

But Shakespeare's philosophy shines out brightest in his view of man's proper attitude toward the providence that determined his lot. When he makes Pericles say,

"We cannot but obey
The powers above us. Could I rage and roar
As doth the sea . . . Yet the end
Must be as 'tis,"

he teaches submission to the inevitable, for the sufficient reason given elsewhere:

"What's gone, and what's past help, should be past grief ;"

Yet it is not the submission of despair, nor yet of indifference, but rather the submission of hopeful effort whenever circumstances call it forth :

"In peace, there's nothing so becomes a man
As modest stillness, and humility :
But when the blast of war blows in our ears,
Then imitate the action of the tiger ;
Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood,
Disguise fair nature with hard favour'd rage :
Then lend the eye a terrible aspect ;
Let it pry through the portage of the head,
Like the brass cannon ; let the brow o'erwhelm it,
As fearfully, as doth a galled rock
O'erhang and jutty his confounded base,
Swill'd with the wild and wasteful ocean.
Now set the teeth, and set the nostril wide ;
Hold hard the breath, and bend up every spirit
To his full height !"

He bases this counsel on the principle of Cassius' observation to Brutus :

"Of your philosophy you make no use
If you give place to accidental evils."

Shakespeare, however, is much more than even a moral philosopher ; he gives us a real standard of Christian morals. Next to Solomon, perhaps, he is the greatest moralist the world has ever known. He not only deals with moral facts, but he deals with them upon Christian principles. Inculcating plain lessons in ethics, he invokes Christianity to aid his philosophy. His mind is deeply imbued with the pure morality of the Gospel. As Othello says of Iago, but with more truth we may say of Shakespeare :

"This fellow's of exceeding honesty,
And knows all qualities with a learned spirit
Of human dealings."