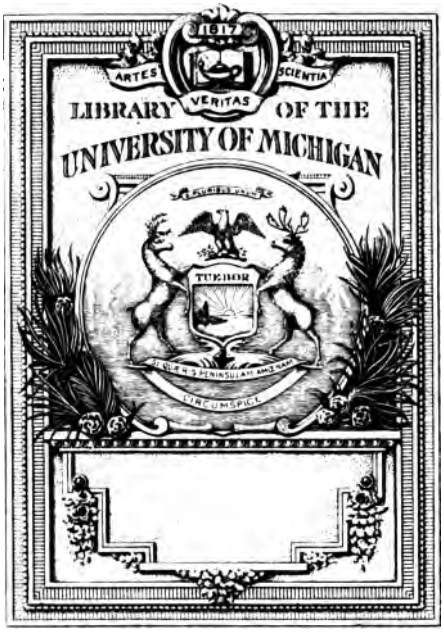

SHAKESPEARE STUDIES

PAPERS READ BEFORE
THE LITERARY CLINIC

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Buffalo, 1916

DEDICATED
TO
THE MEMORY OF

CHARLES P. CLARK
DUANE B. TUTTLE
FRANK B. CARLTON

GOOD CLINICIANS ALL

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FOREWORD

THE Literary Clinic, now fourteen years old, has heretofore refused to heed the many requests to publish some of its papers. It has not been ambitious to rush into print. It has been content to have its productions typed and bound for its own archives only.

The Shakespeare Tercentenary, however, with its natural and most fitting emphasis upon the life and works of the greatest writer in our language, has made such a demand upon us that we have decided to break our rule and allow others to share some of the good things which we have enjoyed. Hence this volume. It is our modest contribution toward the word-wide offering of praise, appreciation, and gratitude for Shakespeare. We give it with the hope that it may mean to others something like what the various papers have meant to the Clinic members. If this hope is realized, Shakespeare will occupy a larger place in the lives of such as know and appreciate his matchless work, his interpretation of man to mankind.

We count ourselves fortunate in having, among our charter members, one who is a ripe Shakespearean scholar,—F. Hyatt Smith. Most of his papers included in this volume have been offered orally, as lectures, at the various Chautauquas and other assemblies, at the University of Buffalo, where Mr. Smith was the first lecturer in English Literature, and before many literary clubs and other organizations, as well as before The Literary Clinic. Those who have heard them, will now be able to read and to study them. Perchance they will be of still greater value in this more lasting form.

The paper on Shakespeare's England, the joint work of Mr. and Mrs. Brayton L. Nichols, has been read before the Highland Park Literary Club, the Buffalo Center of

the Drama League and other clubs. When read before the Clinic, it was at once and unanimously decided not only to include it in this volume, but to place it first as an introductory essay. It really introduces to Shakespeare, his times, and his haunts.

The brief tribute to Shakespeare is of interest to Buffalonians, because it is the only tribute of its kind, so far as we know, included among the Shakespeare memorials at Stratford. For this, also, we are indebted to Mr Smith.

The picture of Ann Hathaway's cottage, on the cover, was taken by the president of the Clinic during the summer of 1912.

CHARLES ELBERT RHODES,
President of the Literary Clinic,

Buffalo, N. Y.,
April, 1916.

SHAKESPEARE'S ENGLAND

— BY —

PAULINE H. NICHOLS
BRAYTON L. NICHOLS

SHAKESPEARE'S ENGLAND

THE spacious times of great Elizabeth," is the way Tennyson designates the age of Shakespeare, in his *Dream of Fair Women*. Tennyson was a master of the adjective. Note the fine fitness of that word "spacious," with its suggestion of breadth, ampleness, scope. No other word could so well describe the Elizabethans, who dared everything and did so much.

To understand Elizabethan England, learn what the Elizabethans thought and believed. See what a few years did for them. Not much more than half a century before Elizabeth came to the throne in 1558, the New World was discovered. Then came the Reformation. In the 1520's, the first man sailed around the globe. Then came King Henry's break with the Church of Rome. In 1549 telescopes were invented, and other worlds swam into the ken. In 1572, when Shakespeare was a boy of eight, the tidings of the massacre of St. Bartholomew came. In 1580 Sir Francis Drake came sailing home, the first Englishman to encompass the earth. All this time English seamen were coursing the seas, founding English commerce, and winning the supremacy of the ocean for England,—and year in and year out bringing home knowledge of strange countries. In 1588 England established her power to think for herself, by defeating the Spanish Armada. Tobacco came in, and the potato, and a myriad of other strange commodities, along with usages and fashions from the ends of the earth. Think of the educational value of these things! The Elizabethan lived in a world without limits. He dared attempt anything.

That is why the age is so full of great men. Quaint old Fuller, writing half a century afterward, said: "Observe how God set up a generation of military men, both by

sea and land, which began and expired with the reign of Queen Elizabeth, like a suit of clothes made for her and worn out with her; for Providence designing a peaceable prince to succeed her, so ordered the matter that they attended their mistress before or after, within some short distance, unto her grave." That was the greatest generation of Englishmen, the generation of Drake and Frobisher, Bacon and Hooker, Shakespeare and Marlowe. As Sir Walter Raleigh says, "If Elizabeth's men were stricken from the roll of fame, England would be robbed of half her glory."

That is why Elizabethan England was so full of tumult and riot and imagination. Fortunes were made in a twinkling. It was as restless an age as that of the discovery of gold in California. It was a get-rich-quick age, and it is no wonder that Elizabethan literature is so full of the cheat and fraud and impostor, parasites who always swarm in such times. The activity and spirit of innovation, the increase in comfort and luxury, the big fortunes and great benefactions, made it the most American age (as it might be called) in English history. "Whatever your status, your birth, trade, profession, residence, religion, education or property, in the year 1564 (when Shakespeare was born)," says Prof. W. A. Neilson, "you had a better chance to change these than any of your ancestors had; and there was more chance than there had ever been that your son would improve his inheritance. The individual man had long been boxed up in guild, church, or the feudal system; now the covers were opened, and the new opportunity bred daring, initiative and ambition." The sea rovers were typical Elizabethans, but the poet, priest, merchant, and politician had scarcely less share of adventure. "The individual had no such opportunity for fame in England before or since." The

nineteenth century is the only one which equals it in rapidity of changes in ideas and modes of life. But the Victorian age was an age of reaction and doubt of spirit —the Elizabethan was an age of hope.

Understand these things, and we understand the conditions of Elizabethan England. These are the foundations.

* * * * * *

We get our knowledge of life in those days from a variety of sources; not so much from dramatists as might be thought. They did not make exact pictures of the life of their time, any more than Bernard Shaw or George Cohan draw detailed pictures of the domestic machinery of the present time. Charles Lamb, who loved the familiar and ancient and homely, expresses regret that Shakespeare and some of his brother dramatists hardly ever chose as their theme the simple daily life of the England about them. But if they had done so, there would have been no great English drama and no Shakespeare. The Elizabethan looked outward, was a citizen of the world, and drew his plots largely from foreign parts. It is from account-books and registers, the satirists like Stubbes and Gosson, and the homely recorders like the Rev. William Harrison, that we get the details of Elizabethan life.

When Shakespeare was born, there were four or five million persons in England. It was an agricultural country for the most part; manufacture of the modern kind was just beginning. The waters were pure, and the sky, clouded only by wood smoke, was clear,—as clear as an English sky can be.

Stratford-on-Avon was a village of about two thousand souls. The streets were lined with buildings of a picturesque kind,—mainly what are called timbered or half-

timbered houses. These were mostly of wood, just as American villages today are chiefly built of wood. But instead of being clapboarded, the Elizabethan houses had timbers, or studs, running up and down, a few inches apart, and some horizontally, with the spaces between filled with plaster or, in poor houses, clay. Perhaps the whole was plastered over the outside, and maybe the inside was finished with mortar and maybe not. But a change in architecture was going on in England at that very moment. It was no longer the fashion to build castles, with narrow slits of windows,—these were not needed, for the fighting days were over. The finer houses were now mere houses built of brick and stone, with wider and more numerous windows, more light and more comfort.

The general effect of an Elizabethan street was more picturesque than most streets now. The people of that day built more for the pleasure of the wayfarer and the passer-by, by decorating their housefronts, and less for comfort within, than we do now. The Elizabethan manors, set in great parks, were a different thing, however. They were of brick, with many windows. Many of them had wings at right angles to the main part of the house, and so had the shape of the letter "E"—a delicate compliment to Queen Elizabeth.

Window glass was just coming into common use in Shakespeare's day. Before that, the windows were mere open spaces, or were closed only with horn or, much more generally, with lattices of wicker or strips of oak set checkerwise. Where wood was plentiful enough for strong rafters, the roof was covered with tiles, or with slate if quarries were handy. Otherwise the roof was thatched with reeds, sedge, or straw. Even in the houses where window glass was used, good care was taken of it.

Glass was expensive. When the Northumberland family left Alnwick Castle for London, the windows were taken out and laid up in safety.

The house known as Shakespeare's birthplace certainly belonged to Shakespeare's father, and Will Shakespeare was born there if he wasn't born somewhere else. It has been altered and restored so much that but little of the original material remains in it, probably, and the arrangement has been changed more than once.

But let us see what the old house can tell us. As you enter it, you find yourself in a main room with a stone floor and an immense chimney-piece; and behind it is a kitchen with another big chimney. Let us hope that little Will Shakespeare had the pleasure of snugging up to a blaze in these fireplaces. But the chimney corner, which suggests so much of domestic comfort to us, dates only from this very reign. Chimneys were rare in ordinary houses when Elizabeth came to the throne; before her, smoke got out of the house through the door or window or a hole in the roof.

The stone floor of this main room in the Shakespeare house had a dressing of sand in summer and a layer of rushes in winter,—no other carpet probably. The furniture was strong rather than beautiful. There was no table cloth except on state occasions, and the platters, dishes and bowls were probably of wood, easily scoured with sand. The spoons may have been of wood, but tin spoons were beginning to come in, just as pewter platters were beginning to be the style. There were *no* forks. The meat and vegetables got to the mouth on the tip of the knife which every member of the household possessed; the left hand did general work in the platter when necessary. If Shakespeare ever used a fork, it was when he was well along in life. Forks did not

come in until the beginning of the seventeenth century; and then from Italy. As was natural, the new-fangled contrivance was at first looked on as effeminate,—perhaps worse. Some preachers denounced forks, it being obviously an insult to Providence to keep fingers and meat from getting acquainted.

Up stairs is the little room where Shakespeare was born (according to tradition). In the little lattice windows are still some greenish lights of ancient glass. Will Shakespeare himself looked through glass as greenish, if not greener.

Everything was produced in this house that could be made at home. The whir of the spinning wheel was no novelty to Shakespeare's ears. Watching the brewing was probably a regular occupation with him. The Rev. Mr. Harrison tells us how the beer was made for the small household of a clergyman "with forty pounds a year." Mistress Harrison ground eight bushels of malt in her quern, added half a bushel of wheat meal and half a bushel of oatmeal, and poured upon it three successive hogsheads of boiling water, of eighty gallons each; and added at the proper time hops and arras and bayberries and other commodities, and at the end she had two hundred or more gallons of good beer. This for a year's supply? No; "it is once a month practiced by my wife," says the good Mr. Harrison.

Stratford had a weekly market and a semi-annual fair, like most villages. Shakespeare saw a motley life at these fairs and markets. The villages and the highways of rural England were full of ballad singers, acrobats, dancing dogs, trained bears, wandering players, to whom fair-time was harvest time. The city fathers regulated the affairs of the town spasmodically, like most city fathers, but were gradually growing more strict as Puritan

influences became stronger. They were specially severe on rebellious servants, idle apprentices, shrewish women, the pigs that ran in the streets, and,—after 1605,—upon persons guilty of profanity. Regular church attendance and fixed hours of work were required, and the council was kept busy regulating the alehouses, of which there were some thirty. There were public bowling alleys and archery butts, and the council was strict as to the hours of using them. Hunting, hawking, cockfighting, bull-baiting, dancing and other sports delighted the villager and the small boy.

Back of the Shakespeare house were probably Mr. Shakespeare's tan-pits and pigsty. The condition of the yard and highway, in front, may be guessed from the fact that in 1552 John Shakespeare was fined twelve pençe for having too big a muckhill before his door, and in 1558 four pence for not cleaning out his gutter. Other Stratford citizens fell victims to the spasmodic cleaning-up fever of the council at the same time. Fire and pestilence were the two great enemies of English villages at that time, as well as of English cities; and Stratford suffered more than once. The plague always left the streets cleaner, because it led to a cleaning up.

Near the market cross in Stratford stood a pump, and housewives were often to be seen "washing of clothes" there and hanging them on the cross to dry; the butchers might occasionally be detected hanging meat there. But the corporation did not approve of such practices, and finally forbade them. Also near the cross were the stocks, pillory and whipping post, for malefactors.

Stratford was well shaded with elms. The gardens of the citizens were separated by mud walls, not very durable, which sometimes provoked quarrels. Fruit trees were generally set about the house; and flowers and a few medicinal and cooking plants were grown.

Inventories of the furniture of houses in Shakespeare's day, made for executors' sales, show much the same utensils that our forefathers brought into this region when it was young,—andirons, candlesticks, etc. The frequency of brewing utensils, and of looms for weaving wool, tells its own story. One interesting item is "painted cloths," or arras, made to nail up in place of wallpaper; these cloths always had "wise sayings painted on them." And the abundance of napkins, of flax, hemp and diaper, is significant. There were no forks then.

There was no garbage service in Stratford. The inhabitants made up for this lack by laying the refuse in the streets and lanes; but after 1563 the householder might be fined 3s.4d. for this. There were, however, six places in the town set apart legally for amassing the refuse. These muckhills were to be removed twice a year, before Pentecost and about Michaelmas, in deference to sanitary science. These muckhills were right in town, so placed as to be handy to citizens.

Garrick described Stratford in 1769 as "the most dirty, unsemmly, ill-pav'd wretched looking town in all Britain." This must have been exaggeration. Yet Stratford could not have been neat. The town delegated the cleaning of its streets to its citizens, and they attended to it when they were speeded up,—with fines. But the town itself looked after the cleaning of the bridge, the market place and the space before the chapel door and Guild Hall. The "White Wings" of Stratford in Will Shakespeare's day consisted of the Widow Baker. She got 6s.8d. a year from the corporation, and a shovel, a broomstick and twigs were thrown in at municipal expense. She attended to the market place. A man named Raven swept the bridge, assisted occasionally by Widow Baker. When the roof of the chapel was fixed in 1604, the spirit of

improvement carried the corporation to greater lengths, and Anthony Rees, Mistress Rees and Goodwife Wilson were hired to sweep away the cobwebs and wash the seats. Otherwise the chapel was rarely contaminated with water.

And water was regarded as injudicious in many cases of sickness. Perhaps it was looked on then, even generally, with more suspicion than it is nowadays. Good soap was hard to get, moreover, in Shakespeare's day. But the Elizabethans had a substitute for soap: they used perfumery.

One of the books that Shakespeare must often have seen gives an idea of the medicine practised at that day. It was Dr. Andrew Borde's *Breviary of Health* (1575). Dr. Borde was a popular physician of Henry VIII's day. He was something of a joker, and called himself jocularly Andreas Perforatus (perforated Andrew or Andrew bored). Medical treatment, as he pictures it, is a mixture of theory, superstition and white magic. It is a sort of popular science, not far removed from the advice given in almanacs today. The medicines mentioned by Dr. Borde include such commodities as oil of scorpion and grease of fox. "Bloodshot eyes," "privation of wit," "sneezing out of measure" are some of the things for which the doctor prescribes. His science is lightened occasionally with levity. For a scolding wife the doctor says the only cure is "God and great sickness." For itching he recommends "long nails and scratching." Concerning diseases of the tongue he remarks: "It hath many other impediments, but none worse than lying and slander."

For scolding wives the corporation of Stratford did not trust to Dr. Borde's specific. The village had among its possessions a substantial "ducking stool," of the kind then general throughout England. It had iron staples, lock

and hinges. The shrew was attached to it, and by means of ropes, planks and wheels was ducked two or three times in the river Avon. The prescription ran: "Repeat when needed."

Not far away from the Shakespeare home was an institution that Will Shakespeare must have known well, —the Stratford Free Grammar School, so called because Latin grammar was taught there. There were a great many such schools in England then; Harrison says "there is hardly a corporate village but has one." State education did not dawn in England until 1832, but guilds and individuals established these free schools in early centuries. Of course, only villagers profited by them, for the most part. Education was then practically a privilege of the elite—the elite either by birth or intellect. And girls—girls did not need an education, except in spinning, baking and brewing. Highborn girls might get, from tutors, as advanced an education as any boy. Ascham tells us the pretty story of finding little Lady Jane Grey in her chamber "reading *Phaedon Platonis* in Greeke, and that with as moch delite as some jentlemen would read a merie tale in Boccace." Queen Elizabeth could talk Latin and French and Italian, and even sidestepped gracefully in Greek when an Oxford orator addressed her in that language. But for the ordinary girl, it was fine time for studying Domestic Science.

We know that Shakespeare must have gone to this Stratford grammar school, because we find evidence of it in his plays. At such schools they began with Lily's grammar, reached Aesop's fables in the third year and Ovid in the fourth. Now, we find in the plays quotations from or references to the grammar and the fables, and, specially, to Ovid. Shakespeare was not a scholar; there is evidence that when a translation was to be had he

went to the translation always, rather than to the original Latin. But the way in which, in his immense vocabulary, he coins words from the Latin, or shows other knowledge of the derivation of words, proves that he did know something about Latin. And we can guess how Will Shakespeare looked, when he went to grammar school mornings, and what was his speed. Chance remarks of the melancholy Jaques in *As You Like It,* and of Romeo, indicate that he "crept like a snail."

Had Shakespeare's family been prosperous, he might have gone on to the university from school. The grammar schools were the ladder to the universities, of which there were then three in England. But Shakespeare had to go to work.

Having looked at village life as Shakespeare saw it, let us see what he learned in the pleasant Warwickshire countryside about Stratford. North of the Avon was the Forest of Arden—then largely cut away like most English forests—and south of it was a plateau full of the homes of the gentry. Legends of outlaws and English champions filled the Warwickshire countryside; it was one of the homes of ballad poetry, and rustic pageants and festivals kept the spirit of poetry alive. Many of the fine roads of today were entirely lacking; others were ill-defined, winding ways through dense thickets and bogs.

One striking feature of the present-day landscape was lacking. Shapespeare saw no carriages when he went rambling! All travel on the poor roads was on foot or horseback. Goods were carried on packhorses. When Elizabeth rode into London from Greenwich, she rode on a pillion behind her Lord Chancellor. Afterward came a great improvement, in the form of a rough cart without springs, the box sitting on the solid axle. Queen Bess rode to her fifth Parliament in such a contrivance.

Coaches came in toward the end of the century. Elizabeth had lumbering gilt coaches; but when she went about the country in her stately progresses, she fairly crept along the muddy roads, and her coach was followed by several hundred carts containing the luggage of her train. Great was the interest in good-roads improvements just then, in the districts she was to visit! Beside the first coaches used to run, afoot, the footmen, carrying staves wherewith to pry the wheels out of the mudholes.

But even before the coaches, we hear of the delightful inns which won the praise of all foreigners. Where travel was so slow, the inns had to be numerous.

In the Warwick country. Shakespeare saw picturesque two-roomed cottages, of wattle or stone with thatched roofs. Now and then he might see a shepherd, in russet coat with red sleeves, and a bag of salt dangling at his side. He would hear singing everywhere; would listen to grewsome stories of witches, and might hear even of the burning of a witch somewhere in England. Most persons then believed in witches, and it was a risky time for homely old women. The countryside was full of superstition. We read in the chronicles of the time of all sorts of strange things. For instance, of how at Kinnaston in 1575, "on the 17th of February at 6 o'clock in the evening, the earth began to open and a Hill with a Rock under it (making at first a great bellowing noise which was heard a great way off), lifted itself up to a great height and began to travel, bearing along with it the trees that grew upon it, the sheepfolds and flocks of sheep; having walked in this way from Saturday in the evening until Monday noon, it then stood still." The Elizabethan rustic believed these tales, as did most persons not rustics. It was a credulous age, stimulating to the imagination!

There was surprisingly good living even in the humble homes along the way. The Englishman always astonished the foreigner by the amount of what he ate and drank. But wages were not high. The magistrates were empowered to fix, in quarter sessions, the wages of artisans and farm laborers. In the sixty years following 1583, the average weekly wage of the carpenter was 6s. 2½d., while the mason and the bricklayer got a little more, and the ordinary farm laborer got only 3s. 5½d. And wages did not go up and down as fast as the prices of food, and the farm laborer had to stick to his job, instead of hunting a new one, until the magistrates gave leave. This power given to the magistrates in Tudor days explains why the squire and the rector occupy the awful station that they do in the English country novel of even today.

A picture of Henry Hastings, a country squire of Dorsetshire a little after this time, will show what was the life in the squires' halls that Shakespeare passed. "His (Hastings's) clothes were always of green cloth. His house was in the midst of a large park, well stocked with deer, rabbits and fishponds. He had a long narrow bowling green in it; here, too, he had a banqueting room built, like a stand, in a large tree. He kept all sorts of hounds, that ran buck, hare, otter and badger; and had hawks of all kinds. His great hall was commonly strewed with marrow bones, and full of hawk perches, hounds, spaniels and terriers. The upper end of it was hung with foxskins of this and last year's killing. Here and there a polecat was intermixed. The parlor was a large room, completely furnished in the same style. On a broad hearth, paved with brick, lay some of the choicest terriers, hounds and spaniels. One or two of the great chairs had litters of cats in them, which were

not to be disturbed. Of these, three or four always attended him at dinner; and a little white wand lay by his trencher, to defend it if they were too troublesome. In the windows, which were very large, lay his arrows, crossbows and other accoutrements. At the upper end of the room stood a small table with a double desk; one side of which held a church Bible, the other the Book of Martyrs (published 1573). On different tables about the room lay hawks' hoods, bells, old hats with their crowns thrust in and full of pheasants' eggs; dice, cards and store of tobacco pipes. At one end was a door into a chapel, which had been long disused for devotion; but in the pulpit, as the safest place, was always to be found a cold chine of beef, a vension pasty, a gammon of bacon, or a great apple pye with thick crust well baked. His table cost him not much, though it was good to eat at. His sports supplied all but beef and mutton, except on Fridays, when he had the best of fish. He drank a glass or two of wine at meals; put syrup of gillyflowers into his sack; and always had a glass of small beer standing by him, which he often stirred with rosemary." (This is from Hutchins's *History of Dorsetshire*.)

The country clergyman, like the lower orders of clergy generally, was distinguished by the title of *Sir*, which was purely honorary. The condition of the minor clergy was never lower in England, and the house chaplains were little better than servants. The standing of the clergy may be judged to some degree (perhaps) by this entry in the books of the Stationers' Company in London in 1560:

Item, payd to the preacher..... 6s. 2d.
Item, payd to the minstrell..... 12s.
Item, payd to the coke..... 15s.

One feature of the rural English life must not be overlooked. It tended to Shakespeare's education. The kingdom was full of players. The old miracle plays were acted largely by amateurs, in the streets and squares of towns. The moralities and interludes were performed by roving companies, at first in open spaces, afterward in the banqueting rooms of the gentry. And so the way was led to the professional companies, attached to the households of lords at first and then doing business for themselves.

In 1568, when Will Shakespeare was four years old, the players came to Stratford. Probably they came, like most traveling companies, on foot, with their luggage carried on one or two packhorses or mules. There were no women in the company, of course. Of the two companies of these players who came, one received 9 shillings from the town, the other 12 pence; for they came under the patronage of the village. We do not know that Shakespeare saw these plays, but probably he did; boys all over England were enjoying such sights then. We can imagine the long low Guild Hall, lighted by guttering candles and smoky torches; the stage, only a few inches above the floor, and without scenery and with few properties;—and wide-eyed little William looking on.

Play-acting had long been common through rural England. Miracle plays were given at Coventry, not far from Stratford, up to 1580, and perhaps Shakespeare saw Quince and Bottom there. And very likely young Shakespeare, when he was eleven years old, saw the most famous of all the royal entertainments of Elizabeth's day, that which the Earl of Leicester gave in honor of Elizabeth at Kenilworth castle (or Killingworth, as it was often called), eleven or twelve miles from Stratford.

The "princely pleasures of Kenilworth" were the high-water mark of the shows of sixteenth-century England. They lasted eighteen days and cost the earl a thousand pounds a day, say the contemporary chroniclers. There were sports of all kinds: fireworks, bear-baiting, pageants and plays, morrice dances, tilting, hunting, a rural wedding, everything that could please and entertain the queen, from the allegorical welcome when she came to the farewell show at the end. There were floating islands and other contrivances on the lake beside the castle. People of every kind flocked to Kenilworth for the spectacle. Robert Laneham, a dandy who held a minor office in the queen's train, wrote a letter to a friend that contains a detailed account, day by day, of the entertainment offered to Elizabeth. One thing that Laneham describes is this: . . . "And the Lady, with her two nymphs, floating upon her movable island (Triton on his mermaid skimming by), approached toward Her Highness (the Queen, who was upon a bridge), chiefly to present Her Majesty with this gift,—which was, Arion, that excellent and famous musician, in tire and appointment strange, riding aloft upon his old friend the dolphin, that from head to tail was four and twenty feet long, and swam hard by these islands."

That is a fair specimen of Elizabethan prose. Fifteen or twenty years afterward William Shakespeare gave a fine illustration of Elizabethan poetry, when he made Oberon say in *A Midsummer Nigth's Dream*:

"Thou remember'st
Since once I sat upon a promontory
And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath
That the rude sea grew civil at her song,
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres,
To hear the sea-maid's music."

Does it not seem as if Shakespeare was present at Kenilworth in 1575?

In that same passage of *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* Shakespeare makes Oberon speak of a "fair vestal thron-ed by the west," at whom Cupid shot a dart in vain:

"And the imperial votaress passed on,
In maiden meditation, fancy-free."

The fair vestal was, of course, Queen Elizabeth. It was the fashion of the poets of the day to exalt and to worship the maiden queen, and it was the fashion of the common people, too, to look up to her and almost to defy her. There was an Elizabethan legend, just as in later days there was a Napoleonic legend.

It is somewhat shocking to discover the difference between the Elizabeth of fancy and the Elizabeth of fact. Really, Queen Elizabeth was the best *man* in the kingdom. She could hunt all day and then dance all night, or watch masques and pageants, till the "knees of strong men trembled under them as they wearily waited upon her." She kissed whom she pleased; she tickled the neck of Leicester once as he knelt before her. She swore like a trooper when she was angry; nor did she content herself with words,—her ladies and the highest officers in the land felt the weight of her hand. She collared Hatton, and she spat upon the courtier's coat of Sir Matthew Arundel when his foppery displeased her. One day in 1598 there was a stormy time in her council when she and the favorite Essex differed about an Irish appointment. She addressed him sarcastically. He turned his back upon her with an expression of contempt. Thereupon she gave him a good stinging box on the ear and told him to "go to the devil."

She called the members of her privy council by all sorts of nicknames. The Bishop of London once thought her finery unfitting to her age, and in a sermon endeavored to raise her thoughts from the ornaments of dress to the riches of heaven. The "fair vestal throned by the west" thereupon told her ladies that if he touched upon that subject again, she would fit *him* for heaven, and that he would go there without his staff and would leave his mantle behind him.—Such was Spenser's Gloriana in real life.

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Our country boy, Shakespeare, finally went up to London in the '80's, to earn a living. He saw a London we would not recognize. It had fewer than two hundred thousand inhabitants. It was a medieval city, surrounded by a wall, which was guarded by the Tower at one end and by the Fleet ditch and Blackfriars at the other, with the cathedral crowning all. It lay on the north side of the Thames, and the wall made a circuit of two miles about it. Seven gates pierced the wall to the north, and the houses stretched along the roads a long way out into the country. Westward along the river were palaces, and a muddy road which led to the adjacent city of Westminster. The Thames, famous for fish and swans, was crossed by only one bridge, which was crowded with houses. A sight near the center of the bridge was the Nonesuch House, of gilded and carved wood, built in the Low Countries and brought to London in parts and set up with wooden pins. The bridge was so crowded that the river was the great highway. On it plied small boats; there were from two thousand to four thousand watermen (according to varying estimates), a rude and quarrelsome lot of men. When one went to the theater, he took a boat and was rowed across to the

south side, where were the rings for bear-baiting and bull-baiting, the theaters and other places of amusement. The city fathers would not allow the playhouses within the city limits, for fear of fire, or of pestilence which might be disseminated by the crowds, so the actors built their places just outside the limits; and the rabble went to them in boats, just as Buffalonians cross to Fort Erie to see horse-racing.

Shakespeare, on reaching London, perhaps saw the heads of traitors and felons drying over the city gates and at the end of the bridge. He saw narrow streets, with open sewers or ditches, and wooden houses with many gables. As he walked along, perhaps pails of slops fell upon him from overhanging buildings. They had simple ways of disposing of refuse in London then.

And what a strange throng he saw in the streets! There were apprentices in swarms, in the blue gowns that they were compelled by ordinance to wear; there were gallants and dames in all the colors of the rainbow, only the clergy and the lawyers then limited themselves to black; there were women in masks, and fops wearing bracelets and earrings; there were seamen home from the tropics; merchants with chains of gold, and merchants' wives, who shocked the Puritans and the gentry by their elegance of apparel; university youths come up to town to win a fortune with the pen; country squires marveling at the sights and storing away wondrous tales to tell at home of the "chimes at midnight"; and statesmen, courtiers and ambassadors. Countless processions threaded the narrow streets. Perhaps Shakespeare saw a seminary priest, or a counterfeiter or other criminal, being drawn to Tyburn in a cart, to be hanged, drawn and quartered. The pillory for necks and hands, the stocks for feet, told of minor offenders. Chains fas-

tened up at one side of the street marked preparations for blocking the way, to stop the march of mobs.

The shops were little booths open in front like bazaars; the shopkeepers stood before them and invited the passers-by to enter with a "What do ye lack?" The tobacco shops became one of the sights of the metropolis about this date; in 1614 there were declared to be seven thousand of them. The expert tobacconist took young gallants as pupils and taught them how to load their pipes and how to blow balls and rings of smoke. Tobacco ran a swift course in Elizabethan England; it was a medicine, next a pleasure, and then a vice, all in a few years.

We know that the painted faces of the women were one of the things that struck the notice of the countryman from Stratford. The fashions were never more wonderful than in Shakespeare's England. In the middle ages, women had fanciful headgear, but their dresses were plain. But under Queen Bess things were different. The great ruff was a feature of the age. Like most striking features of the time, it was adopted from Spain. It began as a loose cambric collar, and grew so enormous that it troubled the wearer by its flappings. Wires were inserted to hold it out and up from the neck, and in its palmiest days it reached up to the top of the high-dressed hair and had three or four minor ruffs, rufflets so to speak, to fill the space between it and the shoulders. Toward the end of the century, a clever Belgian woman taught Londoners how to starch, and goffering irons, or "poking sticks of steel," were likewise invented about the same time; and by degrees the ruff became a stiff frill. The shocked Puritans called starch "the Devil's liquor," and one of them, Stubbes, tells a warning story of a young lady of Antwerp who fell into the power of the devil because he taught her improved ways of setting

the ruff. After she died her coffin was opened, and "they found the body to be taken away and a black cat, very lean and deformed, sitting in the coffin, setting of great ruffs and frizzling of hair, to the great fear and wonder of all beholders."

Queen Elizabeth had red hair, and later in life wore an auburn wig to recall old times. Of course, false hair became fashionable. She was pale and fair, and women in general, therefore, desired a "pale bleake color," and to that end swallowed gravel, ashes and tallow,—so we are told. And her long waist and narrow chest gave to all English womanhood a pinched look.

Both men and women wore enormous ruffs; and to balance these they swelled out below, so that a gallant of Elizabeth's time had the outline of a fat mandolin. A modified form of the "farthingale," or hoop, for women, was introduced in 1545. With greater expansion there was greater opportunity for jewels and ornaments and embroidery; and Elizabeth's girth steadily grew, and at the end of her reign there was a "wheel" farthingale, by which the skirt was drawn out at the top, in a right angle with the body, and formed a sort of table on which the arms could rest. Elizabeth's dress was covered with ornaments, quiltings, slashings, jewels, etc. It may be mentioned that looking glasses were first introduced in this reign, to supersede the mirrors of polished steel; they probably encouraged dress.

The gallants aped the women in extravagance of dress. Their breeches, or galligascons, were stuffed to such an extent that stooping was difficult. They were moreover cut and slashed like the ladies' gowns. Stubbes, hearing that a hundred pounds had been paid for a pair of breeches, cries "God be merciful unto us!" The men had fancy stockings that cost 20s. a pair; painted or

embroidered shoes with roses on them; and were specially dainty in the matter of hats. The lower orders copied the higher. Lord Keeper Edgerton said in 1596 in a case in the Star Chamber: "The excess of apparel in merchants' wives and daughters, and in all degrees, is a pestilent canker in the commonwealth; a means by which persons of small estate do prodigally waste their patrimony." But efforts to regulate dress were of no avail; hurly-burly Elizabethan times were too much for them. John Bulwer tells the story of a gallant who rose from his chair to salute some ladies. There was a nail in the chair, and bran began to pour from a tear in his immense breeches as "from a mill that was grinding," and he shrank and shrank and his breeches settled and settled until finally he stood there a mere spindle.

One of the sights of London that Shakespeare must have enjoyed was the stalls of the booksellers in St. Paul's churchyard. This was the first age in human history, be it remembered, in which common people were able to buy and read books for entertainment. In St. Paul's, the life of London was to be seen best. The church had become a sort of club, or general meeting place. Mules and horses were no longer to be found there, as in Bloody Mary's reign; but the center aisle was the resort of all London as a place for gossip and business. Paul's Walk, as it was called, was crowded for an hour or so before dinner at noon, and for three hours in the afternoon. To see everybody and to be seen, go to Paul's Walk!

The different classes rubbed shoulders more, in the little London of Elizabeth, than afterward; but they intermingled less,—each class kept within its limits, barring the eternal disposition of the citizens' wives to ape their betters. The importance of the court in the city

life is hard to realize today. The court was continually before the eyes of the citizens; its retainers made up much of the population; and it was producing some gorgeous spectacle or other all the time. Queen Elizabeth courted popularity and she loved gayety, and did not avoid showing herself in London. She was fond of dancing, and when she was a wrinkled old woman with black teeth, she was seen one day practicing a dance step alone, to keep up the limberness necessary to impress foreign ambassadors with her vitality.

Taine calls the England of the time "a den of lions." With all the life and rude jollity, and considering the national temper, it is no wonder that, in the playhouses across the Thames, the wild and reckless Elizabethan drama broke the shackles of the classical rules that the scholars tried to fasten upon it. It aped life itself, and the rough crowds in the theaters now shouted at buffoonery, now listened silently to a Hamlet's soliloquy, and moved from Egypt to England in the space of a minute with no regard to unities of time or place. And note how versatile the men of the age were: Raleigh, courtier, soldier, explorer, poet, historian, was an example of them. And note the Wild Western uncertainties of life. Take the poets Surrey, Wyatt, Raleigh, Marlowe, Sidney, Spenser, Jonson: only two of them, Spenser and Jonson, died in their beds, and Jonson had killed a man in a duel.

As one of the sights of London, let us go to the theater. They are all afternoon performances, what we should call matinees, because it is hard to light the theaters and there would be more danger of fire at night. We go across that curious old London bridge, between the lines of houses, past the queer Nonesuch House and the waterworks built at the middle of the bridge, and under the

warning row of bleaching heads of criminals. We go along the south bank of the river to one of the round, three-story buildings of wood where the players carry on their business. A flag flying from the top of the building lets us know that a performance is to be given.

Shall we pay a penny and go into the pit, and stand up two hours or so to hear Falstaff jest or Pistol rant? Or shall we pay more, even up to half a crown, and get a place in a gallery or box, or even show ourselves off upon the stage, where we can sit at the sides and observe (and be observed of everybody)? The theater resembles the inn yards where the English drama passed its childhood. There is a pit, open to the weather; tiers of galleries surround it; and the stage, protected by a little roof, projects halfway into the pit. There is no scenery and there are no women actors. Boys take the women's parts. The Elizabethan dramatist can change the scene as often as he wishes, with no fears of a Belasco. All that is necessary for the scene-shifter to do is to come out on the stage and hang up a sign with "Venice" or "Vienna" written on it, and your imagination will have to do the rest. But the actors wear sumptuous costumes. Probably the coat upon that actor cost more than the playwright has received for his play. There may be music between the acts, but there are no long waits, and of course there is no thumping of scenery and there is no dizzying test of the spot-light.

What a lively, jostling, rude, unmannerly audience it is! Painted ladies; gallants in huge breeches and with strange beards; apprentices, quick to approve and quick to jeer; befrilled wives of citizens; stray countrymen; a pit full of "rascality," catcalling and throwing missiles. But let us do the thing rightly and go up on the stage, "on the very rushes where Comedy is to daunce," as

old Dekker puts it. There is where you really enjoy the performance. You can get a good stool for a sixpence. There is where the "best and most essentionable parts of a gallant (good clothes, a proportionable leg and a tolerable beard) are perfectly revealed," as Dekker again informs us. There you can hiss or applaud in the sight of everybody; can see what is going on in the dressing-rooms, and watch the play as almost a part of it; can pose as a critic; can ask in a loud voice what the play is about; can examine the lace on the actors' suits while they are ranting their lines. The scarecrows in the pit may mew and hiss at you, even throw dirt from the ground at you; but do not be frightened away,—everybody notices you.

Dekker gives some advice to the gallant upon the stage: "Before the play begins, fall to cards." If you have a spite against the playwright, get up from your stool at a crisis in the plot and go out; or, if the weather is bad, stay and tickle the ears of your neighbors with a straw and make them laugh. "Mew at passionate speeches, yawn at merry ones, find fault with the music, whew at the children's actions, whistle at the songs." While you are doing this, the groundlings in the pit will howl, at you and the players impartially.

It is amid such scenes that you listen to a *Hamlet* or a *Tempest.*

One of the great features of the reign was the progresses made by Queen Elizabeth to towns and universities. She was parsimonious and enjoyed "visiting round," and she liked the gifts and the shows; and not many years passed by without such journeys, which introduced the court to the country. The town account-books of the time contain many interesting details which picture to us rural England. What a scrubbing up there was along the line of march!

The biggest single expense of the towns, when the queen came, was the gift to Her Majesty—thirty to forty pounds in gold, generally. The queen's servants went ahead to survey the town against her coming, and they had to be fee'd. There were trumpeters to be paid, and yeomen of various kinds,—the yeomen of the bottles first, then those of the mace and sword, and musicians of various kinds. Men had to be paid for fixing the roads, and for paving the market place perhaps. At Leicester the town council ordered that "the Mayor, and such as have been Mayors, meet her in scarlet gowns, and the rest of the twenty-four aldermen shall wear black gowns, made of a new comely fashion; also the forty-eight members of the common council to wear coats of fine black cloth and to be guarded with velvet, and to meet Her Majesty on horseback. And that every householder forthwith amend and beautify the fore fronts of their houses, and amend the pavement." At Worcester the council ordered the city gates to be painted ash color, with Her Majesty's arms without and within, and "also that every person having any dunghills within the liberties shall cause the same to be carried away."

Many records of that time indicate the prices that the Elizabethans had to pay for what they ate. For instance, at Norwich in 1561, the Earls of Northumberland and Huntington were entertained at the Duke of Norfolk's castle. The records of that entertainment contain the following items: Eight stone of beef (a stone is 14 pounds), 8d.; cheeses, 4d. each; butter, 2½ d. a pint; a hind quarter of veal, 10d.; a fore quarter, 5d.; leg of mutton, 5d.; six pullets for a shilling; eight rabbits for 1s. 8d.; eight partridges, 2s.; 34 eggs for 6d.; a bushel of flour, 6d.; a peck of oatmeal, 2d.; sixteen loaves of white bread, 4d.; barrel of table beer, 1s.; sixteen oranges

(which were then often called Portingales), 2d.; gallon of white wine, 1s. And the cook got 1s. 2d.—Yet probably the housewives of Queen Elizabeth's day talked as warmly of the cost of living as we do today!

People rose early then. Four was the regular time, with breakfast at five, when the men went to work or business. Dinner was about noon. And people went to bed earlier than now, because candlelight did not encourage late hours. The great drink of Shakespeare's England was beer; there was no great excess of drunkenness until Holland gin was imported. There were four kinds of white bread, which the gentry ate; the poorer folk ate bread of rye, barley, or even oats and acorns. All foreigners wonder at the abundance of the Englishman's table and his liking for good cheer. All of them, too, speak about the prettiness of the English women, with their white skins. They also mention, with general approval, the practice of kissing the lady of the house when you called and again when you went away; even grave Erasmus, in an earlier reign, remarked this custom with commendation.

We read that the Earl and Countess of Northumberland, when in the country, used to breakfast together at 7 o'clock in the morning. They had upon the table "a quart of ale, a chine of beef and a quart of wine." How they divided it, and whether they had bread, does not appear. But we are sure of one thing, and that is, that they did not have coffee or tea. These did not come in for nearly a century. Samuel Pepys records in his diary for Sept. 28, 1660: "I did send for a cup of tee (a China drink), of which I had never drank before." And two years later he records: "Home, and there find my wife making tea, a drink which Mr. Pelling, the Pothecary, tells her is good for her cold and defluxions."

With a gay, pleasure-loving queen, a rough population which lived more out of doors than people do now, and which loved sports, Shakespeare's England was a merry England—at least as merry as any England before or since. But the Puritans were coming in, to frown on theaters, bear-baiting, bull-baiting, and other sinful pleasures; and Bishop Corbet was to write:

At morning and at evening both,
  You merry were, and glad!
So little care of sleep, or sloth,
  The pretty ladies had.
When Tom came home from labor,
  Or Ciss to milking rose;
Then merrily, merrily went their tabor,
  And nimbly went their toes.

Witness, those rings and roundelays
  Of theirs, which yet remain,
Were footed, in Queen Mary's days,
  On many a grassy plain;
But since, of late, Elizabeth,
  And later James came in,
They never danced on any heath
  As when the time hath been.

An age that ate and danced and an age that dared, with a grey Puritan cloud rising in the sky——that was Shakespeare's England.

HAMLET

— BY —

F. HYATT SMITH

HAMLET

THE fundamental idea of this immortal play is the greatness of action. The dramatist teaches that consideration robs action of its power. "The native hue of resolution is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought." The basis of *Hamlet* is profoundly theological. Divine will and human freedom perpetually interplay. The problem of life is presented before us like a vast landscape. Secret guilt is also portrayed with a power excelled only in *Macbeth*. "Foul deeds will rise though all the earth o'erwhelm them to men's eyes."

Gervinus ingeniously declares that the drama has two moral themes: "that intentions, conceived in passion, vanish with the emotions; and that the human will changes and is influenced and enfeebled by delays."

There have been four views concerning the play; first, that Hamlet's delay was due to external causes. This falls down, for there is no reference to it, and he planned the play scene to convince himself; second, that he was restrained by conscience from revenge, but against this is Act V, scene 2, line 63; third, that a lovely nature without strength of nerve sinks under a great burden; this is inadequate; fourth, Coleridge's view that *Hamlet* is the tragedy of reflection, that irresolution is the cause of his delay, and that this is the result of speculation in an introspective mind. Coleridge first brought this explanation forward and it is now generally accepted. If we add an inherited melancholy and exquisite sensibility, the drama is as wide as humanity and as enduring as time.

The style is that of *Julius Caesar,* very weighty and solemn. The play contains 3924 lines. *Macbeth* is the shortest of the tragedies. The scene of *Hamlet* is Elsi-

nore, a seaport of Denmark, on the island of Zealand, not far from Copenhagen, where a statue to Hamlet may be seen. Scarlet was the royal color and hence the Queen and Claudius oppose the appearance of Hamlet in black. Alone among Shakespeare's plays *Hamlet* has a northern atmosphere. The dramatist loved the warmth and beauty of southern climes, and the melancholy Dane alone is set beneath gray skies and cloudy nights.

The first Act discloses Denmark's condition, Hamlet appears and utters his first soliloquy, Ophelia enters, Polonius gives his wonderful advice to his son, and Hamlet meets the ghost.

The second Act shows Hamlet's influence on Ophelia, he has put the antic disposition on, the players arouse his determination, Ophelia thinks his brain unhinged by love, he plans to test the guilty king, he lashes himself into fury, and a night passes before the crisis.

The third Act gives the great soliloquy, which is the finest debate on man and suicide in all literature; Hamlet talks with Ophelia, he goes to his mother's chamber and finds the king praying, he kills old Polonius, gives his advice to the players, and the court play follows.

The fourth Act shows Hamlet leaving for England; we have the third soliloquy; Ophelia is now insane, she dies; and the King and Laertes conspire against Hamlet.

The fifth Act gives the grave-digging scene, Hamlet is prostrated, but "there's a divinity that doth shape our ends rough hew them how we will"; Hamlet and Laertes meet, they fence, Hamlet is struck down, but kills the King; the Queen drinks the poisoned cup by mistake; Laertes dies, then Hamlet, and the tragedy ends. Some think that the entire action included but ten days.

This play shows Shakespeare's great knowledge of mental philosophy. The pangs of despised love, the law's

delay, the insolence of office, and the spurns which patient merit of the unworthy takes,—these are still the source of melancholy and the cause of madness. Will is fate, and when will abdicates, chance rules. We have the nothingness of reflection. The great monologue on suicide and doubt is followed by another equally remarkable on reason and resolution. Tennyson thought Hamlet the first creation in all literature. Thinking creates more problems than it solves. Enormous intellectual activity and aversion to real action are here combined with exquisite power.

The soliloquy in the graveyard is the best of sermons on the vanity of life. And where else is conscience so portrayed? Hamlet knew the force of conscience and instructed the players; he watched the features of the guilty monarch. The voice of his brother's blood cries to him from the ground. "O my offence is rank and smells to heaven." The Queen shudders as Hamlet holds up before her his father's picture. The criminal lawyer who would force a confession from the accused, can have no better textbook than this play. And we are taught that thinking without action destroys belief. Hamlet lays hold of nothing with energy. His very faith becomes clouded and transitory, because he never acts. He is the type of thousands who waver between immortality and despair.

This great play alone reveals the indebtedness of the King James version of the Bible to Shakespeare. He came when the Bishop's Bible was in use and he used it freely; indeed all the secular authors in the world combined do not give so much evidence of the reading of the sacred volume as the great dramatist alone. "It hath the primal eldest curse upon't, a brother's murder" is the curse of Cain. The noble apostrophe to man in

Act II. is almost a paraphrase of the Psalms. "There's a divinity that shapes our ends rough hew them how we will," is an echo of Romans and its doctrines. "The world is weary, stale, flat and unprofitable," recalls Ecclesiastes. All the functions of repentance are given in that speech of the king in Act III. The soul is called immortal. Jepthah and his daughter illustrate Act II. We hear of a time in Rome when the graves stood tenantless as in Jerusalem. There is a "special providence in the fall of a sparrow" is a direct quotation from our Lord. The Ghost confined to fast in fires till the foul crimes are burnt and purged away, is a conception of Purgatory. Hamlet's cry on seeing the apparition, "Angels and ministers of grace defend us," is from the Book of Hebrews. "The devil hath power to assume a pleasing shape," is an echo of St. Paul who says, "Satan can transform himself into an angel of light." Polonius' familiar advice to his son is the practical wisdom of St. James. "We are arrant knaves all," said Hamlet to Ophelia.

The Scriptures assure us that all have sinned. Conscience does make cowards of us all. Nowhere are the efficacy and purpose of prayer better delineated than in this play. "Words without thoughts never to heaven go." "There's nothing good or bad but thinking makes it so," what is that but "as a man thinketh in his heart so is he?" "The undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns," shows that Shakespeare was thinking of Job,—"I go whence I shall not return even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death." Hamlet calls the human body a temple as does St. Paul. "O shame! where is thy blush," is a skillful turn of the sublime, "O death where is thy sting?"—Our literature will never regain body and force and majesty until men drink

long and deep of the English Bible, the source of power and beauty in Shakespeare, Byron, De Quincey, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Ruskin.

In Claudius the King we have a man regal, dignified, with lofty manners and never small; yet treacherous, faithless, and untrustworthy. The Ghost calls him seductive. When Hamlet meets him, his denunciations dissolve. He is a large and attractive man, yet lives in dread of death and makes his way by murder. He is the Cain of Shakespeare. Polonius is a type of the politician in his dotage, a statesman out of repair, a man of intrigue and self-interest, to whom Hamlet is a constant mystery. He is always hunting for some plot to guide. Hence he perpetually trips himself. No trace of the real diplomatist is in him. He agrees with everyone and cannot see when he is justly ridiculed. His famous advice to his son partially redeems this hesitating and negative character. Here Shakespeare is rivalled only by Burns in his lines to a young friend.

Horatio is a very Apollo in moral beauty. Disinterested, loyal, prompt, fearless, of deep feeling, true to his convictions, ready to warn Hamlet at his own risk, utterly unselfish, just, tender, strong, and yet of surpassing modesty. Shakespeare seems to have drawn in him the ideal friend: one who indeed "is not passion's slave and who in suffering all suffers nothing, with no revenue but his good spirits," and well does Hamlet wear him in "his heart's core."

Laertes lives close to the earth. He is a pure materialist. "Be wary, best safety lies in fear," he says. He is economical: "And for my means, I'll husband them so well they shall go far with little." Trained in France, he is a man of the world, destitute of spirituality, fond of music and fencing, false to his friends, ungenerous,

unreflective, but of prompt energy and decision. In the whole play he is the only opposite of Hamlet. This shows Shakespeare's wisdom.

Weakness, irresolution, a willingness to buy stolen goods, the puppet of the King, having a flexible conscience, and incapable of lasting repentance,—such is the Queen. We are ever disappointed in this woman of paste. Yet she surprises us once when she nobly addresses Ophelia, scattering "sweets to the sweet" on her grave. And she is Hamlet's mother and the more's the marvel. We are not told her share in the awful crime. Her weakness crowns her son's sorrow.

"A bloody deed, almost as bad, good mother; as kill a king and marry with his brother!"

Poor Ophelia! In all the list of Shakespeare's women where is there one so pathetic? Too good for earth, too pure for life, never disclosing her love, and ending her spotless career in madness; she is too delicate and unworldly to analyze, a fragile shell, a momentary dream. Her wreck is the climax of sadness. Her hopes bud only to droop. Her mind disintegrates like Prospero's vision. Perhaps no character in literature has so awakened pity. She cannot rise from calamity, like Hero; but sinks beneath it, like a sensitive plant.

And what of Hamlet? Is he not Shakespeare's riddle? Confessedly his master creation, he has attracted, enthralled, and puzzled the first intellects of the world. "Hamlet is Shakespeare," says Taine. "Hamlet is Hamlet," says Hebler. "It is we who are Hamlet," says Hazlitt. At the beginning, and before his mind has been shocked by his father's apparition, he ponders on the emptiness of this life and the solemn mysteries of the life to come. "O that this too too solid flesh would melt!" This is the natural outcome of his reflective

soul. In the earliest passage in which he communes with himself, he broods on the advisability of suicide. He was marvelously sensitive to all the miseries of life. "O that the Everlasting had not fixed His canon 'gainst self-slaughter." To him it was a hollow pageant: "how weary, stale, flat and unprofitable, seem to me all the uses of this world."

Out of the dim unknown streamed the influences to which he was singularly responsive. Open is he to all those occult forces—"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy." Brooding melancholy, the poetic temperament, a spiritualized intellect, a womanly softness, an enfeebled will, a princely grace, a piteous humor, and a mighty heart: all meet in this most subtle creation of the world's most gifted mind. Grief breaks his heart. He is charged with a filial duty for which his will is inadequate. As Goethe said, "he is an acorn planted in a vase." His outlook of the universe is so vast that his sense of responsibility is paralyzed and his ability for action is arrested. Great is his thinking, but it is without purpose. He roams in the twilight between reason and madness. Heaven enraptures him, and Hell haunts him. No character, it is said, since Christ, has ever formed an object of such absorbing interest to men. Apart from his setting he would still be Hamlet. Grand in his conceptions, lonely in his grandeur, desolate in his pain, he is the eternal mouthpiece for all men who confess the universe a complexity, a paradox, a puzzle. "To be or not to be."

No sadder feature in Hamlet appears than his inability to find solace in love. Ophelia is incompetent to understand him, and loneliness again is his atmosphere. Men to him stand self-revealed. "Suit the action to the word, the word to the action—hold the mirror up to nature,"—

these words are the model for the stage. He pulls off men's disguises as easily as he casts aside his own cloak. In passages that defy criticism, he uncovers motives, ends, hopes, fears, virtues, defects, and somehow our experience always throbs "yes" in response. Hamlet is never at rest. All things to him are shadows. Like Paul, he saw that the things which are seen are temporal. Yet his spirit is indomitable. Distracted and irresolute, he never surrenders. He stands, a lofty soul, perplexed by life's mystery, depressed by affliction, awed by the nearness of the other world, yet confronted by the stern duties of the hour. The parting from Ophelia is desolate and tragic, and flashes a light into his inner heart. "I loved Ophelia, forty thousand brothers could not make up my sum."

Beneath all of Hamlet's words, like the rocks beneath the soil, we may discover a great mental force and a courtly elegance, as native to him as beauty to the rose. Sometimes he is dull and inert; again he is all life. Grief corrodes his grandeur. In the Ghost-scene he is superstitious: "I'll watch tonight, perchance 'twill walk again." With Ophelia he is tender; when Polonius dies, he is furious; "How now! a rat? Dead, for a ducat, dead!"; at Ophelia's grave he is in despair. Predisposed to meditation on the vanity of life, his soul was crowded with august and portentous fancies, weird as the witches in *Macbeth;* and he sways like a balloon when he is in touch with these unearthly powers. "Angels and ministers of grace defend us!" Princely in action, exalted in manner, tearful in humor, incomparable in thought, his power to execute is completely benumbed, and fate reigns over will.

No real thinker can study Hamlet and remain an agnostic. There is patient sweetness. There is wonderful pathos. There is vital attachment to Horatio. There

is love for his father's memory. There is a sense of earth's misery, of the instability of all things about us, that almost remind one, at times, of Christ's lament over Jerusalem. He is man at the apex of his development, disappointed, unsatisfied, shrouded in doubt, struggling for the light, with a tender heart, a vacillating purpose, a comprehensive vision, and a paralyzed will.

And Hamlet is conscious of his own defects. He is forever analyzing his emotions. He gazes into his conscience and says: "Thus conscience doth make cowards of us all." The engine works, but the driving wheel is still. He is never spontaneous, exuberant, healthy. He is always self-conscious, introspective, morbid. Thought replaces action. He sees the good in evil and the evil in good so clearly that he makes no choice between them.

He is a warning to every man in whom reflection has usurped duty, and who conceives that talking is activity. Such men are not rare. The real world, to Hamlet, is obscured by the mental haze in which he moves. Indifference leads to feebleness, feebleness to inability, and inability to disaster. Notice that his continual declaration of his resolution shows that he has none. Never was the critical instinct so carefully and exactly developed. Iago is critical, but he has purpose; Laertes raises a mob and destroys the security of a palace, but Hamlet only ponders. He lives in the future only. He is a great sceptic because he has no faith in himself. Moreover, soon after he sees his father's spirit he doubts immortality. He doubts even Horatio, and swears him to secrecy at the sword's point. He doubts Ophelia and asks: "Are you honest?"

Mr. J. R. Lowell has noticed Hamlet's irony. It is like the irony of Socrates and is the result of his temperament. He wonders if men are not made in jest. He talks of suicide but cannot kill himself; he refuses to kill the

king while praying, for fear his soul will therefore be saved. He goes to England for no reason but removal from a disagreeable duty. Chance alone brings him to his end. He is a man of genius, *per se,* and has all the eccentricity of his class. The philosophical spirit in him is supreme. He foresees, analyzes, and describes every movement of his enemies, and this gives him great delight.

"The time is out of joint; O cursed spite,
That ever I was born to set it right"!

And he goes no further to set it right. How many Hamlets there are in morals, in politics, in business, in religion,—perpetually in the bloom of critical conviction, ever budding caustic criticism, sitting in judgment on other men, yet lifting not so much as a hair's weight to relieve humanity, or to purge it of its faults. Hamlet would have made a good editor, or a political declaimer, or a general pessimist at large. Salvini thought that in Hamlet the intellect completely took the place of the will.

Was Hamlet's madness real or assumed? Polonius, a shrewd observer, says: "Tho this be madness, yet there's method in't." One thing is certain: if Hamlet is irresponsible the whole play is a farce. Gervinus thinks that his madness was feigned. If he was mad, then he and three-fourths of men are alike. Taine says that, "the hinges of his mind were twisted, not broken." We must confess that he acts his part well, for he deceives even his examiners by telling them unwelcome facts. Edgar, in *King Lear,* pretended insanity, and so did Hamlet, says Lowell. If so, this course permitted him to drift along in the channel of his inactivity, and shows the profound subtlety of his mind.

Edwin Booth believed Hamlet fitfully insane, that this was his recurring cloud, allowing him the clearest and

loveliest vision, only to be followed by the most melancholy depression. Granting this, he is a type of thousands, for Voltaire tells us that "insane asylums were designed to prove the rest of the world sane." Hamlet said to the Queen, "Essentially I am not in madness, but mad in craft." Thus the character baffles us at every turn. But surely the great soliloquy was uttered in a sane moment, else the play is bedlam and has no force. Hamlet walks the borderland of Dryden:

> "Great wit to madness sure is near allied,
> And thin partitions do their bounds divide."

Hamlet lies close to Shakespeare's heart. It gives us the dramatist's view of the stage, of life, of men, as does no other of his plays. No play is so often quoted, and none has so universally affected mankind. To select any one line is like selecting one rose from a thousand. It is the tragedy of thought. No commentator on this play, among the hundreds who have written, has risen to its true level. Perhaps if one had we should have had a second Shakespeare. *Hamlet* was produced when the master had passed the day-dreams of life, and was musing on its perplexities and sorrows. It is not golden but dark.

The French have never understood it. The Germans have most deeply appreciated it. Not until Coleridge threw upon it the searchlight of his genius, did the English rise to its true worth. If *Lear* teaches the difference between justice and generosity; if *Macbeth* shows the eternal Nemesis that follows secret sin; if *Othello* reveals the abyss into which jealousy may plunge a noble mind;—then *Hamlet,* Shakespeare's masterpiece, teaches men that sands no more surely glide through a glass, than the best intentions through a paralyzed purpose. As the centuries pass he sounds to them the danger of delay.

If *Hamlet* is the consummate flower of the world's greatest mind, it is as truly the perfection of the actor's art. In the seventeenth century, Thomas Betterton, when acting *Hamlet,* turned from a ruddy hue to unnatural white, and made his audience shudder in their seats on seeing the Ghost. Talma, in Paris, was so vivid in his delineation of the character that women fainted and screamed. Robert Wilkes, David Garrick, John Kemble, Edmund Kean, Tommaso Salvini, these were all great representatives of Hamlet.

But it was reserved for our own land and time to witness an impersonation of the character that has never been surpassed. In all the elements of intellect, fancy, grandeur, tenderness, mystery, delirium and grace, the Hamlet of Edwin Booth was the very crown of that great actor's art. Sustained power, marvellous variety, matchless eloquence, facial play, spontaneous delivery, refined gasticulation, all combined to form an impression that once seen could never be effaced. The poetic imagination, the reflective mind, and the melancholy temperament of the Dane, precisely fitted Booth's genius, and he gave it an individuality quite his own. His exquisite tenderness to Ophelia; his weird meeting with the Ghost; his quiet study of the king's face in the play; his unrivalled rendering of the soliloquies; his manly love for Horatio,—these were and will ever remain the priceless glory of the American stage.

Booth was Hamlet. He revealed its spiritualized intellect, its feminine softness, its autumnal gloom, perhaps more than any man before him. There was a pathetic emotion, an awful reality, a poignant suffering, and, above all, an indefinable dreaminess that charmed while it subdued. There was no bald realism, no spectacular frenzy, no gaudy glitter, about it; it was the portrayal of a

great mystery, spiritualized, illumined, inspired, and shot through and through with rare sentiment that played upon the text like light upon the lawn. There were flashes of great energy, when the hearers sat transfixed with terror; there were silvery notes of sadness, that melted men to tears; there were passages of awful power, when the audience were amazed: and there were colossal explosions, when the whole house rose and cheered. You felt that Booth's spirit was a mirror that reflected every varying mood of Hamlet's complex personality, and that when you saw him you saw the very character itself. From the first, his imagination was haunted, the Ghost scene transfigured him into horrible suspense, his cry on killing Polonius froze the soul, and the desolate calm as he stood over Ophelia's grave was beyond all imitation or description. It fascinated all men everywhere, and once ran one hundred nights successively with an interest that never flagged. To all who have seen this immortal representation, each subsequent Hamlet fades from the eyes, and the great American tragedian walks the stage once more.

* * * *

EDWIN BOOTH

I cannot forbear, in closing, to present a few words of tribute to the man who did more than any other to elevate, and purify, and adorn the American stage. Primarily a gentleman, his appearance is deeply engraven on the memories of all who were so fortunate as to see and know him. Of incomparable grace, with a voice like a silver bell, he had a high forehead, a wealth of waving hair, a stern yet mobile mouth, and eyes deepset, hazel, expressive as diamonds, now melting with tenderness,

and now aglow with frenzy; while his bearing, dignified, Athenian, and refined, swayed men as by magical power. To the very last, a roll of those eyes, or one of his wonderful gestures, evoked a peal of spontaneous applause. He had a delicate humor, a cheerful patience, a lofty ideal. He was stately yet not austere; dignified yet not cold; proud yet not repelling. He never descended to the spectacular or the low. He was generosity itself. He was a very embodiment of honesty. Grave, contemplative and sweet, he was as sensitive as a girl, and shunned all compliment and applause. His artistic purpose was unswerving, lofty and pure. Isolated by reason of his somber, spiritual temperament, profoundly affected by his brother's awful crime, introspective and inheriting a tinge of deep melancholy, he possessed the dreaminess of the poet and the contemplation of the philosopher.

His devotion to his wife is seen in all his letters, and his attachment to his friends is their priceless heritage. He saw, with sorrow, the decline in the public taste that now seems to have reached a regretful culmination, and used to say that he "never gave the theater-going world what it wished but what it needed." For forty-two years he fascinated, instructed, and elevated men, women and children by the surpassing power of his great art, and never condescended to a single representation that could bring a blush to the purest maiden's cheek.

He has left no successor, and lies among the great dead in Mt. Auburn. Above his grave the robins carol, and on its grasses the snowflakes fall. Yet the first are no sweeter than his voice, and the second are no purer than his life. Surely we may say of him, as Horatio said of Hamlet: "Good night, sweet Prince, and flights of angels sing thee to thy rest."

AS YOU LIKE IT

— BY —

F. HYATT SMITH

AS YOU LIKE IT

IT is the sweetest and happiest of all the comedies, a rest for the imagination, a tonic for the heart. Founded on a graceful story, wit and mirth, song and sense, philosophy and tenderness, love and melancholy, gravity and drollery, absurdity and truth, are so perfectly blended and intermingled, that misfortune is lightened, love is heightened, wisdom is deepened, and nature welcomes her tired children beneath the trees and beside the streams.

The Forest of Arden covered much of Warwickshire from the Avon northwest of Stratford, one of the loveliest landscapes in the world, with towering trees, manyhued flowers, trembling breezes, and haunting fancies in nook and dell. With his mother's name the great alchemist associated an ideal and fanciful life, robbed of all conventionality and restraint. We breathe the blossom-laden air; we lie on couches of moss; under melancholy boughs we moralize on the artificialities of existence, the imagination becomes soft and delicate; the wit runs riot in idleness, caprice and fancy reign here; the critical and destructive spirit is banished from this Arcady; it is a return to the Promised Land from the Egypt of formalism and pretense. Stern necessity flees away, the cares and echoes of the harsh world disappear, the very atmosphere wakens philosophic poetry, and "this our life, exempt from public haunt, finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything."

We have thus a poetic pastoral, an enchanting masque, lions are introduced from France and serpents and palm trees are added. Fantastic imagery casts

over the whole a robe of iridescent beauty. The intention of the comedy is to extol self-mastery and equanimity and self-command. Town life is contrasted with rural abandon. We are led into the country of contentment where our anxieties drop from us like needles from the scented pine. We are solicited to a return to nature. It is the joy of childhood, the fresh delight of innocence, the sport of frolicsome lambs. Here too is love, in its many phases, and humor, natural and professional and morbid. There are gleams of the simplest humanity and of the profoundest philosophy. No play more appeals to our primal instincts and none more to our better impulses.

Through the treachery and violence of a brother, a noble and generous prince has been driven into exile. Friendship, stronger than blood, induces several of his subjects to share his banishment. From the solitude of society they escape into the solitude of nature. The daughter of the prince is also driven forth to the vicinity of her father. Her cousin, the usurper's daughter, accompanies her, drawn by a sisterly devotion. They persuade a witty court fool to be their companion. A shepardess, a country wench, two servants, and three young men, complete the society of Robin Hood's land. We have love and disguise in Rosalind and Orlando, love and folly in Audrey and Touchstone, and love conventional in Phebe and Silvius. There is the natural humor of Rosalind, the professional humor of Touchstone, and the morbid humor of Jacques.

The old Duke Frederick is a man of harsh and illiberal mind, destitute of the finer instincts, and a real robber of his brother's property; he suspects all good men, he is jealous, hasty, bitter and designing.

The banished Duke converts exile into repose, he rises above all discomforts, he is cheerfulness in misfortune, he thinks these woods "more free from peril than the envious court"; "these are councillors that feelingly persuade me what I am"; "sweet are the uses of adversity, which like the toad, ugly and venomous, wears yet a precious jewel in his head", an allusion to the old tradition that the toad was a remedy for disease, with its imagined gem set between its eyes.

He thinks Jacques nowhere like a man; he penetrates his sly humor with "what fool is this", he tells him of his former life, he memorizes on their former better days when with "holy bell they were knelled to church and sat at good men's feasts, and wiped their eyes of drops that sacred pity engendered"; yet he asks all the sylvan company to sit down in gentleness and take their food"; he is a humane man and notes that "this wide and universal theatre presents more woeful pageants than the scene wherein we play in". He solicits music from Amiens who answers, "Blow, blow, thou wintry wind, thou art not so unkind, as man's ingratitude; thy tooth is not so keen, because thou art not seen, although thy breath be rude". "Freeze, freeze, thou winter sky, that dost not bite so nigh, as benefits forgot; though thou the waters warp, thy sting is not so sharp, as friend remembered not". This is the finest verse in the world on the pangs of broken attachment and the hollowness of human devotion. Who has not repeated them when deceived and neglected and forgotten? They recall the sorrowful lines in *Lear*.

He pierces through Touchstone's folly and uncovers all his wit. And at the very close, when his fortunes are returned to him, with what dignity and modera-

tion he offers to share all his unexpected gain among the companions of his enforced exile! And all closes with a rustic dance.

Here is Shakespeare's picture of the man whom no reverses can subdue, no sorrows embitter; whose humanity rises with his own loss, whose inborn gentleness conquers every obstacle,—a grand portrait of the superiority of character over possessions and of soul over title, a perpetual lesson of stability, endurance, dignity, manliness, and truth. Stripped of his rightful estate, banished to the wilderness, his real wealth he finds in himself, the cover of heaven is sweeter than his palace roof; losing his domain he finds it within; his mind makes its own world, and he proves that the intellectual man furnishes his own surroundings and can never be depleted of the best.

Orlando is a young gentleman, brave, modest and magnanimous; his only thought of his ancestry is never to dishonor it; he a sort of Horatio in adversity; the very highest type of friend; never schooled but learned; his humblest servant is his highest eulogist; he tilts with Jaques in wit; he is as wise as humorous; trained like a peasant by his brother and treated like a slave, yet in anger he is master of himself, he defends his old retainer with the sword; he is always self-contained, healthy, a perfectly balanced man. He thinks little of himself. Concerning his possible death in the wrestling match, he says: "I shall do my friends no wrong for I have none to lament me; the world no injury for in it I have nothing; only in the world I fill up a place which may be better supplied when I have made it empty". The sight of Rosalind entrances him, his love developes, he hangs his ditty to her upon the tree; "Oh Rosalind! these trees shall be my books, and in

their barks my thoughts I'll character, that every eye which in this forest looks shall see thy virtues witnessed everywhere; Run, run Orlando, carve on every tree, the fair, the chaste, the unexpressive she."

"Her stature," he says, "is just as high as my heart"; he tells her there is no clock in the forest; he tells her again that he is loveshaked and asks her the remedy; he admits to the disguised girl that he wrote the verses on the tree; neither rhyme nor reason can express his love; he would have her cure it by counsel and when she tells him she would cure him if he would but call her Rosalind, and come every day to woo her, he replies, "tell me where you live."

The love scene in Act IV is delicious, natural, a model for novelists, without strain or stilt or convention. When Celia marries them in fun, and he repeats the formula after her, it is the sweetest bit in all Shakespeare, with a forest for a church, and flowers for wedding bells, and a witty woman for a priest. Then the real marriage with Hymen's hymn, "you and you are sure together, as the winter to foul weather,"; and the song, "wedding is great Juno's crown,"—and the felicity is consummated.

Rosalind is a delightful blending of subtle womanly traits, defying analysis, like the rainbow. She breathes of youth and youths' sweet prime. She is as witty as Beatrice, but her wit bubbles like a fountain. It is the carol of a bird. Tenderness and mirth exquisitely interplay in her, and she is affection, raillery, teasing vivacity, sauciness, audacity, impatience, fondness, propriety, grace, and abandon, in turns. She has all the swift changes of an April day. We think of her "a gallant curtleaxe upon her thigh, a boar spear in her hand";—she has not the sober eloquence of Portia,

nor the demure wisdom of Isabella; her shortest talks are her best; yet she is both volatile and voluble,—like Keat's Madeline, "to her heart her heart was voluble, paining with eloquence her balmy side."

She is a strange, queer, lovely creature,—a beautiful romantic animal; she briskly springs and runs and leaps; she plays lightly over all things with her delicate wit; it is irrepressible and gushes like a brook in the glade; it catches force from the clouds and is a compact of maidenly fancy and cheerfulness; even in her tears an arch of playfulness spans that perfect mouth. No trial can break her spirits, no storm can chill her enthusiasm; she is perfect composure; the contradiction between her assumed dress and her sex but heightens her attractiveness. Her part is played with infinite zest. She roams the forest like some wood nymph. Nor is she in any degree mannish or prudish.

She is a lovely girl, freed from the conventions of the court, liberated into nature's wide domain and unfettered from all restraint, yet still a woman with a woman's sense of propriety and truth. We cannot imagine her wearing Portia's sedate air, or Hermione's matronly gravity, or Cordelia's solicitude for the sorrowing. Her freedoms of speech are the rarest proofs of her delicacy; she hazards just enough to conceal her real personality. Her modesty speaks more freely than it feels, as false modesty feels more freely than it speaks. She is love in disguise forevermore, a mountain zephyr, a swaying shadow in the sun. She would be out of place in a city mansion, the woods are her natural setting. Fortune robbed her of her wealth, and when she finds in Orlando one struck by the same fate, her heart is taken unawares and yields. She

vanquishes him before he conquers her. Her friendship with Celia is a perfect pastoral. This it is which brings forth her native cheerfulness under every stress. She is too impulsive for deep reflection, she is too adroit for delay, she masters her passion by giving rein to her mind and imagination. Thus she shields herself from all melancholy and preserves a due decorum. Her laugh is wholly unlike that of any other of Shakespeare's heroines, silvery, tinkling, teasing, taunting. She is his most enchanting coquette. She could not be merry, however, until she had joined her banished father. She can rejoice in Celia's greater fortune, proving her total unselfishness. Orlando was the son of her father's friend and this cements their attraction.

How dashing is the picture of the splendid girl who would have a "swashing and a martial outside", to be called Ganymede in the forest, going in content to liberty and not to banishment, true as a star to her cousin, defying all that may await her in the free and untried life! She slyly hints that she must comfort the weaker vessel, as "doublet and hose ought to show itself courageous to petticoats." She seeks refreshment for Celia in the shepherds' hut and buys the hut for a place of refuge. Can you not see her reading, "From the east to western Ind, no jewel is like Rosalind; her worth being mounted on the wind, through all the world bears Rosalind; all the pictures fairest lin'd are but black to Rosalind"!

The whole wilderness suddenly becomes a library, verses on every tree. And she knows the laws of poetry too—"for some of the verses had in them more feet than the verses would bear". She cries; "Is he of God's making? What manner of man? Is

his head worth a hat, or his chin worth a beard?" Learning that her love poet was Orlando, she quickly inquired; "What said he? How looked he? Did he ask for me? Where remains he? Answer me in one word". Cold and unconcerned at first she becomes a torrent of curious solicitude in an instant. She tells Celia that when a woman thinks she must speak. "Time trots hard," she says, "with a young maid between the contract of her marriage and the day it is solemnized; time ambles with a priest that lacks Latin, and a rich man that hath not the gout; and he gallops with a thief to the gallows; and he stays still with lawyers in the vacation". How delicious is this!

She says to the wondering Orlando that she dwells with her sister the shepherdess in the skirts of the forest "like a fringe upon a petticoat". And this rollicksome and teasing girl "thanks God she is not a woman, to be touched with so many giddy offences as he hath generally taxed their whole sex withal"! And then those marks of love, where are they equalled? "A lean cheek, a blue eye and sunken, an unquestionable spirit, a beard neglected, hose ungartered, bonnet unbanded, sleeve unbuttoned, and everything about you," she says to the wondering swain, "demonstrating a careless desolation," "But are you he who hangs verses on the trees wherein Rosalind is so admired?" "Love is merely a madness, yet I profess to cure it by counsel." "Did you ever cure any so?" "Yes, one, and in this manner. He was to imagine me his love, his mistress,—and I set him every day to woo me; at which time would I, being but a moonish youth, grieve, be effeminate, longing and liking, proud, fantastical, apish, shallow, inconsistent, full of tears, full of smiles, —would now like him, now loathe him; then entertain

him, then forswear him; now weep for him, then spit at him; and thus I cured him"! "I would cure you, if you would but call me Rosalind, and come every day to my cote and woo me"! "The oath of a lover," she tells Celia, "is no stronger than the word of a tapster."

She tells Jaques that she would rather "have a fool to make her merry than experience to make her sad." She dismisses the amazed Orlando saying, "I'd as lief be wooed of a snail, for though he comes slowly he carries his house on his head",—besides "he brings his destiny with him". Then—"come woo me, woo me, for now I am in a holiday humor and like enough to consent." When he threatens to kill himself, the saucy enchantress replies; "Men have died from time to time, and worms have eaten them, but not for love"! She tells him how to begin the mock marriage ceremony beneath the trees; and when she anticipates the disguised priest, coyly says; "there's a girl goes before the priest, and certainly a woman's thought runs before her actions." "Make the doors upon a woman's wit and it will out at the casement; shut that, and 'twill out at the keyhole; stop that, 'twill fly with the smoke out at the chimney". Once she sums up the whole tender transaction; "for your brother and sister no sooner met but they looked, no sooner looked but they loved, no sooner loved but they sighed, no sooner sighed but they asked one another the reason, no sooner knew the reason but they sought the remedy; they are in the very wrath of love; clubs cannot part them."

In the Epilogue, this inimitable creature says that her way is "to conjure and not to beg." This is the key to her character, for she is a dainty, deft, tantalizing

enchantress, vivacious and sprightly, coming and going like a dream, provoking and rebuking, always self-possessed, never caustic, playful as a kitten, dazzling and alarming, pouring forth her ceaseless raillery like a bird, fluttering over every subject, saucy as a page, wise as a statesman, with a profound knowledge of all the intricacies of the heart, and yet steadied and sobered by a womanly conviction and reserve that redeem her nature and enhance its beauty.

The melancholy Jaques! We all know him. He is wholly unique and individual. A song carries him out of his senses; the fool convulses him; he has neither hatred nor love, all things suggest melancholy to him; he loves himself too well to hate anybody, among the cheerful cheerless only he. Happy faces but whet his philosophic meditation; he mistakes his own self-love for compassion, and his pity does not include its object. The sufferings of others but open the fountains of his easy tears, he would inflict pain to weep over it, he has been a libertine and now pensively stands aloof from the world; he is the sauce of the entire pudding. His irony is tempered with good-nature and he is a pure sentimentalist.

His melancholy is not earnest, but assumed; "a melancholy," he says, "of mine own, compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects,"—he is a puzzle to the Duke and a challenge to Rosalind; he was the forerunner of Lawrence Sterne. His entire life is unsubstantial and a mockery, he thinks he can banish all reality, he was born a hypochondriac, all things discontent him, he knows the shadow side of every age and temperament, and censures all he sees.

He is without patience in a life of contemplation, was never fitted for activity, never learned selfmastery, he

can "suck melancholy out of a song as a weasel sucks eggs," "from hour to hour we ripe and rot, and thereby hangs a tale." His brain is as dry as the remainder biscuit after a voyage; he sits down and rails at the misery of mankind; he ridicules marriage, like all of his successors; he has "neither the scholar's melancholy which is emulation, nor the musician's which is fantastical, nor the courtier's, which is proud, nor the soldier's which is ambitious, nor the lawyer's which is politic"; thus he runs the gamut of pensive brooding and reflects every temperament.

He has given us the unrivalled—"All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players," yet Shakespeare for this surpassing paragraph drew upon Solon and a Jewish commentator. Man's life was divided into seven parts by many earlier authors; this is the summary of human life from the cynic's standpoint; duty and religion are omitted; the end is second childishness and mere oblivion, "sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything." For a magnificent refutation of Jaques' conclusion read Hamlet's "What a piece of work is man!"

Jaques has still his thousands of counterparts, young men in whom the springs of obligation and the sense of nobility and the longing for action are obliterated by the dust of indifference and criticism and scorn; to whom the universe is a glittering pageant, a passing show, an unreal panorama. And all such inevitably have Jaques' misanthropy, morbidity, indecision, and censure; they despise love and marriage and tenderness and hope and heaven.

In Touchstone, Shakespeare gives us a fool wholly unlike his others. The fool in *All's Well That Ends Well* is a prophetic clown. Those in *Twelfth Night* and *Lear* are more expert and conscious of their wit. Speed and Launce in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*,

are a pair whose wit is professed and studied. Shakespeare could laugh. But there are many modes of laughter. Hogarth has depicted a group in the pit of a theatre laughing at the play on the stage. Each face shows a different emotion. The habitual enjoyer of the comic is abandoned to his mirth without stint. By his side is his female companion, fairly overcome, tickled into a climax of merriment. Beyond sits one who has passed the culmination and wipes his eyes. A girl of twenty has her vacant intellect captured, and gazes expectantly for a new sensation. Near is a man whose half opened gaze and winking lid betoken reflection and curiosity. And a woman in the distance laughs because she is too dull to know just what excites her risibilities. And a peak nosed person of refinement condemns the whole circle for their vulgarity.

Thus the dramatist gives us the whole range of humor, many-sided, complete, temperamental,—not a shade is missing. With Jaques, he rails at the world; with Timon, he turns against it; in Petruchio, we have the tempest of high spirits; in *Romeo and Juliet,* the nurse lets loose her wanton tongue; in the *Merry Wives of Windsor,* Falstaff reaches the very height of pure humor.

The history of Shakespeare's laughter is the history of himself. At first it is that of a young man; then it is coalesced with fancy; then it is a union of all the faculties; then it is pathetic; then it is the joy of power; then it becomes irony; then it is musical, and, finally, it is tragic and terrible. Touchstone stands on the edge between instinct and consciousness, he is called both "a natural" and a fool, yet the folly of others is the source of his wit, he assumes the appearance of sound wisdom, his folly he calls his stalking horse. Sometimes he vents the deepest philosophy. He is a complex and most interesting character.

In Phoebe and Silvius, we have the rustic love of the shepherds, far beneath the intellectual amorousness of Rosalind and Orlando. Audrey is a coarse creature of the woods, in love with William, the country fellow,—thus there are three pairs of lovers: the refined, the rustic, and the low. Where else could you find such subtle delineation? And in old Adam, we have the perfect servant, serving two generations, devoted to both father and son, giving of his earnings to his master, whose age is as a lusty winter, frosty yet kindly,—and who is sure of that "He that doth the ravens feed and providently caters for the sparrow, will comfort his declining years." Well does Orlando tell him, "Thou art not for the fashion of these times, where none will sweat but for promotion, and having that, do choke their service up, even with the having."

Celia is Rosalind's opposite; this shows Shakespeare's genius in contrast,—more quiet and retired, she yields to her, is less witty, and more unobtrusive, yet full of intelligence and sweetness, she disdains all envy and jealousy, is a Horatio to Rosalind's Hamlet. She is always striking and animated, she tells us that she and Rosalind have slept together, rose at an instant, learned, played, eat together, and wheresoer we went, like Juno's swans, still we were coupled and inseparable. It is a splendid study in female friendship. Her love for Oliver was love at first sight, it needed no fires, it refused all raillery and banter, it was artless and complete. She thinks tears do not become a man, that kisses are Judas' children, that men only swear love because there is no truth in them, and that to say "aye" and "no" to all Rosalind's questions is more than to answer in a catechism.

As You Like It is the comedy of romantic life. Scarcely any other play is more often quoted. We are

in the wide world of nature, and cry with Emerson, "Good-bye, proud world, I'm going home!" Giant oaks with their umbrageous foliage; purling brooks lulling to measureless content; the stag with his horns; the wounded hart; the quiet hut thatched with straw; the pillow of flowers; the roaming sheep; the green pastures; Amiens under the greenwood tree; the sportive winds; Jaques watching his face in the silver stream; the long velvet sward; the plants and hawthornes; the osiers by the river; the spring time and chorus of birds;—these lure us all from the city's noise and contention and untruth into that "cathedral boundless as our wonder, whose quenchless lamps the sun and moon supply; its choir the winds, its organ thunder, its dome the sky". "When I am stretched beneath the pines, where the evening star so holy shines, I laugh at the lore and pride of man, at the sophist school and the learned clan; for what are they all in their high conceit, when man in the bush with God may meet?"

It is the function of this great pastoral to recall the primary joy in nature, the fresh incentive to meditation, the glory of flower and leaf and piney bough.

"The world is too much with us, late and soon
Getting and spending we lay waste our powers;
Little we see in nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
The sea that bares her bosom to the moon,
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are upgathered now like sleeping flowers—
For these, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not—great God! I'd rather be a Pagan
Suckled in a creed outworn; so might I,
Standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea,
Or hear old Triton blow his weathered horn."

KING LEAR

— BY —

F. HYATT SMITH

KING LEAR

MACBETH is the most rapid, and *Hamlet* is the slowest of Shakespeare's plays. *Lear* is hurried and long, it has a barbarous background, a gigantic setting, the whole play resembles a stormy night; nature and humanity are in convulsion. In it Shakespeare rivals Sophocles, man is the play of the elements, pity and terror alternate. The first intellects of the world have studied it in awe. Lamb thought it too colossal to be acted, and indeed there have been few who could reproduce it effectively.

The story is an old one. Lear was a ruler of ancient Britain, with three daughters, Cordelia and Goneril and Regan; he called all before him and asked how well they loved him; the first two answered hypocritically, pledging what they did not feel. Cordelia, last and youngest and best beloved, was too sincere and womanly to bribe him by false professions. She refuses to say what was not in her heart, her natural reserve becomes her fatal snare, she will only love him as a natural father, and the blinded man, stung to rage and dominated by passion, divided his kingdom between the false sisters and cut off the child who, when all others had betrayed and deserted him, took him to her heart, a broken and demented monarch, falling like an oak in the forest.

It is the great tragedy of ingratitude. In it Shakespeare surpasses himself. The play was first published in 1608. From the references to the eclipse of the sun we judge that it was written in 1605. Sir Philip Sidney, in his Arcadia, had employed the same plot which Shakespeare illuminated by his genius. That the effect might not be insupportable, the dramatist introduced a secondary plot, and we have Gloster and his sons Edgar and

Edmund; by Edmund he is tortured and wronged and by Edgar he is tended and supported. The under plot alone would have made a tragedy, but here it relieves the awful blackness of the main action.

Edmund is a minor Iago, destitute of feeling, a monster of vindictiveness; his knowledge of his shameless birth rankles in his soul. Edgar assumes madness to be the companion of the outcast king. He is light as his brother is darkness. Kent is incarnate devotion to truth and duty. He is one of Shakespeare's noblest men. Cornwall, a coward, is a fit mate for Regan, and is finally killed by a servant, to our relief. Goneril married Edmund and the union was designed in hell. Oswald is a mere factor yet at times faithful to his trust. Thus we have five awful characters as a background to the main actors.

Of all Shakespeare's fools, the fool in *Lear* is the most wonderful. He is no comic buffoon, no circus clown. His wild babblings conceal the most weighty conclusions. He is an inspired idiot, only Shakespeare could have drawn him, he is half comic and half serious, we take refuge in his sallies when the anguish for Lear overpowers us, and his devotion to Lear in all his wanderings touches the heart.

Goneril and Regan are furies in their hate, hags of night horror, fiends destitute of kindness, awful portrayures that even surpass Lady Macbeth in bald villainy and cunning. The imagination shudders to admit that such creatures may exist among women. Yet have they not their modern analogues? Surely the inner history of our insane asylums, where a weak and helpless father is not infrequently confined by his children, proves that the filial ingratitude of one age may reappear in another age in a different form.

KING LEAR

Lear is almost beyond analysis. It is profanation to touch him. He is a ship driven by the waves, a man of rash haste and furious passion and colossal pride, a giant torn by feeling, a monarch pushed forth by inhuman daughters into a storm that harmonizes with his distracted mind. Beneath all his aberrations is a basis of fact; his remorse for his petulant rejection of the faithful one increases with the action of the play, our compassion is exhausted when we see the wandering beggar exposed to the pitiless hail, his bodily and mental powers gone, a man "more sinned against than sinning." Few can read the last act without tears; when his wits desert him he sees it, some of his speeches surpass in pathos anything in literature, his tender recognition of Cordelia at the last is the climax of sorrow. His impatience at first produces his misfortunes.. We see the precipice on which he stands; he is pushed off and our pity begins. Blindly incredulous, rashly importunate, violently impetuous, yet to the last he is every inch a king.

And Cordelia, where is her counterpart? She unites the love of truth and the devotion to duty, woman's highest attributes. Faithful daughter and wife, too modest to proclaim her devotion, she will prove rather than profess. She begs her sisters to treat her father well, she sees their vileness yet calls no names; her's was a deep and unfathomable nature, of all Shakespeare's heroines she knew the least of joy. Her character is too fine for words, her heart is a well of unsounded devotion, she could not envy or hate or blame, she appears in but a few scenes yet the result is ineffable and complete. She is governed by the loftiest of motives, she approaches the ideal, she must be known to be loved and loved to be known, she irradiates the blackness of the tragedy like the sunlight after a storm.

The subdued quietness and the veiled shyness over all her emotions make her something to be studied and admired and loved; her eloquence is silence, her voice is characteristic, ever soft, gentle and low, an excellent thing in woman. She surpasses Imogen in her sensibility and tenderness and fortitude and magnanimity, she has more strength than Katherine, she has more grandeur than Portia, she has more devotion than Hermione; the intensity of her feeling is concealed beneath the dignified calmness of her deportment.

Like Abdiel in the great epic, "among the faithless, faithful only he"; at the conclusion of the play she reappears a ministering angel, and passes from our sight a glorified saint. Only the *Antigone* of Sophocles is worthy of comparison with her.

The motif and exposition are given in the first act. The haughty king would divide his territory. Goneril and Regan express their false devotion in lines that are the consummation of hypocrisy. Cordelia will love and be silent. She cannot heave her heart into her mouth. Threatened with rejection, she will give her father half of her love, reserving the other for him who may win her hand and heart. Not even the wise Kent can dissuade the infuriated Lear; he disowns and curses her. Burgundy would marry Cordelia for her dowry, but France takes her, for she in herself is a dowry, most rich being poor. Then follows the great picture wherein Gloster discerns in the late commotion in the heavens the presage of discord among kingdoms and families. Edmund answers that "we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon and the stars, as if we were villains by necessity"; here is medieval astrology and its influence. Goneril and her sister plot against their father, Kent declares he will serve Lear in all seasons, and now appear touches of Lear's coming insanity.

The Fool gives the first of his speeches: "Have more than thou showest, Speak more than thou knowest, Lend less than thou owest, Ride more than thou goest, Learn more than thou trowest, Set less than thou throwest, and thou shalt have more than two tens to a score." Note that Goneril cannot bear the mouthings of the Fool, for villainy never can endure simple wit. She would send the old man forth. He utters an awful curse upon her. "Turn all her mother's pains and benefits to laughter and contempt, that she may feel how sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child!"

The Fool tells Lear that the snail has a house to put his head in, not to give away to his daughters and leave his horns without a case. No play so abounds in maledictions and references to the lower animals. In Act 2 Edmund lies to his father as the sisters lied to Lear.

Indeed the whole action is like a greater and lesser storm proceeding at the same time. Edgar flees from his brother, he grimes his face with filth and faces the persecutions of the sky; his madness is assumed most perfectly, while Lear's madness is real. In Edgar's ravings we see a practical purpose in view, while in Lear's we have the constant brooding on one great anguish; so well did Shakespeare know the mind.

Lear, in despair, now turns to Regan for protection. Abandoned by one child, he turns to the other. Alas, she defends her inhuman sister, she calls her father old, and begs him to implore Goneril's forgiveness. Our pity increases. He and the Fool now go out into the storm—the elements rage, "spit fire, spout rain, nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters, I tax you not with unkindness. I never gave you kingdom, called you children—I, a poor, infirm, weak, despised old man."

The 4th scene is a convention of agonies. External nature convulsed, Lear insane, the babbling of the Fool, Kent faithful and tender—no such scene can be found elsewhere. Only Michael Angelo or Dante might have conceived it! Nature howls the woes of humanity. Kent, Lear and the Fool enter a rude hovel. Lear says: "O! that way madness lies: Let me shun that!" Yet even then he prays for other defenseless wretches that bide the pelting of this pitiless storm. Edgar enters disguised as a madman. The debate between him and Lear, interrupted by the mouthings of the Fool, surpasses all art. Gloster appears, and Edgar says "the prince of darkness is a gentleman." Lear asks him what is the cause of thunder? Edgar's feigned madness surpasses that of Hamlet. And he leaves, saying, "Childe Roland to the dark tower came."

Then follows the wonderful imitation trial. It is a medley in which all take part. Edgar is the Judge, the Fool sits by his side, Goneril and Regan are summoned in spirit. Lear cries: "She kicked the poor father." The trial proceeds, it is the climax of sorrow. Edgar can scarcely conceal his tears, Lear sees little dogs bark at him and babbles unintelligibly saying, "We'll go to supper in the morning."

The Fool is the soul of pathos in a sort of comic setting, yet his fun contrasted with Lear's agony is idealized into tragic beauty. We seem to gaze on something surpassing earth and time; here is humanity deserted, old age abandoned, while pity weeps and folly smiles. Lear knows that "you cannot fetter strong madness in a silken thread, charm ache with air, and agony with words." It is tremendous realism. In an awful scene that follows, Gloster is captured, Regan pulls out his beard, and puts out his aged eyes; she says "he can smell his way to

Dover." Gloster is all dark and comfortless now. The servants note the deed, and predict that women will all turn monsters.

In Act 4 men are the sport of the gods. All is confusion. We learn that it is better to be despised than to be despised and flattered. The unsubstantial air is sweeter than human scorn. The strange mutations of life make us willing to leave it. Edgar utters a profound piece of philosophy in "the worst is not so long as we can say—this is the worst." This was a favorite passage with Edwin Booth. The fellow feeling that prevails among the destitute is beautifully shown by the solicitude of the sightless Gloster for Lear and the Fool. "As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods—they kill us for their sport."

This hapless quartette in misery, surpassing anything in fiction or in poetry, have lost faith in man and in deity; only the storm accords with their inward anguish. Lost to the world and to themselves, they have found kindness in the biting wind and comfort in the driving rain. Nothing more is needed to deduce the fall of man from his original estate than this *miserere* of despair. How many hapless vagrants since have welcomed the play of the elements after man's ingratitude! It is the very crown of the dramatist's art that he so pierces to the core of human neglect, and that with the increasing sum of sorrow he compels the heavens to weep at man's stony-hearted attitude.

If the play teaches anything, it is that nature is after all kind in her rudest moments. Madmen now lead the blind and Edgar leads Gloster to Dover's cliffs. There is a world in the lines: "Give me thy arm, poor Tom shall lead thee!" It were impossible that such a pair as Goneril and Albany, her husband, should long agree. He fears her disposition, and she calls him a milklivered man. She

reminds us of Lady Macbeth, yet she surpasses her in cool and defiant sin, in calculating and unfeeling hate. Milton never drew such a woman, in whom the springs of sex were dry and the fountains of goodness congealed. It is a picture of the under world. She is a tigress, "deformity seems not in the fiend so horrid as in woman." Albany is not wholly sold unto Satan, he relents a little. He upbraids his wife. "What have you done? Tigers, not daughters, a father have you madded. Thou art a fiend, a woman's shape doth shield thee!"

As Hugo well says, "Shakespeare takes ingratitude and gives the monster two heads." Goneril is the calm wielder of pitiless force, Regan is the smaller and shriller malice. Even in their love they are odious. Their caresses are the blandishments of serpents. To the last Goneril is true to her nature. Regan is killed by her sister, who takes her own life, and boldly enters the undiscovered country. All through the play the noble Kent walks the high table-land of devotion and manliness and truth. He relieves the darkness. Without him we would faint under the accumulation of horrors.

Sweet is the story that comes from France, where the lovely Cordelia seated on her throne hears of the woes of her distant father. "An ample tear trill'd down her delicate cheek. You have seen rain and sunshine at once; her smiles and tears were like a better way." Once she cried: "Sisters! Sisters! shame of ladies! Sisters!" But not a word of hate or recrimination. Never was such magnanimity portrayed before nor since. This was Cordelia. Kent charges all the tragedy to the starry influence. "It is the stars above us that govern our conditions."

There is a picture of the medical science of that rude age in the interview of Cordelia and the doctor.

She asks: "What can man's wisdom in the restoring of Lear's bereaved sense? He that helps him takes all my outward worth." He answers, "There is means, madam; our foster nurse of nature is repose, the which he lacks." It reminds us of Macbeth's "can'st thou minister to a mind diseased, pluck up the memory of a rooted sorrow?" Indeed the whole tragedy turns about a mind unhinged by unparalleled misfortune and neglect. Cordelia shines the one star in this black night. Gloster would cast himself off from Dover's high cliff, but Edgar leads him carefully below. He does not yet know his faithful son whom he disowned.

Lear enters dressed in wild flowers, yet every inch a king. Nothing in all literature approaches this scene for kingly grandeur. Mad and deserted, lonely and uncrowned, his heart gnawed by filial ingratitude, his mind unhinged, great thoughts still flicker in his brain. Gloster would kiss his sovereign's hand, but Lear says: "Let me wipe it first, it smells of mortality." What a touch! Thus the two poor outcasts talk, the one blind and the other insane, yet Lear pities him, for even the blind may see how this world goes. Then the great passage: "Robes and furr'd gowns hide all. Plate sin with gold and the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks; arm it in rags and a pigmy's straw doth pierce it. Get thee glass eyes and like a scurvy politician seem to see the things thou dost not. Now, now, now, pull off my boots." It is reason in madness.

The last scene of this act is like a breath of heaven. Lear is in a tent softly sleeping, Cordelia and the doctor work over him; she thanks honest Kent for her father's preservation, and cries—"O you kind gods, cure this great breach in his abused nature! O my dear father! Restoration hang thy medicine on my lips, and let this kiss repair those violent harms that my two sisters have

in their reverence made." Then "Was this a face to be opposed against the warring winds? Mine enemy's dog, though he had bit me, should have stood that night against my fire." Lear then wakes, saying "You do me wrong to take me out of the grave."

Cordelia: "Sir, do you not know me?" Lear: "You are a spirit, I know; when did you die?" Cordelia: "O look upon me, sir, and hold your hands in benediction o'er me." Lear: "I am a very foolish fond old man, fourscore and upward, and to deal plainly, I fear I am not in my perfect mind. . . . Do not laugh at me, for, as I am a man, I think this lady to be my child Cordelia!" Cordelia: "And so I am, I am."

Was ever such a scene portrayed? The aged father returning to reason, the angelic daughter bending above him to heal his malady with a kiss, their mutual tears, her delight at his recognition and his awakening to her voice; his contrition for his mistake of long ago, her boundless love that floods her being and his like an ocean with its forgiveness, it is the sublimation of love and tenderness, generosity and recognition. All the past is obliterated, the poor prodigal outcast comes to himself, and supported on the only breast that ever beat for him he totters away. Well did Sir Walter say, "Woman is like ivy—the greater the ruin the closer she clings."

Would that the play might have closed here! Then we would have had a duet of birds and a sunset of hope. But the final act must now come. Goneril sinks lower and lower, she plots Regan's death, there is a great battle. Lear and Cordelia are taken prisoners by the hostile forces, "truth is on the scaffold, wrong is on the throne." Yet Cordelia, courageous to the last, exclaims: "We are not the first who with best meaning have incurred the worst. Shall we not see these daughters and these sis-

ters?" Here she discloses the wonderful patience and nobility of her nature. It is a touch of sarcasm but how exquisitely veiled.

Lear would away to prison: "We two alone will sing like birds in the cage. When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down and ask of thee forgiveness. So we'll live and pray and sing, and tell old tales and laugh at gilded butterflies and hear poor rogues talk of court news; and we'll wear out in a walled prison packs and sects of great ones that ebb and flow by the moon." He wanders in his mind now, and the two disappear under guard. Edgar kills Edmund, Goneril and Regan are brought in dead, Edgar would rescind an order to kill Lear and Cordelia, but it is, alas, too late, and the aged father enters bearing his murdered angel in his arms.

Lear's speech here surpasses anything in Shakespeare, it is the frenzy of a Titan, the roar of a giant, it even exceeds the awful words of Othello: "Howl, howl, howl, O you are men of stones! Had I your tongues and eyes I'd use them so that heaven's vault should crack. She's gone forever! I know when one is dead and when one lives. She's dead as earth. Lend me a looking glass; if that her breath will mist or stain the stone, why, then she lives." "A plague upon you murderers, traitors all! I might have saved her; now she's gone forever! And my poor Fool is hanged! Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life, and thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more; never, never, never, never, never! Do you see this? Look on her, look—her lips, look there, look there!" And the great heart breaks and the tortured soul passes into the beyond.

Thus the tragedy ends without relief. In *Othello,* Iago is led away to torture, but here the innocent are tortured and the guilty ascend the throne. Is it just? It is in-

scrutable. There is little trace of Providence as in *Hamlet*, the air is heavy, the stars are hidden and nature is convulsed; it is a vast battle that is too great for human comprehension. Tennyson called it the catastrophe of a world. Here the dramatist let loose all his superhuman powers. It is a whirlwind of passion, the good go down, our thoughts are in anarchy, petrified indifference is contrasted with swollen anguish, human compassion is exhausted, humanity is stripped of all its honors and left a prey to scornful power. Cordelia's death is the consummation of cruelty, surely the catastrophe is terrible! Yet is she not a saint prepared for heaven? No one would wish to see Lear's sufferings prolonged. Who would wish to place a crown on that head that lightnings had scarred? And is not martyrdom the only crown for such a life as hers? What is life? Is it to get or to give, to gain or to bless, to possess or to suffer? What had Lear to offer to the Fool? No kingdom nor estate, no gold nor power, no joy nor peace. Only the life of a wanderer, homeless and childless, a thatched hovel and straw, persecution, abandonment, hatred, neglect, a beggar's couch and a beggar's fare.

When the fatal word was spoken that drove the old king out into the heath, and all the world rejected the insane man, it was the faithful Fool who said: "That, Sir, which serves and seeks for gain, And follows but for form, Will pack when it begins to rain, And leave thee in the storm. But I will tarry; the Fool will stay; And let the wise man fly; The knave turns fool that runs away, The Fool no knave perdy." As Lear's insanity grows, the Fool would banish it by his mirth. When the night descends wherein the cub-drawn bear would couch and the unbonneted monarch runs, it is the Fool who attends him, who rallies and supports him, saying: "He that has a

house to put his head in has a good headpiece." When Lear sees his wits desert him, the faithful servitor laughs and says: "He that has and a little tiny wit, With hev ho! the wind and the rain, Must make content with his fortunes fit, For the rain it raineth every day." Never does his cheerfulness flee. Inky skies, tumultuous thunder, the quaking earth, blinding flashes of lightning, sheets of water and showers of hail, is this a setting for the attachment of two souls, is this the condition to cement two aching hearts? Yet, like Hagar and Ishmael driven forth by Abraham, hand in hand go these miserable men, a naughty night to swim in—their tattered rags dripping, twin companions in sorrow and want, bereft of all comfort and denied life's necessities, never to part until the one is hanged for his devotion, and the other dies on his daughter's lips. It would seem that Shakespeare in derision would hold up the example of a Fool to men and say: "This is attachment, where is your vaunted friendship?" Strip the richest of their property, strip the wisest of their knowledge, strip the handsomest of their beauty, and where are their friends? But go farther, and strip a regal mind of its powers, make the intellectual cathedral totter and the judgment wander, transform a harmonious thinker into a disconnected babbler, push reason from its throne—there remains no refuge but an asylum with grated windows and guarded walls.

If a friend is the one who comes in when all the world goes out, where will you find the counterpart of this wise Fool, who clung the closer when the rain increased, and who loved the more when insanity clouded the brain? Byron's truest friend was his dog, and Shakespeare's greatest friend was a Fool. What a satire is this upon our carpet attachments, our church civilities, our opera greetings, our veneered and lacquered amenities, our family

professions, our altar pledges—"until death doth us part!" From the nameless grave of a nameless Fool we must pluck the roses of an unchanging friendship, from the steamy rags of a dripping outcast we must catch the drops of holy water, through the perforated roof of a squalid hut we must see the stars appear. Who among us knows the friendship of nature? Timon found the forest a relief from the flatteries of men, the Duke read sermons in stones and books in the running brook, Lear found midnight thunders sweeter than palace lies.

As Othello warns us that refinement and education may become the very artifices of hell to allure and enslave a noble mind, as Hamlet warns us that procrastination benumbs the will and freezes the resolution, so Lear warns us that all our boasted pride of wealth, if unsupported by personal sacrifice, is but the glittering maelstrom to engulf each unreflecting soul. Goneril gained and lost; Cordelia lost and won. Regan expelled herself when she drove her father out in the storm. He that saveth his life shall lose it. Cordelia died for a principle, she disdained the primrose path.

What a satire on the flimsy gains and estates of men is this immortal play! Albany sits on Lear's throne, while its just possessor is the pitiless sport of the hail. Were all the property in the world suddenly to change hands and to pass to its rightful owners, what a hurrying and confusion, what shame and mortification would ensue! Cordelia was rich though poor, for she owned herself. Principle is more than self-preservation, "'tis man's perdition to be safe when for the truth he ought to die."

Wendell Phillips thought that no ardent Christian could die at ease in his bed. He called Christianity a battle, not a dream. Our morals are nickel-plated, we admire Regulus but we do not imitate him, we ponder Emerson

but we do not dare to follow him. Cordelia's end horrifies us because martyrs are less plentiful than misers. "For a cap and bells our lives we pay, bubbles we buy with a whole soul's tasking; 'tis heaven alone that is given away. 'tis only God may be had for the asking." Shakespeare knew the human heart. He knew that only character and thought are real property. In the whole length and breadth of his immortal works there is no wealth but achievement, no success but truth, no estate but character.

You cannot find a character in all Shakespeare who is sublimated by vice, nor one who is degraded save by himself. Timon of Athens indicts us for our feverish worship of gold. Wolsey indicts us for our reckless ambitions. Prospero indicts us for our domination by the material. Portia indicts us for injustice to the weak. History is a spiral, what is lost in one age is regained in the next, the centuries are beads on time's string and not of equal value. Shall we take our ethics from the morning paper?

I have heard how Truth once learned of the threatening and incursion of her foes, and she determined to muster her servants and review their weapons, and beyond all her expectations she found everything prepared. There was a vast host of armed men, weapons which they exercised admirably, brightly flashing from afar. But as she drew nearer, she sank into a swoon; what she had thought iron and steel were mere toys; the swords were made of the mere lead of words; the breastplates of the soft linen of pleasure; the helmets of the wax of plumed vanity; the shields were of papyrus scrolled over with opinions; the spears were thin reeds of weak conjecture; the colors were spider webs of philosophical systems; the cannon was Indian reed; the powder was poppy seed; the balls were of glass—Through the indolent neglect of their lead-

ers they had sold their true weapons and substituted these. "What avails me," she cried, "your faith, since your actions are worthless; of old when I led naked unarmed combatants to the field, one martyr, one warrior, faithful to death, was worth more to me than a hundred of you in your gilded and silvered panoplies!"

ROMEO AND JULIET

— BY —

F. HYATT SMITH

ROMEO AND JULIET

THERE is nothing new under the sun. The Arabians had malleable glass which they twined around their wrists; Cicero saw the entire Ilaid written on a skin so small that it was carried in a nutshell; Nero used a gem in his ring for an opera glass; the Egyptian colors seem immortal; artists have lost Titian's method of mixing pigments; English lancets cannot endure the atmosphere of India unless gilded, while the Damascus blades are as perfect as when made in the oldest city in the world; Saladin drew a sword that severed a down-pillow with a single stroke; Pompey's pillar weighed a ton and was hung in air; the ancients built canals far superior to ours; the Egyptians had locks that opened for the passage of their boats; no man knows how the Pyramids were ventilated, nor their gigantic stones quarried and erected; the railroad dates back to Memphis; every social question was debated in Thebes; Solomon's Temple was guarded by lightning rods; the spinning machine is two thousand years old; a Hindoo princess wore seven garments so diaphonous that her father thought her scarcely covered; steam must have been used in Assyria; no man can now make a perfect mirror of bronze; the ruins of Pompeii disclose cut glass of wonderful patterns; the best modern puns may be traced to Greece and Rome; the story of Cinderella is old as the race; and Shakespeare borrowed most of the plots on which he erected his unfading creations.

It is more difficult to be up to antiquity, than up to date. A Neapolitan writer in 1476 described a young man named Mariotto, who was enamored of a citizen's daughter named Giannozza, and was loved by her in return. The Fates opposed their union, but they were

secretly married by a monk. Soon Mariotto killed the girl's kinsman and was banished to Alexandria. In his absence, her father urged her to accept the hand of a rich suitor, but in distress she turned to the friar, who gave her a powder which cast her into a three days' slumber resembling death. She was buried in a church. Meanwhile, the absent Mariotto broke from exile, and hurrying to the church where she lay entombed, flung himself on the grave. Here he was discovered and taken for a thief and beheaded. The agonized girl entered a convent and died of a broken heart.

Upon this early story Shakespeare built the greatest love tragedy in the world. *Romeo and Juliet* is set in Italy, the land of passion and romance. The moonlit nights have a peculiar warmth and lustre, the fruit trees are tipped with silver, the nightingale sings in the pomegranate boughs, the masquers are on the palazzo, in the streets at noon the light glares, and the blood is stirring in men's veins, and the rapier leaps from the scabbard, the perplexities of love and hate are swiftly solved by the poignard and the poison-phial.

The play was published in 1597, and is said to have been the master's first attempt at tragedy, when youthful ardor and ambition fired his energies, and love gilded every scene. It is a tragedy of high and natural passion, of alternate rapture and despair, of maiden loveliness and manly hope, of festivity and foreboding, of embrace and death. It is his only tragedy built upon a love tale. It has the sweetness of the rose, the languor of the midnight bird, the softness of the southern spring.

Romeo and Juliet are in love, but they are not love-sick. There is no insipid interchange of superficial sentiments, no saccharine smiles and sighs, but the health and glow of two fervid natures, the heart beats, the blood courses,

all that was to come was theirs; their hopes were of air and their passions of fire. We have a picture of human life as it is in the order of nature. Inexhaustible passion is checked by bitter experience, and the nuptial couch becomes the untimely grave. The time is midsummer and the action takes but five days.

The prologue calls the main actors a "pair of ill-starred lovers," and indeed from the very beginning the heavens are unpropitious, quarrel follows quarrel, Fate is the undertone of all the rapture and ecstasy; all is done in youthful haste; superstition and the supernatural have full sway; the poetry is the richest possible, splendid imagery throngs each act, nature is wildly prodigal, intense heat and impetuous power and throbbing desire vivify the lines, there is no chill mist and northern gloom as in *Hamlet,* but brilliant color glows throughout and all the forms of the language come from the dreamy south. We are taught that the affections are given us to heighten our enjoyment of life, but if too far pursued they transform all blessing into curse and chaos.

On a dark background of family rivalry and hate that fills Verona with uproar and blood, the tragedy is based, but the youthful lovers do not share the ancient antipathy, and on this desolating soil their love grows more luxuriant and intense. From early times the Montagues and Capulets have warred, and the first scene introduces the Prince who quells a fracas in the street. Romeo is already touched by the melancholy of love; he walks abroad in the mornings "adding to clouds more clouds with his deep sighs." Mercutio questions what lengthens his cousin's hours. He is told it is not having that which having makes them short. "Love is a smoke raised with the fume of sighs, being purged a fire sparkling in lover's eyes; being vexed a sea nourished with lover's tears, a

madness most discreet, a choking gall, and a preserving sweet."

Thus he is already ripe for the heavenly impression. And Shakespeare makes him the victim of an earlier passion, here as always true to nature. Juliet is now but fourteen and her ambitious father would have her two years hence the bride of Paris. Hamlet lived in the world of thought; Romeo lives in the world of emotion. He lives and moves and has his being in love. When he meets Juliet it is love at first sight. All our modern conventions, our place and form, our social regulations, Shakespeare avoids; the tide of passion leaps like a spring, crystal-pure from the vernal earth, he sees his queen first at a ball and says, "her beauty hangs upon the cheek of night like a rich jewel in an Ethiope's ear"; both are masqued; they kiss; she says, "Sin from my lips? O trespass sweetly urged, give me my sin again." She asks the nurse his name; "If he be married, my grave is like to be my wedding bed." Yet even now his mind misgives some consequence yet hanging in the stars, "tho He that hath the steerage of his course directs his sail." What a picture of man's helplessness and the guidance of God!

The great garden scene follows. It is enchantment. Juliet betrays her feelings in soliloquy, and shrouded by considerate night; Romeo can hope for an interview only at the peril of his life; innocence struggles with desire; she gives and withdraws; speaks and retracts; manifests her love and yet is not unwomanly; declines his oaths and remembers the falseness of his sex; she steps out of the enclosure of decorum but is thus led by her nature as a childish innocent, by impelling necessity, and by her good intentions. Not an unbecoming word tarnishes her lips.

Nowhere in the world is the charm and shame of innocence so perfectly blended as here. "Thou knowest the mask of night is on my face, else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek for that which thou hast heard me speak to-night. O gentle Romeo, if thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully; or if thou thinkest I am too quickly won, I'll frown and be perverse and say thee nay." "My love is as boundless as the sea, my love as deep; the more I give to thee the more I have; for both are infinite." This one passage reveals all the girlish nature. It is a more vehement confession than that of Miranda in *The Tempest*. She does not pine in thought with a green and yellow melancholy. Her passion is a mountain torrent sweeping all before it in resistless flood. The action of the play is now fairly begun and on it rushes to its sad consummation.

Into this world of love, Shakespeare introduces the gray-haired Friar Laurence, the oracle of experience and age. He is the chorus in the tragedy, teaching that excess in any enjoyment, however pure, transforms the sweet into bitterness. In his first soliloquy, as he muses in his garden, we have wonderful truths gathered like his own herbs from the ground and touching all human life. "Naught so vile that on the earth doth live, but to the earth some special good doth give; nor aught so good but strained from that fair use, revolts from true birth stumbling on abuse; virtue itself turns vice being misapplied, and vice sometimes by action dignified; within the infant rind of this fair flower, poison hath residence and medicine power; two such opposed kings encamp them still in man as well as herbs, grace and rude will; and where the worser is predominant full soon the canker death eats up that plant."

Here we learn that the ground is filled with remedies for man and implanted for a wise purpose; and that the triumph of will over grace always marks the decline of a well balanced nature. He is sympathetic with the lovers, looks with a kindly eye on their ardor, chides Romeo for forgetting Rosaline, and warns him that "they stumble that run fast."

The nurse and Peter are a contrast in their low estimate of love to the prominent actors. She advises Juliet that the Friar waits in his cell to unite her with the object of her adoration, and she hastens to meet him there. They are made one in secret by the holy man. Mercutio falls a victim of Tybalt, the coarse bully. Already the passion of the lovers has produced a deadly hate that issues in murder. Mercutio cries, "a plague on both your houses!" Romeo comes, learns of the death of his friend, and avenges it with Tybalt's death. This is the climax of the play.

For this crime he is banished by the Prince. The wonderful soliloquy of Juliet follows; "Come gentle night, come loving blackbrowed night, give me my Romeo, and when he shall die, take him and cut him out in little stars, and he will make the face of heaven so fine that all the world will be in love with night."

What an antiphony of bird voices do we hear in the fifth scene: Juliet at the window and Romeo beneath in the garden: "Wilt thou be gone? it is not yet near day; it was the nightingale and not the lark, believe me, Love, it was the nightingale. It was the lark, the herald of the morn; look, Love, what envious streaks do lace the severing clouds in yonder east; I must be gone and live, or stay and die. Yon light is not daylight I know it; I, therefore, stay, yet thou need'st not to be gone." She seems to see the coming tragedy; "O God I have an

ill divining soul; methinks I see thee now thou art below, as one dead in the bottom of a tomb." Thus they part.

She is betrothed to the unloved Paris, and must be married on Thursday next, and in despair she seeks again the wise Friar for a way out of the maze, and he gives her the vial of stupefying liquor that shall "make the roses in her lips and cheeks to fade, her eye's windows fall, each part deprived of supple government, stiff, stark, and cold, appear like death; thus she shall continue two and forty hours and then awake as from a pleasant sleep."

It was a rare device well worthy of an Italian monk. She had been bent on suicide. Only a woman deeply devoted and wrought up to a pitch of passion could have accepted such a hazardous plan. The crafty Friar had foreseen that the impetuous pair would be entrapped by Fate. But he was their best friend as many a minister has been since that day. Perhaps the new therapeutics will be employed in similar emergencies at long range and with less risk, hypnotic suggestion may be used to conceal and preserve the lady from the imperious demands of ambitious parents, and restore her to the arms of her desired spouse. Here is a new and profitable field for clergymen, a Gretna Green of the New Thought.

Juliet has little forethought, she is ardent abandon, eager affection, a thing of love fresh as the daisy on the grass; passion takes whole hold of her being, she is soft and fair and flexible, small and delicately formed, languorous and inexperienced, natural and unconstrained, not simple like Miranda, nor grand like Isabel, nor fanciful like Viola. She has a tender heart and a vivid imagination, she invests her mate with all the graces of nobility; he is the object of her dreams and the summit of her hopes; she is pure virgin love unsophisticated

and destitute of weariness; subject to superstitious influences, passion makes her poetical, she is all in each act of her soul; her first thought always is of Romeo's danger; women have fewer elements in their composition than men, and thus are better poised. Juliet is the nearest approach we have to Cleopatra, but pure; she is impatient for self-surrender; with her, wisdom cannot overcome love; her's is an Amazon torrent that bursts its bounds, a cataract of passion that will not be stayed. We love her for her ingenuousness, for her dew of youth, for her tireless vigil of ardent devotion, for her unstinted wealth of affection, for her charming simplicity, for her immature freshness, maidenly attachment, and grand loyalty to the very last.

Love, or its counterpart, is bought and sold; it is bandied about on rude lips and in suggestive hints; it is a thing of the mart and parlor and counting-room and ball. Our modern Juliets and Priscillas weight with dainty accuracy all the accessories of marriage, all its emoluments, all its risks and rewards. Too soon their love alters when it alteration finds. But not so our heroine, she never suspects a price or cost or separation; her soul and his rushed together like an alkali and an acid; the voice of nature to them was the voice of God. And Romeo was rich in having such a jewel, as twenty seas if all their sands were pearl, their water nectar, and their rocks pure gold. She was his till death did them part.

As an offset to Juliet, we have the great picture of the nurse,—crafty and vulgar, garrulous and sympathetic, a devoted family servant impatient of delay, knowing her young mistress' age to an hour, "the prettiest babe that e'er she nursed," she calls Paris "a man of wax," and this completely sums him up and many others since; her

own relations with the common Peter are far from commendable,, but she puts her mistress on a pedestal and defends her continually. Rosemary and Romeo have the same letter, she leads him on with clever hints and sly observations,—"my mistress is the sweetest lady, I anger her sometimes and tell her Paris is the properer man," she gets the ladder for the eager Romeo to mount in the garden; she apprises Juliet of the death of Tybalt and significantly says, the smooth dissembler: "There's no trust, no faith, no honesty in men; all perjured, all forsworn,—give me some aqua vitae!" She unites her cunning with the monk's wisdom to preserve the sorrowing girl. She praises his learning with a flattering smile, even a monk, she knows, is susceptible. How she simulates amazement in the morning when Juliet cannot be wakened; "Why lamb, why lady, fie you slugabed! What! not a word? How sound she is asleep! I needs must wake her; Madam, madam, madam! Alas, alas, my lady's dead, O well a day that ever I was born!"

I know nothing in the whole range of the dramatist's work more perfect than this delineation, as true today as three centuries ago.

Romeo's first passion for Rosaline was a waking dream, a fantastic revery; his second and real attachment was a deep and permanent reality, he was elevated to the third heaven, or hurried on to abject despair. He is Shakespeare's unlucky man, with the best intentions and highest hopes, he is perpetually unfortunate, failing in every aspiration, exerting himself to the utmost only to fall anew. Ill fortune marked him for her own. He was himself the Banquo at the feast. He prophesies his own failure. Vainly does he try to pacify Tybalt, vainly does he decline the proffered duel. Mercutio takes up the abandoned quarrel and Romeo's ill-omened interfer-

ence slays his friend. When the dying Mercutio asks, "Why the devil came you between us?" he only offers the excuse, "I thought all for the best". He is a victim of stubborn wilfulness. Oppressed by society, hateful to him, of refined and generous mind, he repels relatives and friends who seek him, is disdainful of advice, melancholy, laconic, always foreboding the worst, his nature blossoms with Fate, his parents are aloof from him; he and Tybalt stand like opposing crags, when he has killed him he cries, "I am fortune's fool".

After Juliet's death he burns with a grand defiance, and it is this event that rouses the embers of his latent courage. He is banished by the duke and is wholly crushed, while Juliet rises to the emergency like a true woman; and not only comforts but commands him. He is steeped in love as Hamlet in meditation; a man of the soft and sunny south. He cannot maintain his will in successive disasters; he is Hamlet in love. He involves others in his ruin; he is a creature of haste; he dies by poison and even then in a hurry. If less in a hurry he might have lived,—he leaves all to heaven, and falls. He trusts the flattering truth of sleep, when Juliet's body sleeps in Capulet's tomb he cries, "I defy you stars!" For forty ducats he buys a dram of poison and, against the law, tells the poor apothecary,—"The world is not thy friend, nor the world's law; the world affords no law to make thee rich; then be not poor but break it and take this." "There is thy gold, worse poison to men's souls."

At the tomb he rises into majesty, the former man is transformed, Paris intrudes and Romeo slays him; he utters a grand eulogy on the dead girl; "O my love, my wife, death that hath sucked the honey of thy breath hath had no power yet upon thy beauty; thou art not

conquered, beauty's ensign yet is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks; and death's pale flag is not advanced there; I never from this palace of dim night depart again; here, here will I remain with worms that are thy chambermaids; O here will I set up my everlasting rest and shake the yoke of inauspicious stars from this world-wearied flesh; eyes look your last! arms take your last embrace! and lips, O you, the doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss a dateless bargain to engrossing death; here's to my love! O true apothecary! thy drugs are quick,—thus with a kiss I die."

Juliet faintly hears and rouses herself in the tomb. She kisses him. Then she snatches his dagger and falls lifeless on his lifeless form. Friar Laurence tells us all; the riddle is solved; he reproaches Capulet and Montague for their ancient feud; they join hands; Juliet is to have a golden statue; Romeo shall be laid at her side, "a gloomy peace this morning brings, for never was a story of more woe than this of Juliet and Romeo."

Byron sang, "Man's love is of his life a thing apart; 'tis woman's whole existence". Shakespeare's men are studies and they grow; his women are quickly transformed and seem immediate creations. The great orchard scene is the loveliest in all literature. She will be his, "a rose by any other name would smell as sweet."

Mercutio is a great masterpiece, a man of little culture, rude and ugly, scornful of love, despising dreams and all presentiments, gifted with extraordinary wit, perceiving the humorous in all things, even dying he jokes with his last breath. In the scene with Benvolio he predicts that with such a foe he would not live an hour; and this prediction is soon fulfilled with Tybalt. His great tribute to sleep is well known and matchless; "O then I see Queen Mab hath been with you; she is the fairies' mid-

wife and she comes in shape no bigger than an agate stone, on the fore finger of an alderman; drawn with a team of little atomies athwart men's noses as they lie asleep; her waggon spokes made of long spinner's legs, the cover of the wings of grasshoppers; the traces of the smallest spider's web, the collars of the moonshine's watery beams, her whip of cricket's bone, the lash of film, her waggoner a small grey coated gnat, not half so big as a round little worm pricked from the lazy finger of a maid; her chariot is an empty hazel-nut, made by the joiner squirrel or old grub; and in this state she gallops night by night, through lover's brains and then they dream of love; o'er courtiers' knees that dream on courtesies straight; o'er lawyers' fingers who straight dream on fees; o'er ladies' lips who straight on kisses dream; sometimes comes she with a tithe pig's tail tickling a parson's nose as lies asleep, then dreams he of another benefice, sometimes she driveth o'er a soldier's neck and then dreams he of cutting foreign throats, of breaches, ambuscades, Spanish blades, of healths five fathom deep;—I talk of dreams which are the children of an idle brain, begot of nothing but vain fantasy; as thin of substance as the air, and more inconstant than the wind." This wonderful whimsicality and grotesque raillery have always commanded the admiration of readers.

An old smoky tavern is now said to stand upon the palace of the Capulets and at the end of the courtyard the lovers are said to lie. Thousands go thither each year. Such is the immortality of genius.

This play gives love as God made it. It depicts a pitiless struggle against evil destiny. The Friar says, "A greater Power than we can contradict hath thwarted our plans for safety." "We cannot accuse any blind fate for it is tumultuous nature alone which shattered the

helm." Over the grave of the ill-starred pair all feud and dissension disappear and peace is finally restored to the long-disturbed city.

The play is not so flawless as *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* nor so harmonious. But it is the great and typical love story of the world. It rises far above all attempts to supercede it. It was done in Shakespeare's adolescence, before he has seen the sear, the yellow leaf; it reflects the exuberant passion and ardor and daring of the young man; it is a fine contrast to his second tragedy, *Hamlet;* the heroes are precisely opposite in all respects; in *Hamlet* love is disappointed, in Romeo love is fully satisfied; Hamlet's friend, Horatio, is grave, well-balanced and strong; Romeo's friend, Mercutio, is all brilliance, wit, effervescence of spirit; poor Ophelia, crazed, seeks a muddy death; Juliet passionately desires an end to all her misadventures; both Hamlet and Romeo are whirled along the tide of destiny like leaves on a stream. Neither can rule his events.

We feel, all through the five acts, a thunder-storm brooding; a pall of Nemesis hangs above us; nature is exactly adapted to the action, for it is her languorous and heated season when each hour is high-colored and intense. Shakespeare always uses external nature as the medium and milieu of human passion. In *King Lear,* we have terrible storm, and wind, and rain, and flood, and all nature is convulsed. In *Macbeth,* Duncan unsuspiciously enters the castle, lulled by the martlet-haunted portals and the sweet-scented air; in *Julius Caesar* the central figure of the world falls after a night of prodigy and portent when even graves were mysteriously disturbed; in *The Merchant of Venice,* Lorenzo and Jessica sing their love strains under a star-sown sky, every orb in which is quiring to young-eyed cherubims,

while the moonlight sleeps upon the verdant bank; in *As You Like It,* the deer approaches the pool, Jacques reclines on a grassy couch, the pines drop their slender needles, and adversity itself is soothed by green haunts and woody shades and mysterious elves; in *Pericles,* the water ever utters its tender tones of monition and complaint; in *The Tempest,* it is the scented isle of enchantment that prepares us for Prospero and Ariel and Miranda and the flitting spirits that throng the sky.

The great dramatist once said that "the lunatic, the lover, and the poet are of imagination all compact." In Romeo's nature the emotional atmosphere is more important than the reality itself, he walks in a world of fancy, while Juliet lives far from the golden haze of enchanting ecstasy and is alarmed by the excess of delight. He is never fully delivered from his self-consciousness; Juliet, on the contrary, is self-possessed in every act.

Shakespeare never gave us the development of a woman's soul, no Romola nor Maggie nor Dorothea. If we except Cleopatra, his women are not a complexity of faculties like his men; he venerated the feminine element of humanity as the higher and the more divine. It is Juliet who takes the lead and proposes and urges the sudden marriage. She is eager that the deed should be quick and irreversible. She never had an adviser or sustainer. Her mother is a proud Italian matron who had not married for love, and whose nature is cold and deadly.

One of the first lessons of this tragedy is that every strong emotion which exalts the life of man also exposes the entire life to increased risk.

One sometimes enquires which of Shakespeare's women he loved the best. Was it Perdita who never knew a sorrow, with the flowers and field air about her? Was

it Miranda, the child of nature, in her heavenly isle listening to songs celestial, and watching that wand that could evoke spirits from the vasty deep? Was it Cleopatra, the gorgeously robed and intoxicating queen, in her barge of burnished gold? Was it Lady Macbeth, that amazing combination of energy, self-control, and desperate resort? Was it fair Ophelia, bringing her flowers and pining away, —too fragile for earth? Was it Portia in her majesty and truth, the loveliest judge in all the world? Was it Desdemona, the true, dying like the swan and the victim of unfounded jealousy? Was it Cordelia, regal and faithful, and the rarest daughter ever painted? Was it Katherine, the womanly, resenting the haughty Cardinal? Was it Hermoine, the calm and forgiving wife, who saved her foolish husband and redeemed his better self? Was it Cressida, the light bubble of vanity and grace without depth or purpose? Was it Isabella, the embodiment of conscience, or Helena, the embodiment of will?

And why should we concern ourselves about the love of a boy and girl six hundred years ago in Verona? What makes this play perpetually attractive, year after year? Is it not that in the development of their joy and pain we see the powers that stir all animated nature, the shadow of a great law that bounds all human desire and delight?

Had Romeo been a little less impetuous and Juliet a little more prudent, had they been ceremoniously married in some fashionable church, had they begun life in a handsome establishment, our interest in them would surely wane. They were violent and hare-brained and foolish; hence we love them. They prove that "all the world loves a lover," that the choice they made in the face of death is an emblem of the great law of sacrifice, old as the world itself, and lifting our prosaic existence above the market-place and counting-house.

Only five days are sufficient to carry the ill-starred couple from the heights of rapture to the grave of despair. It is the sublime principle of atonement that the dramatist would emphasize. Lovely in their lives, in their death they are not divided. The grave cannot part two such devoted hearts.

Contrast the perfect purity of Juliet throughout all the many scenes, with the bold audacity and unwomanly coarseness that deface the creations of some recent playwrights whose names are blazoned in the press. The tenderest girl can see this great tragedy without a blush. It is true to the higher nature, not false to virgin modesty and maidenly repose. Thus we have purity of heart and imaginative ardor united with sweetness and dignity of manner; passionate violence with simplicity and truth. There is nothing coy nor coquettish nor affected; it is frank, for there are no thoughts to conceal. Innocence reposes in strength, on affection; delicacy does not consist of coldness and reserve, but of warmth and glow and voluptuous sensibility.

When Edmund Kean delivered the soliloquy at the tomb, the whole house rose. A century ago Helen Faucit fascinated Londoners with her wonderful rendition of Juliet. It is not strange that this old love tale should be the perpetual standard in fiction for the naturalness and unaffectedness of love in its truer notes. We unconsciously measure the novel of affection by this great norm. Scott said that woman is like ivy, the greater the ruin the closer she clings. Juliet was such a woman. Romeo, banished, was but made the dearer, exiled by the state and sought by the law, a bounty on his head and deprived of all honor, she clung the closer, as the storm descended and the floods fell. What God had joined together no force could put asunder.

The play is a splendid tribute to constancy and marital purity and unchanging attachment. It is a fadeless sermon from age to age, never more needed than now.

Do we rule our destiny, or does our destiny rule us? This is an old theme for debate. Romeo and Juliet seem, from the very start, the heirs of misfortune, each struggles ineffectually against overwhelming odds. Some stupendous power overrules the play, it is like *Macbeth* in the interplay of supernatural forces, the old conception of the influence of the stars on man's career is here in all its force. We have the star-crossed lovers in the prologue, earthquakes are noted, the mind misgives some consequence yet hanging in the stars, the boat is tossed, yet God directs its course, "this day's black fate on more days doth depend, this but begins the woe others must end." Romeo is fortune's fool, he cries, "more light and light; more dark and dark our woes!" Dry sorrow drinks the blood, and the tragedy ends in a cataclysm of ill.

The dramatist teaches that there's a "divinity doth shape our ends rough hew them how he will." Prospero, in *The Tempest,* is Providence watching the game played by Miranda and the Duke, and directing the moves. Hamlet oscillates like a pendulum between fate and free will, uttering magnificent soliloquies on destiny, and swaying like a balloon in the presence of the supernatural. Macbeth feels himself a chip on the tide of irresistible Nemesis and goes down in the awful flood. Wherever in all his many works, man opposes the moral law written in the heart, he succumbs to a power that he cannot defy, for Shakespeare was a profound believer in the basal truths that neither time nor place nor custom can disregard.

Much is now said of the higher law, but the higher law in Shakespeare is the divine mandate uttered on Sinai and still echoing through the world. And this great tragedy teaches the need of moderation. Romeo and Juliet loved "not wisely but too well." What a contrast was their feverish attachment to the union of Brutus and Portia, steady as the pull of the moon on the tides, resisting every turn of misfortune, most powerful in disaster, the ideal wedlock of a strong and devoted man and a faithful and sagacious woman. As Shakespeare grew in years and wisdom, he left his youthful creations and perceived the underlying principle that must ennoble and preserve the tender passion to make it enduring and true. "These violent delights have violent ends, and in their triumph die, like fire and powder, which, as they kiss, consume; the sweetest honey is loathsome in his own deliciousness and in the taste confounds the appetite,—therefore love moderately; long love doth so; too swift arrives as tardy as too slow."

OTHELLO

— BY —

F. HYATT SMITH

OTHELLO

AS *Hamlet* is the tragedy of the will, *Othello* is the tragedy of the emotions. The story was taken from a work of Giraldi Cinthio published in Sicily in 1565. Shakespeare enlarged this plot and robed it in beauty. We are in the period of Venetian supremacy when the island of Cyprus was a dependence of that great republic. The first act only is set in Venice; the remaining acts are placed in Cyprus. The time element has caused much perplexity; but the general consensus gives three days for the action; the first day for Act I, the second day for Act II, and the third day for the catastrophe. The conflict does not arrive until the last scene of the first Act; in the first half of the play the main conflict is developing and then goes hurrying on to its close. The highest pathos comes in Act II, scene 3, on the eve of the catastrophe. The construction is unique for the murder is a long distance from Othello's death.

Shakespearean tragedy may present many persons, but is primarily concerned with but one. It is a tale of suffering usually leading to the hero's death. The hero is always a prominent person; the calamities come from actions; men are the authors of their woe; character developes action; madness is seldom inherent, but developed; the supernatural usually appears; chance or accident have an influence at some point; men start events that they cannot control; there are often antagonistic groups and plots; the hero seems predisposed in some way and incapable of resistance; only Richard and Macbeth do villainous wrong and know it; we always mourn the waste of opportunity, this is the tragedy's mystery; Shakespeare painted the world as he saw it, not as he

would have liked it to be. Ghosts and God and hell appear, but never shed light on the mystery.

The dramatist never gives us his own opinion. The final power is more than Fate; men are responsible; the doer suffers; moral order rules the world; the main source of the catastrophe is evil.

Shakespeare never, like Milton, "justifies the ways of God to man"; the world moves on to perfection, but evolves evil that is only overcome by torture and waste. Every tragedy has three parts: the first is the exposition or state of affairs; then the beginning or growth of the conflict; the final section is the issue in catastrophe. The outward conflict first attracts attention; then the inward. The great crisis usually comes in the middle of the play: in *Julius Caesar* it is the assassination; in *Hamlet* it is the play scene; in *Othello* it is the 3d scene of the 3d act. Shakespeare knew the rules of tragedy, but often broke them. He had his moods, and frequently was hasty and careless as Milton and Tennyson never were. He was between thirty-seven and forty-four and musing on the miseries of life. The style of *Othello* is similar to that of *Julius Caesar;* weighty and solemn.

The play is one of the longest, containing over three thousand lines. Three actions are in force before the beginning of this play: Bianca's relations with Cassio, Roderigo's pursuit of Desdemona, and the love of Othello and Desdemona. In the play Iago is the centre of four intrigues: against Roderigo to get money from him and destroy him; against Cassio to get his place; against Cassio to kill him; and against Othello.

The play opens with an admirable preparation of Roderigo as Iago's first dupe. The contrast of the precipitation of the one with the coolness of the other is a happy stroke. The Duke appears and Othello defends

himself in a grand speech, before him and the council. Desdemona perceives a double duty; Brabantio yields, Desdemona saw Othello's visage in his mind, and to him did consecrate her soul and fortunes. The speech discloses moral strength. In confidence Othello leaves his bride to the care of his lieutenant.

Then follows the great dialogue between Iago and Roderigo. Here the villain discloses his utter lack of faith, his contempt for all virtue, his avarice and hypocrisy. "Virtue! a fig! 'tis in ourselves that we are thus or thus. Love is but a lust of the blood, a permission of the will. Put money in thy purse, put money in thy purse!" "Desdemona," he says "will repent of her choice; these Moors are changeable in their wills." And the act closes with his great soliloquy: "he holds me well, the better shall my purpose work on him; the Moor is of a free and open nature, and as will tenderly be led by the nose as asses are; I have it: it's engendered: hell and night must bring this monstrous birth to light." Few who heard Edwin Booth deliver those awful lines can ever forget them.

In Act II we are in Cyprus. Our fears are rising; the first scene appropriately opens with a storm, as before all of Shakespeare's conflicts, this foreshadows the storm of Desdemona's misfortunes. Iago, Desdemona and Emilia converse: the cynic, the angel and the common woman. Desdemona seems to apprehend the portent of disaster, "I am not merry"; Iago watches Cassio take Desdemona's hand—"with as little a web as this will I ensnare as great a fly as Cassio." The entrance of Othello shows his measureless faith in his wife. It is a noble picture, Adam and Eve before the fall. The serpent sees and notes it aside. Now he winds Roderigo in his silken skein, sows doubts of Desdemona's honor in his mind,

"watch you tonight!" The forces of hell are gathering. Othello is welcomed with a bonfire and great celebrations; Iago makes poor Cassio drunk—he is Faust in the clutch of Mephistopheles. In Iago's song "Let me the cannakin clink,—a soldier's a man, a life's but a span,—why then let a soldier drink"—we have the grin of a death's head.

A quarrel ensues; Montano is wounded, from inciter of the brawl Iago changes like a chameleon to the defender of order. Othello calms the disturbance. Cassio is reduced from his rank and Iago wins his first design. Cassio has lost his reputation,—the immortal part,—with the cry of a wounded spirit, he comes to himself, nothing more plainly shows his open nature in contrast with Iago's duplicity than the cry—"O thou invisible spirit of wine, if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee devil!" Iago skillfully suggests to the broken man to importune Desdemona for his reinstating and thus another seed of jealousy is sown. The soliloquy that follows matches the very hues of hell: "I'll pour this pestilence in his ear; so will I turn her virtue into pitch, and out of her own goodness make the net that shall enmesh them all."

Shakespeare's women are a world in themselves. Portia, grave and discerning and the embodiment of mercy; Rosalind, with her true heart and silvery laugh; Cordelia, the beauty of holiness and the apocalypse of daughterly devotion; Hermione, the queen, mother and wife, calm as a sunset and as lovely; Imogen, the union of simplicity and enthusiasm; Juliet, the symbol of ardent and unreflecting love; Cleopatra, the gorgeous and enchanting child of the Orient; Katherine, whose simple truth was no match for the wily Cardinal; Lady Macbeth, the very incarnation of designing power, masterly control and murdeous hate, from whose palm "the damned spots will not out."

None of these resembles Desdemona, unless it be Juliet, in her trustfulness, her inability to reason, her injured and defenceless innocence, her artless devotion and predisposition to wonder, and her surprising union with a dark native of another race. Desdemona is simple and lovely, the preordained victim of the fiend, a maiden never bold, she suffers more than Imogen, sweetest of Shakespeare's women and as innocent as Miranda,—a child of nature, she knows evil by name only, she has little recollection and a grain of superstition, she makes no reply to Othello's awful charges, she shows her womanliness when she defends her choice to her father,—she coyly deceives her father in her marriage, and this gives the basis for Othello's fear.

She was easily captivated by the stories of the brave and soldierly Moor, sentiment and metaphysics mingled in her courtship, gentleness is the prevailing tone of her nature. There is too little energy and too little reflection; she is a passive character; she easily believes that the fated handkerchief was a talisman; softly credulous was she; a sweet nature, she had little moral energy, like Hermione, who defied the charges of infidelity,—she is so innocent that she cannot understand guilt in others; accusation stuns, but does not rouse her; she makes no defence, her love was her religion.

Never does she upbraid, nor bitterly deny; words with her denote sentiment and not reason; she was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and "as a sheep before her shearers is dumb so she opened not her mouth." Emilia is her exact opposite, as Iago's wife she is common, vulgar, blunt; she parts with the handkerchief without protest, she is stupid, till the very last careless of her own life, and after the murder, transfigured by her bravery, she redeems her mistake.

Othello is a grand and romantic man, noble, tender and generous, not easily jealous, but being wrought, perplexed in the extreme, not a converted barbarian, but a royal, mysterious man. He lacks Hamlet's speculative imagination, love crowns his success. Of simple mind, he is dulled by devotion, absolutely trustful and determined on revenge, he puts entire confidence in Iago. His great agony is not due to jealousy, but is caused by the belief that his angel is impure. He struggles like Laocoon in the serpent's coils; he is the author of his own fate; a military man, he would take the life of the guilty. He is the most greatly drawn and most heroic of the dramatist's characters. His passion, like a flood, overflows all restraints until it issues in the awful murder, but even here he is a priest at a sacrificial altar. He has as much energy as Hamlet has indecision; his repentant sorrow is the roar of outraged friendship, mingled with the pathos of a soul almost dissolved. He does not trust Iago at once; only when he thinks the evidence indisputable does he yield. He is not vindictive. When desolate and despairing, with the blind hope of an anguished man, he clutches at his last possession,—his honor, which he thinks demands the sacrifice of Desdemona and Cassio. We see a grand and lordly nature writhing to death, fitting material for destruction in the hands of the most consummate villain in all literature.

Ruskin said of the serpent that it "is passive to the sun and shade, and is cold or hot like a stone; it can outclimb the monkey, outswim the fish, outleap the zebra, outwrestle the athlete, and crush the tiger." Such is Iago, the intellect divorced from all morals. He is intense, subtle, malignant, audacious, cynical, sneering, an Italian devil, worse than Richard and Milton's Satan, only rivalled by Gœthe's Mephistopheles.

He revels in danger; is a great egotist; of supreme intellectual power, he stands outside the moral world. He is incapable of goodness; suspicious of his wife, without feeling, defying torture, hating superiority in others; he is will in intellect, as Hamlet is intellect destroying will.

He sneers at women (indeed all sarcasms in Shakespeare against women come from villains)—Iago "is nothing if not critical," and thus a warning to all; he is Judas and Pilate combined. He is the really jealous man in the play and the man who has no aim in life but his own advantage. Thus the play revolves about a princely man, a guileless angel, and an incredible fiend.

Act III is the spectacle of a fast gathering storm. Shakespeare well introduces it by buffoonery, or we could not endure the suspense. We have the last scene of Othello's happiness. Desdemona promises to intercede for Cassio and thus weaves a web about herself. The catastrophe is now hinted at in Iago's—"Ha, I like not that," to Othello.

At first he is vague, and dimly suggestive; then disquieting,—"Did Michael Cassio when you wooed your lady know of your love?" "Indeed, is he not honest?" "Men should be what they seem, or those that be not, would they might seem none." "Good name in man or woman, dear my lord,"—"O beware, my lord, of jealousy,"—thus the artful spider enmeshes his victim in the ever-widening web. Sometimes there flashes a line of great truth, hinting a nature not wholly lost: as "poor and content is rich and rich enough."

But Othello's fears are roused when Iago suggests,—"she did deceive her father marrying you." This lays the track for the powder. Desdemona now gives Othello the fated handkerchief to cool his fevered head, he drops it, O fatal act! Emilia picks it up. Iago has asked for this; she will give it to him. He loses it in Cassio's room

Othello enters, and his mournful desolation rivals that of Hamlet,—"farewell the tranquil mind!" No grander pathos can be found in all Shakespeare than these lines, the cracking of a trusting heart. "Othello's occupation's gone!" Here Salvini raged like an infuriated lion, and Booth, as Iago, was the incarnation of malignity and hellish suggestion. It was an awful scene that often made the hearers faint.

Othello is now between Scylla and Charybdis (love for his wife and belief in his lieutenant). Even dreams invented by Iago rouse him on,—"I'll tear her all to pieces!" —the handkerchief serves as proof, on such simple things do life's tragedies depend,—and the two men drop on their knees and swear to the stars above to be true and devoted in the detection of the suspected crime, and Othello's soul is sold.

In the tender scene that follows, Desdemona is shown wholly unconscious of her coming doom. Othello then enters. He feels of her hand, and when he says it is hot and moist she innocently replies, "twas that hand that gave away my heart." She is terrified by the mystic value of the lost handkerchief that a sybil sewed in prophetic fury. Iago now sees Cassio importune her for her influence with her husband. She defends Othello's strange behavior with unsuspecting eagerness. Bianca appears, and Cassio gives his mistress the fated handkerchief to take the work out.

Act IV is the great catastrophe of the play. Iago combines all earlier proof, Othello says "she shall not live"; he swoons at Iago's confessions of Cassio's intrigue; Iago cries "Work on, my medicine!" Othello rages like a wild beast, yet recurs to Desdemona's innocence, "O Iago, the pity of it!" Nothing approaches this scene in sorrow

and wounded confidence. Desdemona's doom is fixed. She cannot understand her lord's frenzy; it is a great contrast between the man's cruelty and the woman's tears. Emilia defends her mistress to the raging husband who is deaf to her words. He doubts all women now; life is gone without his ideal. He thinks he has had oracular proof, "had it pleased heaven to try me with affliction, steeped me in poverty to the very lips; but, alas, to make me a fixed figure for the time of scorn to point his slow unmoving finger at!"

His reason totters under the terrible load of suspicion. He charges Desdemona with guilt. She is stunned, yet half conscious of her fate, and asks Iago, "am I that name, Iago?" It is the cry of the lamb that fears the wolf. She begs her enemy to tell her how to win her lord again, all unsuspecting his devilish villainy. "By this light of heaven I know not how I lost him." Nothing but a figure of adamant could have resisted such tears and pleadings. When Desdemona robes herself for the night and sings the *Willow Song,* we are reminded of Ophelia. It is sorrow crowning sorrow,—the lament of the swan. The debate between the hunted innocent and the calloused woman of the world is the contrast of purity and vice, of snow and ink.

Act V is unsupportable. Witness the words of Othello, —"It is the cause, the cause my soul; she must die or she will betray more men." Like Hamlet, he cannot kill an unprepared soul and she must pray; he will not send for Cassio to unravel the mystery of the handkerchief. Rage, incredible and unrelieved, spurs him on. He strangles her and Desdemona, dying, asserts her innocence and defends her husband, saying she did the deed herself. This is the consummation of saintliness and the very wonder of wonders. With a prayer for her destroyer

she floats into the undiscovered country. As Emilia reveals to Othello how he has been duped, unravelling to him all her husband's fiendish work, he roars like Lear himself, "Cold, cold my girl! whip me, ye devils! blow me about in winds, roast me in sulphur, O Desdemona dead, Oh, Oh, Oh!" After wounding Iago, he would have him live, for "in his sense 'tis happiness to die." The serpent refuses to speak, "What you know you know, demand me nothing."

Then come those sublime closing words of the ruined man: "Speak of me as I am, nothing extenuate nor set down aught in malice; then must you speak of one that loved not wisely but too well; of one whose hand, like the base Indian, threw a pearl away richer than all his tribe." He stabs himself and falls upon the bed—"I kissed thee ere I killed thee, no way but this, killing myself to die upon a kiss." Iago is led forth to torture, and the curtain falls.

Othello surpasses all other tragedies in the strength of its dramatic effects, and is called the most thrilling of the master's masterpieces. The play is like the fury of the elements; sympathy alternates with repulsion; sickening fear with flashes of hope. The play is scarcely relieved, as *Lear* and *Hamlet,* with supernatural powers. We are verily "hemmed in, cabbined, cribbed, confined"; the slightest instruments rouse the action. The subject itself is painful.

In Act IV, we have chaos itself. Some critics have been horrified by a black Othello, yet Shakespeare uses "negro" and "Moor" of the same person in the *Merchant of Venice.* Lamb thought Desdemona was to be condemned for loving a black, and to us the union does seem unnatural. Othello is made jealous against his will, while Leontes, in *The Winter's Tale,* is jealous by nature.

Never before, nor since, was the progress of suspicion in a noble mind so steadily, and progressively, and actually delineated. The bravery and credulity of Cassio are balanced against the readiness and cowardice of Roderigo; Shakespeare has only to drop a handkerchief and the mischief is done. *Lear* is the greatest effort of Shakespeare, as a poet; *Hamlet*, as a meditator; and *Othello* is the combination of the two.

Macaulay thought this play the greatest work in the world. It gives a great moral lesson for all time. Hugo called Othello night, Desdemona dawn, and Iago darkness. One can see the workings of conscience under Iago's disguises like the works beneath the crystal of a watch. Many actors have sensualized and brutalized Othello. Until he becomes a lover, he is centred in integrity and calmness. Afterward, he is passion personified. His devotion had something of awe and self-abnegation. Forlorn was the swarthy warrior in the hands of a mere girl. In the night of horror, he is like Jepthah discharging an awful duty. It is the intellectual calculation in Iago that commands our admiration. There are Iagos in council, in commerce, in banking, in common life.

Othello dies, yet lives, and Iago lives but to die. Suffering is less than incapacity for pain. Like Coleridge, Othello found death in life and life in death. He warns us against the folly of a mistaken vow. Like Abraham, he went up with his offering to the sacrifice, but found no substitute in the thicket. We are taught the tremendous consequences that hinge on the most trivial circumstances, "trifles, light as air, are to the jealous confirmation strong as holy writ." Jealousy may be the offspring of love. What "damned minutes tells he o'er who dotes, yet doubts; suspects, yet strongly loves!"

When Othello opened his heart to the first suspicion, he surrendered his peace. A life of service for others is the only corrective to the green-eyed monster. The little island of our own concerns, washed by the seas of personal gain and flowered by the roses of family content, where so many of us dwell in happy ignorance and selfish ease, unwilling, like Columbus, to penetrate other waters and survey other lands, may become the nest of envy and hate and jealousy, a trinity of vipers, that mock the meat they feed upon, unless we open our windows to the light, give our talents expansion, dedicate our energies to humanity, leave the Jerusalem of pleasure for the Jericho of benevolence, and bind up the wounds of each suffering traveller that we meet on life's road.

Iago's infamous motto—"put money in thy purse"—we have adopted as our rule of life, and denuded action of its motive, and nature of her treasures, and character of its sweetness. This great drama repeats the truth, elsewhere expressed by Shakespeare, that "virtue turns vice being misapplied, and vice's by action sometimes dignified." We are also taught that the whitest bosom may conceal the darkest thoughts, "who has a breast so pure, but some uncleanly apprehensions keep leets and law days and in session sit with meditations lawful?" "A good name is better than riches and its loss is the greatest poverty." Boundless riches is as poor as winter to him that ever fears he shall be poor.

In *Macbeth,* sleep is murdered that "knits up the ravelled sleeve of care." Here "not poppy, nor mandragora, nor all the drowsy syrups of the world can medicine the anguished mind, the sweet sleep it had yesterday." Bacon says that knowledge is power, but we learn that suspicion makes knowledge a weary weight. "Where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be wise." How few there

are in all the world who will speak of us as we are, "nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice!"

In *Hamlet* and in *Romeo and Juliet* and in *Othello* we have a touch of presentiment, of superstitious foreboding, to which we all are responsive. Hamlet quivered like an aspen when he was confronted by his father's apparition, and poor Desdemona was frightened at the loss of the magical handkerchief, dyed in liquor, conserved of maiden's hearts. By the coarsest character in the play all are taught that "'tis not a year or two shows us a man." This is akin to Richter's great observation that the best fruits, flowers, and feelings, develop slowly.

Burke says that confidence is the cheap defence of men and nations, and on the sands of sinking confidence Othello's nature suffers its frightful collapse.

There are crises when God seems all withdrawn. No light appears. The Fates weave their web unforbidden; the air is filled with foreboding shapes; and Providence seems only a name. Over this play no all-controlling power is seen; the gods sport with innocence and youth; darker and darker grows the mystery; evil looms larger; the Archfiend stalks unchecked; and purity goes like the Maid of Domremy to a cruel doom. "Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne."

We can no more explain the awful sacrifice than we can explain the decimation of the chosen people through the ages, their untold desolation and sorrow and pain. The great dramatist well knew that character passes through the fire, and that innocence must bear the cross before it can wear the crown. This is the lesson of Cordelia and of Desdemona. In the whirling wind of passion, in the blinding mist of recklessness, the judgment is benumbed and the reason dethroned. Othello has his counterparts, many a husband has since fanned the flame

of unfounded suspicion until it became a devouring, roaring conflagration, licking up the foundations of trust and destroying all the props of hope. Infatuation too often ends in hate.

This immortal play is a witness to the ages that something more than admiration for conquest and travel is needed as a basis for the marriage tie. Brutus trusted his wife, for he knew her. Leontes distrusted his wife, for he never knew her. Intellectuality is in the air, and we are urged to read and think and ponder. Yet Iago is the ineffaceable warning to our age of what the intellect may readily become when unassisted, uncontrolled by the moral faculties. Is it not significant that the most dastardly villain in all literature was a profound thinker, a master of the arts that are now deemed most honorable, the embodiment of the American idea that exalts cunning and self-interest and personal gain?

Shakespeare in this play is the lawgiver on Sinai. The mountain again quakes. We have the sixth and seventh commandments. Iago sets up his golden calf only to drink its powdered dust brackish with water, and is denied an entrance into the promised land. Irresolution froze the current of Hamlet's purpose, frenzied ambition brought Wolsey to his fall, and malignant envy slowly petrified Iago's heart. Too many modern playwrights make sin something to be expunged and atoned, a stepping stone for character, and a dash of deviltry seasons the libretto. Not so is it with him who was not of an age but for all time. Wickedness is sin and sin is damnation; the offence is rank and smells to heaven; no guard shall bar heaven's shafts, dalliance is dangerous. In the corrupted currents of this world, offence's gilded hand may shove by justice, but 'tis not so above; there is no shuffling, there the action lies in his true nature, and we

ourselves are compelled, even to the teeth and forehead of our faults, to give in evidence. "The plays of Shakespeare are the voice of history, sounding across the ages, the laws of right and wrong."

THE TEMPEST

— BY —

F. HYATT SMITH

THE TEMPEST

OF all Shakespeare's plays, *The Tempest* is the most original and striking. Written late in life, it is pervaded by the supernatural and traverses the borderland of the unseen. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* the actors wander in a maze of error led by mischievous frolic. Here both human and imaginary characters, both the dramatic and the grotesque, are perfectly blended with the greatest art without any semblance of consciousness. Here he gives to "airy nothing a local habitation and a name." The preternatural part resembles reality and the real events resemble a dream.

We are in a world of spirits, airy shapes flit about us, singular portents throng the sky, the terrestrial but serves to project the celestial, the earthly incidents are but the scaffolding for the aerial structure. It is almost impossible to represent. We have solemn grandeur, unrivalled grace, and grave beauty. While the passion and depth and expression of other compositions easily surpass it, yet as a work of art, as a triumph of the imagination, as a sustained unity and majesty, it stands alone. It has no prototype in literature.

The action and progressive movement are minor in this play. The scene of *The Tempest* lies in the fancy. The fabled island may have been Lampedusa, in the Mediterranean, still uninhabited, and supposed by sailors to be enchanted. Yet the island of the play sank beneath the waves when the great magician broke his staff.

The enchanted isle, the wonderful necromancer, the beautiful girl, the mysterious sprite, the gross composite of brute and demon, the stately king, the exact

seamanship knowledge, and the rude sailors, are all the creations of that imperial mind whose empire knew no visible bounds, and whose daring penetrated earth and sea and sky. *The Tempest* is the synonym for all realms surpassing sense and defying space and vision. It is Shakespeare's *"Book of Revelation"*, and as full of enigmas as the Apocalypse. It is allied to St. Augustine's *"Civitas Dei"*, and to Bernard's *"Walls of Zion"* conjubilant with song.

It hints a fourth dimension of space and a clairvoyant sight. It inspired Poe's *"Haunted Palace"*, and his *"City by the Sea."* It resembles Plato's *"Atlantis"*, that mythical island that disappeared in a convulsion of nature. It entices, intoxicates, hints, symbolizes and haunts. Milton gives the dimension of angels, their attributes, and their physical qualities. Shakespeare lays open the world of spirits, he surpasses Coleridge in the supernatural, he distances Shelley in his ethereal visions, and he achieves in a phrase what the blind Puritan labored to attain in a page. Puck girdled the earth, but Prospero waves his wand and the invisible appears.

Once a ruling prince, thirsting for knowledge, devoted to the liberal arts, he forgot that the world is hostile, and thus his brother deposed him from his dukedom. He saved himself and his lovely daughter and some of his books of magic upon a desert island. Here his knowledge expands. Nature listens to him and obeys him, zephyr-like spirits full of humor are compelled to serve him, songs issue from nowhere and ravish the ear, Ariel does his bidding, Caliban struggles and repines, a thing of earth earthy, Miranda is virgin simplicity and confidence and truth. Prospero is Shakespeare himself in his calm temper, in his self-

mastery and gravity, in his sensitiveness to wrong and his unfaltering justice, and in his remoteness from the joys and sorrows of the world.

His occasional intellectual impatience, his flashes of irritability, his memory of his injury, throw into greater relief that altitude of thought from which he surveys the whole field of human life, and ponders on its smallness and its greatness. Paracelsus attains. He shares the joy of his children to whom he is half-god and half-father. In a dream existence he will still face each duty with a smile. He is very wise and conducts his intercourse equally well with friend and foe.

He is Shakespeare's nearest approach to deity. He and his daughter came ashore by Providence divine. When he breaks his staff and buries his book at the end, we feel that we are again returned to earth and the great vision fades. He can throw over whom he will a magic sleep, and then he can awaken his subjects like a hypnotist. He introduces us to the kingdom of mind. He hints thought transference and mental suggestion and realms unreached by wires and messages from unseen heights. Prospero is man, liberated from the bondage of the present, roused to a conviction of his supernal powers, disdaining all that can be bought or sold, responsive to far-off forces, and akin to distant beings. He tells us that there are supersensible spheres, spiritual energies, planets beyond and outranking our little ball.

By the discipline of trial and the loss of rightful possessions, Prospero attains a kingdom which shall endure. Deprived of gold and land he inherits himself. He dies unto the present, and reigns over the future. He is the symbol of the intellectual man who makes his own surroundings. His library is a dukedom

large enough. He echoes Richter's great observation that whatever the mind of man may conceive, the will of man may achieve. He emphasizes the old truth that sacrifice is the pathway to success.

Prospero is the great prophet of Shakespeare, clad in his robe of magic, a sort of Elisha with his staff, and when he lays this upon the dead they come to life. His simple island fare is far sweeter than all the rich dishes that he once enjoyed. No music is so rare as the winds that play about the isle, and the mysterious sounds that issue unexpectedly from caverns and sea. Thoreau in his hut was a Prospero who found enchantment in the pines and heard oratorios among the birds. Power is proved by Prospero to be in exact ratio to solitude. Bunyan was the Prospero of the 17th century, immured in a narrow dungeon, yet seeing the Wicket Gate and the House Beautiful and the towers of jasper and beryl. "Stone walls do not a prison make nor iron bars a cage, minds innocent and quiet take that for a hermitage". Out of the lion comes the honey.

Prospero is above all vengeance, he forgives his brother, he is harmonious and fully developed will. Forgiveness and freedom are the keynotes of the play. When, at the last, he leaves the island and returns to the dukedom he had lost, he goes a purified man,—the bard himself, to his loved Stratford, matured and taught and dignified, to await the end. In the Epilogue, Prospero implores pardon. Was he Shakespeare feeling the nearness of the other world, sensible of his errors, and eager to be forgiven them? Who can say?

Miranda is abstract womanhood. She is modest and tender, beautiful and unsophisticated, delicate and refined. She is the Eve of an enchanted paradise.

She resembles nothing upon earth and has never beheld any of her sex. She rises into loveliness from the rocks and ferns. Her playmates are the billows and clouds. Sprites speak to her, the air is vocal to her by her father's art, she appears to others celestial. Her first tears spring from compassion at the shipwrecked sailors. Her first sigh is one of love. Her bashfulness is the unfolding of a rose.

Like a child of nature, she is struck with wonder at her own emotions when Ferdinand, the noble, seeks her hand. He is the chivalrous in man, laying his gifts at the feet of pure womanhood. Byron degraded Haidee into a sensual toy, but Shakespeare made Miranda a blossom sweet as the arbutus springing from the hidden moss. Such a creature could only have had a Ferdinand for a lover. Any other and less sincere a man would have done violence to the play. Her princely father claims her as a thread of his own life, nay "that for which he lives". She surpasses the Eve of Milton for she is more natural. Possibly he studied her for his great creation. She is the goddess of the island.

She is the ideal teacher, opening the mind of the dull Caliban, and with the sympathetic insight of girlhood interpreting his thoughts and giving them words. Her patience with his ignorance, her vision of his possibilities, her eagerness to lead him to the light, are almost divine. Born a daughter of a Prince, bred on a lonely island with a magician and a monster for her companions, she remembers her infancy, and when Prospero lays down his mantle and tells her the story of her removal, she is all attention and her great eyes dilate. She marvels that he can raise or calm a storm. He never permits his loved daughter to come too near

Ariel, lest the effect of the unearthly sprite may overcome her. He waves his staff and there ensues the charming attachment between Ferdinand and the lovely girl.

Ariel is wondrous. He revolves about Prospero like his stellar namesake about Uranus; and whenever he would stray from his orbit the Master brings him back. He is not an angel above man, nor a fiend below man. He is a being with all the faculties of reason, yet immortal. Did Shakespeare mean him to typify the soul in its heavenly estate? Or is he the pure fancy, roaming earth and sky, Shelley's skylark, a joy unembodied, a blithe spirit ever on the wing? He is surely unearthly, ethereal and refined, imaginary power, and the swiftness of thought. He drinks the air.

He has a sense of goodfellowship in all his employments. His songs sound as if invisible. He is frolicsome and fairy, agreeable and open, mischievous and capricious, daring and roguish, he thanks his master for his release but his gratitude does not seem human, he must be ever held in check. He is promised his freedom in two days, and then his spirits recover their old abandon. The old angels of literature weary us with their ill-set wings and their stately speech. Shakespeare manages this sprite with consummate tact and naturalness. Ariel is the proper attendant for Miranda. He and his fellows hover above her head, they minister to her needs, they call up before her pageants of great beauty. He is the image of the air, and on air he feeds. He is the poet's thought, the poet's intuition, the poet's insight. He anticipated the telegraph and leaps vast spaces.

If man shall ever conquer the air and ride in aerial ships, looking down on continents and cities, then he

will share Ariel's powers and survey Ariel's domain. He comes and goes; a spirit in the grasp of a mighty enchanter. He feels his bondage. Unlike Goethe's Faust, his energies are always employed for good. He can fly, swim, and dive into the fire. He boards a ship, dives into the cabin, rushes to the topmast, follows Jove's lightnings, makes old Neptune tremble, causes a fearful storm, and the sailors cry: "Hell is empty and all the devils are here!" Yet not a hair perishes. He disperses the voyagers about the isle. He can cool the air. He leaves all asleep. Prospero has freed him from torment and he is eager for new fields to conquer. Sometimes he appears as a water nymph.

What wonderful songs are his; "Full fathom five thy father lies, Of his bones are coral made, Those are pearls that were his eyes, Nothing of him that doth fade, But doth suffer a sea change, Into something rich and strange". The last three lines are appropriately cut on Shelley's tomb. Prospero calls him his industrious servant. He summons the peasants and Iris and Ceres to the nuptials of Miranda and Ferdinand. When urged by his master he says, "I go, I go". He confines the king and his followers distracted and dismayed; he makes tears run down their beards like winter's drops. Indeed he would pity them were he human. Immediately Prospero orders their release. They must again be themselves. Ariel fetches them. He sings: "Where the bee sucks, there suck I, in a cowslip's bell I lie, there I couch when owls do cry, on the bat's back I do fly, after summer merrily. Merrily, merrily shall I live now, under the blossom that hangs on the bough."

Now he awakens the shipmaster and boatswain under the hatches of the ship; he goes and returns be-

fore twice the pulses beat; he stands invisibly by when the seamen say they were in a dream, and he asks his master—"was it well done?" This is our last view of the singular sprite until Prospero delivers all and says, "My Ariel, chick, to the elements be free and fare thou well!" From the air he came and to the air he returned. He is the most fascinating and unworldly and blithesome creature in all literature.

Precisely opposed to Ariel is Caliban. The one is a Mayblossom suspended in the azure; the other is half man and half brute, condensed and gross in feeling, he has the dawnings of understanding without reason or the moral sense, he shows the approach of the brutes to the mental powers of man. He is malicious and cowardly and false; yet different from Shakespeare's merely vulgar knaves. He is rude but not vulgar; he always speaks in verse. He has a vocabulary of his own.

Caliban is one of the dramatist's masterpieces. He has attracted attention from the first thinkers of every age. He is wild, deformed, irregular, neither man nor brute, the essence of grossness without vulgarity. He comes from the dark soil, of the earth earthy,—the isle with its haunting noises he hears with delight: "sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not; sometimes a thousand twanging instruments will hum about mine ears and sometimes voices". Here is a savage with a child's simplicity. What a curious mixture of devil and man and beast! Evil he desires for its piquancy. He thinks gross injustice has been done him and believes himself a slave.

The idea of murder gives him delight, for he imagines that it would make a great noise and commotion. He is laughably horrible, a specimen to be

examined more than a creature to be execrated; at times he shows great prudence, and again he roars with hate. Yet Shakespeare grants him some instincts of goodness, we meet him when full grown and a victim of heredity. Miranda taught him, and Prospero stroked him when young. He is a land-fish, a dullard, service to him is slavery; his fins are like arms, some have thought him the missing link between man and brute.

He seems the understanding in prison; awaiting the light. He represents the grosser passions and appetites.

He is the natural man, uneducated and untrained, the creature in the rough, the material for evolution, allied to the ape, and ages will be required to lift him to his proper height. Prospero sends pains on him, and cramps, and side-stitches. He has memory, for he recalls how he was taught to name the bigger light, and how the less; he knew all the springs and brine-pits of the mystic isle. Language was taught him but he uses it only to curse. He is amazed at the shapes he sees; for every trifle they are set on him; they chatter at him and bite him; adders wound him as he treads.

When Stephano sings, "The master, the swabber, the boatswain and I, the gunner and his mate, loved Mall, Meg, and Marian and Margery, but none of us cared for Kate; for she had a tongue with a tang, would cry to a sailor 'go hang!' then to sea, boys, and let her go hang!" (Is this Kipling's model?) Caliban feels himself tormented and cries aloud. He thinks Trinculo his god, and will kiss his foot. He will fish for him and get him berries and wood enough. Man to him is wondrous. He knows too the jay's nest and the clustering filberts.

He is wise enough to know that Prospero's power depends on his books and staff; without them "he's but a sot as I am; burn all his books." This is Shakespeare's tribute to the immeasurable superiority of the thinking man, for he represents this product of soil as separated in his own opinion from the mighty magician only by his intellectual treasures. Is it not significant? We learn that Caliban's mother was a witch; she could control the moon, make flows and ebbs, and deal in her command without her power. A flash of intelligence irradiates his mind at the last and he says, "I'll be wise hereafter and seek for grace." Thus he departs.

As Ariel represents the ethereal and spiritual, and Caliban the earthly and material, so Shakespeare, by the enormous gap between them, would signify by what slow and persistent and patient stages all educational forces must proceed. Perhaps our Teutonic ancestors were Calibans, drinking blood from their enemies' skulls, and beating tomtoms as they advanced half-clad into battle. Each idiot is a Caliban, and every son of Adam in whom development is arrested. They who live close to the earth, who "eat and drink for tomorrow they die", are akin to this island monster. May we not go farther and say that he to whom the visible earth bounds all, who is anchored more firmly to the ground by each drill that cuts the rock, or each spade that uncovers the mine, who magnifies only terrestrial forces, who ignores, or denies, the existence of anything beyond the reach of theorems or tubes, to whom "a primrose by the river's brim, a yellow primrose is to him, and it is nothing more", is a Caliban, not indeed in a hideous and repulsive form, but in soul, in aspiration, in mental equipment, in the loss of the finer and ultimate energies of life?

Wherever a city is so intent on present good and present pleasure that it omits and loses the uplift of art and letters and music, and the refinements that chasten and elevate and subdue, there is a civic Caliban, breathing smoke and cinders and the oppressive air of feverish gain, wallowing in the mire of sordid ambition, and content to sell its divine birthright for a mess of pottage, Philistinism not Hellenism, willing to obliterate the landscape, or pare away the waterfall or denude the forest, "for the jingle of the guinea heals the hurt that honor feels". "The Lord let the house of a brute to the soul of a man, and the man said,—'am I your debtor?' And the Lord, 'not yet, but make it as clean as you can—and then I will give you a better'."

There is a lovely picture in this play, where the noble Ferdinand and the sweet Miranda sit in the cave playing chess; Prospero discovers them, he smiles benignantly for he knows each move they make; a pretty pair,—and he their controller and disposer. The great Persian sang: "we are but pieces on the game he plays, upon this checkerboard of nights and days, and hither and thither moves and checks and slays, and one by one into his closet lays". This is pessimism and despair. But Prospero is kindly Providence, he oversees the board, each advance and each decline is by his wise decree, he rules and overrules for his creature's good. "There's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will".

The punishment in this immortal work is for discipline and never for revenge. The sea rages, but the sailors are preserved. Ariel can go just so far but no farther. Over the whole is suspended an atmosphere of benevolence. Much is now said of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. But Shakespeare

taught these three centuries ago in the magnanimous generosity and forgiveness and equality of Prospero.

In the second act we have the vices that debase civilization. Antonio and Sebastian are bad men, and the intended assassination of Alonso and Gonzalo is an exact counterpart of the scene between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, only pitched in a lower key. Thus we have the crimes of earth with the inspirations and aims of men at their best. All the elements that compose our modern life are here pictured and contrasted with great effect. The sordid in Caliban with the unselfish in Prospero; the criminal in Antonio with the angelic in Miranda; the poetic in Ariel with the commonplace in Stephano. The island is a world. An inferior artist would have peopled it with angels and beings above all sin. But Shakespeare was true to nature and to fact. The mob appears with its follies and temper, but Shakespeare is not angry with it, he regards it as a simple phase of life, he never promulgates any party tenets. Out of all the divergent forces issues complete harmony, and he bids us never to despair. He knew, as well as Emerson, the great law of compensation. Trinculo and Stephano are good-for-nothing drunkards.

The sailors are like most men of their class. They set the leading actors in greater relief. The plot against Prospero is but a feint, for his magic robe is his sure protection. This robe is honor and truth and justice. The good man cannot fall. Over all is suspended Ariel with his paradoxical songs and his cheerful wit, showing the immeasurable power of good nature in a world of complexity. Society is conceived of as an aggregation of conflicting forces whose ultimate outcome is regeneration. What a stimulus and hope for our age!

Gonzalo was a socialist. He might well be studied by his modern followers, for he would have nature bring forth of its own kind; no riches nor poverty, nor contract, succession, magistrate; no occupation nor sovereignty. But in Prospero he recognizes the distinctions wrought by talent and genius, the value of government, the rights and liberties of the subject, and the necessity of individualism.

In the tumult of the storm, with which the play opens, the bravery of the sailors, their energy, their daring, the fall of the topmast and the howling of the winds, the coarse conversation, and the cry: "all's lost, to prayers, to prayers", we have a just introduction to the sedate basis of that which follows, and a perfect picture of a *tempest*. Yet Prospero who raised the storm restrains it so that no soul is lost. The perfect balance of taste and feeling in this play is unusual with Shakespeare, and shows that with his maturity came a more intense respect for form. It is like the Greek drama; the English is made as flexible as the Attic.

In no play does the function of prayer to avert trouble more prominently appear. Shakespeare's conception of prayer would form a theme of surpassing interest. How the sense of justice is dignified by the rescue of Ferdinand who proves to be the son of the King who made a league with Antonio! Mercy becomes the great enchanter as nobly as the graceful Portia. When Ferdinand would draw his sword, Prospero suddenly holds his arm suspended in space; the king is a marionette in his power.

There is the finest picture in literature of a swimmer, beating the surges under him, treading the water, his bold head above the contentious waves, his arms in lusty stroke for the shore. Compared with this Byron is tawdry and melodramatic. At Ariel's touch the men sleep, their eyes

are open yet a singular drowsiness possesses ther
denly waking they hear the sprite: "While you
snoring lie, open-eyed conspiracy, his time doth t
of life you keep a care, shake off slumber and h
Awake, awake!" They leap to their feet as if a
had dinned in their ears. One imagines he was d
from the moon.

Ferdinand illustrates the dignity of labor. Wh
to the removal of wet logs, he refreshes his labor by
thoughts, surely "sweet are the uses of adversity, w
like the toad ugly and venomous, wears yet a prec
jewel in his head." Prospero watches the spell of l
descend on the gracious king who calls it morning wh
Miranda walks at night. She would wish no compani
in the world but him. Both prattle deliciously under t
mighty necromancer's power. She weeps at her unworth
ness; he loves and prizes and honors her beyond all lim
in the world. She does not shrink from the great declar
tion, for she is untaught nature and says: "I am your wi
if you will marry me". And the happy father is rejoic
beyond measure, and returns to his solitary vigils am
his magical tools. Would that all infatuations might l
thus guided!

What a picture is that in Act III. Where strange shap
bring in a banquet (the sailors think them unicorns
leave the viands, and depart at Prospero's bidding. It is
supernatural feast. Ariel claps his wings upon the tab
and the food vanishes to the consternation of all. The
he plainly tells them that they are mad, and that he mac
them thus, their plot against Prospero is revealed, the
hear it in the winds and thunder and billows: here is th
Nemesis and certainty of detection of all crime. It is n
the Nemesis of Macbeth walking the earth with leade
tread and avenging form; it is the remorse of convictio
for judgment belongs to Prospero alone.

No gaudy gifts and no servile offerings are brought to the nuptials of the happy pair. But the treasures of Ceres, the goddess of plenty, wheat, rye, barley, vetches, oats and peas,—all nature contributes of her store, honey-drops, refreshing showers, even the peacocks come with their gorgeous tails and feathers to the ceremony. Then the loveliest song that nuptials ever heard save Spenser's, "Honor, riches, marriage blessing, long-continuous and increasing; hourly joys be still upon you, Juno sings her blessings on you; spring comes to you at the farthest, in the very end of harvest; scarcity and want shall shun you, Ceres blessing so is on you!"

As the singular celestial visitors depart Prospero says: "These our actors as I foretold you were all spirits and are melted into air, thin air; and like the baseless fabric of this vision, the cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces, the solemn temples, the great globe itself, yea all which it inherit, shall dissolve, and like this insubstantial pageant faded, leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep." Coleridge thought these lines the most majestic in all literature. Alone they prove Shakespeare's title as the first thinker of all time.

Now dogs throng the sky, hunters above the clouds appear, and Caliban and his companions run for their lives. The project of the magician prospers and the end is near. His enemies languish in a cave: the "rarer action is in virtue than in vengeance"; he is more magnanimous than Hamlet; he will save and restore those whom he has punished. "Go release them, Ariel, my charms I'll break, their senses I'll restore and they shall be themselves." Is not this the grand end of all penal discipline, and have we of the 20th century yet learned it?

Then follows the magician's farewell to his servants and to his art: "Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes, and groves, you demi-puppets that by moonshine do the green sour ringlets make, whereof the ewe not bites; and you whose pastime is to make midnight mushrooms that rejoice to hear the solemn curfew; I have bedimmed the noontide sun, called forth the mutinous winds, and 'twixt the green sea and the azured vault set roaring war; to the dread rattling thunder have I given fire, and rifted Jove's stout oak with his own bolt; graves at my command have waked their sleepers, opened, and let them forth by my so potent art. But this rough magic I here abjure: and when I have required some heavenly music, I'll break my staff, bury it certain fathoms in the earth, and deeper than did ever plummet sound, I'll drown my book." This apostrophe is only comparable to the Lord speaking in the Book of Job.

The miracles have served their august purpose, the enchanter is merged in the man, the mount no longer quakes with fire. Perhaps this was Shakespeare's farewell to the theatre. His mighty creations were well nigh ended, the staff was broken, the book was buried, his secret he concealed certain fathoms in the earth, and none among the sons of men has yet discovered it. Prospero unrobed is Joseph revealing himslf to his erring brothers, a reconciliation follows, and peace is restored. What a sublime lesson, that even supernatural powers can have only a merciful aim! Like the Man of Galilee, Prospero used his miraculous gifts for humane and illuminating ends only.

Nature appears in her rarest dress, birds sing, flowers bloom, and with the harmony of man nature herself shares. Never play had happier ending. Alonso asks the gentle maid's forgiveness and she grants it. Wonder-

ful isle on which all the actors find themselves! Ariel has repaired the broken ship, while the sailors slept all was changed, new masts and rigging waited their astonished eyes, the restoration of the shattered vessel was Ariel's last achievement, and worthy of his powers. Caliban is freed, and his spell untied. Into his cell the hospitable Prospero invites all for one night. He feeds his former enemies, he tells the story of his life and they listen like Desdemona and her aged father, we can almost see them before the fire as the shadows illumine their bronzed features, it is a marvellous experience. Ariel wings his way to the realm from which he came, and Prospero returns to Milan where every third thought of his shall be his grave.

The deeper we mine in this play the richer is the ore. It is as replete with truth as Golconda with gems. No critic has ever sounded its shore for no plummet is of sufficient length. It embraces the world that now is and that which is to come. We, like the denizens of the enchanted island, are the victims of delusions, we are dominated by the cloud-capped towers and the gorgeous palaces, slaves to time and sense, cowards when no real danger is nigh, we are frightened by each seeming calamity, only a Prospero can read the riddle, and only a mind based on Providence is assured of sanity, proportion and peace. In each Caliban of the streets we should seek a rough diamond, for the vilest conceals some redeeming grace. "There dwells some soul of goodness in things evil." The ideal father is here portrayed, who so subtly weaves the web of confidence and affection about his children, that all his words are heeded. Ferdinand was richer in the cave than on this throne. He could sing with old Dyer: "My mind to me a kingdom is", and defy storm and want. Cooped in our conventional huts, Ariel invites

us forth into the liberal and embracing air, to gather the sweets of intellectual delight, and to roam fields as yet untrodden. The supreme intellectual faculty is the imagination, and it is almost bankrupt in an age that sees no higher than a building of stone, that drowns the song of the thrush with the scream of the train, and that haunts "the market place, the eager love of gain, whose aim is vanity and whose end is pain". We need to have "the love of learning, the sequestered nooks, and all the sweet serenity of books." Beyond all, stretches and allures the vast domain of mind, the unconquered realm that awaits the present century.

Man has brought fire from the clouds; he paints his pictures with the sunbeams; he unrolls the rocks; and he pushes his trains with vapor; while harmless lightnings illuminate his towns. Even the planet seems subjugated to him while it bears him in silence and smoothness along the vast aerial spaces. Master of terrestrial forces, he swells with pardonable pride; inventions multiply, commerce spreads her white sails, unseen wires transmit his thought beneath the seas.

But with all this mastery has come a corresponding doubt of the overworld, the invisible is pushed farther off, and the attraction of the physical pulls the thought from ethereal heights. We smile when told of lands that telegraphs cannot reach, and forces that scales cannot weigh. Even the popular philosophy takes but little cognizance of the immaterial and spiritual and immortal. Consciousness is considered a function of the brain and conscience itself is robbed of its ethical import. The "thrones, dominations, princedoms" of Milton, the burning marle and the crystalline sky and the sapphire pavilion, streaming with august splendor, seem to many as idle tales to charm a child to sleep. Dante's snowy rose of saintly multitudes,

with faces of flame and wings of gold, ever ascending, perishes beneath the relentless gaze of the critic. The iridescent lights of the Iliad, and all the glory of armor and helmet and shield, with its undertone of aspiration and suspense, appeal only to the eager scholar, and are meaningless to the average man. The transcendent mood of the spirit, when at the close of day every grass blade is oracular, and the orange and crimson heavens suggest Him "whose dwelling is the light of setting suns", when the liberated soul is no longer fretted with wasting cares and easily mounts to celestial heights, this and this only is the source of all that is highest in thought and endeavor and hope.

Without this, poetry is commonplace; art is no longer transfigured; and buildings are no longer sermons in stone. The consciousness of immortality has ever been the vital and quickening impulse of all lordly effort. Thus Angelo hung the Pantheon in air; thus Correggio painted his *Holy Night;* thus the Crusaders sought to rescue the Saviour's tomb from the Saracen; thus the Hollanders defied the Spaniard and the sea.

A conviction of the supernatural is the supreme lesson of *The Tempest.* Without it, life would lose its sacred charm. Without it, eloquence falls to the level of vapid disquisition. Without it, society loses its aspirations and is drowned in animalism which exactly keeps pace with its wealth. As Wordsworth puts it:

"The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
The Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;

For this, for everything we are out of tune;
It moves us not,—Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn."

"THESE OUR ACTORS"

— BY —

F. HYATT SMITH

"THESE OUR ACTORS"

TEMPEST Act IV, Scene I

Slowly the great procession passes. Hamlet, with his "bourne from which no traveler returns", musing on the destiny of life; Portia, with gravity and womanly sweetness, teaching the ever new lesson of human mercy; Macbeth, with empty hand and leaden heart, lamenting he hath murdered sleep; Lady Macbeth, the guilty enchantress, from whose slender palm the fated stains will not out; Lear, storm-swept and deserted, with his faithful fool, and his mind darkened by madness, crying "I am a man more sinned against than sinning"; Iago, incarnate evil, masterpiece of villainy, whose life motto is American: "Put money in thy purse"; Desdemona, a creature of stainless purity, laid on the altar of unfounded suspicion; Ophelia, that fragile shell on Shakespeare's endless shore; Rosalind, with her silvery laugh and honest heart; Falstaff, coming from the tavern, rubicond and rolling; Helena, the combination of intellect and will in perfect harmony; Juliet, at the window, fairer than the nightingale, and drinking the fatal draught at last in the stately tomb; the Witches, dancing in weird and fantastic movement, and singing "When shall we three meet again, in thunder, lightning or in rain?"; Brutus, a great man in ruins, dying at the climax, like Judas, by his own hand; Caesar, bestriding the narrow world like a Colossus, "the foremost man of all the earth", singularly resembling the Son of Man in his betrayal by those He loved, and in his supposed ascension and subsequent rule of Rome from the land of the immortal gods; Timon, with his awful indictment of the yellow metal that poisons all our modern life; Wolsey, falling like a bright exhalation in the evening, and crying to the ages, "Fling away ambi-

tion"; Richard the Third, abhorred of man, and deserted of God, appalled at the ghost in the tent; Friar Laurence, learning from the rind of a flower the whole divine dispensation of grace; Richard the Second, whose Pilates cannot wash away their sins; Hermione, the combination of dignity without pride, love without passion, and tenderness without weakness; Autolycus, with his wisdom concealed in doggerel; Viola, the embodiment of love and youth in every shifting color; Cordelia, faithful and true, pillowing her aged father's head on the only heart that ever throbbed for him; Imogen, with her sword in the cavern's mouth; Horatio, the model friend in disaster; Mercutio, with his raillery; Bassanio, before the three caskets, making a wise decision; Polonius, with those lines of worldly advice that compass all of life; and the Fools concealing beneath their silly badinage, golden nuggets of philosophy and truth.

A TRIBUTE

— BY —

F. HYATT SMITH

SHAKESPEARE

A Tribute by *

F. HYATT SMITH

SHAKESPEARE is the riddle of literature, the miracle of mind. His ancestors were yeomen, his handwriting would disgrace any school boy, he belonged to no church and no party, took no apparent interest in his works, mingled with the irregular characters of London, and when life waned, he retired to Stratford, among the tavern-keepers and rustics of the town. Without education he educates the world, untraveled he traverses the universe, unread he is read in every land, untrained he trains all men. Three million copies of his works are sold each year, hence he would have been the greatest wealth producer in history had he had a complete royalty on his immortal plays. He portrays every human passion, longing, art, profession, industry, court and camp, mart and belief, sounds the sea and conquers the air, all customs and myths and habits and faculties, the lives of kings and peasants and philosophers and mechanics and senators and sorcerers and politicians and priests. *Hamlet* is the tragedy of the will, *Othello* is the tragedy of jealousy, *Lear* is the tragedy of ingratitude, *Macbeth* is the tragedy of remorse, *Julius Caesar* is the tragedy of politics, *Romeo and Juliet* is the tragedy of love, *The Tempest* is the colossal picture of the supernatural. His works are the best English history and a great commentary on the Bible. Indeed, many words in the King James Version are from him. He can only be compared with himself, "the man not of an age, but for all time." His sweep and range and imagery and

* Note on page 156