

A Book of the Week.

"COMEDIES AND ERRORS."*

I hope that it does not display very culpable negligence when I say that the name of Henry Harland is new to me. I feel a sort of guilty conscience in owning that I have never read the other works that I find accredited to his name, because the book in question is so extremely able, the style so matured, the dialogue so delightful, that it seems to argue an unpardonable dulness in a reviewer not to have made earlier discovery of such gifts.

"Comedies and Errors" is a collection of short tales and studies of the sort that might have been published in magazines: but this is apparently not so. They are of all sorts, but there is one that stands out from among the rest with ease and distinction—it is called "Merely Players." The situation in this is managed with really exquisite literary skill. It is a romance of the most charming description, with not a word too much or too little. Mr. Harland leaves a great deal to the imagination of his reader, but never too much, which is just what is so delightful in the writer of a short story, and what takes so much skill and knowledge to accomplish satisfactorily.

It is a great temptation to reveal the plot of "Merely Players," but that would be to spoil the enjoyment of so many readers. They must find out for themselves the nature of the delicious comedy, the two opening sentences alone are here subjoined.

"My dear," said the elder man, "as I've told you a thousand times, what you want is a love-affair with a red-haired woman."

"Bother women," said the younger man, and hang love-affairs. Women are a pack of samenesses, and love-affairs are damnable iterations."

There is another tale of the same calibre, and almost as good, called "The Invisible Prince."

This second tale is spoiled by not being quite finished. It wants so very little, only a few more sentences, but, as it stands, it is not a complete work of art. Mr. Harland is such a conscientious artist that I don't like to think he shirked the difficulty of finishing: I wish he would add on something, just something, in the next edition.

"Flower of the Clove" is also very good, though the beginning, perhaps, does not give one quite enough clue to the startling sequel. Will and Johannah are both charming people, and we cannot but be glad for their happiness. But is it in character that Johannah should have a Past? Very possibly it is, but it was a shock to the present writer. Her treatment of the blackmailer was a model to any young woman in the same frightful and odious position, and Will was a most particularly charming and seductive young person.

"P'tit Bleu" is good, but it is a theme which is less fresh and entirely Mr. Harland's own than the others. It recalls Bret Hart's "Miggles," though the situation I own is not identical.

The rest of the book is not, strictly speaking, stories, but studies—little bits of memory, thought and description, with a wonderful freshness and reality in them.

Of these the best are "The friend of man," "The house of Eulalie," and the "Queen's Pleasure."

* "Comedies and Errors." By Henry Harland. John Lane.

But I have named almost all the contents of the volume. They are of rare merit, possessing one infallible test of worth, they will bear reading a second time. I shall look forward with immense interest to Mr. Harland's next book. G. M. R.

Coming Events.

June 9th.—Concert at Stafford House in aid of the South London District Nursing Association, 3.30.

June 13th.—The Bishop of London presides at the Annual Dinner of Old Students of King's College, London, at the Holborn Restaurant.

June 15th & 16th.—First Annual Conference of the Matrons' Council at the Medical Society's Rooms, 11, Chandos Street, Cavendish Square. Morning Session, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Afternoon Session 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Admission to members free. To non-subscribers, 3/- for the whole Conference, or 1/- for each session. Tickets may be obtained from Miss Breay, 46, York Street, Portman Square, W.

PROGRAMME, JUNE 15th.

MORNING SESSION.

11 a.m.—Opening of Conference, and short address of welcome by Miss Isla-Stewart, Matron of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, Chairman of the Council.

PAPERS:—

- 1.—"The Matron's Duty to her Profession." By Miss Mollett, Matron of the Royal South Hants Infirmary.
- 2.—"Home Hospitals." By Miss Elinor Pell-Smith, Lady Superintendent, Home Hospital, Leicester.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

PAPER:—"The Training of Male Nurses." By Miss M. Greenhough Smith, late Matron Royal Infirmary, Bristol.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:—

- 1.—"Is the formation of a National Corps of Nurses for active service in foreign wars desirable?" A Member of the Council.
- 2.—"Do institutions, supported on charity, undersell the private nurse?" Sister Beatrix Farnsworth, R.N.S.
- 3.—"Cycling for Private Nurses." A Member of the Council.

JUNE 16th.

PAPERS:— MORNING SESSION.

- 1.—"Specialism in Nursing." By Miss H. Poole, Matron of the East Lancashire Infirmary, Blackburn.
- 2.—"The Nursing of the Middle Classes." By Miss M. Breay, Hon. Secretary, Matrons' Council.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

PAPER:—"A Practical Standard of Nursing." By Mrs. Bedford Fenwick.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:—

- 1.—"The need of Sanitary Knowledge for Nurses." Miss Alice Wadmore (late Lecturer to the London School Board for Hygiene in Finsbury), Associate Sanitary Institute.
- 2.—"Would the formation of a Poor Law Nursing Service, under Government, facilitate efficient

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