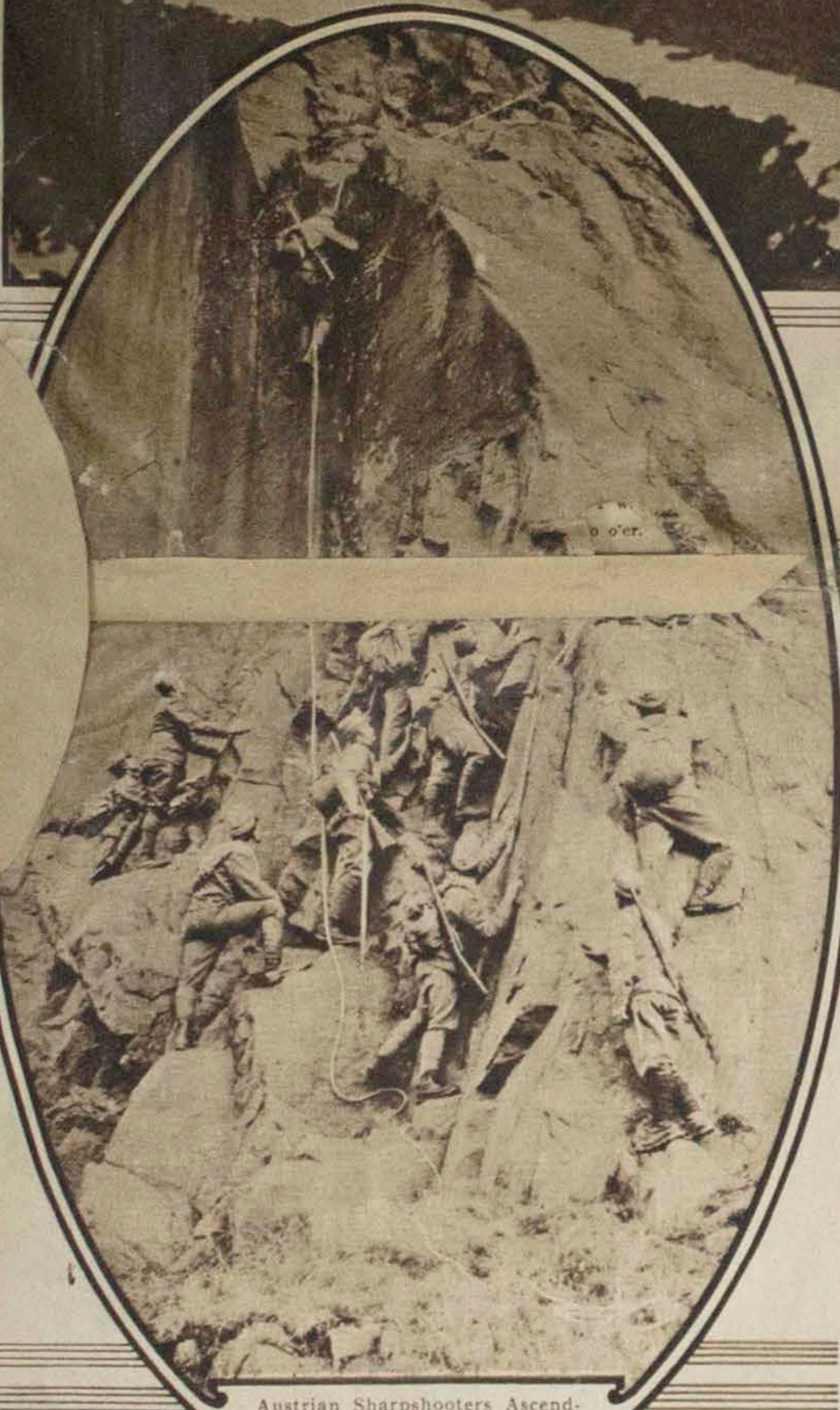




FRENCH TROOPS ON THE RETREAT TO SALONIKI FROM THE SERBIAN FRONTIER WHICH HAD GONE TO RELIEVE KING PETER'S ARMY. (Photo © U. P. S.)



Austrian Sharpshooters Ascending the Dolomites From Which to Attack the Italians. (Photo © U. P. S.)



MISS IRENE LANGHORNE GIBSON. Among the First of the Season's Debutantes to Become Engaged. She is the Daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Dana Gibson, and is to Wed George B. Post, Jr. (Photo © by Marceau.)

MRS. JULIAN M. GERAK. Wearing at Palm Beach a Costume Designed for Either Bathing



WALTER J. TRAVIS (RIGHT) AND REGINALD M. LEWIS, IN THE FLORIDA CHAMPIONSHIP CONTEST, PLAYING THE NINTH HOLE ON THE PALM BEACH LINKS. (Photo © by International Film Service.)



AMBASSADOR HENRY MORGENTHAU ENTERTAINING AT THE EMBASSY IN CONSTANTINOPLE THE CREW OF THE AMERICAN GUNBOAT SCORPION ASSIGNED TO THE TURKISH CAPITAL.
Ambassador Morgenthau on the Embassy Steps is Mrs. Marcellus Bowen, who has resided in Constantinople longer than any other member of the American colony there.
(Photo © by Underwood & Underwood.)

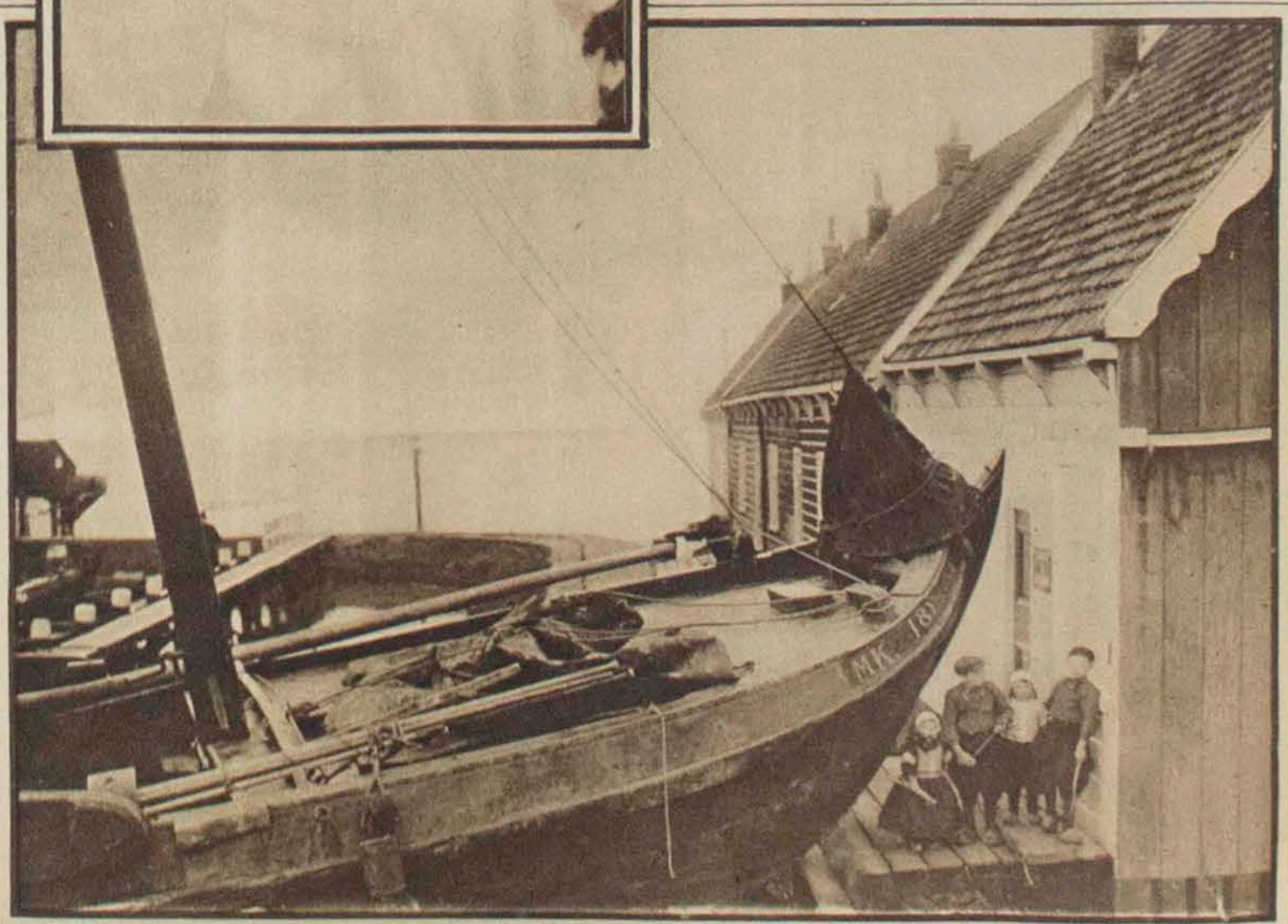


"MOONLIGHT"—BY RALPH ALBERT BLAKELOCK.
From the Catholina Lambert Collection sold last week. It is regarded by experts as one of the finest American paintings.
(Photo by Laurence N. Champoux.)



VIOLA ALLEN,
As Lady Macbeth in the Shakespearean Revival with James K. Hackett at the Criterion Theatre.

Douglas S. Moore, Composer of "Good-Night, Harvard," as Mabel Chiltern in Oscar Wilde's "An Ideal Husband," to be presented here this week by Yale Thespians.
(Photo by White Studio.)



LITTLE DUTCH CHILDREN COMING OUT TO SEE A BIG TRAWLER WHICH BROKE AWAY AND CAME AND LOOKED INTO THEIR WINDOW EARLY ONE MORNING DURING THE RECENT DISASTROUS FLOODS IN HOLLAND.
(Photo by Honisch Illustrations, Amsterdam.)

Shakespeare Tercentenary: 1616-1916

The New York Times

February 27, 1916

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SHAKESPEARE THE GREAT CREATOR OF TRAGEDY

"In His Isolated Achievement Tragedy Climbed to Its Supreme Summit and Vanished"

Written for THE NEW YORK TIMES
By RICHARD LE GALLIENNE.

ONLY two races so far have been able to create tragedies of universal currency. Other races have produced tragic dramatists who take classical rank among themselves—Cornelle and Racine for France, Calderon and Lope de Vega for Spain, and so on—but Greece and England alone have produced tragedies that are world classics, as the "Antigone" and "Hamlet" are world classics.

In the modern world, tragedy has only one universal representative, and it is singular to reflect that the only tragedies known today to the world at large were written by one man in a space of time covering about twelve years.

To the names of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides the modern world has added but one name—that of Shakespeare. In his isolated achievement tragedy climbed to its supreme summit and vanished. For Goethe's "Faust" alone since his day can any claim for universality of tragic eminence be advanced, though it may be the forerunner of a renaissance of the tragic spirit; for it is probable that his own plays will in the long run seem valuable rather for their practice of a new dramatic formula than for themselves.

Not, heed one says, that Shakespeare's achievement was, except in his last creative transmutation, an individual miracle. On the contrary, it had long been in course of preparation, up to a point, like all universal work, was the manifest outcome of

collaborating processes of evolution. Much had been done for him. The conditions were not always entirely favorable. Many conditions were unfavorable. The time was not ripe for his shaping hand.

Some of the conditions which he was to make his own had been already familiar to the public. The stage, still in its infancy, had made the dramatic formula of the religious and educational plays, which were popular as it is today.

National vitality was in its exuberant youth. Elizabeth I. was not "the spacious lady." The Renaissance was in its prime. The Armada had been defeated.

The world of newly discovered worlds filled England with the sound of ruffling sails. It was the mighty Spring of modern Europe.

The newspaper was as yet unborn. Books were still for the few. The stage was at once the intellectual playground and lyceum of the people, and the players literally "the abstract and brief chronicles of the time."

That Elizabethan drama, tragedy and comedy alike, was an indigenous growth, only subjected to classical influence when some of its most marked features were already sketched.

It is clearly demonstrated by Professor Thorndike. In dealing with the miracle plays and the moralities. The miracle plays, being dramatized versions of biblical narratives, he says, "had long familiarized men with tragic action, tragic conceptions in the drama, and tragic power in the treatment of situation"; while in their introduction of "comic relief"—horseplay and buffoonery for the benefit of "the groundlings"—they had not only laid the foundations of comedy, but accustomed audiences to that juxtaposition of clowning and high seriousness which would have been an unpardonable incongruity to the Greeks, though it was to become something like a tragic convention with Shakespeare.

Finally his supreme illustration in "King Lear." As for the moralities, "in substituting for a translation of the Bible narrative, the symbolization of life as a conflict between folly and wisdom, or the vices and virtues of the body of the soul, the moralities give importance to one of the most essential elements in tragedy, that of moral strife."

In addition to the popular dramatic activities of the miracle plays and the moralities, but brought aloft from them, were the wholesale performances of plays chiefly in Latin, at the universities, the Inns of Court, and the great public schools. The St. Paul's School may be regarded as something like a seminary of theatrical training for the early drama, the boys being famous for their skill in acting. It was through these learned "humanist" experiments that the influence of the Greek drama first made itself felt as a contributory element to the general dramatic evolution, in very secondary fashion, however, through the plays of Seneca, whose transpositions of Euripides were as near as the earlier Elizabethans approached to the Greek tradition.

Through the study of Seneca came about a secularization of subject in the native drama, and its early tendency, never quite lost, to sup full of horrors.

"Tragedy," said the early critic Putterham, "deals with delectable falls of unfortunate and afflicted Princes, for the purpose of reminding men of the mutability of fortune and of God's just punishment of a vicious life." Happiness and the lives of humble folk was felt to be the province of comedy. Ghosts, and other supernatural machinery, unhappy endings, mainly in the form of bloody deaths, spectacular reverses and rebirths, were also felt to be indispensable to tragedy; an attitude reinforced by the influence of Aristotle, coming through Italy with his formula of the purpose of tragedy being the purging of the soul through pity and terror—though the Elizabethan drama was to escape



Painted by W. Hogarth

Richard III in the Character of Richard the Third

Engraved by W. Hogarth & C. Grignion

From the Collection of Evert Janzen Wendell.

his prison of "the unities of sheer vitality." From Italian models, too, came the first uninspired use of blank verse, as the appropriate tragic medium, by Sackville in "Gorboduc."

The part played by "the chronicle" in the shaping of tragedy must be noted. As tragedy was expected to deal with the fates of Princes, the dramatist naturally turned to the histories of native Kings for themes that would combine national and narrative interest with disastrous vicissitude. Thus, Shakespeare's "King John" had an earlier and far from negligible forerunner in "The Troublesome Reign of King John," and his great English "histories" (as tragedies were often called) generally had in Marlowe's "Edward II," one predecessor not unworthy in some respects to be named beside them.

The debt of English tragedy to Marlowe is indeed very great, and though it is evident that he could never have done for it what Shakespeare was to do, he lifted it immensely higher in temper than any preceding dramatist, not merely by virtue of his splendid verbal power, but by his focusing of the action about the protagonist and his conception of tragic significance as being less that of a chronicle of horrors than that of a heroic struggle between a strong human will and a still stronger destiny. His work moved too much in "the purple" was too uniformly grandiose, to include that complexity of human character and experience which Shakespeare's greater humanity qualified him to introduce, but there is no question that in "Tamburlaine," and "Edward II," and "Dr. Faustus" he blazed the way for his greater successor, Thomas Kyd, in his "Spanish Tragedy" and his lost play of "Hamlet," had made valuable contributions also, as Greene and Peele, by their development of the "character" and idyllic features of drama, had done much in preparing those subsidiary elements, all of which Shakespeare was to include within the compass of a tragic formula which was bounded only by life itself. Much, very much, had been done for him by way of preparation. There was even a great actor, in Richard Burbage, in readiness to play the great tragic parts—he was to play Hamlet, Othello, Lear, and Richard III. Almost all the offerings were there on the altar. All else that was needed was—the fire from heaven.

The materials, the methods, (in part, at all events, and as yet in imperfect union), the actors, the audience, "the psychological moment"—all, as invariably happens with universally great figures, was ready, waiting the advent of—the man; the man who could alone protect them in a new triumphant synthesis.

Of all artists, the dramatist must needs be an eminently practical man. Everything we know of Shakespeare proves him to have been that, and one reason for his being the greatest of dramatists was that he understood and accepted the conditions of his work as he found them. The stage and the audience were the first things he had to think of.

Brought up with the "Vice" or "Devil" of the moralities and miracle-plays, they were not lightly, he knew, to be robbed of them. They should have clown, immortal and ever-various clown, and fools to the top of their bent. When a Scottish James I. is coming to the throne, what more natural than that the London mob should have a chronicle-play of an old Scottish King, plentifully daubed with gore, and—the King being a great witch-finder, the author of the "Daemonology"—hair-raising with the supernaturalism of "the weird sisters." They should have "Macbeth."

When they want an old favorite revised, he is not the man, supreme genius though he be, to balk their simple tastes with committing the old sensations. He will, on the contrary, make his own use of every one of them, so inclusively that Professor Thorndike thus sums up his obligations to the old "Hamlet," probably Kyd's, and unfortunately lost: "The plot, situations, types of character, and leading motives of the old 'Hamlet' were already familiar to the stage in several plays. Revenge, directed by a ghost, hesitation on the part of the hero, insanity real or feigned, intrigue, copious bloodshed, a secondary revenge plot, meditative philosophizing in the form of soliloquies, were all essential elements of the Kydian 'Hamlet,' certain of several other revenge plays. The refusal of an opportunity to kill the villain, the songs and wild talk of a mad woman, the murder of an innocent intruder, scenes in a churchyard, the appearance of the ghost to soldiers on the watch, the play within the play—all these, as well as many more minor conventionalities, such as the swearing on the sword-hilt, or the voice of the ghost in the cellar, had appeared in other plays than the old 'Hamlet.' And Hamlet himself, wild and ranting at times, crafty and dissimulating at others, cynical and ironical, given to melancholy and meditation, hesitating in bewilderment, harassed by the unavoidable 'whips and scorns of time'—so far as we can analyze the tragic hero, his characteristics had been already used by contemporary dramatists."

The only difference there was to be between the old and the new "Hamlet" was

simply—Shakespeare. He was to endue these familiar materials with an energy and significance of life such as had never been breathed into them before, to express them in language of an imaginative suggestiveness such as no poet else has ever had at his command, and to infold them in an atmosphere of once of humanity and eternity which is the very atmosphere of life itself.

This peculiar Shakespeare atmosphere is one of the characteristics of Shakespearean tragedy which make it different from any other. In inferior dramatists we feel at once that we are not in the natural world of man and woman. The air we breathe is artificially ominous. It has, so to speak, been consciously de-naturalized. We feel that we are in for tragedy and nothing else. The "damnable faces" begin at once, and continue all through. Attempts at contrast seem merely grotesque and out of place. Even in Greek tragedy the air seems rarefied, as by the presence of the gods. They, and Fate behind them, are the real actors. The mortals seem to lose their humanity in their presence, and huddle, shrunken and overawed, in a corner of the stage. The invisible, instead of permeating the action as in Shakespeare, seems to crowd out, or to depolarize, the visible. We are more constantly aware of the presence of the inevitable issue than of the drama that is to bring it about.

In Shakespeare there is none of this artificial darkening of the atmosphere, or strange chilling of it, as by the vicinity of unseen loobers. The tragedy falls suddenly, or gloms gradually, in the midst of the warm shining of life. The sun is broadest, the birds are singing, men are going laughingly as mortals do about their daily business, when either, with a swift crash like a bolt, the tragic thing happens, or we grow slowly aware of its coming, by little sinister hints, the falling of silence on the human murmur, low far-off rumblings, the piling up of threatening clouds, and the growing darkness of the world.

When Shakespeare has to enact how "the mightiest Julius fell," he does not begin with the speaking and gibbering of ghosts in the Roman streets, but with the humors of a demagogic orator, who, while indirectly serving to hint at that popular discontent on which the conspirators are to rely, diverts us by a cynical sidelight on the materials of which mobs and their leaders are made. Whatever he may pretend, he is simply marking his followers about in the interests of his business, to wear out their shoe-leather. So with the famous porter in "Macbeth." Even while the horror of Duncan's murder still hangs

undivided in the air, hanging as it were between Macbeth's guilty lips and Macduff's innocent ears, the porter, roused from sleep, must complain, as natural with men of his station, and vent his clownish wit, as happens every day in the as yet unseen front of catastrophe.

It was Shakespeare's previous apprenticeship to comedy, comedy which sometimes narrowly escapes from some tragic menace, that qualified him for this various peopling of the tragic scene, and in his earliest tragic masterpiece, "Romeo and Juliet," the power and truth of his method is at once triumphantly evident. How bathed is the whole play in the radiance of life, how flooded from end to end in its golden energy. It is almost as much Mercutio's play as that of the ill-starred lovers. Ill-starred—and yet not ill-starred. Tragic death indeed is the theme, but there is such a wonder of loving before it strikes, that somehow we think less of the cutting off of the flower than of the glory of the flower; just as Mercutio's laughter seems to go on even after he has fallen by Tybalt's sword. For, after all, this is a tragedy of youth, and pitiless as is the tragedy of fair things taken in their young bloom, it is the tragic moral behind the progression of Shakespeare's tragedies that there is a still grimmer and drearier tragedy implicit in living than that.

All the door of life, by the gate of breath. There are worse things waiting for men than death.

Life, Shakespeare's tragedies would seem to say—great as was his joy in it—is a progress in sadness. The sadness of "Romeo and Juliet" is the young sadness, the tragedy of the spring blossom—the branch that might have grown full straight; but life has still to teach the truth that, after all, it is a tragedy of "those whom the gods love." The tragedy of the bitterness of the fruit, of those whom the gods do not love, the agony for which there is no alleviation but the end of them, the despair for which there is no other save oblivion. It was to be this tragedy of the wrecked and disillusioned soul that was to employ Shakespeare's most mature and terrible powers: the sorrow alike without meaning or end, the tragedy which we can only meet with the abdication of hope and a steady expectation of the worst—"the roadline is all"—or with the crazed preoccupation of the heart-broken Lear, plunged in a universal abandonment of incredulous, heaven-denying, world-shattering sorrow.

I say not that, yet elements, with unaltered

I never gave you kingdom, call'd you villain—

the tragedy of the ambitious will thwarted by destiny, or wrecked by its own weakness; the terror of a soul fighting a losing battle with itself.

The chronological order of Shakespeare's greatest tragedies, as now generally surmised, is as follows: "Julius Caesar," 1601; "Hamlet," 1602; "Othello," 1604; "Macbeth," 1606; "Lear," 1606; and "Antony and Cleopatra," 1607. There is a school of interpreters that would read Shakespeare's own history, the progress of a private grief, between the lines and in the sequence of these variously modified tragedies. Such considerations need not detain us here, nor have I space to analyze or contrast these several masterpieces. That has been done to superabundance by a multitude of critics, and frequently overdone with faithful ingenuity and super-subtlety. Nor can I attempt to weigh the greatness of one masterpiece against the other. Such judgments are largely conditioned by individual preference. There would seem to be something like a consensus in favor of the greatness of "Lear." Personally, I do not feel that it is so much great as a play as great in its one supreme, poignant, elemental, dramatic lyric of Lear's frenzy on the beach, that appalling duel, so to say, between his sorrow and the elements. The fabric that supports it is too childish, and the characterization of the sisters too arbitrary to carry conviction for the play as a whole. But I am lapsing into comparison involuntarily, and I must confine myself to conclusion to more general considerations.

After that all-enfolding atmosphere of humanity and eternity of which I have spoken, it seems to me that the greatness of Shakespeare's tragic art was achieved through his supreme possession and expenditure of two gifts: the gift of characterization, and the gift of imagination, atmospheric, expressive, and subtle. Apart from quotable power and beauty, his words have a quality of dramatic embodiment and suggestiveness for which there is no parallel in literature. First, he knew men and the souls of men as no other man has ever known them, and then he was able to present them as agonies of destiny—a destiny not external, as with the Greeks, but implicit in their own character—by virtue of words creative at once of them and of the whole world of conditions in which the mystery of life had passed them, all his other gifts would have availed for nothing without his crowning gift of a supernatural literary expression.

THE MINES FROM WHICH HE DUG HIS PLOTS



Rehan as Katharine in "Taming of the Shrew"

Viola Allen as Viola, "I am all the daughters of my father's house, And all the brothers, too, and yet I know not." Act II Scene IV.

He Turned Old Stories to Plays of Beauty

Written for THE NEW YORK TIMES BY WILLIAM ALLAN NELSON, PH. D., Professor of English in Harvard University.

IN the legal and ethical relations of literature in our day the question of invention plays a highly important part. Most of the cases concerning literary property that come into court, most of the scandals concerning literary honesty that are aired in the newspapers, have to do with the originality or borrowing of plots. Whatever the law as to such disputes may be, it is certain that the usual public discussion of them implies much ignorance of literary history and a complete misunderstanding of the nature of artistic originality. For, to confine ourselves to the drama, no great play can fairly be said to owe its position to sheer novelty of plot; and most great playwrights, taking their plots where they could find them, have depended for their originality upon their imaginative grasp of character and situation, the beauty or brilliance of their dialogue, or the manipulation of the story to produce a convincing and well-proportioned action. Not what story the writer tells is the question, but how he tells it, how he handles it to make it yield the maximum of beauty and significance.

The most obvious instance in proof of this is to be found in the practice of the writers of Greek tragedy. Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides based their plays on the most familiar of myths and legends, and seemed not to care though the same theme had been treated by another only a year or two before. Seneca used, for the most part, the same class of subjects; and, in modern times, Goethe was content to take for the basis of his masterpiece a story which had been well known throughout Western Europe for centuries, had been first seized by Marlowe, and had been staged even in the puppet shows of the populace. To this general rule Shakespeare and his fellow playwrights were no exception. There is no evidence that they went out of their way to discover or contrive new stories, though Ben Jonson in this, as in many other matters, is somewhat apart. On the other hand, the very familiarity of a subject seems to have been at times regarded as an asset, as if they could count on the curiosity of their public to see what a new play would make, say, of Julius Caesar, or the story of Troy. As we shall see, the plots of the great majority of Shakespeare's dramas were drawn from the most popular literature of the day, so that we could from their themes and situations compile a fairly satisfactory account of the stock literature of entertainment among the Elizabethans.

This literature stood, naturally, in close relation to the main currents of thought and feeling of the day. The heightening of national consciousness under Elizabeth was accompanied by the compiling of national annals on a large scale; the revived interest in antiquity was fed by translations from the Greek and Latin classics; and the general quickening of the imagination was fostered by the importation of vast quantities of romantic fiction. The dramatic as well as the non-dramatic literature exhibits this relation, and it would be hard to say how far the theatre reflected popular interests directly, how far indirectly, through the nature of the narrative material which thus lay ready to hand. In any case, the study of the sources of the Shakespearean drama is of historical as well as purely literary interest, on account of the light it throws upon the culture and curiosity of the public, literate and illiterate, for whom it was produced. The literary and artistic value of the study of sources lies principally in the opportunity it affords us of seeing the dramatist at work. We can lay on the desk side by side the source and the play, and compare the raw material with the finished product, the bricks with the house. Every substitution, every rejection, every addition calls for an explanation; and much valuable elucidation is to be obtained by observing the causes and effects of the changes. These causes and effects range from merely mechanical and economic considerations affecting the conditions of the contemporary stage, through the exigencies of popular actors and the humors of the audience, to the loftiest demands of tragedy. Their determination is no simple matter, since it calls for a minute knowledge of Elizabethan stage conditions as well as much critical acumen; but no attempt at interpretation which ignores them

can hope to be thorough, and no single line of research affords so much aid to the critic of the art of these dramas as that which has brought to light the materials on which they are based. The methods employed by Shakespeare in turning narrative into drama vary both from group to group and from play to play. Among the plays dealing with English history four are based mainly on earlier attempts at dramatization, while most of the remaining six come straight from the chronicles. Of the four re-vamped plays, the three parts of "Henry VI." are probably, even in the revised form, the work of several hands, and they are of slight importance from our present point of view. The fourth, "King John," is more interesting.

We still possess the double ten-act play on which Shakespeare wrought, and we can trace point by point how he eliminated and compressed, quickening the action, elaborating the characterization, especially of Constance and Faulconbridge, and changing the theme of the play from an anti-papal tirade to a plea for a united nation. He added to the action scarcely at all, but he rewrote almost every line. The chief source for the other histories was the great compilation of Raphael Holinshed, supplemented by the chronicles of Hall, Fabian, Grafton, and Stowe, and, in the case of "Henry VIII.," by Foxe's "Book of Martyrs." Events in these books of annals are usually related baldly in chronological order, and what characterization there is done in a few scanty strokes. In each case Shakespeare formed his own conception of the main character, selected subordinate figures, which he grouped around for contrast or background, or for atmosphere; selected similarly incidents fit to reveal character, as in "Richard II.," or to construct an approximation to a real tragic action, as in "Richard III." The idea for the comedy in "Henry IV.," and "Henry V.," he caught from an old play; but the wit of the dialogue and the creative power displayed in Falstaff and his set are entirely his own.

For the plays dealing with classical antiquity the chief source was Sir Thomas North's translation, through the French, of "Plutarch's Lives." Here he was dealing with material of a very different quality from the English chronicles. Plutarch was profoundly interested in character; his book was a series of portraits of the great men of Greece and Rome, who had fascinated him; and the incidents, great and small, which he selected for his biographies were chosen mainly for their value in delineating the personal traits of his subjects. Thus Shakespeare found a much larger part of his task already performed; and though he had his own idea of Caesar, of Antony, or of Coriolanus, one can easily perceive Plutarch's conception of these characters shining through. Moreover, North wrote a style really superior to that of the contributors to Holinshed, and Shakespeare, with characteristic economy, availed himself of a hundred well-turned phrases, and at times did little more than add the graces of meter to the stately prose of North. But the central conception of each play is Shakespeare's in the main; and in developing it he not only selected and rejected, but rearranged and condensed with great freedom.

One play dealing with a classical theme, "Troilus and Cressida," stands apart as to its source, as it does in many other respects. The plot of the lovers is drawn from Chaucer's poem of the same name; the scenes in the camp come chiefly from a version of the Troy story by Caxton. But versions of this tale abounded, and a complete list of all the accounts from which Shakespeare may have received hints will probably never be made. Yet there is no play in connection with which a knowledge of the previous history of the plot and characters is more important, for the clue to what appears to many modern readers the degrading and degraded treatment of the most famous story of antiquity is to be found in a realization of the attitude of the Middle Ages, and, to a large extent, of the Elizabethans, toward Helen and Cressida, Hector and Ulysses. To as great an extent as in the historical plays, Shakespeare was manipulating material not entirely plastic; and whatever of human or dramatic values he added, he knew he had to reckon with the prepossessions and prejudices of his audience. And it is in his sources that these are to be apprehended.

The terms of his problem were obviously very different in the field of comedy. Here, though many of the stories were accessible to the ordinary reader, no such prestige attached to either characters or incidents as in the case of the histories, English or Roman. Further, the very nature of comedy gave him a freer hand in

subduing his material to the purposes of entertainment or light satire. There is no evidence compelling us to believe that Shakespeare knew Italian, yet it is to Italian novelle that the majority of his comic plots are to be traced. The love story in "Cymbeline" is found in the "Decameron," though the precise form in which Shakespeare read it is unknown, and Boccaccio, through Painter's English version, supplied him also with the plot of "All's Well That Ends Well." With the tale of Imogen Shakespeare combined a legend of the British King, Cymbeline, which he found in Holinshed—an interesting example of the freedom he used with history when he got clear of the hindrances of the popular memory.

The story of the caskets in "The Merchant of Venice" is also found in Boccaccio, and that of the pound of flesh in another Italian, Ser Giovanni Fiorentino. But both elements are very widespread, and may probably have been combined in an earlier English play. Similar uncertainties as to precise source exist as to the obligations of "Much Ado About Nothing," "Twelfth Night," and others. As a rule, we know of either an English or a French version, or both, through which the story might have reached Shakespeare; but the freedom of treatment and the multiplicity of versions combine to make the exact determining of sources much more difficult in this class of plays. What he did not take from these novelle is, however, clear enough. He did not take the sparkling dialogue, he did not take the atmosphere, he did not take the long series of delightful girls whose charm and distinction do most to raise these plays to the summit of romantic comedy. It was for little more than incident and situation that he was indebted, and it is again to his characterization that the incidents and situations owe whatever of convincingness they possess.

Three plays are commonly set aside as possessing plots probably contrived by

The Trial Scene in the "Merchant of Venice" Act IV. Scene 1. Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desirest.

Shakespeare himself. "Love's Labour's Lost," probably his first attempt in this form; "A Midsummer Night's Dream," and "The Tempest," very possibly his last completed play. Hints for episodes and names in the first have been found in contemporary French history, but the scanty plot is not of such a nature as to overthrow any generalizations one may form as to Shakespeare's strength lying elsewhere than in the invention of new fables. Fragmentary sources for the highly composite fabric of the "Dream" are to be found in Chaucer and Ovid; the love chain, which comes nearer to being a central plot than any other element in the play, he could have found along with the magic juice in the Spanish romance of "Diana," by Montemayor, from which a few years before he had drawn the plot of "The Two Gentlemen of Verona"; and the fairies and artisans are clearly not mainly of literary origin at all. For "The Tempest" many parallels are to be found, no one of which can be positively stated to have

been that used by Shakespeare, but the plot is clearly made up of very familiar literary material, and at most could only be said to have been put together by Shakespeare rather than invented. Finally, the reference of "The Comedy of Errors" to the "Menechmi" and the "Amphitruo" of Plautus disposes of the question of the originality of Shakespeare's comic plots. There remain the tragedies. Of these "Titus Andronicus" is a reworking of older plays, somewhat after the fashion of "King John"; the materials of "Romeo and Juliet" and "Othello," like those of the comedies, are drawn from Italian novelle, the former through an English narrative poem, the latter from Cinthio through the French. But it is difficult to exaggerate the transformation accomplished by the dramatist here. All the characters taken over from Cinthio are recast, and several are added. Such instances as the separate voyages of Othello and Desdemona, the drunkenness of Cassio, the connection of Emilia and Bianca with the handkerchief, are invented by him. The catastrophe is entirely made over. Instead of the swift and terrible close with which we are familiar, the Italian tale drags on through the torture and banishment of Othello, who finally is assassinated by Desdemona's relatives, while Iago dies from torture inflicted under another accusation. All that is in the higher sense tragic is Shakespeare's, and nowhere is his power of transmuting dross to gold more superbly exhibited. "Macbeth" again goes back to Holinshed, but shows a freer handling of history than the chronicle plays. "King Lear," like "Cymbeline," belongs to the legendary part of Holinshed; but here Shakespeare had, in addition, an old play, and some other versions of the story. Again all the power of the catastrophe is due to him alone.

In the old play the French for Cordelia are victorious, and Lear restored to his kingdom. But Shakespeare had made Lear undergo too much to any such restoration possible. He had vented the madness of the King, as he had the banishment of Kent and the character of the Fool; he had filled the play with pity and terror. From Sidney's "Arcadia" he had drawn the underplot of Gloucester and his sons, and thus doubled the emphasis on the tragedy of filial ingratitude. After all this there was only one ending. When we hear Lear's terrible cry over the body of Cordelia.

Never, never, never, never! There can be only assent to Kent's decision: Vex not his ghost; O, let him pass; He hates him that would upon the rack of this tough world stretch him out longer.

The story of the sources of "Hamlet" has been often told. We have, indeed, various earlier forms of the tale, but the play which immediately preceded Shakespeare's is gone, except as it may glimmer through the corruptions of the first Quarto or be dimly shadowed in the degraded prose version acted by English players in Germany. No more impressive proof of the value of a knowledge of Shakespeare's sources can be given than the negative evidence derived from the loss of the work of his predecessor on this theme. It is more than probable that some of the most puzzling elements in this greatest and most enigmatic of his works are due to survivals in our text of the older play; but it is all but impossible that we can ever recover this clue to the mystery—a clue which, if found, might prove triumphantly and forever the value of the search for sources.



William Faversham and Maude Adams in "Romeo and Juliet" ~ ~ ~ "I must be gone and live or stay and die" ~ ~ ~

Campbell Found Beatrice Disagreeable

From Thomas Campbell's "Remarks on the Life and Writings of Shakespeare."

AT the same time, if Shakespeare were looking over my shoulder, I could not disguise some objections to this comedy, which involuntarily strike me as debarring it from ranking among our poet's most enchanting dramas. I am, on the whole, I trust, a liberal on the score of dramatic probability. Our fancy and its faith are no niggards in believing whatsoever they may be delighted withal; but, if I may use a vulgar saying, "A willing horse should not be ridden too hard." Our fanciful faith is misused when it is spurred and impelled to believe that Don John without one particle of love for Hero, but out of mere personal spite to Claudio, should contrive the infernal treachery which made the latter assuredly jealous. Moreover, during one half of the play, we have a disagreeable female character in that of Beatrice; Her portrait, I may be told, is deeply drawn and minutely finished. It is; and so is that of Benedick, who is entirely her counterpart, except that he is less disagreeable. But the best drawn portraits by the finest masters may be admirable in execution, though unpleasant to contemplate, and Beatrice's portrait is in this category. She is a Tartar, by Shakespeare's own showing, and, if a natural woman, is not a pleasing representative of the sex. In befriending Hero she almost reconciles us to her, but not entirely; for a good heart that shows itself only on extraordinary occasions is not sufficient atonement for a bad temper, which Beatrice evidently shows.

The marriage of the marriage-hating Benedick and the furiously anti-nuptial Beatrice is brought about by a trick. Their friends contrive to deceive them into a belief that they love each other, and partly by vanity, partly by a mutual affection which had been disguised under the bitterness of their wit, they have their hands joined, and the consolations of religion are administered, by the priest who marries them, to the unhappy sufferers.

Mrs. Jameson, in her characters of Shakespeare's women, concludes with hoping that Beatrice will live happy with Benedick, but I have no such hope, and my final anticipation in reading the play is the certainty that Beatrice will provoke her Benedick to give her much and just conjugal castigation. She is an odious woman. Her own cousin says of her: D disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes, Misprising what they look on—and her wit Values itself so highly, that to her All matter else seems weak. She cannot love. Nor take no shape nor project of affection. She is so self-endear'd. I once knew such a pair. The lady was a perfect Beatrice; she rallied hypocritically at wedlock before her marriage, and with bitter sincerity after it. She and her Benedick now live apart, but with entire reciprocity of sentiments, each devoutly wishing that the other may soon pass into a better world. Beatrice is not to be compared, but contrasted, with Rosalind, who is equally witty, but the sparkling sayings of Rosalind are like gems upon her head at court, and like dewdrops on her bright hair in the woodland forest.

A CRIME TO TEACH SHAKESPEARE AS WE DO NOW



felt the inspiration of the new dramatic renaissance. The boys cut young firs of the mountain and made a stage in a corner of the school yard, screening out unsightly objects beyond and creating mask-wings and entrances. The girls made costumes. Their natural love of dancing was utilized to the full. Every body contributed something, even the grade children.

And on a June day all the population of the little town gathered to watch the play, seeing and hearing something far different from anything the movies provided. The sixteenth century touched hands with the twentieth across the years in the mountain village, and the thrill of eternal loveliness awoke. What a splendid thing for a school to do! That is the real way to teach Shakespeare.

Alas! in the cultured New England village where I live, when the high school pupils want to raise some money they no longer even get up a farce or give a performance of "The District School." They merely sell tickets for a movie show at divide profits with the manager.

While the superior educational advantages of doing a thing yourself instead of having it done for you can never be overestimated, at the same time we should never lose sight of the stimulus of professional example and the standard success example sets. In the study of Shakespeare there is as yet attention of the aid to schools. Some of the schools, some for between the two schools, and doubtless will our theatre be in service.

There is probably an article who does not most precious memory of my own case. I know Dickens's dramatic Museum Stock Company with my development and appreciation than anything else told me of a boys' years ago, outside Adams sent him "Pan," and he took years later, talking it was that trip to Pan" which every one remembered and many of them had still her ardent champion of us who saw Julia we were schoolboys memory, like a precious lines and poetry.

©1907 by Cassie & Co. The Merchant of Venice - The Casket Scene - Act II, Scene IX. (This and the other pictures on this page are from the collection of Evert Jansen Wendell.)

Who Gets a Mark of 100 and Thereafter Hates Shakespeare Has Failed--Rather, His Teacher Has

THE NEW YORK TIMES
BY RICHARD EATON,
"American Stage of Today,"
New Theatre," &c.

HE died 300 years ago the slightest consciousness had written textbooks for the Academy and the New School. He passed from amid primroses—for in those days in the country I am sure the Spring blooms about his dwelling—in the knowledge and belief that he had written plays for the practical theatre. That they commanded a wide interest he was not unaware; probably he was not unaware that they deserved it! He had already seen them put into print. But he had no "message," as Shaw or Huxley has, and these quarts were, so to speak, souvenirs of a pleasant evening in the playhouse, or hints of a pleasant evening for those who were not present. Most assuredly they were not textbooks.

And it would take a bold man to deny the possibility of a connection between the modern decline of Shakespeare on the stage and the fact that his plays were never more generally in use as textbooks! More American children grow up today with an apposed knowledge of Shakespeare than ever before, and fewer ever see him acted—which simply means that fewer have any real knowledge of him.

It is an object of the tercentenary celebration not only to honor Shakespeare, but to focus attention upon all phases of his works, and I personally believe that no more useful result could possibly follow than a reevaluation of Shakespearean study methods in our secondary schools, so complete in places as to be revolutionary. At present it is safe to say that the average high school makes Shakespeare a bore, and while it may teach enough routine of plot and smattering of philology to jam a child past the college entrance board, it fails utterly to inspire dramatic appreciation, to expand the imagination, to create affection. And the reason invariably is that Shakespeare's works are studied as textbooks, not as living dramatic performances spoken by living players. Conditions are not so bad as they were a few years ago, to be sure. The dramatic renaissance in our colleges is carrying down better equipped teachers into the secondary schools. But there is still a vast deal to be done, and the present is an excellent opportunity for calling attention to it.

Most readers, I fancy, have gone through much the same experience that I went through in my school days—and they were spent in a great and famous school, too! We boys sat on benches with our red-bound Rolfe's editions before us, and in a sleepy, singsong some boy droned out a passage, and then the instructor asked him questions to see if he'd read the notes, and then another boy recited and was questioned on the notes, and then the instructor, if he were feeling particularly energetic that day, gave us a bit of a lecture on the beauty of the poetry or on the character of Rosalind, and we openly yawned, and waited for the bell, and when it sounded rushed with a glass of much repetition, we learned that the quality of mercy is not strained, and we could repeat the plot of "Macbeth" in order to get into Yale. After which, we prayed to be delivered from the land! From a considerable observation of secondary schools since that time I rather think that this is still the way Shakespeare is "taught" in too many places.

should be thrown overboard in a preliminary teaching of Shakespeare to children of high school age is the notes. In their place should be substituted, by diagram, by pictures, and most of all, if it is a possible thing, by practical illustration, a clear image in the pupils' minds of the Elizabethan stage, of the actual conditions under which "Hamlet" or "Macbeth" or "The Merchant of Venice" or "Macbeth" or "The Merchant of Venice" first saw the light. This preliminary seems indispensable to me, for until the play to be studied is sensed in its practical relation to the theatre, until it is felt primarily as a living, acted story, it is ridiculous to expect children, or even untrained adults, to grasp its secondary significances. Moreover, through the dramatic sense lies the easiest and most natural approach to the child's interest; the method is pedagogically sound.

If I were teaching Shakespeare in a high school—and, I may add, I have taught him to many boys and girls of high school age, lest it be thought I am speaking purely from theory—I should first of all (after my talk on the Elizabethan theatre and my display of pictures and diagrams) have the desk removed from the platform, or shoved far back for a "balcony." I should then group some of the class at the sides as well as in front, and with as much merriment and informality as possible lead the

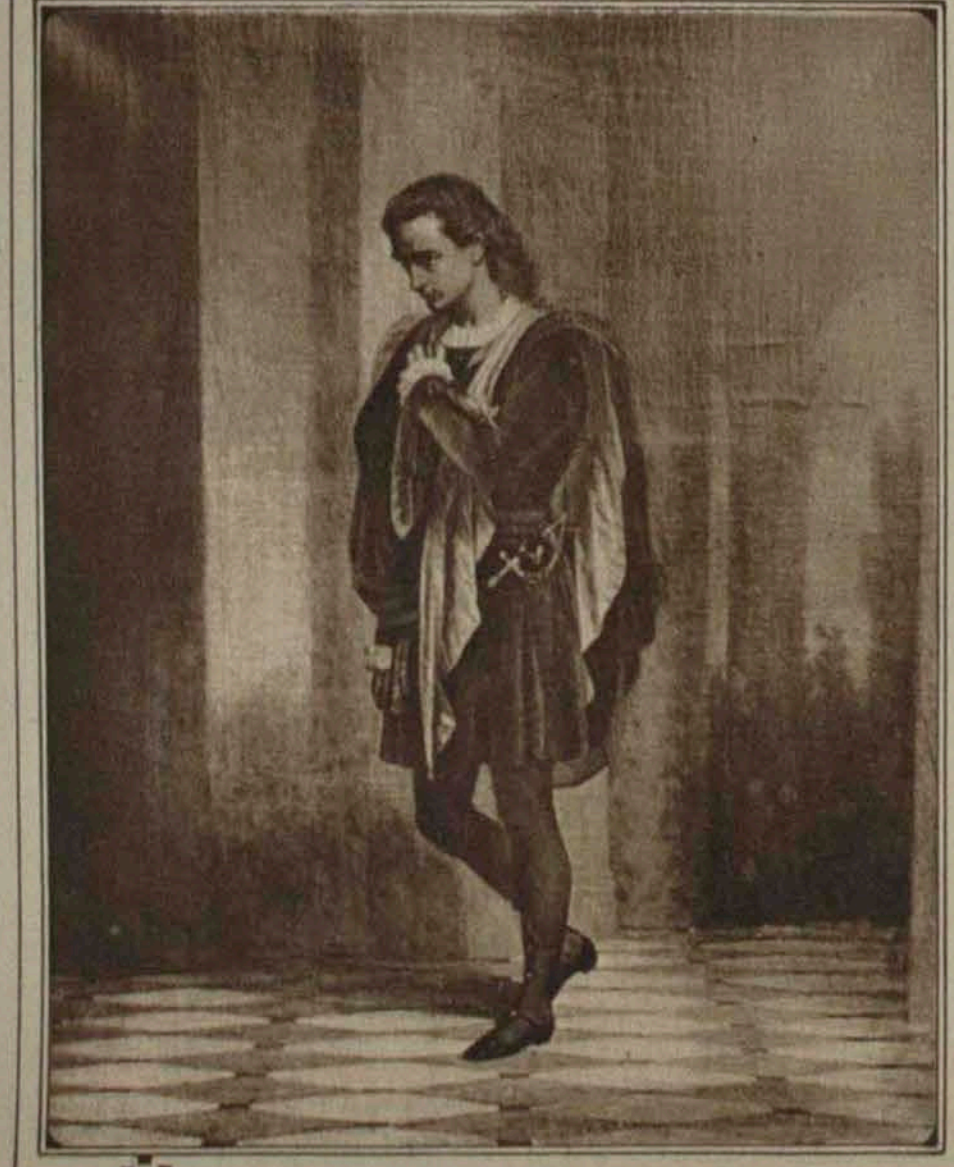
class to play the teacher's platform was Shakespeare's stage and they the London audience. Then, picking boys and girls for the various parts, I should have them come up on this platform to read their rôles, act by act. No doubt the players would be changed frequently if the class were a large one. Everybody must have a chance. No effort would be made, of course, to "coach" any pupil into acting, further than to keep them in the relative positions called for by the text, though a very definite effort would be made—and herein lies one of the finest opportunities of the Shakespearean teacher, and a neglected one—to coach each pupil to read his lines not only intelligently but rhythmically and with full voice and clear enunciation. Those who by nature threw themselves into acting would, of course, not be discouraged, but those who lacked the capacity or the self-assurance would not be made to feel that they were less useful or failing in their work. The main object to be achieved would be the creation in them all of a sense for the dramatic quality of the story, a realization of the dramatic drive and interest.

It should be possible thus to cover at least one act, possibly two, at each recitation, and I should go through the entire play in this manner before a single word was said about the notes at the back of

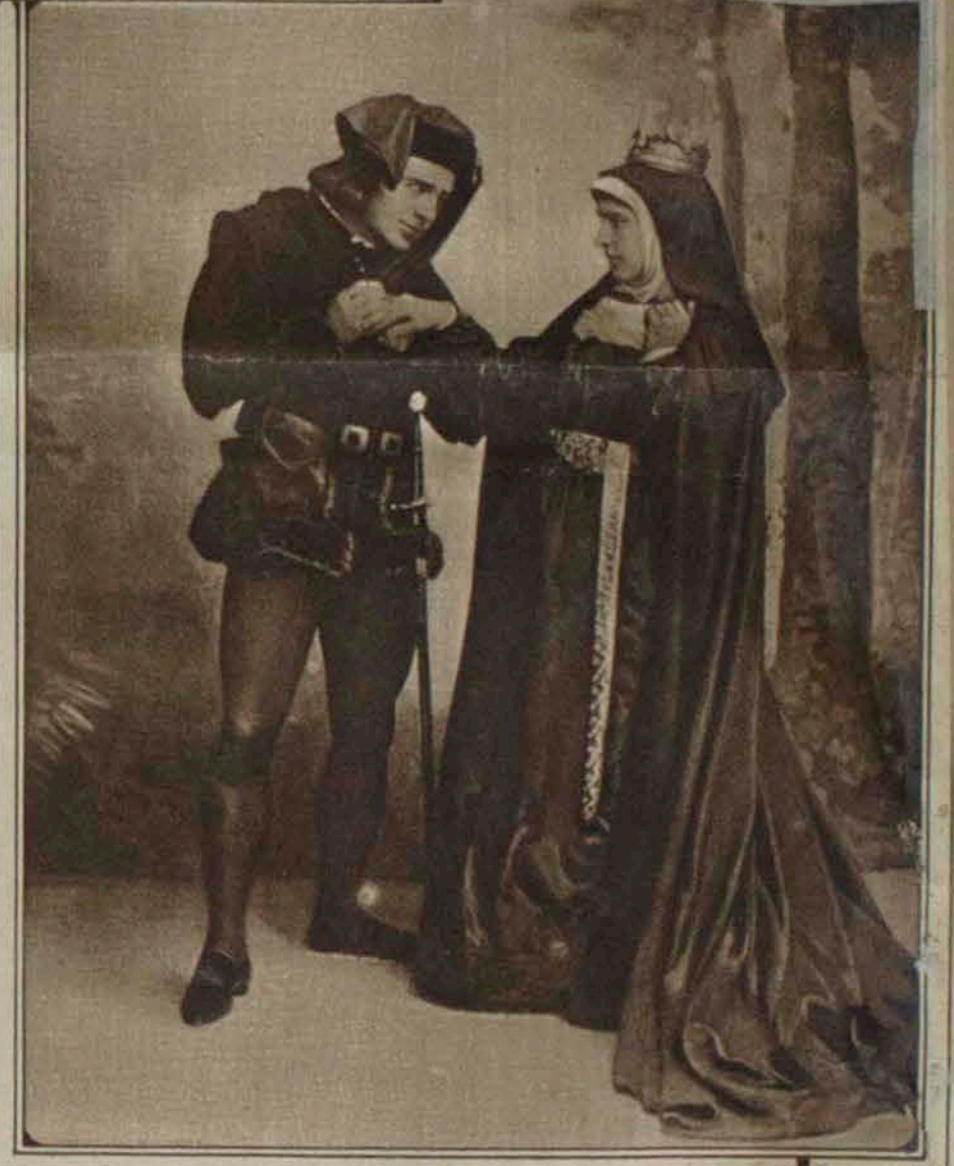
the book. I should make that particular play a living, vital tale to every child, as vital as the movies around the corner, before I turned to the notes at all. I should abolish most of the formality and discipline of the conventional classroom, and have a grand good time in the process.

Then, and only then, should I turn back to the text and go through it as classroom work, demanding a knowledge of the notes, elucidating the simpler and most necessary problems of philology, and discussing with (not at) the pupils the characters of Shylock or Hamlet or Rosalind. And even during this work, at every possible opportunity the teacher should make reference to this or that famous performance in the past, show pictures of Booth and Sothern and Marlowe, keep in every possible way the stage side of the play before the pupils' minds. It is only by bringing out the dramatic element that the growing mind can grasp Shakespeare in his true significance and interest.

It is only by a practical demonstration of the platform stage that the school child can acquire the capacity for historic projection, the ability, that is, to view with comprehension in one century the works of a previous century, created for totally different conditions. And it is only by keeping Shakespeare a living, spoken thing, not a dry, printed text, that a love can be fostered for verbal beauty on the stage of the present, for the chiming of the spoken word, the strut and sweep of poetic passion.



Edwin Booth as Hamlet (From here to here unpublished paintings by Pope in the Wendell Collection)



©1890 by Cassie & Co. Richard Mansfield as Gloucester and Beatrice Cameron as Lady Anne - Richard III Act I, Scene II.

Elizabethan as the resources permit, or else out of doors. If the former method is chosen, both pupils and public should be impressed with the fact that the school is trying to do something historical, to show Shakespeare in an approximation of his original dress. It is perfectly proper for a school production to have a touch of the educational about it, especially as in that way the terrible obstacle of scenery is overcome! The platform stage is easily made, requires no curtain, has the charm of novelty, and centres the attention on the spoken word. It can be appropriately dressed at the rear, also, with cloth hangings, rugs, tapestries, to relieve its bareness and give it color. The New Theatre's production of "A Winter's Tale" proved that.

But how is this co-operation between school and stage to come about? The reader asks. Especially how is it to come about in the small towns where there are no theatres?

Very often, of course, for the small towns, the thing is impossible, making the more need for such amateur productions as that in West Virginia, described above. But in the larger towns, and in the smaller places adjacent to them, a little co-operation between theatre managers and school authorities could in a surprisingly large number of cases bring about an opportunity for the high school pupils to see Shakespeare professionally performed. Not only are there several companies touring the country who are equipped to give Shakespeare out of doors, but anything like a concerted demand for Winter performances would keep these companies as permanent organizations during the year. Moreover, even today, though the average stock company has sunk to a rather low level of accomplishment, the right encouragement from the school and municipal authorities would find most of the Directors ready to respond with occasional matinees.

Certainly, nothing could be better for the theatre than the creation of a sentiment in the community that it is not only a luxury, a means of idle amusement, but also a factor in the educational life of the town, an adjunct of the school children come to regard the playhouse in their town as a fascinating part of their school study, and you have made vastly easier for the next generation the task which faces us—the task of freeing the American theatre from the bondage of Broadway, of revitalizing it and localizing it in each separate community. One of the ways to accomplish this end, and one of the surest ways, is to make the theatre contributory to our prized national institution, the public schools. The advantage will be mutual.

An entire school can contribute. I have in mind at this moment a performance of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" given by a little West Virginia high school at the instigation of the English teacher, a graduate of Radcliffe College, where she had

VICTOR HUGO ON HAMLET, OTHELLO, AND LEAR KING LEAR.



Edwin Forrest as King Lear
Act IV, Scene VI. "Ay, every inch
a King" - FROM THE WEDGELL
COLLECTION

The Great French- man's View of Three Great Tragedies

Victor Hugo's "William Shakespeare,"
(A. C. McClurg & Co., 1891.)

HAMLET, that awful being complete in incompleteness; all, in order to be nothing! He is Prince and Lemagogue, sagacious and extravagant, profound and frivolous, man and neoter. He has little faith in the sceptre, rails at the throne, has a student for his comrade, converses with any one passing by, argues with the first comer, understands the people, despises the mob, hates violence, distrusts success, questions obscurity, and is on speaking terms with mystery. He communicates to others maladies that he has not himself; his feigned madness inoculates his mistress with real madness. He is familiar with spectres and with actors. He jests, with the axe of Orestes in his hand. He talks literature, recites verses, composes a theatrical criticism, plays with the bones in a churchyard, dumsfounds his mother, avenges his father, and closes the dread drama of life and death with a gigantic point of interrogation. He terrifies, and then disconcerts. Never has anything more overwhelming been dreamed. It is the parricide saying: "What do I know?"

"Parricide? Let us pause upon that word. Is Hamlet a parricide? Yes, and no. He confines himself to threatening his mother, but the threat is so fierce that the mother shudders. "Thy word is a dagger! . . . What wilt thou do? Thou wilt not murder me? Help! help! ho!"—and when she dies, Hamlet, without grieving for her, strikes Claudius with the tragic cry: "Follow my mother!" Hamlet is that sinister thing, the possible parricide.

Instead of the North, which he has in his brain, let him have, like Orestes, the South in his veins, and he will kill his mother. This drama is stern. In its trusts doubts, sincerity lies. Nothing can be vast, nothing subtler. In it man is the world, and the world is zero. Hamlet, even in full life, is not sure of his existence. In this tragedy—everything floats, hesitates, shuffles, staggers, becomes discomposed, scatters, and is dispersed. Thought is a cloud, will is a vapor, resolution a twilight; the action blows every moment from a different direction; the mariner's card governs man. A work which disturbs and makes dizzy; in which the bottom of everything is laid bare; where the pendulum of thought oscillates only from the murdered King to buried Yorick; and where that which is most real is kingliness impersonated in a ghost, and mirth represented by a death's head.

Hamlet is the supreme tragedy of the human dream. One of the probable causes of the feigned madness of Hamlet has not been, up to the present time, indicated by critics. It has been said, "Hamlet acts the madman to hide his thought, like Brutus." In fact, it is easy for apparent imbecility to hatch a great project; the supposed idiot can take aim deliberately. But the case of Brutus is not that of Hamlet. Hamlet acts the madman for his safety. Brutus screens his project, Hamlet his person. Given the manners of those tragic courts, from the moment that, through the revelation of the ghost, Hamlet is acquainted with the crime of Claudius, he is in danger. The superior historian within the poet is manifested, and one feels the deep insight of Shakespeare into the darkness of the ancient royalty. In the Middle Ages and in the Eastern Empire, and even at earlier periods, we see him who found out a murder or a poisoning committed by a King!



Louisa Brunton (Afterward Countess of Craven) as Cordelia.
From a print of 1785

Ocean gives to Prometheus: "To seem mad is the secret of the sage." When the Chamberlain Hugolin found the iron spit which Edric of Mercia had impaled Edmund II., "he hastened to put on madness," says the Saxon Chronicle of 1010, and saved himself in that way. Heraclides of Nisibis, having discovered by chance that Rhinometer was a fratricide, had himself declared insane by the doctors, and succeeded in getting himself shut up for life in a cloister. He thus lived peacefully, growing old, and waiting for death with a vacant stare. Hamlet runs the same risk, and has recourse to the same means. He gets himself declared insane like Heraclides and puts on madness like Hugolin. This does not prevent the uneasy Claudius from twice making an effort to get rid of him—in the middle of the drama by the axe or the dagger, and toward the end by poison.

The same indication is again found in "King Lear," the Earl of Gloucester's son takes refuge also in apparent lunacy. Herein is a key to open and understand Shakespeare's thought. To the eyes of the philosophy of Art, the feigned madness of Edgar throws light upon the feigned madness of Hamlet.

The Hamlet of Belleforest is a magician; the Hamlet of Shakespeare is a philosopher. We just now spoke of the singular reality which characterizes poetical creations. There is no more striking example than this type, Hamlet. Hamlet is not in the least an abstraction. He has been at the university; he has the Danish savageness softened by the Italian politeness; he is short, plump, somewhat lymphatic; he fences well, but is soon out of breath. He does not care to drink too soon during the fencing bout with Laertes, probably for fear of sweating. After having thus supplied his personage with real life, the poet can launch him into the full ideal; there is ballast enough.

Other works of the human mind equal "Hamlet"; none surpasses it. There is in "Hamlet" all the majesty of the mournful. A drama issuing from an open sepulchre—this is colossal. "Hamlet" is to our mind Shakespeare's capital work. No figure among those that poets have created is more poignant and more disquieting. Doubt counseled by a ghost—such is Hamlet. Hamlet has seen his dead father and has spoken to him. Is he convinced? No; he shakes his head. What shall he do? He does not know. His hands clench, then fall by his side. Within him are conjectures, systems, monstrous apparitions, bloody recollections, veneration for the ghost, hate, tenderness, anxiety to act and not to act, his father, his mother, conflicting duties—a profound storm. His mind is occupied with ghastly hesitation. Shakespeare, wonderful plastic poet, makes the grandiose pallor of this soul almost visible. Like the great spectre of Albrecht Dürer, Hamlet might be named "Melancholia." Above his head, too, there floats the disemboweled bat; at his feet are science, the sphere, the compass, the hour-glass, love, and behind him, at the horizon, a great and terrible sun, which seems to make the sky but darker. Nevertheless, at least one-half of Hamlet is anger, transport, outrage, hurricane, sarcasm to Ophelia, malediction on his mother, insult to himself. He talks with the gravediggers, almost laughs, then clutches Laertes by the hair in the very grave of Ophelia, and tramples furiously upon that coffin. Sword thrusts at Polonius, sword thrusts at Laertes sword thrusts at Claudius. At times his inaction flashes open, and from the rent thunderbolts flash out.

And thus, apart from men, Hamlet still has within him an undefined something which represents them all. Agnosco fratrem. If at certain hours we felt our own pulse, we should be conscious of his fever. His strange reality is our own reality, after all. He is the mournful man that we all are in certain situations. Unhealthy as he is, Hamlet expresses a permanent condition of man. He represents the discomfort of the soul in a life unadjusted to it. He represents the shoe that pinches and stops our walking; this shoe is the body. Shakespeare delivers him from it, and rightly. Hamlet—Prince if you like, but King never—is incapable of governing a people, so wholly apart from all does he exist. On the other hand, he does better than to reign; he is. Take from him his family, his country, his ghost, the whole adventure of Elisnore, and even in the form of an inactive type he remains strangely terrible. This results from the amount of humanity and the amount of mystery in



King Lear ~ Act III, scene II.
"Good nuncle, in, and ask thy daughters' blessing"

him. Hamlet is formidable—which does not prevent his being ironical. He has two profiles of destiny. Let us retract a word said above. The capital work of Shakespeare is not "Hamlet"; the capital work of Shakespeare is all Shakespeare. This is, moreover, true of all minds of this order. They are mass, block, majesty, bible; and their unity is what renders them impressive. Have you never gazed upon a beclouded headland running out beyond eye-shot into the deep sea? Each of its hills contributes to its make-up. No one of its undulations is lost upon it. Its bold outline is sharply marked upon the sky, and just far out amid the waves; and there is not a useless rock. Thanks to this cape, you can go amidst the boundless waters, walk among the winds, see closely the eagles soar and the monsters swim, let your humanity wander in the eternal uproar, penetrate the impenetrable. A genius is a headland into the infinite. Now, what is Othello? He is the night. An immense fatal figure. Night is amorous of day. Darkness loves the dawn.



The African adores the white man. Othello has for his light and for his frenzy Desdemona. And then, how easy to him is jealousy! He is great, he is dignified, he is majestic, he soars above all heads; he has as an escort bravery, battle, the braying of trumpets, the banners of war. Twenty victories, he is studded with stars, this Othello; but he is black. And thus how soon, when jealous, the hero becomes the monster, the black becomes the negro! How speedily has night beckoned to death! By the side of Othello, who is night, there is Iago, who is evil—evil, the other form of darkness. Night is but the night of the world; evil is the night of the soul. How deeply black are perfidy and falsehood! It is all one, whether what courses through the veins be ink or treason. Whoever has fostered against imposture and perjury knows it; one must blindly grope one's way with knavery. Pour hypocrisy upon the break of day, and you put out the sun; and this, thanks to false religions, is what



Othello ~ Emilia ~ She lov'd thee, cruel Moor. Act V, scene II.

Lear is the occasion for Cordelia. Maternity of the daughter toward the father. Profound subject! A maternity venerable among all other maternities, so admirably translated by the legend of that Roman girl who in the depth of a prison nurses her old father. The young breast near the white beard; there is no holier sight! Such a filial breast is Cordelia! Once this figure dreamed of and found, Shakespeare created his drama. Where should he put this consoling vision? In an obscure age. Shakespeare has taken the year of the world 3105, the time when Josiah was King of Judah, Axanippus King of France, and Leir King of England. The whole earth was at that time mysterious. Picture to yourself that epoch.

The temple of Jerusalem is still quite new; the gardens of Semiramis, constructed 900 years before, are beginning to crumble; the first gold coin appears in Aegina; the first balance is made by Phydron, tyrant of Argos; the eclipse of the sun is calculated by the Chinese; 312 years have passed since Orestes, accused by the Eumenides before the Areopagus, was acquitted; Hesiod is just dead; Homer, if he still lives, is 100 years old; Lycurgus, thoughtful traveler, re-enters Sparta; and one may perceive in the depth of the sombre cloud of the Orient the chariot of fire which carries Elijah away; it is at that period that Leir—Leir—lives and reigns over the dark islands.

Jonas, Holofernes, Draco, Solon, Themis, Nebuchadnezzar, Annamenes, who is to invent the signs of the zodiac; Cyrus, Zoroaster, Tarquin, Pythagoras, Aeschylus, are not yet born; Coriolanus, Xerxes, Cincinnatus, Pericles, Socrates, Brennus, Aristotle, Timoleon, Demosthenes, Alexander, Epicurus, Hannibal, are ghosts awaiting their hour to enter among men; Judas Maccabaeus, Virgatus, Popilius, Jugurtha, Mithridates, Marius and Sylla, Caesar and Pompey, Cleopatra and Antony, are far away in the future; and at the moment when Leir is King of Britain and of Ireland there must pass away 846 years before Virgil says "Penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos," and 950 years before Seneca says "Ultima Thule." The Picts and the Celts (the Scotch and the English) are tattooed. A redskin of the present day gives a vague idea of an Englishman then.

It is this twilight that Shakespeare has chosen—a long, dreamy night in which the inventor is free to put anything he likes; this King Lear, and then a King of France, a Duke of Burgundy, a Duke of Cornwall, a Duke of Albany, an Earl of Kent, and an Earl of Gloucester. What matters your history to him who has humanity? Besides, he has with him the legend, which is also a kind of science, and as true as history, perhaps, although from another point of view. Shakespeare agrees with Walter Mapes, Archbishop of Oxford—that is something; he admits from Brutus to Calpurnia, the Celtic and the English) are tattooed. A redskin of the present day gives a vague idea of an Englishman then.

He takes tyranny, of which at a later period he will make weakness. Lear; he takes treason—Edmund; he takes devotion—Kent; he takes ingratitude, which begins with a career, and he gives to this monster two heads—Goneril, whom the legend calls Gonerille, and Regan, whom the legend calls Ragan; he takes paternity; he takes royalty; he takes fealty; he takes ambition; he takes madness, which he divides, and he places face to face three madmen—the King's buffoon, madman by trade; Edgar of Gloucester, mad for prudence sake; the King, mad through misery. It is at the summit of this tragic pile that he sets the bending form of Cordelia.

There are some formidable cathedral towers,—as, for instance, the Giraldus of Seville,—which seem made all of spires, with their spirals, their staircases, their sculptures, their carvings, their aerial cells, their sound their bells, their walling, and their spire, and all their order to support at their summit spreading its golden wings. Such a drama "King Lear."

The father is the pretext for the daughter. That admirable human creature, serves as a support to this ineffably divine creation, Cordelia. All that chaos, crimes, vices, manias, and miseries find its justification in this shining vision of virtue. Shakespeare, bearing Cordelia in his brain, in creating this tragedy was like a god who, having an Aurora to establish, should make a world to put her in.

And what a figure is that father! What a tyrant! It is man stooping. He does nothing but shift his burdens for others that are heavier. The more the old man becomes enfeebled, the more his load augments. He lives under an overburden. He bears at first power, then ingratitude, then isolation, then despair, then hunger and thirst, then madness, then all Nature. Clouds overcast him, forests heap their shadow upon him, the hurricane swoops down upon the nape of his neck, the tempest makes his mantle heavy as lead, the rain weighs upon his shoulders, he walks bent and haggard as if he had the two knees of Night upon his back. Dismayed and yet colossal, he flings to the winds and to the hail this epic cry: "Why do ye hate me, Tempesta? Why do ye persecute me? Ye are not my daughters!"

And then all is over; the light is extinguished; reason loses courage, and leaves him; Lear is in his dotage. This old man, being childish, requires a mother. His daughter appears, his only daughter, Cordelia. For the two others, Regan and Goneril, are no longer his daughters—save so far as to entitle them to the name of parricides. Cordelia approaches—"Sir, do you know me?" "You are a spirit, I know," replies the old man, with the sublime clairvoyance of frenzy. From this moment the filial nursing begins. Cordelia applies herself to nursing this old, despairing soul, dying of inaction in hatred. Cordelia nourishes Lear with love, and his courage revives; she nourishes him with respect, and the smile returns; she nourishes him with hope, and confidence is restored; she nourishes him with wisdom, and reason awakens. Lear, convalescent, rises again, and step by step returns again to life: the child becomes again an old man, the old man becomes a man again. And behold him happy, this wretched one!

It is upon this expansion of happiness that the catastrophe is hurled down. Alas! There are traitors, there are perjurers, there are murderers. Cordelia dies. Nothing more heart-rending than this. The old man is stunned; he no longer understands anything; and, embracing her corpse, he expires. He dies upon his daughter's breast. He is saved from the supreme despair of remaining behind her among the living, a poor shadow, to feel the place in his heart empty, and to seek for his soul, carried away by that sweet being who is departed. O God! those whom Thou lovest Thou takest away. To live after the flight of an angel; to be the father orphaned of his child; to be the eye that no longer has light; to be the deadened heart that knows no more joy; from time to time to stretch the hands into obscurity and try to recapture a being who was there, (where, then, can she be?); to feel himself forgotten in that departure; to have lost all reason for being here below; to be henceforth a man who goes to and fro before a sepulchre, not received, not admitted—this is indeed a gloomy destiny. Thou hast done well, poet, to kill this old man. For rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters: I'll smite the air, I'll dash the ocean: I'll never give you kingdom, said your children. I never saw no subscription. Act III, Scene II.

ANOTHER FRENCH VIEW: MACBETH AND HAMLET



Sir Herbert Tree as Macbeth

Each "The Story of a Moral Poisoning," Says Taine

From Taine's "History of English Literature."

IF the life of Coriolanus is the history of a mood, that of Macbeth is the history of a monomania. The witches' prophecy was buried in his heart instantaneously, as a fixed idea. Gradually this idea corrupts the rest and transforms the man. He is haunted; he forgets the thames who surround him and "who stay upon his leisure"; he already sees in the future an indistinct chain of images or scenes.

... yield to that suggestion a doth until my hair ed heart knock at my murder yet is but fan- gle state of man that surmise, and nothing is not.

the language of hallucination. hallucination becomes complete wife has resolved on the assassination of the King. He sees in the air a stained dagger. "In form as pale as this which now I draw." His whole brain is filled with grand and terrible phantoms, which the mind of a common murderer would never have conceived; the poetry of which indicates a generous heart, enslaved to an idea of fate, and capable of remorse:

... Now over the one half world Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse The curtain'd sleep; witchcraft celebrates Pale Hecate's offerings, and wither'd murder Alum'd by his sennet, the wolf, Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace, With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design Moves like a ghost. . . . (A bell rings.) I go, and it is done; the bell invites me. Hear it not, Duncan; for it is a knell That summons thee to heaven or to hell.

He has done the deed and returns tottering, haggard, like a drunken man. He is horrified at his bloody hands, "these hangman's hands." Nothing now can cleanse them. The whole ocean might sweep over them, but they would keep the hue of murder. "What hands are here? Ha, they pluck out mine eyes!" He is disturbed by a word which the sleeping chamberlains uttered:

One cried, "God bless us!" and "Amen," the other: As they had seen me with these hangman's hands Listering their fear, I could not say "Amen." When they did say, "God bless us!" . . . But wherefore could not I pronounce "Amen?" I had most need of blessing, and "Amen" stuck in my throat.

Then comes a strange dream; a frightful vision of punishment descends upon him. Above the beating of his heart, the tingling of the blood which boils in his brain, he had heard them cry:

"Sleep no more! Macbeth does murder sleep," the innocent sleep; Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleeve of care, The death of each day's life, sore labor's bath, Pain of hurt minds, great nature's second course, Chief nourisher in life's feast.

And the voice, like an angel's trumpet, calls him by all his titles:

Glance hath murder'd sleep, and therefore Shall sleep no more; Macbeth shall sleep no more!

This mad idea, incessantly repeated, beats in his brain with monotonous and hard-pressing strokes, like the tongue of a bell. Insanity begins; all the force of his mind is occupied by keeping before him, in spite of himself, the image of the man whom he has murdered in his sleep:

To know my deed, 'twere best not know myself. (Knock.) Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I would thou couldst!

Thenceforth, in the rare intervals in which the fever of his mind is assuaged, he is like a man worn out by a long malady. It is the sad prostration of maniacs worn out by their fits of rage:

Had I but died an hour before this chance, I had lived a blessed time; for, from this instant There's nothing serious in mortality; All is but toys; renown and grace is dead; The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees Is left this vault to brag of.

When rest has restored some force to the human machine the fixed idea shakes him again and drives him onward, like a pitiless horseman, who has left his panting horse only for a moment, to leap again into the saddle and spur him over precipices. The more he has done the more he must do:

I am in blood Stepp'd in so far that, should I wade no more, Returning were as tedious as go o'er.

He kills, in order to suppress the track of his murders. The fatal circlet of gold attracts him like a magic jewel, and he beats down, from a sort of blind instinct, the heads which he sees between the crown and him.

But let the frame of things disjoint, both the worlds suffer, Ere we will eat our meal in fear and sleep in the affliction of these terrible dreams That shake us nightly; better with the dead, Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace Than on the torture of the mind to lie In restless ecstasy. Duncan is in his grave; After life's fitful fever he sleeps well; Treason has done his worst; nor steel, nor poison, Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing, Can touch him further.

Macbeth has Banquo murdered, and in the midst of a great feast he is informed of the success of his plan. He smiles and proposes Banquo's health. Suddenly, conscience smitten, he sees the ghost of the murdered man; for this phantom, which Shakespeare summons, is not a mere stage-trick; we feel that here the supernatural is unnecessary and that Macbeth would create it, even if hell would not send it.



John Philip Kemble as Hamlet at the Grave of Yorick

With stiffened muscles, dilated eyes, his mouth half open with deadly terror, he sees it shake its bloody head and cries with that hoarse voice which is only to be heard in maniacs' cells:

Prithce, see there! Behold! look! lo! how busy 'tis! Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak too. If churl-houses and our graves must send those that we bury, back our monuments Shall be the maws of kites. . . . Blood hath been shed ere now, I 'th' olden time; Ay, and since, too, murders have been per- form'd; Too terrible for the ear; the times have been That, when the brains were out, the man would die, and there an end; but now they rise again.

Expire before the flowers in their caps. Dying or ere they sicken. His soul is "full of scorpions." He has "supp'd full with horrors," and the faint odor of blood has disgusted him with all else. He goes stumbling over the corpses which he has heaped up, with the mechanical and desperate smile of maniac-murderer. Thenceforth death, life, all is one to him; the habit of murder has placed him beyond humanity. They tell him that his wife is dead:



E. H. Sothern and Julia Marlowe as "Hamlet"

With twenty mortal murders on their crowns, And push us from our stools; . . . Avaunt! and quit my sight! let the earth hide thee! Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold; Thou hast no speculation in those eyes Which thou dost glare with!

His body transmits the image of an apoplectic, his teeth clenched, foaming at the mouth, he sinks on the ground, his limbs beat against the floor, shaken with convulsive quiverings, while a dull sob swells his panting breast and dies in his swollen throat. What joy can remain for a man benighted by such visions? The wide dark country, which he surveys from his towering castle, is but a field of death, haunted by deadly apparitions; Scotland, which he is depopulating, a cemetery: Where . . . the dead man's knell Is there scarce ask'd for who; and good men's lives



Mrs. Siddons as Lady Macbeth entering with the letter Act I. Scene V

Imagination, like that of Shakespeare. He has lived hitherto, occupied in noble studies, apt in bodily and mental exercises, with a taste for art, loved by the noblest father, enamored of the purest and most charming girl, confiding, generous, not yet having perceived, from the height of the throne to which he was born, sought but the beauty, happiness, grandeur of nature and humanity.

On the soul, which character and training make more sensitive than others, misfortune suddenly falls, extreme, overwhelming, of the very kind to destroy all faith and every spring of action; with one look he has seen all the vileness of humanity, and this insight is given him in his mother. His mind is yet intact; but judge from the violence of his style, the crudity of his exact details, the terrible tension of the whole nervous machine, whether he has not already one foot on the verge of madness:

O that this too too solid flesh would melt, Thaw and resolve itself into a dew! Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! O God!

How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable Seem to me all the uses of this world! Fie on't! O fie! 'tis an unweeded garden, That grows to seed; things rank and gross In nature

And all our yesterdays have lighted fools The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle! Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player That struts and frets his hour upon the stage, And then is heard no more: it is a tale Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, Signifying nothing.

Possess it merely. That it should come to this: But two months dead—nay, not so much, not two: No excellent a king, . . . so loyally to my mother. That he might not bemoan the winds of heaven, Visit her face too roughly, Heaven and earth! Let me not think on't—Frailty, thy name is woman!— A little month; or ere those shoes were old With which she follow'd my poor father's body. . . . Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears Had left the flushing in her galled eyes, She married. O, most wicked speed, to post With such dexterity to incestuous sheets! It is not, nor it cannot come to good; but break my heart; for I must hold my tongue!

Here already are contortions of thought, arrests of hallucination, the symptoms of what is to come after. In the middle of a conversation the image of his father rises before his mind. He thinks he sees him. How, then, will it be when the "canonized bones have burst their cements," "the sepulchre hath opened his ponderous and marble jaws," and when the ghost comes in the night upon a high "platform" of land to hint to him of the tortures of his prison fire, and to tell him of the fratricide who has driven him thither? Hamlet grows faint, but grief strengthens him, and he has a cause for living:

Hold, hold, my heart; And you my sinews, grow not instant old, Nor bear me stiffly up; Remember thee! Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat In this distracted globe—Remember thee! Yes, from the table of my memory I'll wipe away all trivial fond records, All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past. . . . My commandments all alone shall live. . . . Villains, villains, smiling, damned villains! My tables—meet it is I set it down, That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain; At least I'm sure it may be so in Denmark: So, uncle, there you are. (Writing.)

This convulsive outburst, this fevered writing hand, this frenzy of intention, prelude the approach of a monomania. When his friends come up he treats them with the speeches of a child or an idiot. He is no longer master of his words; hollow phrases whirl in his brain and fall from his mouth as in a dream. They call him; he answers by imitating the cry of a sportsman whistling to his falcon: "Hillo, ho, ho, boy! Come, bird, come." While he is in the act of swearing them to secrecy the ghost below repeats "Swear." Hamlet cries with a nervous excitement and a fitful anxiety:

Ah ha, boy! say'st thou so? Art thou there, (trumpets) Come on—you hear this fellow in the cellarage— Consent to swear. . . . Ghost (beneath)—Swear. Hamlet—He is unique? Then we'll shift our ground. Come hither, gentlemen. . . . Swear by Ghost (beneath)—Swear. Hamlet—Well said, old mole! Canst work i' the earth so fast? A worthy pioneer!

Understand that as he says this his teeth chatter, "pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other" intense anguish ends with a burst of laughter, which is nothing else than a spasm. Thenceforth Hamlet speaks as though he had a continuous nervous attack. His madness is feigned, I admit; but his mind, as a door whose hinges are twisted, swings and bangs in every wind with a mad precipitation and with a discordant noise. He has no need to search for the strange ideas, apparent incoherences, exaggerations, the delirium of sarcasms which he accumulates. He finds them within him; he does himself no violence; he simply gives himself up to them.

When he has the piece played which is to unmask his uncle, he raises himself, lounges on the floor, would lay his head in Ophelia's lap; he addresses the actors, and comments on the piece to the spectators; his nerves are strung, his excited



Irving as Hamlet (From a drawing by V. W. Bromley)

thought is like a waving and crackling flame, and cannot find fuel enough in the multitude of objects surrounding it, upon all of which it seizes. When the King rises unmasked and troubled, Hamlet rises, and says: "Would not this, Sir, and a forest of feathers—if the rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me—with two Provincial roses on my rased shoes, get me a fellowship in a cry of players, Sir?" And he laughs terribly, for he is resolved on murder. It is clear that this state is a disease, and that the man will not survive it. In a soul so ardent of thought and so mighty of feeling, what is left but disgust and despair? We tinge all nature with the color of our thoughts; we shape the world according to our own ideas; when our soul is sick we see nothing but sickness in the universe:

This goddy frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory, this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors. What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculty! In form and moving how express and admirable! In action how like an angel! In apprehension how like a god! The beauty of the world! The paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me, nor woman neither.

Henceforth his thought tarnishes whatever it touches. He rails bitterly before Ophelia against marriage and love. Beauty? Innocence! Beauty is but a means of prostituting innocence:

Get thee to a nunnery, why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? . . . What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves, all; believe none of us.

When he has killed Polonius by accident he hardly repents it; it is one fool less. He jeers luxuriously:

King—Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius? Hamlet—At supper. King—At supper? (Where?) Hamlet—Not where he eats, but where he is eaten; a certain convolution of his limbs is seen at him.

And he repeats in five or six fashions these gravedigger jests. His thoughts already inhabit a churchyard; to this hopeless philosophy your true man is a corpse. Duties, honors, passions, pleasures, profecies, science—all this is but a borrowed mask, which death removes, that we may see ourselves what we are, an evil-smelling and grinning skull. It is this sight he goes to see by Ophelia's grave. He counts the skulls which the gravedigger turns out; what salutations, intriques, pretensions, arrogance! And here, now, is a clown knocking it about with his spade and playing "at loggats with 'em." Caesar and Alexander have turned to clay and make the earth fat; the masters of the world have served to "patch a wall." "Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favor she must come; make her laugh at that." When one has come to this there is nothing left but to die.

This heated imagination, which explains Hamlet's nervous disease and his moral poisoning, explains also his conduct. If he hesitates to kill his uncle it is not from horror of blood or from our modern scruples. He belongs to the sixteenth century. On board ship he wrote the order to behead Rusecraunts and Guldenstern, and to do so without giving them "shriving time." He killed Polonius, he caused Ophelia's death, and has no great remorse for it. If for once he spared his uncle, it was because he found him praying and was afraid of sending him to heaven. He thought he was killing him when he killed Polonius.

What his imagination robs him of is the coolness and strength to go quietly and with premeditation to plunge a sword into a breast. He can only do the thing on a sudden suggestion; he must have a moment of enthusiasm; he must think the King is behind the arras, or else, seeing that he himself is poisoned, he must find his victim under his foil's point. He is not master of his acts; occasion dictates them; he cannot play a murder, but must improvise it. A too lively imagination exhausts energy by the accumulation of images and by the fury of intention which absorbs it.

You recognize in him a poet's soul, made not to act, but to dream, which is lost in contemplating the phantoms of its creation, which sees the imaginary world too clearly to play a part in the real world; an artist whom evil chance has made a Prince, whom worse chance has made an avenger of crime, and who, destined by nature for genius, is condemned by fortune to madness and unhappiness. Hamlet is Shakespeare, and, at the close of this gallery of portraits which have all some features of his own, Shakespeare has painted himself in the most striking of all.

If Racine or Corneille had framed a psychology, they would have said, with Descartes: Man is an incorporeal soul, served by organs, endowed with reason and will, living in palaces or porticos, made for conversation and society, whose harmonious and ideal action is developed by discourse and repulse, in a world constructed by logic beyond the realm of time and space. If Shakespeare had framed a psychology, he would have said, with Esquirol: Man is a nervous machine, governed by a mood, disposed to hallucinations, transported by unbridled passions, essentially unreasoning, a mixture of animal and poet, having no rapture but mind, no sensibility but virtue, imagination for prompter and guide, and led at random, by the most determinate and complex circumstances, to pain, crime, madness, and death.

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