THE BOGEY OF ELIZABETHAN TRADITION

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THE OREGONIAN'S HOME STUDY CIRCLE: DIRECTED BY PROF. SEYMOUR EATON

POPULAR STUDIES IN SHAKESPEARE

Contributors to this course: Dr. Edward Dowden, Dr. William J. Rolfe, Dr. Hamilton W. Mabie, Dr. Albert S. Cook, Dr. Hiram Corson, Dr. Isaac N. Demmon, Dr. Vida D. Scudder and others.

XI. RICHARD III.

BY PROF. T. M. PARROTT.

Popular Conception of Richard III.

Richard III was the bogey of Elizabethan tradition and history. A free, united and loyal people looked back with loathing to the times when feudalism was dying in a horror of civil strife. The savage cruelty and base treachery that were distinguishing characteristics of the wars of the roses seemed to reach their climax in the person of the last of the Plantagenets, and no other actor in those wars was so fitted to receive the full weight of the people's detestation. Richard of York, his father, had been throughout his life the idol of a great part of the nation; Edward IV, his brother, was applauded for his beauty, liberality and prowess in the field, and—what is even more to the point—he was the ancestor of the reigning sovereign, Elizabeth; Henry VI, pitied for his gentleness, piety and miserable end, was looked upon as a martyr; even Margaret of Anjou, hated as a foreigner, won a reluctant admiration from the hearts of the people by her heroic struggle for the cause of her husband and her son. Richard III became, as it were, the scapegoat to bear away into the wilderness the sins of his whole generation.

This conception of Richard was not only due to popular tradition, it was deliberately fostered by the Tudor chroniclers. Beginning with Polydore Vergil, the historiographer of Richard's conqueror, and Thomas More, the disciple of Bishop Morton, Richard's most dangerous enemy, the tale of the usurper's crimes grew blacker and blacker, until in the popular histories of the 16th and 17th ceptuies it is the picture of a monster rather than a man that confronts us.

According to their reports Richard's malignant disposition showed itself on the day of his birth. He came into the world with teeth and long hair down to his shoulders. He was "little of stature, ill-featured of limmes, crooke-backed, his left shoulder much higher than his right. His face was small, but his countenance cruel and such that at the first aspect a man would judge it to savor and smell of malice, fraud and deceit. When he stood musing he would bite and chew busilie his nether lip . . . beside that the dagger which he wore he would (when he studied) with his hand pluck up and down in the sheath to the midst, never drawing it fully out."

And the story of Richard's life as told by these chroniclers more than fulfilled the evil omens of his birth and appearance. At 19 years of age he had a hand in the savage murder of the Prince of Wales at Tewkesbury. Two days later he sent to the block the Lancastrian nobles whose lives the king had sworn to spare. Within the month he "slewe in the towre kynge Henry the sixt" ("with a dagger," adds the minute historian), "whych murder was doen without kynge Edward his assent." He was suspected of having hastened the secret execution of his brother George, "false, fluting, perjured Clarence." He seized and beheaded, without form of trial, Rivers, Grey and Vaughn, the kinsmen and natural guardians of the young king. Two months after, he arrested Hasting, the one powerful noble whose fidelity to his master's child stood between Richard and the throne, and bade him make short shrift, "for by St. Paul (quoth he) I will not to dinner till I see thy head off." In his greed for the throne he did not scruple to cast a slur upon the character of his own mother, spreading reports that "neither King Edward himself nor the Duke of Clarence, among those that were secret in the household, were reckoned verie surelie for the children of the noble duke" (Richard's father). Hypocrisy joined hands with treachery and murder to help him to the throne and what he had sought for along such bloody paths he professed to accept only at the urgent wish of the people, protesting his entire love and devotion to his brother's children.

Of all crimes laid to Richard's charge none provokes more bitter indignation than the murder of the princes in the tower. His other victims at least were men, enemies or rivals. The princes were helpless children and his own nephews. The details of their taking off were hidden for years; men only knew that the children were no more; and with unerring instinct popular judgment pointed to Richard as their murderer. When the truth came out in his successor's reign, the pent-up anger knew no bounds, and the pathetic story of the children's death in the pages of More gives voice to the wrath and sorrow of a nation.

But Richard was suspected of an even blacker crime. After the death of his son, a child of whom Shakespeare knows nothing, he cast his eyes upon his niece, Elizabeth, the true heiress of the house of York. His persuasions drew this lady from her mother's keeping in sanctuary, and at the same time he spread abroad a report of his wife's death. Hearing this rumor, she feared, so the chroniclers report, that Richard had judged her worthy to die, and soon after, "either by pensiveness of hart, or by infection of poison (which is affirmed to be most likely) the queen departed out of this transitorie life." So strong in fact did the suspicion grow that Richard had murdered his wife to marry his niece that in order to retain the fidelity even of his firmest partisans he was forced to declare publicly and with an oath that he had never entertained the idea of this union.

But Richard did not escape, said the chroniclers, the fit judgment for his sins. Rebellions broke out in the land; the old supporters of York and Lancaster made common cause against the usurper. Many who fought under Richard's banners "hated him worse than a toad or a serpent, wishing and working his destruction." On the eve of the decisive battle he had "a dreadful and terrible dreame; for it seemed to him being asleepe that he did see diverse images like terrible divels which pulled and haled him, not suffering him to take anie quiet or rest." On the morning rumors of treachery ran through his army. In the tent of the Duke of Norfolk was found a rhyme bidding him refrain from the battle:

"Jacke of Norfick, be not too bold,
For Dikon, thy master, is bought and sold."

In his address to his captains Richard showed the remorse that weighed upon him, confessing that in the obtaining of the crown he had committed "a wicked and detestable act, which, nevertheless, I trust to have expiated with strict penance and salt tears." Finally, when the battle was joined, Lord Stanley, on whose aid the king had counted, led his troops to Richmond's side, and Richard, scorning to flee, rushed into the thickest of the fray, shouting, "Treason! Treason!" and then fell, pierced with countless wounds.

Attempts have been made to clear the character of Richard, and inaccuracies and even positive errors have been pointed out in the popular conception. But in spite of all, the tradition remains the interpreter of the facts of history; and the latest authority on this period assures us of the general fidelity of the portrait with which we have been made familiar by Shakespeare.

Even were it otherwise, Shakespeare would be justified in his work. The province of the poet is not that of the critical historian. The creative poet deals with ideas current in his day, and when his material is the popular conception of a historic figure it is his part not to run counter to that conception, but to explain it, to infuse it with poetic life, to humanize it.

This Shakespeare has done in the play of "Richard III." He dwells upon and exaggerates the personal deformity of Richard as cutting him off from natural affection. He points out Richard's pride of intellect, which finds the same satisfaction in a well-played stroke of hypocrisy as the artist does in a perfected masterpiece. He develops touch by touch the "demoniac energy of will" that drives Richard headlong into action. The crafty, fiery, unresting hunchback is an incarnate engine of destruction. So long as the enemies of his race kept the field he was the sword of the house of York; when piping times of peace succeeded, the sword, like some enchanted weapon of northern legend, turned against its master.

And yet Shakespeare's Richard is no monster, awful and incredible afetr the pattern of Marlowe. He is intensely human. Cynical, treacherous and bloody, he is still a man, and we can understand the motive that drives him on, unchecked by fear or scruple, to the sweet fruition of an earthly crown. And when all is over, when the sword is broken and the fiery will is quenched, we cannot refuse a touch of human sympathy to this most memorable portrait in the great gallery of Shakespeare's English kings.

T. M. Parrott

Princeton University.

THE OLD RED HORSE HOTEL, STRATFORD-ON-AVON.

THE DEACON'S SWEET CIDER

Unforeseen Doings at the Sewing Circle's Meeting.

It was too rainy last Thursday afternoon for Lafayette Jones to stack his hop poles, so he took his prize trotting stallion Wilkes Booth, 5:29, up to Bill Kitchen's blacksmith shop to get the animal's shoes sharpened a trifle. On arriving at the shop he found Bill with one hind foot of Deacon Orville Hopper's bay mare in his lap, says a Lairdsville (N. Y.) letter to the New York Sun.

"Hello, Bill," said Lafayette, as he led his trotter into the shop; "what ye doin'?"

"Hemstitchin' a pocket hancherheef fur my wife's Christmas present. Can't ye see?"

"Wal, yes, I kin see; but sometimes I sees bias. I s'posed ye was chiropodizin' a piece o' hoss flesh; but as the polt says: 'Things ain't allers as they seem.' Hemstitchin' a handkerchief, be ye? You'd ought to join Deacon Orville Hopper's sewin' circle. Mighty lively times they have down there to Deacon Hopper's," and Lafayette chuckled.

"Didn't know ex there was anythin' lively about the deacon but his hoss flesh," returned the blacksmith. "This is a putty consid'able hoss of his I'm workin' onto now."

"So it is," agreed Lafayette Jones, after a careful survey of the animal. "A putty consid'able hoss. Yes, the deacon's a putty smart judge o' hoss flesh—an' other things," he added after a pause, and chuckled again.

"Lafayette Jones," said Bill, solemnly, "I hope you ain't scandal mongerin' no tales about our good Deacon Hopper an' a sewin' circle."

"It wa'nt the deacon; 'twas the sewin' circle in combination with the Hopper brand o' temperance. You know Deacon Hopper runs a cider mill, but makes it a special p'int to have everybody draw their cider off his place before it begins to ferment. He says that fermentation is all microbes an' wiles of Satan an' it shan't do no business on his premises. Wal, he's right, too. I'm a temperance man myself; made a speech on the subject once in the old red schoolhouse that brought tears to the eyes of the widdered an' fatherless. But now, just wait till I tell ye about the deacon. I got the story from my wife, who, to tell the truth, was involved in the disgraceful doin's. She wa'nt goin' to tell 'bout it, but her sense o' humor got the best of her secrecy, an' she up an' told me.

"Ye see, last week a Friday the sewin' society met up to deacon's. 'Twas a nice afternoon, an' there was a lot of 'em there. Aour folks all went, an' Smith's folks, an' Brown's, an' the hull crowd o' Stoneses, an' Deans, an' Thomases, an' a putty consid'able besides too numerical to mention. They sewed an' stitched an' cut yoke an' bias an' polenay an' redingote an' them other fancy stitchins until about 3 P. M., an' then they was a hand 'round. An' all eat a hearty mess o' corn beef sandwiches, one-two-three-four cake, an' bean coffee. Then comes sewin' agin, an' all went well until 'bout 4 P. M. They all begin gettin' dreadful thirsty. The corn beef got in its work big, an' water didn't seem to be much relief. Jest then who should come in but deacon, an' arter the customary 'Haow do—Haow do—Haow do all raound,' Miss Sukey Thomas she spoke up peart an' says:

"'Deacon,' says she, 'Ain't ye got no sweet cider? We're in a horrid state o' thirst, an' a little jest-made cider would be a mercy.'

"The deacon hesitated a minute, an' then my wife insists that all of a suddint his face kinder lighted up, an' he winked to hisself.

"'Wal, ladies,' he says, 'it's a leetle late in the season fur the gineral run,' he says, 'but now I come to think it over, they is jest one barrel left out to the mill, an' I can testify that it is nice an' sweet as honey. I'll jes bring in a little for you to try, an' maybe you'll testify along with me consarnin' its harmless excellence.'

"Wal, now, Bill, what do ye s'pose that pious deacon done? Deliberately an—as courts has it—with malice aforethought, an' aforesaid, he went out to where he had a barrel of cider that had been left out an' froze hard. You know what that means. The water froze solid, an' the nice, sweet, smooth, liey alcohol was all left in the center of the ice. This good old Christian feller got a auger, bored through the ice an' drawed off a milk pail full o' that concentrated juice o' happiness an fetched it in to them trustin' old female women, with a face as calm an' holy as he ever wore while handin' raound the c'lection plate.

"'There, ladies,' he says, 'try that an' testify.'

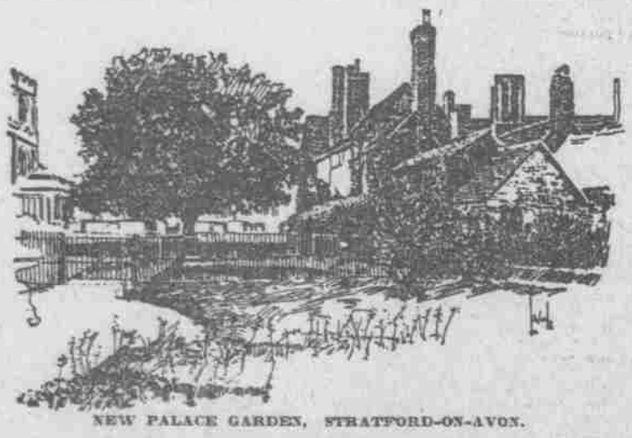
"Wal, they tried it, an', golly, they tried agin. Wife says 'twas the sweetest, smoothest stuff she ever drinked. It went down like syrup an' set as easy as soothin' syrup. An' then, after they'd tried it they begin to testify, an' the more they tried, the louder they testified, an' all of a suddint the deacon said suthin' 'bout havin' to see a feller, an' he skipped out an' left 'em testifyin', as loud as a meetin'-house full of Methodists with the power on. I tell ye that no pious Presbyterian hain't got no right nor call to hev a sense o' humor. An' now comes the p'int that'll show what depths o' sin an' transgression the ineat love of the redicklious 'll bring the most plousest to. I don't know where the deacon went to or what he see that made him go, but it's sartin he hadn't been gone long when the parson come drivin' in. Jest dropped 'raound to have a bite o' vittles an' pass the good word raound amongst the sisters. Anyhow, whatever the deacon had been, rumor says, an' I reckon rumor knows, that the deacon, when he met parson in the barn, was carryin' a pitcher o' that same mild cider, an' the parson bein' thirsty, drinked a good pint right daown an' smacked his lips as loud as a Chinee firecracker.

"'Good, deacon! Good!' he says; 'I always liked new-made cider. Jest a day old, not an hour more. Another swallow? Well, yes. Jest one more. Ah, fine, fine! Guess I'll drop in an' cheer up the sisters a little—um—ah—fine cider—yes, sir!'

"Wal, he went into the house, an' the sisters offered him a little refreshment an' a drink o' cider, which he took a good one an' smacked his lips louder'n ever an' looked raound 's if he might smack somebody elses, jest to show they wa'nt no hard feelin's. You kin' imagine the rest—30-odd female women an' a orthodox parson all testifyin' ter once like the rapid-fire guns at San Juan. Such sewin'! Aunt Sukey Thomas sewed a stockin' foot on a dish towel. Amy Cushman worked a feather stitch in red raound a blue cotton shirt, an' Mi's Humpy Wood missed the heel of the stockin' she was darnin' an' stuck the needle a right sharp ways inter parson. He hollered a terrible loud 'Amen!' and jumped clean inter the Widder Rock's lap—best-lookin' woman in the room, the widder—an' he didn't seem in no hurry to change his seat. Jest then there come a horrid, smothered laugh from outside the door, an' wife she run an' opened it, an' although they wa'nt no one there, wife swears that they was footprints in the new-fallen snow that looked big enough to be the deacon's, an' fur enough apart to suggest a man's runnin', an' she further swears that if they'd been any snow to show it, they'd a been eye-marks raound the keyhole. Wal, she come back an' looked 'raound comperhenchive at the work of the society, an' says she:

"'Ladies,' says she, 'I guess we better give this whole batch to the heathin', she says. 'The heathen may know what to do with them things,' says she; 'but I don't believe nobody else would. I'm a-goin' home,' an' she come away.

"They do say that they was mighty goin's on in that happy home before the sewin' society got their things on an' dispersed, singin' glorificatiously. I wa'nt there to see, so I can't say sartain, but I do know that parson preached a temperance sermon Sunday an' Deacon Orville Hopper got took with a fit o' coughin' an' hed to go aout in a hurry, an' he's been keepin' out o' parson's way ever sence."



NEW PALACE GARDEN, STRATFORD-ON-AVON.

An Elastic Currency System.

PORTLAND, Jan. 31.—(To the Editor.)—In your article of yesterday, under the heading of "Emergency Circulation," you say that you deem it strange "that with all the currency schemes pending before congress, the problem of emergency circulation for relief of spasmodic stringency has been neglected, and, of all the proposals of amendment to the banking laws, none touches the serious lack," and in conclusion you say:

We have never seen any consideration advanced against the plan advocated by ex-United States Senator Corbett, of Oregon. Mr. Corbett proposes a new 2 per cent bond, which banks can buy and deposit in the treasury in exchange for emergency circulation. This 2 per cent per annum on the bonds, accruing to the banks, will cease for the time the bonds are on deposit with the treasury, thus operating precisely like a tax of 2 per cent per annum on the circulation. These bonds and notes would be promptly interchangeable, and the arrangement would introduce into our currency system a device of instant availability in refreshing contrast to the cumbersome, expensive and inadequate methods now in vogue. It is practically inevitable that an emergency circulation will some time have to form part of our currency system. When all proposals are considered, Mr. Corbett's is as likely as any to be adopted.

With all deference to the plan suggested by the distinguished gentleman, it must be noted that the control of the currency proposed is left to the banks, and that such currency would be bank money, not a legal tender for debts, two very serious objections. It does really appear to me that a far superior and much more elastic and self-adjusting currency system could be provided for, which would not be under the control of the banks, and which currency would be full debt-paying and therefore infinitely preferable. Let the government issue, say, $500,000,000 (or more if required by the business interests of the country) legal-tender notes, to be loaned at 4 per cent on real estate at one-third its appraised value, and to be convertible at the pleasure of the holder into 2 per cent bonds, which bonds could be presented at any time and paid with interest in the currency aforesaid. Thus the government itself, instead of the banks, could, upon the demand of any bondholder, banker or no banker, furnish relief to the country in a debt-paying currency, or it could be procured by any real-estate owner upon the execution and presentation of any sufficient real estate mortgage. As I stated in an article in the North American Review for August, 1891, such a policy would place the currency of the nation upon the safest foundation possible, and would entirely preclude those extremes of contraction and expansion so hurtful to business interests; for if there should be in circulation more money than could be advantageously used, it would seek investment in government securities, while if there should be an urgent need for more, the bonds would be changed into currency. SYLVESTER PENNOYER.

BRITISH CAUSE STATED.

Disadvantages of the Boer Position Pointedly Set Forth.

The Western British American has an interesting article from the British standpoint, by Professor W. D. Mackenzie, of Chicago. The chief grounds on which Professor Mackenzie justifies the present war are those of the ignorance, tyranny and bad faith of the Boers, their championship of slavery, their cupidity, their corrupt rule, and their determination to deny all liberty to natives or foreigners. He says a majority of the Boers are unable to do more than write their own names and to read over and over certain portions of the Old Testament. Their lives have not been characterized by any high ideals in politics, in religion, or in family life. Their one controlling passion is to get away from the control of any strong or orderly government. They have quarreled with their own rulers for 50 years, and their government had come to a standstill when Great Britain annexed the Transvaal in 1877. They were seeking the help of other European powers, but no other would have anything to do with them. Great Britain paid their debts, conquered their native enemies, enlarged their boundaries and set them on their feet again; whereupon they ungratefully broke their plighted faith and went to war to throw off British authority.

One of Professor Mackenzie's strongest points is that concerning the Boers' treatment of the blacks. He says it should be known that to the present hour it is a fundamental doctrine of the Transvaal constitution that no black man can have equal rights with white men. No negro is allowed to own land in his own name, or to appear as a witness against a white man who wrongs him. The blacks are compelled to live in certain designated places, and are dependent for a livelihood upon the farmer on whose land they live, and to whom they must pay an annual hut tax.

Instead of seeing any parallel between the Transvaal war and our war for independence, Professor Mackenzie draws one between the Boer war and the American slaveholders' rebellion. He says the Boers are fighting in order that 20,000 ignorant farmers may hold in practical slavery 750,000 natives and may misrule 120,000 foreign white men and women from Europe and America. He says some Americans are mistakenly sympathizing with the Boers through the same sort of misunderstanding that made England sympathize with the South in the early years of the civil war. It is the innate tendency of the Anglo-Saxon to sympathize with the under dog. But in both cases the under dog has been fighting for a wrong cause.

Professor Mackenzie recalls President Kruger's invitation to outlanders to come to the Transvaal in 1881, and then he points out what he considers the Boers' perfidy in gradually lengthening the term of naturalization to 14 years. They were maintaining one of the most corrupt governments in existence. Many of the members of the ruling Boer and Hollander clique became immensely wealthy. It is the Boers who are fighting for gold, not the British, who will gain no money or property by the war. The Boers feared they would lose their power and opportunity for peculation if they granted the franchise to the outlanders, so they arranged the franchise in such a way that the foreigners should have all the burden of citizenship without any of its benefits.

Briefly, the difficulty was this: A man could at the end of two years become a naturalized citizen by taking the oath, in which he gave up his former citizenship, but he did not receive a vote for legislators or for president. Nor could he know that his oath would ever bring him the franchise, for the law only assured him that at the end of 10 more years, if he had lived continuously in the country, registered regularly and was recommended by certain Boer officials, his case would be considered by the supreme executive and he might then receive full citizenship if his case met with the president's approval. Professor Mackenzie says this law was deliberately constructed to close the door to foreigners.

He holds that justice is entirely on the side of Great Britain, that the Transvaal had no right to the name of a republic, and that the sort of government conducted by the Boers has no right to exist or to fight for existence. He adds that it was disturbing the peace and prosperity of all South Africa, and that the British interference is justified on exactly the same grounds as American interference in Cuba in the days of Weylerism.

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Leave for Dallas daily, except Sunday, at 4:30 P. M. Arrive at Portland at 9:20 A. M.

Leave for Airlie Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, at 8:35 A. M. Arrive at Portland Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays at 3:35 P. M.

*Except Sunday.

R. KOEHLER, Manager. C. H. MARKHAM, Gen. Frt. & Pass. Agt.

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7:00 P. M.	Astoria Express, Daily.	9:40 P. M.

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