

that Ophelia was far too frail and tender a plant for this rude world of ours. Her love was deep; but at the command of her father, she attempted to stifle it. She seems too good to hate, too noble to disobey her father's command, too pure to live in the troublesome times that surrounded her. Hamlet's madness, for such it seemed to her, destroys the buoyancy of her life; the death of her father—unworthy as he may have been, yet loved by her—destroys a mind at once so simple, pure and chaste that the rough stains of the world found no lodgment in it. Even after the wreck of her mind, she sings and loves.

But Shakspeare's power to paint life was not confined to love. In Lady Macbeth, we find another passion developed, that of ambition. True to his ideal, he has not made her wanting in every virtue: love she seems to have had for her husband; and sometimes she shows that she was not destitute of some feeling for humanity; but the overpowering passion of her life was ambition. She shows herself a stronger character than her husband: when he wishes to draw back from the course that he himself had suggested, she says:

"What beast was it then  
That made you break this enterprise to me;  
When you durst do it, then you were a man.  
And to be more than what you were  
You would be so much more the man."

She knows no such word as fail, and in a righteous cause, such power and will, would not have failed. But the blood upon her hands could not be effaced. Shakspeare has shown us that ambition, when it resolves to succeed without regard to means, must fail. And what a failure? Who would endure the tortures of imagination that haunted Lady Macbeth after her horrid deed for all the world contains?

But while in Lady Macbeth we can not help but admire the energy and firmness and strength of mind that she possessed,

Shakspeare has given us in King Lear's daughters, Generil and Regan, two characters that do not seem to possess anything lovely or admirable. Everything they do seems to be of a low, petty kind. Their deceitfulness may be seen in their first words, where, apparently, language fails them to tell their love for their father. Like many other people, both then and now, their love was in words and not in deeds, or, as Cornelia expresses it, "I am sure my love's more richer than my tongue." As soon as they had obtained their desires and were at the head of the government, how different their words and actions. King Lear was reproached by one, and then reviled by the other; and finally driven from the house in the midst of a dreadful storm.

Words fail to convey the loathing and disgust that one feels for such creatures. Yet can we affirm that they are not true to nature? How often we see parents abandoned by their children, and left to shift as best they can.

But to this dark picture there is a brighter side. Cordelia, although she does not say much, acts so we may know the purity of her life and character. She is spurned by her father, driven into exile, and deprived of her share of the inheritance; yet she never forgets the duties she owes to him; and at last when he is driven into despair and madness by his other daughters, she comes from her happy home in France to rescue him. But alas! Here too, the hate and envy of her sisters follow her; and when she falls into their hands, they cruelly put her to death; but not till they themselves have received the due reward of their lives of shame and dishonor: not till Lear recognises her worth, and she has received his blessing.

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Thought is the first, second and third requisite to all mental excellence—of eloquence as well as of composition.—*Grimke*.