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INFERENCES AS TO THE PERSONALITY OF
SHAKESPEARE

TO BE DRAWN FROM HIS WORKS.

Presented to the faculty

of

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by

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INFERENCES AS TO THE PERSONALITY OF
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" Great wits are sure to madness near allied."

That genius is a species of insanity is a theory long popularly championed and sometimes scientifically defended. Its popularity is not surprising. Mediocrity must have some consolation and it is surely a blessing to escape the imputation of a possible microbe.

It is futile to deny the modicum of truth found in this theory. Every man has his own instance to prove it. It seems to be true that intellectual expansion in one direction often entails constriction in another; or, a more deplorable fact, mental prodigés tend to become moral degenerates. An Alexander, a Bonaparte or a Charles XII, with colossal genius for conquest, are blind to simple moral law, and one of them at least was little better than a maniac. Swift with his pen of chilled steel and matchless (until he furnished one) powder magazine of words, felt early in life the warning that he should begin "to die at the top." He did,- and so also Ruskin. Byron, the peanut gallery hero par excellence is - merely the hero of peanut gallery. Shelly with his angelic music is mad as a march hare when he talks of sociology. Poe, the god incarnate

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of witching song effuses unadulterated nonsense in his philosophy. Keats is a glorious Pagan with moral sense eliminated.

This bit of truth is a powerful leaven. So powerful is it indeed that when the Baconian partisans fail of any thing more substantial, they rest their edifice on a ramshackle foundation like this: It is against all experience to find poetic genius of the first rank go hand in hand with exceptional common sense. The author of Hamlet and Othello and Lear could not have been the prosperous self-made actor who retired at forty-eight independently wealthy; the magician who with Prospero, after setting all the discords of humanity to heavenly music, broke his wand and buried his book "deeper than did ever plummet sound," could not have settled down as the smug owner of New Place to the zealous collecting of his rents, and conscientious litigation for the recovery of 1^l., 19 s. 10 d.

'Tis useless to deny the facts in Shakespeares' life reveal a paradox; still, like many another paradox, the discrepancy is only seeming. Shakespeare's genius was eminently sane. If we find in him the higher intellectual powers most happily blended, why evince surprise if the humbler, though not therefore less important qualities of prudence and frugality are also exceptionally

present? Had Shakespeare failed in these he would not stand our most nobly-equipped, highly-achieved, mere man. They were necessary to the completed circle. He was the sanest of poets, the sublimest of business men; his imagination fettered only by his reason, his dealings tempered always by his love.

" Shakespeare - The man." What a snare and delusion in that! We are sure that he was a man, but in the language of Street Dick, "What for a man?" Do you wish an introduction to Sam Johnson? You may have it any time for seventy-five cents. Boswell leaves you in no doubt after chronicling one meeting of the club. Would you like to cultivate Swifts acquaintance? The "Modest Proposal" and "Journal to Stella" are all you need. You may know Charles Lamb, and DeQuincey and Carlyle as well as most of the people who saw and met them. Go with Lord Byron through one Canto of Childe Harold as he trailed his sorrow over Europe and you shall recognise the wall at the end of a millennium. You need not travel more than a " furlonge way or so " from the Tabard before you are on speaking terms with Chaucer and at evening of the first day's ride you are sworn comrades. You will be longer getting intimate with Browning, for you must

learn when he is having his joke with you. But Shakespeare! Where is he so hardy as to rise up and say "Lo here!" or "Lo there is Shakespeare?" His characters are

" no other than a moving row
Of magic Shadow-shapes that come and go
Round with the Sun-Illumined Lantern held
In midnight by the Master of the Show"

He is the "Master of the Show"-- the Deus ex Machina. The Dramatis Personae are men and women with real heads and hearts, who speak. You are not treated to a puppet show by a skillful ventriloquist. When his characters open their mouths, you are persuaded it is they themselves. Byron and Hall Caine may tell you that the Giaour or Oscar Stephenson is about to talk, though you know well enough it is only Byron or Hall Caine; but in Shakespeare the dramatic genius is paramount.

In the Sonnets one might hope to get behind the scenes a moment. We should expect to find nowhere more of personal feeling than in such a series of sonnets as Shakespeare left; yet here also we meet disappointment. It strikes us almost as an indication of willful perverseness that he was doing consummately, something every other poet or rhymster was attempting, and he was doing it after the approved style of the time. Mr. Sidney Lee leaves

little room for doubt that there is no sure note of personal feeling in these highly conventional pieces.

There is a theory of genius that fits the great master of drama well. What if the man of genius be but a highly sensitized plate upon which every scrap of reading or conversation, every sense experience, and every fleeting scintilla of personal thought and emotion is caught and registered? Or if we may change the figure. What if he be a complex system of pigeon-holes where every rag of experience receives its proper label and is placed with its proper associates - to reappear at the behest of the Master? Suppose this, and Shakespeare's mind is a glorified type-writer with a million keys - a miraculous organ with a billion pipes answerable to his hand alone. Add to this the magic of imagination; let it brood over the mighty wilderness of sounds forming new and wonderful combinations and we have framed

" not a fourth sound but a star."

Shakespeare was of an experiencing nature. He did not come into the world with a miniature globe in his right hand and a compendium of Natural Theology in his left. He grew and learned. Walter Bagehot says well that his work is the result of a first-class imagination working on a first-class experience. Now it is plain how such a mind would work when confronted with the problems of

the dramatist. Given a character with certain bold outlines; given a situation, what will he do or say? Shakespeare consults the pigeon-hole, consciously or otherwise, as you please, floods his subject with the accumulations of the probably widest experiencing nature ever accorded to man; then gathering with his magnetic imagination the consistent and like elements, he sets down -- himself? Yes, but only part of himself -- Hamlet, Iago, Biron, Viola, Prospero, Henry V, Richard III, Coriolanus. Small wonder that we do not see Shakespeare. We may as well try to do Africa in a morning. We cannot see the forest for the trees. As the actor identifies himself in a measure with his rôle, so the dramatist puts a part of himself into his characters, but 'tis too small to pass judgement on. We cannot judge a flock of sheep by one specimen, nor would we criticize the physiognomy of the Sphinx with a microscope.

So I think it not strange that we should find it difficult to analyze and classify Shakespeare. To do so would be like composing a monograph on humanity. His was, we are justified in believing, the most receptive of natures, the most universal in apprehensions, the most catholic in sympathies and tastes. He would have been hard put to it to write a short character sketch

of himself. Like the doubter who knows too many conflicting things to adhere firmly to any fixed belief, he was too many people at different times to work very hard at being one all the time. Like the cloud in Hamlet, he was a camel one moment, then a weasel or a whale. The Ancient Greeks, twenty centuries before Shakespeare, knew and taught the eternal flux in nature. Said one, " You dip in the river and emerge a different man. The river itself is different from the one you entered." There is an undoubted flux in personality - especially in the assimilative personality. Who would expect to find the author of Love's Labor Lost or the perpetrator of Venus and Adonis the same as the wizard of the Tempest or the sage of Coriolanus? To give his opinions now in " words as hard as cannon-balls" and next week other views perhaps, in the same sort of grape and canister has always been the mark of a great man. Consistency is no necessary badge of sincerity or authenticity, and if we find a man expressing on different occasions what seem to be contradictory opinions we are not compelled to assume either or both or all of them feigned to suit the mouth-piece. They may be the man himself at different times. They may all exhibit personality.

So far, I presume, I may be permitted to go with-

out much fear of being halted. The difficulty, it will be said, is not to reconcile conflicting evidence; but to find evidence of personality. Can we find Shakespeare in his works? In the light of the introductory remarks I think we can, and it is the purpose of this paper to make the attempt.

I confess I have little in common with that class of critics who profess to regard the dramatist as a kind of "intellectual mid wife" to use Mr. Leslie Stephens' phrase. If Falstaff has humor how could Shakespeare be without it? If there is pathos in Ophelia's moan "Indeed, my lord, you make me believe so," when Hamlet says "I loved you once," could Shakespeare be without a feeling for the pathetic in a stricken though a weakly, inadequate love like hers? If Launcelot Gobbo is irresistibly droll, if Rosalind is charming, if Portia is noble and if the tragedy in Lear is sublime, can Shakespeare be conceived lacking in an appreciation of all these attributes? The mere question confesses its absurdity. Who ever heard of an artist lacking in a passive appreciation of his art? No one ever accused Wordsworth of being purposely humorous, though he sometimes with the most serious intentions and most sedate mien, stumbled on an outrageously funny line. But conscious humor argues keen relish:

else how should an author know when he has been happy in his fun? The creator of Falstaff must have been himself a delightful companion.

I am aware that this, used alone is a precarious scaffolding when examined in its minutest construction. For instance it may be said that by pursuing the analogy, we must suppose Shakespeare to have an appreciation of the nauseating hypocrisy of Angelo or the diabolical treachery of Iago. Yes, we do not hesitate to admit it. We rather proclaim it. The supposition fits beautifully in our theory of genius. But we did not cite this evidence as final and exact, only as directive. We use it for only what it is worth; and it is worth something -- nay, a great deal, in a negative, unobtrusive way. Our real active theory must add something to this. Did Shakespeare approve of Angelo and Iago and Richard The Third, the case would be different. He did approve as we approve of the humor of Falstaff--as humor. When Shakespeare makes us yield our applause to a scene, he himself must believe in that scene; else he is insincere. We know he is not insincere. No work could last as his and be insincere. Art cannot succeed by deception, and surely the greatest art must be the sincerest.

The grounds therefore upon which our inferences will be based are ⁱⁿ general, the following:

If Shakespeare appears to admire a character we can look upon that man or woman as voicing in a measure Shakespeare's own opinions. What the dramatist thinks and what he likes especially must willy-nilly find expression in the people he evidently likes. The wisdom of character estimation never got further than Ruskin's dictum "Tell me what a man likes and I will tell you what he is." Especially may we depend upon this kind of evidence if these opinions and likes recur with sufficient frequency to be in any sense chronic. On any other supposition, there is no sanity nor moral articulation in Shakespeare. His works are but a vale of Hinnom where no shadow of purpose falls and he himself, a simple child sporting with the mighty elements of world-anatomy, without a glimmer of their meaning.

" William Shakespeare was born in Stratford in 1564. All the commentators, Shakesperian scholars, etsetry, are agreed on this, which is about the only thing they are agreed on in regard to him, except that his mantle hasn't fallen onto any poet or dramatist hard enough to hurt said poet or dramatist much."

The critics are still unanimous in regard to the mantle, as they were when Artemus Ward convulsed the readers of Punch with the above; and there are now a few other matters commonly agreed upon. Still there remains a vast deal of conflicting conjecture and there are tons of Shakespeariana moulding on forgotten shelves. Requiescat in pace. We would not disturb your cumbersome repose. We look merely for self-revelation in his works, for evidence which none can dispute but those who still naively maintain Shakespeare did not write Shakespeare.

Browning, in his sonnet, "The Names," couples those of Jehovah and Shakespeare.

" . . . Two names there are: That which the Hebrew reads
 With his soul only: if from lips it fell,
 Echo back thundered by earth, heaven and hell,
 Would own "Thou didst create us!" Naught impedes
 We voice the other name, man's most of might,
 Awesomely, lovingly "

This does not seem irreligious. The sublimest of God's creatures may well be mentioned after the hush succeeding His name. It appears peculiarly fitting that the personal characteristic most patent to him even who runs through the pages, is that quality which "doth show likest Gods" - mercy - tolerance - a large-minded, full-blooded sympathy.

The fact that he shows "an enormous specific acquaintance with common people" might prepare us for such a finding, merely on a priori grounds. An experiencing nature is merely another phrase for a sympathetic nature, and if a man knows many people intimately, pari passu, he he must be able to enter into their joys and fears. He must also have learned that each man is a micro-cosm, a world unto himself, the final tribunal for absolute decision; and so he must be tolerant.

Every one knows Portias great plea for mercy in the Court scene in *The Merchant of Venice*. So also when Angelo says "Your brother is a forfeit to the law"--Isabella replies in words hardly less beautiful than Portia's and if any thing, more forceful.

" Alas, Alas!

Why all the souls that were, were forfeit once;
 And He that might the vantage best have took
 Found out the remedy. How would you be,
 If He, which is the top of judgement, should
 But judge you as you are? O think on that;
 And mercy then will breathe within your lips
 Like man new made."

Who doubts that Shakespeare speaks here?

Consider the character of Henry the Fifth with regard to this matter. Henry was not ideal, nor does Shakespeare think him so. Still there are certain striking points of similarity between the young King and his evident admirer, which serve to make the utterance of Henry Fifth significant. For instance, the paradox we noticed in Shakespeare, the incongruity of intellect and feelings, is reflected in Henry, as it was seen in an earlier Plantagenet, Richard I, "Yea and Nay"-- the cold head and warm heart.

Listen to old Henry IV as he discusses the Prince on his death bed:

" For he is gracious, if he be observed:
 He hath a tear for pity, and a hand
 Open as day for melting charity:
 Yet, notwithstanding, being incensed, he's flint,
 As humorous as winter and as sudden
 As flaws congealed in the spring of day."

Now this same young Harry has that clear-eyed, broad, generous tolerance and justice that we think must have been Shakespeare's. To the Chief Justice who had sent him to prison for some of his hoodlumism, he says on becoming King:

" you did commit me;
 For which, I do commit into your hand

The unstained sword that you have used to bear;
 With this remembrance, that you use the same
 With the like bold, just and impartial spirit
 As you have done 'gainst me."

This might have been Shakespeare commending Squire Lucy to put his son Hamnet to his own extremity should the paternal predilection for venison be inherited.

When Cambridge, Scroop and Grey are apprehended in their conspiracy, note Henry's placability in regard to personal injury, mingled with firm justice:

" Touching our person, seek we no revenge;
 But we our kingdoms safety must so tender
 Whose ruin you have sought, that to her laws
 We do deliver you"

The tragedy in Lear and in Othello arises from a Quixotic generosity - ill-balanced, to be sure and hypertrophied. The Moor and the ancient British King are surprising instances of child-like perversity in blindly ascribing virtues to -- the wrong people. We do not deprecate the trait itself - only the abuse of it. It is seen run to seed in these colossal dupes. The tragedy in each is intensified because it seems dependent in some way upon nobility of nature.

I think of no one in modern literature so much

like these as Colonel Newcome. All three were "constant, loving, noble," but all, let us speak with bated breath, all victims of extremes, false perjured extremes, and all fools when disillusionized. If we still had the benefit of the former "dark lady" of the sonnets and the friend who had in some way alienated her affections from the poet, we might trace a connection between the two dramas and this supposed passage in Shakespeares life; but Mr. Lee has left that fiction hardly a leg to stand on. Still, though there may have been no "dark lady" nor fickle friend, Shakespeare must have in some way during those years become acquainted with the gloomy powers, and it is altogether plausible that the darkest tragedy possible of suggestion should have been one focused in some disordered way around that personal quality which had been injured and abused. I mean that an abuse of Shakespeares' characteristic generosity may explain in a measure Lear and Othello, though it must be frankly admitted there is absolutely nothing known of him to give such a supposition color. A personal focus there must have been. If Othello is purely imaginary, if Shakespeares ink is merely gall, not mingled with heart's blood and this stupendous cataclysm where the incarnate fiend turns "virtue into pitch" and out of goodness makes "the net that shall enmesh them all" is but disinterested history and not personal reminiscence; then we may do well

to shut the book and not look further for Shakespeare. Generosity he admires, and generosity he must have had and must have had abused, I think; otherwise, Othello and Lear stand inexplicable, -- spiritual Melchisedecs.

Now it happens that to clinch this first thesis, we have the best of evidence in what we know of his life. Let two instances serve. All the references to Puritans, Mr. Lee tells us, are "uniformly discourteous." (We may have occasion to notice this again.) In Twelfth Night and Winter's Tale and Cymbeline, their doctrines are flouted and there is every reason for believing Shakespeare disliked them; yet he made no objection to his eldest daughter's marriage with Dr. John Hall, of decided Puritan leanings, and even entertained a Puritan clergyman at his house on one occasion.

The other source of evidence is his good-humored tolerance toward the pirate book-publishers who made so free with his name and works. In 1609, when officious Thorpe published the sonnets probably without the suggestion of Shakespeares knowledge or approval, the man of genius went on writing Coriolanus only shrugging his shoulders at the financial astuteness of T.T. The copy-right laws then were very primitive -- but the "substance of things hoped for." Although the most popular dramatist of his day

was subjected to numberless annoyances of this sort by these cheerful pirates, he seems to have opened his mouth in protest but once, when Jaggards' poetic anthology, containing only a few short pieces of Shakespeare's, was entitled, "The Passionate Pilgrim by William Shakespeare." Imagine Mr. Bernard Shaw's hysterics under a similar trial. Methinks "Earths mountains would be leveled and her seas filled up" in his writhings. This unusual good natured complaisance can hardly be explained on the assumption that Shakespeare did not realize the value of his name and work, that he took the same un-serious view of the dramatists' calling which obscured the vision of some of his contemporaries, a claim I have sometimes heard made. For my part I can not conceive of a great man blind to the greatness of his work. Says the old Arabic proverb, "The man who knows and knows not he knows is asleep; wake him." Any thesis under Heaven might be better maintained against Shakespeare than that he was asleep.

Indeed, I think his works show he had a proper appreciation of himself. Is it not a reminiscence of his early full blown youth when he makes Antony say:

"This morning, like the spirit of a youth
That means to be of note, begins betimes,"

and of his flight to London when the father of Proteus one of the "Two Gentlemen of Verona" says:

" I have considered well his loss of time
And how he cannot be a perfect man
Not being tried and tutored in the world?"

His patrician tendencies, of which later, as where Macbeth says to the murderers:

" Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men,"
also seem to show that he linked himself with the real aristocracy—the intellectual bon-ton. So although he knew himself, he was willing to tolerate such liberties with his name and reputation.

A man who sees every side is not apt to be strongly partisan. He must of course have opinions. We would not have him always with Sir Roger de Coverley thinking "much might be said on both sides," nor yet with the host in Silas Marner who thought the matter of "gos'es" was in the "smell." Some had the smell and some had not. Still we would not have him proselyte; and Shakespeare does not. We are told that in the actors' war between the children and the adults, when Ben Jonson took such a bitter attitude and the actors' world was ranged in two columns, Shakespeare maintained an easy, dignified, non-com-

mittal position and was trusted by both factions. We can easily believe this. 'Tis what we should expect of him. He does not show partisanship for his characters. Where are his heroes? The man who can draw hundreds of portraits without degenerating into a single ideal, (I speak of his men) is possessed of a singularly sane and balanced mind. Thackeray, among modern realists knew there are no out and out heroes. Shakespeare by his repeated assertion of weakness in strength, saves himself and us from the fallacy of hero-worship, the besetting sin of romanticists. Shakespeare does not settle ethical questions-- not he. He raises them. We must lay our own ghosts. Was Macbeth or Lady Macbeth more guilty? Ought Hamlet to have killed the king at prayer or waited-- or not killed him at all, but piously prayed for his conversion? Did Henry V treat Falstaff justly? Were these matters settled, what would become of the ladies' coteries and Sorosis literary societies and Shakesperiana?

Closely connected with this all-embracing quality are the matters of politics and religion. We cannot hope to know what a man is until we know what he thinks and likes about the state, what he believes and knows about God. Let us notice politics first. Was Shakespeare a liberal or a conservative, progressive or non-progressive, a reform pioneer or a stand-patter.

Before discussing these questions, a preliminary word is necessary. We have no reason to believe that Shakespeare was consumed with any sort of desire to have things different. He was distinctly a man of his age. He is the Elizabethan Age, at its best, chrystallized for all time. He adapted himself to existing conditions; made use of the tools at hand. In regard to his plays, this fact is notorious. Beginning as a hack adapter of stock plays, he continued all his life borrowing skeletons to dress in warm living flesh. In another field Euphues had set the fashion for

" Taffeta phrases, silken terms precise,
Three-piled hyperboles, spruce affectation,
Figures pedantical"--,

and who can say this style did not accord well with the youthful Shakespeare's taste? He surely does exhibit a nose for "smelling out the odoriferous flowers of fancy," delighting to "draw out the thread of his verbosity;" and though he does, like Biron, eschew the "taffeta phrases," knowing "honest plain words" are best, yet also like Biron, the temptation is too strong and " The Two Gentlemen of Verona" and "The Taming of the Shrew" show scarcely any decrease in his stock of quips and puns. This same character of Biron, by the way, as the first draft of Benedick well

deserves study. Benedick and Biron are compounds of "poet, lunatic and lover" and man of sense, compounds like Shakespeare himself; and it is altogether in accordance with reason and example that Shakespeare in his first original play should be less addicted to the dramatic habit and frankly paint his ideal in this first quasi-hero.

It was the fashion for poets to publish sensuous passionate love poems and Shakespeare wrote Venus and Adonis and The Rape of Lucrese. I should not say their tone was at all distasteful to him, for I rather believe at this time he delighted in such a task; but he wrote them all the more eagerly because it was "the thing to do". He had already become intimate with the young Earl of Southampton and as custom and interest demanded a patron, he responded by a conventional dedication. Since Surrey and Wyatt had introduced the sonnet, every poet must write a sequence; so the Child of the Age goes to work and journey-man-like knocks off one hundred and fifty-four in the most approved style. They were the best of their tribe, to be sure, but I need only to refer to Mr. Sidney Lee's admirable discussion to remind the reader that they were strictly conventional in conception and treatment.

Does this general trait hold in politics? We think it does. Shakespeare was patriotic, like all English-

men of his time, glorying in the defeat of the Armada and proud of his queen; neither was he above holding out to her greedy lips the sugar of her accustomed flattery. The long line of noble historical plays bears witness to his loyalty and patriotic devotion. There is a ring of personal conviction in the boast of Philip the Bastard,

" This England never did, nor never shall
Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror
But when it first did help to wound itself";

and then, that eulogy of dying Gaunt, than which no nobler has ever been pronounced on England, announced as it is, to be inspired, must have been his own:

" This royal throne of kings, this sceptre'd isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-paradise,
This fortress built by Nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of war
.
.
.
.
This precious stone set in the silver sea
.
.
.
.
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England"

In his political system, however, so far as he had one, he seems to be a man of the Sixteenth Century when the Tudors held England in their fists. If there is

anything surprising in the study of Shakespeare it is to find him not greatly dissatisfied with monarchical government. I should like to read into him a hope and prophecy of the coming

"Parliament of man, the federation of the world," but such reading would be impossible in the face of the evidence.

Anything like man-hood suffrage, Shakespeare would probably have laughed to scorn. In the treatment of Jack Cade's rebellion, he shows his distrust of such popular movements. Every one connected with it is an ignorant, bigoted simpleton.

"And you that love the Commons, follow me.

Now show yourselves men: 'tis for liberty.

We will not leave one lord, one gentleman:

Spare none but such as go in clouted shoon--"

says Cade himself. The first thing they do is to kill all the lawyers and they trust only those who cannot sign their names. He was no doubt right in discrediting a radical movement like Cade's Rebellion and he saw clearly how easily a popular reform is frenzied into a dangerous revolution, through ignorant and fanatical leaders. This attitude toward the populace is, I believe fairly consistent. Whenever a citizen is introduced, prepare for some foolish or vapid remark.

" Measure for measure, all agree, was written with particular zest and smacks of keen relish on the part of the author. Both the Duke and Angelo inwardly despise the people.

" I love the people
 But do not like to stage me to their eyes;
 Though it do well, I do not relish well
 Their loud applause and Aves vehement;
 Nor do I think the man of safe discretion
 That does affect it."

Both demos and demagogue ~~be~~ distrusted. Says Angelo,

" The general (public) subject to a well-wish'd king
 Quit their own part, and in obsequious fondness
 Crowd to his presence, where their untaught love
 Must needs appear offence."

The uniform scant respect he pays the people renders the hot impetuous words of Coriolanus pregnant with personal feeling:

" You common cry of ours, whose breath I hate
 As reek o' the rotten fens, whose loves I prize
 As the dead carcasses of unburied men
 That do corrupt my air, I banish you;"-

Yes, Shakespeare was an aristocrat. By right and might of intellect he stood a crowned king; even among his fellows.

He could not bear the odor of the unwashed masses. We remember that he moved Heaven and Earth to get a coat of arms for his father, and for all we know valued them as much as did the smuggest of English gentry.

No doubt he saw the faults of despotic monarchy but he seems to have rather desired the evils that he had than to fly to others that he knew not of. Troilus and Cressida contains his wisest and maturest political wisdom. Let Ulysses say the final word:

" Take but degree away, untune that string,
 And hark, what discord follows! each thing meets
 In mere oppugnancy, the bounded waters
 Should lift their bosoms higher than the shores
 And make a sop of all this solid globe,
 Strength should be lord of imbecility,
 And the rude son should strike his father dead"

He goes on to picture the hierarchy of Troy which might serve as a portrait of our own Washington:

" The general's disdained
 By him one step below, he by the next,
 That next by him beneath; so every step,
 Exemplified by the first pace that is sick
 Of his superior, grows to an envious fever
 Of pale and bloodless emulation:"

In politics then, he is the careful, moderate paver, not a pioneer chopper; not an indiscriminating experimentalist, but a prudent husbandman. Elizabeth is Queen, and he is no reformer, but William Shakespeare, writer of plays. Here as elsewhere we see him with perfect control over his emotions. Even when his friends Essex and Southampton were confined in the tower on the charge of treason, we hear no ranting from him. Tumult and clamor are inconsistent with depth and power.

What does Shakespeare think of God and the human soul? These are vital matters in forming our conception of a man's personality. Here tolerance and moderation are again the words. In the widest and best sense a man of the world, Shakespeare does not burden his pages with doctrine nor impinge on his art with creed. If he had a definite form of religious belief he succeeded pretty well in concealing it. We know not whether he was Catholic or Protestant; docile King Henry Eighthian or a sprig of one of the numerous independent branches; though we do know he was not partial to the Puritans.

Before a hazard as to religion it may be best to devote a word to morality. There may still be those a little shy of Shakespeare. Some of his scenes are not just proper for reading in polite society, and he is so

prone to call a spade a spade. Then too, his life -- was it exemplary? Was there not something irregular about his marriage? And was there not a story about a certain Sir William d'Avenant who boasted Shakespeare was his father? Very likely there is that story and many others similar that the present author has never had time to read and which he regards as alike apocryphal. It is also true that his marriage was hasty and perhaps ill-advised, though the evidence on this point is inadequate. Still it remains a platitude to say Shakespeare is a moral writer -- Nay! Shakespeare is, after the Scriptures, the moral book. No doubt his own youthful errors were repented of; and that he does not splash us buckets of salt tears is no presumption to the contrary. He refers repeatedly to the discrepancy between practice and preaching:

" It is a good divine that follows his own instructions: I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done than ~~##~~ be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching. The brain may devise laws for the blood, but a hot temper leaps o'er a cold decree"--

" There was never yet philosopher

That could endure the tooth-ache patiently,
 However they have writ the style of gods
 And made a push at chance and sufferance."

It is with a rather touching humility that Henry V acknowledges his early excesses not altogether excusable on the grounds of scientific curiosity. No he makes no great hub-bub and bon-fire about his repentance. He simply repents. He was not one to let his right hand know what his left hand doeth.

But as to morality, does he ever condone vice; ever scorn or mock or deal lightly with true nobility of thought or sentiment? True in his large sympathy he explains how man falls; how in the case of Angelo the very virtues of others may adorn the face of evil and enhance temptation. The good are not always rewarded in this life and the wicked frequently flourish as a green bay tree — just as in our experience; but, do you excuse and palliate the offence in Angelo or is the moral world ever turned topsy-turvy for you, demanding approval of vice and disregard of virtue? Never. Shakespeare is nature -- not "to advantage drest" but in her gorgeous native colors. If Shakespeare writes of man as God made him, acting and reacting under the laws of the moral universe, we can not blame the dramatist for his material or its limitations. Some may object: "How do you know his sophistries and philosophic and moral perversions are not as much his as these others I have cited in favor of his moral sanity?"

Our grounds cover the point. The moral and philosophic weaknesses are uniformly found in the mouths of characters of whom he does not approve. In so far then as his writings reflect him, he was moral. While his humor sometimes is broad and his conversation coarse, they were doubtless more refined than Elizabeth's; and we have only to compare him with his contemporaries to thank Providence he was no worse. I do not agree this point, for there is brief time, and argument, I believe unnecessary; but who will affirm that with Shakespeare, sin is ever other than sin or that he like many, ever plays bo-peep with moral principles? From the moral tone of his work, the strong presumption, though only a presumption, is personal morality. But is he religious?

It can be said that he had the fundamental requirements of religion, sincerity and reverence, and trust in God. A great man is incapable of insincerity.

" This above all

To thine own self be true,

And it must follow as the night the day

Thou canst not then be false to any man."

The sublimity of this cannot be degraded even in the mouth of that cringing old "toady" of a Polonius. In truth I think he makes Polonius say it in order to show how great

truths will get themselves uttered, and as the wrath, so the cunning and deceit of man are made to praise Him. Shakespeare, we can make sure, though there may have been infirmities of will, was not one to look one way and pull another; was not one to show others "the steep and thorny way to heaven" while he himself was treading the "primrose path of dalliance." He was in earnest. This does not, as may appear, militate against what was said above about his conformance to convention. There was no question of sincerity involved there. He hated hypocrisy. Lady Macbeth did not break down till confronted with Macbeth's colossal hypocrisy in claiming that he killed the grooms in pious rage out of his great love; then she faints. The arch hypocrite Richard III, pierces thro' the smaller hypocrites who name religion:

" Name not religion, for thou lovest the flesh,
And ne'er throughout the year to church thou go'st
Except it be to pray against thy foes."

Be sure at all events Shakespeare would not make pretence to what he lacked.

That he was reverent and had confidence in God as the ruler of the universe, no one can doubt after noticing the wealth of worshipful allusion. Says Kent " It is the stars, The stars above us govern our conditions,"

but we would do ill to argue fatalism from this. Kent is pessimistic. In the same play Edmund answers this sort of thing effectually.

" This is the excellent foppery of the world that, when we are sick in fortune,-- often the surfeit of our own behavior,-- we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars: as if we were villains by necessity; fools by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves and treachers by sperical predominance; drunkards, liars and adulterers, by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that, we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on"-- It is part of Shakespeares morality not to countenance a spineless resignation to Fate and a shifty reference of imperfections to necessitarianism. It is no blind impersonal force or "something", but a "divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will". To whom would the virtues of Duncan " plead like angels trumpet-tongued against the deep damnation of his taking off" if not to a personal God? Even the conscienceless opportunist, Macbeth is awed by the feeling that there must be retributive justice in the world. When John asks Philip from whence comes the latter's commission to question him as to his King-ship, the King of France replies:

" From that supernal judge that stirs good thoughts
 In any breast of strong authority,
 To look into the blots and stains of right:
 That judge hath made me guardian to this boy:
 Under whose warrant I impeach thy wrong
 And by whose help I mean to chastise it."

This is very high and noble testimony that God is God — not of Jew or Gentile, but of the powers that make for right against the powers that make for wrong. Shakespeare is uniformly reverential, He does not, like Swift mock the religion of those who differ from him. Good men of all creeds are good; rather he knows no creeds. Even though we have little respect for the nerveless King we do not scoff at his sincere resolve:

" And in devotion spend my latter days,
 To sin's rebuke and my Creator's praise"

He trusted in God. Of Henry V, Shakespeares evident favorite, the Bishop of Winchester says:

" He was a king blessed of the King of Kings

.

The battles of the Lord of hosts he fought:"

There can be nothing equivocal about this:

" Let us be back'd with God and with the seas
 Which he hath given for fence impregnable,

And with their helps only defend ourselves;

In them and in ourselves our safety lies."

Though there may be doubt it is generally conceded Shakespeare wrote that part of Henry VIII containing Wolsey's famous farewell address to Cromwell. The aged statesman who has all his life of helotage to Tudor been afflicted with moral astigmatism, now focuses clearly on the important things. Who will say Shakespeare was "play-acting" in that heart burst:

" O Cromwell, Cromwell!

Had I but served my God with half the zeal

I served my king, he would not in mine age

Have left me naked to mine enemies."

Finally is there a more tender, humble, reverent mention in the whole realm of literature than this from Henry IV?:

" Therefore, friends

As far as to the sepulchre of Christ,

Whose soldier now, under whose blessed cross

We are impressed and engaged to fight.

Forthwith a power of English shall we levy;

Whose arms were moulded in their mother's womb

To chase these pagans in those holy fields

Over whose acres walked those blessed feet

Which fourteen hundred years ago were nail'd
For our advantage to the bitter cross."

Did Shakespeare fail us here, were there a hint of insincerity or superficiality in his morals, a scintilla of levity in his reverence, or a suspicion of skepticism in his religion; he would be wrenched from his unrivalled place among our Penates, and would be

" Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
Fallen from his high estate".

Shakespeare's business acumen to the contrary, he could hardly have been "worldly" - self-centered in worldly things - and have written:

" You have too much respect upon the world,
They lose it that do buy it with much care"

The answer, " I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano,
A stage where every man must play his part " is characteristic. To Jacques " All the world's a stage" and to Macbeth, " Life is a poor player, that" struts and frets his hour upon the stage." We are here but in a stage of life and while we are here, our part is that of service to others. I think Shakespeare has touched the heart of Christianity in Measure for Measure:

" Heaven doth with us as we with torches do,
 Not light them for ourselves; for if our virtues
 Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
 As if we had them not." Shakespeare realized
 this is but a stage, not real life, that there is something
 after and that we are to prepare ourselves here for that
 after time; but concerning that here-after he tells us
 nothing. Hamlet knows not what he thinks of that

" Undiscovered country from whose bourne
 No traveler returns." To the Duke, death is
 no more than a sleep, but condemned Claudius regards it
 with all the terror of the warm, sensuous Renaissance:

" Death is a fearful thing

.

Ay but to die, and go we know not where;
 To lie in cold obstruction and to rot;

.

The weariest and most loathed worldly life

.

is a paradise

To what we fear of death." Shakespeare is the
 poet of life. He takes us to the brink, but the rest is
 silence. Whether his faith, like that of Socrates never
 became more than hope, we can only guess.

If this tolerance is Shakespeare's most God-like attribute, he is most human in his happy, wholesome union of emotion and volition, and the proper subordination of strength of passion to stronger will. He does not ridicule feeling or the show of feeling. He does not think a man a fool or child who weeps upon occasion. He would not have him stolid and stockish. Wolsey is not to be scorned when he says,

" Cromwell, I did not think to shed a tear in all my miseries; But thou hast forced me by thy honest grief to play the woman! There are times when by too great a calm, a man would proclaim himself less than man. When Macduff, the victim of Macbeth and later the instrument of vengeance hears of the dastardly murder of his wife and children, he opens for a moment the flood-gates of his emotion; and when Malcolm, feeling the constraint to exert control, says, " Dispute it like a man," Macduff flashes round at him,

" I shall do so,

But I must also feel it as a man"

It is in the way they feel that Shakespeare's characters are superior to those of Marlowe, the greatest of his predecessor's. Like Faustus and ~~Balthazar~~^{Barabas} and Tamurlane, they feel strongly; but unlike these, they feel justly. Tenderness is by no means lacking. Into a dry chronicle

sometimes there is introduced a pathos only attributable to a tender nature. Arthur's part in King John allies that play with tragedy, ^{and indeed} ~~though~~ it is said Shakespeare owes history nothing for the characters of Constance and Arthur. But listen to the crazed, heart-broken cry of the mother when her boy is taken from her to enjoy the tender mercies of his faithless uncle

" I am not mad: this hair I tear is mine;
My name is Constance; I was Geoffrey's wife;
Young Arthur is my son, and he is lost:
I am not mad";

and compare her bitter, contemptuous retort to the legate, who attempts to calm her,

" He talks to me that never had a son,"
with Macduff's stunned endeavor to find some explanation for Macbeth's fiendish massacre,

" He has no children. All my pretty ones?
Did you say all? O hell-kite! All?";

and then we see that this, if not history, is Shakespeare. This is the man who followed his only son to the grave and knew the anguish of such a loss. When later in King John, it is the pretty innocent prattle and confiding trust of a little child that routs a tyrant's law and melts the stony hearts of hardened murderers, again we glimpse

a nature always touched with compassion for the weak of earth.

But if he is tender, he is never sentimental. Just as appropriately think of Swift and sentiment as of Shakespeare and sentiment. We never weep with him when there is no occasion. Sometimes even, when he thinks the tragedy is getting the best of us and we might drop a legitimate tear, he introduces some horse-play to help us refrain. Always restraint! If we see the ocean ebb, it is no longer infinite.

Shakespeare's rare sanity and balance is nowhere so striking as in Richard II, rich, I believe in evidence of personality. Says Gaunt to Boling-broke upon the latter's banishment:

" Teach thy necessity to reason thus;

There is no virtue like necessity.

Think not the king did banish thee,

But thou the king

Suppose the singing birds, musicians;

.

The flowers, fair ladies; and thy steps, no more

Than a delightful measure or a dance":

When we read this we are on the verge of Berkeleyanism.

We are saved by the reply:

" O, who can hold a fire in his hand,

By thinking on the frosty Caucasus?

Or cloy the hungry edge of appetite,
 By bare imagination of a feast?
 Or wallow naked in December snow,
 By thinking on fantastic summer's heat"?

No, although Shakespeare takes a fall out of Christian Science, he shows himself the stoic idealist. "There is no virtue like necessity" to him, and "hope to joy is little less in joy, Than hope enjoy'd:"
 He knows the "mind is its own place" and can construct largely a world of its own.

There could hardly be a better place to notice what we learn of Shakespeare from his treatment of the universal passion. He was, we are sure, a good lover. We have a specimen of every species from the banks of the Nile to the frozen fiords of Denmark; from the frank, voluptuous, exotic passion of Cleopatra to the chaste prudery of Isabella; from the girlish tempest of Juliet to the womanly calm of Portia; from the reckless Romeo to the redeful Hamlet, one never, the other always thinking on the "event", yet like enough in other ways. We have all these and others not to be mentioned or not mentionable, but love is always worth while. Friar Laurence must have his fling at fickle Romeo: "young men's love then lies
 Not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes,

" Jesu Maria! what a deal of brine

Hath wash'd thy sallow cheeks for Rosaline!"

but love is never debased; love itself is triumphant.

While in a sense human love is, of its nature, selfish in its relation to the outside world, and Shakespeare shows this; yet within its sphere it is divine. He has no Locksley Hall lovers, smug and self-sufficient. He must have agreed with Browning:

" Lose who may, I still can say

Those who win heaven, blest are they."

Limits preclude a complete discussion here. But put the question to yourselves. The author of Much Ado, of Merchant of Venice, of As You Like It, or of Romeo and Juliet, instruct as a summer storm-cloud with fever and electricity-- could he be a Joseph Addison or a Jonathan Swift-- a Pope or a Dryden?

While I know that it is at ones own peril that he accepts any sentiment in the sonnets as personal, for there Shakespeare's "dramatic instinct never slept", yet I for one make sure that Sonnet CXVI is genuine:

" Love is not love

Which alters when it alteration finds,

Or bends with the remover to remove;

.

Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
 Within his bending sickle's compass come;
 Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks
 But bears it out even to the edge of doom.";

and that Shakespeare was at least capable of the feeling
 in his lines:

" For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings,
 That then I scorn to change my state with kings".

My only argument is that of Johnson's for free will: I
 know that's Shakespeare and there's an end of it.

Allied to Shakespeare's youthful interest in
 word-play, thrust and parry, pun and quibble, stilted ped-
 antry and wordy euphuisms, is his no less evident delight
 in Sophistry. King John shifts the guilt of the murder
 of Arthur to Hubert because Hubert happened to be at hand
 " fit for bloody villany, apt, liable to be employed in
 danger" when the thought of murder crossed the King's mind.
 It is Cassio waiting the coming of Othello in Cyprus who,
 has good hopes for the safety of his Chief because he has
 not hitherto indulged those hopes; very like Godfrey Cass
 thinking to prepare for good luck by assuring himself of
 the worst. He is blood-relation to the great psychological
 novelist and the great poet of the 19th, Century. Who is
 laughing over Dame Quickly and Dogberry and Verges and

Launcelot Gobbo, does not think of Dolly Winthrop and Mr Macey and all the country people George Eliot has made us acquainted with? These two Warwickshire observers knew and enjoyed the delicious non-secutions of the untutored mind. And Browning too! The argument of the clown in All's Well to prove that the gallant of his wife would be his friend is worthy of a Mr. Sludge; while Bishop Blougram could hardly have bettered this:

" My wound is great because it is so small;

Then were it greater were it none at all."

I take it such things are the froth of great minds. They may be nonsense, but nonsense of the gods.

Nowhere is Shakespeare's practicality, his utter lack of moral squeamishness seen ^{better} than in his attitude toward a benevolent deceit. He would agree with Mark Twain that a lie is sometimes justifiable- that occasionally the end justifies the means. When the duke in Measure for Measure (which we remember was written seemingly behind a thinner mask than Shakespeare usually wore), is proposing the scheme by which Angelo shall be entrapped he says: " -- the doubleness of the benefit defends the deceit from reproof. What think you of it?" With a similar relish he puts up exactly the same "deceit so lawful" on Bertram. He was no prude.

Neither was he a Sir Oracle, expecting the dogs

to keep silence when he opened his chaps. He did not take himself too seriously we may be sure. He was a "good fellow" to his friends and acquaintances.

"Souls of poets dead and gone
 What Elysium have ye known,
 Happy field or mossy cavern
 Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?"

We need not the legend of the Mermaid to confirm us in our belief. The boisterous bouts in Henry IV and the Merry Wives, the calm equanimities of the other plays, the men he admires, Prince Hal, Horatio, Bassanio and Benedick, though they may be sarcastic at times, these all proclaim Shakespeare a good fellow. Bassanio had the instincts of a gambler tempered by good sense and judgment. In his school days when he had lost one shaft he

"-shot his fellow of the self-same flight
 The self-same way with more advised watch
 To find the other forth;" and
 "By adventuring both
 - oft found both":

This very sensible recklessness, this madness with method in it would endear him to his fellows. He would have appreciated John Paul Jones who when cautioned by a superior

officer about his recklessness in battle with the trite "discretion is the better part of valor", answered "yes, but damned impudence is the better part of discretion."

Then his joy in the present life -- his disregard for the pains and uncertainties of the future, would be another link to his earth born companions.

What is love? 'Tis not hereafter;
 " Present mirth hath present laughter

What 's to come is still unsure;

In delay there lies no plenty

Then come kiss me sweet and twenty,

Youth's a stuff will not endure".

When devilish duke John is captured and brought back to Messina in the last Scene, Benedick cries out:

" Think not on him till tomorrow. I'll devise thee brave punishments for him. Strike up, pipers." Sufficient unto the day -- says

Shakespeare always. Not only was the future, future; the past was past.

" To mourn a mischief that is past and gone

Is the next way to draw new mischief on",

is another version of Saint Paul's "Forgetting the things that are behind".

Again he had instinctive good breeding. He was not one to insist to the point of boorishness on being polite

to others, but would gracefully allow others to be courteous to him. In other words he was no mule. It was not "Apres vous, mon cher Alphonse! Apres vous mon cher Gaston! Slender and Anne Page both insist on the other's leading the way until finally Slender cries "I'll rather be unmannerly than troublesome; you do yourself wrong, indeed, la." He knew there may be more good breeding in accepting a courtesy than in offering one.

Similarly, he detested servility in excuses. Because a man has blundered or transgressed against another, is no reason that he should crawl. Let him stand erect and acknowledge his fault.

" 'Tis well, 'tis well; no more:

Be not as extreme in submission

As in offense"

The greatest sin of morals may be forgetfulness of obligation—ingratitude; but the greatest sin in manners is obsequious recurrence to obligation. It humiliates debtor and creditor.

One or two other traits seem to indicate that the poet was a good fellow. He admired plainness and simplicity in speech. Brilliancy in repartee is not conducive to popularity among ordinary people. They become suspicious that they are being made game of. A too liberal supply of

wit goes ill with honesty and sincerity, in their minds. Many a man who is enjoyed in cultured circles is regarded by Philistines as a prig. Now while Shakespeare was more than a match for Ben Jonson or Burbage or any other of his set, yet I think he was one to answer with a plain "yea" or "nay" when talking with Tom or Dick. Does not he show that though the flesh is still weak in *Love's Labor Lost*, the spirit is anxious to throw off his early affectations and gaudy dress of speech? And in *Troilus and Cressida*, for the most part the most dreary, desolate and desolating thing he ever did, he makes Troilus -- for whose integrity I am glad Shakespeare leaves us a little respect -- answer bitterly when Cressida says,

"My lord, will you be true?",

"Who, I? alas, it is my vice, my fault:

Whiles others fish with craft for great opinion,

I with great truth catch mere simplicity;

.

Fear not my truth; the moral of my wit

Is 'plain and true'; there's all the reach of it."

This echoes the same momentarily hopeless resignation to a topsy-turvy moral world that we hear in Lady Macduff's supremely agonized cry,

" I have done no harm. But I remember now
 I am in this earthly world, where to do harm
 Is often laudable, to do good sometimes
 Accounted dangerous folly: why then, alas,
 Do I put up that womanly defense
 To say I have done no harm?"

It would be absurd to make Shakespeare answer for what Troilus or Lady Macduff in the agony of their stress are surprised into saying, and it is not worth while to refute those who would argue from these citations, cynicism in the dramatist. My object in presenting the first, by this a little obscured I fear, is that Shakespeare admired straight-forwardness and simplicity in speech. Says Othello

" Rude am I in my speech
 And little bless'd with the soft phrase of peace;"

Again in All's Well,

" 'Tis not the many oaths that make the truth
 But the plain simple vow that is vow'd true".

He hated bravado. We cannot doubt the ring of conviction when Portia speaks of the "fine bragging youths" who tell "quaint lies how honorable ladies sought my love" and how she will practise "a thousand raw tricks of these bragging Jacks." Just as definite and decided is Antonio speaking of the

" Spambling, out-facing, fashion-monging boys,
 That lie, and cog, and flout, deprave, and slander,
 Go anticly, and show outward hideousness,
 And speak off half a dozen dangerous words,
 How they might hurt their enemies, if they durst."

For all this tribe of Sir Thopas who say blusteringly after him, " Thy mawe shal I percen" with the mental reservation, "if I may", he had supreme contempt.

But one other trait that made him a jolly companion. He was fond of out-door sports as are all Englishmen. If he was actually tried before Sir Thomas Lucy for deer-stealing, we may be sure poverty alone did not drive him to such extremities. He was a sportsman. We need read only Venus and Adonis to know this. He might have been a horse-dealer — he knows the points so well. Adonis' horse is perfect:

" Look! What a horse should have he did not lack"
 Further on we see the hounds, the fox, the roe, and the hare. Shakespeare writes with his eye on them. He did not read about them in Histories of Animated Nature or libraries of "Animals I Have Known." We actually see the purblind hare "outrunning the wind," hiding among a flock of sheep to throw off the chase and finally where

" -- poor Wat far off upon a hill

Stands on his hinder legs with listening ear

To hearken if his foes pursue him still."

To write Venus and Adonis a man must have known nature first hand -- Nature in her sporting mood. The bay of the hounds is almost graphophonic. I think Shakespeare kept till his later days, his love for dogs. Page would not confess his dog had been outrun on Cotsall, --

" It could not be judged, Sir", he demurs, loyal to his grey-hound. The true animal lover is always militant when the reputation of a favorite is at stake.

As he himself sang such ravishing strains, we are not surprised to find he loved music.

" The man that hath not music in himself

Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds

Is fit for treason, stratagems and spoils;

.

Let no such man be trusted."

This is but a playful exaggeration of a deep-seated conviction. When the Duke finds Mariana singing in the moated grange, he answers thus her excuse:

" 'Tis good; though music oft hath such a charm

To make bad good, and good provoke to harm".

A man stolid and impregnable behind rock-ribbed intellectuality could not be so susceptible to the power of music. Reared on the ancient boundary between Celt and Saxon, he exhibits eminently the happiest traits of both, the tuneful lips of the one; the wrinkled brow of the other.

Shakespeare was above spoken of as having aristocratic leanings. While that I believe is true I should not wish to be understood to hold he was blind to personal worth. Such a view would ill become the son of a Stratford glover and wool-comber. Like Carlyle, distrustful of democracy in the concrete, he was quick to champion its theory. "The abstract become concrete" says Anthony Hope, "is often absurd." Man is the true king and personal honor, not foolish parasitism on a father's achievements, the real yard-stick. The king in All's Well pays note-worthy tribute to his old commoner friend, the physician: " his honour,

Clock to itself, knew the true minute when
Exception bid him speak, and at this time
His tongue obey'd his hand"--

It is the same speaker who in referring to the daughter of his friend says:

" From lowest place when virtuous things proceed
The place is dignified by the doer's deeds" and
a few lines further on, " She is young, wise, fair;

In these to Nature she's immediate heir,
 And these breed honour: that is honour's scorn
 Which challenges itself as honour's born
 And is not like the sire: honours thrive
 When rather from our acts we them derive
 Than our foregoers,"

Honor in high places or in low is exalted

" Life every man holds dear; but the brave man
 Holds honour far more precious—dear than life."

" But if it be a sin to covet honour

I am the most offending soul alive."

We scorn Claudio for seeking life at the expense of his sisters honor. Honor here, purity and continence he always demands. He never confuses love and lust. Even in Venus and Adonis they are antipodal:

" Love comforteth like sunshine after rain

But Lust's effect is tempest after sun"

So in this respect Shakespeare does not disappoint us.

His genius is as triumphant here as elsewhere.

Shakespeares favorites, besides having confidence in themselves are optimistic. They are not flabby idealists afraid to trust their ventures to a single issue. Hamlet and Macbeth are the "horrible examples " standing as bell-buoys

in the sea of indecision. But Henry V is not one of those,

" Fretted by sore debate
 On verge of trying,
 Anxious to know their fate
 While time is flying,"

He sings, exults in the presence of danger; like Wordsworth's ideal warrior, is "happy as a lover and attired in sudden brightness like a man inspired." He would not have one more man to share the honour of Agincourt with them;

" We few, we happy few, we band of brothers".

Opposition is but inspiration. Thus it is with strong men; so it was with Shakespeare:

It has been said many times since Ruskin that Shakespeare has only heroines. Perhaps the reason is he knew more about men and idealized women. He was surely not a "ladies' man"; he was a men's man. Fine beaux and professional lovers may say pretty things about women but they are incapable of creating great women. To endow one's idols with classic and enduring life it is necessary to keep them at a distance on a pedestal and not finger them till they have lost their gloss and charm. Dick Steel or Robert Burns may pay fine compliments (and none have paid finer), but the type of glorious woman-hood, Shakespeare

must supply. Yet his acquaintance with femininity seems not to come from confidential interviews with fine ladies or their waiting-maids, but rather through that clear analysing prism, his impartial, omnipresent observation. He was a men's man.

Now I wonder if after all these dabs and thrusts, any one sees clearer the man. Has the abstract been in any way made concrete? We have had fine talk and talk not so fine about opinions, qualities, likes and dislikes, tendencies, and what-not? Can we visualize the man? Have we a notion of his personality? I fear we may have found that anomaly that puzzled Alice so in Wonderland -- a smile without a cat. Let us look for the cat!

One of the main theses of my introduction is that the paradox in Shakespeare's life, the combination of high poetic genius with great common sense, is only an apparent one. Since writing that I find these words from an irreproachable critic:

" -- In all points from the most important to the most minute, the judgement of Shakespeare is commensurate with his genius, -- nay his genius reveals itself in his judgement, as in its most exalted form" -- with which support I shall rest my point.

Another contention of my introduction, allow me to review. Shakespeare was not a machine, constructed to write two dramas a year. We cannot regard his work as entirely impersonal. He was a man, with no particular reason for concealing his personality and until some one shows why he should have deceived us, we have the right to think his seeming self-revelation real. Neither was he a freak, I would add, a miracle not subject to common law. He is definite though not easily definable.

He was, if we are correct in our inferences a rare ideal in proportion; the cool head and warm heart have never been so joined. This implies many things we immediately remember, the poetic combined with the judicial temperment, strength of passion with strength of will and cool steely tenacity of purpose. He was thoroughly English in his attitude towards politics -- content with the existent order of things-- and towards morals, though inclined by his tolerance to be lenient to the offender. He was good-natured, easy going, and careless of maintaining a dignity which other men, less secure in their intellectual sovereignty must seek. His genius made him King of the Salon while his boon comradeship made him supreme in the Ale-house; his laugh was ready, appreciative and adequate for the occasion; his tear, for ~~the~~ pain and sorrow, quick and true;

his compassion for moral weakness, Christ-like in its breadth of knowledge and sympathy. He was at home in the field or in the Cloister; he knew the joys of mere living and the delights of intellectual travail. The aggressive life of the spirit at first seems not prominent, yet few reformers have equalled his work. Says Coleridge: "I for my part have acquired from perusal of him, a habit of looking into my own heart, and am confident that Shakespeare is an author of all others the most calculated to make his readers better as well as wiser." Paley's old argument for design in the Creator, from evidence of design in the created is good here. If we get sermons out, sermons went in.

A man of the world in the best sense, Shakespeare exhausted its possibilities -- we have never seen over him; he marks our horizon -- and died a true micro-cosm.

Emerson begins his lecture on Shakespeare by saying "Great men are more distinguished by range and extent than by originality." He might have stopped there. It describes Shakespeare. If there are any complaints that my picture is too vague, too many men in one, I answer "you view a many-sided man." As Taine said of Carlyle, "Look well at him. His like we shall never see again."

Was there some hidden well of personality in those doggeral lines he is said to have written for his own epitaph? Could he who had written so many noble elegies not have done better for himself? Or was it but his last humorous rebuking commentary on "Why should the Spirit of Mortal be Proud?" 'Tis well that others have supplied the deficiency of his own modesty. But fourteen years after his death he was recognized as immortal. Let Miltons words fittingly close this poor tribute:

What needs my Shakespeare for his honored bones

The labor of an Age in piled stones?

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Dear Son of Memory, great heir of Fame

What needst thou such weak witness of thy name?"