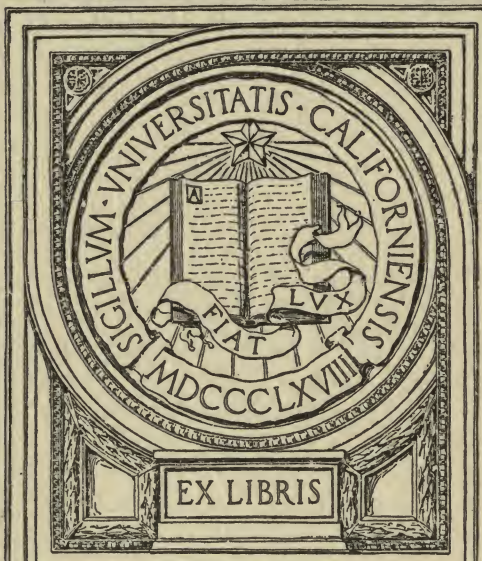
Shakespearean Studies

William Rader



SHAKESPEAREAN STUDIES

WILLIAM RADER

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To my Daughter
KATHRYN

Why take the artistic way to prove so much?
Because it is the glory and good of Art,
That Art remains the one way possible
Of speaking truth, to mouths like mine at least.
How look a brother in the face and say
"Thy right is wrong, eyes hast thou yet art blind,
Thine ears are stuffed and stopped, despite their length:
And, oh, the foolishness thou countest faith!"
Say this as silverly as tongue can troll—
The anger of the man may be endured,
The shrug, the disappointed eyes of him
Are not so bad to bear—but here's the plague
That all this trouble comes of telling truth,
Which truth, by when it reaches him, looks false,
Seems to be just the thing it would supplant,
Nor recognizable by whom it left:
While falsehood would have done the work of truth.
But art,—wherein man nowise speaks to men,
Only to mankind,—Art may tell a truth
Obliquely, do the thing shall breed the thought,
Nor wrong the thought, missing the mediate word.

BROWNING—*"The Ring and the Book."*

FOREWORD

THIS little book is the fruit of sermons given from a city pulpit on the ethics of Shakespeare. The preacher has never seriously attempted a homiletic treatment of the great English master, whose works are replete with profitable lessons dealing with the simple moralities. Shakespeare makes his appeal to all men, the preacher not excepted. For the most part the response has been given by the theatre and the literary critic. Broader than any sect and independent of any school of theological thought, Shakespeare is peculiarly inviting to the student of ethics. Every tragedy, comedy amd drama is founded upon certain well defined principles of conduct. The universality of his searching thought, the striking application of truth to life, the dramatic situations which illustrate artistically his ethical ideals, afford an unusual field for the moralist. Shakespeare is a prophet-poet whose chief business is not to entertain, but instruct in the deepest things of life. These studies are given to the world with the hope that the lessons taught may create a new interest in the study of his works, and be profitable as a guide in the way of life.

X Wrong! "To hold a mirror up to life."

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MACBETH—A TRAGEDY OF AMBITION

"For what shall a man be profited if he gain the whole world, and forfeit his life." Matt. 16: 26.

BY virtue of his intellectual range and height, Shakespeare is the common property of mankind. He belongs to the world as much as Mont Blanc or Shasta. The preacher and the actor alike claim him. For the most part, the theatre has not a monopoly of Shakespeare. The actor, not the preacher has lived and thought in the Shakespearean atmosphere. The church has read Milton and Dante, but has been slow in appreciating the higher values of Shakespeare, whose overflowing genius reaches beyond the narrow confines of schools, systems, and sects. He stands above and beyond these, but his thought involves the unshifted foundations of evangelical religion. Each play centres in a ruling human passion touching a lesson as doctrinally clean-cut as any sermon preached by John Calvin, John Knox, or Jonathan Edwards. Dipping his pen in the ink-pot of great Nature, the nature of the universe, and of universal man, he has analysed, interpreted, and illustrated the fundamental truths of every day life. Wedded to his keen analyses is the skill of an artist. There are many

reasons why ministers of the gospel should inform themselves of the ethical values of Shakespeare. He sets the standard of excellence in the use of words which he uses, as an artist selects his brilliant bits of stone or glass, and places them with such discernment as to make a perfect expression. His powerful appeal to the imagination is rewarding to any preacher. The portraits of men and women which he has drawn so skilfully, are studies in psychology and character. The men and women who people his plays, and move back and forth through the shadow and light of his manifold genius, are the men and women who sit in the church pews and walk on the streets of our modern cities. His knowledge of law, religion, science, history, tradition and life, bids the thoughtful mind enter the great cathedral of his universal learning. Furthermore, Shakespeare is rich with the interpretations of scripture. The Bible is a companion volume of Shakespeare, and the minister and actor meet upon a common plane. No scholar reaches up into such spiritual fellowship with the Bible. There is a moral affinity between them.

Shakespeare has gathered the materials of his plays from history and tradition. He has seized the driftwood and drawn out of the sea of legend and story, fragmentary information which has been utilized with artistic skill, but the moral lesson has been drawn from the facts of revelation. Shakespeare is emphatically a Bible student. Measured by the

Bible he is as orthodox as Tolstoi, and as severe in his Calvinistic delineations as John Calvin. The preacher, then, must use Shakespeare to illuminate the Bible, and the Bible may be used to throw light upon Shakespeare.

Here, for example, is the tragedy of Macbeth, and over against it is placed the familiar passage "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul," or "what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" What does this familiar passage mean? It teaches that a man's self respect, that is, his life or soul, and all that they embody in his personality, is of supreme value; that a man cannot substitute anything for his life; that ambition is good, but that it must not over-ride and take the place of a man's essential life.

The preacher may use the text for a study in ambition, and the tragedy of Macbeth as a lighted taper to guide him in his researches. Ambition is a world passion. It discloses the inmost secrets of sin,—a moral force, and yet a peril. When exercised as an aspiration, and a determination to reach a right goal, ambition is a motive power, the influence of which has governed the destinies of the world. All vices are perverted virtues. Fire is, at once a blessing and a curse. The keen edge of the sword may defend or destroy. Ambition, like powder, may open the path to ships and trains, or devastate and deal a death-blow to life.

The story of Macbeth reveals the possibilities of

false and vaulting ambition, and affords a striking commentary of the text. The tragedy is laid in the time of Duncan, the Meek. His kinsman was Lord or Thane Macbeth. He and Banquo, a Scottish general, returning from a victorious battle, and crossing a blasted heath, were stopped by three weird witches who greeted Macbeth as the "King that shalt be hereafter." To Banquo they referred as one destined to be "lesser than Macbeth and greater! not so happy, but much happier," and predicted that his sons would one day reign as kings in Scotland.

The witches dropped the evil seeds of a false ambition in the receptive soil of Macbeth's mind, and the opportunity soon came for him to realize his ambition. Macbeth told his wife of the strange prediction, and that he had already had conferred upon him the dignity of Thane of Cawdor. It transpired that the King was entertained in Macbeth's castle, whereupon Lady Macbeth planned the details of his murder, which she herself tried to accomplish, but failed, and induced her husband to do the bloody deed, which he did. Duncan's sons ran away, Malcom seeking refuge in the English court, and Donalbain, in Ireland. Remembering the prediction that Banquo's sons should be kings after him, led to the murder of Banquo, who had been invited to a banquet, but who was killed on his way. Albeit his ghost, appearing at the banquet, occupied the chair about to be filled by Macbeth. Then came the retribution of these tragedies, the torture of conscience,

the possible suicide of Lady Macbeth, the death of Macbeth on the field of battle by Macduff.

In the development of this tragedy let us think first, of the preparation for the crime. I name three stages—the witches, the wife, and the ambition for the throne, or selfishness. These witches are not broomstick witches or gypsy fortune tellers, but "goddesses of destinie" brewing charms in their hellish caldrons. Mischief is brewed through unseen causes. These witches are ideas, solicitations, principalities and powers, the mysterious cause of evil which no philosophy has caught, and no psychology has explained. They are the philosophy of crime. Gervinius regards them as "the embodiment of inward temptation," which may be understood in the language of Dowden as "an apocalypse of power auxiliary to vice, as really as there is a manifestation of virtuous energy." Such is the Mephistopheles of Goethe. Such is the doctrine of evil of Saint Paul. Forces of good and evil are moving about independently of the will of man.

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamed of in your philosophy."

The translation of the noble soul of Macbeth into a foul murderer is gradual. Men are not suddenly plunged into crime. There is a logical approach. The witches are pointed out as the first means. These afford him a wilderness of temptation. The appear-

ance of the witches strikes the key note of the tragedy. They are the chorus of evil which anticipates the tragedy which ensues. Macbeth was a good man, but the pollen of the mind will oft'times catch and fructify the evil seed of the viewless air. The history of crime is concealed in the mystery of the unseen, whence come evil thoughts which hatch into wicked deeds.

Lady Macbeth is the second cause. She is Shakespeare's wickedest woman. Her influence on her husband is in singular contrast to the effect of Pilate's wife upon Pilate. These two powerful women standing in the background denote the influence of woman on man. Women rule the world. Study the powerful portrait of Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth in the Tate gallery, London. Pilate may not always obey, nor Macbeth hasten to perform the bloody deed, but, for the most part, the woman bends the will of the strongest man. Pilate's wife urged the imperial Roman to wash his hands of crime; Lady Macbeth induced Macbeth to redden his hands with crime. The two women invite a study in contrast. Macbeth confided in his wife the revelations of the witches, and from that moment she assumed the responsibility of realizing the growing dream of power. It is observed that this unholy ambition which has so often stained the social and political world, when in possession of strong women, corrupts every noble feminine principle. She enters the portal of his hitherto stainless life, and devastates, and cor-

rupts. She poisons all within her reach. She sets aside domestic happiness, the laws of honor, and the standards of her sex and prepares stealthily, cunningly, and effectively for the murder of the King. That she may be furnished with the fiendish equipment for the deed, she utters a soliloquy of sin, which is a prayer for incarnate evil that her sensibilities might be intoxicated with hell's liquor to do the bloody deed.

"Come. you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full
Of direst cruelty! make thick my blood;
Stop up the access and passage to remorse,
That no compunctious, visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
The effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,
And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers,
Wherever in your sightless substances
You wait on nature's mischief! Come, thick night,
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,
To cry 'Hold, hold.'"

Two things relieve slightly the fiendish work of Lady Macbeth. She is ambitious for her husband

and she remembers her father, whose face she saw reflected in the countenance of the king. She is a Titaness marred by no petty vice, but wholly given up to the one passion of murder, conceived in an inordinate ambition for political power. She opens the awful possibilities of depraved womanhood. "She is a splendid picture of evil, nevertheless,—a sort of sister of Milton's Lucifer, and, like him, we surely imagine her externally majestic and beautiful." (Mrs. Jamieson.) Such is this fascinating fiend who plans an evil deed, tempts her husband, and creates the conditions of the tragedy which follows.

The third impelling motive inducing Macbeth to surrender to the wily temptress, is ambition to reach a throne by a short cut. Ambition was one of the temptations in the wilderness. It was the powerful and successful solicitation made to Napoleon. It is the appeal made to all men of power. Rooted in selfishness, it fastens itself in the very heart of human nature. Only the grace of God can make it righteous. All sin finds its sustenance in selfishness. The tragedy of Macbeth is a tragedy of supreme and uncontrolled selfishness.

"To the Christian moralist, Macbeth's guilt is so dark that its degree cannot be estimated, as there are no shades in black. But to the mental psychologist, to whom nerve rather than conscience, the function of the brain rather than the power of the will, is an object of study, it is impossible to omit from the calculation the influences of the supernatu-

ral event, which is not only the starting point of the action, but the remote cause of the mental phenomena."

The moral loss in such a transaction is the lesson of the play and the illustration of the text. Macbeth is the tragedy of a great loss, of lives deliberately thrown away, of honor sacrificed, and of self-respect put to open shame. There is no gain for any of the conspirators. Death follows death, and tragedy succeeds tragedy with quick succession. This is the inevitable consequence of the great moral principle which binds together loss and forces of the ethical world. It is the dogmatic assertion of retributive justice on which Shakespeare has built all his tragedies. He thinks of a universe which is morally intolerant of wrong doing. From a natural theology as well as from revealed truth, he draws a lesson of retribution, resistless in logic, accurate in moral aim, and definite in purpose. The hell of Shakespeare is unlike the hell of Jonathan Edwards. It does not smell of brimstone, but is not less real.

The moral order of the world resents the slightest violation of law. Such is the world of Shakespeare, as responsive to the quake of sin as the seismograph to the tremor of the earth. The hell of Shakespeare is not pictured in the terminology or in the colors of Angelo, but with the deeper consciousness of Milton, is described as within. The conscience of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, writhing in the frenzy of fear, becomes the horrible manifestation of the unseen

fears which burn and consume away the happiness of the heart. Says Macbeth:

"Whence is that knocking?
How is't with me, when every noise appals me?
What hands are here? ha! they pluck out mine eyes!
Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No; this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red."

Lady Macbeth:

"Out damned spot! out, I say! One: two:
Why, then 'tis time to do't. Hell is murky!
Fie, my lord, fie! a soldier, and afeared? What
Need we fear who knows it, when none can call
Our power to account? Yet who would have thought
The old man to have had so much blood in him?"

In the sleep walking scene where Lady Macbeth walks in two worlds, with wild fears of the unawakened consciousness, she indicates the deep damnation of her despair which we may believe ends in suicide; while Macbeth meets Macduff upon the field of war, and dies the death of a criminal. What does it all mean? What doth it profit a man if he gain everything and lose himself? What does it profit a physician to murder his wife and lose his life?

What gain to a young millionaire who kills his enemy and spends his life in an asylum or prison? What profit to the grafter who gains a whole city and is sentenced to fourteen years in the penitentiary? The problem of moral loss and gain is identical with that of life and death. What doth it profit a man whatever he gain if he lose his self-respect? These losses in the world of affairs comprehend the world tragedy of Macbeth played upon the vast American stage washed by two oceans, played upon the European stage, the foot-lights of which are the cities which are the centres of population.

Witness this play and in the evolution of its scenes and situations, mark the down-fall of strong men. Vaulting ambition leads to short-cuts to fame and fortune. Observe how men will climb to thrones from the bloody bodies of those who are in the way. The wickedest is the man who would win fortune or authority over the wrecks of others, and this is what Macbeth did. Such heroes of transient fortune do not last long. God's laws will not suffer them to live and be happy. Witness the Macbeths in business, who by special privileges and dishonest methods make their way to empire, "over broken oaths and through a sea of blood." The political gain in the United States is a stinging rebuke to the Macbeths of the market-place. A more personal consideration of this thought leads to the reflection that the choice of man is between *being* and *having*. This is the age

of having, rather than being; of position, rather than power; of accumulation, rather than depth of personality. The desire to have, sacrifices in many lives, the desire to be. In the end, the man who is, wins. Who has being, depth of power, richness of nature, and well fashioned ideals, is the richest. Better stand before the throne of God a beggar in purse, and rich in spirit, than to stand there possessing all the world and yet without one's own life. Furthermore, it is a choice between saving one's life at the expense of the world, and saving both the individual and the individual's world. Redemption is not the negative experience which our fathers taught us to believe; that we are as brands snatched from the burning and rescued from some dreadful hereafter. Redemption is a positive experience which is salvation to everything that is good and from everything that is bad. A man should save the world in which he lives. He has no right to think only of himself. Indeed so closely is the legitimate occupation and profession to a man's world that he must of necessity save his professional or business world even as he would save his soul. We must bring into the Kingdom of God the little worlds in which we live, otherwise we have not made a complete sacrifice. For what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

OTHELLO—THE DRAMA OF THE DOMESTIC LIFE

"*What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*" Matthew 19: 6.

AMONG the relationships of life, that of the home is the most far-reaching and sensitive. The relation of the citizen to the state involves the destiny of the nation. The teacher's relation to his pupil, and the soldier's obligations to the army vitally affect the character of the individual and the success of armies, but that between husband and wife is of the greatest significance. The machinery of the home is easily disordered. The mechanism of the locomotive is not delicately made like that of a watch. It is stronger and larger, and more crude. The fine construction of a watch illustrates the sensitiveness of the domestic life. The slightest infraction of law will throw it out of gear.

In the tragedy of Othello the dropping of a handkerchief caused a domestic earthquake in the affectionate and happy home of Othello. The Lord, in his anticipation of easily disordered households, says in his dissertation on marriage and divorce, "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder,"

an injunction that is illustrated in Shakespeare's Othello. The characters in the situation of this dramatic analysis of domestic troubles are known to every observer of social life. All of Shakespeare's characters are well known. He has taken them from practical life, and they are neither new nor antique. Nothing in Shakespeare is particularly original except in expression. It will be seen in the presentation of this thought how well known the leading characters are, and how we read of them daily in the papers. The story of Othello is of charming interest. Lord McCauley called this the greatest work of man.

Brabantio, a wealthy Venetian senator, had a fair daughter named Desdemona. This is the beginning of much history. A man had a daughter! How this shapes itself into the warp and woof of destiny, and fate is the cause of both sorrow and joy. Naturally she was sought by many suitors, among them a dark skinned Moor named Othello, who was eloquent and cultivated. He had traveled far and suffered privations of which he was willing to talk. Desdemona would quickly do her work and sit with open-eyed wonder listening to the recital of his adventures. A clandestine courtship and marriage ensued, and while Brabantio had welcomed this delightful stranger to his home, he turned against him, as fathers sometimes do, when he discovered that Othello was the husband of his daughter. For this, Othello was summoned before the Duke to show

cause why he should not be punished for this interesting adventure, and at the same time was summoned as a soldier to be sent to the Island of Cyprus, where the Turks required the attention of the Venetian Army. He was therefore before the court, both as a culprit and as a soldier.

Brabantio, like most fathers, surrendered to the inevitable domestic conditions which had so unceremoniously been imposed upon him and gave him his daughter. Othello and Desdemona came to Cyprus where conditions were such that their presence was hardly required. It was in Cyprus that two other characters appeared upon the scene. These are introduced as keys to the domestic situation. Reformers sometimes speak in statistics—in generalities—on social problems. If one can get at these problems in terms of personality, and find the people who create the conditions, he will go far toward an intelligent appreciation of the modern situation. Problems are inseparable from people, and to analyse a person is to get nearer the heart of the situation than to study a condition.

One Cassio, a Florentine soldier, appears as the lieutenant of Othello. Indeed, Othello did the unsafe thing of inviting Cassio's assistance in the wooing of Desdemona. Iago, married to Emelia. is a pretended friend to both, but jealous of Cassio, It is his purpose to do what Samson did—pull down the temple on the heads of all, exclude Cassio from the office of lieutenant, and destroy the home of

Othello. He did the first by causing a fight which was precipitated after he made Cassio drunk, for which act Cassio was relieved from the office of lieutenant. He then attempts to disrupt the home of Othello and his method is to make Othello jealous. This he does by innuendo and suggestion. He drops the seed of doubt in Othello's mind, which fructifies and grows into a bitter harvest. His own injunction to Othello contains a good definition of jealousy, the deadly weapon which he put in Othello's hand for self-destruction.

> "O, beware, my lord, of jealousy;
> It is the green-ey'd monster, which doth mack
> The meat it feeds on: That cuckold lives in bliss
> Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger;
> But, O, what damned minutes tells he o'er
> Who dotes, yet doubts, suspects, yet strongly loves!"

Jealousy always develops the worst traits in a man's character. It never brings out the best. It is the occasion for the full expression of the animal human nature, and is a propensity possessed of uncontrolled injustice and insanity. The incident of the handkerchief secured from Desdemona by strategy, and used by Iago to evoke the doubt of Othello, ended in the destruction of all the principal characters in the play. Othello finds Desdemona

asleep in bed. He enters the chamber full of the black purpose which he had meditated, of putting her to death. Seeing her asleep, he would not shed her blood nor scar the alabaster whiteness of her skin. Kissing her for the last time, he smothers her to death. Cassio was brought in, after having been set upon by assassins, at the will of Iago, Iago killing the assassins who attempted to kill Cassio. Certain letters were found in Cassio's pockets which make the guilt of Iago and the innocence of Cassio clear beyond all doubt, the discovery of which impelled Othello to commit suicide.

A study of Othello, Desdemona, and Iago will point the moral and analyze the motives of the drama. Desdemona is one of Shakespeare's most beautiful women.

"Her pure and eloquent blood
Spoke in her cheeks and so distinctly wrought,
That one might almost say her body thought."

Involved in circumstances from which she could not extricate herself, Desdemona appears as the innocent victim of the revenge of jealousy. Many a woman is the victim of her own virtue, which must be defended as the snow, falling in its spotless whiteness, must protect itself against the stain of the mud and grime. Womanhood is open to suspicion by its very purity. The saddest of all tragedies is successful assault made by suspicious men

upon womanhood. A fair name is a shining target. Desdemona appears a striking contrast with Cleopatra. The one has the fascination of beauty and chastity, the other of voluptuous worldliness and divided affection. True, it may be said of Desdemona that she made the first mistake in marrying outside her social province clandestinely. But the bitter fruit she took to her lips can hardly be recorded as the reward of her folly.

It is usual among the libertines to suspect women, but the character of Desdemona is a rebuke to such unholy suspicions. The foundation of society is Desdemona. More than any other character does she stand for the unity and happiness of mankind. Upon her rests the home and all it involves. She is the pillar of faith, and while she may be the object of suspicion, she is to be defended against the Iagos who would besmirch her character and inspire the green-eyed monster of jealousy in her husband.

Othello is remembered by the critics of Shakespeare as the jealous husband. Doubtless he was jealous, but there was more than jealousy in his uncontrolled frenzy toward Desdemona. Othello's love was stronger than his reason. Many divorces are caused by too much love rather than too little. A great love can only be made safe in a sane and judicial mind. It is a misfortune for a weak-minded man to be possessed by an extraordinary affection. The probability is that the affection will topple over the reason. Love rests upon sense—good sound common

sense. This must always be the foundation of romantic love. The tumult in Othello's soul was caused by the conflict between love and honor, the love which he had, and the honor which he wanted Desdemona to have. His was the tragedy of the heart's disappointment, grounded in suspicions suggested by circumstances which, to him, were as logical as the law of gravitation. The estimate Coleridge passed, analyzes and explains the awful storm in Othello's soul. He says "Othello must not be conceived as a negro, but a high and chivalrous Moorish chief. Shakespeare learned the spirit of the character from the Spanish poetry, which was prevalent in England in his time. Jealousy does not strike me as the point in his passion; I take it to be rather an agony that the creature, whom he had believed angelic, with whom he had garnered up his heart, and whom he could not help still loving, should be proved impure and worthless. It was the struggle *not* to love her. It was a moral indignation and regret that virtue should so fail:—'But yet the pity of it, Iago!—O Iago! the *pity* of it, Iago!' In addition to this, his honor was concerned: Iago would not have succeeded but by hinting that his honor was compromised. There is no ferocity in Othello; his mind is majestic and composed. He deliberately determines to die; and speaks his last speech with a view of showing his attachment to the Venetian State, though it had superceded him.

Schiller has the material Sublime; to produce an

effect, he sets you a whole town on fire, and throws infants with their mothers into flames, or locks up a father in an old tower. But Shakespeare drops a handkerchief, and the same or greater effects follow.

"Lear is the most tremendous effort of Shakespeare as a poet; Hamlet as a philosopher or mediator; and Othello is the union of the two. There is something gigantic and unformed in the former two; but in the latter, everything assumes its due place and proportion, and the whole mature powers of his mind are displayed in admirable equilibrium."

Othello's estimate of himself is effectively given in the words spoken just before he stabs himself.

"Soft you; a word or two before you go.
I have done the state some service, and they know't.
No more of that. I pray you, in your letters,
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice: Then must you speak
Of one that loved not wisely but too well;
Of one not easily jealous, but, being wrought,
Perplex'd in the extreme; of one whose hand,
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away
Richer than all his tribe; of one whose subdued eyes,
Albeit unused to the melting mood,
Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees

Their medicinal gum. Set you down this;
And say besides, that in Aleppo once,
Where a malignant and a turbaned Turk
Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,
I took by the throat the circumcised dog
And smote him thus."

Iago is Shakespeare's Devil. In the Garden of Eden he is in the form of a serpent. In Milton's representation, he is a mocking fiend, while Tintoretto has painted him in the guise of an athlete. He is Goethe's Mephistopheles in Faust, and the Satan in the wilderness of temptation. This man is always clever, polite, wilful, and dangerous. Iago is the destroyer of character. In this instance his method is that of suggestion. Students of the New Thought who interest themselves in the occult and psychological mysteries, will find in the drama of Othello an excellent illustration of suggestion's influence over the human mind. The trifle of the handkerchief light as air, suggests a series of events which ended in the destruction of hope, happiness, and life. This was all wrought by suggestion. There was no basis in fact, whatever, only circumstantial evidence created by the perfidy of Iago and used to slay the innocent. Iago is the slanderer, and no slanderer can enter the kingdom of heaven. Slander is murder. The man who holds you up with his pistol or shoots you is a gentleman in comparison with the man who will rob you of your reputation and destroy your character.

Iago destroyed the home of Othello by making Othello destroy his wife and himself. He inspired him to act upon false premises, and Iago furnished the premises. He is the polite gossip who distills poison in suspicious minds, and sets in motion currents of thought which end in death. Of all the bad men in Shakespeare's plays, Iago is quite the worst. He is more subtle than Macbeth or King Richard III. His is the crime of the spirit and of the mind. He is the assassinator of fair names, the destroyer of happy homes.

By way of application, it is observed that Shakespeare is quick to destroy by death the people of his tragedies. This is quite in harmony with human nature. It has long been an accepted method of escape in domestic entanglements, to use the pistol and the dagger, in the belief that death is the solution of domestic problems. The choice of the modern world is between death and divorce. Their popularity is about equally divided. Despite the almost countless number of divorces, which in some respect feed the miseries and in others relieve the troubles of society, the resort to death is still in vogue. It is a poor expedient economically and morally. The killing of Desdemona doesn't help matters. The discovery of the mistake that was made, is the real tragedy of the situation. Suicide is not a solution of trouble, and a man who takes his own life to escape the sorrows of the flesh, but intensifies the grief of others and imperils his own soul. There is no

philosophy in murder, but so popular is this method among the distressed classes, high and low, that we have long ago ceased to enumerate the tragedies of the dagger, the deadly poison, and the revolver. A better philosophy is to settle our difficulties according to reason, as set forth in Christ's great injunction on marriage and divorce, recorded in the nineteenth chapter of Matthew.

The ethics of Shakespearean murders will not bear a close analysis of the moralist, but Shakespeare has tried only to follow out the consequences of foul deeds and the awful effects of mistaken suspicions. In making a more personal application to those who are starting out in life as husband and wife, let me urge upon you the peril of distrust and jealcusy and to warn you against the Iagos who are ever seeking to pull down the structure of your home. Living is a fine art, and we must be taught how to love without losing our sense, and how to believe without doubt, and how to love without revenge.

Marriage is fraught with such possibilities and perils that it becomes us to enter upon it thoughtfully, sincerely, and intelligently. Intelligent love is life's greatest asset. Jesus Christ has given us, in his injunction on the marriage relation, that what God hath joined together, let no Iagos put asunder. The forces of separation are in deadly conflict with the forces of unity. The secret of marriage is in the moral union of two souls. Marriage is of God, or it is of little strength and short duration.

To the young people, some of whom are contemplating matrimony, and others who are already enjoying it, I would give the advice, keep clear of the Iagos and of the green-eyed monster of jealousy. In the making of a new home, a new star glistens upon the sky. Enter upon this experience with an intelligent regard for all that makes home happy, and with the moral defense against the things which cause domestic tragedy. The mighty drama of Othello repeated over and over again in the life of the modern world, must ever be an influential reminder of the Lord's injunction to his generation, that "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

HAMLET, A STUDY IN REVENGE, DUTY, AND DOUBT

"*'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.'*"
Romans 12: 19.

ARMED with the passion of revenge, we go forth to avenge ourselves upon the enemy. But vengeance is not the property of man. It is a possession of God. Man is incapable of using this dangerous thing called vengeance. Our rights end with punishment, but vengeance is more than punishment. Therefore I do not believe in capital punishment—the arbitrary taking of life. There is no discipline in killing an offender. We have only followed the abrogated law of the old covenant, "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." We have taken a life for a life, and thus satisfied our sense of revenge. Punishment is chastisement,—making the soiled linen sweet and white and pure by soap and water, and divers poundings. Vengeance such as the apostle writes of, does not belong to man. It is the exclusive property of God. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." A good illustration of the conflict which sometimes wages between the desire for vengeance

and the higher law of honorable duty, is found in Shakespeare's delineation of the character of Hamlet, where is apparent emotional scepticism, morbid forebodings, the spirit of vengeance, the sense of duty, and altogether a miserable and unhappy state of affairs. Hamlet describes many unfortunate lives, caught in the mesh of circumstances, and incapable of solving the perplexing problems of life.

The facts involved in the tragedy are possibly, better known than those of any other of Shakespeare's tragedies. Apart from Hamlet the tragedy does not make a strong appeal. It is chiefly remembered for its brilliant bits of wisdom, its noble eloquence, and the keen psychological study Shakespeare makes of the character of Hamlet. In the analysis made of him, the great master lays bare the human heart, and the careful student attends a clinic on the heart's inmost emotions.

The Queen of Denmark, Gertrude, becomes a widow by the strangely sudden death of the king. In less than two months she marries his brother Claudius. Both the suddenness of the death and the marriage greatly disturb Hamlet. In consequence of his trouble he grew morbid and melancholy. It happens that an apparition had been seen by soldiers upon watch before the palace at midnight. It was arranged that Hamlet should see this apparition for himself and taking his stand one night with Horatio and Marcellus, where the ghost appeared, he was struck with fear, and so great was the resemblance

to his father, that he followed the apparition begging for some word of recognition. To make a long story short, the ghost related to him how Claudius, his uncle, had murdered him, and appealed to Hamlet to avenge his death by killing Claudius. Hamlet's feigned madness was explained by his ardent love for one Ophelia to whom he was in the habit of communicating messages of love.

While he was in this irresolute and disturbed state of mind, not knowing whether to avenge his father's death, and not quite sure of the testimony of the ghost he decided to put the king and queen through the "third degree," as the detectives say. A strolling band of players came along, and it was arranged for them to play a tragedy reproducing the facts of the tragedy as reported by the ghost. The king and queen were invited to be present. So real was the representation that the king excused himself on the ground of illness. This incident was followed by an interview between Hamlet and his mother, during which Hamlet observes somebody behind the curtains, and thinking it was Claudius, thrusts him with his sword. It so happens, Pelonius, father of Ophelia, was there, and he was stabbed to death, for which act Hamlet was sent out of the country, but owing to a strange series of circumstances returned in time to attend Ophelia's funeral, and to engage in a general slaughter of about everybody of importance in the play.

"Let four captains
Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage;
For he was likely, had he been put on,
To have proved most royally: and, for his passage,
The soldiers' music and the rites of war
Speak loudly for him.
Take up the bodies: such a sight as this
Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss
Go, bid the soldiers shoot."

Hamlet's troubles, like those of many people, began at home. His father was murdered and his mother disgraced the family name by the indiscretion of an early marriage. There is an explosive element in domestic affairs which works ruin, once the fire reaches the powder.

Again, the advent of the ghost into Hamlet's life, influenced his artistic temperament and disarranged his mind. Ghosts are poor friends. They are not safe counselors. The two worlds are closely related and influence each other, and the spiritual life is as real as the human life seen by our eyes. But keep away from ghosts. Beware of buying stocks or dealing in real estate at the advice of the spirits of your dead ancestors, and when they rise up and insist that you wreak vengeance on their enemies—beware!

The character of Hamlet is so universal in its wide range of feeling and motive, that we may profitably

give it special consideration. His character is marked by irresolution and hesitancy, which stamp him as uncertain, and weak. There is an indefiniteness about him which reaches a point of fascination at times. He has laid upon him a duty which he has not the strength to execute. He is the man who is under a cross which is too heavy for him, who has standards but not power, who would do what ought to be done, but is incapable of doing it. In the seventh chapter of Romans, Paul appears, just for a moment upon the stage, as a disarranged, morbid and melancholy Hamlet, assured that whenever he would do good evil is present with him. Goethe says: "It is clear to me that Shakepseare's intention was to exhibit the effects of a great action imposed as a duty upon a mind too feeble for its accomplishment." Certainly we have an example of indecision, but the indecision as in most of us, is in our inability to assert the resolution. It is fundamental weakness in the machinery of power behind the decision of the mind. It is easy to make resolutions, but how hard it is to execute them. Hamlet was like a man who loads his gun to the muzzle with shot, but behind the shot there is little or no powder. Every New Year's day we pour in the rattling shot of resolution—but the gun does not always go off, because there is not sufficient will power, that is, character, to expel it.

Again, this tragedy has been called "a tragedy of thought." The mind's war is uncovered. The brain's battle-field is laid bare. The torments of

doubt are felt in the sublime soliloquy, and seen in the melancholic action of the Prince. "Prometheus and Hamlet are two lovers," says Hugo, "laid bare before us; blood flows from the one, doubt from the other." Hamlet's doubt is against life, and this is the most deadly species of scepticism. When you are surrounded by conditions over which you have no control, when walled in by impenetrable troubles, and made captive by unexplained sorrows and disappointments, you are in the position of Hamlet when he spoke of this weary, and unintelligible world—"

> "Oh cursed spite, that I was ever sent
> To set it right."

When a man's doubt is against the whole scheme of things as he sees it, when it embitters him against life itself, then is his doubt more destructive than the unanswered question raised by a book or a system or a creed.

> "To be, or not to be, that is the question:—
> Whether 'tis nobler in the mind, to suffer
> The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
> Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
> And by opposing end them? To die, to sleep:—
> No more; and by a sleep, to say we end
> The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks

That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;
To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's
the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may
come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause: there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life;
For who would bear the whips and scorns of
time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's con-
tumely,
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
No traveler returns, puzzles the will
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment,
With this regard, their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action."

"Hamlet, the tragedy of doubt," says Victor Hugo, "stands in the centre of all his works. Geniuses of the first rank have the peculiarity that each creates a specimen of humanity. Each gives to humanity its own image, one a laughing one, another a weeping one, another again a thoughtful one. The last is the grandest. Plautus laughs and gives mankind an Amphitryo, Rabelais laughs and gives a Gargantua, Cervantes laughs and gives a Don Quixote, Beaumarchais laughs and gives a Figaro; Moliere weeps and gives an Alceste; Shakespeare meditates and gives a Hamlet; Aeschylus meditates and gives a Prometheus. The former are great; Aeschylus and Shakespeare are immeasurably so."

And now a word about Hamlet's insanity. For many years this has been a subject of discussion. The preponderance of opinion favors the idea that Hamlet's insanity never reached the point of irresponsibility, and that he feigned madness. "To pretend madness is the secret of the wise," says Oceanus to Prometheus. Gloster's son in Lear feigns madness, and when a man would assassinate an American president or European sovereign in the spirit of revenge, madness becomes a convenient excuse for the deed. Coleridge says, "If it be asked, is Hamlet really mad: or for what purpose does he assume madness? We reply that he assumes madness to conceal from himself and others his real distemper. Mad he certainly is not, in the sense that Lear and Ophelia are mad." Irresolution, doubt, hesitation, and mor-

bidness resulted in a mistaken and hasty action—the murder of the wrong man!

Now let us take up the whole matter of revenge and discuss it on its moral merits in the light of the national and individual life. Hamlet is the nation. War for thousands of years has, with a few exceptions, been waged on the ground of vengeance. War is the chief inheritance of savagery. It is a relic of the savage, when the early barbarian gripped his club, and went forth to flay his enemy. We call it patriotism. It is not patriotism, it is savagery. The nations are still attached to the earth, sphinx-like to the lower passions, and while the head may be among the stars, the body is fastened to the sands. The great Tolstoi would have liberated the nations from the barbarism of the savage, but he died alone in the hut, surrounded with armies which were in singular contrast to Christianity.

"Yes, Germany is Hamlet, too?
Upon her ramparts every night
There stalks in silence, grim and slow,
Her buried freedom's steel-clad spirit,
Beck'ning the warders watching there,
And to the shrinking doubter saying:
They've drop't fell poison in mine ear
Draw thou the sword, no more delay."

America has been Hamlet. What was the war with Spain but a war of vengeance? For some days

after the Maine was sunk, President McKinley was the national Hamlet personified, hesitating between duty and revenge, pausing between the appeal of the ghosts of the sailors, and the dogs of war, let loose by the American newspapers, and barking through the halls of congress,—solemnly paused between duty and revenge, and at length, inevitably it would seem, surrendered to the popular cry for vengeance—and stabbed Polonius behind the curtain!

What Hamlets read these words! Hamlets who have been inspired to wreak vengeance, for real or imaginary wrongs. It requires a greater man not to strike, than to strike, not to pull the trigger, than to shoot. The soft answer is harder to give than the sulphurous and fiery reply which burns and destroys. Almost any man likes to strike back. The nation does. The boy does, and sometimes in self defense, striking back is necessary. The first impulse of Hamlet is to avenge his father's murder. It is your impulse. A man has done you a wrong—do him two wrongs. A man has struck you once, strike him a dozen times. A negro has committed a crime —kill him, burn him, hang him to a tree, riddle him with bullets, and then call yourselves gentlemen of honor. No—"Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord."

I give then, the following advice to the Hamlets: First: Be sure you are right—then act. Such is the point in the wise injunction of Davy Crockett. "Be sure you are right, then go ahead." Many of our

troubles would be avoided could we courageously obey this bit of wisdom. To know what is right—the will of God, to find it, as the Indian finds and follows the trail, is to find a working doctrine of practical life, that would defend us against many tragedies. Having found the right, then follow it against all odds. The hesitant, vacillating, uncertain man never realizes his purpose because he never knows when and where to strike his blow.

Second: God punishes—

> "The mills of the gods grind slowly,
> But grind they exceeding fine."

The low rumble and roar of the mighty stones is the voice of history. God rules. Oh, little, furious, angered man, do not strive to pull down from above the thunderbolts of God! They do not belong to you. Shall infants play with pistols, and children with fire? You do not know how to use the awful power of vengeance. That can be used alone by God. But how we strive to break through the limitations and seize the vengeance of God. We have not the wisdom, the forebearance, the justice, nor the mercy to wreak vengeance. Do not worry, God will give every man what he deserves. The universe is framed on that unbroken law. It does not belong to us to deal out hell to people. God will do that. Ours is a different function. It does not belong to us to rule the universe. Certain sacred attributes

are not for us to own. The child may play with the candy gun, but one higher, who knows the laws of warfare, points and fires the engine of steel and fire. Every man will ultimately get his deserts. There must somewhere, somehow be a clearing house of eternal justice, here or hereafter.

The apostle's advice is better than the ghost's appeal to Hamlet. Despite the fact that we have within us the spirit of revenge, the gospel of the New Testament is the doctrine for the new age. Here we have not the sword, but the hot coals, not revenge, but kindness, the soft answer which turns away wrath, as the hot sun turns away the icicles, and melts them to tears. What a fine art is the use of the hot coals, and how few there be, capable of rising up high enough in the scale of religion to use them. But put them on! Lay them on the heads of your enemies, and thus fulfil the law of God. Coals of fire are invested with a gospel which is preached but not practised. Some day the nations will use them, and Christians will reach each others' hearts by the burning, searching spirit of the Christ. How beautiful these words: "Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

KING LEAR—FILIAL INGRATITUDE

"*Honour thy father and thy mother, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*" Deut. 5: 16.

THE decalogue is the moral frame work of civilization. It is the ethical skeleton of the Shakespearean tragedies. As the steel and stone outline of the building is the bony skeleton on which is put the flesh of the perfect structure, so the ten commandments furnish the basal truths of the higher life and thought of mankind. He who wrote this injunction of filial respect for parents, was himself a castaway, having been rescued as a child from the River Nile by Pharoah's daughter. The orphan is the occasion for filial gratitude. This precept is associated with a promise: "that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

Among the influential relations of life is that of child and parent. Surely the Hebrew household was the model illustration of domestic faithfulness. The child's honorable respect for his father and mother was one of the Jewish ideals which con-

fessedly modern Jews have not perceptibly lowered. The perpetuity of this ideal among the people of our times is one of the safeguards of our national life. Once the filial spirit declines, the home will be shattered. The story of King Lear as given in Shakespeare's tragedy is a dramatic consideration of filial ingratitude. King Lear of Brittain, had three daughters, Goneril, wife to the Duke of Albany; Regan, wife to the Duke of Cornwall, and Cordelia whose hand was sought by the King of France and the Duke of Burgundy. The worn out king, at the close of his life, called his children to him and asked how much they loved him. Goneril, the eldest, could not find words strong enough to tell her love. Regan, the hollow-minded sister, was even more profuse in her declarations of affection, while Cordelia, whom he called his joy, said she loved him according to her duty, neither more nor less, at which the king was shocked. This led to a frank talk, during which Lear lost his temper and determined to give his property to the two daughters who were most lavish in their expressions of love. The Earl of Kent standing by attempted to speak a good word for Cordelia, but he, on the pain of death, was commanded to desist, which Kent refusing to do, led to his banishment from the country. This Kent disguised himself and returned and became Lear's fastest but unknown friend, and in more than one respect is the greatest character in the drama. The King of France and Duke of Burgundy

were called upon to hear what Lear had to say to Cordelia, and the Duke of Burgundy refused to marry such an ungrateful daughter, while the King of France willingly accepted her. King Lear now attempts to live with his two hypocritical daughters. This was a failure. He is driven from one to the other and at last banished by the ingratitude of both, to the open field around Dover. Here he loses his mind and fancies himself again a King and puts a crown of dry grass and burdock upon his head. The picture of the storm which beats upon him resembles the thunder storm in Job. The elements are so used to poetically describe the volcanic emotions of the old man's soul as he rages in splendid defiance of his ungrateful daughters and the fury of the storm. Cordelia invades the kingdom of her father and proves to be the faithful daughter of the three. The meeting between father and daughter is tenderly drawn,—he with his half crazed brain, putting his hands upon the cheeks of his affectionate daughter who tries to kiss away her sisters' unkindness. Cordelia was imprisoned during which time she probably committed suicide. The daughters untrue to their father, were untrue to their husbands and became involved in a scandal with the bastard son of Gloster. King Lear did not long survive Cordelia.

Shelly says that King Lear is the greatest drama in existence, but this has been said of practically all of Shakespeare's plays. Keats writes that it portrays the fierce dispute between damnation and impas-

sioned clay. What are some of the lessons to be drawn from this drama of everyday life?

First: Many a home is wrecked by property. Once members of a family become involved in money obligations, division follows. If you would keep on good terms with your own household, keep out of money entanglements. Many a home has been shipwrecked on the rocks of riches. The division of property will root up years of domestic happiness. Many a home is divided after years of unity and peace by the animosity which is caused by the distribution of a fortune. The two ungrateful daughters thought more of their father's kingdoms than they did of their father. Having secured these they rejected him. This is an old story, repeated daily—the filial ingratitude of children who pretend to love their parents.

Second: The dependence of old age. Here is a man who has lived his life and is now dependent upon his children. We are twice children and the dependence at both ends of life is pathetic. That it is a tax on filial piety is beyond question. The rejection of old parents is not the least of the domestic crimes. Some people who are very emphatic in their loyalty to certain ideals have no hesitation in violating the commandment "Honor thy father and thy mother." They will not steal, nor murder, nor commit adultery, but they will, with impunity, turn their aged parents out of doors. Children are under moral bonds to support their dependent par-

ents. I know how hard for some to make sacrifices to keep the wolf from the old father's door, but it is a rewarding service. We all know faithful Cordelias who might shine in society and prosper in a professional career, or a home of their own, but because of their aged parents, sacrifice these things and honor their father and their mother. These are among the noblest types of womanhood. They live under the stress and care of helpless parentage and no doubt their filial honor is often tested to the extreme, since old people may be very agreeable or exceeding disagreeable. The picture of King Lear going from home to home and knocking for admission in public institutions, is one of the sad dramas of our modern life. Here we have the consequences of filial ingratitude. Shakespeare is never so suggestive or effective as when he writes of consequences. His tragedies inevitably lead to retributive results. The deeper meaning of King Lear indicates these tragical consequences. Beneath the surface conditions of our domestic life are these distressing results. Among them is a divided family. This in itself is tragical. Families were never meant to be divided. There are some things which we can think of only in terms of unity and solidarity. Once they are severed, they cease to be. The family is such an agency. It is a great misfortune for a home to be cut asunder by a slight difference of opinion or some serious infraction of moral obligation. The scattered family of Lear in itself is sufficient to

wring sympathy from our hearts. Every influence which makes for such a division is antagonistic to the best interests of the nation and of society. Goneril and Regan are on one side, and Cordelia, shining like a soft pure star through a cloud on the other side.

Another lesson is that daughters who are untrue to their fathers may not be safely trusted as wives. Among the measurements of womanhood is the filial relation. The bad daughter seldom makes a good wife. The children who are untrue to their parents will probably not be faithful to their wives and husbands. Show me a daughter who is not true to her father and I will point you to a woman who will not make a good wife. The filial relation is an indication of character. It is a test of the virtues of the woman. It is not a surprise then that these two girls who were so untrue to Lear were unfaithful to their husbands. It is the true daughter who will make a true wife. There is no better commendation for a young man as a husband than that he is true to his mother and his father. No young woman can go far astray in selecting such a young man for a husband. The same is true of a daughter.

The insanity of King Lear gives Shakespeare an opportunity for a powerful delineation of the disturbed soul. His description is like a storm at sea. Whatever question may be raised as to the insanity of Hamlet, here we have an unquestioned form of mental disturbance in Lear. Insanity is worse than death. It is the mind confined in the living

tomb of the body. The fall of a great mind unsettled by domestic troubles is like the shattering of a great tower in an earthquake, when the bricks rattle in the street and the masonry of years is destroyed.

"Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage!
blow!
You cataracts and hurricanes, spout
Till you have drenched our steeples, drowned
the cocks!
You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,
Vaunt-couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts,
Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking
thunder,
Smite flat the thick rotundity o' the world!
Crack nature's moulds, all germens spill at once,
That make ingrateful man!

Rumble thy bellyful! Spit, fire! spout,
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters:
I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness;
I never gave you kingdom, call'd you children,
You owe me no subscription: then let fall
Your horrible pleasure; here I stand, your slave,
A poor, infirm, weak, and despised old man:
But yet I call you servile ministers,
That have with two pernicious daughters join'd
Your high-engender'd battles 'gainst a head
So old and white as this. O! O! 'tis foul!"

We are grateful for this fool who keeps with his master for a while and gives him the comfort of his presence. It is significant too, that Lear refers to the good dogs which he once owned, reminding us of the dog in Rip Van Winkle, who was such a good friend to his master. Dying men clutch at straws and many a man when he lets loose of life and its old associates finds comfort in a hut, and friendship in a dog, and help in a crazy fool. As we draw near to this powerful figure which is beyond the genius of the stage we come into the atmosphere of the Prometheus of Aeschylus and hear the ravings of the Titan upon the Caucassian rocks.

King Lear has been criticised because of his foolish disposition of his kingdom and his sentimental attitude to his children, a criticism which has some ground of justice. There are two aspects of old age involved in the personality of Lear. One should act as a warning to those who are sentimentally inclined as the years go on. From one viewpoint Lear is the biggest fool in the drama. His foolishness consists of follies and dangers sentimentally touching the love of his children. It was this folly that caused the death of Cordelia. Blessed is the man who as he grows old maintains his mental balance and lives sanely. We should all pray to be spared from the follies of old age. Old people often do very foolish things. It is a perilous time mentally. The path of old age often leads along dangerous heights. The action of Lear at the very beginning of his tragedy

anticipates the insanity which ensues. He did not say or do many wise things, which by the way, is no excuse for ill treatment. We are under obligation to take care of our parents whatever they may be, or do. I know there are two sides to this question. Sometimes children are rejected by their parents; again parents are rejected by their children. To you who are growing old let me warn you with this hint: do not act in such a manner as to alienate the children who now respect and love you. Be a Cordelia.

Among the strong domestic supports is the faithful daughter who holds loyally to her parents. Cordelia may not be the strongest of Shakespeare's women, but she is surely one of the faithful, marked by allegiance to her father. Life is conditioned by accomplishments and parts, but more by relationships. No violation of sacred relationships can be atoned by intellectual attainments. Great and good daughters are superior to great and bad actresses or artists, or authoresses. Better a faithful daughter in poverty than a faithless society woman in her automobile. Honor thy parents. This is an old pillar precept upon which stands the heavy weight of the world's civilization. Any movement that shifts this precept tends to disturb the moral order of mankind. It is followed by a promise as rich and full and sweet as any promise given to human faithfulness: "that thy days may be prolonged and that it may go well with thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

The old folks at home are to be included in life's reckoning and account. They may be left like wrecks along life's shore, but they cannot safely be either forgotten nor neglected. When men and women forget their parents, then does the nation begin its downward course. Here in the West, on the outer rim of the continent, whither thousands of young people have come in the crusade of wealth, the ghost of King Lear stalks through the crowded streets of the cities, the ripened fields of the ranch, and pauses by the gold mines of the hills. King Lear seeks, often in vain, for the children who have mysteriously disappeared from Glasgow, London, and New York. In some little country home far away, he waits for a letter on Christmas day, and sits in the sunset glow hoping for a sign of filial respect. Young man, honor your parents. You may succeed in other things, but do not allow your life to be a filial failure. Young woman, honor your father. Remember Lear. You will never meet a man who will be nearer to you than your father. Sit down now and send a message of love to the old folks at home. Some day you will receive a message that will smite you as lightning, and make your soul tremble with the memory of "the days that are no more," and this is the message: "King Lear is dead."

THE ASPIC IN THE BASKET OF FIGS, OR ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

"*The Wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*" Rom. 6: 23.

PAUL and Shakespeare deal with Rome—the one in the letter to the Romans, the other in his tragedy "Antony and Cleopatra." The apostle makes a singularly suggestive comparison in the passage taken from the sixth chapter of Romans. Sin is thought of as a workman going out to earn a wage. It is a service rewarded with death. Eternal life is an unmerited gift of God, unearned by works, a free and gracious gift through Jesus Christ.

In this little word "sin" is a world of meaning. It is a small term but an ocean in signification. No ship of thought has crossed it from shore to shore, no plummet ever reached the bottom of this soundless sea. Sin is the cause of life's troubles. The mind of man has tried in vain to understand the mystery of sin, but has been baffled, and the origin, and nature of evil are as completely shrouded today as in the beginning.

Paul tells us its penalty is death, physical and

spiritual. Let us not over-emphasize physical death, which is not the vital thing. The death of our bodies is not a great catastrophe. The death of the spiritual life is the true tragedy. The apostle thrusts below the physical change. He opens the perils of spiritual death. I know how unwelcome such a consideration is, and how uninviting such a theme, but I am sensible, too of the need of a thought to awaken us from the deadly lethargy of a materialistic, and self-satisfied age.

Where shall we find a fit illustration of this truth that sin's penalty is death? The morning paper brings to us the daily assurance of its soundness and the repetition of its reality in the life of the people. Shakespeare has given us a striking example of the penalty paid to sin by natural law in the spiritual world. Plutarch classified the facts of history, and Shakespeare has invested these facts with his illuminating genius, while Dryden in his "All for Love," has reflected the greater grandeur of the English master. Johnson says, "This play keeps curiosity always busy, and the passions always interested. The continual hurry of the action, the variety of incidents, and the quick succession of one personage to another, call the mind forward without intermission from the first act to the last."

It is right to say, not in apology, but explanation, that the scenes herein painted are laid in an age of paganism. The two conspicuous characters so powerfully delineated, lived in an age when religion

was well nigh driven from the earth, but the deep darkness of an unbroken cloud of heathenism was beginning to break away under the glimmering dawn of the Christianity of Christ.

The history of Antony and Cleopatra is not a drama, nor a catastrophe, but a tragedy. It ends in death. Continuous sin is paid in the cash value of destruction. The theology of Paul is asserted in the reality of lives of license.

In the time of Julius Caesar, Rome was disturbed by civic wars. In the year 48 Caesar went in search of Pompey, and finally arrived in Alexandria where he passed the winter. Here he met Cleopatra. The following year he left Egypt, and in 46 returned to Rome, whither he was followed by Cleopatra. After Caesar's assassination, Antony wished to learn on which side of the civic strife she was, and sought an interview. He was in Cilicia, and sent for the queen of Egypt to appear before him to answer to the accusation of being a rebel, having been accused of rendering aid to Cassius before the bloody battle of Philippi. Like the Queen of Sheba she made every preparation for the meeting. She made an irresistible appeal to Antony's sense of vanity, and to his taste for the beautiful. The Egyptian spider hypnotized the Roman fly. Here is Shakespeare's description of Cleopatra on the Cydnus:

"The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne,
Burn'd on the water: the poop was beaten gold;

Purple the sails, and so perfumed, that
The winds were love-sick with them; the oars were silver;
Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, and made
The water, which they beat, to follow faster,
As amorous of their strokes. For her own person,
It beggar'd all description: she did lie
In her pavilion—cloth-of-gold, of tissue—
O'er-picturing that Venus, where we see,
The fancy outwork nature: on each side her,
Stood pretty dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids,
With divers-colour'd fans, whose wind did seem
To glow the delicate cheeks which they did cool,
And what they undid did.
Her gentlewomen, like the Nereides,
So many mermaids tended her i' the eyes
And made their bends adornings: at the helm
A seeming mermaid steers: the silken tackle
Swell with the touches of those flower-soft hands,
That yarely frame the office. From the barge
A strange invisible perfume hits the sense
Of the adjacent wharfs. The city cast
Her people out upon her; and Antony,
Enthron'd in the market-place, did sit alone,
Whistling to the air; which, but for vacancy,
Had gone to gaze on Cleopatra too,
And made a gap in nature."

The impression made by the beautiful woman on the susceptible master of the Roman world may be

measured by his action at the decisive battle of Actium, which is the story of Samson and Delilah, and of Hercules and Deianeira repeated. Cleopatra reinforced Antony with a navy and twenty millions in money. At a critical moment she withdrew her ships and Antony, turning away from possible victory, followed the Queen to defeat and destruction. Boarding her ship he joined her on the poop, looking back upon the victorious enemy, deliberately sacrificing his patriotism and his life, and writing in the red words on the tomb of both:

"The wages of sin is death."

As Antony and Cleopatra are the chief characters in this tragedy of sin, we will gain a closer view of both.

Antony was an orator, a statesman, and a general. In eloquence he will be remembered by his classic tribute to the great Caesar. In statesmanship he had an opportunity to be even greater than Caesar, and as a leader of armies he might have been a second Hannibal. He divided the sovereignty of the world with Octavius and Lepidus. As a soldier half the legions of Rome were under the sway of his sceptre. But he was not equal to Brutus in the qualities which make a man. He never attained to individuality, and lived in his senses, not his ideals. Dominated by people rather than principles, he surrendered to a personality more powerful than himself. Antony

was brilliant and weak, intellectual but purposeless, ambitious, but as susceptible to the charms of woman as the sand is the slave of the wind. Fulvia was his wife, and after her Octavia, sister of Octavius, his last and greatest rival. It was this Octavius who is known in history as Augustus Caesar. By choosing a woman at Actium instead of a victory, the destiny of the Roman Empire was changed. Antony was given to self-indulgence. The asp in the basket of figs was the wine in the cup. It was this adder that first bit him. The ideals of some men are as useless as coats of mail which are never worn. The man who lives in the flesh never wins victories. No great military leader has ever surrendered himself to his cups. For the most part, great generals and statesmen have been temperate. Witness Oliver Cromwell, who dismissed the House of Parliament by the force of arms, and walked away with the key to the British Empire in his pocket—he was temperate. Gustavus Adolphus, Caesar, and Frederick the Great belong to the list of masters. Whatever may be said against Napoleon—he who raised an army which he used as a brush of fire to scour and scrub the floor of Europe, was temperate, else he would not have done it. The banquet has slain more generals than the battle-field. Sensualism slew Antony, and death was the reward.

Where is Antony today? You will find him in the fashionable cafes in Europe, the center of admiring worshippers in the pleasure centers of the world.

You will recognize him as you meet him on the steamships which cross the seas, and hear his glass clink in the gorgeous gambling resorts and fashionable saloons. You see him spending inherited money. Shakespeare has given a hint of his extravagance in Timon of Athens, who is a fool, while Antony passes as a gentleman and makes a bid for American girls. He is an undesirable citizen, and a useless, dangerous type, who makes a poor husband, a poor patriot, and at last, falls upon his own sword—his own worst enemy.

What shall we think of Cleopatra in whom the sands of earth mingled with the grains of gold, and the fascination of voluptuous charm seasoned the better qualities of her personality. More Greek than Egyptian, this wonderful woman fills a large place in an age in which Rome and Alexandria were the centers of the world's life. Born sixty-nine years before Christ, the last in the line of Ptolemies, she spent much of her early life in Alexandria, famous for its library, and its culture. At the age of nineteen she chained Caesar by her irresistible charms. Upon the occasion of his visit to Alexandria, she returned with him to Rome, where she remained until his assassination. She was twenty-eight, "a period of life," says Plutarch, "when woman's beauty is most splendid, and her intellect is in full maturity," when she met Antony.

Cleopatra is a social queen today. She is the woman of the world, and "the woman of the world"

is the companion of Antony, "the man of the world." You may meet her on the Rialto, and in the Ball Room, you will find her in the Halls of Legislation, in Congress, in the European Courts, wherever there is power and wealth and influence. She makes her home in the modern Romes and Alexandrias, always charming, ever deadly in her influence, and never to be trusted. She is the aspic in the fig-basket of modern affairs. She is the Lorelei, the Siren of the sea, the dangerous woman against whom men of might must wax their ears to escape the deadly charm.

Antony and Cleopatra create a social condition which comprises the crucial problem of our times. They are types which illustrate the luxury and extravagance of the age, and while the story of this couple is replete with signs of extravagance and luxury, it is oft repeated. No age is more luxuriant than ours. Never was there such extravagance. The dimpled cupids fanning Cleopatra are supplanted by high-priced servants, and the barge is insignificant in comparison with the modern ship, Pullman car, and automobile—at least the multiplicity of these comforts of transportation accessible to all classes of people, stamps this age as one of unusual comfort. The state of worldliness constituted by Antony and Cleopatra has become a world peril. It is the sting of this worldly asp that poisoned the nations of antiquity, that turned Athens into a mute and splendid memorial of marble and memory; that sent its deadly

influence through great Rome and changed the city of the Caesars into a city of tourists. The world has more to fear from Antony and Cleopatra than anybody or anything. Sensualism is destroying more people than work. Vice is rotting away the foundations of the social structure, and the Antonys and Cleopatras are the types which are boring into current life, as the worm works its way into the solid oak of the wharves. Our country need have no fear of foreign foes. The American people need not greatly concern themselves about threatened invasion of the Chinese or Japanese. The bristling guns on our sea-front do not symbolize the real perils of the Republic. Our foes are within. If our country is ever destroyed it will be destroyed by Antony and Cleopatra. It will be pulled down by the jeweled hands of the men and women who live in their senses, and who by self-indulgence and luxury, extravagance and vice, violate the wholesome laws of the simple life, and weaken the moral and physical fibre of the people.

The inevitable end of such condition is tragedy. Mark the meaning of this oft used word, tragedy. This is not a comedy. Here and there laughter rings out, but it is the forced laugh of guilt and vice. Shakespeare with the skill of a true artist introduces his smiles before the tragic blow. You will find this in all his tragedies. He makes you smile before he makes you cry. You have observed on a summer day, a deadly silence and tranquility just before the

storm breaks, with its loosened fires, and thunders, and drenching rains. Shakespeare is true to nature —before the tragical comes the frivolous. The comedy of our age is but the prologue of the tragedy, and how full of tragedy is this twentieth century. Every morning we read the play of Antony and Cleopatra. Antony is disappointed at last. It is always so. It has been true since Samson and Delilah. Cleopatra is stronger than Antony. Women may rule or ruin. In the contest of personalities she invariably proves the stronger. A bad woman may do more injury than a bad man. Antony falls upon his sword, believing her dead. She conceals herself in a castle or monument. Covered with blood and slowly dying he is drawn up to her chamber and expires in her arms—this frail man once the master of the world—now the withered leaf crumpled in the hand of the Egyptian Queen. What an illustration of the words "The wages of sin is death." Sin receives its wage, and death is the coin in which it is paid. Cleopatra commits suicide. A countryman appears with his basket of figs, and in it is the deadly reptile. This pagan woman whose paganism transmitted to other generations, flows through the veins of much of our modern womanhood, obeys the paganism of her fathers, and without a belief in the future and a right doctrine of life. To Proculeius she says,

"Know sir that I
Will not wait pinion'd at your master's court;

Nor once be chastis'd with the sober eye
Of dull Octavia.....Rather a ditch in
Egypt. Be gentle grave to me."

Afraid to meet the evils of life, she dies as only a pagan dies—by suicide, and so she puts the asp to her arm and breast, and as she does so, one last white wave of remnant motherhood breaks over the ruins of her life, and she utters that simple sob of sorrow:

"Dost thou not see my baby at my breast,
That sucks the nurse asleep."

Over against this tragical conclusion of the physical destruction of these ruling and powerful, but misdirected natures, is the more momentous fact of their spiritual disentegration and death, a fact which personified the ultimate end of the older Rome and Egypt. It is against this destruction that Paul hurls his majestic message, and makes his final appeal. His is a new civilization founded upon the eternal principles of righteousness. His is the civilization of life, not of death. The old order was that of hopeless paganism, the new order is one of helpful Christianity. This gift of eternal life is the salvation of both Antony and Cleopatra. Men call it religion, they call it faith, and oft times it is clothed in terms misunderstood by the popular mind, but it is the saving grace of the eternal, and which alone can lift up Egypt and Rome and resurrect fron the grave of sensual worldliness, Antony and Cleopatra.

It is the subtle but masterful spirit which, taking possession of Antony, transforms him into a William the Silent, or a Gladstone, and which gripping the finer sensibilities of Cleopatra, changes her into a queen among the better women of the world. God does not destroy, but changes functions, talents, forces. He takes the sword and changes it into a plow-share, he does not utterly destroy it. He seizes the spear, still wet with its costly sacrifice, and turns it into a pruning hook. He seizes an Antony, and guarding divinely the misdirected forces of his soul, regenerates them and recreates the man. This is the gift of eternal life. Thus Shakespeare and Paul bring before us, in a tremendously effective contrast, the two opposing principles of two contrary civilizations,—the one, the awful wages of sin, the other the sublime gift of the Eternal God.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE AND THE GOLDEN RULE

"*Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.*" Matthew 7:12.

WHILE the scene of the Merchant of Venice is laid under the soft Italian skies by the tideless Adriatic in whose lagoons the richly colored palaces of Venice reflect the glory of an older day, the passions of the comedy are reflected in the market place of the modern world. The characters who move back and forth through the shadows of legal cunning, business strategy, religious bigotry and racial hatred, reveal all the characteristics of the modern man who transacts business and deals with the quibbles of the law. Adventure, surprise and suspicion blend in a dramatic expression which has drawn upon the imagination of the author and appeals to the sense of right and wrong in the reader. The story of "the pound of flesh" is combined with that of "the three boxes." The first concerns us in this study of the play. The story of the pound of flesh may be traced back to the mythology of the Hindus. Shylock, the Jew, was a usurer, lived in Venice and made a fortune by lending

money at great interest to Christian merchants. The play is laid in a time of conflict between the Jews and Christians. This is the pivot on which the drama rests. Antonio, a kind, but rather weak man, was popular among his fellows, and among his best friends was Bassanio, a noble Venetian who became engaged to a lady of rank, named Portia. He asked Antonio to loan him some money, saying his ship would soon be in, when he would pay it back. Antonio did not have the money, but suggested that Shylock would make the loan. He was appealed to and consented, musing within himself "If I can once catch him on the hip, I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him. He hates our Jewish nation, and he lends out money gratis; and among the merchants he rants at me and my well earned bargains which he calls interest. Cursed be my tribe if I forgive him!"

After a stormy interview in which the rights and wrongs of the Jew were exploited, an agreement was made that the money would be loaned, and if he did not repay it by a certain day, he would forfeit a pound of flesh, to be cut off from any part of his body that Shylock pleased. In the meantime Antonio's ships were wrecked. Bassanio was married. Then came the execution of the bond. Antonio was imprisoned. The place of the trial was Venice. Portia disguised as a lawyer, appeared as counsel for the defense. The Jew demanded the pound of flesh. He would show no mercy, accept

no money, since the time had passed, and sharpened his knife in preparation for cutting off the pound of flesh. Portia resorted to a legal quibble and pointed out that if a drop of blood be shed in cutting the pound of flesh, Shylock's lands and goods are by the law to be confiscated to the State of Venice. Further, that if more or less be taken, he would be, by the laws of Venice, condemned to die, and his wealth forfeited to the senate. Again, "by the laws of Venice your wealth is forfeited to the State for having conspired against the life of one of its citizens, and your life lies at the mercy of the duke; therefore down on your knees, and ask him to pardon you."

The duke then said to Shylock,

> "That thou shalt see the difference of our spirits,
> I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it:
> For half thy wealth, it is Antonio's:
> The other half comes to the general state,
> Which humbleness may drive unto a fine."

Antonio said he would give up his share if Shylock would deed it to his daughter who had married a Christian, and then the duke said the State would forgive the fine of the other half of the riches if he repented, and turned Christian. Shylock said, "I am ill. Let me go home; and send the deed after me, and I will sign over half my riches to my daughter."

Shakespeare did not construct such a play without a definite ethical object. To find this object will be my purpose. Literature is not purposeless. It

has a text and an application and if it have neither it is not literature. While many separate and complete lessons may be drawn from a play such as The Merchant of Venice, some definite ruling ethical principle will be found underneath the whole structure. The religionist will find in the Merchant of Venice a discussion between the Jew and the Christian; the student of race-hatred, an opportunity to study the racial relations between the Jew and Gentile; the lawyer, a series of legal complexities which are worth his profoundest study; the moralist, a theme in which moral values are weighed and measured; the economist will be interested in a conflict between rights of property and the rights of humanity; while the romancer will find ample field for the consideration of the clash between love and business honor. All of these aspects are rich with blessings and practical moral conclusions. Comprehensively they are all involved in what is known as the Golden Rule—"Do unto others as you would have others do unto you," an ethical standard involving justice, mercy, righteousness and the unquestioned ideal of behavior between man and man. The Golden Rule is cordially accepted by everybody and freely repudiated by anybody who wishes to have his own way. It is a paradox that men with impunity break that,which with enthusiasm, they believe. Because it stands as the unquestioned though unattained standard of morality the world over, it may serve as a standard of moral measure-

ments for the characters and ideals of The Merchant of Venice.

The people of the play may first come forward to be tested by the Golden Rule. We may as well begin with Antonio, who will be the first in the small group of leading characters to be subjected to our examination. Antonio may quickly be disposed of as a rash friend and imprudent business man, an incautious weakling of not very much strength of character who lends himself easily and without any strain of conscience to the strategy of a quibble and the technicalities of law.

Bassanio is a fascinating parasite caught in the mesh of confiding friendship on one side, and an ardent love on the other.

Portia is the most modern of Shakespearean women. By this is meant, she is most masculine. This masculinity, moreover, is admirably held in check and ruled by a dominating sweetness and refinement which lends peculiar charm to her personality. She performs publicly a man's part, shares a man's legal and commercial strategy, and speaks with the mature eloquence of an experienced advocate. Her words are sharp and to the point, and convey a certain sense of assurance which comes from the feeling that she has the advantage of the Jew. She worries Shylock as a toreadore worries a bull in the ring and one cannot help watching the darts as they strike and quiver. She warms his Jewish blood and wounds him with her quibbles. The justly

celebrated speech on "mercy" is directly opposed to her purpose and feeling. It is the most complete expression of inconsistency in Shakespeare. She is preaching one thing, and as a lawyer, practising another. The contest between her and Shylock is a contest of technicalities. Neither Shylock nor Portia is ruled by the justice of the case. What Portia says of justice and mercy is all very true in the abstract but she does not apply the beautiful gospel to the Jew whom she defeats by recourse to the letter of the law. The issue between them is not one of generous fairness but of the loop-hole in the bond. Portia is no more just than Shylock. The instrument of her assault is the same as that of her opponent. She fights fire with fire and answers quibble with quibble. She is not so amiable as Mrs. Jameison pictures her, nor so pedantic and fair as Hazlitt would have us think, but over-rated by extravagant critics who have forgotten her faulty legal procedure in admiration of her personality. There is a painful disguise in all this woman does and says—a disguise symbolized by her dress, but far more fundamental in fact. Shylock is surrounded by a company of women bent on stealing away the peace of his soul and the contents of his purse. Jessica is a flippant little minx who breaks her father's heart by running away with a Christian man. Nerissa, the waiting maid, is rather a nonentity. While the title makes the Merchant the central figure, Shylock is the chief figure of the play, and made

the occasion of a highly dramatic situation, giving opportunity for Shakespeare to dissect and reveal the spirit of Judaism. Shylock is the storm center of racial hatred and business and domestic intrigue. The state, the church, society, and the home are all involved in the strange mingling of circumstances. His passionate appeal to the letter of the bond is the Pharisaical emphasis upon the religion of the outward life. In his physical appearance, he portrays with admirable accuracy the Jewish characteristics. Shakespeare has outlined the Jewish race in the personal appearance of Shylock. Edwin Booth's interpretation of Shylock may be cited as one that is quite consistent with Shakepeare's understanding of the Jew, and not the least of importance in the interpretation of his character, is Booth's conception of Shylock's dress. For Shylock's costume he found a suggestion from one of the oriental figures of a painting by Gerome "The Nautch Girl" which consisted of "a long dark green gown trimmed at the edge of the skirt with an irregular device of brown color; a dark brown gaberdine with flowing sleeves and hood lined with green and trimmed as the gown; a variegated scarf about the waist from which descends a leather pouch; red leather pointed shoes; and hat of orange-tawny color shaped somewhat like the Phrygian cap but with a rim of about two inches turned up; head gray and pretty bald; beard of same color and quite long,

earrings and several finger rings, one on thumb and one on forefinger; a long knotted staff; complexion swarthy; age about sixty, I judge from what is said of it by one of the gallants, when he is mourning the loss of his daughter, but it is difficult to determine the years of such natures." The personality of the Jew, the mixture of religous fanaticism and commercial ambition, the traits of his race which nothing has been able to destroy nor materially change, has been the subject for analysis and criticism in fiction, drama, and history. The Jew in fiction, as in real life, has never been treated with much generosity. Before the Merchant of Venice appeared, "The Jew of Malta" by Marlowe was given scant justice. Carlyle and Thackeray have almost caricatured him, while Dickens made "Fagin" a monster, and Scott's "Ivanhoe", and George Eliot's "Daniel Deronda" are of a higher standard. In Shylock, Shakespeare has compressed four thousand years or more of stress and struggle against religious bigotry and racial hatred. Shylock is ultra-Judaism. His doctrine is "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." This belief flowed in his blood, flashed from his eye, and trembled in the hand that gripped the knife that was sharpened to cut the pound of flesh. It was this doctrine that was recorded in the bond. He stands for the merciless letter of the law. Shrewd in bargain-making, he carries it to its human limit once it is made. The elopement of his daughter adds to the fuel which fires his soul. He carries

his nervous religious convictions into his business affairs. There is a cruel cunning in his merciless soliloquy:—

"Signior Antonio, many a time and oft
In the Rialto you have rated me
About my moneys and my usances;
Still have I borne it with a patient shrug;
For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe.
You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,
And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine,
And all for use of that which is mine own.
Well then, it now appears you need my help:
Go to, then; you come to me, and you say
'Shylock, we would have moneys:' you say so;
You, that did void your rheum upon my beard,
And foot me as you spurn a stranger cur
Over your threshold; moneys is your suit.
What should I say to you? Should I not say
'Hath a dog money? is it possible
A cur can lend three thousand ducats?' or
Shall I bend low and in a bondman's key,
With bated breath and whispering humbleness,
Say this,—
'Fair sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last;
You spurned me such a day; another time
You call'd me dog; and for these courtesies
I'll lend you this much moneys'?

ANTONIO—

"I am as like to call thee so again,
To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too.
If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not
As to thy friends; for when did friendship take
A breed for barren metal of his friend?
But lend it rather to thine enemy;
Who if he break, thou mayest with better face
Exact the penalty."

As one looks upon this aroused and tumultuous Jew standing before his unsympathetic associates like a barren and fruitless tree before the storm, one's sympathies go out to him. He is the only figure in the play which invites our sympathy. He is the personification of the persecuted race, surrounded in this instance by a company of clever and rather unscrupulous enemies.

Measured by the Golden Rule, this is indeed a comedy and not a drama. It is the catastrophe of cunning, a tragedy in the letter of the law and acted in modern courts so often that public conscience is almost seared with the repetition of its inhuman processes. Let us draw closer to these chief participants in this transaction and observe how law is bandied back and forth as a tennis ball, subject wholly to the skill and dexterity of the players. The close observer will perceive that law is determined not by its intrinsic moral worth but by the resources of the skilled player. Portia is on one side of the net,

Shylock on the other, and the comedy is a dramatic description of the game. The trial is a demonstration of abuse of law by law. A law-suit is a fight. The court is the field. It is more than a game. It is a serious conflict subject to all the chances and surprises of the battle. The result is usually spoken of as having been "won" or "lost". This makes court scenes comedy. Shylock wants his pound of flesh—so the bond dictates. Portia warns against the shedding of a drop of blood which is also justified by the unwritten conditions of the bond and thus quibble offsets quibble. To answer cunning with cunning is not a vindication of justice. Having once defeated the Jew, judgment is given against the plaintiff. A decision is rendered to the effect that his estate be forfeited, one-half to the Commonwealth, the other to the defendant; that his life lie at the mercy of the duke; and to crown all, that he be a Christian. This may be law, but a form of justice which is hard to adjust to the Golden Rule and affords a suggestive study in the ethics of the court-room. The trial scene is a very good reflection of the jurisprudence of modern times in which too often passion supplants principle, the technicality of the letter, the gracious spirit of justice, and strategy abuses the ethics of mercy.

In the light of the rule laid down by the great Master of morals, one may at least reflect upon the relation of justice and mercy, and their relative bearing upon human conduct. As liberty is made of law,

so is justice made of mercy. Liberty is the fulfillment of law, and justice is the fulfillment of mercy. One completes the other and satisfies its claims. Law in the crude is without freedom. It is a master which brings us to the realization of liberty. Justice in the raw is severe and merciless. Seasoned with mercy it becomes righteous and loving. Justice would put us all within the heartless hold of law were it not tempered with mercy. God does not govern the world on the principle of justice except as justice is seasoned with mercy.

> "Therefore, Jew,
> Though justice be thy plea, consider this,
> That, in the course of justice, none of us
> Should see salvation."

Justice is not revenge. The purpose of all punishment in God's mind is merciful redemption. Justice without mercy is the severity of the letter. Mercy with justice is the saving quality of the spirit. The mixture of these two moral ingredients results in the Golden Rule. Portia makes a beautifully dramatic address on the quality of mercy, recalling the words from Ecclesiasticus, "Mercy is seasonable in the time of affliction as clouds of rain in time of drought," and makes her first point by declaring that mercy shall not be compulsive but free in its exercise—that its nature is to flow freely and unrestrainedly like the rain. This would be

a very remarkable speech if reinforced by the sincerity of the speaker. It will bear re-reading.

"The quality of mercy is not strain'd,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from Heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest;
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes:
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown;
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attributes to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But mercy is above this sceptered sway;
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
Though justice be thy plea, consider this,
That, in the course of justice, none of us
Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy;
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much
To mitigate the justice of thy plea;
Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there."

Portia's intellectual gifts shine with lustre in this magnificent appeal in which she is at once a lover and a lawyer. Interested in her two clients, one her husband, the other her husband's friend, her appeal to the Jew's mercy was not for the sake of mercy but of men. She tried to win him first with honey then with gall. She would cover him with roses and then poison him with animosity and bitterness. She used a golden arrow to penetrate the hard heart of Shylock, but the arrow broke into pieces at the base of four thousand years of persecution.

Much time has been spent in tracing the origin of the plot and the source of the facts of the Merchant of Venice. Whether the old ballad of Geruntus of the sixteenth century, or the Northern Lord, or a chapter Leti from Pope Sextus V, or a story discovered in Shakespeare's time in an Italian book entitled "Il Pecorone", or the bond and casket story in the Gesta Romanorum of the thirteenth century, or a Persian manuscript translated by Munro, or Marlowe's "Jew of Malta," or a half dozen other sources are responsible for its origin, this I think may be set down as true—that Shakespeare found abundant material in the ordinary affairs of legal and business life to compose a plot so characteristic of human nature. The mixture of passion and principle, of personality and opportunity, in the development of the Merchant of Venice is reproduced in modern life, and scenes may be laid in any city in America

and not do violence to the customs of the courts and the principles of the people. The play illustrates at once the value of a practical application of the Golden Rule, and the lack of capacity in the average man to make that rule a law for the enforcement of law, and a principle for human conduct. It is now, as then, an object for our attainment, and furnishes much inspiration for that preaching which is ideal, and the moralizing of reformers which makes inspiring homilies. When our Lord delivered the sermon on the Mount, He went away from the multitudes, escaped to the mountain and talked to His disciples. The multitudes have never practiced the sermon He preached on that occasion when he uttered the Golden Rule.

The most superficial moralist may see in this play the injunction that Shylock should do unto Antonio as he would have Antonio do unto him, and that Antonio should do unto Shylock as he would have Shylock do unto him. Portia did not succeed in perfectly interpreting this law, but like most reformers was influenced by partisanship, a reminder unwritten but none the less apparent, as in this play, charging the Christian to be fair to the Jew and the Jew to be fair to the Christian in matters of religious belief. The courts of law are suffused with the penetrating light that brings within the gaze of any man, who would study the ups and downs of law, how dangerous is the emphasis upon the letter at the expense of the righteousness of the spirit. The

courts, for the most part, are still dominated by the doctrine of Judaism. They are still on the Old Testament ground. The defeat of justice by a resort to the technical imperfections in the bond is a cause of apprehension. The application of this gospel of right treatment to capital and labor is one of the dreams of the industrial reformer. The problem is unsolved because men are not good enough to make a practical adaptation of the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount to the needs of society, which is another inducement to make the world capable of doing good. Good principles will not be applied by bad people. Cleverness, strategy, chicanery, and the adroit handling of the tennis ball of truth may win a game in clever play, but will not realize the purpose of the Golden Rule.

The drama then has been called a comedy of intrigue, in which the god of the world is set over against the God of justice and truth. It has been interpreted as a study of the relation of man to property, but with greater fitness may be thought of as a study of man's relation to justice, or man to man. Property is incidental in the play. The value of the ducats, the contents of the boxes, the claims of the bond, are the keys which open the door to the world of Vanity Fair. Thackeray introduces us to the people of this region, and Shakespeare leaves us in the same remarkable company. With the skill of a scholar, who knows the foibles and follies in life, he has unfolded and analyzed the vices of

mankind, confining his people to a limited circle of Venetians who are used to illustrate the larger circle of worldlings, cheapened and ruined by the ruling passion for property and power. Yes, it is a comedy of intrigue, and too, a tragedy of selfishness which taints and stains everybody in the play.

In contrast with this other-worldliness, with its business passions and racial hatred, selfishness and self interest, the dramatist gives us the glorious night in Belmont, and the love scene between Jessica and Lorenzo, when the moon shines bright and the gentle kisses of the breeze move the trees—a night which makes the lovers think of Troilus mounting the walls of Troy, and Cressid sleeping in the tents of Greece.

> "In such a night
> Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertrip the dew,
> And saw the lion's shadow ere himself,
> And ran dismay'd away."

And so the lovers thought of Dido "with a willow in her hand upon the wild sea banks," of Medea gathering "enchanted herbs," and of the night Jessica stole from the wealthy Jew and ran away from Venice to Belmont. It was the hour of self-consciousness, born of a resemblance of this light scene and a former experience—a vision of the time when self interest will be subject to a better order in the domestic and business world. Shakespeare relieves the strain

of the situation which presses upon the nerves through out the play, by giving us this delightfully beautiful and suggestive moonlight scene in which love is the sole actor on the stage. "The moonlight sleeps upon the bank." Here they sit while sounds of music creep into their ears and the soft stillness and the night are in harmony. Above, the floor of heaven is inlaid with patines of bright gold. The angel sings, quiring to cherubines.

> "Such harmony is in immortal souls;
> But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
> Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it."

KING RICHARD, THE THIRD, THE SATAN OF SHAKESPEARE

"*Whatsoever a man soweth that also shall he reap.*"
Galatians 6-7.

MILTON'S Satan was probably inspired by Richard III. That an English king should so portray the nature of the devil is in itself a matter of more than ordinary interest. To be at once kingly and Satanic, to rule a people and expose a soul of evil is to show the dualism of all human nature—the Dr. Jekyl and Mr. Hyde of mankind. However far we seek for virtues in the devil,—and most representations disclose some dangerously attractive qualities,—in Richard we have some favorable traits. Dangers are often beautiful. The singing Sirens were as beautiful as the hidden rocks were dangerous. Poison may be concealed under the cover of gold or hidden in the heart of a rose. The tiger is a strong and splendid animal whose muscles are alive with strength, whose eyes are like precious stones of fire. He is magnetic but dangerous. The eagle is the king of the air—a noble bird hiding his talons as a battleship covers her guns. The Alps are

majestic and inviting with white peaks and crags and precipices, but are they not the grave-yard of tourists? King Richard III had courage, discernment, a slight touch of sympathy now and then, but all in all a veritable devil, a butcher of men whose court was the slaughter-house of enemies. From the Latin biography of Thomas Moore, Shakespeare got scanty information of the characteristics of Richard who is reported, "as born with teeth. He was ugly, his left shoulder higher than his right. Wickedness, anger, envy belonged to his nature, a quick sharp wit to his mind. He was a good captain; with large gifts he got him unsteadfast friendship for which he was fain to pill and spoil in other places and got him steadfast hatred. Close and secret as a deep dissembler lowly of countenance, he is at the same time imperious and arrogant of heart, disdainful in death, outwardly companionable where he inwardly hated, not letting to kiss whom he thought to kill; disputatious and cruel, not for evil-will alway but oftener for ambition and policy. If his safety or his ambition interfered, he spared neither friend nor foe." These traits in a setting truly historical are interpreted without exaggeration by Shakespeare. "He who possessed neither pity, love nor fear" is painted with bold strokes of expressive color and he stands out as a portrait beside Macbeth as the Satan of Shakespeare.

His chief passion was to gain his crown. This was his only concern and it ruled his every act. Every-

body in his path was summarily removed. In the first act he murders his brother, Clarence. His soliloquies are revelations of his character. False to his brother he is hypocritical to Lady Anne, whom he first wins then mocks. Following the curses of Margaret, which he throws off his conscience with impunity, he murders his brother. In the second act we have the death of Edward IV. Malice and falsehood toward children, mother and Buckingham prepare for mistrust. The third act records the winning of the throne by murder and hypocrisy. Rivers, Grey, Vaughn and Hastings are the victims, and religion is the mask worn by the murderer. In the fourth act is described the murder of the children in the tower. In the fifth, the curse of retribution begins to realize itself and law asserts its authority.

> "By a divine instinct men's minds mistrust
> Ensuing danger; as, by proof, we see
> The water swell before a bois'trous storm,—
> But leave it all to God."

The two tents of Richard and Richmond are shown side by side, making an impressive contrast between good and evil. In the one Richard commits himself to the earthly guards, to the soldiers with swords and armour. Awakening from his sleep, he cries:

"What do I fear? myself? there's none else by:
Richard loves Richard; that is, I am I."

Richmond commits himself like a good Christian to God.

"God and our good cause fight upon one side."

The conscience of Richard is swords and law. The tragedy of Richard is like a candle set against the words—"Whatsoever a man soweth that also shall he reap."

The character of Richard is explained by his physical deformity, which not unfrequently determines mental operations. Lord Byron's club foot made him less gentle and generous and created a sensitiveness which marked his character. Pope might have put more sweetness in his "Essay on Man" had he not been a hunch-back. Caliban of Shakespeare's "Tempest" lives again in his crooked form groveling in the dust in Dickens' Quilp. Philip II of Spain, like Richard III, was a deformed man and atrocious in his bloody deeds. The apologetic based upon physical defects is well taken. Prenatal conditions go far to explain the mystery of the notorious criminals who, by the accident of government, have been made the rulers of the people. "Void of natural affection" is the way the Scripture describes the mental state of those with whom nature has dealt ill.

"Then, since the heavens have shap'd my body so,
Let hell make crook'd my mind to answer it."
—(Henry VI)

"Whosoever," says Bacon, "hath anything fixed in his person that doth induce contempt, hath also a perpetual spur in himself to rescue and deliver himself from scorn."

In the development of the morality of the play, Queen Margaret is the chief character. Whether her place has or has not historical warrant, she has a rightful place in the moral structure of the related events. Her curse is fixed in the moral order of the universe as is the law of gravity. Margaret was the widow of King Henry VI and the head of the House of Lancaster. After the battle of Tewksbury, May, 1471, she was confined in the tower till 1475. Having been ransomed by her father she went to France where she died in 1482. This shows that her part in the drama is fictitious. Her character and the character of Richard have their roots in the preceding play of King Henry VI. Henry V died in 1422, after notable conquests in France. His infant son afterwards Henry VI, inherited the crown. At the age of twenty-two he married Margaret of Anjou. "The Wars of the Roses" which ended with the death of Richard III were caused by the contest for the French provinces. Margaret figured in these events. "The irritations

caused by the losses in France are represented by Shakespeare as so many eggs of discord in the nest of English life and Maragret as the hot-breasted fury that hatched them into effect; her haughty, vindictive temper, her indomitable energy and fire-spouting tongue fitting her to be as indeed she was a constant provoker and stirrer of hatred and strifes" (Hudson). Shakespeare introduces her as Nemesis. In the myths of old, Nemesis was the daughter of Ocean and Night, the goddess of retributive fury, clothed in a tunic, and drawn in a car hitched to dragons. In the realm of religion she was the personification of justice, the terrible declaration of divine law. She is the Nemesis of Richard III and her curse is phrased in words of fire. She calls him dog, "the troubler of the poor world's peace." She calls upon the worm of conscience to still begnaw his soul, and that no sleep close up his deadly eye, unless in some tormenting dream he is frightened with the hell of ugly devils. Her description exhausts adjectives and makes use of such words as "elvish-mark'd, abortive, rooting hog—Thou rag of honour! thou detested." If Nemesis is a fire, conscience is the fuel which feeds it. Margaret's mighty curse is but the vocal thunder reporting the explosion of conscience. What is conscience? The philosophers from Confucius to Kant define it as enlightened reason; Epicurus Hobbes, Bentham and others as the instinct of individual preservation. It has been defined as the instinct of social preserva-

tion. Leslie Stephens in the "Conscience of Ethics" says—Conscience is the torture of public spirit of the social order, as to obey primary conditions for its welfare.* Conscience has to do with God in the soul of man—that remnant goodness resident in us all. A gift rather than a voice, a capacity rather than a special Providence uttering himself to our conscience of good and evil. The moral law of God within and the starry heavens above impressed Kant—this is conscience, a knowing with God, the soul's secret understanding with the Almighty. It might be educated or seared as with a hot iron. When our conscience is on good terms with God we are happy. When it is unfriendly with God we are filled with remorse. In Richard we have a spectacle of a man overcoming his conscience snuffing out the "light that lighteth every man who cometh into the world." The historical setting of this tragedy of the inner life is impressively described by Shakespeare in what takes place the night before the battle of Bosworth field.

*"As a fact the conscience is the ideal of the self, coming to consciousness as a present command. It says, *Be loyal.* If one asks, *Loyal to what?* the conscience awakened by our whole personal response to the need of mankind replies, *Be loyal to loyalty.* If hereupon various loyalties conflict, the conscience says, *Decide.* If one asks, *How decide?* conscience further urges, *Decide as I your conscience the ideal expression of your whole personal nature conscience and unconscience finds best.* If one persists, *But you and I may be wrong,* the last word of conscience is, *We are fallible,* but we can be decisive and faithful and *this is loyalty.*"—(ROYCE—"The Philosophy of Loyalty"—Page 195.)

Richard has a dream.

"Give me another horse; bind up my wounds.
Have mercy, Jesu!—Soft! I did but dream.
O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me!
The lights burn blue. It is now dead midnight.
Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh.
What do I fear? myself? there's none else by:
Richard loves Richard; that is, I am I.
Is there a murderer here? No. Yes, I am:
Then fly. What, from myself? Great reason why:
Lest I revenge. What, myself upon myself?
Alack, I love myself. Wherefore? for any good
That I myself have done unto myself?
O, no! alas, I rather hate myself
For hateful deeds committed by myself!
I am a villain; yet I lie, I am not.
Fool, of thyself speak well; fool, do not flatter.
My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several tale,
And every tale condemns me for a villain.
Perjury, perjury, in the high'st degree;
Murder, stern murder, in the direst degree;
All several sins, all used in each degree,
Throng to the bar, crying all, Guilty! guilty!
I shall despair. There is no creature loves me;
And if I die, no soul shall pity me:
Nay, wherefore, should they, since that I myself
Find in myself no pity to myself!

Methought the souls of all that I had murder'd
Came to my tent: and every one did threat
To-morrow's vengeance on the head of Richard."

A man wholly bad would not have such a horrid dream. He would not have dreamed at all. This vision is a quickening of conscience, the still small voice will not quickly be silenced. The worm already turned dies hard. Richard succeeds in overcoming his better nature, but the tragedy culminates not in the death of his body but in the loss of his soul. In this realistic description of a struggle between right and wrong the return of the dead emphasizes the moral significance of the situation. For the first time Richard grasps the meaning of retribution—a law which he has steadfastly stood against with impunity, setting it aside as unworthy his serious acceptance.

"By the apostle Paul, shadows tonight
Have struck more terror to the soul of Richard
Than can the substance of ten thousand soldiers
Armed in proof, and led by shallow Richmond."

The return of the dead bringing to him the soul's remorse, plunging him into the fires of hell, is governed by a law which he cannot escape. It is the expiring gasp of his soul's consciousness—the last moving picture thrown upon the transient curtain of his better manhood, and his forehead is wet with the

sweat of the conflict, all of which is expressed in the wisdom that we reap what we sow, we get what we give. If we sow murders, we reap the harvest and get out of the world what we put into it. "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." There is an inevitable reciprocity between the thing we do and the world in which we do it. The rebound of our own life is the hell from which we would be delivered. This moral law is acknowledged by Richard as he starts from his slumber. Conscious of his eternal isolation from humanity he shrieks "There is no creature loves me." He who played with love and never honored it now sees his house of gold crumbled into dust. Love itself becomes law and smites him as with a sword. His life centered in selfishness is its own punishment. This is the tragedy of King Richard III. "I myself find in myself no pity to myself." The next day we have the outward confirmation of this inward defeat, a fact which need not particularly interest us since it is but the physical refrain of a mental tragedy and the logical consequence of the inner disruption of law and order. Richmond was the logical end of Richard. He who represents the moral order of the world must make conquest upon Richard, who would pull down the moral structure with his own hands. In further recognition of the situation he uses these words:

"Slave, I have set my life upon a cast,
And I will stand the hazard of the die;
I think there be six Richmonds in the field;
Five have I slain today instead of him.
A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!"

This then is Shakespeare's analysis of King Richard III, a study which opens to the student inviting fields for the consideration of its ethical aspects. Richard is a study in monstrosity. That he is unusual and abnormal physically and in his moral structure, is obvious to many students of his prenatal and subsequent history. He belongs to the monsters who, rising above their fellows in determination, in power of will, have made an impression upon history by the sheer force of personality possessed with the qualities of bold and courageous wickedness. The possibilities of human nature are suggestively discussed in this man's unique personality. His sins are written so large that we must see them. The difference between men is largely a difference of religious instincts and spiritual training. Great saints might be great sinners. Contrariwise great sinners have in them the basic qualities of great saints. The potter has more to do with the clay in shaping its design than clay has to do with itself. Human nature is much the same. That which determines human nature in its moral destiny is the touch from without. Much depends upon whose hands shape us, what ideal rules us, to what spirit

we submit as the government of our inner lives. St. Francis of Assisi is the extreme opposite to King Richard III, but both men lived in the same world and had the same passions. St. Francis suffused Europe with his holiness. King Richard left in his pathway nought but wreck and ruin. There is as much difference between these two characters as there is between the foul Miasmic pool and the clear shining star. One has music, the other clash and discord. The one is remembered by the world-wide system of religious devotion and the other is remembered for the blood he shed. The extremes of life cannot be accounted for on the ground of hereditary prenatal conditions, physical deformity, national ideals or social environment. These enter into the formation of character but do not answer all the questions which are raised in the presence of a really wicked man. Nero and St. Bernard are opposites. Why a Nero and why a Bernard of Clarveaux? What constitutes the difference between Paul and Caesar or between John the Baptist and Herod? What is the difference between a man who reddens his hands in blood and the man who lays down his life for God? Does it not involve the whole matter of religion? The history of character cannot be confined to the history of flesh and blood. These have much to do with the formation of character, but character is rooted in other soil and grows out of other conditions. Golden conduct is not fashioned out of leaden instincts. The social remedies offered

for the reconstruction of the world fall short when they fail to include a downright religious cause. To separate political or social economy from religious conditions and spiritual principles is to signally fail to comprehend at once the need and the remedy of modern society. The difference between St. Francis of Assisi, if I may continue the comparison, and King Richard is the difference of a vision of truth. The one saw the truth and brought it down into his life which he beautified and adorned with its spiritual power. The other did not see the truth. Therefore one was a saint and the other a criminal. This carries with it this profoundly important lesson that—"Whatsoever a man soweth that also shall a man reap."