

writer) almost as well as his play, imagine that the playwright was dealing tenderly with this common vice in "The Tempest?" In the tipsy vagaries of Trinculo, Stephano and Caliban? Let any sceptic read the end of the second and the beginning of the third act, and if he is then convinced that the whole scene is intended as a respectful tribute to Bacchus with the author's compliments, the only cure would be to "give him blows and take his bottle from him." So with the meanderings of those senile old gentlemen, Sir Toby Belch and Sir Andrew Aguecheek. Does Shakespeare doff his hat to the drawer? Is he here paying obeisance to the tankard? Does he not rather show us to the life two conceited old fools, in their sober moments, and in their cups; and as conclusively illustrate with all the gentle, playful satire at his command, that under the influence of the genial and generous bowl they are just a few degrees more foolish as a consequence. (Twelfth Night, Act I, scene three; Act II, scene three, and in the third and last acts).

Well "there is more foolery yet, an' I could remember it." Reference has already been made to the immortal Jack Falstaff. Where else will one find so characteristic a coterie of conviviais as in the fat knight's company. We can see the silent Nym, always half drunk, the wag Poins, poor Bardolph, Falstaff's butt, with his nose aflame, the sign through all the ages of the inveterate and persistent toper. We see them, rollicking Prince Hal and all, and, unless one is a sour Pharisee, have not the heart to condemn. They are so thoroughly happy and human, we feel like discussing them as the reformed Prince did the supposed corpse of Falstaff: "We could have better spared a better man."

As a slight contrast to the warnings and examples here referred to, there are a few lines from Old Adam in "As You Like It," which will repay a passing thought. Speaking to Orlando he says, "Let me be your servant; though I look old yet am I strong and lusty, for in my youth I never did apply hot and rebellious liquors to my blood, nor did not with unbashful forehead woo the means of weakness and debility; therefore my age is as a lusty winter, frosty, but kindly. Let me go with you, I'll do the service of a younger man in all your business and necessities."

Here the great dramatist, and moralist, gives us the other side of the picture, and states in his own opportune way the truism that continence and sobriety in the spring-time of youth bears according to nature's own compensating laws,—fruit in a healthy, hardy winter.

It is not pretended to discover at this date that the dramatist paid special heed to the drink question. The contention is simply that when he held "the mirror up to nature" and showed "virtue her own feature, scorn her own image," he almost showed vice her own likeness, every vice, as every virtue, of which poor humanity is capable, and that finding drunkenness among the vices he stated the issue fairly "neither exaggerating or glossing over, extenuating nothing or setting aught down in malice."

As was said earlier in this paper, there is a vague, nebulous idea in the minds of some good honest jovial folk who can take their glass without going to excess, that Shakespeare palliates, or condones, or excuses, or even justifies drunkenness, an impression that from the citations given it is to be hoped all fair-minded people will concede