

In Act III, Scene I, evidence is given of the philosophy of the play. Here, Hamlet enters, being made the victim of a plot to discover whether he really loves Ophelia or not. "To be or not to be; that is the question."

Whether it is nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, or to take up arms against a sea of troubles, and by opposing end them?" By this Hamlet is seeking the better way in which to put an end to his troubles. If he shuffled off the mortal coil, would he enter into a sleep of death or of life eternal? This doubtfulness forces him to give pause to his act. "The dread of something after death, the undiscovered country, from whose bourn no traveller returns," makes him consider his intended act, compels him to reason out the almost inevitable result of his deed.

Another rotatable incident is the suffering of the innocent. Why should it be that the one in no way to blame for the smallest fraction of the trouble should suffer as if she had been engaged in the thickest of the plot? Again the case of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern may be quoted. These two rascals undoubtedly were worthy of punishment for their lack of proper scruples, yet it seems that the punishment they did receive was too extreme in its nature. Likewise we see the hope of the nation crushed. Hamlet, after much vacillation, accomplishes his deed, but he does so at the expense of his own death. Fortinbras sets forth on an expedition with the intention of simply putting aside the inner trouble of his kingdom, and on his return finds himself King of Denmark. Such conditions are certainly guided by a hand beyond the power of the natural.

Another point to be remarked is the wonder expressed by Hamlet at the order which exists in the world. Not only does Hamlet express his astonishment at the lower existing things, but he utters in such a noble manner the attributes of man that it forces one to consider what it really means before continuing in the study of the work. "What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a God! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!"

WM. HAYDEN, '16.