, as he also lay, waiting again for him to move so they could shoot at him. But surely now the sound of the firing in that room must have reached the man in the room above; surely he must be summoning his servants!

Eaton listened; there was still no sound from the rest of the house. But overhead now, he heard an almost imperceptible pattering—the sound of a bare-footed man crossing the floor; and he knew that the blind man in the bedroom above was getting up.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Under Cover of Darkness.

BASIL SANTOINE was oversensitive to sound, as are most of the blind; in the world of darkness in which he lived, sounds were by far the most significant—and almost the only—means he had of telling what went on around him; he passed his life in listening for or determining the nature of sounds. So the struggle which ended in Eaton's crash to the floor would have waked him without the pistol-shot immediately following. That roused him wide-awake immediately and brought him sitting up in bed, forgetful of his own condition.

Santoine at once recognized the sound as a shot; but in the instant of waking, he had not been able to place it more definitely than to know that it was close. His hand went at once to the bellboard, and he rang at the same time for the nurse outside his door and for the steward. But for a few moments after that first shot, nothing followed; there was silence. Santoine was not one of those who doubt their hearing; that was the sense in which the circumstances of his life made him implicitly trust; he had heard a shot near by; the fact that nothing more followed did not make him doubt it; it made him think to explain it.

It was plain that no one else in the house had been stirred by it; for his windows were open and other windows in bedrooms in the main part of the house were open; no one had raised any cry of alarm. So the shot was where he alone had heard it: that meant indoors, in the room below.

Santoine pressed the bells quickly again and sat up straighter and more strained; no one breaking into the house for plate or jewelry would enter through that room; he would have to break through double doors to reach any other part of the house; Santoine did not consider the possibility of robbery of that sort long enough to have been said to consider it at all; what he felt was that the threat which

THE BLIND MAN'S EYES

BY WILLIAM McHARG AND EDWIN BALMER

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CHAPTER XVII.—(Continued.)

HIS instant's glimpse of that face astounded him. He could not have seen that man! The fact was impossible! He must have been mad; his mind must have become unreliable to let him even imagine it. Then came the sound of the voice—the voice of the man whose face he had seen! It was he! And, in place of the paralysis of the first instant, now a wild, savage throe of passion seized Eaton; his pulses leaped so it seemed they must burst his veins, and he gulped and choked. He had not filled in with insane fancy the features of the man whom he had seen; the voice witnessed too that the man in the dark by the wall was he whom Eaton—if he could have dreamed such a fact as now had been disclosed—would have circled the world to catch and destroy; yet now with the destruction of that man in his power—for he had but to aim and empty his automatic pistol at five paces—such destruction at this moment could not suffice; mere shooting that man would be petty, ineffectual. Eaton's fingers tightened on the handle of his pistol, but he held it now not as a weapon to fire but as a dull weight with which to strike. The grip of his left hand clamped onto the short steel bar, and with lips parted—breathing once, it seemed, for each heartbeat and yet choking, suffocating—he leaped forward.

At the same instant—so that he could not have been alarmed by Eaton's leap—the man who had been working moved his torch, and the light fell upon Eaton.

"Look out!" the man cried in alarm to his companion; with the word the light of the torch vanished.

The man toward whom Eaton rushed did not have time to switch off his light; he dropped it instead; and as Eaton sprang for him, he crouched. Eaton, as he struck forward, found nothing; but below his knees, Eaton felt a man's powerful arms tackling him; as he struggled to free himself, a swift, savage lunge lifted him from his feet; he was thrown and hurled backwards.

Eaton ducked his head forward and struggled to turn, as he went down, so that a shoulder and not his head or back would strike the floor first. He succeeded in this, though in his effort he dropped the jimmy. He clung with his right hand to the pistol, and as he struck the floor, the pistol shot off; the flash of flame spurted toward the ceiling. Instantly the grip below

his knees loosed; the man who had tackled him and hurled him back had recoiled in the darkness. Eaton got to his feet but crouched and crept about behind a table, aiming his pistol over it in the direction in which he supposed the other men must be. The sound of the shot had ceased to roar through the room; the gases from the powder only made the air heavier. The other two men in the room also waited, invisible and silent. The only light, in the great curtained room, came from the single electric torch lying on the floor. This lighted the legs of a chair, a corner of a desk and a circle of books in the cases on the wall. As Eaton's eyes became more accustomed to the darkness, he could see vague shapes of furniture. If a man moved, he might be made out; but if he stayed still, probably he would remain indistinguishable.

The other men seemed also to have recognized this; no one moved in the room, and there was complete silence.

Eaton knelt on one knee behind his table; now he was wildly, exultantly excited; his blood leaped hotly to his hand pointing his pistol; he panted, almost audibly, for breath, but though his pulse throbbed through his head too, his mind was clear and cool as he reckoned his situation and his chances. He had crossed the Pacific, the Continent, he had schemed and risked everything with the mere hope of getting into this room to discover evidence with which to demand from the world righting of the wrong which had driven him as a fugitive for five years; and here he found the man who was the cause of it all, before him in the same room a few paces away in the dark!

For it was impossible that this was not that man; and Eaton knew now that this was he who must have been behind and arranging and directing the attacks upon him. Eaton had not only seen him and heard his voice, but he had felt his grasp; that sudden, instinctive crouch before a charge, and the savage lunge and tackle were the instant, natural acts of an old linesman on a championship team in the game of football as it was played twenty years before. That lift of the opponent off his feet and the heavy lunge hurling him back to fall on his head was what one man—in the rougher, more cruel days of the college game—had been famous for. On the football field that throw sufficed to knock a helmeted opponent unconscious; here it was meant, beyond doubt, to do more.

Upon so much, at least, Eaton's mind at once was clear; here was his enemy whom he must destroy if he himself were not first destroyed. Other thoughts, recasting of other relations altered or overturned in their bearing by the discovery of this man here—everything else could and must wait upon the mighty demand of that moment upon Eaton to destroy this enemy now or be himself destroyed.

Eaton shook in his passion; yet coolly he now realized that his left shoulder, which had taken the shock of his fall, was numb. He shifted his pistol to cover a vague form which had seemed to move; but, if it had stirred, it was still again now. Eaton strained to listen.

It seemed certain that the noise of the shot, if not the sound of the struggle which preceded it, must have raised an alarm, though the room was in a wing and shut off by double doors from the main part of the house; it was possible that the noise had not gone far; but it must have been heard in the room directly above and connected with the study by a staircase at the head of which was a door. Basil Santoine, as Eaton knew, slept above; a nurse must be waiting on duty somewhere near. Eaton had seen the row of buttons which the blind man had within arm's-length with which he must be able to summon every servant in the house. So it could not last much longer now—this deadlock in the dark—the two facing one, and none of them daring to move. And one of the two, at least, seemed to have recognized that.

Eaton had moved, warily and carefully, but he had moved; a revolver flashed before him. Instantly and without consciousness that his finger pulled the trigger, Eaton's pistol flashed back. In front of him, the flame flashed again, and another spurt of fire spat at one side.

Eaton fired back at this—he was prostrate on the floor now, and whether he had been hit or not he did not yet know, or whether the blood flowing down his face was only from a splinter sprayed from the table behind which he had hid. He fired again, holding his pistol far out to one side to confuse the aim of the others; he thought that they too were doing the same and allowed for it in his aim. He pulled his trigger a ninth time—he had not counted his shots, but he knew he had had seven cartridges in the magazine and one in the barrel—and the pistol clicked without discharging. He rolled over