

THE HEART OF HAMLET

MRS. MARY DEVLIN
DOOTH
FROM THE
COLLECTION OF
ALFRED DECKO

the drama. Only it seems not right to say who is in heaven alone, where hosts of angels welcomed her approach. It is true, and you have got the spirit of our lives. While reading it I recalled the far past before I saw the angel, and I remembered how she wept when I laid my blackened heart bare to her. She covered it with her goodness and kissed away many dark stains from it which now I fear, begin to show their damnable dyes again. You might think that I had been the author of most horrible crimes when I speak of my past, might you not? It is not so, however, but I have been full of sin, up to the top of all that dissipation, evil associations and sensuality, could lead me to, except, of course, murder, robbing and such petty offenses, although the perpetrators of such things have been my companions. I don't think I am to be blamed for what I may have done, for I was neglected in my childhood and thrown (really, it now seems almost purposely) into all sorts of temptations and evil society. Before I was 18 I was a drunkard; at 20 a libertine; I knew no better. I was born good; I do believe, for there are sparks of goodness constantly flashing out from among the cinders.

I never was at school more than a week or so at a time. I grew up in ignorance, allowed by an indulgent mother who knew nothing more than that she loved her child, and a father who, although a good man, seemed to care very little what course I took. I was allowed to roam at large, and at an early age and in a wild and almost barbarous country where boys become old men in vice very speedily; but after satiate remorse set in like a despair, and like the devil when he was taken ill I resolved to become a saint and throw off the hoots and horns. I could not do it. Sin was in me, and it consumed me while it was shut up so close, so I let it out and it seemed to rage and burn more fiercely than ever. All the accumulated vices I had acquired in the wilds of California and the still less refined society of Australia seemed to have full sway over me and I yielded to their beseeching voices. I added fuel to the fire until the angel quenched it and made me, if not a man, at least a little worthier than I was. There was one spark, however, left untouched. It was merely covered, and it occasionally would ignite; still the angel kept it under. I dread lest it get full headway again. Through all this vice I, of course, suffered torture at times bodily, pain and mental agony. These in time left me sad mementoes which I must carry to the grave.

I do not know why I have said so much about this, which must appear to others a silly hatch of whinnies. / Mollie is the only one I have spoken to about it, for I knew she could find the antidote and she has.

"But I have that within, which passeth show; These, but the trappings and the suits of woe!"
Hamlet, Act I, Scene II

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*Hamlet: Act I,
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EDWIN
BOOTH
IN THE
EARLY
SIXTIES

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH
IN THE COLLECTION
OF THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

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(FROM A PHOTOGRAPH
IN THE COLLECTION
OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES)

My eyes were dry, but it was not worth while; then no words were said for some time, but that my grief could be only a burden and nuisance to my friends. I thought I would not say anything more, but unaccountably. The blow was struck. Tell him that and none but time can lift me up. Thus felt it would be useless, although I longed for some one to tell me that I was not alone, and bones, to drag you on here while you had a sick brother to nurse, to offer me in words that I was not alone, to tell me that Dick had left me that I had no more to do, allowing him to neglect his business. I did not think of it at the time, for my selfishness was so great that I could not think of anything but how I could get on. I knew he would have sacrificed business, and everything to have given me relief, but it was not to be. I had to let him to stay, and it would have been a great deal for him to leave Wilson and your quiet comfort for this dull place of sorrow. I beg you will understand that I am not saying this too hastily from what I wrote hurriedly and in despair that I desired no comfort at your expense. I am sure you will soon be here. He must be getting on splendidly. Tell Dick yesterday. Tell him I fear after all my cook is gone. I cannot find her. She drinks. Tell her to go. Tell her to go. Tell her to go. I told Dick or Wilson at the time. I thought of them. I have shown them to be a great deal of help. These last are exquisite, too, only the last one is the last last seems not so well, but, of course, I understand why it is used in contradiction

in the great white light of Mary Devlin's love, in the deep and tragic shadow of his repentance. These things make his moral standard so high, and his damning of murder and robbery seem right-minded and without prejudice.

"... I've been in hell for several days now, and I've seen a glimpse of heaven—may I ever leave this world with the same breath I pray for life and death. The selfish to crave that which would give them life, and then to die without it, but then what can I do with life? I can't be good. I'm a sinner! I struggle upward as I go, but I can't get out of the mire. I plunge into the sea of evil. I must drown. I must die, using struggling with my fate. Sometimes I think, thus, and then I strive to shrink behind the veil of my sins, and then I believe I am a little insane, and then I believe my errors are overlooked—but even this proves I have at least sense enough to be damned.

In that letter speaks the man whom tender women love and some men tolerate.

On April 7 there follows a most remarkable letter. It is remarkable only in the light of the extraordinary picture it presents. He writes:

Last night, while I was reading and the storm without raging, "there came a tapping," and I thought, "What is it?" I found a poor little bird struggling to get in. I gave him house-room, but the little "tip"

His irritation here is childish petulance, while his humor is as the outbreak of a volcano. I am sure he has been long repressed, rather than as the wit of an intellectual man.

"... Would to God I could write. If I had the brains I would devote my whole time to it. But I have no brains. I can't think. You'd swam with me, maybe. Would you? Bye-bye! I'm silly, sick, stupid. D—D—D"

In the face of facts, the man's honest humility endears him. These letters are real contributions to literature. He does not know it, simply because to him they are so obvious that he doesn't see them as such. Nevertheless the artist's sense is continually present. Much of his written expression admits of being scanned and rearranged. The letters are simple, direct and forceful. The letters are valued only by the most superficial faults. Certain of their incoherence are due, obviously, to hysterical condition or to familiarity with his own conduct. It is all right now and then in the careless jutting of his thoughts.

On one of the many occasions that he retreated from his abortive efforts to make a home for himself and mother, he writes:-

"I've tried a thousand times to get a house. I suppose I'll have to wait till my grave is dug. I've got to live on the various bills against me; they come in like..."

He interpreted to her as they would crutch together during the storm. He recalls the intense heat of the wind a menace to her, the "wails of the departed screaming in agony or in grief" perhaps for the sins of the poor mortals left behind. The wind is whistling now, and he says to her, "I have called on thee, and thou wilt say—there may be a voice in this wild music calling on me. Why doesn't Mary come? I want to see her. What are her arms all out now? I have called on her, and she must have lain all night awake and strained my eyeballs in the darkness for her, but she has not come. I have called on her, and she has been with him. Am I too base? Does she hate me, or does she fear to tell me she is unhappy? I have called on her, and she has some knowledge of her state; could I but see her, I asked that she is eternal, but there is a damned, unbloody doubt bubbling up in my mind. I want to see her, but I either did not believe at all or were convinced beyond all doubt. This half humanity is a curse to me. I am a man, and this damned friend and God's worst enemy is to be damned outright. So much for my early education."

Yet, again, with strange, abnormal intensity, Mollie is a feudal day of horror. Mollie is now in heaven. It must be cold out there at Auburn, the cemetery where Mary lies. Oh, Dick, only to think I've been with her! I have been with her, and it doesn't seem as though she were

MILWAUKEE AMERICAN.

By an ante-nuptial agreement, \$100,000 to be advanced, Miss Emily Hutchinson, the 7-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Dillon B. Hutchinson, of 3821 Langley avenue, Milwaukee, has been betrothed to the 7-year-old president of the Crane family, Harry Crane, by the consent of both families to the match and the marriage took place Wednesday.

By a written agreement by which the bride receives the gift she also signs away her lower rights, and this is the cause of the friendly attitude of Mr. Crane's family.

The son of H. C. Crane, dealer in real estate, St. Paul, Minn., is believed to be the only member of the family who is still opposing the marriage. He is now in Russia. The father, however, is a devoted adherent of the match, a daughter-in-law, who has been making her home with Mr. Crane. As a token of his appreciation of her approval of the match he is reported to have given her a handsome present.

That Richard T. Crane, Jr., approves is shown by the fact that he acted as best man at the ceremony. His wife supplied the ceremony, which was at Trinity church.

"But," said the heiress, "how am I to get my money? Am not marrying me for your money?" It is not clear whether the young man who was addicted to the clove habit. "How am I to know that you are