

phrase, what Bacchus owes to Phoebus will never be estimated. The festoons and garlands that have been hung round the shrine, or heaped in lavish bounty at the feet have hidden his ugliness, and lent to the leering of this god monarch a false symmetry. The brilliance and beauty, the fancy and wit, the music and love, are what captivate each succeeding generation of generous youth, and when the bird is limed and has beaten in vain his soiled pinions against the hard earth, the disillusion comes too late—he is yet another victim at the altar of this terrible deity falsier than Janus, more hideous than Mokanna, more mocking than Circe.

The opinion is loosely held that amongst the chiefest of sinners in this direction, the great high priest of excuses for drinking is the greatest poet and dramatist of them all. Doubtless there is some ground for this opinion, but whether the general tendency of Shakespeare's writing is solid enough in the direction of the poets of the school of Anacreon is open to question. An examination may even reveal the contrary.

It is to be freely admitted that the jovial good-fellowship of such characters as Jack Falstaff is almost irresistible. "What," exclaims that prince of rascals, "because ye are virtuous shall there be no more cakes and ale?" And yet this keynote to his inimitable personality is not the refrain that lingers in men's minds in recalling Sir John from the misty past, but rather the amusement and contempt felt when on the emptying of his pockets in one of his drunken sleeps the tavern bill elicits the exclamation "a haporth of bread to such a monstrous disproportion of sacks!" So also when the wily Iago, a fit and consistent advocate of drinking deep, in combatting

the self accusation of poor Cassio, "You are too severe a moraliser; good wine is a good familiar creature if it be well used," to which defense another character in Shakespeare might well say "there be much virtue in an 'if.'"

But take the defence at its best and its effect is utterly swamped in men's minds when they read, or better, hear a good actor declaim, the lines given to poor Cassio (one of Shakespeare's noblest characters, but for that one mar-ring weakness) an indictment against alcohol more powerful than any written since. Shakespeare's critics and commentators have been telling us that the great moral lesson to be deduced from the play Othello is the danger of giving way to jealousy, and the additional folly of trusting a man who is too frequently proclaimed as honest; "honest, honest Iago." But at least as obvious a moral is in the fatal celerity with which the good reputation of a life time can be irretrievably ruined as the result of one drunk—and a moderate one at that. The passages are too long to be here quoted in full, but if the reader will turn to act second, scene third, and generally on to the end of the act, he will bear me out that the ruin of poor Cassio in the eyes of his general and himself was effected solely through the means of the extra glass of wine which his honor (?) compelled him to take, to his own destruction. And the epitome of the whole incident is not a whit too powerfully put in the lines of the unhappy victim, "Oh God! that men should put an enemy into their mouths to steal away their brains! That we should with joy, pleasure, revel and applause transform ourselves into beasts!" If the lines are hackneyed it is because they are true, as painfully and fatally true at the end of the nineteenth