

A Book of the Week.

"ADDIO AMORE."*

UNDER the title "Farewell Love!" Mrs. Henry Harland has given her fellow-country women the opportunity of reading with comprehension Matilda Serao's famous novel "Addio Amore." Mr. Edmund Gosse, writing of Madame Serao in a preface to this translation, says of her that "She has a fiercer passion, more of the true ardour of the South, than Zola or Maupassant. . . . She is an idealist working in the school of realism; she climbs, on scaffolding of minute prosaic observation, to heights which are emotional and often lyrical." In "Addio Amore" there is besides an acute comprehension of the tragedy of "love" without a worthy object for loving, a deep and vibrating sympathy for the pathos of this wasted energy, this futile pouring forth of a large-hearted woman's affection upon a small-hearted man. The heroine of the story, "Anna Acquaviva," is left with her sister Laura an orphan. Their guardian, "Cesare Dias,"—an admirably drawn character—is cold and selfish, pleasant, and gentlemanly, "he hated sentiment," and had "no ideal of friendship." He was "without tenderness and without sympathy" in Anna's presence, he was "merciless for all human weakness, disdainful of all human interests." This was the guardian of the impulsive, youthful, Anna Acquaviva, the tragedy of whose life is told us with the deepest and most human sympathy.

Doubtless (in spite of the skill of the translator) the melodious and vibrating language of Italy, which seems made for such passionate love words as fall from Anna's lips, must lose by being transposed into our colder tongue. In the original, none of the words grate upon us as they must inevitably do in English, but in reading them in a translation we should endeavour to remember that the phrases are translated (and admirably translated) into a language that is alien to the passionate mind that wrote and conceived them. Anna's soul yearns to love, and the first object upon which she bestows her affection is a certain Giustino. She meets him on the terrace one night, and then she says to him:—

"My love is consuming me. I can feel nothing else; neither cold, nor night, nor danger—nothing. I can only feel *you*. I want nothing but your love. I only want to live near you always—till death and after death—always with you—always, always."

"Ah me!" sighed he under his breath. And then he proceeded to tell her that their love was a dream from which they must awaken, because

"'Cesare Dias was right, my dearest Anna, I couldn't answer him, I'm a poor young fellow, without a farthing.' 'Love is stronger than money.' 'I am a commoner, I have no title to give you.' 'Love is stronger than a title.' 'Everything is against our union, Anna.' 'Love is stronger than everything; stronger even than death.' After this there befell a silence. . . . He saw his duty and overcame his pain."

Space fails me, or I would like to continue and quote the rest of this admirable dialogue between the love-sick, yet noble, girl and her conscientious lover.

* "Farewell Love!" A novel by Matilda Serao, translated from the Italian by Mrs. Henry Harland. 2/6. Heinemann, 1894.

Of course, he was right and Anna was wrong; but I think it would be a nice test of character to see with which of these lovers, readers will sympathise. Though Giustino loved Anna, he could not bear "to be accused of having made a good speculation." He tells her he has always preferred duty to happiness, and "she looked at him and listened to him with stupefaction, amazed at the spectacle of a rectitude, of a virtue that was greater than love, for she believed only in love." And so they part, and Anna tries to live without love in her life, and finds it impossible; and so, for want of a worthier object, she turns to her cold-hearted guardian and loves him—much to his amazement.

"Cesare Dias was simply indifferent. For *her* love was a tragedy; for *him* it was an ordinary incident of his day." But the guardian of 40 years of age was flattered by the love of his beautiful ward, and so he takes her to wife after forcing her to make the humiliating promise that she would never torment him with jealousy, but leave him heart free.

The story of their married life is intensely interesting reading. Anna adores and idolises her husband, with his feet of clay and his heart of ice. She is a beautiful woman, and other men would gladly be her "*cavaliere servante*"; but she is faithful to Cesare Dias, and will not even listen to the compliments of others. She waits and serves and loves and bores her husband till his ordinary half-sarcastic courtesy is changed into bitter speech; and then, one fated night, she finds that he is dallying with her own sister's affections, and then follows a terrible scene. Anna tells her husband:—

"You are a man without heart, without conscience; a soul without greatness, and without enthusiasm. Have you ever loved, Cesare? Have you ever, for a moment, felt the immensity of real love? In your selfishness you have made an idol of yourself, an idol without greatness. You are corrupt, perverted, depraved, even to the point of betraying your wife who adores you, with her sister whom you do not love."

And he, stung by the truth of her portrait of his ignoble self, turns upon her without mercy, and hurls these cruel words at her:—

"You are a bore. . . . Nothing but a bore. I don't employ high-sounding words, you see. I speak the plain truth. You're a bore. . . . With your rhetoric, your tears, your sobs, your despair, your interminable letters, your livid face and your grey lips, you're enough to bore the very saints in heaven."

The few extracts that I have given will, I trust, show the singular power of this most remarkable book. It is the tragedy of a woman unable to endure life without love; unfortified by the discipline of experience and unconsolated by religion, she falls an inevitable though innocent victim to the egotism of her heartless husband.

A. M. G.

Inventions, Preparations, &c.

Maignen's Filters.

The name of filters, in these days of sanitary improvements, is legion; but for efficacy, economy and simplicity, we know of but few which can

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