

forms as Medea and Clytemnestra. Their one national event was the defeat of the Persian horders, and their literature ever after consisted in ringing, *ad nauseam*, the changes on that event. The Romans, preeminently a military people, had little or no literature that was not an imitation of the subject Greeks. Women were not in sufficient esteem among them to be deemed worthy a place in literature. Where will we find in Roman writers their own women described as Shakespeare has described them in his noble Portia and Volumnia?

His lofty appreciation of female character is, no doubt, the true one, and much might be learned from him in this respect by modern writers of fiction. As his works are comprehensive they must contain some reference to inferior women, but they are not paraded before our eyes, nor subjected to cruel taunts; his very lowest, however, are not thoroughly vicious; we can detect in them a remnant, however small, of that affectionate sympathy, that retiring modesty, and that longing for esteem and honor which adorn woman in her glory. With what a tender care he makes the slandered woman triumphant! How he delights to paint the wife, the mother, the daughter, sister or friend as constant, faithful, pure minded, gentle and loving. Her good and lovely qualities he displays in their brightest colors. Of these love stands pre-eminent as her own peculiar possession, her legacy from mother Eve, her life; for it she braves father and friends, endures calumny and exile, and sacrifices everything but honor, that pearl of priceless value. Even Lady Macbeth, misled by vaulting, unnatural ambition and love for an unworthy husband, is checked in the very act of murder, not by fear like her craven husband, but by love, awakened by a fanciful re-

semblance, which resumes its place in her heart and forbids the fatal blow; the one link that bound the unsexed woman to her kind was love, the last to leave the heart of woman.

Having created his admirable ladies, he, like a true gallant, does not neglect to provide them with the husbands of their choice. Even Titania is gratified in this respect and for a time thinks herself very happy with her long-eared lover of green peas, but is soon only too glad to be relieved of the contented Bottom who is sent back to his weaving. What a warning to ladies this is to beware of gentlemen of long-eared proclivities. Many a Titania, charmed by some magic-working Puck, it may be in the form of wealth, fame, distinction, a handsome exterior, or even *ears*, has been blinded to the other side—vice, disease, dissipation, or passion, connecting herself thus with an unworthy object. These delusions on earth are like that of Titania, soon dissolved, but, then, where is the friendly wand to remove the obnoxious *heavy head*? Puck, indeed will be found to be a very sad substitute for Cupid, blind as the latter is.

And now one word for the lucky Bottom. What an extraordinary piece of luck! Beloved by a goddess! and yet he quietly takes all her caresses as his due and sees nothing unusual in it. Is it typical after all? Do we all assume the ass's head and imbibe unlimited quantities of flattery, in success, and like Bottom, good scupid men, take it all as our due? It is to be feared that Master Puck sometimes plays his pranks on another aerial lady—to wit, Dame Fortune, who, passing over worthy objects, forthwith showers her favors on some lucky Bottom, who straightway loses his head and believes himself a god until the fickle dame has the delusion removed and leaves him plain Bottom the weaver.