

nastery of St. Just, could have made a more complete finish of his career than Mr. Perriam did when he closed his catalogue and said, "I will buy no more." "What's the use of my getting any more bargains?" he said "when Lady Perriam remarked on this change in her brother-in-law's habits. There's no one to sympathise with me. You don't care for old books. You like new novels, poor ephemeral things, which become waste paper six months after their publication. How can you appreciate an Aldine Cicero, in twenty folio volumes; or a Decameron, almost as rare as that famous edition which sold the other day for something like two thousand pounds? Aubrey could sympathise with me. Aubrey understood when I talked to him." Sylvia had in some measure merited the reproach implied in this speech, for without being absolutely uncivil to her brother-in-law, she had let him see her almost contemptuous indifference to his pursuits. She had yawned when he showed her some treasured volume; and she had gone so far as to show that she considered bookbinding an ignoble pursuit for a cadet of the house of Perriam. From the first day of his brother's affliction Mordred Perriam seemed to shrink away from Sylvia. He recoiled from that lovely butterfly-like creature, as if the very fact of her beauty were an offence against her husband. Sir Aubrey's room was Mordred's favourite habitation. To sit by the fire-place in winter and summer with his chair close to the hearth, even when the capacious grate was empty of fuel, formed Mordred's chief pleasure. He brought a pile of books with him every day, and would read aloud to Sir Aubrey when the invalid cared for

that recreation, nothing discouraged, though his brother made the same senile remarks day after day, and gave utterance to feeble criticisms that went often wide of the text. He would make approving remarks on the piety of Voltaire, mistake Jeremy Taylor for Gibbon, confound Paradise Lost with Dante's Inferno, and in various ways betray the weakness of his decaying brain; but Mordred was happy if he would but appear to listen, and talk a little now and then, and seem content with his company. Thus day after day the two men sat together, both old before their time, both with the looks and the manners of men who had, as it were, outlived life itself, and now dwelt apart in a kind of Hades, between the life past and the life to come.

Almost the only interest these two evinced in the actual world was their interest in the heir of Perriam. Of him, each seemed equally proud. The infant's presence always brought a smile to Sir Aubrey's wan face, a smile which seemed reflected in the countenance of his brother.

"Providence has been very good to you, Aubrey," Mordred said very often in exactly the same complacent tone; "it's a great blessing to see that fine little fellow, and to know that the Perriam estate need not go out of the direct line."

To be continued.

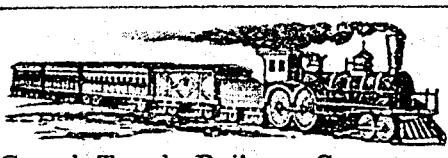
The wardrobe of a fashionable New York poodle usually costs \$20.

A NEW WAY TO GET OLD DEBTS PAID. London tradesmen have discovered an ingenious method of obtaining the payment of small sums from unwilling customers. The great disinclination of some of the upper classes to pay their debts is said to have led to one celebrated firm becoming voluntarily bankrupt every six years, by which act the operation of the statute of limitations was evaded, and the odium of enforcing payment devolved upon the trustee. But the method just devised is put in force against a less influential class of customers, and practically arms the tradesman with the authority of the law without expense or uncertainty. He obtains spurious notices purporting to be issued from the County Courts. These are printed and got up in every way to resemble a legal document, and, it is said, may be purchased from law stationers without investigation as to the purposes for which they are to be employed. The form is then served on the debtor, who finds himself placed in the dilemma of having to dispute the claim in Court, to suffer judgment or to pay the money. The trick is clever but dangerous. The notice is often merely a reproduction of a statutory provision previously repealed. Still if the system were brought before the notice of a County Court Judge, he might be inclined to regard it as a contempt of Court.

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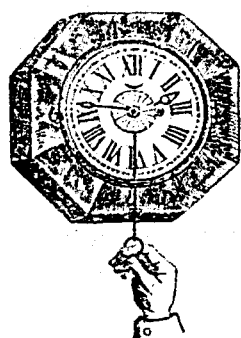
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