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tershire. "I do see the bottom of Justice Shallow," he crows, regarding him throughout with a diverting but total lack of respect; but it may be doubted if he does, or ever sees him quite as we do. Shallow is a braggart and a liar: he is the sort of old gentleman who will never stop showing off the (probably fictitious) wildnesses of his youth: his roguishness is at moments hardly to be further borne. Yet Shakespeare uses his tiresome reminiscences, his inconsequential patter, and the cavernous interjections of Cousin Silence, to create an extraordinary atmosphere of leisure, kindness, and the ripeness of late afternoon sunshine in an orchard of slightly over-flushed apples—a maturity and tolerance quite unknown to any other

clowns and butts in all literature. So that it comes about that we think of Shallow and Silence as forever contented and content in their own comic but lovely world.

Selected Shakespeare

LISTENING to "Capulet," in the BBC series of vignettes of Shakespeare's characters, I was undecided about the success of such specialised programmes. For whom are they intended? The ordinary listener, the lover of Shakespeare, or the student of drama? It is a dangerous business to choose, out of such a play as *Romeo and Juliet*, only those passages which relate to one particular character. It may produce, instead of the living picture which is intended, a pedantic study reminiscent of

the methods used in our youth when Shakespeare was "done" at school, and done to death in most cases. It reveals, too, that often the poet necessarily failed to make certain characters completely comprehensive (the plays are long enough already, without allowing time for complete pictures of all characters), and that he left certain omissions to be filled in by the combined commonsense of audience and actors. It is one more proof of the immortality of the plays that they withstand such selective editing as is given them in this series. What modern playwright would pass the test of having only one character's scenes dissected from the play and delivered by means of radio and a running BBC commentary?

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