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A NEW STORY, By Stanley Weyman, Author of
"Gentleman of France," in this
number.

THE
Occasional Magazine,

5 cents Monthly, 50 cents a Year.

Vol. I.

APRIL, 1895.

No. 1.

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APRIL, 1895.

No. 1.

Pere Champagne.

BY GILBERT PARKER.

"Is it that we stand at the top of the hill and the end of the travel has come, Pierre? Why don't you spake?"

"We stand at the top of the hill, and it is the end."

"And Lonely Valley is at our feet and Whitefaced Mountain beyond?"

"One at our feet, and the other beyond, Shon McGann."

"Its the sight of my eyes I wish I had in the light of the sun this mornin'. Tell me, what is't you see?"

"I see the trees on the foothills, and all the branches shine with frost. There is a part—so wide!—between two groves of pines. On Whitefaced Mountain lies a glacier-field . . . and all is still." . . .

"The voice of you is far-away-like, Pierre—it shivers as a hawk cries. It's the wind, the wind, maybe."

"There's not a breath of life from the hill or valley."

"But I feel it in my face."

"It is not the breath of life you feel."

"Did you not hear voices coming athwart the wind? . . . Can you see the people at the mines?"

"I have told you what I see?"

"You told me of the pine-trees, and the glacier, and the snow—"

"And that is all."

"But in the valley, in the valley, where all the mines are!"

"I cannot see them."

"For love of heaven, don't tell me that the dark is fallin' on your eyes, too."

"No, Shon, I am not growing blind."

"Will you not tell me what gives the ache to your words?"

"I see in the valley—snow . . . snow."

"It's a laugh you have at me in your cheek, whin I'd give years of my ill-spent life to watch the chimney smoke come curlin' up slow through the sharp air in the valley there below."

"There is no chimney and there is no smoke in all the valley."

"Before God, if you're a man, you'll put your hand on my arm and tell me what trouble quakes your speech."

"Shon McGann, it is for you to make the sign of the Cross . . . there, while I put my hand on your shoulder—so!"

"Your hand is heavy, Pierre."

"This is the sight of the eyes that see. In the valley there is snow; in the snow of all that was, there is one poppet-head of the mine that was called St. Gabriel . . . upon the poppet-head there is the figure of a woman."

"Ah!"

"She does not move—"

"She will never move?"

"She will never move."

"The breath o' my body hurts me. . . . There is death in the valley, Pierre?"

"There is death."

"It was an avalanche—that path between the pines?"

"And a great storm after."

"Blessed be God that I cannot behold that thing this day! . . . And the woman, Pierre, the woman aloft?"

"She went to watch for some one coming, and as she watched, the avalanche came—and she moves not."

"Do we know that woman?"

"Who can tell?"

"What was it you whispered soft to yourself, then, Pierre?"

"I whispered no word."

"There, don't you hear it, soft and sighin'? . . .

Nathalie!"

"*Mon Dieu!* It is not of the world."

"It's facin' the poppet-head where she stands I'd be."

"Your face is turned toward her."

"Where is the sun?"

"The sun stands still above her head."

"With the bitter over, and the avil past, come rest for her and all that lie there!"

"Eh, *bien*, the game is done."

"If we stay here we shall die also."

"If we go we die, perhaps." . . .

"Don't spake it. We will go, and we will return."

when the breath of summer come from the South."

"It shall be so."

"Hush! Did you not hear—?"

"I did not hear. I only see an eagle, and it flies toward Whitefaced Mountain."

And Shon McGann and Pretty Pierre turned back from the end of their quest—from a mighty grave behind to a lonely waste before; and though one was snow-blind, and the other knew that on him fell the chief weight of a great misfortune, for he must provide food and fire and be as a mother to his comrade—they had courage; without which, men are as the standing straw in an unreaped field in winter; but having become like the hooded pine, that keepeth green in frost, and hath the bounding blood in all its icy branches.

And whence they came, and wherefore, was as thus:—

A French Canadian once lived in Lonely Valley. One day great fortune came to him, because it was given to him to discover the mine St. Gabriel. And he said to the woman who loved him: "I will go with mules and much gold, that I have hewn and washed and gathered, to a village in the East where my father and my mother are. They are poor, but I will make them rich: and then I will return to Lonely Valley, and a priest shall come with me, and we will dwell here at Whitefaced Mountain, where men are men and not children." And the women blessed him, and prayed for him, and let him go.

He travelled far through passes of the mountains, and came at last where new cities lay upon the plains, and where men were full of evil and of lust of gold. And he was free of hand and light of heart; and at a place called Diamond City false

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friends came about him, and gave him champagne wine to drink, and struck him down and robbed him, leaving him for dead.

And he was found, and his wounds were all healed: all save one, and that was in the brain. Men called him mad.

He wandered through the land, preaching to men to drink no wine, and to shun the sight of Gold. And they laughed at him, and called him Père Champagne.

But one day much gold was found at a place called Reef o' Angel; and jointly with the gold came a plague which scars the face and rots the body; and Indians died by hundreds and white men by scores; and Père Champagne, of all who were not stricken down, feared nothing, and d'd not flee, but went among the sick and dying, and did those deeds which gold cannot buy, and prayed those prayers which were never sold. And who can count how high the prayers of the feckless go!

When none was found to bury the dead, he gave them place himself beneath the prairie earth—consecrated only by the tears of a fool—and for extreme unction he had but this: "*God be merciful to me, a Sinner!*"

And it happily chanced that Pierre and Shon McGann, who travelled westward, came upon this desperate battlefield, and saw how Père Champagne dared the elements of scourge and death; and they paused and labored with him—to save were saving was granted of Heaven, and to bury where the Reaper reaped and would not stay his hand. At last the plague ceased, because winter stretched its wings out swiftly o'er the plains from frigid ranges

in the West. And then Père Champagne fell ill again.

And this last great sickness cured his madness: and he remembered whence he had come, and what befell him at Diamond City so many months ago. And he prayed them, when he knew his time was come, that they would go to Lonely Valley and tell his story to the woman whom he loved; and say that he was going to a strange but pleasant Land, and that there he would await her coming. And he begged them that they would go at once, that she might know, and not strain her eyes to blindness, and be sick at heart because he came not. And he told them her name, and drew the coverlet up about his head and seemed to sleep; but he waked between the day and dark, and gently cried:

"The snow is heavy on the mountain . . . and the valley is below . . . *Gardez! mon Père!* . . . An, Nathalie?"

And they buried him between the dark and dawn.

Though winds were fierce, and travel full of peril, they kept their word, and passed along wide steppes of snow, until they entered passes of the mountains, and again into the plains; and at last one *poudre* day, when frost was shaking like shreds of faintest silver through the air, Shon McGann's sight fled. But he would not turn back—a promise to a dying man was sacred, and he could follow if he could not lead; and there was still some pemmican, and there were martens in the woods, and wandering deer that good spirits hunted into the way of the needy; and Pierre's finger along the gun was sure.

Pierre did not tell Shon that for many days they travelled woods where no sunshine entered; where no trail had ever been, nor foot of man had trod:

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that they had lost their way. Nor did he make his comrade know that one night he sat and played a game of *solitaire* to see if they would ever reach the place called Lonely Valley. Before the cards were dealt, he made a sign upon his breast and forehead. Three times he played, and three times he counted victory; and before three suns had come and gone, they climbed a hill that perched over Lonely Valley. And of what they saw and their hearts felt we know.

And when they turned their faces eastward they were as men who go to meet a final and a conquering enemy; but they had kept their honor with the man upon whose grave-tree Shon McGann had carved beneath his name these words:

"A Brother of Aaron."

Upon a lonely trail they wandered, the spirits of lost travelers hungering in their wake—spirits that mumbled in cedar thickets, and whimpered down the flumes of snow. And Pierre, who knew that evil things are exorcised by mighty conjuring, sang loudly, from a throat made thin by forced fasting, a song with which his mother sought to drive away the devils of dreams that flaunted on his pillow when a child: it was the Song of the Scarlet Hunter. And the charm sufficed; for suddenly of a cheerless morning they came upon a trapper's hut in the wilderness, where their sufferings ceased, and the sight of Shon's eyes came back. When strength returned also, they journeyed to an Indian village, where a priest labored: and him they besought; and when spring came they set forth to Lonely Valley again that the woman and the smothered dead—if it might chanced so—should be put away into peaceful graves. But thither coming they only saw a gray

and churlish river ; and the poppet-head of the mine of St. Gabriel, and she who had knelt thereon, were vanished into solitudes, where only God's cohorts have the rights of burial. . . .

But the priest prayed humbly for their so swiftly-summoned souls.

GILBERT PARKER.

A Walking Skirt.

O, Phyllis, in her kirtle, for so I choose to call
The pretties and the shortest petticoat of all—
Search the Island over between the triple seas,
The skirt of all in England clings about her knees !

The band of it a circle, supple as 'tis round,
The hem another circle, a foot above the ground :
Below the hem her ankles, her waist within the band
As she trips it, are the trimmest and the slimmest in
the land.

Above the dainty waistband, when she takes a walk,
Her face above her body floats, a flower on its stalk ;
Beneath the hem a-swinging, as she sways along so
sweet,
The eyes of men are tangled in the twinkle of her feet.

O, Phyllis, in her kirtle, is lovelier than all !
Delicious as her laughter, gentle and so tall,
So lissome as a willow, so pretty as a dove,
A darling in her kirtle, for it clips her like a glove !

GEORGE WYNDHAM.

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Robert Louis Stevenson.

BY ALFRED ERWIN.

“The situation of the Master's grave—lay beside a chief landmark of the wilderness, a certain range of peaks, conspicuous by their design and altitude.—The Master of Ballantrae.”

How aptly this description of the burial place of that keen subtle adventurer, the Master of Ballantrae, which the great romancer wrote years ago, applies now, to himself, the master of writers! So he lies now, there on the high summit of Vaea, “a place no wider than a room and flat as a table. On either side the land descends precipitously; in front lies the vast ocean and the surf-swept reefs; to the right and left, green mountains rise, densely covered with the primeval forest;”—so his son-in-law, Mr. Lloyd Osborne describes it, in a printed letter from Samoa.

It was his expressed wish to be laid there, when the Grim Destroyer, Death, had gained his inevitable victory. Not for him was the Golgotha of the roaring town, or to be laid in some city of the dead among hundred others; no—for *this* he said;

Under the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie;
Glad did I live, and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me :—
“ Here he lies where he longed to be ;
Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.”

He was a wanderer, a sailor and a hunter, though home now from the sea, and home from the hill, one in whom the gypsy blood, that is in us all, stirred strong. He delighted in the fresh, clean places of the earth, in the sweetness and beauty of the hills, the great sea, and the plains; and roamed through it all filled with its glamour. The mystery and the beauty, and the awesomeness of nature, was ever present with him. He knew and loved the primitive; the storming and warring and smiling of nature, the strong deep passions of natural men, stripped of their veil of superficial civilization. Most delightful of vagabonds, he had a tender heart for the vagabonds of the earth, the wanderers and outcasts, the men who sail the sea in ships, the ranting strolling players, the men who seek fortune far and wide, the adventurers; they who oft-times sleep under the stars, and sometimes find it sufficing. He gave forth his love freely—and lo! love was given to him. He stood near to the great heart of all things, reading not a few of its secrets. He, a product of the highest civilization, knew and understood, as I said before, the primitive. Thus he clasped hands and spoke brave true words with the scholars and princes and great men of the earth—and then clasped hands and spoke other brave true words with pointed savages; and all alike loved the man.

When Robert Louis Stevenson died, thousands of people far and wide felt it as a personal loss—ay, and a loss to the world.

To many thousands, by his books and his own brave life, he has given instruction and the noblest of entertaining. He, seeing with his own eyes the strange things, that purblind people, crying, out of darkness, that the romance of the world had fled,

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would not see, set it before them so, that indeed they *must* see. All of his writings are strong and notable, and some are truly great and true, and will, I truly believe, last with the language. And to recognize what a painter, an artist, of nature he was, read this:—

“I have never seen such a night. It seemed to throw calumny in the teeth of all the painters that ever dabbled in starlight. The sky itself was of a ruddy, powerful, nameless, changing colour, dark and glossy like a serpent’s back. The stars, by innumerable millions, stuck boldly forth like lamps. The milky way was bright, like a moonlit cloud; half heaven seemed milky way. The greater luminaries shone each more clearly than a winter’s moon. Their light was dyed in every sort of colour—red, like fire; blue, like steel; green, like the tracks of sunset; and so sharply did each stand forth in its own lustre that there was no appearance of that flat, star-spangled arch we know so well in pictures, but all the hollow of heaven was one chaos of contesting luminaries—a hurly-burly of stars. Against this the hills and rugged tree-tops stood out redly dark.”

What prose writer can better that? It is as perfect in its way as a poem of Tennysons’.

He lies, now, wrapped in the flag that flew over his ship in many a happy sea-voyage among the glowing isles of the South Pacific, an English ensign, fit emblem of his patriotism, and his gypsyism. And where he lies buried, when his monument is raised, there will be a beacon mark to his beloved seamen. Yea, and his words are, and will be landmarks to many thousands, living, and as yet unborn.

What fitter end could be wished for him. ?

ALFRED ERWIN.

Who is the Richer?

A PROSE POEM.

When the wealthy Rothschild is praised in my hearing—who, out of his enormous revenues, spends thousands on the education of poor children, on the healing of the sick, and on the care of infirm old men—I feel moved and praise him.

Still, while I am praising him, and feeling thus touched, I involuntarily think of a poor peasant family, who took an orphan—a poor relation—into a thin, miserable, shattered hut.

“We will take Kate to live with us,” said the wife; “it is true it will cost us our last groschen; we shall not even have salt to flavour our soup. . .”

“Well, we can eat it without salt,” answered the peasant, her husband.

Rothschild rank far below this peasant!

IVAN TURGENIEF.



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The Killing of a Humourist.

BY BARRY PAIN.

I was once sitting in the office of the *London Review* engaged in the usual routine of editorial work, when one of the clerks entered with a telegram for me. It was no unusual occurrence, for telegrams are more common than letters in the office of the *London Review*. Yet, as I opened this particular telegram, I had a distinct feeling of nervousness. Indeed, my mind had been haunted all the morning by presentiments of some catastrophe impending, either for myself or my friends. The telegram ran as follows :—

“Our poor Harry is becoming a humourist. Do please come at once.—George Blackburny.”

The Blackburny's are among my oldest and dearest friends. I have always regretted that they lived in Carlisle, while my work compelled me to live in London. They were devoted to their son Harry, and when I first knew him he was, indeed, a boy of whom any parents might be proud. His gentleness and earnestness had endeared him to everybody ; he was at this time studying, with hopes and prospects singularly bright, for the career in life which he had selected. He was to have been a missionary.

Shocked and pained though I was by the news which the telegram contained, I yet felt a melancholy

pleasure that in their hour of trouble they had asked me to be by their side and seemed to rely on me to help them. I proceed to act at once. First of all I wrote as follows to Simpson, my assistant editor :—

“Dear Simpson, you must see the paper through this week, as I have been called away. I notice in the make-up that there is no ‘par’ about myself. How can you be so careless? Cut out the bi-metalism ‘par’ and write something about my new book.”

Then I wired back to Blackburny.

“Am coming do not despair.”

Finally I left the office, packed hurriedly, and drove to Euston. The evening was closing in; all day the skies had been overcast; and now the rain fell steadily and gloomingly. The wind howled pitifully, like a heart-broken child, as though it knew that far away in Carlisle poor Harry Blackburny was becoming a humorist.

The words of that sad telegram repeated themselves over and over in my mind, in time to the rattling of the train.

The Blackburny's were wealthy; they were successful; it had seemed that they had all that a man desired to make him happy. And now their only son, their dearly-loved Harry, was becoming a humorist. Wealth could not stop it; no efforts of theirs could have averted the blow. We are toys in the hands of Destiny and Destiny breaks us up.

It had been quite unexpected. Only a few weeks before I had seen Harry, and had never dreamed of anything of the kind. Indeed I should have said that his principles would have stood any stress.

At Carlisle I found George Blackburny waiting for me on the platform. He looked old and worn. He grasped my hand and said in a voice choking with

emotion, "My dear friend? How good of you?" He seemed unable to say more for the moment, but he led the way to the brougham. "Now," I said when we were seated, "you must tell me when this happened. When and where did it begin?"

"I will try," he answered. "It began on Wednesday night at dinner; he had seemed perfectly well all day, but before he had half finished dinner he suddenly got up from his chair and walked out. We found him afterwards at the writing table. He had done three verses and said that he expected another any minute. We got him to bed, gave him bromide, and sent for a doctor. Here are the verses. I am afraid there can be no doubt from them what is the matter."

I glanced over them. They were to the effect that the writer disliked to hear a German band play popular music out of tune, and that this was funny.

"Yes," I said, sadly, "that is the splendid old humour; it has added to the gaiety of nations. Has he suffered at all from brilliance?"

"Last night, when his temperature rose, he was quite brilliant, so that it was painful to hear him. Towards morning he calmed down and seemed to know us."

Very little was said until we arrived at the house. Mrs. Blackburny joined us in the drawing-room at once, and answered our eager enquiries about poor Harry. It appeared that he had had another violent attack of punning. "The doctor" said Mrs. Blackburny, thinks that it may have been due to the hare soup which he had for luncheon. The word hare, you see, is so remarkably rich in suggestions."

"We should have thought of that," said Mr. Blackburny, gloomily. "Anything else?"

"He had parodied Pepys twice last night, but the doctor says that that is usual."

"Of course, our greatest trouble," Mr. Blackburny said, turning to me, is our fear lest he should get anything published." The disgrace and criticism of it would break my heart. It takes three men to hold him at post time.

If his humorous description of a channel passage got into print I could never hold up my head again.

"Does the doctor," I asked, "hold out any hopes of recovery?"

"None."

"Then, I said, there is only one thing to be done." We all looked at one another. The Blackburnys understood my meaning, and looked grateful. "What will you do it with?" Mrs. Blackburny asked in a more cheerful voice.

"With this," I said, picking up the poker, and moving towards the staircase. They showed me which was his room, and entreated me to be careful with myself. The whole thing did not take ten minutes.

BARRY PAIN.



The Feminine Fictionists.

Corelli Mary, quite contrary,
How does *your* novel grow ?
With splashes of gore, and spooks galore,
And platitudes all in a row.

Ouida, Ouida, now indeed-a,
How does *your* novel grow ?
With a Princess shady, a lord and a lady,
And Guardsmen all in a row.

Miss Edna Lyall, now no denial,
How does *your* novel grow ?
With a rake reformed, a cold atheist warmed,
And goody girls all in a row.

Mistress Ward, with critical sword,
How does *your* novel grow ?
With soul forlorn, and phrases outworn,
And clergymen all in a row.

O all ye writers of penny-soul-smitters,
How do *your* novels grow ?
With endless chatter of amorous matter,
And wedding-rings all in a row.

The Open Shutter.

A Story From the Memoirs of a Minister of France.

BY STANLEY J. WEYMAN.

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For one man who in these days recalls the thousand great and wise deeds of the late King a thousand remember his occasional freaks, the duel he would have fought, or his habit of visiting the streets of Paris by night and in disguise. That this last has been much exaggerated, I can myself bear witness; for though Varenne or Coquet, the Master of the Household, were his usual companions on these occasions, he seldom failed to confess to me after the event, and more than once I accompanied him.

If I remember rightly it was in April or May of the year 1606, that he surprised me one night as I sat at supper, and, requesting me to dismiss my servants, let me know that he was in a flighty mood; and that nothing would content him but to play the Caliph in my company. I was not too willing, for I did not fail to recognize the risk to which these expeditions exposed his person; but in the end, I consented making only the condition that Maignan should follow us at a distance. This he conceded, and I sent for two plain suits, and we dressed in my closet. The King, delighted with the frolic, was in

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his wildest mood. He uttered an infinity of jests, and cut a thousand absurd antics, and rallying me on my gravity, soon came near to making me repent of the easiness which had led me to fall in with his humour.

However it was too late to retreat, and in a moment we were standing in the street. It would not have surprised me if he had celebrated his freedom by some noisy extravagance there; but he refrained, and contented himself—while Maignan locked the postern behind us—with cocking his hat and lugging forward his sword, and assuming an air of whimsical recklessness, as if an adventure were to be instantly expected.

But the moon had not yet risen, the night was dark, and for some time we met with nothing more diverting than a stumble over a dead dog, a word with a forward wench, or a narrow escape from one of those liquid douches that render the streets perilous for common folk and do not spare the greatest. Naturally I began to tire, and wished myself with all my heart back at the the Arsenal; but Henry, whose spirits a spice of danger never failed to raise, found a hundred things to be merry over, and some of which he made a great tale afterwards. He would go on; and presently, in the Rue de la Pourpointerie, which we entered as the clocks struck the hour before midnight, his persistence was rewarded.

By that time the moon had risen; but, naturally, few were abroad so late, and such as were to be seen belonged to a class among whom even Henry did not care to seek adventures. Our astonishment was great therefore when half-way down the street—a street of tall, mean houses neither better nor much worse than others in that quarter—we saw, standing

in the moonlight at an open door, a boy, about seven years old.

The King saw him first, and, pressing my arm, stood still. On the instant the child, who had probably seen us before we saw him, advanced into the road to us. "Messieurs," he said, standing up boldly before us and looking at us without fear, "my father is ill, and I cannot close the shutter."

The boy's manner, full of self-possession, and his tone, remarkable at his age, took us so completely by surprise to say nothing of the late hour and the deserted street, which gave these things their full effect—that for a moment neither of us answered. Then the King spoke. "Indeed, M. l'Empereur," he said gravely; "and where is the shutter?"

The boy pointed to an open shutter at the top of the house behind him.

"Ah!" Henry said. "And you wish us to close it?"

"If your please, meisseurs."

"We do please," Henry replied, saluting him with mock reverence. "You may consider the shutter closed. Lead on, Monsieur; we follow."

For the first time the boy looked doubtful; but he turned without saying anything, and passing through the doorway, was in an instant lost in the pitchy darkness of the entry. I laid my hand on the King's arm, and tried to induce him not to follow; fearing much that this might be some new thieves' trap, leading nowhither save to the poire d'angoisse and the poniard. But the attempt was hopeless from the first; he broke from me and entered, and I followed him.

We groped for the balustrade and found it, and began to ascend, guided by the boy's voice; who

kept a little before us, saying continually, "This way, messieurs; this way!" His words had so much the sound of a signal, and the staircase was so dark and illsmelling, that expecting every moment to be seized or to have a knife in my back, I found it almost interminable. At last, however, a gleam of light appeared above us, the boy opened a door, and we found ourselves standing on a mean, narrow landing, the walls of which had once been white-washed. The child signed to us to enter, and we followed him into a bare attic, where our heads nearly touched the ceiling,

"Messieurs, the air is keen," he said in a curiously formal tone. "Will you please to close the shutter?"

The King, amused and full of wonder, looked round. The room contained little besides a table, a stool, and a lamp standing in a basin on the floor; but the alcove curtained with black, dingy hangings, broke one wall. "Your father lies there?" Henry said, pointing to it.

"Yes, Monsieur."

"He feels the cold?"

"Yes, Monsieur. Will you please to close the shutter?"

I went to it, and, leaning out, managed, with a little difficulty, to comply. Meanwhile, the King, gazing curiously at the curtains, gradually approached the alcove. He hesitated long, he told me afterwards, before he touched the hangings; but at length, feeling sure that there was something more in the business than appeared, he did so. Drawing one gently aside, as I turned from the window, he peered in; and saw just what he had been led to expect—a huddled form covered with dingy bed-clothes and a grey head lying on a ragged yellow pillow. The

man's face was turned to the wall ; but, as the light fell on him, he sighed and, with a shiver, began to move. The King dropped the curtain.

The adventure had not turned out as well as he had hoped ; and, with a whimsical look at me, he laid a crown on the table, said a kind word to the boy, and we went out. In a moment we were in the street.

It was my turn now to rally him, and I did so without mercy ; asking if he knew of any other beautiful damsel who wanted her shutter closed, and whether this was the usual end of his adventures. He took the jest in good part, laughing fully as loudly at himself as I laughed ; and in this way we had gone a hundred paces or so very merrily, when, on a sudden, he stopped.

"What is it, sire ? I asked.

"Hola !" he said, "The boy was clean."

"Clean ?"

"Yes ; hands, face, clothes. All clean."

"Well, sire ?"

"How could he be ? His father in bed, no one even to close the shutter. How could he be clean ?"

"But, if he was, sire ?"

For answer Henry seized me by the arm, turned me round without a word, and in a moment was hurrying back to the house. I thought that he was going thither again, and followed reluctantly ; but twenty paces short of the door, he crossed the street, and drew me into a doorway. "Can you see the shutter ?" he said. "Yes ? Then watch it, my friend."

I had no option but to resign myself, and I nodded. A moist and chilly wind which blew through the street and penetrating our cloaks made us shiver,

did not tend to increase my enthusiasm; but the King was proof even against this, as well as against the kennel smells and the tedium of waiting, and presently his persistence was rewarded. The shutter swung slowly open, the noise made by its collision with the wall coming clearly to our ears. A minute later the boy appeared in the doorway, and stood looking up and down.

"Well," the king whispered in my ear, "what do you make of that, my friend?"

I muttered that it must be a beggar's trick.

"They would not earn a crown in a month," he answered. "There must be something more than that at the bottom of it."

Beginning to share his curiosity, I was about to propose that we sally out and see if the boy would repeat his overture to us, when I caught the sound of footsteps coming along the street. "Is it Maignan?" the king whispered, looking out cautiously.

"No, sire, I said. "He is in yonder doorway."

Before Henry could answer, the appearance of two strangers coming along the road confirmed my statement. They paused opposite the boy, and he advanced to them. Too far off to hear precisely what passed, we were near enough to be sure that the dialogue was in the main the same as that in which we had taken part. The men were cloaked, too, as were we, and presently they went in, as we had gone in. All, in fact, happened as it had happened to us, and after the necessary interval we saw and heard the shutter closed.

"Well," the King said, "what do you think of that?"

"The shutter is the catch-word, sire."

"Ay, but what is going on up there?" he asked. And he rubbed his hands.

I had no explanation to give, however, and shook my head; and we stood awhile, watching silently. At the end of five minutes the two men came out again and walked off the way they had come, but more briskly. Henry, moreover, whose observations was all his life most acute, remarked that whatever they had been doing they carried away lighter hearts than they had brought. And I thought the same.

Indeed, I was beginning to take my full share of interest in the adventure; and in place of wondering, as before, at Henry's persistence, found it more natural to admire the keenness which he had displayed in scenting a mystery. I was not surprised, therefore, when he gripped my arm to gain my attention, and, as the window fell slowly open again, drew me quickly into the street, and hurried me across it and through the doorway of the house.

"Up!" he muttered in my ear. "Quickly and quietly, man! If there are to be other visitors, we will play the spy. But softly, softly; here is the boy!"

We stood aside against the wall, scarcely daring to breathe; and the child, guiding himself by the handrail, passed us in the dark without suspicion and pattered on down the staircase. We remained as we were until we heard him cross the threshold, and then we crept up; not to the uppermost landing, where the light, when the door was opened, must betray us, but to that immediately below it. There we took our stand in the angle of the stairs and waited, the King, between amusement at the absurdity of our position and anxiety lest we should betray ourselves, going off now and again into stifled

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I was not in so gay a mood myself, however, the responsibility of the safety lying heavy upon me; while the possibility that the adventure might prove no less tragical in the sequel than it now appeared comical, did not fail to present itself to my eyes in the darkest colors. When we had watched, therefore, five minutes or more—which seemed to me an hour—I began to loose faith; and I was on the point of undertaking Henry to withdraw, when the voices of men speaking at the door below reached us, and told me that it was too late. The next moment their steps crossed the threshold, and they began to ascend, the boy saying continually, "This way, Messieurs, this way!" and preceding them as he had preceded us. We heard them approach, breathing heavily, and but for the balustrade, by which I felt sure that they would guide themselves, and which stood some feet from our corner, I should have been in a panic lest they should blunder against us. But they passed safely, and a moment later the boy opened the door of the room above. We heard them go in, and without a second's hesitation we crept up after them, following them so closely that the door was scarcely shut before we were at it. We heard, therefore, what passed from the first; the child's request that they would close the shutter, their hasty compliance, and the silence, strange and pregnant, which followed, and which was broken at least by a solemn voice. "We have closed one shutter," it said, "but the shutter of God's mercy is never closed."

"Amen," a second person answered in a tone so distant and muffled that it needed no great wit to

guess whence it came, or that the speaker was behind the curtains of the alcove. "Who are you?"

"The cure of St. Marceau," the first speaker replied.

"And whom do you bring to me?"

"A sinner."

"And what has he done?"

"He will tell you."

"I am listening."

There was a pause on this, a long pause; which which was broken at length by a third speaker, in a tone half sullen, half miserable. "I have robbed my master," he said.

"Of how much?"

"Fifty livres."

"Why?"

"I lost it at play."

"And you are sorry."

"I must be sorry," the man panted with sudden fierceness, "or hang!" Hidden though he was from us, there was a tremor in his voice that told a tale of pallid cheeks and shaking knees and a terror fast rising to madness.

"He makes up his accounts to-morrow?"

"Yes."

Someone in the room groaned; it should have been the culprit, but unless I was mistaken the sound came through the curtains. A long pause followed. Then, "And if I help you," the muffled voice resumed, "will you swear to lead an honest life?"

But the answer may be guessed. I need not repeat the assurances, the protestations and vows of repentance, the cries and tears of gratitude which ensued, and to which the poor wretch, stripped of

his sullen indifference, completely abandoned himself. Suffice it that we presently heard the clinking of coins, a word or two of solemn advice from the cure, and a man's painful sobbing; then the King touched my arm, and we crept down the stairs. I was for stopping on the landing where we had hidden ourselves before; but Henry drew me on to the foot of the stairs and into the street.

He turned towards home, and for some time did not speak. At length he asked me what I thought of it.

"In what way sire?"

"Do you not think," he said in a voice of much emotion, "that if we could do what he does, and save a man instead of hanging him, it would be better?"

"For the man, sire, doubtless," I answered drily; "but for the State it might not be so well. If mercy became the rule and justice the exception—there would be fewer bodies at Montfaucon and more in the streets at daylight. I feel much greater doubt on another point."

Shaking off the moodiness that had for a moment overcome him. Henry asked with vivacity what that was.

"Who he is, and what is this motive?"

"Why?" the King replied in some surprise—he was ever of so kind a nature that an appeal to his feelings displaced his judgment. "What should he be but what he seems?"

"Benevolence itself?"

"Yes."

"Well sire, I grant that he may be M. de Joyeuse, who has spent his life in passing in and out of monasteries, and has performed so many tricks of the

kind that I could believe anything of him. But if it be not he—”

“It was not his voice,” Henry said positively.

“Then there is something here,” I answered, “still unexplained. Consider the oddity of the conception, sire, the secrecy of the performance, the hour, the mode, all the surrounding circumstances? I can imagine a man currying favour with the basest and most dangerous class by such means. I can imagine a conspiracy recruited by such means. I can imagine this shibboleth of the shutter grown to a watchword as deadly as the “Tuez!” of ’72. I can imagine all that, but I cannot imagine a man acting thus out of pure benevolence.”

“No?” Henry said, thoughtfully. “Well, I think that I agree with you.” And far from being displeased with my warmth (as is the manner of some sovereigns when their best friends differ from them), he came over to my opinion so completely as to halt and express his intention of returning and probing the matter to the bottom. Midnight had gone, however; it would take some little time to retrace our steps: and with difficulty I succeeded in dissuading him, promising instead to make inquiries on the morrow, and having learned who lived in the house, to turn the whole affair into a report, which should be submitted to him.

This amused and satisfied him, and expressing himself well content with the evening’s diversion—though we had done nothing unworthy either of a King or a Minister—he parted from me at the Arsenal, and went home with his suite.

It did not occur to me at the time that I had promised to do anything difficult; but the news which my agents brought me next day—that the uppermost

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floor of the house in the Rue Pourpointerie was empty—put another face upon the matter. The landlord declared that he knew nothing of the tenant, who rented the rooms, ready furnished, by the week; and as I had not seen the man's face, there remained only two sources whence I could get the information I needed—the child and the cure of St. Marceau.

I did not know where to look for the former, however; and I had to depend on the cure. But here I came to an obstacle I might easily have foreseen. I found him, though an honest man, obdurate in upholding his priest's privileges; to all my inquiries he replied that the matter touched the confessional, and was within his vows; and that he could, nor dared—to please anyone, or for any cause, however plausible—divulge the slightest detail of the affair. I had him summoned to the Arsenal, and questioned him myself, and closely; but of all armor that of the Roman priesthood is the most difficult to penetrate, and I quickly gave up the attempt.

Baffled in the only direction in which I could hope for success, I had to confess my defeat to the King, whose curiosity was only piqued the more by the rebuff. He adjured me not to let the matter drop, and suggesting a number of persons among whom I might possibly find the unknown, proposed also some theories. Of these, one that the benvolent was a disguised lady, who contrived in this way to give the rein at once to gallantry and charity, pleased him most; while I favored that which had first occurred to me on the night of our sally, and held the unknown to be a clever rascal, who, to serve his ends, political or criminal, was corrupting the, commonalty and drawing people into his power.

Things remained in this state some weeks, and, growing no wiser, I was beginning to think less of the affair—which, of itself, and apart from a whimsical interest which the King took in it, was unimportant—when one day, stopping in the Quartier du Marais to view the works at the new Place Royale, I saw the boy. He was in charge of a decent-looking servant whose hand he was holding, and the two were gazing at a horse that, alarmed by the heaps of stone and mortar, was rearing and trying to unseat its rider. The child did not see me, and I bade Maignan follow him home, and learn where he lived and who he was.

In an hour my equerry returned with the information I desired. The child was the only son of Fauchet, one of the Receivers-General of the Revenue; a man who kept great state in the largest of the old-fashioned houses in the Rue de Bethsly, where he had lately entertained the King. I could not imagine anyone less likely to be concerned in treasonable practices; and, certain that I had made no mistake in the boy, I was driven for a while to believe that some servant had perverted the child to his use. Presently, however, second thoughts, and the position of the father, taken, perhaps, with suspicions that I had for a long time entertained of Fauchet—in common with most of his kind—suggested an explanation, hitherto unconsidered. It was not an explanation very probable at first sight, nor one that would have commended itself to those who divide all men by hard and fast rules and assort them like sheep. But I had seen too much of the world to fall into this mistake, and it satisfied me. I began by weighing it carefully; I procured evidence, I had Fauchet watched; and, at length, one evening in August, I went to the Louvre.

The King was dicing with Fernandez, the Portu-

gese banker ; but I ventured to interrupt the game and draw him aside. He might not have taken this well, but that my first word caught his attention.

"Sire," I said, "the shutter is open."

He understood in a moment. "St. Gris!" he exclaimed with animation. "Where? At the same house?"

"No, sir; in the Rue Cloitre Notre Dame."

"You have got him, then?"

"I know who he is, and why he is doing this."

"Why?" the King cried eagerly.

"Well, I was going to ask for your Majesty's company to the place," I answered smiling. "I will undertake that you shall be amused at least as well as here, and at a cheaper rate."

He shrugged his shoulders. "That may very well be," he said with a grimace. "That rogue Pimentel has stripped me of 2,000 crowns since supper. He is plucking Bassompierre now."

Remembering that only that morning I had had to stop some necessary works through lack of means, I could scarcely restrain my indignation. But it was not the time to speak, and I contented myself with repeating my request. Ashamed of himself, he consented with a good grace, and bidding me go to his closet, followed me a few minutes later. He found me cloaked to the eyes, and with a soutane and priest's hat on my arm. "Are those for me?" he said.

"Yes, sire"

"Who am I, then?"

"The cure of St. Germain."

He made a wry face. "Come, Grand Master," he said; "he died yesterday. Is not the jest rather grim?"

"In a good cause," I said equably.

He flashed a roguish look at me. "Ah!" he said
"I thought that that was a wicked rule which only
we Romanists avowed. But, there; don't be angry,
I am ready."

Coquet, the Master of the Household, let us out
by one of the river gates, and we went by the new
bridge and the Pont St. Michel. By the way I
taught the King the role I wished him to play, but
without explaining the mystery; the opportune
appearance of one of my agents who was watching
the end of the street bringing Henry's remonstrance
to a close.

"It is still open?" I said.

"Yes, your excellency."

"Then come, sir," I said. "I see the boy yonder.
Let us ascend, and I will undertake that before you
reach the street again you shall be not only a wiser
but a richer sovereign."

"St. Gris!" he answered with alacrity. "Why
did you not say that before, and I should have
asked no questions. On, on, in God's name, and the
devil take Fimentel!"

(To be concluded in our next).

STANLEY WEYMAN.



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The Passing Show.

Some few days ago, I chanced to be glancing through the columns of an old periodical, published years ago, and therein I found a paragraph to the effect that a certain Robert Louis Stevenson was then lying dangerously ill. How often, since then, has cause been given for the same report? The writer then went on to say, that he hoped that Mr. Stevenson would recover; for he had given promise of high achievements in letters, which the future would assuredly unfold. I wonder if the writer of that little "par," ever thought of his words, as the wonderful books of the master Romancer came one by one to their place in the hearts of men.

Canada has no reason to be ashamed of her company of writers now. Mr. Grant Allen, Mr. Gilbert Parker, Mrs. Everard Cotes, more familiarly known as Sara Jeannette Duncan, Mr. Bliss Carman, Mr. Charles G. D. Roberts, the more prominent of our "literary folk," form indeed a very goodly company.

Mr. Bliss Carman is editor of that unique little fortnightly, "*The Chap-Book*." But that, however, is not his best claim for the high place which is his in the world of letters. Mr. Carman is a poet of a high order and a lucky man, for his worth is recognized, which does not always follow. His last book, *Low Tide On Grand Pre*, has run through several editions.

A Cure for Dullness.

If you, as sometimes all must do,
Art wearied with the bawling crew,
Who, grovelling, senseless, nothing hold
As good, save, but the search for gold ;
And would'st thou leave them for a space.
And forget them in a pleasant place ?
I'll tell you, Poet, Priest, or Layman,
Take from thy shelf a book by Weyman.

Life brings many tasks—but the hardest is find-
ing out our right one.

A little boy stood one day looking out the window,
watching the white snow falling. It fell upon the
hard ground and blew together into little dusty
patches.

"Mamma," said he, "does the angels send the
snow ?"

"Yes, dear," said Mamma, without looking up
from her book.

There was silence again for awhile. From out the
house across the street a white-capped maid came
with a broom, and swept the door-steps and side-
walk off. She was the servant maid of Mrs. S——,
a very fastidious, fussy, old lady, who disliked
both children and dirt. Only that day she had
sent little Jack and his companions away from her
door-steps.

Jack watched the maid, for a while, then he
startled his mother with this question :

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"Mamma, will Mrs. S—— be mad with the angels,
for putting the snow on her steps?"

The best of this little incident is that it is true.

Undoubtedly, the greatest literary success of the year in America, is Du Maurier's, *Trilby*. Over one hundred thousand copies have been sold already, and the demand still continues brisk. Bonnets, cigars, boots, and many other articles, have been called after the sweet-voiced model—and that is the greatest compliment the Americans can pay to art—to utilize it in business. They measure the world with a business standard, and the business success of *Trilby*, is too apparent to be over-looked.

A receipt for calling a man a liar in safety—
apologise immediately afterwards.

A Duologue.

YOUTH SOLUS.

Oh, Life so full of joy,
Behold, I know not pain!
Better things employ,
Man's full heart and brain.
Life is sweet, without alloy,
Sorrow's vain!

MAN SOLUS.

Oh, Life, and art thou joy
Or be thou Pain?

He.—Yes, Vice is stronger than Virtue.

She.—And why?

He.—It has much more exercise, Madam.

Robert Louis Stevenson was much beloved by the Samoans. "Tusitala," the teller of tales they called him, and the word since then has been taken up everywhere. It has, perhaps, found its most fitting place, in Edmund Gosse's beautiful, *To Tusitala, in Vailima*. Below I give portion of a native poem, (translated,) a poem of sorrow for their departed friend a Samoan,

"LAMENT FOR TUSITALA."

Listen, O this world! as I tell of the disaster,
That befell in the late afternoon;
That broke like a wave of the sea,
Suddenly and swiftly, blinding our eyes.
Alas for hoia who speaks, tears in his voice.

Refrain.—Groan and weep, O my heart, in its sorrow.

Alas for Tusitala who rests in the forest!

Aimlessly we wait, and sorrowing; will he again return?

Lament, O Vailima, waiting and ever waiting!

Let us search, and enquire of the captain's of ships,

"Be not angry, but has not Tusitala come?"

Modern charity is a phase of modern journalism
—we *must* get our names "in the paper."

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