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The Open Shutter.

A Story From the Memoirs of a Minister of France.

BY STANLEY J. WEYMAN.

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(Concluded.)

I restrained the caustic jest that arose to my lips, and we proceeded in silence down the street. The bcy, whom I had espied loitering in a doorway a little way ahead, as if the great bell above us which had just tolled 11 had drawn him out, peered at us a moment askance; and then, coming forward accosted us. But I need not detail the particulars of a conversation which was almost word for word the same as that which had passed in the Rue de la Pourpointerie; suffice it that he made the same request with the same frank audacity, and that granting it, we were in a moment following him up a similar staircase.

"This way, missieurs, this way!" he said; as he had on that other night, while we groped our way upward in the dark. He opened a door, and a light

PUBLIC ARCHIVES OF NOVA SCOTIA
HALIFAX, N. S.

shone out; and we entered a room that seemed, with its bare walls and rafters, its scanty stool and table and lamp, the very counterpart of that other room. In one wall appeared the dingy curtains of an alcove, closely drawn; and the shutter stood open, until, at the child's request, expressed in the same words, I went to it and closed it.

We were both so well muffled up and disguised, and the light of the lamp shining upwards so completely distorted the features that I had no fear of recognition, unless the King's voice betrayed him. But when he spoke, breaking the oppressive silence of the room, his tone was as strange and as hollow as I could wish.

"The shutter is closed," he said; "but the shutter of God's mercy is never closed!"

Still, knowing that this was the crucial moment, and that we should be detected now if at all, I found it an age before the voice behind the curtains answered "Amen!" And yet another age before the hidden speaker continued, "Who are you?"

"The cure of St. Germain," Henry responded.

The man behind the curtains gasped, and they were for a moment violently agitated as if a hand had seized them and let them go again. But I had reckoned that the unknown, after a pause of horror, would suppose that he had heard amiss, and continue his usual catechism. And so it proved. In a voice that shook a little, he asked, "Whom do you bring to me?"

"A sinner," the King answered.

"What has he done?"

"He will tell you."

"I am listening," the unknown said.

The light in the basin flared up a little, casting dark shadows on the ceiling, and at the same moment the shutter, which I had failed to fasten securely, fell open with a grinding sound, one of the curtains swayed a little in the breeze. "I have robbed my master," I said slowly.

"Of how much?"

"A hundred and twenty thousand crowns."

The bed shook until the boards creaked under it; but this time no hand grasped the curtains. Instead, a strained voice—thick and coarse, yet different from that muffled tone which we had heard before—asked, "Who are you?"

"Jules Fauchet."

I waited. The King, who understood nothing, but had listened to my answers with eager attention, and marked no less closely the agitation which they caused in the unknown, leant forward to listen. But the bed creaked no more; the curtain hung still; even the voice, which at last issued from the curtains, was no more like the ordinary accents of a man than are those which he utters in the paroxysms of epilepsy. "Are you—sorry?" the unknown muttered unvoluntarily, I think; hoping against hope; not daring to depart from a formula which had become second nature. But I could fancy him clawing, as he spoke, at his choking throat.

France, however, had suffered too long at the hands of that race of men, and I had been too lately vilified then to feel much pity; and for answer I lifted a voice that to the quailing wretch must have been the voice of doom. "Sorry?" I said grimly. "I must be—or hang! For to-morrow the King examines his books, and the next day I—hang!"

The King's hand was on mine, to stop me before the last word was out; but his touch came too late. As it rang through the room one of the curtains before us was twitched aside, and a face glared out, so ghastly and drawn and horror-stricken, that few would have known it for that of the wealthy fermier, who had grown sleek and fat on the King's revenues. I did not know whether he knew us, or whether, on the contrary, he found this accusation, so precise, so accurate, coming from an unknown source, still more terrible than if he had known us; but on the instant he fell forward in a swoon.

"St. Gris!" Henry cried, looking on the body with a shudder, "you have killed him, Grand Master! It was true, was it?"

"Yes, sire," I answered. "But he is not dead, I think," And going to the window I whistled for Maignan, who in a minute came to us. He was not very willing to touch the man, but I bade him lay him on the bed and loosen his clothes and throw water on his face; and presently M. Fauchet began to recover.

I stepped a little aside that he might not see me, and accordingly, the first person his eyes rested on was the King, who had laid aside his hat and cloak, and taken the terrified and weeping child on his lap. M. Fauchet stared at him awhile before he recognized him; but at last the trembling man knew him, and tottering to his feet, threw himself on his knees, looking years older than when I had last seen him in the street.

"Sire," he said faintly, "I will make restitution."

Henry looked at him gravely, and nodded. "It is well," he said. "You are fortunate, M. Fauchet;

for had this come to my ears in any other way I could not have spared you. You will render your accounts to M. de Sully to-morrow, and according as you are frank with him you will be treated."

Fauchet thanked him with abject tears, and the King rose and prepared to leave. But at the door a thought struck him, and he turned. "How long have you done this?" he said, indicating the room by a gesture, and speaking in a gentler tone.

"Three years," sire, the wretched man answered.

"And how much have you distributed?"

"Fifteen hundred crowns, sire,"

The King cast an indescribable look at me, wherein amusement, scorn and astonishment were all blended. "St. Gris! man!" he said, shrugging his shoulders and drawing in his breath sharply, "you think God is as easily duped as the King! I wish I could think so."

He did not speak again until we were half-way back to the Louvre; when he opened his mouth to announce his intention of rewarding me with a tithe of the money recovered. It was duly paid to me, and I bought with it part of the outlying lands of Villebon—those, I mean, which extend towards Chartres. The rest of the money notwithstanding all my efforts was wasted here and there, Pimental winning 30,000 crowns that year. But the discovery led to others of a similar character, and eventually set me on the track of a greater offender, M. L'Argentier, whom I brought to justice a few months later.

One Way Out.

BY G. FLAMBRON,

This happened in British Columbia early in the "sixties"—that is, before the road was built through the Fraser Canons; and it was an "old-timer" who told it to some of us younger men. Now, when an "old Cariboo man" opens his mouth in British Columbia, even the youngest present is, as a rule, silent, knowing well enough that the old Cariboo trail was a very fine-barred sieve that let only the proper-sized men through—and they were not many out of all the crowd that started up from the coast in 1860–2.

The talk had been of the new finds in Cassiar, and of the danger of being snowed in there, and some of the Kanuk boys had been talking foolishness about snow-shoes, and then the Old Man spoke.

"Accordin, to my calculatlon," said the Old-timer, "snow-shoes ain't of much account in a timber country like that. But if it came to a squeeze, now, you might get out, p'raps, by way of the Skeena, like the Scotchmen did that came through the Canons to Yale late in '62."

Of course several of us wanted to know what the Scotchmen did, though some of our company, who

had been in the country for a while, seemed to have heard of it already.

So the Old-timer worried a big corner of the tobacco-cake which was handed to him, and spat in the fire, and opened out—

"There was a whole crowd of us was wintering in Yale that year, so as to be ready for a start in the spring's soon's ever there was any signs of a chance of getting through again, and late one afternoon we heard yellin' that someone was comin' out of the Canon, and all ran down to the river just in time to see Tom Aigle swing 'em the lariat. He was a fine hand with a rope was Tom, and it fell fair across 'em, and one of 'em managed to give it a bend round the pick-shaft that he lay grippin' to, and that swerved 'em out of the stream and in-shore in no time. It was a day or two before they got fit enough to tell us all about it, and we didn't know where they'd come from, but we knew anyhow that they'd done the pluckiest thing since Noah, and so we shouted till the old Canon growled with it as we carried 'em up to the houses.

"Seems these two Scotchmen had worked a barren claim up in the back country all the summer, gettin' never a colour out of it, but, of course, always first-rate prospects, better and better every day—same as we all do—and so they stuck to it, 'just one day more,' and so on, till by'm-bye when they did draw out they were dead broke in every sense, and the winter as good as on them.

"They had a h—— of a trail before 'em, and four weeks of it in the best of weather. But it was certain starvation to stay were they were, which was somewhere in the Chilcotin country, west of Cariboo.

So they tried to rush it. They druv on ahead through storms and snows for eight on nine days, getting every day desperater and desperater, and then struck the Fraser, well up above the Canons. Of course, this was before the Gov'ment had blasted out that d——d road that has let all the blanked Chinamen into the back country; and the Scotchmen knew there was full three weeks more of the very roughest sort of travel before 'em, even if they followed the very trickiest trail, and a good deal longer if they took the safer grades—let alone the snows were gettin' deeper and deeper.

"It was on a Wednesday that they sat down and reckoned it out, and, being desperate and dead broke, and not caring much which way things went—because they were just sick of the whole thing—they said 'Yale or Hell before Sunday,' and made up their minds to chance which. They took their axes and worked like devils, and in two days fixed up a rough log-raft. They tore up their blankets to make lashings, and fixed it as strong as they knew how with these and wooden bolts, and set up two steerin' oars between pins, and struck their picks deep into the timbers to give 'em something to hold to in the riffles; and then it was 'All clear?' 'Le' go!'—and off they went!

"Now you all know what the Fraser's like!"

Here the Old Man paused to shift his plug to the other cheek, and it gave us time to get well into our minds the memory of that great swirling river, reeling with speed between mountain cliffs that the clouds hang over like rafters, and out of it the sound of the groaning and thumping of great rocks rolling over and over along the bottom that rises above all the tumult of its waters.

"Well, it warn't, of course, like spring-flood time, but the autumn rains had come in, and was just a hell-pot all the same, and when the raft fairly felt the stream the men said she dove and jumped same as a horse near a rattlesnake. Then she took a long swinging rush, and they knew they were in for it whatever might happen, and worked their oars for life and death to keep her in mid-stream for the Canons. She slode along steady enough for an hour of two, shakin' and jumpin' now and then, and then again having smooth spells, but all the time getting quickly away down stream in a way that it gave 'em joy to feel. By'-m-bye she takes a long swoop round the great bend where the river goes into the Canons. And there they are. In a boiling pot, with the waters over 'em every minute. And the raft heeling around and rocking like a dancing bear. And then the walls of the Canon shut in upon 'em as black as coals.

"Of course their oars went away right off, and there was only one thing to do, and that was to fling emselves down on their faces beside their picks, and hang on for whatever they were worth, and pray their picks would stick. And I reckon no man that wurn't a very fool, or a very, very tenderfoot, would have taken a risk on their lives then at ninety-five cents to the dollar!

"Well, she bounced and twirled and did her best to fling 'em all down the top rifflle, and then shot off along the cliffs faster than they could think about it, but still keepin' well clear of the side till she rounded China Bluff. But there she shot in so close that they declared you couldn't hev put a penknife betwixt her and the rock. Anyway, their place was only to hang on and wait, and that's what they did.

An' the next bend she shot over to the other side straight as a bolt, and they expected her to fairly tunnel a level into that bluff; but she slewed round just a short second afore she would have struck, and slid right off in a bee-line for Hell-gate. That straight reach just gave 'em time to get their breath again, and sorter stiffen themselves for the next bout; and then into Hell-gate they rolled, broadside on. The men declared that the darned contrivance turned clean over twice there with them hangin' to their picks; but I guess myself that with tons of water on the top of you anyway, it would always be easy to judge exactly which way up you was. 'Tanyrate she came out right side up, with them Scotchmen still hanging to her, but more dead than alive, and one of 'em with a broken arm and t'other with two ribs stove in. When they came again to have any sort of sense in 'em, they were swinging down the long straight just to the Falls, and then they knew that whatever was left of 'em before would drive past Yale in less than half an hour. But she scraped the side just before reaching the Falls, and though it was only a shaver scrape, it ripped, they said, as if it would rip their carcases into bits, and they never thought but the whole machine had gone into pipe-splints. Instead 'o that, it had just jerked the log that touched clean out of all its pegs and lashings, and sent it away off on its own account, while the rest of the raft hold together somehow. Still they never thought to get through the Falls with her, but it so happened that the river being in flood was all in their favour, and she took 'em fair in the middle and slid 'em without a single shake, and it was only in the riffles below that she began to go to pieces. But they were as good as safe then, and in a few

minutes came sailing round the Yale Bend, and that's where we saw them, late one Saturday afternoon, and Tom Aigle swung 'em a lariat.

"G—— ! lads ! it did me good, and all of us good, to shout as we carried 'em up. They were more dead than alive, but we dosed 'em with whisky and packed them with warm flannels, and then when they'd come to, we got a good square meal into them and strapped up the man's broken arm.

"And you bet when we got to know all about it, we wouldn't let 'em leave Yale at all that winter, nor want for anything all the time they stopped there neither.

"And now if any of you young men has a fancy for prospecting away up there at the back of Cassiar, he might p'raps take his chance like that, and come down the Skeena. But that man's not going to be me!"

And as he ran his eye critically over us, it is probable that our faces showed him that it would not be any of us, either!

—*From To-Day.*

Boccaccio.

BY EUGENE FIELD.

ONE day upon a topmost shelf
I found a precious prize indeed,
Which father used to read himself,
But did not want us boys to read;
A brown old book of certain age
(As type and binding seemed to show)
While on the spotted title-page
Appeared the name "Boccacio."

I'd never heard that name before,
But in due season it became
To him who fondly brooded o'er
Those pages a beloved name!
Adown the centuries I walked
Mid pastoral scenes and royal show,
With seigneurs and their dames I talked—
The crony of Boccaccio!

Those courtly knights and sprightly maids,
Who really seemed disposed to shine
In gallantries and escapades,
Anon became great friends of mine;
Yet was there sentiment with fun,
And oftentimes my tears would flow
At some quaint tale of valor done,
As told by my Boccaccio.

In boyish dreams I saw again
Bucolic belles and dames of court,
The princely youth and monkish men
Arrayed for sacrifice or sport;
Again I heard the nightingale
Sing as she sang those years ago
In her embowered Italian vale
To my revered Boccaccio.

And still I love that brown old book,
I found upon the topmost shelf—
I love it so, I let none look
Upon that treasure but myself!
And yet I have a strapping boy
Who (I have cause to know)
Would to its full extent enjoy
The friendship of Boccaccio.

But boys are, oh! so different now
From what they were when I was one!
I fear my boy would not now know how
To take that old raconteur's fun!
In your companionship O friend,
I think it wise alone to go,
Plucking the gracious fruits that bend
Where'er you lead, Boccaccio!

So rest you there upon the shelf,
Clad in your garb of faded brown;
Perhaps, sometime, my boy himself
Shall find you out and take you down,
Then may he feel the joy once more
That thrilled me, filled me years ago
When reverently I brooded o'er
The glories of Boccacio.

From the Chap-Book.

What Became of Biencourt.

BY E. CAMBERWELL.

In after years they told the story of the quarrel differently for when it happened, Imbert was drunk and Biencourt dreaming of a certain black-eyed maid of honour, neither of which facts would have pleased Annette.

Imbert had been drinking for hours from a stone jar filled with Holland gin, which he had by chance discovered in the ruins of the storehouse, and the liquor had made him quarrelsome. As for Biencourt he was smoking placidly enough but the black-eyed visi n floating through his brain made Imbert's noisy drinking-songs jar upon his nerves. At last as the singer gave vent to a sudden discordant howl, France and the maid of honor disappeared, he came with a sudden shock, back to the Acadian wilds and saw Imbert's scarred face looming sullenly at him through the smoke.

"Well, what now?" he asked sharply.

"Its always the same," grumbled Imbert, moodily balancing his sword upon his vast palm from whence in the course of his speech it fell clanging to the floor. "Nothing to do but smoke and think. No cards, no dice, not a comrade to sing a catch with, nothing but the English robbers marks to look on."

Biencourt began speaking of the future of the colony, but Imbert rudely interrupted.

"The colony!" he cried with an oath. "A colony with two solitary colonists! a colony that has ruined all its owners and is a thousand louis d'ors in debt! That for a colony!"

He snapped his fingers contemptuously and commenced roaring a ribald tavern song, beating time with his hands upon the oaken table till it rang again. Biencourt wild with rage sprang to his feet and drew his sword; Imbert stooped unsteadily down and caught his from the floor with his monstrous hand and tha fight began.

It was a weird scene for the room lay wrapped in shadow and the scant firelight falling pallidly on their faces served in place of candles. Behind each the other saw a vast black background with angry eyes gleaming from out it, while between, the swords writhed and twisted and caught the light in long pale crimson flashes. Biencourt, who was the younger and more act ve, first touched Imbert on the arm. They paused momentarily while a cloth was bound upon the wound, then began again with greater fury than before. This time Imbert's giant strength slowly but surely beat Biencourt's opposition down. He felt his head begin to swim before the furious onslaught, his guard failed and Imbert ran him through the left shoulder.

He sank slowly into a chair and Imbert flung his sword with a whirring crash into a dark corner of the room. Then he knelt by Biencourt's side, all the drunken bravado vanished from his face.

"I've hurt thee, lad," he said morosely.

"No, old pirate, only a scratch," answered Biencourt cooley, "but I had to live awhile longer and my courage needs no proving. It was a foolish quarrel, though after all a little blood-letting is no bad thing."

Imbert rose to his feet. A little blood was of course nothing after their years of forest adventure but the momentary dread had partly sobered him. Steadily enough he went to the fire, threw on it fresh pine logs, and with a piece of burning bark lighted the candles in the two high brass candlesticks on the table. Then he disappeared through the doorway.

Left to himself Biencourt began smoking again. His pipe had a huge lobster-claw bowl, a fantastically carved wooden stem, resplendent with the visages of Indian gods, and from its mouthpiece wampum spread in a white sheen across the blue satin slashings of his doublet. The doublet itself was of black velvet, his long stockings of blue silk and on his silver shoe-buckles diamonds shone.

It was dusk in the ruins of Port Royal the evil-starred, a few years only since Argall and his horde of God-fearing Puritans had rifled it storehouses and magazines and given its emblems of the hated superstition to the flames. Outside a bleak wind moaned and within the glare from the fresh logs fell on scarred walls and broken furniture, and deep hollows in the floor where Argall's men had lit their bivouac fires. Even the richly figured oaken mantel carved in Paris, had suffered with the rest. Its quaint devices had been hacked by Puritan axes and marred by their torches till it was a mere mass of shapeless blackness ; from the walls above, the founder's motto had been carefully effaced, and in its stead some wit had drawn a huge black cross in fine derision.

The room, once the state dining-hall of the lords of the seigr eurie, was so large and lofty that the two candles made small head against the shadows. They lurked beneath the wooden settle skirting the apart-

ment, and in distant corners and danced up and down the wainscotted walls as the blaze on the hearth flickered low and rose again. At the far end where the gloom was deepest loomed the high black chair of the lords of Port Royal, like the coffin of some monstrous giant, but now there were neither vassals to judge or Jesuit strivings to allay and dust lay on it in a heavy shroud.

Biencourt gave vent to a thick puff of smoke and looked reflectively at the fire. The vast ruined apartment was unutterably lonely with its old memories and its haunting sense of ill success. The very firelight seemed thronging with the pale sad faces of those whom Port Royal had already made its victims. DeMonts the Huguenot nobleman was there and Biencourt's father, and Gilbert DuThet, the Jesuit intriguer, and a dozen other cavaliers of France whom the colony had dragged down in its own dark ruin.

The wounded shoulder was paining sharply when Imbert returned. Snow lay in white dots on the coal blackness of the shaggy mane of hair growing low on his forehead, and tiny streams of water trickled across the grim scars upon his cheeks. He was quite sober, that Biencourt could see from the way he leaned against the fireplace, rubbing his high jack-boots together with the low swish of leather upon leather, and his face was unclouded.

"My sword is over in that dark corner I suppose," he said with a grim smile, "and I played the fool well enough for once. It was a shame to treat a good sword so. Pierre Euston gave it to me, as bold a man as ever laid aboard an Englishman in the old days and so now men say. It was a wild stormy night a dozen years ago and in the dark we had run upon a

Scotch merchantman. We were fighting hand to hand on her red decks and I saved Pierre from a raw-boned half-naked Scotchman who took him unawares. "Merci!" said Pierre to me, changing swords and giving me his diamond-hilted one. "Merci!" he said again to the Scot I had brought down and then drew his knife across the fellow's throat. There was a wife and little girl with him too, and when they brought lamps to clear decks, these two were lying on the dead man's body. D'Auvergne got them I think. He was Pierre's favourite, a dark sullen dog I never liked."

Biencourt shook his head.

"It was brutish work."

"Yes, yes," assented Imbert eagerly, "but I took no part beyond the fighting. I was mad for war in those days, and they had proscribed me in France so what could I do? Ah, it was rare sport with a man's life in his hands a dozen times a day and the swirl of blue waters all about him."

Biencourt laid his pipe upon the table and stared moodily into the fire. The blood had dried upon his arm but the pain at times half maddened him, a dull beating pain rising at intervals to sharp agony,

"There are better trades than the rovers," he said at length, "and I must find one soon or those crazy walls will sink upon us, A vessel and some men and I would turn conquistador on my own account and wrest some of the gold fields from the Spaniards. But there, help will surely come from France by spring."

Imbert shook his head portentuously. Then a softer look came into his fierce black eyes, he drew nearer and laid his uncouth hands gently on the long

brown curls that drooped over the young seigneur's shoulders.

"It will never come, lad, never. The Jesuits have the queen-mother's ear too surely for her to aid Port Royal. Years will go by and the ruins will fall around us one by one, till we die forgotten, for what is a beggared nobleman hiding in the wilderness to the painted women who rule Versailles?"

Biencourt removed his doublet to ease the pain. It was no scratch Imbert saw, but a long slash crosswise on the white flesh, which was swollen around it. The ex-pirate shook his head aud perked his thick lips, for such cuts were dangerous.

"Can you put something on it?"

"Yes—no—that is there is nothing here but—"

"Out with it man."

"I know where there is something, an Indian herb, that will set all right within a week. A minute and I can lay my hand on it but there is a story to tell first. Indeed, methinks, I trampled the laws of Port Royal underfoot."

Biencourt extended his shapely hand, half hidden by long lace ruffles.

"By virtue of our authority as Seigneur of Port Royal, and Vice-Admiral for the King we pardon thee," he said mockingly.

Imbert bowed, then remembering the duel began to laugh too.

"It was the day Memberton died. The black-robes stood about him waiting and muttering prayers for his soul while the old chief lay silent on the bed. I was there. I saw it all and cursed them underneath my breath and stood and watched for death to come. Ah, he was a grand man for an Indian, a grand man! Bye and bye he stirred and I saw his

PUBLIC ARCHIVES OF NOVA SCOTIA
HALIFAX, N. S.

eyelids quiver. Presently he opened them, saw me and beckoned. He whispered he wanted to be alone with me, so I drove the priests away with my sword hilt for they wouldn't leave without, and put my ear close to his mouth. I can hear his hoarse whisper now. 'I am dying, Embra, (he always called me that) dying, and in darkness the white god has fled from me.' Then he asked me to see he was buried in his own way and not by the priests, and soon afterwards, babbling of a strange white man who lived near by, he died. First the Jesuits claimed him and put him with all their foolery into consecrated ground, but when night came I dug the body up and embalmed it after a fashion I learned among the Spanish Indians years ago, and then for safekeeping hid it not far away, and there it has rested ever since. The black robes had too keen a scent for me to pass the sentry at the gate, and soon Argall came and I've forgot it all till now.

"But the bark—where does that come in?"

"The bark!" said Imbert confusedly, "oh, I hid it in his bosom so it might be ready when he wakes. We won't take it all from him."

Biencourt laughed for he knew Imbert had a superstitious trust in half a dozen savage gods from Port Royal to Peru, and Imbert taking a candle in his hand went to the dark end of the room. Biencourt followed. There was a small recess behind the tall chair of state, and stepping within it the old pirate touched a spring that opened a hidden doorway in the wall, leaving a yawning black hole a yard in length to comfort them. From out it came a dull smell of pine wood and an impalpable dust that showed whitely in the candle rays. In a moment Imbert had drawn out the body and laid it on the

dusty velvet chair. Then he shut the door to with a click and the wall grew smooth again.

"You never knew that was there, lad. Your father made it on my advice when you were too young to learn those things. It was to keep his treasure safe from the wild crew he had to deal with."

They came closer to the chair and looked at the body, Imbert holding the candle over it and admiring his handiwork. The dead chief lay with folded arms, precisely as in life, only the rigid contour of the limbs telling he was not asleep. The lank hair framing his face gave a ghostly depth to the hollows beneath his high cheek bones and strangest of all a long beard swept his breast. It was Memberton the bearded Indian, France's warmest ally in the west, first trophy of the Jesuits and now at peace with all theologies. Imbert reached down and produced the bark from beneath the leather jerkin, wrapped about the body. There was magic in its very touch so Biencourt thought as he felt it being bound soothingly upon his arm, while all the while the dead man slumbered peacefully on beside them.

As he was replacing his doublet which Imbert had brought to him, his eyes fell on a white edge of paper protruding from Memberton's right hand. The position of the arms had been altered by the removal of the bark, and the hand had loosened in its grasp. What was it and how had it got there? A charm for the evil spirits perhaps and he died holding it, or maybe some Jesuit mummery. The hand yielded to his efforts, he opened the paper and read aloud.

"To the Seigneur of Port Royal—greeting. I, Bernardin D'Auvergne of Bordeaux in France, gentleman, being on my death-bed and in grievous sorrow,

which only Our Lady's mercy can allay, do hereby appoint thee guardian of the girl Annette, my house and lands and all therein. And by this way shall ye come to it—three scant leagues southward to the river, across it to the Indian graves, and then the fifth part of a league south along the brook that flows by them. And if "—

Here the letter ended as if the death-faintness had overcome the writer.

Imbert passed a hand in mute astonishment over his coarse hair, and even Biencourt looked amazed. Then each spoke a word.

"D'Auvergne," said Imbert.

"Annette," said Biencourt.

It was very curious both agreed. It was Pierre Euston's favourite, Imbert said, and of course the girl was dead too by now or married to one of the savages. Biencourt thought not. She was likely alive and the name was a very pretty one. His shoulder had ceased to pain. They would go at once.

Soon they had donned their bearskin hunting-coats, and with snow-shoed feet clattered noisely through the doorway, leaving Memberton alone to keep his vigil in the chair of state with the dim candle-light touching his wearied face, and the shadows writhing across the walls.

Outside the moon was high and the wind came in gusty moans. They walked slowly down the deserted square, bounded on both sides by charred ruins and shattered rafters, till they reached the entrance way. No cannon stood upon the dismantled bastions and the stone gateway carved with the fluer-de-lis of France lay in a dozen pieces at their feet. The snow was hard and progress rapid. They came to open spaces where duels had once been fought between

Parisian gallants, passed places famous in camp-fire legends, and lonely spots where men had died in snow storms, with nitches cut in the crumbling rocks in place of graves,—a weird place where spirits of the red men were said to hover and no Frenchman's life was safe. Following from that they went on till they reached a tiny plateau hidden by the higher hills and saw the massive log walls of the house they sought.

Lights were in the windows, rudely made tallow candles, and smoke was rising in the air. Biencourt began to run and by the time Imbert reached the door he saw him shaking hands with a tall bissome girl, hazel-eyed and running over with laughter. "Messieur de Biercourt was a strange man," she said to Imbert rubbing her left cheek softly. Then she bethought herself and made them a courtsey, stately as either had before beheld. Keeping her sea-green kirtle from the floor with marvellously dimpled hands.

Since Bernardin D'Anvergre's death she had lived alone with her Indian servants, so she told them, cultivating the large fields he had laid out as best she could. But the squaws were often lazy in their work in spite of all her efforts. The house was rather large too. Biencourt had noticed it himself for Imbert with his ready self-possession had made directly for the kitchen and his voice after coming through the halls sounded curiously far away. He was making jokes in Indian to the squaws cooking moose-meat there and every now and again their laughter rang hoarsely out.

Biencourt had removed his snow-shoes and bear-skin coat and he and Annette sat facing each other opposite a high fire-place in the principal room.

There was a large round table in the middle of the floor and a great abundance of the home made candles about the walls on tiny shelves. Soft rugs served for carpets and strange foreign relics stood about for which D'Anvergre had no doubt paid in blood, and confronting them on the mantle was some of Annett's own handiwork — two Indian warriors done in coloured beads. It was all very pleasant Bieucourt thought, after the lonely room he had left. The wall were not scarred like those at Port Royal, the many lights rained a yellow glamour through the air, and to crown all Annette sat near him, her dimpled hands demurely clasped upon her lap, a soft flush coming and going on her cheeks. She had told him of the dreadful night Pierre Euston had boarded their vessel and how her father had been killed, and then of the life the three had lived in this wilderness till her mother's time had come. After that D'Auvergue always sullen and silent had betoken himself to prayers until at last worn with fasting he too had died and left her all alone with his ill-gotten treasurer, its silks, its gold pieces and its blood. And then a silence fell upon them.

Annette was looking steadily into the flames, feeling her cheeks flush hotter beneath his gaze, and growing angry at their redness. This Monsieur de Biencourt must be very impulsive for he had kissed her at the door before his comrades' arrival and his long curls had rested a brief instant on her neck!

" Annette," said Biencourt rising and approaching her chair.

Annette rose too and counted the lace-points on the ruffles of his doublet which seemed the only thing to do. He looked very gallent this young French explorer and for years the Indians had been

telling of his stubborn lonely courage in the ruined fort. He was fair too which was a great thing.

"Annette," said Biencourt again, more slowly than before.

A few minutes after when Imbert came in from the kitchen, they were standing hand in hand before the fire.

"When spring comes, Imbert, you shall go to France to buy us cattle," said Biencourt in a matter of fact way. "A dozen will do and a few horses, but no colonists, mend, to quarrel and balk our plans. The squaws will work well enough for what we need. They—"

"Wait, wait," cried Imbert, tossing his shaggy mane amazedly about, "I to go alone and have them ask perchance where you have gone! The queen-mother herself may ask, that spawn of the Medicis. What shall I say has become of you?"

Biercourt laughed. Then he turned his half lit blue eyes to Annette and gently laid his hand on her shoulder. The girl drew closer.

"This," said he.

The Sleepers.

BY BLISS CARMAN.

The tall carnations down the garden walks
Bowed on their stalks.

Said Jock-a-dreams to John-a-nods,
"What are the odds
That we shall wake up here within the sun,
When time is done,
And pick up all the treasures one by one
Our hands let fall in sleep?" "You have begun
To mutter in your dreams,"
Said John-a-nods to Jock-a-dreams,
And they both slept again.
The tall carnations in the sunset glow
Burned row on row.

Said John-a-nods to Jock-a-dreams,
"Lo me it seems
A thousand years since last you stirred and spoke,
And I awoke.
Was that the wind then trying to provoke
His brothers in their blessed sleep." "They choke,
Who mutter in their nods,"
Said Jock-a-dreams to John-a-nods.
And they both slept again.

The tall carnations only heard a sigh
Of dusk go by.

—*From the Bookman.*

Max Nordan's "Degeneration."

BY JEROME K. JEROME.

A book which has recently attracted all the attentian 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 . nd 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

attack is over. Max Nordau is in love with his theory, poses, indeed, as one who is likely to be a martyr for its sake. His enthusiasm is literary rather than scientific; his choice of language picturesque rather than accurate. He uses evidence which, on his own showing, is not trustworthy. He has not the even temper of a scientific investigator; it is not enough for him to prove his artist or author to be diseased; he goes on to abuse him for it—for the very thing which he has shown to be a misfortune and not a fault. And he has allowed himself to be drawn into an enterprise too vast to be adequately undertaken by one man. He embarks upon a consideration of the contemporary literature of several languages; he attempts a critical investigation of a school of music and another of a school of pictorial art. With all his knowledge, wide though it is, he must needs fall into some of the errors that are inevitable to those who generalize.

Now turn to the other side, and see how the man of science in Max Nordau spoils the man of literature. He criticises the pre-Raphaelite movement and the æsthetics. He seems to me to assign an importance to them which they never possessed. But the book originally appeared, I believe, at a time when the movement, though dead, had not been so long buried; I let that pass. Nordau criticises "The Blessed Damozel." It is mystic, he says, and mysticism is a sign of degeneracy. It is worth while to remember that the mysticism is intentional, planned, conscious; the symptom of a disease must be its inevitable accompaniment, but mysticism cannot be said to have been inevitable in the author of "Jenny" and "The Burden of Nineveh." Rossetti spoke of the day that counted as ten years. Max Nordau flies to arithmetic. The two lines in the poem that almost definitely preclude the least

idea of sensuality must have been, Nordan thinks, the result of a sensual idea. He goes on to quote one of Mr. Oscar Wilde's most absurd sayings, and sets to work seriously to prove that it is absurd. In brief, Max Nordan does not understand poetry, and has no sense of humour—or has mislaid it.

However, grant that Max Nordan's criticism is correct, then it proves much more than it wants to prove. Mr. Oscar Wilde sometimes says things which are not reasoned truth; so did Aristophanes and Rabelais. We are not quite so modern as Max Nordan thinks. However, there is no need to martyrize him. His book is suggestive, audacious, interesting, showing that width of range which is so fatal in science and so desirable everywhere else. Nor does his evidence always fail; it would be difficult to refute what he says of Walt Whitman or Verlaine, for instance. It must not be supposed that either Max Nordan or his Master, Lanbroso, would prove every genius to be insane. The theory is not so large as that, but none the less, it seems to me to be too large for the facts. The fallacy which underlies Max Nadan's book seems to me that by proving a parallel one proves a connection.

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Musical Notes.

Loie Fuller is appearing in a dance with entirely new effects, at the Comédie Parisienne in Paris.

Six large panes of glass are let into the floor of the stage, under each of which is a colored electric light.

As Miss Fuller dances above these powerful lights, whirling a long silken scarf in her hands, the effect is marvellous. She is seemingly enveloped in a blace of multi-colored fire. The dance is named "Salomè" which was the name of the dancer at the court of Herod.

The Royal Albert Hall, London, England, has a seating capacity of 10,000.

Gounod's "Faust" has been performed more than 1000 times in Paris alone, since its first production in 1859. No opera is more popular in that city.

"It is stated that the Emperor of Germany has invited several sculptors to offer designs for a monument to Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven to be erected in Berlin."

"The compositions of Cécile Chaminade show a seriousness and elevation, which perhaps no other composer of her sex, has exhibited before, in the same degree."

A valuable "Wagner" collection in Vienna, is now offered for sale for £22,000. It includes thousands of documents, portraits busts and manuscripts.

"Mrs. Millnard Adams of Chicago in lecturing in New York said: "Many voices are ruined in the public schools. Children are told to "speak louder" without being taught how to increase the volume of voice"

A committee has been formed to raise funds for the erection of a monument to Abbé Franz Liszt at Weimar, where he rendered such distinguished and enduring services to the art of music.

Lully, the celebrated French composer (1633-87) directly met his death from a too-vigorous beating of time to his orchestra. In January, 1687, he was conducting a Te Deum in honour of the King's recovery from a serious illness. He had provided himself with a stout stick some six feet in length, and with this he gave loud knocks on the floor to mark the time. Unfortunately in a burst of enthusiasm he struck his foot instead of the floor. An abcess followed—the quack in whose hands he placed himself proved incompetent and Lully died within two months.

—*Musician.*

The Passing Show.

"Mr. Charles G. D. Roberts, says *The Bookman*, late Professor at King's College, Windsor, Nova Scotia, and the best known of our Canadian poets, has resigned his chair and intends to make his home in the States. He had a generous reception in Boston circles a few days ago, and at the time of writing is now in New York."

One by one our literary men are leaving us, for "fresh fields and pastures new." The only consolation is, that there is now arising a younger band of writers to whom Canada is the home of their body and the theatre of their work, and the conviction that some of them are, assuredly, certain of soon being heard of in the highest places.

A few days after the appearance of this number of *The Occasional*, which, by the way, you will notice is much improved in appearance, the public will have the opportunity of welcoming another literary arrival. It is *Nesbitt's Weekly* a 20 page illustrated journal of, we quote the title, Literature, Art, Industry, Amusement, and Instruction. I notice that the first number will have a story by E. Camberwell, one of the contributors to this months' *Occasional*. *Nesbitt's Weekly* will also contain many diverse and interesting articles, written by the best Nova Scotian talent. *The Occasional*

extends a hearty welcome to the new-comer, and wishes it all success.

The selling price of the new paper is ten cents.

A VISION.

I see men laughing, love-making, labouring,
See strong men battling, ay, and also tippling,
See the great river of Romance flowing; then
Close a *Book*, waking. The Enchanter's name? 'Tis
Kipling.

We are born into trouble—and it is our only legacy that is not contested.

"The Idler's Club" discussion in the April number of *The Idler*, is on an extremely enteresting subject, viz., "Who should be Laureate?" and it contains some very interesting contributions on the subject, by the leading literary men of England. The majority of the writers favour Mr. Swinburnes claims, (as is, indeed, fit and proper) though there are many voices raised in support of Rudyard Kipling, William Watson, Robert Buchanan, John Davidson, and indeed a host of others. Oscar Wildes opinion of the matter is characteristic.

"Mr. Swinburne is already the Poet Laureate of England. The fact that his appointment to this high post has not been degraded by official confirma-

tion renders his position all the more unassailable He whom all poets love is the Laureate Poet always."

John Davidson's opinion is also brief and to the point.

"I have really nothing to say on the subject. Swinburne is the greatest poet in England. If He refuses the Laureateship, or has refused it, as the powers that be are not fools they will not make an appointment at all. It is Eclipse first, and the rest nowhere.

Mr. Swinburne has been called the "poet of tempestuous passion," whose verse is, "like a mountain torrent carrying down its wild course both riches and rubbish," yet here is a blossom of song, as soft and sweet as may be.

A BABY'S FEET.

A baby's feet, like sea-shells pink,
Might tempt should Heaven see meet,
An angels lips to kiss, we think
A baby's feet.

Like rose hued sea flowers towards the heat
They stretch and spread and wink
Their ten soft buds that part and meet.

No flower-bells that expand and shrink
Gleam half so heavenly sweet,
As shine on Life's untrodden brink,
A baby's feet.

OUR BULLETIN BOARD.

OUR SECOND NUMBER.

The readers of our second number will note that a considerable improvement has been effected in our general make-up. The sale of our first number, and the rate at which subscriptions are coming in, guarantee a good success for the "The Occasional," and we thank the public for their support; and hope that we shall have it fully as generously in the future.

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