

## Shakespeare: the Man

In *The Merchant of Venice*, mercy in man reflects an attribute of God.

On the other hand, when Shakespeare touches the problem of human existence or that of the world to come, we cannot help feeling that we are in contact with a mind more like that of Giordano Bruno, or rather that of the Elizabethan liberals, than that of an orthodox Anglican Divine. The soliloquy in *Hamlet* presents nothing sceptical; yet it and Hamlet's general utterances are pervaded by the spirit of one to whom the state of man, present and future, is an unsolved mystery. We do not know "in that sleep of death what dreams may come." The world beyond the grave is "the undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveller returns." To die is to "go we know not where." "We are such stuff as dreams are made on; and our little life is rounded with a sleep." This globe of ours "like an unsubstantial pageant, will vanish and leave not a wreck behind." That Shakes-