

cases unfamiliar with their contents. He used to imagine that he had a particular desire to read such and such an author till he got the author at home. But the volumes once snug on his shelves the desire seemed somehow appeased. When his learned friends talked of an author, Mr. Perriam used to say, "Ah! I've got him." He was too honest to say "I've read him."

The apartments devoted to Mr. Perriam were airy and spacious like all the rest of the house. But large as they were his books overran them. From floor to ceiling, under the windows, over the mantelpiece, wherever a shelf could be put, appeared those endless rows of brown-backed volumes, hardly brightened here and there by the faded crimson labels of some later editions. Mr. Perriam could not afford to be a connoisseur in bindings. No costly tooled calf, no perfumed Russia, gratified his sense of scent or feeling. But in his very poverty there lurked a blessing. He had taught himself to patch the old bindings, to stain, and sprinkle, and marble the dust blackened edges, and he was never more serenely content than when he sat before his worktable, and dabbed and fitted, and pasted and furbished the battered old volumes with the aid of a glue pot, a few scraps of calfskin, a little vermilion, a big pair of scissors, and inexhaustible patience. In his heart of hearts Mr. Perriam felt that could he begin life again he would wish to be a bookbinder.

Mr. Perriam's library overlooked the kitchen garden. It was a spacious room with a deep bay like that which at the other extremity of the house formed the end of the drawing-room. In the days when there were children at Perriam, this room had been the nursery. Immediately above it was Mr. Perriam's bed-chamber, and next to that a smallish dressing-room, which communicated, by means of a dark little passage, with Sir Aubrey's bedroom. The brothers were honestly attached to each other, different as were their habits, and liked to be within call of each other. Sir Aubrey's valet slept in his master's dressing-room; but Mr. Perriam had no body servant. That was a luxury, or an encumbrance which he persistently denied himself. Nor would his wardrobe have afforded either employment or perquisites for a valet. He never possessed but one suit of clothes, wore those garments nearly thread bare, and passed them on when done with to an underling in the garden; a deaf old man who wheeled a barrow of dead leaves all the autumn, and rolled the lawns and gravel walks when there were no leaves to fill his barrow. This old gardener used to prow about the gardens looking like the wraith or double of Mr. Perriam. When there were visitors at the place, Mr. Perriam rarely showed himself. When Sir Aubrey had no guests the brothers dined together; but while the baronet was away Mr. Perriam always dined in his own den, and turned the leaves of some late acquisition as he ate his dinner. He was a slow reader, and had been three years poring over an old copy of Dante, and adding his poor old brains with the commentaries which obscured the text. If he took a walk it was in the kitchen garden. He liked those prim quadrangles of pot-herbs, the straight narrow walks, the espalier-bounded strawberry beds, the perfect order and quiet of the place, and above all he liked to know that no chance visitor at Perriam would surprise him there. He brought his books here on summer mornings, and paced the paths slowly, reading as he walked; or dosed over an open volume, in yonder summer-house before the fish pond, on sultry afternoons. He trotted up and down between the bare beds for his constitutional, in mid-winter. The kitchen garden was all he knew of the external world, and all he cared to know; so long as he could conduct all his transactions with booksellers, through the convenient medium of the post. So passed his harmless uneventful life, and if no man could say that Mordred Perriam had ever done him a service, assuredly none could charge him with a wrong.

CHAPTER XIX.

"LOVE, THOU ART LEADING ME FROM WINTRY COLD."

Sir Aubrey and his brother dined *à la carte* on the evening of that day on which Mrs. Carford left the brief shelter of the schoolhouse, to resume her place in life's endless procession. The dining-room at Perriam faced the north-west, and commanded a fine side view of the setting sun. One saw the glorious luminary sink to his rest without being inconvenienced by his expiring splendour.

It was eight o'clock, and that western glory was fading, but Sir Aubrey liked the twilight. It was at once soothing and economical, and the baronet did not forget how large a cheque he annually wrote for the Monkhampton tallow-chandler. People talked of the cheapness and brilliancy of gas, but Queen Anne herself could not have been more averse from that garish light, had it been suddenly introduced to her notice, than was Sir Aubrey. Gas at Perriam! Gas pipes to disfigure those old crystal chandeliers which took all the hues of a peacock's breast in the sunshine! "August shade of my great grandfather!" exclaimed Sir Aubrey, "What Goth can counsel such desecration?"

Sir Aubrey and his brother sat in the gloaming, and talked, or at least Mordred talked and Sir Aubrey made believe to listen. The book-worm's harmless babble about his last bargain with a Bristol bookseller did not demand much strain upon the listener's attention. Sir Aubrey gave a vaguely acquiescent murmur now and then, and that was enough.

Indeed, Sir Aubrey's mind had been wandering a little throughout the ceremony of dinner, and now he sat in a thoughtful attitude with his glass of claret not diminished, looking down into the shadowy gulfs of the polished mahogany table, as if to read the visions he beheld there.

It was not of his brother's newly-acquired twelve-volume edition of Chatterton that he thought; but of a fair young face he had seen last night in the garden of Hedingham school-house.

"Mordred," he exclaimed suddenly, "did you ever wonder why I have not married?"

"No," said Mr. Perriam, "I never wonder. But I should think the reason was clear enough to the meanest comprehension. You have never forgotten poor Guinivere."

"Forgotten her? no; and never shall forget her. Yet if, at my sober age, it were possible for a man to feel a romantic love—the love of a poet rather than a man of the world—do you think he ought to trample upon the flower because it has blossomed late?"

"Do you mean to say that you have fallen in love?" asked Mordred aghast.

"I have seen a face lovely enough to bewitch a saint or a hermit—to thaw the coldest heart that time ever froze. I don't admit that I'm in love. That would be too great a folly.

But I feel within me a faculty which I deemed I had long outlived—the capacity to fall in love."

Mordred Perriam put his hands to his head, and rubbed his scanty grey hair distractedly. He thought his brother was going mad.

"Poor Guinivere," he said feebly, as if the shade of that patrician lady were outraged by Sir Aubrey's folly. "If she could have lived to see this day."

"If she had lived I might have been the happy father of many children," answered Sir Perriam; "as it is the estate must go to Lancelot Perriam whenever you and I are laid beside our ancestors."

"That seems hard," said Mr. Perriam, who was able to appreciate this common-sense view of the question. "If you could find anybody now to replace Lady Guinivere—of the same rank—an alliance which you might be proud of."

Sir Aubrey sighed and was silent. His chief purpose in marriage ought to be to provide himself with an heir. How was he to confront that heir in after-life if he could not name his maternal grandfather—if for all genealogical purposes the child were on the maternal side grandfatherless.

He sighed again, and with increasing despondency.

"At my age, my dear Mordred, a man can hardly hope to marry a duke's daughter. I shall never meet a second Guinivere. Lord Bolingbroke's second wife was a French woman. He consulted his heart rather than his interest."

"Bolingbroke married the niece of Madame de Maintenon, and the widow of a marquis."

"True, but he married for love," said Sir Aubrey, impatiently. "Late in life a man should marry for love, if he is to marry at all. He has so short a span left him in which to be happy. At twenty a man can afford to consult his interest, and marry a woman he doesn't care for. A youth of domestic misery may be compensated by a middle age of worldly success. But at my age there is nothing left a man to wish for except happiness."

Mr. Perriam regarded his brother in helpless wonderment. Was this abstract philosophy—or the foolishness of an elderly egotist?

"I should have thought you were happy in your present position," said his brother, mildly. "You have Perriam for a country house, and your *entresol* in the Faubourg St. Honoré—snug, and not very expensive. When you are tired of Perriam you go to Paris. When you are tired of Paris, you return to Perriam. You have boots and slippers, and brushes and combs, and a dress suit at both places—no packing—no bustle—and your valet here is your cook and general servant there. What could be pleasanter, if one must move at all?"

"An empty life at best," said Sir Aubrey, "and monotonous. The fact of the matter is," he went on, in a business-like tone, "that for some years past I have felt it my duty to marry. If I have shrunk from that duty—preferring the repose and serenity of a bachelor's life—I have felt myself guilty of moral cowardice. It is hard that Perriam should descend to one who is all but a stranger."

"Horace Perriam—a starched prig in the War Office," said Mordred. "There is not such another kitchen garden in the west of England!" he added, with a sigh. "If you could find some one of suitable rank, I don't say a duke's daughter—but of suitable rank—some good old family—bearing arms which the Perriams need not blush to quarter with their own."

This was harping on a string which Mordred had been accustomed to hear twanged by his elder brother. He was surprised to find the Baronet indifferent, or even contemptuous, about the question of rank.

"As to family," he said, "the Perriams ought to be like the Bourbons—great enough to give rank to their children without aid from the mother. The sons of Louis Quatorze were all princes. My son will be Sir Aubrey Perriam by and by, and he could have been no more than Sir Aubrey Perriam if poor Guinivere had been his mother."

Mordred made haste to agree with his brother. He rarely disputed a point with any one, unless it were a purely literary question, such as the reason of Ovid's exile, or Tasso's madness, or the identity of the man in the iron mask, or the authorship of Junius's letters.

"You have seen some one, perhaps, whom you admire—some young lady belonging to one of our county families," said Mordred. He could not suppose that his brother's eye had fallen to any lower depth than the county families.

Sir Aubrey winced. He had been so bigoted a high priest in the temple of the family god, and the family god was Caste. How could he justify such sacrilege as would be involved in his admiration of a village schoolmaster's daughter?

"I have certainly seen some one I admire," he said, with a curious shyness, an almost juvenile shame in this late-born love. A young lady who is very pretty, very amiable, altogether worthy of admiration. A young lady whose affection might make any man proud and happy. But she is not of a particularly good family; or, if her father belongs to an old and respectable family, which is not impossible, since his name is a good one, he is reduced in circumstances and occupies a somewhat humble position."

"A curate, perhaps," suggested Mordred vaguely.

"No, he is not in the church."

"Good gracious," exclaimed Mordred, with an awed look, "you don't mean to say that he is in trade?"

"No, he is not in trade."

Mr. Perriam breathed more freely.

"I am glad of that," he said. "I live so secluded from the world that it might seem unimportant to me, but I shouldn't like to think that any stigma of that kind could attach to us in future. The actual fact might be glossed over in 'Burke's Landed Gentry,' but people would remember it all the same."

"Never mind details, my dear Mordred," returned Sir Aubrey, "after all, what I have been talking about is perhaps but an idle dream."

"You ought to marry," said Mordred, thinking of his kitchen garden. He begrudged the heir the reversion of those neat walks, by the box-bordered beds where a narrow line of hardy flowers, stocks, sweet William, mignonette, or nasturtium screened the brocoli and onions that grew within the boundary. The dear old garden, with its red earthenware senkale pots peeping out of the greenery, and that delicious herby odour which sweetens the atmosphere of country kitchen gardens.

"Ah," said Sir Aubrey, with a sigh, "I shall never marry unless it is for love."

Mr. Perriam smiled approvingly across the wide shining table; but his soul was full of wonder. All human love, except his mild affection for Aubrey, had withered in his heart thirty years ago. Indeed, there had never been warmth enough

in that placid temperament to kindle the flame of love. Women he looked upon as a race apart, useful doubtless after their lower kind, but to be kept at the furthest possible distance by the Sage. Marriage Mr. Perriam regarded as a stern necessity for elder sons. The younger actions of a great race, more happy, could slip through life untried in the matrimonial furnace. That any one should cumber himself with a wife, save when compelled to that burden by the exigencies of a fine estate, seemed to Mr. Perriam almost incredible. A wife who would doubtless take odd volumes of his books, from their shelves, to mislay them, or meddle with his papers! He thanked Providence for having made him the cadet of the House.

"For love," repeated Aubrey to himself, "for love! How Mordred and all the world would laugh at my folly, if I dared indulge it. Love at fifty-seven years of age, and for a girl young enough to be my grand-daughter. It is too wild a folly. Yet if a true affection could be possible to a man of my age, it ought to be possible for me. I have not frittered away my stock of feeling upon passing fancies. My life has been free from the follies that waste the hearts of some men. Late as the day comes, I ought to be able to love truly, and to win a true heart, if I have but courage to seek for one. Shall I seek it where this new fancy draws me? Shall I trust the augury of eyes and lips that speak but of innocence and truth?"

The butler came to light the candles in the tall silver branches, of pseudo design.

(To be continued.)

(For the Canadian Illustrated News.)

STANZAS.

(From the German of Luise Heusch.)

Translated by John Roade.

I.

Oh! wherefore is my soul bowed down
With sorrow? Shadow grim, begone!
Who loth the flowers with beauty crown
Will not forget to clothe His son.

II.

Though I be lone and sad my mood,
Though room and table empty be,
My God who gives the birds their food—
He never will abandon me.

III.

Why then should trouble vex my soul
This side the grave? My Father's heart
Yearneth to me. And lo! the goal
Of all is Heaven and ne'er to part.

IV.

There at the everlasting Throne
I shall behold my Saviour's face,
And, even as I know, be known,
Blooming in plenitude of grace.

V.

Then, courage, heart! and be content,
And heavenward direct thy flight;
If by God's will thy course be bent,
Whatever befalls thee must be right.

VI.

Only a moment and 'tis past,
This life-dream, haunted by the tomb,
And then, aside all burdens cast,
The spirit wins its endless home.

(For the Canadian Illustrated News.)

THE MOORISH DOCTOR'S PARCHMENT.

In the chamber of a handsome *parada* sat Don José de Trias d'Alcantara, Doctor of Salamanca, hidalgo in his quality of Asturian, but possessing nothing in the world except the dress which he wore, twenty reals and a passable opinion of himself.

Although hardly more than twenty years of age he had made several attempts to attain opulence and he was returning to Leon with the hope of obtaining employment from Count Don Alonzo Mendos, who owned between Moro and Zamora a magnificent domain already visited by our doctor. Unfortunately the first questions he put the innkeeper informed him of the Count's death.

"Don Alonzo dead!" said he with stupefaction.

"And buried," added the innkeeper.

"The castle is then occupied by his heirs?"

"The sole heir was the nephew of the Count and he has given orders to the notary to sell the domain. I believe it will have a new proprietor to-morrow."

"I shall wait to offer him my services," thought José. And he returned to his room. There he found among other things some books and manuscripts said to have been left by an old Moorish doctor, years before. He amused himself thumbing the folios and then passed to the manuscripts. He read over several which contained nothing more than general instructions on the transmutation of metals, but finally he found in a leaden case a roll of parchment which attracted his attention. It comprised magic receipts for the accomplishment of certain prodigies, such as transformation, metamorphosis, and bilocation. Then he came upon this paragraph:

MEANS OF MAKING YOUR WILL SOVEREIGN LAW AND OF INSTANTANEOUS ACCOMPLISHMENT.

The young doctor started with joy.

"By the rood," he exclaimed, "if that means succeeds, I ask nothing more."

He read the recipe indicated in the manuscript and found nothing therein contrary to faith. It sufficed to obtain the promised gift, to pronounce a certain prayer, before falling asleep, and to drink the contents of a little phial hidden at the bottom of the leaden case.

José sought this phial, uncorked it, and saw that it contained a few drops of a black and odorous liquid. He hesitated a moment, read the paragraph again and noticed a postscript which had escaped him before.

The postscript read thus:

"Our weakness is a providential barrier opposed by Deity to our folly."

After reflecting a moment on these words, he bore the phial to his lips and pronounced the long formula which was prescribed. He had scarcely done so when his eyes closed and he fell asleep.

Don José knew not how long he had slept, when he saw the daylight streaming through his little window. He arose with