

June 6<sup>th</sup> 07.

emphatically denied him the possession of tenderness at all, and quoted his gross, not to say brutal, remarks to Ophelia on more than one occasion in support of his proposition. He was not prepared to admit that he was even in love with Ophelia, principally on the strength of his rant in the scene with Laertes near the end of the play. An aesthetic appreciation of her he probably did have, but of anything like spiritual love, none. The never-ending theme of Hamlet's sanity or madness the lecturer did not touch upon, more than to declare his opinion that in any scientific sense of the word Hamlet was not mad—that is to say that, even if in moments of great excitement his hysteria developed into something still less healthy, he was always responsible for his actions. Professor Henderson agreed with the older and more orthodox critics, as against some of the more modern, that Hamlet's great intellectual fault or deficiency was his ingrained habit of procrastination. He was so essentially a thinking apparatus that thought got out of his control, and controlled him. His "native hue of resolution" was indeed "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," and his actions were indeed turned "awry" thereby. Take him by surprise, give him no time to ponder upon the event, and he was as ready to do a thing as anyone; but allow him leisure to get his imagination playing upon anything he desired to accomplish, and the power to do it was instantly sapped. He lacked force. He was a man of intense intellectual activity and keen moral and aesthetic sensitiveness, but the current of his being had been turned aside by the dreadful degradation of his mother's hasty marriage with her late husband's brother, and by the portentous appearance of his father's ghost. The duty of avenging that father's murder was impressed upon him in the strongest manner, and the sense of it was ever present with him; but though opportunity after opportunity of fulfilling that duty presented itself, the moody prince did nothing until nothing could be done which did not involve the destruction of many innocent persons. The thing was still to do. The defect in his intellectual constitution, his want of force and resolution, was not supplied in him, as it is supplied in so many people, by any reliance on a sense of providence. His inclination was to believe that nothing was either good or bad—but thinking made it so; and although the development of his nature, through experience, subsequently brought him to some vague sense that "there is a divinity which shapes our ends," the sense never amounted to a sustaining belief. Generally speaking, it may be said that Professor Henderson was inclined to sympathise, if not quite altogether agree, with Goethe's celebrated remarks on the character of Hamlet, as expressed in Wilhelm Meister; though he probably would not go so far as to coincide with the view of the German poet that the keynote of the play was to be found in the lines—

"The time is out of joint. O, cursed spite,  
That ever I was born to set it right!"  
The concluding lecture of the series will be on the tragedy and teaching of Hamlet, and it will be delivered in the Queen's Hall to-morrow night.

### PROFESSOR HENDERSON'S LECTURES.

#### "HAMLET."

Professor Henderson concluded his series of lectures in Perth last night. His Excellency the Governor (Sir Frederick Bedford) presided, and amongst these in the large audience in the Queen's-hall were Lady Bedford and a party from Government-house.

Having discussed in the two preceding lectures the language of the tragedy and the character of Hamlet, Professor Henderson last night delivered something like a sermon or moral discourse, with Hamlet for a text. In Hamlet, he said, the contemplative faculties became so abnormally developed that his capacity for action became atrophied. That was a not uncommon experience in men who passed their lives in study, and some of the German educationalists were coming to the conclusion that their universities and schools were making collective Germany too much like Hamlet. They were beginning to realise that the system of pure sport which forms so essential an element in the life of the student at the two great English universities had its advantages and should be adopted in some form in Germany. Sport developed in a youth the faculty of seeing a thing through to the end, of striving to overcome difficulties, and of living and working in harmony and co-operation with others. Hamlet himself had his morbid introspective tendency nourished by his alienation from the material world in all its forms. He had engaged in sport at the University of Wittenberg, but had discontinued his exercise on returning home, with the result that he became "fat and scant of breath." What he lacked was force, personal force, and sport was an excellent thing to generate and foster that quality. He was an idealist, but not a strenuous idealist; not an idealist of the kind that Browning loved—a man that would grapple with his fate and strive to rise superior to circumstance. He recognised his duty, and recognised it to the end, but the burden of his cry was—

"The time is out of joint. O cursed spite,

That ever I was born to set it right."  
His task was too heavy for him, and he delayed performing it until the performance of it meant ruin to guilty and innocent alike.

Turning to the tragedy of Hamlet itself, Professor Henderson explained the difference between the method, or rather the basis, upon which the Greek tragedians worked and the plan of Shakespeare. They followed the dictum of Aristotle who pronounced tragedy to be a powerful instrument for purifying the passions through the influence of terror and pity, and they placed man in his relationship to the ancients' idea of fate. If he sowed the wind he would inevitably reap the whirlwind. Shakespeare drew his picture on different lines. He never assumed any necessary proportion between moral transgression and suffering, but showed life as it was and is. Whatever Hamlet's defects of character there could be no comparison between his moral turpitude and that of Claudius, and yet the young prince's suffering and misery were out of all proportion to the meanness of the usurping king. Ophelia, too, an almost blameless character, met with terrible misfortunes—the loss of her lover, of her reason, and finally of her life. And much more to the same effect. This was life as it is, and if the government of the world were totally different, if every wrong act inevitably produced a corresponding degree of punishment, and every good act its material reward—then morality would be impossible. Living would degenerate into a bargain, a business transaction, a matter of valuable consideration in the material sense. No man's nature needed for its true development, work, discipline, and, perhaps, suffering. (Applause.)

At the conclusion of the lecture His Excellency the Governor moved a vote of thanks to Professor Henderson. He said that gentleman had the faculty of adding fresh interest to everything he touched, and he was sure they all hoped to see him again soon. The vote was carried with acclamation.

Professor Henderson, in returning thanks, said he had in his composition enough of "old-time loyalty" to be proud of having present at his lectures—and Sir Frederick Bedford had been present at three of them—the representative of His Majesty the King. He thanked their Excellencies, the president, and secretary of the Mechanics' Institute (Mr. Longmore and Mr. Reeves respectively), and all who had attended the lectures for their shares in making the series a success. His object had been to stimulate thought and inquiry upon the propositions he had dealt with, and he hoped he had achieved some measure of success in that direction.

A vote of thanks to His Excellency the Governor terminated the proceedings.

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*May 21<sup>st</sup> 07.*

### UNIVERSITY EXTENSION LECTURES.

#### PROFESSOR HENDERSON'S VISIT.

Professor Henderson, of the Adelaide University, arrived by the R.M.S. Indis yesterday to fulfil his engagement to deliver a series of University Extension lectures under the auspices of the Swan River Mechanics' Institute. Speaking to a representative of the "West Australian" yesterday with reference to the subjects and the plan of his lectures, Professor Henderson said:—

"In the lectures I delivered here a year ago I took three subjects, dealing with the Puritan revolution. That was the greatest event in the history of England. Now I will take the greatest event in the history of Europe, and will deal with characters of the times of the Crusades. I am treating the subject very much in the same way as I did last time. I will take, first of all, the practical man—the warrior, Richard I., King of England. Then I will deal with the idealist, Francis of Assisi, who in a way made one of the greatest struggles to realise in practice the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount that has been made in the history of the world. The subject of my third lecture will be Louis IX., King of France, who was both practical and idealist. He was virtually a 'saint on the Throne.' He had to administrate, and yet he had the idealism of the cloister.

"In the second course of my lectures I will take 'Hamlet,' in order to illustrate in three lectures certain aspects of the Shakespearian drama. I will deal with the subject under three heads—(1) What dramatic language means; (2) the building up of the dramatic character; (3) the indirect teaching of the play. 'Hamlet' is a play which commands attention more than any other of Shakespeare's works, and probably more than any other work in the literary world. The character of Hamlet has always excited the attention of scholars, not only in Great Britain, but in Germany, America, and France, and thousands of volumes have been written upon it. My object is to review the art of Shakespeare through 'Hamlet.'"