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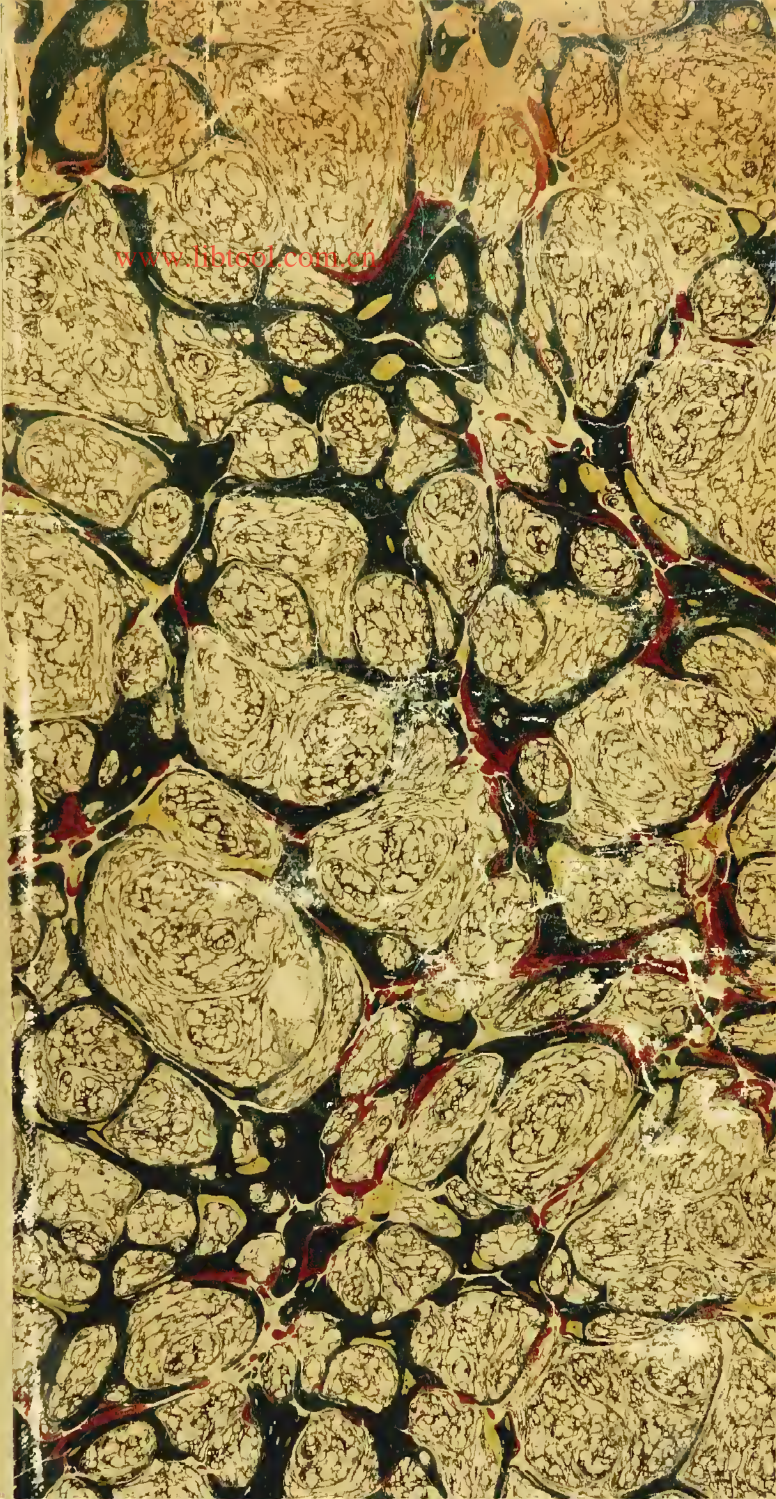

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—BY—

D. J. SNIDER.

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SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDIES.

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ROMEO AND JULIET.

This play shows in many ways that it belongs to the youthful productions of Shakespeare. Its theme is the passion of youth; it has the wild freedom and intensity of youth. There is a lack of that severity of treatment which belongs to the later works of the Poet; there are parts which seem very loosely connected with the fundamental thought, and then again there are other parts developed at length which appear quite unnecessary to the action. There is often a sensuous fullness of delineation, and often an abstract brevity; there are found the finest and purest bursts of poetry intermingled with frigid conceits and far-fetched antitheses. Everywhere in the drama can be noticed an inequality—an inequality in thought, in language, in the structure of the plot. Still, beneath all this play of caprice and irregularity there is felt to be a deep, pervading harmony throughout the entire work. The inequality seems to be the inequality of the subject—the inequality of youth with its fitful, tempestuous passion. It has been well named the tragedy of love, love in all its conflicts, love in all its extravagance and volcanic tossings, love despised and love triumphant. It portrays this passion boiling over with a fervor which sweeps down all traditional barriers, even the most deadly enmity, and which is ready to struggle with death itself. The theme is therefore love, unconquerable, irresistible, of which the individual is the merest instrument, ready to be sacrificed without the least hesitation. Such is the feeling

which warms this poem in every part: youthful love in its grandest intensity, for it is just the intensity which characterizes the love of Romeo and Juliet above all other loves, and which prefers death to permanent separation.

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It will now be our object to point out the harmonious structure which underlies the drama and gives it a general consistency of thought, but above all imparts to it that profound concord so readily felt, but not always easily explained. Whether the Poet had in mind, when he wrote the play, just the method here unfolded, or was wholly unconscious in his procedure, is a question which can not now be discussed; but whatever answer be given, it cannot affect the validity or the necessity of the explanation. Shakespeare is at least a phenomenon whose law is the subject of rational investigation, just as the phenomena of Nature must be explained and reduced to laws, whether Nature be conscious of her own laws or not.

Taking the play as it stands, there are three essential divisions of its action, three grand movements which combine to form the whole. The first culminates in the union of Romeo and Juliet, and portrays the obstacles and events antecedent to that union; it exhibits the transition from the unrequited to the requited love of the hero. The second begins with the separation of the lovers caused by the banishment of Romeo, and ends in their death at the tomb of the Capulets; it depicts the attempts at reunion of the unhappy pair, which, however, do not succeed but bring upon them destruction. The third and shortest division is the reconciliation of the two hostile houses of Montague and Capulet, after their children have perished. The relation in

which this last division stands to the rest of the play and to tragedy in general will be considered in the latter part of the essay.

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Such are the general divisions of the entire work, but through the whole action there run a certain number of threads or groups which must be carefully distinguished. The first of these groups is the Prince with his attendants, representing the State, which stands above all the other elements and enforces their obedience to its commands. Its efforts are directed to keeping peace between the two hostile families, to securing, by its power, an external harmony and order; still the enmity is so intense that upon slight provocation it boils over and bears down all authority. This thread is the least prominent one in the play, the Prince appears but three times, and each time to quell a disturbance. The second thread is the two houses, the Montagues and Capulets with their respective adherents, both of which have one common trait—mutual hatred. The hostility between them is so intense that it not only assails the higher authority of the State, as above mentioned, but that through it the Family turns against itself and assails its own existence, and, indeed, finally destroys itself in its children. Thus there is portrayed a double collision, the Family against itself and against the State. This thread is the disturbing principle of the play, it disturbs public order and domestic peace; its function, therefore, can be best shown in connection with the other threads, and hence it will not be separately developed. The third thread, however, is the most important one of the play, is in fact the play itself. It turns, not upon family hatred, but upon the opposite passion, love, which constitutes the basis of the Family. Its

bearers are Romeo and Juliet, a Montague and a Capulet, whose union thus falls athwart the enmity of their houses, and is sought in vain to be reconciled with the same by Friar Lawrence, the grand mediator of the drama. But love too is the source of manifold collisions which the Poet has taken the pains to fully portray. First comes the unrequited love of Romeo, in which the conflict is wholly subjective, in which the individual is struggling with his own passion. Then follows his requited love, which, however, has to endure a double collision, with the will of the parent on the one hand and with the suit of his rival Paris on the other. With this naked statement of the elements of the play, which is intended only as a sort of analytical table of contents to aid the reader in grasping the whole, we shall now proceed to a concrete development of the thought of the drama.

The action begins with a tumult, and its suppression by force. The very first scene depicts the extent and the intensity of the hatred between the two houses; it reaches down to their servants, who are ready for a fight whenever they meet, and involves the relatives of both families together with their respective adherents in the city. Order is trampled under foot, a violent struggle ensues in the streets, till the Prince as the head of the State has to appear for the purpose of vindicating authority and restoring peace. We are also told that these brawls have repeatedly taken place. Thus it is shown that the conflict between the hostile families is so violent and wide spread that it assails the State, and threatens the existence of public security. Such is the background upon which the chief action of the play is to be portrayed.

In this world of strife and contradiction Romeo now appears, manifesting the full intensity of love. He shuns society, seeks the covert of the wood, avoids daylight, desires not even to be seen. His passion is so strong that he cannot control himself, he sighs and weeps, he goes out of the way of everybody in order not to expose his state of mind and to give full vent to his fancy and emotions. His absorption is complete, he is so swallowed up in one individual that he cuts himself off from all other relations in life, from father, mother, relatives and friends. Thus the intensity of his love is the key-note of his character, and it is this intensity which will bring forth all the tragic consequences of the drama.

But his love is unrequited, he loves and is not loved in return. Here we reach the cause of his strange demeanor and the source of all his affliction. Thus there has arisen a struggle within his own bosom which he can not allay. He gives expression to his conflicting emotions in language so strongly antithetic and contradictory that it often seems unnatural and frigid, yet it is only a highly-wrought picture of his own internal condition. His utterances are the very embodiment of contradiction:

> Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health!

Such extravagance belongs to youth and love, though it, perhaps, begins to get outside of the domain of the Beautiful. Romeo's mind is in a state of contradiction, his language is in the same state. The sympathetic Benvolio tries to soothe him, and advises him to change, to examine other beauties. But the passionate lover scouts at the suggestion, he can not be taught to forget. We should take note of this declaration for it

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is sometimes asserted by critics that his first love was not genuine. The collision so far is purely subjective, in the breast of the individual; but to produce a dramatic action, there must be a struggle with an external power, which the poet now prepares to introduce.

Hence we must pass to the love which is requited and thus collides with the will of the family. Romeo, in company with the friends among whom is the gay scoffer, Mercutio, goes to a masquerade at the dwelling of Capulet, the mortal enemy of his house, evidently for the purpose of beholding the fair Rosaline. While there he sees Juliet, and at once transfers to her all his passion. Indeed its intensity is so great that he for the moment questions his former affection. This passage has been often construed as if Shakespeare meant to assert that Romeo's first love was only a fanciful delusion. How utterly aimless, how ridiculous must this whole first act then become! The poet would thus be simply undoing all his work. These words of Romeo are only the exaggerated expression of his present impulse. He passes to Juliet and talks with her, the language between them, though full of dark and far-fetched metaphor, is plain enough when supplemented with the look and the kiss. If he could not endure the previous struggle, what must become of him now? Juliet is also caught, her fervor seems equally great, both have loved at first sight. Through all this volcanic might of passion, the tragic end is peering, for separation now means death.

Thus Romeo *has* changed, notwithstanding his protestations to Benvolio. This transition is the central point of the whole first movement of the play, and, indeed, gives the true motive for the tragic termination

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of the action. But it has been so generally misunderstood, according to my judgment of the drama, that the grounds for it require a full statement. It is declared that this sudden change from one individual to another is unnatural, and is, moreover, a great blemish in the work. The apparent lack of fidelity is said to give offence to our ethical feelings, and to destroy our respect for the hero. Also Romeo seems now the most inconstant of lovers, but afterwards is faithful to death; which fact looks like an inconsistency in the character and an unsolved contradiction in the play. The defenders of the poet have injured him more deeply than his assailants; they have defended his work by destroying it. The first love of Romeo, so fully detailed by the author is pronounced to be no love, a mere caprice. But a careful view of the circumstances will show that this change is not only psychologically justifiable, but is the only adequate motive for the death of the lovers, that is, for the tragedy itself.

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Romeo is consumed with the most ardent passion; its intensity is its great characteristic; he has given himself away, has made a complete sacrifice of his individuality, but there is no return for his devotion. This is the motive upon which the Poet has laid the chief stress, the first love of Romeo was not reciprocated. The necessity of a corresponding passion is felt by everybody, though its logical basis is not usually thought of. Love is the surrender of the individual to one of the opposite sex through the feelings, each must find his or her emotional existence in the loved person; each must be only through the other. This mutual sacrifice of self on the part of both constitutes the unity and harmony of love. For when individuality

thus offers itself upon the altar of affection, that same individuality, to be consistent with its own principle, must demand a like sacrifice from the second person, otherwise it is in utter contradiction with itself. A new individual must enter the bosom and take the place of that self which has been immolated.

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But let one side be wanting, the reciprocity is destroyed, there is the sacrifice without the compensation, the lover loses for a time at least his own individuality, as far as his emotion is concerned, without gaining another. Hence he is harrassed with an internal struggle more or less severe according to the intensity of the passion. How much of the literature of the world is based upon unrequited love, the reader can form his own estimate; but it may be said to be the first, most natural, and most prevalent of all the collisions which spring from the tender passion. In such a struggle a restoration can be brought about by the healing influence of time. But the sacrifice may be so complete and the passion so intense that recovery is extremely difficult by this means, nay, impossible; then there is only one other way: change the object, find some new individual who will make the sacrifice. It is a matter of not uncommon experience that rejected lovers make these sudden transfers of affection, not from spite, however, as is often supposed, but from a real necessity.

Such is the conflict in Romeo's bosom, and such is its solution The fervor of his love does not permit him to recover himself, he, indeed, must change in order to get repose and harmonize the struggle. It is, therefore, not fickleness, but rather the permanence and strength of his passion which causes its transference to Juliet. This change is hence grounded in the fact that

his love is unrequited, and yet so intense that it must have an object, a corresponding sacrifice. He can not retrace his steps, he is just seeking that which comes across his way in the form of Juliet, for Rosaline can www.libtool.com.cn not now have any reality for him. The relief is instantaneous, he recovers himself at a bound, the merry mocker Mercutio can not now drive him off by bitter jests, but is beaten at his own game and compelled to exclaim: "Now art thou sociable, now art thou Romeo, etc."

For Juliet the motives are quite different, she has no case of unrequited affection on her hands, hence, the question may be asked, Why then does she too so easily fall in love? Juliet is in the full bloom of youth, ready for the sacrifice, yet without its experience. Now Romeo approaches her in the hot glow of his love, and with his sly words and eyes darting flames from beneath his mask, he infuses into her soul all the strength of his passion. Nor is this anything unusual or unnatural, for man and woman belong together and must come together, unless there is a good reason for their remaining asunder. No such reason exists in the case of Juliet; she is taken by the first manifestation of love; Romeo gives a hint: "they pray, grant thou, lest faith turn to despair;" a kiss seals their union. Thus her love is motived by that of Romeo, and the intensity and completeness of his sacrifice call for and demand an equal intensity and completeness in her devotion. Her possible tragic fate also peers through at this point.

The intensity now reached by Romeo and Juliet is kept up by both throughout the play, and constitutes its great distinguishing feature. For the love of man and woman has here attained such a potence that neither

can exist with the other. In the vast majority of mankind perhaps it never reaches quite so high a degree, it stops this side of death. The first act concludes with the excitation of their mutual love. The next step is the mutual acknowledgment, so that their union rises out of mere emotion into conscious purpose. This declaration to each other gives the famous balcony scene, one of those everlasting reprints of the human heart. The theme is the sacrifice of the sexual individual, which results in the formation of a higher unity, the Family. Previously, this unity was only felt, now both declare it to be their most exalted principle forever. The activities of the mind, particularly the imagination, which makes symbols and the understanding which graps relations are intensified into a whirlwind of energy by their passion. In the scenes of their meeting all external nature around them is seized upon and made the bearer of their emotions: sun, moon, stars, birds, the lark and nightingale, are turned into the ministers of their love. The play of mental activity is as great as that of passion, and relieves the directness and blunt expression of the latter. These conceits, these images, though not always in good taste, are in general psychologically true, the characterization can not do without them, for they exhibit the strength of the emotion of the lovers. Their intense feeling seeks the world to find means for utterance, their minds hunt up the most recondite relations between objects, all externality seems there only to express love. The hatred of their families is burnt up in a consuming fire, both are ready to disown their names, if these furnish any obstacle to their union. Still they feel that a new and terrible collision has arisen which they now have to face,

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a collision with the ancient prejudice and hostility of their families.

But their union is not yet complete, it must be carried out to its full realization in marriage. This the deep and earnest nature of Juliet has already demanded:—

> If that thy bent of love be honorable
> Thy purpose marriage—

It is no holiday flirtation, but her ethical feeling is even stronger than her love, since rather than violate it she is ready to undergo the pain of separation. She even distrusts her strong emotion, it is too rash, too sudden, she wants time to give it permanence. This ethical element in the character of Juliet is generally not attended to. She is considered on the one hand as a simple unreflecting girl, on the other hand she is sometimes represented with a dash of coquetry. Both these views are mistaken, she here first insists upon due deliberation, and then seeks the true ethical union found only in marriage. For in marriage the Family is first realized, to the emotional or subjective element of love there is now added the objective or rational element of an institution. This consummation could be reached according to the belief of the time, only through religion, which gave the divine sanction to the union already formed in the emotions. Thus the Family was called into existence as it were by the fiat of God, it was a new and holy creation in the world which was under his special blessing and protection. The ceremony is performed, their unity is now a reality.

D. J. SNIDER.

[To be completed in the February Number.]

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SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDIES.

ROMEO AND JULIET.

(Continued from the January number.)

The marriage of the lovers introduces us to the grand mediator of the play, Friar Lawrence. We are ushered into his presence in the quiet of early morn; the holy man of contemplation is shown in all the surroundings, the very atmosphere breathes serenity and repose. His reflection leads him to consider the contradictions of nature and of mind; he notes that excess calls forth strife, virtue itself being strained turns to its opposite. Here is given the germ of his character; he recognizes the source of all conflict, and seeks the means of its reconciliation. He naturally employs the religious form of expressing this contradiction: grace on the one hand, rude will on the other. He has himself subordinated all the passions of the soul, his order indicates his exclusion from secular struggles, he stands in striking contrast to the passion-tossed world around him. In southern climates, where the blood is hot, it is the main duty of the confessor to assuage the harassing emotions of the individual who can not control them himself, and hence must have them controlled from without. The Friar is the mediator of the whole community, the very intensity of their passions demands one who is without passion to direct, advise, and soothe. Romeo, we see, has been a frequent visitor; the Friar was his confidant when no one else was, and has already often calmed his excited feelings concerning Rosaline. Such is the beautiful character of the Friar, standing in the midst of this tempest of passion, controlling, directing, pacifying it, for both love and hate seem equally ungovernable and destructive without his reconciling presence. He is represented as a profound observer of the natural properties of objects, hence he can provide a drug of such wonder-

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ful potency for Juliet. But his chief mental principle is the shunning of all extremes; and just here lies the basis of his deceptions, of the pious frauds which he practices. A rigid moralist he is not, and can not be, in consistency with his principle:

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> Virtue itself turns to vice, being misapplied.

As mediator he has to smooth over difficulties, and harmonize collisions; he can not be hampered by moral punctilios at every step. He brushes them away, but still he is true to the highest end and subordinates to it every minor scruple. It is to be noticed that all of Shakespeare's mediatorial characters have quite the same traits; they falsify and deceive, without the least hesitation, in order to accomplish their grand mediation. The Friar unites Romeo and Juliet in marriage, for this is the only solution; separation means death; religion adds its sanction to love, to the right of subjectivity, even against the consent of the parents; and the new family unites within itself both the Capulets and the Montagues, whose ancient hatred must henceforth vanish in their descendants. Such a consummation is assuredly a great religious object.

It is now time to go back and bring up to this point the counter-movement to the marriage, resulting from the wooing of Paris. He is the competitor of Romeo for the hand of Juliet, but he rests his suit not on the love of the daughter but on the consent of the parent, and herein proceeds according to the received social formality. Just the opposite is Romeo who entirely disregards formality, but acts from love. Hence arises the conflict. Both parents of Juliet favor Paris, but the father at first declares distinctly that the consent of the daughter must be obtained. Afterwards he abandons

this principle and tries to force the marriage with Paris, an act which brings on all the tragic consequences of the drama. The strength of each suitor was shown at the masquerade; love proved to be more powerful than form, hence Paris had his chosen one carried off from under his very eyes. This excellent young man, upon whom certainly the Poet nowhere casts any reproach, has been often misjudged by critics. He is not a villain, not a fortune-hunter, unworthy of Juliet; the only drawback is, he does not possess her heart. On the contrary, he is a truly ethical character; his manner of courtship was certainly the established custom of the time. His conduct and final death at the tomb of Juliet show that he was influenced by love; he was not, therefore, seeking marriage from interest. The pith of his contrast with Romeo is that he is a worthy man, but that he has not and can not have Juliet's affection, which fact, however, is nowhere made known to him in the play. His love is unrequited like the first love of Romeo, hence can not form a rational basis for marriage. Such is the collision of the right of choice, against the will of the parent. Paris is, therefore, a true tragic character, who has an end justifiable in itself, which, however, collides with a higher justifiable end, and he perishes in the conflict. For the intensity of Romeo is such that he slays the man who stands in the way of his union, as well as slays himself when union is impossible.

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Such is, in outline, the first general division of the play, terminating in the marriage of Romeo and Juliet. We are now prepared for the second part; namely, the separation of the happy pair, ending in their death. This has already had its external cause given in the First Act, though the fundamental motive lies in the hate of the

two families. Tybalt seems to have regarded the presence of a Montague at the masquerade, as an audacious affront to his house. He, therefore, seeks a quarrel with Romeo; but for the latter, all the enmity against the Capulets has vanished in his union with Juliet. Romeo quietly endures the insult of Tybalt, but his friend Mercutio takes up the quarrel. A conflict ensues in which Mercutio is slain. The passionate reaction now comes over Romeo, the old enmity breaks out, he slays Tybalt. Again the hate of the two families has disturbed public order. The State appears in the person of the Prince and decrees the immediate banishment of Romeo, who has so deeply violated the principle of authority.

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This Mercutio, who has become the instrument of the banishment of his friend, and fallen a sacrifice to his own interference, is a character in every way noteworthy. He is the mocker who has not earnestness sufficient for a real passion or a deep conviction. His chief mental trait is humor coupled with a light, airy fancy. The Poet has portrayed him in a series of situations, all quite different, yet all manifesting the same fundamental characteristic. First is his somewhat lengthy description of Queen Mab and her functions, wherein he makes fun of the fairy mythology, and wherein, at the same time, he manifests the most beautiful fancy. Here he makes the ideal world his sport, yet in a most ideal manner. Humor and fancy were never so harmoniously blended. Next he takes up the real world around him, and treats it in a similar manner; he mocks in the most lively way the formality and affectation of the time, in particular, the formal training and fencing of Tybalt. But above all, he is the mocker of love, and its manifesta-

tions in Romeo are the subject of infinite merriment. Such is the contrast—for the one, love has a tragic depth; for the other, a comic lightness. His fancy also finds expression in puns and conceits, he always sees the ridiculous side; he rallies Romeo, for instance, by not very delicate inuendoes when the old nurse appears bearing a message from Juliet. Thus the world dissolves in his humor, he assails everything with it; all his surroundings furnish only food for his sport. But there is nothing cynical or bitter in his character; it is a laugh, light, airy, mercurial like his name. What causes such a man to fight? His volatile nature is brought into trying circumstances that require at least strong self-command, which he does not possess; it must fly off, for it has no controlling centre within itself. He thinks that Romeo has been insulted and has basely submitted; puff, he is up and off. This, added to an evident dislike of Tybalt, seems to be the motive of the fight. Though the relative of the Prince, he is the friend of Romeo, and takes sides with the house of Montague. As an offset to him, Paris, another relative of the Prince, allies himself to the Capulets and perishes. The last words of Mercutio are full of repentance, though he can not refrain from the jest and pun, with his dying breath. The logical justification of his fate is not very apparent, but it probably lies in the fact that he, though an outsider, is the first man to stir up afresh the enmity of the two houses, after it had been healed or ultimately must have been healed by the marriage of Romeo, as well as by the conciliatory conduct of the latter. The hate breaks forth anew, Mercutio is the first victim; it is his own act which calls forth his death. His mistake he sees and his final curse is upon "your houses."

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Banishment is decreed, the unity of love must be violently torn asunder. The conduct and feelings of the lovers which are now manifested are in the most perfect consonance with their principle. Both think of death ; loss of existence is preferable to the loss of union, so great is its intensity. They are brought forward in different scenes, but their pathos is quite the same ; the tragic motive is again manifest, permanent separation means destruction. In the breast of Juliet, however, there is a double conflict. Her dearest relative has been slain by her husband, and now that husband must leave her. Not dissimilar is the situation of Ophelia. Juliet, in the beginning, thinks of the death of her cousin Tybalt ; her family thus comes up first in her mind, and she curses Romeo. But soon the deeper principle manifests itself ; that which rends her heart is the separation, and she says directly that she would rather endure the destruction of her whole family, Tybalt, father and mother, than the banishment of her husband. Just as great is the desperation of Romeo. Again he must betake himself to the Friar, who will comfort him with "adversity's sweet milk—philosophy," and will soothe his agitated soul, the true function of the religious mediator. The good monk adopts the only solution possible : the separation must not be permanent, Romeo can only be buoyed up with hope of a speedy return. This hope is furnished to him by the Friar, he is now prepared to endure the parting from Juliet, which accordingly takes place, and the separation is accomplished.

Let us now go back again and consider the thread which collides with this union, namely, the suit of Paris supported by the consent of the parents. In the

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absence of Romeo this thread becomes the sole element of the drama, and Juliet has to support the struggle alone. Her fidelity is to be tried to the utmost, afflictions will be laid upon her, increasing in intensity till death. But she will never, for a moment, flinch in her devotion. The father, who previously asserted for his daughter the right of love, now changes his basis and commands Juliet to marry Paris. This change lies in his impulsive, volatile nature, as far as the Poet has given to it any motive; he suddenly makes a "desperate tender" of his daughter's love without having consulted her choice. It is one of the turning-points of the drama, this abrupt reversal of his former opinion. Juliet is continually weeping; her father thinks her mourning is for her relative Tybalt, while it is really on account of the absence of Romeo. She thus seems to have a share in her own misfortune by not informing her parent of her love; but then any declaration of the sort would have been equally fatal. It is the tragic dilemma, either way leads to death. Paris is pressing his suit, both the father and the mother of Juliet favor him; she resists, the result is that she is berated by her parents and threatened with expulsion from home and with disinheritance. Here is the next affliction after the banishment of Romeo. The conflict between the right of love and the will of the parent is manifested in all its intensity, but she can not yield. She resorts for comfort to the nurse, who knows of her love and from whom she expects sympathy. But this last source too, is cut off; the old woman advises her to submit, and cites every consideration but the right one, namely love, which is the sole possible motive with Juliet. Thereupon, she is done with the nurse; their friendly

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relation henceforth ceases, and the nurse disappears from every essential mediation of the play.

The nurse is also one of the important instrumentalities of the drama; her function is partly mediatorial, www.libtool.com.cn though in a far less degree than that of the Friar. Her portrait is taken from nature direct, nothing can be more real and life-like. She almost supplies in care and affection the place of a mother; she is the friend and confidant of Juliet, while Lady Capulet appears in the distance, a stranger to the nursery, and the supporter of the marriage with Paris. The maternal feeling in her bosom does not seem very strong. The nurse, on the contrary, supports, for a time at least, the love of Juliet against her family. She is, however, of low birth, vulgar in language and coarse in character, hence is ready for the sway of interest. The ideal devotion of Juliet she can in no sense appreciate, it lies far beyond her horizon, and so she advises its abandonment. The realistic fullness and limited range of her characterization gives the clearest picture in the play; her garrulity, her habit of citing old memories in which she dwells, her sudden changes of thought, her trickery and teasing, are all united into the most vivid individuality.

As soon as the nurse gives this advice to abandon Romeo her mediatorial function ceases; the case is out of her reach, the Friar alone can understand and solve the difficulty. Accordingly Juliet betakes herself to his cell; at once she finds both sympathy and aid, for it is the character of the Friar to give complete validity to love. He is ready with a plan: she must drink off a liquor which produces the semblance of death, and be buried in the vault of her family, whither he and Romeo will come to her rescue. This means appears far-

fetched and without adequate motive. Why could she not have gone directly to his cell and secreted herself, or have slipped off and hurried to Romeo at Mantua? Yet the design of the Poet is manifest. Since he is portraying love in its highest intensity, he makes it endure every gradation of trial and finally death itself. The most terrible thing to the human imagination is probably the idea of being buried alive, and shut in a vault with dead bodies. But she, a tender girl, resolves to undergo what would make the heart of the most courageous man blench. It is the affliction next to death, yet love gives her the daring to endure Read her soliloquy as she drinks of the contents of the vial. There she recounts the possibilities, imagination starts up the direst phantasms, madness stares her in the face, still she will drink. This occurrence, therefore, is in perfect harmony with the spirit of the play; before death Juliet is brought to the tomb alive. It is one of the series of trials, increasing in pain and horror, in whose fire her love must be tested.

But just here are incidents portrayed which we cannot help attributing to the youthfulness of the author. What necessity of exhibiting the sorrow of the parents over their supposed dead child, which must be a false pathos to the audience? Friar Lawrence again appears in his true role of mediator and consoler, but his dissimulation now seriously impairs his high ethical character. Both the weeping of the parents and the deception of the Friar could have been here omitted without injury to the action, and to the decided advantage of thought and logical consistency. In fact this is the main defect of the entire drama: it has a certain natural fullness which makes it often vivid, but obscures its unity as a

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whole. It lacks the more rigid adherence to a central thought found in the later works of the Poet.

The conflict of Juliet with the will of her parents is thus solved by the plan of the Friar, who protects her against her family as he protected Romeo against the authority of the State. Nothing now seems in the way of the speedy reunion of the separated lovers. Romeo is still in exile, filled with longings and anticipations of the time when he will be restored to his Juliet. His thoughts by day and his dreams by night have no other employment. Suddenly the terrible news arrives, Juliet is dead. His love is at once all ablaze, he will still be united with her, though in death. He resolves to set out immediately for home. But herein he disobeys the Friar, and acts without the latter's knowledge. Thus the Friar's plan is interfered with and destroyed. Romeo proceeds upon mistaken information and the good monk fails in his mediation. The lover hastens to the tomb there to lie in death with Juliet, but he meets Paris. The latter attempts to interfere with his resolution, and to stand in the way of his union with Juliet. Paris is slain, for such is the intensity of this love that it destroys every obstacle in its way, and destroys itself when it cannot be realized. Thus Romeo kills himself too, in preference to living without this union. Juliet wakes, sees her lover at her side dead, she also cannot live apart from their union in the Family. They are thus alike in devotion, but it is manifest that Juliet is the truer and loftier character. Her sacrifice belongs to her sex, is its profoundest ethical principle. But Romeo does not rise above this same character. He is too much like a woman, his pathos is too feminine. A man must find some higher ethical principle for which he

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sacrifices existence; for example, the State. On this account Romeo can never be as great a favorite as Juliet, he falls below the true type of manhood.

Again authority has been assailed, blood has been spilled in another fray, the Prince, as the representative of the State, appears the third and last time. There is, however, no one to punish. The play must explain itself. The Friar together with the page of Paris and the servant of Romeo unfold the causes of the untoward calamity. This is not an unnecessary appendage, for Shakespeare always makes in the end, the play clear to its own actors, thus only is it complete in itself. The Friar, after telling all his plans of mediation, offers to die, but of course that man cannot perish who chiefly sought to ward off the tragic consequences of the fatal love.

Thus we see that the logical result of this feud has been the annihilation of the family. Each house willed the destruction of the other, and therein the destruction of itself. For their conduct must return upon themselves, and the drama only portrays the manner of that return. Both families lose their children, their heirs, and in their loss must pass away forever. The Prince, too, suffers along with them for "winking at the discords," and he declares in the plainest terms the great law of retribution, by which all are punished.

We have now reached the termination of the second division or movement of the play, namely, the union of the lovers in death. Their last and greatest trial has been passed, both have remained true to love. Their tie was so strong, their oneness so complete, that they could not really exist as separate individuals. The grand object of the play has been frequently stated: it is to portray

a love so intense that separation must cause death. But such a result is contrary to the common experience of mankind, and hence the Poet seeks every possible means for manifesting the *intensity* of the passion. That it lay in the character of Romeo never to recover his individuality after it was once surrendered to his affection, is shown in the first division of the play; the taking away of the loved object is literally the taking away of himself, so complete is his sacrifice. Juliet's passion is motived, both in kind and in degree, by that of Romeo, her devotion must be as great as his. The second division of the tragedy portrays the separation of the pair, at first supposed to be only temporary; but the moment Romeo, and afterwards Juliet, become possessed of the notion that the separation will be eternal, self-destruction is the logical necessity of their characters. It is indeed the tragedy of love, this coloring of intensity it keeps throughout amid all its vagaries and excrescences. This is in fact the deep underlying unity of the work whose power every one must feel. The guilt of the unhappy pair must be placed here also, if we can predicate guilt of them. The emotional nature of man must be controlled and subordinated to the rational principle and under no circumstances can it have the right to utterly absorb and destroy individual existence.

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The third division is the reconciliation of the two hostile houses. The Prince insists upon it, the public order of the city has been violated; he has also lost two of his kinsmen in the feud, he too, has been punished in his family. This part of the action is exceedingly short, but it must rank as coördinate with the other two divisions, if it is to have any place in the

play at all. Thus the tragic intention of the whole drama seems for a moment to vanish in the repentance and reconciliation of the Montagues and Capulets.

I am not unaware of the ingenious defence which has been frequently set up concerning the necessity of this termination. But such a defense proves too much, it must by implication, censure Shakespeare's greater and more mature tragedies in which this reconciliation does not take place. But the view has several other difficul ties which must always excite a great deal of doubt concerning the propriety of such a conclusion. If the play be a tragedy, it would naturally seem to terminate with the death of the lovers or with the explanation of the Friar. But as it now stands there is a mediation of the hate of the two houses. The question then arises, was the fate of Romeo and Juliet only the means or the end of the action? .To make it only the means would appear to destroy the whole purport of the play, which was, as above shown, to give an adequate motive for the death of the lovers. It must be confessed that there is a species of dualism which is not overcome by the present solution.

There is another important consideration which should not be omitted. Repentance ought to bring witn it some fruition, some escape from the consequences of guilt. It is hard, indeed it is a contradiction, for the individual to repent, and then to be as bad off as he was before. The parents have lost their children, repentance can now do little good, at least, it cannot save their families, which was the question at issue. Shakespeare has frequently employed repentance, it is, in fact, the great mediating principle in that class of his plays which may be called Special Dramas, as distinguished from Tragedies

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and Comedies. But repentance implies restoration, it rescues those who yield to its influence, from the tragic consequences of their deeds. The present play, however, exhibits an intermediate stage, a sort of transition from pure tragedy to the special drama, owing, perhaps, to the youthfulness of the author, who had not yet strictly determined the different provinces of his art

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SHAKESPEARE'S TRADEGIES.

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KING LEAR.

The impression left upon the mind by this drama is that of terrific grandeur. In it is found probably the strongest language ever written or spoken by a human being. Dante has passages of fiery intensity, Æschylus has strains of wonderful sublimity, but nothing in either of these poets is equal to the awful imprecations of Lear. The grand characteristic of the play is strength, Titanic strength, which can only be adequately compared to the mightiest forces of Nature. There is a world-destroying element in it which oppresses the individual and makes him feel like fleeing from the crash of the Universe. The super-human power, passion and expression, can only be symbolized by the tempest or volcano; it is indeed the modern battle of the Giants and the Gods. Shakespeare, like other poets, seems to have had his Titanic epoch, and his *Lear* may be well called the most colossal specimen of literary Titanism.

It will be noticed that the action of the play lies in the sphere of the Family, and portrays one of its essential relations, that of parents and children. The conflicts arising from this relation involve also brothers and sisters in strife. The domestic side of life is thus torn with fearful struggles, and its quiet affection and repose are turned into a display of malignant hate and passion. Each element is present, there is on the one hand the most heroic fidelity, and on the other, the

most wanton infidelity. The parents are both faithful and faithless to their relation; so are the children, taken collectively. Such are its contradictory principles, and hence arises the conflict, in which the offending individuals perish, since they destroy the very condition of their own existence, namely, the Family. But those who have been true to their domestic relations, and have not otherwise committed wrong, are preserved. It is essentially the story of fidelity and infidelity to the Family.

The threads of the play are fundamentally two, which, however, unite, separate and collide in various ways. The first thread is the family of Gloster, the second is the family of Lear, the attendants of each being included. They have the same logical basis; the one can behold its features in the other as it were in a mirror. The drama gives a double reflection of the same content. Both fathers cause an utter disruption of their families by their mistakes and their passion; they drive off the faithful children and cherish the faithless ones; they are even ready to hand over to the latter their property and power. Both parents meet with a terrible punishment for the wrong done by them to their faithful children. But this punishment is received at the hands of their faithless children who had obtained all the favors, and who thus in turn fall into guilt, which will also be punished. There are, however, many differences of character, of situation, and of incident between the two threads. The one father has only daughters, the other has only sons; each relation therefore, represents a distinct side of the Family, Lear is king, Gloster is subject, both taken together show that the conflict is not limited to one rank, but

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pervades the chief classes of society. Lear is irascible, Gloster is superstitious; the result however, is the same. Both groups indicate that it is the epoch of strife in the Family.

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The two threads are sufficiently simple, but the psychological changes of character are far more difficult of comprehension. There will be touched almost every note in the gamut of the human mind, from sanity to madness. Also the grand transitions of the whole action must be carefully noted and accounted for, since everything is in a process, not only the individual, but also the entire group and the entire drama. As in life itself, each part moves, and the totality moves. The development is that upon which the chief stress ought to be laid.

The general movement of the play has essentially two divisions. There is in it a double guilt and a double retribution. The first division (embracing mainly three Acts) exhibits the complete disintegration of the Family. It portrays the first guilt and the first retribution—the wrong of the parents and its punishment. Lear banishes his daughter, his daughters in turn drive him out of doors—Gloster expels from home and disinherits his true and faithful son in favor of the illegitimate and faithless son, and is then himself falsely accused and betrayed by the latter. Cordelia too falls into guilt in her attempt to avenge the wrongs of her father. Thus the disruption is complete, the parents expelled, the false triumphant, the faithful in disguise and banishment. Such is the first division—the wrong done by the parents to their children and its punishment. The second division will unfold the second guilt and the second retribution—the wrong done by

by the children to their parents and its punishment. It must be observed, however, that the deeds of the children which are portrayed in the first division of the drama constitute their guilt. On the one hand they are instruments of retribution, but on the other hand their conduct is a violation of ethical principle as deep as that of their parents. They are the avengers of guilt, but in this very act become themselves guilty and must receive punishment. The general result therefore of the second division will be the completed retribution. Lear and his three guilty daughters—for we have to include Cordelia under this category—as well as Gloster and his guilty son perish. The faithful of both families come together in their banishment, Cordelia assails the established State, the consequence of her deed is death. The faithless of both families also come together; though they triumph in the external conflict, there necessarily arises a struggle among themselves, for how can the faithless be faithful to one another? The jealousy of the two sisters leads to a conspiracy and to their final destruction. Edmund, faithless to both, falls at last by the hand of his brother whom he has so deeply wronged.

This short analysis is intended as a sort of tabular statement to guide the reader through the various complications of the play. I hope that the two distinctions which have been above unfolded will not become a source of confusion instead of a means of comprehension. Let it be borne in mind that the threads divide the drama lengthwise, while the divisions of the action, as before explained, divide it crosswise. Each thread in each division will be elaborated in proper order. But the thought must not be entertained that these distinctions

are external and arbitrary; on the contrary they are organic, they show the essential members of the whole, all of which should be logically connected.

We shall accordingly take up the first thread and carry it through the first division of the action. The play opens with the conversation of Gloster concerning his family relations. He speaks of his incontinence with light-hearted frivolity; here is the fruit of it in a grown-up son who is present after a long absence, but must be sent away again. That son hears his own shame from the lips of his indiscreet parent, and we can well imagine the bitterness in his heart and his resolution to thwart his father's purpose. Here is indicated the crime of Gloster and the instrument of his retribution. He has committed the deepest wrong against the Family, he has called a contradiction into existence which it is impossible to heal. A son and not a son, a child by nature yet a child which the Family rejects, disowns, banishes, though it is the special function of the Family, to rear and cherish the child. The wrong of Gloster is therefore double. He has wronged the Family, the conditions of whose existence he has trampled under foot, and at the same time made it the instrument of the direst injustice against an innocent being. But his wrong against his own child is still greater, it is a born outcast from the institutions of society. If guilt is ever requited at the hands of the injured, that father is bound to receive punishment from that son.

But here is the son, speaking in his own person, let us see how he feels. He invokes nature against the plague of custom, for by nature he is in every way as good as his legitimate brother, indeed he is better. Therefore he will have his rights, particularly his share

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in the paternal patrimony, even if he assail and destroy everything high and holy in his attempt. His course and character are simply the logical result of his situation. He must turn against all institutions, for they have made him an outcast of society and deprived him of his estate. Yet it is from no fault of his own he thus finds himself punished for crimes which he never committed. That which is called morality shuns him, scoffs at him, tramples him into the dust. All the safeguards which have been built up to protect the individual as Family, State, Law, are turned to his degradation and destruction. The illegitimate child therefore is the natural villain, hostile to the Family, to Society, to Law, to Morality; in him institutions become contradictory of their purpose, and he must bear the sting of their wrong. Hence he worships nature, for there alone he is the peer of all. He is thus not without adequate motives for his conduct, still he is a villain, for such every man must be called who deliberately and persistently assails the ethical principles of the world. Yet if he follows these principles, they crush him. Edmund has taken his choice, he prefers honor and distinction through villainy, to shame and degradation through virtue. But still the fatal outcome of his career, whatever may have been its cause, can not be averted.

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Edmund accordingly begins to work out his schemes. He turns against his legitimate brother, because the latter is the bearer of all those ethical elements which crush him. He turns against his father, who was the original author of the wrong, the evil consequences of which however, the child must endure. Still filial affection is his duty, under all circumstances; moreover, he has been given an education, and is beloved by his father.

Here the theme can be seen to be the same as that of Lear: filial ingratitude and paternal wrong. Edmund finds his father just in the mood to be successfully deceived, for the latter is excited over the occurrences at court, especially over the banishment of his friend Kent. It is the season of treachery, Gloster thinks, and the son proceeds to inject into his mind the deadly suspicion against his brother Edgar, and at the same time artfully conceals his own motives. Gloster is superstitious fundamentally, he sees in Nature, in the eclipses of the sun and moon, the collisions of the moral world; he is always ready to assign to blind physical causes the obliquities of man's own action. By thus ignoring human freedom, he would seem to try to get rid of his own guilt. But Edmund is just the opposite in this respect, he does not believe in these external influences, but announces in the boldest terms the self-determination of man. He is the conscious villain, and takes upon himself the full responsibility of his own act. He therefore, quickly perceives the weakness of his father, and uses it to his own advantage.

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Equally well does he grasp and utilize the weak side of his brother Edgar's character. At first, however, he touches the same chord which lay so deep in the paternal nature, namely superstition. But the plan does not work well. Edgar is not superstitious, but he is wholly unsuspecting. Accordingly he does what Edmund urges him to do, avoids his father. Both Edgar and Gloster have therefore credulity, and that too credulity of such magnitude that it requires considerable credulity in the reader to believe it possible. But they reach it through different channels, the father

is superstitious, hence credulous, the son is simple-minded and unsophisticated, hence credulous. Either will do for the wily villain.

Edgar is concealed at first by his brother from the wrath of the parent, then is inveigled into making the pretended assault upon the latter, after which he betakes himself to flight. He must be imagined as possessing a primitive innocence which knows of no such thing as deception in the world. Upon this utter guilelessness Edmund relies with success. Again the latter touches skillfully the old chord in his father's bosom, which he knows will be most effective, namely superstition:

> Here stood he in the dark, his sharp sword out,
> Mumbling of wicked charms, conjuring the moon,
> To stand auspicious mistress.

Evidently the most startling words in the ear of old Gloster are just those. Each is therefore wrought upon through his peculiar weakness. But we shall hereafter see that Edgar passes through a course of severe instruction, and learns something. From his present innocent state of mind he is to come to a knowledge of evil in some of its varied manifestations.

The honest and faithful son has now been driven from home, the true and ethical relation of the Family has been annihilated by the faithless and immoral one. But that is not all, Edgar is pursued as a murderer, is outlawed, and a price is set on his head. The institutions of society are invoked to destroy him; though true to both, yet Family and State have turned against him in favor of one who is false to both. The ethical order of the world is reversed, just as was declared by Gloster himself, and yet he is the author of the present condition of things. But what is to become of poor

Edgar? Without domestic or even civil protection, he has to flee, and in some way avoid the oppression of society. He can only assume the meanest and most loathsome disguise and wander over the country feigning both madness and beggary. For are not the institutions of man, through which alone personal security is possible, directed against him, and must he not get out of their reach? Still he will remain faithful to his parent in spite of his wrongs, for fidelity is ever faithful. Nor will he go mad like Lear, from his fall, though he descends from being a nobleman's son to the lowest depth of humiliation. Innocence, therefore, dares not show its face in this perverted world, but has to hide itself under the garb of insanity. Fidelity too, must disguise itself from the clutches of the faithless.

The disruption of Gloster's family is now complete. That which the eclipses foreshadowed has come to pass, father against child, child against father. Yet it was the consequence of his own innate disposition which was thus predicted, the presentiment of his own character. He had within himself the possibility of these events, that is what he saw in the stars. The signs of nature were to him an unavoidable fate, because they were simply the image of his deepest self. The Bastard is infinitely the intellectual superior of his father, for he believes in mind and relies upon thought. He knows that the individual is determined through himself. Hence comes his success, because he works through intelligence. But he too makes a mistake, he imagines his standpoint to be absolute, whereas it also is limited. He thinks the world is moved solely through cunning, he therefore ignores the eternal ethical laws of the universe. To employ the technical language of philosophy, his faith

is in his own subjective intelligence alone, but the objective world of spirit he neither believes in, nor cares for. He therefore collides with it and perishes.

But the deepest stroke of villainous cunning is still to come. Edmund has succeeded in getting rid of the presence of his brother, now he must have the property. His next scheme is therefore to work upon his father to this end. But here arises a great difficulty which the intellectual rogue perfectly comprehends and carefully prepares for. While he is instilling suspicion, how is he to avoid suspicion himself? he is seeking his brother's patrimony by exciting mistrust, will he not be himself mistrusted of doing that very thing? This is the logical consequence of such conduct; a man who tries to arouse suspicion will be apt to be suspected; it is his own action returning upon him, for his principle is suspicion. Only the most adroit villain can make the synthesis of these two contradictory sides. Independent of the fact that Gloster is not hard to deceive, Edmund succeeds admirably. His method is to declare openly the suspicion to which he is liable, and which is really true of him. Here is his language to his father:

> I threatened to discover him, he replied
> "Thou unpossessing bastard! dost thou think,
> If I would stand against thee, would the reposal
> Of any trust, virtue, or worth in thee
> Make thy words faithed? . . . .
> And thou must make a dullard of the world
> If they not thought the profits of my death
> Were very pregnant and potential spurs
> To make thee seek it."

"Edgar said that I would be suspected of plotting for his inheritance and therefore nobody would believe me." All suspicion is thus anticipated and destroyed in the

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mind of the father. Edmund appears to be the faithful son without property, and Edgar the faithless son with property. Gloster at once makes an adjustment, he says to Edmund: you shall have my estate. Edgar's offence is made to spring from his being heir; of the heirship he is therefore deprived.

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The reader will notice that the crafty rogue announces here the very thing of which he is guilty; he *is* seeking the patrimony of his brother. Hypocrisy and falsehood are now carried to their climax; hypocrisy hypocritically condemns its own plan, falsehood falsely laments falsehood. Edmund declares his own nefarious scheme as something of which he might be suspected. Thus, however, he destroys suspicion. A careful concealment would be certain to arouse it, but when a person finds his most secret misgivings openly announced by the one who is suspected, suspicion is apt to take its flight. Gloster might suspect that Edmund was deceiving him and trying to be his heir, but the latter puts this very suspicion into the mouth of Edgar as the ground of mistrust against himself. Thus its foundation is brushed away, for it is the nature of suspicion to rest upon its own secresy; let the villain destroy this secresy and he is generally successful. Suspicion seems to take for granted that the motives of a scamp must always be hidden. To avoid suspicion means usually to be open, without concealment. The above mentioned trait of Edmund, Shakespeare has given to other villains, notably to Iago. Villainy is full of the reproof of villainy, and thus seems honesty, which is just that which it is not, but it is still villainy.

Still Edmund is not satisfied, he is not willing to quietly wait for the succession, but his father must be

got rid of too. Gloster sympathized deeply with Lear and therefore incurred the enmity of the ruling powers. He has received by letter information of the invasion of Cordelia, his leaning is decidedly toward her party. He expresses this inclination and also imparts the news which he has received to the son whom he supposed to be faithful. The son at once betrays his father and is made Earl of Gloster. Edmund who had previously been taken into the service of the sisters, has now obtained all that his family possessed, and has thus reached the goal of his first ambition. But a new and higher sphere has been opened to him, namely, the possession of the State.

The fearful retribution of Gloster speedily follows. He has not seen that he has been doing to his own child what Goneril and Regan were doing to their father. The old man is seized, his eyes are plucked out and he is thrust forth to grope his way in the world, Like the ancient Œdipus, he did not see when he had eyes, the result is, he loses them. He learns however, that Edmund is the informer who has brought upon him the present calamity, and at once the whole truth flashes upon his mind. He has pursued an innocent son with murderous wrath and outlawry, he is himself now driven forth houseless and homeless, and he too has a price set upon his head. Another son he has brought into the world of institutions under circumstances which produce nothing but wrong and degradation; that son is the necessary instrument of his punishment. He has destroyed the rational principle of the Family by his act; his own family is disrupted and turned against him. The consequences of his deed are upon him.

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Such is the first thread of the first division, ending in the complete disruption of Gloster's family. It is now time to go back to the beginning and trace the second thread of this first division, namely the family of Lear, to a similar disruption. The general offense of both Gloster and Lear is the same: violation of the right of the Family. Their conduct is fundamentally the same: they trust their faithless and banish their faithful children. But the origin and special form of their offenses are very different. The play presupposes in Gloster the act of incontinence, in Lear the tyrannical disposition which overbears and destroys all individual right. With this latter character, we are now prepared to begin.

The central figure of the second thread, in fact of the whole play, is the king. The three essential circumstances pertaining to him are his time of life, his long rule, and his absolute power. They make him a tyrant, but a tyrant of a peculiar kind. He is introduced to us with a character long since formed, and now hardened and stiffened with age. He has been and is still the absolute monarch whose mandates are not to be questioned. This unlimited authority has fed his temper till it is wholly unyielding and wholy uncontrollable. Any restraint put upon his caprice causes him to boil over with the most intense passion; irascibility has therefore become one of his most marked characteristics. The course of the drama will exhibit the various limitations placed upon him, one after another, and increasing in severity, till the absolute monarch who prescribed to all their bounds, becomes the outcast, the most limited of mortals. Old age, long rule, and uncontrolled power combined can alone produce such a man.

Now this king whose character springs from and rests upon unlimited authority is ready to surrender his sway, that is, to surrender the very ground of his existence.
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Tired of the cares of government, yet not weary of its pomp and outward show, he proposes to resign the reality of power and yet retain its appearance, to play the king and yet to be freed from the troubles of kingship. He will thus reduce himself to a mere semblance; his desire is to seem to possess authority, while in truth he has wiped its last vestige. Such is the contradiction which he deems possible to be realized. The logical result is manifest, the shadow must prove itself to be shadow and not substance, the show of authority must go where authority actually resides.

This will be a leading phase of the progress of Lear in the second thread before us. He will pass from semblance to nothingness; there is no help for him since he is fighting for a shadow and has thrown away that which might assist him, if anything could, namely, authority. Every remnant of power will be stripped from him, the ensigns of royalty will also be taken away, he will descend from the palace to the hovel. In general, from the absolute monarch he will become the humblest individual: a transition which is wholy involved in his choosing the shadow for the substance of authority.

Running parallel with this transition is another which is intimately connected with it, the transition from sanity to madness. Domination, unopposed and uncontrolled, was the basis upon which the spiritual nature of Lear reposed; destroy this basis, and the prop of his mind is gone. He was too old and too stiff to adjust himself at once to such an overwhelming and sudden

change in his outward circumstances. He was wholly the creature of external forms, his thoughts rested in them, when they are gone, he has quite lost the entire content of his existence. The insanity of Lear thus has its adequate motive in the suddenness and completeness of this transition.

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Such is in general the character of Lear, let us now consider its effect upon those around him, upon his family and court. What will be the results of long years of arbitrary rule? Two classes must arise, on the one hand the hypocritical and faithless, on the other the rigid and faithful. The former class is composed of the sycophants of power, who administer to the caprices of rulers, who flatter and fawn in success, but are equally ready to desert, and even to strike, in misfortune. They are the product of a forced external conformity, full of intrigue and treachery. Lear's court is mainly composed of such characters, at the head of whom stand, Goneril and Regan; yet even his own chosen companions, his knights, seem no exception. But the second class will also be there, made up of the virtuous few, who, by a kind of reaction, will be the very opposite of what they see around themselves. They must possess strong, even stoical natures to resist the current. Instead of the glib and guileful phrases of the courtier, they will be blunt and direct in speech; the prevailing corruption will only increase the stern code of their morality; but chiefly the utter faithlessness of the time will engender in them the most heroic fidelity. In Lear's own family this class is represented by Cordelia, in the Court by Kent, in a still different relation, more fully to be explained hereafter, by the Fool. These two classes therefore spring di-

rectly from the character and situation of Lear. Moreover, since he has chosen the semblance and rejected the reality, his course must be to retain the false flatterer and drive off the true friend. Hence, the second class will soon be compelled to fly from his presence.

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The tyrannical nature of Lear therefore seeks to reduce everybody to an apparent submission and outward conformity. His first collision is with the true and honest people of his court, whom he banishes. Having thus made the world around him a semblance, he also concludes to become semblance himself. Lear is thus about to manifest in his action four phases of transition, all of which are the direct consequences of his character and situation: he will pass from unlimited power to the most limited existence, from appearance to nothingness, from sanity to madness, from wrong against his daughter to wrong from his daughters. That is, the negative sweep of his deed involves in one common destruction the world of action, of intelligence, and of morality.

Having thus elaborated the essential elements of the second thread, we can now take up its incidents and trace the above-mentioned principles in their concrete development. First comes the division of the realm by Lear, who bases his conduct upon his daughters' expressions of love toward him. This scene has been often censured, and sometimes defended, upon a misconception of its meaning. It has just been stated that the character of Lear rests in the outward form and not the inner-essence, that he prefers the semblance of power to its reality. So the appearance is there, he is satisfied. Hence it is in perfect keeping with his situation, and strongly indicative of his character that he lays far more

stress upon external and noisy expressions of love than upon genuine but quiet affection. Goneril and Regan both declare in formal phrase their unfathomable, unspeakable devotion, and receive their share of the kingdom. Now comes Cordelia, she will be the opposite, according to her severe nature, and she will also be blunt in speech. She loves her father according to her duty, no more. She places, therefore, a limit upon her love to parent, an ethical one too, that of love to husband. The old man at once boils over with anger, curses and banishes his daughter. In his imprecation he renounces fatherhood, he commits the crime against the Family, his curse will be literally fulfilled in himself through his other daughters. The code of Cordelia is *duty and truth* in all their severity. She proposes not only to do what is right, but to say it without disguise. Her manner is firm and resolute, but quiet; she is not the simple ethical character, but is reflective and intellectual. She knows the disposition of her sisters and indicates the result. She rejects the suit of Burgundy, since his love is not pure, but based on gain. Her acts seem not instinctive, but rather the result of conscious principles, which are her guide and support in the prevailing corruption. She is therefore essentially intellectual, a woman who can think and who carefully adjusts herself in all the ethical relations of life. But she is at the same time womanly and devoted. For her assertion of supreme love to husband, she is cursed by Lear, who thus curses the very essence of the Family whose first principle is the unity and mutual devotion of man and wife.

Kent, who belongs to the same school of stern moralists as Cordelia, also undertakes to place a limit upon

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the old King. The result is just what must happen from an aged and absolute ruler. His rage swells at the audacity, and Kent is banished. In the latter, honest counsel and courageous utterance take their departure from the Court. But fidelity is forever faithful, that of Kent is stoical, the deepest principle of his nature. Whatever wrongs he may suffer as an individual, he is still true to his allegiance. Hence he will return and serve his king in disguise, he can not do otherwise. With this obstinate nature is coupled another cognate trait, he is rough in manner and blunt in speech. As above stated, he is the product of the reaction against courtly hypocrisy and flattery.

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Lear has now succeeded in getting rid of every species of fidelity, fidelity to parent in Cordelia, and fidelity to King in Kent, fidelity to Family and to State. The world of appearance is everywhere triumphant, Lear has completely realized his principle, he is himself a shadow, all are shadows around him, they seem what they are not. Even fidelity must disguise itself, it dares not appear in its real form, hence Kent has to put on a deceptive guise in order to be faithful. Wisdom also can show her face only in the garb of folly, the sagest counsellor of the King is his Fool. The same result was observed in the preceding thread concerning the family of Gloster. Edmund the innocent and true son, is compelled to flee and assume the guise of a madman, while the false Bastard is triumphant in his wildest schemes. Society is a grand masquerade, where each person seems to be what he is not; the world has become one immense deception.

When such a state of things becomes universal, the logical result begins to make itself manifest, falsehood

must be false to itself, and will turn upon and destroy itself. The sham-king Lear must have his semblance stripped away, and be reduced to what he really is. Goneril upbraids him to his face and proposes to diminish his train of knights; she in every respect treats him as a shadow. She knows and states precisely the contradiction in his conduct:

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> Idle old man
> That still would manage those authorities
> That he hath given away.

He can not be semblance and at the same time possess authority. Now she has the power to which she has hitherto bowed while she was shadow. Lear's turn is come, he must follow the logic of his situation. Moreover he has banished his faithful daughter, why should his daughters be faithful to him? It is his own deed returning upon him through his own family. Nevertheless, Goneril's guilt is not diminished, she is false to her agreement and undutiful to her parent.

But Lear will not receive any limitation without the most terrific display of passion. A second time he launches a curse against a daughter. He prays that she may never have offspring, or if she have, that it may be a monster. Therein he curses his own generation, his imprecation is that his own tribe may perish. It is fulfilled to the letter. For the first time a limit has been placed upon him which he could not sweep away, with it he begins to see the wrong done to Cordelia, with it too his mind begins to break down. "Let me not be mad sweet heaven," is his pitiful utterance. Hereupon he departs for his other daughter.

But this world of disguise is not one of utter falsehood and wickedness, for fidelity is also here in disguise.

We have already mentioned Kent, who takes service as a menial, sincerity itself must be insincere, truth has to assume the form of deception. To this pass has Lear reduced his whole court. If the honest man must become dishonest in order to be true to his nature, what of the naturally dishonest? Kent acts as servant to his master, his duties are of the lower kind, he cannot appear as the adviser of the king since the latter will suffer no advice. He is messenger, and zealously defends the royal honor against the malign attacks of Oswald who stands in pretty much the same relation to Goneril, as he does to Lear.

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But the complete and conscious reflection of this world is in the Fool. He too is in disguise, seems to be what he is not, and thus is a true representative of his age. But his peculiarity is that he sees beneath the masks of all around him, and knows their acts and purposes. He is the intellectual man, yet his intelligence must also be disguised, hence it casts an inverted image. The contradiction is that the wise man of the company is the Fool. His theme is the folly of Lear's conduct, he offers the latter a coxcomb, the symbol of his own profession. Knowing the character of the two daughters, he sees the situation and anticipates the result. He alone appears to adequately comprehend the act of Lear in surrendering the kingdom, and he alone can assume disguise sufficient to tell to the old King the nature of that act without being banished. Thus wisdom at the court of Lear dares look only through the mask of folly, and good counsel take the form of nonsense. In this way therefore, no insult or reproof is given to the haughty old King, for when a fool says anything, it is supposed to be foolish. But if the truth should assume

the form of grave advice, it would imply the lack of wisdom on the part of the ruler. Hence the absolute monarch has his critic, but he must take the form of a fool, then the royal vanity is not touched. Thus it will be seen that not only fidelity and truth, but even intelligence must seem to be what they are not, when semblance is the universal principle, and the Fool becomes a necessary part of this world of appearance.

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Lear sets out for the second daughter, but there he meets with even worse treatment. The fool foresaw what the supposed wise man, the king, did not. The dispositions of the two daughters are alike, "as a crab to a crab," he in this comparison declares the result. Goneril hastens to support her sister Regan, who in strength of will seems to have been the weaker and less aggressive of the two women, and strongly influenced by her more determined sister. They put the messenger of their father in the stocks, they together strip the old King of the last vestige of royalty. The Fool states that the greatest folly is now fidelity, it were wisdom to let go a great wheel running down hill; still he will remain fool and faithful; Lear struggles with himself to curb his anger, he tries to suppress the rising of his heart, the mother as he calls it, he prays for patience, he does not curse Regan as he did Cordelia and Goneril. Still his self-restraint is not adequate, his passion boils over. He is now ready to submit to conditions which he formerly rejected with scorn, but it is too late. Finally, when the last semblance of authority is torn from him, and the shadow has fled, he becomes what he really is, a private individual of the humblest kind.

"A poor, infirm, weak, despised old man."

He is now conscious of his own condition, the deceitful mirage no longer blinds his eyes. But with this external show and power, his mind has been so long and so intimately connected, that the loss of the one involves the loss of the other. "O fool, I shall go mad," has been his poignant cry at every limitation.

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But one step he will not take, he will not be dependent upon his daughters. But they are the sovereigns, nothing remains for Lear but to flee to the woods, to the freedom of nature. This is the ground of the transition in the Third Act, for the entire world of institutions has been closed against him, both Family and State have cast him forth, what security then is possible for the individual? Lear therefore rushes out into the rude elements, without civil protection, without shelter, and finally without clothing.

But here too he has to encounter a conflict, namely the storm. The elements assail him, and conspire with his daughters for which he reproaches them with servility. Still he defies them, in fact he invokes them to blot out the whole world which has become so utterly perverse and disordered. Now the show is all gone, "take physic, pomp." The reality of what he is comes up to his mind, he is ready to sympathize with the most wretched. But what is this object which rises before his eyes? Low as Lear is himself, there is one person still lower; here he is, Edgar disguised as mad Tom. Lear notices the difference, no human being shall be beneath him; "thou art the thing itself; unaccommodated man is no more but such poor bare forked animal as thou art; off, off," and he tears away his garments. He is now reduced to the natural individual, every product of man's intelligence, from the highest institutions

to the humblest contrivances, even to clothing, he has thrown away. In other words, he has banished the whole content of his rational existence, the logical result must be that he is irrational. From the king he has descended to the animal.

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All along he has given premonitions of insanity; he knows "that way madness lies." For these external conflicts have been accompanied with a corresponding internal conflict. He has always been struggling to bear up against his own passion; "Patience I need." He who was unlimited in power now has every restraint put upon him, till he reaches zero. The act of his two daughters gets complete possession of thoughts, he tries them for their deed in his wild delirium, he has lost his relation to the outward world, his mind is eaten up with its own conflicts.

Let us grasp the complete picture of this society and its characters. First in order come Edgar and Lear, now reduced to the same outward condition and from the same general cause. Both have touched the very bottom of human misery, both are in a deadly struggle with the spiritual and with the physical world, with quite the sum total of being. The Family has turned against them, the State has driven them forth from its protection, and Nature herself has assailed them with her terrific forces. Such is the outcome of man in hostility with institutions. Still neither Lear nor Edgar are conquered, in spirit they hold out, are even defiant. The unconquerable will, the subjective independence of man could not be asserted against an opposition more destructive. But Edgar is sane, his madness is only simulated, while that of Lear is real. Lear has been deprived of what constituted the innermost essence

of his nature, namely the show of authority. But the mind of Edgar had never become so interwoven with his rank and power, that separation from them would destroy it; he is also young and supple, he can bend witbout breaking.

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Gloster is also present in these wild scenes, deeply sympathetic with Lear, and incurring danger for the sake of the old King. But his own sympathy condemns him; before his eyes stands a man, his faithful son, whom his wrong has reduced to a condition as miserable as that of Lear. Every word which he speaks against the unkind daughters is a judgment against himself. That judgment is executed upon him in a manner which every humane feeling cries out to be too severe.

Kent, the picture of fidelity, will also be present in the storm, for he must follow his master through every grade of calamity. Still his fidelity must remain in disguise, in order to accomplish itself; it dares not even now to assume its native form. The world of appearance has, however, reached its climax; it is rapidly dissolving. Lear, its original source and supporter, has himself become not merely the shadow of a king, but the shadow of a man; reason has taken its flight, and the erect animal shape alone remains.

The Fool, too, is present in the tempest, trying to divert the King from his thoughts, and to jest away his approaching insanity. But it is to no purpose. Wisdom, though to effect its design it has assumed the garb of folly, has not succeeded. The Fool therefore drops out now, his function must cease when Lear is no longer rational, but has himself turned fool. It was his duty to reflect the acts of the King in their true

character, so that the latter might behold what he was doing. When intelligence is gone, this is impossible.

There never was portrayed such a picture as this of the Third Act; it is the world turned upside down, morally, mentally, physically. To give it greater strength and terror, the two threads of the action are now brought together. There are the faithless, protected in their wrongs by institutions, and sheltered by their palaces from the raging elements. There are the three disguises, that of innocence, that of fidelity, that of wisdom, seeking to be true to their own nature under the most alien forms. Then there is the parent of these false appearances, himself now the shadow of a shadow. Finally there is the storm without, one of the warring principles in itself, and at the same time symbolical of the storm within. It is the perverted world, it seems quite to reach the extreme negative point short of annihilation.

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The consequences of Lear's conduct and character now are complete; they have produced their legitimate fruit. The semblance of absolute authority has vanished, he is now the humblest of mortals. At the same time he has passed from sanity to madness. The unlimited monarch has descended to the most narrow existence, has become, in fact, a beast of the forest. But above all, his wrong against the Family has met with a retribution which seems but too harsh and horrible. The fate of Gloster, as before remarked, is in every essential respect similar, for he, too, is sent forth an outcast, deprived of title and possessions, dazed, if not crazed, by his misfortunes. The two threads have thus been brought down to the time of the utter disruption of the two families and of the punishment of the two

parents. Now the reaction must be portrayed, which will indicate and restore the shattered institutions of the world, bring the false and guilty to justice, and make the faithful and innocent triumphant.

We have reached in our analysis the second grand movement of the play, which will depict the re-action against the successful but guilty children, and will show the completed retribution. The ethical world is lying in ruins, falsehood is triumphant, honesty banished, all moral ties destroyed, and the Family disrupted. Chaos seems to have come again. But from this chaos the elements are beginning to coalesce, which will restore order and vindicate the shattered institutions of man's rational nature. The faithful children were unjustly cast off by their parents, and the latter have been punished for their wrong. But thus a new guilt has arisen, that of the faithless children, whose punishment must now also be portrayed. For, in their case, the same law of retribution holds good which was observed in the case of their parents.

But who are to be the instruments of their chastisement? The faithful children will return and seek to avenge the wrongs and recover the rights of themselves and of their parents. This attempt will constitute the second movement: it is an attempt to restore the disrupted Family. Thus the circle of the whole action is complete; it begins with the wrong done to the faithful children, and ends with putting into their hands the retribution. But the effort will not be fully successful, the parents can not be completely restored to their former condition, for their deed is essentially the same as that of their faithless children.

In this second movement also there are two main

threads, though they are different from the two threads of the first movement, which are composed of the families of Lear and Gloster. Now the faithless members of both families coalesce, and also the faithful members of both families are thrown together: Edmund unites and works with Regan and Goneril on the one hand, and on the other hand Edgar sympathizes with, if he does not aid the party of Cordelia. These two sides collide, the faithless children are victorious in the external conflict, but the daughters perish in a struggle between themselves, and Edmund falls in single combat with his brother.

Beginning, therefore, with the first thread, we observe that it is composed of the faithful children, Edgar and Cordelia, together with the groups of which each one is the central figure. Both are similar in conduct and character, both now bring aid and solace to their afflicted parents who, however, have done them the deepest wrong. But their fidelity never falters, their duty cannot give way to revenge or indifference. Such has been their action from the beginning, such it will remain to the end. Their profoundest principle is to be true to the Family: Edgar to Gloster, Cordelia to Lear. Restoration, internal and external, for their parents, is the great object of their endeavor. The two fathers are to be brought back to their previous circumstances of honor and power, if possible; at least, they are to be solaced, comforted, and restored in mind. Hence a great change is observable in this portion of the drama. The tremendous upheavals of volcanic passion have ceased, and in their stead the tenderest emotions of affection and pity stir the breast. The action

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becomes more quiet and more pathetic; tears succeed to wrath, loving devotion to ingratitude.

First, then, let us follow the group which mainly consists of Edgar and his father. They are almost independent through the whole of the second movement, and can be easily separated from the rest of the action. Edgar still retains the disguise of mad Tom; he is thinking of Lear, and prefers his own state, "better unknown to be contemned, than still contemned and flattered." He would chose the reality, however bitter, to a false appearance, however agreeable, so deep is the truth and sincerity of his character. But who is this wretched, mutilated man who meets him here upon the wild heath? It is his father, Gloster, blind, fleeing from the cruelty of his own son, accompanied by a faithful tenant as a guide. The father's thoughts are occupied about his injured child; he is humbled to the earth by his misfortunes, and still more by his own deeds; as in the case of Lear, calamity has made his sympathy universal, his heart is full of commiseration for the poor and lowly, he thinks of the poor beggar (who was the disguised Edgar) in the storm. But his chief mental state consists in the belief that he is the victim of an almighty yet cruel power above:

> "As flies to wanton boys, are we to the Gods,
> They kill us for their sport."

Such a creed is the fruit of his superstition, of his belief in external determination. For if God be the immediate cause, then misfortune can only be Divine persecution, and hope is impossible. It therefore lies deep in the characters of Lear and Gloster that the one ends in insanity, the other in despair.

Gloster therefore wishes to end the unequal contest

by ending his own existence, and hence his desire is to reach the precipice of Dover. But it is the object of Edgar, who now acts as his leader instead of the aged tenant, to rescue him from despair and to reconcile him again with the world. Then will follow the disclosure of the disguised son, when the father can endure the recognition. Consequently Edgar practices an artifice upon the old, blind man—makes him believe that he has fallen down the lofty cliff, that he has been preserved by the miraculous interposition of the Gods, that, in fine, he must be the object of their special care and protection. It is true that the son skillfully makes use of his father's weakness, namely, superstition, to effect his pious purpose; this motive is particularly apparent in the description of the fiend whose eyes

> "Were two full moons; he had a thousand noses,
> Horns whelked and waved like the enridged sea;
> It was some fiend"——

and truly it was a fiend, despair, which lured him to the precipice. But Gloster is cured, he is now ready to accept life anew, and to endure every species of affliction; he seems also to abandon his notion of a Divine persecution directed against himself.

Gloster again meets Lear, mad, roaming at large over the country, though Cordelia is seeking to get possession of his person in order to restore him. It is the last time that the two ill-fated parents come together, both have touched the lowest depths of misfortune, both are now found and cared for by the children to whom they have done the greatest injustice. Finally Edgar performs the highest filial act, he saves his father from death at the hands of Oswald and slays the assassin. Thus he has rescued the mind within from de-

spair, and preserved the body without from destruction. He may hence be said to have restored his parent to existence; filial duty now reaches in him its climax. But the roar of battle is heard around them; Edgar puts his father in a place of safety and goes out to observe the result of the conflict. He does not seem to have participated in the fight, he keeps aloof from the collision with the State, and hence is preserved at the end of the play. The great end of all his efforts is the personal security and mental repose of his parent.

Finally the son reveals himself, can we wonder that the old blind father could not support the conflict, could not endure the joy and the grief of the recognition? Gloster, therefore, can not be restored to the Family whose essence he has so deeply violated, his heart breaks in the process, his emotional nature can not bear up under the contradictory feelings of his situation. His inability to make this transition is the logical necessity of his character. Gloster is not a bad, but a weak man. He has unwittingly been made the instrument of the disruption of his own family. Hence, if he be restored to it, there is the same possibility of his disrupting it again, for this result is the fruit of his intellectual weakness. It should also be observed that Edgar is no longer the unsophisticated youth who was so completely outwitted by the Bastard. He has learned to disguise himself and to assume a wonderful variety of characters; the number and skill of the deceptions which he practices upon his father to accomplish the most unselfish and pious ends, are startling to the rigid moralist. His education has been severe but thorough, and when he now comes to meet Edmund, he is prepared.

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Gloster the efore perishes, the victim of his faithless son, who in his turn must meet with retribution. To Edgar remains this final duty of destroying the instrument of destruction, a negative but necessary result of his principle. For that principle is the restoration of the disrupted family, which, however, since the death of Gloster is impossible; but the cause of the disruption as well as of his own wrongs still exists and must be removed. Thus Edgar, though declaring openly the primal guilt of his father, slays his illegitimate brother. The leading element of his character is fidelity to Family, here in the form of devotion to parent, whose enemies he destroys and whose mind he rescues from despair.

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Similar is the purpose and also the character of Cordelia, who is the main figure in the second group of this first thread, which group we are now ready to consider. She, too, is the faithful, yet injured child; she, too, seeks the internal and external restoration of her father. But she goes a step further than Edgar, she assails the State in her attempt to recover the rights of Lear. She thus falls into guilt which leads to the most fatal consequences. Her endeavor has three different phases, restoration of her parent to reason, to Family, and to State.

First of all, the attempt must be made to cure the insanity of Lear. He seems to be wandering alone over the country, without care or guidance; his talk, though wild and incoherent, is mainly connected with his lost authority, with the cruelty of his daughters and in general with the utter perversity of the ethical world which he, in his raving mood, scoffs at and condemns with sarcastic bitterness. The Poet has thus intimated

the cause of his madness, as well as the means of its cure: restore him to a daughter's love and to the image of respect and power, and the ground of his insanity is removed. These are just the spiritual medicines which Cordelia administers to him after sufficient physical repose; in the pathetic scene when he awakens, she asks for his blessing with the deepest affection, and assures him that he is again in his own kingdom. Lear is thus restored to reason and to Family with its love, the original cause of madness is taken away.

It is manifest that Cordelia is different from what she was in the First Act; a new element of her nature seems to have developed itself. Previously we saw her rigid moral code and her intellectuality brought into the greatest prominence; now her character in its softer and more beautiful features is shown, we behold her devotion to parent as well as her intense emotional nature, which, however, she is able to keep under perfect control. Still the germ of this new trait can be found in her earlier declarations and demeanor. In the first scene, that of the partition, she repeatedly expresses her affection for her father:

> "What shall Cordelia speak? Love and be silent," etc.

It is not merely the physical repose prescribed by the doctor which clears up the clouded intellect of Lear, it is the presence of Cordelia who brings with her a double restoration, that of subjective affection on the one hand and that of objective institutions on the other. It was the loss of these, through the conduct of Regan and Goneril, which shattered his reason; sanity therefore returns with the return of Cordelia.

But her third purpose is that which ruins her cause. She brings a French army into England to secure to her

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father his right, as she says, by which she evidently means, to place him again on the throne. She thus assails the highest ethical institution of man, the State, and unwittingly commits herself the greatest wrong. Moreover Lear had resigned his power, and divided his Kingdom; he had no longer any just claim to the crown. Her invasion of the country rouses up against her the head of the State, Albany, who was otherwise favorable both to her and to Lear. But he had to defend his own realm, though he hates his associates, and loves those who are fighting against him. Had Cordelia been satisfied with the restoration of her father to his reason and to his family, Albany would have given her both aid and sympathy. However much we may admire her character and regret her fate, however indignant we may be against her two sisters, still we must in the end say, she did wrong, she violated the majesty of the State, in her affection for parent she attempted to destroy the higher principle for sake of the lower. The result is, she loses the battle, is taken prisoner and perishes.

The death of Cordelia is often felt to be unjustifiable, and the play was once altered to suit this feeling. But a true comprehension of the nature of Dramatic Art will vindicate the Poet. The end of Tragedy is not that somebody get killed, or even that a villain be brought to justice; it must show the collision of two ethical principles, both of which have validity in the reason of man. The individuals who are the representatives of these conflicting principles are brought into a struggle which admits of no mediation; both, from one point of view, are in the right, and yet both from another point of view are in the wrong; the deeper, more universal thought must decide the conflict, and triumph in

the end, for strife can not be eternal. Cordelia's profoundest impulse is devotion to Family, a very lofty principle of action; but she is led by it into a collision www.libtool.com.cn with the State, a still higher principle. Undoubtedly these two elements ought to be harmonized, if possible; but Tragedy means that they cannot always be harmonized, and hence the lesser must be subordinated by violence and by death.

Cordelia is therefore a truly tragic character, whom we are compelled to condemn, though we shed tears over her fate. But she is something more, she is the tragic *female* character, for her collision is peculiar to her sex. The Family is the highest ethical principle of woman as woman; at least it has been hitherto in the history of the world, even though we may think that this state of things will be changed in the future. The readers of her own sex therefore will always feel, perhaps ought always to feel that she is in the right, that her death is unjustifiable. Let us contrast her action with that of Albany who is a man and holds to the other principle, the State. He too is indignant at the conduct of Goneril and Regan, he sympathizes deeply with the misfortunes of Lear, and wishes well to the efforts of Cordelia for the restoration of her father. But a French army means the ruin of his country, at least its control from without, he therefore is compelled to make the choice, he takes the State as his ethical principle, though he has to act with those whom he hates, and against those whom he loves. Albany and Cordelia hence collide; it is the collision of man and woman, both of whom are the representatives of the essential ethical principles of their respective sexes. It is also to a certain extent the collision between emotion and

reason. Our feelings go along with Cordelia, even Albany's feelings went along with Cordelia, for the Family is the realm of affection and must always call forth the emotions of man; still intelligence must control sentiment, and subordinate it to the higher end. The consequences of their actions are seen in the catastrophe; Cordelia perishes, while Albany survives as the ruler of his country.

But our next anxious inquiry is concerning the fate of Lear. He has recovered from insanity through his daughter's love; what will be his condition, now that she is gone? He relapses momentarily into madness; but this is not the end: he can not again be disrupted from the Family. His affection for Cordelia is most intense, he cares not for prison and captivity, if she only be with him, her presence has become to him life itself. Hence when he is convinced that she is dead, his heart breaks over her corpse, an end similar to that of Gloster. The first disruption of Lear's domestic ties cost him his reason, the second now costs him his life. It is however, his own primal wrong which reaches through the whole play and at last strikes the fatal blow. Such is the first thread with its two very similar groups of faithful children.

There remains finally the second thread of the second movement to be considered. The faithless children of both families have come together, similarity of character naturally attracts them to one another. Edmund and the two sisters therefore constitute the heads of this group, to which also Albany must be added, though he only belongs to it partially. An external conflict has arisen with Cordelia, the nature and grounds of which have already been given; in it they were successful, as

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they happened to be the supporters of the State in conjunction with Albany. But the internal conflict has also arisen, as it must arise under the circumstances. The unity of the faithless can not be permanent, they must be true to the deepest principle of their character, and hence must be faithless to one another. This gives the struggle among themselves, which the poet has also developed, to make the delineation logical and complete.

The two sisters have become fired with the most intense jealousy and enmity in their endeavors to obtain the love of Edmund; they are playing false to each other, and Edmund is playing false to both. The principle of them all is falsehood, what else can be expected but mutual treachery? But Goneril and Regan are now shown in a further yet very consistent development of character: their faithlessness becomes universal. Having been faithless to their father, they naturally become faithless to the Family in all its relations; hence they are now portrayed as violating the great fundamental virtue of the Family, chastity. Infidelity toward parent is deepened into infidelity toward husband, and the very possibility of any ethical ties is annihilated. Their former conduct has therefore adequately motived this final development. For them every condition of the Family is destroyed, daughterhood has long since perished, now wifehood passes away. Union with them is impossible, even for the Bastard, as he himself intimates. What remains? Only Death, for every substantial element of existence is gone. Goneril, always the prime mover, destroys her sister with poison, as before she brought ruin upon her father; and when she knows that her intrigue with Edmund is discovered by her husband, she speedilv thrusts a dagger into her own

bosom. Such is the end of the two faithless sisters; both perished in a struggle with each other for the possession of an infamous villain who was faithless to both.

But Edmund remains, his success has been without a parallel, he may well believe that his lucky destiny cannot be arrested. Hitherto he has obtained all the honors, titles, and property of the family of Gloster; now his object is the possession of the State. He fights bravely against the French invasion for a crown which he regards as his own, and to remove every obstacle which might arise in his path after the victory, he orders Lear and Cordelia to be put to death. This conduct brings him into direct conflict with Albany the present head of the State, whose life he has before sought to destroy. But Albany according to the spirit of the play can not be his slayer; this can only be his brother Edgar whose father he has deceived, betrayed and outraged, and who therefore now appears as the avenger of the Family. The Poet is thus careful to make the first wrong of Edmund to return and to involve him in its inexhorable retribution. The Bastard in the course of his career has assailed quite all the ethical institutions of man; he believed that the world was entirely controlled by management, and not by principle; hence his sole faith was in his own subjective cunning. His fate, though long deferred, is the necessary consequence of such a character; some one armed with the vengeance of violated right destroys him. Such is the outcome of the three faithless children.

The conduct and fate of Kent in this second movement seem to be left somewhat indefinite. The Poet, however, carefully informs us that it is so intended:

"Some dear cause
Will in concealment wrap me up a while."

No active participation in the war is manifested by him, though he visits the camp of Cordelia. His devotion appears now to be to Lear as an individual; still the drama indicates little one way or the other. Some critics have even imagined that his death is given in the play, but this is certainly a mistake and also a misunderstanding. The truth is, the Poet wishes to preserve all the faithful; but to do so consistently, he must keep them out of the collision with the State which was the fatal deed of Cordelia. Hence the conduct of both Kent and Edgar in regard to the war is left in obscurity, though their devotion is still brought forward in the strongest light. They therefore survive with Albany who defends the State and yet at the same time respects the Family.

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The action has now completed its revolution and brought back to all the leading characters the consequences of their deeds; the double guilt and the double retribution have been fully portrayed. The treatment of children by parents and of parents by children is the theme; both fidelity and infidelity are shown in their most extreme manifestation. Two families are taken, that of the monarch and that of the subject; the former develops within itself its own collisions, free from any external restraint, and hence exhibits the truest and most complete result; the latter is largely influenced and determined in its course by authority, but an authority which is itself poisoned with domestic conflict. The exhaustiveness of the treatment is worthy of careful study; Regan is faithless to parent, Goneril is faithless to both parent and husband, Cordelia is true to

both, yet assails another ethical principle, the State. The two sons and the two sons-in-law exhibit also distinct phases www.libtool.com.cn of the domestic tie; they are still further divided by the fundamental theme of the play into the faithful and faithless; that is, a son and a son-in-law belong to each side. But it is a curious fact that one very important relation of the Family is wholly omitted; no mother appears anywhere; sonhood, daughterhood, wifehood, fatherhood are all present, but the tenderest bond of existence, motherhood, is wanting. The Poet evidently does not need it, for the action is already sufficiently full and complicated; perhaps too the character of the mother may be supposed to re-appear in some of her children, as for example in Cordelia, who is so different from her father. But one cannot help commending the true instinct, or it may be judgment, which keeps such a mild and tender relation out of the cauldron of passion and ingratitude which seethes with such destructive energy in this appalling drama.

D. J. SNIDER.

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SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDIES.

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TIMON OF ATHENS.

This play is one of the least celebrated among Shakespeare's works. The theme itself is not the most attractive, and its treatment must be pronounced to be in many respects unsatisfactory. The inequality of its execution will be acknowledged by every careful reader; some parts are wrought out with the greatest skill and completeness, others are hastily and rudely sketched, while certain necessary links seem to be omitted altogether. The versification is often a mystery, and the prose frequently appears to be written with exceeding carelessness. To account for these imperfections, conjecture has been very busy if not very satisfactory. A supposition is, that it was originally one of the Poet's most perfect works, but was ruined by the various mutilations of the actors, or possibly of the printers, or of the copyists. Another supposition is, that it was based upon an older drama by a different author, which was partially re modelled by Shakespeare. Again, an opinion has been advanced that the Poet lost to a large extent his art in one period of his career, and that *Timon* is a work of that period. It has also been held to be an imperfect second edition of a youthful product of Shakespeare. All these conjectures are confessedly without any historical basis, and merely seek to imagine some external ground for the incomplete character of the drama; as far as its comprehension is concerned, they furnish no aid, and hence may

be passed by without further discussion. There is, however, a very popular theory which attempts to account for the selection of this subject by the Poet. It is supposed that Shakespeare from some unknown cause became disgusted with society and men, and gave expression to his misanthropic feelings in the present work, and to a less degree in some other works. But nothing can be more unwarrantable than to infer that the expresssion of any of his characters are the real opinions of the man Shakespeare. He undoubtedly comprehended Timon, but it is hard to believe that he was Timon, even for a short period. In fact, the tragic fate of the latter rather goes to show that the Poet wished to give a warning against the danger of misanthropy, instead of being a misanthrope himself. The universality of his genius precludes the possibility of limiting him to any one character.

But it is a wearisome and profitless labor to chase down conjecture; let us pass to the more useful task of comprehending the drama. This is, as previously stated, defective in execution, but its conception is in every way Shakesperian. To unfold this conception is the object of the present essay. The relation of the individual and of society to property and the conflicts which arise therefrom constitute the fundamental theme of the play. For property is also an ethical principle, not the highest by any means, perhaps the lowest, still an ethical principle, to violate which within its sphere is guilt, and not to subordinate which outside of its sphere is also guilt. A person therefore who disregards it utterly and a person who esteems it as the highest end, may both of them become involved in a tragic destiny. These two forms occur in the present

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work. Shakespeare has here introduced a principle of the ethical world which is found in none of his other plays.

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Perhaps this idea of property may give some difficulty and ought to be scanned a little further. Property is the beginning of an ethical order of things, and its necessary condition; in property man first beholds and respects the right of his fellow-man, and has in turn his own right respected; without property person, in primitive times at least, has no true reality, is a slave or a being without rights. It is the progress of the world's history which has secured right to person independent of property. But a man who ignores or denies the right of property in a civilized society, must become unethical and hostile to all institutions, if he carries out his doctrine to its consequences. Hence the Communist starts with assailing this primary principle and ends with the destruction of all social order.. But the other side also ought always to be taken into account. Property though itself an ethical principle, may come into collision with other and higher ethical principles. The unbridled pursuit of gain leads to the most fearful corruption and can result in the destruction of the virtue, of the greatness, and indeed of the existence of a nation. The unlimited right of property too may beget and protect the direst wrong, oppression, and even slavery. It is just this conflict in the ethical world which the Poet, true to his conception of Art, has made the basis of his drama.

Let us now unfold in a brief statement the structure of the work. There are two very distinct threads in which the action centers; they may be called the thread of Timon and the thread of Alcibiades. Both these

persons are in a conflict with the society in which they live as respects property; that society is devoted primarily to the acquisition of wealth, yet with a decided relish for gratification of the senses. Timon is the generous prodigal who spends his own and other people's money, Alcibiades is the active soldier who despises the pursuit of gain and lives for a wholly different end. There are also two parts or movements of the play. The first part extends to the time when both Timon and Alcibiades take their departure from Athens on account of the above-mentioned conflict; a money-getting society drives them away. The second part depicts the conduct of these two persons in exile; Timon becomes a misanthropist, turns against all mankind as a property-acquiring race, and finally perishes, it would seem by suicide; Alcibiades, the soldier and man of action, returns with an army, humiliates and punishes his country for its wrongs. Thereby it is also indicated that the nation can no longer defend itself, but is sapped within by its exclusive pursuit of property.

The first of these threads, that of Timon, is by far the more important and prominent; it exhibits in its development the most wonderful contrast, for it portrays the transition from a boundless benevolence to the deepest hatred of man, and from a life of luxury to a life of abject but self-imposed wretchedness. Its two factors are, Timon and the society around him. This society is first drawn in the most lively colors, its various classes are all represented in the picture, with the same fundamental trait of character. The artists are here in the persons of the Painter and Poet, both of whom are ready to lay their offerings at the feet of Timon—for a consideration. Art is thus in the pur-

suit of gain, and seeks it at the hands of patronage. But the Poet gives some honest counsel along with his flattery, he sings of the fickleness of Fortune, and warns Timon that all those who now seem to be friends, will drop off at the first blow of adversity. His little poem therefore is a kind of programme, and foreshadows the course of the play. The commercial world has also its representatives present in the Merchant and Jeweller, the latter of whom especially has a sharp eye for business; he knows how to put his wares where they will bring several times their value. Presents of greyhounds, of milk-white steeds, pour in from thrifty lords who expect and receive a triple return for their gifts. Finally Senators, the representatives of the State, and hence the most important personages of the time lend their presence to this carnival of parasites. They also appear as the chief usurers and extortioners of an extortionate nation. The fundamental consciousness of all these people is the same: love of gain, pursuit of property regardless of honesty or honor. Even the old Athenian seems to be a type of the ordinary citizen:

> "I am a man
> That from my first have been inclined to thrift."

He barters away the hand of his daughter to a servant, for a sum of money which is given by Timon.

Next to the desire of wealth comes the love of sensuous enjoyment, which is also furnished to these people by Timon. A number of idle lords and sycophants surround him for no other purpose than to share his bounty. Dinners are dispensed with unsparing liberality, masques, dances, music, make his house one continued scene of enchanting pleasures. "The five best senses acknowledge thee their patron," says the dis-

guised Cupid. It is a life immersed in the senses without conscience or honor, and is the usual accompaniment of material pursuits. But Timon is soon to be disagreeably shaken out of his dream. Sunk in enjoyment, he has permitted his property, vast as it was, to melt into nothing, and with it he too must vanish from the scene.

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But this society so selfish and sensual, has naturally produced its opposite; here is the example, Apemantus the cynic. This character really belongs to history, to the days of the ancient Greek and Roman world in its decline and corruption. We now behold an individual who instead of gratifying the senses abuses them and thrusts from him all the reasonable comforts of life. To the flatterer succeeds the scoffer, to abject servility succeeds intentional discourtesy. The love of property has no place in his breast, on the contrary he has become the hater of men from their pursuit of gain. He is just the person to expose the rotten condition of society, because he contemns it so deeply. His main function in the play is therefore to reflect the age in its negative phases. He holds up to Timon, for whom alone he seems to have some affection, the consequences of prodigality; he speaks openly and bitterly, exposing the flattery and treachery of the whole crowd of followers. But not alone to Timon but also to all persons with whom he comes in contact, he tells with stinging satire what they are; he is the mirror which reflects the inner character of each individual of the company. Thus amid all this hollow formality, the real spirit is shown; a man may utter his polite phrases, but Apemantus is there to cast his true image. Moreover, Apemantus is now the picture of that which

Timon is destined to become, namely, the misanthrope. Still another trait must be added which, however, appears with distinctness only in the latter part of the drama. It is the vein of affectation which lies deep in the character of Apemantus, his cynicism is largely the result of vanity and not of conviction. Insincerity must thus attach to him in a certain degree, and he is a true member of this false and dissembling Athenian world.

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Such is the society, now we are prepared to consider the character of Timon who is for a time its central figure. His fundamental trait is, the lack of all notion of property; with this one element are connected his other qualities, good and bad. Generosity, strong affection, honesty, are some of his virtues; prodigality, love of flattery and pleasure, borrowing money and running in debt are the most of his weaknesses. His principle is that his friends should share his wealth equally with himself, he tells them that they are more welcome to his fortune than he is himself. A sort of communism is thus broached by him, and in his exceeding generosity he quite abjures the idea of property. To retain is not his nature: "there's none can truly say he gives if he receives." This principle is manifestly one-sided and can only bring its followers to ruin. What is given out must come back in one way or another, else the source ceases to flow. But Timon will only give, and so hands over his entire fortune to the enjoyment of his friends. He becomes the victim of sharpers, who with pretended affection send him their presents knowing that they will receive something far more valuable in return. His property is therefore essentially abandoned; it may be compared to a dead or-

ganism which every creeping thing is busily consuming and carrying away.

Timon excites our admiration by his lofty enthusiasm and by his noble striving after an ideal life, in which all things are common and all men are brothers. But such a principle is an absurdity, an impossibility, for it rests upon a one-sided view of human nature. Man must be individual to be man, he cannot be absorbed into a universal humanity. Society also is based on the fact that each member of it seeks to own, that is, to acquire and to retain. One contributes his labor in order to get in return and to keep as much as is reasonable. The consciousness of Timon is contrary to the organization of society, which cannot rest on spending but on obtaining. As everybody else is seeking to acquire and retain, Timon must soon be deprived of his property. It is at this point that we can see the ethical guilt of Timon; his principle and his conduct are logically destructive of society.

But there is one class which remains honest and faithful in this corrupt community, the servants of Timon, his own household shares in his true nature. Flavius, his steward, has also warned him of the consequences of his conduct, has done everything to stem the tide of extravagance, and is in fact, the most rational character in the drama. It is a contrast between the high and the low, integrity and honor have taken refuge in the humblest class of the people. Thus there still remains a sound part of society, though the top is rotten; there is still a source from which a new life is possible. But it is only one bright and small ray in a very dark picture.

The incidents may now be noticed in rapid succes-

sion. The money has run out, no more can be borrowed, the faithful steward is in the greatest embarrassment. The usurers have become alarmed for the safety of their loans, a crowd of importunate servants throng Timon's doors to collect their master's debts. He now wakes up to the bitter situation, he has no land, no money, no credit, yet has incurred many obligations. But he is certain of his friends, they will be ready to advance him whatever sums he may need. Still he learns on the spot, of the refusal of the Senators to aid him, but he thinks that their blood is caked and cold with age; he will now apply to his warm and younger friends. Thus Timon has been compelled to abandon his principle of not receiving. He has hitherto disregarded property, now property makes itself felt. His ideal communistic dreams have vanished in his pressing emergency.

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But what will be the result of this application for money? Requests to grant a loan are sent around to his friends; one tries to bribe the servant to report not having seen him; another has just lent out all his funds; Sempronius has a double reason for refusal, he won't furnish anything because he is applied to first, then he won't furnish anything because he is applied to last. Amid these various pretexts the truth also leaks out: "this is no time to lend money, especially upon bare friendship, without security." Such do Timon's friends turn out in the hour of need. Nothing else could have been expected from the beginning, for their highest end is and has been property, friendship was only a means. He imagined that others will be to him as he was to them; but the rest of society is seeking ownership, hence he is rejected on all sides even by those

who are under the greatest obligations to him. The result is, Timon spends all his money and is left helpless. He began with a large fortune which he did not acquire, hence he does not know the significance of property. It is also a curious but natural trait that all these friends claim to have warned Timon against his reckless prodigality; the comforting "I told you so," is the sole coin sent back to their needy benefactor.

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The crowd of creditors becomes larger and noisier, Timon's door is besieged by them as by enemies. The very men who are most clamorous for their money, are those who have enjoyed his bounty and shared his hospitality. They now demand pay for the gifts which they have in their own possession and present the bill for the dinners which they have themselves eaten. The bitter conviction comes upon Timon that his whole life has been based on a deception, friends are not friends, all is false and hollow. Still he by no means believes his principle to be incorrect, it is only too good for mankind; hence he will not abandon his principle but will abandon mankind. He has learned the fact that the pursuit of the individual in a social system must be to a large extent to gain and to own; property is the foundation. Timon therefore flies from society and goes to the forest. He will not dwell with his species in an organization so hostile to his conviction, he will henceforth live alone, and because men are just the opposite of himself, he will become the man-hater. For it is man who has organized the system of property and exists through its mediation. Such is the ground for the grand and striking transition of the drama, which portrays a human being passing from the warmest feelings of benevolence to the most intense hatred of his fellow-

creatures. Once more he will invite his former friends to a feast; they come with fawning apologies and gluttonous anticipation; he is fully confirmed in his bitter judgment. The dishes are uncovered, they are full of warm water. It is Timon's sole retaliation for their deception; in burning words he tells them their true character; involving in one common curse his guests, his country and all humanity, he departs for the woods.

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On looking back at the conduct of Timon and of the society around him, it will be manifest that both have committed wrong in regard to property. Timon has disregarded it wholly as an ethical principle, the logical consequence of his actions would be social disruption. It is true that no law can prevent a man from squandering his substance, no more than it can prevent him from committing suicide; yet both acts are violations of right in its true sense. That Timon's wrong is mainly committed against himself can not change its nature. But he also borrows and spends what belongs to others, hence his offense extends beyond himself. And on the other hand it will be equally manifest that the society in which Timon lives is violating all ethical principle in its exclusive pursuit of wealth; it seems to acknowledge no other end of existence but to make money; through fraud and treachery it seeks to obtain what really belongs to another. Thus amid its other delinquencies it also violates the right of property, though in just the opposite manner to that of Timon.

The second thread of the first movement is to be next considered, namely that of Alcibiades. It also portrays the collision with this wealth-acquiring society, but in a new phase. Alcibiades is the man of action and hence very different from Timon who is essentially a

theoretical enthusiast, though the latter also is represented as having been in the service of the State for a time. Such is the contrast between the two men, yet both are alike in their disregard of gain. Alcibiades we first meet at the house of Timon, he is a soldier, not rich, but he has certain decided notions of honor; next he is seen before the Senate, pleading for the life of a friend who has been condemned to death for killing an enemy; he urges the honorable nature of the conflict, his friend's and his own services to the country; the Senate however will not listen to such a plea but adhere to the strictness of the law, for which conduct they can not be blamed. But on account of a hasty word they also banish Alcibiades, the only man among them whose object was not wealth, but the protection of the State. His sense of honor and his end in life the usurious Senate can not appreciate; reproaching them with their avarice he departs from Athens, vowing vengeance against the city; from the defender of his country he has become its enemy, a change quite parallel to that of Timon. Thus the one-sided pursuit of property has ended in the destruction of its sole bulwark; the brave soldier is gone who:

> "Kept back their foes
> While they have told their money, and let out
> Their coin upon large interest."

Such seems to be the signification of this thread in its relation to the rest of the play; though the connection must be confessed to be very loose and by no means fully developed. The result of the entire first movement is now before us. The Athenian world, by making property the highest end of existence, has destroyed its improvement from within and its protection from without; it has reduced the enthusiastic lover of

mankind to misanthropy and despair, it has turned its greatest general into the most deadly enemy.

We are now prepared to begin with the second movement, the conduct and fate of these two men in exile. Here too the thread of Timon is the more prominent. He curses society, institutions, mankind ; he prays that all the destructive elements of the world may be let loose upon the race. Not only does he flee from the face of humanity, but he tries to get rid of every social custom ; like Lear he even casts away his clothing, as the last remnant which distinguishes him from the beast of the field. It is the complete abandonment of his species and return to animality ; he disdains himself on account of his human shape ; he will not eat human food, but digs in the earth for roots to sustain life. But what is here ? As he turns up the ground, he finds a heap of gold This is what he had fled, for it is the image and representative of all property. The old cause of his misfortune and transformation can not be left behind, it extends its influence even to the woods. But now he will keep it and make a new use of it, he will employ it as a destructive weapon against humanity.

Not only property, but also society will appear at the new abode of Timon in the forest; the world will be brought into the presence of the misanthrope, judged and damned. In order, however, to effect its destruction, its own negative elements are introduced and sent on their pitiless errand. First come Alcibiades and the two prostitutes ; the one is the assailant of the State and the ethical institutions of man, the others are the destroying angels of the physical being of man. These two agencies, if let loose upon society without re-

straint, seem quite sufficient to sweep it from the face of the earth. Timon at first curses them because they belong to the human race; though Alcibiades is his friend, friendship now only arouses in him the most bitter and vehement sarcasms. But when he learns that their expedition is directed against his native city, he wishes them complete success in their destructive career and contributes a portion of his gold for the accomplishment of their purpose. Bandits come to rob him, he thanks them for their profession because it is the enemy of property; he gives them gold also and sends them to Athens to assail the wealth whose principle has been his own ruin.

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Other figures who belonged to the old company appear, of which the most interesting is Apemantus; he seeks out Timon in the forest. Here a new trait of his distinctly appears, he is jealous of Timon's misanthrophy, he wishes to monopolize for himself the hate against mankind, and the fame thereof. We are now certain that the cynicism of Apemantus is at bottom an affectation and not a conviction; it is a capricious whim or at most a theoretical hobby. He can have no valid ground for it, he has not felt the loss of fortune, or the treachery of friends, for he never had either fortune or friends. But Timon's conduct rests upon his deepest conviction and his actual experience; his sincerity will carry him to the logical consequence of his principles, though the result be death. Apemantus, were he consistent and honest, would long since have fled to the woods, and not have continued to lurk around the abodes of the great. It is the difference between the sincere and affected misanthrope. Timon therefore

will have nothing to do with him, and drives him back, we may suppose, to society.

The Poet and Painter again come before us, though www.libtool.com.cn now portrayed in grosser colors than before. The Poet at least could have been charged only with flattery in his previous utterances, now he is also guilty of wanton falsehood. The servants however still remain true to the memory of Timon; Flavius, the good steward hunts him up in his solitude in order to take care of him. Thus Timon is brought to acknowledge that there is one honest man, one of the human race whom he cannot hate. Still he will not tolerate any upright shape. Flavius too is driven off under the threat of curses. Finally the Senators of his native city are brought to his cave, they make the humblest apologies and offer the greatest rewards; they are even ready to grant him absolute power, if he will return and drive back Alcibiades. No, he will not stir; on the contrary he gives the State over to destruction. It ought to be observed that Timon is here represented as a soldier able to cope with the experienced Alcibiades, a new trait which does not well consist with his previous character.

Society has now passed in review before Timon as misanthrope; it is only fit to perish. He has reached the true conclusion of his doctrine: who ever desires to rid himself of affliction, let him hang himself to a tree. The human species is a nuisance, it ought to have sense enough to abolish itself. The ultimate application of his principle to himself he does not disguise; if mankind ought to perish he must be included. Timon is honest and consistent, hence he kills himself. Such is the logical outcome of Pessimism, it must destroy its supporter. Were Apemantus sincere in his expressed

beliefs, he ought to meet with the same fate. The tragic destiny of Timon therefore springs directly from his conviction, we find its germ in the very beginning of his career, in his views concerning property and society.

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The second of the two exiles, Alcibiades, has already been noticed in his interview with Timon. He marches against Athens, the city sues for peace, but its humiliation is accomplished. It is punished for its wrongs, the exclusive devotion to property has brought about national subjugation. Thus it is manifest that this second thread was introduced as the poetical means to visit retribution upon society for its offences. Alcibiades reserves the enemies of Timon and of himself for death, the rest of the citizens are allowed to survive the loss of independence. Both Timon and society have now paid the penalty for their ethical violation, though the wrong of Alcibiades against the state is left without explanation or punishment. This second thread throughout the entire drama is in a very incomplete condition, but its general purpose is manifest from the conclusion.

In fact the play as a whole leaves the impression of a sketch, completely filled out in some portions, in other portions possessing the barest outlines of the characters and action. Motives are inserted which are not afterwards used, some are omitted which ought to have been mentioned, both redundancy and deficiency are easy to be pointed out. Several unexpected differences between the first and second parts occur in the characterization, these have been noticed in the case of the Poet, of Apemantus, and of Timon also. The work therefore seems to lack the final revision which gives to every element its proper relief and organizes the whole into a

consistent unity. The reason of this incompleteness has often been conjectured, but never can be known. Still the conception of the play is eminently worthy of the great Dramatist, but it remains a grand fragment of his genius, which, had it been completed, would have taken an equal rank alongside of *Lear*, whose coloring and treatment it often resembles.

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OTHELLO.

The impression left by this play is generally said to be that of sadness and despair. Life seems to be the sport of external influences, and man is swept to destruction, whether his conduct be good or bad. Villany and cunning, it is thought, are portrayed as too successful and powerful, while innocence is exhibited as too weak and unfortunate. There is often expressed a deep dissatisfaction at the result; virtue is not rewarded or is even punished, and retribution does not manifest itself in its native might. Perhaps such will always be the first and most immediate impression upon the auditor or reader. But this melancholy view of the work springs from a hasty judgment, from taking into account only a portion of its various elements. On the one hand Othello and Desdemona are not innocent, but are guilty of a violation of ethical principles, which calls forth their punishment; and, on the other hand, Iago is not the incarnation of villany for its own sake, but he has some very strong and very

natural grounds for his conduct. In this play, as in all others of Shakespeare, a careful analysis is necessary in order to bring all the motives to the surface, and to adequately comprehend their thought and purpose. They must be marshalled before the mind in their relation and in their completeness. If only a part of what is told us remains in the memory, the judgment is not likely to be correct. Accordingly I believe that diligent study and comparison will bring to light some less manifest elements which must have an essential influence in determining the character of the whole drama.

I am aware that there is likely to be made against this kind of criticism the charge of seeking and finding what the Poet never intended. Such a charge may be just sometimes, but it usually means that the objector did not think of the various points in question when he read the play. Hence he infers that Shakespeare could not have thought of them. There is often an ill-concealed egotism lying at the basis of such statements, for the benefit of which one reflection ought always to be made. It took Shakespeare weeks, perhaps years, to plan and write *Othello*. If so much time was required for his mind in order to make the drama, how much time will you (the objector), with your mind, need in order to comprehend it? To enter into his conception thoroughly, to see his work arising from all sides and coming together into a complete and harmonious whole, will demand more than a three hours' reading or representation.

There are three essential divisions of the entire action. The first is the external conflict in the Family; the right of the daughter to choose a Moor for her husband is asserted against the will of the parent. Both

sides appeal to the State, which decides in favor of the marriage, and Othello carries off his bride in triumph. The guilt of Desdemona is here indicated. The second division shows the internal conflict in the Family, between husband and wife. The married pair, though successful in their external struggle with the father, are now rent asunder, for between such characters no secure and permanent ethical union is possible. Jealousy must arise. Iago only seized what was already prepared, and used it for his own purposes. The guilt of Othello and his Ancient are here shown. The third division is the retribution which brings home to every person the consequences of his deeds. Tragedies usually have only two parts, guilt and retribution. But there may be an introduction, as is seen in the first division of the present play, or there may be an appendix, as is the case with *Romeo and Juliet.*

The presupposition of the action is the love, elopement and marriage of Othello and Desdemona. They are already united, against their union the hostile elements begin to array themselves. First comes the rejected yet determined suitor Rodrigo, who has been ignominiously dismissed by the father, and apparently disregarded by the daughter. Still he persists—the great end of his existence is to secure her hand. for which purpose he is willing to spend large sums of money. This weakness makes him a fit subject for the practices of Iago, who buoys him up with hope and draws at will from his purse. But when the marriage is sanctioned by the State, and is beyond reversal, what will poor Roderigo do? Since the object of his life is to attain Desdemona, he is easily led into the thought of attainining her in unholy fashion, when she can no

longer be his lawful wife. He is first foolish in pursuing such an object, then he becomes immoral and assails the Family. Rodérigo is the white suitor of Desdemona and stands in striking contrast to the black suitor, Othello. She prefers the hero of a different race to the imbecile of her own nation. But his chief function is to be the ready instrument of Iago, who uses him like the merest tool and destroys him when he no longer subserves any purpose.

The second enemy is Iago, whose hate is not directed against the marriage, primarily, but against Othello in person. Hence he plays a very subordinate part in the first division of the drama, but is reserved for the second collision. To unfold and arrange in proper order and prominence the different motives which actuate him is one of the chief duties of a criticism on this work. In his conversation with Roderigo he assigns as the cause of his hate that he has been degraded in rank through having a less experienced and less meritorious officer promoted over his head by Othello. Hereafter he is going to look out for himself, since nobody else will pay any attention to his claims. He proposes to employ any means in his power to accomplish his end; everything, high and holy, honesty, fidelity, morality, is to be trampled under foot if standing in his way. The service of the individual therefore he declares to be his ultimate principle, but to attain his purpose with success, there must be disguise. "I am not what I am," is his curt and striking statement, his instrumentality is to be dissimulation.

Iago asserts in the strongest manner the supremacy of reason; men can make out of their body and their appetite what they will. Still his reason extends not

beyond subjective cunning, he ignores the validity of all ethical principles. Virtue is a pretense, love is merely lust, reputation is a delusion. The question naturally arises, why has his intelligence become so debauched? The ground thereof lies in his own experience, as will be pointed out hereafter. But here also there is a large element of pretense, since he knows the exact nature of his conduct. Mark too that for his hatred of Othello he has not assigned to Roderigo the true motive, he is already dissembling in accordance with his principle. His talk is intended for Roderigo alone, whom he wishes to keep as an instrument, and to whom he is compelled therefore to give some motive for his conduct, and some clew to his future action. For Roderigo, fool as he is, must have a plausible explanation of the strange fact that the Ancient of Othello works against his master, before any money will be forthcoming.

But the true motive for Iago's hate is given in his first and also in his succeeding soliloquies, but nowhere in his conversation with others, since he would not be likely to announce his own shame, or herald his self-degrading suspicions. He considers that Othello has destroyed the chastity of his wife. Public rumor has noised the scandal abroad; he is made the object of scorn, he feels that he has suffered the deepest injury which man is capable of giving or receiving. This is the thought which gnaws the heart of Iago and spurs him to revenge:

——the thought whereof
Doth like a poisonous mineral, gnaw my inwards,
And nothing can or shall content my soul
Till I be evened with him.

Such was his own declaration to himself, whom he certainly had no motive for deceiving. Nor is it consistent with his shrewd understanding to assume that his belief rests on self-deception, that he really did not know what he was about. Iago has declared his actual conviction, a conviction which is confirmed by events which afterwards transpire. It is often taken for granted that his suspicions are wholly groundless, in fact that he does not believe them himself. The question of Othello's guilt with Emilia belongs to the second division of the play, where it will be hereafter considered. But that Iago is sincere in his belief can not be consistently questioned. The single motive usually assumed for his conduct is what he states to Roderigo about the lack of promotion. Such a view however is psychologically false; Iago is not the man to tell the truth to another and lie to himself. Moreover, why is the form of the soliloquy employed, unless to express the real internal ground of his action which could not be imparted to others?

With this interpretation there is a motive quite adequate for the subsequent vindictive conduct of Iago; otherwise he is an unnatural character, a monstrosity. His slight in regard to promotion would doubtless excite his enmity, but not an enmity sufficient to involve Desdemona in destruction, or even Othello. To inflict worse than death upon a man because he did not advance a subordinate when he could have done so, is altogether disproportionate to the offence; but to cause his wife to perish also is merely horrible. Thus Iago is a monster, a wild beast, and needs no motive at all, not even neglect of promotion, to bring on a rabid fit of cruelty. But what then becomes of the artistic me-

rit and beauty of this drama? Moreover Shakespeare's rule is to motive all his most important characters; such a being as the villain pure and simple is not to be found in any of his works. The second motive is therefore the true one, and at the same time is adequate; the family of Iago has been ruined by Othello, now Iago in his turn will ruin the family of the destroyer of his domestic life, hence Desdemona is included in his retaliation. He thus requites the Moor with like for like, his conduct is logical and his revenge only equals the offence. But there is absolutely no proportion between motive and deed if he involved Othello's family in destruction, merely because the latter would not promote him. Such seems to be the proper relation of the two grand motives mentioned by the Poet; the first one is intended only for Roderigo, while the second is the true and single motive for the subsequent actions of Iago.

The third opponent of the marriage is the father, Brabantio. This opposition gives the collision which Shakespeare always takes particular delight in portraying, the collision between the right of choice and the will of the parent. It is often supposed that the tragic destiny of the daughter is motived by her disobedience, but such a view will not bear investigation. Shakespeare everywhere justifies the right of choice when it is the sole issue, and therein he is true to the modern consciousness. It belongs to the woman to say who shall be her husband, for she, and not her father, has to form with him the unity of emotion which lies at the basis of the Family. But even if we grant that there is some guilt in such conduct, it certainly can not be tragic guilt which involves the destruction of the individual. The

ethical code of Shakespeare is therefore against this interpretation, for he always mediates such a conflict by the triumph of the daughter. The case of Romeo and Juliet is mixed with another ingredient, namely, the antecedent hate of the two houses, which renders reconciliation impossible; therefore it is not an example of merely paternal opposition to the marriage of a daughter.

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Another motive must hence be sought, which the Poet has not failed to indicate. It lies in the fact that between husband and wife existed the difference of race. An ethical union is impossible under such circumstances, the chasm is too wide, at least in the present condition of mankind. The Family, like all institutions, is grounded in prescription, this prescription has placed upon marriage certain limitations which can not be violated without giving the deepest offence to the ethical feelings. The principle of prescription belongs to every age and nation in different degrees, and is shared by all the truly moral people; those who violate it are regarded as outcasts. A difference of rank often destroys the possibility of an ethical union, though the parties are of the same race and of the same country. In Europe to-day the marriage of a lord and servant-girl collides with the moral consciousness of the whole public. The rational basis for such a strong sentiment is not wanting; it is that where so great a difference exists, the unity demanded by the Family is impossible. Both parties know that they have violated one ethical element of marriage, hence comes the dark suspicion that another ethical element of marriage may be as readily disregarded, namely, chastity. Therefore the jealousy which fires Othello will hardly fail to arise

from such a union, and turn it into a source of bitterness and death.

Desdemona has contracted a marriage which is impossible for the Family, hence it culminates in destroying the woman who enters into its baleful embrace. The true tragic element of her character we are now prepared to appreciate. On the one side, she is the most chaste and innocent of women, her love and devotion are absolute. So faithful to her relation does she seem that many people can see no justification for her fate. But let us now turn to the other side. While in the highest degree true to one ethical principle, she utterly disregards another. The entire realm of prescription which rests upon distinction of race she casts to the winds, and marries an African. In the most beautiful manner she is true to the Family, but is untrue to that upon which the Family reposes; for the sake of marriage she violates the condition of marriage. Her tragic pathos, therefore, lies in the fact that she espouses the one whom she loves, which is her right, and yet thereby involves herself in guilt. The collision with her parent is allowable, but not with her race; that is, the one is not tragic, the other is. If Othello were not a Moor, there would be no motive for the fate of Desdemona; and conversely, if she commits no offence in her marriage, it is hard to see why the Poet should give himself the unnecessary trouble of making Othello a Moor. The only answer which can be given, is that he followed blindly the sources of his plot at the sacrifice of both decency and thought.

A correct appreciation of this subject is not without difficulties in our time; any view is likely to be assailed with the charge of prejudice. But there seems to be

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no doubt that Shakespeare makes race an ethical element of marriage as important as chastity. Nor does he differ much from the great majority of mankind at present. That philanthropist is yet to be found who would be willing to see his daughter marry an African, though both be dead in love. His repugnance does not necessarily proceed from prejudice, but from the conviction that such a union is unethical, the lives of the pair, even if they lasted, would be a continuous tragedy. The prospect of his posterity would also be apt to call forth language and emotions quite similar to those of Brabantio.

A question has been raised concerning the degree of Othello's Africanism, about which extreme opinions have been held in both directions. But he was not a Hottentot on the one hand, nor was he a Caucassian on the other; he was, however, born in Africa, and his physiognomy is thoroughly African. The point which the Poet emphasizes so often and so strongly is the difference of race between him and Desdemona; he is her equal in rank, for he comes of royal lineage; he is the peer of her family in honor and fame, for he is the most distinguished man in Venice; the sole difference which is selected as the ground of the collision is the difference of race. This fact is sufficient for all dramatic purposes; to ascertain the exact shade of his skin may be left to those who have leisure to play with probabilities.

Desdemona therefore asserts the right of choosing her husband against the will of her father, which collision as above said, is continually recurring in Shakespeare, and which he always solves by giving full validity to love, though in opposition to parental authority. But in the present instance he has surrounded the choice

of the young girl with a peculiar obstacle and introduced an element found nowhere else in his dramas. The love of Desdemona is made to leap over quite all the social limitations known to man; she bids defiance not only to the behests of Family, but also to the feelings of nationality and to the instincts of race. She is a practical cosmopolitan.

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Her father Brabantio is decidedly of the opposite character. He is not wholly illiberal in his external conduct; nevertheless, he bears the stamp of a hide-bound patrician, devoted more to his class than to his country. He would hardly be called national in his feelings; the cosmopolitan love of his daughter therefore excites in his bosom the liveliest emotions. It is, indeed, so incomprehensible to him, that he can only account for it by the employment of some supernatural means on the part of the Moor. His limits are essentially his own order. But he cannot avoid taking his share of the blame; it is his own conduct which has led to the unfortunate result. Othello has been a frequent guest at his house, and thus he has himself furnished the opportunity of the courtship. For Othello had rendered the most important services to the State; on account of these services he was tolerated, indeed, welcomed to the home of the Venetian aristocrat. But never for a moment did the latter think of removing the social ban. The limits of race Othello has thus broken down on one side, he has obtained honor and high command in the State. Here he can not be barred out, for he is the chief instrument of its existence. It might be thought that these civil distinctions are higher than any other; this may be so, still they can not overcome social distinctions, or prejudices, if you please.

The contrast is drawn in the most striking manner by the Poet. Brabantio admires him, treats him with the kindness of a friend, regards him as a benefactor, often invites him to his own house, and seems to accord to him complete social equality. Yet when it comes to have Othello as a son-in-law, his nature revolts; for him the limit of race is impassable; he would prefer the booby Roderigo, because he is a Venetian, to the hero Othello because he is a Moor. Brabantio can only curse fatherhood when he contemplates his descendants of a different race.

But this narrow Venetian view of things is an absurdity, and can not be permanent. The State which thus defends itself by the aid of a distinct and despised race, must expect to bestow honors upon those to whom it owes its own existence. That race can not long be excluded from social equality under such circumstances, for the State is the higher, and must give the greater validity to the instrumentalities of its own perpetuity. Hence these social distinctions will be ignored or subordinated in the end by the State. Consequently we see in this play that the Duke, the head of authority can only confirm the union of Othello and Desdemona. Such is the strife here portrayed, between social prejudice and acquired honors by an individual of a despised race. It is very manifest that the Venetians must themselves defend their State, if they wish to preserve intact their Society. The latter is subordinate to the former.

Desdemona therefore refuses to make these distinctions of her father and countrymen. She is an artless girl, unacquainted with the world, and seems to have been brought up in pretty strict seclusion by her father.

She sees the Hero, the all sufficient man; this is enough to captivate her heart. She hears his adventures, how he has met the greatest obstacles of the world and conquered them all; he appears to be the master over accident. It is his bravery against external danger which is portrayed; no feats of mind, or skill, or cunning are recorded; his composition has in it more of the Achilles than of the Ulysses. On this weaker side, namely, the intellectual, he will hereafter be assailed, be overcome and perish. He is essentially the Hero of surpassing courage and self-possession. Desdemona has, on the other hand, the characteristic element of the true woman, a loving trust; she must have a support to lean upon, a heart to confide in; the stronger they are, the more intense is her devotion. All the most attractive qualities to such a nature she sees before her; she has not imbibed the social prejudices of the time, or perhaps despises them; she sees Othello's "visage in his mind," she ignores his color and race, and breaks through the barrier. Othello, too, is caught for the correspending reason; the trust and devotion of the woman call forth love; the leaning for support arouses the most intense pleasure in giving support; the causes of their love are reciprocal:

> "She loved me for the dangers I had passed,
> And I loved her that she did pity them."

The Heroic in the man, calls forth the devotion of the woman, and the devotion and sympathy of the woman can only beget their like in the man. Such are the motives which the Poet has elaborated in order to adequately account for this extraordinary union. The Father is repaid for his social equality, which at bottom was a mere pretence; he is now to behold it in reality,

for his own family is to be transferred to a totally different race.

Such is the collision in the Family; we are now prepared to see the same conflict pushed forward into the State. Brabantio has roused the neighborhood and is in hot pursuit of the lovers. He finds the Moor, arrests him as a criminal, and cites him before the highest tribunal of justice. But mark! even before the arrival of Brabantio, a messenger of the government has come in great haste for Othello. The Duke is in pressing need of his services, the country is in danger, the Turk is threatening Cyprus. The two conflicting elements are thus brought together side by side. Othello obeys the double summons, on the one hand as a criminal, and on the other hand as the defender of the country. Then follows the trial. It is the same tribunal which has to try him as a malefactor, and to appoint him to command against the foe. Brabantio in his accusation, can only account for such an unnatural love by the employment of witchcraft, or of some potent drug. Such is his charge. The reproach of race is always on his lips; to him it is inconceivable that his daughter should fall in love with a black monster whom she feared to look upon. How his fellow patricians were affected by his situation may be judged from the language of the Duke before he knows who the offender is:

> "Whoe'er he be that in this foul proceeding
> Hath thus beguiled your daughter of herself
> And you of her, the bloody book of law
> You shall yourself read in the bitter letter
> After its own sense, yea, though our proper son
> Stood in your action."

But though the Duke might condemn his own son, he could not condemn Othello. The decision is a very unwilling one, but how can it be helped? The choice www.libtool.com.cn must be made: the safety of the State or the punishment of the offender. The appeal of Brabantio is doubtless most powerful; his "brothers of the State can not but feel this wrong as their own," and if such actions be permitted, who will be their children, the future rulers of Venice? But there can be only one result of such a trial, the State is deciding whether it shall exist or a subordinate principle shall be asserted. The parent gives up all hope when his charge is disproved; he has already cursed fatherhood, in which alone such a collision is possible, and now with a heavy heart and an ominous warning to the pair, he asks that the Senate turn to other affairs. Othello departs with his prize for the wars, in his struggle with both Family and State he has been triumphant.

Such is the conclusion of the first division of the action, in which is portrayed the external conflict in its twofold phase. The various hostile elements have assailed the union of Othello and Desdemona from the outside and have failed. This first division almost constitutes a drama by itself with its collisions and happy termination. Were Othello a Venetian, it would be difficult to tell why the play should not end here. But in the difference of race has been planted the germ of the internal disruption of the pair; the man has also been introduced to us whose hatred will nurse this germ into a speedy and colossal growth.

The second division of the tragedy exhibits the internal conflict in the Family, a conflict which brings to ruin all who participate in its guilt. The scene is now

transferred from Venice to Cyprus, where Othello has supreme authority. The struggle therefore will not be disturbed by any external power, but will be allowed to unfold itself in its natural and complete development. The couple too are here removed from the social prejudice and dislike which would assail them at home. By this transition therefore they become the head of the society around them, free scope is given to make the most of their union. Relieved of every possibility of immediate external interference, Othello and Desdemona must now fall back upon their internal bond of marriage.

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But a disruption will take place, of which the grand instrument is Iago, who now becomes the central figure of the action. The motive for his conduct has already been stated to lie in the deep injury which he believes that he has suffered from the Moor. His method is to excite in Othello the most intense jealousy, to produce which he employs various means, that will be considered in their proper place. Now it is a leading peculiarity of Othello that his character is fundamentally free from jealousy, he is of a noble, open, magnanimous disposition. The problem then is to explain how an unsuspicious person becomes filled with the most deadly suspicion. The character of the Moor is a contradiction, and hence an impossibility without some adequate ground for the great change which it undergoes If he were naturally jealous, there would be needed no motive for his conduct; but the difficult point lies in the fact that he is naturally without jealousy. His characterization as well as that of Iago, has been pronounced unnatural, and so it is, unless some adequate impelling principle can be given, to account for this to-

tal inversion of his nature. We shall attempt to explain the cause of his change and to portray his gradual transition from the first surmise to the final deed of blood.

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The several parties have arrived in the island, Othello still remains behind. While they are waiting for his ship, a conversation arises which exhibits a new phase of Iago's character: his disbelief in the honor of woman. It must be regarded as the result of his own experience, married life has for him brought forth only its bitterest fruits. He treats his wife with the greatest asperity and contempt which she with slight protest for the present endures. But at the whole sex he aims his sarcasms, his doctrine is that woman is naturally lustful and faithless, and moreover fitted only for the lowest functions. That the husband's opinion of Emilia is true, is very plainly indicated in the last scene of the Fourth Act, where she openly admits that chastity is not the principle of her life. Othello is also well acquainted with her character, he knows of her falsehood and infidelity, he will not believe any of her statements and loads her with the most approbrious epithets.

We are now brought face to face with a question which is by no means pleasant to consider, but which has to be discussed if we wish to comprehend the Poet's work. Must we regard the Moor as guilty of what Iago suspects him? There is nothing in the play which shows that Othello was innocent of the charge, but there is much which shows that he was not innocent. The very fact, that this suspicion is cast upon him almost at the beginning and is nowhere removed, seems sufficient to raise the presumption of guilt. It hangs over him like a cloud which will not pass away. Then

Emilia's character, instead of precluding, strengthens the supposition of criminal intercourse, and the notion is still further upheld by the knowledge of her habits which Othello betrays. But the veil is never wholly removed. Why does not the Poet openly state the offence so as to leave no doubt? It is evident that he does not wish to soil the union with Desdemona by dwelling on Othello's incontinence, nor does he desire to throw into the background the difference of race, as the leading motive of the play. Still he would not have us forget the dark surmise, there it is suspended over the Moor to the last. Iago to be sure is a liar, but his lies are meant for others and not for himself. Moreover Iago is not more certain at first than we his readers and hearers are; but the complete success of his plan which is based on the Moor's guilt, confirms both for him and for us the truth of the suspicion.

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So much is indicated in the course of the play; but if the deeper motives of the various characters, are carefully examined, this conclusion would seem to become irresistible. Iago is manifestly assailed with the same burning jealousy which afterwards wrought such terrific effects in Othello. Now what will be the manner of his revenge? The most logical and adequate would be "wife for wife," hence his first thought is to debauch Desdemona. But nothing more is heard of this plan, for it could not possibly be successful. Then comes his most shrewd and peculiar method of avenging his wrong. If he cannot dishonor Othello in reality, he can do it in appearance with almost the same results. His purpose is to make Othello believe that Desdemona is untrue. This will be a revenge sufficient for his end, it will destroy Othello's happiness and peace of

mind just as well as the truth, it will bring upon the latter that which he has brought upon Iago.

Another phase of the question now comes up for solution. How was it possible to excite such a passion in a character like that of Othello? The free, open, unsuspecting nature of the Moor is noted by Iago himself, his noble and heroic disposition would appear least likely to be subject to jealousy. Yet, this is the very form of revenge chosen by Iago with surpassing skill, this is therefore just the weak side of Othello's character. Why? The solution of the problem lies in the fact above mentioned, that Iago's suspicion is true. Othello has been guilty of adultery, he is therefore aware that the infidelity of wives is a fact. Here lies the germ of his belief in the faithlessness of Desdemona, his own act thus comes home to him and renders him accursed, his faith in justice can only make him more ready to think that he will be punished through his wife, since that is the mode of his own guilt. Such is the initial point of the fearful jealousy of the Moor, which Iago knows exactly how to reach, since it is a matter lying wholly within his own experience; and he knows also that Othello on account of previous criminality must be as capable of this passion as himself. Both the revenge of Iago and the jealousy of Othello therefore can be adequately motived only by the guilty conduct of the Moor towards the Ancient's wife. Moreover there is no other ground for the relation of marriage between Iago and Emilia except as a basis for these two main motives of drama. Thus too we see one of the fundamental rules of Shakespeare vindicated, that man cannot escape his own deed; hence Othello is the author of his own fate, since by his guilt he has called

up the avenger who will destroy him and his family; while without the view above developed he must appear as an innocent sufferer deceived by a malicious villain. www.libtool.com.cn Two other things of great importance have their explanation in the same view; namely, the manner of Iago's revenge and his knowledge of the assailable point in Othello's character. Here we find the solution of the Moor's contradictory nature; he is in general unsuspecting, but on account of his guilt he is capable of one suspicion, namely, that wives may be faithless. The Poet has thus added to the distinction of race, for which the Moor could not be blamed, a second motive, the criminal deed of which he must take the responsibility. The military life of Othello will furnish the third principle, that of honor, which will impel him to destroy the wife whom he thinks to have violated it in its deepest and most tender part.

The plan of Iago and the grounds upon which it reposes have now been unfolded; the next task before us is to scan with care the instruments which he employs to effect his purpose. The first one is Roderigo, who stands in a wholly external relation to the main action, and is always introduced from the outside for some violent purpose. He is twice turned against Cassio and is continually directed by the hand of Iago. His unholy pursuit has also brought him to Cyprus, where he is still fed with hope and relieved of his money by the artful Ancient But he becomes very impatient, he is always angry at his first appearance in the scene, yet a few words from Iago fill him again with great expectations. It is curious what a predominating influence Iago's superior intelligence has over him. When alone he knows that he is robbed and deceived; he even re-

solves to go home after giving Iago a good tongue-lashing. But he always yields even against his own judgment, he cannot resist the plausibility and flattery of the Ancient, and he twice exposes, and finally loses his life in his foolish and unrighteous enterprise.

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The second and by all means the most important instrument in the hands of Iago is the Lieutenant Cassio. This man is in every way adapted for exciting Othello's jealousy. He is on intimate terms with Desdemona, he is fair in external appearance, gifted with the graces of deportment, and his youthful face stands in marked contrast to the older look of Othello. Modern parlance would call him a ladies' man. But the decisive fact in his portraiture is that he is an open, notorious libertine, Iago himself has reason to suspect him too of undue intimacy with Emilia. This suspicion in itself by no means so improbable on account of her character, is however not confirmed in other parts of the play. But to remove all doubt concerning Cassio's moral weaknesses, the Poet has introduced a special person, the courtesan Bianca. There is no other ground why such an offensive relation should be dragged into the drama. Cassio has been long acquainted with Othello who also must have known his private habits. Cassio is therefore in every way a fit subject for suspicion, on account of his character, his external appearance and his relation to Desdemona.

Already Iago has observed a familiarity a little indiscreet yet entirely innocent, between the Lieutenant and Desdemona. But Iago can do nothing unless he can bring about a total separation between Cassio and Othello, so that they will not communicate together. This then he proceeds to accomplish, thus destroying

all opportunities for explanation, and giving occasion for the intercession of Desdemona. The dark plan of Iago is wonderfully carried out, he holds and directs Cassio with one hand and Othello with the other, yet neither knows what is controlling him. The drunken brawl causes the Lieutenant to be dismissed, Roderigo here is made the external means. Dissimulation could not be more complete. Iago has three disguises, he makes three men believe that he is working in their interest, yet is at the same time ruining them all. He hopes also to get Cassio's place, though the main motive is to wreak revenge upon Othello, of which Cassio is a convenient instrument. Ambition is not his deepest impelling power, but revenge.

At this point we behold the grand culmination of Iago's characterization: it is his confession that he is a villain. The form of the soliloquy again appears, in which he always expresses his deepest convictions. He knows that he is involving the innocent and the guilty in one common destruction, he acknowledges that he is a devil clothed in his blackest sins; that is, Iago is entirely conscious of the nature of his deed, and does not try to conceal it from himself. He at first indulges in an ironical defence of the advice which he gives to Cassio for recovering the Moor's favor; in appearance it is the best possible counsel, but it is counteracted and turned into the most deadly poison by his own dark insinuations to Othello. Such a defence however is the divinity of Hell from whose sophisms his mind at least is free. It is thus his great boast that his intelligence is not caught in the meshes of deceptive casuistry; still he will have his revenge. Iago is the self-conscious villain. He knows that he is overthrowing the moral

world, as far as his conduct goes; still it must perish since it stands in his way. There is no excusing of himself, no palliation of the deed:

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> When devils will their blackest sins put on,
> They do suggest at first with heavenly shows,
> As I do now.

How complete the consciousness and how audacious the statement of his own character! It has been said that Iago deceives himself with his display of motives, that he persuaded himself to believe a falsehood in his accusation of Othello. This soliloquy ought to banish forever such an opinion. No man ever knew his own mind better than Iago; here it is seen that he clearly comprehends and acknowledges the nature of his deed. He is aware that every man is a villain who does what he is doing; however deserved may be his revenge upon Othello, he can have no justification for ruining Cassio and Desdemona, and resorting to the means which he now employs.

The third instrument of Iago is Emilia, his wife, who is the devoted attendant of Desdemona and is employed by the latter in her communication with the cashiered Lieutenant. Iago thus has a means of obtaining information concerning their plans. Desdemona is now set to interceding for Cassio; she is urged on by both Emilia and Cassio, who are in their turn directed by Iago. This part of the plan easily succeeds.

But Iago himself, must manage the far more difficult case of Othello. This brings us now to the main development of the drama, and perhaps the most complete psychological portraiture in Shakespeare. Iago begins the manipulation of Othello's mind through a ser-

ies of influences adapted exactly to the shifting phases of the latters disposition, and increasing in intensity to the end. Given a noble unsuspecting character, the design is to portray those causes which not only turn it into the opposite, but make it destroy its most beloved object. The primal basis to work upon lies in Othello's own consciousness of guilt. The first point is to faintly touch his suspicion, which is accomplished most easily, for he readily imagines what he himself has done to others may happen in his own case. We see how the slightest hint from Iago cast a shadow over his whole being.

> *Iago.* Ha, I like not that.
> *Oth.* What dost thou say?
> *Iago.* Nothing my lord, or if—I know not what.
> *Oth.* Was not that Cassio parted from my wife? etc.

A word from Desdemona is sufficient however to allay his mistrust, but another word from Iago is sufficient to arouse it anew in all its intensity. Can any one doubt that this hasty suspicion on the part of an unsuspecting character can have any other ground than the consciousness of the same kind of guilt? Iago's artifices are unquestionably skillful, but he found a most fruitful and well prepared soil, and besides his very skillfulness rests upon his comprehending and utilizing so thoroughly the psychological effects of Othello's crime. It is impossible to think that an honest and innocent man could have been so easily led astray.

Othello's suspicion is now fully aroused, but with it the difficulty of Iago's task is proportionately greater. How will the latter prevent that suspicion from becoming universal, from being directed against himself as well as against Cassio and Desdemona? His first plan there-

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fore, must be to confirm his own honesty in the mind of Othello with the same care and skill that he infuses distrust against the other two. He has to fill the Moor with suspicion, and at the same time to avoid the suspicion of doing that very thing.

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It is this double and apparently contradictory ability that gives such a lofty idea of Iago's intellectual power. But how does he proceed to accomplish his purpose? At first by the apparent unwillingness with which he tells his dark surmises, and by the pretended dislike with which he assails the reputation of people. In these cases he seems to manifest the most tender regard for the rights and character of others, indeed he repeatedly confesses his own tendency to suspect wrongfully. Such a man appears absolutely just, more just indeed to others than to himself. But all these things might be the tricks of a false, disloyal knave, as Othello well knows and says. Now comes Iago's master-stroke, by which he completely spans the Moor's mind, and turns it in whatever direction he pleases. "Othello beware of jealousy," and then he proceeds to give a description of its baleful nature. What now is the attitude of the Moor? This is the very passion with which he knows himself to be effected. Never more can he harbor a doubt of Iago's honesty, for has not the latter warned him of his danger? Iago thus tears out and brings to the Moor's own look his deepest consciousness, his greatest peril. He knows the truth of the warning. Iago now can proceed with more certainty and directness, he can not be suspected of exciting jealousy, for this is the very thing against which he has given so potent a warning. Thus Othello is thrown on his own defence, is compelled to dissimulate his true

feelings, declares that he is not jealous, when he really is. He is forced into the necessity of disguise, exchanges positions with Iago. Yet the latter well knows, indeed says, that jealousy cannot be eradicated when once excited, but ever creates itself anew, feeds on its own meat. Such is the two-fold purpose of Iago as manifested in this dialogue: to inspire Othello with suspicion and yet shun suspicion himself. Othello is caught, the reason is manifest. A universally suspicious nature would not have been thus entrapped, it must have suspected the purpose of Iago also, with all his adroitness.

Othello is however naturally unsuspecting, but guilt has furnished the most fruitful soil for one kind of suspicion, that soil Iago cultivates. Hence the Moor is afraid of only one thing, the infidelity of his wife, the tricks of Iago lie outside of the horizon of his suspicion. On the other hand, a completely innocent nature could not have been thus entrapped, the psychological basis would be wholly wanting. Here is seen the reason for the marked outlines of Othello's character; he is not naturally suspicious, otherwise he must have suspected the purpose of Iago; nor is he guiltless, for if he were, his jealousy could not have been reached by any such artifice.

Nothing can be more impressive and instructive than the contemplation of this mental development. It is most clearly shown how that man's deed becomes forever a part of his being, how that he can never free himself from its effects upon his own disposition. The deed does not fly away into the past and lose itself in vacuity after it is done, but it sinks into the deepest consciousness of the doer, and gives coloring to his fu-

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ture conduct. The negative wicked act must cast its dark shadow upon the soul, and thus change the character of the individual, whereby he is prepared for punishment. In the case of Othello we shudder at the manner in which guilt finds the most subtle avenues for returning upon the doer. The deed may be secret to the gaze of the world, but it sinks deep into the mind; this is altered, and retribution will follow. Such a portraiture is worth, to a rational being, all the insipid moralizing of ages.

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Iago can now be more bold, Othello cannot suspect him. Hitherto he has directed his hints and surmises against Cassio. But now he begins to assail Desdemona with the most artful inuendos. She is from Venice where it is the custom to be untrue; she deceived her father, you know she pretended in his presence to tremble at your looks, when she loved you most, a statement which has increased force from the parting admonition of her father. As preparatory to the final and culminating charge, Iago renews his warning against jealousy. But this third point the Moor anticipates, so well prepared has he been, and showing that it was always in his mind. It is the distinction of race. Hardly is it hinted by him, when Iago catches up the unfinished thought and dwells upon it with terrific emphasis. How unnatural, horrible, the union between man and woman of different complexion and clime! and hence how much more ready will she be to break it, after becoming disgusted! We see with what effect this reproach takes hold of Othello in his succeeding soliloquy. It recalls all the bitterness of many years, the taunts of Brabantio, finally the collision resting upon this very basis, which he has just passed through. Des-

demona broke over all social distinction of nation and race, here is the retribution, wanton jealousy. The greater her sacrifice, the more unnatural does it seem and the more suspected she becomes. Moreover we catch a glimpse of that to which this jealousy will lead: destruction for himself and for the loved one rather than be so dishonored. The passion jealousy rests upon the monogamic nature of marriage; when that relation is disturbed, jealousy will and ought to arise in all its intensity. Another element is added in the case of Othello, springing from his military career: honor. He can not endure shame and reproach, he who has never had any taint cast upon his courage or reputation.

The passion has overwhelmed him, he can not do or think of anything else, his occupation is gone. So Iago knows, not all the drowsy medicines of the world will restore to him peace of mind. Iago indeed has obtained his knowledge from experience, in fact, his own present activity has the same root. For a moment Othello reacts, suspects, notices that no positive proofs have been produced, only surmises. He turns upon Iago and grasps him by the throat, yet how can he continue his suspicion, how can he blame Iago? Did not the latter warn him of these very consequences? One word from his Ancient therefore makes him release his hold. Othello must believe that Iago has been honest with him, once more Iago speaks of his passion, a thought that cuts the Moor through and through, whose truth he can not deny.

Othello will have more direct proofs than surmise, Iago is ready with them. He then narrates the dream of Cassio, which Othello of course has no means of verifying. But the charge is direct, plain, and based upon

an occurrence. Next comes the apparently complete demonstration: the handkerchief. Here is a fact which Othello does verify sufficiently to discover that Desdemona has it not in her possession. Still whether Cassio has received it or not, he can not verify as long as they are asunder. Finally the trick wherein Othello overhears the conversation about Bianca and thinks it is about Desdemona seems to him to be an acknowledgement of guilt from the mouth of Cassio himself. It ought to be added, that before this Iago has made the direct charge, that Cassio has revealed to him Desdemona's infidelity. Othello is so overcome that he falls into a swoon, and then afterward through the words of the Lieutenant he seems to get a complete confirmation of Iago's statement. Othello is now resolved, his mad suspicion has been wrought up to the point where no explanations can mitigate its ferocity. He investigates, but his resolution is already taken; no declarations of Emilia, whose character he can not trust, and no denials of Desdemona, who is the person suspected, can shake his belief. The passion has taken too deep a hold, he will not and can not withdraw himself from its grasp. The plan of Iago has reached its climax; he began with faint surmise, he proceeded to direct assertion, and lastly he has given what seems to be a demonstration to the senses.

Two persons, Emilia and Cassio have now revealed themselves fully, and we are enabled to ascertain their function in the play. In regard to Emilia she makes no pretence to virtue as her principle in life, indeed she quite acknowledges her own infidelity. We have already seen with what contempt she was treated by her husband; in her character and declarations is found a

complete justification of his suspicion, though she naturally denies to him the truth of the charge. Before she was submissive, but now she requites his disrespect in full measure; she also intimates that he is untrue to the marriage relation. This ill-starred couple therefore have already passed through the experience of Othello and Desdemona, and both show that they are well acquainted with all the manifestations of jealousy.

But her most peculiar trait is her insight into the whole spiritual network of Iago's plans; she thus is an explanation of her husband to a certain extent. In the first place, she at once comprehends the exact nature of Othello's passion; she declares that her inference is from the similar behavior of Iago. Secondly, she sees that some person has excited the Moor's jealousy, it could not have arisen of itself in his bosom. Thirdly, she is certain that Iago is this person, though she does not say so openly, and she gives him several secret thrusts. The motives which impelled Iago and the grounds upon which he based his success appear to be distinctly apprehended by this strange, shrewd woman, whose redeeming traits are her devotion to Desdemona and her courageous defence of innocence.

Cassio has always fared well, receiving the greatest praise from even ministerial critics, notwithstanding his scandalous relation to Bianca. It is hard to tell why he has been so lauded, unless the reason be found in the temperance speech which he makes after being cashiered for getting drunk. Soberness is apt to bring such repentance, along with resolutions to reform. He also laments the loss of reputation, by which he clearly does not mean reputation for morality and decency, but the empty bauble of military glory. It is true that he is a

favorite of the simple-hearted Desdemona, but on account of his character he is employed as the instrument of her destruction.

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The third part of the play, the Retribution, follows. The tragic preparation of the previous portions is carried to the consummation. First Roderigo is led to assail Cassio, but is slain by Iago. It is his just desert, for he has willed and tried to execute both adultery and murder. Desdemona is killed by the Moor, jealousy has done its worst, has slain its most beloved object. The ground for her fate has been already stated; she violated the conditions of the Family in marrying a husband of a different race. Othello himself feels that she has shocked the strongest instincts of nature, by her conduct; hence he can easily be brought to believe her untrue; that is, jealousy is sure to arise under such circumstances. It can not be her disregard of the parental will which brings on her tragic fate. The second and subordinate motive of Othello's jealousy, namely his previous incontinence, can of course have nothing to do with the guilt of Desdemona. That has its baleful effect upon his character, as has already been shown; it brings upon him a fearful retribution, and determines the method of Iago's revenge. Still a man may be fired with jealousy and yet may not be ready to destroy its object. A third element is added to Othello's character, honor. It is intimately connected with his military life. The soldier always prefers death to what he deems dishonor; he would rather destroy the dearest existence and be destroyed himself than be stained with disgrace. Hence when Othello is convinced of Desdemona's guilt, he must proceed to kill her.

Iago is unmasked, the whole breadth of his wicked

plan is exposed mainly by his wife Emilia. It has been before noted how completely she fathomed the design of her husband; she is indeed the reflection of his spiritual nature. Now she glances through the entire scheme of villany; Iago knows her sharp insight, he tries to stop her speech, but, when he cannot, stabs her. The truth flashes upon the mind of Othello, he is ready to practice upon himself that severe justice which he imagined that he was employing against others; honor too will no longer permit him to live. As he slew a Turk once who traduced the State, so now he will slay himself who has acted so as to deserve the same fate. There seems some design of the Poet in one incident Othello attempts but is not permitted to slay Iago; the latter has really suffered a greater injury from the Moor than he has inflicted; he cannot therefore receive his punishment from the hands of Othello

This tragedy deals essentially with one relation of the Family, that of husband and wife, though the father of Desdemona appears for a short time. There are three pairs all of which represent in regular gradation negative phases of marriage. First come Othello and Desdemona, a unity resting on love and fidelity, but which is nevertheless contrary to a necessary condition of the Family. Hence their tie is disrupted and both perish. The second couple is Iago and Emilia, who are married, but have no emotional basis for their union; both are certainly wanting in love, and both are probably wanting in fidelity. They too are destroyed. The third pair is Cassio and Bianca, who are unmarried but still represent the purely sensuous relation of the sexes in its hostility to the possible existence of the Family. They both are preserved; the Poet

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would seem to indicate that they had committed no tragic violation of an institution which they had never entered. Then there are various cross relations of these individuals which give other negative phases of married life, as that of Othello and Emilia; the peculiar attitude of Roderigo towards Desdemona must also be classed as one of these manifestations. In general the conjugal bond of the Family has here its various collisions portrayed, and this drama may therefore be named the Tragedy of Husband and Wife.

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MACBETH.

The supernatural tinge which is given to *Macbeth* is always felt to be one of its most effective qualities. It transports us into a world so different from our own, that sometimes we are at a loss to explain the acts and beliefs of its characters, but the mystery always heightens the impression. The coloring throughout is the same; it belongs not merely to one person, but it is the element which envelops the whole play. All move in a world of imagination, in which man dwells among the weird forms of his own creation. The Poet has produced this wonderful effect in two ways. In the first place nature, whenever it is introduced, is made to prognosticate moral or spiritual occurrences and conflicts; it exists only as the sign of the future deed, it is filled with human purposes. The raven, the owl, the cricket betoken darkly what is to come; the wind and tempest, the raging elements always foreshadow the struggles of men. The minor characters in particular manifest this tendency, and thus show the popular consciousness. But in the second place the converse procedure is far more effective and hence far more prominent in the present drama. That is, the internal spirit projects its own workings into external forms, which rise up before it with all the certainty of a real object. Such are the Weird Sisters, the products of

the imagination of those who behold them, but of the imagination which can not recognize its own shapes as distinct from actual things. These two processes are the complements of each other to a certain extent, the one unfolds the internal out of the external, the other unfolds the external out of the internal. Both indicate the supremacy of the imagination, whose great characteristic is to find in nature or create out of itself those objective forms which express the activities of mind.

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It will be seen that man is thus controlled from without, by the dim forebodings of the physical world or by the phantoms of his own brain. A realm beyond human power or consciousness seems to exercise a controlling influence over the affairs of life. But let not the other side be forgotten: it is a genuine attempt of the individual in a certain stage of culture to find or create some expression for what is true within him. Such a theme however is essentially epical, for it is the Epos which exhibits its characters as determined by external powers, by the god or the demon, by the fairy or the angel. The drama on the contrary portrays man as acting through himself, as ruled by his own wishes, motives, ends, principles; hence in it the above mentioned instrumentalities of the Epos must be always subordinated and explained into a subjective element. Shakespeare has accordingly shown the inner movement of the mind alongside of the outward influence of the Weird Sisters; both are in fact different expressions of the same thing. There is thus a twofoldness running through the play, a double reflection of the same content; the reason whereof is that characters which are controlled by the shapes of their own imagination are

portrayed, and hence it must be manifested what they seem to behold and what they really do behold.

The drama can therefore be divided into two distinct worlds: the supernatural and the natural. These terms are not completely antithetic, but they are sufficient to indicate the meaning which is intended to be conveyed. The supernatural world is that of the Weird Sisters who seem to enter the action from the outside and direct its course. They appear to Macbeth twice, the essential turning-points of his career are thus marked. The first time they incite him to guilt, the second time they lead him to retribution. Their two appearances thus divide the tragedy into its usual double movement which unfolds the crime and then its punishment. The natural world is composed of two well-defined groups, In the first group are those whom the Weird Sisters determine: Banquo, Macbeth, and less directly and less strongly Lady Macbeth. They manifest a regular gradation in their relations toward this external power: Banquo resists its temptations wholly, Lady Macbeth yields to these wholly, or rather brings to their aid her own strength of will, Macbeth fluctuates, resisting at first, but finally yielding. These characters also manifest the influence of imagination with greater or less intensity; they have in particular the double element above-mentioned, for they are impelled both by external shapes and by internal motives. The second group of the natural world comprises Duncan and the remaining persons of the play who do not come in contact with the Weird Sisters nor are directly influenced by their utterances. But this group is for the most part set in motion by the first group of the natural world, both move along together at first and

then collide. The external element thus reaches through the entire play; the first impulse is given by the Weird Sisters, is received by one set of characters, through these is transmitted to a still different set of characters, who finally re-act, punish the usurper and restore the rightful king. The first group, it ought to be added, disintegrates within itself, for Banquo refuses to listen to the advances of Macbeth, seeks to avenge the murder of Duncan, and at last is destroyed by his comrade in arms.

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The first thread, that of the Weird Sisters, can now be taken up and developed in the first part of the general movement of the play. These beings dwell in a realm of their own, distinct, complete. Three things concerning them are to be noted: Their physical surroundings, their corporeal appearance, and their moral qualities. Their coming is in thunder, lightning and rain, their home seems to be in the tempest, in the wild convulsions of nature; their attendants are the lower, and often repulsive animals. In bodily aspect they appear to represent the Ugly; they are withered, bony hags, unnatural monstrosities without sex, opposite in every respect to the beautiful human form. Thus the negative elements of nature are manifested in them and in the atmosphere which envelops them. Corresponding to their looks and to their surroundings is their moral character; to them fair is foul and foul is fair; they are portrayed in a state of hostility to man and what is useful to him; their delight is in darkness, confusion, destruction. Malice and revenge enter deeply into their disposition; in general, they exhibit an inimical power which is directed against mankind externally, and their world seems to include the hostile

phases of both nature and spirit. The storms around them and their own dispositions are equally charged with harmful threatenings.

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But their chief attribute is the gift of prophecy. This completes their influence, the influence of a prediction which is believed to be true, upon human conduct. If the conviction is once settled that the promise will turn out as foretold, it becomes usually a wonderful incentive to action; indeed a prophecy may force its own fulfillment merely through its influence upon the mind. When Lady Macbeth says, "thou shalt be what thou art promised," it is manifest that she is going to do all in her power to make the prophetic utterance of the Weird Sisters a reality. Macbeth too is driven by the same impulse; once however he intimates the fatalistic view which would paralyze his activity;

> "If chance will have me king, why chance may crown me
> Without my stir."

But this was one of his fluctuations which are carried through the whole First Act. Banquo too is powerfully wrought upon by the same influence, but he can not be torn from his moral anchorage. Hence the subjective impression created by a prediction which is believed to be true, is an important element in estimating these characters.

A question is likely to arise here in the mind of the reader. Why are such beings endowed with the gift of prophecy? There is no doubt but that it can be logically inferred from their nature. They represent the totality of conditions, internal and external, which determine conduct to evil; impart to that totality a voice, and you have the prophetic Weird Sister. Given all

the circumstances, the recurrence must take place; if then all these circumstances can find utterance, that utterance must be an announcement of the event which is to happen. The powers which control and impel the individual are united together into an external form and endowed with speech and personality in the case of the Weird Sister. When she gives expression to her own essence, it must be a prophecy, since she is just that which determines what is to be. Hence the Poet has introduced these existences also to foretell, that is their ultimate principle. It must also be remembered that the gift of prophecy is a natural rather than a spiritual endowment; the individual feels in the surrounding circumstances that which is to come; it is not so much a clear conscious knowledge, as a dark presentiment. Undoubtedly the present has within it the seeds of the future; let the totality of influences work upon a keenly receptive spirit gifted with a strong imagination, and we have the seer. He is not the thinker who can deduce the future as the logical result of the present, but he is one who *feels* the Whole and sees its consequences and expresses them in highly wrought symbolical language. With the growth of the Understanding prophecy passes away for two reason: its place is supplied by a different faculty, and it loses its credit through the deception practised in its name. Such was its history among the old Greeks and Hebrews. But the prophet is still found among all peoples living in intimate connection with Nature, for his is a mainly natural function.

Such in general seems to be the purport of the Weird Sisters: an external personification of the influences which impel the individual to evil. Now what are these

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influences? The reader can easily ascertain them at the beginning of the play: a rebellion, two victorious generals, a weak king who owes his kingdom to their valor, and who could not resist their power, were they to turn against him. What would be more likely to stir up ambitious thoughts concerning the throne? Then comes the prophecy with its partial fulfillment when Macbeth is made Thane of Cawdor. Here too our credulity is not very heavily taxed, for can anything be more natural than that Macbeth should receive the estates and title of the rebel whom he had put down? It will thus be manifest that these mysterious prophecies are the direct product of the circumstances, are just the thoughts most likely to arise in the minds of the two heroes as they return from their victory. Their ambition is appealed to most powerfully, will they yield to its promptings? That depends upon their subjective nature, and hence from this point each will show his own character, which will be developed in its proper place.

Another difficulty now springs up for adjustment. If the Weird Sisters only represent that which is given in another form, are they not superflous in the drama? To come directly to the issue: What is the purpose for which the Poet employs these shapes? The answer must give the most important point for the proper comprehension of the play. *It lies in the character of Banquo and Macbeth to see such spectres.* Hence they are absolutely necessary for the characterization. The Weird Sisters are beheld by those two persons alone, and it must be considered as the deepest phase of their nature that they behold the unreal phantoms. Both have the same temptation, both are endowed with a strong imag-

ination, both witness the same apparition. In other words, the external influences which impel to evil, to ambitious thoughts, to future kingship are the same for both. In their excited minds, these influences take the form of the Weird Sisters. Such is the design of the Poet, he thus gives us at once an insight into the profoundest trait of their characters. In no other way could he portray so well the tendency to be controlled and victimized by the imagination, which sets up its shapes as actual, and then misleads men into following its fantastic suggestions. Lady Macbeth also is influenced by the Weird Sisters, though she had no immediate intercourse with them.

There is still another question which will probably be asked in this connection: Why has not the Poet himself openly told us what he means? He could easily have explained the matter for his audience in a separate scene, in a soliloquy, or in almost any way. It is true that the reader who carefully weighs and compares the natural and supernatural threads will have no difficulty in finding the secret. Still the author has scrupulously guarded the reality of the Weird Sisters; whenever they appear, they are treated as positive objective existences. Mark the fact that two persons behold them at the same time, address them and are addressed by them. Now if they were seen only by one person or by each person at different times, there would be no riddle, everybody would at once say, it is a subjective phantom. Such is the case when the ghost of Banquo appears to Macbeth but is seen by nobody else, though a number of guests with Lady Macbeth are present Here then is no problem. The Poet has therefore taken care to preserve the air of reality in these shapes.

For such a procedure he has a most excellent reason, one that lies at the very basis of tragedy. He wishes to place his audience under the same influences as his www.libtool.com.cn hero, and involve them in the same doubts and conflicts. We too must look upon the Weird Sisters with the eyes of Macbeth and Banquo; we may not believe in them, or we may be able to explain them, still the great dramatic object is to portray characters which do behold them and believe in them. The audience therefore must feel the same problem in all its depth and earnestness, and must be required to face the enigma of these appearances. For a character can only be tragic to the spectators when they are assailed by its difficulties and involved in its collision. It would have destroyed the whole effect of the Weird Sisters, had their secret been plainly shown from the beginning. In fact when the audience stand above the hero and are made acquainted with all his complications, mistakes and weaknesses, the realm of comedy begins, the laugh is excited instead of the tear. We make merry over men pursuing that which we know to be a disguise or a shadow. To persons who can remain uninfluenced by their imagination, this representation may appear ridiculous even in its present shape. Few people however have so much passivity and so little poetry.

Such seems to be the meaning of the Weird Sisters and the grounds for their employment by the Poet. It is to be observed that every explanation of them must show that they are subjective forms in the minds of those who see them. That is just the purport of their interpretation; otherwise they can be left simply as they are, in their objective reality. He who believes in ghosts, or thinks that Shakespeare believed literally in

ghosts, has no difficulty to solve and hence needs no explanation. Still further, those who hold that the Poet merely employed an existing superstition for external effect without intending to put any sense into these shapes have also got rid of the problem, and it may be added, have got rid of Shakespeare too.

The play very properly opens with the witch scene which represents the mustering of the hostile influences. The Weird Sisters want to meet Macbeth, no other person is mentioned by them, for he is the one who is mainly determined by their power and is the central character of the drama. They are the primordial forces which set the whole work in motion; this impulse being given, we must now be introduced to the natural world, the object upon which the supernatural elements exert their influence.

This is the second thread whose development must now be given extending to the second appearance of the Weird Sisters. Here we shall keep our attention on Macbeth as the chief figure around which the others move. His career will be shown in three different crises which however flow from one another in regular order: the conflict with himself, the murder of Duncan, the murder of Banquo. Each takes up about an act, and the three hence occupy the first three acts nearly. The internal conflict exhibits Macbeth struggling with his own conviction, for he knows that his deed is wrong, and also that retribution will follow; "we still have judgment here" says he. But the Weird Sisters combined with his wife are victorious over his moral nature aided by Banquo; both the former appeal to his ambition, which he himself confesses to be the real motive of his conduct:

> "I have no spur
> To prick the sides of mine intent but only
> Vaulting ambition."

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Which can be taken as his own subjective interpretation of the Weird Sisters. The conviction now being overborne, the deed follows, namely the murder of the King. Herein he violates not only his own profoundest belief, but also contradicts his former life. He once put down traitors, now he has become a traitor himself, his act has annihilated his previous honorable career. He assails the existence of the State, which he once saved. But here he cannot stop. He proceeds to destroy the man who will not be a traitor with him, who will not also violate his own conviction and contradict his own legal acts. Banquo is true to the old King, and is ready to avenge his death, he cannot therefore be true to Macbeth. The latter also must get rid of those who do not accept his principle of treason and murder, they are a standing cause of fear and reproach. Thus it will be seen that Macbeth, the former savior of the King, not only slays him, but also slays those who would save him. Macbeth, swayed by external influences working upon a favorable disposition, has turned into the opposite of himself, has become the complete contradiction both of his former action and of his present conviction.

Still that conviction is not lost nor indeed inactive; those stern words have expressed his profoundest faith

> ——"that we but teach
> Bloody instructions which, being taught, return
> To plague the inventor; this even-handed justice
> Commends the ingredients of our poisoned chalice
> To our own lips."

If ever there was belief in retribution, it is declared here. But how will this conviction make itself felt? Through the imagination. It has already been seen how Macbeth projects his internal states of mind into shapes seemingly real. Imagination is his peculiar psychological trait, ambition worked through the imagination, and retribution must work through the imagination. Hence we can account for the voices which he hears after the murder of Duncan, and the sights which he sees after the murder of Banquo. That mental quality which beholds the Weird Sisters, is the same as that which beholds air-drawn daggers and ghosts. This is therefore the deep consistency of the character. At first temptation in the forms of the imagination assists in leading him into crime, and then remorse punishes him also in the forms of the imagination. The appearances always accompany his guilty act, they are the Fairies which he tries to drive away by crime but which always return with tenfold terror.

We can now take the play in hand and trace these principles in its incidents with greater minuteness. We find at the very beginning that there has been a terrific collision in the State; a great revolt has taken place in which many of the King's subjects aided by foreigners have participated. But this revolt has been put down mainly by the strong arm of Macbeth, assisted however by Banquo. The breach is healed, the throne is saved, peace again reigns. Such is the background upon which the action is portrayed. Now comes the internal struggle, and we are to witness the influences which will turn Macbeth in the most direct contradiction with himself. What has he been doing? Putting down traitors to the King. But next he be

comes himself a traitor to the same King, does the very thing for which he had just destroyed an army. What brought about this change? The tracing of this development in his character will constitute the first crisis of this second thread, terminating in the surrender of his own conviction.

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Banquo and Macbeth are returning from the scene of their triumph, filled with the glory of their deed. What honors now are not within their reach! They are truly greater than the King, they have saved his realm. Then the Weird Sisters appear in their horrid shapes, and prophesy the future of the two warriors. The one shall be King himself, the other shall have children who shall be Kings. But the moment the shapes are asked concerning their origin and purpose, they vanish. Both the men are skeptical at first, yet both are pleased, the utterances of the Weird Sisters seem to harmonize quite with their own thoughts. Now comes the sudden confirmation, Macbeth is the Thane of Cawdor just as one of the witches hailed him, the Weird Sisters are henceforth regarded as prophetic.

What shall we do with this passage? Here is the point where the supernatural world touches the natural, and hence it constitutes the main difficulty of the play. The Poet has told us enough that we can see his meaning, though he is by no means going to declare openly his mystery. It is a problem which we must and can solve. To repeat what was before indicated, the ambitious feelings and possibilities of both these men are given an objective form by their imagination, which to them has all the force of a reality. It is like a dream when the image is actual. For the imagination gives full validity to its content, if the reason be not present

and correct its vagaries. Not a few persons in ordinary life take that which they imagine, to be real. Under strong excitement it is possible to perhaps every person. At any rate such is the mental quality of Macbeth and Banquo, they project their own imaginings into reality, they see witches. Even they at first question the existence of these beings. It is curious that the latter disappear so speedily when their origin is sought for. That can evidently not be given to the two men, for it would lead back to their own minds, and thus would destroy the objective reality of these shapes. The situation of Macbeth and Banquo, as the victorious generals of a weak King calls up very naturally vague feelings of future greatness. That which the witches prophesy is in such complete harmony with the subjective feelings natural to the occasion, that the one is a picture of the other. But it lies in the character of the two men that these feelings take the form here represented. The deeds imagined, such as the murder of the King and usurpation of the realm, are repugnant to the moral natures of both, hence the Weird Sisters are evil and ugly to both. Both too have that predominance of imagination which tricks them into taking its shapes for realities. This trait is fundamental and is preserved throughout the play.

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But though both possess the above-mentioned moral element, yet each has it in a different degree. Now their characters begin to separate and to individualize themselves. When the witches have announced the future greatness of the two heroes, Banquo tramples all wicked designs or even wicked surmisings under foot, his moral nature asserts its complete superiority over the promptings of ambition. Not so Macbeth. He still

cherishes the thought, dismisses it at one moment, and calls it up the next moment, is rapt in his own fancies while Banquo has solved the question for once and for all. He regards the spectres as instruments of darkness and warns Macbeth against "trusting home" their prophetic utterance. The latter after much struggling resolves to wait for the present, but when the King appoints his own son as his successor, Macbeth's feelings are aroused anew, and he himself confesses to his "deep and black desires."

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But the prophecy has set another influence at work which is irresistible. Lady Macbeth will now supply the element the lack of which caused such hesitation in her husband. She is introduced reading a letter which relates the promises of the Weird Sisters; these promises are just what she desired. But she knows the character of her husband and fears that he will still be irresolute since the conflict between the good and the bad is so evenly balanced in his mind. He has the ambition but hesitates at the wickedness. Her function now is to pour "her spirits into his ear" and destroy every scruple. But even she feels her sex to be inconsistent with cruelty, she therefore abjures womanhood. Her address to the "spirits" and murdering ministers would show however a lurking belief in the world beyond, and an underlying foundation in the imagination. This hereafter becomes more apparent.

Macbeth in his soliloquy gives the subject a final consideration, and comes to the conclusion not to kill Duncan. He would risk the world to come if he were sure that he would escape in the present world. But he expresses his profoundest conviction that there is always on earth a retribution for the wicked deed. This

too, it may be added, is the Poet's doctrine, and that upon which he bases his tragedy. Macbeth's firm belief in retribution shows that he sinned against light, www.libtool.com.cn and the play itself is a striking illustration of the same principle. But no sooner has he resolved not to murder the King when the wife appears. She reinforces with her determination the evil side of her husband's character. Her argument is that of immorality. You are coward not to be that which you desire to be. Now morality is quite the opposite, namely, to suppress desire when inconsistent with what is right. His first answer is the true one: "I dare do all that may become a man, who dares do more is none." But she aiding his ambition which had almost turned the scale without her, changes his mind. His hesitation was caused by the conflict between conviction and desire, she reinforces desire with her intense purpose. Banquo subordinates his desires and even his thoughts to his moral conviction, while Lady Macbeth tramples upon every moral consideration to attain the goal of her ambition. Macbeth hangs between the two, he has the conviction of Banquo but the ambition of his wife. She says:

> "Art thou afeard
> To be the same in thine own act and valor
> As thou art in desire ?"

That is, it is cowardly not to follow your desire. This really did not convince Macbeth as is shown by his answer, but it made overpowering the evil element in him which was already very strong. Her "undaunted mettle" he yields to, her strong will added to the elements already in him conquers.

Again the Poet touches the old chord, the similar

and the dissimilar traits in the character of Banquo and Macbeth. Both have the same strong imagination, Banquo is disturbed by wicked dreams and haunted by bad fancies during the day, but he vigorously suppresses every sinful inclination. Macbeth also is possessed with his imagination ; his thought and his purposes at once take on the form of an objective image. He sees a dagger which directs him to the King, hovering in the air, when he has resolved upon the murder. The bloody business always informs thus to his eyes. Though he questions the reality and seems at times to believe in the unreality of these shapes, still they have none the less power over him. But the resolution remains, the King is murdered. What then ? The same imagination rises up in tenfold power and becomes the instrument of punishment, the weapon of conscience. It was said hat Macbeth believed in retribution, now it appears in the fearful voice which cries

> "Glamis hath murdered sleep and therefore Cawdor
> Shall sleep no more, Macbeth shall sleep no more."

For he has slain repose in the sleeping Duncan. The utterance is fulfilled to the letter. Macbeth is harassed with his thoughts, he gets rest no more. His wife again performs her function, she controls his wild imagination and shames as cowardice his fear of his own pictures. Still even she has manifested some signs of weakness, some indications that she is not free from the same influence. External prognostications have been noticed by her as the croak of the raven, the scream of the owl, the cry of the cricket; she has addressed too a world of spirits beyond; she also can not murder on account of an image which appears to her mind resem-

bling her father. Other indications will hereafter occur. But toward her husband she always manifests the cool understanding which suppresses such appearances. In her deepest nature there is however a stratum of the same mental quality. The content of Macbeth's imagination is now always retribution.

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The murderous deed becomes known to the outer world which enters at the Porter scene, and suspicion, especially that of the King's sons attaches at once to Macbeth. It is also to be noticed, what use is made of superstition. Nature was filled with strife, the imaginative, superstitious man transfers the conflicts of the spiritual world to physical phenomena. They indicate what lies in the future, both natural and moral occurrences have the same cause in some external power. The wild night, lamentings in the air, the clamor of the obscure bird, darkness in day-time, the falcon killed by the mousing owl, the horses contending against obedience and eating one another are some of the portents which the time brought forth. But in reality it is man who in this manner projects his own thoughts and feelings into nature which thus is merely the language to express what is going on within. It must not be judged too harshly, the human mind in certain of its stages has indeed no other means of utterance. It is easy to deride it as superstition, but it is better to comprehend it as a genuine though not the most exalted phase of human spirit.

The extravagant and superfluous talk of Macbeth reveals him to the King's sons as the cause of the murder; it is a very natural inference, for they, genuine mourners, have so little to say that the contrast points to Macbeth as insincere, a noisy dissembler. The

fainting of Lady Macbeth may be taken as genuine, as a momentary bursting up of that under current in her character which has already given numerous indications of its existence, and which will at last control her. But the external motives for the continuence of Macbeth's career of murder are here given. Banquo declares that he will fight against the author of the crime, and even hints the suspicion which afterwards he utters more plainly. Macduff pledges his word to the same course, so do the other lords.

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Duncan is murdered, Macbeth is King through treason. Now the third crisis in his history begins its movement, The difference between him and Banquo has already been noticed; that difference has developed into opposition, nay, into hostility. Starting from the same point, endowed with the same imagination, Banquo has suppressed his evil ambition, while Macbeth has allowed the wicked purpose to control him. The result is a conflict between them, for the moral nature of Banquo is outraged at Duncan's murder: whose author he more truly suspects to be Macbeth. Hence the latter fears the royaly of his nature and his wisdom; but above all Macbeth feels "that under him my genius is rebuked," referring to the difference in their moral characters.

Banquo is a prepetual picture held up before his guilty conscience, a continual reminder of that which he ought to have done, a rebuke to his character.

His excited imagination works upon this theme, and gives him no peace day and night. He must have Banquo out of the way. But also Banquo was his partner in the prophetic promises of the Weird Sisters, he was to be father to a line of Kings, who would exclude the posterity of Macbeth. His destruction is therefore

resolved upon. Macbeth however falls here into contradiction with himself as he did in the case of Duncan. He believes the Weird Sisters to have uttered true prophecies, yet he is going to nullify them. It is a prophecy of theirs which has declared that Banquo's posterity will succeed; acting upon the belief that it is certain to take place, he still proposes to forestall it. With the apparent confidence in the truth and certainty of what is foretold, he will nevertheless prevent it. In other words he now turns against the utterances of the Weird Sisters which he had hitherto followed and which have proven true in his own case. He is himself aware of this contradiction when he says

> "Come fate into the list
> And champion me to the utterance."

In the bottom of his heart there then was at times some distrust of the witches. Banquo is murdered by hired assassins. In the scene where Macbeth talks with them, there is a somewhat disproportionately long dialogue in which the poet seems desirous of justifying the death of Banquo in a certain degree. The murderers are made to declare that Banquo was their enemy who had inflicted upon them the greatest wrongs.

The same struggles of the imagination occur after the death of Banquo as took place after the death of Duncan, only with greater intensity. Before it was the imagined voice of retribution, but in the present case the murdered man appears in person, and takes his seat at the table of guests. The imagination now has all the force of reality, it controls Macbeth's action even in the presence of company. Through it Banquo himself returns to earth, reveals his murder and to a certain extent accomplishes his revenge. Macbeth cannot

banish his image as he did the air-drawn dagger. The wife again preforms her previous function, that of suppressing the imagination of her husband, but its power has got beyond her control. Then she tries to excuse his conduct to the guests who are excited and full of suspicion ; in fact the secret is as good as told. The power of the imagination has now reached its climax, we behold it completely controlling an individual by its phantoms. Macbeth has been fighting them all along, he has sought to destroy them by crime, but that has only aroused them the more. We shall thus find a regular gradation in the influence of the imagination over him, from the first thought of the throne to the murder of Banquo.

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We have now carried down the whole action with its two threads through the first movement which exhibits ths guilt of Macbeth. The theme is in general, his transition from being the savior of the realm into just the opposite ; this transition has been shown in its three leading phases, namely the conflict with himself, with the King, with the loyal supporter of the King. On the one hand, his ambition working through the imagination has created a supernatural world which together with the strength of will of Lady Macbeth has inclined him to the evil side of his nature ; on the other hand his moral conviction, also working through the imagination inflicts upon him along with every act an internal retribution. We are now prepared to take up the second movement.

The turning point of the drama begins with the second appearance of the Weird Sisters. Macbeth has reached the goal of his ambition through crime, the current now sets in toward punishment. The theme of this second part is therefore retribution, not, how-

ever, the internal retribution of the imagination which has already been portrayed, but the external retribution which brings home to the guilty man the true equivalent of his deeds. Here too we observe the division into the same threads as was noticed in the first movement. The supernatural world composed of the Weird Sisters again makes its appearance, retaining its former character but changing to a certain extent its purpose. The natural world still has its two groups; the one of which is made up of Macbeth and his wife, the guilty pair for whom retribution is prepared, though in different ways; the other of which is composed of the injured fugitives who return with the aid of foreigners and avenge their wrongs.

Before entering upon the main topics, an important question should be brought up and discussed. Macbeth says that he wishes to go again to the Weird Sisters for a consultation. What are the grounds for this second interview with them? The former prophecy has been fulfilled, Macbeth is upon the throne; he naturally asks himself, what has the future in store for me now? Just as before he projected his thoughts into those prophetic shapes, so must he do at present; this is the peculiar element of his character. Moreover two questions disturb him. First, will the promise of the Weird Sisters to Banquo, concerning the latter's posterity, be fulfilled? Macbeth has tried to forestall that prophecy by the murder of Banquo; yet in his own case a similar prediction has turned out true; hence he may well be anxious about his success. But the second question is far more important. It is, Will there be any retribution for my deeds? Macbeth must thus interrogate himself, for it has already been seen

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that he possesses the strongest faith in retribution. This belief is in reality deeper than his belief in the Weird Sisters, though he tries to cover it and extinguish it by a reliance upon their prophecies. Such is his mental condition, which will again arouse the activity of his imagination; as he previously saw and heard the seeresses of the air when returning from the victorious field of battle, so he will see and hear them a second time concerning his destiny.

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Accordingly, the supernatural world—the first thread, appears. A new personage is now introduced into it, Hecate the queen of the witches. Her function is particularly marked; she is to change the previous course of events. Hence she reproves the Weird Sisters for their former favors to Macbeth who is but a "wayward son;" she will do differently, she proposes to deceive him by magic slights and "draw him on to his confusion;" her means is to produce in his mind "security," a confident temerity which results from an absolute reliance upon a prediction. The "hell-broth" is now cooked before our eyes, all the elements of nature most horrible and hostile to man are thrown into the cauldron, the future is being literallv stewed together out of its diverse ingredients; the purpose at least of these beings is clearly revealed in the ominous chorus: "double, double toil and trouble." This world has a complete activity of its own; though every part may not be symbolical, yet the whole certainly is; in fact the Queen Hecate, who may be considered the supreme power, has not only revealed her design, but also the means of its execution. She represents the new direction of the drama towards retribution.

These beings are, as before stated, an embodiment

of the influences which impel the individual to evil. They will drive Macbeth on from one wicked act to another, till they thrust him into the embrace of his punishment. www.libtool.com.cn It must not be forgotten that it lies in the character of Macbeth to see such phantoms; his own subjective temptations and even desires assume these forms. Still the Poet is most careful in guarding the reality of the Weird Sisters; he removes them as far as possible from any direct connection with Macbeth's mental condition. For instance, their prophecy about the moving of Birnam Wood seems in no way to have sprung from his mind, at least consciously; nor were the circumstances of Macduff's birth known to him, when the prediction was announced that no man "of woman born" would destroy his life. These and other occurrences which are difficult to explain in their particular shape, are in general the Poet's means for giving a strong and unquestioned reality to his airy seeresses. That his procedure herein is true to the highest conception of Dramatic Art was attempted to be shown in the first part of the present essay. His audience must also have the problem of the Weird Sisters as well as his hero; if their secret were openly proclaimed, the tragic element of the play would be destroyed.

Next let us consider what and how the Weird Sisters communicate to Macbeth. In general their utterances are the internal workings of Macbeth's own mind in an imaginative form, which however he himself does not recognize as his own. This is even hinted in the passage where the witch says to him: "He (the apparition) knows thy thought;" that is, Macbeth's mind was known without his needing to tell what it was. Again he says, "Thou harpst my fear aright," which indicates

the exact correspondence between his own mental state and the warning of the phantom. In like manner can be explained the injunctions of the other two apparitions: "Be bloody, bold and resolute," and "be lion-mettled, proud;" they spring from his character hardened by crime and audacious from success. The two prophecies also are an expression of his blind confidence in his own destiny, as "none of woman born shall harm Macbeth," and "Macbeth shall never vanquished be until great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill shall come against him." This whole passage therefore is in harmony with Macbeth's psychological development.

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Another side of the same description must be noticed. What is the signification of the three apparitions which rise up before Macbeth. One is the crowned child Malcolm who will take away his kingdom, another is the bloody child, Macduff, who will slay him; the third is his own head severed from the body. They prognosticate the fate of Macbeth in its three phases, dethronement, death, decapitation. Yet these phantoms give him advice and determine his conduct. That is, his own destroyers tell him that he cannot be destroyed; this is just the cause of his destruction. It strengthens his fatal reliance upon his supposed destiny, irrespective of the ethical nature of his deeds.

But in one respect he is disappointed. He learns that Banquo's children and not his own will become the occupants of the throne. He has therefore not succeeded in forestalling the first prophecy of the Weird Sisters; his murder of Banquo has availed him nothing. Nor ought he to have expected anything else; the Weird Sisters could not be made to predict truly in his own case, but falsely in another similar

case. His failure leads him to curse these prophetic shapes, he is now done with them forever. From this time forward Macbeth seeks no more the Weird Sisters, nor is he harassed any longer with the specters of his imagination. "No more sights," he sternly says; he will drown his mental phantoms in a whirl of activity: he will fight till every enemy be swept away. At once he proposes to get rid of the suspected Macduff.

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Such is the supernatural world of the second part. Its origin is seen to lie in the fact that the first prophecy had run out, and that other questions were pressing upon Macbeth's mind for an answer. In accordance with his peculiar mental trait, his thought and anxiety for the future call up the Weird Sisters in his imagination. Their purpose is distinctly declared to be retribution, which can only be the consequence of his own deeds, and which, it must not be forgotten, is his own deepest conviction. Still he blunts and destroys that conviction for a time, because he so wishes; hence he clutches the two ambiguous prophecies, or to speak more truly, creates them. Also the response concerning the posterity of Banquo which so excites his anger, is nothing but the logic of his own career and of his own thought.

We shall next consider the natural world in its first group, the guilty couple for whom punishment is now prepared. Lady Macbeth in person is introduced but once, in the famous night-walking scene. The objection is often made that this scene is not motived with sufficient plainness, that the leap into it is not at all accounted for by her preceding conduct. But a careful survey of her previous actions and sayings will refute

the charge. It has been above noted that she cites and seems to believe in the prognostications of nature, that she calls up the image of her father when about to murder the grooms and is thereby deterred from the act, that once she gives way to her suppressed emotional character and faints. But the most striking instance of her belief in the supernatural world is found in the passage where she invokes the "spirits that tend on mortal thoughts," and the "murdering ministers" of the air. The predominance of her imagination is most emphatically brought out in these places; in this respect she was no doubt intended by the Poet to rank in quite the same category with Macbeth and Banquo. Her self-command however is sufficient to suppress her own tendency to fantastic creation as well as that of her husband. This is just her function in the first part of the drama; in his presence the stern, cool understanding always seems to control her actions except the one time. But when she is alone, she can not help manifesting the deepest trait of her nature.

Therefore in her waking moments Lady Macbeth can temporarily crush the workings of her imagination by her colossal strength of will. But the hour comes when this fierce grip is relaxed, wnen the mind is freed from its central controlling power and its activities rush out in all directions like the released winds of Aeolus. Then we may expect that the suppressed imagination will exhibit itself in its native might, or indeed will burst forth with tenfold fury as the fires of the pent-up volcano. The Poet simply gives the fact; he brings before us Lady Macbeth awake when this trait is smothered, and Lady Macbeth asleep when it must be manifested in its highest potence. There would seem to be

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no very great necessity for delineating any intervening stage of her mind, in fact there is none.

But what now will be the subject which her imagination will seize upon in sleep? Note its power over the physical system; she rises out of bed, walks about, writes upon a paper, speaks aloud, indeed quite equals her waking state. Its theme however will be that which has made the strongest impression upon it, namely, the scenes of that eventful night when Duncan was murdered, together with their consequences. It will reproduce with striking fidelity the two sides of her nature which have before been noticed. For in the first place, her self-command appears here adumbrated in her dreams; she quiets her husband, reproves his fear, suppresses the phantoms of his mind, and directs his actions after the murder. But in the second place the great and important element of this representation is the imagination portraying not her assumed but her actual mental condition. The rubbing of her hands to wash out the gory spot and her inability to get them clean, the smell of blood upon them, the sigh when she finds her attempts ineffectual are the most terrific symbols of remorse. Again we behold conscience working through the imagination. The doctor, who is the interpreter for the audience in this scene, tells the secret: "More needs she the divine than the physician;" her ailment is not bodily but spiritual. Also her fluctuation between the above-mentioned two elements of her character is to be observed, for it is no doubt to a certain extent a picture of what she actually was in her waking state.

In the case of Lady Macbeth, as well as in the case of her husband, we behold the internal retribution ac-

complished through the imagination. But her it destroys, she can not withstand its attacks nor avoid them by outward activity. We must consider her to have been left alone some length of time, "since his majesty went into the field." She thus was handed over to her own thoughts, no doubt her most terrible enemies. She began with unsexing herself, in which step is contained the germ of her fate; for to unsex the woman is to destroy the woman as woman. Abjuring her emotional nature, she proceeded to cruelty and crime; at last we see her in the process of being eaten up by the Furies of her own creation. The exact manner of her death is not given, nor need it be; the motive however is most ample; imagination is her executioner.

The somewhat prevalent notion of making love the mainspring of Lady Macbeth's actions and of seeing in her the tender, devoted wife who committed the most horrible crimes merely out of affection for her husband is ridiculous and is, in my judgment, contradicted by the whole tenor of the play. The very point emphasized in her characterization at the beginning is that she abjured womanhood with its tenderness and love and prayed to be filled "from the crown to the toe, top full of direst cruelty," and her woman's breasts to be milked for gall! To be the wife is clearly not her highest ambition, that she is already; but it is to be the queen. There is no consistency or unity in her character, if love be its leading principle. To this passion the husband may justly lay claim, but not the wife who suppresses her emotional nature.

The second person of this group is Macbeth whose career we shall now take up again and trace to its close.

Macduff had excited suspicion by absenting himself from the royal feast, and previously he had sworn with Banquo to avenge the murder of Duncan. But he discovers his danger and flees. His wife and children are left behind, and are destroyed in his stead. This is the third great crime of Macbeth. He has quite run through the scale of human guilt; he has destroyed the foundation of State in the murder of the rightful king, he has destroyed loyalty to just authority in the murder of Banquo, now he destroys the Family in the murder of its innocent members. Logically his criminal career is now complete, consequently the Poet has given no other special case of his cruel acts. Still the process continues and must continue, as is indicated in a general way by the statements that every morn "new widows howl, new orphans cry" and "the dead man's knell is there scarce asked for whom?" Every human being is now the object of his suspicion, the existence of any individual is conceived to be an act of hostility by the jealous tyrant. For having slain man wantonly, he very truly infers that man is his enemy. He is becoming in reality what he is logically in the first murder, the destroyer of the human race. His act involves the annihilation of the species. In order to escape the monster a general flight from Scotland must take place, which flight will collect the instruments for his destruction.

The main fact now to be noticed in his character is that he is no longer swayed by his imagination. This change was indicated at the end of his interview with the Weird Sisters, he is now able to dismiss such "sights" altogether. His outward activity must absorb his mind, for his foes are marching against him;

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the reality before him is quite as terrible as any image can be. But Macbeth himself states clearly the main ground of this remarkable change. Previously he had declared that his dire phantasms were merely the result of his inexperience in crime :

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> My strange and self-abuse
> Is the initiate fear that wants hard use ;
> We are but young in deed.

But now he contrasts his present with his former condition in this respect :

> I have almost forgot the taste of fears.
> The time has been my senses would have quailed
> To hear a night-shriek ; and my fell of hair
> Would at a dismal treatise rouse and stir
> As life were in't ; I have supped full with horrors ;
> Direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts
> Cannot once start me.

Here is exactly stated the difference between his two mental states and its cause. Familiarity with crime has hardened his thoughts, repetition of guilt has seared his conscience. Hence no retributive ghosts appear after the murder of Macduff's family. But his whole mind is seared too, it is a desolation ; "life is but a walking shadow," "I have lived long enough," "life is fallen into the sere, the yellow leaf," "I begin to be a weary of the sun," etc. That is, with the cessation of his imagination his spirit is dead, an inward desert, since his imagination was the center of his spiritual activity. There is, however, one object to which he still shows attachment, it is his wife. She dies, there remains only his dependence upon the two prophecies. These also break down, for though their reality is carefully maintained, they are simply symbols of his external reliance upon his imagined destiny, to the disregard

of all ethical conduct. He tries to believe that he will not perish, no matter what he does. Hence the prophecies are a delusion, in fact his own delusion. It will thus be seen that both Macbeth and his wife have their common psychological principle in the imagination, though its development in each is just the opposite. In the first part of the drama Lady Macbeth suppresses while Macbeth yields to his imagination; in the second part, the reverse takes place.

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The second group of the natural world, the avengers from abroad, has already appeared in order to inflict upon Macbeth the external retribution for his deeds. The fugitives from Scotland went to England where the good King Edward reigned in contrast to the wicked King Macbeth. From this happy realm must come the relief, hence its introduction. There is Malcolm, son of the murdered Duncan, and Macduff father of the murdered family, but we miss Fleance son of Banquo who ought to be present to make the list of avengers complete. The foreigner Siward is added who however loses his son for his interference. Macbeth is undeceived first, then perishes fighting bravely. The disruption is healed, Malcolm is king, all are restored.

Shakespeare has not introduced a double guilt into this drama, hence the fate of only one series of characters is adequately motived. For the death of Duncan, of Banquo, and of Macduff's family there can be found no justification from their deeds. Critics have sought to make out a case against them, but without success. They have committed no ethical violation worthy of death; they are innocent beings overwhelmed in a catastrophe from without. And this is deeply consistent

with the form and movement of the play which exhibits fate, external determination. The Weird Sisters, the instruments of destiny, give Macbeth his impulse; he is driven upon these guiltless victims, who fall because they stand in the way of a mighty force. Such is the outward form, though it must not be thought that thus Macbeth is released from the responsibility of his act. The inner truth is, that these shapes are himself, his own desires, his own ambition.

The peculiarity of the present work is that the ethical elements, usually the most prominent, are withdrawn into the background to make room for another principle. To be sure those elements cannot be absent, and they have been pointed out in their proper place; the conflict in the State and the destruction of the Family are also seen in the career of Macbeth. But the main interest is psychological; the activities of the mind appear to leap at once into independent forms of the imagination. Although Macbeth knows abstractly of his own ambition, still his chief temptation seems to spring from the phantoms of the air; and though an external punishment is brought home to him, still his retribution as well as that of his wife is mainly found in the workings of fantasy. Judging by its language, its treatment, and its theme, we may call this play distinctively the Tragedy of the Imagination.

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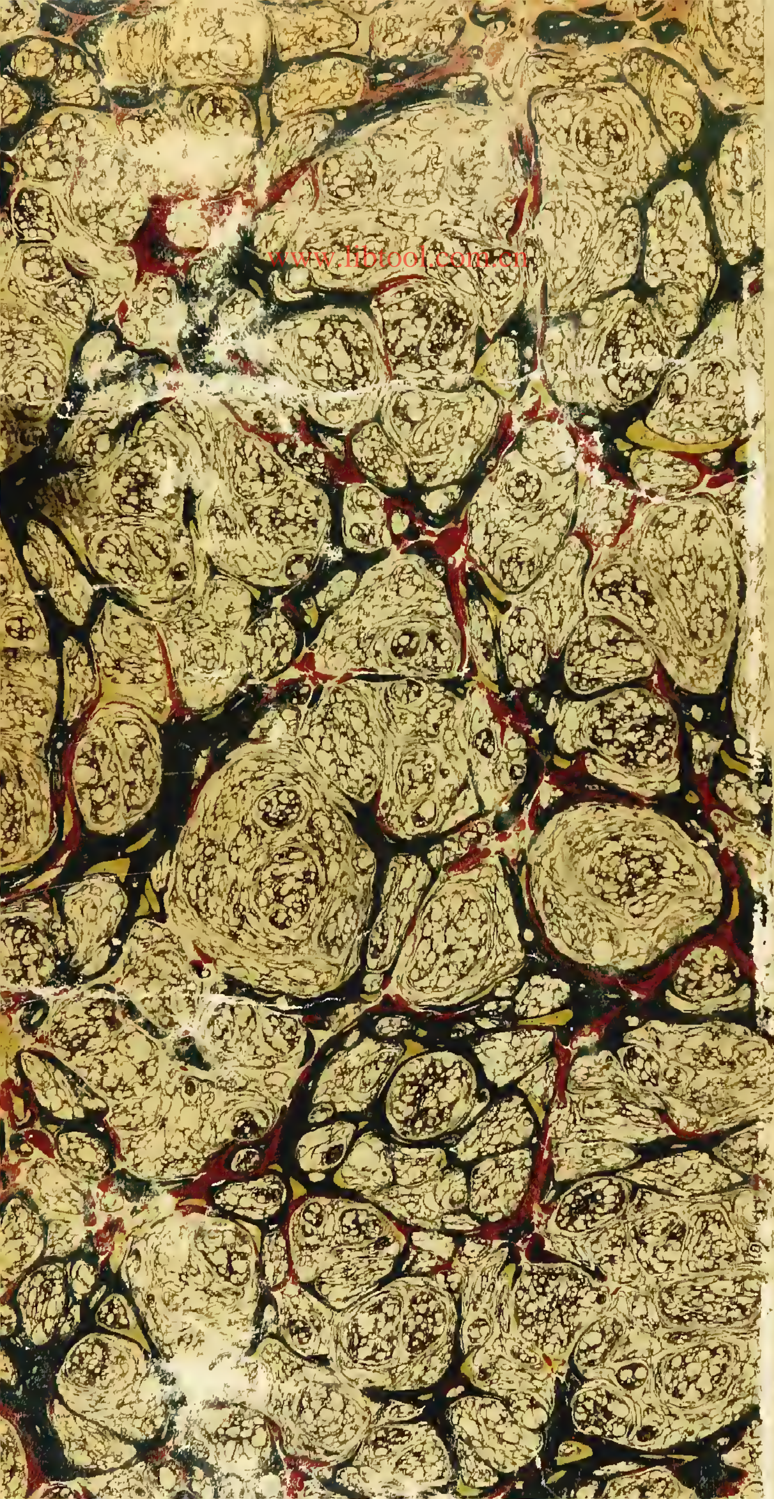
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