

qualities, a sense of satisfaction, or even of downright pleasure, will arise in our minds, even if the disaster be one that is really serious. But this disaster, if it is to be comic, must not involve the sight of actual physical pain, for a spectacle of human suffering in this extreme form will always provoke a sense of horror, unless, indeed, the nature of the spectator be exceedingly hardened, or the circumstances are altogether abnormal. The central motive of comedy is, therefore, to present an exhibition of the irony of circumstances, and the effect which it seeks to produce upon the mind of the spectator is admittedly one of complete satisfaction. It shows him that a great deal of the suffering which he sees around him is deserved—for one of the legitimate motives of comedy is to satirize, or exhibit the ugliness of vice, the ludicrousness of pride based upon conventional distinctions, and the unhappiness of excessive self-regard—and by teaching him to view his own misfortunes as part of the general life of the community, and to himself look upon them from the point of view from which he would look upon the same misfortunes in others, reveals to him the fact that there is a "light side" to the darkest events.

But the drama, that is the representation of a tragedy or comedy in the theatre, includes two further elements besides the literary element—the actual composition in words—with which we are here concerned. These two elements are the interpretation of the words by the intonation, acts, and gestures of the actor, and the representation of the scenery by the various resources, artistic and scientific, which are placed at the disposal of the stage manager. The drama is, therefore, a composite art, in which the author, the actor and the stage manager all combine to produce the total effect: and as the line of development of this art has been rather in the direction of the perfecting of scenic accessories, the importance of the literary element has tended to decline in the modern drama. The greater convenience of prose as a literary medium, and the closer