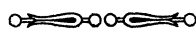


# THE MODERN SCHOOLMAN

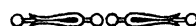
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## The Future of Tragedy

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THAT tragedy has fallen to low estate is a fact of which every serious observer is acutely conscious. We look back to her glorious epiphany in the Age of Pericles, to her retreat during the Middle Ages, her tawdry emergence in the Renaissance, her magnificent reincarnation in the days of Shakespeare and Racine, and then—her slow descent to slatternly days with us. Melpomene ragged in the streets excites a wistfulness for her restoration that has of late found scattered expression, sometimes with remedial suggestions that inspire hope.

More constructive than anything of the kind in recent years was an article by Mr. F. McEachran, "The Roots of Tragedy," which first appeared in *The Nineteenth Century and After* in July, 1929, and was later reprinted in *The Bookman*. Based on a foundation offered by Humanism in America, as expounded by Professor Babbitt, and em-

phasizing the dignity that Humanism attaches to man, this article could beget courage, at least in those students of tragedy who regard the Humanist movement without hostility.

There was some hope, too, in an essay by Mr. Alan Reynolds Thompson which, under the title "The Dilemma of Modern Tragedy," appeared in 1930 in *Humanism and America*, edited by Professor Foerster. This paper stressed the inadequacy of a naturalistic age to produce tragedy, placing the naturalist poet squarely between the horns of his dilemma: to be honest, and at the same time to be sublime. Mr. Thompson suggested a way out through Humanism. But he left one unsatisfied with a solution based insecurely, one felt, on the assumption that admiration is the essential tragic emotion, to be aroused by the spectacle of human will-power manifested heroically.