

AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

Fare thee well, King : sith thus thou wilt appear,
Freedom lives hence, and banishment is here,

and the King of France says :

Gods, gods ! tis strange that from their coldest neglect
My love should kindle to inflamed respect.

Thy dowerless daughter, King, thrown to my chance,
Is Queen of us, of ours, and our fair France :

Not all the Dukes of waterish Burgundy

Can buy this unprized precious maid of me.

Bid them farewell, Cordelia, though unkind :

Thou lovest here, a better where to find.

And in the first Scene of the second Act Gloucester says :

O madam, my old heart is cracked, is cracked ! . . .

O lady, lady, shame would have it hid ! . . .

I know not, madam : 'tis too bad, too bad.

These and similar lines are juvenile work. Throughout the Play, and especially in the first couple of Acts, there are passages of an older Blank Verse such as he wrote when he was finding his music. And all this prentice work is combined with passages of his most beautiful Prose and of his perfect Blank Verse.

Apart from the manner the incidents of *King Lear* are enough to prove that he wrote a form of this Play when he was young. The first Scene, for instance, is juvenile and the blinding of Gloucester on the Stage is a horror which he could only have planned in the days when he wrote *Titus Andronicus* : though he threatened one like it afterwards when he was writing *King John* he made the cruel Hubert relent.

He may have founded the *Tragedy of King Lear and his daughters* on *Albion's England*, printed in 1586, or Holinshed's *Chronicle*, printed in 1578 and 1587, or *The Mirror for Magistrates*, printed in 1587 ; and his use of the name Cordelia instead of Cordeill or Cordila (which may have been a later change) was probably borrowed from the second book of *The Faery Queen*, which was printed in 1590 and had been current before. He may have founded the *Tragedy of Gloucester and his Sons* on a chapter in Philip Sidney's

KING LEAR

Arcadia, printed in 1590 but written in 1580 and 1581, "the pitiful state and story of the Paphlagonian unkind king and his kind son," or on the source of that story. It would have been natural to turn to these sources when they were new; but it does not seem probable that he would have depended only on the books of that time many years later.

In all the old sources the tale ended with King Lear's restoration by his daughter Cordeill or Cordelia, who reigned after him and died in old age. Spenser's version was:

So to his Crown she him restored again,
In which he died, made ripe for death by eld,
And after wished it should to her remain:
Who peacefully the same long time did weld,
And all men's hearts in due obedience held;
Till that her sister's children, woxen strong,
Through proud ambition against her rebelled
And overcomen kept in prison long,
Till weary of that wretched life, herself she hong.

Shakespeare altered this with the cruelty of *Titus Andronicus*, and this seems one of the signs that the first form of this Tragedy sprang from that Play in which there is another crazed father, another innocent girl and another monster of wickedness loved by another murderous Queen. And I think that the *Tragedy of Gloucester* must also have belonged to that time. These two Tragical Plays, I think, were revised about 1593 with *Titus Andronicus* and combined then because the fashion demanded longer Plays at that time. This second form may have been the Play called *King Leare* which (according to Henslowe's Diary) was acted at the Rose Theatre in 1594, "by the Queen's Men and My Lord of Sussex, together." And I think that it was the base of the *Tragedy of King Lear* as we have it. The success of *Macbeth* may have helped Shakespeare to turn to another Chronicle History in which King James could see the fate of another very remote ancestor shown, since he claimed descent from King Lear through the Tudors, who (according to Welsh pedigrees) were descended from Regan. And Hamlet's sullen and assumed humour of Tom of Bedlam may have reminded him of the story of Edgar.

AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

King Lear is a Tragedy of the dotage of strength. In the same way as Hamlet's fatuity or dotage began before his suspicions were confirmed by the Ghost and Macbeth had been wrenched to crime by ambition before he saw the Weird Sisters (as his story was told before the Play had been shortened), Lear's dotage preceded the things which crazed him, the belief that his best-beloved daughter was cold to him and the ungrateful behaviour of his two others and the storm on the heath. Regan says of him in the first Act, "'Tis the infirmity of his age: yet he hath ever but slenderly known himself," and Goneril answers, "The best and soundest of his time hath been but rash; then must we look to receive from his age, not alone the imperfections of long ingrafted condition, but therewithal the unruly waywardness that infirm and choleric years bring with them." His love and trust only convince them that he is losing his wits. Edmund thinks in the same way of his father; he says, "I begin to find an idle and fond bondage in the oppression of aged tyranny, which sways not as it hath power but as it is suffered." Essex might have spoken thus of the Queen.

Lear raged against Cordelia because he loved her too much, and this links his doom with Hamlet's and Othello's. All three were wrecked by the hardness of the everyday World, like the sad Kings of the Chronicle Pageant. "Is there any cause in nature that makes these hard hearts?" says King Lear, and when he is dying Kent says,

He hates him

That would upon the rack of this tough world
Stretch him out longer.

Othello, the most sane of the three, is the only one driven to the deed of a lunatic, for Hamlet is justified; and Lear, who is the wildest, hurts nobody. Even Lear's madness is left open to doubt when he is most frenzied. When he is raving with the storm on the heath or when in the fourth Act he comes in fantastically dressed with wild flowers, like Ophelia, he sees the world as it is. Shakespeare cannot have meant pitiless insight to be a sign of Insanity when he gave it to Hamlet and to Lear and to Timon: these men

KING LEAR

were set apart from the World by their greatness and misery and saw it the better because they were apart.

In the Scene in the storm when the Fool says, "Here's a night pities neither wise man nor fool," and "this cold night will turn us all to fools and madmen," five Characters meet (Lear, Kent, Gloucester, the Fool and Edgar) and only one of them is behaving with Sanity, for Edgar is disguised as a madman and Gloucester grows as crazed as the King; he says :

Thou sayest the king grows mad; I'll tell thee, friend,
I am almost mad myself: I had a son,
Now outlawed from my blood; he sought my life,
But lately, very late: I loved him, friend,
No father his son dearer: truth to tell thee,
The grief hath crazed my wits. What a night's this!

Edgar's simulated Insanity is a comment on Lear's natural frenzy. It was congenial to him, for when he appears in the first Act Edmund says: "And pat he comes like the catastrophe of the old Comedy: my cue is villainous melancholy with a sigh like Tom o' Bedlam." His disguise was hardly sufficient even in the dark on the heath, for Gloucester says afterwards :

In the last night's storm I such a fellow saw,
Which made me think a man a worm: my son
Came then into my mind, and yet my mind
Was then scarce friends with him.

And the Fool's folly (or simulation of it) matches with Edgar's.

This Fool is the Court-jester of the *Midsummer Comedies*, *Touchstone*, of whom Celia says in *As You Like It*,

He'll go along o'er the wide world with me,
and Feste in *Twelfth Night*, whose last song he continues when he sings in the storm,

He that has and a little tiny wit,
With hey ho! the wind and the rain!
Must make content with his fortunes fit,
For the rain it raineth every day.

AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

He is a shrewd knave and unhappy and would ask nothing better than to go over the wide world with Cordelia. The Knight says of him, "Since my young Lady's going into France, Sir, the Fool hath much pined away," and Lear answers, "No more of that: I have noted it well." He vanishes in the midst of the Tragedy after the storm, saying, "And I'll go to bed at noon," and there is no more mention of him unless Lear is thinking of him when he says, "And my poor fool is hanged." It may be that as the Play was first written he was faithful to the King to the last and died defending him and Cordelia and this was altered because he had won the hearts of the audience through a natural sympathy and so his disaster would have been too heart-rending though the distant calamities of Kings could be borne. His had been the part of a Chorus, to interpret the Play and keep the audience in touch with Lear's tragedy, and this was no longer required after the storm, for Lear had been broken and the end was in sight.

The storm may be one of the signs that *King Lear*, as we have it, was written after *Macbeth*. I think that it was suggested by the thunder and lightning when Macbeth and his friend saw the Weird Sisters and that it must have been written later because the whole effect is developed. This storm is the more effective because it is a natural one, and it becomes the culminating Scene of the Tragedy, which is made a story told in a storm instead of in the haunted night like *Macbeth*, and is set out of doors instead of in the rooms of a Castle like nearly all the hesitations of *Hamlet*. The King grieves with the raving of the wind in the night. This storm enforces the whole drift of the Play, "Why, thou wert better in thy grave than to answer with thy uncovered body this extremity of the skies. Is man no more than this? Consider him well." These skies were natural, and so were the passions which devastated Lear and the rest, and this links *King Lear* with the two other supreme Tragedies *Othello* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, and with two revised after them, *Coriolanus* and *Timon of Athens*: all these are apart from any Creed and not guided by any Devil or Ghost.

King Lear is too loving and generous and great for this

OTHELLO

World. He is so great that he surrenders this World's greatness without giving a thought to it: he only values his Kingdom because he can divide it among the children he loves. This divides him from Macbeth who had sacrificed his soul for a Kingdom; and his recklessness contrasts him with Hamlet who was made impotent by thinking too much. He towers over these, and even over his only rivals in greatness, Othello and Antony, because they are dominated by women while his love is a father's and only asks to give all. He discovers too late that one of his three children repaid all his devotion, and his faithful Fool might have sung the Song in *As You Like It* to him—

Blow, blow, thou winter wind!
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude.

It may be that Shakespeare left this sorrowful Poem intentionally tangled because its picture of Life gained truth by repeating *Hamlet's* Pantomime method, or that effect may be due to the blending of two juvenile Plays when Andronicus lived reincarnated as Lear. In either case it agrees with the passionate medley of the storm in the night. When Lear, who has been as mad as the vexed Sea, passes out of reach of such storms Kent says,

Vex not his ghost! O let him pass!

Two of the Tragedies, *Othello* and *Hamlet*, are linked with *King Lear* by the domination of Chance. *Hamlet* was ended by a casual slaughter, and the chance that Edmund's warning was given just too late governed *King Lear*, which otherwise would have been a Tragi-comedy closing in reconciliation and joy, like *Cymbeline*. If Desdemona had not happened to drop the handkerchief while Emilia was with her and if Cassio had not happened to give it to Bianca at once and she had not happened to restore it to him while Othello was watching him, Iago's chief evidence could not have been proffered. And as Mr. Masefield has said, "Had Emilia come a minute sooner or a minute later, the end of the Play would have been very different."

This development of the action of Chance helps to denote

AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

the order of the Plays it controls. The final chances in *Hamlet* and *King Lear* were foretold by the moods of the Plays and therefore they are not really accidents, and they govern the Tragedy by shaping its end. But the chances in *Othello* control the story throughout, as when the messengers recalling the Moor to Venice and giving his place to Cassio arrive just at the moment when the news will be fatal. These chances are destined because they are the tools of the doom which Desdemona incurred; but this is disguised till all the story is told: they come as true accidents which prove to be fatal at the end of it all. Othello foretells them when he speaks of his story,

Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances.

In the similar Italian Romance, *Il Capitano Moro*, in Cinthio's *Hecatommithi*, the Ancient contrived the theft of the handkerchief, employing his child to steal it for him. If we could be certain that Shakespeare founded this Play on it, the change about this would be one of the proofs that this employment of Chance was deliberate; but though the Play, as we have it, resembles Cinthio's story there are signs that an earlier form had differed from it. It may be that Shakespeare founded the first form of *Othello* on a Spanish version (which may have been written before Cinthio's) in the days when he wrote *Titus Andronicus* and afterwards made it resemble the Italian one more.

This Play does not seem to have been printed before the Quarto edition of 1622, so we cannot know when he made the final changes in it. If the *Revel's Book* of 1605 is genuine it proves that a Play called *Othello* was acted at Whitehall in 1604. Prince Lewis Frederick of Würtemberg saw a Play of this name at the Globe in 1610. And the Accounts of Money Expended by the Treasurer of the Chamber between Michaelmas 1612 and 1613, prove that a Play called *The Moor of Venice* was acted by His Majesty's Servants during that time. But the *Elegy on Burbage*, who died in 1618, seems to show that the Play as it was printed in 1622 had been changed from the form acted by him. It says of him,

But let me not forget one chiefest part
Wherein, beyond the rest, he moved the heart,

OTHELLO

The grieved Moor, made jealous by a slave,
Who sent his wife to fill a timeless grave,
Then slew himself upon the bloody bed.

This statement that Othello was made jealous by a slave seems supported in the Play as we have it. For instance, Iago says,

Though I am bound to every act and duty,
I am not bound to all that slaves are free to,

and in the fifth Act Montano says of him,

I'll after that same villain,
For 'tis a damned slave,

and Othello says of him,

O cursed slave!

and Lodovico says,

O thou Othello, that wert once so good,
Fallen in the practice of a damned slave,
What shall be said to thee? . . .

For this slave,
If there be any cunning cruelty,
That can torment him much and hold him long,
It shall be his.

All this can be explained if Iago had begun as a slave and not as an Ancient. And that would explain how his wife was Desdemona's servant, employed, for instance, to lay the sheets on the bed, and not a lady-in-waiting.

Gildon wrote in his *Reflections on Rymer's Short View of Tragedy*, printed in 1694: "I am assured, from very good hands, that the person who acted Iago was in much esteem of a comedian, which made Shakespeare put several words and expressions into his part, perhaps not so agreeable to his character, to make the audience laugh who had not yet learnt to endure to be serious a whole Play." If Iago was partly Comical this may explain why Leonard Digges wrote in his verses prefixed to Benson's edition of Shakespeare's Poems, printed in 1640,

Sejanus too was irksome; they prized more
Honest Iago and the jealous Moor.

AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

If Shakespeare made this change for Posterity or to please himself and not for the Stage of his own time, this would show that he still worked on his Plays to improve them with no prospect of gain.

In the third Act of Ben Jonson's *Poetaster* there are allusions—

Who calls out murder? Lady, was it you?

and "You shall see me do the Moor: Master, lend me your scarf a little," which may mean that a form of *Othello* was known in 1600 or 1601. The first may refer to Emilia's words after Desdemona calls out, "O falsely, falsely murdered!"

Alas, what cry is that? . . .

Out and alas! that was my lady's voice,

and the other may show that Desdemona was strangled. Othello's description of the napkin or handkerchief,

There's magic in a web of it:

A sybil that had numbered in the world
The Sun to course two hundred compasses,
In her prophetic fury sewed the work,

now only seems intended to alarm Desdemona, since if this had been true it would have been natural to tell her before. This may show that she was strangled with it before the Play was governed by Chance.

Iago's assertion that the handkerchief is spotted with strawberries may be a sign that Shakespeare had only heard the story told and forgot (or never knew) why a mulberry might have been the badge of the Moor. Mulberries were known then in England: they seem to have been grown first at Sion House by the Thames, and he is said to have planted a mulberry tree in his own garden. So there was no reason why he should have altered the badge if he had remembered that "moro" was the Italian for "mulberry" and also for "Moor."

This double meaning of "moro" explained why Three Mulberries Sable were borne by Cristofano Moro, whom Guicciardini named in the eighth book of his *Storia d'Italia* as besieging Padua in 1509—"Per occultare più questi

OTHELLO

pensieri, Cristofano Moro, l'altro provveditore, dimostrasse di andare a campo alla terra di Citadella." It is said that Cristofano Moro's wife died while he was Lieutenant of Cyprus in 1508, but beyond this we have no ground for connecting him with Cinthio's story. He was not a Moor; neither was Lodovico il Moro, who seems to have taken his name from his complexion or from the badge he assumed. But if Cinthio based his story on one about Cristofano Moro or some one else bearing that surname, the double meaning might have suggested changing the husband into a Moor. Sir Israel Gollancz writes: "Cinthio's Novel may have been of Oriental origin, and in its general character it somewhat resembles the Tale of the Three Apples in the *Thousand and One Nights*." If Cinthio used that tale the husband's complexion may have been suggested to him by the fact that in it the slave who wrought the mischief was black.

Desdemona's words:

My mother had a maid called Barbara:
She was in love; and he she loved proved mad
And did forsake her: she had a song of "Willow";
An old thing 'twas, but it expressed her fortune,
And she died singing it,

may have suggested Ophelia's sorrow and death instead of echoing them. And if so, that song may have suggested the willow on which Ophelia leant. The singing which is a sign of distraction in Desdemona and is echoed extravagantly when Emilia says,

I will play the swan,
And die in music, "Willow, Willow, Willow,"

becomes natural when it is a token of Ophelia's Insanity.

There are traces of early work in this Play, as, for instance, when the Duke says:

When remedies are past, the griefs are ended
By seeing the worst, which late on hopes depended.
To mourn a mischief that is past and gone
Is the next way to draw new mischief on,

beginning a rhyming passage of eighteen lines which is stopped when Brabantio, after saying

AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

But words are words; I never yet did hear
That the bruised heart was pierced through the ear,

adds, "I humbly beseech you, proceed to the affairs of State."
And the Blank Verse is written in four different manners.

It may be that Shakespeare first wrote *Othello* as a Tragical Play in the days when he wrote the first form of *Titus Andronicus*, and rewrote it as *The Moor of Venice* after he wrote *The Merchant of Venice*, giving it a fortunate ending in which Desdemona survived and was reconciled to Othello, for this would help to explain why she speaks after he believes she is dead and why so much of this Tragedy has a Comical mood. The Theatre-goers may have preferred the Tragical close, and this may have been restored in a form which was written before 1600 and revised in 1604 and again when he was not working for the Stage of his time.

This would explain the singular construction. The first Act is a prelude, and the Tragedy begins with the second in a storm, like *Macbeth* and *The Tempest*. This first Act extenuates Othello's behaviour in a way contradicted in the rest of the Tragedy; for instance, it shows that he did not woo Desdemona till her love was made plain, but in the third Act he says that Cassio had acted as a go-between—"went between us very oft" and

He was of my counsel
In my whole course of wooing,

and Desdemona says,

What! Michael Cassio,
That came awooing with you, and so many a time
When I have spoke of you dispraisingly
Hath ta'en your part?

This change in the first Act deprives Othello of an obvious reason for being jealous of Cassio who might have played the old part of the treacherous friend the more easily since Othello was black, and it absolves Cassio from the doom which complicity would have made him incur. The first Act seems written to ennoble Othello, and to give a new reason for Iago's behaviour. Iago still says in his soliloquy,

OTHELLO

I hate the Moor ;
And it is thought abroad that 'twixt my sheets
He has done my office : I know not if it be true,
But I for mere suspicion in that kind
Will do as if for surety.

This impossible wickedness is subordinate here to the motive explained in the beginning when he tells Roderigo that he only follows the Moor to serve his turn upon him because Cassio was promoted instead. After that explanation he said,

Call up her father ;
Rouse him : make after him, poison his delight,
Proclaim him in the streets.

This is the first we hear of the marriage, and so far Roderigo's only reason for poisoning Othello's delight is the fact that Iago was not made the Lieutenant. This feeble beginning is in the Tragi-comical method of *The Merchant of Venice*. All the rest of the Tragedies open tragically with the story appearing, but there is nothing in this to indicate the mood of *Othello*.

In the second Act in another soliloquy Iago announces that he loves Desdemona :

Now, I do love her too,
Not out of absolute lust, though peradventure
I stand accountant for as great a sin,
But partly led to diet my revenge,
For that I do suspect the lusty Moor
Hath leaped into my seat : the thought whereof
Doth like a poisonous mineral gnaw my inwards ;
And nothing can or shall content my soul
Till I am evened with him, wife for wife,
Or failing so, yet that I put the Moor
At least into a jealousy so strong
That judgment cannot cure. Which thing to do,
If this poor trash of Venice, whom I trash
For his quick hunting, stand the putting on,
I'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip,
Abuse him to the Moor in the rank garb,
For I fear Cassio with my nightcap, too ;

AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

Make the Moor thank me, love me and reward me,
For making him egregiously an ass
And practising upon his peace and quiet
Even to madness. 'Tis here, but yet confused :
Knavery's plain face is never seen till used.

This is still Tragi-comical. Iago's intention is to make the Moor a cuckold, "egregiously an ass," in the mood of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and he forgets that he has already said at the end of the first Act in the right vein for a traditional villain,

I have it. It is engendered. Hell and night
Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light.

There are at least two Iagos, a Tragi-comical one and another whose deliberate wickedness was tempered by Hamlet's introspection and doubts. His praise of his victims may have been first meant as signs of his devilish detestation of goodness. He says of Othello in the first Act,

The Moor is of a free and open nature,
That thinks men honest that but seem to be so,
and in the second Act,

The Moor, howbeit that I endure him not,
Is of a constant, loving, noble nature,

forgetting that he has just said, "Mark me with what violence she first loved the Moor, but for bragging and telling her fantastical lies," and even of Cassio he says,

He hath a daily beauty in his life
That makes me ugly,

though in the Play, as we have it, Cassio's life is not beautiful. The effect now is that this testimony carries more weight because it comes from a foe. But another effect is that Iago keeps contradicting himself. These things are not meant to deceive, for they are said in soliloquies, and if he was sure that Othello was of a constant, loving, noble nature he could not have thought that he had dishonoured him by seducing Emilia. That motive is thrown into the background in the Play, as we have it, like the similar suspicion of Cassio, because

OTHELLO

Shakespeare decided to ennoble Othello, and the result is that Iago is left like Leontes of whom Paulina says in *The Winter's Tale*,

These dangerous unsafe lunes in the King, beshrew them !

or Ford of whom Mistress Page says in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* : " Why, Woman, your husband is in his old lunes again : he takes on so yonder that any madness I ever yet beheld seemed but tameness, civility and patience to this his distemper." And the Play, as we have it, leaves him without justification for his atrocious revenge.

Iago gives a clue to the meaning of the Play when he says in the first Act, " If sanctimony and a frail vow betwixt an erring barbarian and a supersubtle Venetian be not too hard for my wits and all the tribe of Hell, thou shalt enjoy her." He sees his own nature in the innocent girl Desdemona who is as simple as Imogen or as her companion in misfortune, Ophelia. He is the supersubtle Venetian and he shares the calamity of the erring barbarian, for the same irrational jealousy devastates both.

Iago and Othello employ the word " jealousy " as meaning " suspicion," as Malcolm did in the fourth Act of *Macbeth* when he said,

Let not my jealousies be your dishonours,

for instance, when in the third Act Iago says,

As, I confess, it is my nature's plague
To spy into abuses, and oft my jealousy
Shapes faults that are not,

and Othello says

Thinkest thou, I'd make a life of jealousy,
To follow still the changes of the Moon
With fresh suspicions ?

This was why Othello could say that he was not easily jealous ; he was trusting by nature and therefore the more easily fooled. But they were both wrecked by jealousy in our sense of the word.

Desdemona is only a victim of this jealousy now, though as

AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

the Play was first planned she had, I think, incurred her calamity by deceiving her father and yielding to an unnatural love. Her love is not unnatural now, for Othello's nobility and greatness account for it in spite of his colour; but I think that in the first form of this Tragedy it was meant to be horrible and because it was horrible it ended in horrors. And even these horrors were modified in the Play as we have it.

It is probable that in the first form Iago was a conventional villain as childishly wicked as King Richard the Third, and Othello was a repetition of Aaron, the ghastly Moor in *Titus Andronicus*. Iago has now more in common with Shakespeare's only natural villain, Edmund in *King Lear*, and with Hamlet than with King Richard the Third, and Othello resembles the Prince of Morocco in *The Merchant of Venice*. This may be one of the signs that this Play was rewritten when that Prince was made noble and romantic though black.

Coleridge (according to the *Extracts from his Table Talk*) said: "Othello must not be conceived as a Negro, but as a high and chivalrous Moorish Chief. Shakespeare learned the spirit of the Character from the Spanish Poetry, which was prevalent in England in his time. Jealousy does not strike me as the point in his passion. . . . It was a moral indignation and regret that virtue should so fall—'But yet the pity of it, Iago, O Iago, the pity of it.' In addition to this, his honour was concerned: Iago would not have succeeded but by hinting that his honour was compromised. There is no ferocity in Othello; his mind is majestic and composed." This criticism has only been rivalled by Gervinus' belief that Iago's words

She that in wisdom never was so frail
To change the cod's head for the salmon's tail

asserted that Desdemona was too wise to exchange an evident advantage for a disadvantage, "einen offenbaren Vortheil nicht für einen Nachtheil, einen Lecterbissen nicht für einen Speizerest hinzugeben." And Gervinus had the excuse that he was a foreigner and did not understand Elizabethan vulgarity. Othello is an erring barbarian: he is not a high and chivalrous Moorish Chief, but a Blackamoor, a Negro, and he kills Desdemona with a barbaric ferocity, not with a majestic composure.

OTHELLO

No one has ever thought that Aaron the Moor was intended to be a chivalrous Chief. He describes himself when he says,

What signifies my deadly-standing eye,
My silence, and my cloudy melancholy,
My fleece of woolly hair that now uncurls
Even as the adder when she doth unroll
To do some fatal execution ?

His colour is shown when Bassianus says,

Believe me, Queen, your swarth Cimmerian
Doth make your honour of his body's hue,
Spotted, detested and abominable,

and when Lavinia says,

Let her enjoy her raven-coloured love.

His child and Tamora's is plainly a Negro : the Stage-direction says, "Enter nurse with a Blackamoor child"; and Aaron says,

Look, look, how the black slave smiles upon his father. . . .
Come on, you thick-lipped slave, I'll bear you hence.

Lucius says to Aaron,

Say, wall-eyed slave, whither wouldst thou convey
This growing image of thy fiendlike face ?

and Aaron says,

Coal black is better than another hue
In that it scorns to bear another hue. . . .
Let fools do good and fair men call for grace,
Aaron will have his soul black like his face.

Othello is drawn in the same way : Roderigo says,

What a full fortune does the thick-lips owe
If he can carry it thus ?

Iago says to Brabantio,

An old black ram
Is tuppung your white ewe. Arise, arise . . .

AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

Awake the snorting citizens with the bell,
Or else the Devil will make a grandsire of you.

Othello says :

Haply for I am black
And have not those soft parts of conversation
That chamberers have, or for I am declined
Into the vale of years, yet that's not much,
She is gone. . . . Her name that was as fresh
As Dian's visage, is now begrimed and black
As mine own face.

Desdemona says to him,

And yet I fear you, for you are fatal then
When your eyes roll so.

Brabantio says of her :

To fall in love with what she feared to look on !
It is a judgment maimed and most imperfect,
That will confess perfection so could err
Against all rules of nature ; and must be driven
To find out practices of cunning hell,
Why this should be.

And Iago says to Othello in the third Act,

And when she seemed to shake and fear your looks
She loved them most . . .
Foh ! one may smell in such a will most rank,
Foul disproportion, thoughts unnatural.

In all this there is the same view of blackness as the King takes in *Love's Labour's Lost*, when he says, "Black is the badge of Hell." All this makes Othello more like Aaron than the Prince of Morocco in *The Merchant of Venice*. The Prince is a high and chivalrous Moorish Chief. He begins,

Mislike me not for my complexion,
The shadowed livery of the burnished Sun,
To whom I am a neighbour and near bred.

OTHELLO

Portia, though she says of him before he appears, "If he have the condition of a Saint and the complexion of a Devil, I had rather he should shrive me than wive me," says to him,

If my father had not scanted me
And hedged me by his wit, to yield myself
His wife who wins me by that means I told you,
Yourself, renowned Prince, then stood as fair
As any comer I have looked on yet
For my affection.

He is as martial as Othello: he says to her,

By this scimitar
That slew the Sophy and a Persian Prince,
That won three fields of Sultan Solyman,
I would outstare the sternest eyes that look,
Outbrave the heart most daring on the earth.

None the less Portia, after he has failed and departed, says,

A gentle riddance. Draw the curtains, go.
Let all of his complexion choose me so.

She shared the reluctance of Claribel in *The Tempest*, who, when she married the King of Tunis, was "weighed between loathness and obedience"; and that marriage was considered unnatural, for all the Courtiers knelt to Alonzo and importuned otherwise. Still, such marriages as this had been common in Mediæval Romances, and they were known in Spanish History too, as when in 712 King Roderick's widow, Egilona, married his Arab conqueror's son, Abd-el-Aziz. And Antony's love for Cleopatra was natural, though she said that she was "through Phœbus' amorous pinches black." Shakespeare may not have known that Cleopatra was probably less swarthy than Antony, or he may have meant her darkness to be a part of her charm.

Perhaps he meant the Prince of Morocco to have a dusky complexion. In Edmond Howe's *Annals* there is an account of a pageant which "the gentlemen of the Middle Temple and Lincoln's Inn acted on Shrove Monday Night, 1613, in honour of the Princess Elizabeth's marriage," and it tells how

AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

they marched from Chancery Lane to Whitehall by the Strand, some of them "in an antic or mock-masque of baboons," and others "the chief Masquers, with great state in white Indian habit or like the great Princes of Barbary . . . their vizards were of olive colour; their hair long and black down to their shoulders."

In the Play, as we have it, Othello is a Barbary Moor, and thinks of returning to Mauritania (according to Iago) and boasts a Royal descent. This may have been a change made when he was altered to resemble the Prince; but he still has a sooty bosom, like Aaron, as Brabantio says. The people of Mauritania were then supposed to be black. For instance, Ben Jonson wrote in the *Masque of Blackness*,

Black Mauritania first and secondly
Swarth Lusitania, next we did descry
Rich Aquitania.

In that Masque, which was "personated at the Court at Whitehall on Twelfth Night, 1605," blackness was praised: Niger, who is seen "in form and colour of an Æthiop," said of his daughters,

In their black the perfectest beauty grows,

and Queen Anne of Denmark and eleven of her ladies appeared as Negro Nymphs. In this they were imitating the ladies of King Henry the Eighth's Court who (according to Edward Hall's *Chronicle of England*) took part in a Masque in 1509, "their faces, necks, arms and hands covered with fine pleasaunce black; some call it Lumbardynes, which is marvellous thin, so that the same ladies seem to be nigrost or Black-moors." In those days there would have been nothing contemptible in a Negro Othello, any more than there was anything absurd in the grant of two Demi-Moors or Demi-Negroes as Supporters in Heraldry.

Othello is left childishly credulous and suddenly savage, every inch a Negro, in spite of the stateliness borrowed from the Prince of Morocco. Indeed, he became a true Negro instead of an impossible one like Aaron, in the same way as Shylock became a real Jew instead of the bugbear of the Traditional Stage. He could have said with Aaron,

OTHELLO

I am a lamb : but if you brave the Moor,
The chafed boar, the mountain lioness,
The Ocean swells not so as Aaron storms,

but even this national savagery in him is extenuated when he is made an epileptic, like Cæsar. When he falls in a trance in the fourth Act Iago says,

My lord is fallen into an epilepsy :

This is the second fit ; he had one yesterday,

though there has been nothing said before about this. When Cassio says, " Rub him about the temples," he replies,

No, forbear,

The lethargy must have his quiet course :

If not, he foams at the mouth, and by and by

Breaks out to savage madness.

Immediately after this he rouses Othello, using this means to make him savagely mad.

A similar extenuation is visible in the method of murder if those students who think that Othello smothered his wife are right, but this may be a mistake. In the Play, as we have it, the Stage-direction says only " he stifles her." After this he says,

Not dead ? not yet quite dead ?

I that am cruel am yet merciful ;

I would not have thee linger in thy pain :

So, so.

It may be that the Stage-direction is wrong or misinterpreted, and that he had tried to strangle her and then stabbed her, for this would account for her speaking afterwards, which she could not have done if she had been smothered or strangled. The *Elegy on Burbage* says that the Moor " slew himself upon the bloody bed." Othello says in the third Act, " I will tear her all to pieces," and " O blood, blood, blood !" and

Even so my bloody thoughts with violent pace
Shall ne'er look back,

and in the fourth Act,

AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

I will be found most cunning in my patience ;
But—dost thou hear ?—most bloody.

When Iago says to him

Do it not with poison, strangle her in her bed,
he replies “ Good, good, the justice of it pleases.” In the fifth Act, he says,

Forth of my heart, those charms, thine eyes are blotted :
Thy bed lust-stained shall with lust’s blood be spotted.

Afterwards he says,

Yet I’ll not shed her blood
Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,

but this cannot prove that he does not stab her after failing to strangle her, and apart from the Stage-direction there is nothing to show that he did not strangle her as he had intended to do. He says at the end,

There lies your niece,
Whose breath indeed these hands have newly stopped :
I know this act shows horrible and grim.

This may have been the core of the Tragedy, white Desdemona strangled by an elderly Negro’s huge black hands.

Even this horror is softened in the Play, as we have it, for if the bed was in a curtained recess it must have been at the back of the Stage and Desdemona must have been hidden while Othello was strangling her, instead of being killed openly as in Cinthio’s version, according to which she was beaten to death. This would have made her death like Agamemnon’s (in the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus), where he calls out, “ Woe’s me ! I am stricken a mortal blow within ” ; and the Chorus says, “ Hush ! who is it that cries out ‘ a blow,’ mortally wounded ? ”

The miracle in this Play is the fact that the sympathy is all with Othello. This triumph is increased by the fact that he is a Negro and a horrible one, rolling his eyes and gnawing his lips. Young Desdemona is a victim destroyed by his Tragedy and not a protagonist, and Iago, who is aged twenty-eight, about the same age as Edmund in *King Lear* or a little

THE THEME OF THE TRAGEDIES

older, is a tempter controlled by envy, malice and hatred. The Tragedy is entirely Othello's, and he towers over all the everyday World. He is like the Negro of whom Wordsworth wrote afterwards :

Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

Five of the Tragedies, *Julius Cæsar*, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear* and *Othello*, are Revenge-Plays of the kind which was popular when Shakespeare was young. In all of these, except *Julius Cæsar*, which was founded on Plutarch, there is a strain of fantastic humour and a foundation of cruelty in a story of crime. It would have seemed a sign of perversity if Shakespeare had chosen the extenuation of Murder as his Tragical theme when he was strongest; but that would be explained if he turned to rewrite stories of horror which had been congenial to him when he had the mind of a boy. In the same way as he had made Lavinia exclaim in *Titus Andronicus*,

Do this and be a charitable murderer,

he made Othello describe himself as "an honourable murderer,"

For naught I did in hate, but all in honour.

Brutus, too, was an honourable murderer,

He only in a general honest thought
And common good to all, made one of them;

so was Hamlet, who only slaughters Polonius by mistake and is justified in killing the King in retaliation apart from the duty of avenging his father. And though this cannot be said of Macbeth his crimes are extenuated because the Weird Sisters or Witches had encouraged his purpose.

Even the callous villains were given an excuse for their crimes: Edmund avenges his mother's wrongs and his own when he punishes his father's adultery in *King Lear*, and Iago was either avenging his own dishonour or demented enough to suspect the Moor without cause. It does not follow from this that Shakespeare believed that every crime could be

AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

palliated : this was merely his method in constructing these Plays ; it was his aim to secure some sympathy for each of his Characters. This separates them from the young ignorance of *Titus Andronicus* as well as from the true picture of Crime by the forgotten master of the Drama who wrote *Arden of Feversham*.

In three of these Plays, *Macbeth*, *King Lear* and *Othello*, a Tragedy in the manner of Æschylus soars above pedestrian work. I do not infer from this that Shakespeare was copying Æschylus, for I take it that the resemblance is due only to the fact that they both reached the greatest heights of the Drama. So, too, I do not infer that he borrowed the last Scene of *The Winter's Tale* from the *Alcestis*, or that when he wrote, for instance,

Unhouseled, disappointed, unanealed,

he remembered that there were many similar lines in the Greek Poets, such as,

ἀκλαντος, ἀφιλος, ἀνυμέναιος,

in the *Antigone* : he wrote in this way because it was the best way to write. Besides, in this instance (as in "cabined, cribbed, confined," in *Macbeth*) the three words all meant the same thing.

These Plays were successful on the Stage of his time because the pedestrian work in them enabled the audience to tolerate the flaming emotion. Even in English the *Agamemnon* would have been Greek to people who could delight in *Macbeth*. Though the most popular of his Tragedies, *Hamlet*, resembled the Greek Tragedies most in its theme (which was an accident since the legend was Danish), it resembled them least in its nature, partly because the Prince had no trace of the Greek severity and partly because his varying moods were in unison with the shifts of a Pantomime. The Play which had least in common with them in its original theme, the atrocity of a horrible Negro, resembled them most when it was finished : *Othello* is seen like a Laocoon, he is crushed by a snake and *Desdemona* is dwarfed as Laocoon's sons are in the group which (though it is later work) is a Greek Tragedy repeated in stone. This resemblance is increased

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

by the changes which left Othello governed by Chance. The culminating chances in it have the effect of an implacable Destiny. Othello could have said at the end as did Gloucester in *King Lear*,

As flies to wanton boys are we to the Gods,
They kill us for their sport,

or as Florizel did in *The Winter's Tale*,

But as the unthought-on accident is guilty
To what we wildly do, so we profess
Ourselves to be the slaves of Chance, and flies
Of every wind that blows.

Antony and Cleopatra, the Tragedy printed next by Heminge and Condell, is separated from these, and so are two others, *Coriolanus* and *Timon of Athens*: these three are not Murder Plays or Revenge Plays, they are not governed by Mischance or by Destiny, and they are massively Roman. This contrast may show that they were divided from the rest by an interval. It may be that Shakespeare was exhausted for a time by the agonies of *Lear* and *Othello* and turned to quieter work, including a revision of *Troilus and Cressida* which inspired him to write the Tragedy of the Emperor Antony.

Though *Antony and Cleopatra* does not seem to have been printed before 1623, the Stationers' Register shows that Edward Blunt obtained a Licence to print a Play of that name in 1608. If we can take this as proving that a version of *Antony and Cleopatra* was acted in 1607 or 1608 this would agree with an interval of three or four years between a form of *Othello* and the completion of a form of this Tragedy. This seems to me the only Play written slowly with deliberate labour: I think that after Shakespeare had turned to other work he attempted to make this Tragedy his greatest and wrote it in seclusion and peace. This would help to account for the dignity and calm in the telling of this story of Passion.

The subject had been familiar to him for many years, for besides its treatment by Plutarch it had been used in the Countess of Pembroke's translation of Garnier's *Marc*

AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

Antoine in 1592 and Samuel Daniel's Play, *Cleopatra*, in 1594 and Samuel Brandon's *Tragi-comedy of the Virtuous Octavia* in 1598. And it came to his mind in other Plays, as, for instance, when he made Macbeth say :

There is none but he
Whose being I do fear, and under him
My genius is rebuked ; as, it is said,
Mark Antony's was by Cæsar,

and when in *Cymbeline* he made Iachimo say of Imogen's room :

It was hanged
With tapestry of silk and silver ; the story
Proud Cleopatra, when she met her Roman,
And Cydnus swelled above the banks, or for
The press of boats or pride : a piece of work
So bravely done, so rich, that it did strive
In workmanship and value ; which I wondered
Could be so rarely and exactly wrought,
Since the true life on it was.

In the same way as he had crowned the happy Plays of his Youth with *Romeo and Juliet*, a sorrowful poem of the innocent love of children, he made this Tragedy of elderly Passion the climax of the work of his manhood. And he changed Plutarch's story to make his last Tragical lovers elderly.

North's version of Plutarch's Life of Antonius, says of Cleopatra : " Cæsar and Pompey knew her when she was but a young thing, and knew not then what the World meant ; but now she went to Antonius at the age when a woman's beauty is at the prime, and she also of the best judgment." And her age is stated afterwards, " Cleopatra died, being eight-and-thirty years old, after she had reigned two-and-twenty years, and governed about fourteen of them with Antonius. And for Antonius, some say that he lived three-and-fifty years and others say six-and-fifty." According to this, Cleopatra was about twenty-four when Antony's enslavement began. In the Play she says of herself in the first Act that she is " wrinkled deep in time," and in the second Act Pompey says of her,

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

But all the charms of love,
Salt Cleopatra, soften thy waned lip!

and Enobarbus says of her,

Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
Her infinite variety.

This increase of her age rendered the survival of charm part of her witchcraft, and left all the story one of lovers embracing at a time when they knew Love must be brief.

This was a deliberate change, and so was the omission of Antony's solitude in a house in the Sea. Plutarch tells how after the Battle of Actium Antonius "forsook the city and company of his friends, and built him a house in the Sea, by the Isle of Pharos, upon certain forced mounts which he caused to be cast into the Sea, and dwelt there, as a man who had banished himself from all men's company, saying that he would lead Timon's life, because he had the like wrong offered him that was before offered unto Timon, and that for the unthankfulness of those he had done good unto and whom he took to be his friends, he was angry with all men and would trust no man." This was left out because it would have hampered the Tragedy and because Antony trusted others still to the end.

Some other changes are incidents developed from hints. Plutarch only says, "With Antonius in Italy there was a Soothsayer or Astronomer of Egypt, who warned him that his fortune would be always obscured by Cæsar's, 'for thy *Demon*,' said he, '(that is to say, the good angel and spirit that keepeth thee) is afraid of his; and being courageous and high when he is alone, becometh fearful and timorous when he cometh near unto the other.'" Out of this Shakespeare made the Scene in which the Soothsayer warns Charmian and Iras while they are jesting together:

You shall be more loving than beloved . . .
You shall outlive the lady whom you serve.

His warnings sound like a knell, and their young laughter passes out of the Play when Cleopatra says of Antony,

AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

He was disposed to mirth; but on the sudden
A Roman thought hath struck him.

These jests in the first Act and the Scene in the second in which the fuddled solemnity of Lepidus echoes a like Scene in *Othello*, and the talk of the Clown who brings the figs in the fifth Act are the only approaches to a Comic relief and, with the Porter's speech in *Macbeth*, they are dominated by the mood of the Tragedy. This distinguishes this Play and *Macbeth* from *Hamlet* and *King Lear* and *Othello* in which Comedy broke the tension with laughter. Here the Roman thoughts govern the merriment.

There is only one change which may have been a mistake, and that is when the soldier has heard the music at night and says,

'Tis the God Hercules, whom Antony loved,
Now leaves him.

It is possible that Shakespeare remembered that Antonius had been devoted to Hercules and had wished to resemble him and so misunderstood the words, "Now such as in reason sought the depth of the interpretation of this wonder, thought that it was the god unto whom Antonius bore singular devotion to counterfeit and resemble him, that did forsake them." But it may be that he knew that this god was Bacchus and found the other more fit for such a Tragical moment. If so, this change would be significant, for Plutarch had shown Antonius turning to the worship of Bacchus but Shakespeare drew him a Hercules subdued by a woman. And he may have remembered the *Hercules Ætaeus* of Seneca and the words,

In astra missus fertur et nubes vago
Spargit cruore

when he made Antony say,

The shirt of Nessus is upon me: teach me,
Alcides, thou mine ancestor, thy rage:
Let me lodge Lichas on the horns of the Moon,
And with those hands that grasped the heaviest club
Subdue my worthiest self.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

It so happened that Plutarch was lifted by a Poetical impulse in his *Life of Antonius*. At other times he wrote of him coldly. Still, he remembered that Antonius boasted himself a friend of the Greeks, and besides, the tale was vivid to him because his home, Chaeronea, had known Antonius' kindness and his tyranny after it and because his grandfather Lampryas remembered those things and had heard the revels described. And he wrote the story dramatically, as he showed when he heralded it in his *Life of Demetrius*, "Now that the Macedonian hath played his part, give the Roman also leave to come upon the Stage."

Cleopatra's Macedonian descent attracted him also, and he dealt with her story in the same way. For instance, when he described her behaviour at the Battle of Actium he wrote: "Howbeit the battle was yet of even hand, and the victory doubtful, being indifferent to both, when suddenly they saw the three-score ships of Cleopatra busily about their yard-masts and hoisting sail to fly. So they fled through the midst of them that were in fight, for they had been placed behind the great ships and did marvellously disorder the other ships." And he added, quoting a saying which he had ascribed to Marcus Cato the Censor in his *Life of him*, "Then Antonius showed plainly that he had not only lost the courage and heart of an Emperor, but also of a valiant man; and that he was not his own man (proving that true which an old man spake in mirth, 'that the soul of a lover lived in another's body and not in his own'), he was so carried away with the vain love of this woman, as if he had been glued unto her, and that she could not have removed without moving of him also. For when he saw Cleopatra's ships under sail, he forgot, forsook and betrayed them that fought for him." Horace seemed to agree with Plutarch's view of her flight when he wrote,

Mentemque lymphatam Mareotico
Redegit in veros timores
Cæsar.

But Dio in the fortieth Book of his *Roman History* said that on the eve of the battle she had persuaded Antonius to join her in flight because she was dismayed by the omens

AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

and that Octavius was aware of their purpose. On other points Dio treated Cleopatra more harshly than Plutarch did. For instance, he wrote in the next Book of his History that her greed and her desire were insatiable (*ἄπληστος μὲν Ἀφροδίτης ἄπληστος δὲ χρημάτων γενομένη*) and that she sent Antonius news of her death, hoping that he would kill himself when he heard it, and that she tried to enthrall Octavius Cæsar in turn.

Plutarch wrote: "Antonius being thus inclined, the last and extremest mischief of all other (to wit, the love of Cleopatra) lighted on him, who did waken and stir up many vices yet hidden in him, and were never seen to any, and if any goodness and hope of rising were left with him, Cleopatra quenched it straight and made it worse than before." But he said that she sent Antonius the news of her death because she was afraid of his fury and that when she received Octavius she had been lying "upon a little low bed in poor estate," and "suddenly rose up naked in her smock, and fell down at his feet, marvellously disfigured: both for that she had plucked the hair from her head, as for also that she had martyred all her face with her nails, and, besides, her voice was small and trembling, her eyes sunk into her head with continual blubbering."

Shakespeare ennobled Plutarch's haughty Antonius and made his wild Cleopatra the greatest picture of a passionate woman. Unlike Plutarch, he made Antony's disastrous surrender to Cleopatra exalt him to a greater nobility.

The note of disgust which had been morbid in Hamlet and frenzied in Lear is to be found in this Play, though most of the Editors have partly disguised it by following Warburton in altering the First Folio's word "dung" into "dug" in the passage in the fifth Act in which Cleopatra says,

It is great
To do that thing that ends all other deeds;
Which shackles accidents and bolts up change;
Which sleeps, and never palates more the dung,
The beggar's nurse and Cæsar's.

There is no excuse for this alteration, for in the first Act Antony says to her,

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

Kingdoms are clay : our dungy earth alike
Feeds beast as man,

and in *The Winter's Tale* Antigonus says,

We need no grave to bury honesty :
There is not a grain of it the face to sweeten
Of the whole dungy earth,

and in the fourth Act of *Timon of Athens* Timon says of the Earth :

Common mother, thou,
Whose womb immeasurable and infinite breast
Teems and feeds all.

And this has been recognized by some of the German students, for instance Baudissin, who wrote in his *Antonius und Cleopatra*,

Was Schlaf ist und nicht nach dem Kot mehr hungert
Der Bettler und Cäsaren grossgenährt.

This Play begins,

Nay but this dotage of our General's
O'er flows the measure . . .

You shall see in him

The triple pillar of the World transformed
Into a strumpet's fool.

But Antony answers this,

Let Rome in Tiber melt, and the wide arch
Of the ranged Empire fall ! Here is my space.
Kingdoms are clay : our dungy earth alike
Feeds beast as man : the nobleness of Life
Is to do thus ; when such a mutual pair,
And such a twain can do it.

When in the dotage of Love he "kisses away Kingdoms and Provinces," he cannot stoop to be the King of the World. Crowns are "immoment toys" to him then, and he turns from his victories to conquer himself in the high Roman fashion. And Cleopatra is an Empress no more,

AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

No more, but even a woman, and commanded
By such poor passion as the maid that milks
And does the meanest chares.

This noble Play is the World's greatest Poem of Love,

A piece of work
So bravely done, so rich, that it did strive
In workmanship and value; which I wondered
Could be so rarely and exactly wrought,
Since the true life on it was.

This Play is the last Tragedy in the Folio Order, for the Play printed after it, *Cymbeline*, was left Tragi-comical; but I think that two others which are Roman in build (though one of them is Greek in its scene), *Coriolanus* and *Timon of Athens*, as we have them, were written several years after this triumph. There is a bleak light in these Plays and the mood of a man who has begun to be old. Perhaps Shakespeare could have said of himself as Timon did of the Senators,

These old fellows . . .
'Tis lack of kindly warmth, they are not kind:
And Nature as it grows again toward Earth
Is fashioned for the journey, dull and heavy.

Coriolanus is austere in his love: even his mother says to him,

Thou hast never in thy life
Showed thy dear mother any courtesy;
When she, poor hen, fond of no second brood,
Has clucked thee to the wars, and safely home,

giving new life to Plutarch's words, "besides thou hast not hitherto showed thy poor mother any courtesy." And Timon is austere in his rage. Though he echoes Lear when he says,

Strike me the counterfeit matron:
It is her habit only that is honest;
Herself's a bawd,

CORIOLANUS

his savage indignation is Roman. He is a Roman Lear and resembles Coriolanus more than the King.

Coriolanus does not seem to have been printed before the Folio of 1623. Its title page said of it, "the whole history exactly followed, and many of the principal speeches copied from the life of Coriolanus in Plutarch," but there are two changes in this accurate copy.

Coriolanus brought his doom on himself in Plutarch's version: "He was so choleric and impatient, that he would yield to no living creature, which made him churlish, uncivil, and altogether unfit for any man's conversation. Yet men marvelling much at his constancy, that he was never overcome with pleasure nor money, and how he would endure easily all manner of pains and travails: therefore they well liked and commended his stoutness and temperancy. But for all that, they could not be acquainted with him as one citizen useth to be with another in the city: his behaviour was so unpleasant to them by reason of a certain insolent and stern manner he had, which because he was too lordly was disliked. . . . And as for other, the only respect that made them valiant was that they hoped to have honour: but touching Martius, the only thing that made him to love honour was the joy he saw his mother did take of him. For he thought nothing made him so happy and honourable, as that his mother might hear everybody praise and commend him, that she might always see him return with a crown upon his head and that she might still embrace him with tears running down her cheeks for joy." According to Plutarch, he only married to please her, "did not only content himself to rejoice and honour her, but at her desire, took a wife also, by whom he had two children and yet never left his mother's house therefore." This love for his mother, the only gentle quality in a man who was stern and insolent to every one else and so proud that he only valued fame for her sake, is the root of his tragedy, according to Plutarch; but Shakespeare lays little stress on this preparation for the culminating Scene when that love conquers his rage. In Plutarch's version the People honoured him in spite of his pride and only refused him the Consulship when they saw him surrounded by the Senate and Nobility, "fearing to

AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

put this office of sovereign authority into his hands . . . as one they might doubt would take away altogether the liberty from the People." In Shakespeare's version all this is changed, and Coriolanus is justified by the ingratitude of the cowardly Mob, "the mutable and rank-scented many."

He can hardly have thought that Menenius Agrippa's speech (which he imitated from Plutarch) was a logical argument, for there would have been as much sense in calling the People the belly and the Senate the head, and in any case the conclusion should be that the whole body should be equally treated. So his use of it seems one of the signs of a deliberate attitude. In this Play as in *Julius Cæsar* the Mob (Seneca's *Fluctu magis mobile vulgus*) is the "common cry of curs." He may have remembered Essex (who had intended to march against London till he was dissuaded from that by his second stepfather Christopher Blunt and by Southampton), when he still wrote in the mood of Marullus' speech to the Mob. This is one of the three Tragedies without magical charm, and this may be a sign that he wrote a version of it when forms of the two others, *Julius Cæsar* and *Hamlet*, were written under the shadow of the Essex Revolt, for this would explain why it keeps the structure of the Chronicle Pageant. That form may have been the second, for the Folio Order suggests that he had written another when he was young, perhaps about 1593 before he revised *Titus Andronicus*.

If we could be certain that he wrote *Coriolanus* first in the time suggested by its manner which links it with the last Tragi-comedies we could infer that the difference in his treatment of Plutarch indicates a waning of interest or a failure of health. But if he merely rewrote a Play which had been written in imitation of Marlowe that difference may be due to this fact.

I think that after he wrote *Antony and Cleopatra* he rested because he had attained his ambition and knew that he could never surpass or equal that Tragedy and that he revised other work from time to time afterwards but never toiled with that passionate emotion again. This may be enough to account for the coldness which sets *Coriolanus* apart.

TIMON OF ATHENS

Timon of Athens does not seem to have been printed before the Folio of 1623; but it is patently founded on a juvenile Play. The story was familiar to Shakespeare when he was young, as he showed when he wrote in *Love's Labour's Lost*,

To see great Hercules whipping a gig,
And critic Timon laugh at idle toys,

and he could have found it in Paynter's *Palace of Pleasure*, or in Matteo Boiardo's *Il Timone* or in Lucian's *Dialogue on Timon the Man-hater*. as well as in North's version of Plutarch.

The introduction of Alcibiades seems to show that this Play was suggested by the Life of Antonius. Plutarch wrote in that Life: "This Timon was a citizen of Athens that lived about the War of Peloponnesus, as appeareth by Plato and Aristophanes' Comedies, in which they mocked him, calling him a viper and malicious man unto mankind, to shun all other men's companies, but the company of young Alcibiades, a bold and insolent youth, whom he would greatly feast and make much of and kissed him very gladly. Ape-mantus, wondering at it, asked him the cause what he meant to make much of that young man alone, and to hate all others. Timon answered him, 'I do it,' said he, 'because I know that one day he shall do great mischief to the Athenians.'"

Alcibiades appears to be the first sketch of Coriolanus. Plutarch bracketed their Lives and compared them, so Shakespeare may have been led to the Roman when he wrote of the Greek. But he made little use of Plutarch's Alcibiades (who was "undoubtedly always too licentious and loosely given," and was banished from Athens for deriding the Gods), when he drew the hero who says,

Sound to this coward and lascivious town
Our terrible approach. . . .
Till now you have gone on and filled the time
With all licentious measure.

It may be that the first form of *Timon of Athens* suggested a form of *Coriolanus* written in Youth. These Plays are now linked by a contrast, for, as Mr. Masefield has said,

AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

“Timon of Athens is betrayed by an excessive generosity. Coriolanus is betrayed by an excessive contempt for the multitude.” And this excess links these Plays with the other Tragedies of the dotage of Strength.

The fact that Heminge and Condell printed *Timon of Athens* before *Julius Cæsar* is discounted because the arrangement of the Folio proves that they only put it there as an afterthought. Still, they might have been partly guided by knowing that a form of this Play had been written about 1600. It would have been timely when Essex was behaving like Timon, raging alone and deserted by many who had flattered him once. Mr. Simpson contended that *Satiromastix* referred to a recent form of this Play. *Satiromastix* may have referred to a farcical Play called *Timon* which seems to have been written about 1600 and was printed in 1842. That Play seems to have been one of the onslaughts in the War of the Poets. Some students have thought that it was a travesty of *Cynthia's Revels*, which was acted in 1600, because two of its Characters resembled Ben Jonson's Amorphus and Asotus, but this may only show that these Comedies caricatured the same men. This farce may have been intended to travesty Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens*, and if so, this may indicate that a form of that Tragedy had been recently acted by the Chamberlain's Servants. But if a version of *Timon of Athens* was performed in those days it could not have been the Play as we have it, for the manner and mood of the noble parts of it prove that they were written after Shakespeare had reached the height of his power.

The last form, or the beginning of one, seems suggested by the account of the solitude of a house in the Sea which Shakespeare omitted when he transformed Plutarch's Life of Antonius. He explained this last form when he made the Poet assert,

I have, in this rough work, shaped out a man,
Whom this beneath world doth embrace and hug
With amplest entertainment. . . .

When Fortune in her shift and change of mood
Spurns down her late beloved, all his dependants

TIMON OF ATHENS

Which laboured after him to the mountain's top
Even on their knees and hands, let him slip down,
Not one accompanying his declining foot.

This sketch remains rough and the present form of the Play suggests that Heminge and Condell found the new fragment written over the old one or interleaved with it and retained passages which would have been altered if the task had been finished.

Timon of Athens seems a noble fragment erected on a juvenile Play which had been already revised. The fact that this fragment is only roughly begun in Shakespeare's last manner may indicate that Death cut it short. Even as we have it, Mr. Dowden has called it the climax of Shakespeare's Tragical work.

Heminge and Condell did not perceive that Timon had recited his Epitaph, and so when they did not find it repeated in the last Scene, they inserted the two given by Plutarch. The Epitaph which Timon had written for his tomb by the Sea was :

Timon hath made his everlasting mansion
Upon the beached verge of the salt flood ;
Who once a day with his embossed froth
The turbulent surge shall cover.

Which labourer after him to the mountain's top
Lies on their knees and hands, his ship down
Not one accompanying his morning foot.

This sketch remains rough and the present form of the story
suggests that Jennings and Corbell found the new fragment
written over the old one or interlarded with it and retained
passages which would have been altered if the task had been
finished.

James W. Alden seems a noble fragment created on a
point. The which has been already treated. The fact that
the fragment is only roughly drawn in Alden's last
edition may indicate that Corbell cut it short. Even so we
have it. Mr. Alden has called it the chapter of Alden's
Tactical work.

Jennings and Corbell did not perceive that James had
written the Epitaph, and when they did not find it repeated
in the last book, they inserted the two given by Jennings.
The Epitaph which James had written for his tomb by the
sea was:

James hath made his everlasting mansion
Upon the beach of the salt flood;
Who encounters with his crimson death
The turbulent surge shall cover
The monument and name of him
Who sleeps beneath the waves.

The turbulent surge shall cover
The monument and name of him
Who sleeps beneath the waves.

James had made his everlasting mansion
Upon the beach of the salt flood;
Who encounters with his crimson death
The turbulent surge shall cover
The monument and name of him
Who sleeps beneath the waves.

James had made his everlasting mansion
Upon the beach of the salt flood;
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THE LAST TRAGI-COMEDIES

Heminge and Condell printed seven of the Plays as Histories, and Shakespeare left seven as mature Tragedies, not counting the fragment of *Timon of Athens*. If these Tragedies alone had survived he would have been known to us as Æschylus and Sophocles are, since each can only be studied in seven plays out of many. And the metrical tests seem to show that after 1603 he wrote or rewrote seven other Plays, *Measure for Measure*, *Pericles*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest* and *Cymbeline*. These Plays are under the shadow of his Tragical mood, and only one of them, *The Tempest*, was left really finished. In the same way as he wrote his Chronicle Pageant halfheartedly while his true bent was to his *Midsummer Dreams* he worked on all the rest of these Plays with a flagging hand and an early failure of interest.

Only two of these Plays, *Pericles* and *Troilus and Cressida*, seem to have been printed during his life. Simon Forman's Diary proves that *The Winter's Tale* was performed at the Globe in 1611 and mentions *Cymbeline* also, and the Treasurer's Accounts show that *The Tempest* was acted at Court in 1613. If the Revels Books of 1605 are genuine they furnish a proof that *Measure for Measure* was acted at Court in 1604, and there are several allusions to *Pericles* about this time, but we know nothing of *All's Well that Ends Well*.

Four of these Plays, *Pericles*, *Measure for Measure*, *All's Well that Ends Well* and *The Tempest*, almost agree with the definition which Fletcher took from Guarini in his Address to the Reader prefixed to the *Faithful Shepherdess*: "A Tragi-comedy is not so called in respect of mirth and killing, but in respect it wants deaths, which is enough to make it no Tragedy, yet brings some near it, which is enough to make it no Comedy, which must be a representation of familiar people, with such kind of trouble as no life be questioned, so that a God is lawful in them as in a Tragedy and mean

AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

people as in a Comedy." Two of the others, *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale*, have bloodshed in them and are fantastic Romances which can only be called Tragi-comedies because they have the chief note of that kind of Play in the fact that they have a right to the name *All's Well that Ends Well*. One of them, *Troilus and Cressida*, is a Tragedy told satirically or a Comical Tragedy, and can only be called a Tragi-comedy because the two kinds of Play are blended in it.

The rules which Fletcher had imported from Italy were alien to Shakespeare, and so was the distinction perceived by Aristotle's definite mind. If he had read Aristotle in a translation he could have defended his use of contradictory Episodes by citing, "Bad Poets compose such pieces by their own fault; good Poets to please the Players." But in that case he would have admitted that he was pleasing himself since he had learnt how to employ contrasted Scenes on the Stage. His Tragi-comedies were English and sprang from the Traditional Stage, as was shown, for instance, when Sidney wrote in 1581 in the *Apology for Poesy*: "But, besides these gross absurdities, how all their Plays be neither right Tragedies nor right Comedies, mingling Kings and Clowns, not because the matter so carrieth it, but thrust in the Clowns by head and shoulders to play a part in majestical matters, with neither decency nor discretion; so as neither the admiration and commiseration, nor the right sportfulness, is by their mongrel Tragi-comedy obtained. I know Apuleius did somewhat so, but that is a thing recounted with space of time, not represented in one moment: and I know the Ancients have one or two examples of Tragi-comedies, as Plautus hath *Amphytrio*. But if we mark them well, we shall find that they never, or very daintily, match hornpipes and funerals." When Shakespeare matched hornpipes with funerals, as the Players did when they dissipated the gloom of a Tragedy by dancing a jig when it was over, he followed the old ways which were natural to him because he was English. These Tragi-comedies were a fitting conclusion to the work of his life since a Tragi-comical vein ran through it all.

It is probable that one of his reasons for turning to them

MASQUES

was the fact that he still had to be guided by the popular taste. The new Court had set an old fashion by reviving the Masques which had fallen into disfavour in Queen Elizabeth's time because she was too proud to take part in them, and new dramatists had established a foreign Tragi-comical mode.

The Court Masques or Mummeries seem to have been imported from France where light-hearted Kings and their Courtiers acted in them as little children pretend to be savages or dangerous animals. According to Froissart they were brought to the French Court in 1393 from Orthez when Yvain de Foix planned the fatal Dance of the Satyrs. And in England this pastime was enthroned in the golden days of King Henry the Eighth, when that Merry Monarch delighted in Wine and Women and Song. For instance, George Cavendish, in his *Life of Cardinal Wolsey*, wrote of the Revels at Hampton Court: "I have seen the King come in a Masque, with a dozen of other Masquers, all in garments like Shepherds, made of fine cloth of gold and fine Crimson satin paned and caps of the same, with vizors of good proportion of visnomy: their hairs and beards either of fine gold wire or else of silver and some being of black silk."

The Court Masques of King James' time were founded on these and on the popular Pageants which were acted, for instance, by the Londoners when Katharine of Aragon and Anne Bullen and King Henry the Eighth's daughters passed through the City on their way to be Crowned. Ben Jonson wrote a Pageant described as "Part of the King's Entertainment in passing to his Coronation, with Scenes to be acted at Fenchurch, Temple Bar and in the Strand" and a Masque called "a Particular Entertainment of the Queen and Prince their Highness at Althorpe, which was performed on the twenty-fifth of June 1603 as they came first into the Kingdom," and another called "a Private Entertainment of the King and Queen on Mayday in the Morning in 1604." The new Queen liked these so well that she employed him to write others for her, for instance, the *Queen's Masque of Blackness*, "presented at the Court at Whitehall on the Twelfth Night, 1605," in which she

AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

took the part of Euphoris, one of the Masquers, "which were twelve Nymphs, Negros and the daughters of Niger."

Four of Shakespeare's last Tragi-comedies, *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*, have Masques (as *Love's Labour's Lost* had), and so has *Timon of Athens*. These may have been more important than they seem to us now, for the Masques of that time were settings for dumb-shows; the words spoken or sung introduced the dancers or pageants. For instance, the Masque of the Amazons in *Timon of Athens* could have lasted as long as the audience wanted to see the Amazons dance. We cannot be certain that he wrote any of these Masques or the similar introduction of Hymen in *As You Like It*, since the Masques and dumb-shows in *Pericles* may be a survival from an earlier form and the other Plays do not seem to have been printed before 1623. Still, even if they were added by other hands because they were popular, they show that these Plays, as we have them, were influenced by the taste of this time. And the revival of the Masques at the Court helped to establish the similar falsity of Beaumont and Fletcher's Tragi-comical Plays.

Fletcher's first Play, *The Faithful Shepherdess*, imitated Battista Guarini's *Il Pastor Fido*, which was written about 1586 in rivalry with Torquato Tasso's *Aminta*, written about 1572 and printed in 1581. These Pastorals were Italian in mood and seem to have sprung from Poliziano's *Favola d'Orfeo*, written about 1471, and Agostino Beccari's *Sacrifizio*, written about 1554. Though the *Pastor Fido* was printed in Italian in 1590 and the *Aminta* in English in the following year, when it was translated as the Countess of Pembroke's *Ivychurch* by Abraham Fraunce, they do not seem to have been copied in England before George Daniel wrote his *Queen's Arcadia*, printed in 1605. This may have been due to the fact that Sidney's *Arcadia* had followed the French Pastoral convention derived through Montemayor's *Diana* from Boccaccio's *Ameto*.

This Italian Pastoral mood was even more alien to England than the French one had been, and *The Faithful Shepherdess* failed. But when Fletcher began working with Beaumont about 1607 he turned from Guarini to imitate the fashion begun by the *Tragi-comædia de Calisto y Melibea*, afterwards

LAST TRAGI-COMEDIES

called *La Celestina*, a long Play or Novel in dialogue which seems to have been written by Fernando de Rojas and was printed in 1499. The Plays ascribed to Beaumont and Fletcher in the Folio of 1647 were written under Ben Jonson's influence, and several copied his treatment of Roman History in *Sejanus*; for instance, *Bonduca* was founded on the *Annals* of Tacitus. While they honoured his strict rules of the Drama they imitated Calderon and Lope de Vega. And their foreign success ended the immemorial development of the Drama of England. Dryden wrote of Beaumont and Fletcher in his *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, printed in 1668, "These Plays are now the most pleasant and frequent entertainment; two of them being acted through the year for one of Shakespeare's or Jonson's."

While the success of these Plays may have guided Shakespeare when he turned to his last Tragi-comedies his choice may have been also due to the fact that he was exhausted by his Tragical agonies and too weary for laughter. I think that he rewrote *Measure for Measure* about 1604 and then wrote a revision of *Pericles* suggested by it, and then devoted himself to his Tragedies till he had rewritten *Othello*, and then began to rewrite *Troilus and Cressida* darkly but cast it aside when *Antony and Cleopatra* arose from it, and then turned to revise his *Sonnets*, and then began to ennoble *Measure for Measure* and *All's Well that Ends Well*, but abandoned these tasks, retouched the Tragical part of *The Winter's Tale*, made *The Tempest* an Epilogue to the whole of his work and began to change *Cymbeline* from a fantastic Romance to a Tragi-comedy ending in impossible happiness. During this time, I think, he retold *Coriolanus*, perhaps before he turned to *The Tempest*, and began to rewrite *Timon of Athens*.

Two of these last Tragi-comedies, *Measure for Measure* and *Troilus and Cressida*, deal with the perpetual tragedy of human affairs. *Coriolanus* has the same theme, and in it, as in *Timon of Athens*, the mutable and rank-scented many are shown as crows or daws pecking an eagle. *Coriolanus* says,

AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

Thus we debase
The nature of our seats, and make the rabble
Call our cares fears; which will in time
Break ope the locks of the Senate, and bring in
The crows to peck the eagles,

and he says afterwards,

like an eagle in a dove-cot, I
Fluttered your Volscians in Corioli.

But *Measure for Measure* and *Troilus and Cressida* comment on the faults of the Great. Angelo falls through the temptations of Power and Isabella says,

Man, proud man,
Drest in a little brief authority . . .
Plays such fantastic tricks before high Heaven
As make the Angels weep.

The beneath world in *Measure for Measure* is as vile as it is in *Timon of Athens*. And when the common Soldiers appear in *Troilus and Cressida* Pandarus says, "asses, fools, dolts, chaff and bran, chaff and bran, porridge after meat! . . . Ne'er look, ne'er look, the eagles are gone, crows and daws!" This Play is all concerned with the eagles and it shows most of them as carrion birds. Thersites, whose brothers are Apemantus and Caliban, speaks for the rabble: he is a scurrilous Clown and his railing is justified because all the Princes except Hector are base. There was reason enough why Shakespeare's mind should have dwelt on Government in these days when he saw the English Monarchy falling. And I think that the theme involved in the tale of *Measure for Measure* guided him to rewrite *Troilus and Cressida* next as a picture of the Kings of the World. Instead of rivalling Æschylus, as he did in the heights of his Tragedies, he came near Aristophanes in *Troilus and Cressida*, but he was mocking himself instead of Euripides.

Mr. Masefield writes: "*Troilus and Cressida* is the dialogue scenario of a Play that was never finished. . . . Two or three scenes are finished. The rest is indicated in the crudest

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

dialogue, written so hastily that it is often undramatic and nearly always without art or beauty. The finished Scenes are among the grandest ever conceived by Shakespeare, but the grandeur is that of thought not of action." This overlooks the fact which Mr. Saintsbury recognized when he wrote: "It is impossible that *Troilus and Cressida*, in part at least, should not be early." And while the crude work (which Mr. Masefield perceives) should, I think, be ascribed to the days when Shakespeare's writing was crude, the fact that (as he says) the grandeur is that of thought not of action suggests a doubt whether the last form of this Play was intended to be seen on the Stage. Some students have argued that this Play is a satire on the Great of the time, and this would explain why it was printed when (according to the Address to the Reader prefixed to the Second Quarto edition of 1609) it was "never staled with the Stage, never clapper-clawed with the palms of the vulgar" and "not sullied with the smoky breath of the multitude."

The First Quarto edition of 1609 had on its title page "*The History of Troilus and Cressida* as it was acted by the King's Majesty's Servants at the Globe." In the same year this was issued with a new Preface as "*The Famous History of Troilus and Cresseid*, excellently expressing the beginning of their loves, with the conceited wooing of Pandarus Prince of Lycia." This change in the title would be explained if His Majesty's Servants had acted another Play of this name but not this one. If, for instance, the sententious Ulysses was taken to be a picture of the Solicitor-General, Sir Francis Bacon, whose manner in his *Essays* seems echoed in the verses beginning,

Time hath, my Lord, a wallet at his back
Wherein he puts alms for oblivion,

this would explain why the Players had not acted this version.

The second title page may have meant that this Play was a First Part "excellently expressing the beginning of the loves," and to be followed by one which would give the end of the story. As it ends now, only Hector has fallen, Troilus is left seeking revenge and Cressida still faithful to

AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

Diomed. The fifth Act holds three conventional endings, one in the eighth Scene where Achilles says,

Come tie his body to my horse's tail,
Along the field I will the Trojan trail,
[Exeunt, a retreat sounded]

and another in the ninth Scene where Agamemnon says,

If in his death the Gods have us befriended,
Great Troy is ours and our sharp wars are ended,
[Exeunt, marching]

and a third in the tenth Scene where Troilus says,

Strike a free march to Troy! with comfort go:
Hope of revenge shall hide our inward woe.
[Exeunt Æneas and Trojans].

Then Pandarus speaks an Epilogue to all these and the Play. It may be that he promised a Second Part which would give the tangled story an end when he said,

Some two months hence my will shall here be made : . . .
Till then I'll sweat and seek about for cases,
And at that time bequeath you my diseases.

The Story of Hector seems to have been the first of the parts combined in this Play. It was written, I think, as a short Tragical Play when Shakespeare began. The first twenty-one lines of the Prologue are in his juvenile manner, and so are many others, for instance the lines in the fifth Act spoken by Troilus and beginning "Hector has gone." These verses, I think, were written in the days when Shakespeare wrote the speech given to the First Player in *Hamlet*, beginning "The rugged Pyrrhus." In this Play Agamemnon speaks often in imitation of Marlowe, for instance,

The fierce Polydamas
Hath beat down Menon : bastard Margarelon
Hath Doreus prisoner,
And stands, Colossus-wise, waving his beam
Upon the pashed corse of the Kings,

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

and he uses many words as remarkable as the epithet "mobled" which Polonius admired.

When Lorenzo in *The Merchant of Venice* said,

In such a night
Troilus, methinks, mounted the Trojan Walls,
And sighed his soul towards the Grecian tents,
Where Cressid lay that night,

he was thinking of the sorrowful love-story told by Chaucer ; but when Pistol said in *King Henry the Fifth*,

Fetch forth the lazar kite of Cressid's kind,
Doll Tearsheet she by name,

and the Clown said in *Twelfth Night*, "I would play Lord Pandarus of Phrygia, Sir, to bring a Cressida to this Troilus," they were remembering the cynical version.

Chaucer drew all the Characters gently in *Troilus and Creseyde* : he made Pandare or Pandarus a faithful friend and showed Creseyde (whom he also called Creseida) a victim of Love, too tender to be faithful :

But truly the story telleth us
There made never women more woe
Than she when that she falsed Troilus,
She said "Alas ! for now is clean ago
My name in truth of love for ever mo,
For I have falsed one, the gentillest
That ever was, and one the worthiest.

"Alas ! of me unto the World's end
Shall neither ben y-written or y-song
No good word, for these books will me shend :
Y-rolled shall I been on many a tongue,
Throughout the world my bell shall be rung,
And women most will hate me of all,
Alas ! that such a case me should befall !"

And she says,

But since I see there is no better way,
And that too late is now for me to rue,
To Diomedes I will algate be true.

AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

Chaucer's debt to Boccaccio was too great to be owned. He might have been prepared to admit that he had used Boccaccio's *Teseide* in his *Knight's Tale* and that the *Reeve's Tale* and the *Shipman's* and the *Franklin's* were all in the *Decameron*; but he did not choose to avow that this Poem was based on the *Filostrato* and so he proclaimed that he found the story in Lollius.

Boccaccio wrote his *Filostrato* as a *Lover's Complaint*, and sent it to his false love Fiammetta. He seems to have got his story, as Mr. Edward Hutton says in his *Giovanni Boccaccio*, "partly from Benoît de Sainte-More, whose *Roman de Troie* had been composed from the uncertainly dated works of *Dictys Cretensis* and *Dares Phrygius*, and partly from the prose Latin *Hystoria Troiana* of Guido delle Colonne." But he changed it because he loved Fiammetta, though he knew her too well to have any trust in her constancy. His Griseida is a girl who loves Love as much as Romeo or Juliet did and forgets all about Troilo as quickly as Romeo forgot all about Rosaline when she sees Diomedé :

Egli era grande, e bel della persona,
Giovane fresco e piacevole assai,
E forte e fier siccome si ragiona,

and she tells him (quite honestly because she has forgotten all about Troilo),

Amore io non conobbi, poi morio
Colui al qual lealmente il servai;
Si come a marito e signor mio.

Chaucer remembered this when he wrote,

Oh young fresh folks, he or she,
In which that love up groweth with your age,

but he drew his *Creseyde* less subtly and with English good-nature instead of the French tolerance which was shown by Boccaccio.

Some students have thought that Chaucer's *Creseyde* was derived through Boccaccio's *Griseida* from *Briseida*, which was Benoît de Sainte-More's version of *Briseis*. But

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

John Gower wrote in the Second Book of his *Confessio Amantis* :

At Troie how that Agamemnon
Supplanted hath the worthy Knight
Achilles, for that sweet wight
Which named was Brisseida ;
And also of Criseida,
Whom Troilus to love ches
Supplanted hath Diomedes.

Since we do not know when Gower wrote this (for the date given by Mr. Hales, 1483, is only a guess), we cannot be certain that he had Chaucer's Poem in mind.

Shakespeare's Cressida had nothing in common with Boccaccio's Griseida or with Chaucer's Creseyde apart from her betrayal of Troilus. I think that he wrote his first version of the Story of Troilus in the ignorant mood of his young Italianate Comedies. He may have based it on Guido delle Colonne's *Hystoria Troiana*, which he could have read in John Lydgate's *Troy-Book*, written before 1420 and printed in 1513, or on the *Recuyell of the Histories of Troy* (a translation of *Le Recueil des Histoires de Troye*), written by William Caxton about 1470 and printed by him about 1474. He may have thought that the version of the story of Troy ascribed to Dares Phrygius was true, as Philip Sidney seems to have done when he wrote in his *Apology for Poesy* of "the feigned Æneas in Virgil" and "the right Æneas in Dares Phrygius."

Dares Phrygius was said to have been a priest of Vulcan who was living in Troy during the Siege, and the account of it ascribed to him was said to have been put into Latin by Cornelius Nepos. The account of the Trojan War ascribed to Dictys of Crete was said to have been found in his tomb in the First Century and to have been translated from Phœnician to Greek and then to Latin. If Quintus Smyrnæus, who seems to have lived in the Fourth Century, knew these books he treated them as idle Romances. He based his story on Homer's and probably on the lost Cyclic Poems of Arctinus and Lesches. In the First Book of his *Fall of Troy* he adopted the account of Thersites given in

AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

the Second Book of the *Iliad* and expanded it by recording how he was slain by Achilles. And Thersites is the only character drawn in the same way by him and Homer and Shakespeare.

In this Play, as we have it, Cressida discourses with Pandarus with the merriment of *Love's Labour's Lost* or *Much Ado About Nothing* and Troilus avows his devotion in the usual vein of the Italianate youths. Shakespeare, I think, combined two juvenile Plays, the Story of Hector and the Story of Troilus, about 1601, adding the Story of Thersites and Ajax. This form, I think, became the foundation of this dark Tragi-comedy in which these Stories are episodes in a picture of life worthy of Timon. He may have meant this to be tangled, like *King Lear*, and unfinished because then it would be more life-like, or this effect may be due to a distaste for this task which made him throw it aside. I think that while he was working on it he saw his way to a task which would be a completion of his Tragical work. He seems to have planned this last form as an ironical Tragedy which would have been a travesty of his Chronicle Pageant, a tale of Fool and Fight showing the chief heroes as fools. He did not plan this as an attempt to surpass Homer (as Gervinus suggested) or to mock him, for he knew little of him. This Play is a proof that he did not know Greek, for if he had read the *Iliad* in Greek he could not have degraded its heroes. But he may have read part of the *Iliad* in Arthur Hall's "satirical" version of the first two Books, printed in 1581. And the publication of Chapman's seven Books of the *Iliad* in 1598 may have helped him to choose the Story of Ajax.

The last form may have been written in a time of exhaustion, and this may have been why it has the grandeur of thought not of action. In it Achilles and Ulysses debate Philosophy in similar language, and many of the speeches appear as if they came from a note-book and were assigned to the Characters at random instead of springing from them. This seems one of the signs that the last form of this Play is only a sketch. In the Play, as we have it, the first Achilles survives clashing with the last, the first Cressida, the humorous girl of the early Plays, with the last, a false woman

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

intrinsically worthless and evil, and the first Troilus, a lover like Romeo, with the last who is elderly and noble like Antony. It is the first Troilus who says in the fourth Scene of the fourth Act when he is parting from Cressida :

Come, to the Port, I'll tell thee Diomed,
This brave shall oft make thee to hide thy head.
Lady, give me your hand ; and, as we walk,
To our own selves bend we our needful talk.

It is the last Troilus who says before this in a speech which has nothing in common with the rest of that Scene,

And suddenly ; where injury of chance
Puts back leave-taking, justles roughly by
All time of pause, rudely beguiles our lips
Of all rejoindure, forcibly prevents
Our locked embrasures, strangles our dear vows
Even in the birth of our own labouring breath :
We two, that with so many thousand sighs
Did buy each other, must poorly sell ourselves
With the rude brevity and discharge of one.

This speech must have been either an echo from *Antony and Cleopatra* or else the origin of the music in it. And I think that this noble lament was the source of the parting Scene when Antony said,

I am dying, Egypt, dying ; only
I here importune Death awhile, until
Of many thousand kisses the poor last
I lay upon thy lips.

Sir Walter Raleigh writes of this Play in his *Shakespeare*, "It is hard to believe that the love-passages of the third Act, which are untouched by the spirit of Satire and show Cressida pure and simple, were written after *Romeo and Juliet*, a mere repetition," and he surmises that Shakespeare, finding the love-story of Troilus unfit for a Tragedy, wrote *Romeo and Juliet* instead. I think that *Antony and Cleopatra* arose from the last form of this love-story in the same way as *Romeo and Juliet* was based on the first. The last form of *Troilus and Cressida* was intended, I think, to be a com-

AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

ment on *Romeo and Juliet*, a bitter Tragedy of a man and woman to be compared with the sweet one of a boy and a girl, and Shakespeare threw it aside and left it only a sketch because a more splendid vision soared from its ashes. *Cressida* became *Cleopatra*, whose falsity was part of her charm, and instead of attempting to ennoble the boy *Troilus* (as he did in that speech), he dreamt there was an Emperor *Antony*.

In May, 1609, Thomas Thorpe obtained a licence to print a book called *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, and it must have been published at once, for Edward Alleyn's Diary shows that he bought a copy in June for fivepence. This little book seems to have been printed without Shakespeare's consent or opposition from him, and this would be explained if he was living at Stratford. I think that he collected the *Sonnets* of many years after *Antony and Cleopatra* was written and revised several of the juvenile ones, and I infer that he wanted them to be printed, though the fact that the book vanished from notice may indicate that he had some reason for postponing it then.

Thomas Nashe wrote in his *Terrors of the Night*, printed in 1594: "A long time since hath it lain surpressed by me until the urgent importunity of a kind friend of mine (to whom I am sundry ways beholding) wrested a copy from me. That copy progressed from one scrivener's shop to another, and at length grew so common that it was ready to be hung out for one of their signs, like a pair of Indentures." Shakespeare may have employed a scrivener to copy his *Sonnets* for himself or a friend, and Thorpe may have secured another copy of them. This book resembled the other one printed about the same time, *Troilus and Cressida*, for there was the same story of betrayal in each and the same blending of a boy's idle love with a man's heart-breaking passion.

Troilus and Cressida remains Tragi-comical because it is governed by *Thersites* and *Pandarus*, but its later Tragical drift sets it apart from the other six Tragi-comedies. I think that all these, except *Pericles*, were rewritten later, when he had devoted himself mainly to Tragi-comical work,

MEASURE FOR MEASURE

and that the last form of *Measure for Measure* was the first of these five.

Measure for Measure, which seems to have been first printed in 1623, is a noble Tragi-comedy blended with a juvenile Comedy already revised. If we looked on it as first written after 1603 it would be better described as a Comedy written in a Tragical mood, for in spite of its mirth and the conventional happiness at the end of the tale the inner meaning is dark. But this is prevented by the patent survival of a juvenile version which made Mr. Saintsbury cite this Play in *The Cambridge History of Literature* as "the strongest instance of the suggested earliness, in a more or less complete form, of many more Plays than are contained in Meres' list" and write of it in his *History of English Prosody*: "*Measure for Measure*, however, is in prosodic as in other respects, something of a puzzle. It is generally taken as a rather late Play; but I have always felt sure, for reasons by no means wholly prosodic, that it is in part an early one."

The solemnity of the Tragical mood in it seems to belong to Shakespeare's last Tragical work. The Duke's speech beginning,

Be absolute for death; either death or life
Shall thereby be the sweeter

must have been written several years after Hamlet's soliloquy,

To be or not to be, that is the question.

The Duke's speech is a man's last meditation. All the thoughts in it were familiar to Shakespeare as they had been to many before. When he wrote "Thy best of rest is sleep" he did not pause to reflect that Seneca had written,

O domitor
Somne malorum, requies animi,
Pars humanæ melior vitæ.

When he wrote,

If thou art rich, thou art poor;
For, like an ass whose back with ingots bows,
Thou bearest thy heavy riches but a journey,
And death unloads thee