

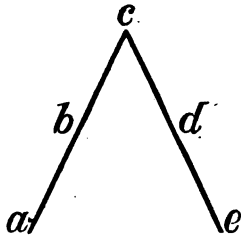
useful for the playwright to recognize these laws as found in the drama of elevated character, where every violence done them may be dangerous to the success of the piece ; and second, that the spectacle play in which a milder adjustment of conflicts is necessary in the second part, has a double reason for laying motives in the first half by means of fine characterization, for the hero's stout-hearted and vigorous desire in the second half of the play. Otherwise, it is exposed to the danger of becoming a mere situation-piece, or intrigue-play ; in the first case, by sacrificing the strong movement of a unified action to the more easy depiction of circumstances and characteristic peculiarities ; in the second case, by neglecting to develop the characters, on account of the rapid chess-board performance of a restless action. The first is the tendency of the Germans ; the second of the Latins ; both kinds of preparation of a subject are unfavorable to a dignified treatment of serious conflicts ; they belong, according to their nature, to comedy, not to serious drama.

II.

FIVE PARTS AND THREE CRISES OF THE DRAMA.

Through the two halves of the action which come closely together at one point, the drama possesses — if one may symbolize its arrangement by lines — a pyramidal structure. It rises from the *introduction* with the entrance of the exciting forces to the *climax*, and falls from here to the *catastro-*

phe. Between these three parts lie (the parts of) the *rise* and the *fall*. Each of these five parts may consist of a single scene, or a succession of connected scenes, but the climax is usually composed of one chief scene.



These parts of the drama, (*a*) introduction, (*b*) rise, (*c*) climax, (*d*) return or fall, (*e*) catastrophe, have each what is peculiar in purpose and in construction. Between them stand three important scenic effects, through which the parts are separated as well as bound together. Of these three dramatic moments, or crises, one, which indicates the beginning of the stirring action, stands between the introduction and the rise; the second, the beginning of the counteraction, between the climax and the return; the third, which must rise once more before the catastrophe, between the return and the catastrophe. They are called here the exciting moment or force, the tragic moment or force, and the moment or force of the last suspense. The operation of the first is necessary to every play; the second and third are good but not indispensable accessories. In the following sections, therefore, the eight component parts of the drama will be discussed in their natural order.

The Introduction.—It was the custom of the ancients to communicate in a prologue, what was presupposed for the action. The prologue of Sophocles

and also of Æschylus is a thoroughly necessary and essential part of the action, having dramatic life and connection, and corresponding exactly to our opening scene ; and in the old stage-management signification of the word, it comprised that part of the action which lay before the entrance song of the chorus. In Euripides, it is, by a careless return to the older custom, an epic messenger announcement, which a masked figure delivers to the audience, a figure who never once appears in the play, —like Aphrodite in *Hyppolitus* and the ghost of the slain Polydorus in *Hecuba*. In Shakespeare, the prologue is entirely severed from the action ; it is only an address of the poet ; it contains civility, apology, and the plea for attention. Since it is no longer necessary to plead for quiet and attention, the German stage has purposely given up the prologue, but allows it as a festive greeting which distinguishes a single representation, or as the chance caprice of a poet. In Shakespeare, as with us, the introduction has come back again into the right place ; it is filled with dramatic movement, and has become an organic part of the dramatic structure. Yet, in individual cases, the newer stage has not been able to resist another temptation, to expand the introduction to a situation scene, and set it in advance as a special prelude to the drama. Well-known examples are *The Maid of Orleans* and *Kätchen of Heilbronn*, *Wallenstein's Camp*, and the most beautiful of all prologues, that to *Faust*.

That such a severing of the opening scene is

hazardous, will be readily granted. The poet who treats it as a separate piece, is compelled to give it an expansion, and divide it into members which do not correspond to their inner significance. Whatever seems separated by a strong incision, becomes subject to the laws of each great dramatic unit; it must again have an introduction, a rise, a proportionate climax, and a conclusion. But such presuppositions of a drama, the circumstances previous to the entrance of the moving force, are not favorable to a strongly membered movement; and the poet will, therefore, have to bring forward his persons in embellished and proportionately broad, elaborated situations. He will be obliged to give these situations in some fulness and abundance, because every separate structure must awaken and satisfy an independent interest; and this is possible only by using sufficient time. But two difficulties arise in this: first, that the time of the chief action, not too amply allotted on our stage without this, will be shortened; and second, that the prelude, through its broad treatment and quiet subject matter, will probably contain a color which is so different from that of the drama, that it distracts and satisfies, instead of preparing the spectator for the chief part. It is nearly always the convenience of the poet and the defective arrangement of the material, which occasion the construction of a prelude to an acting play. No material should keep further presuppositions than such as allow of reproduction in a few short touches.

Since it is the business of the introduction of the

drama to explain the place and time of the action, the nationality and life relations of the hero, it must at once briefly characterize the environment. Besides, the poet will have opportunity here, as in a short overture, to indicate the peculiar mood of the piece, as well as the time, the greater vehemence or quiet with which the action moves forward. The moderate movement, the mild light in *Tasso*, is introduced by the brilliant splendor of the princely garden, the quiet conversation of the richly attired ladies, the garlands, the adornment of the poet painter. In *Mary Stuart*, there is the breaking open of closets, the quarrel between Paulet and Kennedy—a good picture of the situation. In *Nathan the Wise*, the excited conversation of the returning Nathan with Daja is an excellent introduction to the dignified course of the action and to the contrasts in the inwardly disturbed characters. In *Piccolomini*, there are the greetings of the generals and Questenberg, an especially beautiful introduction to the gradually rising movement. But the greatest master of fine beginnings is Shakespeare. In *Romeo and Juliet*, day, an open street, brawls and the clatter of the swords of the hostile parties; in *Hamlet*, night, the startling call of the watch, the mounting of the guard, the appearance of the ghost, restless, gloomy, desperate excitement; in *Macbeth*, storm, thunder, the unearthly witches and dreary heath; and again in *Richard III.*, no striking surroundings, a single man upon the stage, the old despotic evil genius, who controls the

entire dramatic life of the piece, himself speaking the prologue. So in each of his artistic dramas.

It may be asserted that, as a rule, it is expedient soon after the opening scene, to strike the first chords firmly and with as much emphasis as the character of the piece will allow. Of course, *Clavigo* is not opened with the rattle of the drum, nor *William Tell* with the quarrelling of children in the quiet life of the household; a brief excited movement, adapted to the piece, conducts without violence to the more quiet exposition. Occasionally this first exciting strain in Shakespeare, to whom his stage allowed greater liberty, is separated from the succeeding exposition by a scenic passage. Thus in *Hamlet*, a court scene follows it; in *Macbeth*, the entrance of Duncan and the news of the battle. So in *Julius Cæsar*, where the conference and strife between the tribunes and the plebeians form the first strong stroke, to which the exposition, the conversation of Cassius and Brutus, and the holiday procession of Cæsar, is closely joined. Also in *Mary Stuart*, after the quarrel with Paulet, comes the exposition, the scene between Mary and Kennedy. So in *William Tell*, after the charming, only too melodramatic opening situation, comes the conversation of the country people.

Now certainly this note, sounded at the beginning, is not necessarily a loud unison of the voices of different persons; brief but deep emotions in the chief characters may very well indicate the first ripple of the short waves which has to precede the

storms of the drama. So in *Emilia Galotti*, the exposition of the restless agitation of the prince at the work-table goes through the greater beating of waves in the conversation with Conti even into the scene with Marinelli, which contains the exciting force, the news of the impending marriage of Emilia. Similarly but less conveniently in *Clavigo*, it goes from the conversation at Clavigo's desk, through Mary's dwelling, to the beginning of the action itself,—the visit of Beaumarchais to Clavigo. Indeed, the action may arise so gradually that the quiet preserved from the beginning forms an effective background, as in Goethe's *Iphigenia*.

If Shakespeare and the Germans of the earlier times,—*Sara Sampson*, *Clavigo*—have not avoided the changing of scenes in the introduction, their example is not to be imitated on our stage. The exposition should be kept free from anything distracting; its task, to prepare for the action, it best accomplishes if it so proceeds that the first short introductory chord is followed by a well-executed scene which by a quick transition is connected with the following scene containing the exciting force. *Julius Cæsar*, *Mary Stuart*, *Wallenstein*, are excellent examples in this direction.

The difficulty of giving also to the representative of the counter-play a place in the introduction, is not insurmountable. In the arrangement of scenes, at least, the poet must feel the full mastery of his material; and it is generally an embarrassment of his power of imagination when this seems

impossible to him. However, should the fitting of the counter-party into the exposition be impracticable, there is always still time enough to bring them forward in the first scenes of the involution.

Without forcing all possible cases into the same uniform mould, therefore, the poet may hold firmly to this: the construction of a regular introduction is as follows: a clearly defining keynote, a finished scene, a short transition into the first moment of the excited action.

The Exciting Force.—The beginning of the excited action (complication) occurs at a point where, in the soul of the hero, there arises a feeling or volition which becomes the occasion of what follows; or where the counter-play resolves to use its lever to set the hero in motion. Manifestly, this impelling force will come forward more significantly in those plays in which the chief actor governs the first half by his force of will; but in any arrangement, it remains an important motive force for the action. In *Julius Cæsar*, this impelling force is the thought of killing Cæsar, which, by the conversation with Cassius, gradually becomes fixed in the soul of Brutus. In *Othello*, it comes into play after the stormy night-scene of the exposition, by means of the second conference between Iago and Roderigo, with the agreement to separate the Moor and Desdemona. In *Richard III.*, on the contrary, it rises in the very beginning of the piece along with the exposition, and as a matured plan in the soul of the hero. In both cases, its position helps to fix the character of

the piece ; in *Othello*, where the counter-play leads at the conclusion of a long introduction ; in *Richard III.*, where the villain alone rules in the first scene. In *Romeo and Juliet*, this occasioning motive comes to the soul of the hero in the interview with Benvolio, as the determination to be present at the masked ball ; and immediately before this scene, there runs as parallel scene, the conversation between Paris and Capulet, which determines the fate of Juliet ; both scenic moments, in such significant juxtaposition, form together the impelling force of this drama, which has two heroes, the two lovers. In *Emilia Galotti*, it sinks into the soul of the prince, as he receives the announcement of the impending marriage of the heroine ; in *Clavigo*, it is the arrival of Beaumarchais at his sister's ; in *Mary Stuart*, it is the confession which Mortimer makes to the queen.

Scarcely will any one cherish the opinion that *Faust* might have become better as a regular acting drama ; but it is quite instructive to conceive from this greatest poem of the Germans, how the laws of creation, even with the freest exercise of invention, demanded obedience to dramatic form. This poem, too, has its exciting force, the entrance of Mephistopheles into Faust's room. What precedes is exposition ; the dramatically animated action includes the relations of Faust and Gretchen ; it has its rising, and its falling half ; from the appearance of Mephistopheles, it ascends to the climax, to the scene which refers to the surrender of Gretchen to Faust ; from there it descends to the catastrophe.

The unusual form of the structure lies, aside from the later episodes, only in this, that the scenes of the introduction, and of the exciting force, occupy half of the play, and that the climax is not brought out with sufficient strength. As for the rest, the piece, the scenes of which glitter like a string of pearls, has a little complete, well-ordered action, of a simple and even regular character. It is necessary only to think of the meeting with Gretchen as at the end of the first act.

Shakespeare treats the inception of the animated movement with special care. If the exciting force is ever too small and weak for him, as in *Romeo and Juliet*, he understands how to strengthen it. Therefore, Romeo, after his conclusion to intrude upon the Capulets, must pronounce his gloomy forebodings before the house. In three pieces, Shakespeare has yielded to his inclination to repeat a motive, each time with increased effect. As in the scene in *Othello*, "Put money in thy purse," is a variation of the introductory note, so are the weird sisters, who excite the bloody thought in Macbeth, so is the ghost which announces the murder to Hamlet. What at the beginning of the piece indicated tone and color, becomes the inciting force for the soul of the hero.

From the examples cited, it is evident that this force of the action treads the stage under very diverse forms. It may fill a complete scene; it may be comprised in a few words. It must not always press from without into the soul of the hero or his

adversary; it may be, also, a thought, a wish, a resolution, which by a succession of representations may be allured from the soul of the hero himself. But it always forms the transition from the introduction to the ascending action, either entering suddenly, like Mortimer's declaration in *Mary Stuart*, and the rescue of Baumgarten in *William Tell*, or gradually developing through the speeches and mental processes of the characters, like Brutus's resolve to do the murder, where in no place in the dialogue the fearful words are pronounced, but the significance of the scene is emphasized by the suspicion which Cæsar, entering meantime, expresses.

Yet it is for the worker to notice, that this force seldom admits of great elaboration. Its place is at the beginning of the piece, where powerful pressure upon the hearer is neither necessary nor advisable. It has the character of a motive which gives direction and preparation, and does not offer a single resting-place. It must not be insignificant; but it must not be so strong that, according to the feeling of the audience, it takes too much from what follows, or that the suspense which it causes, may modify, or perhaps determine, the fate of the hero. Hamlet's suspicion can not be raised to unconditional certainty by the revelation of the ghost, or the course of the piece must be entirely different. The resolution of Cassius and Brutus must not come out in distinct words, in order that Brutus's following consideration of the matter, and the administration of the oath, may seem a progress.

The poet will, probably, sometimes have to moderate the importance attached to this force, which has made it too conspicuous. But he must always bring it into operation as soon as possible; for only from its introduction forward does earnest dramatic work begin.

A convenient arrangement for our stage is to give the exciting force in a temperate scene after the introduction, and closely join to this the first following rising movement, in greater elaboration. *Mary Stuart*, for example, is of this regular structure.

The Rising Movement.—The action has been started; the chief persons have shown what they are; the interest has been awakened. Mood, passion, involution have received an impulse in a given direction. In the modern drama of three hours, they are no insignificant parts, which belong to this ascent. Its arrangement has comparatively little significance. The following are the general rules:

If it has not been possible to accord a place in what has gone before, to the most important persons in the counter-play, or to the chief groups, a place must be made for them now, and opportunity must be given for an activity full of meaning. Such persons, too, as are of importance in the last half, must eagerly desire now to make themselves known to the audience. Whether the ascent is made by one or several stages to the climax, depends on material and treatment. In any case, a resting place in the action, and even in the structure of a scene, is to be

so expressed that the dramatic moments, acts, scenes, which belong to the same division of the action, are joined together so as to produce a unified chief scene, subordinate scene, connecting scene. In *Julius Cæsar*, for instance, the ascent, from the moment of excitation to the climax, consists of only one stage, the conspiracy. This makes, with the preparatory scene, and the scene of the contrast belonging to it, an attractive scene-group very beautifully constructed, even according to the demands of our stage; and with this group, those scenes are closely joined which are grouped about the murder-scene, the climax of the play. On the other hand, the rising movement in *Romeo and Juliet*, runs through four stages to the climax. The structure of this ascending group is as follows. First stage: masked ball; three parts, two preparatory scenes (Juliet with her mother, and nurse) (Romeo and his companions); and one chief scene (the ball itself, consisting of one suggestion—conversation of the servants—and four forces—Capulet stirring up matters; Tybalt's rage and setting things to rights; conversation of the lovers; Juliet and the nurse as conclusion). Second stage: The garden scene; short preparatory scene (Benvolio and Mercutio seeking Romeo) and the great chief scene (the lovers determining upon marriage). Third stage: The marriage; four parts; first scene, Laurence and Romeo; second scene, Romeo and companions, and nurse as messenger; third scene, Juliet, and nurse as messenger; fourth scene, Laurence and the lovers, and the

marriage. Fourth stage: Tybalt's death; fighting scene.

Then follows the group of scenes forming the climax, beginning with Juliet's words, "Gallop apace you fiery footed steeds," and extending to Romeo's farewell, "It were a grief, so brief to part with thee; farewell." In the four stages of the rise, one must notice the different structure of individual scenes. In the masked ball, little scenes are connected in quick succession to the close; the garden scene is the elaborate great scene of the lovers; in beautiful contrast with this, in the marriage scene-group, the accomplice, Laurence, and the nurse are kept in the foreground, the lovers are concealed. Tybalt's death is the strong break which separates the aggregate rise from the climax; the scenes of this part have a loftier swing, a more passionate movement. The arrangement of the piece is very careful; the progress of both heroes and their motives are specially laid for each in every two adjoining scenes with parallel course.

This same kind of rise, slower, with less frequently changing scenes, is common with the Germans. In *Love and Intrigue*, for example, the exciting force of the play is the announcement of Wurm to his father that Ferdinand loves the daughter of the musician. From here the piece rises in counterplay through four stages. First stage: (the father demands the marriage with Milford) in two scenes; preparatory scene (he has the betrothal announced through Kalb); chief scene (he compels

the son to visit Milford). Second stage: (Ferdinand and Milford) two preparatory scenes; great chief scene (the lady insists on marrying him). Third stage: Two preparatory scenes; great chief scene (the president will put Louise under arrest, Ferdinand resists). Fourth stage: Two scenes (plan of the president with the letter, and the plot of the villains). The climax follows this: Chief scene, the composition of the letter. This piece also has the peculiarity of having two heroes—the two lovers.

The import of the play is, it must be owned, painful; but the construction is, with some awkwardness in the order of scenes, still, on the whole, regular, and worthy of special consideration, because it is produced far more through the correct feeling of the young poet, than through a sure technique.

As to the scenes of this rising movement, it may be said, they have to produce a progressive intensity of interest; they must, therefore, not only evince progress in their import, but they must show an enlargement in form and treatment, and, indeed, with variation and shading in execution; if several steps are necessary, the next to the last, or the last, must preserve the character of a chief scene.

The Climax.—The climax of the drama is the place in the piece where the results of the rising movement come out strong and decisively; it is almost always the crowning point of a great, amplified scene, enclosed by the smaller connecting scenes of the rising, and of the falling action. The poet

needs to use all the splendor of poetry, all the dramatic skill of his art, in order to make vividly conspicuous this middle point of his artistic creation. It has the highest significance only in those pieces in which the hero, through his own mental processes, impels the ascending action; in those dramas which rise by means of the counter-play, it does not indicate an important place, where this play has attained the mastery of the chief hero, and misleads him in the direction of the fall. Splendid examples are to be found in almost every one of Shakespeare's plays and in the plays of the Germans. The hovel scene in *King Lear*, with the play of the three deranged persons, and the judgment scene with the stool, is perhaps one of the most effective that was ever put on the stage; and the rising action in *Lear*, up to the scene of this irrepressible madness, is of terrible magnificence. The scene is also remarkable because the great poet has here used humor to intensify the horrible effect, and because this is one of the very rare places, where the audience, in spite of the awful commotion, perceives with a certain surprise that Shakespeare uses artifices to bring out the effect. Edgar is no fortunate addition to the scene. In another way, the banquet scene in *Macbeth* is instructive. In this tragedy, a previous scene, the night of the murder, had been so powerfully worked out, and so richly endowed with the highest dramatic poetry, that there might easily be despair as to the possibility of any further rise in the action. And yet it is effected;

the murderer's struggle with the ghost, and the fearful struggles with his conscience, in the restless scene to which the social festivity and royal splendor give the most effective contrasts, are pictured with a truth, and in a wild kind of poetic frenzy, which make the hearer's heart throb and shudder. In *Othello*, on the other hand, the climax lies in the great scene in which Iago arouses Othello's jealousy. It is slowly prepared, and is the beginning of the convulsing soul-conflict in which the hero perishes. In *Clavigo*, the reconciliation of Clavigo with Marie, and in *Emilia Galotti*, the prostration of Emilia, form the climax, concealed in both cases by the predominating counter-play. Again, in Schiller, it is powerfully developed in all plays.

This outburst of deed from the soul of the hero, or the influx of portentous impressions into the soul; the first great result of a sublime struggle, or the beginning of a mortal inward conflict,—must appear inseparably connected with what goes before as well as with what follows; it will be brought into relief through broad treatment or strong effect; but it will, as a rule, be represented in its development from the rising movement and its effect on the environment; therefore, the climax naturally forms the middle point of a group of forces, which, darting in either direction, course upward and downward.

In the case where the climax is connected with the downward movement by a tragic force, the structure of the drama presents something peculiar,

through the juxtaposition of two important passages which stand in sharp contrast with each other. This tragic force must first receive attention. This beginning of the downward movement is best connected with the climax, and separated from the following forces of the counter-play to which it belongs by a division—our close of an act; and this is best brought about not immediately after the beginning of the tragic force, but by a gradual modulation of its sharp note. It is a matter of indifference whether this connection of the two great contrasted scenes is effected by uniting them into one scene, or by means of a connecting scene. A splendid example of the former is in *Coriolanus*.

In this piece, the action rises from the exciting force (the news that war with the Volscians is inevitable) through the first ascent (fight between Coriolanus and Aufidius) to the climax, the nomination of Coriolanus as consul. The tragic force, the banishment, begins here; what seems about to become the highest elevation of the hero, becomes by his untamable pride just the opposite; he is overthrown. This overthrow does not occur suddenly; it is seen to perfect itself gradually on the stage—as Shakespeare loves to have it—and what is overwhelming in the result is first perceived at the close of the scene. The two points, bound together here by the rapid action, form together a powerful group of scenes of violent commotion, the whole of far-reaching and splendid effect. But, also, after the close of this double scene, the action

is not at once cut into ; for there is immediately joined to this, as contrast, the beautiful, dignified pathos scene of the farewell, which forms a transition to what follows ; and yet after the hero has departed, this helps to exhibit the moods of those remaining behind, as a trembling echo of the fierce excitement, before the point of repose is reached.

The climax and the tragic force are still more closely united in *Mary Stuart*. Here, also, the beginning of the climax is sharply denoted by the monologue and the elevated lyric mood of Mary, after the style of an ancient pathos scene ; and this mood scene is bound by a little connecting song to the great dialogue scene between Mary and Elizabeth ; but the dramatic climax reaches even into this great scene, and in this lies the transition to the ominous strife, which again in its development is set forth in minute detail.

Somewhat more sharply are the climax and tragic force in *Julius Cæsar* separated from each other by a complete connecting scene. The group of murder scenes is followed by the elaborate scene of the conspirators' conversation with Antony—this interpolated passage of beautiful workmanship—and after this the oration scenes of Brutus and Antony ; and after this follow little transitions to the parts of the return.

This close connection of the two important parts gives to the drama with tragic force a magnitude and expanse of the middle part, which—if the playful comparison of the lines may be carried out,

—changes the pyramidal form into one with a double apex.

The most difficult part of the drama is the sequence of scenes in the downward movement, or, as it may well be called, the return; specially in powerful plays in which the heroes are the directing force, do these dangers enter most. Up to the climax, the interest has been firmly fixed in the direction in which the chief characters are moving. After the deed is consummated, a pause ensues. Suspense must now be excited in what is new. For this, new forces, perhaps new rôles, must be introduced, in which the hearer is to acquire interest. On account of this, there is already danger in distraction and in the breaking up of scenic effects. And yet, it must be added, the hostility of the counter-party toward the hero cannot always be easily concentrated in one person nor in one situation; sometimes it is necessary to show how frequently, now and again, it beats upon the soul of the hero; and in this way, in contrast with the unity and firm advance of the first half of the play, the second may be ruptured, in many parts, restless; this is particularly the case with historical subjects, where it is most difficult to compose the counter-party of a few characters only.

And yet the return demands a strong bringing out and intensifying of the scenic effects, on account of the satisfaction already accorded the hearer, and on account of the greater significance of the struggle. Therefore, the first law for the construction of

this part is that the number of persons be limited as much as possible, and that the effects be comprised in great scenes. All the art of technique, all the power of invention, are necessary to insure here an advance in interest.

One thing more. This part of the drama specially lays claims upon the character of the poet. Fate wins control over the hero; his battles move toward a momentous close, which affects his whole life. There is no longer time to secure effects by means of little artifices, careful elaboration, beautiful details, neat motives. The essence of the whole, idea and conduct of the action, comes forward powerfully; the audience understands the connection of events, sees the ultimate purpose of the poet; he must now exert himself for the highest effects; he begins, testing every step in the midst of his interest, to contribute to this work from the mass of his knowledge, of his spiritual affinities, and of what meets the wants of his own nature. Every error in construction, every lack in characterization, will now be keenly felt. Therefore the second rule is valuable for this part; only great strokes, great effects. Even the episodes which are now ventured, must have a certain significance, a certain energy. How numerous the stages must be through which the hero's fall passes, cannot be fixed by rule, farther than that the return makes a less number desirable than, in general, the rising movement allows. For the gradual increase of these effects, it will be useful to insert, just before

the catastrophe, a finished scene which either shows the contending forces in the strife with the hero, in the most violent activity, or affords a clear insight into the life of the hero. The great scene, Coriolanus and his mother, is an example of the one case; the monologue of Juliet, before taking the sleep potion, and the sleep-walking scene of Lady Macbeth, of the other case.

The Force of the Final Suspense.—It is well understood that the catastrophe must not come entirely as a surprise to the audience. The more powerful the climax, the more violent the downfall of the hero, so much the more vividly must the end be felt in advance; the less the dramatic power of the poet in the middle of the piece, the more pains will he take toward the end, and the more will he seek to make use of striking effects. Shakespeare never does this, in his regularly constructed pieces. Easily, quickly, almost carelessly, he projects the catastrophe, without surprising, with new effects; it is for him such a necessary consequence of the whole previous portion of the piece, and the master is so certain to bear forward the audience with him, that he almost hastens over the necessities of the close. This talented man very correctly perceived, that it is necessary, in good time to prepare the mind of the audience for the catastrophe; for this reason, Cæsar's ghost appears to Brutus; for this reason, Edmund tells the soldier he must in certain circumstances slay Lear and Cordelia; for this reason, Romeo must, still before Juliet's tomb, slay

Paris, in order that the audience, which at this moment, no longer thinks of Tybalt's death, may not, after all, cherish the hope that the piece will close happily; for this reason, must the mortal envy of Aufidius toward Coriolanus be repeatedly expressed before the great scene of the return of the action; and Coriolanus must utter these great words, "Thou hast lost thy son;" for this reason the king must previously discuss with Laertes the murdering of Hamlet by means of a poisoned rapier. Notwithstanding all this, it is sometimes hazardous to hasten to the end without interruption. Just at the time when the weight of an evil destiny has already long burdened the hero, for whom the active sympathy of the audience is hoping relief, although rational consideration makes the inherent necessity of his destruction very evident,—in such a case, it is an old, unpretentious poetic device, to give the audience for a few moments a prospect of relief. This is done by means of a new, slight suspense; a slight hindrance, a distant possibility of a happy release, is thrown in the way of the already indicated direction of the end. Brutus must explain that he considers it cowardly to kill one's self; the dying Edmund must revoke the command to kill Lear; Friar Laurence may still enter before the moment when Romeo kills himself; Coriolanus may yet be acquitted by the judges; Macbeth is still invulnerable from any man born of woman, even when Burnam Wood is approaching his castle; even Rich-

ard III. receives the news that Richmond's fleet is shattered and dispersed by the storm. The use of this artifice is old; Sophocles used it to good purpose in *Antigone*; Creon is softened, and revokes the death sentence of Antigone; if it has gone so far with her as he commanded, yet she may be saved. It is worthy of note that the Greeks looked upon this fine stroke far differently from the way we regard it.

Yet it requires a fine sensibility to make good use of this force. It must not be insignificant or it will not have the desired effect; it must be made to grow out of the action and out of the character of the persons; it must not come out so prominent that it essentially changes the relative position of the parties. Above the rising possibility, the spectator must always perceive the downward compelling force of what has preceded.

The Catastrophe.—The catastrophe of the drama is the closing action; it is what the ancient stage called the *exodus*. In it the embarrassment of the chief characters is relieved through a great deed. The more profound the strife which has gone forward in the hero's soul, the more noble its purpose has been, so much more logical will the destruction of the succumbing hero be.

And the warning must be given here, that the poet should not allow himself to be misled by modern tender-heartedness, to spare the life of his hero on the stage. The drama must present an action, including within itself all its parts, excluding

all else, perfectly complete ; if the struggle of a hero has in fact, taken hold of his entire life, it is not old tradition, but inherent necessity, that the poet shall make the complete ruin of that life impressive. That to the modern mind, a life not weak, may, under certain circumstances, survive mortal conflicts, does not change anything for the drama, in this matter. As for the power and vitality of an existence which lies subsequent to the action of the piece, the innumerable reconciling and reviving circumstances which may consecrate a new life, these, the drama shall not and can not represent ; and a reference to them will never afford to the audience the satisfaction of a definite conclusion.

Concerning the end of the heroes, however, it must be said, the perception of the reasonableness and necessity of such a destruction, while reconciling and elevating, must be vivid. This is possible only when, by the doom of the heroes, a real adjustment of conflicting forces is produced. It is necessary, in the closing words of the drama, to recall that nothing accidental, nothing happening but a single time, has been presented, but a poetic creation, which has a universally intelligible meaning.

To the more recent poets, the catastrophe is accustomed to present difficulties. This is not a good sign. It requires unembarrassed judgment to discover the reconciliation which is not opposed to the feeling of the audience, and yet embraces collectively the necessary results of the piece. Crudeness and a weak sensibility offend most where the

entire work of the stage should find its justification and confirmation. But the catastrophe contains only the necessary consequences of the action and the characters; whoever has borne both firmly in his soul, can have little doubt about the conclusion of his play. Indeed, since the whole construction points toward the end, a powerful genius may rather be exposed to the opposite danger of working out the end too soon, and bearing it about with him finished; then the ending may come into contradiction with the fine gradations which the previous parts have received during the elaboration. Something of this kind is noticeable in *The Prince of Homburg*, where the somnambulism at the close, corresponding to the beginning, and manifestly having a firm place in the soul of the poet, is not at all in accord with the clear tone and free treatment of the fourth and fifth acts. Similarly in *Egmont*, the conclusion, Clara, as freed Holland in transfiguration, can be conceived as written sooner than the last scene of Clara herself in the piece, with which this conclusion is not consistent.

For the construction of the catastrophe, the following rules are of value: First, avoid every unnecessary word, and leave no word unspoken whereby the idea of the piece can, without effort, be made clear from the nature of the characters. Further, the poet must deny himself broad elaboration of scenes; must keep what he presents dramatically, brief, simple, free from ornament; must give in diction and action, the best and most impressive; must

confine the scenes with their indispensable connections within a small body, with quick, pulsating life ; must avoid, so long as the action is in progress, new or difficult stage-effects, especially the effects of masses.

There are many different qualities of a poetic nature, which are called into operation in these eight parts of the drama on which its artistic structure rests. To find a good introduction and a stimulating force which arouses the hero's soul and keeps it in suspense, is the task of shrewdness and experience ; to bring out a strong climax is specially the business of poetic power ; to make the closing catastrophe effective requires a manly heart and an exalted power of deliberation ; to make the return effective is the most difficult. Here neither experience nor poetic resource, nor yet a wise, clear vision of the poetic spirit, can guarantee success ; it requires a union of all these properties. In addition, it requires a good subject and some good ideas, that is, good luck. Of the component parts discussed, all of them, or such as are necessary, every artistic drama of ancient or modern times is composed.

III.

SOPHOCLES' CONSTRUCTION OF THE DRAMA.

The tragedy of the Athenians still exercises its power over the creative poet of the present ; not only the imperishable beauty of its contents, but its poetic form influences our poetic work ; the tragedy