

degradation of industrial work is mainly due to the fact that it is not sustained by the highest and strongest inspirations of life. Here it is deemed not only allowable, but necessary, that men should cease to dream of the higher ideals, and court the corrupting influences which inevitably flow from working for pecuniary gain. There is no reason why the industrial life of the world should be thus divorced from the motives which are found to be most effective in other spheres of activity; and when it is made to thrill with the inspiration of these motives, it will find a sufficient reward in satisfaction with its own achievements.

It might be supposed that with the triumphant issue of the trial the poet's task was done, and the dramatic interest exhausted. But Portia's refusal of a fee leads to the incident of the rings; and this creates a new dramatic problem, awakening a fresh interest in its solution. The scene is thus, by a natural turn of the plot, transferred once more to Portia's home; and this ideal region becomes more than ever of a fairyland, as eye and ear are enchanted with the soft splendors of a moonlit night and the harmonies of delicious music. The features of external nature are thus in exquisite unison with the happy mood of the whole party returning from their recent triumph. The inspiration of the scene exalts thought and sentiment in all. Even the trivial circumstance of a light, seen by Portia in her hall as she draws near, has its solemn suggestions to her mind.

"How far that little candle throws his beams!
So shines a good deed in a naughty world."

The shallow Lorenzo himself is quickened for the moment to a more earnest depth of spirit, as he discourses to Jessica on the mystic power of music over the human soul, and tells her of an ethereal sphere-music sounded by the orbs of heaven,—

"Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubim."

No more fitting scene could be imagined for closing a drama in the spirit of the finest comedy. The merry little