

however, reached its climax in Romeo and Juliet. In the short week occupied by the events of that play we have condensed the ardour and buoyancy of first love, the perfect happiness of its full realization and the blank despair caused by the loss of the loved one. In the mournful, dreamy Romeo—fortunate as a lover, but how unlucky as a man—a man of one idea, always thinking right but doing wrong, drawn by an irresistible impulse to the side of his equally loving, impulsive and hopeful Juliet, we have a picture of passionate young love that even Shakespeare could not surpass. Genius can go no further in the delineation of youthful, ardent passion, and the story of "Juliet and her Romeo" remains the world's love story. Where else shall we look for such a story of love? Where else find that natural and warm mingling of soul with soul? Petrarch has charmed the world with his fervid descriptions of his Laura, but his love is mere, cold adoration of, we might almost say, an imaginary being, whose charms he delights to paint in elegant measures of polished, ornate verse. Eloise and Abelard present us a picture of passionate love, but blotted by coarseness. Shakespeare's play, however, gives us all the poetry and passion without the platonic iciness, or the vulgar coarseness.

In spite of all the misfortunes that fall to the lot of our two lovers, there is a certain satisfaction in reading their story. Lysander's line :

"The course of true love never did run smooth,"

is not such a terrible thing after all. Vainly might an adverse fate shower down its wrath on the heads of such devoted lovers. Happy in the complete enjoyment of mutual affection, what care they for the woes of life.

"Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just,"

and thrice were our lovers armed against the shafts of adversity in the consciousness of their love. To such

lovers, separation alone is evil, nay it is death—alarming in its suddenness, and yet friendly and desirable, since it removes the only barriers that separate the lover from his heart's idol.

Such is true love as interpreted by the poet and such its effects when reciprocal, but what would this love, unrequited, be?—this side of it with all its direful results has not escaped our poet. What heart has not throbbled in sympathy, what eye is not dimmed in sorrow over the shattered intellect of poor Ophelia? Her sad lot it was, to love where love was not returned. And poor County Paris! Vainly might it be said of him :

"Verona's summer hath not such another flower."

His sighs, his grief, yea, his life, were matters of indifference to Juliet, absorbed as she was, in love for her Romeo. Like the lovers, Shakespeare neglects him—for a rejected lover is anti-Shakespearian—and it is only by his dying request to be laid on her tomb that we discover how fondly he loved her. More manly and unchanged, perhaps, than Romeo, he loved her probably not less vehemently, but how short had been his happiness! The long-wooded Juliet was now to be his. Like Romeo, he rejoiced in the buoyant spirits of youth, and, no doubt, looked forward to his bridal morn with all the rapturous intoxication of hope, never, alas, to be realized, for a seemingly cruel though really merciful death snatched her from him, and left him nought but blank despair! In his heart he had thought Juliet loved him and that thought had made him happy, but only for a moment, death claimed her, and in his great grief he seeks her tomb at midnight to mourn all alone, when a sudden and, no doubt, a welcome death meets him. Well for him, that there was no waking from that tomb. He never knew his loss and hence it was none to him. It would be idle to conjecture what he