

Queen' or the 'Pilgrim's Progress' by remembering the allegory, so unless we enter into the play as a romance, we miss the whole spirit of it.

Our education tends too much to abnormal development of the critical, at the expense of the appreciative faculty. Shakespeare study has become, to a great degree, merely a mechanical process of dissection; with us, indeed, it is an expressive name for the swallowing of commentaries and the cramming of notes, grammatical and etymological, and 'sich like cattle.'

The 'Tempest' and such a play as 'Hamlet' differ most widely in dramatic character. Anyone who has seen Rossi knows the passionate tumult this latter play produces, an excitement, of which, in reading, we can get but the faintest shadow. The former, on the contrary, is more suitable for reading than for representation on the stage, where the delicate shading of its characters would be lost under the glare of the footlights. It has no action or plot-interest; it is a poem rather than a play.

The first scene is a work of fine dramatic insight. Nothing could be better for throwing us into the proper receptive state. Amidst the cry of the sailors and the rude commands of the boatswain, are heard the creaking of the masts and cordage and the rush and roar of the water. The present fades away, we lose ourselves in the scene before us, our emotional condition fits us for witnessing the wonders and beauties of the 'enchanted island.'

The admirable way in which the worlds of spirits and of men are brought into relation is but one of the many instances of what might be called the dramatic ingenuity of our dramatist. Indeed, with such ease does he put together the framework of his dramas, that we lose sight of the workman altogether.

The 'Tempest' and 'Midsummer Night's Dream' resemble one another in their poetic rather than dramatic character. In both plays the lyrical portions are constituent elements of their beauty, not chance jewels to deck it.

Critics have generally assigned the 'Tempest' a higher place than 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' and, no doubt, the loftier tone of imagination that pictures forth

'The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples,'

and the philosophic spirit that breathes in the lines,

'We are such stuff
As dreams are made; and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep,'

justifies the judgment. But 'Midsummer Night's Dream' has such peculiar excellences, arising mostly from the different way in which the author has dealt with the spirit world, that it becomes almost a question of taste or age, as to which is preferred.

In the play, *Ariel* takes part in human affairs only because he is under the magic power of *Prospero*. There is no attempt to enter into a world of 'airy nothings' to which that 'tricksy spirit' might belong; the supernatural creatures are little more than the means for carrying out their master's wishes. In the other play, we are taken right into the realm of fairyland. We are made partakers of the loves and jealousies of *Oberon* and *Titania*, watch their mimic warfare and the tricks of that most mischievous *Puck*.

'Such sight as youthful poets dream
On summer eves, by haunted stream.'

Outspread before us are the immortal glades, filled with such creatures as

'Hang a pearl in each cowslip's ear,
Creep into acorn cups and hide them there.'

Or,

'In the beached margent of the sea
Dance their ringlets to the whistling wind.'

Shakespeare's more youthful spirit is just revelling in all these delicate imaginings. What glorious praise of love, and what tender-hearted mockery of it, are there too, and how Shakespeare's genial humor spreads, like sunlight, over everything!

There is no comical scene in the 'Tempest' to compare with that in which the 'Athenian mechanicals' choose their parts for acting *Pyramus and Thisbe*. With what exquisite humor the dramatist makes *Bottom* respond, when his companions object to his offer to play the *Lion*, since he would rave so awfully, that 'he would frighten the ladies and the Duke would hang them.'

'I grant you, friends, that if you should fright the ladies out of their wits, they should have no more discretion but to hang us; but I will aggravate my voice so, that I will roar you as gently as an sucking dove; I will roar you an't were any nightin-

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