

THE FAVORITE

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"THE FAVORITE"

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In our number for 26th April will be commenced a new and very exciting novel, entitled:

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OR,

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PROTECTION AGAINST FIRE.

It is almost an impossibility to provide any means or system which will guarantee perfect immunity from fire to any large city; and especially those where buildings are tall, closely packed together, and a large percentage of inflammable material is used in their construction, or stored within them. But, as a city grows in size, and the probabilities of an extensive conflagration are increased, it becomes the bounden duty of the local authorities to see that the means of fighting fire are increased in proportion to the growth of the city. It is a criminally foolish policy to avoid expending a few hundred dollars extra per annum to increase the efficacy of the fire department, for that small saving is more than counterbalanced by the high rates charged by the Insurance Companies, and the few dollars saved to the ratepayers is lost twice or thrice over by large premiums paid, and the constantly increasing value of property destroyed. We have little doubt that for its size and importance, Montreal is about the least protected city against fire on this continent, the idea of the lives and property of one hundred and thirty thousand people being entrusted to thirty-three men with no ladders worth speaking about, one third-rate steam engine, and a lot of leaky,

damaged hose, is a disgrace which the city ought to wipe away as soon as possible. The Fire Department does not want a little patching up, it needs a complete and entire overhauling and an establishment on a new and very much improved and enlarged basis. We need to have the number of men at least tripled; we require three or four more steam fire engines, the best to be had; we want a thoroughly competent hook and ladder company provided with patent self-raising ladders and supplied with a proper quantity of good fire escapes. No half-way measures will do; the evils arising from the inadequacy of the present department are great and crying, and a thorough and radical reform is needed. We are glad to see that the late terrible catastrophe at the St. James Hotel has aroused public feeling to such an extent that an indignation meeting was held at Mechanics' Hall on Saturday evening last and the following resolution adopted:—"That the experience of the past few days proves that the Fire Department is not in such an efficient state as the city of Montreal requires, and this meeting calls upon the City Council to lose no time in placing this important department of their operations in thorough working order." This is well enough as far as it goes; but we trust the matter will not be allowed to rest here, but a petition to the Council be got up and signed by every resident calling on that body to perform a duty which they have too long neglected, and that the matter will not be allowed to rest by either the press or the people until proper means for saving life and property have been provided. But fire escapes, steam engines and a larger number of firemen are not the only things we need; the evil strikes deeper than that, and we might as well grasp the whole difficulty now. We want better constructed houses, we need the inspection of buildings to be something more than a solemn farce as it is at present; and we require that the law against wooden buildings should be rigidly enforced. Another thing to which attention should be paid is the means of exit provided in places of public entertainment or amusement. "If anyone wants to conjure up to a terrible spectacle let him imagine the Mechanics' or Queen's Hall on fire while an entertainment was being given to a crowded house; who can estimate the loss of life which must ensue? Even our churches are but poorly supplied with means of exit, and our hotels are lamentably deficient in this respect. One general stairway—usually a narrow and crooked one at that—is for the most part considered sufficient to provide for the rapid exit of several hundred people, and this same stairway has besides to serve as the way for the firemen to reach the fire, if it be in the upper portion of the building. Every house where people sleep, or congregate in large numbers, should be provided with at least two separate and distinct ways of exit, at a considerable distance from each other, so that if one takes fire the other may afford a chance of escape. In New York all tenement houses are compelled by law to have an iron stairway outside of the building, in the rear usually, with a landing at each flat; this stairway is permanent, the lowest ladder being fixed on a pivot so that it can be kept raised to guard against burglars, but can be lowered to the ground in a moment on the first alarm of fire. It would be well if our large hotels were compelled to have several such escapes leading from each floor, so that boarders would have something like a chance of escape. Now that popular attention has been directed to the great insecurity from destruction of both life and property by fire, under which the city labors, we trust the Council will at last see that it is time vigorous measures were taken to provide efficient means to prevent the repetition of the St. James Hotel catastrophe.

Since writing the above the inquest on the bodies of Mary Brennan, William Hyatt, and Samuel George Hilditch has been closed and

the jury have returned what may well be considered a remarkable verdict; we say remarkable, for it is, unfortunately so, in that a coroner's jury enter so fully and entirely into a case as in the present instance, and we thank the gentlemen of the jury for the very thorough and complete way in which they have accomplished their task. We give the full text of the verdict:

That Mary Brennan and William Hyatt came to their deaths by accident by fire in the St. James Hotel, in the city of Montreal, on the morning of the 18th day of March last, the cause of such fire the jury are unable to determine. That Samuel George Hilditch came to his death through the want of proper precaution and by the culpable neglect of the present and former Fire Committees of the City Council in not providing efficient, and they might easily any without any, means whatever of saving human life in buildings of even moderate height, and unfortunately their want of precaution is the more criminal, as their attention had been repeatedly drawn to perfect and efficient apparatus, the usefulness of which and mode of construction were well known to them, and which it was the more imperatively necessary to obtain in consequence of the great height buildings have been erected in the principal parts of the city, in many of which hundreds of people are employed in the uppermost storeys daily, and often far on into the night, and in nearly every case the only means of exit is by a narrow wooden staircase. The jury cannot too severely condemn the present management of the Fire Brigade, although there are many excellent men in it who always perform their duty nobly and often heroically. Still, it is apparent to the jury that there is an important want of management, want of discipline and want of organization, and if it can be seen at this day that the apparatus such as they have for saving human life cannot be brought to the scene of a fire within three minutes walk of their central station in less than thirty minutes, it is useless under such an organization to provide the improved "fire-escapes" and other apparatus, as there would even then be disaster. And the jury would earnestly recommend the City Council to divide the Fire Brigade into three distinct corps.

1st. The firemen to concentrate all their strength and efforts to extinguishing the fire.
2nd. The men with the fire-escapes and other apparatus for saving human lives to make a complete as money and skill can possibly do.
3rd. The Salvage men to save property from fire and water.

The jury also urgently call the attention of those in power to the manner in which buildings are very often constructed in this city.

A man of great skill and decision of character should be employed as inspector of buildings, without delay. The largest possible salary would be as nothing compared to the great benefit the city would receive from such an official doing his duty as it ought to be done.

In a city growing at such a rapid rate as Montreal is at present, the means of exit in buildings where large numbers sleep at night should be regulated by by-laws of the most stringent character.

The jury cannot close this verdict without expressing their opinion that the St. James Hotel managers, Frederick Gerken and Robert Acton, are guilty in neglecting their duty to those in their charge on the fatal night of the 17th inst. And that it is painfully evident the night watchman, James Callery, was not at his appointed duties, and he totally neglected in alarming any of the inmates but the manager, Robert Acton. And that the statements made on his solemn oath are not corroborated by a single witness.

Alexander Empey, Foreman, James Brown, Hector Munroe, W. H. Barber, John Smith, H. S. Prowse, William D. Smith, James Walker, David Teas, John Gardner, William Carrau, Dominique Rosaire.

LITERARY ITEMS.

The *New Illustrated Annual of Phrenology and Physiognomy* for 1878, contains portraits and sketches of more than fifty distinguished subjects; including Seward, Livingstone, Fred. Douglass, Arnold; with Indians, Negroes, Malays, Mongolians, Arabs, Caucasians, Views of the Human Brain; Language of the Lips; Character in Expression; Physiognomy; with portraits and sketches of all the Presidents of the U. S., from Washington to Grant. A Capital Hand-Book of 75 pages, 12mo. Price 25 cents. S. R. Wells, Publisher, 389 Broadway, N. Y.

The important industries for which the city of Wilmington, Delaware, is so justly distinguished, have been made the subject of the initial article in *Lippincott's Magazine* for April. The writer has evidently exerted himself to obtain the most trustworthy information, which he presents in a style remarkable for its clearness and easy flow. The article is profusely illustrated. The second installment of "The Roumi in Kabylla," with its vivid descriptions of life and scenery, its striking and amusing anecdotes, and its excellent pictorial embellishments, constitutes a most entertaining paper. "Thackeray's 'Gray Friars,'" by an old "Gown-

boy," is full of interesting reminiscences of the old Charter House school, and of Thackeray's connection with it. The article is evidently from the pen of one familiar with some of the best and most curious phases of English life. "Medical Expert Evidence," by H. C. Wood, Jr., M. D., is a contribution at once striking and important. Its comments upon the difficulties which the law carelessly throws in the way of the genuine expert, and its animadversions against the serious perils to which innocent persons are therefore exposed deserve a careful perusal. The author illustrates his assertions by full and pertinent references to trials, the memory of which are still fresh in the public mind. Mr. Edwin de Leon, in a paper entitled, "The Sweet Waters," describes the parks of Constantinople and the manners of those who frequent them. "The Mystery of Massabieille," by William D. Wood, is a highly attractive article, descriptive of the wonderful events which have rendered the Grotto of the Virgin, at Lourdes, an object of extraordinary and world-wide interest. "A Night in Bedford, Virginia," by Richard B. Eder, presents in a terse and humorous way some important facts concerning real estate and prospects of the "Old Dominion." Mr. Black's serial novel, "A Princess of Thule," continues to be the leading attraction of *Lippincott's Magazine* in the field of fiction. The other contributions to this department appearing in the present issue are the opening chapters of Mrs. Rebecca Harding Davis's new story, "Barrytown," and "Made-moiselle Syltles," by Margaret Vandegrift. The poetry in this number is considerably above the general standard. "The Glaciers of Paradise," by a new poet, Hjalmar Hjarth Boyesen, will elicit notice. "Our Monthly Gossip," as usual, is full of piquant and engaging anecdotes and timely notes on men and things.

PASSING EVENTS.

Mr. Gladstone has resumed the Premiership. The defeat of Carlists has restored public confidence in Spain.

The French Government prohibits the exportation of war material.

The Emperor William has been celebrating his birthday, and Berlin was illuminated.

The Pope has appointed bishops for the B. C. Dioceses of Newark and Savannah, United States.

The English and French ministers at Madrid are said to have received threatening letters from the Internationalists.

Mr. CARON and Mr. Fabre are the opposing candidates who aspire to represent Quebec County in the Commons.

The editor of the *Rappel* newspaper has been summoned to answer a charge of violating the laws regulating the press.

The railroad rioters in Missouri have continued to commit acts of lawlessness, which have led to a number of arrests.

A Police agent had left Liverpool with extradition papers for Macdonald, the forger, recently arrested at New York.

It is announced from St. Albans that a great railway suit involving an amount of six millions of dollars has been commenced in Vermont.

FOSTER, the ear-hook murderer, underwent the extreme penalty of the law at New York on 21st inst. It is said that he met his fate unflinchingly.

Two fugitives from the authority of President Baez, in San Domingo, who had taken refuge with a British Consul, were taken away by force, and the latter has asked for a man-of-war.

The Pope gave audience on 17th inst. to one hundred Canadians who served in the Pontifical Zouaves. His Holiness congratulated his visitors upon their steadfast devotion to the Church.

The bill for the emancipation of slaves in Porto Rico passed the Spanish Assembly by an unanimous vote. The freedmen are accorded full political rights and the measure goes into effect immediately.

THREE thousand persons engaged in a riot at Wolverhampton on the 18th. The combatants, who were Englishmen and Irishmen, used firearms and knives and though none were killed many received serious injuries.

The Ontario and Quebec Railway Company give notice to Parliament for an Act to amend their Act of Incorporation by granting them authority to construct a branch line to Georgian Bay and to purchase the line of railway now built from Port Perry to Port Whitby, and for other rights and purposes.

The bonds stolen from the Bank of England were attached in the post-office by the Sheriff at New York, but the Post Master refused delivery as mails are exempt from seizure. The package, however, will be delivered to the Safe Deposit Co. to which it is directed, when the Sheriff will at once attach it in the interest of the Bank.

A Cincinnati man who suspected his servant girl of using kerosene oil to kindle the fire with thought he would try her one night, so he poured the oil out and filled the can with water. When he landed in the dining-room next morning there was no breakfast and no fire to cook it with—nothing but a stove full of soaked wood and the foolish-looking girl he ever saw.