

## Shakespeare Lectures (with Angel Foundation)

**May 16** Introduction to Shakespeare in England beginning with *Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare*, and learning assorted sonnets by heart from Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*. Then at Wimbledon College (Jesuit high school) reading plays of Shakespeare in class, distributing parts among boys, required to learn set speeches (purple passages) by heart. Memory of four plays in particular, two comedies, two tragedies. The comedies, *The Merchant of Venice* and *As You Like It*.

e.g. From MV, Portia. "The quality of mercy is not strained,/ It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven/ Upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed./ It blesseth him that gives and him that takes."

From AL, Duke Senior. "This our life, exempt from public haunt,/ Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,/ Sermons in stones, and good in everything." Also Jaques. "All the world's a stage,/ And all the men and women merely players./ They have their exits and their entrances,/ And one man in his time plays many parts,/ His acts being seven ages."

The tragedies, *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*, from first to last.

e.g. From M, Macbeth. "Is this a dagger that I see before me,/ The handle toward my hand? Come let me clutch thee!/ I have thee not, and yet I see thee still./ Art thou not, fatal vision sensible/ To feeling as to sight? Or art thou but/ A dagger of the mind, a false creation?" Again Macbeth. "Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow/ Creeps in this petty pace from day to day/ Till the last syllable of recorded time,/ And all our yesterdays have lighted fools/ The way to dusty death."

From H. Hamlet, "To be, or not to be, that is the question,/ Whether tis nobler in the mind to suffer/ The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,/ Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,/ And by opposing end them? To die, to sleep, no more.../ To die, to sleep,/ To sleep, perchance to dream." Also from the beginning, "But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue!" to the end, "The rest is silence."

Then from entrance into SJ 1943 emphasis on the Greek and Latin classics till entrance into Oxford University, Campion Hall 1950, changing to English 1952 (for Japan). Beginning with paper on Shakespeare, reading and writing on all his plays, plus plays of the Elizabeth and Jacobean ages (according to his dramatic career, 1590-1610).

Opening attention drawn to speech of Claudio in *Measure for Measure*, pleading for life. "Ay but to die, and go we know not where,/ To lie in cold obstruction and to rot,/ This sensible warm motion to become/ A kneaded clod, and the delighted spirit,/ To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside/ In thrilling region of thick-ribbed ice... Tis too horrible!"