

ing catastrophe of "Othello" forcibly picture what frightful developments the seeds of jealousy may produce in a suspicious mind. "Macbeth" discloses the direful effects which follow from the workings of an unchecked, inordinate ambition. Hamlet insinuates a similar lesson, by tottering a throne, the steps of which were mounted only by treading over the corpse of a rightful ruler, thus showing that regal security cannot be maintained when initiated by an act of "foul and most unnatural murder." By raising the ghost of an injured brother from the tomb, it further imports the oft-repeated and well-confirmed lesson,

"That murder though it have  
no tongue  
Will out with most miraculous  
organ."

Timon of Athens bids us beware of sly, insidious persons, no matter how friendly be their appearance or how pretentious their protestations. In a word

"Set it down that one may  
smile and smile  
And be a villain,"

But enough suffices. To give further examples would be but to impart to the reader knowledge which a moment's consideration can easily supply. There is therefore no disputing the fact that every play of Shakespeare has its definite moral aim. The question however has arisen, whether in reading those plays, attention should be given exclusively to their dramatic excellence, or whether besides considering their compliance with the requirements of the three unities, or their remarkable force and beauty of language, we should go still deeper in order to delve out the moral gem that lies hidden underneath. To

this question the majority of German Shakespearean critics reply in the affirmative; that of the English in the negative. With all due respect for the latter I find it necessary to side with the former, and with considerable reason. For a story considered but as a story, skilfully though it be told, is little calculated to inspire moral, or to stimulate mental, development. Otherwise a cursory glance over our best classics would satisfy the pupil's most ambitious aims, while little more would be incumbent upon our warmest preachers than a bare reading of the Sunday Gospel. To use a homely comparison, there is a potent medicine composed of several liquids, each of which is distinguished by different densities. In consequence of this, the ingredients are disposed in layers, the lighter being on top, the heavier at the bottom, while each separately contains little or no medicinal properties. This indolent treatment of our gravest authors reminds one forcibly of the invalid who in his eager pursuit of health, forgot to shake up the above bottle before using, so that instead of swallowing the real essence of the decoction, he simply skimmed off the almost worthless matter from on top.

In search of mental vigor, such a treatment of our authors might be productive of certain favorable results, but it would deny us more material advantages; for it is evident that what has occupied the attention, and is stamped by the genius, of such a master mind as Shakespeare's, should be worthy of assimilation, and of complete assimilation on the part of the student, whether it be for the benefit of his literary, mental or moral improvement. Besides, if the acquisition of a choice