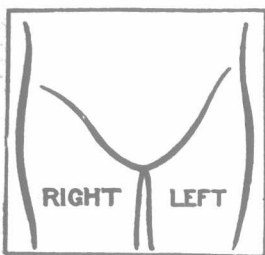


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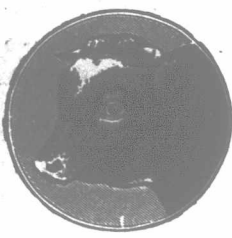
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On which side ruptured?..... Ever operated on for rupture?.....

Age..... Time ruptured.....

Name..... Address.....



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For Sale—The stock bull, Queenston dam Veronica (Imp.) by Brave Archer (Imp.); also a number of choice Shropshire ram lambs at reasonable prices. **BELL BROS., Bradford, Ont.**

The Phantom Cance

(La Chasse Gal'rie).

A NEW YEAR'S LEGEND OF THE CANADIAN WOODS.

By W. Victor Cook.

Gran'pere Latoche is very old—over eighty years, they say. In the summer-time he sits and smokes his beloved tabac Canayen in a rocking armchair on the veranda beneath the climbing flowers. In the winter he sits in the kitchen corner shaking his old gray head, and from time to time muttering to himself. At times he will tell stories of le vieux temps. Some of them are queer tales, for Gran'pere Latoche has seen things in his time; and if they were not so rambling, and if one could write them down in the old man's own words, they would make good reading.

Strangest of all is the story of how Gran'pere Latoche saw La Chasse Gal'rie. Had I but the gift, I could make you feel the grip of that weird tale as Gran'pere Latoche told it me one wild New Year's Night when I was snowed up in the Latoche homestead on my way back to Montreal. Nobody will believe the story, but that is neither here nor there. As Gran'pere Latoche is so very old, perhaps his imagination plays antics with his memory. Moreover, they say in Quebec Province that a man may live a hundred years and never see La Chasse Gal'rie.

It was about sixty years ago. At the edge of the forest, where it dips its feet in the Saguenay, Louis Latoche and 'Poleon Desbarres stood and clasped hands.

"You swear," said 'Poleon, handing the other a small crucifix, "that you will not see her, nor speak to her, nor write to her, till the year is out?"

"Yes, I swear—que Dieu me soit en aide! And you?"

'Poleon laughed a little wildly.

"Sure, I swear, too. For the rest, my friend, I am not likely to meet Mamzelle Henriette Manon on the shores of Hudson Bay."

"Nor I in the lake ports. It is a bargain?"

"A bargain," repeated 'Poleon, stepping with noiseless moccasined feet down the river bank, where a Montagnard Indian awaited him in a birch-bark canoe. "Good luck to you," said Louis Latoche.

'Poleon turned round as he grasped the peak of the canoe, and laughed again, this time defiantly.

"You mean to say: 'I hope you will get drowned in the first rapids.' But au revoir, Louis."

He got into the canoe, and Louis watched him and the Indian paddle up stream, into the wide, wild north.

That was the last that Louis Latoche ever saw of 'Poleon Desbarres in the flesh. But often when his turn came at the wheel on a starry night, or when in a calm the sunset glow bathed the St. Clair flats in the hues of dreamland, the picture would come before his mind of his rival 'Poleon as he saw him that last time—tall, and strong as a young bull, with unkempt sandy hair loose about his face, and his hazel eyes alight with scornful defiance.

All the spring and summer, and late into the fall, Louis sailed up and down the Great Lakes on the little trading-schooner of which he was the mate. The first snow flurries had fallen when he made his way to the great stern river of the north. The young man's imagination dwelt lingeringly upon the vision of Henriette; but mindful of his pledge to his rival, he did not at once go home to his own village of St. Pierre de Beaulieu. On New Year's Day—come snow, come shine—he and his rival would be back to prove their fate. But till then their oath held them. Therefore Louis went to visit with an uncle ten miles lower down the river.

The Old Year died on a day of lowering clouds. At noon the wintry sun showed a cold, dead disc through the leaden atmosphere, then faded and was seen no more. The wind, dubious and uncertain, sprang up time and again

with a sudden howl as of a spirit in distress, shaking the snow from the gaunt black forest trees; then it subsided into an oppressive silence.

"If I were you, I would not go," said Louis' uncle, peering from the window upon the desolate sky; "it will be a wild night."

"Have no fear," said Louis Latoche in the pride of his youth and strength; "I know the way."

"I do not like the sound of the wind," the elder man insisted. "Louis, be advised, and stay until the morning."

"I must go," persisted his nephew.

"I know you," his uncle smiled. "It is of that girl of Manon's, with her brown eyes and rosy lips, that you are thinking. Be assured good wine will keep, mon gar."

"'Poleon Desbarres will be there," said Louis.

"St. Michael himself would not keep 'Poleon from the fete of the Jour de l'An. Uncle, you do not understand how the thing is between us. I tell you, I must go."

The end of it was that Louis dressed himself in his best, and putting on over his fete dress his warm seaman's jacket, slipped his moccasined feet into the loops of his snow-shoes, and started on his ten-mile journey. At the door his uncle put a gun into his hands.

"They say the wolves are about," he warned the young man. "Pere Sebastien saw two last week, so early in the season. Be careful, Louis, and keep along the river where you can see the way."

It was still a dull gray daylight when the young man set forth. The winter road over the hard, dry snow was good, and for a time he made rapid progress.

Then, while the uncertain wind continued its intermittent dirge, the snow began to fall, almost imperceptibly at first. Soon, as the spirits of the storm rushed from their lairs, it whirled in blinding clouds of paralyzing white dust round about him, sweeping with a sound like a brush along the frozen roadway, cutting his face with its icy touch.

Louis was no stranger to the wintry woods, and he fought his way doggedly onward, pulling his fur cap low over his ears, and taking a small "coup" from a flask of whisky he carried.

More and more furious grew the storm, and deeper and deeper the drifts. It was impossible to see two yards through the whirling snow-fog around him, and in vain his eyes, shrinking from the pitiless needles of the frost, sought the friendly lights of St. Pierre de Beaulieu. The path was long since obliterated; the going was heavier every minute. Louis realized too late that he was lost in the tempest.

There was but one hope for him. Fighting blindly along, he stumbled on a spot where under some great tree trunks the snow-drifts lay less heavily than elsewhere. In his desperate straits the place seemed made for him. He scooped himself a hole in the snow and crept in.

Long he lay in the comparative warmth of his strange retreat listening to the tempest, which howled in the forest trees around him as though all the fiends of hell were riding on the gale. Louis fell into a reverie, regretfully conjuring up pictures of the festive scene in the house of Josef Manon—the sound of the great viol, the young men and girls dancing the Old Year out and the New Year in.

Something warm brushing by his face aroused him. A red fox had crept through the already narrowed opening of his retreat. Louis put out his hand and touched the creature. Instead of resenting the touch, it whined like a dog in trouble, and drew closer to him.

"Its den is choked up," thought Louis, and in sympathy stroked the head of the frightened animal. He took another nip from his whisky flask and strove to keep himself from falling asleep in the growing warmth of his snow-nest.

Hark! What was that? The red fox quivered from its head to the tip of its bushy tail, and Louis started and listened hard. The sound came again, penetrating and weird, like the cry of the wild goose as it passes southward in the fall. But when did wild goose fly on a midwinter night?

Louis brushed the sweat from his forehead and listened as though his soul were in his ears. A third time came the cry, high over the tree-tops, out of the north-west sky, closer and closer with the rush of the wind. Was it words that he heard, and the sound of sing-

(Continued on next page.)