

a proceeding would not be justifiable in the eyes of the world he must wait and restrain his just indignation and desire for revenge until he can in some way prove the guilt of the murderer. How to accomplish this upon the evidence of the ghost alone is a difficulty which would render its performance impossible for anyone but Hamlet. But he proves himself quite equal even to this task ; and his actions for the accomplishment of it are the outcome of the musings of a mind which has all its faculties unimpaired, and not of those of a mind whose judgment is dethroned.

Perhaps in no respect have we the true character of Hamlet brought before our minds more clearly than in his soliloquies. He seizes the favorable opportunity presented by each moment of seclusion to ponder over the enormity of the crime which has been perpetrated, and to devise a means by which he can prove the guilt of the perpetrator and bring him to justice. In his first soliloquy we have brought before us the reflections of a noble and exalted mind. In these reflections the thought at first presents itself to his mind of ending his misery by committing suicide. But he immediately dismisses this thought upon the reflection that " God has fixed his canon against self-slaughter," and that the miseries of a never ending eternity awaits him.

In his reflections just before his interview with Ophelia his thoughts again wander above the things of this world to " that undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveller returns," and by these reflections he is again dissuaded from ending his misery by self-slaughter.

It is very interesting to notice the manner in which he acts towards his mother on all occasions. When the ghost has made its horrible disclosure to him it directs him as to how he shall act toward his mother in revenging the foul deed : " But however thou pursuest this act, taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive against thy mother aught."

This command Hamlet virtually obeys as far as his outward actions are concerned. But he makes the most of the means at his disposal ; and he paints the queen's character and shameful conduct so vividly and impressively before her that her mind, hardened as it is by sin, completely gives way before the onset of disgust and anger.

All the other characters of the play seem to have combined all their resources in attempting to ascertain the cause of Hamlet's strange actions. It is while carrying one of these schemes into execution that Polonius meets with his untimely end. This act on the part of Hamlet does not prove that he is mad. He is engaged in private conversation with his mother when all at once he becomes conscious of the presence of someone behind the arras, who is there for the purpose of betraying his conversa-