

Denmark (*i.e.*, X and XI centuries), while on the other the king calls for his 'Switzers,' who were not employed as mercenaries till the XV or XVI.

"But in whatever century or atmosphere Hamlet lived, it was certainly a dignified one, and to represent him as a Norse chieftain of early days is to falsify the whole play. I have never seen this done in Hamlet, but there is a movement toward this end in England, masking itself under the name of historical fidelity. I have never forgotten my sensations on seeing Macbeth sitting on a primitive stool, dressed in a rather inadequate kilt and munching a raw vegetable, apparently a turnip. The savage chieftain told of in the chronicle from which Shakespeare drew his material may have done this, but Shakespeare has lifted him into a different atmosphere. So in the same way I quite approve of the Theatre Français in putting the king and the nobles into court dress of Louis XIII. This is specially happy, because while at that time they dressed magnificently, wigs had not come in and so the actors wear their hair comparatively short.

"One or two curious changes are made. The first, typically French, is that the love affair of Hamlet and Ophelia is made much more important. Ophelia is a typical French *ingenue amoureuse*. When Laertes tells her not to be seen too often in Hamlet's company, she puts in:—

'Ecoutes le prince est un danger, selon vous;
Est-ce si perilleux, vraiment, quand c'est si doux.'

And at the end of the scene she goes out with clasped hands, murmuring to herself:—

'Je l'aime; il m'aime; oh, que je suis heureuse!'

"Hamlet too is represented as much more deeply in love with her than in the original. This leads to a very unhappy change in the scene where Hamlet urges her, with what may almost be called sardonic humour, 'Get thee to a nunnery,' this is turned into a passionate appeal that she should do so. Hamlet, finding his appeal unsuccessful, rushes off the stage, still shouting 'au couvent!' No less than *four* times after he had left the stage, one heard his voice as he went down the corridor, at first loud, then dying away—'Au rouvent!'—a pause,—'au couvent!' and so on four times. The effect was to me almost ludicrous. So in the mad scene, which was magnificently done, and in which the translation is seen at its best, love for Hamlet is made even more than the death of Polonius, the cause of her madness.

"Two other changes made, seem to me, if I may criticise Shakespeare, improvements from the point of view of stage effect. Laertes is sent at the beginning, not to France but as one of the ambassadors to Norway, where by mingled address and firmness he wins great credit, thus to a certain extent preparing the way for the cry of the mob in Act IV, 'Laertes shall be king.'

"So too, it is not Laertes who suggests that he will 'anoint my sword' with poison, but the king who suggests it to him. Laertes at first repels the suggestion, saying that he has come as avenger, not assassin. Nor does he consent till the queen comes in