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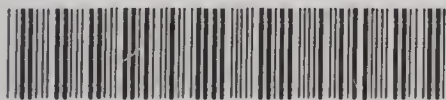
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PSYCHOLOGY AND DRAMATIC ART

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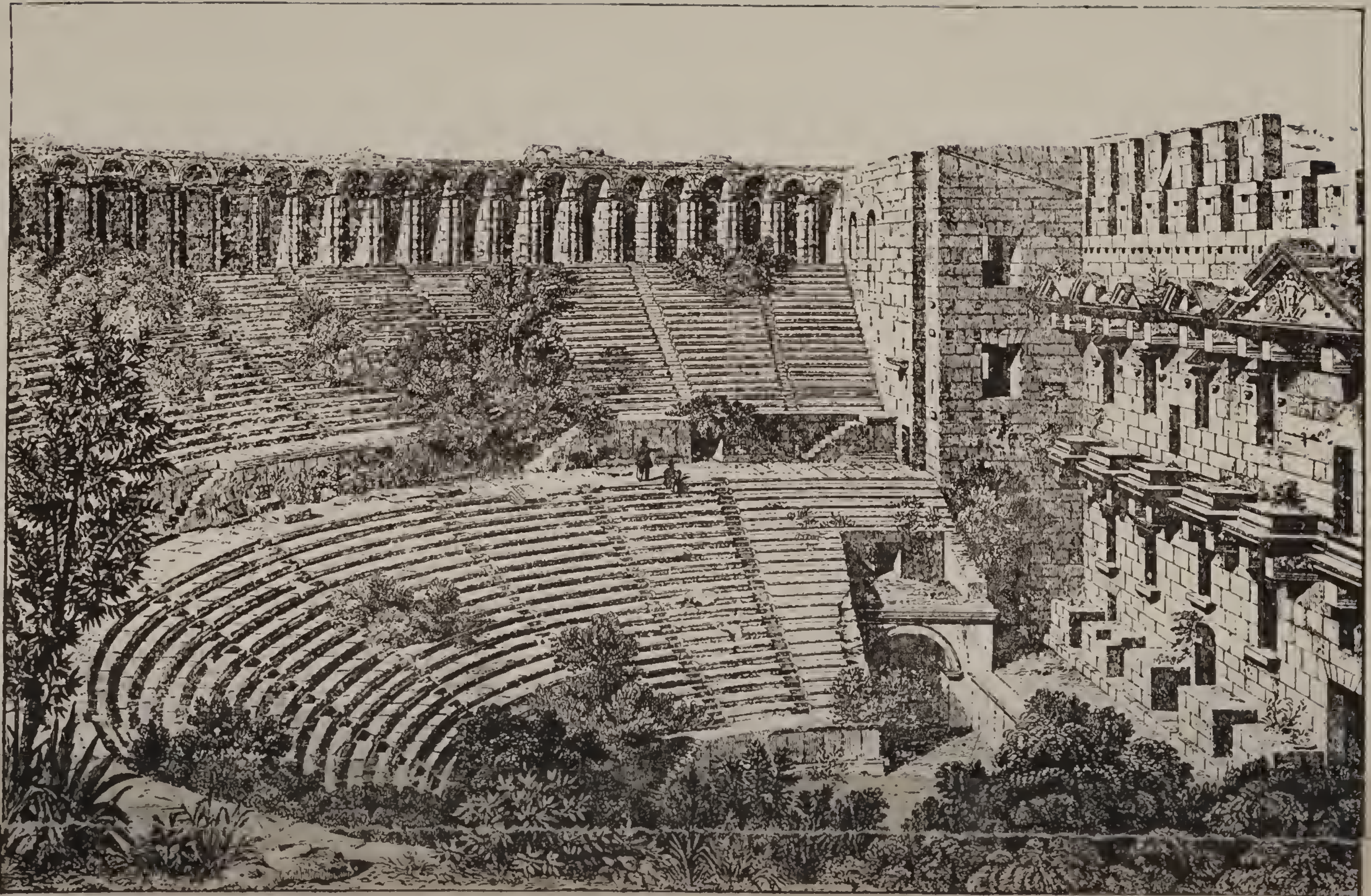

GREEK THEATRE AT ASPENDUS

INTRODUCTION

THE recent rapid development of drama from the thing of naught that it was a half century ago to the potent influence that it is today is a matter of common knowledge. From a tawdry thing that touched nothing that ever was on sea or land it has come to be a fairly accurate reflection of certain aspects of life. That so rapid a development should bring about a deluge of criticism is logical. Equally logical is it that, as the drama came into closer relation to life, criticism should see in it a greater insistence on what has come to be known as psychology. This guarded phrasing is deliberate, for we are living in an age of vague and indefinite speech. Precision has quite gone out, has given way to a flippant disregard of language. "Psychology" is on the tongue of every careless word-monger; the word is over-worn. And when it is so bandied about by a careless generation, one who uses it in its strict sense is driven to the necessity of explaining and defending — a curious reversal of the normal situation.

By psychology, in its exact sense, we mean that department of philosophical science which deals with the nature, attributes and activities of the human soul. But it would be reckless to assume that everybody who uses the term understands it

in this sense. It is easy to see how a materialistic age, which denies, or even merely ignores the spiritual nature of man, will be content with a looser application, and in time lose sight of its original significance. And when the word, stripped of its definite meaning, creeps into the popular vocabulary — then farewell all precision. Here is an epitome of this word's history in the last quarter century or thereabout. It has become a by-word. We hear on every hand of the psychology of this or that — of painting, of sculpture, of sport, of advertising, of salesmanship, or what-not — until we are wearied of the damnable iteration. The word is bandied about, tossed off the tongue by the unthinking, without reflection, without care, without remorse, until it becomes an offence and an irritation.

To the man in the street the word has a savor of learning and confers a certain distinction on his vocabulary. Its novelty — for it is novel to him — implies its recent discovery, and the application of its principles to the drama must necessarily be a new departure. And the average reviewer of plays and critic of the drama is but a few degrees above the man in the street in intelligence, and hardly at all in his respect for language. To him, too, is this a new departure and an evidence of the superiority of all things modern. This misconception is due largely to ignorance of the history of the drama, and consequent failure to realize that the poverty of the drama of a century or so ago was due to a

process of degeneration. The ancient art had fallen from its high estate and had come upon evil days. Its regeneration, it is true, when it came, was marked by a rapid advance, but, after all, that advance marks but a partial recovery of its ancient glories.

Yet even a casual consideration of this application of the principles of psychology must show that there is no more of novelty in it than in death, or marriage, or hunger, or taxes, or anything else under the sun. It is of the very essence of the drama. All drama that has any value as literature must concern itself with life — with the play of character on incident, of incident on character. It must present a moving aspect of life. To be true to life it must depict men and women as actuated by motives consistent with their characters, as those characters are seen and presented by the author. The springs of action must be natural, and within the bounds of reason. The characters, to be convincing, must be human; their motives must be adequate; their speech and actions must be in harmony with both the characters and the situations in which they find themselves. To achieve all these ends the dramatist must have a comprehensive knowledge of human nature. He must be capable of depicting men not merely in their superficial aspects, but in their inmost motives. He must be capable of searching their souls and representing the working of those souls in concrete word and action, the outward bodily manifestation of their working. In a word,

he must understand psychology and be able to represent its results.

This was true when Sophocles wrote Œdipus and Antigone; it was true when Shakespere wrote Macbeth and Lear; it is true today when hundreds of dramatists are scrambling for the eminence of the great masters. It is a truth that has been recognized by every great critic of the drama, from Aristotle to George Bernard Shaw. And this is the burden of this work — to demonstrate that from the first earnest effort to depict life by a mimic action, to present in concentrated form some moving aspect of life, some assertion of the human will, the writer must have brought to the task a knowledge of human nature, a knowledge of the workings of the human soul — in a word, a knowledge of psychology. How well the author has accomplished the task it is not within the province of an introduction to say. That would be to prejudge. But to declare that she has brought to the making of her book zeal and interest and scholarship is but to assert a simple truth, and to stimulate expectation.

Thomas Gaffney Taaffe.

November 19, 1922

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Psychology and Dramatic Art

I

INTERRELATIONS

THIS is preëminently the age of democracy. Day by day the masses are becoming more insistent in voicing their rights and privileges, not hesitating when occasion demands to make force, rather than reason, the arbiter of their cause. To many this phase of the world's so-called progress seems a product of today, an aftermath of the late world war that has disturbed, one might almost say revolutionized, previously existing conditions both social and industrial.

While it may be readily admitted that the masses are displaying their power in new fields of action, it is impossible to deny them the actual possession of that power at any stage in the world's history. Man has been made king of creation and, in virtue of this God-given kingship, his interests and his views must reign paramount in the world over which he rules. Not wealth, nor politics, nor art, nor science, but human nature — *humanitas* — is man's most interesting study; and it is only in as much as other things affect human nature that they are of any moment to the greater part of mankind. This statement holds good in the case of practically

all arts and sciences, but nowhere perhaps is it more clearly evinced than in the relations existing between dramatic art and physchology, the drama and human nature.

There was once upon a time a certain college professor so given to repeating a single phrase that it became the slogan of his courses: "Be sure that you know what you are going to talk about before you begin to talk about it." Following his advice, might it not be well to decide just what we mean by dramatic art and by psychology before discussing their interrelations?

Dramatic Art

Art is defined as the skillful and systematic arrangement or adaptation of means for the attainment of some desired end.

Dramatic means pertaining to, constituting, or resembling a drama.

Drama is: (1) A composition, in prose or poetry, usually intended to be acted upon the stage, presenting a story by means of characters speaking and acting in situations contrived to develop a plot, and with such accessories of scenery, etc., as are fitted to produce an impression of reality.

(2) A whole body of dramatic compositions taken collectively and as a department of literature.

(3) A series of actions, events, or purposes, considered collectively as possessing dramatic unity.

Taking this last meaning, one sees at once the close relation between human nature and the drama; for surely, in this sense: "Every man's heart is

a living drama; every death is a drop-scene; every book only a faint foot-light to throw a little flicker on the stage."[1]

Perhaps a fairly good working definition of dramatic art would be: The skillful and systematic arrangement of the vital episodes of a theme, and the presentation of these episodes by such characters and amid such surroundings as shall not put them beyond the possibilities of reality.

Dr. Matthews holds dramatic art to be twofold, the result of a necessary union of the efforts of the playwright with those of the player. He maintains that neither can accomplish his purpose without the aid of the other, the achieving of a masterpiece requiring that the dramaturgic skill of the author should utilize the histrionic skill of the actor.[2] Here, of course, Dr. Matthews is placing the drama on the stage, but since great dramas, and even those that are not great, are usually written for theatrical presentation, it is only fair to consider them from the point of view of the playhouse. Moreover it is this viewpoint alone that gives the true position of dramatic art; it shows how, as a mistress, she calls to her aid the arts of poetry, painting, sculpture, and music, to vivify the action which is the heart of the play. It would be absurd to undervalue the exquisite poetry, the virile prose, the deep thought, the wise philosophy, that have enhanced the value

Adjuncts and Essentials

[1] "Dream Life," D. G. Mitchell.
[2] "A Study of the Drama," Brander Matthews.

of our great dramas; yet we insist that these are adjuncts rather than essentials; that the *sine qua non* of drama is the story told by such speech and action as may produce the impression of reality.

"Art cannot exist without nature, and man can give nothing to his fellow-men but himself. . . . Dramatic art requires that the characters portrayed by the dramatist be personated by living individuals, meeting as near as may be, in sex, age, and figure, the prevalent conceptions of the fictitious originals, that they assume the personality of these individuals, using their tones of voice, their actions, and their gestures."[1] The dramatist must also add such circumstances as are needed to give a clear idea of his play.

But do not these requirements necessitate a close study of human nature, and will not the success of the dramatist be measured, at least in great part, by his success as a psychologist?

Man Mimetic

The reason for the existence of dramatic art seems both obvious and natural. Man is prone to mimic; when he enters vividly into the situations, sentiments, passions, of others, he involuntarily uses their action and gestures, sometimes their very tone of voice. Children at play give evidence of this tendency to imitate, more or less successfully, the words and actions of those whom they pretend to be. Have you never seen a little lad "playing soldier," armed with something that does duty for his father's gun,

[1] "Dramatic Art and Literature," A. W. Schlegel.

or a tiny maid "going visiting," draped in anything that resembles her mother's gown?

Possibly no more striking proof than the following can be given of the close connection existing between nature and dramatic art, or rather of the dependence of the latter upon the former.

With the Greeks, who hold an important place in ancient drama, "the ideal of human nature was perfect union and proportion between all the powers — a natural harmony";[1] hence, in their dramatic art, one finds "an original and unconscious unity of form and matter."[2] Modern dramatists, on the other hand, being imbued to some extent at least with Christian ideas, are conscious of an internal discord which renders the Grecian ideal impossible; their dramatic efforts aim at reconciling the two "selves" between which man finds himself divided. Is not this psychology as well as dramatic art?

Ideals

It must be remembered, too, that the dramatist has to study human nature not only in his characters but also in his audience. He must rivet attention, excite interest and sympathy, and avoid exceeding the ordinary measure of patience and comprehension. In a word, he must take so complete a possession of the attention of his audience as to make it live, for the moment, the life that he depicts on the stage. Does not this power of appeal presuppose an intimate knowledge of human nature and thus mark the dramatist a psychologist?

[1] "Dramatic Art and Literature," A. W. Schlegel.
[2] *Ibid.*

Influences

If one considers the drama as a composition intended to be produced upon the stage, it is evident that it is influenced by the actor, the physical theatre, and the audience. The true dramatist, according to a writer of our times, never feels that his work is complete until "he has seen it bodied forth by actors on the stage before the motley masses"[1] of a listening public. Nor does the same writer hesitate to say with Molière: "I accept easily enough the decision of the multitude, and I hold it as difficult to assail a work which the public approves as to defend one which it condemns."[2]

Actor

A playwright is sometimes reproached with having written his play to fit a special actor or actress. But why should he not do this? Many an artistic feat of the Italian Renaissance resulted from the fact that the painter had to make the best of the wall space over an altar, or the sculptor to form his statue out of a given block of marble, peculiar as to size or shape. May not the playwright, then, seize the opportunity found in the personality or the ability of an actor or an actress? Granted that the actor depends upon the playwright, is not the latter also dependent upon the actor? Is it not the actor who interprets the lines of the dramatist, who vivifies them with appropriate action, who, in a word, creates the part?

[1] "A Study of the Drama," Brander Matthews.
[2] *Ibid.*

If one seeks for precedent in this matter of suiting the play — or at least the character — to the actor, one may find it readily enough among the noted playwrights of the past. Sophocles, "supreme artist of a most artistic race," is said to have composed his chief characters for one whose name is not known but whose histrionic gifts spurred on the old Greek dramatist. The rant and violence of Marlowe's "Jew of Malta" and "Tamburlaine," may be accounted for by the fact that the chief part in each of these plays was written for a certain Alleyne, a "most robustious actor," nearly seven feet in height and possessed of proportionate physical energy. It is inferred, though not actually recorded, that the great Shakespeare himself bore in mind the histrionic ability of the leading members of the dramatic company to which he belonged and for which he wrote his plays; Burbage seems to have "created" most of the "star parts." An interesting light may be thrown, too, upon the characters of Rosalind, Viola, Portia, and Beatrice, if one remembers that these maidens had to be personated by boys and not by women.

If one turns to the French stage, there is Molière giving to his stage people the actual physical characteristics of himself or others. A character to be played by himself has his own cough; another to be played by his lame brother-in-law, Bégart, is lame; the part of the gay serving-maid in "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme," is written to utilize the infectious laugh of Mlle. Beauval, a member of his

dramatic company. For his wife, Armande Bégart, he composes several brilliant parts, chief among them being Elmire in "Tartuffe" and Celimène in "Le Misanthrope." Nor was Molière the only one to act in this way. Legouvé composed "Adrienne Lecouvreur" for Rachel, and Rostand measured "Cyrano de Bergerac" to fit Coquelin.

Not only have playwrights consulted the capabilities of the actor in writing the part intended for him, but at his suggestion they have even changed the play. Bulwer-Lytton practically re-wrote "The Lady of Lyons" and "Richelieu" in accordance with advice given him by the actor Macready, while Tennyson not only added certain lines to his "Becket" when asked to do so by the actor Irving, but also gave permission for such omissions and transpositions as Irving deemed necessary. Perhaps there exists no better example of a play written for the players than Sheridan's "School for Scandal." Sheridan brought the play out at Drury Lane Theatre, of which he was manager, and every character is said to have been fitted to the one who first played it. There is even a story to the effect that when Sheridan was asked why there was no love scene for the two characters, Charles Surface and Maria, with whose marriage the comedy ends, he said that Mr. Smith, who played Charles Surface, and Miss Hopkins, who played Maria, could not make love. A playwright is undoubtedly helped by considering special actors while writing a play, even though these actors be un-

available for its production, for their personality will act as a stimulus to his invention if not to his imagination. Moreover we humans are far more alike than different, and the play written for certain actors may be quite as successfully interpreted by others. Madame de Sevigné accused Racine of "writing plays for la Champmeslé, and not for posterity"; the accusation was probably justified but, as it happens, the plays that suited Mlle. de Champmeslé have been successfully interpreted by her successors and thus may lay claim to having been written for posterity as well as for the famous actress.

Physical Theatre

So much for the influence of the actor; now a word as to that of the physical theatre.

A close examination of dramatic productivity will convince us that the playwright composes his plays to suit the actual conditions of the physical theatre of his own time. It is impossible, therefore, to form a just appreciation of the dramatic artist unless we have a clear understanding of the chief circumstances accompanying an actual performance of his play in the theatre for which it was prepared, and to the size, shape, and scenic appliances of which it had to be adjusted. How can one evaluate the dramatic art of Sophocles or Shakespeare, Molière or Ibsen, without a knowledge of the size and shape of the place in which their plays were presented, as well as of the scenic appliances available for such presentation? A huge theatre needs a broad

and simple theme, heavy scenery, a plot requiring few changes of place; while only the artificial illumination and mechanical inventions of laters years make possible the production of some at least of our modern plays.

Just how important a factor the physical theatre is in dramatic production, it is none too easy to estimate; even the keenest students of English drama have failed, perhaps, to grasp "the full significance of the changes which resulted during the Restoration period from the introduction of painted scenery and artificial light."[1]

Go in spirit to the early theatre of the Greeks and place yourself on one of the marble benches raised in tiers above the orchestra; see how small the actors in the orchestra appear and how impossible it is to perceive any play of feature; realize, too, that it is difficult not to lose, at least occasionally, the spoken word. Can you wonder that the dramatist called for no physical action from actors raised on lofty boots and wearing masks towering above their heads, so that their apparent stature might be increased? Is it strange that he should choose a plot already familiar to the spectators so that they might not lose the thread of the story, even when a sudden gust from the Ægean bore away the actors' words?

Greece

Recall the theatre of the Romans, a modification of that of the Greeks. There are benches placed in the orchestra and the stage is raised so that the

[1] "A Study of the Drama," Brander Matthews.

Rome

spectators may see the performance. The stage itself is a long and narrow shelf with a high wall, pierced with doors and decorated with columns and statues, for its unchanging background. In one of these theatres, at Orange in the South of France, the stage was about one hundred and ninety feet wide, the radius of the auditorium was more than one hundred eighty feet, and there were accommodations for six thousand spectators. This theatre belongs to a late date, but the earlier Roman theatres were not unlike it in size and in shape. They were evidently better suited to pantomime and acrobatic feats than to drama dealing with the pathos and humor of life. Might their place of presentation have contributed in any way towards the failure of Terence's delicately polished works to please his contemporaries? Once, in modern times, the company of the Comédie-Française visited Orange and gave a neo-Greek playlet, the "Ilote" of M. Paul Ferrier. The play had been a success at the Théâtre Français in Paris, but it became absolutely insignificant in the vast span of the theatre at Orange. On the other hand, French versions of Sophocles' "Œdipus," as well as of other massively planned Greek tragedies, were much more effective at Orange than they had been at Paris.

We might close the discussion of Roman drama by quoting M. Gaston Boissier, a student of Latin literature, who, having visited most of the surviving Roman theatres, or, to be more exact what remains

of them, gives it as his opinion that the plays " were instinctively accommodated and appropriated to the place where they were to be presented."

Passing to the Middle Ages, one no longer finds the traditions of the Greek or of the Roman drama, but a new dramatic form evolved spontaneously out of the ritual of the Christian Church. Once more, however, the play — we use the word reverently — was adapted to the place. Side doors, nave, and chancel, were utilized in the ordinary church building, while large cathedrals offered various chapels, called " stations " by the English and " mansions " by the French, to those who took part in presenting different episodes in the life of Christ. Later on, as we shall see when discussing the development of the drama, the play or " Mystery " as it was called, left the church building for more secular surroundings.

Middle Ages

In the manuscript of a " Mystery," acted at Valenciennes, France, in 1541, there is a miniature of the stage on which the play was produced. This stage is a shallow platform, about one hundred thirty feet long, and has behind it a line of small houses representing each of the several " mansions " required in the course of the " Mystery."

In England, the " stations " were set up separately on wagons, the acting being done in the street proper in front of these wagons. Even when the actual playhouse came into existence in England in the time of the Tudors, the stage, unencumbered by the painted scenery of today, still represented the

neutral ground of the platform stage in France, or the street stage in England.

Hoyle, in his "Tragic Drama of the Greeks," claims that one of the chief characteristics of Shakesperian drama, "the calm and tranquil manner in which the scenes were brought to a close, originated in the casual circumstance that the old English theatre had no drop-scene; the successive portions of a play were terminated, not by a curtain, but by the actors walking off the stage; and for this reason it was impossible to finish up with a climax, as is now the invariable custom." Here we surely see a noteworthy effect of the influence of the physical theatre on the play. Might one not claim with equal reason that the descriptions, found in the drama from the days of Æschylus to those of Shakespeare, were called for by the absence of adequate scenic representation? Poetic description as used by the writers mentioned above was helpful to the audience; in the hands of Ibsen or Rostand it would be superfluous since the scenic artist places before the spectators the setting of the modern play.

Audience

If the playwright must fit his play to the place in which it is to be presented, still more must he adapt it to the audience by which it is to be judged. The following quotation is from an English writer: "Shakespeare, we know, was a popular playwright. I mean not only that many of his plays were favorites in his day, but that he wrote, mainly at least, for the more

popular kind of audience, and that within certain limits, he conformed to its tastes."[1] The truth of the statement that, within certain limits — those, namely, beyond which the true artist may not venture — Shakespeare conformed to the tastes of his audience, may, we think, be proved by his plays. Perhaps none lends itself more readily to the proof than "A Midsummer Night's Dream." In this single drama, Shakespeare caters to the lover of the classics by the tale of Theseus and Hippolyta, to the romantic by the story of Hermia and Lysander, Helena and Demetrius, and to the coarser people by the mock play of the "Mechanicals." Shakespeare was undoubtedly a genius, but that he was also a good business man is shown by the success that marked his connection with the theatre. One fancies that he would scarcely have denied the truth of Dryden's verses:

> "They who have best succeeded on the stage
> Have still conformed their genius to the age,"

or of Dr. Johnson's couplet:

> "The drama's laws the drama's patrons give,
> And we who live to please, must please to live."

Long before Shakespeare's time, Isocrates had told his pupils, the would-be orators of Greece, to study the people; and writers as well as speakers have not failed to follow his advice. Long after

[1] "Oxford Lectures on Poetry," A. C. Bradley.

the time of the great English writer, Molière's comedies come to amuse the burghers of Paris, and Ibsen writes his dramas with his mind's eye fixed on the narrow-minded villagers of Gunistad who must be roused from their moral lethargy.

It is not to be supposed that the playwright places himself under any undue strain in his effort to please his audience; in many cases such effort may be non-existent, or at least unconscious. The playwright, one must remember, is his own contemporary, sharing the likes and the dislikes of those for whom he writes; hence in seeking to satisfy himself he will probably satisfy them. Terence owes the lack of popular appreciation of which he so bitterly complains, to his incompatibility with the only audiences then found in Rome; had he lived during the Italian Renaissance, he might have had an audience capable of enjoying his delicate finish and felicity of phrase. Lope de Vega, while apologizing for setting aside the so-called "rules of the drama," seems to have felt no awkward restraint in writing plays conformed to the tastes of the Madrid populace.

Stage-craft

There is a distinct and indeed a very marked difference between the drama intended for actual presentation in the theatre and the drama considered as a purely literary production. Goëthe, in a warning given to Eckermann in 1826, expresses himself as follows: "When a play makes a deep impression on us in reading, we think it will do the same on the stage, and that we could obtain such a result with little trouble. But

a piece that is not originally, by the intent and skill of the poet, written for the boards, will not succeed; whatever is done to it, it will always remain unmanageable."

The writer of the closet-drama or the dramatic poem lacks the craft of the theatre, and seems to have in mind not only the impatient spectator, but also the leisurely reader. He does not have to consider the exigencies of the theatre, the prejudices of the manager or the audience, the financial returns, the requirements of the star performer; hence he has a freer hand than the professional playwright and a certain independence not allowed the latter. It cannot be denied, however, that there is a touch of unreality about the closet-drama, and that one sometimes feels like asking its author, with Sir Leslie Stephen: "Why bother yourself to make the actors tell a story, when it is simpler and easier to tell it yourself?"

To be welcomed by an audience the poetic drama must be dramatic as well as poetic; if it is, there is no reason to fear that it will fail where the works of a Shakespeare, an Ibsen, a Hugo, and a Rostand, have succeeded. Only let the modern playwright remember that the drama of today "has cast out all that is undramatic"; [1] that "it has now no room for anything but the action and the characters." [2]

The influence of the fine arts on the drama is practically self-evident. They form an important factor

[1] "A Study of the Drama," Brander Matthews
[2] *Ibid.*

in the production of the play, not only giving it a suitable home, but often intensifying its realism and, perhaps, in certain cases becoming largely responsible for the manner of its writing.

The modern theatre offers to the playwright a stage enriched with scenic effects and mechanical devices, without which the production of many at least of the modern dramas would be utterly impossible. While the development of these arts in connection with the theatre has, perhaps, all too frequently lessened the literary value of the play and even led to the catastrophe of the "movies," still it has in many instances lent itself to enhance the beauty and the realism of the really good drama. Rosalind and Orlando, already attractive on the Elizabethan stage, are none the less so in the staged Forest of Arden made possible by the development of scenic art.

Mystery Plays

If the dramatic art of the Greeks owes much to pagan worship, that of modern times is no less indebted to the Christian Church. Setting aside for the moment the dramatic elements found in the Church's liturgy, a subject worthy of special discussion, consider the Mystery Plays, inaugurated by the Church and undoubtedly the nucleus of modern drama. The earliest of these, known technically as "liturgical Mysteries," date from the twelfth, or perhaps in part from the eleventh century, although living pictures of scenes from the Gospel, such as the Adoration of the Magi, the Marriage of Cana, and the

Death of the Saviour, had been given as early as the fifth century in connection with public worship. The "liturgical Mysteries," composed in Latin, were followed by the "popular Mysteries," written in the vernacular. The French Mystery, "La Resurrection," dating from the twelfth century, is regarded as the earliest extant religious drama in the vulgar tongue.[1]

The subjects of the Mysteries, both liturgical and popular, are taken from the New Testament, the favorite ones being the Nativity, the Passion, and the Resurrection of our Lord.

Closely connected with religious beliefs, although not with the Church's liturgy, were the Miracle Plays, which dealt with incidents drawn from legends of the saints.

After these came the Moral Plays, designed to teach the truths of religion, not by direct representation of scriptural or legendary events or personages, but by allegorical means; abstract figures of virtues or qualities were personified in the play.

Then the drama loses all direct and positive connection with the Church, but what has it not learned from her? And what part has not psychology, the Church's knowledge of human nature, played in the teaching?

Remembering that the aim of the Church has always been what it still is, and what it must ever be, namely to draw men to God, let us consider how well adapted to this end the Mystery Plays were

[1] "Geschichte des Dramas," Klein.

both as to choice of subject and manner of presentation.

Three of the favorite subjects, as already stated, were the Nativity, the Passion, and the Resurrection of Christ. What do these Mysteries represent and how do they appeal to man? They represent weakness, suffering, glory, and they appeal to three of man's most pronounced characteristics, — pity, sympathy, and emulation.

Visualize the scene of the Nativity. How could one gaze upon the lovely Babe, the fair young Mother, the care-worn Foster-Father, deprived as they were of such necessaries as even the poor may claim, without feelings of the tender pity that is so akin to love?

Bring before your mental vision Golgotha's mountain; behold the

> "............................darkness as of night
> Through which there gleams the Cross-borne Christus dead;"

see, standing beneath the Cross, the Virgin Mother

> "..................who gave us Christ's humanity,"

now offering that sacred body for our redemption. Surely at such a death bed as this, one's deepest sympathy would go out to any mother, to any son; how much more readily, then, to the Mother and to the Son of God!

Go with Christ to Mount Thabor, raise your eyes that they may follow His ascent until the clouds to

which the wondrous privilege has been given receive Him into their embrace. Is not a noble emulation awakened within you to tread the path, thorn-strewn and blood-stained though it may be, that leads to such a goal?

As to the manner of presentation, it was simple, solemn, religious; shorn of everything that would distract the attention of the faithful from the scene of the mystery, a scene that their faith vivified and their love made beautiful. Ah, Mother Church is a past mistress in psychology, one whose knowledge of human nature it would be hard to equal, impossible to surpass!

Basis of Drama

Probably one of the best proofs of the close connection existing between psychology and dramatic art is shown in the fact that practically all successful drama is based on some phase of human life. An idealization in which one sees the possibilities of human nature; a burlesque manifesting that nature's idosyncracies; a tragedy that scarcely exaggerates actual sorrows; a comedy with the happy ending often, but thank God not always, missing in real life; make it what you will, the pivot on which the interest turns will still be the closeness of the drama's approach to the heart of nature, to the lives lived by our fellow-men.

Tragedy appeals to man because it shows him the moral freedom of his nature as displayed in conflict with his sensuous impulses. Comedy, on the other hand, touches his sense of humor and gratifies his tendency to ridicule. But whether his higher nature

is to be strengthened or his lower tendencies are to be indulged, the end must be accomplished by placing before him human life as it is lived in the world of which he forms a part. In a word, we repeat that "Art cannot exist without nature, and that man can give nothing to his fellow-man but himself."[1]

Having obtained some idea, however inadequate, of dramatic art, let us turn our attention to psychology, considering the meaning of the word itself and the nature of that branch of philosophy to which it gives its name.

Psychology

Etymologically psychology, from the Greek words ψυχή and λόγος, means the science of the soul; it is the branch of philosophy that studies the human mind or soul, taking mind or soul to be the thinking principle by which man feels, knows, and wills, and by which his body is animated. The inquiry into our various mental states and operations, — sensations, perceptions, thoughts, volitions, emotions, — is known indifferently as Phenomenal, Empirical, or Experimental Psychology; the investigation into the nature of the mind itself, is called Rational Psychology. It is the Phenomenal, Empirical, or Experimental Psychology that bears upon the question under discussion, — namely the connection existing between psychology and dramatic art.

The subject matter of this psychology is consciousness. The various states of consciousness

[1] "Dramatic Art and Literature," A. W. Schlegel.

can be observed only by introspection; that is by turning the mind in upon itself. It is, therefore, to the adjudication of this faculty of internal observation that the first as well as the last appeal must be made in every psychological problem. This mode of investigating psychical phenomena, known as the subjective or introspective method, may be supplemented, however, by the objective method. This objective method occupies itself: (1) with the results of other men's use of introspection, as far as these results can be gathered together: (2) with the products of the human mind as embodied in language; products made known by the sciences of philology and literature; (3) with the study of the human mind as manifested at different periods of life and in different grades of civilization; such manifestations being found in the manners, religions, and social institutions of different nations. The study of the human mind as manifested at different epochs and under varied conditions, is known technically as the historical or genetic method. To put it briefly, psychology teaches us to study human nature: (1) as found in ourselves, by introspection; (2) as found in others, by observation. The sensations, the passions, the intellect, may be studied at leisure behind the closed door of self; they may be studied in others only when the self-door is opened by look, or word, or action.

But these sensations, these passions, this intellect, are the factors in that human life upon which the drama is based. It is evident, therefore, that dra-

matic art cannot part company with psychology unless the drama is to be deprived of that impression of reality which crowns it with success.

In modern times, man's great interest is man himself, and the words of Terence might well be chosen as the slogan of our race: "Homo sum: humani nihil a me alienum puto."[1] What is it that keeps Shakespeare's plays ever new if not their human interest? Macbeth is still found in many an ambitious man; King Lear in many a fond and foolish father. Numberless other plays, too, having none of Shakespeare's art to recommend them, have kept the boards because of the vital question they discussed, or because of the characters clothed with some extrinsic interest, that they portrayed.

Suggestive Questions

1. What is dramatic art?
2. What is the *sine qua non* of drama?
3. To what extent is the dramatist dependent upon the actor?
4. To what extent is the dramatist influenced by the physical theatre?
5. To what extent is the dramatist influenced by the audience?
6. What is the chief characteristic of the closet-drama?
7. What formed the nucleus of modern drama?
8. Define experimental psychology and state its subject matter.
9. Distinguish between the introspective and the objective method of investigating psychical phenomena.
10. Prove that a close connection exists between psychology and dramatic art.

[1] Terence — Heaut., 1, 1, 25.

II

THE DRAMA

WHEN we name the drama we state its most essential requirement — action. The connection of the Greek δρᾶμα — so like our English word — with the verb δρᾶν is, of course, obvious. Now while the dictionary translates this verb by "to do, to go," Homer uses it — the expression is "ἰθὺ δραμῶν," in the sense of the Latin *curro;* [1] this would imply that the word expresses not only action but quick action. Without unnecessary hair-splitting over the exact meaning of a Greek verb, we are safe in saying that, whether the action be swift or slow, it must be present if we are to have drama. This action, however, is not mere movement or external agitation; rather is it the expression of a will that knows itself. The French critic, M. Ferdinand Brunetière, maintained that the drama must reveal the human will in action; that the central figure in the play must know what he wants and strive for it with incessant determination; this, according to his theory, is the law of the drama.[2] The proof is worked out rather ingeniously. The drama differs fundamentally from other literary forms, there-

[1] Od. 23, 207.

[2] "Law of the Drama," a preface to the "Annales du Théâtre" for 1893.

SCENE FROM IPHIGENIA

College Campus, Mt. St. Vincent, New York

fore it must have some essential principle of its own; this principle must be the law of the drama, the obligation to be accepted by all writers for the stage. An examination of a collection of typical plays of every kind, — tragedies, comedies, farces, — shows the starting point of each to be the same; some one central character wants something, and this exercise of volition is the main-spring of the action. In many of the plays, the central character is thwarted in attaining his — or her — desire either by a stronger will or by a combination of circumstances; but it is just this clash of contending desires, or this assertion of the human will against strenuous opposition, that makes the successful play whether ancient or modern.

M. Brunetière goes farther still. The law of the drama once grasped, he says, it helped to differentiate more precisely the several dramatic species. If the obstacles against which the central figure, be it hero or heroine, has to contend are insurmountable, Fate or Providence or the laws of nature, and the end of the struggle is likely to be death since the one contending is defeated in advance, — then we have tragedy. If the obstacles, being only social conventions or human prejudices, may be overcome and the hero has a possible chance of obtaining his, — or the heroine her, — desire, we have the serious drama. Let the obstacle be changed, — the conditions of the struggle equalized, and there is comedy. Make the obstacle of a lower order, an absurdity of custom for instance, and one has farce.

Law of Drama

M. Brunetière finds a confirmation of his theory in the fact that the drama has most amply flourished when the will of a nation has stiffened itself for some great effort. Greek tragedy, he tells us, is contemporary with Salamis and the Spanish drama with the conquest of the New World; Shakespeare had reached manhood when the Armada was repulsed; Corneille and Molière were made possible by the work of Henry IV. and Richelieu; Lessing and Goëthe and Schiller came after Frederick the Great.

While M. Brunetière was the one to declare this law of the drama, not a few of his predecessors had at least caught sight of the theory which he so sharply isolated. Voltaire asserted, in one of his letters, that every scene in a play should represent a combat. Stevenson declared that " a good serious play must be founded on one of the passionate cruces of life, where duty and inclination come nobly to the grapple." Schlegel held that tragedy deals with the moral freedom of man, which can be displayed only " in a conflict with his sensuous impulses." Coleridge thought that accidents ought not to be introduced into tragedy, since " in the tragic the free will of man is the first cause." Goëthe went so far as to say, in " Wilhelm Meister," that, while the hero of a novel might be passive, the hero of a play must be active, since " all events oppose him, and he either clears and removes every obstacle out of his path, or else becomes their victim."

But Brunetière has gone farther back than all these writers in his statement of the law of the drama. He has gone to the first and the foremost of dramatic critics, no other than Aristotle, the "master of all that know," who asserted that "without action there cannot be a tragedy; there may be without character."

It is true that practically all these statements refer to tragedy rather than to drama in general; but if action is necessary to tragedy, surely it is even more indispensable to the other dramatic forms. Tragedy offers scope for such subtle characterization and such eloquence of impassioned diction as might win at least a half-hearted pardon for lack of sufficient action. Such characterization and diction could hardly find place in serious drama and would be altogether ludicrous in comedy; hence the greater dependence of these forms on the action of the play.

Seen in the light of Brunetière's law, one better understands Sarcey's theory that in every story, fit to be set on the stage, there are certain episodes which must be shown in action and cannot, without dissatisfaction to the audience, be narrated by the characters. It might be well to recall just here that M. Sarcey, a very practical critic, passed all his evenings in the theatre and deduced his theories from his observation of the effect of the acted drama upon the audience. Sarcey calls the unerring intuition as to what the audience will expect to actually see, the test of the playwright. Now what

are these essential scenes if not the episodes marked by acute dramatic conflict, the interviews showing clash of volitions, in a word, to use Stevenson's phrase, the scenes in which "passion must appear . . . and utter its last word"?

All the great dramatists have done instinctively what Brunetière and Sarcey declare to be necessary and, if one pauses for a moment, a procession of plays, ancient as well as modern, will probably pass before one's mental vision to illustrate the point. Moreover a careful analysis of the impression made upon ourselves by the plays that we have witnessed, will enable us to test personally the validity of the principles laid down by the two French critics.

Besides the law already enunciated, there are certain essential conventions which govern the drama. These result chiefly from the conditions of theatrical performance. The time for the giving of a play is limited; therefore the dramatist must select the vital elements of his theme and compact his dialogue. Not only must he condense, but he must also clarify the speech of his characters. Every character in a play is supposed to be capable of saying just what he means in the fewest possible words, always using the actual vocabulary in keeping with his part. In "Julius Caesar," for instance, Shakespeare makes the heroic figures employ blank verse, the less distinguished use a stately rhythmic prose, and the populace sink into the everyday speech of the common folk.

Conventions

With regard to non-essential conventions, one is

always willing to accept them if the acceptance is helpful, although in many cases one can well dispense with them. The world of today has become accustomed to realistic scenery and characteristic costumes, but the Greek and the Elizabethan enjoyed the drama without either of these accompaniments. Even in modern times, Henry Irving once gave the "Merchant of Venice" in the mess-hall at West Point, on a flag-draped platform devoid of scenery; and Edwin Booth and his company appeared in "Hamlet" at Waterbury, all wearing their traveling clothes because their stage costumes had miscarried.

There are other non-essential conventions which one might discuss but their discussion would scarcely lead us nearer to the point that we wish to reach. The banishing of one such convention, the monologue, or soliloquy, may, however, help us on our way. This convention, found convenient by the playwright and acceptable to the audience for two centuries or more, was hastily discarded in the later years of the nineteenth century, the spectators crying out against it as "an outworn trick unworthy of a self-respecting workman." They may accept the reasoning of the clever man who justified his habit of talking to himself by saying that he liked to talk to a man of sense and to hear a man of sense talk, but they will not admit that it is natural for a man to express his feelings aloud, even under the stress of strong agitation, in a soliloquy of a hundred lines or more. Here is the keynote, you

see; the play has to be natural, it must have at least the semblance of reality. And now we have reached the port for which we set sail, although our skiff has, perhaps, been taken from its course occasionally by the currents of digression. The drama must have action, a story developed naturally, that is in accordance with human nature, and the audience will accept only such non-essential conventions as make the play clearer or more realistic. But how can a dramatist meet these requirements, which necessarily imply a close knowledge of human nature, unless he studies that nature? Hence the connection existing between psychology and dramatic art is once more made evident.

With regard to the beginnings of the drama, Mr. Rappoport tells us, rather poetically, that " In the garden-land of religion the source of dramatic art wells up, dividing into many streams, which, widening as they run along, traverse the provinces of life." [1] As a matter of fact we know that from the primitive ages there have been dramatic elements, not only in religious worship, but in games, sports, and other mimetic performances. In India, the drama was held to be a gift bestowed by Brahma upon Muni the Wise. It was called " nataka " from " nata," to dance. This name would seem to place its origin in the dance, accompanied by songs, performed in honor of some god or gods. In Egypt, the famous " Book of the Dead " is, perhaps, nothing but a religious drama, the chief rôle being played by the

[1] " The English Drama," A. S. Rappoport.

dead and the other rôles by the gods. The dramatic nature of the early worship of the Jews is attested by the service in the Temple, the singing of psalms and responses, the dancing before the Ark, and the various ceremonies performed by the High Priest. In Greece, dramatic performances were closely connected with religious worship, and the cult of Dionysius may be regarded as the source of the Greek drama.

Place of Drama

One must remember, however, that while mimicry is as old as the human race, and while the dramatic tendencies in life and literature resulted in various nations in definite literary forms given theatrical presentation, the drama, properly so called, took an important place in literature much later in the development of civilization. In classical times it was considered one of the three divisions of poetry, the other two being the epic and the lyric. This distinction may still be applied in a general way although many of our good dramas are written entirely in prose. The Greeks divided the drama into tragedy and comedy, but no such division is found in the Indian, the Chinese, or the Medieval drama. Again there are dramatic forms outside the strict limits of either tragedy or comedy; for instance the Satyric Drama of the Greeks, the Morality of the Middle Ages, the Tragi-Comedy and the Pastoral of the Renaissance, the modern French drama, and the so-called, but often miscalled, melodrama.

One would like to discuss Indian drama, to say

a word about "Sakuntala," the most famous of Indian dramas, written by Calidasa, the greatest of Sanskrit dramatists, and translated by Sir William Jones in 1789; it would be interesting, too, to see how the Chinese, a later development than the Indian, differs like it from European drama; but such discussion and investigation would lead too far afield. The Greeks must be our first guides in our search for the connection between psychology and dramatic art.

Greek Drama

When we turn to the Greeks for guidance, they naturally place before us their three great dramatists, Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Æschylus is grand, severe, often harsh; Sophocles has a finished symmetry, a harmonious gracefulness; Euripides is soft and luxuriant in style. Comparing dramatic art with that of sculpture, one agrees with Mr. Schlegel in calling Æschylus its Phidias, Sophocles its Polycletus, and Euripides its Lysippus.[1]

Æschylus, considered the creator of tragedy, is, it is true, prone to bring the gods into his plays, as if it were too great an effort always to paint mere men; yet his works are not lacking in human interests, nor do they fail to show his knowledge of human nature, at least in its terrible moods.

Sophocles avails himself of the interposition of the gods only when such interposition is absolutely necessary. He takes everything in the most human

[1] "Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature," A. W. Schlegel.

sense but shows by the beauty and nobility of his characters of what he thought human nature capable.

Considered by himself, Euripides deserves praise; taken in connection with the history of dramatic art, he merits censure. Through him came the decline of tragic poetry, and even the ancients, admittedly not over-prudish, condemned him for the seductive invitations to sensual love found in his plays. He was probably the first to make the passion of love of capital importance as a dramatic motive.

Greek comedy, like Greek tragedy, sprang from the worship of Dionysus, being only a development of the frolic and buffoonery that marked the harvest festival.

Only one writer of the Old Comedy has come down to us, Aristophanes, whose comedies abound with criticisms on the Athenian life of his day. Political and intellectual tendencies, fashionable follies, even men of note, were attacked by this writer who, however much he may have offended by the matter of his works, still showed the skill of a finished artist in their form.

Ancient critics assume the existence of a Middle Comedy, characterized by careful avoidance of political or personal matters. Modern critics consider the works classified as "Middle Comedy" to have been merely tentative efforts marking the transition from the Old to the New Comedy.[1] This

[1] "Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature," A. W. Schlegel.

New Comedy, the ancestor of our modern comedy of manners, was a faithful picture of life. So true was this that Aristophanes, apostrophizing Menander, the chief representative of this New Comedy, exclaims; "Oh life and Menander! which of you copied the other?" Unfortunately the works of Menander survive only in fragments and in the translations and imitations of the Roman Terence.

Roman Drama

The early development of the Roman drama was probably similar to such development in Greece, but as no portions of the early folk drama, the Atellan farces (Fabulae Atellanae) have survived, it is impossible to note the peculiarities that mark the national development. In point of fact, Roman drama is known only through three writers, Terence, Plautus, and Seneca.

Terence, who has himself been imitated, not only imitated but even translated the Greek Menander. Plautus, too, followed the New Comedy of the Greeks but gave to his characters a coarseness and a directness of humor suited to Roman taste. The Roman comedies became models and incentives for Renaissance writers of drama, and their stock characters and lively intrigue still influence the drama. Seneca, whose tragedies were probably never acted, was the model for the humanists, and his was the main classical influence upon modern tragedy.

In the latter days of the Empire, drama yielded to bloody spectacles and indecent pantomime, nec-

essarily attacked by the early Fathers of the Church after the triumph of Christianity. The Roman theatre, as an institution, practically ceased and its dregs, the despised mimes, became the ancestors of the traveling entertainers of the Middle Ages, handing down the old traditions of clownery and farce.

The Church was undoubtedly the chief source of Medieval Drama, although minor ones are found in the games and sports of the time, as well as in the amusements offered by the popular entertainers, direct descendants of the Roman mimes. In France, where alone the Medieval Drama departed extensively from religious themes, we find besides the Mystère and the Miracle, the Farce and the Sottise. The last two were affected by the popular entertainers.

Medieval Drama

In Italy, the Sacre Rappresentazioni held the place of the French Miracle.

In Spain, Germany, and England, there was practically the same development from the Liturgical to the full-fledged Mystery or Miracle Play.

After this, didacticism and fondness for allegory led to the introduction of the Moral Play, an advance in dramatic production since it required the invention of a plot and centered interest on a moral conflict.

Early in the sixteenth century, there arose a new kind of performance known as the Interlude or the Moral Interlude. As its name indicates, — ludus, a play, and inter, between, — it was a dialogue similar

to the Latin "Disputationes," the German carnival plays of Hans Sachs, and the French "Querelles." It was occasionally performed in the intervals of banquets or entertainments, and perhaps between the acts of the long, and sometimes dreary, Mystery or Moral Play. In character it was farcical, light, and humorous.

Taking medieval drama as a whole, one finds it servile in its adherence to sources and apparently incapable of making any distinction between a narrative and a dramatic fable. Again it failed to see the absurdity of putting on the stage much that was not essential to the acted story, it permitted the presentation of all kinds of action, and it delighted in discordant combinations of comic and tragic.

The Humanists sought to impose upon the drama the rules of classic writers, but they took as models Terence, Plautus, and Seneca, not the Greek dramatists. The imitations of the Humanists, however, lacked both the authority of the great masters and suitability to the then current theatrical conditions; hence there arose a conflict between humanism and medievalism. Yet this jostling together of Neo-Latin plays, vernacular imitations of Latin writers, miracle and moral plays, interludes and farces, was not without result. It led ultimately to recognized standards and great achievements.

In England and in Spain, the national drama carried on medieval traditions but it was also indebted to classical fecundation. In Italy, the Commedia dell' Arte, the Comedy of Masks, held popu-

lar favor, and a new genre, the Pastoral, more distinctly national in character, succeeded the Rappresentazione Sacra. In France the drama both religious and secular, attained to a high degree of development during the Middle Ages, and this dramatic eminence is still maintained.

National Drama

Turning our attention more exclusively to English drama, we find medieval forms, variously modified, surviving until about 1552. As soon as the drama became an element of popular amusements, comedy took foremost rank. This is readily understood. Comedy, of the average type, is more easily invented than tragedy. It appeals to a commoner intelligence, deals with more familiar motives, makes slighter demands upon the capacity of the actors, and attracts more powerfully an uninstructed audience. Tragedy, too, it must be remembered, is more in need of models, and requires a study of the old classics; it came into England under the tutelage of the Italian Renaissance. Yet, in the very first English tragedy, "Gorboduc," which was considered classical, the three unities were not observed. As time went on the defenders of classicism found it impossible to impose the classic rules upon the playwrights of the people, who refused to submit to these rules on the ground that they hampered their flights of imagination. The Historical or Chronicle Play is the earliest form of the English national drama and treats of the events of some one reign. The "spontaneous national

dramatic instinct,"[1] however, was at work in the plays dealing with everyday matter and the popular dramatists drew the material for their works from "the stirring events and the realistic scenes of contemporary life."[2] Marlowe, who brought blank verse to the theatre and raised the prevailing popular forms of play writing to dramatic and literary effectiveness, disregarded classical rules. His plays are the violent and spectacular, but always dramatic, expression of human passion. Lyly gives us the artificial and courtly play; Greene, the romantic comedy with its averted tragedy and its sentimental treatment of love. But the primary aim of these three playwrights, as well as of their contemporaries, was to tell a story so as to please an audience. Even the dramatic career of Shakespeare, great genius that he is, was undoubtedly conditioned by the demands of the London theatre of his day, and perhaps, one might almost say surely, the most potent factor in the enduring success of his plays, is found in the evidence they give of his knowledge of human nature.

Modern Drama

In more modern days, the drama has become complacent in adapting itself to the temper of the times. Romanticism finds a powerful rival in realism, and the "Social" drama discusses the problems offered and the reforms needed by prevailing social conditions.

[1] "The English Drama," A. S. Rappoport.
[2] *Ibid.*

American dramatists have been, in the main, imitators of European models, but the work of a chosen few seems to bespeak a more brilliant future for our national drama.

The present century has witnessed a remarkable development in the drama of both Europe and America, together with changes in stage presentation absolutely revolutionary. The revolution of the theatre is still in process and no one can say with certainty what the outcome will be. Everywhere there is evidence of great popular interest in the drama on the one hand, and of a desire to suit the theatre to the proletariat on the other. Potentialities are found in the drama which are not possessed by either the short story or the novel. Undoubtedly Ibsen has influenced this extremely modern drama in no small way. Realistic study of current manners, intellectual discussion of social problems, symbolic interpretations of life, each owes something to the Scandinavian. Yet all the while Romance keeps its hold on the stage and of late Poetry has been trying to regain its one-time place. But mark well that the twentieth century drama has had no uniform national development; on the contrary, each nation seems to be striving to express its own peculiarities and aspirations.

As to the American interest in the drama, Brander Matthews calls it "a sudden and unexpected burgeoning. . . . A quarter of a century ago people did not read plays, . . . because there was a divorce between literature and the drama; and

with few exceptions the plays that were readable were not actable while those that were actable were not readable. . . . Probably the change in the attitude of the public must be ascribed primarily to Ibsen; his plays were drama and they were literature; they were readable and they were actable. But while Ibsen may have been the exciting cause, there was also a predisposing condition; the time was ripe for a revival of interest in the drama as an art."[1]

Little Theatres

There is no more significant manifestation of this revival in the United States than the springing up of the so-called Little Theatres, in small towns and remote villages, as well as in larger cities. Free from the commercial spirit that makes the probable sale of tickets a factor to be reckoned with in the production of a play, they can serve, as Mr. Matthews puts it in the article already quoted, "as proving grounds and experiment stations."

Not only have they presented plays, having a certain interest although not universal in appeal, but they have brought the acted play to many a place where otherwise it would at most have been known only in print. Dwellers in large cities are not always the best judges of what is really worth while in the drama, or indeed in many other things that require education as well as book learning, understanding as well as memory. True, owing to

[1] "The Case of the Little Theatres," B. Matthews; The North American Review, Nov. 1917.

the poverty of their resources, these Little Theatres have been forced to devote most of their energies to the one-act play. But after all the one-act play has its artistic abilities as well as its obvious limitations. Augustin Eugène Scribe began with the composition of one-act plays; so did Sir Arthur Pinero and Henry Arthur Jones and Clyde Fitch. If this same poverty of resources has restricted them to simple stage-settings and amateur actors, is it altogether to be regretted? Has not the first stimulated the imagination of the audience and the second offered to incipient dramatic talent possibilities of development hardly to be obtained under other conditions?

Melodrama

The melodrama has come to be regarded as so bastard a form of art that it requires courage even to discuss it, but is it not the form in which it is expressed that should be condemned rather than the thing itself? Ottavio Rinuccini invented the term melodrama toward the end of the sixteenth cenury, forming it from the Greek words μέλος and δρᾶμα, melody and action. In its first application, it related to opera; just how it has come to stand for such productions as "Nellie, the Beautiful Cloak Model," or "Convict 999," one can hardly conceive. Certain it is, however, that from the loose application of the term there has arisen a misunderstanding as to the true elements in melodrama.

If one considers the relation between music and drama, he will readily see the point from which

melodrama may be said to start. The most brilliant moments of an opera are those that involve the characteristic elements of a glaring play. The actions of the characters are broad and such subtlety as the production possesses depends more upon the music than upon the play. Many an opera high in favor as such, would be little more than a despised melodrama if deprived of its orchestration. The dominant feature of the melodrama is situation, the difference between it and the "legitimate drama," a term invented by Douglas Jerrold in 1832, being largely a matter of accentuation. In earlier melodramas the stories were consistent and the characterizations human. Note the genial Irish atmosphere pervading the most sensational of Dion Boucicault's plays, and the heart interest so romantic as to cover the most daring adventures with the gloss of possibility. But such writers of today's melodrama as Owen Davis and Theodore Kremer deal with situations only, quite irrespective of the possibilities of life, their sole aim apparently being to deaden with sensationalism the logical sense of the spectator.

There is this to be said about the audience appreciative of melodrama, — it must be shown everything; never tell what has happened but let it actually take place on the stage.

Just here we pause and — wonder. Is there not a tendency at present in the legitimate drama to let things happen on the stage? We are thinking of "The Girl of the Golden West." In one of the

scenes, you remember, the girl hides the hero from the pursuing sheriff, and as this hero lies above in the rafters his blood drips down upon the floor. Now what we are wondering is this. If Mr. Kremer, let us say, had been the author of the play, would it have been accepted by the two-dollar audience who took it as coming from the pen of Mr. Belasco? Perhaps we are crassly ignorant, but it does seem to us that the difference between "The Girl of the Golden West," softened to suit the classes by some attempt at subdued acting, and "The Girl of the Golden West" offered to the masses without the softening process, lies wholly in the matter of accentuation.

Poor Melodrama, how many sins against the drama you have been made to cover! At least let us give you credit for one good point; you never mix your colors; white remains white and black remains black; virtue is rewarded and vice punished; in spite of your glaring and numerous faults, the morality that you teach is often superior to that taught by the legitimate drama.

Motion Picture

Does the "Movie" — we beg its pardon, the "kinetoscopic theatre," — belong to the drama? It would seem so; at least a recent writer on American drama devotes an entire chapter of his book to its discussion.[1] Whatever be its worth or its place in the world of play acting, its popularity makes it a factor with which one is forced to reckon. Perhaps

[1] "The American Dramatist," M. J. Moses.

the best hall-mark of this theatre is found in the terminology of those who frequent it. "Othello" is "run through" in seventeen minutes, "Romeo and Juliet" is 915 feet in length, and "Macbeth" 835 feet. Eventually one might come to speak of the "Movie" as the play of miles and minutes.

Like the melodrama, the motion-picture is not an evil thing per se; judiciously used it can be very educational. Our government at Washington has its film department and employs the moving-picture to record military manoeuvres and naval displays; so, too, the New York Museum of Natural History has experimented with the cinematograph to picture the flight of birds and the habitat of bears.

As an amusement, the moving-picture lacks the human element; for this reason, Mr. Moses, in the book already quoted, speaks of it as "one of the greatest enemies to the theatre, which is a live institution, presenting plays in human fashion." Again he tells us that "The moving-picture has undoubtedly hurt the theatrical business. It steals the spoken drama and reduces it to motion. Every road company has its tale to tell of business ruined by the kinetoscope; every vaudeville house is forced to open its doors to celluloid drama."

Reading this, one better understands the importance of an article written by Brander Matthews in 1917.[1] Mr. Matthews' views so often agree with our own that we may be pardoned for using his article rather freely.

[1] "Are the Movies a Menace to the Drama?" B. Matthews, The North American Review, March, 1917.

"A French critic," he tells us, "is credited with asserting that 'the skeleton of every good play is a pantomime' — a saying which is not quite true although it contains a large proportion of truth. In Hamlet and Macbeth and Othello the visible actions of the characters almost interpret themselves; and a performance of any one of the three plays would probably hold the attention of the average spectator even if he were so placed that he could not benefit by the dialogue."

True, but would his grasp of the story be as strong as if the spoken word had called upon the intellect to co-operate with the sense of vision? Has any one but an anatomist ever preferred a skeleton to a living body of flesh and blood? Mr. Matthews voices our opinion when he gives the restriction of the moving-picture to mere pantomime as a reason why it will never really be a rival of the drama, since "the picturization of the finer kinds of drama will always be inadequate and unsatisfactory." Again he says: "All kinds of melodrama the movie can do better than the regular theatre; certain kinds of farce also. But comedy and tragedy are wholly beyond its reach; and equally unattainable by it are the social drama and the problem play. It is true, of course, that the moving-picture director can take comedy and tragedy, social drama and problem play, and that he can translate them on the screen; but what has he succeeded in presenting? The mere story, the empty sequence of events, void of nearly all the humanity that gives it meaning."

It seems to us that a — if not the — great danger of the motion-picture lies in the fact that "the reel asks no co-operation of the intellect for the enjoyments of the events thrown upon the screen."[1] America has long been noted for its labor-saving inventions, but is it quite wise to add to the list one that saves the labor of thinking? Newspaper headlines give us our knowledge of current events, reviews furnish us with our views of current literature; must the eye alone be again taxed for our non-speaking acquaintance with the drama? No wonder so many of us wear spectacles!

Let us hope that, if the "Movie" has come to stay, it will at least keep to its own field, realize its own limitations, and thus do away with any possibility of rivalry between itself and the drama, which is, to quote Mr. Matthews once more, "the noblest of the arts precisely because it does demand the co-operation of the intellect at the very moment when it is appealing to the emotions and gratifying the senses."

We have tried to trace the drama, however briefly and imperfectly, from its earliest to its latest form, and all along the way we have had for guides Psychology and Dramatic Art,— a knowledge of the human nature of characters and audience and the dramaturgic skill to use this knowledge to good purpose. At every step we have seen how man influences the drama; what about the drama's influence on man? We are prone to forget that

[1] "The Story of a Play," Howells.

a man's amusements, as well as his occupations, have a share in the fashioning of both his mentality and his morality; that the theatre is a social institution and that, as such, it has a moral accountability to society. Example holds first place in the teaching paraphernalia and imitation is one of the most obvious factors in development. The child uses the faculty of imitation when he first repeats, after his mother, the names of Jesus and Mary; the dying saint makes use of the same faculty to utter his "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

Influence of Drama

Again, man is given to emulate his fellows. You remember St. Augustine's "Why cannot I do what others have done?"

Granting the force of example, and imitation, and emulation, one readily sees the power for good or evil that dramatic representations exercise on the lives of those who witness them. The responsibility for the drama seems to us threefold; true, the dramatist writes the play, but is he not guided in his writing by the knowledge of what the theatrical manager will accept, and is not the manager influenced in turn by knowing what the public will go to see? One must always bear in mind that while drama is itself an art, the theatre — and even the writing of plays — is often a mere commercial enterprise. The question is not "Will the play raise the intellectual or the moral standard of the audience?" but "Will it pay?" The greatest hope of the theatre, therefore, rests today, as it rested

yesterday and as it will rest tomorrow, with the people themselves. Whether you approach the drama from its physical or technical or economic side, the public is always concerned, and it determines largely the tendency of the dramatist, although he, if he be big enough, may in turn determine its cast of thought. Moreover the drama lies close to life, it is the very art of representing life; and this art has been used both by the pagan Greek and by the Christian Church for social purposes. But drama not only draws from life; it also reacts on it. Hence it would be well for the modern dramatist to remember that "there are other ways of remedying society than by treating solely of conditions as they are. . . . Condition is simply the back-drop of life; man's soul and woman's soul are the primary consideration."[1] Yet there must be a touch of sympathy with condition, as well as human passions. A play dealing wholly with family life as it is conceived by the foreigner will hardly find favor with an American audience, nor will a play dealing entirely with American institutions be better received in a European theatre. Dramatic form has ever been moulded to receive the content, changing as the content changed; dramatic treatment of the mysteries of life has been modified to accord with the highest individual action towards those mysteries. Fate, concern for the individual soul, heredity, social regeneration, — on the mimic stage as in real life, each has in turn

[1] "The American Dramatist," Montrose J. Moses.

held sway; and the dramatist, who has drawn his inspiration from the actual or the thought life of his fellow-men, has in turn left upon those men the impress of his own impressions and conceptions. These are the days of problem plays. God grant that in dealing with these problems our dramatists may not ruin the virtue that they profess to save. Of those plays that make no such professions, we do not care to speak; surely rotten fruit and faded flowers should be banished from the garden of true art. We Americans are learning from European drama to make use of the deep and vital problems of human nature and to exalt them above mere effectiveness of situation. The great world-movement is touching the shores of our own dear land and asking us, as it is asking every other nation, to solve these problems. Ah, if we use the drama to help us in the solving, let us use it as a power for good. If it stands for the true in doctrine and for the moral in action, it will be such a power. It will be an uplift to the people whom it amuses, placing before them nobler ideals than those that they would otherwise know, and showing them by the pictured life of stageland the possibility of living in accordance with these ideals. Then indeed will the drama be a civic institution worthy of support, well deserving its plebiscite.

Suggestive Questions

1. Define the word "drama."
2. What sort of action does the drama require?

3. Show how the several dramatic species differ.
4. What does M. Sarcey call the test of the playwright?
5. Distinguish between essential and non-essential dramatic conventions.
6. Name three Greek dramatists.
7. Name three Latin dramatists.
8. What was the earliest form of English national drama?
9. What is the influence of the so-called "Little Theatres?"
10. Is the motion-picture an unqualified evil?

III

CHARACTERIZATION

THE action of a drama ought always to be probable. This probability, however, is not that of actual or historical experience, but rather a conditional probability; in other words, it is the consistency of the action with the characters, and of the characters with themselves. It is evident, therefore, that upon the invention and the conduct of his characters, the dramatist must expend a large proportion of his labor; his treatment of them, no less than his choice of subject, conception of action, and method of construction, will determine the effect which his work produces. The importance of this truth has been fully realized and there is no aspect of dramatic art under which its advance is more perceptible than under that of characterization. While many causes have probably contributed to bring this about, the chief one is undoubtedly to be found in the increased opportunities offered for mankind's study of man.

Again, in the early Greek theatre, the distance of the actor from the spectator, the use of the masque, the necessary raising and hence conventionalizing of the voice, all tended to make the character a type rather than an individual.

Later Greek and Roman drama, with a persistency illustrative of the force of habit, limited the range of characters to accepted types. These examples, as well as national tendencies of mind and temperament, inclined the dramatists of the Roman nations to attach less importance to characterization than to action and construction. It is in the Germanic drama, above all in Shakespeare, that the individualization of characters has been carried to its furthest point, and that the significance of a character has been allowed to work itself out in closest connection with the progress of the dramatic action to which it belongs.

Essential Requirements

However the method and scope of characterization may vary under the influence of different historical epochs and different tendencies or tastes of races or nations, the laws of this branch of dramatic art are everywhere based on the same essential requirements. What interests us in men or women in real life, or in impressions formed of historical personages, is that which individualizes. Hence a dramatic character should have distinctive features sufficiently marked to excite one's interest; with these features the conduct of the character must be consistent and its participation in the action of the play must correspond. It is the task of the dramatist, therefore, to conceive a character — whatever may have suggested it to him — under the operation of particular circumstances; this conception, growing and modifying itself as the action of the play pro-

gresses, determines the totality of the character. While the likeness of a given character to a real or a historical personage may concern its success, it in no way influences its dramatic effect. The drama is not a photographic apparatus.

Distinctiveness is a primary requisite in all dramatic characterization but it is necessarily elaborated in such characters as contribute more to the action of the play, the fullness of its elaboration being reserved for heroes or heroines. Many expedients lend their aid to the attainment of the higher degrees of distinctiveness. Much may be gained by the significant introduction of a character; Sophocles has Antigone dragged in by the watchman. Again the use of contrast marks character clearly; notice how Shakespeare employs it in the case of Othello and Iago. Nor does he confine himself to direct antithesis, for in Julius Caesar, Cassius is a foil to Brutus.

Consistency between the conduct and the distinctive features of the character does not imply uniformity. Aristotle himself tells us that there are characters which, to be represented with uniformity, must be presented as uniformly un-uniform. Such characters are not of frequent occurrence in Greek tragedy; in modern drama, good exemplars are found in Hamlet in Shakespeare's tragedy of that name, in Weislinger in Goëthe's "Gotz," and in Alceste in Molière's "Misanthrope."

Perhaps some light might be thrown on the sub-

ject of character making from M. Coquelin's description of his way of creating a character. "When I have to create a part," he says, "I begin by reading the play with the greatest attention five or six times. First, I consider what position my character should occupy, on what plane in the picture I must put him. Then I study his psychology, finding out what he thinks, what he is morally. I deduce what he ought to be physically, what will be his carriage, his manner of speaking, his gestures. These characteristics once decided, I learn the part without thinking about it further; then, when I know it, I take up my man again, and closing my eyes, I say to him, 'Recite this for me.' Then I see him delivering the speech, the sentence I asked him for; he lives, he speaks, he gesticulates before me; and then I have only to imitate him."

Could one find a better illustration of the close connection existing between psychology and dramatic art?

A play needs an interesting story for immediate success; it must be peopled by characters that linger in one's memory if it would attain to lasting popularity. Nations and times cause taste in story to vary, but human nature is much the same in all nations and at all times. "It is by veracity of character delineation, by subtlety of psychology, that great plays are great. It is by this power of creating living and breathing human beings, recognizable fellow-creatures with ourselves, that a playwright establishes his title to be considered a dram-

atist. If he lacks this power, if he cannot leave behind him characters that the next generation will recognize and relish, then his reputation is fleeting; he exists by virtue of his plots only, and these the playwrights of the next generation will surely make over in accord with the changing taste of their own time."[1]

The fact that a character lives on in our memory long after the play has ceased to mean anything to us, may very readily be proven by personal experience. For instance, which one of us cares particularly for the "Winter's Tale," but again who can remain insensible to the appeal of the eternally human love of Perdita and Florizel? In our times, too, the central incidents of the "Merchant of Venice" seem almost puerile, but "Shylock is an unforgettable figure, as alive today as when he first strode on the stage of the Globe Theatre."[2]

Characterization, whether taken in its purely technical meaning or as derived from dramatic action properly so called, gives a very true summary of man's qualities. Yet this is no easy task, for the dramatist is limited in his means of presentation. His characters can be made known to us only by what they say and do; they must speak and act for themselves with no word of explanation from the one who created them. The stage is guiltless of comment or foot-note or sign post.

Perhaps this very limitation, however, has urged

[1] "A Study of the Drama," B. Matthews.
[2] *Ibid.*

the really great dramatist to a deeper study of psychology and has thus enabled him to put upon the stage human beings thoroughly capable of making themselves known. If we were to note the imaginary characters who answer most readily to the roll call of memory, we would probably find that many of them come from the world of drama. This is eminently true of Molière's characters. One may criticize the plot of his plays, but his characters are most carefully conceived and elaborated. He may tell us nothing of how they came to be what they are when they emerge into view, but looking at them and listening to them as they play their parts, we know all that we need to know about them.

Shakespeare and Molière

Here, as in many other aspects, Shakespeare and Molière are at one. When, in "As You Like It," we meet Jacques in the Forest of Arden and hear him moralize at large and bandy repartees with a clown, we know him at once as we know one whom we have often met even though we have no idea of who he is, where he comes from, or why he is in the greenwood. It is quite possible, indeed, that Shakespeare himself would have found some difficulty in answering these questions.

Mrs. Jameson has written a charming but fanciful book called the "Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines." The writing of the book was surely a work of love, intended to honor the poet by showing the interest with which his heroines inspired us; but

it seems to us that they were created only for the life they live on the stage and that this life needs neither a " before " nor an " after."

Paradoxical as it may appear, it is still true that while the characters of a play can be only what the plot permits them to be, the story in turn is what it is because they are what they are.

Stevenson is said to have once told a friend that he knew only three ways for making a story; the first way was to start with a group of characters and devise a plot to exhibit them; the second to begin with the plot and fit characters to it; the third, to subordinate both plot and characters to a special atmosphere, which was to be realized and made impressive. The third method is impracticable for the theatre, since atmosphere does not suffice to hold the attention of an audience, but the other two are quite available for the playwright and have been freely used by him. The first method has produced admirable results in the comedies of Molière and the second in the Greek tragedies. However, it would seem to matter little whether the dramatist begins with plot or character, since it is the result that decides the case for or against him and not the method by which it was obtained.

Looking at this question of character from another point of view, it is evident that an actor's interpretation of a part may sometimes differ widely from that intended by the playwright. A rather interesting example of this is given in one of

Christian Reid's novels, "The Daughter of a Star." A playwright, John Stafford, has written a play, "The Queen of Cypress," in which the title-rôle is played by Violet Lestrange, a star actress. Her presentation of the character, while leaving the letter of the play comparatively untouched, completely changes the spirit. The delicate, poetic conception of Caterina, the Queen of Cypress, entirely disappears, and she becomes a mere creature of passion. Later on an accident happens to Violet Lestrange and the part is played by her daughter, Sylvia, who interprets the character as it had been conceived by Stafford. In the hands of Sylvia, the Queen of Cypress is not the mature enchantress using the seductive arts of her womanhood to accomplish her end, but a girl in all the radiance of youth, appealing to man's higher nature; a girl in whom the glow of awakening passion is as unconscious as her charms are irresistable.

Character Interpretation

Another good illustration, and one founded on truth, concerns the character of Lady Teazle in Sheridan's "School for Scandal." The part was written for Mrs. Abington who saw in it only the woman of fashion. After Mrs. Abington retired from the stage, Mrs. Jordan played the part as that of a country-girl aping the airs and graces of a fine lady. The second interpretation, probably never intended by Sheridan, was quite as effective as the first and proved that creations may have possibilities unknown to their creators. As a matter of

fact it is sometimes impossible to know just how an author wishes a given rôle to be played and the question must necessarily be decided according to the opinion of the actor. Take for instance Jacques in "As You Like It." We have already said that when we meet him in the Forest of Arden we know him as one whom we have met before. This is quite true; but it remains for the actor to determine whether Jacques is to be classed with those cynics who are, alas, too familiar to most of us, or with the humorists whom we meet too rarely. He simply talks and his words may be consistently used by the character interpreted in either way. That is the wonderful thing about Shakespeare's characters; they are living human beings who, like ourselves, take on different aspects in the eyes of different observers.

There is another aspect under which characterization must be considered. It sometimes happens in a play that a given character may seem in one place to contradict himself as presented elsewhere. This is the crucial moment for the playwright. If he is a mere "characterizer" he will be unequal to the test and his play will fall to the level of melodrama or farce. If he is a psychologist, he will be able to convince his audience that there is only a seeming contradiction, no greater, indeed, than those contradictions we often find in our own characters as well as in those of the people with whom we live.

Elaborating a thesis already stated, namely that

the characters are only what the plot permits them to be, and the plot what it is because of the characters, Mr. Galsworthy points out that "character is situation." In other words, the situation exists because some character is what he is and hence has an inner conflict or clashes either with another character or with his own environment. Naturally if you change the character you will change the situation; or if you bring more people into the scene, their very presence, by affecting the character already involved, will necessitate a change in the situation.[1]

Dramatic Situation

It is evident that a playwright must know his characters intimately if he would produce a play that is worth while. Of what use is a dramatic situation, however great its possibilities, unless one can work his characters up to and into it? The situation, you see, must be treated, not as though it were created by the dramatist, but rather as the creation of the people who are in it. But suppose the characters are not capable of creating the situation? Then they must be worked at until they are. If the dramatist is leading up to one important scene, he must seek such characters as will make this scene, not only possible, but natural. If, on the other hand, he is chiefly interested in characterization, he is forced to let his characters themselves model the central situation, as well as all that precedes and all that

[1] "Some Platitudes Concerning Drama," John Galsworthy, Atlantic Monthly, Dec. 1910

follows it. An amusing anecdote illustrative of the way in which the writer of plays is ruled by his characters, is related by a certain professor in one of our American Universities. The scene is laid in London. A critic met a well-known dramatist on the Strand. The dramatist looked worried. "What's the matter," queried the critic, "anything gone wrong?" "Yes. You remember the play I told you about, and that splendid situation for my heroine?" "Yes. Well?" "Well! She won't go into it, confound her, do the best I can." "Why make her?" "Why? Because if I don't there's an end to that splendid situation." "Well?" "Oh, that's just why I'm bothered. I don't want to give in, I don't want to lose that situation; but she's right, of course she's right, and the trouble is I know I've got to yield."[1] One may feel quite sure that he did yield and that the heroine had the situation into which she was willing to go.

Character Motivation

Not only must character and situation be fitted to each other, but the motivation of character must be clear, adequate, and plausible.

First, it must be clear. From the moment that an audience fails to understand why a character says what he is saying, or does what he is doing, the play weakens. William Archer objects to Tennyson's "Becket" on this ground, and maintains that the poet has missed both the historical interest and the psychological problem of his theme.

[1] "The Theatrical World for 1893," W. Archer.

"What was it that converted the Becket of Toulouse into the Becket of Clarendon — the splendid warrior-diplomatist into the austere prelate? The cowl, we are told, does not make the monk; but in Lord Tennyson's psychology it seems that it does. . . . The social and political issues involved are left equally in the vague."[1] To the argument that the fact of the poet's not writing as a partisan is a proof of his art, Mr. Archer answers, in the same article: "The poet is not impartial; he is only indefinite. We are evidently intended to sympathize, and we do sympathize with Becket. simply because we feel that he is staking his life on a principle; but what that principle precisely is, and what its bearings on history and civilization, we are left to find out for ourselves."

Secondly, the motivation must be adequate. Here we may cite an instance in which even so great a master as Shakespeare has failed. "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" shows both Proteus and Valentine in love with Silvia. Valentine threatens the life of Proteus when he discovers the latter's perfidy but forgives him for the asking. Again Proteus, finding that the page who has been following him is Julia, turns at once from Silvia to her:

> "What is Silvia's face, but I may spy
> More fresh in Julia's with a constant eye?"

This slip of Shakespeare's might be taken as an offence against plausible as well as against adequate

[1] "The Theatrical World for 1893," W. Archer.

motivation. Not only is there an absence of sufficient reason for the sudden change in the feelings of both Valentine and Proteus, but this change does not accord with their characterization in the earlier scenes of the play.

Shakespeare's Characterization

We would like to atone for our temerity in daring to criticize the immortal Bard by admitting that such a slip does not often occur in his works; on the contrary, one of the chief elements of his genius is to discern in his material, whether history or fiction, the eternal principles of human conduct. Perhaps no other dramatist has looked deeper into the heart of human nature, or learned to know more thoroughly its characteristics and its tendencies. A well-known German critic says of him: "If the delineation of all his characters, separately considered, is inimitably bold and correct, he surpasses even himself in so combining and contrasting them, that they serve to bring out each other's peculiarities. This is the very perfection of dramatic characterization; for we can never estimate a man's true worth if we consider him altogether abstractedly by himself; we must see him in his relations with others. . . . Nobody ever painted as truthfully as he (Shakespeare) has done the facility of self-deception, the half self-conscious hypocrisy towards ourselves, with which even noble minds attempt to disguise the almost inevitable influence of selfish motives in human nature. . . . His comic characterization is equally true, various,

and profound, with his serious."[1] Is not this high praise for Shakespeare's knowledge of psychology as well as of dramatic art? But after all, Shakespeare has small need of the critics' praise; his characters best tell his worth.

His tragedies abound in characters so true to nature that they seem real human beings rather than the creation of their author. Take for instance Othello, in the play of that name. He is noble, frank, confiding, grateful for Desdemona's love; a man who spurns danger, a leader of an army, a faithful servant to the State. But he is tamed only in appearance, and that by the desire of fame, by foreign laws of honor, by the milder and nobler manners of those with whom he lives. The mere physical force of his passion — a sensual jealousy — puts to flight in a single moment his acquired habitual virtues, gives the upper hand to the savage over the civilized man, and shows "the wild nature of that glowing Zone which generates the most ravenous beasts of prey and the most deadly poisons." Has not the dramatist touched a note which rings true in our everyday life? Need we go farther back than our own century to discover, beneath the veneer of culture, the savage nature of him who yields to passion?

So much has been said and written about the character of Hamlet that one hesitates to add even a passing word; to us Hamlet seems the embodi-

[1] "Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature," A. W. Schlegel.

ment of self-hypocrisy, a man constantly seeking in some far-fetched scruple a pretext to conceal his want of determination.

The character of Macbeth, probably Shakespeare's most faithful study of human nature, we shall consider when we discuss the tragedy itself.

Shakespeare's portrayal of human nature is not, however, confined to his tragedies, but is found as well in his other works.

" Antony and Cleopatra " offers two very human characters. In the man is a mingling of great qualities, weaknesses, and vices. He yields now to violent ambition and again to ebullitions of magnanimity. He sinks into luxurious enjoyment only to feel shame for his aberrations. He makes resolutions worthy of his better self to have them shipwrecked by the seductions of a woman. The woman is made up of pride, vanity, inconstancy, true attachment, seductive charms, — a type that has caused the ruin of many a modern Antony.

Notice, too, Shakespeare's knowledge of human nature as shown by his making the king, in " Henry V.", adopt the policy of preventing internal disturbances by foreign conquests, — a policy not too ancient to be modern.

In " King John," Constance is a real mother, plunged into despair because of the danger which threatens her son; and Arthur, pleading his cause with Hubert, has all the winsomeness of childhood.

Although Shylock, in " The Merchant of Venice," has, like Hamlet, been over discussed, the char-

acter must be mentioned as a masterpiece of psychological study. Made an object of ridicule by those who first played the part, Shylock later on was so presented as to excite our pity for himself even while we condemned his deed. In our own day, he is being acted as the ordinary Jew of the Ghetto and his compatriots are applauding the naturalness of the presentation. Surely Shakespeare has come very close to "the heart of nature" when each may read into the part his own conception of the typical Jew.

The women characters of the poet are many and varied and show a wonderful knowledge of feminine nature — for a man. On the whole, however, they lend themselves less readily to the subject we are discussing — the connection between psychology and dramatic art — than do his male characters. One reason for this may be found in the fact that while he often took his men from real life, as in the case of the heroes of Rome, he had frequently to fall back upon his superb creative power in fashioning his women, particularly if they were classical heroines. Or was it the poet's chivalry that caused him to refrain from laying upon his fair ladies too heavy a burden of faults of character or conduct? England in Shakespeare's time was Protestant in name but not yet in nature. Catholic customs still prevailed; among others one that we, too, follow although many of us have lost sight of its origin. It is the custom of showing courtesy to women because of the great courtesy that

God Himself showed one Woman when He asked her to become His Mother.

Once you begin to talk about Shakespeare it is difficult to stop. Surrounded by his works you feel as Ali Baba felt in the cave of the Forty Thieves; everything is so rich and beautiful that you hardly know what to choose. This being the case, let us take it for granted that we have said enough about Shakespeare's characters, at least for the present, and see if we can discover what it is, besides his knowledge of human nature, that makes us know his people for what they are.

Three tendencies in real life make it difficult to know man, either as he has been or as he is. The first, a spirit of partisanship, meets us in history, in biography, in imaginative literature, in society. We see men through the atmosphere of nation, sect, politics, or even in the littleness of class or coterie. The second, a spirit of simulation, shows us men as they seem rather than as they are. If it cannot wholly disguise character, it at least perverts or restrains it. Man attempts to deceive, not only others, but even himself with respect to the motives actuating his conduct. The third, the spirit of egotism, makes man's individuality his universe; he judges life exclusively from his own view point. Nay, so strong a passion is egotism that even "genius" is sometimes swayed by "self." Would it be too daring to suggest that this "self" is quite visible in the works of Dante and of Milton?

Shakespeare is singularly free from these three tendencies of partisanship, simulation, and egotism. He gives us people in their genuine, concrete existence; people who, though the creatures of all time, are none the less true to their own eras. Only one class of human beings does he fail to understand, — religious, whether monks or nuns. Yet this in no wise detracts from his knowledge of human nature. How could one who saw the Catholic Church but from without understand the inner life of even her lay members, much less that of her children who have entered into the sealed garden of the religious state? It appears to us that the conception of the character of Friar Lawrence, in "Romeo and Juliet," would alone suffice to refute all arguments in favor of Shakespeare's being a Catholic. The most ignorant member of the Church knows too much about the priesthood to picture any priest as Shakespeare depicts the Friar — who is, nevertheless, supposed to be a holy and learned man. Let him speak for himself.

Friar Lawrence

In Act IV., Scene I., he says to Juliet, after he has suggested a possibility of her marriage to Paris:

"Hold, then: go home, be merry, give consent
To marry Paris. Wednesday is to-morrow;
To-morrow night look that thou lie alone,
Let not thy nurse lie with thee in thy chamber;
Take thou this phial, being then in bed,
And this distilled liquor drink thou off;
When, presently, through all thy veins shall run

A cold and drowsy humour. . . . .
. . . .
No warmth, no breath, shall testify thou livest.
. . . .
And in this borrowed likeness of shrunk death
Thou shalt continue two and forty hours,
And then awake as from a pleasant sleep.
. . . .
Then, as the manner of our country is,
. . . .
Thou shalt be borne to that same ancient vault,
Where all the kindred of the Capulets lie.
In the mean time, against thou shalt awake,
Shall Romeo by my letters know our drift;
And hither shall he come, and he and I
Will watch thy waking, and that very night
Shall Romeo bear thee hence to Mantua."

In Act V., Scene I., Brother John having failed to deliver to Romeo Friar Lawrence's letter, the Friar says:

"Now must I to the monument alone.
Within this three hours will fair Juliet wake;
She will beshrew me much, that Romeo
Hath had no notice of these accidents;
But I will write again to Mantua,
And keep her at my cell till Romeo come."

Consider these words for a moment. Would a good and wise priest counsel a girl of fourteen — that, we believe, is usually held to be Juliet's age — to be deceitful and disobedient? Or would he place before her a scheme that might easily mis-

carry and result in real rather than in feigned death? We think not.

Be that as it may, however, there are certain things that no Franciscan friar could do — even if he would — without being dismissed from his order. He could not have a lady visit him in his cell, much less reside there until claimed by her lover.

Perhaps not now, some one will say, but Shakespeare wrote of olden times when discipline was less strict. Make the times as old as you please, the discipline less strict if you will; you can never find a change in the vow of chastity taken by every priest and monk and nun. Mind you we do not say that this vow has not been broken. Many have found too galling the sweet yoke of Christ, too heavy His light burden. If Shakespeare had made Friar Lawrence a recreant monk, however much we might regret the introduction of the character, we could not deny the possibility of its truthfulness. But Shakespeare makes him a good and holy friar and in this lies the harmfulness of his work. God help our prospects for converting our non-Catholic brethren if they were to judge our priests by this impossible friar! Shakespeare a Catholic? Never!

When he deals with the merely human, Shakespeare is indeed a master. He turns, as it were, an intellectual x-ray on the soul of man, laying bare even those secret recesses which the soul, perhaps, never sees itself, or at best only glimpses in its all too rare moments of honest self-examination. But

when there is question of the things of God, of the fundamental requirements for a sacerdotal or a religious life, then the master becomes the pupil who has yet to learn the letters of the language used by Faith.

While it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find a more psychological maker of characters than Shakespeare, one must not think that characterization ended with him. On the contrary, it is along this very line that drama has made its greatest progress. This will be easily understood if we remember the ever increasing tendency to adapt the stage to life, not life to the stage; for since men and women make real life what it is, since they are, in other words, its most important factors, so, too, must they attain chief distinction in the representation of this life on the stage.

The passing of the soliloquy and the aside have made it more difficult for the dramatist to let his characters describe themselves. Description of one character by another may sometimes be used but it requires persuasive acting to make it appear natural. Unquestionably the best method of characterization is by action.

Ibsen

Ibsen, in the first draft of " A Doll's House," shows clearly the tactlessness of Krogstad by making him speak familiarly to Helmar, formerly his school fellow but now his employer; the petty vanity of Helmar is also illustrated by the irritation which this familiarity causes.

Bernard Shaw's characters strike one as belong-

ing rather to him than to themselves. He wants no "moral attitudes"; but after all real "men and women live and move and have their being in these moral attitudes. . . . By being shown as constantly capable of stripping off the very texture of their inner life, of living an uninterrupted series of moments characterized by the highest shavian insight and sagacity, they cease to be independent creatures at all, and become the mere images of men as reflected by the hard, bright, unshadowed surface of their creator's mind."[1] Mr. Lewisohn is willing to admit, however, that a few ordinary mortals have stolen into the "astonishing assemblage" of Mr. Shaw's characters: Crampton in "You Never Can Tell," Roebuck Ramsden in "Man and Superman," and the General in "Getting Married."

Shaw

Galsworthy

John Galsworthy's power of characterizing, effected by means of his dialogue, which is held by some critics to be the best dramatic dialogue in our language, rises sometimes to admirable heights. Good examples of this power are found in Mrs. Jones in "The Silver Box," several of the working-men in "Strife," Cokeson in "Justice," and Sir William Chesire in "The Eldest Son." Mr. Galsworthy published some few years ago what he called "Hall-Marked: A Satiric Trifle,"[2] which illustrates rather well his idea of setting men and the facts about them "down faith-

[1] "The Modern Drama," L. Lewisohn.

[2] Atlantic Monthly, June, 1914.

fully, so that they draw for us the moral of their natural actions." The story is a mere episode. Edward, Lady Ella's Scotch terrier, and Hannibal, Maud's bull dog, have a fight in a pond. Edward is getting the worst of it when an unknown woman, "Herself," rushes into the pond and rescues him. The ladies are profoundly grateful and quite ready to become acquainted with "Herself"; so, too, are their husbands, "The Squire" and "The Rector." Then comes the question of 'Who is she.' Not being able to discover whether or not she is the wife of Mr. Challenger, with whom she is living, their gratitude is weakened by their sense of propriety.

It would be impossible to quote the entire scene but even the following fragments may give some idea of Mr. Galsworthy's dialogue.

LADY ELLA. . . . It's horrible not having the courage to take people as they are.

THE SQUIRE. As they are? H'm! How can you till you know?

LADY ELLA. Trust our instincts, of course.

THE SQUIRE. And supposing she'd turned out not married — eh?

LADY ELLA. She'd still be herself, wouldn't she?

MAUD. Ella!

THE SQUIRE. H'm! Don't know about that.

LADY ELLA. Of course she would, Tommy.

. . . .

Enter "Herself." There is some talk about the dogs. Maud notices that "Herself" wears no wedding ring.

LADY ELLA (*producing a card*). I can't be too grateful

for all you've done for my poor darling. This is where we live. Do come — and see — (*Maud tweaks Lady Ella's dress*) That is — I'm — I

"Herself" looks at Lady Ella in surprise.

THE SQUIRE. I don't know if your husband shoots, but — if — (*Maud, catching The Squire's eye, taps the third finger of her left hand*) — er — he — does — er — er —

"Herself" looks at The Squire in surprise. Maud, turning to her husband, repeats the gesture with the low and simple word "Look!"

THE RECTOR (*with round eyes, severely*). Hannibal!

He lifts the dog bodily, and carries him away.

MAUD. Don't squeeze him, Bertie!

(*She follows through the French window.*)

THE SQUIRE (*abruptly — speaking of the unoffending Edward*). That dog'll be forgettin' himself in a minute. *He picks up Edward, and takes him out — Lady Ella is left staring.*

LADY ELLA (*at last*). You mustn't think, I — you mustn't think, we — Oh! I must just see they don't let Edward get at Hannibal. (*She skims away.*)

"Herself" is left staring after Lady Ella in surprise.

HERSELF. What is the matter with them?

The door is opened.

THE MAID (*entering, and holding out a wedding-ring — severely*). You left this, m'm, in the bath room.

HERSELF (*looking startled at her finger*). Oh! (*Taking it.*) I hadn't missed it. Thank you, Martha.

The maid goes.

A hand slipping in at the casement window, softly lays a pair of braces on the window-sill. "Herself" had given them to Maud for The Rector, who had

used his to tie up Hannibal in the early part of the scene.) "Herself" looks at the braces, then at the ring. Her lip curls, and she murmurs deeply: Ah!

CURTAIN.

Man and the Stage

We have dwelt so forcibly upon the importance of characterization and have insisted so strongly upon the fact that a character which has appealed to us remains our familiar long after the story in which it figured has passed from our memory, that it might be worth while to inquire the reason for man's interest in the people of stageland.

Do you think it is because they are free "to make pretend" — a thing most of us have probably wanted to do, sometimes at least? Has it ever occurred to you that perhaps every man — and woman — has a natural desire to be somebody else? Oh, not a thought-out, reason-approved wish; that is quite another thing. What we mean is perhaps, after all, not even quite a full-fledged desire; it is rather a lurking fancy, a hazy thing that occasionally slips into the open only to return to the shadows of sub-consciousness. This desire is possibly the chief cause of many of the minor irritations of life. We feel that we really could do more than attend to our own personal duties and thus we are likely to interfere with those of others. We call this sort of thing a spirit of helpfulness; the other people, being less enlightened, are given to dubbing it not minding one's own affairs. It has just oc-

curred to us that this desire to be other than we are may throw some light on the servant problem. May it not be because the maid feels that she is quite able to fulfill the rôle of mistress that makes it seemingly impossible for her to fulfill equally well that of servant?

Again the same desire may explain the aberrations of artists and literary men. Filled with a most laudable desire to do "all the good they can to all the people they can in all the ways they can," they sometimes mix their callings. A musician insists upon our seeing a sunset — or is it a sunrise? — in his musical poem; a painter wants his painting to be a symphony in colors; a prose-writer wills to be a poet and changes his prose into poetry — free verse is a good form to choose — by beginning every line with a capital letter.

One of the delights of childhood lies in the fact that our possibilities are still manifold; there are so many things that we can be. Explorer, perhaps missionary, poet, novelist, painter, professional man, business man, — all these avocations are open to the boy, many of them to the girl; and youth rarely doubts that it can be what it will. Only as age creeps upon us do we realize our limitations and recognize that if we would turn our energy in one direction, we must keep it from flowing in another. And yet, even as we advance in life, how few of us would be willing to admit that we are only what we seem to men! Nor would we, perhaps, be justified in making such an admission. Not long ago

we met a man whose writings are marked by a deep knowledge of things both human and divine, and by a tender, all embracing charity; these writings, too, show such a wealth of fancy as to bring them close to the borderland of poetry. Yet this man impressed us most disagreeably as he greeted us with a supercilious smile and a bored look that flatly contradicted his "glad to meet you." Now the question is which is the real man; the one to whom we spoke in the flesh or the one who spoke to us in the spirit? May it not be that the man we met had "played pretend" and had become in his writings the man he wished to be? In many of us there is an elusive personality in hiding. Just "as the rambling mansions of the old Catholic families had secret panels opening into the 'priests hole,' to which the family resorted for spiritual comfort, so in the mind of the most successful man there are secret chambers where are hidden his unsuccessful ventures, his romantic ambitions, his unfulfilled promises. All that he dreamed of as possible is somewhere concealed in the man's heart. He would not have the public know for the world how much he cares for the selves that have not had a fair chance to come into the light of day."[1] Yet these selves, however well hidden from the gaze of man, still live within us and, like all living organisms, demand their nourishment; they find it in the characters of the drama. As we follow the short lives of

[1] "Every Man's Natural Desire to be Somebody Else," S. W. Crothers, Atlantic Monthly, Nov. 1917.

these creatures of the imagination, we live over again the life that we had lost. We see in the hero or the heroine what we might have been ourselves; we hear what we might have said, we witness what we might have done. The sordid cares of the world around us are for the moment forgotten, the selves that are known to our fellow-men retire into shadowland, and the real selves that we have never been live and breathe and have their being.

It is the old story, you see; man is interested in himself; and the better you get to know him psychologically, the stronger will be the appeal of your dramatic writings.

Suggestive Questions

1. Why is characterization more important in modern than in ancient drama?
2. What are the essential requirements of characterization?
3. How may interpretation affect characterization?
4. Is John Galsworthy justified in saying that "character is situation?"
5. State the essential qualities of the motivation of character.
6. Illustrate successful characterization by some examples taken from English drama.
7. Is George Bernard Shaw's characterization satisfying?
8. How does John Galsworthy characterize?
9. What tendencies in real life make it difficult to know man, either as he has been or as he is?
10. Give a possible reason for man's interest in the people of stageland.

INN YARD PERFORMANCE
Elizabethan Period

IV

THEMATIC STRUCTURE

THE technic of the drama is more difficult to grasp than that of prose fiction. This arises from the fact that while the novelist has only his readers to consider, the dramatist has his actors, his theatre, and his audience. The novelist may change his earlier intentions more than once in the writing of his novel. Sir Walter Scott records in his journal that when he had finished the first of the three volumes in which "Woodstock" was originally published, he was at a loss to find matter for the second volume. The playwright cannot work in this easy-going way. Not only must he have an interesting theme, the subject having a certain magnitude, as Aristotle puts it, but this theme must be conducted, as directly as possible, from the beginning through the middle to the end. "The story cannot straggle into by-paths; it cannot meander into backwaters; it must move forward steadily and irresistibly, setting before the spectators the essential scenes of the essential struggle."[1] The elder Dumas places the secret of success on the stage in having "the first act clear, the last act short, and all the acts interesting." Mr. Henry James com-

[1] "A Study of the Drama," B. Matthews.

pares the five-act drama to a box of fixed dimensions and inelastic material into which a mass of precious things, apparently out of all proportion to the receptacle, must be packed. The problem of the dramatist is so to place these things that each may have its required place and not one may be injured. In other words, the theme chosen by the dramatist must be developed into a story suited to the stage; a story moving along in scenes that follow one another easily and naturally and that are peopled with characters interesting in themselves and contrasting with one another. These characters, moreover, must be placed in appropriate surroundings and given opportunities for coming together that are not unduly improbable. This is no easy task but rather one in the fulfillment of which the dramatist finds himself surrounded by difficulties, increasing in number as his work progresses. Take for instance the divisions of a drama, the beginning, the middle, and the end. In real life there are many beginnings. How many times has not each one of us said with the Royal Psalmist: "And I said, Now I have begun: this is the change of the right hand of the most High." Psalms, LXXVI., 11; in the drama there is only one beginning. In real life the middle continues indefinitely; in the drama it has fixed limitations. In real life the end remains unknown; in the drama it must be determined upon so that the beginning and the middle may find in it their logical term.

Dramatic Limitations

Consider, too, the limitations of time. Much must have happened to the characters before they appear upon the stage, much will happen to most of them after they leave it; for we have outgrown the Tragedy of Blood which prevented so many of its characters from ever leaving the stage. The playwright has no time, even if he had the means, to explain off-scene matter; yet he must make us know his characters if we are to understand the action of the play. And it is the first desire of every audience to understand what the play is about; the second is to have the story develop on the actual stage so that it may be followed without effort. This conveying to the audience of the knowledge they need to follow the plot is known technically as exposition; it is probably one of the best tests of a playwright's command over the resources of stagecraft.

Stage Devices

There are various ways of making the audience acquainted with that portion of the plot which has taken place before the curtain rises on the first act of the play. The dramatist may use a prologue, as Plautus does in "The Two Captives," or a monologue inside the play, as Euripides does in "Medea"; or he may put the information into intense dialogue supported by swift action in the opening scenes, as Shakespeare does in "Othello"; finally he may scatter the information throughout the whole play, as Ibsen does in "Ghosts." The last method runs the risk of giving late in the play a knowledge that the audi-

ence should have had earlier in order to appreciate both the story and the characters. The most expert playwrights tend to give all needed information in the first act, even at the risk of making the earlier scenes somewhat slow and labored. This was Scribe's habit and he was surely a past-master in the art of playmaking. The situation was made perfectly clear in the earliest scenes of the play; then his characters were brought into the action and introduced in such a way as to make their identification in succeeding scenes a matter requiring no effort. The elder Dumas was particularly careful about his introductory scenes. He has told a rather good story about one of his plays, "Mademoiselle de Bell Isle." He waited two or three years after he had actually invented the story for what he considered an effective opening. One day he heard of a pair of lovers who had broken a coin in two; each was to keep a half, returning it to the other only as a sign that their love affair was ended. Dumas, taking this for a starting point, at once wrote his play. Sardou showed great ingenuity in his expositions. The first act of his "Fedora" is nothing but a prologue; it is, however, swift in action, pictorial in movement, and ends with a suggestion of suspense well calculated to keep up the interest of the audience until the second act of the play. In some of his plays he has used another method. Many characters are brought before us; they make amusing remarks and reveal themselves in amusing situations. As the play goes forward, a few of the

more striking figures take the center of the stage, and we discover that the subsidiary people have been used only to make us aware of the relations existing between really important characters. This method requires the dexterity of a Sardou for its successful employment; in hands less skillful it would tend to distract the attention of the audience from what one might call the heart of the play.

The two old devices of opening the play with the conversation of two or three servants, or of having one character tell another what the latter obviously knows, have been discarded as means of enlightening the audience as to what has happened before the play begins. Prologues, too, seem to have gone out of fashion and even the long soliloquy has ceased to hold its own; yet the playwright is still bound to put his audience in touch with the story of his play. How is he to do this? That must depend largely upon himself. It may be said in a general way, however, that simplicity is quite as important in the drama as it is in the other arts, and that a straightforward, clear, and not too lengthy, exposition can hardly fail to give satisfaction. Technique is rarely a birth gift; it is usually the result of hard work, work that at first must be largely imitative. The dramatist reads or sees plays, past and present, notes carefully the points that make for their success, and then tries to use these points in developing his own dramatic creations. Nor need this imitation be considered as derogating from his own ability; for, whether he be a disciple

of Shakespeare or of Ibsen, he will find that his master at first worked imitatively. He must remember, too, that technique is historically of three kinds; universal, special, and individual. The universal technique deals with those essentials which all good plays, ancient and modern, must share at least in part; in other words, it has to do with the qualities which make a play a play. This universal technique must obviously be studied, and may advantageously be copied.

Technique

By special technique is meant the technique of a certain period, such as the Elizabethan or the Restoration period. The drama of a succeeding period must share with the drama of the preceding age certain characteristics, otherwise it will not be a play at all; yet it must be presented differently, at least to some extent. Why? Because the later dramatist is using a stage different from that of those who went before him and is writing for a public of different standards both in morals and in art. The truth of this statement will be readily seen if we compare the stage of the Greeks with that of the Elizabethan or the Restoration period, or with that of our own times; and then make a comparison of the religious and social ideas of the Greeks with those of the audiences of the sixteenth, or the seventeenth, or the twentieth century. It is usually safe for a young dramatist to be guided as to the technique of the period on which he is entering by the playwrights immediately preceding him,

but sometimes this does not hold. In the early nineteenth century, you remember, there was a revolt, especially marked in France and Germany, from Classicism to Romanticism. Late in that same century one saw, too, the influence of Scribe yielding to that of Ibsen.

Individual technique is found in the work of the great masters. It is peculiarly elusive, since it is the result of a particular temperament working on the dramatic problems of a given time. Imitation of the individual technique "usually results," as one author puts it, "like wearing the tailor-made clothes of a friend, in a palpable misfit."[1]

To sum up, the would be dramatist must master the subject of universal technique; the special and the individual technique, he should study for suggestions rather than as models.

Universal technique, we have said, deals with the essentials of drama. These essentials may be variously stated but, in final analysis, one discovers that they are contained in the two words, action and emotion. There must be a story and this story must be capable of evoking and sustaining the interest of the spectators; in other words it must appeal to their emotions. In the early days, mere physical movement, imitative action, was an important dramatic factor. There is a little Resurrection Play, dating from about 967 A.D., and said to be the earliest extant specimen of drama in England,[2]

[1] "Dramatic Technique," G. P. Baker

[2] *Ibid.*

in which the directions for imitative movement occupy three quarters of the space and dialogue only one. Would it be too great a digression to wonder if the "Moving Pictures" are merely giving back to movement its old importance? Perhaps we have completed the circle of progress and have reached the point from which we started. Not that we would underestimate the importance of movement; far from it; we have had a keen realization of this importance since our childhood's days. Indeed we recall a playlet written by us in those days which consisted mainly of movement and title. The title, "Mignonne or the Adventures of a Love Letter," we really must insist upon considering a major part of the work. Notice how it proves that one wanted "thrillers" years ago even as one demands them today. That is one blessing attached to the study of psychology; human nature is ever the same, what you learned about it yesterday holds good for today and tomorrow. But to return to the playlet. In the first scene, Mignonne, the maid, hides the love letter sent to her mistress; in the second scene — fortunately there were only two — the maid's theft is discovered and the love letter restored. We had only two characters in the playlet, the mistress and the maid, but see the possibilities the subject offers for the cinematograph! Elaborate the plot, bring in a few more characters, and there you have your play quite ready for the screen. Sarcastic? Perhaps we are; but you must admit that it is hard on lovers of literature to have the

literary value of the drama absolutely ignored. We are willing to concede, however, that the old adage, "Actions speak louder than words," still holds true, and that what a man does instinctively, spontaneously, at a crucial moment, shows his real character as nothing else could do.

One must remember, moreover, that the playwright wishes not only to gain but to hold the attention of the audience. However humiliating the admission may be, most of us are forced to admit that it is difficult to give sustained attention to a play that makes no appeal to our emotions. Consider for a moment the question of lectures. Not many of them last over an hour, and yet how tiresome one is likely to find them unless the lecturer relieves the strain of close attention by some amusing anecdotes or dramatic illustrations. Even the most intellectual among us have feelings as well as brains, and the really successful dramatist must make an appeal to both.

Dramatic Action

While action may exist largely for itself, as it does in the case of melodrama, it may, and it should, also help towards a better understanding of the story of the play and of the characters who develop that story. The first scene in the first act of Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" illustrates this point. The quarrels, the actual fighting, the halting of the fight by the angry Prince, — these not only characterize in every instance, from the servants of the two factions to Tybalt, Benevolio, the Capulets, the

Montagues, and the Prince, but they emphasize the enmity existing between the houses of Capulet and Montague, they prepare for the parts to be played by Benevolio and Tybalt in later scenes, and they motivate the edict of banishment which alone renders possible the tragedy of the play.

It is not necessary that the action be wholly or even chiefly physical in order to appeal to our emotions; it may make a very successful appeal by revealing the mental state of one or more characters in the play in such a way as to arouse our interest and excite our sympathy or antipathy. Marlowe uses action in this way in his " Faustus."

FAUSTUS. " . . . . .Ah, Faustus,
Now thou hast but one bare hour to live,
And then thou must be damn'd perpetually!
Stand still, you ever-moving spheres of heaven,
That time may cease, and midnight never come.

. . . .

All beasts are happy, for when they die,
Their souls are soon dissolv'd in elements:
But mine must live still to be plagu'd in hell.
Curs'd be the parents that engender'd me!
No, Faustus, curse thyself, curse Lucifer
That hath deprived thee of the joys of heaven.

. . . .

(*Enter Devils*)

My God, my God, look not so fierce on me!
Adders and serpents, let me breathe a while!
Ugly hell, gape not! come not, Lucifer!
I'll burn my books! — Ah, Mephistopheles! "

You may say that there is physical action here, that the tortured Faustus flings himself about the stage. Granted. But surely it is his mental condition, not his physical action, that appeals to our emotions.

One might quote, as another example of mental activity, the opening scene of Rostand's "Les Romanesques." There is very little physical action on the part of either Percinet or Sylvette and yet they amuse and please us by their own pleasant excitement as one reads to the other the story of "Romeo and Juliet."

We may conclude from all this that marked mental activity may be quite as dramatic as mere physical action: a truth emphasized by the fact that the greatest dramatists have used action, not so much for its own sake, as to reveal such mental states as are intended to excite sympathy or repulsion in the audience.

Just here comes the vital question: Which is the real essential in drama, the action that excites or the emotion excited? It would seem that this question could be easily answered by making both action and emotion essential; the first as a means, the second as an end. More careful consideration, however, shows that the matter cannot be dismissed so readily. If we accept as our definition of "dramatic" that which "by representation of imaginary personages is capable of interesting an average audience assembled in a theatre,"[1] we see at once that while the interest must be excited and sus-

[1] "Play-Making," W. Archer.

tained, in other words the emotions of the audience appealed to, the dramatist is given no rigid law as to the means he is to use in order to reach this end. Turning, then, to the great dramatists of all ages to find what means custom has sanctioned, we discover that emotion is excited in the audience, or to speak more accurately, conveyed directly from the actors to the audience, by action, characterization, and dialogue. We have said conveyed directly from the actors, for the writer of dramas that are in the right sense of the word theatric, works only indirectly through the characters which he has created.

Dramatic dialogue is not an easy thing to handle. It must be clear, condensed, characteristic, and interesting. It reaches perfection when, instead of merely stating facts, it so absorbs us by its characterization that we assimilate the facts unconsciously. The playwright must not so bind himself to a clear presentation of facts as to merely see a scene; he must rather feel it, make himself an integral part of it, nay, be himself each character in turn; then, if he has psychological knowledge to conceive and technical skill to express, his dialogue will be what nature would have it under the given conditions of the play.

Dialogue

Another point to be considered under the caption of dialogue is the use of dialect. Formerly we had "stage dialects"; that is certain ways taken as typical of different races. For instance, a Frenchman, an Irishman, a Negro, spoke in a way that had become time-honored on the stage as

Dialect

representing each type. Needless to say, such dialect was at best only an approximation to the speech of real life. At present, efforts are being made to come nearer the truth. It is said of Lady Gregory that, after writing a rough draft of one of her plays, she goes among the people of her community, gets them to talk about the subject of which the play treats, notes their phrases, and gives them to her characters in re-writing the play. This surely is extreme accuracy. While this method could hardly be used by all playwrights, they should at least keep in mind a few qualities absolutely essential to the dialect that improves a play. These essentials may be summed up under the headings of accuracy, persistent use, and clearness for the general public. Since dialect is used to characterize a figure as far as type is concerned, it obviously fails to achieve its purpose if it is not the dialect that would be used by the character in real life, if it is not used by the character throughout the play, or if it is not understood by the public at least in so far as to make it recognizable.

One use of dialogue which has always seemed to us particularly objectionable is its employment by a character, supposedly under the stress of strong emotion, to describe his feelings. This certainly is not true to life. It has been our experience, and probably yours, that the more strongly one feels the less one says. What Dryden's Lyndaraxa said of love,

> " By my own experience I can tell
> Those who love truly do not argue well,"

may, we think, be predicated of the other passions. The superficial things of life may be explained and discanted upon, but those that touch us deeply rarely find expression except in silent prayer. Some of us may be more garrulous, but even in that case the garrulity is not forthcoming until the emotional crisis is passed.

Finally, if the playwright cannot actually make himself each character of the play, he should at least strive to know his characters so thoroughly as to take the dialogue from them rather than give it to them. To put it in another way, he must never speak as himself but always as the character he is depicting. M. Dumas fils has said, "There should be something of the poet, the artist in words, in every dramatist"; we would like to add that there not only "should be," but that there must be much of the psychologist. No man can portray that which he does not know. Hence to present human life and character in a way sufficiently realistic to win the favor of his audience, the dramatist must make that life and character the subjects of his closest study.

Dramatic Themes

It is evident that the playwright must give no less thought to his choice of a theme than he gives to its dramatic development. In this choice, the audience before whom the play is to be presented is always an important factor; a dramatist may sometimes improve the taste of his public, but he can never ignore it.

In ancient Greek tragedy, the chief materials for

the drama were furnished by Greek mythology; a web, as it were, of national or local traditions. These traditions were held in equal honor as a sequence of religion and as an introduction to history. They were kept alive among the people by ceremonies and monuments, and they were already elaborated for the requirements of dramatic art by the treatment of the epic or the merely mythical poet. Affecting tragical subjects were found also in the crimes and consequent sufferings of the Pelopidæ of Mycenæ and the Labacidæ of Thebes. Never, one might notice in passing, did these plays, written for the Athenians, deal with the crimes of families connected with the history of Athens. The Attic drama, too, prefers beauty to realistic presentation; witness the wearing of masks by the actors lest an ignoble visage be given to a god, and the telling that a bloody deed has been accomplished rather than having it enacted before the audience.

The Roman drama at its best was but an imitation of the Greek. The farcical element is strong in those writers who catered to the Roman people, a people craving sensual rather than intellectual enjoyment, and taking greater pleasure in the gladiatorial contest than in any form of dramatic entertainment.

The Middle Ages, characterized by a spirit of Faith and by popular intimacy, if one may use the expression, with the things of God, give us the Christmas Crib and the Easter Play, both intended

to instruct the people and to excite their piety, but also opening the way for the Miracle and the Mystery Plays so favored by the masses. Next we have the Moral Play, dealing with moral rather than with dogmatic or mystic theology; and finally, the Interlude designed for entertainment, and the Chronicle Play presenting matters historical. Before passing to a later period of the drama let us consider some of the themes actually employed in the periods we have been discussing.

Among the Greeks, Æschylus is regarded as the creator of tragedy and his "Oresteia" is probably the greatest production of his genius. It is a trilogy made up of the three plays "Agamemnon," the "Choëphoræ" or, as we call it, "Electra," and the "Eumenides" or "Furies."

In the first play, Agamemnon, the king, is murdered by his queen, Clytemnestra. In the second, Orestes, Agamemnon's son, avenges the king's death by killing the queen. In the third, Orestes is brought to trial, the Furies accusing and Pallas defending him. Finally Pallas Athena herself, personating Divine Wisdom, balances the claims for and against Orestes, establishes peace, and ends the long series of crimes and consequent punishments which have desolated the royal house of Atreus. If we strip these plays of their classic lore and take from them their gods and goddesses, what do they become? The story of woman's intrigue, man's passion, and the tendency of justice itself to palliate the guilt of him who commits a crime under

the stress of passion aroused by just provocation.

Sophocles, in his "Antigone," considered by the ancients one of his greatest works, plays upon the theme of feminine heroism.

Euripides, in his "Medea," the most faultless of his dramas, tells the story of a divorced and outraged wife and of the vengeance which she exacts from her rival.

The Greek comedy deals largely with irony and satire, aimed at themes used in more serious compositions.

The Roman drama, as we have already said, imitated the Greek and therefore calls for no separate consideration with regard to the themes employed.

The plays of the Middle Ages, religious in character, naturally chose themes taken from the Bible, Tradition, or the lives of the saints. The Moral Plays treated of virtues and vices, the Interludes can scarcely be said to have had themes in the strict sense of the word, and the Chronicle Plays dealt entirely with historical subjects.

Taking a general view of later dramatic periods, we find the drama choosing for its themes some phase or conception of human life. Each nation has its own hall-mark, one emphasizing this point, another that; but the rock bottom is everywhere the same, — man with his beliefs, his views, his passions, and his foibles. In Italy, fairy tales are used by Carlo Gozzi; in Spain, the point of honor by Lope de Rueda, and this point of honor together

with devotion to the Church and loyalty to the King, by Calderon. In France, Corneille deals with heroic deeds, Racine makes love his dominant theme, Molière turns to account whatever comes his way. In Germany, Lessing, Goëthe and Schiller, the three who redeemed the German theatre from long-continued mediocrity, live up to their doctrine that the drama is most powerful when it is closest to human nature. Scandinavia becomes important only with the works of Ibsen, works that can be discussed more satisfactorily in connection with the drama of today which they are influencing so pervasively. In England, the Tragedy of Blood, dealing chiefly with blood-shedding, has a short life; so, also, have the comedies of Lyly and Greene, the former using the spectacular and the latter the themes of averted tragedy and sentimental love. Marlowe delights his audience with violence and spectacle, even while his blank verse gives his characters a medium of expression superior to any previously heard upon the English stage. Then comes Shakespeare, who has used in his numerous plays practically all the themes suitable to really great drama. In his comedies, one finds the contest between love and friendship, mistaken identity, love intrigue; in his tragedies, love, jealousy, ambition, ingratitude; in his historical dramas, patriotism, passion, the virtues and the vices of royalty.

Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch has written a most readable paper on Shakespeare's pet devices and on how he — perhaps, — went about writing "A

Midsummer-Night's Dream."[1] Among the devices, he places first the trick of disguising a woman in man's apparel. This starts with Julia in "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," runs through the comedies and into "Cymbeline"; Portia, Nerissa, and Jessica, in "The Merchant of Venice"; Viola in "Twelfth Night"; Imogen in "Cymbeline." Possibly a reason for this might be found in the fact that women's parts were played by boys. Another device is that of working the plot upon a shipwreck, actually shown or merely reported. This device plays a part in "The Comedy of Errors," "Pericles," "The Winter's Tale," "Twelfth Night," and "The Tempest." Then, too, there is the device of using a potion that will arrest life without destroying it, found in "Romeo and Juliet," and in "Cymbeline." Sir Arthur further calls attention to the fact that having once found a device successful, Shakespeare never hesitated to use it again. Knowing as we do that the great dramatist worked upon old plays, chronicles, and romances, we may be sure that he showed no greater hesitation in using as often as suited his purpose the devices of other men.

Sir Arthur's conception of how Shakespeare went about writing "A Midsummer-Night's Dream" seems to us especially ingenious.

The play is to be written for a wedding — that is taken for granted. Then says Shakespeare to

[1] "The Workmanship of 'A Midsummer-Night's Dream,'" The North American Review, June, 1915.

himself: A wedding calls for poetry. The sentiment must be fresh. Shall I use my trick of mistaken identity? A pair of lovers? — nay, that would need two pairs. This play is for a bridal eve. A night for lovers, a midsummer's night, dewy thickets, the moon. And fairies! To be sure, fairies with their philters and their pranks. And then an interlude, there must be an interlude. A set of clowns shall perform it and they shall be chased by the fairies while they are rehearsing.

Sir Arthur does not assert that Shakespeare actually constructed the play just in this way, but after all he may have done so. The Muses do not sell their gifts but, having once bestowed them, they leave us freedom in their use. One must remember, too, that Shakespeare was that *rara avis,* a practical genius; near-sighted to see the money value of his work and far-sighted to look into that world of fancy and imagination which plays so important a part in many of his dramas.

Once we have reached the period of modern drama, the playwright is practically free to choose what theme he will, provided that it is adapted to dramatization and calculated to find favor with his audience. If his play be a representation of the life around him, filled with types appreciated by his own country men, it will hardly meet with success outside his own language. This is shown by the fact that the rich and solid comedies of Augier have rarely gone beyond the boundaries of France while the plays of Scribe, in which the characters

are mere puppets in the hands of the playwright, have been performed in many countries.

There has been for some years past a growing tendency towards Realism, although Romance has never relinquished its hold on drama. Social problems, as well as social life, have given material to the playwright, and the people of stageland have satisfactorily settled many issues still being debated in the world of reality. Morality and immorality have both appeared on the scene, sometimes one sometimes the other in the ascendant according to the temper of the epoch or the nation. It has been left for our own days, however, to place before an audience such scenes as one could not bear to witness in the privacy of the most secret chamber, and to discuss on the public stage such questions as one would not propose even to one's most intimate friend.

Realism

Marital infidelity is not a new theme, the "eternal triangle" is soon learned in life as well as in Euclid; there are, however, many ways of treating the subject. In dramas of less recent date, there were usually two men and one woman to form the figure, but invariably one of the three was eliminated before the end of the play so that the other two might be happy. It was a queer sort of morality, you will say. Perhaps; yet at least it showed recognition of the marriage bond. But now — !

Mr. Bernard Shaw — whose worth as a critic will surely not be questioned — holds M. Eugène Brieux to be the greatest French dramatist since

the seventeenth century and the worthy successor of Molière. We refuse to quote the works of M. Brieux but we may mention some of his themes. The average marriage of convenience is odious but better than spinsterhood; motherhood should be regulated; love should not be curbed by motives of prudence (morality seems to have been omitted from M. Brieux' vocabulary).

M. Hervieu, "an elegant and reserved artist," makes in two of his plays, "Les Tenailles" and "La Loi de l'homme," a strong if indirect plea for divorce by showing "the meaningless bondage" of the marriage vows that one does not wish to keep.

"Le Pardon," by M. Jules Lemaître, deals with a husband and wife each of whom has been unfaithful; idleness and loneliness led to the wife's fault, wounded vanity to the husband's. "They are both miserable sinners, and in the recognition of their common frailty may love each other again."[1] Mr. Lewisohn adds that the psychology of this play is exquisite. What about the play itself?

Naturalism

In Germany, drama has become largely naturalistic. It gives you life as the playwrights have observed it. A good deal of sordidness, a gleam of goodness and self-denial, souls warped by the wrongs of the world, — all these are found in favored themes; but here, as elsewhere, Romance still keeps her dramatic following. While there are, thank God, notable exceptions,

[1] "The Modern Drama," L. Lewisohn.

problems of sex and disasters of love still serve as the dramatists' chief themes. Perhaps this neurotic eroticism has no more sensational exponent than the Italian D'Annunzio whose works are a mingling of lyrical beauty with abnormal brutality. How pitiful that one should so misuse the gift of song!

That the English drama declined in the nineteenth century is admitted by everyone; that a dramatic "Renascence" has dawned seems also to be a fact. Just what it means, just what it will lead to, the future must tell. Its exponents wage war upon the unreality of the drama in the years immediately preceding their coming; is there no danger of their making reality too real? Ibsen is undoubtedly one of the great influences of the day. The realistic study of current manners, the intellectual discussion of social problems, the symbolic interpretation of life, — each of these owes something to him. Yet — pardon our temerity — is it wise to follow him too closely? Does not his pessimism blind him to much that is good in man? Take his "Ghosts" for instance. There is not one really moral character in the play. The theme? To us the play seems to ask a question which it fails to answer, at least directly; one might deduce an answer from the nature of the play itself. And the question? In its briefest form, it is only the old "cui bono." Some critics hold the play to be a protest against social conventions concerning marriage. Mr. Ibsen may have intended it to be such a protest, but he certainly has not shown that

much is gained, even in this world, from the non-observance of these conventions.

Turning to the list of English dramatists, one finds the names of Jones, Pinero, Wilde, Shaw, and Galsworthy. We may owe them much from the point of view of actual thematic development, but for their choice of themes, speaking in a general way, we are not unduly grateful. Marital infidelity, temptation yielded to, intrigue, freedom and flexibility in the relations of the sexes, the injustice of the social system, — these appear to be favorite subjects. It is a pity that the modern dramatist should be so given to the writing of problem plays. Why not first try to solve the problem of whether or not the writing of such plays will do any good?

But what about the knowledge of psychology shown by these writers who pose as portrayers of life as it is? That there is much vice in the world we are all forced to admit, that human nature is weak no man with any self-knowledge can deny; but that the human race is as these playwrights see it, a mass of corrupted selfishness, devoid of loyality towards God or man, — to this we shall never subscribe. Nor does it seem to us that some of the "real life" in these realistic plays is altogether true to nature.

Psychological Blunders

Ibsen

Take Mrs. Alving in Ibsen's "Ghosts." Would a woman such as she is represented to be, one who having yielded to the advice of her minister (it is too bad that Mr. Ibsen did not find her another lover) and returned to her hus-

band, tries during many years to hide his immorality, especially from their son, — would such a woman, we repeat, have kept with her the girl Regina? She might have been forced to do so by Mr. Alving while he lived, although Mr. Ibsen gives us no hint of this, but surely after Mr. Alving's death she would have made provision for Regina to live elsewhere than in the Alving home. And could a mother who loved her son as Mrs. Alving loved Oswald, have told him the story of his father's sin in the presence of Regina? Again consider Nora Helmer in " A Doll's House." She is a devoted wife and mother, finding her happiness in that of her husband and her children. Even the signing of her father's name, wrong in itself, is motivated by love for her husband. She is apparently a pure, innocent woman. In the last act you remember she tells us that she has been a doll-child to her father, a doll-wife to her husband, and dolls are not supposed to have more knowledge of evil than of good. How then account for her scene with Dr. Rand in Act II., or for her complete and almost instantaneous change of views and character in the closing scene of the play? We hardly like to enter into details, the subject is not attractive, but we cannot help regretting that Mr. Ibsen has been so unfortunate in his experiences if he is really depicting life as he has seen it.

M. Brieux is called by Mr. Shaw the most important dramatist west of Russia, since the death of Ibsen. " In that kind of comedy which is so true

to life that we have to call it tragi-comedy, and which is not only an entertainment but a history and a criticism of contemporary morals, he is incomparably the greatest writer France has produced since Molière."[1] We admit frankly that we refuse to read most of M. Brieux' works but we have in mind one play in which a startling assertion is made and a great psychological blunder committed. The play is called "The Three Daughters of Monsieur Dupont." It is in every way worthy of the Ibsen school. We shall discuss not the play, however, but merely the assertion and the blunder. The assertion is made by one of M. Dupont's daughters, Caroline, in Act IV. She says: "I turned to religion for consolation. For a while it cheated my craving for love; but it couldn't give me peace, and it has only left me more bitter and disillusioned." The religion to which Caroline turned for consolation has been previously mentioned by M. Brieux; it is the Catholic. Charity requires us to believe that M. Brieux must have been intensely ignorant of at least one reality in the world around him, the Catholic Church, when he wrote the words quoted, the falsity of which nothing save crass ignorance could well excuse. Not to speak of the "elder sons" who remain at home with the "Father" and turn to Him naturally for consolation in the trials that must come even to those who "are always with Him," how many "prodigals"

Brieux

[1] "Three Plays of Brieux," Prefaced by George Bernard Shaw.

have also turned to the " Father's house," religion, for consolation and peace! Can M. Brieux show us one who has been left " more bitter and more disillusioned " ? The late war has had many disastrous results but at least it has made evident that even in poor misguided France, men realize, in their hour of need, where to turn for peace and consolation.

Now for the psychological blunder. M. Brieux should have studied religious women before he tried to depict one. We beg pardon. Of course no religious women would have allowed him to study them. However he might have read — shall we say some saints' lives? Since he has evidently not done this, let us try in a spirit of Christian charity to show him a few points in which Caroline differs from the real woman he attempts to paint. Take her conduct in Act I. She knows that Courthezon, her father's assistant, has finished his invention, because, as she confesses to her mother, she has prayed for it. The religious people whom we have met do not vaunt the value of their own prayers. But perhaps she did not intend to be vainglorious. In the same scene, however, she utters a sentiment quite out of keeping with her character. Her sister, Julie, reads an extract from a paper. " Solange was still in Robert's arms. At this moment the Count entered, menacing, terrible, his revolver in his hand." Julie wants to know what will happen next — the story, like all serials of the kind, ends at a thrilling moment. Caroline im-

mediately answers: "The Count will kill them, of course. It is his right." Now while we do not doubt that the Count will kill them, — that is quite in keeping with the tale, — we do not understand how a deeply religious and supposedly well-instructed person could accord him the right to commit murder. In Act II., Caroline plainly shows her repugnance to meet her sister, Angèle, who has been unfortunate. This pharisaical attitude is also evidenced by her treatment of Angèle in Act III. Is there anything deeply religious in this lack of charity? Have not the purest, holiest, real women vowed their lives to Christ for the uplift of their fallen sisters? Finally consider her giving fifteen thousand francs to Courthezon for his invention in the hope that he will marry her. She says: "I knew he couldn't love me, but I hoped he would be grateful for what I . . . I only wanted his gratitude and pity." Poor M. Brieux! His Caroline is a sniveling devotee who knows as little about religion as himself. She may have passed much of her time in attending church services but we fear her piety was always the fanaticism of maudlin sentiment rather than the gift of the Holy Ghost. M. Brieux should have given more attention to psychology, and learned something of what the Catholic Church requires from its deeply religious members, as well as something of what the Catholic religion does in forming the characters of those who follow its teachings.

But we must not give up hope of better things.

Many of the writers who have used ill-chosen themes, have surely shown much dramaturgic skill. Let those who follow turn this skill to the development of worthier subjects; then we shall have a dramatic renascence of which we may well be proud. What the near future will do for the stage, it is too soon to say. The dramatic successes of the near past show, unfortunately, the same tendency towards the choice of sex problems and marital infidelity for themes as is evinced in the writers whom we have been discussing. Yet there are occasional glimmers of light, strong enough perhaps to show some clear-sighted dramatist that realism does not necessarily imply immorality.

Suggestive Questions

1. Why is the technic of the drama more difficult to grasp than that of prose fiction?
2. What is the problem of the dramatist?
3. How does time limitation affect the dramatist?
4. Define universal technic.
5. Define special technic.
6. Define individual technic.
7. Should the action of the play exist solely for itself?
8. When is dramatic dialogue perfect?
9. What are the essentials of dialect?
10. Give some themes suited to dramatization.

V

PSYCHOLOGICAL DRAMAS

ALL dramas that are worthy of the name must necessarily be more or less psychological since they are based on the study of human nature. There are some, however, in which this study goes deeper into the heart of man. Some, to put it in another way, in which the characters are far more important than is the story that they tell. Among these we would number the "Antigone" of Sophocles.

Sophocles

We all remember the story upon which the play is based. After the banishment of Œdipus from Thebes, his two sons, Eteocles and Polynices, agree to share the kingdom between them and to reign alternately year by year. The choice of reigning the first year falls by lot to Eteocles. At the end of the year, he refuses to surrender the kingdom to his brother. Polynices flees to Adrastos, King of Argos, marries the King's daughter, and obtains an army with which to attack Thebes and thus enforce his claim to the kingdom. A long drawn out siege follows, with successes on both sides but no decisive victory for either. At length it is agreed to have the two brothers, Eteocles and Polynices, decide the issue by single combat. In the duel resulting from this

decision, both are killed. The contending armies again take up the fight but the invaders are finally repulsed with great loss. Creon, the uncle of Eteocles and Polynices, assumes control over Thebes. He orders the body of Eteocles to be given honorable burial but that of Polynices to lie where he fell; no one is to accord him funeral rites under pain of death. Antigone, sister to Eteocles and Polynices, rebels at the decree which deprives one of her brothers of burial, and, notwithstanding the efforts of her sister, Ismene, to dissuade her, she resolves to bury her brother with her own hands. She is detected in the act of burying him and, in spite of the entreaties of her lover, Haemon, the son of Creon, the latter orders her to be entombed alive. Haemon, unable to survive his beloved Antigone, kills himself. Eurydice, the mother of Haemon, commits suicide on hearing that her son is dead, and Creon, left alone, bewails when too late his rigor towards Antigone.

So much for the story; the psychology of the play is shown chiefly in Sophocles' treatment of the characters of Antigone and Creon. In order to understand Antigone's action and attitude, we must recall the importance attached by the Greeks to the burial of their dead. It is true that in the earliest times the denial of burial rites to enemies was not wholly unknown, and was not held to be an offense. Even in the Iliad, however, a truce is made with the Trojans so that they may bury their slain. Achilles, too, does not carry out his threat against Hector;

nay, the gods themselves protect Hector's corpse and give aid in its surrender. Among the Athenians, the sacredness of the duty of burial was inculcated from an early date. Solon decreed that any one finding an unburied corpse must at least strew dust over it. Children whom he released from other duties toward a parent who urged them to commit certain wrongs, were never released from the duty of burying their parents. That even public enemies were shown the last honor, we learn from the burial of the Persians slain at Marathon, and of the Spartans who fell at Thermopylæ. Again, after the naval battle of Arginusæ, we find six Athenian commanders suffering the death penalty because the bodies of the slain had not been collected and given burial rites. The only limitation to this custom of honoring the dead was that which forbade interment within the borders of their native land to sacrilegious persons, or to traitors who had borne arms against their fellow-citizens. Even this limitation gradually became more and more repugnant to the moral sense of the people. The tragedy of "Antigone" is based on the conflict between the civil law, which Creon seeks to maintain, and the higher moral sense, which makes the burial of Polynices the sacred and inviolable duty of the nearest of his kin; namely, his two sisters, Antigone and Ismene.

Now as to the psychology of the play. As we have said, the characters which best serve to show Sophocles' psychological ability are those of Creon

and Antigone, although a certain type of womanly nature is also placed before us in the character of Ismene.

Creon is a man whose mind is wholly possessed by the consciousness of his supreme authority. Already filled with anger by the news that his orders concerning the body of Polynices have been disobeyed, he becomes more embittered by the murmurs of the Chorus, the arguments of Antigone and Ismene, the pleading of Haemon, the warning of Teresius the Seer. He insults the Chorus, derides Antigone, orders Ismene to die with her sister even though he knows that she has had no share in that sister's disobedience, threatens to compel Haemon to witness the execution of Antigone, slanders the prophet, blasphemes the gods themselves. It is only when Haemon, having failed in his attempt to kill his father, kills himself; when Eurydice, Haemon's mother, hearing of her son's death, commits suicide, cursing as she dies the husband who has caused her sorrow, that Creon bows in submission to a power greater than his own and longs for death as a release from his despair and self-reproach,

> "ἴτω, ἴτω
> φανήτω μόρων ὅ κάλλιστ' ἐμῶν
> ἐμοὶ τερμίαν ἄγων ἀμέρον."[1]

Surely this is a very human picture and one that shows most clearly the havoc made by passion in

[1] "Let it come, let it come, let my last fate appear bringing most happily to me the close of my days."

the soul of man. Creon does not apparently condemn Antigone through wanton cruelty, but rather through short-sightedness and failure to weigh the circumstances of the case. His self-love, however, makes it impossible for him to acknowledge his mistake, and the fact that others criticize, even oppose him, goads his self-love into a fury which leads through crime to self-reproach and despair. He loves both his wife and his son, but pride holds this love in check until grief frees it by the touch of death.

Antigone is the counterpart of Creon. Unlike him, she makes the divine law superior to the human, and determines to honor the gods and to discharge her duty towards her brother, cost what it may. She scorns the weakness of Ismene, she is filled with contempt for Creon. Yet, stern and harsh as she appears at first, her womanly nature is clearly manifested later on in the play. The consciousness of fulfilling a sacred duty gives her strength to bury Polynices in defiance of Creon's orders; this same consciousness upholds her when she stands before Creon to be judged; and pride prevents her from seeking mercy by an allusion to her betrothal with his son. When all is over, however, and she realizes that both lover and life are lost to her, she bewails her lot with all a woman's anguish. Few lines in either ancient or modern poetry are more beautiful than those in which she bemoans her fate. She is going to death unwedded and unwept, condemned by an unjust human law

for having revered the law of the gods. The last and the most wretched of her race, she thus greets the sepulchre in which she is to be buried alive:

> "ὦ τύμβος, ὦ νυμφεῖον, ὦ κατασκαφὴς
> οἴκησις αἰείφρουρος, οἷ πορεύομαι
> πρὸς τοὺς ἐμαυτῆς." [1]

The fact that having entered the tomb her energy returns and she cuts the thread of her own life, in no way detracts from her womanliness, but simply rounds out her character as a Greek maiden of the heroic type.

Ismene is a woman with whom, perhaps, we moderns are more familiar. Yielding, affectionate, even self-sacrificing, her bravery is shown more in suffering than in action.

Haemon, too, is thoroughly human in his love for Antigone as well as in his conduct towards Creon. How natural is the scene in which approaching his father with filial respect, he allows this respect to be changed into indignation and resentment because of Creon's treatment of Antigone! How true to life, also, is the scene in the tomb! If, in his despair at finding Antigone dead, he seeks to kill Creon, the frenzy is but momentary and is avenged upon himself.

Even the wife of Creon, who appears upon the stage but for a moment, leaves a deep and abiding impression; she is so wholly a mother who cannot

[1] "O tomb, O bridal chamber, O excavated, ever-guarded dwelling, where I go to mine own!"

bear to survive her last remaining child.

Molière

If we turn from ancient to modern drama, we find in Molière one who knew human nature well, at least in so far as it displays itself to the eyes of the spectator. His "Avare" furnishes a good example of this knowledge. Harpagon is the important character of the play, the others appearing to be intended by Molière to show the avariciousness of the miser as a father, a master, and a lover. Harpagon has two children, Cléante and Elise. He wishes Elise to marry an old man who is willing to take her without a marriage portion. He refuses money to Cléante and intends himself to wed Mariane with whom Cléante is in love. The piece ends happily with a double wedding, Elise marrying Valère, to whom she had become engaged without her father's knowledge, and Cléante becoming the husband of Mariane.

Each scene of the play shows a new phase of the miser's passion. He accuses the servants of injuring his furniture by hard rubbing; he forbids them to give invited guests wine unless they ask for it a second time; he does not want his children to know where he has hidden his money. Reputation, children, the girl he wishes to marry, — all are of small value when compared with his "chère cassette." His character is probably best shown by his own words when he finds that this "cassette" has been stolen; the monologue occurs in Act IV.:

"Hélas! mon pauvre argent; on m'a privé de toi; et puisque tu m'es enlevé, j'ai perdu mon support, ma

consolation, ma joie; tout est fini pour moi, je n'en puis plus; je me meurs, je suis mort, je suis enterré."[1]

The character is exaggerated to be sure, yet we wonder if there has not been many a Harpagon willing to sacrifice his love and duty and honor in his frenzied search for gold.

Shakespeare

Perhaps English drama can give us no better psychological study than Shakespeare's "Macbeth." In this play the great dramatist has penetrated the very depths of the human heart and shown us the struggle there enacted between good and evil. Both Macbeth and his wife are intensely human characters, and the bonds of affection and confidence that unite them throughout the play, claim an involuntary sympathy and shed a softening influence over the entire tragedy.

Macbeth's character is a strange mingling of good and evil qualities, and it is to the contending of these qualities that the play owes its intense and gloomy interest. Lady Macbeth well describes her husband's character in Act I., Scene V.:

"Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be
What thou art promised. — Yet do I fear thy nature;
It is too full o' the milk of human kindness,
To catch the nearest way. Thou wouldst be great,
Art not without ambition; but without

[1] "Alas! my poor money; they have deprived me of you; and since you are taken from me, I have lost my support, my consolation, my joy; all is over for me, I am dying, I am dead, I am buried."

The illness should attend it; what thou wouldst highly
That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false,
And yet wouldst wrongly win: thou'dst have, great Glamis,
That which cries, 'Thus must thou do, if thou have it';
And that which rather thou dost fear to do,
Thou wishest should be undone."

He is a gallant soldier, a wise leader, naturally, as Lady Macbeth tells us, "full o' the milk of human kindness"; nor is he insensible to the claims of gratitude, kinship, fealty, and courtesy. In Act I., Scene VII., he says to Lady Macbeth, alluding to the projected murder of King Duncan:

"We will proceed no further in this business;
He (Duncan) hath honour'd me of late."

Again, in the same scene, he soliloquizes:

". . . . . . .He's here (meaning Duncan) in double trust;
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject;
Strong both against the deed: then, as his host
Who should against his murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself."

Yet Macbeth is no mere instrument of evil, tempted to entertain the first suggestions of crime by supernatural arts, and forced to its execution by his wife's more determined spirit. Rather is he the victim of a guilty ambition, already familiar with half-formed thoughts of crime when he is first accosted by the Weird Sisters. Their predictions

were but the occasions that gave a more distinct form to the unhallowed aspirations which originated in Macbeth's own evil desires, and the undaunted spirit of Lady Macbeth served only as "a spur to his intent" to put these desires into execution. It is worthy of notice, too, that even as he proceeds from the commission of one crime to that of another, his sense of right and wrong is never distorted, his conscience never seared into insensibility; not even to himself does he disguise or palliate his guilt.

As for Lady Macbeth, she is not a mere fiend, but a woman of high intellect, bold spirit, and lofty desires, — untainted by any grovelling vice, or grosser passion. Her guilt and cruelty come not from malignity or revenge, but from the thirst for power, both for herself and for her husband, by which she is consumed. It is by her intensity of purpose that she overpowers Macbeth's mind and beats down his doubts and fears; nay, the very voice of her own conscience is drowned in the whirlwind of her thoughts. A lady of high rank, left much alone, she has been accustomed to fill her idle hours with day-dreams of ambition; thus she mistakes the courage of fantasy for the power of bearing the consequences of actual guilt. Even in the murder scene, Act II., Scene II., when the obdurate inflexibility of purpose with which she drives Macbeth to the execution of their project and her indifference to blood-shedding and death inspire unmitigated disgust and horror, one has the invol-

untary consciousness that she is forcing herself to act as she does rather than yielding to natural depravity. Notice the words she utters in the moment of extreme horror:

> "Had he (Duncan) not resembled my father as he slept, I had done it!" (i.e. murdered him).

Hers has been a mock fortitude, strong to think deeds of blood but weak to perform them. If she compels herself to enter the chamber of death into which Macbeth will not go, may we not think that it is to save her husband from being suspected of the murderous deed? Indeed from the moment of Duncan's assassination she is no longer the presumptuous, determined woman that she was in the earlier scenes of the play. Knowing by her own experience the torment which her husband endures, she tries by her own reasoning and her sympathy to alleviate his suffering. If during the supper scene, when Macbeth beholds the spectre of the murdered Banquo and his reason appears unsettled by extreme dismay and horror, she utters words of rebuke and remonstrance, it is only to recall him to himself. Once the guests are dismissed, she is silent save for submissive answers to his questions and an entreaty that he will seek repose. But the strain is too great for her to bear it long; her feminine nature and delicate structure are soon overwhelmed by the enormous pressure of her crime. Her keener feelings sink under the struggle that leads Macbeth on to further wickedness. She dies,

perhaps by her own hand, surely giving no sign of the guilty deeds committed by her husband and herself. Almost the last words we hear from her lips, Act V., Scene I., prove that the fatalism of her waking hours marks as well the delirium of her sleep:

"What's done, cannot be undone."

A certain Catholic writer calls "Macbeth" a study in sin, and holds that it lends itself readily to an analysis which corresponds in a remarkable way with the treatment of the same subject (sin) by the greatest of Christian philosphers, St. Thomas Aquinas.[1] Let us see if a study of the tragedy will bear out this assertion.

A Study in Sin

Considering sin from the point of view of moral theology, we have first temptation, secondly sin, and thirdly the consequences of sin; all these may be found in "Macbeth."

First, the temptation. "The devil," says St. Thomas, "tempts by exploring the inner condition of a man, that he may work on that vicious propensity to which a man is more prone." The witches, representing the powers of evil, seize on Macbeth's growing passion (ambition) and nurture it by their pretended prophecies. Owing to their peculiar relation to time and space, spirits can convey the knowledge

Temptation

[1] "Macbeth, a Study in Sin," A. S. Pardie: Catholic World, Nov. 1919.

drawn from one mind to the mind of another by means of transmission simpler than those used by men. This explains the "prophecy" that Macbeth would be thane of Cawdor; the collation of the thaneship had already been decreed by Duncan. Seeing that it will serve to heighten his ambition, the witches go a step further and foretell the kingship which they foresee Macbeth's perverted nature will eventually seek and grasp. This foresight, one must note in passing, comes from their general knowledge of human nature, not from any specific knowledge of what is actually passing in Macbeth's mind.

A second cause of sin, says St. Thomas, is "homo." This cause the tragedy furnishes in the person of Lady Macbeth. She knows her husband's weakness better than he does himself — apparently a feminine prerogative exercised the world over and first manifested in the Garden of Eden. It is her wild and remorseless determination that carries her rough-shod over the dictates of right reason, and "screws to the sticking place" the courage of her husband whose will is not yet completely divorced from reason. Macbeth's conscience, his ethical conscience, makes a last appeal. He foresees the punishment which will be eternal as well as that which will dog him during his mortal life. He recognizes the claims of his kinship to Duncan and those of his own high reputation. Yet he has no genuine desire to withdraw from the commission of his contemplated crime and his wife's

terrible determination steels his nerve to action. Temptation has triumphed; a human will has been assailed and broken; the devil and the world have played their parts in the undoing of the victim.

Sin

The sin. "Consummatio peccati est in opere." Macbeth is walking in the shadowed court, waiting for the moment when he will be called to fill "the perfect measure of his sin." A last grace is offered him. Banquo comes to him with new tokens of Duncan's good will. But the grace is refused, the royal kiss given to a traitor. Then there is a final interior protest against the sin in the grim hallucination by means of which his "imagination deals a first avenging blow":

> "Is this a dagger which I see before me,
> The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.
> I have thee not, and yet I see thee still
> And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,
> Which was not so before. There! no such thing:
> It is the bloody business which informs
> Thus to mine eyes." (Act II., Scene I.)

This protest, too, is unavailing and Duncan's blood seals Macbeth's compact with the devil.

Consequences

The consequences. The first general effect of sin, St. Thomas tells us, is "corruptio naturæ." Man is the subject of a three-fold natural good: the intrinsic principles of his nature which constitute him a rational being, the natural tendency to the performance of virtuous acts, and the gratuitous gift of original

justice. Sin cannot deprive him of the first, for no morally bad act can make him less than man. The third was lost to him by Adam's fall, the effect of which descended to Adam's posterity. It is to the second that St. Thomas refers when he says that the first general effect of sin is the corruption of man's nature. This truth is well exemplified in the moral condition of Macbeth during the last three acts of the tragedy. "Things, bad begun," he himself tells us, (Act III., Scene II.) "make strong themselves by ill." His hold on good grows weaker as he habituates himself to evil; his reason hesitates to act, his will is armed against good. He has rebelled against God and man and he merits punishment from both; hence we find him oppressed from within and from without. There is no sign of contrition, however, for he has smothered every tendency toward good. The tragedy leaves him a moral wreck, deprived of everything except the animal instinct to save his life:

> "They have tied me to a stake. I cannot fly,
> But, bear-like, I must fight the course." (Act V.,
> Scene VII.)

This is the human punishment of Macbeth's sin; upon the divine, one ventures not to speculate.

If we have discussed at so great length this one tragedy, it is because the character of Macbeth seems to illustrate both clearly and forcibly the power given to a dramatist by a knowledge of human nature. Is not the story of Macbeth the story

of fallen man? Man, too, is tempted by the devil, by his own passions, often alas! by the woman whom God gave him for a helpmate. Man too, frequently yields in the combat. But, thank God, we may hope that, at least in many cases, contrition brings him back to the God whom he had offended and thus saves him from the eternal punishment due to sin. Shakespeare's "Macbeth" is in truth a great tragedy, and the secret of its greatness lies in the fidelity with which it places before us the hidden recesses of the human heart.

Suggestive Questions

1. Upon what does Sophocles base his tragedy of "Antigone"?
2. Are the important characters in "Antigone" true to life?
3. Is Molière's "Avare" psychologically sound?
4. What is the strong point in Shakespeare's character of Macbeth?
5. Is the character of Lady Macbeth well drawn?
6. Explain the psychological reason for the introduction of the Weird Sisters in the tragedy of "Macbeth."
7. Is the tragedy of "Macbeth" a study in sin?
8. Prove that Macbeth himself is no mere instrument of evil.
9. Does Lady Macbeth serve only as "a spur to his (Macbeth's) intent"?
10. What evidence does the play afford of Macbeth's having no contrition?

VI

DRAMATIC LITERATURE

THE assertion that "the playhouse has no monopoly of the dramatic form," seems to most of us a hard saying, since the word "drama" involuntarily connotes "theatre"; yet we readily admit that there does exist a deal of dramatic literature not to be read by the footlights of the stage.

Closet-drama

First on the list of this literature stands the closet-drama, well defined as "a play not intended to be played." It is written for the reader rather than for the stage, and uncontaminated by any subservience to theatre, actor, or audience. Perhaps it is its very freedom which has made the closet-drama fail to justify itself. Even as physical wrestling develops a man's body, so does mental wrestling develop his mind. The necessity of grappling with the difficulties attending actual production forces the dramatist to put forth his whole strength. By making his work easier we do not help him, but rather hinder him from great achievement. Let us consider for a moment the following passage, quoted by Dr. Matthews, as a claim set up for closet-drama by one of its admirers:[1] "As the closet-dramatist is

[1] "A Study of the Drama," Brander Matthews.

SCENE FROM DIAMOND JUBILEE PAGEANT
College Campus, Mt. St. Vincent, New York

not bound to consider the practical exigencies of the theatre, to consult the prejudices of the manager or the spectators, fill the pockets of the company, or provide a rôle for a star performer, he has, in many ways, a freer hand than the professional playwright. He need not sacrifice truth of character and probability of plot to the need of highly accentuated situations. He does not have to consider whether a speech is too long, too ornate in diction, too deeply thoughtful for recitation by an actor. If the action lags at certain points, let it lag. In short, as the aim of the closet-dramatist is other than the playwright's, so his methods may be independent."

We grant the truth of the passage, but what the admirer evidently considers advantages seem to us to be disadvantages, since they tend to foster the unwillingness, or to prove the inability, of the closet-dramatist to acquire that craft of the theatre which makes the real dramatist what he is. Again if the aim of the closet-dramatist is other than that of the playwright, why call his achievement drama? If he merely wishes to recite a poem or tell a story, why not recite the one or tell the other himself instead of bothering with actors?

We said a moment ago that we granted the truth of the passage quoted by Dr. Matthews, but we must modify this statement for the passage contains one sentence not to our liking. "He (the closet-dramatist) need not sacrifice truth of character and probability of plot to the need of highly accentu-

ated situations." This would seem to imply that the dramatist who intends to have his plays produced must make this sacrifice. Is this true? The dramatist cannot draw his character in detail as does the novelist; he must rather, as a clever painter, illustrate it by a few suggestive strokes; yet these strokes may surely give a true likeness. He must, too, owing to limitations of time and space, content himself with presenting to his audience such vital points of his story as shall lead to a satisfactory development of the plot within the time and space allowed him; but does this condensation necessarily make for improbability? It seems to us that it tends to restrain rather than to encourage flights of fancy.

Literature and Theatre

It is a significant fact that the closet-drama appears in the history of literature when there is a divorce between literature and the theatre. We find it first in the Rome of Nero when, the stage being given over to vulgar spectacles, Seneca seems to have written his plays for recitation by an elocutionist. Again the closet-drama appears in Italy when men of letters, despising the miracle play and the comedy of masks, the two types of drama then popular on the stage, sought to imitate the Greek tragedy or the Latin comedy, regardless of the conditions of the contemporary theatre. As late as the early nineteenth century it emerged in England, when adaptations of Kotzebue and, somewhat later, of Scribe and his collaborators, formed the chief staple

of the stage. One is willing to justify its appearance in Nero's Rome, one can understand how it came to be written during the Renaissance, but there seems little reason for its emerging in the nineteenth century, and none at all for its continued existence in the twentieth. On the one hand, the dramatic poet of today has no right to despise the stage for which great poets have written; on the other, he must comply with the conditions of this stage if, like his successful colleagues, he wishes to receive its rewards.

Swinburne asserts that when he wrote plays it was "with a view to their being acted at the Globe, the Red Bull, or the Blackfriars"; that is the playhouses with which the Elizabethans had to be content, and to the conditions of which they were forced to conform their plays. Discussing his own "Marino Faliero," he even goes so far as to declare that this dramatic poem, "hopelessly impossible as it is from the point of view of modern stage-craft, could hardly have been found too untheatrical, too utterly given over to thought without action, by the audience which applauded Chapman's eloquence, — the fervid and inexhaustible declamation which was offered and accepted as a substitute for study of character and interest of action." Granting the truth of this statement that Chapman's plays were applauded by the Elizabethan audience, may it not be possible that it was the melodramatic plot rather than the "fervid and inexhaustible declamation" that won popular applause or at least

endurance? After all one naturally looks for eloquence in the oration and seeks declamation on the public platform; on the stage one expects, just as naturally, to find "study of character" and "interest of action."

If we confine ourselves to the definition of "dramatic poems not to be acted," many of the so-called closet-dramas must be removed from the list. Tennyson's "Becket" for instance, Browning's "Strafford" and "A Blot in the 'Scutcheon," and Shelley's "Cenci."

Dramatic Poems

Tennyson certainly intended "Becket," as well as his other plays to be acted; Browning wrote his two plays mentioned to be acted by Macready; and Shelley had Miss O'Neill in view when he wrote the "Cenci." The plays failed in the theatre probably because their authors wrote for the reader as well as for the spectator. To quote Stendhal's criticism of Manzoni's dramatic poems, the "characters seem to be held back by the pleasure of finding fine words." In short, it is the psychology of these literary men that is at fault; one does not pause in the crises of life to find the best literary form for the expression of one's feelings.

There are dramatic poems of another class which can be called closet-dramas only by stretching the definition; such are the attempted resuscitations of Greek tragedy exemplified by Arnold's "Empedocles on Etna" and Swinburne's "Atlanta in Calydon." The French call them "pastiches," but the best name that we have ever found is the one given by

Brander Matthews, "exercises in poetry to be ranked with the anatomies of the old painters."[1] It is impossible for a modern poet to become a Greek of centuries ago, and hence his work, however ingenious, can be at best but an external imitation, lacking as it does the genetic principle to be found in the character of the people and the age to which the play naturally belongs. One reads such plays with keenest pleasure, but on the stage it is a somewhat perilous undertaking to handle other than the modern dramatic form. Poetic drama is in truth a thing to be desired, but it must be poetic drama mind you, not merely dramatic poetry. So long as the latter makes no pretense to be other than it is, we are willing to acknowledge its legitimacy and to accord it its full meed of praise. It is only when it claims to be what it is not, that we pronounce it illegitimate.

Poetic drama, we have said, is a thing to be desired. In the early days of dramatic expansion, the masterpieces of dramatic art were poetic both in theme and in treatment. But poetry we must remember is more than versifying; there are many prosy plays in verse and many poetic ones in prose. Think for a moment of Alfred de Musset's "On ne badine pas avec l'amour" or Aldrich's "Mercedes"; they are both written in prose, yet who could hesitate to call them poetic? Even that most lyric of all Shakespeare's comedies, "As You Like It," is largely in prose. It is well worth one's while to

[1] "A Study of the Drama," Brander Matthews.

study Shakespeare's use of language, his commingling of blank verse with rhythmic prose and the plain speech of daily life. He knew so well how his characters would speak as real men that he escaped the snare into which many a modern poet would have fallen; that, namely, of sustaining at the higher level of blank verse the whole of such plays as "As You Like It," "Julius Caesar," or "Macbeth." Is not this another proof of the benefit accruing to the dramatist from a knowledge of psychology?

Drama and Novel

If we extend dramatic literature to the novel, the field becomes at once immensely enlarged. Dr. Austin O'Malley makes a clever distinction between the drama and the novel in an article published in "America." [1] "In the drama as differentiated from the novel," he tells us, "an appeal is made to the emotions through the senses directly; in the novel the appeal is made through the intellect and imagination by narration; the drama opposes artistic but literal reality to the novel's convention of artistic speech. . . . The novelist may partly explain his characters and deeds; the dramatist cannot avail himself of this method of expression. . . . The drama . . . characterizes by action, the novel by exposition." Finally, says Dr. O'Malley, and this statement we would like to emphasize, "The only psychologists in the world now, outside the Scholastics, are the novelists and dramatists." And why? Because

[1] "How the Novel Differs from the Drama," A. O'Malley, M.D., "America," Mar. 19, 1921.

they are the only ones who study human nature in all its aspects, who seek to know, not only man's words and deeds, but even to penetrate into his most secret thoughts and feelings. There is this difference, however, between the novelist and the dramatist. The dramatist depicts men and women, more or less like those one meets in real life, according to his genius in portraying them, and leaves the spectator to divine their thoughts and feelings from their words and deeds as one learns the cause from the effects. The novelist, having greater time and space at his disposal, may save the reader the trouble of such divination by an analysis of character which makes evident the reason for both words and deeds. The novel gives a wide view of life and uses complex elements; the drama takes a narrower view and usually selects material almost as simple as that of the short story.

This complexity of elements is one reason why the ordinary novel does not lend itself more readily to dramatization. Take such a novel as Thomas Hardy's "The Return of the Native." It surely contains several dramatic situations; the meeting of Eustacia Vye and Clym Yeobright after the mummers' play; Mrs. Yeobright's death with the tragic circumstances that lead up to it, — her recognition of her son in the furze-cutter, her coming to his house while he is asleep and his wife is entertaining Wildeve, the refusal of the wife to admit her, Clym's finding her on the heath as he is on his way to be reconciled with her, the appearance of

Eustacia and Wildeve at her death in the old hut on the heath, and finally the message given to Susan Nunsuch by the boy: "I've got something to tell'ee, mother. That woman asleep there (the dead Mrs. Yeobright) walked along with me today; and she said I was to say that I had seed her, and that she was a broken-hearted woman and cast off by her son, and then I came home." Intensely dramatic, too, is the moment in which Clym shows the reddleman the dead bodies of Eustacia and Wildeve, and well worthy of the greatest tragedian are Clym's words with which the scene closes: "She (Eustacia) is the second woman I have killed this year. I was a great cause of my mother's death; and I am the chief cause of hers. . . . My great regret is that for what I have done no man or law can punish me!"

There are dramatic possibilities also in many of the lighter novels such as Harland's "The Cardinal's Snuffbox" and "My Friend Prospero," or Leslie Moore's "The Peacock Feather." Perhaps some dramatist of today will realize that these stories would make morally clean as well as artistic and entertaining plays.

It is in the short story, however, that one gets closest to the drama. This story, like the drama, has limitations of time and space and must seize upon the vital points of the tale it wishes to tell. It resembles the drama, too, in the swiftness of its action, passing rapidly as it does from the first

Drama and Short Story

meeting to the sound of wedding bells, or from the initiation of a great scheme to its successful completion. Some of these short stories are very cleverly written and many of them might furnish our greater novelists with more correct views of life than these latter seem to possess. We have read several such stories of late and have found displayed in them no slight knowledge of psychology. Like an oasis in a desert, such a sound common sensible tale occasionally appears in a magazine otherwise given to literature that one would rather avoid reading; it is a pity that this should be the case since it keeps the tale from being known to those who would appreciate its worth. Sometimes, too, strange as it may seem to those who decry Catholic fiction, one of these clever short stories finds its way into a Catholic magazine. Such a one appears in the Extension Magazine for March, 1921. It is written by Mabel Osborne and is called "In Perfect Accord." We would like to discuss it at least briefly in order to show the possibilities of the clean short story and the help that correct psychological principles may give to its writing.

The story itself is simple. Robert Fleming, a sedate bachelor of thirty-four, falls in love with Clorinda Gayle, a young lady some ten years younger; she reciprocates his love and they are married. As his wealth and influence increase, he becomes more and more absorbed in his business until at last he is rarely seen with his wife at those

social functions which apparently claim most of her time and attention. After four years of married life he becomes suspicious of his wife's trips to the country, trips made alone in her own little car, and he determines to follow her. As would probably be the case in real life, he gives no thought to his neglect of her but becomes filled with wrath over her seeming misconduct. In a hot chase, he loses her through the bursting of a tire, a mishap which delays him for some considerable time. Finally he sees her empty car on the side of the road in front of an unpretentious green cottage. Jumping from his car, he goes towards the cottage and almost collides with his wife, who comes running around the corner of the house, engaged in the very innocent pastime of playing with a bull pup. She invites her husband to lunch and begs him to pretend that they have never met before so that they may see whether or not they will become friends. Some of the conversation that follows is worth quoting.

"How do you like my little green cottage?"
"Very well."
"My husband doesn't like it."

He says nothing. She bids him play the game to pay for his lunch. Then he says politely:

"You are married?"
"But certainly. I can tell that you are by your look of wisdom."
"You think that marriage is an aid to wisdom?"
"I think it is a school where learning is compulsory."

"That savors of cynicism."

"Cynicism is embraced in the curriculum of the school."

"And I suppose disappointment and disillusionment are also found in this comprehensive curriculum."

"Oh, no. And what I said about cynicism was horrid. It all depends on the student. The branches of learning one pursues are optional."

"Then you have been able to discover some good in it?"

"Loads, by observation. Generosity, unselfishness, union of interests, exchange of ideas, and most of all home-life and companionship."

She falters over the word "companionship" but he remains silent and she suggests talking of "nice things." Her husband finally insists on knowing why she comes to this cottage. She tells him that the place belongs to a former stenographer of his, Delia Grady, who is married and has an adorable baby. Delia being obliged to go to the city once every week and having no one with whom to leave the baby, Clorinda has offered to take care of it. The baby is not there now because Delia's sister has taken it out for the day. When Clorinda's husband asks her why she has done this, she tells him that it is because she wants some human interest in her life, that she cannot live on bridge parties and matinées and teas and luncheons and silly calls. Then she reminds him of their early married days when they talked over his business

affairs and her social interests, and the story ends happily with a mutual resolution to get back to "home-life and companionship."

We make no plea for the literary value of the story, although it is fairly well written, but we would like to emphasize the sensible way in which the writer deals with marital problems. First of all she avoids the "eternal triangle," omitting from her story the second man — or woman — whose presence makes a happy ending possible only by way of death or sin. Secondly, she gives the wife sufficient common sense to keep from airing her home troubles and a conscience which prevents her from seeking relief for her loneliness in illicit pleasures. Thirdly, she shows that, in spite of the friction of daily life, love lives on in the heart and needs but little coaxing to make it burn with all the ardor of its early flame. The story is perfectly true to life up to the point of mutual explanations; might it not be better for humanity if the picture continued truthful unto the end? That it could so continue if people would only live up to their higher nature, is clearly shown by the writer, whose concepts of life might well be used by other writers both of drama and of fiction.

Suggestive Questions

1. Is the freedom accorded the writer of closet-drama a help or a hindrance?
2. What does the closet-drama denote?
3. In what are the writers of closet-drama at fault?

4. Why are resuscitations of Greek tragedy unsuited to theatrical production?
5. Differentiate the drama from the novel.
6. Why does the average novel fail to lend itself to dramatization?
7. Give points of similarity existing between the short story and the drama.

VII

POINTS OF VIEW

THERE is probably nothing that so alters the appearance of an object as a change in one's point of view. Seen from a distance, a giant may seem a pigmy, a castle a wayside hut. This truth holds good in the mental as well as in the physical world and may well be applied to dramatic art.

The drama as conceived in the Ages of Faith, was intended by the Church to be a means of teaching men the truths of Faith and of familiarizing them with the things of God. In the hands of many a modern playwright it is employed to pander to man's lower nature, to place before him in pictures all too vivid the concupiscence of the eyes, the concupiscence of the flesh, and the pride of life. By the one, it was meant to be an instrument for good; by the other, it is too frequently converted into an instrument for evil.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

While we quite agree with Dr. A. W. Ward in holding the liturgy of the Catholic Church to be the main source of the modern drama, we are not at all willing to accept some of the statements either made or quoted by him in his work " A History of English Dramatic Literature." [1] For instance, he

[1] Vol. I.

quotes as follows Hagenbach, whom he calls "an eminent Protestant ecclesiastical historian," on the subject of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.[1] "In the wide dimensions, which in course of time the Mass assumed, there lies a grand, we are almost inclined to say an artistic idea. A dramatic progression is perceptible in all the symbolic processes, from the appearance of the celebrant priest at the altar (Introibus) and the confession of sins, to the Kyrie Eleison, and from this to the grand doxology (Gloria in Excelsis), after which the priest turns with the Dominus Vobiscum to the congregation, calling upon it to pray (Oremus). Next, we listen to the reading of the Epistle and the Gospel. Between the two actions or acts intervenes the Graduale (a chant), during which the deacon ascends the ambon (lectorium). With the Halleluia concludes the first act (Missa catechumenorum); and then ensues the Mass in a more special sense (Missa fidelium), which begins with the recitation of the creed (Credo). Then again a Dominus Vobiscum and a prayer, followed by the Offertorium (Offertory) and, accompanied by further ceremonies, the Consecration. The change of substance — the mystery of mysteries — takes place amidst the adoration of the congregation and the prayer for the quick and the dead; then, after the chant of the Agnus Dei, ensues the Communion itself, which is succeeded by prayer and thanksgiving, the salutation of peace, and the benediction."

[1] Kirchengeschichte.

We will not quarrel with Mr. Hagenbach's exposition of the ceremonies of the Mass, but we must take exception to his statement that "in the course of time the Mass assumed wide dimensions." Just what does he mean by this? If he would imply that, freed from the persecution of her early days, the Church celebrated the Holy Sacrifice with more pomp as well as greater publicity, Mr. Hagenbach has simply failed to express himself clearly. If, however, he would insinuate that the Mass has changed in any of its essential parts since it was celebrated by the Apostles, we must accuse him of either ignorance or falsehood. Had Mr. Hagenbach ever attended Mass in a poor country church or convent chapel, had he ever seen the Holy Sacrifice celebrated on the improvised altar of the missionary, raised temporarily in some hut in the wilderness, he might have realized how absolutely accidental and unnecessary are the pomp and the "touching chant" in which he would seem to make the Mass consist. Again Mr. Hagenbach is quoted as saying "how the fact that the services of the Roman branch of the church were conducted in the same Latin tongue illustrates her plan of placing their chief effect in symbols rather than in the words employed." Is he ignorant of this other fact that for the Consecration, which he himself calls "the mystery of mysteries," not only words but the very ones Christ used at the Last Supper — the first Mass — are absolutely necessary?

Dr. Ward himself says that it would "be going

too far to attribute to the dramatic features of the service per se attempts actually made to bring this feature into stronger relief." This is a kindly saying for which one must be duly grateful. Again he tells us that in the earlier days "whatsoever enriched, expanded or diversified the services was assured a widespread and unstinted welcome; and no fear existed of the intrusion of that sense of ridicule which, since it was reawakened by the severer taste of the Renascence, has in later times cavilled at some ornamentations of religious worship as redundant and at others as incongruous." Might not Dr. Ward have better attributed the intrusion "of the sense of ridicule" to the lack of faith on the part of the so-called Reformers than to "the severer taste of the Renascence?"

Liturgy of the Catholic Church

Leaving Mr. Hagenbach and Dr. Ward to their own opinions, let us ask ourselves the question: Are the services of the Catholic Church dramatic? The answer will depend on the way in which we use the word dramatic. If we take it to mean action which appeals to the emotions by means of the senses directly, then these services are intensely dramatic; if it stands for purely imitative action, void of reality, then they are not dramatic at all. The Church gives to her ritual all possible pomp and grandeur, first because such pomp and grandeur befit the worship of God; and secondly because she realizes that this pomp and grandeur will appeal to her children and serve as a means to attract them to the House of

God where they will be taught the essentials of their Faith and learn to distinguish between these essentials and accidentals however beautiful. As we have said elsewhere in this paper, the Church is a past mistress in psychology; she knows human nature as it never could be known by an institution purely human, and she does not hesitate to use this knowledge for the benefit of her children. As nothing is too great to be employed in the service of God, so nothing is too small. If lights and flowers and song appeal to people, let them be used. But it is only an emotional appeal. Perhaps; yet it may lead to lasting results. How many saints now in heaven may trace the beginning of their sanctity to some appeal made to their emotions!

The Catholic Church and the Drama

Passing from the dramatic features of the Church's liturgy, let us consider her attitude towards actual drama. It is the attitude assumed by her towards all God's creatures; they are to be used in so far as they help us to reach God, not to be used in so far as they lead us from Him.

The drama, properly utilized, may become a powerful instrument for good. Its aim being to portray life and character, it possesses the power of inculcating high ideals, of properly evaluating the good and the bad, the noble and the base. Example has always found place in the foremost rank of teachers, and the mimetic life of the stage may often serve as a model for the real life of the spectators.

This being the case, what can one say of the attitude of many of the modern playwrights towards the drama? Not content with making the theatre a place of mere entertainment, not satisfied with taking from the drama its power of elevating man, they have turned the playhouse into a school of evil and have converted the drama into a depraving force. Dramatic technic, yes, they may be masters of that; but their work is a body without a soul, or if it has a soul, that soul is stripped of all its noble prerogatives and given up as a slave to its sensual appetites.

Bernard Shaw and the Stage

Mr. Bernard Shaw is one of the writers on this so-called dramatic Renascence; let us consider some of his views with regard to drama and the stage. We shall quote from his Preface to "Three Plays by Brieux," published by The University Press, Cambridge, U.S.A. Incidentally we should like to mention that two of the three plays we refused to read; a very superficial reading of one of them having been more than sufficient to convince us that we had no further use for M. Brieux however great a dramatist Mr. Shaw might pronounce him. But to return to Mr. Shaw's views. "When I was a well-known writer," he tells us, "I said that what we wanted as the basis of our plays and novels was not romance but a really scientific natural history. Scientific natural history is not compatible with taboo; and as everything connected with sex was tabooed, I felt the need for mentioning the forbid-

den subjects, not only because of their own importance, but for the sake of destroying taboo by giving it the most violent possible shocks. (He certainly has given the shocks.) The same impulse is unmistakably active in Zola and his contemporaries. (It surely is.) . . . The formula for the well made (i.e. the popular) play is so easy that I give it for the benefit of any reader who feels tempted to try his hand at making the fortune that awaits all successful manufacturers in this line. (Rather novel to call playwrights " manufacturers," is it not?) First, you 'have an idea' for a dramatic situation. . . . For instance, the situation of an innocent person convicted by circumstances of a crime may always be depended upon. If the person is a woman, she must be convicted of adultery. (Is this one of Mr. Shaw's favorite " ideas " ?) . . . The great dramatist has something better to do than amuse either himself or his audience. He has to interpret life. . . . (He is) a ruthless revealer of hidden truth and a mighty destroyer of idols. So well does Brieux (one of the great dramatists according to Mr. Shaw) know this that he has written a play, La Foi, showing how truth is terrible to men, and how false religions . . . are a necessity to them." Just which religion, or perhaps religions, does M. Brieux hold to be not false?

After telling us that M. Brieux has put upon the stage the pros and cons of Malthusianism and even discussed thus publicly the diseases attendant upon

profligacy, Mr. Shaw shows his approval of the publicity given to such subjects by saying: "The common sense of the matter is that a public danger needs a public warning, and the more public the place the more effective the warning. But beyond this general consideration there is a special need for the warning in the theatre. . . . (The) nurture and education (of sex) is, for the present at all events, the chief use of the theatre." Unfortunately, yes; for Mr. Shaw and his followers have made it so. Our drama should depict truth surely, but is there no truth save that which deals with sin? Must the evil that in all probability would otherwise remain unknown to at least some among the spectators be placed upon the public stage? Do we teach our boys how to commit burglary in order that they may not steal, or make known to our girls the ways of a courtesan so that they may remain pure? Knowledge of evil too often whets the appetite instead of causing a distaste. Go to our prisons, our reformatories, our houses of correction. Question the inmates as to the cause of their downfall. You will find in many instances that the first step in the wrong direction was taken after the reading of a bad book or the seeing of an improper play. Nay, take a shorter journey. Walk along some frequented street or avenue in one of our great cities — New York will do admirably well — and notice the immodest dress and the free manners of the women with the consequent lack of respect, even contempt and familiarity, on the part of the men. May not

the theatre be responsible, at least to some extent, for these conditions which mark the degeneracy of our age? Man is not only a social but also an imitative animal and the freedom granted to the people of stageland is quite liable to be claimed by the people of real life. Custom, too, has often the force of a law and what it permits many will consider legitimate. If custom allows the stage to become a clearing-house for sex problems, drama may well clothe itself in robes of mourning for it has lost its interpreter and its home.

Taboo

Mr. Shaw would have us believe that it is only convention which has placed a taboo upon the subjects that he would have staged; but this is not true. There is a God-implanted instinct in every pure minded man or woman which shrinks from private, much more from public, mention of Mr. Shaw's "forbidden subjects." To prove this we have but to put a question. Would Mr. Shaw be willing to introduce these subjects into a conversation held with a woman whose morals are beyond reproach? If he possessed sufficient temerity to do so — and for his sake we are willing to doubt it — we are quite certain that the conversation would end abruptly and never be renewed. It is not by showing vice that we teach virtue. Mr. Shaw can scarcely know human nature as well as the God who created it, and the views of its Creator are altogether opposed to those of the great critic. There is rather an uncomfortable saying found in Scripture about giving

scandal, Mr. Shaw may remember, — that is if he reads Scripture. Let the future dramatist make use of the technical skill shown by Mr. Shaw's scientific playwrights, but let him exercise it on material less unworthy of his art. This is a slogan making epoch; why then should not the dramatist fashion one for himself? Perhaps he could make none better than the one found on the flyleaf of a prayer book belonging to an old religious:

"God, our Lady, the souls of men."

Suggestive Questions

1. How was the drama regarded by the Catholic Church in the ages of Faith?
2. Are the services of the Catholic Church dramatic?
3. Why does the Catholic Church appeal to the senses?
4. What is the attitude of the Catholic Church towards drama?
5. Are George Bernard Shaw's views with regard to drama and the stage tenable?
6. What argument would you give against these views?
7. What are the tendencies of modern drama?

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