

"Bless me! where are you going?" inquired his prospective father-in-law.

"I have a little matter of business," answered M. Louis, "which forces me to leave you."

"What! What business can you possibly have in a city where you are now for the first time, and where you know no one?"

"Quite true; but also true that I must lose no time in going to my appointment."

"Ha, ha! I know all now; you are going to your banker, eh? Why so bashful about it? Come, come! I am entirely at your service. We can manage this so that we need not lose your company. Pray seat yourself again!"

"My dear sir, I assure you that you are mistaken. This is a matter that imperatively requires my personal attention."

"During this dialogue M. Louis had been gradually nearing the door of the room. He was now in the anteroom, his host still pressing him to remain."

"Now, that we are alone, my dear M. Colbert," continued the young man, "and the ladies cannot overhear us, I shall inform you that this morning, shortly after my arrival, a slight accident happened me. I fell ill of the cholera; it terminated fatally. I have promised to be buried at six o'clock. Think of the inconvenience that will ensue if I do not keep my word—everything ready but no M. Louis Duhren! Besides, being a stranger here, you will readily perceive that if I am not punctual, I shall forthwith gain a1 unenviable reputation for levity, and this might injure me."

"Laughing heartily, M. Colbert accepted the excuse, and hoped to see M. Louis as soon as possible that evening, when his so pressing business had been dispatched. The young man bowed and disappeared."

"This pleasantry furnished much amusement to the family, who were charmed with his drollery."

"Six o'clock struck—no M. Duhren; seven,—*Père* Colbert grows impatient; half past, he sends his servant to enquire at the *Hôtel d'Angleterre* for M. Duhren."

"Picture the dismay of the family when the servant returned with the compliments of mine host—"

"M. Louis Duhren arrived at nine, died at eleven, was buried at six."

We smoked on in silence a while. Then I remarked, musingly, "The true Frenchman is nothing if not dramatic."

"Ah, yes!" replied my friend, with an inexpressible shrug, "but what could one do? The *coquin* at the door made the mistake; I had to extricate myself."

W. H. H.

MY FRIEND.

A friend of mine has some odd views of life. A contemplative sort of fellow, he hides behind a cynic veil a heart really so warm that no atom of humanity is refused its love. If I judge rightly from what people say about him, this armour with which he clothes himself is generally taken for the real man.

A curiously credulous being is this friend of mine, filled with sentimental fancies and an admiration for womankind so profound that it may be called reverence. And yet by force of logic he is compelled to recognize the failings of the individual. Indeed, his love for woman is so impersonal that he may be said to worship all possible noble attributes of all possible women. To no particular incarnation does he bow, but it is a piece of his credulousness to imagine that some day he will meet in the flesh the combination of qualities which he has sorted out and arranged (like a bunch of flowers) to deck his impersonal goddess with. In this belief does he hopefully inspect every new face he happens to encounter. Thus he puts himself in the way of ever-recurring disappointment; but such is the fresh faith that springs in the breast of my friend that he will not listen to me when I tell him that he pursues a phantom.

Nay, he says, why discourage me in my pursuit? Better follow a fair dream than find my all-in-all in one of the world's conventional aims. What have you to offer? You ask me to give over seeking for truth, beauty, honesty, and to accept the makeshifts which mankind has adopted in their stead. My primrose way is dear to me, and my soul thrives better in this

celestial air than if it breathed a denser quality. Fleeting beauty leads—

"To the doorway of the dead."

So be it. I follow.

In this spirit does he confidently seek for truth. Nor in the search sparing himself much pain and trouble. Hoping that some time his thirst might be quenched, he has visited many old springs of knowledge, and has found them dry.

Firm in the belief that existence has a purpose, he yet refuses to agree that any of the objects I point out constitute it.

Position? He places so much store on humanity, and so little on the trappings of it, that this ambition he characterizes as mean. Money? He has no wish for it, and what more is there to say. Success? He answers "*Causa victrix dis placuit sed victa Catoni*." Then does not his creed fade utterly away? No; the "I believe" is still deeply written on my friend's heart, though vagueness follows it.

"This is irrational surely," I tell him. "You are right," he says, "Man is irrational. Is his manner of acting to carefully choose some worthy object, and, placing it before him, to work steadfastly towards it? Have his theories of life any bearing on his practice, and are the springs of his action really what he would have you believe? Has he in truth, for a great majority of his deeds, any motives at all (properly so-called), or do they not flow from the purest impulse?"

I scarcely know what to answer to this, and our conversation ends unsatisfactorily.

TABAC.

HERRICK'S *HESPERIDES*.

"A phase of our verse, illustrating its present station," writes Stedman, "reflects the new London vogue. I refer to the plenitude of metrical trifles, society-verse, *belles choses* in the French forms that are so taking. Various new-comers make their entrance accordingly; scarcely one but turns you off his rondeau or ballade, and very cleverly withal. Ditties written gracefully, like those of Sherman, Minturn Peck, and others, are more agreeable than the prentice-work of sentimentalists. A sprightly Mercutio is better company than your juvenile Harold or Werter." But in these days, when the blithe songs of the light-hearted choir are found so charming—when from every bough, as we walk the pleasant paths in the groves of poetry, we hear the joyous, airy notes of innumerable songsters, like flights of glittering *roulades* over the sonorous harmonies of the Tennysons and Brownings, it seems ungrateful in us that the sweet-voiced Herrick should be all but forgotten. Of that gallant company which steered in the glorious wake of Shakespeare, few have met with more undeserved neglect. A vicar in Devonshire, he wrote his verses in the leisure of his quiet country life, giving them the beauty and fragrance of the flowers and fields about his dwelling. He invokes Apollo at the outset, in one of his little poems; and if ever the god was gracious, it was to that prayer:

"Phoebus, when that I a verse
Of some numbers more rehearse,
Tune my words that they may fall
Each way smoothly musical;
For which favour, there shall be
Swans devoted unto thee."

He lived for a time, however, in London, and his friends were such men as Selden, Ben Jonson, Cotton, Denham, Weeks, William and Henry Lawes, to the latter of whom

His verses are amatory, anacreontic and bacchanalian, and pastoral. The hymns in praise of Bacchus are few, however; he loved his calm, leisurely country life more, perhaps, than the glorious nights at the Mermaid tavern. But he loved these too.

"Ah, Ben,
Say how or when
Shall we, thy guests,
Meet at those lyric feasts,
Made at the Sun,
The Dog, the Triple Tun;
Where we such clusters had,
As made us nobly wild, not mad?
And yet each verse of thine
Outdid the meet, outdid the frolic wine."

It is strange that our lyrists' gladness and grace did not make