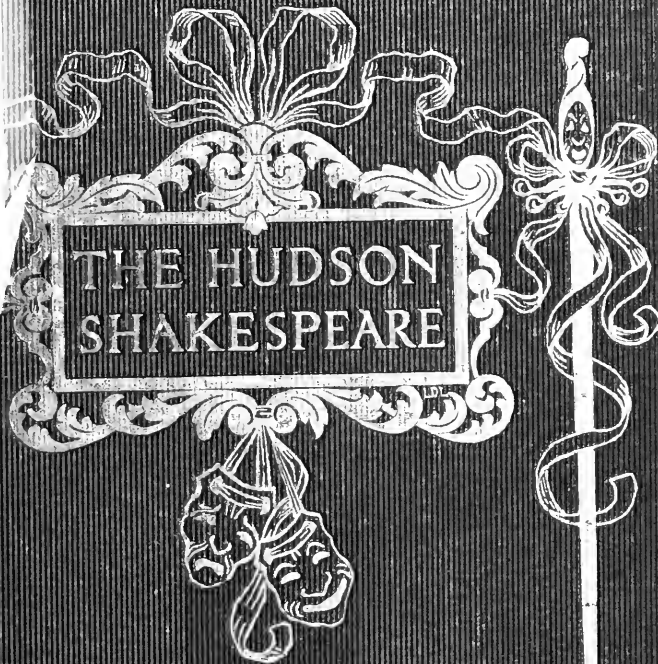


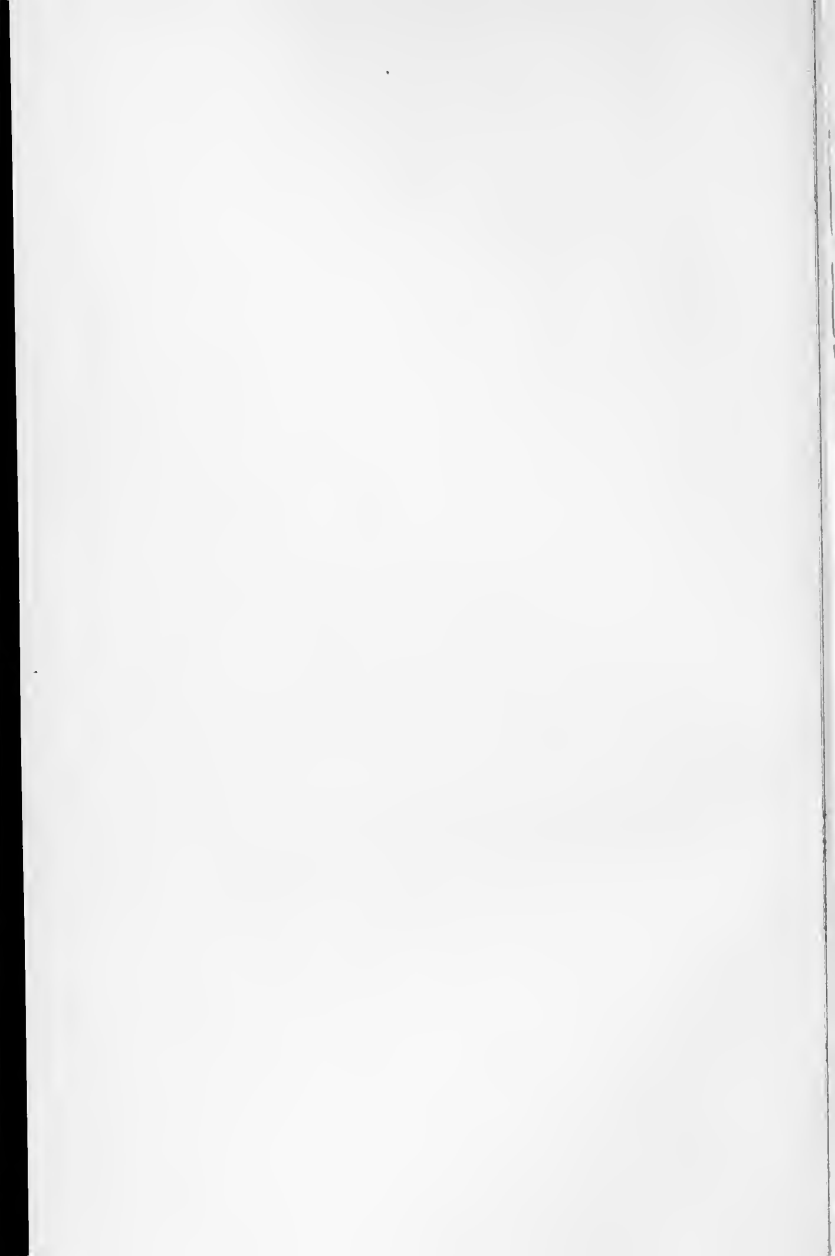
UNIVERSITY OF ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE



3 1761 01866222 1

THE HUDSON
SHAKESPEARE

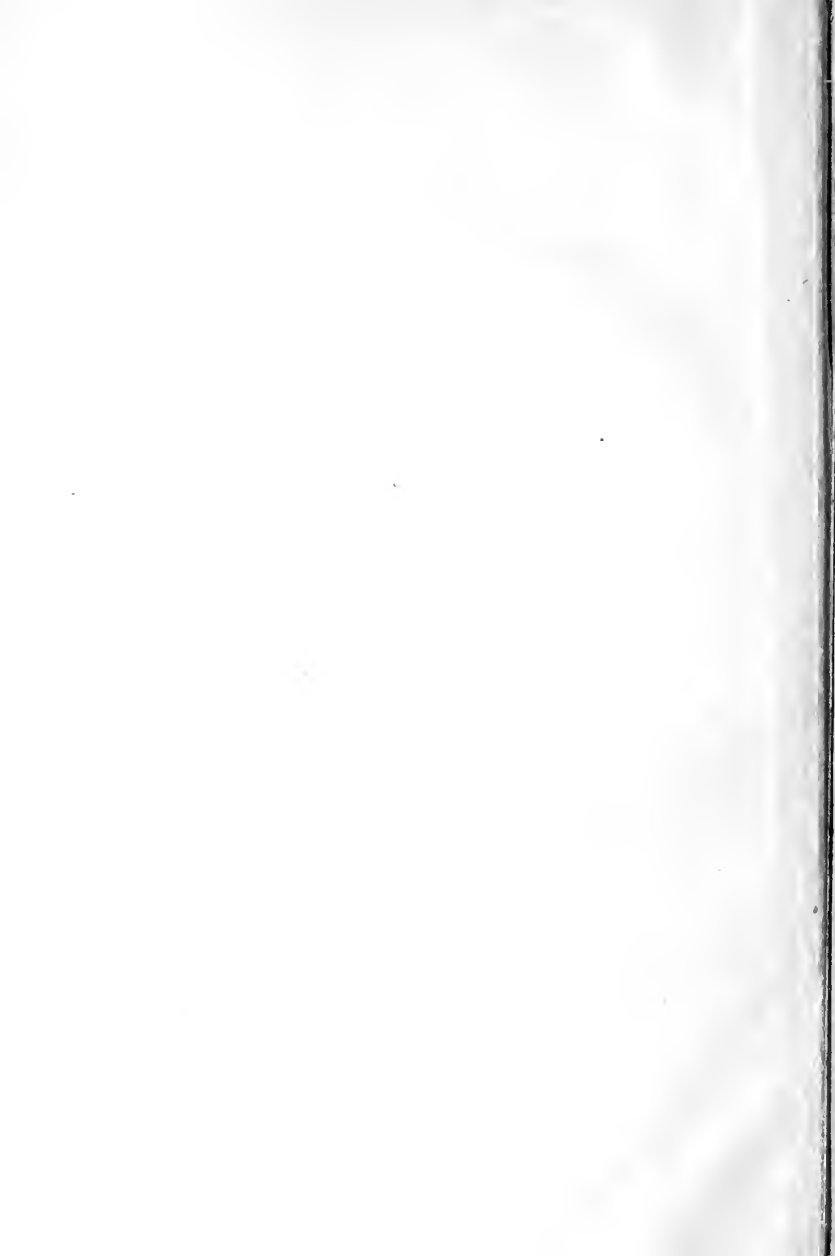




Library of Congress

1869









Macb. "I've done the deed. Didst thou not hear a noise?"
Lady M. "I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry."

THE

COMPLETE WORKS

OF

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

WITH

A LIFE OF THE POET, EXPLANATORY FOOT-NOTES, CRITICAL
NOTES, AND A GLOSSARIAL INDEX.

Harvard Edition.

BY THE

REV. HENRY N. HUDSON, LL.D.

IN TWENTY VOLUMES.

VOL. XVII.

BOSTON, U.S.A.

PUBLISHED BY GINN & COMPANY

1899

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1881, by
HENRY N. HUDSON,
in the office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

MACBETH.

FIRST printed in the folio of 1623. On the 8th of November, that year, it was registered at the Stationers' by Blount and Jaggard, as one of the plays "not formerly entered to other men."

The text of this drama has come down to us in a state far from satisfactory. Though not so badly printed as some other plays in the same volume, for instance, *All's Well that Ends Well* and *Coriolanus*, still it has a number of very troublesome passages. In several cases, the errors are of such a nature that we can hardly refer them to any other than a phonographic origin. On this point, the learned editors of the Clarendon edition observe as follows: "Probably it was printed from a transcript of the author's manuscript, which was in great part not copied from the original, but written to dictation. This is confirmed by the fact that several of the most palpable blunders are blunders of the ear, and not of the eye."

The minute and searching criticism of our time has made out, almost, if not altogether, beyond question, that considerable portions of *Macbeth* were not written by Shakespeare. I have been very slow and reluctant to admit this conclusion: but the evidence, it seems to me, is not to be withstood. It is, moreover, highly probable, to say the least, that few of the scenes, perhaps none, have reached us altogether in the form they received from the Poet's hand. But, as this matter is to be discussed under the heading "Shakespeare and Middleton," and as the lines judged not to be Shakespeare's are asterized in this edition, it need not be enlarged upon here.

The date of the composition has been variously argued and concluded. Until a recent period, there was nothing but internal evidence at hand for settling the date. Proceeding upon

this, Malone and Chalmers agreed upon the year 1606 as the *probable* time of the writing. That the composition was subsequent to the union of the English and Scottish crowns, was justly inferred from what the hero says in his last interview with the Weird Sisters: "And some I see, that *twofold balls* and *treble sceptres* carry." James the First came to the throne of England in March, 1603; but the two crowns were not *formally* united, at least the union was not proclaimed, till October, 1604.

Our earliest authentic notice of *Macbeth* is from one Simon Forman, M.D., an astrologer, quack, and dealer in the arts of magic, who kept a sort of diary which he entitled *The Book of Plays and Notes thereof*. In 1836 the manuscript of this diary was discovered in the Ashmolean Museum, and a portion of its contents published. Forman gives a somewhat minute and particular account of the plot and leading incidents of the drama, as he saw it played at the Globe theatre on Saturday the 20th of April, 1610. The passage is too long for my space; but it is a very mark-worthy circumstance, that from the way it begins, and from the wording of it, we should naturally infer that what now stands as the first scene of the play, then made no part of the performance. The passage opens thus: "In Macbeth, at the Globe, 1610, the 20th of April, Saturday, there was to be observed, first, how Macbeth and Banquo, two noblemen of Scotland, riding through a wood, there stood before them three women, faries or nymphs, and saluted Macbeth, saying three times unto him, Hail," &c.

It is highly probable, to say the least, that the tragedy was then fresh from the Poet's hand, and was in its first course of performance. Some arguments, indeed, or seeming arguments, have been adduced, inferring the play to have been written three or four years earlier; but I can see no great force in them. On the other hand, it appears that Forman had long been an habitual frequenter of play-houses; and it seems nowise likely that one so eager in quest of novelties would either have missed the play, had it been put upon the stage before, or have made so special a notice of it, but that he then saw it for the first time. Nor have the characteristics of the work itself any thing to say against the date in question; those portions of it that have the

clearest and most unquestionable impress of Shakespeare's hand being in his greatest, richest, most idiomatic style.

The story of Macbeth, as it lived in tradition, had been told by Holinshed, whose *Chronicles* first appeared in 1577, and by George Buchanan, the learned preceptor of James the First, who has been termed the Scotch Livy, and whose *History of Scotland* came forth in 1582. The main features of the story, so far as it is adopted by the Poet, are the same in both these writers, save that Buchanan represents Macbeth to have merely dreamed of meeting the Weird Sisters, and of being hailed by them successively as Thane of Angus, Thane of Murray, and as King. Holinshed was Shakespeare's usual authority in matters of British history. In the present case the Poet shows no traces of obligation to Buchanan, unless, which is barely possible, he may have taken a hint from the historian, where the latter, speaking of Macbeth's reign, says, "Certain of our writers here relate many idle things which I omit, as being fitter for Milesian fables or *for the theatre* than for sober history." A passage which, as showing the author's care for the truth of what he wrote, perhaps should make us wary of trusting too much in later writers, who would have us believe that, a war of factions breaking out, Duncan was killed in battle, and Macbeth took the crown by just and lawful title. And it is considerable that both Hume and Lingard acquiesce in the old account which represents Macbeth to have murdered Duncan, and usurped the throne.

According to the history, Malcolm, King of Scotland, had two daughters, Beatrice and Doda, severally married to Abanath Crinen and to Sinel, Thanes of the Isles and of Glamis, by whom each had a son named Duncan and Macbeth. The former succeeded his grandfather in the kingdom: and, he being of a soft and gentle disposition, his reign was at first very quiet and peaceable, but afterwards, by reason of his slackness, was greatly harassed with troubles and seditions, wherein his cousin, who was valiant and warlike, did great service to the State.

I condense the main particulars of the historic matter. After narrating the victory of the Scottish generals over the rebels and invaders, the chronicler proceeds in substance as follows:

Macbeth and Banquo were on their way to Forres, where the King then lay; and, as they were passing through the fields alone, three women in strange and wild attire suddenly met them; and, while they were rapt with wonder at the sight, the first said, "All hail, Macbeth, Thane of Glamis"; the second, "Hail, Macbeth, Thane of Cawdor"; the third, "Hail, Macbeth, that hereafter shalt be King." Then said Banquo, "What manner of women are you, that to my fellow here, besides high offices, ye assign the kingdom, but promise nothing to me?" "Yes," said the first, "we promise greater things to thee: for he shall reign indeed, but shall have no issue to succeed him; whereas thou indeed shalt not reign, but from thee shall spring a long line of kings." Then the women immediately vanished. At first the men thought this was but a fantastical illusion, insomuch that Banquo would call Macbeth king in jest, and Macbeth in like sort would call him father of many kings. But afterwards the women were believed to be the Weir Sisters; because, the Thane of Cawdor being condemned for treason, his lands and titles were given to Macbeth. Whereupon Banquo said to him jestingly, "Now, Macbeth, thou hast what two of the Sisters promised; there remaineth only what the other said should come to pass." And Macbeth began even then to devise how he might come to the throne, but thought he must wait for time to work his way, as in the former preferment. But when, shortly after, the King made his oldest son Prince of Cumberland, thereby in effect appointing him successor, Macbeth was sorely troubled thereat, as it seemed to cut off his hope; and, thinking the purpose was to defeat his title to the crown, he studied to usurp it by force. Encouraged by the words of the Weir Sisters, and urged on by his wife, who was "burning with unquenchable desire to bear the name of queen," he at length whispered his design to some trusty friends, and, having a promise of their aid, slew the King at Inverness; then got himself proclaimed king, and forthwith went to Scone, where, by common consent, he was invested after the usual manner.

The circumstances of the murder, as set forth in the play, were taken from another part of the history, where Holinshed relates how King Duff, being the guest of Donwald and his wife

in their castle at Forres, was there murdered. The story ran as follows : King Duff having retired for the rest of the night, his two chamberlains, as soon as they saw him well a-bed, came forth, and fell to banqueting with Donwald and his wife, who had prepared many choice dishes and drinks for their rear-supper ; wherewith they so gorged themselves, that their heads no sooner got to the pillow than they were so fast asleep that the chamber might have been removed without waking them. Then Donwald, goaded on by his wife, though in heart he greatly abhorred the act, called four of his servants, whom he had already framed to the purpose with large gifts ; and they, entering the King's chamber, cut his throat as he lay asleep, and carried the body forth into the fields. In the morning, a noise being made that the King was slain, Donwald ran thither with the watch, as though he knew nothing of it, and, finding cakes of blood in the bed and on the floor, forthwith slew the chamberlains as guilty of the murder.

The body of Duncan was conveyed to Colmekill, and there laid in a sepulchre amongst his predecessors, in the year 1040. Malcolm and Donalbain, the sons of Duncan, for fear of their lives fled into Cumberland, where Malcolm remained till Saint Edward recovered England from the Danish power. Edward received Malcolm with most friendly entertainment, but Donalbain passed over into Ireland, where he was tenderly cherished by the King of that land

Macbeth, after the departure of Duncan's sons, used great liberality towards the nobles of the realm, thereby to win their favour ; and, when he saw that no man went about to trouble him, he set his whole endeavour to maintain justice, and to punish all enormities and abuses which had chanced through the feeble administration of Duncan. He continued governing the realm for the space of ten years in equal justice ; but this was but a counterfeit zeal, to purchase thereby the favour of the people. Shortly after, he began to show what he was, practising cruelty instead of equity. For the prick of conscience caused him ever to fear, lest he should be served with the same cup as he had ministered to his predecessor. The words, also, of the Weird Sisters would not out of his mind ; which, as they promised him

the kingdom, did likewise promise it at the same time to the posterity of Banquo. He therefore desired Banquo and his son named Fleance to come to a supper that he had prepared for them; but hired certain murderers to meet them without the palace as they returned to their lodgings, and there to slay them. Yet it chanced, by the benefit of the dark night, that, though the father was slain, the son escaped that danger; and afterwards, having some inkling how his life was sought no less than his father's, to avoid further peril he fled into Wales.

After the slaughter of Banquo, nothing prospered with Macbeth. For every man began to doubt his own life, and durst hardly appear in the King's presence; and as there were many that stood in fear of him, so likewise stood he in fear of many, in such sort that he began to make those away whom he thought most able to work him any displeasure. At length he found such sweetness in putting his nobles to death, that his thirst after blood might nowise be satisfied. For, first, they were rid out of the way whom he feared; then, his coffers were enriched by their goods, whereby he might the better maintain a guard of armed men about him, to defend his person from them whom he had in any suspicion.

To the end he might the more safely oppress his subjects, he built a strong castle on the top of a high hill called Dunsinane. This castle put the realm to great expense, before it was finished; for all the stuff necessary to the building could not be brought up without much toil and business. But Macbeth, being determined to have the work go forward, caused the thanes of each shire within the realm to come and help towards the building, each man his course about. At last, when the turn fell to Macduff, Thane of Fife, he sent workmen with all needful provision, and commanded them to show such diligence, that no occasion might be given for the King to find fault with him for not coming himself: which he refused to do for fear lest the King should lay violent hands upon him, as he had done upon divers others.

Shortly after, Macbeth, coming to behold how the work went forward, was sore offended because he found not Macduff there, and said, "I perceive this man will never obey my commands till he be ridden with a snaffle; but I shall provide enough for

him." Nor could he afterwards abide to look upon Macduff, either because he thought his puissance over-great, or else because he had learned of certain wizards, in whose words he put great confidence, that he ought to take heed of Macduff. And surely he had put Macduff to death, but that a certain witch, in whom he had great trust, had told him he should never be slain by a man born of any woman, nor be vanquished till the wood of Birnam came to the castle of Dunsinane. By this prophecy Macbeth put all fear out of his heart, supposing he might do what he would. This vain hope caused him to do many outrageous things, to the grievous oppression of his subjects.

At length Macduff, to avoid peril of life, purposed with himself to pass into England, to procure Malcolm to claim the crown of Scotland. But this was not so secretly devised, but that Macbeth had knowledge thereof: for he had, in every nobleman's house, one sly fellow or other in fee with him, to reveal all that was said or done within the same. Immediately then, being informed where Macduff went, he came hastily with a great power into Fife, and forthwith besieged the castle where Macduff dwelt, trusting to find him therein. They that kept the house opened the gates without any resistance, mistrusting no evil. Nevertheless Macbeth most cruelly caused the wife and children of Macduff, with all others whom he found in the castle, to be slain. He also confiscated the goods of Macduff, and proclaimed him traitor; but Macduff had already escaped out of danger, and gone into England to Malcolm, to try what he could do, by his support, to revenge the slaughter of his wife, his children, and other friends.

Holinshed then proceeds to relate, at considerable length, the interview between Macduff and Malcolm at the English Court, setting forth the particulars of their talk in the same order, and partly in the same words, as we have them in the Poet's text.

Soon after, Macduff, repairing to the borders of Scotland, addressed letters with secret dispatch to the nobles of the realm, declaring how Malcolm was confederate with him, to come hastily into Scotland to claim the crown. In the meantime, Malcolm gained such favour at King Edward's hands, that old Siward, Earl of Northumberland, was appointed with ten thousand men

to go with him into Scotland, to support him in this enterprise. After this news was spread abroad in Scotland, the nobles drew into several factions, the one taking part with Macbeth, the other with Malcolm.

When Macbeth perceived his enemies' power to increase by such aid as came to them out of England, he fell back into Fife, purposing to abide at the Castle of Dunsinane, and to fight with his enemies, if they meant to pursue him. Malcolm, following hastily after Macbeth, came the night before the battle to Birnam wood; and, when his army had rested awhile there, he commanded every man to get a bough of some tree of that wood in his hand, as big as he might bear, and to march forth therewith in such wise, that on the next morning they might come closely within view of his enemies.

On the morrow, when Macbeth beheld them coming in this sort, he first marvelled what the matter meant; but in the end remembered himself, that the prophecy, which he had heard long before, of the coming of Birnam wood to Dunsinane-Castle, was likely now to be fulfilled. Nevertheless he brought his men in order of battle, and exhorted them to do valiantly; howbeit his enemies had scarcely cast from them their boughs, when Macbeth, perceiving their numbers, betook him straight to flight. Macduff pursued him with great hatred, till Macbeth, perceiving that he was hard at his back, leaped beside his horse, saying, "Thou traitor, what meaneth it that thou shouldst thus in vain follow me, who am not appointed to be slain by any creature that is born of a woman: come on, therefore, and receive thy reward"; and therewithal he lifted up his sword, thinking to have slain him. But Macduff, quickly leaping from his horse, answered, with his naked sword in his hand, "It is true, Macbeth; and now shall thy insatiable cruelty have an end: for I am even he that thy wizards told thee of, who was never born of my mother, but ripped out of her womb": therewithal he stepped unto him, and slew him. Then, cutting his head from his shoulders, he set it upon a pole, and brought it to Malcolm. This was the end of Macbeth, after he had reigned seventeen years over the Scottishmen.

MACBETH.



PERSONS REPRESENTED.

DUNCAN, King of Scotland.	YOUNG SIWARD, his Son.
MALCOLM, } his Sons.	SEYTON, an Officer attending on
DONALBAIN, }	Macbeth.
MACBETH, } Generals of his Army.	Son to Macduff.
BANQUO, }	An English Doctor.
MACDUFF, }	A Scotch Doctor.
LENNOX, }	A Soldier. A Porter.
ROSS, }	An old Man.
MENTEITH, }	
ANGUS, }	LADY MACBETH.
CAITHNESS, }	LADY MACDUFF.
FLEANCE, Son to Banquo.	Gentlewomen attending on Lady
SIWARD, Earl of Northumberland,	Macbeth.
General of the English Forces.	HECATE, and Witches.
Lords, Gentlemen, Officers, Soldiers, Murderers, Attendants, Messengers, and Apparitions.	

SCENE.— *In the end of the fourth Act, in England; through the rest of the Play, in Scotland.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.— *An Open Place.*

Thunder and lightning. Enter three Witches.

1 Witch. When shall we three meet again
In thunder, lightning, and in rain?

- 2 *Witch*. When the hurlyburly's¹ done,
When the battle's lost and won.
- 3 *Witch*. That will be ere th' set of Sun.
- 1 *Witch*. Where the place?
- 2 *Witch*. Upon the heath.
- 3 *Witch*. There to meet with Macbeth.
- *1 *Witch*. I come, graymalkin!
- *2 *Witch*. Paddock² calls. — Anon!³
- All*. Fair is foul, and foul is fair:⁴
Hover through the fog and filthy air. [Exeunt.

¹ The origin and sense of this word are given by Peacham in his *Garden of Eloquence*, 1577: "Onomatopœia, when we invent, devise, fayne, and make a name imitating the sound of that it signifyeth, as *hurlyburly*, for an *uprore* and *tumultuous stirre*." Thus also in Holinshed: "There were such *hurlie hurlies* kept in every place, to the great danger of overthrowing the whole state of all government in this land."

² *Graymalkin* is an old name for a *gray cat*. — *Paddock* is *toad*; and *toad-stools* were called *paddock-stools*. — In the old witchcraft lore, witches are commonly represented as having attendants called familiars, which were certain animals, such as dogs, cats, toads, rats, mice, and some others. So in *The Witch of Edmonton*, by Rowley, Dekker, and Ford, ii. 1:

I have heard old beldams
Talk of familiars in the shape of mice,
Rats, ferrets, weasels, and I wot not what,
That have appear'd, and suck'd, some say, their blood.

And in that play, mother Sawyer, the Witch, is attended by a black dog, or rather by a devil in that shape, who executes her commands. Generally, in fact, the familiar was supposed to be a devil assuming the animal's shape, and so waiting on the witch, and performing, within certain limits, whatever feats of mischief she might devise; the witch to pay his service with the final possession of her soul and body.

³ *Anon!* was the usual answer to a call; meaning *presently* or *immediately*. Here the toad, serving as familiar, is supposed to make a signal for the Witches to leave; and *Anon!* is the reply.

⁴ This is probably meant to signify the moral confusion or inversion which the Witches represent. They *love* elemental wars; and "fair is foul, and foul is fair" to them in a moral sense as well as in a physical.

SCENE II. — *A Camp near Forres.*

Alarums within. Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN.

LENNOX, *with Attendants, meeting a bleeding Sergeant.*

* *Dun.* What bloody man is that? He can report,

*As seemeth by his plight, of the revolt

*The newest state.¹

* *Mal.* This is the sergeant,²

*Who, like a good and hardy soldier, fought

*'Gainst my captivity. — Hail, brave friend!

*Say to the King thy knowledge of the broil

*As thou didst leave it.

* *Serg.* Doubtful it stood;

*As two spent swimmers, that do cling together

*And choke their art. The merciless Macdonwald —

Worthy to be a rebel, for, to that,³

The multiplying villainies of nature

Do swarm upon him — from the Western Isles

Of⁴ kerns and gallowglasses is supplied;

*And Fortune, on his damnèd quarrel⁵ smiling,

¹ "The *newest state*" is the *latest* condition.

² *Sergeants*, in ancient times, were not what are now so called; but men performing feudal military service, in rank next to esquires.

³ To that *end*, or for that purpose; namely, to make him a rebel.

⁴ *Of*, here, has the force of *with*, the two words being often used indiscriminately. — Touching the men here referred to, Holinshed has the following: "Out of Ireland in hope of the spoile came no small number of *Kernes* and *Gallowglasses*, offering gladlie to serve under him, whither it should please him to lead them." Barnabe Rich thus describes them in his *New Irish Prognostication*: "The *Gallowglas* succeedeth the Horseman, and he is commonly armed with a scull, a shirt of maile, and a gallowglas-axe. The *Kernes* of Ireland are next in request, the very drosse and scum of the country, a generation of villaines not worthy to live."

⁵ *Quarrel* was often used for *cause*. So in Bacon's essay *Of Marriage and Single Life*: "Wives are young men's mistresses, companions for middle age, and old men's nurses; so as a man may have a *quarrel* to marry when he will." See, also, the quotation from Holinshed in scene 4, note 8.

- *Show'd like a rebel's whore : but all's too weak ;⁶
 *For brave Macbeth, — well he deserves that name, —
 *Disdaining fortune, with his brandish'd steel,
 *Which smoked with bloody execution,
 *Like valour's minion
 *Carved out his passage till he faced the slave ;
 *And ne'er shook hands,⁷ nor bade farewell to him,
 *Till he unseam'd him from the nave to th' chops,⁸
 *And fix'd his head upon our battlements.
 **Dun.* O valiant cousin ! worthy gentleman !
 **Serg.* As whence the Sun gives his reflection⁹
 *Shipwrecking storms and direful thunders break ;
 *So from that spring whence comfort seem'd to come
 *Discomfort swells. Mark, King of Scotland, mark :
 *No sooner justice had, with valour arm'd,
 *Compell'd these skipping kerns to trust their heels,
 *But the Norweyan lord, surveying vantage,
 *With furbish'd arms¹⁰ and new supplies of men,
 *Began a fresh assault.
 **Dun.* Dismay'd not this

⁶ Here, "is supplied" and "is too weak" are instances of the present with the sense of the perfect, and mixed up irregularly with preterite forms.

⁷ To *shake hands with* a thing, as the phrase was formerly used, is to *take leave of* it. So Sir Thomas Browne, in his *Religio Medici*, 1643: "I have *shaken hands with* delight in my warm blood and canicular days; I perceive I do anticipate the vices of age;" &c.

⁸ *Nave* for *navel*, probably. Such a sword-stroke upwards seems rather odd, but queer things have often happened in mortal combats. So in Nash's *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, 1594: "Then from the *nave* to the *throat* at once he ript old Priam." Also in Shadwell's *Libertine*, 1676: "I will rip you from the *nave* to the *chin*."

⁹ *Reflection* is here put, apparently, for *radiance* or *light*. So that the place "whence the Sun gives his reflection" is the heavens or the sky. See Critical Notes.

¹⁰ That is, arms gleaming with *unstained brightness*; *fresh*. — *Surveying vantage* is *watching his opportunity*.

*Our captains,¹¹ Macbeth and Banquo?

**Serg.*

Yes;

*As sparrows eagles, or the hare the lion.

*If I say sooth, I must report they were

*As cannons overcharged with double cracks; ¹²

*So they redoubled strokes upon the foe :

*Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds,

*Or memorize ¹³ another Golgotha,

*I cannot tell.

*But I am faint, my gashes cry for help.

**Dun.* So well thy words become thee as thy wounds ;

*They smack of honour both. — Go get him surgeons. —

*Who comes here ?

[*Exit Sergeant, attended.*]

**Enter Ross.*

**Mal.* The worthy Thane of Ross.

**Len.* What haste ¹⁴ looks through his eyes ! So should
he look

*That seems ¹⁵ to speak things strange.

**Ross.*

God save the King !

**Dun.* Whence camest thou, worthy thane ?

**Ross.*

From Fife, great King ;

Where the Norway banners flout the sky,

And fan our people cold.¹⁶ *Norway himself,

¹¹ Here *captains* was probably meant to be a trisyllable, as if it were spelt *capitains*. We have the word used repeatedly so.

¹² *Overcharged* with double *cracks* is, as we should say, *loaded* with double *charges*; *crack* being put for that which makes the crack.

¹³ To *memorize* is to *make famous or memorable*. *Except* is here equivalent to *unless*. "Unless they meant to make the spot as famous as Golgotha, I cannot tell *what they meant*."

¹⁴ We should say, "What a haste." See vol. xiv. page 29, note 13.

¹⁵ It appears that to *seem* was sometimes used with the exact sense of to *will* or to *mean*. So, afterwards, in scene 5: "Which fate and metaphysical aid doth *seem* to have thee crown'd withal."

¹⁶ "The banners, proudly reared aloft and fluttering in the wind, seemed

- *With terrible numbers,
 *Assisted by that most disloyal traitor,
 *The Thane of Cawdor, 'gan a dismal conflict ;
 *Till that Bellona's bridegroom, lapp'd in proof,¹⁷
 Confronted him with self caparisons,¹⁸
 Point against point rebellious, arm 'gainst arm,
 Curbing his lavish spirit :¹⁹ *and, to conclude,
 *The victory fell on us ;—
 **Dun.* Great happiness !
 **Ross.* — that²⁰ now
 *Sweno, the Norway's king, craves composition ;
 *Nor would we deign him burial of his men
 *Till he disbursèd, at Saint Colme's-inch,²¹
 *Ten thousand dollars to our general use.
 **Dun.* No more that Thane of Cawdor shall deceive
 *Our bosom interest. Go pronounce his present death,
 *And with his former title greet Macbeth.
 **Ross.* I'll see it done.

to mock or insult the sky,—'laughing banners'; while the sight of them struck chills of dread and dismay into our men." *Flout* and *fan* for *flouted* and *fanned*; instances of what is called "the historic present." See note 6.

¹⁷ "Lapp'd in proof" is covered with impenetrable armour, or "armour of proof," as it is called.—Bellona was the old Roman goddess of war; the companion and, as some thought, the sister of Mars. Steevens laughed at the Poet's ignorance in making her the wife of Mars; whereas he plainly makes her the bride of Macbeth.

¹⁸ *Caparisons* for *arms*, offensive and defensive; the trappings and furniture of personal fighting. Here, as often, *self* is equivalent to *self-same*. So that the meaning is, Macbeth confronted the rebel Cawdor with just such arms as Cawdor himself had. It was Scot against Scot. See Critical Notes.

¹⁹ That is, checking or repressing his *reckless* or *prodigal* during.

²⁰ *That* was continually used with the force of *so that*, or *inasmuch that*.—*Composition* for *armistice* or *terms of peace*; as in the phrase to *compound a quarrel*.

²¹ *Colme's* is here a dissyllable. *Colme's Inch*, now called *Inchcomb*, is a small island, lying in the Firth of Edinburgh, with an abbey upon it dedicated to St. Columb. *Inch* or *inse*, in Erse, signifies an island.

**Dun.* What he hath lost noble Macbeth hath won.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. — *A Heath.*

Thunder. Enter the three Witches.

**1 Witch.* Where hast thou been, sister?

**2 Witch.* Killing swine.

**3 Witch.* Sister, where thou?

**1 Witch.* A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap,
*And munch'd, and munch'd, and munch'd. *Give me,*
quoth I :

**Aroint thee!*¹ *witch!* the rump-fed ronyon² cries.

*Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' the 'Tiger :

*But in a sieve I'll thither sail,

*And, like a rat without a tail,³

*I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do.⁴

**2 Witch.* I'll give thee a wind.

**1 Witch.* Thou art kind.⁵

¹ *Aroint thee!* is an old exorcism against witches; meaning, apparently, *away! stand off! or be gone!* The etymology of the word is uncertain.

² *Ronyon* is said to be from *ronger*, French, which signifies to *gnaw* or *corrode*. It thus carries the sense of *scurvy* or *mangy*. — *Rump-fed* is, probably, fed on broken meats or the refuse of wealthy tables. Some, however, take it to mean *pampered*; fed on the best pieces.

³ Scot, in his *Discovery of Witchcraft*, 1584, says it was believed that witches "could sail in an egg-shell, a cockle or muscle-shell through and under the tempestuous seas." And in the *Life of Doctor Fian, a notable Sorcerer*: "All they together went to sea, each one in a riddle or cive, and went in the same very substantially, with flaggons of wine making merrie, and drinking by the way in the same riddles or cives." — It was the belief of the times that, though a witch could assume the form of any animal she pleased, the *tail* would still be wanting.

⁴ *I'll do* is a threat of gnawing a hole through the hull of the ship so as to make her spring a-leak.

⁵ This free gift of a wind is to be taken as an act of sisterly kindness; witches being thought to have the power of *selling* winds.

*3 *Witch.* And I another.

*1 *Witch.* I myself have all the other ;

*And the very points they blow,

*All the quarters that they know

*I' the shipman's card.⁶

*I will drain him dry as hay :

*Sleep shall neither night nor day

*Hang upon his penthouse lid ;⁷

*He shall live a man forbid :⁸

*Weary sev'n-nights nine times nine

*Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine :⁹

*Though his bark cannot be lost,

*Yet it shall be tempest-toss'd.

*Look what I have.

*2 *Witch.* Show me, show me.

*1 *Witch.* Here I have a pilot's thumb,

*Wreck'd as homeward he did come.

[*Drum within.*

*3 *Witch.* A drum, a drum !

*Macbeth doth come.

**All.* The Weird Sisters,¹⁰ hand in hand,

⁶ The seaman's *chart*, which shows all the points of the compass, as we call them, marked down in the radii of a circle.

⁷ "Penthouse lid" is eyelid protected as by a penthouse roof. So in Drayton's *David and Goliath*: "His brows like two steep *penthouses* hung down over his *eyelids*."

⁸ To live *forbid* is to live *under a curse* or an *interdict*; pursued by an evil fate. — *Sev'n-night* is a *week*.

⁹ To *peak* is to *grow thin*. This was supposed to be wrought by means of a waxen figure. Holinshed, describing the means used for destroying King Duff, says that the witches were found roasting an image of him before the fire; and that, as the image wasted, the King's body broke forth in sweat, while the words of enchantment kept him from sleep.

¹⁰ *Weird* is from the Saxon *wyrd*, and means the same as the Latin *fatum*; so that *weird sisters* is the *fatal sisters*, or the *sisters of fate*. Gawin Douglas, in his translation of Virgil, renders *Parcæ* by *weird sisters*. Which agrees well with Holinshed in the passage which the Poet no doubt had in

- *Posters¹¹ of the sea and land,
- *Thus do go about, about :
- *Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,
- *And thrice again to make up nine.¹²
- *Peace ! the charm's wound up.

Enter MACBETH *and* BANQUO.

Macb. So foul and fair a day¹³ I have not seen.

Ban. How far is't call'd to Forres? What are these
So wither'd, and so wild in their attire,
That look not like th' inhabitants o' the Earth,
And yet are on't?— Live you? or are you aught
That man may question? You seem to understand me,
By each at once her choppy finger laying
Upon her skinny lips: you should be women,
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
That you are so.

Macb. Speak, if you can : what are you?

1 Witch. All hail, Macbeth ! hail to thee, Thane of Glamis !

2 Witch. All hail, Macbeth ! hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor !

3 Witch. All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter !

Ban. Good sir, why do you start, and seem to fear
Things that do sound so fair?— I' the name of truth,
Are ye fantastical,¹⁴ or that indeed
Which outwardly ye show? My noble partner

his eye: "The common opinion was, that these women were either the *weird sisters*, that is (as ye would say) the *goddesses of destinie*, or else some nymphs or feiries, indued with knowledge of prophesie by their necromantical science, because everie thing came to passe as they had spoken."

¹¹ *Posters* is *rapid travellers* ; going with a postman's speed.

¹² Here the Witches perform a sort of incantation by joining hands, and dancing round in a ring, three rounds for each. Odd numbers and multiples of odd numbers, especially three and nine, were thought to have great magical power in thus winding up a charm.

¹³ A day fouled with storm, but brightened with victory.

¹⁴ That is, "Are ye imaginary beings, creatures of *fantasy*?"

You greet with present grace and great prediction
 Of noble having and of royal hope,¹⁵
 That he seems rapt withal : to me you speak not.
 If you can look into the seeds of time,
 And say which grain will grow, and which will not,
 Speak, then, to me, who neither beg nor fear
 Your favours nor your hate.

1 *Witch.* Hail !

2 *Witch.* Hail !

3 *Witch.* Hail !

1 *Witch.* Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.

2 *Witch.* Not so happy, yet much happier.

3 *Witch.* Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none.

All Three. So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo !

Banquo and Macbeth, all hail !

Macb. Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more :
 By Sinel's death I know I'm Thane of Glamis ;¹⁶
 But how of Cawdor ? the Thane of Cawdor lives,
 A prosperous gentleman ;¹⁷ and to be king
 Stands not within the prospect of belief,
 No more than to be Cawdor. Say from whence
 You owe¹⁸ this strange intelligence ? or why
 Upon this blasted heath you stop our way
 With such prophetic greeting ? Speak, I charge you.

[*Witches vanish.*]

¹⁵ Here, again, *that* has the force of *so that*.—*Present grace* refers to *noble having*, and *great prediction* to *royal hope* ; and the Poet often uses *having* for *possession*. A similar distribution of terms occurs a little after : " Who neither beg nor fear your favours nor your hate."

¹⁶ Macbeth was the son of Sinel, Thane of Glamis, so that this title was rightfully his by inheritance.

¹⁷ We have a strange discrepancy here. In the preceding scene, Macbeth is said to have met Cawdor face to face in the ranks of Norway : he must therefore have known him to be a rebel and traitor ; yet he here describes him in terms quite inconsistent with such knowledge.

¹⁸ To *owe* for to *own*, to *have*, to *possess*, occurs continually.

Ban. The earth hath bubbles, as the water has,
And these are of them. Whither are they vanish'd?

Macb. Into the air; and what seem'd corporal melted
As breath into the wind. Would they had stay'd!

Ban. Were such things here as we do speak about?
Or have we eaten on the insane root¹⁹
That takes the reason prisoner?

Macb. Your children shall be kings.

Ban. You shall be king.

Macb. And Thane of Cawdor too: went it not so?

Ban. To th' selfsame tune and words. Who's here?

Enter ROSS and ANGUS.

Ross. The King hath happily received, Macbeth,
The news of thy success: and, when he reads
Thy personal venture in the rebels' fight,
His wonders and his praises do contend
What should be thine or his:²⁰ silenced with that,
In viewing o'er the rest o' the selfsame day,
He finds thee in the stout Norway ranks,
Nothing afeard of what thyself didst make.²¹

¹⁹ "The insane root" is *henbane* or *hemlock*. So in Batman's *Commentary on Bartholome de Proprietate Rerum*: "Henbane is called *insana*, mad, for the use thereof is perillous; for if it be eate or dronke it breedeth madnesse, or slow lykenesse of sleepe. Therefore this hearb is commonly called mirilfdium, for it taketh away wit and reason." And in Greene's *Never too Late*: "You have gazed against the sun, and so blemished your sight, or else you have eaten of the roots of *hemlock*, that makes men's eyes conceit unseen objects." — *On* and *of* were used indifferently in such cases.

²⁰ The meaning probably is, "His wonders and his praises are so earnest and enthusiastic, that they seem to be debating or raising the question whether what is his ought not to be thine, — whether you ought not to be in his place." Such a thought, or *seeming* thought, on the King's part, would naturally act upon Macbeth as a further spur to his ambition. But that is a thought which the King cannot breathe aloud; it would be a sort of treason to the State and to himself; he is *silenced* by it. See Critical Notes.

²¹ That is, "not at all afraid of the death which you were dealing upon the enemy." The Poet often uses *nothing* thus as a strong negative.

Strange images of death. As thick as tale
 Came post with post ;²² and every one did bear
 Thy praises in his kingdom's great defence,
 And pour'd them down before him.

Ang. We are sent
 To give thee, from our royal master, thanks ;
 Only to herald thee into his sight,
 Not pay thee.

Ross. And, for an earnest of a greater honour,
 He bade me, from him, call thee Thane of Cawdor :
 In which addition,²³ hail, most worthy thane !
 For it is thine.

Ban. [*Aside.*] What, can the Devil speak true ?

Macb. The Thane of Cawdor lives : why do you dress me
 In borrow'd robes ?

Ang. Who was the thane lives yet ;
 But under heavy judgment bears that life
 Which he deserves to lose. Whether he was combined
 With those of Norway, or did line²⁴ the rebel
 With hidden help and vantage, or that with both
 He labour'd in his country's wreck, I know not ;
 But treasons capital, confess'd and proved,
 Have overthrown him.

Macb. [*Aside.*] Glamis, and Thane of Cawdor !
 The greatest is behind. — [*To Ross and ANG.*] Thanks for
 your pains. —
 [*Aside to BAN.*] Do you not hope your children shall be kings,

²² Meaning, "messengers came as *fast* as one can *count*." The use of *thick* for *fast* occurs repeatedly. So we have *speaks thick* used of one who talks so fast that his words tread on each other's heels. — The Poet often has to *tell* also for to *count*. And we still say "keep *tally*" for "keep *count*." So Milton in *L'Allegro*. "And every shepherd *tells* his *tale*"; that is, *counts* the *number* of his sheep, or to see whether the number is full.

²³ Here, as often, *addition* is *title*, mark of *distinction*.

²⁴ To *line*, here, is to *strengthen*. Often so. See vol. xii. page 42, note 1.

When those that gave the *Thane of Cawdor* to me
Promised no less to them?

Ban. [*Aside to MACB.*] That, trusted home,²⁵
Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,
Besides the Thane of Cawdor. But 'tis strange :
And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
The instruments of darkness tell us truths ;
Win us with honest trifles, to betray's
In deepest consequence.²⁶ —
Cousins, a word, I pray you.

Macb. [*Aside.*] Two truths are told,
As happy prologues to the swelling act
Of the imperial theme.²⁷ — I thank you, gentlemen. —
[*Aside.*] This supernatural soliciting
Cannot be ill ; cannot be good : if ill,
Why hath it given me earnest of success,
Commencing in a truth? I'm Thane of Cawdor :
If good, why do I yield to that suggestion²⁸
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair,
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,
Against the use of nature? Present fears²⁹

²⁵ *Home is thoroughly or to the uttermost.* See vol. xv. page 85, note 1.

²⁶ *Betray's for betray us.* The Poet has many such contractions. — It is nowise likely that Shakespeare was a reader of Livy; yet we have here a striking resemblance to a passage in that author, Book xxviii. 42, 4: "An Syphaci Numidisque credis? satis sit semel creditum; non semper temeritas est felix, et *fraus fidem in parvis sibi præstruit ut, quum operæ pretium sit, cum mercede magna fallat.*"

²⁷ *Happy is auspicious*, like the Latin *felix*; *swelling is grand, imposing*; and *act is drama*. Thus the image is of the stage, with an august drama of kingly state to be performed; the inspiring prologue has been spoken, and the glorious action is about to commence.

²⁸ The use of *suggestion for temptation* was common. — Macbeth construes the "prophetic greeting" into an instigation to murder, and accepts it as such, though while doing so he shudders at the conception.

²⁹ *Fears for objects of fear, dangers or terrors*; the effect for the cause.

Are less than horrible imaginings :
 My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
 Shakes so my single state of man,³⁰ that function
 Is smother'd in surmise ; and nothing is
 But what is not.³¹

Ban. Look, how our partner's rapt.

Macb. [*Aside.*] If chance will have me King, why,
 chance may crown me,

Without my stir.

Ban. New honours come upon him,
 Like our strange garments, cleave not to their mould
 But with the aid of use.

Macb. [*Aside.*] Come what come may,
 Time and the hour³² runs through the roughest day.

Ban. Worthy Macbeth, we stay upon your leisure.³³

³⁰ "My thought, though it is only of a murder in imagination or fantasy, so disturbs my feeble manhood of reason." The Poet repeatedly uses *single* thus for *weak* or *feeble*.

³¹ That is, *facts* are lost sight of; he *sees* nothing but what is unreal, nothing but the spectres of his own fancy. So, likewise, in the preceding clause: the mind is crippled, disabled for its proper function or office by the apprehensions and surmises that throng upon him. Macbeth's conscience here acts through his imagination, sets it all on fire; and he is terror-stricken, and lost to the things before him, as the elements of evil within him gather and fashion themselves into the wicked purpose. Of this wonderful development of character Coleridge justly says: "So surely is the guilt in its germ anterior to the supposed cause and immediate temptation." And again: "Every word of his soliloquy shows the early birth-date of his guilt. He wishes the end, but is irresolute as to the means; conscience distinctly warns him, and he lulls it imperfectly."

³² "Time and the hour" is an old reduplicate phrase occurring repeatedly in the writers of Shakespeare's time. The Italians have one just like it, — *il tempo e l'ore*. The sense of the passage is well explained by Heath: "The advantage of time and of seizing the favourable hour, whenever it shall present itself, will enable me to make my way through all obstruction and opposition. Every one knows the Spanish proverb, — 'Time and I against any two.'"

³³ "Stay upon your leisure" is stay *for* or *await* your leisure.

Macb. Give me your favour : my dull brain was wrought
 With things forgotten.³⁴ Kind gentlemen, your pains
 Are register'd where every day I turn
 The leaf to read them.³⁵ Let us toward the King. —
 [*Aside to BAN.*] Think upon what hath chanced ; and, at
 more time,
 The interim having weigh'd it, let us speak
 Our free hearts³⁶ each to other.

Ban. [*Aside to MACB.*] Very gladly.

Macb. [*Aside to BAN.*] Till then, enough. — Come,
 friends. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV. — *Forres. A Room in the Palace.*

Flourish. Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, LENNOX,
 and Attendants.

Dun. Is execution done on Cawdor? Are not
 Those in commission yet return'd?

Mal. My liege,
 They are not yet come back. But I have spoke
 With one that saw him die ; who did report,
 That very frankly he confess'd his treasons,
 Implor'd your Highness' pardon, and set forth
 A deep repentance : nothing in his life
 Became him like the leaving it ; he died
 As one that had been studied in his death¹
 To throw away the dearest thing he owed,
 As 'twere a careless trifle.²

³⁴ "Was exercised or absorbed in trying to recall forgotten things." A pretext put forth to hide the true cause of his trance of guilty thought.

³⁵ He means that he has noted them down on the tablets of his memory. See vol. xiv. page 180, notes 20 and 21.

³⁶ "Speak our *free* hearts" is speak our hearts *freely*.

¹ That is, well instructed in the art of dying.

² Meaning a trifle *not worth caring for.* As for *as if.* Often so.

Dun. There's no art
To find the mind's construction in the face :
He was a gentleman on whom I built
An absolute trust. —

Enter MACBETH, BANQUO, ROSS, *and* ANGUS.

O worthiest cousin !
The sin of my ingratitude even now
Was heavy on me : thou'rt so far before,
That swiftest wing of recompense is slow
To overtake thee.³ Would thou hadst less deserved,
That the proportion both of thanks and payment
Might have been mine !⁴ only I've left to say,
More is thy due than more than all can pay.

Macb. The service and the loyalty I owe,
In doing it, pays itself. Your Highness' part
Is to receive our duties ; and our duties
Are to your throne and state children and servants ;⁵
Which do but what they should by doing every thing
Safe toward your love and honour.⁶

Dun. Welcome hither :
I have begun to plant thee, and will labour
To make thee full of growing. — Noble Banquo,
That hast no less deserved, nor must be known

³ The meaning is, "too slow to overtake thee."

⁴ "That my return of thanks and payment might have been *proportionable* to thy deserts, or *in due proportion* with them."

⁵ *Duties* is here put, apparently, for the faculties and labours of duty; the meaning being, "All our works and forces of duty are children and servants to your throne and state." Hypocrisy and hyperbole are apt to go together: and so here Macbeth overacts the part of loyalty, and tries how high he can strain up his expression of it.

⁶ I am not quite clear whether this means "With a firm and *sure* purpose to have you loved and honoured," or, "So as to merit and *secure* love and honour from you." Perhaps both; as the Poet is fond of condensing two or more meanings into one expression.

No less to have done so, let me infold thee
And hold thee to my heart.

Ban. There if I grow,
The harvest is your own.

Dun. My plenteous joys,
Wanton in fulness, seek to hide themselves
In drops of sorrow.⁷ — Sons, kinsmen, thanes,
And you whose places are the nearest, know,
We will establish our estate upon
Our eldest, Malcolm ; whom we name hereafter
The Prince of Cumberland :⁸ which honour must
Not unaccompanied invest him only,
But signs of nobleness, like stars, shall shine
On all deservers. — From hence to Inverness,
And bind us further to you.

Macb. The rest is labour, which⁹ is not used for you.
I'll be myself the harbinger, and make joyful
The hearing of my wife with your approach :
So humbly take my leave.

Dun. My worthy Cawdor !

**Macb.* [*Aside.*] The Prince of Cumberland ! that is a
step,

*On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap,

⁷ The gentle and amiable sovereign means that his joys swell up so high as to overflow in tears. The Poet has several like expressions.

⁸ So in Holinshed: "Duncan, having two sons, made the elder of them, called Malcolm, Prince of Cumberland, as it was thereby to appoint him his successor in his kingdom immediately after his decease. Macbeth sorely troubled herewith, for that he saw by this means his hope sore hindered, began to take counsel how he might usurpe the kingdom by force, having a just quarrel so to doe, (as he tooke the matter,) for that Duncane did what in him lay to defraud him of all manner of title and claime, which he might in time to come pretend, unto the crowne." Cumberland was then held in fief of the English crown.

⁹ *Which* refers to *rest*, not to *labour*. "Even the repose, which is not taken for your sake, is a labour to me."

*For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires ;¹⁰

*Let not light see my black and deep desires :

*The eye wink¹¹ at the hand ; yet let that be,

*Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see. [Exit.

Dun. True, worthy Banquo :¹² he is full so valiant ;

And in his commendations I am fed ;

It is a banquet to me. Let's after him,

Whose care is gone before to bid us welcome :

It is a peerless kinsman. [Flourish. Exeunt.

SCENE V. — *Inverness. A Room in MACBETH'S Castle.*

Enter Lady MACBETH, reading a letter.

Lady M. [Reads.] *They met me in the day of success ; and I have learn'd by the perfectest report, they have more in them than mortal knowledge. When I burn'd in desire to question them further, they made themselves air, into which they vanish'd. Whiles I stood rapt in the wonder of it, came missives¹ from the King, who all-hail'd me Thane of Cawdor ; by which title, before, these Weird Sisters saluted me, and referr'd me to the coming on of time, with 'Hail, king that shalt be ! This have I thought good to deliver thee, my dearest partner of greatness, that thou mightst not lose the dues of rejoicing, by being ignorant of what greatness is promised thee. Lay it to thy heart, and farewell.*

¹⁰ We are not to understand from this that the present scene takes place in the night. Macbeth is contemplating night as the time when the murder is to be done, and his appeal to the stars has reference to that.

¹¹ "Let the eye wink" is the meaning. *Wink at* is *encourage* or *prompt*.

¹² During Macbeth's last speech Duncan and Banquo were conversing apart, he being the subject of their talk. The beginning of Duncan's speech refers to something Banquo has said in praise of Macbeth.

¹ *Missives* for *messengers*. So in *Antony and Cleopatra*, ii. 2: "And with taunts did gibe my *missive* out of audience."

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be
 What thou art promised. Yet do I fear thy nature ;
 It is too full o' the milk of human kindness
 To catch the nearest way : thou wouldst be great ;
 Art not without ambition, but without
 The illness² should attend it : what thou wouldst highly,
 That wouldst thou holily ; wouldst not play false,
 And yet wouldst wrongly win : thou'dst have, great Glamis,
 That which cries, *Thus thou must do*,³ if thou have it, —
 An act which rather thou dost fear to do
 Than wishest should be undone. Hie thee hither,
 That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,
 And chastise with the valour of my tongue
 All that impedes thee from the golden round
 Which fate and metaphysical⁴ aid doth seem
 To have thee crown'd withal. —

Enter a Messenger.

What is your tidings?

Mess. The King comes here to-night.

Lady M. Thou'rt mad to say it :

Is not thy master with him? who, were't so,
 Would have inform'd for preparation.

Mess. So please you, it is true. Our thane is coming :

² *Illness* in the sense, not only of *wickedness*, but of *remorselessness* or *hardness of heart*. — "Macbeth," says Coleridge, "is described by Lady Macbeth so as at the same time to reveal her own character. Could he have every thing he wanted, he would rather have it innocently; ignorant, alas, how many of us are! that he who wishes a temporal end for itself does in truth will the means; and hence the danger of indulging fancies."

³ Editors differ as to how much is here uttered by the voice which Lady Macbeth imagines speaking to her husband. See Critical Notes.

⁴ *Metaphysical* for *supernatural*. So in Florio's *World of Words*, 1598: "Metafisico, one that professeth things supernaturall." And in Minshew's *Spanish Dictionary*, 1599: "Metafisica, things supernaturall, metaphisiekcs." — For this use of *seem*, see page 15, note 15.

One of my fellows had the speed of him ;
 Who, almost dead for breath, had scarcely more
 Than would make up his message.

Lady M.

Give him tending ;

He brings great news. —

[*Exit Messenger.*

The raven himself is hoarse

'That croaks the fatal entrance ⁵ of Duncan
 Under my battlements. — Come, you spirits
 That tend on mortal ⁶ thoughts, unsex me here ;
 And fill me from the crown to th' toe top-full
 Of direst cruelty ! make thick my blood ;
 Stop up th' access and passage to remorse, ⁷
 That no compunctious visitings of nature
 Shake my fell purpose, nor break peace between
 The effect and it ! ⁸ Come to my woman's breasts,
 And take my milk for gall, ⁹ you murdering ministers,
 Wherever in your sightless substances

⁵ Meaning, probably, the raven *has made himself hoarse with croaking*, or has croaked so loud and long as to become hoarse, over the fatal entrance, &c. The figure of speech called *prolepsis*. Shakespeare has other allusions to the ominousness of the raven's croak ; as he also has many such *anticipative* expressions. See vol. xiii. page 188, note 1.

⁶ *Mortal* and *deadly* were synonymous in Shakespeare's time. Later in this play we have "the *mortal* sword," and "*mortal* gashes."—The spirits here addressed are thus described in Nashe's *Pierce Penniless* : "The second kind of devils, which he most employeth, are those northern *Martii*, called the *spirits of revenge*, and the authors of massacres, and seedsmen of mischief ; for they have commission to incense men to rapines, sacrilege, theft, murder, wrath, fury, and all manner of cruelties."

⁷ *Remorse* here means *pity*, the relentings of compassion ; as it generally does in the writings of Shakespeare's time.

⁸ *Peace* is of course *broken* between the effect and the purpose when the two stand in conflict or at odds with each other ; that is, when the purpose remains unexecuted. See Critical Notes.

⁹ "Take away my milk, and give me gall instead," is probably the meaning. In her fiery thirst of power, Lady Macbeth feels that her woman's heart is unequal to the calls of her ambition, and she would fain exchange her "milk of human kindness," for a fiercer infusion.

You wait on nature's mischief ! Come, thick night,
 And pall thee ¹⁰ in the dunnest smoke of Hell,
 That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
 Nor Heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,¹¹
 To cry *Hold, hold!* —

Enter MACBETH.

Great Glamis ! worthy Cawdor !
 Greater than both, by the all-hail hereafter !
 Thy letters have transported me beyond
 This ignorant present, and I feel now
 The future in the instant.¹²

Macb. My dearest love,
 Duncan comes here to-night.

Lady M. And when goes hence ?

Macb. To-morrow, — as he purposes.

Lady M. O, never
 Shall Sun that morrow see !
 Your face, my thane, is as a book where men
 May read strange matters : to beguile the time,
 Look like the time ; ¹³ bear welcome in your eye,

¹⁰ "*Thick night*" is explained by "light *thickens*," later in the play. We still have the phrase "*thick darkness*." — To *pall* is to *robe*, to *shroud*, to *wrap* : from the Latin *pallium*, a *cloak* or *mantle*.

¹¹ The metaphor of darkness being a blanket wrapped round the world, so as to keep the Divine Eye from seeing what Lady Macbeth lugs and expects to have done, is just such a one as it was fitting for the boldest of poets to put into the mouth of the boldest of women. The old poets, however, were rather fond of representing night in some such way. So in *The Faerie Queene*, i. 4, 44: "Now whenas darksome night had all displayd her coleblacke *curtein* over brightest sbye." And in Milton's *Ode on the Passion* : "Befriend me, night ; over the pole thy thickest *mantle* throw."

¹² *Instant* in the Latin sense of *instans* ; that which is pressing. The enthusiasm of her newly-kindled expectation quickens the dull present with the spirit of the future, and gives to hope the life and substance of fruition.

¹³ *Time* is here put for its contents, or what occurs in time. It is a time of full-hearted welcome and hospitality ; and such are the looks which Macbeth is urged to counterfeit.

Your hand, your tongue : look like the innocent flower,
 But be the serpent under't. He that's coming
 Must be provided for : and you shall put
 This night's great business into my dispatch ;

*Which shall to all our nights and days to come

*Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom.

Macb. We will speak further.

**Lady M.* Only look up clear ;

*To alter favour¹⁴ ever is to fear :

*Leave all the rest to me. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI. — *The Same.* Before MACBETH'S Castle.

Hautboys and torches. Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONAL-
 BAIN, BANQUO, LENNOX, MACDUFF, ROSS, ANGUS, and
 Attendants.

Dun. This castle hath a pleasant seat ; the air
 Nimble and sweetly recommends itself
 Unto our gentle senses.¹

Ban. The guest of Summer,
 The temple-haunting martlet, does approve,²
 By his loved mansionry, that the heavens' breath
 Smells wooingly here : no jutting, frieze,
 Buttress, nor coign of vantage,³ but this bird
 Hath made his pendent bed and procreant cradle :

¹⁴ *Favour* is *countenance*. — Lady Macbeth is here mad, or inspired, with a kind of extemporized ferocity, so that she feels herself able to perform without flinching the crime she has conceived, if her husband will only keep his face from telling any tales of their purpose.

¹ That is, "The air, by its purity and sweetness, attempers our senses to its own state, and so *makes* them gentle, or sweetens them into gentleness." Another proleptical form of speech. See page 30, note 5.

² *Approve* in the sense of *prove* simply, or *make evident*.

³ "Coigne of vantage" is a convenient nook or corner; *coigne* being a corner-stone at the exterior angle of a building. So in *Coriolanus*, v. 4: "See you yond coigne o' the Capital, yond corner-stone?"

Where they most breed and haunt, I have observed
The air is delicate.⁴

Enter Lady MACBETH.

Dun. See, see, our honour'd hostess! —
The love that follows us sometime⁵ is our trouble,
Which still we thank as love. Herein I teach you
How you shall bid God 'ield us⁶ for your pains
And thank us for your trouble.

Lady M. All our service
In every point twice done, and then done double,
Were poor and single⁷ business, to contend
Against⁸ those honours deep and broad wherewith
Your Majesty loads our House: for those of old,
And the late dignities heap'd up to⁹ them,
We rest your hermits.¹⁰

Dun. Where's the Thane of Cawdor?
We coursed him at the heels, and had a purpose
To be his purveyor: ¹¹ but he rides well;

⁴ The subject of this quiet and easy conversation gives that repose so necessary to the mind after the tumultuous bustle of the preceding scenes, and perfectly contrasts the scene of horror that succeeds. This also is frequently the practice of Homer, who, from the midst of battles and horrors, relieves and refreshes the mind of the reader, by introducing some quiet rural image or picture of familiar domestic life. — REYNOLDS.

⁵ *Sometime* and *sometimes* were used indiscriminately.

⁶ "God *yield* us," that is, *reward* us. — To *bid* is here used in its old sense of to *pray*. So to *bid* the beads is to pray through the rosary. See vol. x. page 193, note II. — The kind-hearted monarch means that his love is what puts him upon troubling them thus, and therefore they will be grateful for the pains he causes them.

⁷ Here, again, *too* is understood before *poor*. *Single*, again, also, in the sense of *weak* or *small*. See page 24, note 30, and page 25, note 3.

⁸ "To contend against" here means to *viz* with, to *counterpoise* or *match*.

⁹ Here, as often, *to* has the force of *in addition to*.

¹⁰ That is, "We *remain* as hermits or *beadsmen* to pray for you."

¹¹ *Purveyor* is, properly, one sent before, to provide food and drink for some person or party that is to follow.

And his great love, sharp as his spur, hath holp¹² him
To his home before us. Fair and noble hostess,
We are your guest to-night.

Lady M. Your servants ever
Have theirs, themselves, and what is theirs, in compt,¹³
To make their audit at your Highness' pleasure,
Still to return your own.

Dun. Give me your hand ;
Conduct me to mine host : we love him highly,
And shall continue our graces towards him.
By your leave, hostess.¹⁴

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII. — *The Same.* *A Lobby in MACBETH'S Castle.*

Hautboys and torches. Enter, and pass over, a Sewer,¹ and
divers Servants with dishes and service. Then enter
MACBETH.

Macb. If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly :² if th' assassination
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch,
With his surcease, success ;³ that but this blow

¹² *Holp* is the old preterite of *help*. So in The Psalter, generally.

¹³ "*Theirs*, and *what is theirs*," means their *kindred and dependants*, and *whatever* belongs to them *as property*. — *In compt* is ready to answer, subject to account or reckoning. So in *Othello*, v. 2: "When we shall meet *at compt*, this look of thine will hurl my soul from Heaven, and fiends will snatch at it"; *at compt* for the day of reckoning, or the Judgment-Day.

¹⁴ "By your leave" is probably meant as a respectful prologue to a kiss.

¹ An officer so called from his placing the dishes on the table. From the French *essayeur*, used of one who tasted each dish to show that there was no poison in the food.

² "If *all* were done when the murder is done, or if the mere doing of the deed were sure to finish the matter, then the quicker, the better."

³ That is, if the assassination could foreclose or shut off all sequent issues, and end with itself. *His* for *its*, referring to *assassination*. — *To trammel up* is to *entangle* as in a net. So Spenser has the noun in *The*

Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
 But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
 We'd jump⁴ the life to come. But in these cases
 We still have judgment here ; that⁵ we but teach
 Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
 To plague th' inventor : this even-handed justice
 Commends th' ingredients of our poison'd chalice
 To our own lips. He's here in double trust :
 First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
 Strong both against the deed ; then, as his host,
 Who should against his murderer shut the door,
 Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
 Hath borne his faculties⁶ so meek, hath been
 So clear in his great office, that his virtues
 Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against
 The deep damnation of his taking-off ;
 And pity, like a naked new-born babe
 Striding the blast, or Heaven's cherubin horsed
 Upon the sightless couriers⁷ of the air,
 Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
 That tears shall drown the wind. — I have no spur

Faerie Queene, iii. 9, 20 : " Her golden locks, that were in *trammels* gay up-bounden." — *Surcease* is, properly, a legal term, meaning the arrest or stay of a suit. So in Bacon's essay *Of Church Controversies* : " It is more than time that there were an end and *surcease* made of this immodest and deformed manner of writing," &c. — Here, as often, *success* probably has the sense of *sequel*, *succession*, or *succeeding events*. So that to *catch success* is to arrest and stop off all further outcome, or all entail of danger.

⁴ To *jump* is to *risk*, to *hazard*. Repeatedly so.

⁵ *That*, in old English, often has the force of *since*, or *inasmuch as*.

⁶ *Faculties* in an official sense ; honours, dignities, prerogatives, whatever pertains to his regal seat.

⁷ " Sightless couriers of the air " means the same as what the Poet elsewhere calls " the viewless winds." — The metaphor of tears drowning the wind is taken from what we sometimes see in a thunder-shower ; which is ushered in by a high wind ; but, when the rain gets to falling hard, the wind subsides, as if strangled by the water. See vol. xvi. page 290, note 7.

To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself,⁸
And falls on th' other side. —

Enter Lady MACBETH.

How now ! what news ?

Lady M. He has almost supp'd : why have you left the
chamber ?

Macb. Hath he ask'd for me ?

Lady M. Know you not he has ?

Macb. We will proceed no further in this business :
He hath honour'd me of late ; and I have bought
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
Which would⁹ be worn now in their newest gloss,
Not cast aside so soon.

Lady M. Was the hope drunk
Wherein you 'dress'd yourself?¹⁰ hath it slept since ?
And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
At what it did so freely ? From this time
Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard
To be the same in thine own act and valour
As thou art in desire ? Wouldst thou lack that
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,

⁸ *Self* here stands for *aim* or *purpose* ; as we often say, such a one *overshot himself*, that is, overshot his *mark* or *aim*.

⁹ *Would* for *should*. The two were often used indiscriminately.

¹⁰ Every student of Shakespeare knows that he often uses to *address* for to *make ready* or to *prepare*. And he repeatedly has the shortened form *'dress* in the same sense. See vol. xvi, page 221, note 29. From oversight of this, some strange comments have been made upon the present passage, as if it meant that Macbeth had *put on* hope as a *dress*. The meaning I take to be something thus : "Was it a drunken man's hope, *in the strength of which* you *made* yourself *ready* for the killing of Duncan ? and does that hope now wake from its drunken sleep, to shudder and turn pale at the preparation which it made so freely ?" In accordance with this explanation, the Lady's next speech shows that at some former time Macbeth had *been*, or had fancied himself, *ready* to *make* an opportunity for the murder.

And live a coward in thine own esteem,
 Letting *I dare not* wait upon *I would*,
 Like the poor cat i' the adage?¹¹

Macb. Pr'ythee, peace :

I dare do all that may become a man ;
 Who dares do more is none.

Lady M. What beast¹² was't, then,
 That made you break this enterprise to me ?
 When you durst do it, then you were a man ;
 And, to be more than what you were, you would
 Be so much more the man. Nor time nor place
 Did then adhere,¹³ and yet you would make both :
 They've made themselves, and that their fitness now
 Does unmake you. I've given suck, and know
 How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me :
 I would, while it was smiling in my face,
 Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,
 And dash'd the brains on't out, had I so sworn
 As you have done to this.¹⁴

¹¹ The adage of the cat is among Heywood's *Proverbs*, 1566: "The cat would eat fishes, and would not wet her feete."

¹² The word *beast* is exceedingly well chosen here: it conveys a stinging allusion to what Macbeth has just said: "If you dare do all that may become a *man*, then what *beast* was it that put this enterprise into your head?" See Critical Notes.

¹³ *Adhere* in the sense of *cohere*; that is, *consist* with the purpose. — This passage infers that the murdering of Duncan had been a theme of conversation between Macbeth and his wife long before the weird salutation. He was then for making a time and place for the deed; yet, now that they have made themselves to his hand, he is unmanned by them.

¹⁴ Lady Macbeth begins with acting a part which is really foreign to her; but which, notwithstanding, such is her energy of will, she braves out to issues so overwhelming, that her husband and many others believe it to be her own. It is said that Mrs. Siddons used to utter the closing words of this speech in a scream, as though scared from her propriety by the audacity of her own tongue. And I can well conceive how a spasmodic action of fear might lend to such a woman as Lady Macbeth an appearance of su-

Macb. If we should fail, —

Lady M. We fail.¹⁵

But screw your courage to the sticking-place,¹⁶
 And we'll not fail. When Duncan is asleep, —
 Whereto the rather shall his day's hard journey
 Soundly invite him, — his two chamberlains
 Will I with wine and wassail so convince,¹⁷
 That memory, the warder of the brain,
 Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason
 A limbeck only :¹⁸ when in swinish sleep
 Their drenchèd natures lie as in a death,
 What cannot you and I perform upon

perhuman or inhuman boldness. At all events, it seems clear enough that in this case her fierce vehemence of purpose rasps her woman's feelings to the quick; and the pang thence resulting might well utter itself in a scream.

¹⁵ The sense of this much-disputed passage I take to be simply this: "If we should fail, why, then, to be sure, we fail, and it is all over with us." So long as there is any hope or prospect of success, Lady Macbeth is for going ahead; and she has a mind to risk all and lose all, rather than let slip any chance of being queen. And why should she not be as ready to jump the present life in such a cause as her husband is to "jump the life to come"? See Critical Notes.

¹⁶ A metaphor from *screwing up* the cords of stringed instruments to the proper tension, when the peg remains fast in its *sticking-place*.

¹⁷ To *convince* is to *overcome* or *subdue*. — *Wassail* is an old word for *quaffing*, *carousing*, or drinking to one's health.

¹⁸ The language and imagery of this strange passage are borrowed from the distillery, as it was in Shakespeare's time. *Limbeck* is *alembic*, the cap of a still, into which the fumes rise before passing into the condenser. *Receipt* is *receptacle*, or *receiver*. The old anatomists divided the brain into three ventricles, in the hindmost of which, the cerebellum, the memory was posted like a *keeper* or sentinel to warn the reason against attack. When by intoxication the memory is converted to a fume, the sphere of reason will be so filled therewith as to be like the receiver of a still; and in this state of the man all sense or intelligence of what has happened will be suffocated. Such appears to be the meaning of the passage; which is far from being a felicitous one. The Poet elsewhere uses *fume* thus; as in *Antony and Cleopatra*, ii. 1: "Tie up the libertine in a field of feasts, keep his brain *fuming*."

Th' unguarded Duncan? what not put upon
His spongy¹⁹ officers, who shall bear the guilt
Of our great quell?²⁰

Macb. Bring forth men-children only ;
For thy undaunted mettle should compose
Nothing but males. Will it not be received,
When we have mark'd with blood those sleepy two
Of his own chamber, and used their very daggers,
That they have done't?

Lady M. Who dares receive it other,²¹
As we shall make our griefs and clamour roar
Upon his death?

Macb. I'm settled, and bend up
Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.
Away, and mock the time with fairest show :
False face must hide what the false heart doth know.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I. — *Inverness. Court of MACBETH'S Castle.*

Enter BANQUO, preceded by FLEANCE with a torch.

Ban. How goes the night, boy?

Fle. The Moon is down ; I have not heard the clock.

Ban. And she goes down at twelve.

Fle. I take't, 'tis later, sir.

Ban. Hold, take my sword. There's husbandry¹ in Heaven ;
Their candles are all out. Take thee that too. —

¹⁹ *Spongy* because they soak up so much liquor.

²⁰ *Quell* is *murder* ; from the Saxon *quellan*, to kill.

²¹ That is, "Who will dare to understand it otherwise?" — *As* is here equivalent to *since* or *seeing that*.

¹ The heavens are *economizing* their light. *Frugality* or *economy* is one of the old senses of *husbandry*. *Heaven* is here a collective noun.

A heavy summons lies like lead upon me,
 And yet I would not sleep. — Merciful powers,
 Restrain in me the cursèd thoughts that nature
 Gives way to in repose !²

Enter MACBETH, *and a Servant with a torch.*

Give me my sword. —

Who's there ?

Mach. A friend.

Ban. What, sir, not yet at rest? The King's a-bed :
 He hath been in unusual pleasure, and
 Sent forth great largess to your officers : ³
 This diamond he greets your wife withal,
 By th' name of most kind hostess ; and shut up ⁴
 In measureless content.

Mach. Being unprepared,
 Our will became the servant to defect ; ⁵
 Which else should free have wrought.

Ban. All's well.
 I dreamt last night of the three Weird Sisters :
 To you they've show'd some truth.

² It appears afterwards that Banquo has been dreaming of the Weird Sisters. He understands full well how their greeting may act as an incentive to crime, and shrinks with pious horror from the poison of such evil suggestions, and seeks refuge in prayer from the invasion of guilty thoughts even in his sleep. Herein his character stands in marked contrast with that of Macbeth, whose mind is inviting wicked thoughts, and catching eagerly at temptation, and revolving how he may work the guilty suggestions through into act.

³ *Officers* are those having in charge the various branches of household work, such as cook, butler, &c. ; as the several rooms used for those branches were called *offices*. See vol. x. page 145, note 12.

⁴ *Shut up* probably means *composed himself to rest*. The phrase may be a little quaint ; but I think it well expresses the act of closing one's mind to the cares and interests of the world.

⁵ A man may be said to be the servant of that which he cannot help : and Macbeth means that his will would have made ampler preparation, but that it was fettered by want of time.

Macb. I think not of them :
 Yet, when we can entreat an hour to serve,
 We'd spend it in some words upon that business,
 If you would grant the time.

Ban. At your kind'st leisure.

Macb. If you shall cleave to my consent,⁶ when 'tis,
 It shall make honour for you.

Ban. So I lose none
 In seeking to augment it, but still keep
 My bosom franchised, and allegiance clear,
 I shall be counsell'd.

Macb. Good repose the while !

Ban. Thanks, sir : the like to you !

[*Exit* BANQUO and FLEANCE.]

Macb. Go bid thy mistress, when my drink is ready,
 She strike upon the bell. Get thee to bed. — [*Exit* Servant.
 Is this a dagger which 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,
 Proceeding from the heat-oppressèd brain?
 I see thee yet, in form as palpable
 As this which now I draw.
 Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going ;
 And such an instrument I was to use.
 Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses,
 Or else worth all the rest : ⁷ I see thee still ;

⁶ Meaning, apparently, "If you will stick to my side, to what has my consent ; if you will tie yourself to my fortunes and counsel."

⁷ *Senses* is here used with a double reference, to the bodily organs of sense and the inward faculties of the mind. Either his eyes are deceived by his imaginative forces in being made to see that which is not, or else his

And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,
 Which was not so before. — There's no such thing :
 It is the bloody business which informs
 Thus to mine eyes. — Now o'er the one half-world
 Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
 The curtain'd sleep ; now witchcraft celebrates
 Pale Hecate's offerings ;⁸ and wither'd Murder,
 Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
 Whose howl's his watch,⁹ thus with his stealthy pace,
 With Tarquin's ravishing strides,¹⁰ towards his design
 Moves like a ghost. — Thou sure and firm-set earth,
 Hear not my steps which way they walk, for fear
 Thy very stones prate of my whereabout,¹¹
 And take the present horror from the time,
 Which now suits with it.¹² *Whiles I threat, he lives :
 *Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.

[*A bell rings.*

other senses are at fault in not being able to find the reality which his eyes behold. — *Dudgeon*, next line, is the handle or haft of the dagger : *gouts* is drops ; from the French *gouttes*.

⁸ That is, makes offerings or sacrifices to Hecate, who was the Queen of Hades, the patroness of all infernal arts, and of course the mistress of all who practised them ; here called *pale*, because, under the name of Diana, she was identified with the Moon.

⁹ *Watch* is here used, apparently, for *signal*. The figure is of the wolf acting as the sentinel of Murder, and his howl being the signal to give warning of approaching danger.

¹⁰ *Strides* did not always carry the idea of violence or noise, but was used in a sense coherent enough with *stealthy pace*. So in *The Faerie Queene*, iv. 8, 37 : "They passing forth kept on their readie way, with *casie* step so *soft* as foot could *stryde*."

¹¹ That is, "tell tales of where I have been," or "of my having been here." It seems to him as if the very stones might become apprehensive, divulge his dreadful secret, and witness against him.

¹² Macbeth would have nothing break through the universal silence that added such horror to the night, as well suited with the bloody deed he was about to perform. Burke, in his *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful*, observes, that "all general privations are great because they are terrible."

I go, and it is done ; the bell invites me. —
 Hear it not, Duncan ; for it is a knell
 That summons thee to Heaven or to Hell.

[*Exit.*]

Enter Lady MACBETH.

Lady M. That which hath made them drunk hath made
 me bold ;
 What hath quench'd them hath given me fire.¹³ Hark !
 Peace !
 It was the owl that shriek'd, the fatal bellman,
 Which gives the stern'st good-night.¹⁴ He is about it :
 The doors are open ; and the surfeited grooms
 Do mock their charge with snores : I've drugg'd their
 possets,
 That death and nature do contend about them,
 Whether they live or die.

Macb. [*Within.*] Who's there? what, ho !

Lady M. Alack, I am afraid they have awaked,
 And 'tis not done. Th' attempt and not the deed
 Confounds us.¹⁵ Hark ! I laid their daggers ready ;
 He could not miss 'em. Had he not resembled
 My father as he slept, I had done't.¹⁶ — My husband !

¹³ Lady Macbeth has fired her courage by drinking some wine ; but, while she is kindled by drink, the grooms are stupefied, "their possets" having been drugged.

¹⁴ The supposed ominousness of the owl's note is often alluded to by Shakespeare. The office of *bellman*, which the owl is here made to perform, is well explained in Webster's *Duchess of Malfi* : "I am the common bellman, that usually is sent to condemn'd persons the night before they suffer." Lady Macbeth of course regards Duncan as the condemned person to whom the "fatal bellman" gives "the stern'st good-night."

¹⁵ "The attempt *without* the deed *destroys* or *ruins* us." The Poet often uses *confound* with this meaning.

¹⁶ This little touch of nature is one of Shakespeare's most pregnant hints of character, and is enough of itself, I think, to upset the more common notion of Lady Macbeth. It tells us that, notwithstanding her appalling

Enter MACBETH.

Macb. I've done the deed. Didst thou not hear a noise?

Lady M. I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry.
Did not you speak?

Macb. When?

Lady M. Now.

Macb. As I descended?

Lady M. Ay.

Macb. Hark! Who lies i' the second chamber?

Lady M. Donalbain.

Macb. [*Looking on his hands.*] This is a sorry sight.

Lady M. A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.

Macb. There's one did laugh in's sleep, and one cried
Murder!

That they did wake each other: I stood and heard them:
But they did say their prayers, and address'd¹⁷ them
Again to sleep.

Lady M. There are two lodged together.

Macb. One cried *God bless us!* and *Amen!* the other,
As they had seen me with these hangman's hands,¹⁸
Listening their fear: I could not say *Amen*,
When they did say *God bless us!*

Lady M. Consider it not so deeply.

Macb. But wherefore could not I pronounce *Amen*?
I had most need of blessing, and *Amen*
Stuck in my throat.

Lady M. These deeds must not be thought

invocation to the "murdering ministers," her milk continues to be milk. And what a suggestive contrast it makes to the terrible audacity of thought and speech she has just displayed!

¹⁷ *Address'd* for *composed* or *prepared*. See page 36, note 10.

¹⁸ "As if they had seen me with these *butcher's* hands." *As for as if* is very frequent. — *Hangman* was used for *executioner* in general, whether the work was done with rope or steel: hence, when beheading was common, the word contracted the sense of *butcher*.

After these ways : so, it will make us mad.

Macb. Methought I heard a voice cry *Sleep no more!*

Macbeth does murder sleep; — the innocent sleep,
Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleave¹⁹ of care ;
The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great Nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast, —

Lady M. What do you mean?

Macb. Still it cried *Sleep no more!* to all the house :
Glamis hath murder'd sleep, and therefore Cazdor
Shall sleep no more, — Macbeth shall sleep no more!

Lady M. Who was it that thus cried? Why, worthy thane,
You do unbend your noble strength, to think
So brainsickly of things.²⁰ Go get some water,
And wash this filthy witness from your hand.
Why did you bring these daggers from the place?
They must lie there : go carry them, and smear
The sleepy grooms with blood.

Macb. I'll go no more :
I am afraid to think what I have done ;
Look on't again I dare not.

Lady M. Infirm of purpose,
Give me the daggers ! the sleeping and the dead
Are but as pictures ; 'tis the eye of childhood
That fears a painted devil.²¹ If he do bleed,

¹⁹ *Sleave* is an old name for soft floss silk, such as is used for weaving. So in Drayton's *Muses' Elysium* : " Grass as soft as *sleave* or sarcenet ever was." So that to "knit up the ravell'd sleave of care," is to compose and put in trim for use the soft silk that care has ravelled out or discomposed.

²⁰ *Brainsickly* is *insanely, crazily*. *Hamlet* has *brainish* in the same sense. — *To think* is equivalent to *in thinking* ; an instance of the infinitive used gerundively, or like the Latin *gerund*.

²¹ With her firm self-control, this bold woman, when awake, was to be moved by nothing but *facts* ; when her powers of self-control were unknit by sleep, then was the time for her to see things that were not, save in her own conscience.

I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal ;
 For it must seem their guilt.²² [*Exit. Knocking within.*]

Macb. Whence is that knocking?
 How is't with me, when every noise appals me ?
 What hands are here? ha ! they pluck out mine eyes !
 Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
 Clean from my hand? No ; this my hand will rather
 The multitudinous sea incarnadine,
 Making the green — one red.²³

Re-enter Lady MACBETH.

Lady M. My hands are of your colour, but I shame
 To wear a heart so white. [*Knocking within.*] I hear a
 knocking
 At the south entry : retire we to our chamber.
 A little water clears us of this deed :
 How easy is it, then ! Your constancy
 Hath left you unattended.²⁴ [*Knocking within.*] Hark ! more
 knocking.
 Get on your nightgown, lest occasion call us,
 And show us to be watchers. Be not lost
 So poorly in your thoughts.

Macb. To know my deed, 'twere best not know myself.²⁵ —
 [*Knocking within.*]

²² Here we have a seeming quibble between *gild* and *guilt*. But I suspect the Poet did not mean it so. This use of *to gild* was very common, and so might slip in unconsciously.

²³ Making the green *water all red*. So in Milton's *Comus*. "And makes one blot of all the air." — *To incarnadine* is to *colour red*.

²⁴ That is, "Your firmness hath *forsaken* you, *doth not attend* you."

²⁵ This is said in answer to Lady Macbeth's "Be not lost so poorly in your thoughts": and the meaning is, "While thinking of what I have done, it were best I should be lost to myself, or should not know myself as the doer of it." Macbeth is now burnt with the conscience of his deed, and would fain lose the memory of it. *To know* is another gerundial infinitive, and so has the force of *in* or *while knowing*. See note 20.

Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I would thou couldst!

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter a Porter. Knocking within.

Port. Here's a knocking indeed! If a man were porter of hell-gate, he should have old²⁶ turning the key. — [*Knocking.*] Knock, knock, knock! Who's there, i' the name of Beelzebub? *Here's a farmer that hang'd himself on the expectation of plenty. Come in time; have napkins²⁷ enough about you; here you'll sweat for't.* [*Knocking.*] Knock, knock! Who's there, in the other devil's name? *Faith, here's an equivocator that could swear in both the scales against either scale; who committed treason enough for God's sake, yet could not equivocate to Heaven.*²⁸ O, come in, equivocator. [*Knocking.*] Knock, knock, knock! Who's there? *Faith, here's an English tailor come hither for stealing out of a French hose.*²⁹ Come in, tailor; here you may roast your goose.³⁰ [*Knocking.*] Knock, knock;

²⁶ *Old* was a common intensive or augmentative, used much as *huge* is now. — The Porter now proceeds to hold a dialogue with several imaginary persons at the door, who are supposed to be knocking for admission to a warmer place. — Coleridge and several others think this part of the scene could not have been written by Shakespeare. My thinking is decidedly different. I am sure it is like him. Its broad drollery serves as a proper foil to the antecedent horrors, and its very discordance with the surrounding matter imparts an air of verisimilitude to the whole.

²⁷ In the old dictionaries *sudarium* is explained "*napkin or handkerchief, wherewith we wipe away the sweat.*" — "Come in time" probably means "you are welcome."

²⁸ "Could not equivocate *himself into Heaven,*" or could not win Heaven by equivocating, is the meaning. — To "swear in both the scales against either scale" is to commit direct and manifest perjury.

²⁹ *Hose* was used for what we call *trousers*. Warburton says, "The joke consists in this, that, a French hose being very short and strait, a tailor must be master of his trade who could steal any thing from thence." Others say, perhaps more truly, that the allusion is to a French fashion, which made the hose very large and wide, and so with more cloth to be stolen.

³⁰ A tailor's *goose* is the heavy "flat-iron" with which he smoothes and

never at quiet ! What are you ? — But this place is too cold for Hell. I'll devil-porter it no further : I had thought to have let in some of all professions, that go the primrose way to the everlasting bonfire.³¹ [*Knocking.*] Anon, anon ! I pray you, remember the porter. [*Opens the gate.*]

Enter MACDUFF and LENNOX.

Macd. Was it so late, friend, ere you went to bed,
That you do lie so late ?

Port. Faith, sir, we were carousing till the second cock ;
and drink, sir, is a great provoker of three things.

Macd. What three things does drink especially provoke ?

Port. Marry, sir, nose-painting, sleep, and urine. Lechery, sir, it provokes, and unprovokes ; it provokes the desire, but it takes away the performance : therefore much drink may be said to be an equivocator with lechery : it makes him, and it mars him ; it sets him on, and it takes him off ; it persuades him, and disheartens him ; makes him stand to, and not stand to ; in conclusion, equivocates him in a sleep, and, giving him the lie, leaves him.

Macd. I believe drink gave thee the lie last night.

Port. That it did, sir, i' the very throat on me : but I requited him for his lie ; and, I think, being too strong for him, though he took up my legs sometime, yet I made a shift to cast him.

Macd. Is thy master stirring ? —
Our knocking has awaked him ; here he comes.

presses his work ; so called because the handle bore some resemblance to the neck of a goose.

³¹ A bonfire at that date is invariably given in Latin Dictionaries as equivalent to *pyra* or *rogus* ; it was the fire for consuming the human body after death : and the hell-fire differed from the earth-fire only in being everlasting. This use of a word so remarkably descriptive in a double meaning is intensely Shakespearian. — FLEAY.

Re-enter MACBETH.

Len. Good morrow, noble sir.

Macb. Good morrow, both.

Macd. Is the King stirring, worthy thane?

Macb. Not yet.

Macd. He did command me to call timely on him :
I've almost slipp'd the hour.

Macb. I'll bring you to him.

Macd. I know this is a joyful trouble to you ;
But yet 'tis one.

Macb. The labour we delight in physics pain.³²
This is the door.

Macd. I'll make so bold to call,
For 'tis my limited³³ service. [*Exit.*

Len. Goes the King hence to-day?

Macb. He does ; — he did appoint so.³⁴

Len. The night has been unruly : where we lay,
Our chimneys were blown down ; and, as they say,
Lamentings heard i' the air, strange screams of death :
And, prophesying, with accents terrible,
Of dire combustion and confused events
New hatch'd to th' woeful time, the obscene bird
Clamour'd the livelong night :³⁵ some say the Earth

³² To *heal*, to *cure*, to *relieve*, is an old meaning of to *physic*.

³³ The Poet repeatedly uses to *limit* in the exact sense of to *appoint*.

³⁴ Here we have a significant note of character. Macbeth catches himself in the utterance of a falsehood, which, I take it, is something at odds with his nature and habitual feelings ; and he starts back into a mending of his speech, as from a spontaneous impulse to be true to himself. Much the same thing occurs before, when, upon his saying to his wife "Duncan comes here to-night," she asks, "And when goes hence?" and he replies, "To-morrow, — as he purposes."

³⁵ "The obscene bird" is the owl, which was regarded as a bird of ill omen, and is here represented as a prophet of the direful events in question. *Obscene* is used in its proper Latin sense, *ill-boding* or *portentous*. See Critical Notes.

Was feverous and did shake.

Macb. 'Twas a rough night.

Len. My young remembrance cannot parallel
A fellow to it.³⁶

Re-enter MACDUFF.

Macd. O horror, horror, horror ! tongue nor heart
Cannot conceive nor name thee !

Macb. }
Len. } What's the matter?

Macd. Confusion³⁷ now hath made his masterpiece !
Most sacrilegious murder hath broke ope
The Lord's anointed temple,³⁸ and stole thence
The life o' the building.

Macb. What is't you say? the life?

Len. Mean you his Majesty?

Macd. Approach the chamber, and destroy your sight
With a new Gorgon. Do not bid me speak ;
See, and then speak yourselves. — [*Exeunt MACB. and LEN.*
Awake, awake ! —

Ring the alarum-bell. — Murder and treason ! —
Banquo and Malcolm ! Donalbain ! awake !
Shake off this downy sleep, death's counterfeit,
And look on death itself ! up, up, and see
The great doom's image !³⁹ Malcolm ! Banquo ! all !
As from your graves rise up, and walk like sprites,
To countenance this horror.⁴⁰ [*Alarum-bell rings.*

³⁶ Here, as often, *fellow* is *equal*. To *parallel* is to *put alongside*.

³⁷ *Confusion* for *destruction*, as *confound* for *destroy*, before.

³⁸ In I Samuel, xxiv. 10, David speaks of King Saul as "the Lord's anointed"; and St. Paul calls Christians "the temple of the living God."

³⁹ "The great doom" means the Judgment-day, of which this occasion is regarded as a representation. See vol. xv. page 156, note 33.

⁴⁰ "To countenance this horror" is to put on a likeness of it; to augment or intensify it; an effect which the further horror of men rising up as from the dead, and walking like ghosts, would naturally produce.

Re-enter Lady MACBETH.

Lady M. What's the business,
That such a hideous trumpet calls to parley
The sleepers of the house? speak, speak!

Macd. O gentle lady,
'Tis not for you to hear what I can speak :
The repetition, in a woman's ear,
Would murder as it fell. —

Re-enter BANQUO.

O Banquo, Banquo,
Our royal master's murder'd!

Lady M. Woe, alas!
What, in our house? ⁴¹

Ban. Too cruel anywhere. —
Dear Duff, I pr'ythee, contradict thyself,
And say it is not so.

Re-enter MACBETH and LENNOX.

Macb. Had I but died an hour before this chance,
I had lived a blessèd time; for, from this instant,
There's nothing serious in mortality: ⁴²
All is but toys: renown and grace is dead;
The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees
Is left this vault to brag of. ⁴³

Enter MALCOLM and DONALBAIN.

Don. What is amiss?

Macb. You are, and do not know't:

⁴¹ Her ladyship's first thought appears to be, that she and her husband may be suspected of the murder.

⁴² *Mortality* is here put for *humanity*, or the *state of human life*.

⁴³ Observe the fine links of association in *wine* and *vault*; the latter having a double reference, to the wine-vault and to the firmament over-arching the world of human life.

The spring, the head, the fountain of your blood
Is stopp'd, the very source of it is stopp'd.

Macd. Your royal father's murder'd.

Mal. O! by whom?

Len. Those of his chamber, as it seem'd, had done't :
Their hands and faces were all badged with blood ;
So were their daggers, which, unwiped, we found
Upon their pillows :
They stared, and were distracted ; no man's life
Was to be trusted with them.

Macb. O, yet I do repent me of my fury,
That I did kill them.

Macd. Wherefore did you so?

Macb. Who can be wise, amazed, temperate and furious,
Loyal and neutral, in a moment? No man :
The expedition⁴⁴ of my violent love
Outrun the pauser, reason. Here lay Duncan,
His silver skin laced with his golden blood ;⁴⁵
And his gash'd stabs look'd like a breach in nature
For ruin's wasteful entrance ;⁴⁶ there, the murderers,
Steep'd in the colours of their trade, their daggers
Unmannerly breech'd with gore :⁴⁷ who could refrain,
That had a heart to love, and in that heart
Courage to make's love known?

⁴⁴ *Expedition* for *swiftness* or *haste*. Repeatedly so.

⁴⁵ To *gild* with blood is a very common phrase in old plays. Johnson says, "It is not improbable that Shakespeare put these forced and unnatural metaphors into the mouth of Macbeth, as a mark of artifice and dissimulation, to show the difference between the studied language of hypocrisy and the natural outcries of sudden passion. The whole speech, so considered, is a remarkable instance of judgment, as it consists entirely of antithesis and metaphor."

⁴⁶ The image is of a besieging army making a breach in the walls of a city, and thereby opening a way for general massacre and pillage.

⁴⁷ This probably means rudely covered, dressed, *trousered* with blood. A metaphor harsh and strained enough.

Lady M. Help me hence, ho !

Macd. Look to the lady.

Mal. [*Aside to DON.*] Why do we hold our tongues,
That most may claim this argument for ours ?

Don. [*Aside to MAL.*] What should be spoken
Here, where our fate, hid in an auger-hole,⁴⁸
May rush and seize us ? Let's away : our tears
Are not yet brew'd.

Mal. [*Aside to DON.*] Nor our strong sorrow
Upon the foot of motion.

Ban. Look to the lady : —

[*Lady MACBETH is carried out.*⁴⁹

And, when we have our naked frailties hid,⁵⁰

That suffer in exposure, let us meet,

And question this most bloody piece of work,

To know it further. Fears and scruples shake us :

In the great hand of God I stand ; and thence

Against the undivulged pretence I fight

Of treasonous malice.⁵¹

Macd. And so do I.

All. So all.

⁴⁸ "Where there is no hiding-place so small but that murder may be lurking therein, ready to spring upon us at any moment." The Princes divine at once that their father has been murdered for the crown, and that the same motive means death to themselves as well.

⁴⁹ Some regard this swoon as feigned, others as real. The question is very material in the determining of Lady Macbeth's character. If feigned, why was it not done when the murder of Duncan was announced ? The announcement of these additional murders takes her by surprise ; she was not prepared for it ; whereas in the other case she had, by her fearful energy of will, steeled her nerves up to it beforehand.

⁵⁰ Banquo and the others who slept in the castle have rushed forth undressed. This is what he refers to in "our naked frailties."

⁵¹ The natural construction is, "and thence I fight against the undivulged pretence of treasonous malice." *Pretence* here means *intention* or *purpose*. A frequent usage. So the verb, a little further on : "What good could they *pretend* ?" See vol. xv. page 33, note 7.

Macb. Let's briefly⁵² put on manly readiness,
And meet i' the hall together.

All. Well contented.

[*Exeunt all but MALCOLM and DONALBAIN.*]

Mal. What will you do? Let's not consort with them :
To show an unfelt sorrow is an office
Which the false man does easy. I'll to England.

Don. To Ireland I ; our separated fortune
Shall keep us both the safer : where we are,
There's daggers in men's smiles : the near' in blood,
The nearer bloody.⁵³

Mal. This murderous shaft that's shot
Hath not yet lighted ;⁵⁴ and our safest way
Is to avoid the aim. Therefore, to horse ;
And let us not be dainty of leave-taking,⁵⁵
But shift away : *there's warrant in that theft
*Which steals itself, when there's no mercy left. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. — *The Same.* Without MACBETH'S Castle.

Enter ROSS and an Old Man.

Old M. Threescore-and-ten I can remember well :
Within the volume of which time I've seen
Hours dreadful and things strange ; but this sore night
Hath trifled former knowings.

⁵² *Briefly*, here, is *quickly* or *speedily*. Often so. — "Manly readiness" probably means *man's attire*; the opposite of "naked frailties."

⁵³ Meaning that he suspects Macbeth, who is the next in blood, or kin. — The Poet sometimes uses the form of the positive with the sense of the comparative; which is indicated here by the printing, *near'* for *nearer*. See vol. x. page 191, note 8.

⁵⁴ Suspecting this murder to be the work of Macbeth, Malcolm thinks it could have no purpose but what himself and his brother equally stand in the way of; that the shaft must pass through them to reach its mark.

⁵⁵ That is, *punctilious* or *particular about* leave-taking.

Ross. Ah, good father,
Thou see'st, the Heavens, as troubled with man's act,
Threaten his bloody stage : by th' clock 'tis day,
And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp.
Is't night's predominance, or the day's shame,
That darkness does the face of Earth entomb,
When living light should kiss it?

Old M. 'Tis unnatural,
Even like the deed that's done. On Tuesday last,
A falcon, towering in her pride of place,¹
Was by a mousing owl hawk'd at and kill'd.

Ross. And Duncan's horse',² — a thing most strange and
certain, —
Beauteous and swift, the minions of their race,
Turn'd wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out,
Contending 'gainst obedience, as they would make
War with mankind.

Old M. 'Tis said they eat each other.³

Ross. They did so, to th' amazement of mine eyes,
That look'd upon't. Here comes the good Macduff. —

Enter MACDUFF.

How goes the world, sir, now?

Macd. Why, see you not?

Ross. Is't known who did this more than bloody deed?

Macd. Those that Macbeth hath slain.

Ross. Alas, the day!

What good could they pretend?

Macd. They were suborn'd :

¹ A phrase in falconry for *soaring to the highest pitch*.

² *Horse'* for *horses*. Repeatedly so. See vol. xii. page 87, note 26.

³ Holinshed relates that, after King Duff's murder, "there was a *sparhawk* strangled by an *owl*," and that "*horses of singular beauty and swiftness did eat their own flesh*."

Malcolm and Donalbain, the King's two sons,
Are stol'n away and fled ; which puts upon them
Suspicion of the deed.

Ross. 'Gainst nature still :
Thriftless ambition, that wilt ravin up⁴
Thine own life's means ! Then 'tis most like
The sovereignty will fall upon Macbeth.

Macd. He is already named ; and gone to Scone
To be invested.

Ross. Where is Duncan's body ?

Macd. Carried to Colme-kill,⁵
The sacred storehouse of his predecessors,
And guardian of their bones.

Ross. Will you to Scone ?

Macd. No, cousin, I'll to Fife.

Ross. Well, I will thither.⁶

**Macd.* Well, may you see things well done there, —
adieu, —

*Lest our old robes sit easier than our new !⁷

Ross. Farewell, father.

**Old M.* God's benison⁸ go with you ; and with those
*That would make good of bad, and friends of foes ! [*Exeunt.*

⁴ To *ravin up* is to consume or devour *ravenously*. The Poet elsewhere has *ravin down* in exactly the same sense.

⁵ *Colme-kill* is the famous Iona, one of the Western Isles mentioned by Holinshed as the burial-place of many ancient kings of Scotland. *Colme-kill* means the *cell* or chapel of St. Columba.

⁶ That is, "I will go to *Scone*."

⁷ This latter clause logically connects with "see things well done there"; *adieu!* being awkwardly thrust in for a rhyming couplet.

⁸ *Benison* is *blessing*, and is used whenever the verse requires a trisyllable. The opposite sense was expressed by *malison*.

ACT III.

SCENE I. — *Forres. A Room in the Palace.**Enter BANQUO.*

Ban. Thou hast it now, king, Cawdor, Glamis, all,
As the Weird Women promised; and, I fear,
Thou play'dst most foully for't: yet it was said
It should not stand in thy posterity;
But that myself should be the root and father
Of many kings. If there come truth from them, —
As upon thee, Macbeth, their speeches shine,¹ —
Why, by the verities on thee made good,
May they not be my oracles as well,
And set me up in hope? But, hush! no more.

Sennet sounded. Enter MACBETH, as King; Lady MACBETH, as Queen; LENNOX, ROSS, Lords, Ladies, and Attendants.

Mach. Here's our chief guest.

Lady M. If he had been forgotten,
It had been as a gap in our great feast,
And all things unbecoming.²

Mach. To-night we hold a solemn supper,³ sir,
And I'll request your presence.

Ban. Lay your Highness'
Command upon me; to the which my duties
Are with a most indissoluble tie

¹ Their speeches *prosper*, or appear in the *lustre* of manifest truth; a conspicuous instance, to warrant belief in their predictions.

² That is, such an oversight would have disordered the whole feast, and rendered all things *unfitting* and *discordant*.

³ This was the phrase of Shakespeare's time for a feast or banquet given to *solemnize* any event, as a birth, marriage, coronation.

For ever knit.

Macb. Ride you this afternoon?

Ban. Ay, my good lord.

Macb. We should have else desired your good advice —
Which still hath been both grave and prosperous —
In this day's Council ; but we'll take to-morrow.
Is't far you ride ?

Ban. As far, my lord, as will fill up the time
'Twi'xt this and supper : go not my horse the better,⁴
I must become a borrower of the night
For a dark hour or twain.

Macb. Fail not our feast.

Ban. My lord, I will not.

Macb. We hear, our bloody cousins are bestow'd
In England and in Ireland ; not confessing
Their cruel parricide, filling their hearers
With strange invention : but of that to-morrow ;
When therewithal we shall have cause of State
Craving us jointly. Hie you to horse : adieu,
Till you return at night. Goes Fleance with you ?

Ban. Ay, my good lord : our time does call upon's.

Macb. I wish your horses swift and sure of foot ;
And so I do commend you to their backs.
Farewell. — [*Exit* BANQUO.

Let every man be master of his time
Till seven at night ; to make society
The sweeter welcome, we will keep ourself
Till supper-time alone : while then, God b' wi' you !⁵ —
[*Excunt all but* MACBETH *and an* Attendant.

⁴ Perhaps meaning, *If* my horse go not better *than usual* ; but more likely, if my horse go not *too well* ; that is, too well for the result in question. So the Poet often follows a well-known Latin idiom in his use of the comparative. See vol. xv. page 291, note 10.

⁵ "God be with you" is the original of our phrase *good bye* ; and the text

Sirrah, a word with you : attend those men
Our pleasure ?

Atten. They are, my lord, without the palace-gate.

Macb. Bring them before us. — [Exit Attendant.

To be thus is nothing,

But to be safely thus.⁶ Our fears in⁷ Banquo
Stick deep ; and in his royalty of nature
Reigns that which would⁸ be fear'd : 'tis much he dares ;
And, to⁹ that dauntless temper of his mind,
He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour
To act in safety. There is none but he
Whose being I do fear ; and, under him,
My Genius is rebuked, as, it is said,
Mark Antony's was by Cæsar's.¹⁰ He chid the Sisters,
When first they put the name of king upon me,
And bade them speak to him ; then, prophet-like,
They hail'd him father to a line of kings :
Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown,
And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,
Thence to be wrench'd with an unlineal hand,
No son of mine succeeding. If't be so,
For Banquo's issue have I filed¹¹ my mind ;

here aptly illustrates the process of the contraction. — *While* here means *until* ; a sense in which it was often used. See vol. x. page 151, note 13.

⁶ That is, "nothing, *without being* safely thus," or, "unless we be safely thus." The exceptive *but*, from *be out*, is used repeatedly so by the Poet. See vol. xiv. page 165, note 3.

⁷ *In* for *on account of*. See vol. xiv. page 44, note 41.

⁸ *Would*, again, for *should*. See page 36, note 9. — "Royalty of nature" is *royal* or *noble* nature. The Poet has many like forms of expression.

⁹ *To*, again, for *in addition to*. See page 33, note 9.

¹⁰ Octavius Cæsar is the person referred to. In *Antony and Cleopatra* ii. 3, *genius* is explained by the words *demon*, *angel*, and "thy *spirit* which keeps thee." See, also, vol. xiv. page 38, note 16.

¹¹ *File* for *defile*. So in Wilkins's *Forced Marriage* : "Oaths pass out of a man's mouth like smoke through a chimney, that *files* a^ll the way it goes." *Foul* and *filth* are from the same original.

For them the gracious Duncan have I murder'd ;
 Put rancours in the vessel of my peace
 Only for them ; and mine eternal ¹² jewel
 Given to the common enemy of man,
 To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings !
 Rather than so, come, fate, into the list,
 And champion me to th' utterance ! ¹³ — Who's there ?

Re-enter Attendant, with two Murderers.

Now go to th' door, and stay there till we call. —

[*Exit Attendant.*

Was it not yesterday we spoke together ?

I Mur. It was, so please your Highness.

Macb.

Well then, now

Have you consider'd of my speeches ? Know
 That it was he, in the times past, which held you
 So under fortune ; which you thought had been
 Our innocent self : this I made good to you
 In our last conference, pass'd in probation ¹⁴
 With you, how you were borne in hand ; ¹⁵ how cross'd ;
 The instruments ; who wrought with them ;
 And all things else that might to half a soul

¹² "Eternal jewel" is *immortal soul*. So in *Othello*, iii. 3: "Or, by the worth of man's *eternal* soul."

¹³ *Champion me* is *be my antagonist*, or fight it out with me in single combat ; the only instance I have met with of *champion* so used. — *To th' utterance* is *to the uttermost*, or to the last extremity. So in *Cotgrave*: "*Combatre a oultrance* : To fight at sharp, to fight it out, or to the uttermost." So that the sense of the passage is, "Let Fate, that has decreed the throne to Banquo's issue, enter the lists in support of its own decrees, I will fight against it to the last extremity, whatever be the consequence."

¹⁴ *Probation* here means *proof*, or rather *the act of proving*.

¹⁵ *To bear in hand* is *to encourage or lead on* by false assurances and expectations. So used several times by the Poet. — In what follows, *cross'd* is *thwarted* or *baffled* ; *instruments* is *agents* ; and the general idea is, that Banquo has managed to hold up their hopes, while secretly preventing fruition ; thus using them as tools, and cheating them out of their pay.

And to a notion¹⁶ crazed say *Thus did Banquo.*

1 Mur. You made it known to us.

Macb. I did so ; and went further, which is now
Our point of second meeting. Do you find
Your patience so predominant in your nature,
That you can let this go? Are you so gospell'd,
To pray¹⁷ for this good man and for his issue,
Whose heavy hand hath bow'd you to the grave,
And beggar'd yours for ever?

1 Mur. We are men, my liege.

Macb. Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men ;
As hounds, and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs,
Shoughs, water-rugs, and demi-wolves, are clept¹⁸
All by the name of dogs : the valued file¹⁹
Distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle,
The housekeeper, the hunter, every one
According to the gift which bounteous Nature
Hath in him closed ; whereby he does receive
Particular addition, from the bill
That writes them all alike : and so of men.
Now, if you have a station in the file,
And not i' the worser rank of manhood, say't ;
And I will put that business in your bosoms,
Whose execution takes your enemy off ;
Grapples you to the heart and love of us,
Who wear our health but sickiy in his life,
Which in his death were perfect.

2 Mur. I am one, my liege,

¹⁶ *Notion* for *understanding* or *judgment*. See vol. xv. page 40, note 26.

¹⁷ Alluding to the Gospel precept, " Pray for them which despitefully use you." " So gospell'd as to pray," of course.

¹⁸ *Shoughs* are *shaggy* dogs ; now called *shocks*. — *Clept* is an old word for *called*. Shakespeare has it repeatedly so.

¹⁹ " The *valued file*" is the *list* or *schedule* wherein their *value* and peculiar qualities are discriminated and set down,

Whom the vile blows and buffets of the world
Have so incensed, that I am reckless what
I do to spite the world.

1 Mur. And I another,
So wearied with disasters, tugg'd with fortune,
'That I would set my life on any chance,
To mend it, or be rid on't.

Mach. Both of you
Know Banquo was your enemy.

Both Mur. True, my lord.

Mach. So is he mine ; and in such bloody distance,²⁰
That every minute of his being thrusts
Against my near'st of life : and though I could
With barefaced power sweep him from my sight,
And bid my will avouch it, yet I must not,
For²¹ certain friends that are both his and mine,
Whose loves I may not drop ; but wail his fall²²
Who I myself struck down : and thence it is,
That I to your assistance do make love ;
Masking the business from the common eye
For sundry weighty reasons.

2 Mur. We shall, my lord,
Perform what you command us.

1 Mur. Though our lives —

Mach. Your spirits shine through you. Within this hour
at most,
I will advise you where to plant yourselves ;

²⁰ *Distance* here carries the sense of *degree*. It is a term of fencing for the space between the two antagonists. When men are in a hot mortal encounter with swords, they stand at just the right distance apart for the bloodiest strokes or thrusts. Hence the word came to be used for *enmity* in general.

²¹ *For* is here *because of*, or *on account of*. Repeatedly so.

²² The language is elliptical ; the sense being "but *I must wail*."

Acquaint you with the perfect spy o' the time,²³
 The moment on't; for't must be done to-night,
 And something from the palace; always thought
 That I require a clearness:²⁴ and with him —
 To leave no rubs²⁵ nor botches in the work —
 Fleance his son, that keeps him company,
 Whose absence is no less material to me
 Than is his father's, must embrace the fate
 Of that dark hour: Resolve yourselves apart:
 I'll come to you anon.

Both Mur. We are resolved, my lord.

Macb. I'll call upon you straight: abide within. —

[*Exeunt* Murderers.

It is concluded: Banquo, thy soul's flight,
 If it find Heaven, must find it out to-night.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II. — *The Same. Another Room in the Palace.*

Enter Lady MACBETH and a Servant.

Lady M. Is Banquo gone from Court?

Serv. Ay, madam, but returns again to-night.

Lady M. Say to the King, I would attend his leisure¹
 For a few words.

Serv. Madam, I will. [Exit.

Lady M. Nought's had, all's spent,
 Where our desire is got without content:

²³ Will furnish you with an *exact and sure note or signal* of the time when to strike; which is probably done by or through the third murderer, who joins them just before the murder is done. The success of the undertaking depends on the assault being rightly timed. So that "the perfect *spy* of the time" is the *sure means of spying* or knowing the time.

²⁴ That is, "it being always borne in mind that I must stand clear of blame or suspicion."

²⁵ *Rubs* is *hindrances* or *impediments*. See vol. x. page 63, note 12.

¹ "Attend his leisure" is *wait* for him to be at leisure.

'Tis safer to be that which we destroy,
Than, by destruction, dwell in doubtful joy. —

Enter MACBETH.

How now, my lord ! why do you keep alone,
Of sorriest fancies your companions making ;
Using those thoughts which should indeed have died
With them they think on ? Things without ² all remedy
Should be without regard : what's done is done.

Macb. We have but scotch'd ³ the snake, not kill'd it :
She'll close, and be herself ; whilst our poor malice
Remains in danger of her former tooth. But let
The frame of things disjoint, both the worlds suffer,
Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep
In the affliction of these terrible dreams
That shake us nightly : ⁴ better be with the dead,
Whom we, to gain our place, have sent to peace,
Than on the torture of the mind to lie
In restless ecstasy.⁵ Duncan is in his grave ;
After life's fitful fever he sleeps well ;
Treason has done his worst : nor steel, nor poison,
Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing,
Can touch him further.

Lady M. Come on ; gentle my lord,
Sleek o'er your rugged looks ; be bright and jovial
Among your guests to-night.

Macb. So shall I, love ;
And so, I pray, be you : let your remembrance

² Here, as often, *without* is *beyond*. See vol. vii. page 104, note 42.

³ *Scotch'd* is *scored* or *cut*. So in *Coriolanus*, iv. 5 : " Before Corioli he *scotch'd* and *notch'd* him like a carbonado."

⁴ What " these terrible dreams " are, is shown in Lady Macbeth's sleep-walking agonies. It is of her state of mind, not of his own, that Macbeth is here thinking.

⁵ *Ecstasy* is any violent perturbation of mind ; *frenzy*, or *madness*.

Apply⁶ to Banquo ; present him eminence, both
 With eye and tongue :⁷ unsafe the while that we
 Must lave our honours in these flattering streams ;⁸
 And make our faces visards to our hearts,
 Disguising what they are.

Lady M. You must leave this.

Macb. O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife !
 Thou know'st that Banquo and his Fleance live.⁹

Lady M. But in them Nature's copy's not eterne.¹⁰

Macb. There's comfort yet ; they are assailable ;
 Then be thou jocund : ere the bat hath flown
 His cloister'd¹¹ flight ; ere, to black Hecate's summons,
 The shard-borne beetle¹² with his drowsy hums

⁶ Here *apply* has the force of *attach itself*. So in *Antony and Cleopatra*, v. 2 : "If you *apply yourself* to our intents, — which towards you are most gentle, — you shall find a benefit in this change."

⁷ "Treat him with the highest consideration, or as the most eminent of our guests." Rather strange language, and not very happy withal ; but such appears to be the meaning. — Is this a piece of irony ? or is it meant as a blind, to keep his wife ignorant and innocent of the new crime on foot ? I suspect he is trying to jest off the pangs of remorse.

⁸ *Flattering streams* is *streams of flattery*. The meaning is, "The very fact of our being obliged thus to use the arts of hypocrisy and dissimulation proves that we are not safe in our seats, not secure in the tenure of our honours : we can retain them only by making our life, even in social intercourse, a studied, continuous lie."

⁹ Macbeth mistranslates the recoilings and ominous whispers of conscience into prudential and selfish reasonings, and, after the deed is done, the terrors of remorse into fear from external dangers ; like delirious men who run away from the phantoms of their own brains, or, raised by terror to rage, stab the real object that is within their reach. — COLERIDGE.

¹⁰ Ritson has justly observed that *nature's copy* alludes to *copyhold* tenure ; in which the tenant holds an estate for *life*, having nothing but the *copy* of the rolls of his lord's court to show for it. A *life-hold* tenure may be well said to be not *eternal*.

¹¹ The bats wheeling round the dim cloisters of Queen's College, Cambridge, have frequently impressed on me the singular propriety of this original epithet. — STEEVENS.

¹² *Shard* or *sherd* is an old word for *scale*. So that "the shard-borne

Hath rung night's yawning-peal, there shall be done
A deed of dreadful note.

Lady M. What's to be done?

Macb. Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,
Till thou applaud the deed. — Come, seeling¹³ night,
Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day,
And with thy bloody and invisible hand
Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond
Which keeps me paled!¹⁴ — Light thickens, and the crow
Makes wing to th' rooky wood:¹⁵
Good things of day begin to droop and drowse,
Whiles night's black agents¹⁶ to their preys do rouse.
Thou marvell'st at my words; but hold thee still:
Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill.
So, pr'ythee, go with me. [*Exeunt.*

beetle" is the beetle borne along the air by its *shards* or *scaly* wings. — "Night's yawning-peal" is the nocturnal signal for going to sleep.

¹³ *Seeling* is *blinding*; a term in Falconry. To *seel* the eyes of a hawk was to close them by sewing the eyelids together.

¹⁴ "That great *bond*" is Banquo's life; the "copyhold tenure" of note 10. — *Paled* is shut in or confined with *palings*. As Macbeth afterwards puts it, Banquo's life has the effect of keeping him "cabin'd, cribb'd, confined, bound-in to saucy doubts and fears."

¹⁵ To *thicken* seems to have been a common expression for *to grow dark*. So in Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess*: "Fold your flocks up, for the air 'gins to *thicken*." — *Crow* and *rook* were used of the same bird. So that the meaning is, the crows are hastening to their nightly resort, the wood where they gather for society and sleep.

¹⁶ A covert allusion to the exploit which Macbeth's murderers are going about. He seems to want that his wife should suspect the new crime he has in hand, while he shrinks from telling her of it distinctly. And the purpose of his dark hints probably is, to prepare her, as far as may be, for a further strain upon her moral forces, which he sees to be already overstrained. For he fears that, if she has full knowledge beforehand of the intended murder, she may oppose it, and that, if she has no suspicion of it, the shock may be too much for her.

SCENE III. — *The Same. A Park with a gate leading to the Palace.*

Enter three Murderers.

1 Mur. But who did bid thee join with us?

3 Mur. Macbeth.

2 Mur. He needs not our mistrust ;¹ since he delivers
Our offices, and what we have to do,
To the direction just.

1 Mur. Then stand with us.
The West yet glimmers with some streaks of day :
Now spurs the lated traveller apace²
To gain the timely inn ; and near approaches
The subject of our watch.

3 Mur. Hark ! I hear horses.

¹ The meaning is, "We need not mistrust him"; his perfect knowledge of what is to be done, and how, being a sufficient guaranty of his right to be with them. — Mr. A. P. Paton has lately made a strong argument to the point that the third murderer is Macbeth himself in disguise. The thing sounds rather startling indeed, yet I am by no means sure but he is right. I can but condense a portion of his argument: That, although the banquet was to be at seven, Macbeth was not there till near midnight: That he has hardly more than entered the room before the murderer is at the door: That the third murderer repeats the precise directions given to the other two, and has perfect knowledge of the place, and the habits of visitors: That at the banquet Macbeth plays with the murderer at the door, as if exulting in the success of his disguise: That, when the Ghost rises, he asks the company, "Which of you have done this?" as if to take suspicion off himself, and says, in effect, to the Ghost, "In yon black struggle you could never know me." — For the matter of this note, I am indebted, directly, to Mr. Furness's variorum edition of the play. Perhaps the strongest point against the writer's view is, that Macbeth seems surprised, and goes into a rapture, on being told that "Fleance is 'scaped"; but this may not be very much; he may there be feigning. On the other hand, Macbeth's actual sharing in the deed of murder would go far to account for his terrible hallucination at the banquet.

² *Lated* is the same as *belated*. — *Apace* is *rapidly*. — "To gain the timely inn," is to gain the inn *in time*.

Ban. [*Within.*] Give us a light there, ho !

2 Mur. Then 'tis he : the rest

That are within the note of expectation³

Already are i' the Court.

1 Mur. His horses go about.

3 Mur. Almost a mile : but he does usually,
So all men do, from hence to th' palace-gate
Make it their walk.

2 Mur. A light, a light !

3 Mur. 'Tis he.

1 Mur. Stand to't.

Enter BANQUO, and FLEANCE with a torch.

Ban. It will be rain to-night.

1 Mur. Let it come down.

[*They assault BANQUO.*

Ban. O, treachery ! Fly, good Fleance, fly, fly, fly !
Thou mayst revenge. — O slave ! [*Dies.* FLEANCE *escapes.*

3 Mur. Who did strike out the light ?

1 Mur. Was't not the way ?

3 Mur. There's but one down ; the son is fled.

2 Mur. We have lost best half of our affair.

1 Mur. Well, let's away, and say how much is done.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. — *The Same.* *A Room of State in the Palace.*

A banquet prepared. *Enter MACBETH, Lady MACBETH, ROSS,*
LENNOX, Lords, and Attendants.

Macv. You know your own degrees ; sit down : at first
And last the hearty welcome.

Lords. Thanks to your Majesty.

³ Whose names are in the list of those expected at the banquet.

Macb. Ourself will mingle with society,
And play the humble host. Our hostess keeps her state ;¹
But in best time we will require her welcome.

Lady M. Pronounce it for me, sir, to all our friends ;
For my heart speaks they're welcome.

First Murderer appears at the door.

Macb. See, they encounter thee with their hearts' thanks. —
Both sides are even : here I'll sit i' the midst.
Be large in mirth ; anon we'll drink a measure
The table round. — [*Goes to the door.*] There's blood upon
thy face.

Mur. 'Tis Banquo's, then.

Macb. 'Tis better thee without than him within.²
Is he dispatch'd?

Mur. My lord, his throat is cut ; that I did for him.

Macb. Thou art the best o' the cut-throats ; yet he's good
That did the like for Fleance : if thou didst it,
Thou art the nonpareil.

Mur. Most royal sir,
Fleance is 'scaped.

Macb. Then comes my fit again : I had else been perfect ;
Whole as the marble, founded as the rock ;
As broad and general as the casing³ air :
But now I'm cabin'd, cribb'd, confined, bound-in
To saucy doubts and fears. But Banquo's safe?

Mur. Ay, my good lord ; safe in a ditch he bides,
With twenty trenchèd gashes on his head,
The least a death to nature.

¹ Her *chair* of state ; which was a royal chair with a canopy over it. —
Require, in the next line, is *request*. A frequent usage.

² " 'Tis better on your outside than in his body."

³ *Casing* is *enclosing, surrounding*. So *case*, substantive, was often used
of any outer integument or cover, as the skin. — "Broad and general" is
having full and free scope ; *unclogged*.

Macb. Thanks for that.
 There the grown serpent lies ; the worm ⁴ that's fled
 Hath nature that in time will venom breed,
 No teeth for th' present. Get thee gone : to-morrow
 We'll hear't, ourself, again. [*Exit Murderer.*]

Lady M. My royal lord,
 You do not give the cheer : the feast is sold
 That is not often vouch'd, while 'tis a-making,
 'Tis given with welcome : ⁵ to feed were best at home ;
 From thence the sauce to meat is ceremony ; ⁶
 Meeting were bare without it.

Macb. Sweet remembrancer ! —
 Now, good digestion wait on appetite,
 And health on both !

Len. May't please your Highness sit.
 [*The Ghost of BANQUO* ⁷ *enters, and*
sits in MACBETH'S place.]

Macb. Here had we now our country's honour roof'd,

⁴ *Worm* and *serpent* were used synonymously.

⁵ The last clause depends on *vouch'd*; "that is not often declared to be given with welcome." — "The feast is sold," that is, made or given for profit, not as a frank expression of kindness and good-will.

⁶ If merely to feed were all, that were best done at home: away from home, words and acts of courtesy are what give relish to food.

⁷ The actual reappearance of the murdered Banquo on the stage, in this scene, has long appeared to me a stark anachronism. It can hardly fail to excite feelings just the reverse of suitable to the occasion. It is indeed certain, from Forman's *Notes*, that such reappearance was used in the Poet's time; but there were good reasons for it then which do not now exist. In the right conception of the matter, the ghost is manifestly a thing existing only in the diseased imagination of Macbeth; what we call a *subjective* ghost, a Banquo of the mind; and having no more objective being than the air-drawn dagger of a previous scene; the difference being that Macbeth is there so well in his senses as to be aware of the unreality, while he is here quite out of his senses, and completely hallucinated. All this is evident in that the apparition is seen by none of the other persons present. In Shakespeare's time, the generality of people could not possibly take the conception of a subjective ghost; but it is not so now. See vol. xiv. page 253, note 26.

Were the graced person of our Banquo present ;
 Who may I rather challenge for unkindness
 Than pity for mischance.

Ross. His absence, sir,
 Lays blame upon his promise. Please't your Highness
 To grace us with your royal company.

Macb. The table's full !

Len. Here is a place reserved, sir.

Macb. Where !

Len. Here, my good lord. What is't that moves your
 Highness?

Macb. Which of you have done this?

Lords. What, my good lord?

Macb. Thou canst not say I did it : never shake
 Thy gory locks at me.

Ross. Gentlemen, rise ; his Highness is not well.

Lady M. Sit, worthy friends : my lord is often thus,
 And hath been from his youth : pray you, keep seat ;
 The fit is momentary ; upon a thought
 He will again be well : if much you note him,
 You shall⁸ offend him, and extend his passion :
 Feed, and regard him not. — Are you a man ?

Macb. Ay, and a bold one, that dare look on that
 Which might appal the Devil.

Lady M. [*Aside to MACB.*] O proper stuff !
 This is the very painting of your fear :
 This is the air-drawn dagger which, you said,
 Led you to Duncan. O, these flaws and starts,
 Impostors to true fear,⁹ would well become

⁸ In Shakespeare's time, the auxiliaries *shall* and *will*, like *could*, *should*, and *would*, were often used indiscriminately. The same usage has occurred several times before in this play.

⁹ The meaning probably is, that these hysterical gusts and jerks of fear at unrealities are mere *counterfeits* of the true fear that springs from real

A woman's story at a Winter's fire,
 Authorized by her grandam. Shame itself!
 Why do you make such faces? When all's done,
 You look but on a stool.

Macb. Pr'ythee, see there! behold! look! lo! how say
 you? —

Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak too.
 If charnel-houses and our graves must send
 Those that we bury back, our monuments
 Shall be the maws of kites.¹⁰

[*Ghost disappears.*]

Lady M. What, quite unmann'd in folly?

Macb. If I stand here, I saw him!

Lady M. Fie, for shame!

Macb. Blood hath been shed ere now: i' the olden time,
 Ere humane statute purged the gentle weal,¹¹
 Ay, and since too, murders have been perform'd
 Too terrible for th' ear. The time has been,
 That when the brains were out the man would die,
 And there an end; but now they rise again,
 With twenty mortal gashes on their crowns,
 And push us from our stools: this is more strange
 Than such a murder is.

Lady M. My worthy lord,
 Your noble friends do lack you.

Macb. I do forget. —

dangers; such counterfeits as *impose upon*, or *act the impostor to*, those who give way to them. Or it may be that here, as often, *to* has the force of *compared to*.

¹⁰ The same thought occurs in *The Faerie Queene*, ii. 8, 16: "But be entombèd in the raven or the *kite*." Also in Fairfax's *Tasso*, xii. 79: "Let that self monster me in pieces rend, and deep entomb me in his hollow chest." And an ancient author calls vultures "living sepulchres."

¹¹ The meaning is, ere humane statute made the commonwealth gentle by purging and cleansing it from the wrongs and pollutions of barbarism. Another prolepsis. See page 32, note 1. — The sense of *gentle*, here, is *civil, sociable*, amendable to order and law.

Do not muse ¹² at me, my most worthy friends ;
 I have a strange infirmity, which is nothing
 To those that know me. Come, love and health to all ;
 Then I'll sit down. — Give me some wine, fill full. —
 I drink to th' general joy o' the whole table,
 And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss ;
 Would he were here ! to all, and him, we thirst,
 And all to all.¹³

Lords. Our duties, and the pledge.

*Re-enter the Ghost.*¹⁴

Macb. Avaunt ! and quit my sight ! let the earth hide thee !

Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold ;
 Thou hast no speculation ¹⁵ in those eyes
 Which thou dost glare with !

Lady M. Think of this, good peers,
 But as a thing of custom : 'tis no other ;
 Only it spoils the pleasure of the time.

Macb. What man dare, I dare :

¹² Shakespeare uses to *muse* for to *wonder*, to be *amazed*.

¹³ I am not clear as to the precise meaning of this : probably it is, " We crave to drink to the health of all, and of him, and to have every one present join in the pledge to all."

¹⁴ Much question has been made, whether there be not two several ghosts in this scene ; some maintaining that Duncan's enters here, and Banquo's before ; others, that Banquo's enters here, and Duncan's before. The question is best disposed of by referring to Dr. Forman, who, as he speaks of Banquo's ghost, would doubtless have spoken of Duncan's, had there been any such : " The night, being at supper with his noblemen, whom he had bid to a feast, (to the which also Banquo should have come,) he began to speak of noble Banquo, and to wish that he were there. And as he thus did, *standing up to drink a carouse to him, the ghost of Banquo* came and sat down in his chair behind him. And he, turning about to sit down again, saw *the ghost of Banquo*, which fronted him, so that he fell in a great passion of fear and fury."

¹⁵ *Speculation* in its proper Latin sense of *vision* or *seeing*.

Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,
 The arm'd ¹⁶ rhinoceros, or the Hyrcan tiger ;
 Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves
 Shall never tremble : or be alive again,
 And dare me to the desert with thy sword ;
 If trembling I inhabit then,¹⁷ protest me
 The baby of a girl.¹⁸ Hence, horrible shadow !
 Unreal mockery, hence ! [Ghost *disappears*.
 Why, so : being gone,
 I am a man again. — Pray you, sit still.

Lady M. You have displaced the mirth, broke the good
 meeting,
 With most admired ¹⁹ disorder.

Macb. Can such things be,
 And overcome us like a Summer's cloud,
 Without our special wonder?²⁰ You make me strange
 Even to the disposition that I owe,²¹
 When now I think you can behold such sights,

¹⁶ *Arm'd* for *armoured*, referring to the thickness and hardness of the animal's hide.

¹⁷ This passage is explained by Horne Tooke: "Dare me to the desert with thy sword; if then I do not meet thee there; if trembling I stay in my castle, or any *habitation*; If I then hide my head, or *dwell* in any place through fear, protest me the baby of a girl." Milton uses *inhabit* in a similar sense, *Paradise Lost*, vii. . "Meanwhile *inhabit* lax, ye Powers of Heaven." The usage was not uncommon.

¹⁸ "The baby of a girl," some say, is a girl's baby; that is, a doll. Others think it means the child of an immature mother. I suspect it means simply a *babyish* girl. We have many like phrases; as "a wonder of a man"; that is, a *wonderful* man. This explanation was proposed to me by Professor Howison of Boston.

¹⁹ *Admired* for *admirable*, and in the Latin sense of *wonderful*.

²⁰ *Pass over* us without our wonder, as a casual Summer's cloud passes unregarded.

²¹ "I have hitherto supposed myself a man of firm courage; but that you should now be perfectly unmoved when I am so shaken with terror, makes me doubtful of my own disposition. I seem a stranger to myself, and cannot tell what I am made of."

And keep the natural ruby of your cheeks,
When mine are blanch'd with fear.

Ross.

What sights, my lord?

Lady M. I pray you, speak not; he grows worse and worse;

Question enrages him. At once, good night:

Stand not upon the order of your going,²²

But go at once.

Len.

Good night; and better health

Attend his Majesty!

Lady M.

A kind good night to all!

[*Exeunt all but MACBETH and Lady M.*]

Macb. It will have blood; they say blood will have blood:

Stones have been known to move, and trees to speak;

Augurs, and understood relations,²³ have

By magot-pies and choughs and rooks brought forth

The secret'st man of blood. — What is the night?

Lady M. Almost at odds with morning, which is which.

Macb. How say'st thou,²⁴ that Macduff denies his person

At our great bidding?

Lady M.

Did you send to him, sir?

Macb. I hear it by the way, but I will send:

²² Stay not to go out according to your rank or order of precedence.

²³ A passage very obscure to general readers, but probably intelligible enough to those experienced in the course of criminal trials; where two or three little facts or items of testimony may be of no significance taken singly or by themselves; yet, when they are put together and their *relations understood*, they may be enough to convict or acquit the accused. And even so trifling a matter as the note or talk of a parrot, interpreted in the light of such relations, may prove decisive of the case. *Magot-pie* or *magpie* and *chough* are old words for *parrot* or *parraquito*.

²⁴ "What do you say of this fact or circumstance?" — By "our great bidding" is meant, not any particular request or order to Macduff, but the *general invitation* implied in the very purpose of the banquet. Macbeth has heard of his refusal only "by the way," that is, *incidentally*, or through a "fee'd servant." Such is the substance of Elwin's explanation as given in Mr. Furness's *Variorum*. — See, below, page 79, note 4.

There is not one of them but in his house
 I keep a servant fee'd.²⁵ I will to-morrow —
 Ay, and betimes I will — to th' Weird Sisters :
 More shall they speak ; for now I'm bent to know,
 By the worst means, the worst. For mine own good
 All causes shall give way : *I am in blood

*Stepp'd in so far, that, should I wade no more,

*Returning were as tedious as go o'er :

*Strange things I have in head, that will to hand ;

*Which must be acted ere they may be scann'd.

Lady M. You lack the season²⁶ of all natures, sleep.

Macb. Come, we'll to sleep. *My strange and self-abuse

*Is the initiate fear,²⁷ that wants hard use :

*We're yet but young in deed.

[*Exeunt.*

*SCENE V. — *A Heath. Thunder.*

**Enter the three Witches, meeting HECATE.*

**I Witch.* Why, how now, Hecate ! you look angerly.

**Hec.* Have I not reason, beldams as you are,

*Saucy and overbold? How did you dare

*To trade and traffic with Macbeth

*In riddles and affairs of death ;

*And I, the mistress of your charms,

²⁵ Meaning that he has paid spies lurking and prowling about in the families of all the noblemen, and using the advantage of their place as servants to get information for him. The meanest and hatefullest practice of a jealous tyrant !

²⁶ Johnson explains this, "*You want sleep, which seasons or gives the relish to all natures.*" So in *Cymbeline*, i. 6: "Blest be those, how mean soe'er, that have their honest wills ; which seasons comfort."

²⁷ The *initiate fear* is the fear that attends the first stages of guilt. — The *and* in this speech is redundant. The Poet continually uses *abuse* for *delusion* or *deception*. So, here, *self-abuse* is *self-delusion*. Macbeth now knows that the Banquo he has just seen was but a Banquo of the mind.

*The close¹ contriver of all harms,
 *Was never call'd to bear my part,
 *Or show the glory of our art?
 *And, which is worse, all you havé done
 *Hath been but for a wayward son,
 *Spiteful and wrathful ; who, as others do,
 *Loves for his own ends, not for you.
 *But make amends now : get you gone,
 *And at the pit of Acheron
 *Meet me i' the morning : thither he
 *Will come to know his destiny :
 *Your vessels and your spells provide,
 *Your charms, and every thing beside.
 *I am for th' air ; this night I'll spend
 *Unto a dismal and a fatal end :
 *Great business must be wrought ere noon :
 *Upon the corner of the Moon
 *There hangs a vaporous drop profound ;²
 *I'll catch it ere it come to ground :
 *And that, distill'd by magic sleights,³
 *Shall raise such artificial sprites,
 *As, by the strength of their illusion,
 *Shall draw him on to his confusion :
 *He shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear
 *His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace, and fear ;
 *And you all know security⁴
 *Is mortals' chiefest enemy.

¹ Here, as often, *close* is *secret* or *unseen*. See vol. xiv. page 190, note 25.

² *Profound* here signifies having deep or secret qualities. The *vaporous drop* seems to have been the same as the *virus lunare* of the ancients, being a foam which the Moon was supposed to shed on particular herbs, or other objects, when strongly solicited by enchantments.

³ *Sleights* is *arts*, or *subtle practices* ; as in the phrase, "sleight of hand."

⁴ *Security* in the Latin sense of *over-confidence* or *presumption*. Both the noun and the adjective are often used thus.

*[Music and a Song within : *Come away, come away, &c.*⁵

*Hark ! I am call'd ; my little spirit, see,

*Sits in a foggy cloud, and stays for me. [Exit.

**1 Witch.* Come, let's make haste ; she'll soon be back
again. [Exeunt.

SCENE VI. — *Forres. A Room in the Palace.*

Enter LENNOX and another Lord.

Len. My former speeches have but hit your thoughts,
Which can interpret further : only, I say,
Things have been strangely borne. The gracious Duncan
Was pitied of Macbeth : marry, he was dead :
And the right-valiant Banquo walk'd too late ;
Whom, you may say, if't please you, Fleance kill'd,
For Fleance fled : men must not walk too late.
Who can now want the thought,¹ how monstrous
It was for Malcolm and for Donalbain
To kill their gracious father ? damnèd fact !
How it did grieve Macbeth ! did he not straight,
In pious rage, the two delinquents tear,
That were the slaves of drink and thralls of sleep ?
Was not that nobly done ? Ay, and wisely too ;
For 'twould have anger'd any heart alive
To hear the men deny't. So that, I say,
He has borne all things well : and I do think
That, had he Duncan's sons under his key, —
As, an't please Heaven, he shall not, — they should find
What 'twere to kill a father ; so should Fleance.

⁵ For the rest of the song used here, see Critical Notes.

¹ An old form of speech, meaning " *be without* the thought," or *lack* it. We should say, " Who can *help thinking* ? "

But, peace ! for from broad² words, and 'cause he fail'd
His presence at the tyrant's feast, I hear,
Macduff lives in disgrace. Sir, can you tell
Where he bestows himself?

Lord. The son of Duncan,
From whom this tyrant holds the due of birth,
Lives in the English Court ; and is received
Of the most pious Edward with such grace,
That the malevolence of fortune nothing
Takes from his high respect. Thither Macduff
Is gone to pray the holy King, upon his aid
To wake Northumberland and warlike Siward ;
That by the help of these, with Him above
To ratify the work, we may again
Give to our tables meat, sleep to our nights ;
Keep from our feasts and banquets bloody knives ;
Do faithful homage and receive free honours ;
All which we pine for now : and this report
Hath so exasperate³ the King, that he
Prepares for some attempt of war.

Len. Sent he to Macduff?

Lord. He did : and with an absolute *Sir, not I,*
The cloudy messenger turns me his back,
And hums, as who should say,⁴ *You'll rue the time*

² *Broad*, here, is *plain, outright, free-spoken.*

³ *Exasperate* for *exasperated.* The Poet has many such shortened preterites ; as *consecrate, contaminate, dedicate.*

⁴ "As who should say" is equivalent to *as if he were saying, or as much as to say.* A frequent usage. — *Cloudy* is *angry, frowning.* — In "turns me his back," *me* is redundant. Often so. — It appears, at the close of scene 4, that Macbeth did not give Macduff a special and direct invitation to the banquet ; but his attendance was expected as a matter of course ; and his failure to attend made him an object of distrust and suspicion to the tyrant. We are to suppose that Macbeth learned, from the paid spy and informer whom he kept in Macduff's house, that the latter had declared he would not go to the feast. So that the messenger here spoken of was probably not

That clogs me with this answer.

Len. And that well might
Advise him to a caution, to hold what distance
His wisdom can provide. Some holy angel
Fly to the Court of England, and unfold
His message ere he come ; that a swift blessing
May soon return to this our suffering country
Under a hand accursed ! ⁵

Lord. I'll send my prayers with him.
[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I. — *A Cavern. In the Middle, a Boiling Cauldron.*

Thunder. Enter the three Witches.

- 1 Witch.* Thrice the brinded ¹ cat hath mew'd.
2 Witch. Thrice and once ² the hedge-pig whined.
3 Witch. Harpy cries ; 'tis time, 'tis time.³
1 Witch. Round about the cauldron go ;
In the poison'd entrails throw. —
Toad, that under the cold stone
Days and nights hast thirty-one
Swelter'd venom sleeping got,
Boil thou first i' the charmed pot.

sent to invite Macduff, but to call him to account for his non-attendance. See page 75, notes 24 and 25.

⁵ The order is, "our country suffering under a hand accursed."

¹ *Brinded* is but an old form of *brindled*. The colour, as I used to hear it applied to cats and cows, was a dark brown streaked with black.

² *Thrice and once* is put for *four*, because, on such occasions, the calling of even numbers was thought unlucky.

³ Harpy's cry is the signal, showing that it is time to begin their work. *Harpy* is of course a familiar. See page 12, note 2.

All. Double, double toil and trouble ;
Fire, burn ; and, cauldron, bubble.

2 *Witch.* Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the cauldron boil and bake ;
Eye of newt, and toe of frog,
Wool of bat, and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork, and blind-worm's sting,⁴
Lizard's leg, and howlet's wing, —
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

All. Double, double toil and trouble ;
Fire, burn ; and, cauldron, bubble.

3 *Witch.* Scale of dragon ; tooth of wolf ;
Witches' mummy ;⁵ maw and gulf
Of the ravin salt-sea shark ;⁶
Root of hemlock digg'd i' the dark ;⁷
Liver of blaspheming Jew ;
Gall of goat ; and slips of yew
Sliver'd in the Moon's eclipse ;⁸
Nose of Turk, and Tartar's lips ;

⁴ *Fork* is put for *forked tongue*. The adder's tongue was thought to have a poisonous sting. — *Blind-worm* is the *slowworm*. Called "eyeless venom'd worm" in *Timon of Athens*, iv. 3.

⁵ Probably meaning the mummy of an old Egyptian witch embalmed. Honest mummy was much used as medicine ; and a *witch's* of course had evil magic in it. Sir Thomas Browne, in his *Hydriotaphia*, has the following : "The Egyptian mummy, which Cambyses or time hath spared, avarice now consumeth. Mummy is become merchandise, Mizraim cures wounds, and Pharaoh is sold for balsams."

⁶ *Ravin* for *ravenous* or *ravening*. See vol. iv. page 70, note 7. — *Maw* is *stomach*. — *Gulf* is *gullet* or *throat* ; that which swallows or *gulps down* any thing.

⁷ Any poisonous root was thought to become more poisonous if dug on a dark night. See vol. xiv. page 235, note 38.

⁸ A lunar eclipse was held to be fraught with evil magic of the highest intensity. So in *Paradise Lost*, i. 597 : "The Moon in dim eclipse disastrous twilight sheds on half the nations."

Finger of birth-strangled babe
 Ditch-deliver'd by a drab, —
 Make the gruel thick and slab :
 Add thereto a tiger's chaudron,⁹
 For th' ingredients of our cauldron.
All. Double, double toil and trouble ;
 Fire, burn ; and, cauldron, bubble.
2 Witch. Cool it with a báboon's blood,
 Then the charm is firm and good.

**Enter* HECATE.

**Hec.* O, well done ! I commend your pains ;
 *And every one shall share i' the gains :
 *And now about the cauldron sing,
 *Like elves and fairies in a ring,
 *Enchanting all that you put in.

*[Music and song, *Black spirits, &c.*¹⁰

[*Exit* HECATE.

**2 Witch.* By the pricking of my thumbs,
 *Something wicked this way comes : —
 *Open, locks, whoever knocks !

Enter MACBETH.

Macb. How now, your secret, black, and midnight hags !
 What is't you do ?

All. A deed without a name.

Macb. I conjure you, by that which you profess, —
 Howe'er you come to know it, — answer me :
 Though you untie the winds, and let them fight

⁹ *Chaudron* is *entrails*. — *Slab* is *glutinous* or *slabby*; what, in making soft soap, used to be called *ropy*.

¹⁰ I here print just as it is in the original. The song commonly used on the stage is from *The Witch* of Middleton. See Critical Notes.

Against the churches ; though the yesty¹¹ waves
 Confound and swallow navigation up ;
 Though bladed corn be lodged,¹² and trees blown down ;
 Though castles topple on their warders' heads ;
 Though palaces and pyramids do slope
 Their heads to their foundations ; though the treasure
 Of Nature's germens¹³ tumble all together,
 Even till destruction sicken, — answer me
 To what I ask you.

1 *Witch.* Speak.

2 *Witch.* Demand.

3 *Witch.* We'll answer.

1 *Witch.* Say, if thou'dst rather hear it from our mouths,
 Or from our masters ?

Macb. Call 'em, let me see 'em.

1 *Witch.* Pour in sow's blood, that hath eaten
 Her nine farrow ;¹⁴ grease that's sweaten
 From the murderer's gibbet throw
 Into the flame.

All. Come, high or low ;
 Thyself and office deftly¹⁵ show !

Thunder. An Apparition of an armed Head rises,¹⁶

Macb. Tell me, thou unknown power, —

¹¹ *Yesty* is foaming, frothy ; like yeast.

¹² "Bladed corn" is corn in the blade.— *Lodged* is laid.

¹³ *Germens* are the seeds, the springs or principles of germination, whether in plants or animals.— "Till destruction sicken" probably means till destruction grows sick of destroying.

¹⁴ *Nine farrow* is a litter of nine pigs. *Farrow* is from the Anglo-Saxon *farh*, which means give birth to pigs.

¹⁵ *Deftly* is adroitly, dexterously.

¹⁶ The armed head represents symbolically Macbeth's head cut off and brought to Malcolm by Macduff. The bloody child is Macduff, untimely ripped from his mother's womb. The child, with a crown on his head and a bough in his hand, is the royal Malcolm, who ordered his soldiers to hew them down a bough, and bear it before them to Dunsinane. — UPTON.

1 Witch. He knows thy thought :

Hear his speech, but say thou nought.¹⁷

1 App. Macbeth ! Macbeth ! Macbeth ! beware Macduff ;
Beware the Thane of Fife. — Dismiss me : enough.¹⁸

[*Descends.*]

Macb. Whate'er thou art, for thy good caution, thanks ;
Thou'st harp'd my fear aright : but one word more, —

1 Witch. He will not be commanded : here's another,
More potent than the first.

Thunder. *An Apparition of a bloody Child rises.*

2 App. Macbeth ! Macbeth ! Macbeth ! —

Macb. Had I three ears, I'd hear thee.¹⁹

2 App. — Be bloody, bold, and resolute ; laugh to scorn
The power of man, for none of woman born
Shall harm Macbeth.

[*Descends.*]

Macb. Then live, Macduff : what need I fear of thee ?
But yet I'll make assurance double-sure,
And take a bond of fate :²⁰ thou shalt not live ;
That I may tell pale-hearted fear it lies,
And sleep in spite of thunder. —

Thunder. *An Apparition of a Child crowned, with a tree
in his hand, rises.*

What is this,

That rises like the issue of a king,
And wears upon his baby brow the round
And top of sovereignty ?²¹

¹⁷ Silence was necessary during all incantations. So in *The Tempest* :
"Be mute, or else our spell is marr'd."

¹⁸ Spirits thus evoked were supposed impatient of being questioned.

¹⁹ The meaning probably is, "Had I more ears than I have, I would listen with them all." The stress is on *three*, not on *ears*. So the phrase still in use : "I listened with all the ears I had."

²⁰ That is, "I will bind fate itself to my cause."

²¹ The *round* is that part of a crown which encircles the head : the *top* is

All. Listen, but speak not to't.

3 App. Be lion-mettled, proud ; and take no care
Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are :
Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be, until
Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane ²² hill
Shall come against him. [*Descends.*]

Macb. That will never be :
Who can impress the forest ; ²³ *bid the tree
*Unfix his earth-bound root? Sweet bodements ! good !
*Rebellion's head rise never, till the wood
*Of Birnam rise, and our high-placed Macbeth
*Shall live the lease of Nature, pay his breath
To time and mortal custom. ²⁴ Yet my heart
Throbs to know one thing : tell me, — if your art
Can tell so much, — shall Banquo's issue ever
Reign in this kingdom?

All. Seek to know no more.

Macb. I will be satisfied : deny me this,
And an eternal curse fall on you ! Let me know —
Why sinks that cauldron ? and what noise is this ? [*Hautboys.*]

1 Witch. Show !

2 Witch. Show !

3 Witch. Show !

All. Show his eyes, and grieve his heart ;
Come like shadows, so depart !

*Eight Kings appear, and pass over in order, the last with a
glass in his hand ; BANQUO'S Ghost following.*

Macb. Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo ; down !

the ornament which rises above it, and is symbolical of sovereign power and honour.

²² The present accent of *Dunsinane* is right. In every other instance the accent is misplaced.

²³ "Who can *press* the forest into his service ?"

²⁴ Shall live the full time allotted to man, and then die a natural death.

Thy crown does sear mine eyeballs. — And thy air,²⁵
 Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first :
 A third is like the former. — Filthy hags !
 Why do you show me this? — A fourth ! — Start, eyes !
 What, will the line stretch out to th' crack of doom?
 Another yet ! A seventh ! I'll see no more :
 And yet the eighth appears, who bears a glass²⁶
 Which shows me many more ; and some I see
 That twofold balls and treble sceptres carry :²⁷
 Horrible sight ! Nay, now I see 'tis true ;
 For the blood-bolter'd²⁸ Banquo smiles upon me,
 And points at them for his. — What, is this so ?

I Witch. Ay, sir, all this is so. *But why
 *Stands Macbeth thus amazedly? —
 *Come, sisters, cheer we up his sprites,

²⁵ *Air for look or appearance.* See vol. vii, page 250, note 7.

²⁶ The notion of a magic *glass* or charmed mirror, wherein any one might see whatsoever of the distant or the future pertained to himself, seems to have been a part of the old Druidical mythology. There is an allusion to it in *Measure for Measure*, ii. 2: "And, like a prophet, looks in a *glass* that shows what *future evils*," &c. Such was the "brod mirrour of glas" which "the king of Arabie and of Inde" sent to Cambuscan, as related in *The Squieres Tale* of Chaucer. But the most wonderful glass of this kind was that described in *The Faerie Queene*, iii. 2, which

The great Magicien Merlin had devis'd
 By his deepe science and hell-dreaded might.

²⁷ The two balls or globes probably symbolized the two *independent* crowns of England and Scotland; the three sceptres, the kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland. Scott, in *Quentin Durward*, when Charles the Bold has Louis of France in his power, makes Comines say to the King, that "it is his (the Duke's) purpose to close his ducal coronet with an imperial arch, and surmount it with a *globe*, in emblem that his *dominions* are *independent*"

²⁸ In Warwickshire, when a horse, sheep, or other animal perspires much, and any of the hair or wool becomes matted into tufts with grime and sweat, he is said to be *boltered*; and whenever the blood issues out and coagulates, forming the locks into hard clotted bunches, the beast is said to be *blood-boltered*.

*And show the best of our delights :
 *I'll charm the air to give a sound,
 *While you perform your antic round ;
 *That this great King may kindly say
 *Our duties did his welcome pay.

*[*Music. The Witches dance, and then vanish.*

Macb. Where are they? Gone? Let this pernicious
 hour

Stand aye accursèd in the calendar !²⁹ —
 Come in, without there !

Enter LENNOX.

Len. What's your Grace's will?

Macb. Saw you the Weird Sisters?

Len. No, my lord.

Macb. Came they not by you?

Len. No, indeed, my lord.

Macb. Infected be the air whereon they ride ;
 And damn'd all those that trust them ! I did hear
 The galloping of horse' : who was't came by ?

Len. 'Tis two or three, my lord, that bring you word
 Macduff is fled to England.

Macb. Fled to England !

Len. Ay, my good lord.

Macb. [*Aside.*] Time, thou anticipatest³⁰ my dread
 exploits :

The flighty purpose never is o'ertook
 Unless the deed go with it : from this moment
 The very firstlings of my heart shall be
 The firstlings of my hand. And even now,

²⁹ Alluding to the old custom of marking down *lucky* and *unlucky* days in the almanacs.

³⁰ The Poet often has *prevent* in the sense of *anticipate* ; here he has *anticipate* in the sense of *prevent*.

To crown my thoughts with acts, be't thought and done :
 The castle of Macduff I will surprise ;
 Seize upon Fife ; give to the edge o' the sword
 His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls
 That trace him in his line. *No boasting like a fool ;
 *This deed I'll do before this purpose cool :
 But no more sights !³¹ — Where are these gentlemen ?
 Come, bring me where they are. [*Exeunt*.

SCENE II. — *Fife. A Room in MACDUFF'S Castle.*

Enter Lady MACDUFF, her Son, and ROSS.

L. Macd. What had he done, to make him fly the land ?

Ross. You must have patience, madam.

L. Macd. He had none ;

His flight was madness : when our actions do not,
 Our fears do make ¹ us traitors.

Ross. You know not

Whether it was his wisdom or his fear.

L. Macd. Wisdom ! to leave his wife, to leave his babes,
 His mansion, and his titles, in a place
 From whence himself does fly ! He loves us not ;
 He wants the natural touch : ² for the poor wren,
 The most diminutive of birds, will fight,
 Her young ones in her nest, ³ against the owl.

³¹ Macbeth does not at all relish the *vision* of Banquo, &c., shown him in the cavern: it vexes and disturbs him greatly. This is evidently what he refers to here.

¹ *Make* in the sense of *make out* or *prove*. "When our actions do not *convict* us of being traitors, our fears do." The Lady is apprehensive that her husband's flight will be construed as proceeding from guilty fear.

² The sense or sensibility of nature or natural affection. The Poet has "inly *touch* of love" in a like sense.

³ That is, "her young ones *being* in her nest." Ablative absolute.

All is the fear, and nothing is the love ;
As little is the wisdom, where the flight
So runs against all reason.

Ross. My dear'st coz,
I pray you, school yourself : but, for your husband,⁴
He's noble, wise, judicious, and best knows
The fits o' the season.⁵ I dare not speak much further :
But cruel are the times, when we are traitors,
And do not know't ourselves ; when we hold rumour
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear,⁶
But float upon a wild and violent sea
Each way it moves. I take my leave of you ;
Shall not be long but I'll be here again.
Things at the worst will cease, or else climb upward
To what they were before.⁷ — My pretty cousin,
Blessing upon you !

L. Macd. Father'd he is, and yet he's fatherless.

Ross. I am so much a fool, should I stay longer.
It would be my disgrace and your discomfort :⁸
I take my leave at once. [*Exit.*

L. Macd. Sirrah,⁹ your father's dead :
And what will you do now ? How will you live ?

Son. As birds do, mother.

L. Macd. What, with worms and flies ?

Son. With what I get, I mean ; and so do they.

⁴ *As to, or as regards, your husband. For is often used thus.*

⁵ The *exigencies* or *dangers* of the time. *Fits* for *turns* or *changes*.

⁶ "Fear makes us credit rumour, yet we know not what to fear, because ignorant when we offend." A condition wherein men believe, because they fear, and fear the more, because they cannot foresee the danger.

⁷ Meaning, apparently, that, the worse a disease becomes, the sooner there will be either death or recovery. The very excess of an evil often starts a reaction, and thence a return to a better state.

⁸ Meaning that he would fall into the *unmanly* act of weeping.

⁹ *Sirrah* is here used playfully ; perhaps as a note of motherly pride.

L. Macd. Poor bird ! thou'dst never fear the net nor lime,
The pitfall nor the gin.¹⁰

Son. Why should I, mother? Poor birds they are not
set for.¹¹

My father is not dead, for all your saying.

L. Macd. Yes, he is dead : how wilt thou do for a father?

Son. Nay, how will you do for a husband?

L. Macd. Why, I can buy me twenty at any market.

Son. Then you'll buy 'em to sell again.

L. Macd. Thou speak'st with all thy wit ; and yet, i'faith,
With wit enough for thee.

Son. Was my father a traitor, mother?

L. Macd. Ay, that he was.

Son. What is a traitor?

L. Macd. Why, one that swears and lies.

Son. And be all traitors that do so?

L. Macd. Every one that does so is a traitor, and must
be hang'd.

Son. And must they all be hang'd that swear and lie?

L. Macd. Every one.

Son. Who must hang them?

L. Macd. Why, the honest men.

Son. Then the liars and swearers are fools ; for there are
liars and swearers enough to beat the honest men, and hang
up them.

L. Macd. Now, God help thee, poor monkey ! But how
wilt thou do for a father?

Son. If he were dead, you'd weep for him : if you would
not, it were a good sign that I should quickly have a new
father.

¹⁰ *Gin* is *trap* or *snare*. — *Lime* for *birdlime*, the name of an old device for ensnaring birds. See vol. xiv. page 244, note 8.

¹¹ The bright boy's thought seems to be, that traps are not set for the poor, but for the rich ; nor for children, like himself, but for full-grown men.

L. Macd. Poor prattler, how thou talk'st !

*Enter a Messenger.*¹²

Mess. Bless you, fair dame ! I am not to you known,
 Though in your state of honour I am perfect.¹³
 I doubt¹⁴ some danger does approach you nearly :
 If you will take a homely man's advice,
 Be not found here ; hence, with your little ones.
 To fright you thus,¹⁵ methinks, I am too savage ;
 To do worse to you were fell cruelty,
 Which is too nigh your person. Heaven preserve you !
 I dare abide no longer. [*Exit.*

L. Macd. Wherefore should I fly ?
 I've done no harm. But I remember now
 I'm in this earthly world ; where to do harm
 Is often laudable ; to do good, sometime
 Accounted dangerous folly : why then, alas,
 Do I put up that womanly defence,
 To say I've done no harm ?—

Enter Murderers.

What are these faces ?

1 Mur. Where is your husband ?

L. Macd. I hope, in no place so unsanctified
 Where such as thou mayst find him.

1 Mur. He's a traitor.

¹² This messenger was one of the murderers employed by Macbeth to exterminate Macduff's family ; but who, from emotions of remorse and pity, had outstripped his companions, to give timely warning of their approach. — HEATH.

¹³ That is, " perfectly acquainted with your honourable rank and character." The Poet has *perfect* repeatedly so.

¹⁴ Here, as often, *doubt* is used for *fear* or *suspect*.

¹⁵ " To fright you " for *in frightening* you. See page 45, note 20.

Son. Thou liest, thou shag-hair'd¹⁶ villain !

1 Mur. [*Stabbing him.*]

What, you egg !

Young fry of treachery !

Son.

He has kill'd me, mother :

Run away I pray you !¹⁷

[*Dies.*]

[*Exit Lady MACDUFF, crying Murder !
and pursued by the Murderers.*]

SCENE III. — *England. Before the King's Palace.*

Enter MALCOLM and MACDUFF.

Mal. Let us seek out some desolate shade, and there
Weep our sad bosoms empty.

Macd.

Let us rather

Hold fast the mortal sword ; and, like good men,
Bestride our down-fall'n birthdom.¹ Each new morn
New widows howl ; new orphans cry ; new sorrows
Strike heaven on the face, that it resounds
As if it felt with Scotland, and yell'd out
Like syllable of dolour.

Mal.

What I believe, I'll wail ;

What know, believe ; and what I can redress,

As I shall find the time to friend, I will.

¹⁶ *Shag-hair'd* was a common term of abuse. In Lodge's *Incaruate Devils of this Age*, 1596, we have "*shag-heard* slave."

¹⁷ "This scene," says Coleridge, "dreadful as it is, is still a relief, because a variety, because domestic, and therefore soothing, as associated with the only real pleasures of life. The conversation between Lady Macduff and her child heightens the pathos, and is preparatory for the deep tragedy of their assassination. Shakespeare's fondness for children is everywhere shown : in Prince Arthur in *King John* ; in the sweet scene in *The Winter's Tale* between Hermione and her son ; nay, even in honest Evans' examination of Mrs. Page's schoolboy."

¹ *Birthdom*, for the place of our birth, our native land. To *bestride* one that was down in battle was a special bravery of friendship. — *Good* here means *brave*. Often so used. See vol. xi. page 118, note 11.

What you have spoke, it may be so perchance.
 This tyrant, whose sole name blisters our tongues,
 Was once thought honest : you have loved him well ;
 He hath not touch'd you yet. I'm young ; but something
 You may deserve of him through me ; and wisdom
 To offer up a weak, poor, innocent lamb
 T' appease an angry god.²

Macd. I am not treacherous.

Mal. But Macbeth is.

A good and virtuous nature may recoil
 In an imperial charge.³ But I shall crave your pardon ;
 That which you are, my thoughts cannot transpose :⁴
 Angels are bright still, though the brightest fell :
 Though all things foul would wear the brows of grace,
 Yet grace must still look so.⁵

Macd. I've lost my hopes.

Mal. Perchance even there where I did find my doubts.⁶
 Why in that rawness left you wife and child,
 Those precious motives, those strong knots of love,
 Without leave-taking? I pray you,
 Let not my jealousies be your dishonours,
 But mine own safeties : you may be rightly just,

² " You may purchase or secure his favour by sacrificing me to his malice ; and to do so would be an act of worldly wisdom on your part, as I have no power to punish you for it."

³ May recede or fall away from goodness and virtue under the temptation of a man so powerful to resent or to reward.

⁴ *Transpose* for *interpret* or *translate*. Not so elsewhere, I think.

⁵ That is, though all bad things should counterfeit the looks of goodness, yet goodness must still wear its own looks. *Would* for *should*.

⁶ Macduff claims to have fled his home to avoid the tyrant's blow ; yet he has left his wife and children in the tyrant's power : this makes the Prince distrust his purpose, and suspect him of being a secret agent of Macbeth. And so, when he says, " I've lost my hopes," the Prince replies, " Perhaps the cause which has destroyed your hopes is the very same that leads me to distrust you ; that is, perhaps you have hoped to betray me ; which is just what I fear."

Whatever I shall think.

Macd. Bleed, bleed, poor country !
Great tyranny, lay thou thy basis sure,
For goodness dare not check thee ! wear thou thy wrongs,
Thy title is affeer'd !⁷ — Fare thee well, lord :
I would not be the villain that thou think'st
For the whole space that's in the tyrant's grasp,
And the rich East to boot.

Mal. Be not offended :
I speak not as in absolute fear of you.
I think our country sinks beneath the yoke ;
It weeps, it bleeds ; and each new day a gash
Is added to her wounds : I think, withal,
There would be hands uplifted in my right ;
And here, from gracious England,⁸ have I offer
Of goodly thousands : but, for all this,
When I shall tread upon the tyrant's head,
Or wear it on my sword, yet my poor country
Shall have more vices than it had before ;
More suffer, and more sundry ways than ever,
By him that shall succeed.

Macd. What should he be ?

Mal. It is myself I mean ; in whom I know
All the particulars of vice so grafted,
That, when they shall be open'd, black Macbeth
Will seem as pure as snow ; and the poor State
Esteem him as a lamb, being compared

⁷ Ritson, a lawyer, explains this rightly, no doubt: "To *affeer* is to assess, or reduce to certainty. All americiaments are, by *Magna Charta*, to be affeered by lawful men, sworn and impartial. This is the ordinary practice of a Court Leet, with which Shakespeare seems to have been intimately acquainted."—In "wear thou thy wrongs," the meaning probably is, wrongs as opposed to *rights*; or, perhaps, place and honours *gained by wrong*.

⁸ Edward the Confessor, who was then King of England.

With my confineless⁹ harms.

Macd. Not in the legions
Of horrid Hell can come a devil more damn'd
In evils to top¹⁰ Macbeth.

Mal. I grant him bloody,
Luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful,
Sudden, malicious, smacking of every sin
That has a name : but there's no bottom, none,
In my voluptuousness ; your wives, your daughters,
Your matrons, and your maids, could not fill up
The cistern of my lust ; and my desire
All continent¹¹ impediments would o'erbear,
That did oppose my will. Better Macbeth
Than such an one to reign.

Macd. Boundless intemperance
In nature is a tyranny ; it hath been
Th' untimely emptying of the happy throne,
And fall of many kings. But fear not yet
To take upon you what is yours : you may
Convey¹² your pleasures in a spacious plenty,
And yet seem cold, the time you may so hoodwink.
We've willing dames enough ; there cannot be
That vulture in you, to devour so many
As will to greatness dedicate themselves,
Finding it so inclined.

Mal. With this, there grows,
In my most ill-composed affection, such
A stanchless avarice, that, were I king,
I should cut off the nobles for their lands ;

⁹ *Confineless* for *boundless*, or *numberless*. Not so elsewhere.

¹⁰ To *top* is, in old English, to *surpass*. See vol. xv. page 154, note 29.

¹¹ *Continent* for *restraining* or *holding in*; one of its Latin senses.

¹² To *convey* was sometimes used for to *manage* or *carry through* a thing artfully and secretly. See vol. xv. page 26, note 14.

Desire his jewels, and this other's house :¹³
 And my more-having would be as a sauce
 To make me hunger more ; that I should forge
 Quarrels unjust against the good and loyal,
 Destroying them for wealth.

Macd. This avarice
 Sticks deeper, grows with more pernicious root
 Than summer-seeming lust ;¹⁴ and it hath been
 The sword of our slain kings :¹⁵ yet do not fear ;
 Scotland hath foisons to fill up your will,
 Of your mere own : all these are portable,
 With other graces weigh'd.¹⁶

Mal. But I have none : the king-becoming graces,
 As justice, verity, temperance,¹⁷ stableness,
 Bounty, persévérance, mercy, lowliness,
 Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude,
 I have no relish of them ; but abound
 In the division¹⁸ of each several crime,
 Acting it many ways. Nay, had I power, I should
 Pour the sweet milk of concord into Hell,
 Uproar the universal peace, confound¹⁹

¹³ *One man's* jewels and *another man's* house, is the meaning.

¹⁴ Summer-resembling lust ; the passion that burns awhile like Summer, and like Summer passes away ; whereas the other passion, *avarice*, has no such date, but grows stronger and stronger to the end of life. So Donne, in one of his poems, has "a *summer-seeming* Winter's night."

¹⁵ Probably meaning "the sword *that has slain* our kings " ; or, perhaps, "the *evil* that has *caused* our kings to be slain with the sword."

¹⁶ *Foison* is an old word for *plenty* or *abundance*. — *Portable* is *endurable*. — *Weighed* for *balanced*, *counterpoised*, or *compensated*. — "Your *mere* own" is *entirely* or *absolutely* your own. *Mere* and *merely* were often used thus.

¹⁷ *Temperance* in its proper Latin sense of *self-restraint* ; the opposite of *intemperance* as used a little before. — *Verity* for *veracity*.

¹⁸ *Division* seems to be used here in the sense of *variation*. So it appears to have been sometimes used as a term in music.

¹⁹ A singular use of *uproar* ; but probably meaning to *turmoil*, to *fill with tumult* and *uproar*. — *Confound*, again, for *destroy*.

All unity on Earth.

Macd. O Scotland, Scotland !

Mal. If such a one be fit to govern, speak :
I am as I have spoken.

Macd. Fit to govern !

No, not to live. — O nation miserable,
With an untitled tyrant bloody-scepter'd,
When shalt thou see thy wholesome days again,
Since that the truest issue of thy throne
By his own interdiction stands accursed,
And does blaspheme his breed? — Thy royal father
Was a most sainted king : the queen that bore thee,
Oftener upon her knees than on her feet,
Died every day she livèd. Fare thee well !
These evils thou repeat'st upon thyself
Have banish'd me from Scotland. — O my breast,
Thy hope ends here !

Mal. Macduff, this noble passion,
Child of integrity, hath from my soul
Wiped the black scruples, reconciled my thoughts
To thy good truth and honour. Devilish Macbeth
By many of these trains²⁰ hath sought to win me
Into his power ; and modest wisdom plucks me
From over-credulous haste : but God above
Deal between thee and me ! for even now
I put myself to thy direction, and
Unspeak mine own detraction ; here abjure
The taints and blames I laid upon myself,
For strangers to my nature. I am yet

²⁰ *Trains* is *arts or devices of circumvention*. *The Edinburgh Review*, October, 1872, shows the word to have been "a technical term both in hawking and hunting : in hawking, for the lure thrown out to reclaim a falcon given to ramble ; and in hunting, for the bait trailed along the ground, and left exposed, to tempt the animal from his lair or covert, and bring him fairly within the power of the lurking huntsman."

Unknown to woman ; never was forsworn ;
 Scarcely have coveted what was mine own ;
 At no time broke my faith ; would not betray
 The Devil to his fellow ;²¹ and delight
 No less in truth than life : my first false-speaking
 Was this upon myself. What I am truly,
 Is thine, and my poor country's, to command ;
 Whither, indeed, before thy here-approach,
 Old Siward, with ten thousand warlike men,
 Already at a point,²² was setting forth :
 Now we'll together ; and the chance of goodness
 Be like our warranted quarrel !²³ Why are you silent ?

Macd. Such welcome and unwelcome things at once
 'Tis hard to reconcile.

Enter a Doctor.

Mal. Well ; more anon. — Comes the King forth, I pray
 you ?

Doct. Ay, sir ; there are a crew of wretched souls
 That stay his cure : their malady convinces²⁴
 The great assay of art ; but, at his touch,
 Such sanctity hath Heaven given his hand,
 They presently amend.

Mal. I thank you, doctor. [*Exit Doctor.*]

Macd. What's the disease he means ?

Mal. 'Tis call'd the evil :

²¹ *Fellow* for *friend* or *companion* ; and the sense is, that, if he would not betray the Devil to his friend, much less would he betray him to his enemy. Pretty strong !

²² *At a point* is *ready, prepared* ; or at a stop or period where there is nothing further to be said or done.

²³ "May the chance for virtue to succeed be as good, as well warranted, as our *cause* is just." For this use of *quarrel*, see page 13, note 5.

²⁴ *Convince*, again, in its old sense of *overcome*. See page 38, note 17.

A most miraculous work in this good King ;
 Which often, since my here-remain in England,
 I've seen him do. How he solicits Heaven,
 Himself best knows : but strangely-visited people,
 All swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
 The mere²⁵ despair of surgery, he cures ;
 Hanging a golden stamp about their necks,
 Put on with holy prayers : and 'tis spoken,
 To the succeeding royalty he leaves
 The healing benediction.²⁶ With this strange virtue,
 He hath a heavenly gift of prophecy ;
 And sundry blessings hang about his throne,
 That speak him full of grace.

Macd. See, who comes here ?

Mal. My countryman ; but yet I know him not.

Enter Ross.

Macd. My ever-gentle cousin, welcome hither.

Mal. I know him now.²⁷ — Good God, betimes remove
 The means that makes us strangers !

Ross. Sir, amen.

Macd. Stands Scotland where it did ?

Ross. Alas, poor country,

²⁵ *Mere*, again, for *absolute* or *utter*. See page 96, note 16.

²⁶ Holinshed has the following respecting Edward the Confessor : " As it has been thought, he was inspired with the gift of prophecy, and also to have the gift of healing infirmities and diseases. He used to help those that were vexed with the disease commonly called the king's evil, and left that virtue as it were a portion of inheritance unto his successors, the kings of this realm." The custom of touching for the king's evil was not wholly laid aside till the days of Queen Anne, who used it on the infant Dr. Johnson. — The *golden stamp* was the coin called *angel*.

²⁷ The Prince at first distrusts Ross, just as he had before distrusted Macduff: but he has given his confidence *unreservedly* to the latter; and now he has full faith in Ross as soon as he sees how Macduff regards him. The passage is very delightful. — *Means*, next line, is put for *cause*.

Almost afraid to know itself ! It cannot
 Be call'd our mother, but our grave : where nothing,
 But who knows nothing, is once seen to smile ;²⁸
 Where sighs, and groans, and shrieks that rend the air,
 Are made, not mark'd ; where violent sorrow seems
 A modern ecstasy :²⁹ the dead man's knell
 Is there scarce ask'd for who ; and good men's lives
 Expire before the flowers in their caps,
 Dying or e'er they sicken.

Macd. O, relation

Too nice,³⁰ and yet too true !

Mal. What's the new'st grief?

Ross. That of an hour's age doth hiss the speaker ;³¹
 Each minute teems a new one.

Macd. How does my wife?

Ross. Why, well.

Macd. And all my children?

Ross. Well too.³²

Macd. The tyrant has not batter'd at their peace?

Ross. No ; they were well at peace when I did leave 'em.

Macd. Be not a niggard of your speech : how goes't?

Ross. When I came hither to transport the tidings,
 Which I have heavily borne, there ran a rumour
 Of many worthy fellows that were out ;³³

²⁸ Where none but *idiots* and *innocents* are *ever* seen to smile.

²⁹ *Ecstasy* is any strong *disturbance of mind*. See page 64, note 5. — *Modern* is *common, trite, every-day* ; as in the well-known passage, " Full of wise saws and modern instances."

³⁰ Too *nice*, because too elaborate, or having too much an air of study and art ; and so not like the frank utterance of deep feeling.

³¹ That which is but an hour old seems out of date, and so *causes* the speaker to be hissed as tedious.

³² An equivocal phrase, the sense of which is explained in *Antony and Cleopatra*, ii. 5 : " We use to say *the dead are well*."

³³ Here *out* has the force of *in arms*, or *in open revolt*. — What follows

Which was to my belief witness'd the rather,
 For that I saw the tyrant's power a-foot :
 Now is the time of help ; your eye in Scotland
 Would create soldiers, make our women fight,
 To doff³⁴ there dire distresses.

Mal. Be't their comfort
 We're coming thither : gracious England hath
 Lent us good Siward and ten thousand men ;
 An older and a better soldier none
 That Christendom gives out.

Ross. Would I could answer
 This comfort with the like ! But I have words
 That would be howl'd out in the desert air,
 Where hearing should not latch³⁵ them.

Macd. What concern they ?
 The general cause ? or is it a fee-grief³⁶
 Due to some single breast ?

Ross. No mind that's honest
 But in it shares some woe ; though the main part
 Pertains to you alone.

Macd. If it be mine,
 Keep it not from me, quickly let me have it.

Ross. Let not your ears despise my tongue for ever,
 Which shall possess them with the heaviest sound
 That ever yet they heard.

Macd. Hum ! I guess at it.

Ross. Your castle is surprised ; your wife and babes

means that the *rumour* is confirmed by the fact that Macbeth has put his troops in motion. — *For that* is *because*, or *for the reason* that. Often so.

³⁴ *Doff* is *do off*. So the Poet has *don* for *do on*, and *dup* for *do up*.

³⁵ Present usage would here transpose *should* and *would*. See page 71, note 8. — *Latch* is an old North-of-England word for *catch*. Our *door-latch* is that which *catches* the door.

³⁶ A *fee-grief* is a *private* or *individual* grief, as distinguished from one that is public or common.

Savagely slaughter'd : to relate the manner,
 Were, on the quarry³⁷ of these murder'd deer,
 To add the death of you.

Mal. Merciful Heaven ! —

What, man ! ne'er pull your hat upon your brows ;
 Give sorrow words : the grief that does not speak
 Whispers the o'er-fraught heart, and bids it break.

Macd. My children too ?

Ross. Wife, children, servants, all
 That could be found.

Macd. And I must be from thence ! —
 My wife kill'd too ?

Ross. I've said.

Mal. Be comforted :
 Let's make us medicines of our great revenge,
 To cure this deadly grief.

Macd. He has no children.³⁸ — All my pretty ones ?
 Did you say all ? — O hell-kite ! — All ?
 What, all my pretty chickens and their dam
 At one fell swoop³⁹ ?

Mal. Dispute it like a man.

Macd. I shall do so ;

³⁷ *Quarry* was a hunter's term for a heap of dead game, and was often applied as here. See vol. xiv. page 316, note 62. — In "murder'd deer," it may seem that the Poet intended a pun ; but probably not ; at least I can hardly think he meant the speaker to be conscious of it as such.

³⁸ "He has no children" is most likely said of Malcolm, and with reference to what he has just spoken ; though I believe it is commonly taken as referring to Macbeth, and in the idea that, as he has no children, there can be no adequate revenge upon him. But the true meaning, I have no doubt, is, that if Malcolm were a father, he would know that such a grief cannot be healed with the medicine of revenge. Besides, it would seem that Macbeth *has* children ; else why should he strain so hard to have the regal succession "stand in his posterity" ? And Lady Macbeth "knows how tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me."

³⁹ *Swoop* was a term for the descent of a bird of prey upon his quarry.

But I must also feel it as a man :
 I cannot but remember such things were,
 That were most precious to me. Did Heaven look on,
 And would not take their part? Sinful Macduff,
 They were all struck for thee ! naught ⁴⁰ that I am,
 Not for their own demerits, but for mine,
 Fell slaughter on their souls. Heaven rest them now !

Mal. Be this the whetstone of your sword : let grief
 Convert to anger ; blunt not the heart, enrage it.

Macd. O, I could play the woman with mine eyes,
 And braggart with my tongue !— But, gentle Heaven,
 Cut short all intermission ; front to front
 Bring Thou this fiend of Scotland and myself ;
 Within my sword's length set him ; if he 'scape,
 Heaven forgive him too ! ⁴¹

Mal. This tune goes manly.
 Come, go we to the King ; our power is ready ;
 Our lack is nothing but our leave : ⁴² Macbeth
 Is ripe for shaking, and the powers above
 Put on ⁴³ their instruments. Receive what cheer you may :
 The night is long that never finds the day. [*Exeunt.*]

⁴⁰ *Naught* appears to have had the same meaning as *bad*, only stronger. It should not be confounded with *nought*.

⁴¹ The little word *too* is so used here as to intensify, in a very remarkable manner, the sense of what precedes. "Put him once within the reach of my sword, and if I don't kill him, then I am as bad as he, and may God forgive us both!" I cannot point to an instance anywhere of language more intensely charged with meaning.

⁴² That is, "nothing remains to be done here but to take our leave of the King." A ceremony of parting.

⁴³ *Instruments* is here used of *persons*. — *Put on* means *stir up, instigate, urge on*. Often so. See vol. xiv. page 284, note 28.

ACT V.

SCENE I. — *Dunsinane. A Room in the Castle.*

Enter a Doctor of Physic and a Waiting-Gentlewoman.

Doct. I have two nights watch'd with you, but can perceive no truth in your report. When was it she last walk'd?

Gent. Since his Majesty went into the field,¹ I have seen her rise from her bed, throw her nightgown² upon her, unlock her closet, take forth paper, fold it, write upon't, read it, afterwards seal it, and again return to bed; yet all this while in a most fast sleep.

Doct. A great perturbation in nature, to receive at once the benefit of sleep, and do the effects³ of watching! In this slumbry agitation, besides her walking and other actual performances, what, at any time, have you heard her say?

Gent. That, sir, which I will not report after her.

Doct. You may to me; and 'tis most meet you should.

Gent. Neither to you nor any one; having no witness to confirm my speech. Lo you, here she comes!

Enter Lady MACBETH, with a taper.

This is her very guise; and, upon my life, fast asleep. Observe her; stand close.⁴

Doct. How came she by that light?

¹ In the preceding scene, Macbeth was said to have his "power a-foot" against "many worthy fellows that were out." Probably the coming of the English forces has induced him to withdraw his troops from the field, and put them within the strong fortress of Dunsinane.

² That is, *dressing-gown*, not what we call a *night-gown*.

³ *Effects* here means *acts* or *actions*. Repeatedly so.

⁴ Here, again, *close* is *secret*, *hidden*, or *in concealment*.

Gent. Why, it stood by her: she has light by her continually; 'tis her command.⁵

Doct. You see, her eyes are open.

Gent. Ay, but their sense is shut.

Doct. What is it she does now? Look, how she rubs her hands.

Gent. It is an accustom'd action with her, to seem thus washing her hands; I have known her continue in this a quarter of an hour.

Lady M. Yet here's a spot.

Doct. Hark! she speaks: I will set down what comes from her, to satisfy my remembrance the more strongly.

Lady M. Out, damnèd spot! out, I say! — One, two; why, then 'tis time to do't. — Hell is murky!⁶ — Fie, my lord, fie! a soldier, and afeard? What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our power to account? Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?

Doct. Do you mark that?

Lady M. The Thane of Fife had a wife; where is she now? — What, will these hands ne'er be clean? — No more o' that, my lord, no more o' that: you mar all with this starting.⁷

Doct. Go to, go to; you have known what you should not.

⁵ Was this to avert the presence of those "sightless substances" once impiously invoked? She seems washing her hands, and "continues in this a quarter of an hour." What a comment on her former boast, "A little water clears us of this deed!" — BUCKNILL.

⁶ Some think that Lady Macbeth imagines her husband to utter these words, and repeats them after him with a peculiar intonation as in ridicule or reproach of his fears. And so I suspect it is. But the learned Editors of the "Clarendon Press Series" think otherwise decidedly, and note as follows: "Her recollections of the deed and its motives alternate with recollections of subsequent remorse and dread of future punishment."

⁷ She is alluding to the terrors of Macbeth on seeing the Ghost of Banquo in the banquet-scene.

Gent. She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of that : Heaven knows what she has known.

Lady M. Here's the smell of the blood still : all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand.⁸ O ! O ! O !

Doct. What a sigh is there ! The heart is sorely charged.

Gent. I would not have such a heart in my bosom for the dignity of the whole body.

Doct. Well, well, well, —

Gent. Pray God it be, sir.⁹

Doct. — this disease is beyond my practice : yet I have known those which have walk'd in their sleep, who have died holily in their beds.

Lady M. Wash your hands, put on your nightgown ; look not so pale. I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried ; he cannot come out on's grave.

Doct. Even so ?

Lady M. To bed, to bed ; there's knocking at the gate : come, come, come, give me your hand : what's done cannot be undone : to bed, to bed, to bed. [*Exit.*

⁸ Upon this passage, Verplanck, after remarking how fertile the sense of smell is in the milder and gentler charms of poetry, adds the following : " But the smell has never been successfully used as the means of impressing the imagination with terror, pity, or any of the deeper emotions, except in this dreadful sleep-walking of the guilty Queen, and in one parallel scene of the Greek Drama, as wildly terrible as this. It is that passage of the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus, where the captive prophetess Cassandra, wrapt in visionary inspiration, scents first the smell of blood, and then the vapours of the tomb breathing from the palace of Atrides, as ominous of his approaching murder. These two stand alone in poetry ; and Fuseli in his lectures informs us that when, in the kindred art of painting, it has been attempted to produce tragic effect through the medium of ideas drawn from ' this squeamish sense,' even Raphael and Poussin have failed, and excited disgust instead of terror or compassion."

⁹ Does the Gentlewoman misunderstand the Doctor's " Well, well, well," or does she mean this as a further hint how dreadful the thing is ? At all events, I have long been wont to pause upon it as one of the Poet's quiet, unobtrusive master-strokes of delineation.

Doct. Will she go now to bed?

Gent. Directly.

Doct. Foul whisperings are abroad : unnatural deeds
Do breed unnatural troubles : infected minds
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets :
More needs she the divine than the physician. —
God, God forgive us all ! — Look after her ;
Remove from her the means of all annoyance,¹⁰
And still keep eyes upon her. So, good night :
*My mind she has mated,¹¹ and amazed my sight :
I think, but dare not speak.

Gent. Good night, good doctor.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. — *The Country near Dunsinane.*

*Enter, with drum and colours, MENTEITH, CAITHNESS, ANGUS,
LENNOX, and Soldiers.*

Ment. The English power is near, led on by Malcolm,
His uncle Siward, and the good Macduff :

¹⁰ That is, the means of doing violence to herself.

¹¹ To *mate* or *amate* is to *astonish*, to *strike with dismay*. — It has often struck me as a highly-significant fact, that this scene, which is more intensely tragic than any other in Shakespeare, is all, except the closing speech, written in prose. Why is this? The question is at least not a little curious. The diction is of the very plainest and simplest texture; yet what an impression of sublimity it carries! In fact, I suspect the matter is too sublime, too austere grand, to admit of any thing so artificial as the measured language of verse, even though the verse were Shakespeare's; and that the Poet, as from an instinct of genius, saw or felt that any attempt to heighten the effect by any such arts or charms of delivery would unbrace and impair it. And I think that the very diction of the closing speech, poetical as it is, must be felt by every competent reader as a letting-down to a lower plane. Is prose, then, after all, a higher form of speech than verse? There are strains in the New Testament which no possible arts of versification could fail to belittle and discrown.

Revenues burn in them ; for their dear causes
 Would to the bleeding and the grim alarm
 Excite the mortified man.¹

Ang. Near Birnam wood
 Shall we well meet them ; that way are they coming.

Caith. Who knows if Donalbain be with his brother ?

Len. For certain, sir, he is not : I've a file
 Of all the gentry ; there is Siward's son,
 And many unrough² youths, that even now
 Protest their first of manhood.

Ment. What does the tyrant ?

Caith. Great Dunsinane he strongly fortifies :
 Some say he's mad ; others, that lesser hate him,
 Do call it valiant fury :³ but, for certain,
 He cannot buckle his distemper'd course
 Within the belt of rule.

Ang. Now does he feel
 His secret murders sticking on his hands ;
 Now minutely revolts⁴ upbraid his faith-breach ;
 Those he commands move only in command,
 Nothing in love : now does he feel his title
 Hang loose about him, like a giant's robe
 Upon a dwarfish thief.

Ment. Who, then, shall blame
 His pester'd senses to recoil and start,⁵

¹ Would rouse and impel even a hermit to the war, to the signal for carnage and horror. By "the *mortified* man" is meant a *religious* man ; one who has mortified his passions, is dead to the world.

² *Unrough* is *unbearded, smooth-faced*. So in *The Tempest* : "Till newborn chins be *rough* and razorable."

³ *Fury* in the poetical sense ; *inspiration* or *heroic rapture*. So in Hoby-noll's lines to Spenser in praise of *The Faerie Queene* : "Some sacred *fury* hath enrich'd thy brains."

⁴ "*Minutely revolts*" are revolts occurring *every minute*.

⁵ That is, *for recoiling* and *starting*. See page 91, note 15.

When all that is within him does condemn
Itself for being there ?

Caith. Well, march we on,
To give obedience where 'tis truly owed :
Meet we the medicine of the sickly weal ;⁶
And with him pour we in our country's purge
Each drop of us.

Len. Or so much as it needs,
To dew the sovereign flower, and drown the weeds.⁷
Make we our march towards Birnam. [*Exeunt, marching.*]

SCENE III. — *Dunsinane. A Room in the Castle.*

Enter MACBETH, the Doctor, and Attendants.

Macb. Bring me no more reports ; let them fly all :
Till Birnam wood remove to Dunsinane,
I cannot taint¹ with fear. What's the boy Malcolm ?
Was he not born of woman ? The spirits that know
All mortal consequences have pronounced me thus,
*Fear not, Macbeth ; no man that's born of woman
Shall e'er have power upon thee.* — Then fly, false thanes,
And mingle with the English epicures :²

*The mind I sway by and the heart I bear

*Shall never sag³ with doubt nor shake with fear. —

⁶ "The *medicine* of the sickly weal" refers to Malcolm, the lawful Prince. In the olden time, the best remedy for the evils of tyranny, or the greater evils of civil war, was thought to be a king with a clear title.

⁷ "Let us shed so much of our blood as may be necessary in order to seat our rightful Prince on the throne, and destroy the usurping tyrant."

¹ To *taint* is to *corrupt*, to *infect* ; here used intransitively.

² Scotland being a comparatively lean and sterile country, the Scotch might naturally plume themselves on being plain livers and high thinkers, and so speak of the high-feeding English as epicures.

³ To *sag*, or *swag*, is to hang down by its own weight. "A word," says Mr. Furness, "of every-day use in America among mechanics and engineers." And I can add that I used to hear it often among farmers.

Enter a Servant.

The Devil damn thee black, thou cream-faced loon !⁴
Where gott'st thou that goose look ?

Serv. There is ten thousand —

Macb. Geese, villain ?

Serv. Soldiers, sir.

Macb. Go prick thy face, and over-red thy fear,
Thou lily-liver'd boy.⁵ What soldiers, patch ?⁶
Death of thy soul ! those linen cheeks of thine
Are counsellors to fear. What soldiers, whey-face ?

Serv. The English force, so please you.

Macb. Take thy face hence. — [Exit Servant.
Seyton ! — I'm sick at heart,

When I behold — Seyton, I say ! — This push
Will chair me ever, or dis-seat me now.⁷
I have lived long enough : my way of life
Is fall'n into the sere,⁸ the yellow leaf ;
And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have ; but, in their stead,
Curses not loud but deep, mouth-honour, breath,
Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not. —
Seyton !

⁴ This word, which signifies *a base, abject fellow*, was formerly common in England, but spelt *low*, and is justly considered by Horne Tooke as the past participle of *to low* or *abase*. *Lout* has the same origin.

⁵ *Lily-liver'd, white-liver'd, milk-liver'd*, were all strong words for *cowardly*. See vol. iii. page 172, note 15.

⁶ *Patch* was often used as a term of contempt. The use probably grew from the *rotley* or *patch-work* dress worn by professional Fools.

⁷ "Will *seat* me firmly on the throne, or else will *unseat* me utterly." If he whip the present enemy, his tenure of the crown will be confirmed ; if he fail now, there will be no more hope for him.

⁸ *Sere* is *dry, withered*. Often so used. — "Way of life" is merely an enlarged expression for *life*. Macbeth's complaint is, that he is now growing old, and that he cannot expect to have the natural comforts of old age.

Enter SEYTON.

Seyt. What is your gracious pleasure?

Macb. What news more?

Seyt. All is confirm'd, my lord, which was reported.

Macb. I'll fight, till from my bones my flesh be hack'd.
Give me my armour.

Seyt. 'Tis not needed yet.

Macb. I'll put it on.

Send out more horses, skirr⁹ the country round ;
Hang those that talk of fear. — Give me mine armour. —
How does your patient, doctor?

Doct. Not so sick, my lord,
As she is troubled with thick-coming fancies,
That keep her from her rest.

Macb. Cure her of that :
Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased ;
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow ;
Raze out the written troubles of the brain ;
And with some sweet-oblivious antidote
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous grief
Which weighs upon the heart?

Doct. Therein the patient
Must minister to himself.

Macb. Throw physic to the dogs, I'll none of it. —
Come, put mine armour on ; give me my staff.¹⁰ —
Seyton, send out. — Doctor, the thanes fly from me. —
Come, sir, dispatch. — If thou couldst, doctor, cast
The water of my land,¹¹ find her disease,

⁹ *Skirr* is an old word for *scour*, and has the sense of *moving swiftly*. So in *King Henry V.*, iv. 7: "And make them *skirr* away, as swift as stones enforced from the old Assyrian slings."

¹⁰ *Staff* probably means his symbol of military command; general's *baton*. Or it may mean a fighting-tool; his *lance*.

¹¹ Probably alluding to the old custom of medical diagnosis by inspect-

And purge it to a sound and pristine health,
 I would applaud thee to the very echo,
 That should applaud again. — Pull't off, I say.¹² —
 What rhubarb, senna, or what purgative drug,
 Would scour these English hence? Hear'st thou of them?

Doct. Ay, my good lord; your royal preparation
 Makes us hear something.

Macb. Bring it¹³ after me. —

*I will not be afraid of death and bane,

*Till Birnam forest come to Dunsinane.

[*Exeunt all but Doctor.*

**Doct.* Were I from Dunsinane away and clear,

*Profit again should hardly draw me here. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV. — *Country near Dunsinane: a Wood in view.*

Enter, with drum and colours, MALCOLM, old SIWARD and young SIWARD, MACDUFF, MENTEITH, CAITHNESS, ANGUS, LENNOX, ROSS, and Soldiers, marching.

Mal. Cousins, I hope the days are near at hand
 That chambers will be safe.¹

Ment. We doubt it nothing.

Siw. What wood is this before us?

Ment. The wood of Birnam.

Mal. Let every soldier hew him down a bough,
 And bear't before him: thereby shall we shadow
 The numbers of our host, and make discovery

ing or *casting* the patient's water. So that the language is equivalent to "diagnos^ticate all the people of Scotland."

¹² Spoken to the armourer, who has got a piece of the armour on wrong.

¹³ Referring to the piece which he has just ordered the armourer to pull off.

¹ Referring, probably, to the spies and informers whom Macbeth keeps in the noblemen's houses, prowling about their private chambers, and listening at their key-holes. See page 76, note 25.

Err in report of us.

Soldiers. It shall be done.

Siw. We learn no other but the confident tyrant
Keeps still in Dunsinane, and will endure
Our sitting down before't.

Mal. 'Tis his main hope :
For, where there is advantage to be ta'en,
Both more and less ² have given him the revolt ;
And none serve with him but constrained things,
Whose hearts are absent too.

Macd. Let our just censures
Attend the true event,³ and put we on
Industrious soldiership.

**Siw.* The time approaches
*That will with due decision make us know
*What we shall say we have, and what we owe.⁴
*Thoughts speculative their unsure hopes relate ;
*But certain issue strokes must arbitrate :⁵
Towards which advance the war. [*Exeunt, marching.*

² *More and less* is the old phrase for *great and small*, or *high and low*.

³ Another proleptical form of speech ; the meaning being, " Let our judgments wait for the actual result, the issue of the contest, *in order that they may be just.*" See page 72, note II.

⁴ Evidently meaning, " When we have a king that will rule by law we shall know both our rights and our duties." I make this note simply because some have vented an unworthy sneer, not indeed at the Poet, but at the brave old warrior for speaking thus.

⁵ Referring, apparently, to Malcolm's last speech, which proceeds somewhat upon conjecture and seeming likelihood. The old war-horse means, " There's no use in talking about it, and eating the air of expectation ; nothing but plain old-fashioned fighting will decide the matter."

SCENE V. — *Dunsinane. Within the Castle.*

Enter, with drum and colours, MACBETH, SEYTON, and Soldiers.

Macb. Hang out our banners on the outward walls ;
The cry is still, *They come*. Our castle's strength
Will laugh a siege to scorn : here let them lie
Till famine and the ague eat them up :
Were they not forced¹ with those that should be ours,
We might have met them daring, beard to beard,
And beat them backward home. — [*A cry of women within.*
What is that noise ?

Seyt. It is the cry of women, my good lord. [*Exit.*

Macb. I have almost forgot the taste of fears :
The time has been, my senses would have quail'd
To hear a night-shriek, and my fell² of hair
Would at a dismal treatise³ rouse and stir
As life were in't : I have supp'd full with horrors ;
Direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts,
Cannot once start me. —

Re-enter SEYTON.

Wherefore was that cry ?

Seyt. The Queen, my lord, is dead.

Macb. She should have died hereafter ;
There would have been a time for such a word.⁴

¹ *Forced* is strengthened, reinforced. A frequent usage.

² *Fell* is hairy scalp, or any skin covered with hair or wool. — *To hear* is still another gerundial infinitive ; *at hearing*.

³ *Dismal treatise* probably means a tale of cruelty, or of suffering.

⁴ Another instance of the indiscriminate use of *should* and *would* ; and the meaning is, " If she had not died now, she *would* have died hereafter ; the time would have come when such a word must be spoken." The explanation of the whole passage comes to me well worded from Mr. Joseph Crosby ; though the substance of it was put forth many years ago by the Rev. Mr. Arrowsmith : " I used to be frightened out of my senses at almost

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
 Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
 To the last syllable of recorded time ;⁵
 And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
 The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle !
 Life's but a walking shadow ; a poor player,
 That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
 And then is heard no more : it is a tale
 Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
 Signifying nothing.⁶ —

Enter a Messenger.

Thou comest to use thy tongue ; thy story quickly.

Mess. Gracious my lord,
 I should report that which I'd say I saw,
 But know not how to do't.

Macb. Well, say it, sir.

Mess. As I did stand my watch upon the hill,
 I look'd toward Birnam, and anon, methought,
 The wood began to move.

Macb. Liar and slave !

any thing : now nothing — not even the most terrible calamities — can make any impression upon me. What *must* be, I know *will* be.' 'The Queen, my lord, is dead.' 'Well, be it so: had she not died *now*, she would have had to die some time. So creeps along every thing in the world, with petty pace from day to day: every to-morrow has its yesterday, and every yesterday its to-morrow; and thus men go on from yesterdays to to-morrows, like automatic fools, until they drop into the dusty grave.' "

⁵ "The last syllable of *recorded time*" means simply the last syllable of the record of time. Such proleptical forms of speech are uncommonly frequent in this play.

⁶ Alas for Macbeth! Now all is inward with him; he has no more prudential prospective reasonings. His wife, the only being who could have had any seat in his affections, dies: he puts on despondency, the final heart-armour of the wretched, and would fain think every thing shadowy and unsubstantial; as indeed all things are to those who cannot regard them as symbols of goodness.— COLERIDGE.

Mess. Let me endure your wrath, if't be not so :
Within this three mile may you see it coming ;
I say, a moving grove.

Macb. If thou speak'st false,
Upon the next tree shalt thou hang alive,
'Till famine cling ⁷ thee : if thy speech be sooth,
I care not if thou dost for me as much. —
I pall ⁸ in resolution ; and begin
'To doubt th' equivocation of the fiend,
That lies like truth : *Fear not, till Birnam wood
Do come to Dunsinane* ; and now a wood
Comes toward Dunsinane. — Arm, arm, and out !
*If this which he avouches does appear,
*There is nor flying hence nor tarrying here.
*I 'gin to be a-weary of the Sun,
*And wish th' estate o' the world were now undone. —
Ring the alarum-bell ! — Blow, wind ! come, wrack !
At least we'll die with harness ⁹ on our back. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI. — *The Same. A Plain before the Castle.*

*Enter, with drum and colours, MALCOLM, old SIWARD, MAC-
DUFF, &c., and their Army with boughs.*

Mal. Now near enough ; your leafy screens throw down,
And show like those you are. — You, worthy uncle,
Shall, with my cousin, your right-noble son,
Lead our first battle : ¹ worthy Macduff and we

⁷ To *cl'lg*, in the northern counties, signifies to *shrivel, wither, or dry up*. *Clung-wood* is wood of which the sap is entirely dried or spent.

⁸ To *pall* is to *droop, to fall away, to languish, to grow faint*. See vol. xiv. page 300, note 4.

⁹ *Harness* for *armour*. Repeatedly so. See vol. xi. page 86, note 20.

¹ *Battle* was often put for *army in battle-array* : here it is put, apparently, for a *part* of such an army ; the *van*.

Shall take upon's what else remains to do,
According to our order.

Siw. Fare you well.

Do we but find the tyrant's power to-night,
Let us be beaten, if we cannot fight.

Macd. Make all our trumpets speak ; give them all
breath,

Those clamorous harbingers of blood and death. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII. — *The Same. Another Part of the Plain.*

Alarums. Enter MACBETH.

Macb. They've tied me to a stake ; I cannot fly,
But, bear-like, I must fight the course.² What's he
That was not born of woman? Such a one
Am I to fear, or none.

Enter young SIWARD.

Yo. Siw. What is thy name?

Macb. Thou'lt be afraid to hear it.

Yo. Siw. No ; though thou call'st thyself a hotter name
Than any is in Hell.

Macb. My name's Macbeth.

Yo. Siw. The Devil himself could not pronounce a title
More hateful to mine ear.

Macb. No, nor more fearful.

Yo. Siw. Thou liest, abhorrèd tyrant ; with my sword
I'll prove the lie thou speak'st.

[*They fight, and young SIWARD is slain.*

Macb. Thou wast born of woman.

² This was a phrase of bear-baiting, where the bear was tied to a stake, and then the dogs set upon him : the poor bear could not run, and so had no way but to fight it out. See vol. xiv. page 88, note 10.

But swords I smile at, weapons laugh to scorn,
Brandish'd by man that's of a woman born.

[*Exit.*

Alarums. Enter MACDUFF.

Macd. That way the noise is. — Tyrant, show thy face !
If thou be'st slain and with no stroke of mine,
My wife and children's ghosts will haunt me still.
I cannot strike at wretched kerns, whose arms
Are hired to bear their staves : either thou, Macbeth,
Or else my sword, with an unbatter'd edge,
I sheathe again undecided. There thou shouldst be ;
By this great clatter, one of greatest note
Seems bruted.³ — Let me find him, fortune !
And more I beg not.

[*Exit. Alarums.*

Enter MALCOLM and old SIWARD.

Siw. This way, my lord. The castle's gently render'd :
The tyrant's people on both sides do fight ;
The noble thanes do bravely in the war ;
The day almost itself professes yours,
And little is to do.

Mal. We've met with foes
That strike beside us.⁴

Siw. Enter, sir, the castle.

[*Exeunt. Alarums.*

³ *Bruited* is reported, noised abroad. See vol. xi. page 158, note 13. — Of course, wherever Macbeth goes, he has a strong escort attending him; and the clattering of so many feet and swords would indicate his approach.

⁴ "Foes who take pains not to hit us; who are only shamming fight against us, while their hearts are on our side."

SCENE VIII. — *The Same. Another Part of the Plain.**Enter* MACBETH.

Macb. Why should I play the Roman fool, and die
On mine own sword? ¹ whiles I see lives, the gashes
Do better upon them.²

Enter MACDUFF.

Macd. Turn, hell-hound, turn !

Macb. Of all men else I have avoided thee :
But get thee back ; my soul is too much charged
With blood of thine already.

Macd. I have no words,
My voice is in my sword ; thou bloodier villain
Than terms can give thee out ! [*They fight.*]

Macb. Thou lovest labour :
As easy mayst thou the intrenchant ³ air
With thy keen sword impress, as make me bleed :
Let fall thy blade on vulnerable crests ;
I bear a charmed life,⁴ which must not yield
To one of woman born.

Macd. Despair thy charm ;
And let the angel whom thou still hast served
Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb
Untimely ripp'd.

Macb. Accursèd be that tongue that tells me so,
For it hath cow'd my better part of man !

¹ Probably alluding either to the suicide of Cato at Utica or that of Brutus at Philippi ; perhaps to both.

² " While I see *living foes*, it is better to kill them than myself."

³ To *trench* is to *cut*, to *wound*, so that *intrenchant* is *invulnerable* ; literally, *uncuttable*.

⁴ " A *charmed life*" is a life secured against human assault by " the might of magic spells." See vol. xiii. page 131, note 19.

And be these juggling fiends no more believed,
That palter ⁵ with us in a double sense ;
That keep the word of promise to our ear,
And break it to our hope ! — I'll not fight with thee.

Macd. Then yield thee, coward,
And live to be the show and gaze o' the time :
We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,
Painted upon a pole, and underwrit
*Here may you see the tyrant.*⁶

Macb. I will not yield,
To kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet,
And to be ^{baited} ⁷ with the rabble's curse.
Though Birnam wood be come to Dunsinane,
And thou opposed, being of no woman born,
Yet I will try the last : *before my body
I throw my warlike shield : lay on, Macduff ;
And damn'd be he that first cries *Hold, enough!*⁸

[*Excunt, fighting.*]

Retreat. Flourish. Enter with Drum and Colours, MALCOLM, old SIWARD, ROSS, LENNOX, ANGUS, CAITHNESS, MENTEITH, and Soldiers.

Mal. I would the friends we miss were safe arrived.

Siw. Some must go off :⁹ and yet, by these I see,

⁵ To *palter* is to *shuffle* or *equivocate*, to *haggle* or *dodge*. Often so.

⁶ Alluding to the Barnum practice of the time ; which was, to get some strange animal for a show, and then hang out an exaggerated painting of the beast to attract customers.

⁷ *Baited* is *barked at* or *worried*, as dogs worried a chained bear.

⁸ To cry *hold!* when persons were fighting, was an authoritative way of separating them, according to the old military laws. This is shown by a passage in Bellay's *Instructions for the Wars*, declaring it to be a capital offence, "Whosoever shall strike stroke at his adversary, either in the heat or otherwise, if a third do cry *hold*, to the intent to part them." This illustrates the passage in i. 5, of this play : "Nor Heaven peep through the blanket of the dark to cry *Hold! hold!*"

⁹ The meaning is, that in such a contest some must *be killed* of course.

So great a day as this is cheaply bought.

Mal. Macduff is missing, and your noble son.

Ross. Your son, my lord, has paid a soldier's debt :
He only lived but till he was a man ;
The which no sooner had his prowess confirm'd
In the unshrinking station where he fought,¹⁰
But like a man he died.

Siw. Then he is dead ?

Ross. Ay, and brought off the field : your cause of sorrow
Must not be measured by his worth, for then
It hath no end.

Siw. Had he his hurts before ?

Ross. Ay, on the front.

Siw. Why, then God's soldier be he !
Had I as many sons as I have hairs,
I would not wish them to a fairer death :
And so his knell is knoll'd.

Mal. He's worth more sorrow,
And that I'll spend for him.

Siw. He's worth no more :
They say he parted well, and paid his score :¹¹
And so God b' wi' him ! Here comes newer comfort.

Re-enter MACDUFF, with MACBETH'S head on a pole.

¹⁰ That is, the *place* where he fought *without shrinking*.

¹¹ To *part* and to *depart* were used indiscriminately. The allusion is to a traveller taking leave of an inn. — *Score* is *account* or *bill*. Tavern accounts were commonly kept either by marking down the items with chalk on a board, or by notches cut, *scored*, in a stick. — This little episode of old Siward and his son is taken from Holinshed: "It is recorded also, that in the foresaid battell, in which earle Siward vanquished the Scots, one of Siwards sonnes chanced to be slaine, whereof although the father had good cause to be sorrowfull, yet when he heard that he died of a wound which he had receiued in fighting stoutlie in the forepart of his bodie, and that with his face towards the enemy, he greatlie rejoised thereat, to heare that he died so manfullie."

Macd. Hail, King ! for so thou art : behold, where stands
Th' usurper's cursèd head : the time is free.
I see thee compass'd with thy kingdom's pearl,¹²
That speak my salutation in their minds ;
Whose voices I desire aloud with mine :
Hail, King of Scotland !

All. Hail, King of Scotland ! [*Flourish.*

**Mal.* We shall not spend a large expense of time
*Before we reckon with your several loves,
*And make us even with you. My thanes and kinsmen,
*Henceforth be earls, the first that ever Scotland
*In such an honour named.¹³ What's more to do,
*Which would be planted newly with the time, —
*As calling home our exiled friends abroad,¹⁴
*That fled the snares of watchful tyranny ;
*Producing forth the cruel ministers
*Of this dead butcher, and his fiend-like Queen,
*Who, as 'tis thought, by self and violent hands
*Took off her life ; — this, and what needful else
*That calls upon us, by the grace of Grace,
*We will perform in measure, time, and place :
*So, thanks to all at once and to each one,
*Whom we invite to see us crown'd at Scone.

[*Flourish.* *Exeunt.*

¹² *Pearl* is here a collective noun, and equivalent to *jewels*. The metaphor is of a string of pearls encircling the neck, or the head, of royalty. Just the right thing to be said of the brave men who have vindicated Malcolm's title, and rid their country of the butchering tyrant. Milton has a like use of *pearl*: "But this is got by casting *pearl* to hogs."

¹³ Malcolm, immediately after his coronation, called a parliament at Forfar; in the which he rewarded them with lands and livings that had assisted him against Macbeth. Manie of them that were before *thanes* were at this time made *earles*; as Fife, Menteith, Atholl, Levenox, Murrey, Caithness, Rosse, and Angus. — HOLINSHED.

¹⁴ "Friends exiled abroad" is the natural order of the words.

SHAKESPEARE AND MIDDLETON.

EVERY one ripely conversant with Shakespeare's manner, and thoroughly at home in his idiom of thought and language, must, I think, have at least a dim sense, if not a clear perception, of disharmony and incongruity in certain portions of this tragedy. Many years ago I had something of this feeling; but, as the whole play was then universally ascribed to Shakespeare, I did not dare to trust such feeling: I sought, and of course easily found, refuge from it in the thought, that Shakespeare, even in his wisest days, was not wise at all hours, and that in his highest hours he had occasional moments of nodding, as Homer is said to have; and that, in his serene carelessness, or perhaps in his calm assurance, of fame, both his genius and his taste indulged themselves now and then in rather emphatic lapses.

The feeling in question was first moved by the wide contrast between what comes from the Witches, in Act i., scene 3, before the entrance of Macbeth and Banquo, and what comes from the Weird Sisters after that entrance. The difference is not merely one of degree, but of kind; a difference as broad and as pronounced as that between a tadpole and an eagle. In the former case, they are neither more nor less than the coarse, foul old-woman witches of ancient superstition; creatures actuated by the worst and lowest human motives and passions, envy, malice, and spite; killing swine, sailing in sieves, assuming the forms of rats without tails, dealing in the thumbs of wrecked pilots, and riding through the air on broomsticks. Their aspect and behaviour are in the last degree commonplace and vulgar; there is nothing even respectable about them; all is of the earth earthy. In the latter case, they are mysterious and supernatural beings, unearthly and terrible, such as we may well conceive "the Goddesses of Destiny" to be: their very aspect at once strikes the beholder with dread and awe: they do not come and go, they appear and vanish; bubbling up, as it were, through the ground from the lower world, in something of a human shape, to breathe the contagion of Hell upon a soul which they know to be secretly in sympathy with them, and inwardly attempered

to their purposes. Surely every one who reads that scene, with his thoughts about him, must catch at least some glimpses of this wide discrepancy : still I felt bound to presume that the Poet's great and wonderful art had some way of reconciling it.

Again, in the second scene of Act i., it was long ago apparent, that either Shakespeare assumed a style not properly his own, or else that another hand than Shakespeare's held the pen. But, for the peculiarity here displayed, Coleridge gave a plausible, if not a sufficient reason. "The style," says he, "and rhythm of the Captain's speeches in the second scene should be illustrated by reference to the interlude in *Hamlet*, in which the epic is substituted for the tragic, in order to make the latter be felt as the real-life diction." In this explanation of the matter I rested, as perhaps some others did. But surely the two cases are not parallel at all : there is no such occasion here for a change of style as there is in *Hamlet* : there, it is a play within a play ; here, nothing of the kind.

At length, in the year 1869, Mr. W. G. Clark and Mr. W. A. Wright, the learned Editors of the "Clarendon Press Series," led off in a new solution of the difficulty. I propose, first, to reproduce, partly in their own words, so much of their theory, and of their arguments in support thereof, as I concur in ; my limited space not well affording room for the whole of it. Before doing this, however, I must advert briefly to another matter.

A peculiar relation has long been known to subsist between Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and *The Witch* of Thomas Middleton. That relation was discovered in manner as follows. In the original copy of *Macbeth*, Act iii., scene 5, we have the stage-direction, "*Music, and a Song*"; and then, two lines after, another stage-direction, "*Sing within. Come away, come away, &c.*" Again, in Act iv., scene I, we have the stage-direction, "*Music, and a Song. Black Spirits, &c.*" Thus in both places the songs are merely indicated, not printed. — In 1674, Sir William Davenant published an altered version of the tragedy, giving both songs in full, but making no sign as to the source of them ; so that they were supposed to be his own composition. So the matter stood till 1779, when the manuscript of Middleton's play, *The Witch*, was discovered by George Steevens ; and there both songs were found, in nearly the same words as Davenant had given them. From this it was easily gathered why the songs were not printed at length in the folio of 1623. *Macbeth* was of course there printed from a playhouse manuscript ; and those songs were presumed to be so well known to the actors of

the play in the form it then had, that a bare indication of them was enough.

The date of Middleton's play has not been ascertained, nor have we any means of ascertaining it. The forecited particulars infer, of course, that *The Witch* must have been written some time before *Macbeth* acquired the form in which it has come down to us. On the other hand, besides the particulars specified above, Clark and Wright point out various resemblances both of thought and language in the two plays,—resemblances much too close and literal to be merely accidental. So that one of the authors must have borrowed from the other. Now, several of these resemblances occur in those parts of the tragedy which are unquestionably Shakespeare's, and which bear the clearest tokens of his mintage. It is, on the face of the thing, nowise likely that Shakespeare would have borrowed from Middleton: but, Middleton's connection with the tragedy being established, nothing is more likely than that he may have borrowed from Shakespeare. The natural conclusion therefore is, that *Macbeth* was well known, and its very language familiar, to Middleton before he wrote *The Witch*, or while he was writing it. Here, then, we have a contradiction, or seeming contradiction; which, however, is easily cleared up by supposing the *original* form of the tragedy to have been in being *before* *The Witch* was written, and that the tragedy received its *present* form *after* the writing of *The Witch*.

Middleton's play was doubtless highly popular on the stage for a time: the witchcraft-scenes especially yield ample food for a transient popularity. Finding that his representation of old-woman witches pleased the popular taste and took well with the multitude, he would naturally crave to repeat or prolong the thing with some variation. In Shakespeare's tragedy he may well have seen a cheap and ready way of catering still further to the popular taste. Upon the supposal of his having taken *Macbeth* in hand with this view, we can easily perceive strong inducements for him to assimilate, as far as might be, the sublime and unique creations of Shakespeare's imagination to the commonplace and vulgar offspring of his own fancy, which he had found so profitable.

To those at all booked in the usages of the Elizabethan stage, it is well known that stock plays, as they are called, belonging to the theatrical companies, and laid up in their archives, were often taken in hand, overhauled, altered, improved, and brought out afresh, either as new plays or as old plays with new attractions. It is as certain as any

thing of the kind well can be, that Shakespeare himself exercised his hand more or less in thus recasting and amending old stock plays. It is also well known that his manuscripts were owned by the theatrical company of which he was a member; and that they remained in the company's hands, as their property, both during his life and after his death. What, then, is more likely than that some of his plays may in turn have been subjected to the same process which he had himself used on the workmanship of others, though not indeed with the same result? And so, I have no doubt, it was. The thing was quite too common for any scruples to spring up about it.— I may as well add, here, that Middleton died in 1627, eleven years after the death of Shakespeare; and that he continued to write more or less for the stage till near the close of his life.

The matter, I believe, is now ready for something to be heard from Clark and Wright. — “If we were certain,” say they, “that the whole of *Macbeth*, as we now read it, came from Shakespeare's hand, we should be justified in concluding from the data before us, that Middleton, who was probably junior and certainly inferior to Shakespeare, consciously or unconsciously imitated the great master. But we are persuaded that there are parts of *Macbeth* which Shakespeare did not write; and the style of these seems to us to resemble that of Middleton. It would be very uncritical to pick out of Shakespeare's works all that seems inferior to the rest, and to assign it to somebody else. At his worst, he is still Shakespeare; and, though the least ‘mannered’ of all poets, he has always a manner which cannot well be mistaken. In the parts of *Macbeth* of which we speak we find no trace of his manner. But to come to particulars. We believe that the second scene of the first Act was not written by Shakespeare. Making all allowance for corruption of text, the slovenly metre is not like Shakespeare's work, even when he is most careless. The bombastic phraseology of the Sergeant is not like Shakespeare's language, even when he is most bombastic.”

The writers then go on to allege the fact, for such it is, that in one point this scene is strangely inconsistent with what is said in the following scene. For Ross, in giving Duncan an account of the battle, here represents the Thane of Cawdor as having fought on the side of the invaders, till Macbeth “confronted him with self caparisons, point against point rebellious”; whereas in the next scene we have Macbeth speaking as if he knew nothing whatever of Cawdor's trea-

son: "The Thane of Cawdor lives, a prosperous gentleman." Angus, also, who enters along with Ross, in the third scene, speaks of Cawdor thus: "Whether he was combined with those of Norway, or did line the rebel with hidden help and vantage, I know not; but treasons capital, confess'd and proved, have overthrown him." To be sure, Shakespeare has, not seldom, slight lapses of memory, or what seem such; but that he would have penned so glaring a contradiction as this amounts to, who can believe?

Nevertheless the writers in question admit that the second scene has a few lines which taste strongly of Shakespeare; such as, "The multiplying villainies of nature do swarm upon him"; and, "Confronted him with self caparisons, point against point rebellious, arm 'gainst arm, curbing his lavish spirit." To these I should certainly add "Where the Norweyan banners flout the sky, and fan our people cold"; which is to me distinctly Shakespearian.

The opening part, also, of the third scene, down to the entrance of Macbeth and Banquo, they rule off from Shakespeare. Here, again, I fully agree with them: for, besides that the style is not at all like Shakespeare's, I have a deeper reason in that, as before observed, his conception of the Weird Sisters is overlaid and strangled with discordant and irrelevant matter. Therewithal the dramatic flow and current, it seems to me, would be far better without this part of the scene.

Referring to the fifth scene of Act iii., they observe that, if this scene "had occurred in a drama not attributed to Shakespeare, no one would have discovered in it any trace of Shakespeare's manner." This is putting it very softly: for, besides that a new personage, Hecate, is here introduced without any apparent cause, the style and versification taste even less of Shakespeare than in the forecited portions of i. 3; and the whole scene is, in point of dramatic order and sequence, a sheer incumbrance, serving no purpose but to untune the harmony of the action.

Again, touching the cauldron-scene, Act iv., scene 1, they speak as follows: "The rich vocabulary, prodigal fancy, and terse diction displayed in the first thirty-eight lines, show the hand of a master, and make us hesitate in ascribing the passage to any one but the master himself. There is, however, a conspicuous falling off in the eight lines after the entrance of Hecate." And of the last eight lines before the Witches vanish, beginning with "Ay, sir, all this is so," they say that these "cannot be Shakespeare's."

To all this I heartily subscribe; and thus, to my mind the Poet stands acquitted of all the choral passages; which, it seems to me, only blemish the proper dramatic austerity of the play, however they may add to its attractiveness as a popular performance. Nor do I believe it ever entered into Shakespeare's head to "unbend the noble strength" of this great tragedy with any such mellifluous intervals.

Besides the forecited passages, the same writers point out several "rhyming tags," and shorter passages, which they justly rule off as interpolations. They then add the following :

"Finally, the last forty lines of the play show evident traces of another hand than Shakespeare's. The double stage-direction, '*Exeunt fighting.*' — '*Enter fighting, and Macbeth slain,*' proves that some alteration had been made in the conclusion of the piece. Shakespeare, who has inspired his audience with pity for Lady Macbeth, and made them feel that her guilt has been almost absolved by the terrible retribution which followed, would not have disturbed this feeling by calling her a 'fiend-like queen'; nor would he have drawn away the veil which with his fine tact he had dropped over her fate, by telling us that she had taken off her life 'by self and violent hands.'"

In reference, again, to the opening of the play, these writers pronounce as follows: "The eleven lines which now make the first scene, and which, from long familiarity, we regard as a necessary introduction to the play, are not unworthy of Shakespeare; but, on the other hand, do not rise above the level which is reached by Middleton and others of his contemporaries in their happier moments."

As remarked in the preface, the opening of Forman's account looks as if the play did not then begin with the scene in question. Nothing, however, can be soundly inferred from this. He may have chosen to begin his account with what struck him with peculiar force; or, as Clark and Wright observe, "he may have arrived at the theatre a few minutes late." For my part, I have scarce any doubt that the first scene is Shakespeare's, all except two lines, the eighth and ninth, in which the Weird Sisters are made to talk just like vulgar witches. For, as the entire course of the action turns on the agency of the Weird Sisters, it were in strict keeping with the Poet's usual manner to begin by thus striking the key-note of the whole play.

I must add, that the Clarendon Editors further rule off, as interpolations, the soliloquy and dialogue of the Porter, in Act ii., scene 1, and also the passage about "touching for the evil," in iv. 3. Here, however, I dissent from them altogether.

The theory whereby they account for the condition in which *Macbeth* has reached us is propounded as follows: "On the whole, we incline to think that the play was interpolated after Shakespeare's death, or at least after he had withdrawn from all connection with the theatre. The interpolator was, not improbably, Thomas Middleton; who, to please the 'groundlings,' expanded the parts originally assigned by Shakespeare to the Weird Sisters, and also introduced a new character, Hecate. The signal inferiority of her speeches is thus accounted for."

In 1876, the Rev. Frederick G. Fleay put forth a highly instructive volume entitled *Shakespeare Manual*. He takes up the question where the Clarendon Editors left it, accepting all their forecited conclusions, except that touching the Porter's soliloquy and dialogue, but insists on pushing the argument much further. First, he excludes the whole of the first scene, which, as before shown, Clark and Wright do not. Second, he rules off the second scene, as Clark and Wright also do; but thinks, and rightly, I have no doubt, that "in all probability this scene replaces one of Shakespeare's"; a few of his lines being perhaps retained, and worked in with the inferior matter. He concurs with Clark and Wright also about the third scene, down to the entrance of Macbeth and Banquo. And he takes the same course touching all the Hecate matter, both in iii. 5, and in iv. 1. I must here quote, with slight abbreviation, what he says of this matter: "This un-Shakespearian Hecate does not use Shakespearian language: there is not a line in her part that is not in Middleton's worst style; her metre is a jumble of tens and eights, (iambic, not trochaic like Shakespeare's short lines,) a sure sign of inferior work; and, what is of most importance, she is not of the least use in the play in any way: the only effect she produces is, that the three Fate-goddesses, who in the introduction of the play were already brought down to ordinary witches, are lowered still further to witches of an inferior grade, with a mistress who 'contrives their charms,' and is jealous if any 'trafficking' goes on in which she does not bear her part. She and her songs are all alike not only of the earth earthy, but of the mud muddy. They are the sediment of Middleton's puddle, not the sparkling foam of the living waters of Shakespeare."

But Mr. Fleay's distinctive position is in reference to the cauldron business in iv. 1. "What," he asks, "are the witches" of that scene? "are they the 'Weird Sisters,' fairies, nymphs, or goddesses? or are they ordinary witches or wizards, and entirely distinct from the

three mysterious beings in i. 3? I hold the latter view." He then goes on to admit that the first thirty-eight lines of iv. 1, down to the entrance of Hecate, are greatly superior to the thirty-seven lines of i. 3, before the entrance of Macbeth and Banquo. And he fully agrees with Clark and Wright, that the former are Shakespeare's; but says he "cannot identify these witches with the Nornæ" of i. 3, after the entrance of Macbeth and Banquo. "The witches," says he, "in iv. 1, are just like Middleton's witches, only superior in quality. They are clearly the originals from whom his imitations were taken. Their charms are of the sort popularly believed in. Their powers are to untie the winds, lodge corn, create storms, raise spirits; but of themselves they have not the prophetic knowledge of the Weird Sisters, the all-knowers of Past, Present, Future: they must get their knowledge from their *masters*, or call them up to communicate it themselves."

Thus he does not allow the Witches of that scene to be the Weird Sisters at all, or to have any thing in common with them. Nevertheless he candidly refers to two passages where they are clearly identified with the Weird Sisters: one near the close of iii. 4, where Macbeth himself says, "I will to-morrow, ay, and betimes I will, to th' Weird Sisters"; the other in iv. 1, just after the Witches vanish, where Macbeth asks Lennox, "Saw you the Weird Sisters?" And he frankly admits that both these passages are Shakespeare's. He then adds the following: "If my theory be true, those two passages must be explained. This is a real difficulty, and I cannot satisfactorily solve it at present. I can only conjecture that Shakespeare made a slip, or intended Macbeth to make one." Professor Dowden aptly searches the core of Mr. Fleay's position by observing, "It is hardly perhaps a sound method of criticism to invent a hypothesis, which creates an insoluble difficulty."

But is there any way to account for the altered language and methods used in the cauldron business, without dispossessing the Weird Sisters of their proper character? Let us see.

The Weird Sisters of course have their religion; though, to be sure, that religion is altogether Satanic. For so essential is religion of some kind to all social life and being, that even the society of Hell cannot subsist without it. Now, every religion, whether human or Satanic, has, and must have, a liturgy and ritual of some sort, as its organs of action and expression. The Weird Sisters know, by supernatural ways, that Macbeth is burning to question them further, and that he has resolved to pay them a visit. To instruct and inspire him in a suitable manner, they arrange to hold a religious service in his presence and

behalf. And they fitly employ the language and ritual of witchcraft, as being the only language and ritual which he can understand and take the sense of : they adopt, for the occasion, the sacraments of witchcraft, because these are the only sacraments whereby they can impart to him the Satanic grace and efficacy which it is their office to dispense. The language, however, and ritual of witchcraft are in their use condensed and intensified to the highest degree of potency and impressiveness. Thus their appalling infernal liturgy is a special and necessary accommodation to the senses and the mind of the person they are dealing with. It really seems to me that they had no practicable way but to speak and act in this instance just like witches, only a great deal more so. But, in the Middleton scenes and parts of scenes, they are made to speak and act just like common witches, to no purpose, and without any occasion for it. This is, indeed, to disfigure them, to empty them of their selfhood.

It may not be amiss to add, that Shakespeare of course wrote his plays for the stage ; but then he also, in a far deeper and higher sense, wrote them for the human mind. And the divinity of his genius lies pre-eminently in this, that, while he wished to make his workmanship attractive and fruitful in the theatre, he could not choose but make it at the same time potent and delectable in the inner courts of man's intelligent and upward-reaching soul. But this latter service was a thing that Middleton knew nothing of, and had not the heart to conceive.

I return to Mr. Fleay. — To the few smaller interpolations pointed out by the Clarendon Editors, he adds a considerable number. These call for some notice. Clark and Wright make particular mention of a passage in v. 5, as follows :

Arm, arm, and out!

If this which he avouches does appear,

There is nor flying hence nor tarrying here.

I'gin to be awcary of the Sun,

And wish th' estate o' the world were now undone. —

Ring the alarum bell! — Blow, wind! come wrack!

At least we'll die with harness on our back.

And of the four lines here underscored they justly observe, "How much better the sense is without them!" Let any one read the passage without these lines, and surely he must see that Shakespeare could not have written them. In like manner, Mr. Fleay calls attention to the close of v. 6, where Macduff, whose speech is everywhere else

so simple, so manly, and so condensed, is made to utter the following strutting and ambitious platitude :

Make all our trumpets speak ; give them all breath,
Those clamorous harbingers of blood and death.

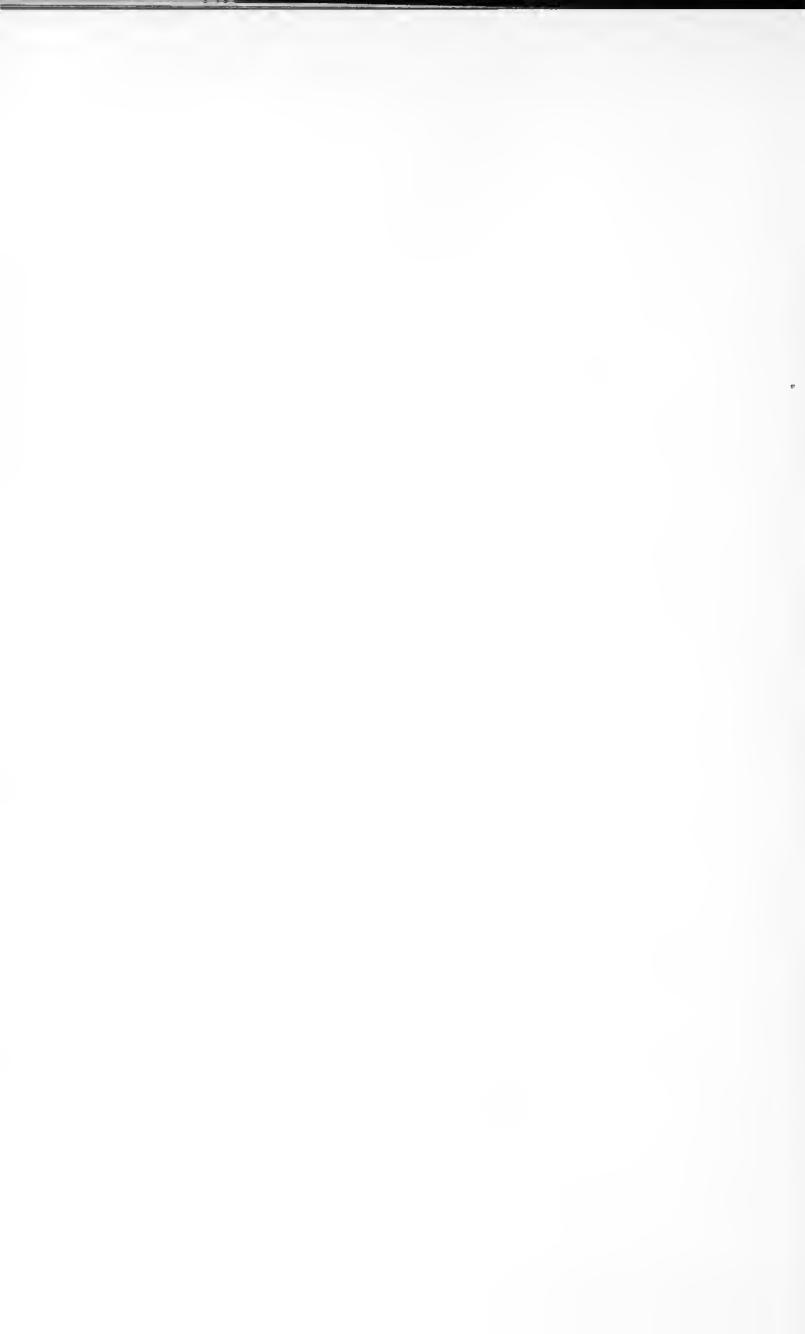
But, as the text distinguishes with asterisks all the passages pointed out by Mr. Fleay, there is no need of further detail in this place. There are, however, three other passages which I have marked in the same way, on my own judgment. These are, the couplet, i. 5, "Which shall to all our nights," &c., and Lady Macbeth's speech a little after, "Only look up clear," &c., and, in v. 3, the couplet beginning, "The mind I sway by." There are also several other passages which I strongly suspect ought to be put on the same list. These are the couplet at the end of i. 7, "Away, and mock the time," &c., and the line and a half at the close of v. 2, "Or so much as it needs," &c. ; also, in iii. 2, the three and a half lines beginning, "Nought's had, all's spent" ; but especially the five lines and a half at the close of the same scene, beginning, "Light thickens, and the crow makes wing." I am all but satisfied that this is not Shakespeare's ; for it is not only flat and feeble, but hardly consistent with what precedes ; and seems, indeed, the work of one who fancied he was surpassing Shakespeare.

As regards the closing part of the play, all, I mean, that follows, after Macbeth and Macduff go out fighting, I have not yet been able fully to make up my mind. The Clarendon Editors, as we have seen, rule it all off from Shakespeare. Mr. Fleay speaks of it as follows : "The account of young Siward's death and the unnatural patriotism of his father, which is derived from Holinshed's history of England, and not of Scotland like the rest of the play, is a bit of padding put in by Shakespeare after finishing the whole tragedy." To the best of my judgment, some portions of it are not unworthy of Shakespeare ; especially the speech of Macduff on his re-entrance with Macbeth's head. On the other hand, what old Siward says about the death of his son seems too hard and unnatural for Shakespeare's healthy human-heartedness to have written. To be sure, we cannot but feel that the brave old father's heart is not in his words ; and the latter may be taken as a spontaneous effort to hide his grief. So that I still hesitate. As to the last speech, however, I have no doubts whatever.

I close with an abridged statement of Mr. Fleay's "theory as to the composition of the play." "It was written," says he, "I think, after *King Lear*. Middleton revised and abridged it : I agree with the

Cambridge Editors in saying not earlier than 1613. There is a decisive argument that he did so after he wrote *The Witch*; namely, that he borrows the songs from the latter play, and repeats himself a good deal. I believe that Middleton, having found the groundlings more taken with the Witches, and the cauldron, than with the grander art displayed in the Fate-goddesses, determined to amalgamate these, and to give us plenty of them. I believe also the extra fighting in the last scenes was inserted for the same reason. But, finding that the magic and the singing and the fighting made the play too long, he cut out large portions of the psychological Shakespeare work, in which, as far as quantity is concerned, this play is very deficient compared with the three other masterpieces of world-poetry, and left us the torso we now have. To hide the excisions, Middleton put on tags at the places where he made the scenes end."

There remains but to add, that I have no doubt whatever of the play's having been greatly shortened in the process of alteration. For the alteration was evidently prosecuted with a view to stage-effect. Such being the case, those parts which were most effective on the stage would naturally be retained, and others added still more suited to catch the applause of the groundlings; while such parts as were especially at home in the courts of reason and thought would be cast aside.



CRITICAL NOTES.

ACT I., SCENE I.

Page 11. *When shall we three meet again*

In thunder, lightning, and in rain? — So Hammer. The original has “Lightning, or in raine.” This makes the three, *thunder, lightning, rain*, alternative; the sense, expressed in full, being “*either in thunder or in lightning or in rain.*” The context and the occasion apparently require the sense of those three words to be cumulative.

P. 12. 1 Witch. *Where the place?*

2 Witch. *Upon the heath.*

3 Witch. *There to meet with Macbeth.* — There is surely some corruption here; for *Macbeth* was evidently meant to rhyme with *heath*, but there needs another syllable to make it do so. And everywhere else, I think, *Macbeth* has the ictus on the second syllable. Perhaps *bold, brave, proud, or great* should be supplied before the name.

P. 12. 1 Witch. *I come, graymalkin.*

2 Witch. *Paddock calls. — Anon!*

All. *Fair is foul, and foul is fair:*

Hover through the fog and filthy air. — So Pope. The original prints the last two speeches as one, with *All* prefixed. Dyce’s remark is right, beyond question: “Surely it is evident that the author intended only the concluding couplet to be spoken in chorus.” White prints “Anon!” as a separate speech, and prefixes to it “3 *Witch.*” In a note he says, “The arrangement of the text seems to me to be required both by the succession of the thoughts, and by the ternary sequence of the dialogue of the Witches throughout all the scenes in which we see them at their incantations.” Perhaps he is right. But I do not believe we have the scene as Shakespeare wrote it; and I am sure that the first two lines are not his. Probably Middleton threw out some of Shakespeare’s gold, and thrust in some of his own dross.

ACT I., SCENE 2.

P. 13. *Say to the King thy knowledge of the broil.*—So Walker. The original has “Say to the King *the* knowledge.”

P. 13. *Of kerns and gallowglasses is supplied;
And Fortune, on his damnèd quarrel smiling,*

Show'd like a rebel's whore: but all's too weak; &c.—In the first of these lines, the original has *Gallowgrosses*. Corrected in the second folio. In the second line, the original has “damned *quarry*.” The change of *quarry* to *quarrel* is made in Collier's second folio, but had been adopted by most of the editors before that volume was heard of. It is amply justified by Holinshed's account of the matter: “Out of the Western Isles there came unto him a great multitude of people, offering themselves to assist him in that rebellious *quarrel*.” And later in the play we have “the chance of goodness be like our warranted *quarrel!*” where “warranted *quarrel*” is just the opposite of “damned *quarrel*.” See, also, foot-note 5.—For *is*, in the first line, Pope substitutes *was*, and also, in the third line, changes *all's* to *all*. Of course this is done to redress the confusion of tenses. And Lettson says, “Read, with Pope, ‘*was* supplied’: the corruption was caused by *Do* just above.” And again, “Read, with Pope, ‘*all* too weak.’” But we have other like mixing of tenses in this scene. See foot-note 6.

P. 14. *And ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him.*—The original reads “*Which* nev'r shooke hands.” As *Which* begins the third line above, it doubtless crept in here by accidental repetition. Corrected by Capell.

P. 14. *As whence the Sun gives his reflection
Shipwrecking storms and direful thunders break;
So from that spring whence comfort seem'd to come
Discomfort swells.*—So Pope. The word *break* is wanting in

the original; which thus leaves both sense and metre defective. The second folio supplied *breaking*.—There has been some stumbling at *swells* here; I hardly know why: the meaning clearly is, *grows big*; just as a thunder-cloud often swells up rapidly into a huge, dark mass, where, a little before, the sky was full of comfort. Capell reads *wells*, which, to my sense, is nothing near so good.—In the first line, the

original has *'gins* instead of *gives*. Having never been able to understand the old text, I adopt Pope's reading. Heath comments as follows: "The fact, in this island at least, is, that storms and thunder do as frequently take their course from the North and West as from the East. The hurricanes always proceed from the North, and turn to the westward. But this was not the point Shakespeare had in view. He draws the similitude from a very common appearance; when a clear sky and bright sunshine are on a sudden overcast with dark clouds, which terminate in thunder and a short but very dangerous tempest, especially in the lochs and narrow, embarrassed seas of Scotland. It is evident therefore that we ought to prefer the other reading, 'As whence the Sun *gives* his reflection'; that is, As from a clear sky whence the light of the Sun is transmitted in its full brightness." — See footnote 9.

P. 15. *As cannons overcharged with double cracks;*

So they redoubled strokes upon the foe. — So Pope. The original has "So they *doubly* redoubled stroakes"; *doubly* being probably interpolated by some player in order to prolong the jingle on *double*. At all events, both sense and verse plead against it. Walker thinks the word has no business in the text.

P. 15. *What haste looks through his eyes!* — So the second folio. The first has "What a haste." But the Poet has many like exclamative phrases without the article, which here mars the verse. See footnote 14.

P. 16. *The Thane of Cawdor 'gan a dismal conflict;*

Till that Bellona's bridegroom, lapp'd in proof,

Confronted him with self caparisons. — In the first of these lines, the original has *began* instead of *'gan*, and in the third, "*self-comparisons*." It is, I think, hardly possible to squeeze any fitting sense out of *comparisons* here. The common explanation takes *him* as referring to *Norway*; but this is plainly inconsistent with "Point gainst point *rebellious*." *Self caparisons* means that they were both *armed in the self-same way*. The correction is Mr. P. A. Daniel's. The folio has the same misprint again in *Antony and Cleopatra*, iii. 13: "I dare him therefore to lay his gay *Comparisons* a-part," &c. Here Pope reads *caparisons*, and rightly, beyond question. See footnote 18.

ACT I., SCENE 3.

P. 18. *And the very points they blow,*

All the quarters that they know

I' the shipman's card.—So Pope. The original has *ports* instead of *points*. Davenant's alteration of the play has "From all the *points* that seamen know."

P. 19. *How far is't call'd to Forres?*—The original has *Soris*.

P. 20. 3 Witch. *Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none.*

All three. *So, all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!*

Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!—The original makes the second of these lines a continuation of the preceding speech, and assigns the third to the first witch. But surely Lettsom is right in saying, "These two verses should be pronounced by 1, 2, 3, in chorus." It seems rather strange that the error should have waited so long to be corrected.

P. 21. *His wonders and his praises do contend*

What should be thine or his.—The original has *Which* instead of *What*. Commentators have tugged mighty hard to wring a coherent and intelligible meaning out of the old reading, and I have tugged mighty hard to understand their explanations; but all the hard tugging has been in vain. As *Which* must needs refer to *wonders* and *praises*, I make bold to say that the passage so read cannot be approved to be either sense or English. With *What*, the passage yields a sense, at least, and, I think, a fitting one; though, to be sure, not of the clearest. See foot-note 20.

P. 22. *As thick as tale*

Came post with post; and every one did bear, &c.—The original has *Can* instead of *Came*; an obvious error, which Rowe corrected. Some editors cannot stand *tale* here, and substitute *hail*. Dyce asks, "was such an expression as 'thick as *tale*' ever employed by any writer whatsoever?" To which it might be answered that Shakespeare seems to have used it here. Dyce also quotes from old writers divers instances of "as thick as hail"; which only shows that this was a commonplace hyperbole; whereas Shakespeare may have chosen to

use one less hackneyed ; as I think he had a right to do. *Tale* is the substantive form of the verb to *tell* ; and Shakespeare repeatedly uses the verb in the exact sense of to *count* ; as he also does *thick* in the exact sense of *fast* ; and surely the phrase “ as *fast* as you can *count* ” is common enough. See foot-note 22.

ACT I., SCENE 4.

P. 25. *Is execution done on Cawdor ? Are not*

Those in commission yet return'd ? — So the second folio. The first has “ *Or not.* ”

ACT I., SCENE 5.

P. 29. *Thou'dst have, great Glamis,*

That which cries, Thus thou must do, if thou have it, —

An act which rather thou dost fear to do

Than wishest should be undone. — Instead of “ *An act which,* ”

the original has “ *and that which.* ” This defeats the right sense of the passage, as it naturally makes *which* refer to the same thing as *which* in the preceding line ; whereas it should clearly be taken as referring to the words “ *Thus thou must do.* ” Hanmer reads “ *And that's what* ” ; and the same change occurred to me, as it also did to Mr. Joseph Crosby, before either of us knew of Hanmer's reading. But I prefer “ *An act which,* ” and have little doubt that the original reading crept in by mistake from the line before. — The passage is commonly printed so as to make the words “ *if thou have it* ” a part of what is supposed to be cried by the crown. The original gives no sign as to how much of the speech is to be taken thus, — none, that is, except what is implied in the word *it*. Of course the crown is the thing which Glamis would have ; and if the crown is here represented as crying out to him “ *Thus thou must do, if thou have,* ” there appears no way of getting the sense but by substituting *me* for *it*. If, however, we suppose only the words “ *Thus thou must do* ” to be spoken by the crown, and the following words to be spoken by Lady Macbeth in her own person, then *it* is right ; and this is probably the way the passage ought to be understood and printed. Johnson saw the difficulty, and proposed to read “ *if thou have me.* ”

P. 30. *That no compunctious visitings of nature*

Shake my fell purpose, nor break peace between

Th' effect and it. — The original has *keepe* instead of *break*,

and *hit* instead of *it*. The attempts that have been made to explain "nor *keep* peace," are, it seems to me, either absurdly ingenious and over-subtile or something worse. The natural sense of it is plainly just the reverse of what was intended. To be sure, almost any language can be tormented into yielding almost any meaning. And we have too many instances of what may be called a fanaticism of ingenuity, which always delights especially in a reading that none but itself can explain, and in an explanation that none but itself can understand. See foot-note 8. — The other error, *hit*, corrects itself.

P. 31. *Nor Heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,*

To cry Hold, hold! — "The *blanket* of the dark" seems to have troubled some persons greatly; and Collier's second folio substitutes *blankness* for *blanket*. This is dreadful. "The blanket of the dark" is indeed a pretty bold metaphor, but not more bold than apt; and I agree with Mr. Grant White, that "the man who does not apprehend the meaning and the pertinence of the figure had better shut his Shakespeare, and give his days and nights to the perusal of—some more correct and classic writer." See foot-note 11.

ACT I., SCENE 6.

P. 32.

The guest of Summer,

The temple-haunting martlet, does approve, &c. — The original has "*This* guest," and *Barlet* instead of *martlet*. The latter was corrected by Rowe. As to the former, Lettsom says, "Read *the*. *This* was repeated by mistake from the beginning of the preceding speech."

P. 33. *Where they most breed and haunt,* &c. — The original has *must* instead of *most*. Corrected by Rowe.

ACT I., SCENE 7.

P. 35. *Put here, upon this bank and shoal of time.* — The original has "*Schoole* of time." Theobald's correction.

P. 35. *Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,*

That tears shall drown the wind. — Mr. P. A. Daniel would read "in every *ear*"; and in support of that lection he quotes the following from Southwell, *Saint Peter's Complaint*, lxxvii.:

And seeke none other quintessence but tears,
That *eyes* may shed what enter'd at thine ears.

P. 36. *Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself,
And falls on th' other side.* — So Hanmer. The original lacks *side*, and yet puts a period after *other*. Walker notes upon it thus: "Evidently 'th' other *side*': and this adds one to the apparently numerous instances of omission in this play." — It has been ingeniously proposed to change *itself* into *its sell*, an old word for *saddle*. But the Poet very seldom uses *its*: besides, no change is necessary. See footnote 8.

P. 36. *Wouldst thou lack that
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,
And live a coward in thine own esteem,* &c. — The original reads "Wouldst thou *have* that"; whereupon Johnson notes thus: "In this there seems to be no reasoning. I should read 'Or live'; unless we choose rather 'Wouldst thou *leave* that.'" The reading in the text was proposed anonymously, but occurred to me independently. Instead of *have*, *crave* has also been proposed. But Lady Macbeth evidently means that, with so good an opportunity as he now has for gaining the crown, nothing but cowardice can induce him to let it slip. We have the same error again in *Antony and Cleopatra*, ii. 2: "If you'll patch a quarrel, as matter whole you *have*, to make it with," &c. Here *have* should be *lack*, beyond question.

P. 37. *I dare do all that may become a man;
Who dares do more is none.*
Lady M. *What beast was't, then,
That made you break this enterprise to me?* — The original reads "Who dares *no* more"; a very palpable error. — Collier's second folio substitutes *boast* for *beast*, and the change has been regarded with favour in some quarters. Mr. John Forster, in *The Examiner*, Jan. 29, 1853, disposes of it thus: "The expression immediately preceding and eliciting Lady Macbeth's reproach is that in which Macbeth declares that he dares do all that may become *a man*, and that who dares do more *is none*. She instantly takes up that expression. If not an affair in which *a man* may engage, what *beast* was it, then, in himself or others, that made him break this enterprise to her? The force of the passage lies in that contrasted word, and its meaning is lost by the proposed substitution."

P. 37. *And dash'd the brains on't out, had I so sworn
As you have done to this.* — So Lettsom. The original lacks *on't*, which is needful alike to sense and metre. The omission was doubtless owing to the close resemblance of *on't* and *out*.

P. 38. *If we should fail, —*
Lady M. *We fail.*

*But screw your courage to the sticking-place,
And we'll not fail.* — Such, I am very confident, is the right pointing of this much-disputed passage. It is commonly given either with an (!) or an (?) after *fail*, as if the speaker did not admit the possibility of failure, and scouted at any apprehension of the kind. Now I cannot think her so far gone in the infatuation of crime as not to see and own the possibility that the enterprise may fail; but she is no doubt ambitious enough to risk life and all for the chance or in the hope of being a queen. And so I take her meaning to be, "If we fail, then we fail, and there's the end of it." And the use of the adverbative *but* in what follows strongly favours this sense; in fact, will hardly cohere with any other sense. Accordingly the simple period is said to have been fixed upon by Mrs. Siddons after long study and exercise in the speech. See foot-note 15.

ACT II., SCENE I.

P. 40. *Sent forth great largess to your officers.* — The original has *offices* instead of *officers*. The context fairly requires a word denoting persons. Corrected by Rowe.

P. 42. *Now o'er the one half-world
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtain'd sleep: now witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecate's offerings.* — The second *now* is wanting in the original. Some complete the verse by printing *sleep*; but surely the repetition of *now* is much better. Rowe's correction.

P. 42. *With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design
Moves like a ghost. — Thou sure and firm-set earth.
Hear not my steps which way they walk, &c.* — In the first of these lines, the original has *sides* instead of *strides*; in the second, *sowre* instead of *sure*; in the third, "which *they may walke*." The first two corrections are Pope's; the other, Rowe's.

P. 46. *This my hand will rather*

The multitudinous sea incarnadine. — So Rowe. The original has *Seas incarnardine*. Some editors adopt *incarnadine*, but retain *seas*. In the former they are right, of course, there being really no such word as *incarnardine*: but surely *multitudinous* loses more than half its force, if made the epithet of a plural noun.

P. 49. *Lamentings heard i' the air, strange screams of death:*

And, prophesying, with accents terrible,

Of dire combustion and confused events

New-hatch'd to th' woeful time, the obscene bird

Clamour'd the livelong night. — The original has *obscure* instead of *obscene*. The correction was proposed by Walker and White independently. See foot-note 35. — Most editors have a different pointing in this passage; putting a colon after *woeful time*, and thus separating *bird* from *prophesying*, and turning the latter into a substantive. But surely it is far better, both in poetry and in sense, to regard the *obscene*, that is, *ill-omened*, bird as predicting the dreadful events in question. Or, if this be thought inconsistent with *new-hatch'd*, we may, as White suggests, take *prophesying* in an interpretive sense, — the sense of croaking or wailing a dismal and awful meaning into what is occurring. The word is often so used in the Bible; especially in Ezekiel, xxxvii.

P. 50. *Banquo and Malcolm! Donalbain! awake!*

Shake off this downy sleep, death's counterfeit,

And look on death itself! up, up, and see

The great doom's image! Malcolm, Banquo! all!

As from your graves rise up, and walk like sprites,

To countenance this horror!

[Alarum-bell rings.

— In the first of these lines, the original reads “and *Donalbaine: Malcolm,*” &c. I transpose the names for metre's sake. Also, in the fourth line, the original is without *all*, thus leaving a breach in the rhythm. The addition is Lettsom's. Again, the original has the last line thus: “To countenance this horror. Ring the bell”; and then, in another line, the stage-direction, “*Bell rings. Enter Lady.*” Here, no doubt, as Malone observes, the players mistook “Ring the bell” for a portion of Macduff's speech, and so inserted the stage-direction, “*Bell rings.*”

ACT II., SCENE 2.

P. 55. *And Duncan's horse', — a thing most strange and certain, &c.* — Instead of *horse'*, the original has *Horses*. But elsewhere the Poet uses the singular form both of this word and of various others with the plural sense. See foot-note 2.

ACT III., SCENE I.

P. 57. *It had been as a gap in our great feast,*
And all things unbecoming. — So the third and fourth folios. The first has *all-thing*, the second *all-things*. But the hyphen was so used in a great many instances where no one would now think of retaining it. Some editors here print *all-thing*, and explain it by *altogether* or *in every way*. But I am not aware of any other instance being produced of the phrase so used in Shakespeare's time.

P. 57. *Lay your Highness'*
Command upon me. — So Rowe and Collier's second folio. The original has "*Let your Highnesse,*" &c.; which, surely, is not English, and never was. Mason proposes *Set*.

P. 59. *My genius is rebuked, as, it is said,*
Mark Antony's was by Cesar's. — So Hammer. The original has *Cæsar* instead of *Cesar's*. The correction is approved by a passage in *Antony and Cleopatra*, ii. 3: "Thy demon, that thy spirit which keeps thee, is noble, courageous, high, unmatchable, where *Cæsar's* is not."

P. 60. *To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings!* — Instead of *seed*, the original has *Seedes*. Pope's correction.

P. 61. *Now, if you have a station in the file,*
And not i' the worser rank of manhood, say't. — The original lacks *And*, and has *worst* instead of *worser*. The insertion was made by Rowe; the correction proposed by Jervis. Shakespeare has *worser* repeatedly in the same sense.

P. 62. *So wearied with disasters, tugg'd with fortune.* — So Capell, Collier's second folio, and Lettsom. The old text has "So *wearie* with Disasters."

P. 63. *I will advise you where to plant yourselves;*

Acquaint you with the perfect spy o' the time, &c.—Johnson proposed, and White prints, “with a perfect spy.” It is a nice point which of the articles should here be used. “*The spy*” may mean the *espial* or *discovery*, that is, the *signal*, of the time; “*a spy*” would mean the *person* giving it. So I do not see that any thing is gained by the change. See foot-note 23.

ACT III., SCENE 2.

P. 64. *We have but scotch'd the snake, not kill'd it.*—The original reads “We have *scorch'd* the snake.” The words, “*She'll close,*” in the next line, show that *scotch'd* is right. Theobald's correction.—The word *but* is wanting in the old text, but given in Davenant's version of the play. It both saves the metre and helps the sense.

P. 64. *Better be with the dead,*

Whom we, to gain our place, have sent to peace,

Than on the torture of the mind to lie, &c.—So the second folio. The first has *peace* instead of *place*. But *peace* is nowise that which Macbeth has been seeking: his end was simply to gain the throne, the *place* which he now holds, and the fear of losing which is the very thing that keeps peace from him. The methods by which some editors try to justify the old reading seem to me altogether too ingenious and too fine.

P. 66. *Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond*

Which keeps me paled.—The old text has *pale* instead of *paled*. Probably the Poet wrote *pal'd* or *pald*; and here, as often, final *d* and final *e* were confounded. The correction is Staunton's. It is hardly needful to observe how well *paled* brings out the Poet's meaning; which evidently was, that Banquo's life was, so to speak, a strong bond that kept Macbeth “*bound-in* to saucy doubts and fears.” See foot-note 14.

ACT III., SCENE 4.

P. 69. *'Tis better thee without than him within.*—So Hammer and Collier's second folio. The original has “*than he within.*”

P. 70. *Get thee gone : to-morrow*

We'll hear't, ourself, again. — Instead of *ourself*, which Capell proposed, the original has *ourselves*, which I have tried in vain to understand. The use of *ourselves* for *each other*, as it has been explained, is not English. I suspect the true reading to be “We'll hear *you tell't* again.” The pronoun *our* seems quite out of place here; and we have many instances of *our* and *your* confounded, as also of *your* and *you*; and *tell't* might easily be misprinted *selves*, when the long *s* was used. I cannot now recover the source of the proposed reading. — The original has *hear*, also, instead of *hear't*. — Theobald's correction.

P. 72. *Blood hath been shed ere now : i' the olden time,*

Ere human statute purged the gentle weal,

Ay, and since too, &c. — I here adopt Mr. P. A. Daniel's punctuation, which, I think, greatly helps the sense. The passage is commonly printed with a comma after *ere now*, and a colon or semi-colon after *gentle weal*.

P. 72. *But now they rise again,*

With twenty mortal gashes on their crowns, &c. — The original has “mortal *murders*,” which is justly condemned by Walker: “*Murders* occurs four lines above, and *murder* two lines below. This, by the way, would alone be sufficient to prove that *murders* was corrupt. ‘*Mortal murders*,’ too, seems suspicious.” Walker, however, proposes no substitute: that in the text is Lettson's: “Read ‘With twenty mortal *gashes* on their crowns.’ Macbeth is thinking of what he has just heard from the Murderer:

With *twenty* trenchèd *gashes* on his head,
The least a death to nature.”

P. 74. *If trembling I inhabit then, protest me*

The baby of a girl. — I keep the old reading here, because I cannot see that any of the changes made or proposed really help the matter. Theobald thought it should be, “If trembling *me inhibit*.” Pope changed *inhabit* to *inhibit*; and Steevens proposed *thee* for *then*. Johnson conjectured “If trembling I *evade it*, then protest me,” &c. This, I think, is the best of them all, as regards the sense. Collier's second folio reads “If trembling I *exhibit*”; which turns *trembling* into a substantive. “If trembling I *unknight* me,” “If trembling I

inherit," "If trembling I *flinch at it*," have also been proposed. Dyce prints "If trembling I *inhibit thee*." But I think the old reading admits of a sense not unfitting. See foot-note 17.

P. 75. *And keep the natural ruby of your cheeks,*

When mine are blanch'd with fear. — The original reads "mine *is* blanch'd." But, as *mine* clearly refers to *cheeks*, it is hardly possible that *is* can be right. Hanmer and some others read *check*; but surely, as Dyce notes, the plural is required there.

P. 76. *There is not one of them but in his house*

I keep a servant fee'd. — So Pope. The original has "There's not a one." Theobald reads "There's not a *Thane*"; White, "There's not a *man*."

P. 76. *I will to-morrow—*

Ay, and betimes I will—to th' Weird Sisters. — The original quite untunes the rhythm of the line by having nothing in the place of *Ay*. The insertion was proposed anonymously.

ACT III., SCENE 5.

P. 78. [Music and a Song within: *Come away, come away, &c.* — Thus much is all that the original prints of the song here used. I subjoin, from *The Witch*, by Middleton, the whole song, or rather musical dialogue, which begins with the forecited words:

Song above. Come away, come away,
Hecate, Hecate, come away!

Hecate. I come, I come, I come, I come,
With all the speed I may,
With all the speed I may.
Where's Stadlin?

Voice above. Here.

Hecate. Where Puckle?

Voice above. Here;
And Hoppo too, and Hellwain too;
We lack but you, we lack but you:
Come away, make up the count.

Hecate. I will but 'noint, and then I mount.

[*A Spirit like a cat descends*
Voice above. There's one come down to fetch his dues,
A kiss, a coll, a sip of blood;

And why thou stay'st so long, I muse, I muse,
Since the air's so sweet and good.

Hecate. O, art thou come? What news, what news?

Spirit. All goes still to our delight:
Either come, or else refuse, refuse.

Hecate. Now I'm furnish'd for the flight.

Fire. Hark, hark! the cat sings a brave treble in her own language.

Hecate. [*Going up.*] Now I go, now I fly,
Malkin my sweet spirit and I.
O, what a dainty pleasure 'tis
To ride in the air
When the Moon shines fair,
And sing and dance, and toy and kiss!
Over woods, high rocks, and mountains,
Over seas, our mistress' fountains,
Over steeples, towers, and turrets,
We fly by night, 'mongst troops of spirits:
No ring of bells to our ears sounds,
No howls of wolves, no yelps of hounds;
No, not the noise of water's breach,
Or cannon's throat, our height can reach.

Voices above. No ring of bells, &c.

ACT III., SCENE 6.

P. 78. *Who can now want the thought, how monstrous*

It was for Malcolm and for Donalbain

To kill their gracious father?—The original reads "Who cannot want the thought," &c. This gives a sense just the opposite of what was manifestly intended. Keightley proposes "*We* cannot want the thought"; which would yield the right sense indeed, but at the cost of too much force and point of expression. *The Edinburgh Review*, July, 1869, undertakes to vindicate the old reading by showing that *cannot want* was, and still is, often used in the sense of *cannot lack* or *cannot be without*. This is very true, but I think it quite misses the point; and I am sure it is no more than we all knew before. The reading in the text was proposed by Cartwright, but occurred to me independently.

P. 79.

The son of Duncan,

From whom this tyrant holds the due of birth,

Lives in the English Court.—The original has *Sonnes* instead

of *son*. Corrected by Theobald.

P. 79. *Keep from our feasts and banquets bloody knives ;*

Do faithful homage, and receive free honours.—So Lettsom. The original has *Free* instead of *Keep*. Malone proposed, and Kann adopted, “Our feasts and banquets *free* from bloody knives.”

P. 79. *And this report*

Hath so exasperate the King, that he, &c.—The original reads “*exasperate their King.*” Corrected by Hanmer.

ACT IV., SCENE I.

P. 80. *Harpy cries; 'tis time, 'tis time.*—The original has *Harpier*, the word having probably been written *Harpie*. Of course it stands for some animal, real or fabulous, which is supposed to be serving the Witches as a familiar, and giving them a signal. But I think there was no real animal so called; and the Poet most likely had in mind the harpies of Virgil. The correction was proposed by Steevens.

P. 80. *Toad, that under the cold stone*

Days and nights hast thirty-one, &c.—The old text is without *the*, which was supplied by Rowe.

P. 81. *Witches' mummy; maw and gulf*

Of the ravin salt-sea shark.—Instead of *ravin*, the original has *ravin'd*, which does not naturally give the right sense. The correction was suggested to me by a passage in *All's Well*, iii. 2 : “Better 'twere I met the *ravin* lion when he roar'd with sharp constraint of hunger.” I have since found that Mason had proposed the same correction, and referred to the same passage in support of it. Probably the Poet wrote *ravine*, and here, as often, final *e* and final *d* were confounded. See foot-note 6.

P. 82. *Enter HECATE.*—Here the original has the stage-direction, “*Enter Hecat, and the other three Witches.*” It is not easy to say positively what this means; but the probability is, that in Middleton's ordering of the matter Hecate came with three ordinary witches to aid the Weird Sisters in the performance of their Satanic ritual. The Clarendon Editors print “*Enter HECATE to the other three Witches,*” thus substituting *to* for *and*.

P. 82. Music and a Song : *Black Spirits, &c.* — Here, again, as in iii. 5, the original merely indicates the song by printing the first words of it. And here, again, I subjoin the song as it stands in *The Witch* :

Black spirits and white, red spirits and gray,
Mingle, mingle, mingle, you that mingle may !
 Firedrake, Puckey, made it lucky ;
 Liard, Robin, you must bob in.
Round, around, around, about, about !
All ill come running in, all good keep out !

P. 83. *Though the treasure*

Of Nature's germens tumble all together, &c. — The original has "Natures *Germaine*." But the plural is evidently required ; and we have the same spelling of *germens* in *King Lear*, iii. 2 : "Cracke Natures moulds, all *germaines* spill at once that makes ingraterfull Man."

P. 85. Rebellion's head *rise never, till the wood*

Of Birnam rise, &c. — So Hanmer and Collier's second folio. The original has "*Rebellious dead, rise never,*" &c.

P. 86. *Thy crown does sear mine eyeballs. — And thy air,*

Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first. — The original has *hair* instead of *air*. The correction is Johnson's. The Poet elsewhere uses *air* for *look* or *appearance*. A family likeness is evidently the thing meant ; and *hair* is not general enough for that. See footnote 25.

P. 86. *Horrible sight ! Nay, now I see 'tis true ;*

For the blood-bolter'd Banquo, &c. — So Pope. The original is without *Nay*. Steevens inserted *Ay*.

P. 88. *This deed I'll do before this purpose cool :*

But no more sights ! — This accords with Macbeth's exclamation, a little before, at the vision of Banquo and his descendants : "Horrible *sight !*" Notwithstanding, much fault has been found with *sights*. Collier's second folio changes it to *flights*, referring to the flight of Macduff. White substitutes *sprites*. Both changes, it seems to me, impair the poetry without bettering the sense ; and *sprites* is particularly unhappy.

ACT IV., SCENE 2.

P. 89. *But cruel are the times, when we are traitors,
And do not know't ourselves.* — So Hammer and Collier's second folio. The original has "not *know* ourselves."

P. 89. *But float upon a wild and violent sea
Each way it moves.* — So Mr. P. A. Daniel. The original has "Each way, and *move*"; out of which it is not easy to make any thing. Theobald printed "Each way and *wave*," and Steevens conjectured "*And each way move*"; but surely Daniel's reading is much the best.

P. 91. *Wherefore should I fly?
I've done no harm.* — Instead of *Wherefore*, the old text has *Whither*, which does not suit the context at all. Lettsom proposes *Why*.

P. 92. *Thou liest, thou shag-hair'd villain!* — The original has "thou *shagge-ear'd* Villaine." Doubtless, as Dyce notes, *ear'd* is "a corruption of *hear'd*, which is an old spelling of *hair'd*." And he fully substantiates this by quotations.

ACT IV., SCENE 3.

P. 92. *Hold fast the mortal sword; and like good men
Bestride our down-fall'n birthdom.* — The original has "our *downfall* Birthdome."

P. 93. *I'm young; but something
You may deserve of him through me.* — The original has *discerne* instead of *deserve*. Corrected by Theobald.

P. 94. *Wear thou thy wrongs,
Thy title is affear'd!* — So Malone and Collier's second folio. The original has "*The Title, is affear'd.*"

P. 98. *Whither indeed, before thy here-approach, &c.* — The original has *they* instead of *thy*. Corrected in the second folio.

P. 103. *This tune goes manly.
Come, go we to the King.* — The original has *time* instead of *tune*. Corrected by Rowe.

ACT V., SCENE I.

P. 105. Doct. *You see, her eyes are open.*

Gent. *Ay, but their sense is shut.* — The original has “their sense *are* shut.” Doubtless an accidental repetition from the line above. Rowe’s correction.

ACT V., SCENE 2.

P. 108. *He cannot buckle his distemper’d course*

Within the belt of rule. — So Walker and Collier’s second folio. The old text has “distemper’d *cause.*” As Macbeth is said to be acting like a madman, or going wild and crazy in his course, there need, I think, be no scruple of the correction.

ACT V., SCENE 3.

P. 110. *This push*

Will chair me ever, or dis-seat me now. — So Percy and Collier’s second folio. The original reads “Will *cheere* me ever, or *dis-eate* me now.” The second folio changes *dis-eate* to *disease*. But the reading thus given seems to me very tame and unsuited to the occasion. *Chair* is often used for *throne*; and Macbeth may well think that the present assault will either confirm his tenure of the throne, or oust him from it entirely.

P. 110. *I have lived long enough : my way of life*

Is fall’n into the sere, the yellow leaf. — Collier’s second folio has “my *May* of life”; and so Johnson proposed to read. This reading would imply Macbeth to be a young man, which he is not, and to be struck with premature old age, which cannot be his meaning. As Gifford says, “way of life” is “a simple periphrasis for *life.*” Macbeth is in the autumn of life, is verging upon old age, the winter of life; for such is the meaning of “the sere, the yellow leaf”; and what he here laments so pathetically is, that his old age cannot have the comforts, honours, friendships which naturally attend it, and are needful, to make it supportable.

P. 111. *Cure her of that :*

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased? — So the second folio. The first omits *her.*

P. 111. *Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous grief*

Which weighs upon the heart. — So Collier's second folio. The old text has *stuffe* instead of *grief*. This jingling repetition has been, as indeed it well might be, an offence to the editors generally, and other changes have been proposed, the best of which is, "Cleanse the *foul* bosom," by Steevens. Some, however, reject *grief*, as not harmonizing with *cleanse* and *bosom*; but Dr. C. M. Ingleby, who is certainly not over-favourable to corrections from that source, strongly approves of it; and his high sanction prevails with me to adopt it. He comments on it as follows: "I am so heterodox as to think this a fine reading. I do so, first, because it restores perfect sense and beauty to what I believe to be a vile corruption: second, because *stuff* is an easy misprint for *grieff*, or *griefe*, in old writing: third, because *grief*, in the language of the old medical writers, did weigh on the heart, and stuff the bosom." And he makes this good, apparently, by quotations; adding withal, that here "grief is sickness, malady"; so that the meaning is not "cleanse the bosom of *grief*, but of *a* grief, that is, a sickness."

P. 112. *What rhubarb, senna, or what purgative drug,*

Would scour these English hence? — Instead of *senna*, the original has *Cyme*, which is not, and never was, the English name of any drug. The correction is from the fourth folio.

ACT V., SCENE 4.

P. 113. *For, where there is advantage to be ta'en,*

Both more and less have given him the revolt. — So Walker. The original reads "advantage to be *given*." Collier's second folio reads "advantage to be *gotten*."

ACT V., SCENE 5.

P. 114. *The time has been, my senses would have quail'd*

To hear a night-shriek. — So Collier's second folio. The original reads "my sences would have *cool'd*"; which, surely, is quite too tame for the occasion. In *Julius Cæsar*, iv. 3, we have "That makest my *blood cold*"; but this is very different from "makes my *senses cold*." Dyce remarks that "examples of the expression, *senses quailing*, may be found in our early writers."

P. 115. *I should report that which I'd say I saw,
But know not how to do do't.*

Macb. *Well, say it, sir.* — The original reads “which *I* say I saw,” and “Well, say sir.” The first of these corrections is Hanmer’s; the other, Pope’s.

P. 116. *I pall in resolution, and begin*

To doubt th' equivocation of the fiend, &c. — The old text has “I *pull* in resolution.” Johnson proposed *pall*, which, as the Clarendon edition observes, “better expresses the required sense, involuntary loss of heart and hope.” Besides, with *pull*, “we must emphasize *in*, contrary to the rhythm of the verse.”

ACT V., SCENE 8.

P. 120. *And damn'd be he that first cries Hold.* — The old text has *him* instead of *he*. Corrected by Pope.

P. 120. [*Exeunt, fighting.* — In the original, this stage-direction is immediately followed, in the next line, by another, which is difficult to explain, and is omitted in all modern editions known to me; thus: “*Enter fighting, and Macbeth slain.*” Then comes the stage-direction, which modern editors retain, “*Retreat, and Flourish. Enter with Drumme and Colours, Malcolm, Seyward,*” &c. What makes the matter still more perplexing is, that, nineteen lines further on, the original, without any intervening *exit*, has the stage-direction, “*Enter Macduffe: with Macbeths head.*” The likeliest explanation seems to be, that the play originally ended with “*Exeunt, fighting,*” and that what follows was afterwards tacked on by Middleton, in order to gratify the audience with more fighting, and with the sight of Macbeth’s head on a pole.

OTHELLO, THE MOOR OF VENICE.



ENTERED at the Stationers' by Thomas Walkley, "under the hands of Sir George Buck and of the Wardens," October 6, 1621, and published in quarto the next year. It was also included in the folio collection of 1623, and was printed again in quarto in 1630. These three copies differ more or less among themselves: in particular, the folio has a number of passages, amounting in all to some hundred and sixty lines, that are wanting in the quarto of 1622. On the other hand, the latter has a few lines that are wanting in the folio; while the quarto of 1630 seems to have been made up from the other two. On the whole, the text has reached us in a pretty fair condition; though there are a few passages where the reading stands much in question, and gives little hope of being altogether cleared from doubt.

Until a recent date, this great drama was commonly supposed to have been among the latest of the Poet's writing. But, within the last fifty years, two alleged manuscript records have been produced which would quite upset the old belief. One of these was given by Collier from "the Egerton Papers," showing the play to have been acted before Queen Elizabeth at Harefield, the seat of Lord-Keeper Egerton, in August, 1602. The other, purporting to be from "the Accounts of the Revels at Court," and produced by Mr. Peter Cunningham, represents the piece to have been performed before the King and Court at Whitehall on the 1st of November, 1604. Both of these records, however, have since been set aside by the highest authority as forgeries. So that we are now thrown back upon the old ground: our earliest authentic notice of the play being furnished by Sir Frederic Madden from certain manuscripts in the British Museum. It appears that in the Spring of 1610 Louis Frederic,

Duke of Wurtemberg, visited England on a diplomatic mission. Among the manuscripts in question, is an autograph diary, written in French, by Hans Jacob Wurmsser, who accompanied the Duke. The diary extends from the 16th of March to the 24th of July, 1610. Under date of April 30th, we have the following entry: "Went to the Globe, the place where comedies are wont to be played; there the history of the Moor of Venice was represented."

Two other authentic contemporary notices of the play have reached us, which ought, perhaps, to be here set down. The first is from the *Accounts* of Lord Harrington, Treasurer of the Chamber to James the First: "Paid to John Heminge, upon the Council's warrant, dated at Whitehall, 20th of May, 1613, for presenting before the Prince's Highness, the Lady Elizabeth, and the Prince Palatine Elector, fourteen several plays." Then, among the plays specified in the account, are *Much Ado*, *The Tempest*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Merry Wives*, and *The Moor of Venice*. The other notice is from an elegy on Richard Burbage, the great actor of the Globe company, who died in 1619. The writer gives a list of the principal characters in which Burbage was distinguished, and winds up with the following:

But let me not forget one chiefest part
Wherein, beyond the rest, he moved the heart, —
The grievèd Moor made jealous by a slave,
Who sent his wife to fill a timeless grave.

The foregoing account obviously concludes *Othello* to have been written in 1609 or early in 1610. And the internal evidence of style and manner is, I think, in entire harmony with that conclusion; the diction, versification, and psychagogic inwardness being such as to speak it into close chronological neighbourhood with *Cymbeline* and *Coriolanus*. So much is this the case, that Verplanck, writing while the account of performance at Harefield was still deemed authentic, thought the play must have been rewritten after that date, and perhaps made as different from what it was at first as the finished *Hamlet* was from the earliest copy. — The play has one item, or seeming item, of internal evidence, which it is not easy to reconcile with

the earliest of the forecited notices. It is in iii. 4, where Othello says to Desdemona,

A liberal hand: the hearts of old gave hands;
But our *new heraldry is hands, not hearts.*

This can hardly be taken otherwise than as an allusion to the new order of the Baronetage which was instituted by King James in 1611; the figure of a bloody hand being among the armorial bearings of those who received the new title. And it is not a little remarkable that, even before the above-mentioned forgeries were exposed, Mr. Grant White still held it certain that this passage at least must have been written "after the creation of the first baronets." But, as this would draw the date of the writing down two years later than we have found it to be, there appears no way of accounting for the passage but as an after-insertion.

The tragedy was founded on one of Giraldi Cinthio's novels. Whether the story was accessible to Shakespeare in English is uncertain, no translation of so early a date having been discovered. But we are not without indications of his having known enough of Italian to take the matter directly from the original. The Poet can hardly be said to have borrowed any thing more than a few incidents and the outline of the plot; the character, passion, pathos, and poetry being entirely his own. The following abstract of the tale will show the nature and extent of his obligations:

A Moorish captain, distinguished for his valour and conduct, was in the service of the Venetian Republic. While living at Venice, his noble qualities captivated the heart of a very beautiful and virtuous lady called Desdemona. He returned her love; and they were married, against the wishes of her friends. Some time after the marriage, he was appointed to the military command of Cyprus, and was accompanied thither by his wife. He had for his ensign a man of a pleasing person, but a very wicked heart. The ensign was also married, his wife being a discreet and handsome woman, who was much liked by Desdemona; and the two passed a good deal of their time together. Both of these went with the Moor to his command; as did also his

lieutenant, a man to whom he was strongly attached, and who was highly esteemed by Desdemona for her husband's sake. The ensign became enamoured of Desdemona; but, on finding he could make no impression upon her, his passion soon turned to revenge: so he took it into his head that she was in love with the lieutenant, and determined to work the ruin of them both by accusing them to the Moor. The Moor was so strong in love for his wife, and in friendship for the lieutenant, that the villain knew he would have to be very cunning and artful in his practice, else the mischief would recoil upon himself. After a while, the lieutenant wounded a soldier on guard, for which he was cashiered by the Moor; and the lady, grieved at her husband's losing so good a friend, went to pleading for his restoration. Thereupon the ensign began to work his craft, by insinuating to the Moor that her solicitations were for no good cause. On being required to speak more plainly, he directly accused her of preferring the lieutenant to her husband on account of the latter's complexion. The Moor then told him he ought to have his tongue cut out for thus attacking the lady's honour, and demanded ocular proof of his accusation. The ensign then began a course of downright lying, but still managed so craftily as to draw the other more and more into his toils, and finally engaged to furnish the proof required.

Now Desdemona often went to the ensign's house, and spent some time with his wife, taking with her a handkerchief which the Moor had given her, and which, being delicately embroidered in the Moorish style, was much prized by them both. The ensign had a little girl that Desdemona was very fond of; and one day, while she was caressing the child, he stole away the handkerchief so adroitly that she did not perceive the act. His next device was to leave the handkerchief on the lieutenant's bolster; where the latter soon found it, and, knowing it to be Desdemona's, went to return it to her. The Moor, hearing his knock, and going to the window, asked who was there; whereupon the lieutenant, fearing his anger, ran away without answering. The ensign was very glad of this incident, as it gave him more matter to work with; and he contrived one day to have an interview with the lieutenant in a place where the Moor could see them. In the

course of the talk, which was on a different subject, he laughed much, and by his gestures made as if he were greatly surprised at the other's disclosures. The interview over, and the Moor asking what had passed between them, the ensign then, after much feigning of reluctance, said the lieutenant had boasted of his frequent meetings with Desdemona, and how, the last time he was with her, she had given him the handkerchief. Shortly after, the Moor asked his wife for the handkerchief; and, as she could not find it, this strengthened his suspicions into conviction: still, before proceeding to extremities, he craved the further proof of seeing the handkerchief in the lieutenant's possession. So, while the lieutenant's mistress was sitting at the window of his house, and copying the embroidery, the ensign pointed her out to the Moor. The two then arrange for killing both the parties: the ensign sets upon the lieutenant in the night, and wounds him; but he fights manfully, and raises an alarm, which draws a crowd to the spot, the ensign himself appearing among them, as if roused by the cry. Upon hearing of this, the lady speaks her grief for the lieutenant; which so enrages the Moor, that he forthwith contrives her death. The ensign hides himself in a closet of her chamber: at the time appointed he makes a noise; Desdemona rises and goes to see what it is, and he then beats her to death with a stocking full of sand; the Moor meanwhile accusing her of the crime, and she protesting her innocence. This done, they pull down the ceiling upon her, and run out crying that the house is falling: people rush in, and find her dead under the beams, no one suspecting the truth of the matter. But the Moor soon becomes distracted with remorse. Hating the sight of the ensign, he degrades him, and drives him out of his company; whereupon the villain goes to plotting revenge upon him. He reveals to the lieutenant the truth about the lady's death, omitting his own share in it; the lieutenant accuses the Moor to the Senate, and calls in the ensign as his witness. The Moor is imprisoned, banished, and finally put to death by his wife's kindred. The ensign, returning to Venice, and continuing at his old practices, is taken up, put to the torture, and racked so violently, that he soon dies.

Such, in brief, are the leading incidents of the novel. Of

course the parts of Othello and Desdemona, Iago and Emilia, Cassio and Bianca, were suggested by what the Poet found in the tale. The novel has nothing answering to the part of Roderigo; nor did it furnish any of the names except *Desdemona*. Some of Iago's characteristic traits may be said to have been taken from the ensign: but this is about the whole of the Poet's obligation in the matter of character. The tale describes the Moor as valiant, prudent, and capable, Desdemona as virtuous and beautiful; and states that she loved the Moor for his nobleness of character, and that her family was much opposed to the match. These are all the hints which Shakespeare had towards the mighty delineations of character in this play, as distinguished from the incidents of the plot. For, as Mr. White remarks, "of the complex psychological structure of the various personages, and of their harmonious mental and moral action, there is not even a rudimentary hint in the story." It is to be observed, also, that Roderigo serves as a most effective occasion in the drama; Iago's most inward and idiomatic traits being made to transpire upon him; and this in such a way as to lift the characters of Othello and Desdemona into a much higher region, and invest them with a far deeper and more pathetic interest.

The island of Cyprus, where the scene of the drama is chiefly laid, became subject to the Republic of Venice, and was first garrisoned with Venetian troops, in 1471. After that time, the only attempt ever made upon that island by the Turks was under Selim the Second, in 1570. It was then invaded by a powerful force, and conquered in 1571; since which time it has continued a part of the Turkish Empire. The play represents that there was a junction of the Turkish fleet at Rhodes for the purpose of invading Cyprus; that the fleet started towards Cyprus, went back to Rhodes, there met another squadron, and then resumed its course to Cyprus. These are historical facts, and took place when Mustapha, Selim's general, attacked Cyprus, in May, 1570; which is therefore the true period of the action.



OTHELLO DEFENDS HIMSELF BEFORE THE DOGE OF VENICE

Othello. Act 1, Scene 3

OTHELLO, THE MOOR OF VENICE.



PERSONS REPRESENTED.

The DUKE OF VENICE.	MONTANO, Governor of Cyprus.
BRABANTIO, a Senator.	A Clown, Servant to Othello.
Two other Senators.	A Herald.
GRATIANO, Brother to Brabantio.	
LODOVICO, Kinsman to Brabantio.	DESDEMONA, Othello's Wife, Daughter to Brabantio.
OTHELLO, a noble Moor.	EMILIA, Wife to Iago.
CASSIO, his Lieutenant.	BIANCA, Mistress to Cassio.
IAGO, his Ancient.	
RODERIGO, a Venetian Gentleman.	

Officers, Gentlemen, Messengers, Musicians, Sailors, Attendants, &c.

SCENE. — *For the First Act, in Venice; during the rest of the Play, at a Seaport in Cyprus.*

ACT I.

SCENE I. — *Venice. A Street.*

Enter RODERIGO and IAGO.

Rod. Tush, never tell me; I take it much unkindly
That thou, Iago, who hast had my purse
As if the strings were thine, shouldst know of this.¹

¹ The intended elopement. Roderigo has been suing for Desdemona's hand, employing Iago to aid him in his suit, and paying his service in advance. The play opens pat upon her elopement with the Moor, and Roderigo presumes Iago to have been in the secret of their intention.

Iago. 'Sblood, but you will not hear me !
If ever I did dream of such a matter,
Abhor me.

Rod. Thou told'st me thou didst hold him in thy hate.

Iago. Despise me, if I do not. Three great ones of the
city,

In personal suit to make me his lieutenant, *3*
Oft capp'd to him ;² and, by the faith of man,
I know my price, I'm worth no worse a place :
But he, as loving his own pride and purposes,
Evades them, with a bombast circumstance³ *4*
Horribly stuff'd with epithets of war ;
And, in conclusion, nonsuits my mediators ;
For, *Certes*, says he, *I've already chose*

My officer. And what was he ?

Forsooth, a great arithmetician,
One Michael Cassio, a Florentine,
A fellow almost damn'd in a fair wight ;⁴ *5*

² It appears that to *cap* was used for a salutation of respect, made by taking off the cap. So explained by Coles in his *Dictionary*: "To cap a person, *coram aliquo caput aperire, nudare*; to uncover the head before any one." And Shakespeare uses *half-cap* for a cold or a slight salutation. So in *Timon of Athens*, ii. 2: "With certain *half-caps* and eold-moving nods they froze me into silence."

³ A *bombastic circumlocution*; or a speech strutting through a circumstantial detail with big words and sounding phrases.

⁴ *In* is sometimes equivalent to *on account of*. See page 59, note 7. — *Wight* was applied indifferently to persons of either sex; often with a dash of humour or satire. Iago seems to be rather fond of the term: he has it again in ii. 1: "She was a *wight*, if ever such wight were," &c. In the text, he probably alludes to Cassio's amorous intrigue with Bianca, which comes out so prominent in the course of the play. — Cassio is sneeringly called "a great arithmetician" and a "counter-caster," in allusion to the pursuits for which the Florentines were distinguished. The point is thus stated by Charles Armitage Browne: "A soldier from Florence, famous for its bankers throughout Europe, and for its invention of bills of exchange, book-keeping, and every thing connected with a counting-house, might well be ridiculed for his promotion by an Iago in this manner."

That never set a squadron in the field,
 Nor the division of a battle⁵ knows
 More than a spinster; unless the bookish theoretic,
 Wherein the togèd consuls can propose
 As masterly as he :⁶ mere prattle, without practice,
 Is all his soldiership. But he, sir, had th' election:
 And I — of whom his eyes had seen the proof
 At Rhodes, at Cyprus, and on other grounds
 Christian and heathen — must be be-lee'd and calm'd
 By debtor-and-creditor :⁷ this counter-caster,
 He, in good time, must his lieutenant be,
 And I — God bless the mark ! — his Moorship's ancient.⁸

Rod. By Heaven, I rather would have been his hangman.

Iago. Why, there's no remedy; 'tis the curse of service,
 Preferment goes by letter and affection,
 And not by old gradation, where each second
 Stood heir to th' first. Now, sir, be judge yourself,
 Whether I in any just term am affined⁹.

⁵ The arrangement, ordering, or marshalling of troops for a battle.

⁶ *Theoretic* for *theory*; what may be learned from books. See vol. xii. page 9, note 7. — "The togèd consuls" are the civil governors; so called by Iago in opposition to the *warlike* qualifications of which he has been speaking. There may be an allusion to the adage, "Cedant arma togæ." — *Propose*, probably, in the sense of *prate* or *propound*. See vol. iv. p. 196, n. 1.

⁷ By a mere accountant, a keeper of debt and credit. Iago means that Cassio, though knowing no more of war than men of the gown, as distinguished from men of the sword, has yet *outsailed* him in military advancement. In nautical language, being *be-lee'd* by another is the opposite of having the *windward* of him; which latter is a position of great advantage. See vol. xvi. page 321, note 2. — Again, he calls Cassio "this counter-caster," in allusion to the *counters* formerly used in reckoning up accounts.

⁸ *Ancient* is an old corruption of *ensign*; used both for the flag and for the bearer of it. See vol. xi. page 105, note 8. — "God bless the mark" is an old phrase of prayer or deprecation, meaning May God *avert*, or *invert*, the *omen*; used with reference to any thing that was regarded as a *bad sign* or *token*. See vol. xiii. page 191, note 10.

⁹ Whether I stand *within* any such *terms of affinity* or *relationship* to the Moor, as that I am bound to love him.

To love the Moor.

Rod. I would not follow him, then.

Iago. O, sir, content you ;

I follow him to serve my turn upon him :

We cannot all be masters, nor all masters

Cannot be truly follow'd. You shall mark

Many a duteous and knee-crooking knave, *... and ...*)

That, doting on his own obsequious bondage,

Wears out his time, much like his master's ass,

For nought but provender ; and, when he's old, cashier'd :

Whip me such honest knaves.¹⁰ Others there are,

Who, trimm'd in forms and visages of duty,

Keep yet their hearts attending on themselves ;

And, throwing but shows of service on their lords,

Well thrive by them, and, when they've lined their coats,

Do themselves homage : these fellows have some soul ;

And such a one do I profess myself. For, sir,

It is as sure as you are Roderigo,

Were I the Moor, I would not be Iago :¹¹ *... the ...*

In following him, I follow but myself ;

Heaven is my judge, not I for love and duty,

But seeming so, for my peculiar end :

For, when my outward action doth demonstrate

The native act and figure of my heart

(In complement extern)¹² 'tis not long after

¹⁰ *Knave* is here used for *servant*, but with a sly mixture of contempt. The usage was very common.

¹¹ An instance, perhaps, of *would* for *should*; and, if so, the meaning may be, "Were I in the Moor's place, I should be quite another man than I am." Or, "if I had the Moor's nature, if I were such an honest dunce as he is, I should be just a fit subject for men that 'have some soul' to practise upon." Perhaps Iago is purposely mixing some obscurity in his talk in order to mystify the gull.

¹² "Complement extern" is external completeness or accomplishment. Iago scorns to have his inward and his outward keep touch together, as

But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve
For daws to peck at. I am not what I am.¹³

Rod. What a full fortune does the thick-lips owe,
If he can carry't thus !¹⁴

Iago. Call up her father,
Rouse him. Make after him, poison his delight,
Proclaim him in the streets ; incense her kinsmen :
And, though he in a fertile climate dwell,
Plague him with flies ; though that his joy be joy,
Yet throw such changes of vexation on't,
As it may lose some colour.

Rod. Here is her father's house ; I'll call aloud.

Iago. Do ; with like timorous accent and dire yell
As when, by night and negligence,¹⁵ the fire
Is spied in populous cities.

Rod. What, ho, Brabantio ! Signior Brabantio, ho !

being the next thing to wearing himself wrong side out. The sense of the whole passage is, "When I shall become such a fool as to make my external behaviour a true index of my inward thought and purpose, I shall soon proceed to the further folly of putting my heart on the outside for other fools to sport with." In illustration of the text, Walker aptly quotes the following from Tourneur's *Revenger's Tragedy* :

The old duke,
Thinking my outward shape and inward heart
Are cut out of one piece, (for he that prates his secrets,
His heart stands o' th' outside,) hires me by price.

¹³ Iago probably means "I am not what I *seem* ; but to speak thus would not smack so much of the peculiar dialect with which he loves to practise on the dupe.

¹⁴ How fortunate he is, or how strong in fortune, if he can hold out against such practice. Similar language occurs in *Cymbeline* : "Our pleasure his *full fortune* doth confine." And in *Antony and Cleopatra* : "The imperious show of the *full-fortuned* Cæsar." — Of course *owe* is used in the old sense of *own* or *possess*.

¹⁵ That is, *in the time of* night and negligence ; a very common form of expression. — *Timorous* was sometimes used, as *fearful* still is, for that which *frightens*. Old dictionaries explain it "fearful, horridus, formidolosus."

Iago. Awake ! what, ho, Brabantio ! thieves ! thieves !
thieves !

Look to your house, your daughter, and your bags !
Thieves ! thieves !

BRABANTIO *appears above, at a window.*

Bra. What is the reason of this terrible summons ?

What is the matter there ?

Rod. Signior, is all your family within ?

Iago. Are your doors lock'd ?

Bra. Why, wherefore ask you this ?

Iago. Zounds, sir, you're robb'd ! for shame, put on your
gown !

Your heart is burst,¹⁶ you have lost half your soul :

Even now, now, very now, an old black ram

Is tupping your white ewe. Arise, arise !

Awake the snorting citizens with the bell,

Or else the Devil¹⁷ will make a grandsire of you.

Arise, I say.

Bra. What, have you lost your wits ?

Rod. Most reverend signior, do you know my voice ?

Bra. Not I : what are you ?

Rod. My name is Roderigo.

Bra. The worsè welcome :

I've chargèd thee not to haunt about my doors :

In honest plainness thou hast heard me say

My daughter is not for thee ; and now, in madness,

Being full of supper and (distempèring draughts,¹⁸ *the reason is*

Upon malicious bravery, dost thou come

¹⁶ *Burst* is here used in the sense of *broken*. The usage was common.

¹⁷ Alluding to the imputed colour of the Devil, who was always represented as *black* ; and implying that Othello is of the same stock and complexion. See vol. iii. page 127, note 26.

¹⁸ "*Distempèring draughts*" is *intoxicating* potations.—*Bravery*, here, is *bravado, insolence, defiance*.

To start my quiet : —

Rod. Sir, sir, sir, —

Bra. — but thou must needs be sure

My spirit and my place have in them power

To make this bitter to thee.

Rod. Patience, good sir.

Bra. What tell'st thou me of robbing? this is Venice ;
My house is not a grange.¹⁹

Rod. Most grave Brabantio,

In simple and pure soul I come to you.

Iago. Zounds, sir, you are one of those that will not serve God, if the Devil bid you. Because we come to do you service, and you think we are ruffians, you'll have your daughter cover'd with a Barbary horse ; you'll have your nephews neigh to you ; you'll have coursers for cousins, and gennets for germans.²⁰

Bra. What profane wretch art thou?

Iago. I am one, sir, that comes to tell you your daughter and the Moor are now making the beast with two backs.

Bra. Thou art a villain.

Iago. You are — a Senator.

Bra. This thou shalt answer : I know thee, Roderigo.

Rod. Sir, I will answer any thing. But, I beseech you, If't be your pleasure and most wise consent, As partly I find it is, that your fair daughter, At this odd-even²¹ and dull watch o' the night, Transported, with no worse nor better guard

¹⁹ " Mine is not a *lone house*, where a robbery might easily be committed." *Grange* is, strictly, the farm of a monastery ; but, provincially, any lone house or solitary farm is called a *grange*.

²⁰ *Gennets* is *horses* ; properly Spanish horses, or the breed called *Barbs*. — *German* is, strictly, *brother* ; but here put for any near kin.

²¹ *This odd-even* appears to mean the interval between *twelve* at night and *one* in the morning.

But with a knave of common hire, a gondolier,²²
 To the gross clasps of a lascivious Moor, —
 If this be known to you, and your allowance,
 We then have done you bold and saucy wrongs ;
 But, if you know not this, my manners tell me
 We have your wrong rebuke. Do not believe
 That, from ²³ the sense of all civility,
 I thus would play and trifle with your reverence.
 Your daughter, — if you have not given her leave, —
 I say again, hath made a gross revolt ;
 Tying her duty, beauty, wit, and fortunes,
 In an extravagant and wheeling²⁴ stranger
 Of here and everywhere. Straight satisfy yourself :
 If she be in her chamber or your house,
 Let loose on me the justice of the State
 For thus deluding you.

Bra. Strike on the tinder, ho !
 Give me a taper ! — call up all my people ! —
 'This accident is not unlike my dream :²⁵
 Belief of it oppresses me already. —
 Light, I say ! light !

[*Exit above.*]

Iago. Farewell ; for I must leave you :
 It seems not meet, nor wholesome to my place,

²² A writer in the Pictorial Shakespeare tells us, " that the gondoliers are the only conveyers of persons, and of a large proportion of property, in Venice ; that they are thus cognizant of all intrigues, and the fittest agents in them, and are under perpetual and strong temptation to make profit of the secrets of society. Brabantio might well be in horror at his daughter having, in ' the dull watch o' the night, no worse nor better guard.' "

²³ *From* here has the force of *against* or *contrary to*. Repeatedly so.

²⁴ *Wheeling* is *roving* or *running about*. *Extravagant* in the Latin sense of *straying* or *wandering*. So Sir Henry Wotton has the phrase " not altogether *extravagant* from my purpose." See, also, vol. xiv. page 151. note 42. — *In* for *on* or *upon* ; the two being often used indiscriminately.

²⁵ The careful old Senator, being caught careless, transfers his caution to his dreaming-power at least. — COLERIDGE.

To be produced — as, if I stay, I shall —
 Against the Moor : for, I do know, the State —
 However this may gall him with some check —
 Cannot with safety cast him ; for he's embark'd
 With such loud reason to the Cyprus wars,
 Which even now stand in act, that, for their souls,
 Another of his fathom²⁶ they have none
 To lead their business : in which regard,²⁷
 Though I do hate him as I do hell-pains,
 Yet, for necessity of present life,
 I must show out a flag and sign of love,
 Which is indeed but sign. That you shall surely find him,
 Lead to the Sagittary²⁸ the raised search ;
 And there will I be with him. So, farewell. [Exit.

Enter, below, BRABANTIO, and Servants with torches.

Bra. It is too true an evil : gone she is ;
 And what's to come of my despisèd time²⁹
 Is nought but bitterness. — Now, Roderigo,
 Where didst thou see her ? O unhappy girl !
 With the Moor, say'st thou ? Who would be a father !
 How didst thou know 'twas she ? O, she deceives me
 Past thought ! What said she to you ? — Get more tapers ;
 Raise all my kindred. — Are they married, think you ?

Rod. Truly, I think they are.

²⁶ *Fathom*, here, is *measure* ; that is, *depth*, *reach*, or *capacity*.

²⁷ "In which regard" here means the same as *on* which *account*.

²⁸ Considerable question has been made as to the place meant by *Sagittary*. Probably it was some inn or hotel that had, for its sign, a picture of the old zodiacal sign, *Sagittarius*. Inns were commonly named from the animals or other things thus depicted on their signs ; and Shakespeare has many instances of such naming. It is not unlikely that the Poet had himself known a Venetian inn called "The Sagittary."

²⁹ *Despisèd time* is here a proleptical form of speech ; that is, Brabantio anticipates contempt during the rest of his *life*, in consequence of what his daughter has done.

Bra. O Heaven! How got she out? O treason of the blood!—

Fathers, from hence trust not your daughters' minds
By what you see them act. — Is there not charms
By which the property of youth and maidhood
May be abused? ^{del. deal} ³⁰ Have you not read, Roderigo,
Of some such thing?

Rod. Yes, sir, I have indeed.

Bra. Call up my brother. — O, would you had had her!—
Some one way, some another. — Do you know
Where we may apprehend her and the Moor?

Rod. I think I can discover him, if you please
To get good guard, and go along with me.

Bra. Pray you, lead on. At every house I'll call;
I may command at most: ³¹ — Get weapons, ho!

And raise some special officers of night. —

On, good Roderigo; I'll deserve your pains. [Exeunt.

SCENE II. — *The Same. Another Street.*

Enter OTHELLO, IAGO, and Attendants *with torches.*

Iago. Though in the trade of war I have slain men,
Yet do I hold it very stuff o' the conscience ¹
To do no contrived murder: I lack iniquity
Sometimes to do me service: nine or ten times
I had thought t' have yerk'd ² him here under the ribs.

Oth. 'Tis better as it is. ^{suggest control}

Iago. Nay, but he prated,

³⁰ *Abused* is *cheated, deluded, made game of.* Often so.

³¹ "I may command at most of the houses."

¹ As we should say, a *point* or a *matter* of conscience.

² To *yerk* is the same as to *jerk*; to strike with a quick smart blow. In *King Henry V.*, iv. 7, we have it used of horses kicking: "The wounded steeds *yerk* out their arm'd heels."

And spoke such scurvy and provoking terms
 Against your Honour,³ (and I never thought I should have
 That, with the little godliness I have,
 I did full hard forbear him. But, I pray you, sir,
 Are you fast married? Be assured of this,
 That the magnifico⁴ is much beloved;
 And hath, in his effect, a voice potential,
 As double as the Duke's:⁵ he will divorce you;
 Or put upon you what restraint and grievance
 The law — with all his might t' enforce it on —
 Will give him cable.

Oth. Let him do his spite:
 My services which I have done the signiory
 Shall⁶ out-tongue his complaints. 'Tis yet to know, —
 Which, when I know that boasting is an honour,
 I shall promulgate, — I fetch my life and being
 From men of royal siege;⁷ and my demerits
 May speak, unbonneted,⁸ to as proud a fortune
 As this that I have reach'd: for know, Iago,
 But that I love the gentle Desdemona,
 I would not my unhousèd⁹ free condition

³ Iago is speaking of Roderigo, and pretending to relate what he has done and said against Othello.

⁴ *Magnifico* is an old title given to the grandees or chief men of Venice.

⁵ He hath a voice potential, or powerful, *as much so as* the Duke's, is the meaning. The Poet often uses *single* for *weak* or *feeble*; and here, for once, he has *double* in the opposite sense. The Duke or *Doge* of Venice was a magistrate of great power, every court and council of the State being very much under his control.

⁶ Here our present idiom would require *will*. I have repeatedly noted that in the Poet's time *shall* and *will* were often used interchangeably.

⁷ Men who have sat on kingly thrones. *Siege* for *seat* was common.

⁸ *Merit* and *demerit* were often used synonymously. So in Latin *mereo* and *demereo* have the same meaning. *Unbonneted* is *without taking off the hat*. To *bonnet*, like to *cap*, is to take off the cap in token of respect. See page 162, note 2.

⁹ *Unhousèd* is *unsettled*, without a *home* or *domestic ties*.

Put into circumscription and confine
For the sea's worth.¹⁰ But, look ! what lights come yond ?

Iago. Those are the raised father and his friends :
You were best go in.

Oth. Not I ; I must be found :
My parts, my title, and my perfect soul
Shall manifest me rightly. Is it they? — *really they*
Iago. By Janus, I think no.

Enter CASSIO, and certain Officers with torches.

Oth. The servants of the Duke, and my lieutenant. —
The goodness of the night upon you, friends !
What is the news ?

Cas. The Duke does greet you, general ;
And he requires your haste-post-haste appearance,
Even on the instant.

Oth. What is the matter, think you ?

Cas. Something from Cyprus, as I may divine.
It is a business of some heat : the galleys
Have sent a dozen sequent messengers
This very night at one another's heels ;
And many of the consuls,¹¹ raised and met,
Are at the Duke's already : you had been hotly call'd for ;
When, being not at your lodging to be found,
The Senate sent about three several quests
To search you out.

Oth. 'Tis well I'm found by you.
I will but spend a word here in the house,
And go with you.

[*Exit.*

¹⁰ Pliny, the naturalist, has a chapter on *the riches of the sea*. The expression seems to have been proverbial. See, also, Clarence's account of his dream, in *King Richard the Third*, i. 4.

¹¹ *Consuls* means the same here as the "togèd consuls," or men of the gown, mentioned in note 6 of the preceding scene ; that is, the *Senators*.

Cas. Ancient, what makes he here? ¹²

Iago. Faith, he to-night hath boarded a land carack :¹³
If it prove lawful prize, he's made for ever.

Cas. I do not understand.

Iago. He's married.

Cas. To who?

Re-enter OTHELLO.

Iago. Marry, to — *Othello comes in.*
Come, captain, will you go?

Oth. Have with you.

Cas. Here comes another troop to seek for you.

Iago. It is Brabantio : general, be advised ;
He comes to bad intent.

Enter BRABANTIO, RODERIGO, and Officers with torches and weapons.

Oth. Holla ! stand there !

Rod. Signior, it is the Moor.

Bra. Down with him, thief!
[*They draw on both sides.*]

Iago. You, Roderigo ! come, sir, I am for you. †

Oth. Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust
them.¹⁴ — *don't be ridiculous.*

Good signior, you shall more command with years
Than with your weapons.

Bra. O thou foul thief, where hast thou stow'd my
daughter?

Damn'd as thou art, thou hast enchanted her ;

¹² What is he *about*, or what is he *doing* here? Shakespeare so uses the phrase repeatedly.

¹³ A *carack* or *carrick*, was a ship of great burden, a Spanish galleon ; so named from *carico*, a lading, or freight.

¹⁴ If I mistake not, there is a sort of playful, good-humoured irony expressed in the very rhythm of this line. The thing was remarked to me many years ago by the Hon. R. H. Dana, of Boston.

For I'll refer me to all things of sense,
 If she in chains of magic were not bound,
 Whether a maid so tender, fair, and happy,
 So opposite to marriage that she shunn'd
 The wealthy curled¹⁵ darlings of our nation,
 Would ever have, t' incur a general mock,
 Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom
 Of such a thing as thou, — to fear, not to delight.
 Judge me the world, if 'tis not gross in sense
 That thou hast practised on her with foul charms ;
 Abused her delicate youth with drugs or minerals
 That waken motion : ^{2000 up} ¹⁶ I'll have't disputed on ;
 'Tis probable and palpable to thinking.
 I therefore apprehend and do attach thee
 For an abuser of the world, a practiser
 Of arts inhibited and out of warrant. —
 Lay hold upon him : if he do resist,
 Subdue him at his peril.

Oth. Hold your hands,

Both you of my inclining, and the rest !
 Were it my cue to fight, I should have known it
 Without a prompter. — Where will you that I go
 To answer this your charge ?

Bra. To prison ; till fit time

Of law and course of direct session¹⁷

¹⁵ In Shakespeare's time it was the fashion for lusty gallants to wear "a curled bush of frizzled hair." In *King Lear*, Edgar, when he was "proud in heart and mind," curled his hair. The Poet has other allusions to the custom among people of rank and fashion.

¹⁶ *Motion* is elsewhere used by the Poet in the same sense. So in *Measure for Measure* : "One who never feels the wanton stings and motions of the sense." And in a subsequent part of this scene : "But we have reason, to cool our raging motions, our carnal stings, our unbitted lusts." To *waken* is to *incite*, to *stir up*. We have, in the present play, "*waken'd* wrath."

¹⁷ The language is rather odd, and perhaps somewhat obscure ; but the meaning probably is, till the time prescribed by law and by the regular

Call thee to answer.

Oth. What if I do obey?

How may the Duke be therewith satisfied,
Whose messengers are here about my side,
Upon some present business of the State
To bring me to him?

I Off. 'Tis true, most worthy signior;
The Duke's in council, and your noble self,
I'm sure, is sent for.

Bra. How! the Duke in council!
In this time of the night! — Bring him away;
Mine's not an idle cause: the Duke himself,
Or any of my brothers of the State,
Cannot but feel this wrong as 'twere their own;
For, if such actions may have passage free,
Bond-slaves and pagans¹⁸ shall our statesmen be. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. — *The Same. A Council-chamber.*

The Duke and Senators sitting at a table; Officers attending.

Duke. There is no (composition) in these news
That gives them credit.¹

I Sen. Indeed, they're disproportion'd;
My letters say a hundred and seven galleys.

Duke. And mine, a hundred and forty.

2 Sen. And mine, two hundred:

course of judicial procedure. *Session* is not unfrequently used in this way; and the proper meaning of *direct* is *straight onward*, or *according to rule*.

¹⁸ *Pagan* was a word of contempt; and the reason will appear from its etymology: "*Paganus*, villanus vel incultus. Et derivatur a *pagnus*, quod est villa. Et *quicumque habitat in villa est paganus*. Præterea quicumque est extra civitatem Dei, i.e., ecclesiam, dicitur paganus. Anglice, a *paynim*." — *Ortus Vocabulorum*, 1528.

¹ There is no *consistency*, no agreement, in these reports, to stamp them with credibility. *News* was used as singular or plural indifferently.

But though they jump not on a just account, —
 As in these cases, where the aim reports,²
 'Tis oft with difference, — yet do they all confirm
 A Turkish fleet, and bearing up to Cyprus.

Duke. Nay, it is possible enough to judgment :
 I do not so secure me in the error,
 But the main article I do approve
 In fearful sense.

Sailor. [*Within.*] What, ho ! what, ho ! what, ho !
1 Off. A messenger from the galleys.

Enter a Sailor.

Duke. Now, what's the business?

Sail. The Turkish preparation makes for Rhodes ;
 So was I bid report here to the State
 By Signior Angelo.

Duke. How say you by this change ?³

1 Sen. This cannot be,
 By no assay of reason :⁴ 'tis a pageant,
 To keep us in false gaze. When we consider
 Th' importancy of Cyprus to the Turk ;
 And let ourselves again but understand,
 That as it more concerns the Turk than Rhodes,
 So may he with more facile question bear it,⁵
 For that it stands not in such warlike brace,
 But altogether lacks th' abilities
 That Rhodes is dress'd in ; — if we make thought of this,

² The Poet elsewhere uses *aim* in the sense of *guess* or *conjecture*. So in *Julius Cæsar* : "What you would work me to, I have some *aim*."

³ That is, *what* say you of this change? See page 75, note 24.

⁴ By no *trial* or *test* of reason. *Assay* was often used thus.

⁵ May *win* or *capture* it with an *easier contest*. See vol. xv. page 202, note 23. — *Question* readily glides through *controversy* to *conflict* or *fight*. — *Brace*, next line, is *state of defence*, *strongly braced*. So, to *brace on* the armour was to *arm*.

We must not think the Turk is so unskilful
To leave that latest which concerns him first,
Neglecting an attempt of ease and gain,
To wake and wage⁶ a danger profitless.

Duke. Nay, in all confidence, he's not for Rhodes.

I Off. Here is more news.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. The Ottomites, reverend and gracious,
Steering with due course toward the isle of Rhodes,
Have there injointed⁷ with an after fleet.

I Sen. Ay, so I thought. — How many, as you guess?

Mess: Of thirty sail; and now they do re-stem
Their backward course, bearing with frank appearance
Their purposes toward Cyprus. Signior Montano,
Your trusty and most valiant servitor,
With his free duty recommends you thus,
And prays you to believe him.

Duke. 'Tis certain, then, for Cyprus. —
Marcus Luccicos, is not he in town?

I Sen. He's now in Florence.

Duke. Write from us to him; post-post-haste dispatch.

I Sen. Here comes Brabantio and the valiant Moor.

Enter BRABANTIO, OTHELLO, IAGO, RODERIGO, and Officers.

Duke. Valiant Othello, we must straight employ you
Against the general enemy Ottoman.⁸ —

⁶ To *wage* is to *undertake*. "To *wage* law (in the common acceptation) seems to be to *follow*, to *urge*, drive on, or prosecute the law or law-suits; as to *wage* war is *præliari*, *bellare*, to drive on the war, to fight in battels as warriors do." — Blount's *Glossography*.

⁷ *Injointed* is the same here as *united*, and so used intransitively.

⁸ It was part of the policy of the Venetian State to employ strangers, and even Moors, in their wars. "By lande they are served of straungers, both for generals, for capitaines, and for all other men of warre, because theyr lawe permitteth not any Venetian to be capitaine over an armie by lande; fearing, I thinke, Cæsar's example." — Thomas's *History of Italye*.

[*To BRABAN.*] I did not see you ; welcome, gentle signior ;
We lack'd your counsel and your help to-night.

Bra. So did I yours. Good your Grace, pardon me :
Neither my place, nor aught I heard of business,
Hath raised me from my bed ; nor doth the general care
'Take hold on me ; for my particular grief
Is of so flood-gate and o'erbearing nature
That it engluts and swallows other sorrows,
And it is still itself.

Duke. Why, what's the matter?

Bra. My daughter ! O, my daughter !

Duke and Sen. Dead?

Bra. Ay, to me :

She is abused, stol'n from me, and corrupted
By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks ;
For nature so preposterously to err,
Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense,
Sans witchcraft could not.

Duke. Whoe'er he be that, in this foul proceeding,
Hath thus beguiled your daughter of herself,
And you of her, the bloody book of law⁹
You shall yourself read in the bitter letter
After your own sense ; yea, though our proper son
Stood in your action.

Bra. Humbly I thank your Grace.
Here is the man, this Moor ; whom now, it seems,
Your special mandate, for the state-affairs,
Hath hither brought.

Duke and Sen. We're very sorry for't.

Duke. [*To OTHELLO.*] What, in your own part, can you
say to this?

⁹ By the Venetian law the giving love-potions was highly criminal, as appears in the *Code Della Promission del Malefico*. And the use of *philters*, so called, for the purpose here supposed, was generally credited.

Bra. Nothing, but this is so.

Oth. Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors,
My very noble and approved good masters,
That I have ta'en away this old man's daughter,
It is most true ; true, I have married her :
The very head and front of my offending
Hath this extent, no more. Rude am I in my speech,
And little bless'd with the soft phrase of peace ;
For, since these arms of mine had seven years' pith,
Till now some nine moons wasted, they have used
Their dearest action in the tented field ;
And little of this great world can I speak,
More than pertains to feats of broil and battle ;
And therefore little shall I grace my cause
In speaking for myself. Yet, by your gracious patience,
I will a round¹⁰ unvarnish'd tale deliver
Of my whole course of love ; what drugs, what charms,
What conjuration, and what mighty magic, —
For such proceeding I am charged withal, —
I won his daughter with.

Bra. A maiden never bold ;
Of spirit so still and quiet, that her motion
Blush'd at herself ;¹¹ and she — in spite of nature,
Of years, of country, credit, every thing —
To fall in love with what she fear'd to look on !
It is a judgment maim'd and most imperfect,
That will confess perfection so could err
Against all rules of nature ; and must be driven

¹⁰ *Round* was often used in the sense of *plain* or *downright*.

¹¹ *Herself* for *itself*, referring to *motion*. The personal and neutral pronouns were often used interchangeably. — *Motion* is here used in the same sense as remarked in note 16 of the preceding scene ; meaning, as White says, " that Desdemona blushed when conscious of the natural passions of her sex."

To find out practices of cunning Hell,
 Why this should be. I therefore vouch again,
 That with some mixtures powerful o'er the blood,
 Or with some dram conjured to this effect,
 He wrought upon her.

Duke. To vouch this, is no proof :
 Without more certain and more overt test,
 These are thin habits and poor likelihoods
 Of modern seeming,¹² you prefer against him.

I Sen. But, Othello, speak :
 Did you by indirect and forcèd courses
 Subdue and poison this young maid's affections?
 Or came it by request, and such fair question
 As soul to soul affordeth ?

Oth. I do beseech you,
 Send for the lady to the Sagittary,
 And let her speak of me before her father :
 If you do find me foul in her report,
 The trust, the office, I do hold of you,
 Not only take away, but let your sentence
 Even fall upon my life.

Duke. Fetch Desdemona hither.

Oth. Ancient, conduct them ; you best know the place. —
 [*Exeunt* IAGO and Attendants.

And, till she come, as truly as to Heaven
 I do confess the vices of my blood,
 So justly to your grave ears I'll present
 How I did thrive in this fair lady's love,
 And she in mine.

Duke. Say it, Othello.

¹² *Modern* is here used in the sense of *common* or *vulgar* ; as in the phrase, " full of wise saws and *modern* instances." — *Habits* seems to be used here much as we now use *colour*, as in " some colour of truth " ; that is, *semblance*. Some think it a Latinism, like *habitu*, things held or believed.

Oth. Her father loved me ; oft invited me ;
 Still question'd me the story of my life,
 From year to year, the battles, sieges, fortunes,
 That I have pass'd.
 I ran it through, even from my boyish days
 To th' very moment that he bade me tell it :
 Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances,
 Of moving accidents by flood and field ;
 Of hair-breadth 'scapes i' the imminent deadly breach ;
 Of being taken by the insolent foe,
 And sold to slavery ; of my redemption thence,
 And portance ¹³ in my travels' history :
 Wherein of antres ¹⁴ vast and deserts idle,
 Rough quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads touch heaven,
 It was my hint to speak, — such was the process ;
 And of the Cannibals that each other eat,
 The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads
 Do grow beneath their shoulders.¹⁵ This to hear
 Would Desdemona seriously incline :
 But still the house-affairs would draw her thence ;
 Which ever as she could with haste dispatch,

¹³ *Portance* is *carriage* or *deportment*. So in *Coriolanus*, ii. 3: "But your loves, thinking upon his services, took from you the apprehension of his present *portance*."

¹⁴ Caverns; from *antrum*, Lat. Rymer ridicules this whole circumstance; and Shaftesbury obliquely sneers at it. "Whoever," says Johnson, "ridicules this account of the progress of love, shows his ignorance not only of history, but of nature and manners."

¹⁵ Nothing excited more universal attention than the account brought by Sir Walter Raleigh, on his return from his celebrated voyage to Guiana in 1595, of the cannibals, amazons, and especially of the nation, "whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders." A short extract of the more wonderful passages was also published in Latin and in several other languages in 1599, adorned with copperplates, representing these cannibals, amazons, and headless people, &c. These extraordinary reports were universally credited; and Othello therefore assumes no other character than what was very common among the celebrated commanders of the Poet's time.

She'd come again, and with a greedy ear
 Devour up my discourse : which I observing,
 Took once a pliant hour ; and found good means
 To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart
 That I would all my pilgrimage dilate,
 Whereof by parcels she had something heard,
 But not intently.¹⁶ I did consent ;
 And often did beguile her of her tears,
 When I did speak of some distressful stroke
 That my youth suffer'd. My story being done,
 She gave me for my pains a world of sighs :
 She swore,¹⁷ *In faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing strange ;
 'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful :*
 She wish'd she had not heard it ; yet she wish'd
 That Heaven had made her such a man :¹⁸ she thank'd me ;
 And bade me, if I had a friend that loved her,
 I should but teach him how to tell my story,
 And that would woo her. Upon this hint I spake :
 She loved me for the dangers I had pass'd ;
 And I loved her that she did pity them.
 This only is the witchcraft I have used : — *with a look
 of surprise*
 Here comes the lady ; let her witness it.

Enter DESDEMONA *with* IAGO *and* Attendants.

Duke. I think this tale would win my daughter too. —
 Good Brabantio,

¹⁶ *Intention* and *attention* were once synonymous. "*Intentive*, which listeneth well and is earnestly bent to a thing," says Bullokar, in his *Expositor*, 1616. Lettsom remarks that here the word "seems to mean either *all at a stretch*, or *so as to comprehend the story as a whole*."

¹⁷ To *aver upon faith* or *honour* was considered swearing.

¹⁸ A question has lately been raised whether the meaning here is, that Desdemona wished such a man had been made *for* her, or that she herself had been made such a man ; and several have insisted on the latter, lest the lady's delicacy should be impeached!

Take up this mangled matter at the best :
Men do their broken weapons rather use
Than their bare hands.

Bra. I pray you, hear her speak :
If she confess that she was half the wooer,
Destruction on my head, if my bad blame
Light on the man ! — Come hither, gentle mistress :
Do you perceive in all this noble company
Where most you owe obedience ?

Des. My noble father,
I do perceive here a divided duty :
To you I'm bound for life and education ;
My life and education both do learn me
How to respect you ; you're the lord of duty,
I'm hitherto your daughter : but here's my husband ;
And so much duty as my mother show'd
To you, preferring you before her father,
So much I challenge that I may profess
Due to the Moor my lord.

Bra. God b' wi' you ! I have done. —
Please it your Grace, on to the State-affairs :
I had rather to adopt a child than get it. —
Come hither, Moor :
I here do give thee that with all my heart
Which, but ¹⁹ thou hast already, with all my heart
I would keep from thee. — For my own sake, jewel,
I'm glad at soul I have no other child ;
For thy escape would teach me tyranny,
To hang ²⁰ clogs on them. — I have done, my lord.

* *Duke.* Let me speak like yourself ; ²¹ and lay a sentence,

¹⁹ *But* in the exceptive sense ; *but that* or *except*. Frequent.

²⁰ *To hang* for *in* or *by hanging*. See page 46, note 25.

²¹ "Let me speak *in the same manner as* you have yourself just spoken." He refers to Brabantio's "I here do give thee that with all my heart," &c.

- *Which, as a grise²² or step, may help these lovers
 *Into your favour.
 *When remedies are past, the griefs are ended²³
 *By seeing the worst, which late on hopes depended.
 *To mourn a mischief that is past and gone
 *Is the next way to draw new mischief on.
 *What cannot be preserved when fortune takes,
 *Patience her injury a mockery makes.
 *The robb'd that smiles steals something from the thief;
 *He robs himself that spends a bootless grief.
 **Bra.* So let the Turk of Cyprus us beguile;
 *We lose it not, so long as we can smile.
 *He bears the sentence well that nothing bears
 *But the free comfort which from thence he hears;
 *But he bears both the sentence and the sorrow
 *That to pay grief must of poor patience borrow.
 *These sentences, to sugar, or to gall,
 *Being strong on both sides, are equivocal:
 *But words are words; I never yet did hear
 *That the bruised heart was piercèd²⁴ through the ear. —

And so he goes on to urge acquiescence in what is done, merely because it is done, and cannot be undone.

²² *Grise* or *greese* is a *step*; from *grés*, French.

²³ This is expressed in a common proverbial form in *Love's Labours Lost*:
 "Past cure is still past care."

²⁴ *Piercèd* seems rather harsh and unfitting here. Of course the meaning is, *reached* or *penetrated* with healing virtue. The expression was not uncommon. So Spenser, in *The Faerie Queene*, iv. 8, 26, describing the old hag Sclaunder attributes to her words "Which, passing through the eares, would pierce the hart." And again in vi. 9, 26, speaking of Melibee's sage discourse:

Whose sensefull words empierst his hart so neare,
 That he was wrapt with double ravishment.

Also in the First Part of Marlow's *Tamburlaine*, i. 2, quoted by Dyce:

Nor thee nor them, thrice-noble Tamburlaine,
 Shall want my heart to be with gladness pierc'd.

*Beseech you, now proceed to the affairs of State.

Duke. The Turk with a most mighty preparation makes for Cyprus. — Othello, the fortitude of the place is best known to you; and though we have there a substitute of most allowed sufficiency, yet opinion, a sovereign mistress of effects, throws a more safer voice on you: you must therefore be content to slubber²⁵ the gloss of your new fortunes with this more stubborn and boisterous expedition.

Oth. The tyrant custom, most grave Senators,
Hath made the flinty and steel couch of war
My thrice-driven bed of down:²⁶ I do agnize
A natural and prompt alacrity
I find in hardness; and do undertake
This present war against the Ottomites.
Most humbly, therefore, bending to your State,
I crave fit disposition for my wife;
Due reference of place and exhibition;
With such accommodation and besort²⁷
As levels with her breeding.

Duke. If you please,
Be't at her father's.

Bra. I'll not have it so.

Oth. Nor I.

Des. Nor I; I would not there reside,
To put my father in impatient thoughts
By being in his eye. Most gracious Duke,

²⁵ To *slubber* is, properly, to *neglect* or to *slight*; here it seems to have the sense of *obscuring* by negligence. See vol. iii. page 153, note 5.

²⁶ A *driven* bed is a bed for which the feathers have been selected by *driving* with a fan, which separates the light from the heavy. — To *agnize* is to *acknowledge*, *confess*, or *avow*. Thus in a *Summarie Report* relative to Mary Queen of Scots, 1586: "A repentant convert *agnizing* her Majesty's great mercie."

²⁷ *Besort* is *attendance* or *companionship*. — *Exhibition* is *allowance* or *provision*. See vol. xv. page 23, note 5.

To my unfolding lend your prosperous ear ;²⁸
 And let me find a charter in your voice,
 T' assist my simpleness.

Duke. What would you, Desdemona?

Des. That I did love the Moor to live with him,
 My downright violence and storm of fortunes
 May trumpet to the world : my heart's subdued
 Even to the very quality²⁹ of my lord :
 I saw Othello's visage in his mind ;
 And to his honours and his valiant parts
 Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate.
 So that, dear lords, if I be left behind,
 A moth of peace, and he go to the war,
 The rites for which I love him are bereft me,
 And I a heavy interim shall support
 By his dear³⁰ absence. Let me go with him.

Oth. Your voices, lords : beseech you, let her will
 Have a free way.

²⁸ *Prosperous* is here used in an active sense, the same as *propitious*.—*Charter*, in the next line, appears to mean about the same as *pledge* or *guaranty*. The word is used in a considerable variety of senses by Shakespeare, and seems to have been rather a favourite with him, as with other Englishmen, probably from the effect of *Magna Charta* and other like instruments in securing and preserving the liberties of England.

²⁹ *Quality* is here put, apparently, for *nature*, *idiom*, *distinctive grain*, or *personal propriety*. Desdemona means that her heart is tamed and tuned into perfect harmony with the heroic manhood that has spoken out to her from Othello's person ; that her soul gravitates towards him as its pre-established centre and home. So that the sense of the passage may be fitly illustrated from the Poet's 111th Sonnet: "And almost thence my nature is subdued to what it works in, like the dyer's hand."—In "downright violence and storm of fortunes," the meaning probably is the state or course of life which the speaker has boldly ventured upon in forsaking the peaceful home of her father to share the storms and perils, the violences and hardships, of a warrior's career.

³⁰ *Dear*, in its original sense, was an epithet of any thing that excited intense feeling, whether of pleasure or of pain. So the Poet has it repeatedly. See vol. v. page 227, note 6.

Vouch with me, Heaven, I therefore³¹ beg it not,
 To please the palate of my appetite,
 Nor to comply wi' th' heat of young affects,³² —
 In me defunct, — but for her satisfaction,
 And to be free and bounteous to her mind.
 And Heaven defend your good souls,³³ that you think
 I will your serious and great business scant
 For she is with me :³⁴ no, when light-wing'd toys
 Of feather'd Cupid seel³⁵ with wanton dullness
 My speculative and active instruments,³⁶
 That my disports corrupt and taint my business,
 Let housewives make a skillet of my helm,
 And all indign and base adversities
 Make head against my estimation ! — *Tisought my words*

Duke. Be it as you shall privately determine,
 Either for her stay or going : th' affair cries haste,
 And speed must answer it.

I Sen. You must away to-night.

Oth.

With all my heart.

Duke. At nine i' the morning here we'll meet again.
 Othello, leave some officer behind,
 And he shall our commission bring to you ;
 With such things else of quality and respect

³¹ " I do not beg it *for this cause*." Shakespeare has repeated instances of *therefore* in the sense of *for this cause* or *to this end*.

³² *Affects* for *affections*, and in the sense of *passions*. Repeatedly so. See vol. vii. page 148, note 21. — The word *defunct* properly goes with *heat*, not with *affects*. Othello means simply that the heat of youthful impulse has cooled down; that his passions have become tempered to the rule of judgment.

³³ Old language for " Heaven defend your good souls *from thinking*."

³⁴ *Because* she is with me. *For* was often used thus.

³⁵ *Seel* is an old term in falconry, for *closing up* the eyes of a hawk. Done by sewing the lids together. See page 66, note 13.

³⁶ Meaning his *faculties* of *intelligence* and of *action*. — *That*, next line, is *so that*, or *insomuch that*. Often so.

As doth import you.³⁷

Oth.

So please your Grace, my ancient ;

A man he is of honesty and trust :

To his conveyance I assign my wife,

With what else needful your good Grace shall think

To be sent after me.³⁸

Duke.

Let it be so. —

Good night to every one. — [*To BRAB.*] And, noble signior,

If virtue no delighted³⁹ beauty lack, — *beauty: not given*

Your son-in-law is far more fair than black.

I Sen. Adieu, brave Moor ; use Desdemona well.

Bra. Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see :

She has deceived her father, and may thee.⁴⁰ *Heedly*

[*Exeunt Duke, Senators, Officers, &c.*]

Oth. My life upon her faith ! — Honest Iago,

My Desdemona must I leave to thee :

I pr'ythee, let thy wife attend on her ;

And bring them after in the best advantage.⁴¹ —

Come, Desdemona ; I have but an hour

Of love, of worldly matters and direction,

To spend with thee : we must obey the time.

[*Exeunt OTHELLO and DESDEMONA.*]

³⁷ To "import you" is the same as to be *important* to you. The Poet repeatedly uses the verb in the kindred sense of to *concern*. So in *Antony and Cleopatra*, i. 2: "Her length of sickness, with what else more serious *importeth* thee to know, this bears." Also in *Troilus and Cressida*, iv. 2: "It doth *import* him much to speak with me."

³⁸ The construction is, "with what else your good Grace shall think needful to be sent after me."

³⁹ "*Delighted beauty*" evidently means here beauty that *gives* or *yields* delight; that is, *delightful*. An instance of the indiscriminate use of active and passive forms which occurs so often in the old writers.

⁴⁰ In real life, how do we look back to little speeches as presentimental of, or contrasted with, an affecting event! Even so, Shakespeare, as secure of being read over and over, of becoming a family friend, provides this passage for his readers, and leaves it to them. — COLERIDGE.

⁴¹ "The best advantage" means the fairest or earliest opportunity.

Rod. Iago, —

Iago. What say'st thou, noble heart?

Rod. What will I do, think'st thou?

Iago. Why, go to bed, and sleep.

Rod. I will incontinently⁴² drown myself.

Iago. If thou dost, I shall never love thee after. Why, thou silly gentleman!

Rod. It is silliness to live when to live is torment; and then have we a prescription to die when death is our physician.

Iago. O villainous! I have look'd upon the world for four times seven years⁷⁶; ⁴³ and, since I could distinguish betwixt a benefit and an injury, I never found man that knew how to love himself. Ere I would say, I would drown myself for the love of a guinea-hen, I would change my humanity with a baboon.

Rod. What should I do? I confess it is my shame to be so fond; but it is not in my virtue to amend it.

Iago. Virtue! a fig! 'tis in ourselves that we are thus or thus. Our bodies are our gardens; to the which our wills are gardeners: so that, if we will plant nettles, or sow lettuce; set hyssop, and weed-up thyme; supply it with one gender of herbs, or distract it with many; either to have it steril with idleness or manured with industry; why, the power and corrigible⁴⁴ authority of this lies in our wills. If the balance of our lives had not one scale of reason to poise another of

⁴² *Immediately*; the old meaning of *incontinently*.

⁴³ This clearly ascertains Iago's age to be twenty-eight years; though the general impression of him is that of a much older man. The Poet, no doubt, had a wise purpose in making him so young, as it infers his virulence of mind to be something innate and spontaneous, and not superinduced by harsh experience of the world.

⁴⁴ *Corrigible* for *corrective*. This comes under the same head as that in note 39. Adjectives ending in *-able* or *-ible* are often used thus by Shakespeare. See vol. v. page 223, note 3.

sensuality, the blood and baseness of our natures would conduct us to most preposterous conclusions: but we have reason to cool our raging motions, our carnal stings, our unbitted lusts; whereof I take this that you call love to be a sect or scion.⁴⁵

Rod. It cannot be.

Iago. It is merely a lust of the blood and a permission of the will. Come, be a man: drown thyself! drown cats and blind puppies. I have profess'd me thy friend, and I confess me knit to thy deserving with cables of perdurable toughness; I could never better stead thee than now. Put money in thy purse; follow thou the wars; defeat thy favour⁴⁶ with an usurp'd beard; I say, put money in thy purse. It cannot be that Desdemona should long continue her love to the Moor, — put money in thy purse, — nor he his to her: it was a violent commencement, and thou shalt see an answerable sequestration;⁴⁷ — put but money in thy purse. These Moors are changeable in their wills; — fill thy purse with money: — the food that to him now is as luscious as locusts⁴⁸ shall be to him shortly as bitter as coloquintida. She must change for youth: when she is sated with his body, she will find the error of her choice: she must have change, she must; therefore put money in thy purse. If thou wilt needs damn thyself, do it a more delicate way than drowning.

⁴⁵ A *sect* is what the gardeners call a *cutting*. — "This speech," says Coleridge, "comprises the passionless character of Iago. It is all will in intellect; and therefore he is here a bold partisan of a truth, but yet of a truth converted into a falsehood by the absence of all the necessary modifications caused by the frail nature of man."

⁴⁶ *Defeat* was used for *disfigurement* or *alteration* of features: from the French *défaire*. *Favour* is *countenance*.

⁴⁷ *Sequestration* is defined to be "a putting apart, a separation of a thing from the possession of both those that contend for it."

⁴⁸ Alluding, probably, to the *ceratonia* or *carob*, an evergreen growing in the south of Europe, and bearing sweet black pods. Commerce had made the fruit well known in London, and *locust* was the popular name for it.

Make all the money thou canst: if sanctimony and a frail vow betwixt an erring⁴⁹ barbarian and a supersubtle Venetian be not too hard for my wits and all the tribe of Hell, thou shalt enjoy her; therefore make money. A pox of drowning thyself! it is clean out of the way: seek thou rather to be hang'd in compassing thy joy than to be drown'd and go without her.

Rod. Wilt thou be fast to my hopes, if I depend on the issue?

Iago. Thou art sure of me;—go, make money. I have told thee often, and I re-tell thee again and again, I hate the Moor: my cause is hearted; thine hath no less reason. Let us be conjunctive in our revenge against him: if thou canst cuckold him, thou dost thyself a pleasure, me a sport. There are many events in the womb of time, which will be delivered. m Traverse;⁵⁰ go, provide thy money. We will have more of this to-morrow. Adieu.

Rod. Where shall we meet i' the morning?

Iago. At my lodging.

Rod. I'll be with thee betimes.

Iago. Go to; farewell. Do you hear, Roderigo?

Rod. What say you?

Iago. No more of drowning, do you hear?

Rod. I am changed: I'll go sell all my land.

Iago. Go to; farewell: put money enough in your purse.—
[Exit RODERIGO.]

Thus do I ever make my fool my purse;
For I mine own gain'd knowledge should profane,
If I would time expend with such a snipe,
But for my sport and profit. I hate the Moor;
And it is thought abroad, that 'twixt my sheets

⁴⁹ *Erring* is here used in its Latin sense of *erratic* or *wandering*.

⁵⁰ *Traverse* is here used as a military term, for *march*.

He's done my office : I know not if't be true ;
 But I, for mere suspicion in that kind,
 Will do as if for surety.⁵¹ He holds me well ;
 The better shall my purpose work on him.
 Cassio's a proper⁵² man : let me see now ;
 To get his place, and to plume up my will
 In double knavery — How, how? Let's see : —
 After some time, t' abuse Othello's ear
 That he is too familiar with his wife :
 He hath a person, and a smooth dispose,⁵³
 To be suspected ; framed to make women false.
 The Moor is of a free and open nature,
 That thinks men honest that but seem to be so ;
 And will as tenderly be led by th' nose
 As asses are.
 I have't ; it is engender'd : Hell and night
 Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light. [Exit.

ACT II.

SCENE I. — *A seaport Town in Cyprus.*¹ *A Platform.*

Enter MONTANO *and two Gentlemen.*

Mon. What from the cape can you discern at sea?

1 Gent. Nothing at all : it is a high-wrought flood ;

⁵¹ I will do as if I were certain of the fact. "He holds me well" is, he entertains a good opinion of me.

⁵² *Proper* here, as very often in these plays, means *handsome*.

⁵³ *Dispose* for *disposition*. Shakespeare has a good many words shortened in much the same way. See vol. xv. page 104, note 12.

¹ The principal seaport town of Cyprus is *Famagusta* ; where there was formerly a strong fort and commodious haven, "neare which," says Knolles,

I cannot 'twixt the heaven and the main
Descry a sail.

Mon. Methinks the wind hath spoke aloud at land ;
A fuller blast ne'er shook our battlements :
If it hath ruffian'd so upon the sea,
What ribs of oak, when mountains melt on them,
Can hold the mortise? What shall we hear of this?

2 Gent. A segregation of the Turkish fleet :
For, do but stand upon the foaming shore,
The chiding billow seems to pelt the clouds ;
The wind-shaked surge, with high and monstrous mane,²
Seems to cast water on the burning bear,³
And quench the guards of th' ever-fixèd pole :
I never did like molestation view
On the enchain'd flood.

Mon. If that the Turkish fleet
Be not enshelter'd and embay'd, they're drown'd ;
It is impossible they bear it out.

Enter a third Gentleman.

3 Gent. News, lads ! our wars are done.
The desperate tempest hath so bang'd the 'Turks,
That their designment halts : a noble ship of Venice
Hath seen a grievous wreck and sufferance
On most part of their fleet.

Mon. How ! is this true?

3 Gent. The ship is here put in,

"standeth an old *castle*, with four towers after the ancient manner of building." To this castle we find that Othello presently repairs.

² There is implied a comparison of the "wind-shaked surge" to the war-horse; the Poet probably having in mind the passage of Job: "Hast thou given the horse strength? Hast thou clothed his *neck* with thunder?"

³ The constellation near the polar star. The next line alludes to the star *Arctophylax*, which literally signifies the guard of the bear.

La Veronesa; ⁴ Michael Cassio,
 Lieutenant to the warlike Moor Othello,
 Is come on shore: the Moor himself's at sea,
 And is in full commission here for Cyprus.

Mon. I'm glad on't; 'tis a worthy governor.

3 Gent. But this same Cassio,—though he speak of
 comfort

Touching the Turkish loss, yet he looks sadly,
 And prays the Moor be safe; for they were parted
 With foul and violent tempest.

Mon. Pray Heavens he be;

For I have served him, and the man commands
 Like a full soldier.⁵ Let's to the seaside, ho!
 As well to see the vessel that's come in
 As to throw out our eyes for brave Othello,
 Even till we make the main and th' aerial blue
 An indistinct regard.⁶

3 Gent. Come, let's do so;
 For every minute is expectancy
 Of more arrivance.

Enter CASSIO.

Cas. Thanks to the valiant of this warlike isle,
 That so approve the Moor! O, let the Heavens
 Give him defence against the elements,
 For I have lost him on a dangerous sea!

⁴ *Veronesa* refers to the ship. It is true, the same speaker has just called the ship "a noble ship of *Venice*"; but Verona was tributary to the Venetian State; so that there is no reason why she might not belong to Venice, and still take her name from Verona.

⁵ "A full soldier" is a *complete* or *finished* soldier. See page 165, note 14.

⁶ That is, "till, to our vision, the sea and the sky so melt into each other as to be *indistinguishable*."—Here may be fitly quoted one of Coleridge's notes: "Observe in how many ways Othello is made, first our acquaintance, then our friend, then the object of our anxiety, before the deeper interest is to be approached."

Mon. Is he well shipp'd?

Cas. His bark is stoutly timber'd, and his pilot
Of very expert and approved allowance; ⁷
Therefore my hopes, not suffocate to death,
Stand in bold cure.⁸

[*Within.*] A sail, a sail, a sail!

Enter a fourth Gentleman.

Cas. What noise?

4 Gent. The town is empty; on the brow o' the sea
Stand ranks of people, and they cry *A sail!*

Cas. My hopes do shape him for the governor.

[*Guns heard.*]

2 Gent. They do discharge their shot of courtesy:
Our friends at least.

Cas. I pray you, sir, go forth,
And give us truth who 'tis that is arrived.

2 Gent. I shall.

[*Exit.*]

Mon. But, good lieutenant, is your general wived?

Cas. Most fortunately: he hath achieved a maid
That paragons description and wild fame;
One that excels the quirks of blazoning pens,
And in th' essential vesture of creation
Does tire the ingener.⁹

⁷ Of *allowed* and approved *expertness*. *Allowance*, in old English, sometimes means *estimation*. See vol. xiv, page 226, note 6.

⁸ Cassio, though anxious, does not despair, and the meaning of "Stand in hold cure" seems to be, "my hopes, though near dying, stay themselves upon, or are kept alive by, *bold conjecture*"; or, it may be, "are *confident* of being cured." See vol. xv, page 100, note 15. — *Suffocate*, of course, for *suffocated*. So in *Troilus and Cressida*, i. 3: "This chaos, when degree is *suffocate*, follows the choking." Shakespeare has many preterites formed in the same way; as "one of an *ingraft* infirmity," in the third scene of this Act.

⁹ By "the *essential vesture of creation*" the Poet means, apparently, her *outward form*, which in *The Merchant of Venice* he calls "the muddy *ves-*

Re-enter second Gentleman.

How now ! who has put in ?

2 *Gent.* 'Tis one Iago, ancient to the general.

Cas. He's had most favourable and happy speed.
Tempests themselves, high seas, and howling winds,
The gutter'd rocks, and congregated sands, —
Traitors ensteep'd¹⁰ to clog the guiltless keel, —
As having sense of beauty, do omit
Their mortal¹¹ natures, letting go safely by
The divine Desdemona.

Mon. What is she ?

Cas. She that I spake of, our great captain's captain,
Left in the conduct of the bold Iago ;
Whose footing here anticipates our thoughts
A se'nnight's speed. — Great God, Othello guard,
And swell his sail with Thine own powerful breath,
That he may bless this bay with his tall ship,
Make love's quick pants in Desdemona's arms,
Give renew'd fire to our extincted spirits,
And bring all Cyprus comfort ! — O, behold,

Enter DESDEMONA, EMILIA, IAGO, RODERIGO, *and* Attendants.

ture of decay." The meaning of the whole clause seems to be, "She is one who surpasses all description, and in real beauty, or outward form, goes beyond the power of the artist's inventive or expressive pencil." It appears that *inginer* or *ingener* was sometimes used for *painter* or *artist*. So Jonson, in his *Sejanus*, i. 1. "No, Silius, we are no good *inginers*, we want their *fine* arts." And Flecknoe, speaking of painting, 1664. "The stupendous works of your great *ingeniers*." — For this use of *paragon*, see vol. xvi. page 32, note 8.

¹⁰ *Ensteep'd* here means simply hid in the water, *submerged*; a frequent use of the word. So in *The Faerie Queene*, i. 11 :

Now gan the golden Phæbus for to *steepe*
His fierie face in billows of the west.

¹¹ *Mortal* is *deadly*, *destructive*; the more common meaning of the word in Shakespeare. See page 30, note 6.

The riches of the ship is come on shore !
 Ye men of Cyprus, let her have your knees. —
 Hail to thee, lady ! and the grace of Heaven,
 Before, behind thee, and on every hand,
 Enwheel thee round !

Des. I thank you, valiant Cassio.

What tidings can you tell me of my lord ?

Cas. He is not yet arrived ; nor know I aught
 But that he's well, and will be shortly here.

Des. O, but I fear — How lost you company ?

Cas. The great contention of the sea and skies
 Parted our fellowship. But, hark ! a sail.

[*Within.*] A sail, a sail ! [Guns heard.]

2 Gent. They give their greeting to the citadel :
 This likewise is a friend.

Cas. See for the news. —

[*Exit Gentleman.*]

Good ancient, you are welcome ; — [*To EMILIA.*] welcome,
 mistress. —

Let it not gall your patience, good Iago,
 That I extend my manners ; 'tis my breeding
 That gives me this bold show of courtesy.¹² [*Kissing her.*]

Iago. Sir, would she give you so much of her lips
 As of her tongue she oft bestows on me,
 You'd have enough.

Des. Alas, she has no speech.

¹² Observe Othello's "honest," and Cassio's "bold" Iago; and Cassio's full guileless-hearted wishes for the safety and love-raptures of Othello and "the divine Desdemona." And note also the exquisite circumstance of Cassio's kissing Iago's wife, as if it ought to be impossible that the dullest auditor should not feel Cassio's religious love of Desdemona's purity. Iago's answers are the sneers which a proud bad intellect feels towards women, and expresses to a wife. Surely it ought to be considered a very exalted compliment to women, that all the sarcasms on them in Shakespeare are put in the mouths of villains. — COLERIDGE.

Iago. In faith, too much ;
I find it still, when I have list to sleep :
Marry, before your ladyship, I grant,
She puts her tongue a little in her heart,
And chides with thinking.

Emil. You have little cause to say so.

Iago. Come on, come on ; you're pictures out of doors,
Bells in your parlours, wild-cats in your kitchens,
Saints in your injuries,¹³ devils being offended,
Players in your housewifery, and housewives in your beds.

Des. O, fie upon thee, slanderer !

Iago. Nay, it is true, or else I am a Turk :
You rise to play, and go to bed to work.

Emil. You shall not write my praise.

Iago. No, let me not.

Des. What wouldst thou write of me, if thou shouldst
praise me ?

Iago. O gentle lady, do not put me to't ;
For I am nothing, if not critical.

Des. Come on, assay. There's one gone to the harbour ?

Iago. Ay, madam.

Des. I am not merry ; but I do beguile
The thing I am, by seeming otherwise.
Come, how wouldst thou praise me ?

Iago. I am about it ; but, indeed, my invention
Comes from my pate as birdlime does from frieze, —
It plucks out brains and all : but my Muse labours,
And thus she is deliver'd :
If she be fair and wise, — fairness and wit,
The one's for use, the other useth it.

Des. Well praised ! How if she be black and witty ?

Iago. If she be black, and thereto have a wit,

¹³ "When you have a mind to do injuries, you put on an air of sanctity."

She'll find a white that shall her blackness fit.

Des. Worse and worse.

Emil. How if fair and foolish?

Iago. She never yet was foolish that was fair ;
For even her folly help'd her to an heir.

Des. These are old fond paradoxes to make fools laugh
i' the ale-house. What miserable praise hast thou for her
that's foul and foolish?

Iago. There's none so foul, and foolish thereunto,
But does foul pranks which fair and wise ones do.

Des. O heavy ignorance ! thou praisest the worst best.
But what praise couldst thou bestow on a deserving woman
indeed ; one that, in the authority of her merit, did justly
put on the vouch of very malice itself?¹⁴

Iago. She that was ever fair, and never proud ;
Had tongue at will, and yet was never loud ;
Never lack'd gold, and yet went never gay ;
Fled from her wish, and yet said *Now I may* ;
She that, being anger'd, her revenge being nigh,
Bade her wrong stay, and her displeasure fly ;
She that in wisdom never was so frail
'To change the cod's head for the salmon's tail ;¹⁵
She that could think, and ne'er disclose her mind ;
See suitors following, and not look behind ;
She was a wight, if ever such wight were, —

Des. To do what?

Iago. — To suckle fools and chronicle small beer.¹⁶

¹⁴ "The sense," say Warburton, "is this: One that was so conscious of her own merit, and of the authority her character had with every one, that she durst call upon malice itself to vouch for her. This was strong commendation. And the character only of clearest virtue; which could force malice, even against its nature, to do justice." — To *put on* is to *provoke*, to *incite*.

¹⁵ The head was esteemed the best part of a codfish, the tail the worst of a salmon. The two are here put for delicate and coarse fare in general.

¹⁶ That is, to suckle children and keep the accounts of the household.

Des. O most lame and impotent conclusion! — Do not learn of him, Emilia, though he be thy husband. — How say you, Cassio? is he not a most profane and liberal¹⁷ censurer?

Cas. He speaks home, madam: you may relish him more in the soldier than in the scholar.

Iago. [*Aside.*] He takes her by the palm: ay, well said, whisper: with as little a web as this will I ensnare as great a fly as Cassio. Ay, smile upon her, do; I will gyve thee in thine own courtship.¹⁸ You say true; 'tis so, indeed: if such tricks as these strip you out of your lieutenantry, it had been better you had not kiss'd your three fingers so oft, which now again you are most apt to play the sir in.¹⁹ Very good; well kiss'd! an excellent courtesy! 'tis so, indeed. Yet again your fingers to your lips? would they were clyster-pipes for your sake! — [*Trumpet within.*] The Moor! I know his trumpet.

Cas. 'Tis truly so.

Des. Let's meet him, and receive him.

Cas. Lo, where he comes!

Enter OTHELLO and Attendants.

Oth. O my fair warrior!²⁰

Des. My dear Othello!

Oth. It gives me wonder great as my content
To see you here before me. O my soul's joy!

¹⁷ *Liberal* was very often used in the sense of *loose-spoken* or *licentious*.

¹⁸ To *gyve* is to *fetter*, to *shackle*. It may be as well to observe that *courtship* is the same as *courtesy*, that is, complimentary or courtly behaviour.

¹⁹ To *play the sir* is to show good breeding and gallantry.

²⁰ Perhaps Othello intends a playful allusion to the unwillingness Desdemona has expressed to "be left behind, a moth of peace, and he go to the war." Steevens, however, thinks it was a term of endearment derived from the old French Poets; as Ronsard, in his Sonnets, often calls the ladies *guèrrières*.

If after every tempest come such calms,
 May the winds blow till they have waken'd death !
 And let the labouring bark climb hills of seas
 Olympus-high, and duck again as low
 As Hell's from Heaven ! If it were now to die,
 'Twere now to be most happy ; for, I fear,
 My soul hath her content so absolute,
 That not another comfort like to this
 Succeeds in unknown fate.

Des. The Heavens forbid
 But that our loves and comforts should increase,
 Even as our days do grow !

Oth. Amen to that, sweet powers ! —
 I cannot speak enough of this content ;
 It stops me here ; it is too much of joy :
 And this, and this, the greatest discords be [*Kissing her.*
 That e'er our hearts shall make !

Iago. [*Aside.*] O, you are well tuned now !
 But I'll set down the pegs that make this music,
 As honest as I am.²¹

Oth. Come, let us to the castle. —
 News, friends ; our wars are done, the Turks are drown'd.
 How does my old acquaintance of this isle ? —
 Honey, you shall be well desired in Cyprus ;
 I've found great love amongst them. O my sweet,
 I prattle out of fashion,²² and I dote
 In mine own comforts. — I pr'ythee, good Iago,

²¹ Coleridge pronounces Iago "a being next to devil, and only not quite devil." It is worth noting that Milton's Satan relents at the prospect of ruining the happiness before him, and prefaces the deed with a gush of pity for the victims ; whereas the same thought puts Iago in a transport of jubilant ferocity. Is our idea of Satan's wickedness enhanced by his thus indulging such feelings, and then acting in defiance of them, or as if he had them not ? or is Iago more devilish than he ?

²² Out of method without any settled order of discourse.

Go to the bay and disembark my coffers :
 Bring thou the master to the citadel ;
 He is a good one, and his worthiness
 Does challenge much respect. — Come, Desdemona,
 Once more well met at Cyprus.

[*Exeunt* OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, and Attendants.]

Iago. Do thou meet me presently at the harbour. Come hither. It thou be'st valiant, — as, they say, base men being in love have then a nobility in their natures more than is native to them, — list me. The lieutenant to-night watches ~~on the court-of-guard.~~²³ First, I must tell thee this, Desdemona is directly in love with him.

Rod. With him ! why, 'tis not possible.

Iago. Lay thy finger thus,²⁴ and let thy soul be instructed. Mark me with what violence she first loved the Moor, but for bragging, and telling her fantastical lies : and will she love him still for prating ? let not thy discreet heart think it. Her eye must be fed ; and what delight shall she have to look on the Devil ?²⁵ When the blood is made dull with the act of sport, there should be — again²⁶ to inflame it, and to give satiety a fresh appetite — loveliness in favour, sympathy in years, manners, and beauties ; all which the Moor is defective in. Now, for want of these required conveniences,²⁶ her delicate tenderness will find itself abused, begin to heave the gorge, disrelish and abhor the Moor ; very nature will instruct her in it, and compel her to some second choice. Now, sir, this granted, — as it is a most pregnant²⁷ and unforced position, — who stands so eminent in the degree of this fortune as Cassio does ? a knave very voluble ; no further con-

²³ The place where the guard musters.

²⁴ On thy mouth to stop it, while thou art listening to a wiser man.

²⁵ Another characteristic fling at Othello's colour. See page 166, note 17.

²⁶ *Convenience* in the Latin sense of *fitness, harmony, accordance.*

²⁷ *Pregnant* is *plain, manifest, or full of proof in itself.*

scionable than in putting on the mere form of civil and humane seeming, for the better compassing of his salt²⁸ and most hidden-loose affection? why, none; why, none: a slipper and subtle knave; a finder-out of occasions; that has an eye can stamp and counterfeit advantages, though true advantage never present itself; a devilish knave! Besides, the knave is handsome, young, and hath all those requisites in him that folly and green minds look after: a pestilent-complete knave; and the woman hath found him already.

Rod. I cannot believe that in her; she's full of most blessed condition.²⁹

Iago. Blessed fig's-end! the wine she drinks is made of grapes: if she had been bless'd, she would never have loved the Moor. Blessed pudding! Didst thou not see her paddle with the palm of his hand? didst not mark that?

Rod. Yes, that I did; but that was but courtesy.

Iago. Lechery, by this hand; an index³⁰ and obscure prologue to the history of lust and foul thoughts. They met so near with their lips, that their breaths embraced together. Villainous thoughts, Roderigo! when these mutualities so marshal the way, hard at hand comes the master and main exercise, the incorporate conclusion: pish! But, sir, be you ruled by me: I have brought you from Venice. Watch you to-night; for the command, I'll lay't upon you: Cassio knows you not. I'll not be far from you: do you find some occasion to anger Cassio, either by speaking too loud, or

²⁸ This peculiar use of *salt* occurs several times in Shakespeare. So in *Measure for Measure*, v. 1: "Whose *salt* imagination yet hath wrong'd your well-defended honour." — *Hidden-loose* is *secretly licentious*. A similar phrase occurs in Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour*, ii. 1: "His course is so irregular, so *loose-affected* and depriv'd of grace." Here *loose-affected* is *licentiously disposed*. — *Conscionable*, line before, is *conscientious*.

²⁹ *Condition*, as usual, for *temper* or *disposition*. Qualities of mind and heart in general were included under the term.

³⁰ *Indexes* were formerly *prefixed* to books. See vol. xiv. page 248, note 5.

tainting his discipline;³¹ or from what other course you please, which the time shall more favourably minister.

Rod. Well.

Iago. Sir, he is rash, and very sudden in choler, and haply may strike at you: provoke him, that he may; for even out of that will I cause these of Cyprus to mutiny; whose qualification³² shall come into no true taste again but by the displanting of Cassio. So shall you have a shorter journey to your desires, by the means I shall then have to prefer them; and the impediment most profitably removed, without the which there were no expectation of our prosperity.

Rod. I will do this, if I can bring it to any opportunity.

Iago. I warrant thee. Meet me by-and-by at the citadel: I must fetch his necessaries ashore. Farewell.

Rod. Adieu.

[*Exit.*

Iago. That Cassio loves her, I do well believe it;
That she loves him, 'tis apt, and of great credit:³³
The Moor — howbeit that I endure him not —
Is of a constant-loving noble nature;
And I dare think he'll prove to Desdemona
A most dear husband. Now, I do love her too;
Not out of absolute lust, — though peradventure
I stand accountant for as great a sin, —
But partly led to diet my revenge,
For that I do suspect the lusty Moor
Hath leap'd into my seat: the thought whereof
Doth, like a poisonous mineral, gnaw my inwards;
And nothing can or shall content my soul

³¹ Throwing a slur upon his discipline.

³² *Qualification*, in our old writers, signifies *appeasement, pacification, assuagement of anger*. "To appease and *qualifie* one that is angry; tranquillum facere ex irato." — BARET.

³³ *Credit* for *credibility*, aptness to be believed.

Till I am even'd with him, wife for wife ;
 Or failing so, yet that I put the Moor
 At least into a jealousy so strong
 That judgment cannot cure. Which thing to do,
 If this poor brach of Venice, whom I trash³⁴
 For his quick hunting, stand the putting-on,³⁵
 I'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip ;
 Abuse him to the Moor in the rank garb,³⁶
 For I fear Cassio with my night-cap too ;
 Make the Moor thank me, love me, and reward me,
 For making him egregiously an ass,
 And practising upon his peace and quiet
 Even to madness.³⁷ 'Tis here, but yet confused :
 Knavery's plain face is never seen till used. [Exit.

³⁴ *Brach*, according to an old definition in Spelman's *Glossary*, is a scenting dog, "or any fine-nosed hound." To *trash* is to *check*, *restrain*, or *keep back*, as when a hound is too eager and forward in the chase. The word is fitly used here of Roderigo who, in his quest of Desdemona, is too impatient for the end to stay for what Iago deems the necessary operation of time and means. See vol. vii. page 17, note 19, and vol. ii. page 141, note 10.

³⁵ The figure of a hound is still kept up. "The putting-on" is the *inciting* or the *setting-on*, as of dogs; so explained in note 14 of this scene. Iago's thought appears to be that Roderigo may not *hold out* in his quest; that from his very eagerness he may grow weary of the instigations, and give over in disgust, or refuse to *stand through* the process.

³⁶ "In the *rank garb*" is merely in the *right-down*, or *straight-forward style*. In *King Lear*, Cornwall says of Kent in disguise, that he "doth affect a saucy roughness, and constrains the *garb* quite from his nature." Gower says of Fluellen, in *King Henry V.*, "You thought, because he could not speak English in the native *garb*, he could not therefore handle an English cudgel."

³⁷ Here we have, perhaps, the most appalling outcome of Iago's proper character, namely, a pride of intellect, or lust of the brain, which exults above all things in being able to make himself and others pass for just the reverse of what they are; that is, in being an overmatch for truth and Nature themselves. And this soliloquy is, I am apt to think, Shakespeare's supreme instance of psychogogic subtilty and insight; as it is also Iago's most pregnant disclosure of his real springs of action, or what Coleridge

SCENE II. — *A Street.*

Enter a Herald with a Proclamation; People following.

Her. It is Othello's pleasure, our noble and valiant general, that, upon certain tidings now arrived, importing the mere perdition¹ of the Turkish fleet, every man put himself into triumph; some to dance, some to make bonfires, each man to what sport and revels his addiction leads him: for, besides these beneficial news, it is the celebration of his nuptial. So much was his pleasure should be proclaim'd. All offices² are open; and there is full liberty of feasting from this present hour of five till the bell have told eleven. Heaven bless the isle of Cyprus and our noble general Othello! [Exeunt.]

SCENE III. — *A Hall in the Castle.*

Enter OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, CASSIO, and Attendants.

Oth. Good Michael, look you to the guard to-night:
Let's teach ourselves that honourable stop,
Not to outspout discretion.

Cas. Iago hath direction what to do;
But, notwithstanding, with my personal eye

aptly calls "the motive-hunting of a motiveless malignity." For it is not that Iago really believes or suspects that either Cassio or Othello has wronged him in the way he intimates: he is merely seeking to opiate or appease certain qualms of conscience by a sort of extemporized make-believe in that kind. The purpose he has conceived against them is, as Coleridge says, "too fiendish for his own steady view, — for the lonely gaze of a being next to devil, and only not quite devil."

¹ "The mere perdition" is the entire loss or destruction. This use of *mere* is frequent with the Poet.

² All rooms or places in the castle, at which refreshments are prepared or served out. See page 40, note 3.

Will I look to't.

Oth. Iago is most honest.

Michael, good night : to-morrow with your earliest

Let me have speech with you. — [*To* DESDEMONA.] Come,
my dear love,

The purchase made, the fruits are to ensue ;

That profit's yet to come 'tween me and you. —

Good night. [*Exeunt* OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, and Attendants.

Enter IAGO.

Cas. Welcome, Iago ; we must to the watch.

Iago. Not this hour, lieutenant ; 'tis not yet ten o' the
clock. Our general cast us¹ thus early for the love of his
Desdemona ; who let us not therefore blame : he hath not
yet made wanton the night with her ; and she is sport for
Jove.

Cas. She's a most exquisite lady.

Iago. And, I'll warrant her, full of game.

Cas. Indeed, she's a most fresh and delicate creature.

Iago. What an eye she has ! methinks it sounds a parley
to provocation.

Cas. An inviting eye ; and yet methinks right modest.

Iago. And when she speaks, is it not an alarum to love ?

Cas. She is, indeed, perfection.

Iago. Well, happiness to their sheets ! Come, lieutenant,
I have a stoup of wine ; and here without are a brace of
Cyprus gallants that would fain have a measure to the health
of black Othello.

Cas. Not to-night, good Iago : I have very poor and un-
happy brains for drinking. I could well wish courtesy would
invent some other custom of entertainment.

¹ "Cast us" is *dismissed* us ; rid himself of our company. One of Iago's
sly thrusts, or covert slurs.

Iago. O, they are our friends ; but one cup : I'll drink for you.

Cas. I have drunk but one cup to-night, and that was craftily qualified too,² and, behold, what innovation it makes here : I am unfortunate in the infirmity, and dare not task my weakness with any more.

Iago. What, man ! 'tis a night of revels : the gallants desire it.

Cass. Where are they ?

Iago. Here at the door ; I pray you, call them in.

Cass. I'll do't ; but it dislikes me.³ *[Exit.*

Iago. If I can fasten but one cup upon him,
With that which he hath drunk to-night already,
He'll be as full of quarrel and offence
As my young mistress' dog. Now, my sick fool Roderigo,
Whom love hath turn'd almost the wrong side out,
To Desdemona hath to-night caroused
Potations pottle-deep ; and he's to watch :
Three lads of Cyprus — noble swelling spirits,
That hold their honours in a wary distance,⁴
The very elements⁵ of this warlike isle —
Have I to-night fluster'd with flowing cups,
And they watch too. Now, 'mongst this flock of drunkards,
Am I to put our Cassio in some action
That may offend the isle. But here they come :
If consequence do but approve my dream,⁶

² " Craftily qualified " is slyly mixed with water, *diluted*.

³ " It *dislikes* me " is it *displeases* me, or *I dislike it*. Often so.

⁴ Who guard their honour from the least approach to insult ; as in the description of a soldier in *As You Like It*, " Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel."

⁵ As quarrelsomeness as the *discordia semina rerum* ; as quick in opposition as fire and water.

⁶ Every scheme subsisting only in the imagination may be termed a *dream*. — *Consequence for issue or result*.

My boat sails freely, both with wind and stream.

Re-enter CASSIO, followed by MONTANO, Gentlemen, and Servant with wine.

Cas. 'Fore God, they have given me a rouse⁷ already.

Mon. Good faith, a little one ; not past a pint, as I am a soldier.

Iago. Some wine, ho !

[Sings.] *And let me the canakin clink, clink ;
And let me the canakin clink !
A soldier's a man ;
A life's but a span ;
Why, then let a soldier drink !*

Some wine, boys !

Cas. 'Fore God, an excellent song.

Iago. I learn'd it in England, where, indeed, they are most potent in potting : your Dane, your German, and your swag-bellied Hollander, — Drink, ho ! — are nothing to your English.

Cas. Is your Englishman so expert in his drinking ?

Iago. Why, he drinks you, with facility, your Dane dead drunk ; he sweats not to overthrow your Almain ; he gives your Hollander a vomit, ere the next pottle can be fill'd.⁸

⁷ *Rouse* is the same in sense and in origin as our word *carouse*.

⁸ In *The Captain* of Beaumont and Fletcher, one of the persons asks, "Are the Englishmen such stubborn drinkers?" and another answers thus: "Not a leak at sea can suck more liquor: you shall have their children christened in mull'd sack, and at five years old able to knock a *Dane* down." And in Henry Peacham's *Compleat Gentleman*, 1622, we have the following: "Within these fiftie or threescore yeares it was a rare thing with us to see a drunken man. But, since we had to doe in the quarrell of the Netherlands, the custom of drinking and pledging healthes was brought over into England; wherein let the Dutch be their owne judges, if we equall them not; yea, I think, rather excell them." — In the text, as elsewhere, *pottle* is used as a

Cas. To the health of our general !

Mon. I am for it, lieutenant ; and I'll do you justice.⁹

Iago. O sweet England !

[Sings.] *King Stephen was a worthy peer,
His breeches cost him but a crown ;
He held them sixpence all too dear,
With that he call'd the tailor down.
He was a wight of high renown,
And thou art but of low degree :
'Tis pride that pulls the country down ;
Then take thine auld cloak about thee.*¹⁰

Some wine, ho !

Cas. Why, this is a more exquisite song than the other.

Iago. Will you hear't again ?

Cas. No ; for I hold him to be unworthy of his place that does those things. Well, God's above all ; and there be souls must be saved, and there be souls must not be saved.

Iago. It's true, good lieutenant.

Cas. For mine own part, — no offence to the general, nor any man of quality, — I hope to be saved.

Iago. And so do I too, lieutenant.

Cas. Ay, but, by your leave, not before me ; the lieutenant is to be saved before the ancient. Let's have no more of this ; let's to our affairs. — Forgive us our sins ! — Gentlemen, let's look to our business. Do not think, gentle-

general term for a drinking-cup. So a little before, "caroused potations *pottle-deep*"; which means *emptied the cup*, or, in pot-house language, pledged her *to the bottom*.

⁹ In the old pot-house cant or slang, to do a man justice, or to do him right, was to keep up with him in drinking.

¹⁰ These stanzas are copied, with a few slight variations, from an old ballad entitled "Take thy old Cloak about thee," which is reprinted entire in Percy's *Reliques*.

men, I am drunk : this is my ancient ; this is my right hand, and this is my left. I am not drunk now ; I can stand well enough, and speak well enough.

All. Excellent well.

Cas. Why, very well, then ; you must not think, then, that I am drunk. [*Exit.*

Mon. To th' platform, masters ; come, let's set the watch.

Iago. You see this fellow that is gone before :

He is a soldier fit to stand by Cæsar
And give direction ;¹¹ and do but see his vice :
'Tis to his virtue a just equinox,
The one as long as th' other : 'tis pity of him.
I fear the trust Othello puts in him,
On some odd time of his infirmity,
Will shake this island.

Mon. But is he often thus ?

Iago. 'Tis evermore the prologue to his sleep :
He'll watch the horologe a double set,¹²
If drink rock not his cradle.

Mon. It were well
The general were put in mind of it.
Perhaps he sees it not ; or his good nature
Prizes the virtue that appears in Cassio,
And looks not on his evils : is not this true ?

Enter RODERIGO.

Iago. [*Aside to* RODERIGO.] How now, Roderigo !
I pray you, after the lieutenant ; go. [*Exit* RODERIGO.]

¹¹ How differently the liar speaks of Cassio's soldiership to Montano and to Roderigo ! He is now talking where he is liable to be called to account for his words.

¹² If he have no drink, he'll keep awake while the clock strikes two rounds, or four-and-twenty hours. The word *horologe* is familiar to most of our ancient writers : Chaucer often uses it.

Mon. And 'tis great pity that the noble Moor
Should hazard such a place as his own second
With one of an ingraft infirmity :
It were an honest action to say
So to the Moor.

Iago. Not I, for this fair island :
I do love Cassio well ; and would do much
To cure him of this evil, — But, hark ! what noise ?
[*Cry within, Help ! help !*]

Re-enter CASSIO, driving in RODERIGO.

Cas. You rogue ! you rascal !

Mon. What's the matter, lieutenant ?

Cas. A knave teach me my duty !
I'll beat the knave into a twiggen bottle.¹³

Rod. Beat me !

Cas. Dost thou prate, rogue ?

[*Striking RODERIGO.*]

Mon. Nay, good lieutenant ;

[*Staying him.*]

I pray you, sir, hold your hand.

Cas. Let me go, sir,

Or I'll knock you o'er the mazzard.

Mon. Come, come, you're drunk.

Cas. Drunk ! [They fight.]

Iago. [*Aside to RODERIGO.*] Away, I say ; go out, and
cry a mutiny ! — [Exit RODERIGO.]

✓ Nay, good lieutenant, — alas, gentlemen ! —

Help, ho ! — Lieutenant, — sir, — Montano, — sir ; —

Help, masters ! — Here's a goodly watch indeed !

[*Bell rings.*]

Who's that which rings the bell ? — Diablo, ho !

¹³ "A twiggen bottle" is a bottle enclosed in wicker-work of twigs.

The town will rise : — God's will, lieutenant, hold !
You will be shamed for ever.

Re-enter OTHELLO and Attendants.

Oth. What is the matter here ?

Mon. Zounds, I bleed still ! I am hurt to th' death.

[*Faints.*

Oth. Hold, for your lives !

Iago. Hold, ho ! Lieutenant, — sir, — Montano, — gentlemen !

Have you forgot all sense of place and duty ? Hold !
The general speaks to you ; hold, hold, for shame !

Oth. Why, how now, ho ! from whence ariseth this ?
Are we turn'd Turks, and to ourselves do that
Which Heaven hath forbid the Ottomites ?
For Christian shame, put by this barbarous brawl !
He that stirs next to carve for his own rage
Holds his soul light ; he dies upon his motion. —
Silence that dreadful bell ! it frights the isle
From her propriety. — What is the matter, masters ? —
Honest Iago, that look'st dead with grieving, —
Speak, who began this ? on thy love, I charge thee.

Iago. I do not know : friends all but now, even now,
In quarter,¹⁴ and in terms like bride and groom
Devesting them for bed ; and then, but now —
As if some planet had unwitted men —
Swords out, and tilting one at other's breast,
In opposition bloody. I cannot speak
Any beginning to this peevish¹⁵ odds ;
And would in action glorious I had lost

¹⁴ "In quarter" means, apparently, *on their station* ; the place of duty assigned them.

¹⁵ *Peevish* here is *foolish* or *silly* ; a common use of the word in Shakespeare's time.

Those legs that brought me to a part of it !

Oth. How comes it, Michael, you are thus forgot? ¹⁶

Cas. I pray you, pardon me ; I cannot speak.

Oth. Worthy Montano, you were wont be civil ;

The gravity and stillness of your youth

The world hath noted, and your name is great

In mouths of wisest censure : ¹⁷ what's the matter,

That you unlace your reputation thus,

And spend your rich opinion ¹⁸ for the name

Of a night-brawler? give me answer to it.

Mon. Worthy Othello, I am hurt to danger :

Your officer, Iago, can inform you —

While I spare speech, which something now offends me —

Of all that I do know : nor know I aught

By me that's said or done amiss this night ;

Unless self-charity be sometimes a vice,

And to defend ourselves it be a sin

When violence assails us.

Oth.

Now, by Heaven,

My blood begins my safer guides to rule ;

And passion, having my best judgment collid, ¹⁹

Assays to lead the way : if I once stir,

Or do but lift this arm, the best of you

Shall sink in my rebuke. Give me to know

How this foul rout began, who set it on ;

And he that is approved in ²⁰ this offence,

Though he had twinn'd with me, both at a birth,

¹⁶ That you have thus forgot yourself.

¹⁷ *Censure* is *judgment* ; as the word was constantly used.

¹⁸ *Opinion* for *reputation* or *character* occurs in other places. — *Spend* in the sense of *waste*, *spoil*, or *throw away*. — To *unlace* is to *ungird*, to *lay bare*, to *expose*.

¹⁹ *Collid* is *blackened*, as with smut or coal, and figuratively means here *obscured*, *darkened*.

²⁰ *Approved in* means *proved to be in*.

Shall lose me. What ! in a town with war
 Yet wild, the people's hearts brimful of fear,
 To manage private and domestic quarrel,
 In night, and on the court of guard and safety !
 'Tis monstrous. — Iago, who began't ?

Mon. If, partially affined, or leagued in office,²¹
 Thou dost deliver more or less than truth,
 Thou art no soldier.

Iago. Touch me not so near :
 I had rather have this tongue cut from my mouth
 Than it should do offence to Michael Cassio ;
 Yet, I persuade myself, to speak the truth
 Shall nothing wrong him. — Thus it is, general :
 Montano and myself being in speech,
 There comes a fellow crying out for help ;
 And Cassio following with determined sword
 To execute upon him.²² Sir, this gentleman
 Steps in to Cassio, and entreats his pause :
 Myself the crying fellow did pursue,
 Lest by his clamour — as it so fell out —
 The town might fall in fright : he, swift of foot,
 Outran my purpose ; and I return'd the rather
 For that I heard the clink and fall of swords,
 And Cassio high in oath ; which till to-night
 I ne'er might say before. When I came back, —
 For this was brief, — I found them close together,
 At blow and thrust ; even as again they were
 When you yourself did part them.
 More of this matter cannot I report :
 But men are men ; the best sometimes forget.
 Though Cassio did some little wrong to him, —

²¹ If, rendered *partial*, or drawn into partiality, by *official* fellowship, affinity, or sympathy.

²² The construction is, "with sword, determined to execute upon him."

As men in rage strike those that wish them best, —
 Yet, surely, Cassio, I believe, received
 From him that fled some strange indignity,
 Which patience could not pass.

Oth. I know, Iago,
 Thy honesty and love doth mince this matter,
 Making it light to Cassio. — Cassio, I love thee ;
 But never more be officer of mine. —

Re-enter DESDEMONA, attended.

Look, if my gentle love be not raised up ! —
 I'll make thee an example.

Des. What's the matter ?

Oth. All's well now, sweeting ; come away to bed. —
 Sir, for your hurts, myself will be your surgeon. —

[*To MONTANO, who is led off.*

Iago, look with care about the town,
 And silence those whom this vile brawl distracted. —
 Come, Desdemona : 'tis the soldiers' life
 To have their balmy slumbers waked with strife.

[*Exeunt all but IAGO and CASSIO.*

Iago. What, are you hurt, lieutenant ?

Cas. Ay, past all surgery.

Iago. Marry, Heaven forbid !

Cas. Reputation, reputation, reputation ! O, I have lost
 my reputation ! I have lost the immortal part of myself, and
 what remains is bestial. — My reputation, Iago, my reputa-
 tion !

Iago. As I am an honest man, I thought you had received
 some bodily wound ; there is more offence in that than in
 reputation. Reputation is an idle and most false imposition ;
 oft got without merit, and lost without deserving : you have
 lost no reputation at all, unless you repute yourself such
 a loser. What, man ! there are ways to recover the general

again : you are but now cast in his mood,²³ a punishment more in policy than in malice ; even so as one would beat his offenceless dog to affright an imperious lion : sue to him again, and he's yours.

Cas. I will rather sue to be despised than to deceive so good a commander with so slight, so drunken, and so indiscreet an officer. Drunk, and speak parrot? and squabble, swagger, swear? and discourse fustian with one's own shadow?—O thou invisible spirit of wine, if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee devil!

Iago. What was he that you follow'd with your sword? What had he done to you?

Cas. I know not.

Iago. Is't possible?

Cas. I remember a mass of things, but nothing distinctly ; a quarrel, but nothing wherefore. —O God, that men should put an enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains ! that we should, with joy, pleasance, revel, and applause, transform ourselves into beasts !

Iago. Why, but you are now well enough : how came you thus recovered?

Cas. It hath pleased the devil drunkenness to give place to the devil wrath : one unperfectness shows me another, to make me frankly despise myself.

Iago. Come, you are too severe a moraler. As the time, the place, and the condition of this country stands, I could heartily wish this had not befallen ; but, since it is as it is, mend it for your own good.

Cas. I will ask him for my place again ; he shall tell me I am a drunkard ! Had I as many mouths as Hydra, such an answer would stop them all. To be now a sensible man, by-and-by a fool, and presently a beast ! O strange ! Every inordinate cup is unblest'd, and the ingredient is a devil.

²³ Thrown off, or dismissed in a flash or fit of anger.

Iago. Come, come, good wine is a good familiar creature, if it be well used : exclaim no more against it. And, good lieutenant, I think you think I love you.

Cas. I have well approved it, sir. — I drunk !

Iago. You or any man living may be drunk at some time, man. I'll tell you what you shall do. Our general's wife is now the general : I may say so in this respect, for that he hath devoted and given up himself to the contemplation, mark, and denotement of her parts and graces. Confess yourself freely to her ; importune her help to put you in your place again : she is of so free, so kind, so apt, so blessed a disposition, she holds it a vice in her goodness not to do more than she is requested. This broken joint between you and her husband entreat her to splinter ; and, my fortunes against any lay worth naming, this crack of your love shall grow stronger²⁴ than it was before.

Cas. You advise me well.

Iago. I protest, in the sincerity of love and honest kindness.

Cas. I think it freely ;²⁵ and betimes in the morning I will beseech the virtuous Desdemona to undertake for me. I am desperate of my fortunes if they check me here.

Iago. You are in the right. Good night, lieutenant ; I must to the watch.

Cas. Good night, honest Iago. [*Exit.*

Iago. And what's he, then, that says I play the villain ? When this advice is free I give and honest, Probal²⁶ to thinking, and, indeed, the course To win the Moor again ? For 'tis most easy

²⁴ A piece of verbal disorder, but clear enough in the meaning : "your love shall grow stronger for this crack."

²⁵ I believe it *willingly* ; without any protestation on your part.

²⁶ *Probal* is *probable* ; perhaps a word of the Poet's own coining, used for metrical convenience.

Th' inclining²⁷ Desdemona to subdue
 In any honest suit : she's framed as fruitful²⁸
 As the free elements. And then for her
 To win the Moor, — were't to renounce his baptism,
 All seals and symbols of redeemèd sin, —
 His soul is so enfetter'd to her love,
 That she may make, unmake, do what she list,
 Even as her appetite shall play the god
 With his weak function. How am I, then, a villain
 To counsel Cassio to this parallel course
 Directly to his good?²⁹ Divinity of Hell!
 When devils will the blackest sins put on,
 They do suggest³⁰ at first with heavenly shows,
 As I do now : for whiles this honest fool
 Plies Desdemona to repair his fortunes,
 And she for him pleads strongly to the Moor,
 I'll pour this pestilence into his ear, —
 That she repeals³¹ him for her body's lust :
 And, by how much she strives to do him good,
 She shall undo her credit with the Moor.
 So will I turn her virtue into pitch ;
 And out of her own goodness make the net
 That shall enmesh them all. —

Re-enter RODERIGO.

How now, Roderigo !

²⁷ *Inclining* here signifies *compliant*, or *yielding*.

²⁸ Corresponding to *benigna*. Liberal, bountiful as the elements, out of which all things are produced.

²⁹ The order is, "this course directly parallel to his good." *Parallel to is coinciding with*, and *good* is what he *thinks* good ; his *wish*.

³⁰ "When devils will *instigate* to their blackest sins, they *tempt*," &c. This use of *put on* has occurred before. See page 199, note 14. — *Suggest* and its cognates in the sense of *tempt* occurs frequently. See vol. x. page 208, note 10.

³¹ *Repeal* in the sense of *recall* or *restore*. See vol. xiv. page 62, note 11.

Rod. I do follow here in the chase, not like a hound that hunts, but one that fills up the cry.³² My money is almost spent: I have been to-night exceedingly well cudgell'd; and I think the issue will be, I shall have so much experience for my pains; and so, with no money at all, and a little more wit, return again to Venice.

Iago. How poor are they that have not patience! What wound did ever heal but by degrees? Thou know'st we work by wit, and not by witchcraft; And wit depends on dilatory time. Does't not go well? Cassio hath beaten thee, And thou, by that small hurt, hast cashier'd Cassio. Though other things grow fair against the Sun, Yet fruits that blossom first will first be ripe:³³ Content thyself awhile. By th' Mass, 'tis morning; Pleasure and action make the hours seem short. Retire thee; go where thou art billeted.³⁴ Away, I say; thou shalt know more hereafter: Nay, get thee gone. [*Exit RODERIGO.*]. — Two things are to be done: My wife must move for Cassio to her mistress; I'll set her on: Myself the while to draw the Moor apart, And bring him jump³⁵ when he may Cassio find

³² *Cry* for *pack*: so used in the language of the chase. See vol. xiv. page 236, note 42.

³³ This is rather obscure; but the meaning seems to be, "Though, in the sunshine of good luck, the other parts of our scheme are promising well, yet we must expect that the part which first meets with opportunity, or time of blossom, will soonest come to harvest, or catch success." Iago wants to possess Roderigo's mind with the triumph that has crowned their first step, that from thence he may take heart and hope for the rest of the course.

³⁴ *Retire thee* is *withdraw thyself*. "Where thou art *billeted*" was the camp phrase for "where your lodging is assigned." From the tickets or *billets* that designated the quarters, and authorized the holders to claim them.

³⁵ *Jump* for *exactly* or *just*. Repeatedly so. See vol. xiv. page 147, note 14.

Soliciting his wife : ay, that's the way ;
Dull not device by coldness and delay.

[*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Cyprus. Before the Castle.*

Enter CASSIO and some Musicians.

Cas. Masters, play here ; I will content your pains ;
Something that's brief ; and bid *Good morrow, general.*¹

[*Music.*

Enter the Clown.

Clo. Why, masters, have your instruments been in Naples,
that they speak i' the nose thus?²

1 Mus. How, sir, how !

Clo. Are these, I pray you, wind-instruments ?

1 Mus. Ay, marry, are they, sir.

Clo. O, thereby hangs a tail.

1 Mus. Whereby hangs a tale, sir ?

Clo. Marry, sir, by many a wind-instrument that I know.
But, masters, here's money for you ; and the general so likes
your music, that he desires you, of all loves,³ to make no
more noise with it.

1 Mus. Well, sir, we will not.

Clo. If you have any music that may not be heard, to't

¹ It was usual for friends to serenade a new-married couple on the morning after the celebration of the marriage, or to greet them with a *morning song* to bid them good morrow.

² Alluding to a certain disease which is said to have appeared first at Naples, and which was noted for the mischief it played with the nose.

³ An old phrase meaning about the same as *for love's sake*, or *by all means*. See vol. vi. page 43, note 10.

again ; but, as they say, to hear music the general does not greatly care.

1 Mus. We have none such, sir.

Clo. Then put up your pipes in your bag, for I'll away : go ; vanish into air ; away ! [*Exeunt* Musicians.

Cas. Dost thou hear, my honest friend ?

Clo. No, I hear not your honest friend ; I hear you.

Cas. Pr'ythee, keep up thy quillets. There's a poor piece of gold for thee : if the gentlewoman that attends the general's wife be stirring, tell her there's one Cassio entreats her a little favour of speech : wilt thou do this ?

Clo. She is stirring, sir : if she will stir hither, I shall seem to notify unto her.

Cas. Do, good my friend. — [*Exit* Clown.

Enter IAGO.

In happy time, Iago.

Iago. You have not been a-bed, then ?

Cas. Why, no ; the day had broke
Before we parted. I've made bold, Iago,
To send in to your wife : my suit to her
Is, that she will to virtuous Desdemona
Procure me some access.

Iago. I'll send her to you presently ;
And I'll devise a mean to draw the Moor
Out of the way, that your converse and business
May be more free.

Cas. I humbly thank you for't. [*Exit* IAGO.] — I never
knew

A Florentine more kind and honest.⁴

⁴ In consequence of this line a doubt has been entertained concerning the country of Iago. Cassio was undoubtedly a Florentine, as appears by the first scene of the play, where he is expressly called one. That Iago was a Venetian is proved by a speech in the third scene of this Act, and by what

Enter EMILIA.

Emil. Good morrow, good lieutenant : I am sorry
For your displeasure ;⁵ but all will sure be well.
The general and his wife are talking of it ;
And she speaks for you stoutly : the Moor replies,
That he you hurt is of great fame in Cyprus
And great affinity, and that in wholesome wisdom
He might not but refuse you ; but he protests he loves you,
And needs no other suitor but his likings
To take the safest occasion by the front
To bring you in again.

Cas. Yet, I beseech you, --
If you think fit, or that it may be done, --
Give me advantage of some brief discourse
With Desdemona alone.

Emil. Pray you, come in :
I will bestow you where you shall have time
To speak your bosom freely.

Cas. I'm much bound to you. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. — *A Room in the Castle.*

Enter OTHELLO, IAGO, and Gentlemen.

Oth. These letters give, Iago, to the pilot ;
And, by him, do my duties to the Senate :
That done, I will be walking on the works ;

he says in the fifth Act, after having stabbed Roderigo. All that Cassio means to say in the present passage is, "I never experienced more honesty and kindness even in one of my own countrymen."

⁵ "Your displeasure" here means the displeasure you have incurred from Othello. An instance of the *objective* genitive in cases where present usage admits only the subjective genitive ; that is, Othello is here regarded as the subject of the displeasure, Cassio as the object of it. Shakespeare has many similar expressions. See vol. xiv. page 283, note 21.

parapet.
Castle fort.

Repair there to me.

Iago. Well, my good lord, I'll do't.

Oth. This fortification, gentlemen, shall we see't?

Gent. We'll wait upon your lordship. [Exeunt.]

SCENE III. — *The Garden of the Castle.*

Enter DESDEMONA, CASSIO, and EMILIA.

Des. Be thou assured, good Cassio, I will do
All my abilities in thy behalf.

Emil. Good madam, do : I warrant it grieves my husband,
As if the case were his.

Des. O, that's an honest fellow. — Do not doubt, Cassio,
But I will have my lord and you again
As friendly as you were.

Cas. Bounteous madam,
Whatever shall become of Michael Cassio,
He's never any thing but your true servant.

Des. O sir, I thank you. You do love my lord :
You've known him long ; and be you well assured
He shall in strangeness stand no further off
Than in a politic distance.

Cas. Ay, but, lady,
That policy may either last so long,
Or feed upon such nice and waterish diet,
Or breed itself so out of circumstance,
That, I being absent, and my place supplied,
My general will forget my love and service.¹

Des. Do not doubt that ;² before Emilia here

¹ He may either of himself think it politic to keep me out of office so long, or he may be satisfied with such slight reasons, or so many accidents may make him think my readmission at that time improper, that I may be quite forgotten. — JOHNSON.

² Do not *fear* that. *Doubt* was often used in the sense of *fear*.

I give thee warrant of thy place. Assure thee,
 If I do vow a friendship, I'll perform it
 To the last article : my lord shall never rest ;
 I'll watch him tame,³ and talk him out of patience ;
 His bed shall seem a school, his board a shrift ;
 I'll intermingle every^a thing he does
 With Cassio's suit : therefore be merry, Cassio ;
 For thy solicitor shall rather die
 Than give thy cause away.

Emil. Madam, here comes my lord.

Cas. Madam, I'll take my leave.

Des. Why, stay, and hear me speak.

Cas. Madam, not now : I'm very ill at ease,
 Unfit for mine own purposes.

Des. Well, do your discretion. [*Exit* CASSIO.

Enter OTHELLO *and* IAGO.

Iago. Ha ! I like not that.

Oth. What dost thou say?

Iago. Nothing, my lord ; or if — I know not what.

Oth. Was not that Cassio parted from my wife?

Iago. Cassio, my lord ! No, sure, I cannot think it,
 That he would steal away so guilty-like,
 Seeing you coming.

Oth. I do believe 'twas he.

Des. How now, my lord !

I have been talking with a suitor here,
 A man that languishes in your displeasure.

Oth. Who is't you mean?

Des. Why, your lieutenant, Cassio. Good my lord,
 If I have any grace or power to move you,
 His present reconciliation take ;

³ Hawks and other birds are tamed by keeping them from sleep. To this Shakespeare alludes.

For if he be not one that truly loves you,
That errs in ignorance, and not in cunning,⁴
I have no judgment in an honest face.
I pr'ythee, call him back.

Oth. Went he hence now?

Des. Ay, sooth; so humbled,
That he hath left part of his grief with me,
To suffer with him. Good love, call him back.

Oth. Not now, sweet Desdemona; some other time.

Des. But shall't be shortly?

Oth. The sooner, sweet, for you.

Des. Shall't be to-night at supper?

Oth. No, not to-night.

Des. To-morrow dinner, then?

Oth. I shall not dine at home;

I meet the captains at the citadel.

Des. Why, then to-morrow night; or Tuesday morn;
On Tuesday noon, or night; on Wednesday morn:
I pr'ythee, name the time; but let it not
Exceed three days: in faith, he's penitent;
And yet his trespass, in our common reason, —
Save that, they say, the wars must make examples
Out of the best, — is not almost a fault
T' incur a private check. When shall he come?
Tell me, Othello: I wonder in my soul,
What you would ask me, that I should deny,
Or stand so mammering on.⁵ What! Michael Cassio,
That came a-wooing with you; and so many a time,
When I have spoke of you dispraisingly,
Hath ta'en your part; to have so much to-do⁶

⁴ *Cunning* here means *knowledge*, an old sense of the word.

⁵ So *hesitating*, in such doubtful suspense. So in Lyly's *Euphues*, 1580:
"Neither stand in a *mammering* whether it be best to depart or not."

⁶ Shakespeare several times has *to-do* in the exact sense of *ado*.

To bring him in ! Trust me, I could do much, —

Oth. Pr'ythee, no more : let him come when he will ;
I will deny thee nothing.

Des. Why, this is not a boon ;
'Tis as I should entreat you wear your gloves,
Or feed on nourishing dishes, or keep you warm,
Or sue to you to do peculiar profit
To your own person : nay, when I have a suit
Wherein I mean to touch your love indeed,
It shall be full of poise and difficult weight,
And fearful to be granted.

Oth. I will deny thee nothing ;
Whereon, I do beseech thee, grant me this,
To leave me but a little to myself.

Des. Shall I deny you ? no : farewell, my lord.

Oth. Farewell, my Desdemona : I'll come to thee straight.

Des. Emilia, come. — Be as your fancies teach you ;
Whate'er you be, I am obedient. [*Exit, with EMILIA.*]

Oth. Excellent wretch,⁷ perdition catch my soul,
But I do love thee ! and, when I love thee not,
Chaos is come again.⁸

Iago. My noble lord, —

Oth. What dost thou say, Iago ?

Iago. Did Michael Cassio, when you woo'd my lady,
Know of your love ?

Oth. He did, from first to last :⁹ why dost thou ask ?

⁷ *Wretch*, as here used, was the strongest expression of endearment in the language. Shakespeare has it repeatedly so.

⁸ The meaning is, "Ere I cease to love thee, the world itself shall be reduced to its primitive chaos." — *But*, again, in its exceptive sense ; *but that*, or, "if I do not love thee." See vol. xv. page 104, note 12.

⁹ In Act i. se. 2, when Iago, speaking of the Moor to Cassio, says, "He's married," Cassio asks, "To whom ?" Yet here he seems to have known all about it. The explanation is, that Cassio there feigned ignorance, in order to keep his friend's secret till it should be publicly known.

Iago. But for a satisfaction of my thought ;
No further harm.

Oth. Why of thy thought, Iago ?

Iago. I did not think he had been acquainted with her.

Oth. O, yes ; and went between us very oft.

Iago. Indeed !

Oth. Indeed ! ay, indeed : discern'st thou aught in that ?
Is he not honest ?

Iago. Honest, my lord !

Oth. Honest ! ay, honest.

Iago. My lord, for aught I know.

Oth. What dost thou think ?

Iago. Think, my lord !

Oth. *Think, my lord!* — By Heaven, he echoes me,
As if there were some monster in his thought
Too hideous to be shown. — Thou dost mean something.
I heard thee say even now, thou likedst not that,
When Cassio left my wife : what didst not like ?
And, when I told thee he was of my counsel
In my whole course of wooing, thou criedst *Indeed!*
And didst contract and purse thy brow together,
As if thou then hadst, shut up in thy brain,
Some horrible conceit ! If thou dost love me,
Show me thy thought.

Iago. My lord, you know I love you.

Oth. I think thou dost ;

And, for I know thou'rt full of love and honesty,
And weigh'st thy words before thou givest them breath,
Therefore these stops of thine fright me the more :
For such things in a false disloyal knave
Are tricks of custom ; but in a man that's just
They're close delations,¹⁰ working from the heart,

¹⁰ "Close delations" are secret accusings, intimations, or informations. So in Jonson's *Volpone*, ii. 3: "Yet, if I do it not, they may *delate* my slack-

That passion cannot rule.

Iago. For Michael Cassio,

I dare be sworn — I think that he is honest.¹¹

Oth. I think so too.

Iago. Men should be what they seem ;
Or, those that be not, would they might seem none !

Oth. Certain, men should be what they seem.

Iago. Why, then I think Cassio's an honest man.

Oth. Nay, yet there's more in this :

I pr'ythee, speak to me as to thy thinkings,
As thou dost ruminate ; and give thy worst of thoughts
The worst of words.

Iago. Good my lord, pardon me :

Though I am bound to every act of duty,

I am not bound to that all slaves are free to.

Utter my thoughts? Why, say they're vile and false, —

As where's that palace whereinto foul things

Sometimes intrude not? who has a breast so pure,

But some uncleanly apprehensions

Keep leets and law-days, and in session sit

With meditations lawful?¹²

ness to my patron." — It should be noted, that in all this part of the dialogue the doubts started in Othello by the villain's artful insinuations have reference only to Cassio. There is not the least sign that the Moor's thoughts anyway touch his wife; and Iago seems perplexed that his suspicions have lighted elsewhere than he had intended. The circumstance is very material in reference to Othello's predispositions, or as regards the origin and nature of his "jealousy."

¹¹ Iago is supposed to pause at *sworn*, and correct himself, as if he were speaking with the most scrupulous candour.

¹² Who has so virtuous a breast that some impure conceptions and uncharitable surmises will not sometimes enter into it; hold a session there, as in a regular court, and "bench by the side" of authorized and lawful thoughts? A *leet* is also called a *law-day*. "This court, in whose manor soever kept, was accounted the king's court, and commonly held every half year": it was a meeting of the hundred "to certify the king of the good manners and government of the inhabitants."

Oth. Thou dost conspire against thy friend, Iago,
If thou but think'st him wrong'd, and makest his ear
A stranger to thy thoughts.

Iago. I do beseech you, —
Though ¹³ I perchance am vicious in my guess,
As, I confess, it is my nature's plague
To spy into abuses,¹⁴ and oft my jealousy
Shapes faults that are not, — that your wisdom yet,
From one that so imperfectly conceits,¹⁵
Would take no notice ; nor build yourself a trouble
Out of his scattering and unsure observance.
It were not for your quiet nor your good,
Nor for my manhood, honesty, or wisdom,
To let you know my thoughts.

Oth. What dost thou mean?

Iago. Good name in man and woman, dear my lord,
Is the immediate jewel of their souls :
Who steals my purse steals trash ; 'tis something, nothing ;
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands ;
But he that filches from me my good name
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed.

Oth. By Heaven, I'll know thy thoughts !

Iago. You cannot, if my heart were in your hand ;
Nor shall not, whilst 'tis in my custody.

¹³ Here we seem to have an instance — and there are many such — of *though* used in a causal and not in a concessive sense ; that is, for *since* or *inasmuch as*. See vol. xv, page 268, note 44, and the reference there.

¹⁴ Iago here feigns self-distrust, and confesses that he has the natural infirmity or plague of a suspicious and prying temper, that he may make Othello trust him the more strongly. So men often prate about, and even magnify, their own faults, in order to cheat others into a persuasion of their rectitude and candour.

¹⁵ In old language, to *conceit* is to *understand*, to *judge* or *conceive*. The word, both verb and substantive, is always used by Shakespeare in that sense, or one closely allied to that.

Oth. Ha !

Iago. O, beware, my lord, of jealousy !

It is the green-eyed monster which doth make
The meat it feeds on : ¹⁶ that cuckold lives in bliss
Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger ;
But, O, what damnèd minutes tells he o'er
Who dotes, yet doubts, suspects, yet strongly loves !

Oth. O misery !

Iago. Poor and content is rich, and rich enough ;
But riches fineless ¹⁷ is as poor as Winter
To him that ever fears he shall be poor. —
Good Heaven, the souls of all my tribe defend
From jealousy !

Oth. Why, why is this ?

Think'st thou I'd make a life of jealousy,
To follow still the changes of the Moon
With fresh suspicions ? No ; to be once in doubt
Is once to be resolved : exchange me for a goat,
When I shall turn the business of my soul
To such exsufflicate ¹⁸ and blown surmises,

¹⁶ Meaning that jealousy is a *self-generated* passion ; that its causes are subjective, or that it lives on what it imputes, not on what it finds. And so Emilia afterwards describes it : " 'Tis a monster begot upon itself, born on itself." Iago is, in his way, a consummate metaphysician, and answers perfectly to Burke's description : " Nothing can be conceived more hard than the heart of a thorough-bred metaphysician. It comes nearer to the cold malignity of a wicked spirit than to the frailty and passion of a man."

¹⁷ That is, *endless, unbounded*. Warburton observes that this is finely expressed — *Winter* producing no fruits.

¹⁸ This is the only known instance of *exsufflicate*. Phillips interprets *sufflation* " a puffing up, a making to swell with blowing." In Plautus we have, "*Sufflavit nescio quid uxore*"; which Cooper renders, " He hath *whispered* something in his wives eare whatsoever it be." Richardson's explanation is, "*Exsufflicate*, in Shakespeare, is not improbably a misprint for *exsufflate*, that is, *efflate* or *efflated*, puffed out, and, consequently, exaggerated, extravagant ; to which *blown* is added, not so much for the sake of a second epithet, with a new meaning, as of giving emphasis to the first."

Matching thy inference. 'Tis not to make me jealous
 To say my wife is fair, feeds well, loves company,
 Is free of speech, sings, plays, and dances well ;
 Where virtue is, these are more virtuous :
 Nor from mine own weak merits will I draw
 The smallest fear or doubt of her revolt ;
 For she had eyes, and chose me. No, Iago !
 I'll see before I doubt ; when I doubt, prove ;
 And, on the proof, there is no more but this,
 Away at once with love or jealousy !

Iago. I'm glad of it ; for now I shall have reason
 To show the love and duty that I bear you
 With franker spirit : therefore, as I'm bound,
 Receive it from me : I speak not yet of proof.
 Look to your wife ; observe her well with Cassio ;
 Wear your eye thus, not jealous nor secure : ^{19—}
 I would not have your free and noble nature,
 Out of self-bounty,²⁰ be abused ; look to't.
 I know our country disposition well :
 In Venice they do let Heaven see the pranks
 They dare not show their husbands ; their best conscience
 Is not to leave't undone, but keep't unknown.

Oth. Dost thou say so ?

Iago. She did deceive her father, marrying you ;
 And, when she seem'd to shake and fear your looks,
 She loved them most.²¹

Oth. And so she did.

Iago. Why, go to, then ;

¹⁹ *Secure* in the Latin sense ; *careless*, or *over-confident*. Often so.

²⁰ *Self-bounty* here means inherent and spontaneous generosity.

²¹ This is one of Iago's artfullest strokes. The instinctive shrinkings and tremblings of Desdemona's modest virgin love are ascribed to craft, and made to appear a most refined and elaborate course of deception. His deep science of human nature enables him to *divine* how she appeared.

She that, so young, could give out such a seeming,
 To seel her father's eyes up close as oak,²² —
 He thought 'twas witchcraft, — But I'm much to blame ;
 I humbly do beseech you of your pardon
 For too much loving you.

Oth. I'm bound to thee for ever.

Iago. I see this hath a little dash'd your spirits.

Oth. Not a jot, not a jot.

Iago. I'faith, I fear it has.

I hope you will consider what is spoke
 Comes from my love. But I do see you're moved :
 I am to pray you not to strain my speech
 To grosser issues nor to larger reach
 Than to suspicion.

Oth. I will not.

Iago. Should you do so, my lord,
 My speech should fall into such vile success²³
 As my thoughts aim not at. Cassio's my worthy friend ; —
 My lord, I see you're moved.

Oth. No, not much moved :

I do not think but Desdemona's honest.

Iago. Long live she so ! and long live you to think so !

Oth. And yet, how nature erring from itself, —

Iago. Ay, there's the point ; as, — to be bold with you, —
 Not to affect many proposèd matches
 Of her own clime, complexion, and degree,
 Whereto we see in all things nature tends ; —
 Foh ! one may smell, in such, a will most rank,
 Foul disproportion, thoughts unnatural.

²² Oak is a tough, close-grained wood. So that *close as oak* probably means *as close as the grain of oak*. — *Seel* has been explained before. See page 187, note 35.

²³ *Success* here means *consequence* or *event*. So in Sidney's *Arcadia* :
 'Straight my heart misgave me some evil *success* !' Often so.

But pardon me : I do not in position
Distinctly speak of her ; though I may fear
Her will, recoiling to her better judgment,
May fall to match you with her country forms,
And happily²⁴ repent.

Oth. Farewell, farewell :

If more thou dost perceive, let me know more ;
Set on thy wife t' observe : leave me, Iago.

Iago. My lord, I take my leave. [*Going.*

Oth. Why did I marry? This honest creature doubtless
Sees and knows more, much more, than he unfolds.

Iago. [*Returning.*] My lord, I would I might entreat
your Honour

To scan this thing no further ; leave it to time :
Although 'tis fit that Cassio have his place, —
For, sure, he fills it up with great ability, —
Yet, if you please to hold him off awhile,
You shall by that perceive him and his means :²⁵
Note if your lady strain his entertainment²⁶
With any strong or vehement importunity ;
Much will be seen in that. In the mean time
Let me be thought too busy in my fears, —
As worthy cause I have to fear I am, —
And hold her free, I do beseech your Honour.

Oth. Fear not my government.

Iago. I once more take my leave. [*Exit.*

Oth. This fellow's of exceeding honesty,
And knows all qualities, with a learnèd spirit,

²⁴ Where a trisyllable was wanted, the poets often used *happily* for *haply*, that is, *perhaps*. — The meaning of what precedes is, "Her will, *falling back upon* her better judgment, may go to *comparing* you with the forms of her countrymen."

²⁵ You shall discover whether he thinks his best *means*, his most powerful *interest*, is by the solicitation of your lady.

²⁶ Press his readmission to pay and office.

Of human dealings.²⁷ If I do prove her haggard,²⁸
 Though that her jesses were my dear heart-strings,
 I'd whistle her off, and let her down the wind,
 To prey at fortune.²⁹ Haply, for I am black,
 And have not those soft parts of conversation
 That chamberers³⁰ have ; or, for I am declined
 Into the vale of years, — yet that's not much ; —
 She's gone ; I am abused ; and my relief
 Must be to loathe her. O curse of marriage,
 That we can call these delicate creatures ours,
 And not their appetites ! I had rather be a toad,
 And live upon the vapour of a dungeon,
 Than keep a corner in the thing I love
 For other's uses. Yet 'tis the plague of great ones ;
 Prerogativèd are they less than the base ;
 'Tis destiny unshunnable, like death :
 Even then this forkèd plague is fated to us

²⁷ So the passage is commonly printed, the explanation being, " He knows with a learned spirit all qualities of human dealings." But I suspect the true sense to be, " He knows all qualities with a spirit learned *in respect of* human dealings." So *of* is often used. See vol. xiv. page 217, note 2.

²⁸ *Haggard* is *wild, unreclaimed*; commonly used of a hawk. So in Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici*: " Thus I teach my *haggard* and *unreclaimed* reason to stoop to the lure of faith." A passage in *The White Devil, or Vittoria Corombona*, 1612, shows that the term was sometimes applied to a wanton: " Is this your perch, you *haggard*? fly to the *stews*."

²⁹ *Jesses* are short straps of leather tied about the foot of a hawk, by which she is held on the fist. " The falconers always let fly the hawk against the wind; if she flies with the wind behind her, she seldom returns. If therefore a hawk was for any reason to be dismissed, she was *let down the wind*, and from that time shifted for herself and preyed at fortune." So in Dryden's *Annus Mirabilis*:

Have you not seen, when, *whistled* from the fist,
 Some falcon stoops at what her eye design'd,
 And, with her eagerness the quarry miss'd,
 Straight flies at check, and clips it *down the wind*.

³⁰ That is, men of intrigue. *Chambering* and wantonness are mentioned together by Saint Paul, Romans, xiii. 13.

When we do quicken.³¹ Desdemona comes :
 If she be false, O, then Heaven mocks itself !
 I'll not believe't.

Re-enter DESDEMONA and EMILIA.

Des. How now, my dear Othello !
 Your dinner, and the generous islanders
 By you invited, do attend your presence.³²

Oth. I am to blame.

Des. Why do you speak so faintly?
 Are you not well?

Oth. I have a pain upon my forehead here.

Des. Faith, that's with watching ; 'twill away again :
 Let me but bind it hard, within this hour
 It will be well.

Oth. Your napkin³³ is too little ;

[*He puts the handkerchief from him ; and she drops it.*
 Let it alone. Come, I'll go in with you.

Des. I'm very sorry that you are not well.

[*Exeunt* OTHELLO and DESDEMONA.

Emil. I am glad I have found this napkin.
 This was her first remembrance from the Moor :
 My wayward husband hath a hundred³⁴ times

³¹ When we begin to live. The proper meaning of *quick*.

³² *Wait for* or *await your coming*. See vol. v. page 208, note 16.

³³ *Napkin* and *handkerchief* were used interchangeably.

³⁴ *Hundred* for an indefinite number ; still it shows that the unity of time is much less observed in this play than some have supposed. Thus far, indeed, only one night, since that of the marriage, has been *expressly* accounted for ; and this was the night when the nuptials were celebrated, and Cassio cashiered ; though several must have passed during the sea-voyage. From Iago's soliloquy at the close of Act i., it is clear he had his plot even then so far matured, that he might often woo his wife to steal the handkerchief while at sea. Moreover, we may well enough suppose a considerable interval of time between the first and third scenes of the present Act ; since Cassio may not have had the interview with Desdemona immediately after

Woo'd me to steal't ; but she so loves the token, —
 For he conjured her she should ever keep it, —
 That she reserves it evermore about her
 To kiss and talk to. I'll have the work ta'en out,³⁵
 And give't Iago :
 What he will do with it Heaven knows, not I ;
 I nothing but to please his fantasy.

Re-enter IAGO.

Iago. How now ! what do you here alone ?

Emil. Do not you chide ; I have a thing for you.

Iago. A thing for me ! It is a common thing —

Emil. Ha !

Iago. — to have a foolish wife.

Emil. O, is that all ? What will you give me now
 For that same handkerchief ?

Iago. What handkerchief ?

Emil. What handkerchief !

Why, that the Moor first gave to Desdemona ;
 That which so often you did bid me steal.

Iago. Hast stol'n it from her ?

he engaged Emilia to solicit it for him. In truth, however, the reckoning of time all through follows the laws of poetry, and laughs at the chronologists. Wilson ("Kit North") observes, not more shrewdly than justly, that Shakespeare has two clocks; one, of the understanding, another, of the imagination. The former goes by the measures of sense; the latter, by the measure of ideas. If we insist on having the two clocks harmonize and tally together, we shall run into manifold contradictions and absurdities. But the imagination has its own laws; and in works of imagination, especially in the Drama, those laws are paramount. Nevertheless, if rightly followed, as Shakespeare commonly follows them, they do not clash with the laws of sensation, but simply range beside or above them; and will carry us smoothly along, unless we choose to stick in the others; as people who know too much often do.

³⁵ *Ta'en out is copied.* Her first thought is to have a copy made for her husband, and restore the original to Desdemona; but the sudden coming of Iago, in a surly humour, makes her alter her resolution.

Emil. No, faith ; she let it drop by negligence,
And, to th' advantage,³⁶ I, being here, took't up.
Look, here it is.

Iago. A good wench ; give it me.

Emil. What will you do with't, that you've been so
earnest
To have me filch it?

Iago. Why, what's that to you?

[*Snatching it.*]

Emil. If't be not for some purpose of imp'ort,
Give't me again : poor lady, she'll run mad
When she shall lack it.

Iago. Be not acknown on't ;³⁷ I have use for it.
Go, leave me. —

[*Exit EMILIA.*]

I will in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin,
And let him find it. Trifles light as air
Are to the jealous confirmations strong
As proofs of Holy Writ : this may do something.
The Moor already changes with my poison :
Dangerous conceits are, in their natures, poisons,
Which at the first are scarce found to distaste,
But, with a little act upon the blood,
Burn like the mines of sulphur. I did say so :
Look, where he comes !³⁸ — Not poppy, nor mandragora,³⁹

³⁶ That is, "I being here just at the nick of time, or pat upon the opportunity." *Advantage* is so used repeatedly in this play. See page 188, note 41.

³⁷ "Do not acknowledge you have seen it." The word occurs in Harrington's *Life of Ariosto*, 1607: "Some say he was married to her priville, but durst not be *acknown* of it."

³⁸ In "I did say so," Iago refers to what he has just said, that dangerous conceptions or imaginations have in them an inflaming virus, which, by working a little in the blood, sets it all on fire, and fills the mind with sleepless perturbation. Then, the moment his eye lights on Othello, he sees that his devilish insight of things was punctually prophetic of Othello's case ; that his words are exactly verified in the inflamed looks of his victim.

³⁹ The mandrake, which was often called *mandragora*, is highly soporific,

Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
 Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
 Which thou owedst yesterday.

Re-enter OTHELLO.

Oth.

Ha! ha! false to me?

Iago. Why, how now, general! no more of that.

Oth. Avaunt! be gone! thou hast set me on the rack:

I swear 'tis better to be much abused
 Than but to know't a little.

Iago.

How now, my lord!

Oth. What sense had I of her stol'n hours of lust?

I saw't not, thought it not, it harm'd not me:
 I slept the next night well, was free and merry;
 I found not Cassio's kisses on her lips:
 He that is robb'd, not wanting what is stol'n,
 Let him not know't, and he's not robb'd at all.

Iago. I am sorry to hear this.

Oth. I had been happy, if the general camp,
 Pioneers and all, had tasted her sweet body,
 So I had nothing known. O, now, for ever
 Farewell the tranquil mind! farewell content!
 Farewell the plum'd troop, and the big wars,
 That make ambition virtue! O, farewell!⁴⁰
 Farewell the neighing steed, and the shrill trumpet,
 The spirit-stirring drum, th' ear-piercing fife,⁴¹

and was formerly used when a powerful opiate was wanted. See vol. xvi. page 29, note 1.

⁴⁰ There is some resemblance between this speech and the following lines in Peele's "Farewell to the Famous and Fortunate Generals of our English Forces," 1589:

And let god Mars his trumpet make you mirth,
 The *roaring cannon*, and the brazen trumpe,
 The *angry-sounding drum*, the *whistling fife*,
 The shrieks of men, the princelie *courser's* ucy.

⁴¹ In mentioning the *fife* joined to the *drum*, Shakespeare, as usual, paints

The royal banner, and all quality,
 Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war !
 And, O you mortal engines, whose rude throats
 Th' immortal Jove's dread clamours counterfeit,
 Farewell ! Othello's occupation's gone !

Iago. Is't possible, my lord ?

Oth. Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore,
 Be sure of it ; give me the ocular proof ;
 Or, by the worth of man's eternal ⁴² soul,
 Thou hadst been better have been born a dog
 Than answer my waked wrath !

Iago. Is't come to this ?

Oth. Make me to see't ; or, at the least, so prove it,
 That the probation bear no hinge nor loop
 To hang a doubt on ; or woe upon thy life !

Iago. My noble lord, —

Oth. If thou dost slander her, and torture me,
 Never pray more ; abandon all remorse ; ⁴³
 On horror's head horrors accumulate ;
 Do deeds to make Heaven weep, all Earth amazed ;
 For nothing canst thou to damnation add
 Greater than that.

from life ; those instruments being used together in his age by the English soldiery. The *fife*, however, was discontinued for many years, but at length revived by the British guards under the Duke of Cumberland, at Maestricht in 1747, and thence adopted into other English regiments.

⁴² *Eternal* is repeatedly used by the Poet for *immortal*. — The next line, "Thou hadst been better have been born," is something of a puzzle in grammar, though clear enough in sense.

⁴³ *Remorse*, in Shakespeare, usually means *pity* or *compassion* : here, as also again near the end of this scene, it stands, apparently, for *conscience* ; the sense of the passage being, "Cast off, spurn away the restraints and regards of conscience altogether, and plunge headlong into all sorts of lawless, remorseless, and inhuman atrocities." The sense of *pity*, however, is included and interfused with the other. What an appalling disclosure the speech is, of Othello's excruciating agony of mind !

Iago. O grace ! O Heaven forgive me !
 Are you a man ? have you a soul or sense ?
 God b' wi' you ! take mine office. — O wretched fool,
 That livest to make thine honesty a vice ! —
 O monstrous world ! Take note, take note, O world,
 To be direct and honest is not safe. —
 I thank you for this profit ; and from hence
 I'll love no friend, since love breeds such offence.

Oth. Nay, stay : thou shouldst be honest.

Iago. I should be wise ; for honesty's a fool,
 And loses that it works for.

Oth. By the world,
 I think my wife be honest, and think she is not ;
 I think that thou art just, and think thou art not :
 I'll have some proof : her name, that was as fresh
 As Dian's visage, is now begrimed and black
 As mine own face. If there be cords or knives,
 Poison, or fire, or suffocating streams,
 I'll not endure it. Would I were satisfied !

Iago. I see, sir, you are eaten up with passion :
 I do repent me that I put it to you.
 You would be satisfied ?

Oth. Would ! nay, I will.

Iago. And may ; but how ? how satisfied, my lord ?
 Would you, the supervisor, grossly gape on, —
 Behold her tupp'd ?

Oth. Death and damnation ! O !

Iago. It were a tedious difficulty, I think,
 To bring them to that prospect : damn them, then,
 If ever mortal eyes do see them bolster
 More than their own !⁴⁴ What then ? how then ?

⁴⁴ The meaning probably is, "If ever any other human eyes than their own do see them *pillow their heads* together."

What shall I say? Where's satisfaction?
 It is impossible you should see this,
 Were they as prime ⁴⁵ as goats, as-hot as monkeys,
 As salt as wolves in pride,⁴⁶ and fools as gross
 As ignorance made drunk. But yet, I say,
 If imputation and strong circumstances ⁴⁷ —
 Which lead directly to the door of truth —
 Will give you satisfaction, you may have't.

Oth. Give me a living reason ⁴⁸ she's disloyal.

Iago. I do not like the office :
 But, sith I'm enter'd in this cause so far, —
 Prick'd to't by foolish honesty and love, —
 I will go on. I lay with Cassio lately ;
 And, being troubled with a raging tooth,
 I could not sleep. There are a kind of men
 So loose of soul, that in their sleeps will mutter
 Of their affairs : one of this kind is Cassio.
 In sleep I heard him say, *Sweet Desdemona,*
Let us be wary, let us hide our loves ;
 And then, sir, would he gripe and wring my hand,
 Cry *O sweet creature !* and then kiss me hard,
 As if he pluck'd up kisses by the roots
 That grew upon my lips : then laid his leg
 Over my thigh, and sigh'd, and kiss'd ; and then

⁴⁵ *Prime* was sometimes used in the sense of *eager* or *forward*, and is so explained by old Cotgrave. The substantive often meant Spring, and hence, by the usual course of metaphor, came to stand for the impetuosity of youth.

⁴⁶ "Wolves in *pride*" is, I take it, wolves in *fine condition*, in the pride of full vigour and lustihood. No uncommon use of the word.

⁴⁷ "Imputation and strong circumstances" is equivalent to "opinion or inference based upon strong circumstantial evidence." This use of *and* in coupling a principal and an auxiliary notion is quite frequent. See vol. xv. page 24, note 7.

⁴⁸ "A *living* reason" is a reason drawn from life; that is, founded on fact and experience, not on conjecture or surmise.

Cried *Cursèd fate that gave thee to the Moor!*

Oth. O monstrous! monstrous!

Iago. Nay, this was but his dream.

Oth. But this denoted a foregone conclusion: ⁴⁹

'Tis a shrewd doubt,⁵⁰ though it be but a dream.

Iago. And this may help to thicken other proofs
That do demonstrate thinly.

Oth. I'll tear her all to pieces.

Iago. Nay, but be wise: yet we see nothing done; ⁵¹
She may be honest yet. Tell me but this:

Have you not sometimes seen a handkerchief
Spotted with strawberries in your wife's hand?

Oth. I gave her such a one; 'twas my first gift.

Iago. I know not that: but such a handkerchief —
I'm sure it was your wife's — did I to-day
See Cassio wipe his beard with.

Oth. If it be that, —

Iago. If it be that, or any that was hers,
It speaks against her with the other proofs.

Oth. O, that the slave had forty thousand lives!
One is too poor, too weak for my revenge.
Now do I see 'tis true. Look here, Iago;
All my fond love thus do I blow to Heaven:
'Tis gone. —

Arise, black vengeance, from the hollow Hell! ⁵²

⁴⁹ *Conclusion* is the old word for *experiment*. So that "a foregone conclusion" is an antecedent *experience*. See vol. xvi. page 161, note 41.

⁵⁰ A *shrewd doubt* is a *well-aimed suspicion*. Here, by a common figure of speech, the effect is put for the cause. This use of *doubt* occurs quite often.

⁵¹ An oblique sarcasm, referring to Othello's demand for "ocular proof." Iago is exulting in his intellectual mastery as shown in the success of his lies. Truth prevails by her own might; lies, by the skill of the liar: hence gaining his ends by falsehood is to Iago just the sweetest thing in the world.

⁵² Readers of Milton will be apt to remember, "He call'd so loud, that

Yield up, O love, thy crown and hearted throne
To tyrannous hate ! Swell, bosom, with thy fraught,
For 'tis of aspics' tongues !⁵³

Iago. Yet be content.

Oth. O, blood, blood, blood !

Iago. Patience, I say ; your mind perhaps may change.

Oth. Never, Iago. Like to the Pontic sea,

Whose icy current and compulsive course

Ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on

To the Propontic and the Hellespont ;⁵⁴

Even so my bloody thoughts, with violent pace,

Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love,

Till that a capable⁵⁵ and wide revenge

Swallow them up. — Now, by yond marble heaven,

In the due reverence of a sacred vow

[*Kneels.*

I here engage my words.

Iago. Do not rise yet. —

[*Kneels.*

Witness, you ever-burning lights above,

You elements that clip us round about, —

Witness that here Iago doth give up

The execution⁵⁶ of his wit, hands, heart,

To wrong'd Othello's service ! Let him command,

And to obey shall be in me remorse,⁵⁷

all the *hollow* deep of *Hell* resounded " ; and, " The universal host sent up a shout that tore *Hell's* *concave*."

⁵³ *Fraught* is but an old form of *freight*. — Shakespeare has several allusions to the poisonous mouth of that ancient beast, the asp of Nile ; and the catastrophe of *Antony and Cleopatra* is made to turn on its deadly bite.

⁵⁴ Pliny's *Natural History*, Holland's translation, 1601, may have furnished this illustration : " And the sea Pontus evermore floweth and runneth out into Propontis, but the sea never retireth backe again within Pontus."

⁵⁵ *Capable* is here used for *capacious*, *comprehensive*. So Nash, in his *Pierce Pennilesse*, 1592 : " Then belike, quoth I, you make this word *Dæmon* a *capable* name, of gods, of men, of devils."

⁵⁶ *Execution* for *exercise*, *employment*, or *executive power*.

⁵⁷ *Remorse* for *conscience*, simply. Iago has before said, " I hold it very

What bloody work soe'er.

[*They rise.*]

Oth.

I greet thy love,

Not with vain thanks, but with acceptance bounteous,

And will upon the instant put thee to't :

Within these three days let me hear thee say

That Cassio's not alive.

Iago. My friend is dead ; 'tis done at your request :

But let her live.

Oth.

Damn her, lewd minx ! O, damn her !

Come, go with me apart ; I will withdraw,

To furnish me with some swift means of death

For the fair devil. Now art thou my lieutenant.

Iago. I am your own for ever.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV. — *Before the Castle.*

Enter DESDEMONA, EMILIA, *and* Clown.

Des. Do you know, sirrah, where Lieutenant Cassio lies ?

Clo. I dare not say he lies anywhere.

Des. Why, man ?

Clo. He's a soldier ; and for one to say a soldier lies, is stabbing.

Des. Go to : where lodges he ?

Clo. To tell you where he lodges, is to tell you where I lie.

Des. Can any thing be made of this ?

Clo. I know not where he lodges ; and for me to devise a lodging, and say he lies here or he lies there, were to lie in mine own throat.

stuff o' the conscience to do not contrived murder." So the meaning here is, "Let him command whatever bloody work he may, to perform it shall be with me a matter of conscience." This explanation is Mr. Joseph Crosby's. See vol. xiv. page 35, note 7.

Des. Can you inquire him out, and be edified by report?

Clo. I will catechize the world for him; that is, make questions, and by them answer.

Des. Seek him, bid him come hither: tell him I have moved my lord on his behalf, and hope all will be well.

Clo. To do this is within the compass of man's wit; and therefore I will attempt the doing it. [*Exit.*]

Des. Where should I lose that handkerchief, Emilia?

Emil. I know not,¹ madam.

Des. Believe me, I had rather have lost my purse
Full of crusadoes:² and, but my noble Moor
Is true of mind, and made of no such baseness
As jealous creatures are, it were enough
To put him to ill thinking.

Emil. Is he not jealous?

Des. Who, he? I think the Sun where he was born
Drew all such humours from him.

Emil. Look, here he comes.

Des. I will not leave him now till Cassio
Be call'd to him.—

Enter OTHELLO.

How is't with you, my lord?

¹ Objection has been made to the conduct of Emilia in this scene, as inconsistent with the spirit she afterwards shows. I can discover no such inconsistency. Want of principle and strength of attachment are often thus seen united. Emilia loves her mistress deeply; but she has no *moral* repugnance to theft and falsehood, apprehends no *fatal* consequences from the Moor's passion, and has no soul to conceive the agony her mistress must suffer by the charge of infidelity: and it is but natural, that when the result comes she should be the more spirited for the very remembrance of her own guilty part in the process.

² It appears from Rider's *Dictionary* that there were three sorts of crusadoes; one with a long cross, one with a short cross, and the great crusado of Portugal. They were of gold, and differed in value from six shillings and eightpence to nine shillings.

Oth. Well, my good lady. — [*Aside.*] O, hardness to dissemble ! —

How do you, Desdemona?

Des. Well, my good lord.

Oth. Give me your hand. This hand is moist, my lady.

Des. It yet hath felt no age nor known no sorrow.

Oth. This argues fruitfulness and liberal heart :

Hot, hot, and moist ! this hand of yours requires

A séquester from liberty, fasting and prayer,

Much castigation, exercise devout ;

For here's a young and sweating devil here,

That commonly rebels. 'Tis a good hand,

A frank one.

Des. You may, indeed, say so ;

For 'twas that hand that gave away my heart.

Oth. A liberal hand : the hearts of old gave hands ;

But our new heraldry is hands, not hearts.³

Des. I cannot speak of this. Come now, your promise.

Oth. What promise, chuck?

Des. I've sent to bid Cassio come speak with you.

Oth. I have a salt and sorry rheum offends me ;

Lend me thy handkerchief.

Des. Here, my lord.

Oth. That which I gave you.

Des. I have it not about me.

Oth. Not?

Des. No, indeed, my lord.

³ This "new heraldry" seems to be an allusion to the *bloody hand* borne on the arms of the new order of baronets, created by James I. in 1611. Malone quotes, in illustration of the text, the following from the *Essays* of Sir William Cornwallis, 1601: "We of these later times, full of a nice curiosity, mislike all the performances of our *forefathers*; we say they were honest plaine men, but they want the capering wits of this ripe age. *They had wout to give their hands and hearts together, but we think it a finer grace to looke aqvint, our hand looking one way and our heart another.*"

Oth. That is a fault. That handkerchief
 Did an Egyptian to my mother give ;
 She was a charmer,⁴ and could almost read
 The thoughts of people : she told her, while she kept it,
 'Twould make her amiable, and subdue my father
 Entirely to her love ; but, if she lost it,
 Or made a gift of it, my father's eye
 Should hold her loathèd, and his spirits should hunt
 After new fancies : she, dying, gave it me ;
 And bid me, when my fate would have me wive,
 To give it her.⁵ I did so : and take heed on't ;
 Make it a darling like your precious eye ;
 To lose't or give't away were such perdition
 As nothing else could match.

Des. Is't possible ?

Oth. 'Tis true : there's magic in the web of it.
 A sibyl, that had number'd in the world
 The Sun to course two hundred compasses,
 In her prophetic fury sew'd the work ;
 The worms were hallow'd that did breed the silk ;
 And it was dyed in mummy⁶ which the skilful
 Conserved of maidens' hearts.

Des. Indeed ! is't true ?

⁴ A *charmer* is used for an *enchanter* in the Psalms. So in Perkin's *Discourse on Witchcraft*, 1610: "By witches we understand not only those which kill and torment, but all *charm*ers, jugglers, all wizards, commonly called wise men and wise women."

⁵ *Her* refers to the noun implied in *wive*. In the last scene of the play Othello speaks of the handkerchief as "an antique token my father gave my mother." This has been thought an oversight; Steevens regards it as a fresh proof of the Poet's art. "The first account," says he, "was purposely ostentatious, in order to alarm his wife the more. When he again mentions it, the truth was sufficient."

⁶ The balsamic liquor running from *mummies* was formerly celebrated for its anti-epileptic virtues. It was much coveted by painters, as a transparent brown colour that threw a warmth into the shadows of a picture,

Oth. Most veritable ; therefore look to't well.

Des. Then would to God that I had never seen't !

Oth. Ha ! wherefore ?

Des. Why do you speak so startingly and rash ?

Oth. Is't lost ? is't gone ? speak, is it out o' the way ?

Des. Heaven bless us !

Oth. Say you ?

Des. It is not lost ; but what an if it were ?

Oth. How !

Des. I say, it is not lost.

Oth. Fetch't, let me see't.

Des. Why, so I can, sir, but I will not now.

This is a trick to put me from my suit :

Pray you, let Cassio be received again.

Oth. Fetch me the handkerchief : my mind misgives.

Des. Come, come ;

You'll never meet a more sufficient man.

Oth. The handkerchief !

Des. I pray, talk me of Cassio.

Oth. The handkerchief !

Des. A man that all his time

Hath founded his good fortunes on your love,

Shared dangers with you, —

Oth. The handkerchief !

Des. In sooth, you are to blame.

Oth. Away !

[*Exit.*

Emil. Is not this man jealous ?

Des. I ne'er saw this before.

Sure, there's some wonder in this handkerchief :

I'm most unhappy in the loss of it.

Emil. 'Tis not a year or two shows us a man :

They're all but stomachs, and we all but food ;

They eat us hungerly, and, when they're full,

They belch us. Look you, Cassio and my husband !

Enter CASSIO and IAGO.

Iago. There is no other way ; 'tis she must do't :
And, lo, the happiness !⁷ go, and impórtune her.

Des. How now, good Cassio ! what's the news with you ?

Cas. Madam, my former suit : I do beseech you
That by your virtuous means I may again
Exist, and be a member of his love
Whom I with all the office of my heart
Entirely honour : I would not be delay'd.
If my offence be of such mortal kind
That nor my service past, nor present sorrow,
Nor purposed merit in futurity,
Can ransom me into his love again,
But to know so must be my benefit ;
So shall I clothe me in a forced content,
And shut myself up in some other course,
To fortune's alms.⁸

Des. Alas, thrice-gentle Cassio !
My advocacy is not now in tune ;
My lord is not my lord ; nor should I know him,
Were he in favour as in humour alter'd.
So help me every spirit sanctified,
As I have spoken for you all my best,
And stood within the blank⁹ of his displeasure
For my free speech ! You must awhile be patient :
What I can do I will ; and more I will
Than for myself I dare : let that suffice you.

Iago. Is my lord angry ?

⁷ *Happiness*, here, is *good hap* or *lucky chance* ; referring to the timely and opportune meeting with Desdemona.

⁸ Probably meaning, "content myself with, settle my mind upon, or bound my thoughts within, some other way and means of living, such as charitable fortune opens or offers to the needy."

⁹ The *blank* is the *white* spot of a mark, at which the shots are aimed. So that to stand *within the blank* is to stand directly before the aim.

Emil. He went hence but now,
And certainly in strange unquietness.

Iago. Can he be angry? I have seen the cannon,
When it hath blown his ranks into the air,
And, like the Devil, from his very arm
Puff'd his own brother; and can he be angry?
Something of moment, then: I will go meet him:
There's matter in't indeed, if he be angry.

Des. I pr'ythee, do so. —

[*Exit* IAGO.]

Something, sure, of State —
Either from Venice, or some unhatch'd practice¹⁰
Made démonstrable here in Cyprus to him —
Hath puddled his clear spirit;¹¹ and in such cases
Men's natures wrangle with inferior things,
Though great ones are their object. 'Tis even so;
For let our finger ache, and it indues
Our other healthful members even to that sense
Of pain: nay, we must think men are not gods,
Nor of them look for such observancy¹²
As fits the bridal. Beshrew me much, Emilia,
I was — unhandsome warrior as I am —
Arraigning his unkindness with my soul;
But now I find I had suborn'd the witness,
And he's indicted falsely.

Emil. Pray Heaven it be State-matters, as you think,
And no conception nor no jealous toy¹³
Concerning you.

¹⁰ That is, some *hidden plot, conspiracy, or machination*. Such is often the meaning of *practice*. See vol. xv. page 151, note 25.

¹¹ *Puddled* with the exact meaning of our old Yankee word *riled*.

¹² *Observancy*, here, is watchful, tender, and devout attention or compliance. So in *As You Like It*, v. 2, where Silvius describes "what 'tis to love": "It is to be all adoration, duty, and *observance*, all humbleness," &c.

¹³ *Toy* for *whim, fancy, or crotchet*, such as are apt to haunt and fascinate suspicious heads. See vol. ix. page 144, note 13.

Des. Alas the day, I never gave him cause !

Emil. But jealous souls will not be answer'd so ;
They are not ever jealous for the cause,
But jealous for they're jealous : 'tis a monster
Begot upon itself, born on¹⁴ itself.

Des. Heaven keep that monster from Othello's mind !

Emil. Lady, amen !

Des. I will go seek him. — Cassio, walk hereabout :
If I do find him fit, I'll move your suit,
And seek t' effect it to my uttermost.

Cas. I humbly thank your ladyship.

[*Exeunt* DESDEMONA and EMILIA.]

Enter BIANCA.

Bian. Save you, friend Cassio !

Cas. What make you from home?¹⁵
How is it with you, my most fair Bianca?
I'faith, sweet love, I was coming to your house.

Bian. And I was going to your lodging, Cassio.
What, keep a week away?¹⁶ seven days and nights?
Eight score eight hours? and lovers' absent hours,
More tedious than the dial eight score times?
O weary reckoning !

Cas. Pardon me, Bianca :
I have this while with leaden thoughts been press'd ;
But I shall, in a more continue time,¹⁷
Strike off this score of absence. Sweet Bianca,

¹⁴ *On* where we should use *of*. Frequent. See vol. xiii. page 124, note 5.

¹⁵ "What *are you doing away* from home?" See page 173, note 12.

¹⁶ It would seem, by this, that seven days at least have elapsed since Cassio was cashiered; perhaps much more, as the "leaden thoughts" may have been kept off for some time by the hopes built upon Desdemona's promise of intercession, and brought on again by the unexpected delay.

¹⁷ "*Continue* time" is time *uninterrupted*.

Take me this work out.¹⁸

[*Giving her* DESDEMONA'S *handkerchief.*

Bian.

O Cassio, whence came this?

This is some token from a newer friend :

To the felt absence now I feel a cause.

Is't come to this? Well, well.

Cas.

Go to, woman !

Throw your vile guesses in the Devil's teeth,

From whence you have them. You are jealous now

That this is from some mistress, some remembrance :

No, in good troth, Bianca.

Bian.

Why, whose is it?

Cas. I know not, sweet : I found it in my chamber.

I like the work well : ere it be demanded, —

As like enough it will, — I'd have it copied :

Take it, and do't ; and leave me for this time.

Bian. Leave you ! wherefore?

Cas. I do attend here on the general ;

And think it no addition, nor my wish,

To have him see me woman'd.

Bian.

Why, I pray you?

Cas. Not that I love you not.

Bian.

But that you do not love me.

I pray you, bring me¹⁹ on the way a little ;

And say if I shall see you soon at²⁰ night.

Cas. 'Tis but a little way that I can bring you ;

For I attend here : but I'll see you soon.

Bian. 'Tis very good ; I must be circumstanced.²¹ [*Exeunt.*

¹⁸ Copy this work in another handkerchief. So in Middleton's *Women beware Women* : " She intends to take out other works in a new sampler." Again in the preface to Holland's *Pliny*, 1601 : " Nicophanes gave his mind wholly to antique pictures, partly to exemplify and take out patterns."

¹⁹ "Bring me" is attend or escort me ; go with me. Often so.

²⁰ Soon at is here equivalent to about. See vol. iii. page 146, note I.

²¹ Probably meaning " I must yield or submit to circumstances,"

ACT IV.

SCENE I. — *Cyprus. Before the Castle.**Enter OTHELLO and IAGO.**Iago.* Will you think so?¹*Oth.* Think so, Iago!*Iago.* What, to kiss in private?*Oth.* An unauthorized kiss.*Iago.* Or to be nakèd with her friend in bed
An hour or more, not meaning any harm?*Oth.* Nakèd in bed, Iago, and not mean harm!
It is hypocrisy against the Devil:
They that mean virtuously and yet do so,
The Devil their virtue tempts, and they tempt Heaven.²*Iago.* So they do nothing, 'tis a venial slip.
But, if I give my wife a handkerchief, —*Oth.* What then?*Iago.* Why, then 'tis hers, my lord; and, being hers,
She may, I think, bestow't on any man.*Oth.* She is protectress of her honour too:
May she give that?

¹ We must suppose that Iago has been applying cases of false comfort to Othello; as that, though the parties had been even found kissing, still there might be nothing wrong between them. Such feigned apologies are, as he well knows, just the things to heighten the agony which he pretends to soothe.

² Tempt Heaven to abandon them to the perils they are sporting with. Those who try how near they can dwell to vice without falling in, may well be said to tempt Heaven. Bale, in his *Actes of Englysh Notaries*, relates a story of St. Adhelm, which the Poet may have had in his eye: "This Adhelmus never refused women, but wold have them commonly both at borde and bedde, to mocke the Devyll with."

Iago. Her honour is an essence that's not seen ;
They have it very oft that have it not.

But, for the handkerchief, —

Oth. By Heaven, I would most gladly have forgot it !
Thou said'st, — O, it comes o'er my memory,
As doth the raven o'er th' infected house,³
Boding to all, — he had my handkerchief.

Iago. Ay, what of that ?

Oth. That's not so good now.

Iago. What, What,

If I had said I had seen him do you wrong?
Or heard him say, — as knaves be such abroad,
Who having, by their own importunate suit,
Or voluntary dotage of some mistress,
Convincèd or supplied them,⁴ cannot choose
But they must blab —

Oth. Hath he said any thing ?

Iago. He hath, my lord ; but, be you well assured,
No more than he'll unswear.

Oth. What hath he said ?

Iago. Faith, that he did — I know not what he did.

Oth. What? what? *? in, no, it*

Iago. Lie —

Oth. With her ?

Iago. With her, on her ; what you will.

Oth. Lie with her ! lie on her ! — We say lie on her, when
they belie her. — Lie with her ! that's fulsome. — Handker-
chief — confessions — handkerchief ! — To confess, and be
hang'd for his labour ; — first, to be hang'd, and then to con-
fess. — I tremble at it. Nature would not invest herself in

³ The raven was thought to be an ill-boding bird, and as such to haunt houses infected with the plague. See page 30, note 5.

⁴ Having either *conquered* her reluctance or complied with her wish. The proper meaning of *convince* is *conquer* or *overcome*.

such shadowing passion without some instruction.⁵ It is not words that shake me thus. — Pish! noses, ears, and lips. — Is't possible? — Confess — handkerchief! — O devil!⁶

[*Falls in a trance.*]

Iago. Work on,
My medicine, work! Thus credulous fools are caught;
And many worthy and chaste dames even thus,
All guiltless, meet reproach. — What, ho! my lord!
My lord, I say! Othello! —

Enter CASSIO.

How now, Cassio!

⁵ This passage is exceedingly obscure, and has called forth, as well it might, a good deal of explanatory comment. It is to be noted that Othello is here in the first stages of the apoplectic fit which presently follows. The fit begins with a strange sensation, coming he knows not how or whence; such a sensation as he has never had before. He adds, "It is not words that shake me thus"; meaning, apparently, that the feeling he now has cannot be the effect of any audible or conscious communication, but must spring from depths in his being which consciousness cannot reach. Of the explanations that have been offered, I therefore, on the whole, prefer Heath's, which is in substance as follows: Othello feels all his faculties suddenly failing him, and a cloudy darkness stealing fast upon him. This suggests to him that his very nature, at her inmost seats where consciousness cannot penetrate, must have been visited by some secret, mysterious touch, some preternatural assurance of the truth and reality of that which so oppresses him; otherwise she (his nature) could not share so deeply in his present agony, and thus be made to invest herself with the horrid darkness which is now overwhelming him. — It appears that *apoplexy* and *epilepsy* and their derivatives were sometimes used indiscriminately. Iago says, a little after, that Othello had a fit "yesterday"; but this is no doubt one of Iago's lies. So, in *2 King Henry the Fourth*, iv. 4, it is said of the King, "This *apop'lex* will certain be his end." The disease was *epilepsy*.

⁶ "The starts," says Warburton, "and broken reflections in this speech have something in them very terrible, and show the mind of the speaker to be in inexpressible agonies." — The trance is thus justified by Sir Joshua Reynolds: "Othello, in broken sentences and single words, all of which have a reference to the cause of his jealousy, shows that *all the proofs are present at once to his mind*, which so overpower it that he falls into a trance, — the natural consequence.

Cas. What's the matter?

Iago. My lord is fall'n into an epilepsy :
This is his second fit ; he had one yesterday.

Cas. Rub him about the temples.

Iago. No, forbear ;
The lethargy must have his quiet course :
If not, he foams at mouth, and by-and-by
Breaks out to savage madness. Look, he stirs :
Do you withdraw yourself a little while ;
He will recover straight : when he is gone,
I would on great occasion speak with you. — [*Exit* CASSIO.
How is it, general? have you not hurt your head?

Oth. Dost thou mock me?

Iago. I mock you ! no, by Heaven.
Would you would bear your fortune like a man !

Oth. A hornèd man's a monster and a beast.

Iago. There's many a beast, then, in a populous city,
And many a civil monster.

Oth. Did he confess it?

Iago. Good sir, be a man ;
Think every bearded fellow that's but yoked
May draw with you. There's millions now alive
That nightly lie in those unproper beds
Which they dare swear peculiar : ⁷ your case is better.
O, 'tis the spite of Hell, the fiend's arch-mock,
To lip a wanton in a séure couch,⁸

⁷ *Unproper* here means *common*, the opposite of *peculiar*. So the Latin *proprius* rightly means *one's own* or *particular*, *special*. The meaning, therefore, of the passage is, "there are millions who will swear that the beds they lie in are exclusively their own, while in fact they do but share them in common with others." He then proceeds to tell Othello that his case is better, since he has full knowledge of the truth.

⁸ That is, a couch where the man lies in false security and confidence of his wife's fidelity. *Secure*, again, in the Latin sense. See page 232, note 19. — "The spite of Hell" is the same as "the fiend's arch-mock"; and the latter

And to suppose her chaste ! No, let me know ;
And, knowing what I am, I know what she shall be.

Oth. O, thou art wise ; 'tis certain.

Iago. Stand you awhile apart ;
Confine yourself but in a patient list.⁹
Whilst you were here o'erwhelmèd with your grief, —
A passion most unfitting such a man, —
Cassio came hither : I shifted him away,
And laid good 'scuse upon your ecstasy ;
Bade him anon return, and here speak with me ;
The which he promised. Do but encave yourself,
And mark the fleers, the gibes, and notable scorns,
That dwell in every region of his face ;
For I will make him tell the tale anew,
Where, how, how oft, how long ago, and when
He hath, and is again to cope your wife :
I say, but mark his gesture. Marry, patience ;
Or I shall say you're all-in-all one spleen,¹⁰
And nothing of a man.

Oth. Dost thou hear, Iago ?
I will be found most cunning in my patience ;
But — dost thou hear ? — most bloody.

Iago. That's not amiss ;
But yet keep time in all. Will you withdraw ? —

[OTHELLO retires.]

means the delusion with which the Devil most delights to mock honest men. In other words, that Satan's crowning triumph is when the virtuous are gouged and gulled by those in whom their trust stands firmest. And Iago is mocking Othello with the consolation that he is not yielding the fiend that morsel of spite ; he being fully cognizant of his wife's falsehood.

⁹ "A patient list" is odd language, but means the *bounds of patience*. For this use of *list*, see vol. v. page 191, note 14.

¹⁰ Equivalent to *all made up of spleen*. The spleen appears to have been regarded as the special seat of the most vehement and tempestuous passions ; those which in their movements resemble the action of lightning and gun-powder. See vol. iii. page 13, note 17.

Now will I question Cassio of Bianca,
 A housewife that, by selling her desires,
 Buys herself bread and clothes : it is a creature
 That dotes on Cassio ; as 'tis the strumpet's plague
 To beguile many and be beguiled by one.
 He, when he hears of her, cannot refrain
 From the excess of laughter. Here he comes.
 As he shall smile, Othello shall go mad ;
 And his unbookish jealousy must construe ¹¹
 Poor Cassio's smiles, gestures, and light behaviour,
 Quite in the wrong.—

Re-enter CASSIO.

How do you now, lieutenant?

Cas. The worser that you give me the addition
 Whose want even kills me.

Iago. Ply Desdemona well, and you are sure on't.
 [*Speaking lower.*] Now, if this suit lay in Bianca's power,
 How quickly should you speed !

Cas. Alas, poor caitiff !

Oth. [*Aside.*] Look, how he laughs already !

Iago. I never knew a woman love man so.

Cas. Alas, poor rogue ! I think, i'faith, she loves me.

Oth. [*Aside.*] Now he denies it faintly, and laughs it
 out.

Iago. Do you hear, Cassio?

Oth. [*Aside.*] Now he impórtunes him
 To tell it o'er : — go to ; well said, well said.

Iago. She gives it out that you shall marry her :
 Do you intend it?

Cas. Ha, ha, ha !

¹¹ Probably, as Walker says, *unbookish* is to be taken with *construe*. "So that his jealousy must *translate ignorantly*," &c.

Oth. [*Aside.*] Do you triumph, Roman?¹² do you triumph?

Cas. I marry her! what, a customer! Pr'ythee, bear some charity to my wit; do not think it so unwholesome.¹³ Ha, ha, ha!

Oth. [*Aside.*] So, so, so, so: they laugh that win.

Iago. Faith, the cry goes that you shall marry her.

Cas. Pr'ythee, say true.

Iago. I am a very villain else.

Oth. [*Aside.*] Have you scored me?¹⁴ Well.

Cas. This is the monkey's own giving out: she is persuaded I will marry her, out of her own love and flattery, not out of my promise.

Oth. [*Aside.*] Iago beckons me; now he begins the story.

Cas. She was here even now; she haunts me in every place. I was, the other day, talking on the sea-bank with certain Venetians; and thither comes the bauble, and falls me thus about my neck;—

Oth. [*Aside.*] Crying *O dear Cassio!* as it were: his gesture imports it.

Cas.—so hangs, and lolls, and weeps upon me; so hales and pulls me: ha, ha, ha!

Oth. [*Aside.*] Now he tells how she pluck'd him to my

¹² The Romans were a triumphant people, and were also fond of triumphs. So Cassio's seeming exultation probably suggests the name, and Othello calls him Roman ironically.

¹³ *Unwholesome* in the sense of *unhealthy* or *diseased*. Repeatedly so.

¹⁴ I am not clear as to the meaning of this. To *score* was to cut notches in a stick; and accounts were formerly kept by scoring the items thus in what were called tally-sticks. In *All's Well*, iv. 3, we have the line, "After he *scores*, he never *pays the score*"; and the context there shows the meaning to be, that when he has sworn a woman into granting his wish he never keeps his oaths; or what the Poet elsewhere calls "beguiling virgins with the broken seals of perjury." So, in the text, the meaning may be, "Have you run up an account against me, which I must pay? very well; I'll see you paid." Or it may be, "Have you squared the account with me for cashiering you?"

chamber. — O, I see that nose of yours, but not that dog I shall throw it to.

Cas. Well, I must leave her company.

Iago. Before me ! look, where she comes.

Cas. 'Tis such another fitchew !¹⁵ marry, a perfumed one. —

Enter BIANCA.

What do you mean by this haunting of me ?

Bian. Let the Devil and his dam haunt you ! What did you mean by that same handkerchief you gave me even now ? I was a fine fool to take it. I must take out the work ? A likely piece of work, that you should find it in your chamber, and not know who left it there ! This is some minx's token, and I must take out the work ? There ; give it your hobby-horse : wheresoever you had it, I'll take out no work on't.

Cas. How now, my sweet Bianca ! how now ! how now !

Oth. [*Aside.*] By Heaven, that should be my handkerchief !

Bian. An you'll come to supper to-night, you may ; an you will not, come when you are next prepared for. [*Exit.*

Iago. After her, after her.

Cas. Faith, I must ; she'll rail in the street else.

Iago. Will you sup there ?

Cas. Yes, I intend so.

Iago. Well, I may chance to see you ; for I would very fain speak with you.

Cas. Pr'ythee, come ; will you ?

Iago. Go to ; say no more. [*Exit* CASSIO.]

Oth. [*Coming forward.*] How shall I murder him, Iago ?

Iago. Did you perceive how he laugh'd at his vice ?

Oth. O Iago !

¹⁵ *Fitchew* is an old name of the *polecat*. — *Such another* was a common phrase, meaning *just like*, or nearly that.

Iago. And did you see the handkerchief?

Oth. Was that mine?

Iago. Yours, by this hand: and to see how he prizes the foolish woman your wife! she gave it to him, and he hath given it his whore.

Oth. I would have him nine years a-killing. A fine woman! a fair woman! a sweet woman!

Iago. Nay, you must forget that.

Oth. Ay, let her rot, and perish, and be damn'd to-night; for she shall not live: no, my heart is turn'd to stone; I strike it, and it hurts my hand. O, the world hath not a sweeter creature: she might lie by an emperor's side, and command him tasks.

Iago. Nay, that's not your way.

Oth. Hang her! I do but say what she is: so delicate with her needle! an admirable musician: O, she will sing the savageness out of a bear! of so high and plenteous wit and invention!

Iago. She's the worse for all this.

Oth. O, a thousand-thousand times. And then, of so gentle a condition!¹⁶

Iago. Ay, too gentle.

Oth. Nay, that's certain: but yet the pity of it, Iago! O Iago, the pity of it, Iago!

Iago. If you are so fond over her iniquity, give her patent to offend;¹⁷ for, if it touch not you, it comes near nobody.

Oth. I will chop her into messes! cuckold me!

Iago. O, 'tis foul in her.

Oth. With mine officer!

Iago. That's fouler.

Oth. Get me some poison, Iago; this night;—I'll not

¹⁶ *Condition*, again, for *temper* or *disposition*. See page 203, note 29.

¹⁷ A *patent* is an open letter conferring a special right or privilege; as in the common phrase, *patent-right*. See vol. x. page 169, note 26.

expostulate with her, lest her body and beauty unprovide my mind again ; — this night, Iago.

Iago. Do it not with poison ; strangle her in her bed, even the bed she hath contaminated.

Oth. Good, good ! the justice of it pleases ; very good !

Iago. And for Cassio, let me be his undertaker :¹⁸ you shall hear more by midnight.

Oth. Excellent-good ! [*A trumpet within.*] What trumpet is that same ?

Iago. Something from Venice, sure. 'Tis Lodovico Come from the Duke ; and, see, your wife is with him.

Enter LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, *and* Attendants.

Lod. God save the worthy general !

Oth. With all my heart, sir.

Lod. The Duke and Senators of Venice greet you.

[*Gives him a packet.*]

Oth. I kiss the instrument of their pleasures.

[*Opens the packet, and reads.*]

Des. And what's the news, good cousin Lodovico ?

Iago. I am very glad to see you, signior : welcome to Cyprus.

Lod. I thank you. How does Lieutenant Cassio ?

Iago. Lives, sir.

Des. Cousin, there's fall'n between him and my lord An unkind breach ; but you shall make all well.

Oth. Are you sure of that ?

Des. My lord ?

Oth. [*Reads.*] *This fail you not to do, as you will—*

Lod. He did not call ; he's busy in the paper. Is there division 'twixt my lord and Cassio ?

Des. A most unhappy one : I would do much

¹⁸ " I will *undertake*, or *take upon me*, your cause against him." The word was used of those who volunteer in other men's quarrels.

T' atone them,¹⁹ for the love I bear to Cassio.

Oth. Fire and brimstone !

Des. My lord ?

Oth. Are you wise ?

Des. What, is he angry ?

Lod. May be the letter moved him ;

For, as I think, they do command him home,

Deputing Cassio in his government.

Des. Trust me, I am glad on't.

Oth. Indeed !

Des. My lord ?

Oth. I am glad to see you mad.

Des. Why, sweet Othello !

Oth. [*Striking her.*] Devil !

Des. I have not deserved this.

Lod. My lord, this would not be believed in Venice,
Though I should swear I saw't : 'tis very much :
Make her amends ; she weeps.

Oth. O devil, devil !

If that the earth could teem with woman's tears,
Each drop she falls would prove a crocodile.²⁰ —
Out of my sight !

Des. I will not stay t' offend you. [*Going.*

Lod. Truly, an obedient lady :

I do beseech your lordship, call her back.

Oth. Mistress !

¹⁹ *Atone* in its old sense of *reconcile* or *at-one*. Repeatedly so.

²⁰ Here, as often, *falls* is a transitive verb, equivalent to *lets fall*. — By the doctrine of equivocal generation new animals were supposed producible by new combinations of matter. Shakespeare here alludes to the fabulous accounts which make the crocodile the most deceitful of animals. "It is written that he will weep over a man's head when he hath devoured the body, and will then eat up the head too." Wherefore in Latin there is a proverb, "*Crocodili lachrymæ, crocodiles teares, to signifie such teares as are feigned, and spent only with intent to deceive or do harm.*" — BULLOCKAR'S *Expositor*, 1616.

Des. My lord?

Oth. What would you with her, sir?

Lod. Who, I, my lord?

Oth. Ay; you did wish that I would make her turn.

Sir, she can turn, and turn, and yet go on,

And turn again; and she can weep, sir, weep;

And she's obedient, as you say, obedient,

Very obedient. — Proceed you in your tears. —

Concerning this, sir, — O well-painted²¹ passion! —

I am commanded home. — Get you away;

I'll send for you anon. — Sir, I obey the mandate,

And will return to Venice. — Hence, avaunt! —

[*Exit* DESDEMONA.]

Cassio shall have my place. And, sir, to-night

I do entreat that we may sup together:

You're welcome, sir, to Cyprus. — Goats and monkeys!²²

[*Exit.*]

Lod. Is this the noble Moor whom our full Senate

Call all-in-all sufficient? Is this the nature

Whom passion could not shake? whose solid virtue

The shot of accident, nor dart of chance,

Could neither graze nor pierce?

Iago. He is much changed.

Lod. Are his wits safe? is he not light of brain?

Iago. He's that he is: I may not breathe my censure.

What he might be, — if what he might he is not, —

I would to Heaven he were!

Lod. What, strike his wife!

²¹ *Painted for counterfeited or simulated.* Conversely, we have, elsewhere, *counterfeit for picture*, or what is painted.

²² In a previous scene, when Othello demands "ocular proof," Iago tells him it were impossible to have this, "were they as *prime as goats*, as *hot as monkeys*." Now that Othello is fully convinced of Desdemona's guilt, these words seem to be ringing in his ears, and exploding involuntarily from his lips.

Iago. Faith, that was not so well ; yet would I knew
That stroke would prove the worst !

Lod. Is it his use ?
Or did the letters work upon his blood,
And new-create this fault ?

Iago. Alas, alas !
It is not honesty²³ in me to speak
What I have seen and known. You shall observe him ;
And his own courses will denote him so,
That I may save my speech : do but go after,
And mark how he continues.

Lod. I'm sorry that I am deceived in him. [Exit.]

SCENE II. — *A Room in the Castle.*

Enter OTHELLO and EMILIA.

Oth. You have seen nothing, then ?

Emil. Nor ever heard, nor ever did suspect.

Oth. Yes, you have seen Cassio and she together.

Emil. But then I saw no harm, and then I heard
Each syllable that breath made up between them.

Oth. What, did they never whisper ?

Emil. Never, my lord.

Oth. Nor send you out o' the way ?

Emil. Never.

Oth. To fetch her fan, her gloves, her mask, nor nothing ?

Emil. Never, my lord.

Oth. That's strange.

Emil. I durst, my lord, to wager she is honest,
Lay down my soul at stake : if you think other,
Remove your thought ; it doth abuse your bosom.

²³ *Honesty*, as also *honest*, was sometimes used in the exact sense of *honourable*. And such is clearly the meaning here. See, also, v. 2, note 17, of this play, for instance of a like usage.

If any wretch have put this in your head,
 Let Heaven requite it with the serpent's curse !
 For, if she be not honest, chaste, and true,
 There's no man happy ; the purest of their wives
 Is foul as slander.

Oth. Bid her come hither ; go. — [*Exit EMILIA.*
 She says enough ; yet she's a simple bawd
 That cannot say as much. This is a subtle whore,
 A closet-lock-and-key of villainous secrets :
 And yet she'll kneel and pray ; I've seen her do't.

Enter DESDEMONA with EMILIA.

Des. My lord, what is your will?

Oth. Pray, chuck, come hither.

Des. What is your pleasure?

Oth. Let me see your eyes ;

Look in my face.

Des. What horrible fancy's this?

Oth. [*To EMILIA.*] Some of your function, mistress ;
 Leave procreants alone and shut the door ;
 Cough, or cry *hem*, if anybody come :
 Your mystery, your mystery ; nay, dispatch.¹ [*Exit EMILIA.*

Des. Upon my knees, what doth your speech import?
 I understand a fury in your words,
 But not the words.

Oth. Why, what art thou?

Des. Your wife, my lord ; your true
 And loyal wife.

Oth. Come, swear it, damn thyself ;
 Lest, being like one of Heaven, the devils themselves
 Should fear to seize thee : therefore be double-damn'd ;

¹ As in mere wantonness of self-torture, Othello here fondles the most agonizing conceptions, and seeks a morbid relief in thinking of Emilia as doing the office or mystery of a procuress. A master-stroke of delineation.

Swear thou art honest.²

Des. Heaven doth truly know it.

Oth. Heaven truly knows that thou art false as Hell.

Des. To whom, my lord? with whom? how am I false?

Oth. Ah, Desdemon! away! away! away!

Des. Alas the heavy day! Why do you weep?

Am I the motive³ of these tears, my lord?

If haply you my father do suspect

An instrument of this your calling back,

Lay not your blame on me: if you have lost him,

Why, I have lost him too.

Oth. Had it pleased Heaven

To try me with affliction: had He rain'd

All kinds of sores and shames on my bare head;

Steep'd me in poverty to the very lips;

Given to captivity me and my utmost hopes;

I should have found in some place of my soul

A drop of patience: but, alas, to make me

A fixèd figure for the time of scorn

To point his slow unmoving finger at!⁴

Yet could I bear that too; well, very well:

But there, where I have garner'd up my heart,

Where either I must live, or bear no life, —

The fountain from the which my current runs,

² That is, by adding the crime of perjury to that of adultery: "Accumulate sin upon sin, lest, being like an angel, you so strike the fiends with awe, that they will not dare to touch you."

³ Shakespeare uses *motive* repeatedly in the sense of *cause* or *mover*.

⁴ Much has been written upon this celebrated passage, which has been thought to be very obscure, if not absurdly at odds with itself; but it seems to me all right. "The time of scorn" means, I think, the *age* of scorn, that is, the whole period during which scorn may be said to live. The "fixed figure" is simply the speaker himself. As to "slow unmoving," the sense of it can be better felt than expressed: we can see the sneer darting from the inexorable finger, ever slowly moving *with* the object, never moving *from* it.

Or else dries up ; to be discarded thence !
 Or keep it as a cistern for foul toads
 'To knot and gender in ! — turn thy complexion there,
 Patience, thou young and rose-lipp'd cherubin,
 Ay, there, look grim as Hell !

Des. I hope my noble lord esteems me honest.

Oth. O, ay ; as summer flies are in the shambles,
 'That quicken even with blowing. O thou weed,
 Who art so lovely fair, and smell'st so sweet,
 That the sense aches at thee, would thou hadst ne'er been born !

Des. Alas, what ignorant sin have I committed ?

Oth. Was this fair paper, this most goodly book,
 Made to write *whore* upon ? What committed !
 Committed ! O thou public commoner !
 I should make very forges of my cheeks,
 That would to cinders burn up modesty,
 Did I but speak thy deeds. What committed !
 Heaven stops the nose at it, and the Moon winks ;
 The bawdy wind, that kisses all it meets,
 Is hush'd within the hollow mine of earth,
 And will not hear it. What committed !
 Impudent strumpet !

Des. By Heaven, you do me wrong.

Oth. Are not you a strumpet ?

Des. No, as I am a Christian :
 If to preserve this vessel for my lord
 From any other foul unlawful touch,
 Be not to be a strumpet, I am none.

Oth. What, not a whore ?

Des. No, as I shall be saved.

Oth. Is't possible ?

Des. O, Heaven forgive us !

Oth. I cry you mercy,⁵ then :

⁵ "I cry you mercy" is an old phrase for "I ask your pardon."

I took you for that cunning whore of Venice
That married with Othello. — You, mistress,
That have the office opposite to Saint Peter,⁶
And keep the gate of Hell !

Re-enter EMILIA.

You, you, ay, you !

We've done our course ; there's money for your pains : ⁷

I pray you, turn the key, and keep our counsel. [*Exit.*]

Emil. Alas, what does this gentleman conceive ?

How do you, madam ? how do you, my good lady ?

Des. Faith, half asleep.

Emil. Good madam, what's the matter with my lord ?

Des. With who ?

Emil. Why, with my lord, madam.

Des. Who is thy lord ?

Emil. He that is yours, sweet lady.

Des. I have none : do not talk to me, Emilia ;

I cannot weep ; nor answer have I none,

But what should go by water.⁸ Pr'ythee, to-night

Lay on my bed my wedding sheets : remember ;

And call thy husband hither.

⁶ The office *opposed* to Saint Peter ; alluding, evidently, to " the power of the keys," which was given to the Apostles generally, and especially to Saint Peter as representing them ; so that the opposition is between Emilia as keeper of the gate of Hell, and Saint Peter as keeper of the gate of Heaven. The sense, therefore, requires that the special emphasis, if there be any, should be laid on *opposite*.

⁷ Othello, who in his relations towards women is one of the most delicate and sensitive of men, in the bitterness of his soul *pays* his wife's own maid as he leaves the former's bed-chamber ; not either to reward or to offend Emilia, but that he may torment his own soul by carrying out his supposition to its most revolting consequences. — WHITE.

⁸ *Go by water* means, of course, *be expressed by tears*. Surely a conceit quite out of place. Laertes, in *Hamlet*, iv. 4, vents a similar one on learning that his sister is drowned : " Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia, and therefore I forbid my tears."

Emil. Here's a change indeed ! [*Exit.*

Des. 'Tis meet I should be used so, very meet.
How have I been behaved, that he might stick
The small'st opinion on my great'st abuse?⁹

Re-enter EMILIA with IAGO.

Iago. What is your pleasure, madam? How is't with you?

Des. I cannot tell. Those that do teach young babes
Do it with gentle means and easy tasks :
He might have chid me so ; for, in good faith,
I am a child to chiding.

Iago. What's the matter, lady?

Emil. Alas, Iago, my lord hath so bewhored her,
Thrown such despite and heavy terms upon her,
As true hearts cannot bear.

Des. Am I that name, Iago?

Iago. What name, fair lady?

Des. Such as she says my lord did say I was.

Emil. He call'd her whore : a beggar in his drink
Could not have laid such terms upon his callet.¹⁰

Iago. Why did he so?

Des. I do not know ; I'm sure I am none such.

Iago. Do not weep, do not weep. Alas the day !

Emil. Hath she forsook so many noble matches,
Her father, and her country, and her friends,
'To be call'd whore? would it not make one weep?

Des. It is my wretched fortune.

Iago. Beshrew him for't !

How comes this trick upon him?

⁹ A very harsh and awkward expression ; but meaning, "What have I been doing, that upon my worst act he should fasten the slightest imputation of crime?"

¹⁰ *Callet* seems to have been used for *vixen* or *scold*. So in *The Winter's Tale* : "A *callet* of boundless tongue, who late hath beat her husband, and now baits me."

Des. Nay, Heaven doth know.

Emil. I will be hang'd, if some eternal¹¹ villain,
Some busy and insinuating rogue,
Some cogging, cozening slave, to get some office,
Have not devised this slander ; I'll be hang'd else.

Iago. Fie, there's no such man ; 'tis impossible.

Des. If any such there be, Heaven pardon him !

Emil. A halter pardon him ! and Hell gnaw his bones !
Why should he call her whore ? who keeps her company ?
What place ? what time ? what form ? what likelihood ?
The Moor's abused by some most villainous knave,
Some base notorious¹² knave, some scurvy fellow. —
O Heaven, that such companions¹³ Thou'dst unfold,
And put in every honest hand a whip
To lash the rascals naked through the world
Even from the East to th' West !

Iago. Speak within door.¹⁴

Emil. O, fie upon them ! Some such squire he was
That turn'd your wit the seamy side without,
And made you to suspect me with the Moor.

Iago. You are a fool ; go to.

Des. Alas, Iago,
What shall I do to win my lord again ?
Good friend, go to him ; for, by this light of heaven,
I know not how I lost him. Here I kneel :
If e'er my will did trespass 'gainst his love,
Either in discourse, or thought, or actual deed ;
Or that mine eyes, mine ears, or any sense,
Delighted them in any other form ;

¹¹ *Eternal*, apparently, for *infernal*. See vol. xiv. page 19, note 37.

¹² *Notorious* seems to be here put for *outrageous*. Or it may mean *deserving to be noted*, or branded with infamy.

¹³ *Companion* was often used in scorn, just as *fellow* is now.

¹⁴ Do not clamour so as to be heard beyond the house.

Or that I do not yet, and ever did,
 And ever will — though he do shake me off
 To beggarly divorcement — love him dearly,
 Comfort forswear me ! Unkindness may do much ;
 And his unkindness may defeat my life,
 But never taint my love. I cannot say *whore* :
 It does abhor me ¹⁵ now I speak the word ;
 To do the act that might th' addition earn
 Not the world's mass of vanity could make me.

Iago. I pray you, be content ; 'tis but his humour :
 The business of the State does him offence,
 And he does chide with you.¹⁶

Des. If 'twere no other, —

Iago. 'Tis but so, I warrant. [*Trumpets within.*
 Hark, how these instruments summon to supper !
 The messengers of Venice stay the meat :
 Go in, and weep not ; all things shall be well. —

[*Exeunt* DESDEMONA and EMILIA.

Enter RODERIGO.

How now, Roderigo !

Rod. I do not find that thou deal'st justly with me.

Iago. What in the contrary ?

Rod. Every day thou daff'st ¹⁷ me with some device,
 Iago ; and rather, as it seems to me now, keep'st from me
 all conveniency than suppliest me with the least advantage
 of hope. I will, indeed, no longer endure it ; nor am I

¹⁵ That is, "it does offend me," or "it is abhorrent to me," or "I abhor it." So the Poet often has the phrase "it likes me" for "it pleases me," or "I like it." See vol. xii. page 169, note 22.

¹⁶ This was the phraseology of the time. "To complaine, to make a quarrel, to chide with one for a thing. *Expostulare et queri.*" — BARET. So in the Poet's 111th *Sonnet* : "O, for my sake do you with fortune chide."

¹⁷ *Daff* is but another form of *doff*, and means to do off or put off. Shakespeare uses the word in both forms. See vol. iv. page 192, note 9.

yet persuaded to put up in peace what already I have foolishly suffer'd.

Iago. Will you hear me, Roderigo?

Rod. Faith, I have heard too much; for your words and performances are no kin together.

Iago. You charge me most unjustly.

Rod. With nought but truth. I have wasted myself out of my means. The jewels you have had from me to deliver to Desdemona would half have corrupted a votarist: you have told me she hath received them, and return'd me expectations and comforts of sudden respect and acquaintance; but I find none.

Iago. Well; go to; very well.

Rod. Very well! go to! I cannot go to, man; nor 'tis not very well: nay, I think it is scurvy, and begin to find myself fopp'd¹⁸ in it.

Iago. Very well.

Rod. I tell you 'tis not very well. I will make myself known to Desdemona: if she will return me my jewels, I will give over my suit, and repent my unlawful solicitation; if not, assure yourself I will seek satisfaction of you.

Iago. You have said now.

Rod. Ay, and said nothing but what I protest intendment of doing.

Iago. Why, now I see there's mettle in thee; and even from this instant do build on thee a better opinion than ever before. Give me thy hand, Roderigo: thou hast taken against me a most just exception; but yet, I protest, I have dealt most directly in thy affair.

¹⁸ The word *fopped* does not occur again in Shakespeare, nor do I remember to have met with it elsewhere. Probably it means *made a fool of*. Cowley, in his *Cutter of Coleman Street*, 1633, uses *foppity* for *simpleton*: "Why does this little *foppitee* laugh always? 'tis such a ninny, that she betrays her mistress, and thinks she does no hurt at all, no, not she."

Rod. It hath not appear'd.

Iago. I grant, indeed, it hath not appear'd; and your suspicion is not without wit and judgment.¹⁹ But, Roderigo, if thou hast that in thee indeed, which I have greater reason to believe now than ever, — I mean purpose, courage, and valour, — this night show it: if thou the next night following enjoy not Desdemona, take me from this world with treachery, and devise engines for my life.

Rod. Well, what is it? is it within reason and compass?

Iago. Sir, there is especial commission come from Venice to depute Cassio in Othello's place.

Rod. Is that true? why, then Othello and Desdemona return again to Venice.

Iago. O, no: he goes into Mauritania, and takes away with him the fair Desdemona,²⁰ unless his abode be linger'd here by some accident; wherein none can be so determinate as the removing of Cassio.

Rod. How do you mean, removing of him?

Iago. Why, by making him incapable of Othello's place; knocking out his brains.

Rod. And that you would have me to do?

Iago. Ay, if you dare do yourself a profit and a right. He sups to-night with a harlotry, and thither will I go to him: he knows not yet of his honourable fortune. If you will watch his going thence, — which I will fashion to fall

¹⁹ Shakespeare knew well, that most men like to be flattered on account of those endowments in which they are most deficient. Hence Iago's compliment to this *snipe* on his sagacity and shrewdness. — MALONE.

²⁰ This passage proves, so far as any thing said by Iago may be believed, that Othello was not meant to be a Negro, as has been represented, both on the stage and off, but a veritable Moor. His kindred, the Mauritians, — from whose "men of royal siege he fetched his life and being," and among whom he was about to retire, — though apt enough to be confounded with the Negroes, were as different from them, externally, as brown is from black; internally, in mind and character, the difference was far greater.

out between twelve and one, — you may take him at your pleasure : I will be near to second your attempt, and he shall fall between us. Come, stand not amazed at it,²¹ but go along with me ; I will show you such a necessity in his death, that you shall think yourself bound to put it on him. It is now high supper-time, and the night grows to waste : about it.

Rod. I will hear further reason for this.

Iago. And you shall be satisfied. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. — *Another Room in the Castle.*

Enter OTHELLO, LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, EMILIA, and Attendants.

Lod. I do beseech you, sir, trouble yourself no further.

Oth. O, pardon me ; 'twill do me good to walk.

Lod. Madam, good night ; I humbly thank your ladyship.

Des. Your Honour is most welcome.

Oth. Will you walk, sir? — O, Desdemona, —

Des. My lord?

Oth. Get you to bed on the instant ; I will be return'd forthwith : dismiss your attendant there ; look't be done.

Des. I will, my lord.

[*Exeunt* OTHELLO, LODOVICO, and Attendants.

Emil. How goes it now? he looks gentler than he did.¹

Des. He says he will return incontinent :²

He hath commanded me to go to bed,
And bade me to dismiss you.

²¹ *Amazed*, in its primitive sense of being *in a maze* ; that is, *bewildered* or *perplexed*. Such is the more common meaning of the word in Shakespeare.

¹ One of those side intimations of the fluctuations of passion, which we seldom meet with but in Shakespeare. He has here put into half a line what some authors would have spun out into ten set speeches. — HAZLITT.

² *Incontinent* for *incontinently*, and in its old sense of *immediately* or *forthwith*. See vol. v. page 100, note 3.

Emil. Dismiss me !

Des. It was his bidding ; therefore, good Emilia,
Give me my nightly wearing, and adieu :
We must not now displease him.

Emil. I would you had never seen him !

Des. So would not I : my love doth so approve him,
That even his stubbornness, his checks, his frowns, —
Pr'ythee, unpin me, — have grace and favour in them.

Emil. I've laid those sheets you bade me on the bed.

Des. All's one. Good faith, how foolish are our minds !
If I do die before thee, pr'ythee, shroud me
In one of those same sheets.

Emil. Come, come, you talk.

Des. My mother had a maid call'd Barbara :
She was in love ; and he she loved proved mad,³
And did forsake her : she had a song of *willow* ;
An old thing 'twas, but it express'd her fortune,
And she died singing it. That song to-night
Will not go from my mind ; I've much to-do,⁴
Not to go hang my head all at one side,
And sing it like poor Barbara. Pr'ythee, dispatch.

Emil. Shall I go fetch your night-gown ?

Des. No, unpin me here.
This Lodovico is a proper⁵ man.

Emil. A very handsome man.

Des. He speaks well.

Emil. I know a lady in Venice would have walk'd bare-foot to Palestine for a touch of his nether lip.

Des. [Sings.]

The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree,

³ Probably meaning mad in the sense of *crazy* ; perhaps, of *fickle*.

⁴ *To-do*, again, for *ado*. See page 226, note 6.

⁵ *Proper*, as usual, for *handsome* or *fine-looking*.

*Sing all a green willow ;
Her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee,
Sing willow, willow, willow :
The fresh streams ran by her, and murmur'd her moans ;
Sing willow, willow, willow ;
Her salt tears fell from her, and soften'd the stones ; —*

Lay by these ; —

[Sings.] *Sing willow, willow, willow ; —*

Pr'ythee, hie thee ; he'll come anon : —

[Sings.] *Sing all a green willow must be my garland.
Let nobody blame him ; his scorn I approve, —*

Nay, that's not next. Hark ! who is't that knocks ?

Emil. It's the wind.

Des. [Sings.]

I call'd my love false love ; but what said he then ?

Sing willow, willow, willow .

If I court more women, you'll couch with more men.⁶ —

⁶ These lines are from an old ballad entitled "A Lover's Complaint, being forsaken of his Love." The ballad is given entire in Percy's *Reliques*. It is there the lament of a man: Shakespeare adapted it to the sex of "poor Barbara." I subjoin the stanzas from which he borrowed:

A poore soule sat sighing under a sicamore tree;
O willow, willow, willow!
With his hand on his bosom, his head on his knee:
O willow, willow, willow!
Sing, O the greene willow shall be my garland.
The cold streams ran by him, his eyes wept apace;
O willow, willow, willow!
The salt tears fell from him, which drowned his face:
O willow, willow, willow!
Sing, O the greene willow shall be my garland.
The mute birds sat by him, made tame by his mones;
O willow, willow, willow!
The salt tears fell from him, which soften'd the stones:
O willow, willow, willow!
Sing, O the greene willow shall be my garland.

So, get thee gone ; good night. Mine eyes do itch ;
Doth that bode weeping ?

Emil. 'Tis neither here nor there.

Des. I've heard it said so. O, these men, these men !
Dost thou in conscience think, — tell me, Emilia, —
That there be women do abuse their husbands
In such gross kind ?

Emil. There be some such, no question.

Des. Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world ?

Emil. Why, would not you ?

Des. No, by this heavenly light !

Emil. Nor I neither by this heavenly light ; I might do't
as well i' the dark.

Des. Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world ?

Emil. The world's a huge thing :

It is a great price for a small vice.

Des. In troth, I think thou wouldst not.

Emil. In troth, I think I should ; and undo't when I had
done. Marry, I would not do such a thing for a joint-ring,⁷
nor for measures of lawn, nor for gowns, petticoats, nor caps,

Let nobody blame me, her scornes I do prove ;
O willow, willow, willow !
She was borne to be faire ; I to die for her love :
O willow, willow, willow !
Sing, O the greene willow shall be my garland

⁷ A *joint-ring* was anciently a token of troth-pledge between lovers, like the piece of broken gold in the *Bride of Lammermoor*. Dryden has a minute description of it in his *Don Sebastian* :

A curious artist wrought them
With joints so close as not to be perceived.
Yet they are both each other's counterpart :
Her part had Juan inscribed, and his had Zayda,
(You know these names are theirs,) and in the midst
A heart divided in two halves was played.
Now, if the rivets of those rings enclosed
Fit not each other, I have forged this lie ;
But, if they join, you must for ever part.

nor any petty exhibition ;⁸ but, for the whole world, — why, who would not make her husband a cuckold to make him a monarch? I should venture Purgatory for't.

Des. Beshrew me, if I would do such a wrong for the whole world.

Emil. Why, the wrong is but a wrong i' the world ; and, having the world for your labour, 'tis a wrong in your own world, and you might quickly make it right.

Des. I do not think there is any such woman.

Emil. Yes, a dozen ; and as many to the vantage⁹ as would store the world they play'd for.

But I do think it is their husbands' faults

If wives do fall : say that they slack their duties,

And pour our treasures into foreign laps ;

Or else break out in peevish jealousies,

Throwing restraint upon us ; or say they strike us,

Or scant our former having¹⁰ in despite ;

Why, we have galls ; and though we have some grace,

Yet have we some revenge. Let husbands know

Their wives have sense¹¹ like them : they see, and smell,

And have their palates both for sweet and sour,

As husbands have. What is it that they do

When they change us for others? Is it sport?

I think it is : and doth affection breed it?

I think it doth : is't frailty that thus errs?

It is so too : and have not we affections,

Desires for sport, and frailty, as men have?

Then let them use us well ; else let them know,

The ills we do, their ills instruct us so.

Des. Good night, good night : Heaven me such uses send,
Not to pick bad from bad, but by bad mend ! [*Exeunt.*]

⁸ *Exhibition*, again, in its old sense of *allowance*. See page 185, note 27.

⁹ *To the vantage* is the same as *to boot*, or *into the bargain*.

¹⁰ *Having* for *allotment* or supply of money. See vol. vi. page 59, note 4.

¹¹ *Sense* is here put for *feeling* or *sensation* ; like the Latin *sensus*.

ACT V.

SCENE I. — *Cyprus. A Street.**Enter IAGO and RODERIGO.*

Iago. Here, stand behind this bulk;¹ straight will he come :

Wear thy good rapier bare, and put it home :
Quick, quick ; fear nothing ; I'll be at thy elbow.
It makes us, or it mars us ; think on that,
And fix most firm thy resolution.

Rod. Be near at hand ; I may miscarry in't.

Iago. Here, at thy hand : be bold, and take thy stand.

[*Retires to a little distance.*]

Rod. I have no great devotion to the deed ;
And yet he hath given me satisfying reasons :
'Tis but a man gone. Forth, my sword ! he dies.

[*Goes to his stand*]

Iago. I've rubb'd this young quat² almost to the sense,
And he grows angry. Now, whether he kill Cassio,
Or Cassio him, or each do kill the other,
Every way makes my gain. Live Roderigo,
He calls me to a restitution large
Of gold and jewels that I bobb'd³ from him,
As gifts to Desdemona ;
It must not be : if Cassio do remain,
He hath a daily beauty in his life

¹ *Bulk* is a kind of stall, board, or counter outside of a house, on which articles were set for sale. So Florio : " Balcone, a bulke or stall of a shop."

² A *quat* was, in provincial usage, a *pimple*, which by rubbing is made to smart. Roderigo is so called for the same reason that a low fellow is sometimes called a *scab*. Rubbing to the *sense* is rubbing to the *quick*.

³ *Fooled* him out of. To *bob* is to *cheat* or *swindle* by craft of tongue.

That makes me ugly ; and, besides, the Moor
 May unfold me to him ; there stand I in much peril.
 No, he must die : be't so ; I hear him coming.

Enter CASSIO.

Rod. I know his gait, 'tis he. — Villain, thou diest !

[*Rushes from his post, and makes a pass at CASSIO.*

Cas. That thrust had been mine enemy indeed,
 But that my coat⁴ is better than thou know'st :
 I will make proof of thine. [*Draws, and wounds RODERIGO.*

Rod. O, I am slain !

[*IAGO rushes from his post, cuts CASSIO behind in
 the leg, and exit.*

Cas. I'm maim'd for ever !— Help, ho ! murder ! murder !
 [*Falls.*

Enter OTHELLO, at some distance.

Oth. The voice of Cassio : Iago keeps his word.

Rod. O, villain that I am !

Oth. It is even so.

Cas. O, help, ho ! light ! a surgeon !

Oth. 'Tis he !— O brave Iago, honest and just,
 That hast such noble sense of thy friend's wrong !
 Thou teachest me. — Minion, your dear lies dead,
 And your unblest fate hies : strumpet, I come !
 Forth of my heart those charms, thine eyes, are blotted ;
 Thy bed lust-stain'd shall with lust's blood be spotted. [*Exit.*

Enter LODOVICO and GRATIANO, at some distance.

Cas. What, ho ! no watch ? no passage ?⁵ murder ! murder !

⁴ Cassio wears, underneath his visible dress, a *coat or shirt of mail*; a hidden panoply made of finely-wrought links of steel, and sometimes called chain-armour. See vol. xvi. page 274, note 13.

⁵ Are there no *passengers*? none *passing by*? *Passenger* formerly meant

Gra. 'Tis some mischance ; the cry is very direful.

Cas. O, help !

Lod. Hark !

Rod. O wretched villain !

Lod. Two or three groan. It is a heavy night.

These may be counterfeits : let's think't unsafe

To come in to the cry without more help.

Rod. Nobody come ? then shall I bleed to death.

Lod. Hark !

Gra. Here one comes in his shirt, with light and weapons.

Re-enter IAGO, with a light.

Iago. Who's there ? whose noise is this that cries on murder ?⁶

Lod. We do not know.

Iago. Did not you hear a cry ?

Cas. Here, here ! for Heaven's sake, help me !

Iago. What's the matter ?

Gra. This is Othello's ancient, as I take it.

Lod. The same indeed ; a very valiant fellow.

Iago. What are you here that cry so grievously ?

Cas. Iago ? O, I'm spoil'd, undone by villains !

Give me some help.

Iago. O me, lieutenant ! what villains have done this ?

Cas. I think that one of them is hereabout,

And cannot make away.

Iago. O treacherous villains !—

What are you there ? come in, and give some help.

[*To* LODOVICO *and* GRATIANO.

Rod. O, help me here !

a passage-boat or vessel, and so would not have been understood in our sense. Of course London had many such boats plying across the Thames.

⁶ That cries or exclaims against murder. To cry on and to cry out on are often so used by Shakespeare. See vol. xiv. page 316, note 62.

Cas. That's one of them.

Iago. O murderous slave ! O villain !

[*Stabs* RODERIGO.

Rod. O damn'd Iago ! O inhuman dog !

Iago. Kill men i' the dark !— Where be these bloody thieves?—

How silent is this town !— Ho ! murder ! murder !—

What may you be ? are you of good or evil ?

Lod. As you shall prove us, praise us.

Iago. Signior Lodovico ?

Lod. He, sir.

Iago. I cry you mercy. Here's Cassio hurt by villains.

Gra. Cassio !

Iago. How is't, brother ?

Cas. My leg is cut in two.

Iago. Marry, Heaven forbid !—

Light, gentlemen ! I'll bind it with my shirt.

Enter BIANCA.

Bian. What is the matter, ho ? who is't that cried ?

Iago. Who is't that cried !

Bian. O my dear Cassio ! my sweet Cassio ! O Cassio, Cassio, Cassio !

Iago. O notable strumpet !— Cassio, may you suspect Who they should be that have thus mangled you ?

Cas. No.

Gra. I'm sorry to find you thus : I've been to seek you.

Iago. Lend me a garter.— So.— O, for a chair, To bea. him easily hence !

Bian. Alas, he faints !— O Cassio, Cassio, Cassio !

Iago. Gentlemen all, I do suspect this trash To be a party in this injury.—

Patience awhile, good Cassio.— Come, come ; Lend me a light.— Know we this face or no ?

Alas, my friend and my dear countryman
Roderigo ! no? — yes, sure ; O Heaven ! Roderigo !

Gra. What, of Venice?

Iago. Even he, sir : did you know him?

Gra. Know him ! ay.

Iago. Signior Gratiano? I cry you gentle pardon ;

These bloody accidents must excuse my manners,
That so neglected you.

Gra. I'm glad to see you.

Iago. How do you, Cassio? — O, a chair, a chair !

Gra. Roderigo !

Iago. He, he, 'tis he ! — [*A chair brought in.*] O, that's
well said ;⁷ the chair. —

Some good man bear him carefully from hence ;
I'll fetch the general's surgeon. — [*To BIANCA.*] For you,
mistress,

Save you your labour. — He that lies slain here, Cassio,
Was my dear friend : what malice was between you?

Cas. None in the world ; nor do I know the man.

Iago. [*To BIANCA.*] What, look you pale? — O, bear him
out o' the air. — [*CASSIO and RODERIGO are borne off.*]

Stay you, good gentlemen. — Look you pale, mistress? —

Do you perceive the gastness⁸ of her eye? —

Nay, if you stare, we shall hear more anon. —

Behold her well ; I pray you, look upon her :

Do you see, gentlemen? nay, guiltiness will speak,

Though tongues were out of use.

Enter EMILIA.

Emil. 'Las, what's the matter? what's the matter, husband?

⁷ *Well said* was a common phrase for *well done*.

⁸ *Gastness* for *ghastliness*; the deadly paleness of terror. The sense of *ghost* lies at the bottom of it, as to be *ghosted* was a pretty frightful matter. The word does not occur again; but we have *gasted* in the same sense. See vol. xv. page 50, note 8.

Iago. Cassio hath here been set on in the dark
By Roderigo, and fellows that are 'scaped :
He's almost slain, and Roderigo dead.

Emil. Alas, good gentleman ! alas, good Cassio !

Iago. This is the fruit of whoring. — Pr'ythee, Emilia,
Go know of Cassio where he supp'd to-night. —

[*To BIANCA.*] What, do you shake at that ?

Bian. He supp'd at my house ; but I therefore shake not.

Iago. O, did he so ? I charge you, go with me.

Emil. Fie, fie upon thee, strumpet !

Bian. I am no strumpet ; but of life as honest
As you that thus abuse me.

Emil. As I ! foh ! fie upon thee !

Iago. Kind gentlemen, let's go see poor Cassio dress'd. —

[*To BIANCA.*] Come, mistress, you must tell's another tale. —

Emilia, run you to the citadel,

And tell my lord and lady what hath happ'd. —

Will you go on afore ? — [*Aside.*] This is the night

That either makes me or fordoes⁹ me quite. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. — *A Bedchamber in the Castle : DESDEMONA in bed asleep ; a light burning.*

Enter OTHELLO.

Oth. It is the cause, it is the cause,¹ my soul, —

⁹ *To fordo* is to *undo*, to *ruin*, or *destroy*. See vol. xv. page 156, note 32.

¹ Othello means that Desdemona's crime is the sole motive or reason that impels him to the present act; that in this alone he has a justifying cause, a "compelling occasion," for what he is about to do; so that he cannot justly lie under the reproach of having acted from any subjective or self-generated *animus* of revengeful jealousy. Webster has a like use of *cause* in the peroration of his great speech in reply to Calhoun, Feb. 16, 1833: "The cause, then, Sir, the cause! Let the world know the cause which has thus induced one State of the Union to bid defiance to the power of the whole," &c.

Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars!² —
 It is the cause. Yet I'll not shed her blood;
 Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,
 And smooth as monumental alabaster.
 Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.
 Put out the light, — and then put out the light. —
 If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
 I can again thy former light restore,
 Should I repent me; — but, once put out thy light,
 Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling Nature,
 I know not where is that Promethean heat
 That can thy light relume. When I have pluck'd the rose,
 I cannot give it vital growth again,
 It needs must wither: I'll smell it on the tree. —

[*Kissing her.*]

O balmy breath, that does almost persuade
 Justice to break her sword! One more, one more:
 Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee,
 And love thee after. One more, and that's the last:
 So sweet was ne'er so fatal. I must weep,
 But they are cruel tears: this sorrow's heavenly;
 It strikes where it doth love.³ She wakes.

² Steevens urges that the Poet had no classical authority for "chaste stars." But, in classical poetry, the Moon is Diana, the goddess of *chastity*, and the stars are the train of *virgins* attending on her. And, if it were not so, Shakespeare had the authority of Nature, and so has made the phrase classical. The epithet *chaste* thus applied most aptly suggests the nature of the cause which the *purity* of the stars forbids to be named in their presence. No classical authority! See vol. xvi. page 314. note 4.

³ The tears are cruel, because, while heart-wringing pity is streaming from the eyes, an overmastering strain of duty is forcing him to what is, objectively, an act of cruelty. And the very loveliness of the victim only works to intensify his purpose, lest love should usurp the crown that belongs to a higher passion, — a passion, too, that *must* wear the crown, else love itself will fall from its propriety. Pathos carried to the most soul-searching height! And the "sorrow is heavenly," because it is baptized and washed into holiness

Des. Who's there? Othello?

Oth. Ay, Desdemona.

Des. Will you come to bed, my lord?

Oth. Have you pray'd to-night, Desdemona?

Des. Ay, my lord.

Oth. If you bethink yourself of any crime
Unreconciled as yet to Heaven and grace,
Solicit for it straight.

Des. Alack, my lord, what may you mean by that?

Oth. Well, do it, and be brief; I will walk by:
I would not kill thy unprepared spirit;
No, — Heaven fend! — I would not kill thy soul.

Des. Talk you of killing?

Oth. Ay, I do.

Des. Then Heaven have mercy on me!

Oth. Amen, with all my heart!

Des. If you say so, I hope you will not kill me.

Oth. Hum!

Des. And yet I fear you; for you're fatal then
When your eyes roll so: why I should fear I know not,
Since guiltiness I know not; but yet I feel I fear.

Oth. Think on thy sins.

Des. They're loves I bear to you.

Oth. Ay, and for that thou diest.

Des. That death's unnatural that kills for loving.
Alas, why gnaw you so your nether lip?
Some bloody passion shakes your very frame:
These are portents; but yet I hope, I hope,
They do not point on me.

Oth. Peace, and be still!

Des. I will so. What's the matter?

by the sacred and divine regards of justice. I know not where else we have so fitting and lifelike an embodiment in act of Lovelace's immortal saying, "I could not love thee, dear, so much, loved I not honour more."

Oth. That handkerchief which I so loved and gave thee
Thou gavest to Cassio.

Des. No, by my life and soul !
Send for the man, and ask him.

Oth. Sweet soul, take heed,
Take heed of perjury ; thou'rt on thy death-bed.

Des. Ay, but not yet to die.

Oth. Yes, presently :
Therefore confess thee freely of thy sin ;
For to deny each article with oath
Cannot remove nor choke the strong conception
That I do groan withal. Thou art to die.

Des. Then Lord have mercy on me !

Oth. I say, amen.

Des. And have you mercy too ! I never did
Offend you in my life ; never loved Cassio
But with such general warranty of Heaven
As I might love ; I never gave him token.

Oth. By Heaven, I saw my handkerchief in's hand.
O perjured woman ! thou dost stone my heart,
And makest me call what I intend to do
A murder, which I thought a sacrifice :⁴
I saw the handkerchief.

Des. He found it, then ;
I never gave it him : send for him hither ;
Let him confess a truth.

Oth. He hath confess'd.

Des. What, my lord ?

⁴ Some editors have managed to stumble at this passage. The language is indeed compressed, but the meaning seems clear enough. Othello goes about the killing of his wife as an act of religion, and he fears lest her perjury may excite his anger, and so corrupt the deed into an act of revenge. So Johnson's explanation: "Thou *hardenest* my heart, and makest me *kill thee with the rage of a murderer*, when I thought to have *sacrificed thee* to justice with the calmness of a priest striking a victim."

Oth. That he hath used thee.

Des. How? unlawfully?

Oth. Ay.

Des. He will not say so.

Oth. No, his mouth is stopp'd ;

Honest Iago hath ta'en order⁵ for't.

Des. O ! my fear interprets : what, is he dead?

Oth. Had all his hairs been lives, my great revenge
Had stomach for them all.

Des. Alas, he is betray'd, and I undone !

Oth. Out, strumpet ! weep'st thou for him to my face?

Des. O, banish me, my lord, but kill me not !

Oth. Down, strumpet !

Des. Kill me to-morrow ; let me live to-night !

Oth. Nay, if you strive, —

Des. But half an hour !

Oth. Being done, there is no pause.⁶

Des. But while I say one prayer !

Oth. It is too late. [*Smother's her.*]

Emil. [*Within.*] My lord, my lord ! what, ho ! my lord,
my lord !

Oth. What noise is this? — Not dead? not yet quite dead?
I that am cruel am yet merciful ;
I would not have thee linger in thy pain :
So, so.⁷

⁵ In old language, to *take order* is to *adopt measures* or *make arrangements*. Shakespeare has the phrase repeatedly in that sense.

⁶ Othello regards the act as *done*, when the conflict between his love and honour is fully over, his resolution finally taken, and his hand raised to strike. To admit any pause, were but to prolong the suffering of the victim.

⁷ At these words, the Othello of the stage is made to stab Desdemona. There is no such direction in any of the old copies ; but still the stage-custom may be right ; as, in the agony of the moment, and in his desire "not to have her linger in her pain," Othello's resolution not to shed her blood might be overcome. It seems more natural, too, that Desdemona should speak *after* being stabbed, than after being smothered to death.

Emil. [*Within.*] What, ho ! my lord, my lord !

Oth. Who's there ?

Emil. [*Within.*] O, good my lord, I would speak a word with you !

Oth. Yes ; — 'tis Emilia ; — by-and-by. — She's dead. 'Tis like she comes to speak of Cassio's death ; The noise was high. Ha ! no more moving ? Still, Still as the grave. Shall she come in ? were't good ? I think she stirs again : no. What's best to do ? If she come in, she'll sure speak to my wife : My wife ! my wife ! what wife ? I have no wife. O, insupportable ! O heavy hour ! Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse Of Sun and Moon, and that th' affrighted globe Should yawn at alteration.

Emil. [*Within.*] I do beseech you That I may speak with you, O, good my lord !

Oth. I had forgot thee : O, come in, Emilia. Soft ! by-and-by. — Let me the curtains draw. — Where art thou ?

[*Opens the door.*]

Enter EMILIA.

What's the matter with thee now ?

Emil. O, my good lord, yonder's foul murder done !

Oth. What, now ?

Emil. But now, my lord.

Oth. It is the very error of the Moon ;^b She comes more near the Earth than she was wont, And makes men mad.

Emil. Cassio, my lord, hath kill'd a young Venetian

^b Othello says this with a tone of sarcastic or ironical scorn : " It is the mere wandering or ex-orbitancy of the Moon." The seeming whims and caprices of the Moon, that is to say, her irregularities of movement, were thought to make people lunatic. This use of *very* for *mere* occurs many times. See vol. vi. page 192, note 2.

Call'd Roderigo.

Oth. Roderigo kill'd !

And Cassio kill'd ?

Emil. No, Cassio is not kill'd.

Oth. Not Cassio kill'd ? then murder's out of tune,
And sweet revenge grows harsh.

Des. O, falsely, falsely murder'd !

Emil. Alas, what cry is that ?

Oth. That ! what ?

Emil. Out, and alas ! that was my lady's voice. —
Help ! help, ho ! help ! — O lady, speak again !
Sweet Desdemona ! O sweet mistress, speak !

Des. A guiltless death I die.

Emil. O, who hath done
This deed ?

Des. Nobody ; I myself. Farewell :
Commend me to my kind lord : O, farewell ! [*Dies.*

Oth. Why, how should she be murder'd ?

Emil. Alas, who knows ?

Oth. You heard her say herself, it was not I.

Emil. She said so : I must needs report the truth.

Oth. She's, like a liar, gone to burning Hell :

'Twas I that kill'd her.

Emil. O, the more angel she,⁹

⁹ Emilia evidently means that Desdemona is the more an angel for having spoken the falsehood in question. And surely all well-ordered minds must agree with her: at all events, I, for one, cannot choose, but love and honour Desdemona the more for that lie. For, indeed, the sweet, dear sufferer knows that Othello is driven onward by some monstrous delusion; that some hideous inspiration has put him clean out of his native self; that he is sure to have the worst of it, and so is even more an object of compassion than herself; and the unspeakable agony legible in his features wrings her pure soul with a pity so intense, as to take from her all sense of the pangs of death: and so her last breath is hallowed with a tender yearning to shield him, as far as she possibly can, from the dreadful retributions which await him, both from without and from within, when the truth

And you the blacker devil !

Oth. She turn'd to folly, and she was a whore.

Emil. Thou dost belie her, and thou art a devil.

Oth. She was false as water.

Emil. Thou art rash as fire, to say

That she was false : O, she was heavenly true !

Oth. Cassio did tup her ; ask thy husband else.

O, I were damn'd beneath all depth in Hell,

But that I did proceed upon just grounds

To this extremity. Thy husband knew it all.

Emil. My husband !

Oth. Thy husband.

Emil. That she was false to wedlock ?

Oth. Ay, with Cassio. Nay, had she been true,

If Heaven would make me such another world

Of one entire and perfect chrysolite,

I'd not have sold her for it.

Emil. My husband !

Oth. Ay, 'twas he that told me first :

An honest man he is, and hates the slime

That sticks on filthy deeds.

Emil. My husband !

Oth. What needs this iterance, woman ? I say thy husband.

Emil. O mistress, villainy hath made mocks with love !¹⁰ --
My husband say that she was false !

Oth. He, woman ;

I say thy husband : dost understand the word ?

My friend, thy husband, honest, honest Iago.

shall be known. So deep and sacred is the head and spring of Desdemona's dying falsehood ! It is a lie born of the very holiness of truth itself !

¹⁰ That is, villainy has made a sport and mockery of love, by playing upon it, and beguiling it into a conflagration of its own home. Emilia probably refers to the heroine's friendly efforts in Cassio's behalf

Emil. If he say so, may his pernicious soul
Rot half a grain a day ! he lies to th' heart :
She was too fond of her most filthy bargain.

Oth. Ha !

Emil. Do thy worst :
This deed of thine is no more worthy Heaven
Than thou wast worthy her.

Oth. Peace, you were best.

Emil. Thou hast not half the power to do me harm
As I have to be hurt. O gull ! O dolt !
As ignorant as dirt ! thou hast done a deed —
I care not for thy sword ; I'll make thee known,
Though I lost twenty lives. — Help ! help, ho ! help !
The Moor hath kill'd my mistress ! Murder ! murder !

Enter MONTANO, GRATIANO, *and* IAGO.

Mon. What is the matter ? — How now, general !

Emil. O, are you come, Iago ? you've done well,
That men must lay their murders on your neck.

Gra. What is the matter ?

Emil. Disprove this villain, if thou be'st a man.
He says thou told'st him that his wife was false :
I know thou didst not, thou'rt not such a villain.
Speak, for my heart is full.

Iago. I told him what I thought ; and told no more
Than what he found himself was apt and true.

Emil. But did you ever tell him she was false ?

Iago. I did.

Emil. You told a lie ; an odious, damnèd lie ;
Upon my soul, a lie ; a wicked lie !
She false with Cassio ! did you say with Cassio ?

Iago. With Cassio, mistress. Go to, charm ¹¹your tongue.

¹¹ To *charm* is to *hush* or *still* as with a *charm*. Pliny says that *favete linguis* was the constant exclamation before any *charm* was applied. From this circumstance the phrase to *charm* a tongue may have originated.

Emil. I will not charm my tongue ; I'm bound to speak :
My mistress here lies murder'd in her bed, —

Mon. } O, Heavens forbend !
Gra. }

Emil. — And your reports have set the murder on.

Oth. Nay, stare not, masters : it is true, indeed.

Gra. 'Tis a strange truth.

Mon. O monstrous act !

Emil. Villainy, villainy, villainy !

I think upon't, I think, — I smell't ; — O villainy ! —

I thought so then ; ¹² — I'll kill myself for grief. —

O villainy, villainy !

Iago. What, are you mad ? I charge you, get you home.

Emil. Good gentlemen, let me have leave to speak :

'Tis proper I obey him, but not now. —

Perchance, Iago, I will ne'er go home.

Oth. O ! O ! O ! [*Falling on the bed.*]

Emil. Nay, lay thee down and roar ;

For thou hast kill'd the sweetest innocent

That e'er did lift up eye.

Oth. [*Rising.*] O, she was foul ! —

I scarce did know you, uncle : there lies your niece,

Whose breath, indeed, these hands have newly stopp'd :

I know this act shows horrible and grim.

Gra. Poor Desdemon ! I'm glad thy father's dead :

Thy match was mortal to him, and pure grief

Shore his old thread in twain : did he live now,

This sight would make him do a desperate turn,

Yea, curse his better angel from his side,

And fall to reprobance.

Oth. 'Tis pitiful ; but yet Iago knows

That she with Cassio hath the act of shame

¹² That is, when she gave the handkerchief to Iago ; for even *then* she appears to have suspected it was sought after for no honest purpose.

A thousand times committed ; Cassio confess'd it :
 And she did gratify¹³ his amorous works
 With that recognizance and pledge of love
 Which I first gave her ; I saw it in his hand :
 It was a handkerchief, an antique token
 My father gave my mother.

Emil. O Heaven ! O heavenly powers !

Iago. Come, hold your peace.

Emil. 'Twill out, 'twill out ! I peace !

No, I will speak as liberal as the north :¹⁴
 Let Heaven and men and devils, let them all,
 All, all, cry shame against me, yet I'll speak.

Iago. Be wise, and get you home.

Emil.

I will not.

[*IAGO offers to stab EMILIA.*

Gra.

Fie !

Your sword upon a woman ?

Emil. O thou dull Moor ! that handkerchief thou speak'st of
 I found by fortune, and did give my husband ;
 For often, with a solemn earnestness —
 More than indeed belong'd to such a trifle —
 He begg'd of me to steal it.

Iago. Villainous whore !

Emil. She give it Cassio ! no, alas, I found it,
 And I did give't my husband.

Iago. Filth, thou liest !

Emil. By Heaven, I do not, I do not, gentlemen. —
 O murderous coxcomb ! what should such a fool
 Do with so good a wife ?

Oth. Are there no stones in Heaven

¹³ *Gratify* here is explained by Walker "express her gratitude for, recompense." A singular use of the word, but involving no real obscurity.

¹⁴ Meaning, to be sure, "I will be as free, as unrestrained, in speech, as the north wind is in blowing."

But what serve for the thunder? ¹⁵ — Precious villain!

[OTHELLO offers to stab IAGO, but is disarmed by MONTANO: IAGO stabs EMILIA, and then runs out.]

Gra. The woman falls; sure, he hath kill'd his wife.

Emil. Ay, ay. O, lay me by my mistress' side.

Gra. He's gone, but his wife's kill'd.

Mon. 'Tis a notorious villain. ¹⁶ Take you this weapon,
Which I have here recover'd from the Moor:
Come, guard the door without; let him not pass,
But kill him rather. I'll after that same villain,
For 'tis a damnèd slave. [Exeunt MONTANO and GRATIANO.]

Oth. I am not valiant neither,

But every puny whipster gets my sword:

But why should honour outlive honesty? ¹⁷

Let it go all.

Emil. What did thy song bode, lady?

Hark, canst thou hear me? I will play the swan,

And die in music: [Sings.] *Willow, willow, willow.* —

Moor, she was chaste; she loved thee, cruel Moor;

So come my soul to bliss as I speak true;

So speaking as I think, I die, — I die.

[Dies.]

Oth. I have another weapon in this chamber;

It is a sword of Spain, the ice-brook's temper: ¹⁸

¹⁵ Thunder-stone is the old name for thunder-bolt. Othello means, "Has Heaven no bolts to spare from the work of thunder for the special purpose of hurling at such villains?"

¹⁶ Iago could not be called a *notorious* villain in our sense of the word, as his villainy was not *known*." But Shakespeare uses the word with considerable license, and has it repeatedly very much in the sense of *egregious* or *outrageous*. See page 272, note 12. Also vol. v. page 238, note 28.

¹⁷ The meaning, here, is obscure, owing to an uncommon use of words. *Honour* is put for *valour*, as the context shows, because to be valiant was held the corner-stone of a man's honour. *Honesty*, again, has the sense of *honour*. The usage was not uncommon. So in North's Plutarch, *Life of Coriolanus*: "Thinkest thou it is not *honesty* for thee to grant thy mother's request, in so weighty a cause?" See, also, vol. xiv. page 198, note 28.

¹⁸ The way of tempering steel is by plunging it red-hot into cold water;

O, here it is. — Uncle, I must come forth.

Gra. [*Within.*] If thou attempt it, it will cost thee dear :
Thou hast no weapon, and perforce must suffer.

Oth. Look in upon me, then, and speak with me,
Or, naked¹⁹ as I am, I will assault thee.

Re-enter GRATIANO.

Gra. What is the matter?

Oth. Behold, I have a weapon ;
A better never did itself sustain
Upon a soldier's thigh : I've seen the day
That, with this little arm and this good sword,
I've made my way through more impediments
That twenty times your stop : but, O vain boast !
Who can control his fate ? 'tis not so now.
Be not afraid, though you do see me weapon'd ;
Here is my journey's end, here is my butt,²⁰
And very sea-mark of my utmost sail.
Do you go back dismay'd ? 'tis a lost fear :
Man but a rush against Othello's breast,
And he retires. Where should Othello go ? —
Now, how dost thou look now ? O ill-starr'd wench !
Pale as thy smock ! when we shall meet at compt,²¹
This look of thine will hurl my soul from Heaven,
And fiends will snatch at it. Cold, cold, my girl !

and the colder the water, the higher the temper attained. Steevens has shown from Martial and Justin that in Spain the waters of the Salo and the Chalybes, being remarkable for coldness, were used in tempering swords. As Toledo blades were famous all over Europe in the Poet's time, he might easily learn that they were of "the ice-brook's temper" without going to classical authorities.

¹⁹ *Naked* here is *unarmed*, or *naked of weapons*.

²⁰ *Butt* was a term in archery for the *mark*, that is, the *end*, at which the shots were aimed.

²¹ *At compt* is *at the judgment*, the day of *reckoning* or of *account*. Shakespeare has the word several times thus. See page 34, note 13.

Even like thy chastity. —

O cursèd, cursèd slave ! — Whip me, ye devils,

From the possession of this heavenly sight !

Blow me about in winds !²² roast me in sulphur !

Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire ! —

O Desdemon ! dead, Desdemon ! dead ! O ! O !

Enter LODOVICO, MONTANO, CASSIO *carried in a Chair, and*
Officers with IAGO, *Prisoner.*

Lod. Where is this rash and most unfortunate man ?

Oth. That's he that was Othello : here I am.

Lod. Where is that viper ? bring the villain forth.

Oth. I look down towards his feet,²³ — but that's a fable. —
If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee. [*Wounds* IAGO.]

Lod. Wrench his sword from him. [*OTHELLO is disarmed.*]

Iago. I bleed, sir ; but not kill'd.

Oth. I am not sorry neither : I'd have thee live ;

For, in my sense, 'tis happiness to die.

Lod. O thou Othello, that wert once so good,
Fall'n in the practice²⁴ of a damnèd slave,
What shall be said to thee ?

Oth. Why, any thing :

An honourable murderer, if you will ;

For nought I did in hate, but all in honour.

²² Probably the best comment on this is in *Measure for Measure*, iii. 1 :

To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice ;
To be imprison'd in the viewless winds,
And blown with restless violence round about
The pendent world

²³ Alluding to the Devil's *fabled* cloven foot. Othello looks down towards Iago's feet, to see if he has that sign of being a devil, but then concludes that he may be just as much a devil without it. In what follows, he implies that devils are in their nature *immortal*.

²⁴ *Practice*, again, for *plot*, *stratagem*, or *device*. See page 251, note 10.

Lod. This wretch hath part confess'd his villainy :
Did you and he consent in Cassio's death ?

Oth. Ay.

Cas. Dear general, I never gave you cause.

Oth. I do believe it, and I ask your pardon.
Will you, I pray, demand that demi-devil
Why he hath thus ensnared my soul and body ?

Iago. Demand me nothing : what you know, you know :
From this time forth I never will speak word.

Lod. What, not to pray ?

Gra. Torments will ope your lips.

Oth. Well, thou dost best.

Lod. Sir, you shall understand what hath befall'n,
Which, as I think, you know not. Here's a letter
Found in the pocket of the slain Roderigo ;
And here another : the one of them imports
The death of Cassio to be undertook
By Roderigo.

Oth. O villainy !

Cas. Most heathenish and most gross !

Lod. Now here's another discontented paper,
Found in his pocket too ; and this, it seems,
Roderigo meant t' have sent this damnèd villain ;
But that, belike, Iago in the interim
Came in and satisfied him.

Oth. O, the pernicious caitiff !—
How came you, Cassio, by that handkerchief
That was my wife's ?

Cas. I found it in my chamber :
And he himself confess'd but even now
That there he dropp'd it for a special purpose,
Which wrought to his desire.

Oth. O fool ! fool ! fool !

Cas. There is, besides, in Roderigo's letter,

How he upbraids Iago, that he made him
 Brave me upon the watch ; whereon it came
 That I was cast : and even but now he spake,
 After long seeming dead, Iago hurt him,
 Iago set him on.

Lod. You must forsake this room, and go with us :
 Your power and your command is taken off,
 And Cassio rules in Cyprus. For this slave,
 If there be any cunning cruelty
 That can torment him much and hold him long,
 It shall be his. You shall close prisoner rest,
 Till that the nature of your fault be known
 To the Venetian State. — Come, bring away.

Oth. Soft you ! a word or two before you go.
 I've done the State some service, and they know't ;
 No more of that. I pray you, in your letters,
 When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
 Speak of me as I am ; nothing extenuate,
 Nor set down aught in malice : then must you speak
 Of one that loved not wisely, but too well ;
 Of one not easily jealous, but, being wrought,
 Perplex'd in the extreme ;²⁵ of one whose hand,
 Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away
 Richer than all his tribe ;²⁶ of one whose subdued eyes,

²⁵ That is, "but *who*, being wrought *upon*, was perplexed in the extreme."—Walker remarks that "*perplexed*, as Shakespeare understood it, meant much more than with us." And he cites various examples showing that the word was used of the most agonizing states of mind.

²⁶ Hereupon Coleridge has the following: "Othello wishes to excuse himself on the score of ignorance, and yet not excuse himself,—to excuse himself by accusing. This struggle of feeling is finely conveyed in the word *base*, which is applied to the rude Indian, not in his own character, but as the momentary representative of Othello's."—Whether Shakespeare meant an allusion to any particular story of an Indian, or to the Indians as generally described, is not quite clear; probably, the latter. So in Drayton's *Legend of Matilda*: "The wretched Indian spurns the golden ore." Also,

Albeit unusèd to the melting mood,
 Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees
 Their médicinal gum. Set you down this ;
 And say besides, that in Aleppo once,
 Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk
 Beat a Venetian²⁷ and traduced the State,
 I took by th' throat the circumcisèd dog,
 And smote him — thus. [*Stabs himself with a dagger.*²⁸

Lod. O bloody period !

Gra. All that's spoke is marr'd.

Oth. I kiss'd thee ere I kill'd thee : no way but this,

[*Falling upon* DESDEMONA.

Killing myself, to die upon a kiss. [*Dies.*

Cas. 'This did I fear, but thought he had no weapon ;
 For he was great of heart.

Lod. [*To* IAGO.] O Spartan dog,²⁹
 More fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea !
 Look on the tragic loading of this bed ;
 This is thy work : — the object poisons sight ;
 Let it be hid. — Gratiano, keep³⁰ the house,

in *The Woman's Conquest*, by Sir Edward Howard: "Behold my queen, who with no more concern Ile cast away then Indians do a pearl, that ne'er did know its value." And in Habington's *Castara* :

So the unskillfull Indian those bright gems,
 Which might adde majestie to diadems,
 'Mong the waves scatters.

²⁷ It is said to have been immediate death for a Christian to strike a Turk in Aleppo.

²⁸ As Othello has been twice disarmed of his sword, first, on his offering to stab Iago, and then on his wounding Iago, we have to suppose that in stabbing himself he uses a dagger which he has hitherto kept concealed.

²⁹ The dogs of Spartan race were reckoned among those of the most fierce and savage kind.

³⁰ *Keep* in the sense of *guard* or *watch*. Repeatedly so. See vol. vii. page 169, note 14.

And seize upon³¹ the fortunes of the Moor,
For they succeed on you. — To you, lord governor,
Remains the censure³² of this hellish villain,
The time, the place, the torture ; O, enforce it !
Myself will straight aboard, and to the State
This heavy act with heavy heart relate.

[*Exeunt.*

³¹ *Seize upon* here means *take possession of*; a law term, used thus in divers other places. See vol. iv. page 252, note 2.

³² "The *censure*" is the *judgment* or the *sentencing*; as the word was commonly used. See page 214, note 17.

CRITICAL NOTES.

ACT I., SCENE I.

Page 162.

*Three great ones of the city,
In personal suit to make me his lieutenant,*

Of capp'd to him. — So the quartos. The folio has “*Off-capt* to him.” This is preferred by some editors on the ground that to *cap* meant to *keep the cap on*. But the word was certainly used for the common ceremony of taking off the cap or hat as a mark of deference. See foot-note 2.

P. 162. *And, in conclusion, nonsuits my mediators;*

For, certes, says he, I've already chose

My officer. *And what was he?* — So the first quarto. The other old copies omit “*And, in conclusion.*” The originals have no indication as to how much of the passage was meant to be taken as a quotation from Othello; and editors differ somewhat on that point. I am not sure but the word *For* should be so taken; but Dyce and the Cambridge Editors think otherwise.

P. 162. *A fellow almost damn'd in a fair wight.* — Instead of *wight* the old copies have *Wife*, with which nearly all are dissatisfied, and which cannot indeed be explained to any fitting sense but by methods too subtle and recondite. A good many different changes have been made or proposed. Tyrwhitt conjectured “*a fair life*”; and Coleridge thinks this reading “the true one, as fitting to Iago’s contempt for whatever did not display power, and that, intellectual power.” Mr. White reads “*in a fair wise*”; not very happily, I think. Of all the readings hitherto offered, I prefer Capell’s *face*. It suits the occasion and the speaker very well; for Iago dwells much on Cassio’s handsomeness of person; recurs to it again and again; and builds his scheme partly on that circumstance, as if he longed to make it the ruin of Cassio, sure enough. On the other hand, however, Iago’s

thought may well have been, that Cassio was badly damaged by the fascinations of a handsome mistress; thus referring to the amorous intrigue with Bianca, which comes out so strongly in the course of the play. So I am satisfied that we ought to read *wight*. It seems to me a very natural and fitting word for the place; and, if spelt phonographically, *wite*, might easily be misprinted *wife*; and Iago seems rather fond of using it scoffingly in reference to women. It may not be amiss to note further, that Iago's talk about Cassio is full of contempt: he is sneering at him both as a soldier and as a man; and Cassio's lickerous infatuation is an apt handle for his scorn to take hold of. And so both *fellow* and *wife*, or whatever may be the right word, are used by him contemptuously; and it would be quite in character for him to speak of Cassio either as a coxcomb almost spoiled by his own good looks, or as a fellow bewitched well-nigh out of his senses with a fair fancy-girl. — Mr. Arrowsmith, however, contends stoutly for the old text. He multiplies words rather profusely in order to make out that the meaning is, that such a character, or such soldiership, as Cassio's would be almost condemned in a woman. This is indeed a good meaning in itself; but to transmute the Poet's words into it, requires more of hermeneutical alchemy than I am master of. *Fellow* does not signify *character* or *soldiership* in any author that I am acquainted with. Besides, this meaning is sufficiently expressed in what follows. And Mr. Arrowsmith's interpretation would, I think, bring us to this: "Cassio's soldiership would be almost contemptible in an ordinary woman; and he knows no more how to order a battle than an ordinary woman does." Surely a reading that prompts or requires an explanation so forced and far-fetched may well be distrusted. It has set me more than ever against the old text. See foot-note 4.

P. 163.

Unless the bookish Theoric,

Wherein the togèd consuls can propose

As masterly as he. — So the first quarto. The other old copies have "the *Tongued* Consuls," which some prefer, as agreeing better with the context, "mere *prattle*, without practice," &c. But surely *togèd* is the right word. See foot-note 6. The folio has a like error in *Coriolanus*.

P. 164. *And, throwing but shows of service on their lords,*

Well thrive by them, and, when they've lined their coats,

Do themselves homage. — So Pope. The old copies have "Doe well thrive by them"; the transcriber's or printer's eye having probably caught *Doe* in the next line.

ACT 1., SCENE 2.

P. 172. *You had been hotly call'd for;*

When, being not at your lodging to be found,

The Senate sent about three several quests

To search you out. — In the first of these lines, the old copies read “you *have* bin hotly call'd for.” The correction is Lettsom's. In the third line, the quartos read “The Senate sent *above* three”; the folio, “The Senate *hath* sent *about* three.”

P. 173. *Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them.* — Walker would read *or* instead of *for*. Perhaps rightly.

P. 174. *Abused her delicate youth with drugs or minerals*

That waken motion. — So Hammer. The old copies read “That *weaken* motion.” Theobald printed “weaken *notion*”; as the Poet sometimes uses *notion* for *mind* or *judgment*. Ritson says that “to *weaken motion* is to *impair the faculties*”; but that surely is a strange use of language. See foot-note 16.

ACT 1., SCENE 3.

P. 177. *Have there injointed with an after fleet.* — So the first quarto. The other old copies have “injoined *them* with”; thus spoiling the rhythm without helping the sense. See foot-note 7.

P. 179. *What conjuration, and what mighty magic, —*

For such proceeding I am charg'd withal, —

I won his daughter with. — So the second folio. The earlier editions omit *with*.

P. 180. Duke. *To vouch this, is no proof:*

Without more certain and more overt test,

These are thin habits and poor likelihoods

Of modern seeming, you prefer against him. — So the quartos, except that they have *seemings* instead of *seeming*. The folio, doubtless by mere accident, omits the prefix, thus making these lines a continuation of Brabantio's speech, and then reads as follows:

To vouch this, is no prooffe,
Without more *wider*, and more *over* Test
Then *these* thin habits, and poore likely-hoods
Of moderne *seeming*, do prefer against him.

P. 181.

Of my redemption thence,

And portance in my travels' history.—So the quarto of 1630. The first quarto reads “And *with it all* my travells Historie”; the folio, “And portance in my *Travellours* historie.”

P. 183.

*For my own sake, jewel,**I'm glad at soul I have no other child;*

For thy escape would teach me tyranny, &c.—The old copies read “For *your* sake”; which can nowise be made to tally with the context, except by taking the phrase as equivalent to *on your account*,—a sense which, to be sure, it sometimes bears. Lettsom justly observes, “The sense, as well as the metre, requires ‘For *my own* sake, jewel.’”

P. 183. *Let me speak like yourself, and lay a sentence, &c.*—This and the twenty-one following lines, down to “‘Beseech you, now proceed to the affairs of State,” are most certainly an interpolation. The style of them is altogether unlike that of the surrounding matter: it is ambitious, artificial, and studied, in the highest degree. In a dramatic regard, also, the lines are a sheer incumbrance, and serve no purpose but to interrupt and embarrass the proper course of the scene. Besides, the preceding speech of Brabantio has fully and formally prepared the way for the Duke's speech, “The Turk with a most mighty preparation makes for Cyprus,” &c.

P. 185. *'Beseech you, now proceed to the affairs of State.*—The quartos read “Beseech you now, to the affairs of the State”; the folio, “*I humbly beseech you proceed to th' Affaires of State.*”

P. 186. *That I did love the Moor to live with him,**My downright violence and storm of fortunes*

May trumpet to the world.—So the folio and the quarto of 1630: the quarto of 1622 has *scorn* instead of *storm*. *Scorn* will not cohere with *violence*, unless by making it express a quality of Desdemona herself, not of her fortunes; the sense in that case being, “my downright violence of behaviour, and scorn of fortune.” She evidently means the violence and storm of fortunes which she has *braved* or *encountered* in marrying the Moor, and not any thing of a violent or scornful temper in herself.

P. 187. *Nor to comply wi' th' heat of young affects,—
 In me defunct,— but for her satisfaction,
 And to be free and bounteous to her mind.*—The old copies
 read as follows :

Nor to comply *with* heat *the* yong affects
 In *my* defunct, *and proper* satisfaction.
But to be free, and bounteous to her minde.

Few passages in Shakespeare have troubled the editors more than this; and the mass of conjectural criticism which it has evoked is almost enough to strike one with dismay. Upton proposed the change of *my* into *me*, — “In *me* defunct”; and since that time the passage has commonly been printed thus :

Nor to comply with heat — the young affects
 In *me* defunct — and proper satisfaction ;
 But to be free and bounteous to her mind.

But I have never been able to rest satisfied with this reading: it seems to me harsh and awkward beyond Shakespeare's utmost license of language. In the first line, the reading here given is my own. The Poet has a great many instances of the double contraction, *wi' th'* for *with the*; and in not a few cases I have found the contraction misprinted *with*. So in *The Tempest*, i. 1: “Bring her to Try *with* Maine-course.” And again in the same scene: “Let's all sink *with* King.” In both these cases — and there are more like them — the sense of *with the* is clearly required, and accordingly I print *wi' th'*. The transcriber or printer probably did not understand that point, in the present passage, and therefore sophisticated the text into the shape in which it has come down to us. For the reading in the second and third lines I am indebted to Mr. P. A. Daniel; and it seems to me one of the happiest emendations ever made of the Poet's text. Nor can the changes be justly termed violent; as *forher* might easily get misprinted *proper*; and such transpositions as *and* and *but* are among the commonest of typographical errors. I must add that to “comply with one's own satisfaction” is not and never was English, as it seems to me. See foot-note 32.

P. 187. *When light-wing'd toys
 Of feather'd Cupid seel with wanton dullness
 My speculative and active instruments, &c.* — So the quartos.
 The folio has “and *offic'd* Instrument.”

P. 190. *She will find the error of her choice*: she must have change, she must: *therefore put money in thy purse*. — So the quartos. The folio has “the errors of her choice,” and omits “she must have change, she must.”

P. 191. Iago. *No more of drowning, do you hear?*

Rod. *I am changed*: I'll go sell all my land.

Iago. *Go to; farewell*: put money enough in your purse. —

[Exit RODERIGO.

Thus do I ever make my fool my purse. — So the first quarto, except that it lacks “I'll go sell all my land,” and places the *exit* of Roderigo before the third line instead of after it. The second quarto omits the third line altogether, but has “I'll go sell all my land.” The folio has nothing of the first three lines, except “He sell all my Land.”

ACT II., SCENE I.

P. 194. *The ship is here put in,*

La Veronesa; Michael Cassio,

Lieutenant to the warlike Moor Othello,

Is come on shore: the Moor himself's at sea, &c. — In the second of these lines, the old copies have “A Veronessa,” and “A Verennessa.” This has bred some doubt whether the name referred to the ship or to Cassio, as if the speaker supposed him to be a *Veronese*. The substitution of *La* for *A* is Mr. P. A. Daniel's, and of course makes *Veronesa* the name of the ship. In the fourth line, the old copies have “the Moore *himselfe* at Sea.” The correction is Rowe's.

P. 194. *Thanks to the valiant of this warlike isle,*

That so approve the Moor! — So the first quarto, except that it has *worthy* instead of *warlike*. The second quarto has the same, except that it omits *worthy*. The folio reads “Thanks you, the valiant of the warlike Isle.”

P. 195. *His bark is stoutly timber'd, and his pilot*

Of very expert and approved allowance;

Therefore my hopes, not suffocate to death.

Stand in bold cure. — The old copies read “not *surfeited* to death.” As Cassio evidently has apprehensions about Othello's safety, how he can either be said to have *any surfeit* of hope, or be said *not* to have

a *deadly* surfeit of hope, quite passes my comprehension. Knight explains, "As 'hope deferred maketh the heart sick,' so hope upon hope, without realization, is a surfeit of hope"; but this seems to me absurdly, not to say ridiculously, forced. Cassio's meaning appears to be, that his hopes of the Moor's safety would have been drowned to death in that terrible sea, but for the strong ship and good pilot. Johnson, not being able to understand how hope could be increased till it were destroyed, conjectured "not *forfeited* to death." I was for a while in doubt whether to read "not *suffocate* to death" or, "not *sick yet unto* death"; but on the whole preferred the former as involving somewhat less of change, and as being perhaps rather more in Shakespeare's manner. See foot-note 8.

P. 195. *One that excels the quirks of blazoning pens,
And in th' essential vesture of creation*

Does tire the ingener. — The quartos read "Does *bear* all excellency," except that the second has *an* instead of *all*. This reading has been justly set down as "flat and unpoetical." The folio reads "Do's tyre the *Ingeniver*." The last word is most likely a misprint for *ingener*. See foot-note 9.

P. 196. *Great God, Othello guard,*

And swell his sail with Thine own powerful breath, &c. — The old copies have "Great *Jove*." "For this absurdity," says Malone, "I have not the smallest doubt that the Master of the Revels, and not our Poet, is answerable." The same "absurdity" occurs in several other places. See note on "*God* and my stars be praised," &c., vol. v. page 247.

P. 200. *Is he not a most profane and liberal censurer?* — So Theobald and Collier's second folio. The old copies have *Counsailor* instead of *censurer*.

P. 205. *If this poor brach of Venice, whom I trash*

For his quick hunting, stand the putting-on, &c. — So Collier's second folio. All the old copies have *trash* instead of *brach*; while, instead of *trash*, the first quarto has *crush*, and the folio and second quarto have *trace*. Theobald reads "This poor *brach* of Venice, whom I *trace*." See foot-note 31.

ACT II., SCENE 3.

P. 211. *I fear the trust Othello puts in him, &c.*—So Capell and Lettsom. The old copies have “puts *him in*.”

P. 213. *Have you forgot all sense of place and duty? Hold!*
The general speaks to you; hold, hold, for shame!—The old copies read “all *place of sence*, and duty.” They also print the first *Hold* at the beginning of the second line, thus: “Hold. The Generall speaks to you:” &c.

P. 215. *Shall lose me. What! in a town with war*
Yet wild, the people's hearts brimful of fear,
To manage private and domestic quarrel,
In night, and on the court of guard and safety!—In the first and second of these lines, the old copies read “in a Towne of warre, Yet wilde,” &c. But what is a *town of war*? or what can the phrase mean? The reading in the text is Mr. P. A. Daniel's. Of course it means “in a town yet wild with war.”—To complete the metre of the first line, Capell printed “Shall *loosen* me.” But that, I think, defeats the right sense. Hammer reads “What, *and in*,” &c. But should it not rather be “What! *even* in a town,” &c.?—In the last line, also, the old copies read “on the Court *and guard of safety*.” Corrected by Theobald.

P. 215. *If, partially affined, or leagued in office, &c.*—The old copies have *league* instead of *leagued*.

P. 215. *And Cassio following with determined sword*
To execute upon him.—The old copies have “Cassio following *him*”;—probably an accidental repetition from the next line. Corrected by Pope.

P. 216. *Sir, for your hurts, myself will be your surgeon.*—
 [To MONTANO, who is led off.
 —The old copies here add to the text “Lead him off,” but have no stage-direction. Doubtless, as Malone thought, those words were meant for a stage-direction, and got misprinted as part of the text. A very frequent error.

P. 220. *Myself the while to draw the Moor apart, &c.*—So Theobald. The old copies have “*Myselfe a while,*” and “*Myselfe awhile.*”

ACT III., SCENE 3.

P. 224. O sir, *I thank you. You do love my lord.* &c.—So the quartos. The folio reads “*I know’t: I thanke you,*” which some editors prefer, I do not understand why.

P. 226. *Save that, they say, the wars must make examples
Out of the best.*—So Singer. The old copies have “*Out of her best.*” Rowe printed “*Out of their best.*”

P. 227. *Or sue to you to do peculiar profit
To your own person.*—So Pope. The old copies read “*to do a peculiar profit,*” &c. We have many like instances of a palpably interpolated.

P. 228. Think, my lord!—*By Heaven, he echoes me,
As if there were some monster in his thought
Too hideous to be shown.*—So the first quarto. The folio reads “*Alas thou echo’st me; As if there were some Monster in thy thought,*” &c.; the second quarto, “*Why dost thou echoe me,*” &c. It is not easy to choose between these three readings, but I am strongly inclined to prefer the last.

P. 230. *As, I confess, it is my nature’s plague
To spy into abuses, and oft my jealousy
Shapes faults that are not,* &c.—I here follow the reading of the quartos, with which the folio agrees, except that it has *of* instead of *oft*. It has been proposed to read “*of my jealousy,*” and change *shapes* into *shape*. At first sight, this is plausible, as it satisfies the grammar perfectly. But jealousy is itself, evidently, the “*nature’s plague*” of which Iago is speaking. So that the sense would be, “*It is my nature’s plague to spy into abuses, and of my nature’s plague to shape faults that are not*”; which comes pretty near being nonsense. On the other hand, if we read, “*It is my nature’s plague to spy into abuses, and oft my nature’s plague shapes faults that are not,*” the language is indeed not good, but the sense is perfect.

P. 231. *It is the green-eyed monster, which doth make*

The meat it feeds on.—So Hanmer and a large majority of the editors since his time. The old text has *mocke* instead of *make*, and several recent editors have gone back to the former. But that reading seems to me a stark absurdity; while, on the other hand, there cannot well be a truer description of jealousy than that it creates its own food. To be sure, some manage to rack and extort from *mock* a certain dim and vague show of fitness: for so minds “green in judgment” are apt to be infected, as in my “salad days” I was myself, with a fond conceit of ingenuity that will undertake to explain any thing; but, as men grow and ripen into a love of plainness and simplicity, all such superfineness of explanation appears to them simply ridiculous. Of late years, Shakespeare has suffered a good deal from these exquisite tormentors of words. See foot-note 16.

P. 242. *And, being troubled with a raging tooth,*

I could not sleep. There are a kind of men

So loose of soul, that in their sleeps will mutter

Of their affairs: one of this kind is Cassio.—So Walker. The old copies have a different arrangement of the lines, and are without *Of* in the last line.

P. 243. *If it be that, or any that was hers,*

It speaks against her with the other proofs—The old copies read “or any, it was hers.” Corrected by Malone.

P. 243. *Arise, black vengeance, from the hollow Hell!*—So the folio. The quartos have “from *thy* hollow *cell*”; which is strangely preferred by several editors. To speak of a hollow cell as the abode of vengeance seems very tame. Besides, as Othello has just blown all his love to *Heaven*, harmony of thought and language seems to require that he should invoke revenge from *Hell*. See foot-note 52.

P. 244. *Whose icy current and compulsive course*

Ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on, &c.—So the quarto of 1630. The passage is not in the first quarto; and the folio reads “Nev'r *keepes* retiring ebb, but *keepes* due on.” Collier's second folio has “Ne'er *knows* retiring ebb.”

P. 244. *And to obey shall be in me remorse,*

What bloody work soe'er.—So the quartos. The folio has “What bloody *business* ever.”

ACT III., SCENE 4.

P. 250. *That nor my service past, nor present sorrow,
Nor purposed merit in futurity, &c.*—So Walker. The old copies have *Sorrowes* instead of *sorrow*. The confounding of plurals and singulars is very frequent.

ACT IV., SCENE 1.

P. 258. *Or I shall say you're all-in-all one spleen,
And nothing of a man.*—So Lettsom. The old copies read “all in all *in* Splene.” Capell printed “all in all *a* spleen.”

P. 263. *God save the worthy general.*—So the quarto of 1622. The other old copies read “Save *you* worthy Generall.” Probably, in this instance, the former reading escaped the Master of the Revels.

ACT IV., SCENE 2.

P. 268. *Had it pleased Heaven
To try me with affliction; had He rain'd
All kinds of sores and shames on my bare head; &c.*—So the quartos. The folio reads “had *they* rain'd,” &c. In support of the latter, Dyce shows that the Poet sometimes uses Heaven as a collective noun; but he does not show that he constantly uses it so.

P. 268. *A fixed figure for the time of scorn
To point his slow unmoving finger at.*—So the quartos, except that the first has *fingers* instead of *finger*, and that both add, after *at*, “—oh, oh.” The folio has “*The* fixed figure,” and “To point his slow, and moving finger at.” The passage has elicited a good deal of comment, and various changes have been proposed, of which the only one that seems to me much worth pausing upon is Hunter’s, “The fixed figure of the time, for scorn To point,” &c. I add White’s comment on the second line: “Some have chosen the reading of the folio, on the ground that if the finger of scorn be ‘slow,’ it must move, and therefore ‘unmoving’ is an incongruous epithet! But surely the finger of scorn is unmoving, because it does not move *from its object*, but points at him fixedly and relentlessly.” See foot-note 4.

P. 271. *How have I been behaved, that he might stick*

The small'st opinion on my great'st abuse?—So the first quarto. The other old copies have *least misuse* instead of *great'st abuse*. But we cannot take *on* here as equivalent to *of*, for the connection is *stick on*, and not *opinion on*; so that *least* does not give the right sense. See foot-note 9.

P. 272. *If e'er my will did trespass 'gainst his love,*

Either in discourse, or thought, or actual deed; &c.—So the quarto of 1630. The passage is not in the first quarto; and the folio has “discourse of thought.” With the latter there is no fault to be found on the score of language; for Shakespeare elsewhere has “discourse of reason,” which is but an equivalent phrase. See vol. xiv. page 159, note 32. But the quarto reading is, I think, more in accordance with the solemn and impressive particularity of the speaker's asseveration of her innocence. And it may well be understood as referring to the three forms of sin, “by thought, word, and deed,” specified in the old catechisms and the eucharistical confession of the Church.

P. 274. *I think it is scurvy, and begin to find myself fopp'd in it.*—So all the old copies. Modern editions generally change *fopp'd* to *fobb'd*, and perhaps rightly, as to *fob* is to *cheat*, to *put off by a trick*, to *evade*; a sense that well fits the occasion. See, however, foot-note 18.

ACT IV., SCENE 3.

P. 277. *My mother had a maid call'd Barbara.*—The old copies have *Barbary* and *Barbarie*; and so the name was probably pronounced. Many people now pronounce *Martha* as if it were spelt *Marthy*.

P. 277. *And she died singing it. I've much to-do*

Not to go hang my head all at one side, &c.—So Hamner and Collier's second folio: Theobald also conjectured the same. The old copies have “*But to go hang,*” &c. With *But*, the construction is, “I've much to-do *to do any thing but to go hang*”; which, to say the least, is exceedingly awkward and harsh. We have many instances of *but* and *not* misprinted for each other.

P. 278. *If I court more women, you'll couch with more men.*—Instead of *more*—*more*, the old copies have *mo*—*mo*: but, as Walker

observes, *mo* and *moe* occur "in numberless places, where no one has thought it necessary so to read, unless the rhyme demanded it."

ACT V., SCENE 1.

P. 282. *No, he must die: be't so; I hear him coming.*—So the quartos. The folio has "*But so.*" Dyce conjectures "*but soft! I hear him coming.*" And so I suspect it should be.

ACT V., SCENE 2.

P. 287. *Put out the light, — and then put out thy light, &c.*—The old copies read "and then put out *the* light." The reading in the text is Hammer's, and is, I think, fully justified by the context; as we have, just below, "but once put out *thy* light," and "That can *thy* light relume."

P. 290. Oth. *It is too late.* [Smother's her.

Emil. [*Within.*] *My lord, my lord! what, ho! &c.*—So the folio and the second quarto. The first quarto inserts between these two speeches "*Des. O Lord, Lord, Lord.*"

P. 291. *The noise was high. — Ha! no more moving? still, Still as the grave.*—So Walker. The first *still* is not in the old copies. The metre certainly wants it, and the sense even more, perhaps, than the metre.

P. 291. *O, my good lord, yonder's foul murder done!*—The old copies have *murders* instead of *murder*. The correction is Theobald's.

P. 297. *Are there no stones in Heaven*

But what serve for the thunder? — Precious villain!—So the first quarto and the folio. The second quarto has "*Pernicious villain.*" And so I more than suspect we ought to read; for there is ground, surely, for Lettson's remark, that "'*Precious villain*' is more in the style of Cloten than of Othello."

P. 299. *O Desdemona! dead, Desdemona! dead! O! O!*—So the folio. The quartos have the line as follows:

O Desdemona, Desdemona, dead, O, o, o.

P. 300. Oth. *O villainy!*

Cas. *Most heathenish and most gross!*—The old copies have *Villaine* instead of *villainy*. Walker says, "*Villainy* of course; and so also Ritson."

P. 300. *And he himself confess'd but even now*

That there he dropp'd it for a special purpose, &c.—The first quarto reads "*confest it even now*"; the other old copies, "*confest it but even now.*"

P. 301. *Of one whose hand,*

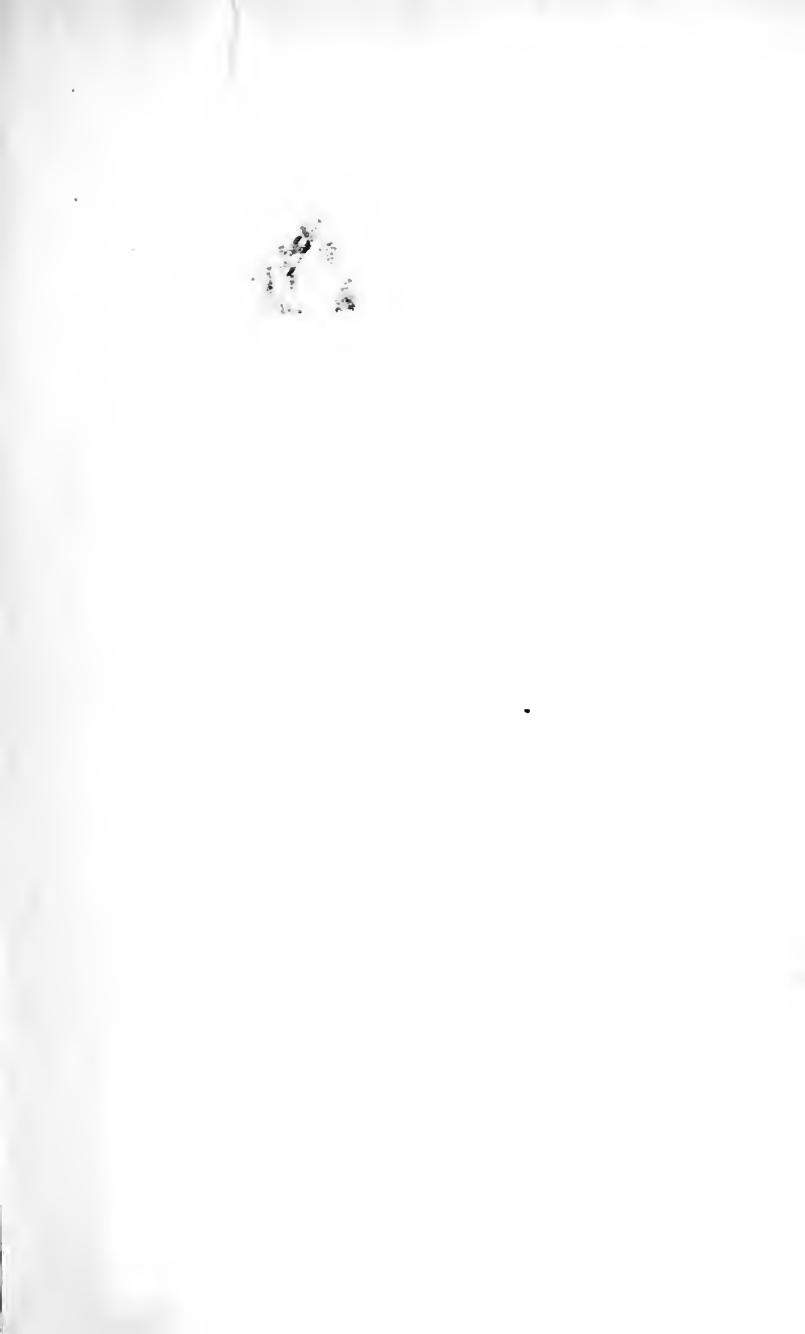
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away

Richer than all his tribe; &c.—So the quartos. The folio has

Judean instead of *Indian*. See foot-note 26.

P. 302. *Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees*

Their medicinal gum.—So the quartos. The folio has *Medicinal*.





PR 2753 .H8 1899 v.17 SMC
Shakespeare, William,
The complete works of
William Shakespeare Harvard
ed. --

