

Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more;
 Or close the wall up with our English dead.
 In peace there's nothing so becomes a man
 As modest stillness and humility;
 But when the blast of war blows in our ears,
 They imitate the action of the tiger;
 Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood,
 Disguise fair nature with hard favour'd rage.
 Now set the teeth and set the nostril wide,
 Hold hard the breath and bend up every spirit
 To his full height. On, on, you noblest English:
 Dishonour not your mothers; now attest
 That those whom you call'd fathers did beget you.
 Be copy now to men of grosser blood,
 And teach them how to war. And you, good
 yeomen,

Whose limbs were made in England, show us here
 The mettle of your pasture; let us swear
 That you are worth your breeding; which I doubt
 not;

For there is none of you so mean and base,
 That hath not noble lustre in your eyes.
 I see you stand like greyhounds in the slips,
 Straining upon the start. The game's afoot:
 Follow your spirit.

And yet, with all this, and more to the
 same high purpose, calculated to make men
 strike the stars with their sublime heads, he
 more than anyone else, can keep things
 human in the right balance by showing us
 that, however heroic we may be, we are yet
 of the earth, earthy. In the last act of
Much Ado About Nothing, Leonato and
 Antonio come upon the scene and give us
 one of the finest exhibitions of average human
 nature ever presented by man to man.

ANT. If you go on thus, you will kill yourself;
 And 'tis not wisdom thus to second grief
 Against yourself.

LEON. I pray thee, cease thy counsel,
 Which falls into mine ears as profitless
 As water in a sieve: give not me counsel:

No, no; 'tis all men's office to speak patience
 To those that wring under the load of
 sorrow,

But no man's virtue nor sufficiency
 To be so moral when he shall endure
 The like himself. Therefore give me no
 counsel:

ANT. My griefs cry louder than advertisement.
 Therein do men from children nothing
 differ.

LEON. I pray thee, peace. I will be flesh and
 blood;

For there was never yet philosopher
 That could endure the toothache patiently.
 However they have writ the style of gods
 And made a push at chance and sufferance,

ANT. Yet bend not all the harm upon yourself.
 Make those that do offend you suffer too.

LEON. There thou speak'st reason: nay, I will
 do so.

These, in their way, are all bubbles, but
 they are bubbles that express what is wise,
 and just, and tender, and heroic, or humour-
 ously earthy in the human spirit, and they
 are a thousand times more helpful to that
 spirit, and a thousand times more worthy of
 admiration than those blown by the vulgar
 life-destroying conqueror, the mere tune-
 making money-monger, the vote-catching
 politician, or the censorious writer who, in
 censuring, oftener exhibits lack of imagination
 than abundance of judgment. Still the life-
 bubbles of all men are of interest to the
 judicious mind, for they show of what material
 the minds of the blowers are made. Thus
 regarded as bubbles, all the thoughts, efforts
 and works of men acquire a special signifi-
 cance. Indeed, men themselves, and all
 animate and inanimate objects are seen to be
 merely the bubbles of nature. This thought
 was, perhaps, in Shakespeare's mind when
 he wrote:

The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
 The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
 Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve.

And yet, were all creation to explode, bubble-
 wise, the chemical essences would remain,
 and the whole vast fabric might re-ascend,
 Phoenix-like, from its elements. Wherefore,
 let us, after all, prize bubbles and the
 philosophy thereof. Let each man go on
 blowing his own, provided he does not hinder
 his brother from doing likewise; and pro-
 vided, further, that while being loyal to his
 own vocation, he does not plume himself
 upon it to the extent of being left without a
 wholesome human admiration for the bubbles
 blown by other men. That way lies egoistic
 conceit, which engenders narrowness and
 kills charity; and with the former and
 without the latter, what man's soul is worth
 a moment's purchase? It is surely a bubble
 of which one may charitably enough observe
 that, in the interest of human nature, it
 cannot pass too soon into that infinite void,
 within which even a Shakespeare himself
 must at last disappear—

Like a bright exhalation in the evening,
 And no man see him more.