

that Shakespeare Wrote

ever, although by age but a boy, appears, by the passion and dignity with which he is presented, as a full-grown man, and appeals to us by his sufferings and his sayings rather as an adult than an adolescent. His boyhood is taken from him by reason of the great political struggle of which he is the centre, and no one who listens to his words can possibly gather that it is a child who speaks. In fact, whenever in a play of Shakespeare we have children on the stage, it is through the tragedy of their existence that they figure. It may be urged that children are seldom real upon the stage, and that our greatest dramatist, with his unerring skill, was the first to detect their lack of the dramatic faculty. Yet having given them at all, it is impossible to understand why Shakespeare did not utilise them more than he did as the embodiment of what is bright and joyful and innocent in life; and we can but feel, whatever the reason may have been for this omission, that herein a great opportunity was neglected by the writer, and a great revelation withheld from the reader and the theatre-goer.

The plays of Shakespeare most suitable for stage representation are those which contain a strong love interest; those which rely on our philosophy, or deal with history, have not the same abiding appeal. Probably the plays which are most popular to-day were also the most