

school-books define a point to be, but "room" of very great—indeed, awfully great, dimensions. Therefore Hamlet had "room," and the contradictory proposition (he had no room) is repulsed.

"What alone could justify his thinking on this subject, would have been the hope of flying from the ills of this world without encountering any others in the next."—GOLDSMITH.

Then, to have no hope in such a case, is, conversely, to have no justification for thinking on the subject. Why? *The outs probandi* lay on the part of the objector. But he takes a short way. He only asserts his conclusion, and rides away on the back of an *ignoratio elenchi*.

"Nor is Hamlet more accurate in the following reflection:—

"Thus conscience does make cowards of us all."

"And from the premises we cannot help inferring that conscience in this case was entirely out of the question. Hamlet was deterred from suicide by a full conviction that in flying from one sea of trouble, which he did know, he should fly into another which he did not know."—GOLDSMITH.

Goldsmith's premises and conclusion, formally stated, yield the following syllogism:

The case of one having a full conviction that he will suffer ills in the next world, is a case of conscience being entirely out of the question.

The case of Hamlet is that of one having this full conviction.

The case of Hamlet is a case of conscience being entirely out of the question.

If one has a full conviction that he will suffer ills in the next world, he might have some belief that he deserved them—deserved them for committing suicide, if he should commit it, or deserve them for some other sin or sins that he had committed; and, having any belief that he deserved them, conscience, of necessity, entered into the question; so that before concluding argumentatively that conscience was entirely out of the question, it was necessary to prove that he had no belief that he deserved the ills in question. But no proof whatsoever is adduced, and the conclusion is therefore worthless—a *petitio principii*.

The minor has already been proved false; and consequently the conclusion inferred is false.

In this way, metaphorically speaking, our objector, as usual, mounts his *petitio principii*, and in leaping the ditch of a false minor, finishes, in what Shakespeare, had he witnessed the performance, might have called a "most lame and impotent conclusion."

"His (Hamlet's) whole chain of reasoning seems inconsistent and incongruous."—GOLDSMITH.

Hamlet's argument is this, stated informally:

It is better to live, bearing whatever ills we have to suffer in this life, than to commit suicide, because by that act we run the risk, as conscience testifies, of encountering ills in the world to come, which are unknown, and of which, therefore, we can make no calculation.

Goldsmith states it thus: "I am doubtful whether I should live or do violence upon my own life, for I know not whether it is more honourable to bear misfortune patiently than to exert myself in opposing misfortune, and, by opposing, end it." Let us throw it into the form of a syllogism, it will stand thus.

Then we have three syllogisms in succession, together with some intermediate remarks.

1. The first syllogism is constructed from a *question* which, as it contains no predication, can supply no premise.

2. All the premises and all the conclusions, except the last conclusion, have the personal pronoun "I" for their subject.

3. In none of the syllogisms have the premises any logical connection or dependence, nor have any of the premises any logical relation to the conclusions.

4. Consequently, none of the syllogisms have a middle term.

5. Nor have any of these syllogisms what, by an ambiguity, can stand for a middle term, so as to entitle it to be ranked as a fallacy.

Hence, it may be truly said, he has not proved that "the whole chain of (Shakespeare's) reasoning is inconsistent and incongruous," nor that "it seems" to be so.

He has not fulfilled his ironical promise: "We shall see how far he argues like a philosopher!"

He has convicted Shakespeare of no errors (so far as his reasoning is concerned): "Whose very errors have helped to sanctify his character among the multitude."

The soliloquy has not been shown to be "a heap of absurdities," whether we consider the "argumentation," etc., and it is not the *soliloquy* that may be compared to the "*aegri somnia*" (a sick man's dreams), nor to the "*tabula cujus auge finguntur species*" (a picture of fantastic figures.)

As a counter authority to Goldsmith's, it may be worth while quoting the following passage from the *Quarterly Review*, April, 1823:

"It is small praise to say that Shakespeare was the greatest poet of his country. He was the sublimest human philosopher the world has known; and not even Bacon had powers of mind which could be compared to his. But the philosophy of Bacon comes in its naked forms and undisguised in any garb that might conceal it: the philosophy of Shakespeare, wrapt in the dress of poetry and the pomps of scenic diction, becomes palpable only by reflection."

W. T. L.

Freshman professor (holding up a written exercise) — "I perceive that this one was copied from outside helps. The man who handed it in will remain." Half a dozen remained.

MAKING IT RHYME.

[Bob. Burdette.]

It is very funny, "Ella," if there is no rhyme for "window." Who told you there wasn't? Sing this, please, without lining:—

The student seats himself to read  
The "Pythian Odes of Pindar,"  
His jug is filled, his pipe is lit,  
And his feet root in the winder.

Go to, girl, go too—there are a thousand rhymes for winder.