



SERMON FROM SHAKESPEARE

The middle of humanity thou never knewest but the extremity of both ends.

Apemantus, the cynic philosopher of "Timon of Athens," was a railler against humanity. He had faith in no one; according to him all men were base and sordid. But even Apemantus could utter words of wisdom, and this pithy summing up of the cause of the ruin of Timon should be taken to heart by all given to extreme courses.

Timon was prodigal of his wealth. He lived in the present, with no thought of the future; he had generous impulses and he selfishly gratified his impulses, without stopping to consider whether or not he could afford to bestow so costly presents on every favorer.

In his state of prosperity his motto was, "We are born to do benefits"; in his adversity he proclaimed, "I am Misanthropos, and hate mankind."

His fault lay in the fact that he had failed to select the golden mean between excess and defect. Even a colossal fortune would not have withstood his extravagance. He had foolishly supposed that all men were generous, rudely awoken from his dream, his faith in humanity gone, he fled to the wilderness and lived like a beast of the forest, solacing himself by unpacking his heart with words against the world he had left.

Apemantus and Timon were predecessors to Aristotle, and Shakespeare, in the words of the text, but antedated the philosophy of the great Greek teacher. Every man has to confront in one form or another his Charybdis of excess and Scylla of defect.

The men who are able to choose the middle channel where the deep water is, and with a strong hand on their passions and appetites, steer a watchful course, are in but little danger from the rocks and whirlpools. The evil effects of extreme action have many illustrations in life. Take for example the matter of eating and drinking! Food is essential for existence. The great majority of the ills that flesh is heir to are due to over-indulgence or unwise abstinence.

On the one hand there is the glutton, who is unable to resist the cravings of appetite; on the other, the ascetic, who starves his body. The glutton becomes coarse, gross and beastly, a mental scourge; the ascetic grows emaciated, anemic and apathetic. Food and drink are excellent servants, but must not be either overworked or underworked.

Clothes are likewise essential to existence. A man may survive without a schoolmaster, but he would perish without a tailor. There is nothing more indicative of character than clothing. A light-brained butterfly delights in fanciful, gaudy apparel; a vulgar mind, in foul and startling effects. The top, the dandy and the vulgarian in dress usually have minds to match. A man slovenly and careless about his appearance is lacking in self-respect. It may be that his mind is so preoccupied with study or work that he has no time to think about his personal appearance. He could toil and aim not as well if he gave a little thought to his clothing. It is not the man or woman who runs after

the newest fad who is esteemed, nor the one who is careless of all fashions. For usefulness, the esteem of others is essential, and a lopsided or slovenly individual repels.

In the matter of language there are many who seem unable to choose a middle course. The prevalence of slang is a manifestation of the desire for startling and striking modes of expression. There is slang that is magnificently expressive, but the vulgar have allowed it to run riot with their speech. The extreme is nothing, but bad. It pollutes the "well of English undefiled"; it corrupts "the tongue that Shakespeare spoke."

On the other hand there is affectation, a foreshadowing of the "well of English undefiled." In the matter of language there are many who seem unable to choose a middle course. The prevalence of slang is a manifestation of the desire for startling and striking modes of expression. There is slang that is magnificently expressive, but the vulgar have allowed it to run riot with their speech. The extreme is nothing, but bad. It pollutes the "well of English undefiled"; it corrupts "the tongue that Shakespeare spoke."

The evils of excess and defect are better shown in the matter of the use of wealth than in any other way. The ethical value of "Timon of Athens" is that it teaches the need of selecting and following the middle course. Timon came to wreck of fortune through over-lavish expenditure; in rushing to the other extreme, he ruined what might have been a noble life. In the use of wealth the exercise of reason is necessary. As a general thing, as with Timon, mere impulse is followed. Something catches the eye, it is bought, an individual in distress, he is helped; a craving asserts itself, it is satisfied. Vanity is aroused by the ostentation of others possessed of wealth; they are imitated or outdone. On the other hand there are those who make a god of it, who hoard as though earth were eternity, and they were to have infinite time in which to use their treasure. Safety and happiness lie in choosing a middle course, accepting the good gift of riches and using it for the benefit of mankind. As Timon remarked, man is born to do benefits; but his spending should be regulated by his men.

Cure for Stage Fright. At the climax of their careers some stars still feel stage fright, but no one need ever know that sensation any more. Dr. Pierre Bonnier has found a complete cure for it. Indeed, the cure sounds quite radical, and even violent, but those who have felt stage fright say that they would give their eyes to be rid of it. According to Dr. Bonnier, they need only give a portion of their noses. He has observed that stage fright is due to contractions of the diaphragm. Now the muscles of the latter are somehow connected with a facial nerve which runs up through the nose. The remedy is, therefore, obvious. You have the nerve in question burned out of your nose, and you are ever after as bold as brass before the footlights. Without ever having acted in your life you play Hamlet before an audience of dramatic critics without turning a hair. Incidentally the removal of the nerve mentioned also cures neuralgia. But Dr. Bonnier does not say whether it may not spoil one's nose. That would be a heavy price for actors and actresses to pay even to be cured of stage fright. On the other hand, some noses might look even better without the facial nerve than with it, and the cure would thus be doubly beneficial.

Paris Correspondent, London Standard.

The Retort Courtesans. While a bitterly waged war was in progress in Washington among the women of a well-known organization, in which there were two militant camps, many cruel, biting things were said by the one of the other. A gracious matron, noted for her consummate tact and the skill with which she handles difficult situations, essayed the part of peacemaker with the result that, being a person of nice discernment, she at once abandoned the plan.

She called on Mrs. Brown, who was the candidate against Mrs. Jones. Mrs. Brown complained bitterly that her opponent had wilfully misrepresented facts and showed certain infirmities of taste and temper, for which there could be no excuse.

"Well," said the ambassador, who was friendly with both leaders, "you should not let the passion of politics narrow your horizon, my dear. You should be broad visioned enough to make reasonable allowances for what you consider unlovely harshness. You fail to reason that Mrs. Jones' age may be telling on her."

"What ingratitude!" exclaimed Mrs. Brown. And the tactful woman knew that her mission was futile.

More Proof. M. A. P. London. Many good examples there are of witty answers that have turned away wrath and have become a saving grace. As a specimen of ready wit it would be difficult to beat the retort of Charles Burleigh, the great opponent of the slave trade. He was in the middle of one of his eloquent denunciations of slavery when a well aimed and rotten egg struck him full in the face. "This," he said calmly, as he produced his handkerchief and wiped his face, "is striking evidence of what I have always maintained, that proslavery arguments are unsound."

On Chicago. Dr. Heinrich C. G. Hirsch, the Viennese conductor, said recently that New York's musical taste was much better cultivated than Chicago's. "A New York and a Chicago girl," he went on, "met at the sea shore. In the twilight, while the sky flames pink in the sunset and the hotel orchestra played Massenet on the terrace, the New York girl said to the Chicago girl: "Do you like figues?" "The Chicago girl sighed and answered wistfully: "No, but I adore clams."—Detroit Free Press.

CAUSES FOR DIVORCE.

Lawyers Do Not Usually Impart Information Free.

The Green Bag. Lawyers do not usually impart information for nothing, but an exception has to be recorded in favor of J. Arthur Barratt, who at the international conference of members of his profession gave an illuminating survey of the causes for divorce prevailing in different lands.

In most continental countries mutual consent, under certain restrictions is a cause for divorce. Habitual drunkenness, or being an habitual criminal, is a cause in Norway; condemnation to penal servitude in France, Norway, Hungary and Denmark; desertion in Denmark, Holland, and Germany. Insanity is, too, a cause in Germany, and Norway; gross bodily injuries or serious violation of matrimonial duty in Belgium, Germany and Norway. In Poland it is a common cause for divorce of a Jew that he is engaged in an occupation which gives him such a disagreeable odor as to create in his wife a vineable aversion. No state in the United States of America, liberal as that country is in the matter of divorce, is half so considerate of feminine sensitivities as Poland seems to be. The two most interesting specimens in the museum of legal curiosity in cause for divorce are "loquacity of the wife" in Formosa, and the "discovery of a previous wooing" on the part of the husband in Algeria, where there had not yet been either acceptance or refusal by the other lady.

The Football Rules. Youth's Companion. For several years the rules governing football have been subject to an annual revision, as the result of the growing dissatisfaction with the game as it has been played. Much of the criticism was the outcome of serious accidents. Some attacks were hysterical outbursts by those who knew little about the game—unjust generalizations based upon an isolated injury or foul play. But the friends of the game have been prompt to meet the situation, and honest revisions and reforms of the rules have followed.

This year unusually radical changes have been made in the attempt to provide a more open and spectacular game, and to lessen the danger of injury to the players. The flying tackle is prohibited; no pushing or pulling of the man with the ball is allowed; there must be seven offensive players on the line of scrimmage; there is greater protection for the receiver of the forward pass or on-side kick; there are two additional rest periods; the quarter-back is now virtually a half-back, and may run anywhere with the ball; and a player who retires from the game may later return.

The Laughing Barber. Jim Rice, the coach of the Columbia crew, was praising a stalwart freshman. "He's so young and tender," said the coach, "you'd never think he could row. Why, they laugh at him at the barbers'."

"As he was getting his hair cut the other day he said to the barber wistfully: "Do you think I'll have a strong beard?" My father has a very strong one."

"It looks to me," said the barber, "as if you took after your mother."—Washington Star.

Sound Advice. Wise doctors always word their advice to their patients so that they will not take offence. A man once called on a physician to see if he could find some remedy for a red nose.

"Doctor," he said, "what shall I take to remove the redness of my nose?" "Take nothing—especially between meals," the doctor answered.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

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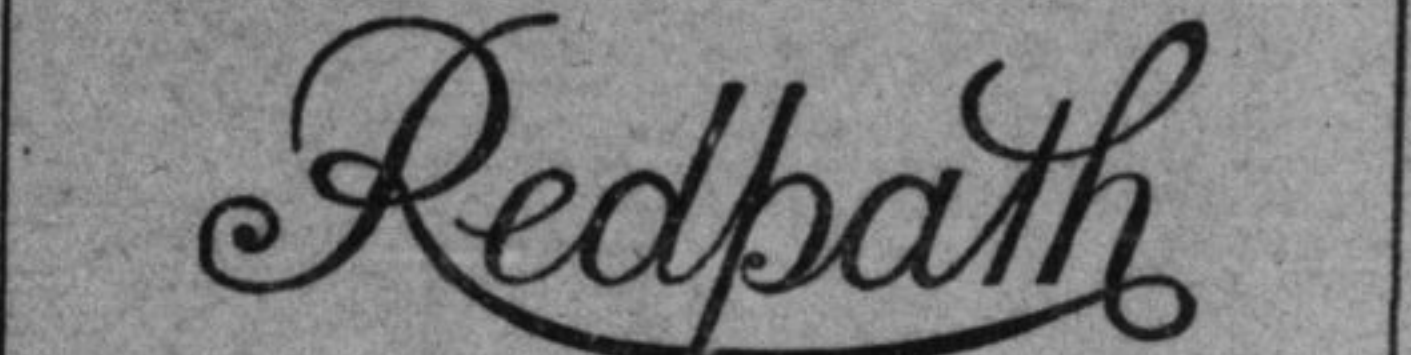
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