

Mordred can never know the strength of filial love in its entirety. His natural tendency to morbidness gains ground ; he broods upon his wrongs and his deformity, and grows morose. The soil is rapidly preparing for the reception of Vivien's seed of evil. By insinuation, by whispered taunt, by glance and word of love she leads him on until we find these two leagued together to destroy the peace of Arthur's court.

Launcelot and Guinevere in their league of love are counter-balanced by the conspiring union of Mordred and Vivien. The latter acts on Mordred and, finding him still vacillating in his purpose of revenge, plans a meeting with Guinevere. She brings the two together, sets forces in action, and steps aside to watch the conflict. So much depends on this first meeting ! And it is with malicious satisfaction that Vivien sees Guinevere make the fatal error, show herself lacking in womanly sympathy for the afflicted, when she tactlessly questions the sensitive hunch-back, "Art thou another fool ?" How could such thoughtless cruelty fail to rouse and antagonize a nature such as Mordred's ? Stung to the quick, he reveals all the bitter secret of his birth—but to unbelieving ears. And Launcelot, eager champion of Guinevere's cause adds fuel to the flame by his hasty espousal of the queen's quarrel and contemptuous humiliation of Mordred.

Now all the elements of tragedy are marshalled. Another crisis has come and gone ; another character has proved inadequate to the demands upon it.

Mordred vows vengeance. He, who once had been the passive instrument of Vivien's schemes, becomes the master-spirit, taking the initiative in every action ; plans calmly, diabolically ; chooses his time and waits.

"Much might be lost by hastening the issue."

The plot thickens. Schemes and machinations occupy the conspirators. Guinevere jealous and Launcelot estranged ; Launcelot an exile from the court, a maniac alternating in his ravings from pathetic murmurings of the seasons and the Queen he loved to fierce, exultant cries for strife ; Guinevere accused of murder and in peril of her life ; Launcelot, "made sane by her extremity," her champion and saviour. Thus runs the record.

But at last the condition of affairs becomes intolerable. Mordred has come to recognize the love that Vivien feels for him—she has conjured a devil and she is mastered by his very power for evil ; and in the same moment he learns to know his own heart, and the know-