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Coriolanus

A. W. VERITY

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The Pitt Press Shakespeare for Schools

CORIOLANUS

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CORIOLANUS

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NOTE.

EXCEPT for the *Introduction*, which remains practically as it was, this edition is, in the main, an abbreviation of the larger one edited by me (1905) for the Cambridge University Press. My obligations were expressed, I hope adequately, in the prefatory Note to that edition, here appended:

"I desire to acknowledge my obligations to various editions, more especially the *Variorum* edition of 1821 and the *Cambridge Shakespeare* (from which all the information on textual points has been derived); as also to the standard works of reference, notably Schmidt's *Lexicon*, and to critical essays on the play. The Indexes were compiled for me."

The remark about the Indexes applies to the present edition also.

A. W. V.

July, 1911.

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INTRODUCTION.

I.

DATE OF THE COMPOSITION OF "*CORIOLANUS*[1]."

Coriolanus was first published in the 1st Folio edition[2] of Shakespeare's plays (1623). It was evidently printed from a very faulty or illegible MS. The Folio's text of *Coriolanus* teems with obvious errors, and the difficulties of reading are numerous.

"The play is mentioned in the Stationers' Registers, under date of Nov. 8, 1623, as one of sixteen plays not previously entered to other men[3]."

There is no conclusive piece of external or internal evidence as to the exact year of the composition of *Coriolanus*. Those general characteristics of style which constitute what is called the "æsthetic" or purely internal evidence—diction, that is, metre and tone—point to the close (1608—1610) of Shakespeare's tragic period; and within the limits 1608—1610 some special

[1] The materials of this section are taken from various sources.

[2] The first collected edition of Shakespeare's plays, and the earliest authority for the text of the majority, e.g. *As You Like It*, *Julius Cæsar*, *Macbeth*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Coriolanus*, *The Tempest*. But for the First Folio (often referred to simply as "the Folio") these plays would, no doubt, have been lost. Of only sixteen of the plays are there extant Quarto editions, and these were all "publishers' ventures... undertaken without the co-operation of the author." The Second Folio (1632) was a reprint of the First, correcting some of its typographical errors, and introducing some conjectural changes which are often quite unnecessary. The later Folios have little value or interest, except that the edition of 1664 was the first to give *Pericles*.

[3] Gollancz.

considerations make the latter part of 1608 or the earlier part of 1609 probable as the precise date of its composition.

Coriolanus belongs to the group of plays later than *Hamlet* (1602), in which the intellectual strain predominates over the poetical; drama over music. A "Roman" tragedy, *Coriolanus* may fitly be compared with the earliest of Shakespeare's Roman tragedies, *Julius Cæsar*, known to date from 1600—1601, i.e. from his middle period. And the comparison, from the point of view of style, is soon felt to lie between a deep rushing river and a broad pellucid stream.

After *Hamlet*, the immediate successor of *Julius Cæsar*, Shakespeare's style (says Professor Bradley) "in the more emotional passages is heightened. It becomes grander, sometimes wilder, sometimes more swelling, even tumid. It is also more concentrated, rapid, varied, and, in construction, less regular, not seldom twisted or elliptical. It is, therefore, not so easy and lucid, and in the more ordinary dialogue it is sometimes involved and obscure, and from these and other causes deficient in charm. On the other hand, it is always full of life and movement, and in great passages produces sudden, strange, electrifying effects which are rarely found in earlier plays, and not so often even in *Hamlet*. The more pervading effect of beauty gives place to what may almost be called explosions of sublimity or pathos." Much of this admirable summary may be applied to *Coriolanus*, with emphasis on the play's non-poetical element—for "the verse continually tends to become prose, and the language again and again approaches that of common speech[1]"—and on its counterbalancing transports of singular eloquence and magnificence.

As with the style, so with the metre. The trend of Shakespeare's blank verse is increasingly towards a freedom which removes it from the simpler, more obviously metrical verse-form that prevails in his early and middle plays. This freedom comes through a number of variations[2] of the normal so-called "iambic"

[1] *The Age of Shakespeare*, II. 99, 100.

[2] See the "Hints on Metre," pp. 229—237.

type of blank verse. "Unstopt" or "run-on" verse, pauses within the line, extra syllables at the end or in the middle of the line, trisyllabic feet[1] which lend a peculiar effect of impetuosity to the rhythm: all these distinguishing features of Shakespeare's later verse are illustrated to the full in *Coriolanus*. Still more significant, as a metrical test, is the number of "light" and "weak" endings[2] to lines. The endings thus classified are the surest metrical mark of Shakespeare's later work. The first play in which there is a considerable number of both classes of ending is *Antony and Cleopatra*, which has 71 "light" endings and 28 "weak" endings, making together a percentage of 3·53 on the total number of verse-lines in the play. *Coriolanus* stands next, with a percentage of 4·05. In *The Tempest* (1610?) the percentage is 4·59. From the absence of specific and incontestable evidence as to the precise date of the composition of *Coriolanus*, this test of the percentage of "light" and "weak" endings has been pressed strongly by critics. In the case of no other play is this particular test so important.

Metrical considerations, therefore, point clearly to a late date, while the whole tone of *Coriolanus* ranges it with the other tragedies of passion and weakness.

Now within this late period, the likeliest year seems to be 1608 (late) or 1609, for two or three reasons.

(1) The test of the "light" and "weak" endings places *Coriolanus*, as we have seen, just after *Antony and Cleopatra*. The date of *Antony and Cleopatra* is 1608. The two tragedies had a common source: Shakespeare might well pass from the one to the other. Several resemblances[3] between the two plays favour this view.

[1] They are remarkably frequent in *Coriolanus*; in fact, they constitute a striking metrical feature of the play. [2] See p. 233.

[3] Cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*, III. 4. 12—20, with Volumnia's great speech, v. 3. 104—118; *A. and C.* I. 2. 192—194, with *Coriolanus*, I. 1. 169, 170. Cleopatra's scornful description of the Roman mob (v. 2. 209—213) recalls more than one passage in *Coriolanus*. The instability of the "common body" is pictured (I. 4. 44—47) in the very spirit of Coriolanus himself.

(2) Ben Jonson certainly appears to allude to *Coriolanus*, II. 2. 99 ("He *lurch'd* all swords *of the garland*") in his comedy of *Epicœne, or The Silent Woman*, v. 1. He makes a character say jestingly, "Well Dauphine, you have *lurched* your friends of the better half *of the garland*." The date of *The Silent Woman* is 1609. There would not be much point in the allusion —a satirical allusion—if *Coriolanus* were not at the time quite a recent play. That the passages are independent of each other is very improbable, the use of "lurch" being out of the common, as Jonson doubtless meant to imply. It would not be the only satirical glance at Shakespeare in Ben Jonson's works[1].

(3) Motherhood is a dominant motive in *Coriolanus*, and Shakespeare's own mother died in September, 1608. "The thoughts of the man and the dreams of the poet were thus led to dwell upon the significance in a man's life of this unique form, comparable to no other—his mother[2]." And in Volumnia *Coriolanus* gives us "this one sublime mother-form, the proudest and most highly wrought that Shakespeare has drawn." Similarly the death of Shakespeare's father in 1601, and the tragic end of his patron-friend Essex the same year, may well have "lent fervour to Hamlet's outbursts of grief and friendship[3]"; for *Hamlet* dates from 1601—1602.

We can hardly, therefore, be far wrong in accepting 1608 (late), or 1609 (early), as the year when *Coriolanus* was written; preferably, I think, 1609. Three other scraps of conjecture are worth mentioning inasmuch as they support this conclusion.

"The reference to the ripest mulberry (III. 2. 79) was thought by Malone and Chalmers to bear on the date; for in 1609 the King made an attempt to encourage the breeding of silkworms. Similarly, Chalmers found in the references to famine and death allusions to the year 1609[4]." Neither of these points, however, can be emphasised strongly. There are references to the mulberry in *Venus and Adonis*[5] (1593) and *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*[6] (1594—1595). The "famine" comes from Plutarch's narrative.

[1] See the note on II. 2. 99. [2] Brandes.
[3] Herford. [4] Gollancz. [5] 1103. [6] III. 1. 170, v. 149.

In *Coriolanus*, I. i. 166, there might be a glance at the great frost of January, 1608.

It is ill-luck that the date of *Timon of Athens*, and Shakespeare's share in it, should be uncertain. The play has much affinity to *Coriolanus*. The story comes in North's *Plutarch*[1], and Timon's railing at humanity in general is of a piece with Coriolanus's railing at the Roman "people." The banishment of Alcibiades, even his retort to the Senate at his banishment (III. 5. 98, 99), and their embassy (V. 1) to Timon, praying him return to Athens and intercede for them with Alcibiades, all have a pretty close parallel in *Coriolanus*.

Some think that the fable of the belly and other members of the body (one of those wide-spread popular tales which appear, with slight local variations, in many lands and literatures) was known to Shakespeare through Camden's *Remains* as well as through North's *Plutarch*. But the reference, if certain, would not help us much in determining the date of *Coriolanus*, as the *Remains* appeared in 1605.

II.

CORIOLANUS AND NORTH'S "*PLUTARCH*."

The source from which Shakespeare drew the story of *Coriolanus* is North's translation of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*. Plutarch, a Greek writer of the first century A.D., wrote the biographies of celebrated Greeks and Romans in pairs, placing a Roman counterpart over against a Greek. "The *Parallel Lives* is a book most sovereign in its dominion over the minds of great men in every age[2]." It is one of the books which Emerson calls "world-books," books, that is, of world-wide

[1] In the *Life* of Mark Antony, which Shakespeare had used for *Julius Cæsar* (probably not to a large extent) and for *Antony and Cleopatra*.

[2] Wyndham. His *Introduction* to the reprint of North in the *Tudor Translations* seems the last word that can be said on the merits of Plutarch and North, and Shakespeare's relation to both writers. Part of what is said in this section (II) of the Introduction to *Coriolanus* is merely adapted from Mr Wyndham.

interest and undying appeal. And it is this, for two reasons. Plutarch deals with great men of action. The end of drama is action, and the end of life is action; and the story of those who *do* great things will always interest their fellow-creatures, most of whom *do* very little. Plutarch's *dramatis personæ* are "makers of history," the field of their activities is the State, their successes and failures are in the grand manner.

> "He nothing common did or mean
> Upon that memorable scene,"

might be applied to many of Plutarch's heroes, and he paints their memorable scenes with an art that rises to the height of its argument. The material was great, but the material was not greater than the insight and skill of the artist. Plutarch sees the essentials of personality and has the power to transmit what he sees. The *Lives* are written on the principle that the proper study of mankind is man, and that man should be studied not only in his noblest deeds, but also in the seeming trifles, the slight, significant touches, which really reveal so much of character. The *Lives*, therefore, have the interest of drama rather than of historical writing as commonly practised; and so when he came to dramatise the lives of Coriolanus, Julius Cæsar, and Antony and Cleopatra, Shakespeare found his work already done in part.

"While Holinshed was a mere annalist, whose work was chiefly an unpretentious record of tradition, the Greek historian was a literary artist of a high order, with a method that specially fitted his writings to become a dramatic storehouse. Imperfectly acquainted with the political issues of the epochs which he describes, he had a keen eye for character in its multifarious varieties, and the incidents which specially attracted him were those which threw light upon some notable personality. Thus, as he tells us, he seeks 'the distinctive marks of the soul in the smallest facts, in witty answers and lively off-hand remarks, which often show a man's character more clearly than murderous combats, or great battles, or the taking of towns.' This psychological method of interpreting history, equally removed from that which simply records occurrences and that which investigates complex social phenomena, is the one most fruitful for dramatic purposes. The playwright finds

that the historian has come half-way to meet him by singling out precisely those episodes which are the distinctive marks of the soul. Thus, while Holinshed supplied rough ore which had to be carefully sifted and refined, Plutarch's material had already gone through these processes, and only needed the crowning embellishment of poetic handling. Hence page after page out of the 'lives' of Caesar, Brutus, Antony, and Coriolanus is, with curiously slight modifications, transposed by Shakespere into dramatic form. His genius finds its scope not in invention, but in animating Plutarch's narrative with the vivid life and play of dialogue[1]."

Thus in the scene which is the climax of *Coriolanus*, the scene of Volumnia's intercession with Coriolanus (v. 3), all the essentials of Shakespeare's meeting of mother and son are to be seen in Plutarch's narrative. The resemblance between the speech which Shakespeare places in Volumnia's mouth and her speech as rendered in North's *Plutarch* is no mere matter of borrowed language. "The dramatic tension, the main argument, the turns of pleading, even the pause and renewal of entreaty, all are in North, and are expressed by the same spoken words and the same gap of silence[2]." The historian, in short, has provided the stuff out of which the poet has wrought the pall of high tragedy.

The medium through which Plutarch was known to Shakespeare was the famous translation :

"The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romanes, compared together by that graue learned Philosopher and Historiographer, Plutarke of Chaeronea: Translated out of Greeke into French by James Amyot, Abbot of Bellozane, Bishop of Auxerre, one of the King's Priuy Counsel, and Great Amner [Almoner] of Fraunce: and out of French into Englishe by Thomas North. Imprinted at London by Thomas Vautrouiller and John Wight, 1579."

The popularity of the translation is shown by its numerous reprints (1603, 1612, 1631, 1656, 1676).

The general relation of *Coriolanus* to North's *Plutarch* may conveniently be considered under three main heads—diction, characterisation, and construction. The first thing that strikes

[1] Boas. [2] Wyndham.

us when we compare the play with its source (and the remark is equally applicable to Shakespeare's other "Roman" tragedies) is the closeness with which Shakespeare often reproduces North's very diction. He is "saturated with North's language and possessed by his passion[1]." This feature of *Coriolanus* is most conspicuous in Coriolanus's speech to Aufidius, at Aufidius's house in Antium, and in the great speech of Volumnia to Coriolanus (v. 3), already referred to, and his reply. Other passages too which might be compared with their originals, though the comparisons will be found less striking, are Menenius's "pretty tale" (I. 1), parts of the description of the campaign at Corioli (e.g. I. 4. 56—61, I. 6. 50—58, I. 9), and Coriolanus's denunciation of the people and of the policy of truckling to them (III. 1. 68—72, 115—130). Some of these resemblances are probably no more than verbal coincidences[2] due to Shakespeare's unconscious recollection of what he had read in North. In other scenes, notably in IV. 5 and V. 3, Shakespeare has adapted North's English to his own purpose by a method of what has happily been called "rhythmical condensation." The transposition was made easier by the fact that North's own style is essentially rhythmical. That indeed is the distinguishing mark of Elizabethan prose: witness, for example, Bacon's style. Verse is always an earlier literary product than prose, and Elizabethan prose had not fully emancipated itself from the verse-influence. Sometimes in *Coriolanus* Shakespeare's close adherence to North leads him, consciously or not, into historical

[1] Wyndham.

[2] In the passage which is the original of *Coriolanus*, v. 3. 97, the three earliest editions of North have *unfortunately* instead of *unfortunate* (1612 edition). "Hence some scholars argue that Shakespeare must have used the late edition, and that the play must therefore be dated 1612 or after; the argument may, however, be used the other way round: the emendation in the 1612 edition of North may have been, and probably was, derived from Shakespeare's text" (Gollancz). Metre required *unfortunate* in *Coriolanus*, v. 3. 97. The date 1612 is impossibly late for the play. *Julius Cæsar* alone suffices to prove that Shakespeare was familiar with North's book years earlier.

errors[1]; and once[2] we can supplement a deficiency in the Folio by referring to the parallel passage in North.

It has been justly said that Shakespeare's deviations from history in his historical plays, Roman and English, are mainly changes of time and place, and seldom involve misrepresentation of character or fact. I presume that Shakespeare regarded Plutarch's story of Coriolanus as not less historical than his story of Julius Cæsar or Antony and Cleopatra. Shakespeare's Coriolanus seems to me essentially, if with some heightened traits, the Coriolanus of Plutarch; and he reproduced no less closely Plutarch's picture of the son's subjection to the mother. Plutarch puts this relation in the foreground. He tells us at the outset that Coriolanus's deeds were done for Volumnia's sake alone. and "at her desire he took a wife also, and yet never left his mother's house therefore." From this presentment of Volumnia's fatal sway, and from her great speech (v. 3), Shakespeare built up his characterisation of Volumnia[3], adding the one point which distinguishes her, not to her advantage, from her son. The admirable scene (III. 2) in which Volumnia urges Coriolanus to dissimulate has no parallel in Plutarch's *Life*.

The Aufidius-element in *Coriolanus* is an expansion of Plutarch's account. We see in Shakespeare's Aufidius the struggle between a certain generosity of nature, which compels him, as a soldier, to admire Coriolanus's soldierly grandeur, and the gradual ascendancy of his personal bitterness. This struggle is outlined by Plutarch. He speaks of Aufidius first as "a man of a great mind," and then shows how this greatness of mind

[1] See the notes on I. 4. 56—59, II. 3. 229—236.

[2] See the note on II. 3. 234—236.

[3] In some versions of the Coriolanus story his mother is called Veturia, and his wife Volumnia.

As to the historical credibility of the whole story, Mommsen, after summarising it, says: "How much of this is true cannot be determined; but the story over which the naïve misrepresentations of the Roman annalists have shed a patriotic glory affords a glimpse of the deep moral and political disgrace of the conflicts between the orders" at Rome. The nominal date of Coriolanus is about 490 B.C.

succumbed to that last infirmity—jealousy. "Though he had received no private injury or displeasure of Martius, yet the common fault and imperfection of man's nature wrought in him, and it grieved him to see his own reputation blemished through Martius' great fame and honour." Observe how early in the tragedy the Aufidius-element is brought in[1].

Virgilia and Menenius are practically new characters. In Plutarch, Virgilia is a *muta persona*, referred to on two or three occasions, once by name. The fact that in Plutarch's narrative she is so overshadowed by Volumnia gave Shakespeare his cue. Also, insight would tell him what type of woman were most likely to be chosen for wife by a mighty warrior. Somehow Virgilia and Coriolanus turn our thoughts to Desdemona and Othello.

Menenius illustrates, more than any other character in Shakespeare that occurs to me, how a seed of suggestion will fructify in Shakespeare's imagination. All that Plutarch says about Menenius is, that he was "chief man" of the embassy of "the pleasantest old men and the most acceptable to the people" who were sent by the Senate to remonstrate with them after their secession to the *Mons Sacer* outside Rome; that he used successfully "many good persuasions and gentle requests to the people"; and ended with his "notable tale" of the belly and the other members of the body. As drawn in *Coriolanus*, Menenius represents a sort of inference from Plutarch's words ("the pleasantest old men") and from the style of reasoning he addressed to the people. Shakespeare evidently argued that "the man who used an apologue in which the belly figures as the most important of human organs, doubtless fully recognised its claims in daily life[2]."

Of Valeria we may just note that in Plutarch it is she, not Volumnia, who proposes the embassy of the Roman ladies to plead with Coriolanus. Shakespeare does not expressly say that the idea originated with Volumnia, but he certainly creates

[1] See the introductory notes in I, 8 and III. 1; also the note on IV. 5. 101—147.

[2] Boas.

that impression in our minds[1]. The dramatic scheme required that the credit should be transferred to Volumnia: subordinate characters must not detract from the importance of the protagonists.

In the construction of the tragedy the great thing is the concentration of the interest on Coriolanus himself. The historical material furnished by Plutarch appeals to Shakespeare only in so far as it shows up the character of Coriolanus and the causes of his downfall. Everything is subordinated to this purpose, everything alien to it eliminated. This method runs throughout his dramatisations of history. What fascinates Shakespeare is history as the revelation of individual character; of personal strength, as in Henry V, of personal weakness, as in Richard II.

To achieve this concentration of interest, Shakespeare simplifies and compresses Plutarch's complicated story of the political troubles at Rome. He makes Rome instead of the *Mons Sacer* the scene of Menenius's address to the people. He combines the troubles over usury and the scarcity of corn into one general grievance against the patricians. In Plutarch's account the outcry against the extortions of usurers precedes the war with the Volscians, and is indeed the immediate cause of the plebeians' refusal "to go to the wars" and of their "secession."

[1] She uses to Volumnia and Virgilia rather a striking argument, which Shakespeare might have made Volumnia use to Coriolanus, only that it was not part of his purpose to show the Roman "people" in a favourable light:

"Come on, good ladies, and let us go all together unto Martius, to intreat him to take pity upon us, and also to report the truth unto him, how much you are bound unto the citizens: who notwithstanding they have sustained great hurt and losses by him, yet they have not hitherto sought revenge upon your persons by any discourteous usage, neither ever conceived any such thought or intent against you, but to deliver you safe into his hands, though thereby they look for no better grace or clemency from him." However, Plutarch does not introduce the argument into Volumnia's speech, throughout which Shakespeare sticks close to his original.

The corn difficulty, when Coriolanus opposed the free distribution, came into prominence later, after Coriolanus's rejection for the Consulship (his candidature for which does not follow directly after his return from the war[1]). This rejection is in Plutarch only one incident in the struggle, that centres round Coriolanus, between the patricians and plebeians; and it does not at once lead to Coriolanus's banishment. It is the starting-point of greater embitterment and trouble between Coriolanus and the people (instigated by the Tribunes), which ends in the people voting for his banishment. Shakespeare, however, seizes on the rejection as the most dramatic episode of the whole conflict and makes it stand out as the thing which brought matters to a head.

And in handling the incident he shows characteristic impartiality. For in Plutarch's *Life* Coriolanus raises no difficulty about wearing the "gown of humility" and showing his wounds. These were customs which other men had complied with and Coriolanus could have followed their example (and in Plutarch did) without loss of self-respect. But Shakespeare divines that compliance would be repugnant to his hero's impossibly proud, egoistic spirit, and so assumes his reluctance and grudging, ill-conditioned observance of the formality. On the other hand, Shakespeare makes the people far more unreasonable over the election than Plutarch's account strictly warrants. In the *Life* the people do not accept Coriolanus as Consul and then suddenly veer round, on the same day, and refuse to ratify the election. Plutarch makes them reject Coriolanus point-blank on the election-day, though they *had* previously felt that "it would be a shame to deny and refuse him," after all his services to the State. And in Plutarch the motive of their change is reasonable: they realise, when face to face with it, the danger to themselves of placing such power as the Consulship conferred in the hands of one who had always shown himself so hostile to the popular cause. But in Shakespeare they are

[1] In Plutarch there is clearly some interval ("shortly after"). Shakespeare does away with it, to increase the impression of the people's ingratitude.

merely the poor dupes of the Tribunes, fickle weathercocks that shift with every wind of suggestion, every gust of passion and vanity. In fact, the whole tendency (it has been remarked) is to degrade to a sort of street-riot what was really an orderly and constitutional movement of reform. But does constitutional history lend itself to dramatisation?

After Coriolanus's departure from Rome Shakespeare simplifies and condenses the narrative greatly. According to Plutarch, the leaders of the Volscians (Aufidius excepted) were unwilling to make war on Rome, "considering that they were sworn to keep peace for two years," and only consented when the Romans themselves "gave them great occasion" by decreeing that all Volscians who happened to be in Rome should leave the city (an insult which Coriolanus was thought to have brought about by a crafty device). Then Coriolanus, with Aufidius, invaded the territory of the Romans and returned with great spoil to Antium; repeated the invasion with a larger army, but without Aufidius, came within "forty furlongs of the city," received envoys from Rome, and under a thirty days' truce (to which a section of the Volscians were opposed) retired again into Volscian territory; and at the expiration of the time came back, received two more embassies from Rome, and eventually withdrew, at his mother's intercession, and made peace. All this is cut down in the tragedy to a single invasion that follows closely on Coriolanus's arrival at Antium.

Some of Shakespeare's omissions are interesting. Thus, Plutarch says that directly after Coriolanus's banishment, when "Rome was in marvellous uproar and discord" between nobles and people, the Senate was further troubled by reports of "sights and wonders." Perhaps the reason why Shakespeare does not allude to these omens, though he could easily have done so in IV. 6 or V. 1, was that he had worked this motive so thoroughly in the first two acts of *Julius Cæsar*[1]. The relation of plays

[1] Cf. *Hamlet*, I. 1. 109—125, where the same consideration probably led to the omission from the Folio (nearer to the stage-version) of the Quarto's account of the omens that preceded Cæsar's death; see the note on *Hamlet*, I. 1. 109—125, in this series.

which have some community of source or subject is always interesting[1].

Plutarch mentions that when Coriolanus first invaded the Roman territory "he was very careful to keep the noblemen's lands and goods safe from harm and burning, but spoiled all the whole country besides," and that he acted thus "to increase still the malice and dissension between the nobility and the commonalty." The Coriolanus of the tragedy rages against Rome with a resentment that disdains such devices, and he curses not least the pusillanimous betrayers among his own class (IV. 5. 75—78).

Of actual additions to the story, the most notable are the scenes of "relief," viz. the domestic interlude (I. 2), the unconscious absurdities of the servants at Aufidius's house (IV. 5), and the humour (culminating in pathos) of Menenius's self-assurance with the sentinels (V. 2). The whole representation, too, of the Roman people imparts an element of humour edged with raillery. And Shakespeare may claim for his own the handling of the child-motive, so wonderfully effective, especially where the boy's high paternal spirit serves to break the tension. Plutarch mentions several times Coriolanus's "young children" (two); for dramatic purposes the half was certainly better than the whole.

Finally, even where Shakespeare draws largely upon North's *Plutarch*, he lends his own heightening touches that spell "Shakespeare," e.g. (V. 3. 177, 178),

> "Come, let us go:
> This fellow had a Volscian to his mother[2]."

What a contrast too between Menenius's "tale" as told by

[1] Compare Collier's ingenious theory as to the respective dates of *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale*; see the Pitt Press *Tempest*, I. 2. 146.

[2] Again, contrast V. 3. 101—103 with the parallel passage in Plutarch: "making myself to see my son, and my daughter hear her husband [no mention of his 'child'] *besieging the walls of his native country*."

Plutarch and as worked up into a vivid and closer parallel by means of dialogue and interruptions and picturesque expansion, such as the First Citizen's enumeration of the "discontented members." (I. 1. 108—115).

III.

ELIZABETHAN COLOURING IN "*CORIOLANUS*."

One of the points in which the Elizabethan drama, taken as a whole, may be said, I think, to differ from modern drama and fiction is the comparative slightness of its local[1] and historical "colour." Elizabethan writers are not at such pains as their modern successors to suggest the natural and social surroundings in which the action of their works is laid. Their rendering of environment and period, of customs and manners, seems incidental rather than designed and systematic, and it shows a lordly indifference about that correctness on which we set so much store. And so a play like *Julius Cæsar*, while it presents with substantial accuracy the political facts on which it is based, cannot lay claim to correctness as a picture of Roman life and manners. The same remark holds good of all Shakespeare's historical plays. Whether he is treating English history, or Roman, or Celtic (as in *Macbeth*), the social circumstances and customs attributed to his *dramatis personæ* have a strongly Elizabethan tone.

For instance, "he arrays his characters in the dress of his own times." Whether the scene be laid in ancient Rome or contemporary Venice[2], in England or Denmark[3], "doublets" are sure to meet our eyes. Cæsar "plucked ope his doublet" (*Julius Cæsar*, I. 2. 267), and doublets are among the "spoils" at Corioli (*Coriolanus*, I. 5. 6). The conspirators in *Julius Cæsar*

[1] The most striking exception that occurs to me is Chapman's play *Alphonsus, Emperor of Germany*. There is a good deal of "local colour" (Danish names and words etc.) in *Hamlet*; see *Introduction*, pp. xxii—xxv, in this series. The atmosphere of *Macbeth* is northern.

[2] Cf. *The Merchant of Venice*, I. 2. 80.

[3] *Hamlet*, II. 1. 78.

(II. 1) conceal their faces in wide-brimmed hats such as one sees in old portraits. The Roman "citizens" with their "bats and clubs" (*Coriolanus*, I. 1. 50) and "greasy aprons" (*Antony and Cleopatra*, V. 2. 209—211), like the "Athenian" workmen in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, figure merely as Elizabethan mechanics, frankly dubbed by the commonest English working-class names (II. 3. 108). It is through a street of Shakespeare's own London that Coriolanus is pictured (II. 1. 192—208) on his triumphal progress past "stalls" and "bulks." The "city mills" (I. 10. 31) used to be familiar to frequenters of the Bankside, the theatrical quarter in Shakespeare's day. But for the lions kept in the Tower of London there would probably be no "lions in the Capitol" (*Julius Cæsar*, I. 3. 75).

Illustrations are drawn freely from Elizabethan sports and pastimes and customs, e.g. from bowls (III. 1. 60, 61), coursing (I. 6. 36—38), mumming (II. 1. 68), tournaments (II. 1. 250—252), heraldry (V. 6. 144, 145). The religion is a blend of pagan and Christian touches; "augurers" and (II. 1. 1) "flamens" (II. 1. 200) consort ill with references to "our divines" (II. 3. 54) and "graves i' the holy church-yard" (III. 3. 51). In a Roman play the only coins which happen to be mentioned are Greek ("drachma," I. 5. 5), English ("groat," III. 2. 10), Dutch ("doit," I. 5. 6). Romans would have been puzzled by allusions to "the stocks" (V. 3. 160), spectacles (II. 1. 193), looking-"glasses" (*Julius Cæsar*, I. 2. 68, II. 1. 205), and striking "clocks" (*Julius Cæsar*, II. 2. 114). Such inaccuracies and incongruities conflict with the modern feeling. Now correctness of local and historical setting is required in a novel or play. On the stage all the accessories[1] of scenery and dress must represent faith-

[1] Attention to these matters is comparatively modern on the English stage. Referring to the actors of the *eighteenth* century, Sir Walter Scott says (*Quarterly Review*, April, 1826):

"Before Kemble's time there was no such thing as regular costume observed in our theatres. The actors represented Macbeth and his wife, Belvidera and Jaffier [in Otway's *Venice Preserved*], and most other characters, whatever the age or country in which the scene was laid, in the cast-off court dresses of the nobility...Some few

fully the place and period of the action. Present taste is exacting in its demand for harmony of effect, and harmony is broken when things unlike and discordant are brought together.

But it would be equally uncritical and unfair to judge the Elizabethan drama from a modern point of view and to look for "realism" of effect. To begin with, the Shakespearean theatre possessed practically no scenery, and only the rudest stage-equipment. Doubtless the poverty of its arrangements had something to do with the indifference of the dramatists as to accuracy in points of detail. Descriptions of places needed not be precisely correct, when a chalked board was the sole indication whether the scene was laid on the banks of the Tiber or the Thames. There was little incongruity, after all, in making Cæsar wear a "doublet": the actor who took part would appear in one.

In the second place—but this is really the more important cause—the general conditions and characteristics of that age were wholly different. It is the difference between a creative

characters, by a sort of prescriptive theatrical right, always retained the costume of their times—Falstaff, for example, and Richard III. But such exceptions only rendered the general appearance more anomalous... Every theatrical reader must recollect the additional force which Macklin gave to the Jew [Shylock] at his first appearance in that character, when he came on the stage dressed with his red hat, peaked beard, and loose black gown, a dress which excited Pope's curiosity, who desired to know in particular why he wore a red hat. Macklin replied modestly because he had read that the Jews in Venice were obliged to wear hats of that colour. 'And pray, Mr Macklin,' said Pope, 'do players in general take such pains?' 'I do not know, sir,' said Macklin, 'that they do, but, as I had staked my reputation on the character, I was determined to spare no trouble in getting at the best information.' Pope expressed himself much pleased." (Quoted in Dr Furness's *Lear*, p. 446.) The red hat, I believe, is now discarded, but the loose gown retained for Shylock. Tradition assigns to Macklin the honour of having restored to the stage the tragic rendering of the part of Shylock, which had been turned into a vulgar, comic caricature of the Jews.

and a critical age. The Elizabethan was a creative, imaginative era, the classics were a new acquisition, and Elizabethan writers drew upon these new stores of inspiration and interest with the free imaginativeness that cares more for the life than the strict letter[1]. Poets took classical themes and reset them amid romantic surroundings, unconscious or careless of the confusion of effect that was produced by the union of old and new. In time the creative impulse dies away; the critical spirit rises, and with it come fuller knowledge, care over details, and accuracy.

In an interesting passage on the treatment of history in the old *Miracle* plays Mr Boas says:

"The method followed...ignores all distinctions of time or place. The personages in the plays are Jews or Romans, but there is no attempt to reproduce the life of the East or of classical antiquity. On the contrary, we see before us the knights, the churchmen, the burghers of the Middle Ages, with their religious and social surroundings...In the Coventry Series the Jewish high-priest appears as a mediaeval bishop with his court for the trial of ecclesiastical offences, in which those fare best who pay best. Herod and Pilate are practically feudal lords, the one an arbitrary tyrant, the other ready to do justice in 'Parliament.'... Thus Shakespere, when he placed his Roman and Celtic characters amid the conditions of his own time, was perpetuating a distinctive feature of the early English drama." So Dante in the *Paradiso*, XXIV. 115, calls Peter a "Baron"; and in XXV. 40—42, Christ is "our Emperor," and the Saints are "his Counts."

IV.

CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY.

Coriolanus ranks among the less popular of Shakespeare's plays; nor is the reason far to seek. This tragedy has, it seems to me, no prominent character who excites and keeps our full sympathy. Greatness, indeed unquestioned if not easily defined, invests Coriolanus and Volumnia, but it is greatness

[1] I suppose that for an Elizabethan less learned than Ben Jonson it would have been difficult to obtain much knowledge of classical antiquities and social life, had he wished to do so.

of the type that compels admiration rather than makes our hearts go out to it ; an unapproachable grandeur that impresses, but does not attract. And our intercourse with the other *dramatis personæ* leaves us, somehow, dissatisfied. In Aufidius the better element is borne down by the worse—ever a sorry spectacle ; and in the patricians who abandon the champion of their order, in the Tribunes whose ruling passion is an ignoble self-assertiveness, in the foolish and fickle crowd, there is little to lead us to think well of humanity. The whole picture is in a key of greyness. There are, it is true, relieving notes, in the silent graciousness of Virgilia, the genial presence of Valeria, and Menenius's easy wit. But the composition of the canvas required that Virgilia and Valeria should be placed in the background so as not to divert attention from the central figures ; and Menenius is not much more than the urbane and worldly cynic of his own self-description. As a representation of human nature *Coriolanus* does not make for optimism. It deals out blame all round.

A single epithet or phrase seldom hits off one of Shakespeare's characters. The complexity of his portraiture eludes the method of simple classification that suits Ben Jonson's studies of "humours." But neither Coriolanus nor Volumnia is complex. They are drawn, like the *dramatis personæ* of *King Lear*, on large and easily traced lines that harmonise with the simplicity of an early age of history. Shakespeare has not endowed either with those subtleties and contradictions of temperament which seem to be the outcome of a more involved environment. One great quality dominates in each. Coriolanus stands for Pride, Volumnia for Patriotism.

The essence of pride, I suppose, is a sense, just or unjust, of unlikeness and superiority to others. This egoism has its good side. Thus Coriolanus is unlike others in his lofty ideal of bravery and service to the State, and in his indifference to the material results of bravery. He transcends all on the battle-field, and shames all in his scorn of personal reward. His is bravery for bravery's sake, a selfless devotion to his ideal of what a warrior and patrician should be and do for his

country. The Tribunes, indeed, accuse Coriolanus of aiming at a "tyranny," but the design, we feel, does not exist outside their mean imaginations. The charge of ambition (IV. 6. 31) carries no conviction. One doubts whether Coriolanus really cared greatly for the consulship, or would have troubled about it, but for his mother's instigation and the feeling that it was due to him as a great patrician and would give him power to keep down the "people." The only sphere of Coriolanus is war. Amid the restrictions of civil life the defect of his qualities must come into play. His proud, intractable, explosive spirit chafes against the compromises, the practical give-and-take of normal life. His is a one-sided character, he has no gift of self-adaptation: he cannot be "other than one thing," or drop in peace-time the "austerity and garb" of war (IV. 7. 41—45). Plutarch had described him as a man that "never yielded in any respect," and Shakespeare puts in Volumnia's mouth the rebuke, "you are too absolute." And so we see the whole State convulsed because he cannot yield over a time-honoured formality with which other brave men must have complied. Now a man who "never yields" is (in colloquial phrase) "impossible." There is no room for such in any society or polity, save as "tyrant." His stiff-necked pride deserves (and desires) no pity when the inevitable befalls. Passionate[1] impracticability has to be paid for heavily.

The expulsion, therefore, or death of Coriolanus was a foregone conclusion. His candidature for the consulship merely precipitated the catastrophe. It was bound to come, some way or other. The immediate cause of his undoing is class-pride rather than

[1] "He was a man too full of passion and choler"—*Plutarch*. This trait is conspicuous throughout the tragedy. "Shakespeare not only makes pride the hero's master-principle, but also sets forth his pride as being rendered altogether inflammable and uncontrollable by passion; insomuch that, if a spark of provocation is struck into the latter, the former instantly flames up beyond measure, and sweeps away all the regards of prudence, of decorum, and even of common sense" (Hudson).

personal pride. He hates the "people" with an intensity that verges on monomania. It is the very fanaticism of caste. The fact that the exhibition of this unsociable temper and its effects furnishes the pivotal idea of the action accounts for the impressions of remoteness which *Coriolanus* leaves on our minds. As *Hamlet*, from the character of Hamlet, is the most modern of Shakespeare's tragedies, so *Coriolanus*, from the character of Coriolanus, is the least modern. May be that *Hamlet* appeals to us more than it did to Shakespeare's contemporaries: "it was not until the nineteenth century, whose speculative genius is a sort of living Hamlet, that the tragedy of *Hamlet* could find such wondering readers[1]." Conversely, *Coriolanus*, as a picture of class-exclusiveness, recedes and loses actuality in proportion as the sense of human brotherhood increases. Moreover, however much we may admire Coriolanus's noble qualities—his soldierly greatness, his devotion to his ideals and indifference to the consequences of his devotion, his absolute personal disinterestedness, his *pietas* and gentleness in all the relations of family life and friendship—yet we do not care for him as we care for so many of Shakespeare's characters—as we care for Henry V. We could be content with a little less of the heroic in Coriolanus were he a little more human. This want of sympathy between him and us tells against the play as a whole, for the whole hinges on him. *Coriolanus* is Coriolanus.

He illustrates the old saying that great men have great mothers. Coriolanus is essentially his mother's son. The affinity between them is one of the outstanding features of the play and has high dramatic significance. For it "makes the exceptional pride and greatness of the hero *possible*[2]"; produces (to borrow a phrase of Coleridge) a "credibilizing effect." We understand the exceptional character of Coriolanus better, we accept it more readily, when we know Volumnia, and through her know the influences of birth and breeding which have made him what we see him. From Volumnia come his pride (though she daringly disclaims it—III. 2. 130), his scorn of the masses

[1] Emerson. [2] Gervinus.

(how he has bettered her instruction!), his moving eloquence[1], his large heroic grandeur of bearing—above all, his "valiantness" (III. 2. 129). She, we soon realise, has been the guiding influence of his life, and surrender to this influence has meant much[2]. Only, Volumnia surpasses Coriolanus in pure impersonal patriotism, and by it saves him, against himself, from the crowning crime. Volumnia is not merely the typical Roman *matrona*, she is Rome itself. But a woman cannot translate her patriotism into action when patriotism in action means, primarily, fighting. To Volumnia, therefore, is denied that sense of supreme personal achievement which transports the proud spirit of Coriolanus beyond all bounds, and that sense of Rome's injustice and ingratitude by which his love of Rome becomes "love to hatred turned"—the madness that burns in the brain. And difference of sex may be not unconnected with another difference (III. 2). But in the main these two figures produce a wonderful effect of harmony: each constructed on an ideal basis, beyond any other of Shakespeare's characters, each illustrating the personality of the other, and each creating an impression of the grandeur that is praised perforce, yet leaves us cold.

If Volumnia helps us to understand Coriolanus she helps us, unconsciously, to appreciate Virgilia. Actually Virgilia speaks less than forty lines: yet how clearly Shakespeare sets her before us, how sensible we are of her presence! We know what she is, and we feel that she is there. To some extent this impression of her "gracious" (II. 1. 163) gentleness is conveyed through the exceeding gentleness of Coriolanus himself—all his harshness "melts" before her (V. 3. 28)—but still more through the contrast with Volumnia. Virgilia represents a negative process of character-delineation: she is all that Volumnia is not; and Valeria serves to mark the distance between them.

[1] Shakespeare's ideal men of action can speak too when occasion needs: witness Henry V., Horatio, Othello. Coriolanus's eloquence is part of Plutarch's account of him.

[2] See Milton's grim sentiment, *Paradise Lost*, IX. 1182—1184.

Valeria is essentially part of the characterisation, not of the plot or construction, of the play. We might eliminate her without in any degree affecting the actual story. But the character-interest would be less effective. For Valeria is an intermediate type, something that stands half-way between the strenuous (almost "mankind," IV. 2. 16) energy of Volumnia and the self-effacing[1] spirit of Virgilia.

Menenius is as much a relief from Coriolanus as Virgilia from Volumnia. Coriolanus is nothing if not extreme: Menenius, with his riper wisdom of life, knows that extremes furnish too stern a fare for human nature's daily food. He belongs to the class of whom Shakespeare has painted so many representatives—the sage old "councillors" who (in Antonio's phrase) "hold the world but as the world." For Menenius, life is a thing to be enjoyed, not taken too seriously, and our expectations of human nature should be pitched in a reasonable key, if we would escape grievous disappointment. He is the typical aristocrat with popular sympathies: "one that hath always loved the people" (I. 1. 45, 46) and understands how to deal with them, but would keep them, more or less, "in their place." He shows far more amiability (but no adulation) to the citizens themselves than to their spokesmen, who, for all their demagogish bluster, stand comically in awe of the aristocrat. Averse from all extremes, Menenius is the very man to smooth away difficulties and bring opponents together. His real good nature makes the rôle congenial to him. It flatters his unaggressive vanity. The one strong, strenuous thing in Menenius is his affection for Coriolanus. That the exercise of all his tact and good temper should not avail to keep Coriolanus in the path of common sense and moderation only shows the incurably impracticable genius of the latter.

Self-conflict always interests, and it is mainly from this point

[1] There are hints, indeed (I. 2), of that quiet tenacity in Virgilia which often marks very gentle people, but any emphasis on that side of her character would have spoilt the contrast with Volumnia and diminished the relief which that contrast gives.

of view that Aufidius interests. He himself had protested the base purpose:

> "I'll potch at him some way,
> Or wrath or craft may get him" (I. 10. 15, 16);

but it is surely a poor and unimaginative interpretation which, because of these and the following lines (17—27), finds a deliberate piece of treachery in his reception of Coriolanus (IV. 5). His welcome (IV. 5) rings absolutely sincere: the welcome of one great soldier (does not Coriolanus bear witness to his greatness?) befriending another in adversity. The very warmth of Aufidius's sympathy and admiration carries him too far. Moved by an almost quixotic impulse of generosity, he places Coriolanus (IV. 5. 136—143) in a position in which he is bound to eclipse his partner: and the sequel is a canker of jealousy that corrupts the whole man, and makes him more truly a tragic figure than Coriolanus himself.

Characters who hunt in couples are commonly much of a muchness: witness Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. It is so with the Tribunes. Plutarch, however, calls Sicinius "the cruellest and stoutest[1]" of the pair, and Shakespeare preserves something of the distinction. At any rate, Sicinius generally takes the lead. He is the first to foresee Coriolanus's candidature for the consulship and the advantage to which they may turn his reluctance to comply with the usual formalities (II. 1. 208, 209, 226—230). It is Sicinius who first rebukes the citizens for choosing Coriolanus (II. 3. 166—168), who bars the progress of Coriolanus to the Capitol (III. 1. 24), commands his arrest[2] (174—176), issues the order "bear him to the rock Tarpeian" (213), and pronounces the final sentence (III. 3. 99—105). In the altercations with Coriolanus himself, and with Menenius about Coriolanus, the chief spokesman of the popular side is always Sicinius; and when the tide sets against them he shows the bolder front. Brutus, indeed, is the more eloquent (cf. II. 1. 192—208, 230—240, II. 3. 168—182), but often he merely echoes and amplifies the suggestions of Sicinius (just as in *King Lear*

[1] Implying self-conceit and insolence. [2] Note "myself."

Regan, the less self-reliant of the twin monsters, echoes Goneril), and he shelters himself behind the authority of his fellow-Tribune[1] (II. 3. 146). However, in the main, they are "Arcadians both," editions of the same thing, and that no very attractive thing. Shakespeare seems to have set to work to depict blatant and unscrupulous demagogy, and to have thrown his heart into the task. The Tribunes live before our eyes: inflated with vulgar pride of office, and far more concerned with "our good" than the good of the citizens (II. 1. 229)—not that one should attribute their bitterness against Coriolanus entirely to personal motives: no doubt, they are moved in some degree by a genuine feeling that the citizens have rights which it is the business of their "office" to assert or defend. But the personal consideration dominates, and to attain their end they play with equal unscrupulousness on the stupidity of the people and the fiery temper of Coriolanus. Their servile cunning finds an easy victim in each.

Shakespeare's treatment of "the people" in *Coriolanus* has elicited curiously diverse comments. Coleridge says:

"This play illustrates the wonderfully philosophic impartiality of Shakspere's politics. His own country's history furnished him with no matter, but what was too recent to be devoted to patriotism. Besides, he knew that the instruction of ancient history would seem more dispassionate. In *Coriolanus* and *Julius Caesar*, you see Shakspere's good-natured laugh at mobs. Compare this with Sir Thomas Browne's aristocracy of spirit."

It might be some other *Coriolanus* of which Dr Brandes writes. For him *Coriolanus* overflows with Shakespeare's personal and passionate feelings against the people: "unqualified contempt for the populace," "a violent aversion," "a detestation of the masses." "For the people he [Shakespeare] felt nothing but scorn." "*Coriolanus* is brimful of scorn for the masses." In fact, "Shakespeare held the same political views as Coriolanus." "We see Shakespeare's whole soul with

[1] "Will *you* dismiss the people?" Note that in their awkward meeting with Volumnia, Brutus is the first to try to make off (IV. 2. 14). Throughout the scene he holds, *very* modestly, in the background.

Coriolanus when he cannot bring himself to ask the Consulate of the people in requital of his services."

I do not agree with those who reject altogether the personal interpretation of Shakespeare's plays and regard the utterances of his characters as purely "dramatic." I think that some inferences may be drawn from his works as to the general complexion of his sympathies, his prevailing mood at different periods of his career, his outlook on life; that through Hamlet, for example, and Prospero we can get near to the poet himself. But to identify Shakespeare with Coriolanus's anti-social spirit derogates, surely, from that sympathy which alone enabled him to touch humanity at so many points. "Scorn" and "detestation" are hard sayings, that suggest Swift rather than Shakespeare. Individually, "his poor and humble are, almost without exception, sound and sweet, faithful and pitiful[1]"; and where shall we find truer, stouter hearts than those of the "soldiers" (i.e. the rank and file, answering to the plebeians of the Roman army) whom Henry V. cheers to victory? That Shakespeare "recognised the manly worth and vigour of the common English character is evident[2]." This recognition seems incompatible with a spirit of *sæva indignatio* against the people, yet not incompatible with a recognition of the weaknesses that in all time have characterised the crowd. Shakespeare shows himself anti-democratic in that he lays bare these weaknesses—fickleness, liability to be flattered and swayed, lack of clear judgment, especially where political interests are at stake. Like Chaucer[3], he impeaches the collective wisdom of the mass. He does it with many touches of caustic humour, and, of course, the sting of the satire lies in the way he makes the

[1] Bradley. He is speaking more particularly of *King Lear* and *Timon of Athens*, but the remark appears to me to hold good of all the plays, judged as a whole.

[2] Dowden.

[3] Cf. *The Clerkes Tale*, 995—1001:

"O stormy peple! unsad and ever untrewe!
Ay undiscreet and chaunging as a vane"

(unsad = unstable; cf. Shakespeare's use of *sad* = sedate, grave, serious). The same "aristocracy of spirit" is felt in Spenser; see *The Faerie Queene*, I. 12. 9 (with Kitchin's note).

people behave, not in what he makes their enemies say of them. But the satire stops a long way short of "detestation"; and Shakespeare's attitude in general may, I think, be summed up in this conclusion, that "he had no respect for [the people] as politicians, but a great respect and regard for their hearts[1]." After all, the heart of the citizens is sound in its impulse of admiration for Coriolanus, and in its sense of their obligation to elect him (II. 3. 1—12); and though Coriolanus charges them with cowardice and the soldiers under his command are driven back and leave him to his fate (I. 4), yet those under Cominius acquit themselves "like Romans" (I. 6. 1—4), and "all" volunteer (I. 6. 74—84) when Coriolanus himself calls upon them. Somehow one feels that Henry V. would have had no trouble with them either on the battle-field or in the Forum.

V.

THE TRAGIC ELEMENT IN "*CORIOLANUS*."

The following criticism is from Professor Bradley's Lectures.

"Consider, finally, the impression left on us at the close of each [*Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus*]. It is remarkable that this impression, though very strong, can scarcely be called purely tragic; or, if we call it so, at least the feeling of reconciliation[2] which mingles with the obviously tragic emotions is here exceptionally well-marked. The death of Antony, it will be remembered, comes before the opening of the Fifth Act. The death of Cleopatra, which closes the play, is greeted by the reader with sympathy and admiration, even with exultation at the thought that she has foiled Octavius; and these feelings are heightened by the deaths of Charmian and Iras, heroically faithful to their mistress, as Emilia was to hers [Desdemona]. In *Coriolanus* the feeling of reconciliation is even stronger. The whole interest towards the close has been concentrated on the question whether the hero will persist in his revengeful design of storming and burning his native city, or whether better feelings will at last overpower his resentment and pride. He stands on the edge of a crime beside which, at least in outward dread-

[1] Bradley.

[2] Used in the sense in which we speak of being "reconciled to a thing," i.e. able to accept it, in our judgment, as the best conclusion at bottom, though our feelings might wish it different.

fulness, the slaughter of an individual looks insignificant. And when, at the sound of his mother's voice and the sight of his wife and child, nature asserts itself and he gives way, although we know he will lose his life, we care little for that: he has saved his soul. Our relief, and our exultation in the power of goodness, are so great that the actual catastrophe which follows and mingles sadness with these feelings leaves them but little diminished, and as we close the book we feel, it seems to me, more as we do at the close of *Cymbeline* than as we do at the close of *Othello*. In saying this I do not in the least mean to criticise *Coriolanus*. It is a much nobler play as it stands than it would have been if Shakespeare had made the hero persist, and we had seen him amid the flaming ruins of Rome, awaking suddenly to the enormity of his deed and taking vengeance on himself; but that would surely have been an ending more strictly tragic than the close of Shakespeare's play. Whether this close was simply due to his unwillingness to contradict his historical authority on a point of such magnitude we need not ask[1]. In any case *Coriolanus* is, in more than an outward sense, the end of his tragic period. It marks the transition to his latest works, in which the powers of repentance and forgiveness charm to rest the tempest raised by error and guilt."

We are so apt to use the word "tragic" loosely that it is well to be reminded that absolute tragedy has to do with the moral, not the material, sphere of man's being; so that Coriolanus, who saves his soul, is not a tragic figure in the same kind as Macbeth, who loses it. At the same time, Shakespeare, being a very practical teacher, keeps before us the fact that worldly failure is a very definite thing. We see the great possibilities, for themselves and for society, of a Hamlet or Coriolanus leading to nothing but "self-torture and self-waste"; and there is poignant tragedy, if not the highest, in the contrast between what might have been (so far as we can judge) and what is. But always this sense of tragedy is tempered by the conviction that the self-torture is part of a discipline which converts the seeming waste into ultimate gain.

[1] It is the main point to be weighed in estimating the advantages and disadvantages to Shakespeare of using Plutarch.

CORIOLANUS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Caius Marcius, afterwards Caius Marcius Coriolanus, a noble Roman.

Titus Lartius, Cominius, } generals against the Volscians.

Menenius Agrippa, friend to Coriolanus.

Sicinius Velutus, Junius Brutus, } tribunes of the people.

Young Marcius, son to Coriolanus.

A Roman Herald.

Tullus Aufidius, general of the Volscians.

Lieutenant to Aufidius.

Conspirators with Aufidius.

A Citizen of Antium.

Two Volscian Guards.

Volumnia, mother to Coriolanus.

Virgilia, wife to Coriolanus.

Valeria, friend to Virgilia.

Gentlewoman attending on Virgilia.

Roman and Volscian Senators, Patricians, Ædiles, Lictors, Soldiers, Citizens, Messengers, Servants to Aufidius, and other Attendants.

Scene: *Partly Rome and the neighbourhood; partly Corioli and the neighbourhood; and partly Antium.*

CORIOLANUS.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *Rome. A street.*

Enter a company of mutinous Citizens, *with staves, clubs, and other weapons.*

First Cit. Before we proceed any further, hear me speak.

Citizens. Speak, speak.

First Citizen. You are all resolved rather to die than to famish?

Citizens. Resolved, resolved.

First Citizen. First, you know Caius Marcius is chief enemy to the people.

Citizens. We know't, we know't.

First Citizen. Let us kill him, and we'll have corn at our own price. Is't a verdict?

Citizens. No more talking on't; let it be done: away, away!

Second Citizen. One word, good citizens.

First Citizen. We are accounted poor citizens; the patricians, good. What authority surfeits on would relieve us: if they would yield us but the superfluity, while it were

wholesome, we might guess they relieved us humanely; but they think we are too dear: the leanness that afflicts us, the object of our misery, is as an inventory to particularize their abundance; our sufferance is a gain to them. Let us revenge this with our pikes, ere we become rakes: for the gods know I speak this in hunger for bread, not in thirst for revenge.

Second Citizen. Would you proceed especially against Caius Marcius?

All. Against him first: he's a very dog to the commonalty.

Second Citizen. Consider you what services he has done for his country?

First Cit. Very well; and could be content to give him good report for't, but that he pays himself with being proud.

Second Citizen. Nay, but speak not maliciously.

First Citizen. I say unto you, what he hath done famously, he did it to that end: though soft-conscienced men can be content to say it was for his country, he did it to please his mother, and to be partly proud; which he is, even to the altitude of his virtue.

Sec. Cit. What he cannot help in his nature, you account a vice in him. You must in no way say he is covetous.

First Cit. If I must not, I need not be barren of accusations; he hath faults, with surplus, to tire in repetition. [*Shouts within.*] What shouts are these? The other side o' the city is risen: why stay we prating here? to the Capitol!

All. Come, come.

First Citizen. Soft! who comes here?

Second Citizen. Worthy Menenius Agrippa; one that hath always loved the people.

First Citizen. He's one honest enough: would all the rest were so!

Enter MENENIUS AGRIPPA.

Men. What work's, my countrymen, in hand? where go you
With bats and clubs? The matter? speak, I pray you.

First Citizen. Our business is not unknown to the senate; they have had inkling, this fortnight, what we intend to do, which now we'll show 'em in deeds. They say poor suitors have strong breaths: they shall know we have strong arms too.

Menenius. Why, masters, my good friends, mine honest neighbours,
Will you undo yourselves?

First Citizen. We cannot, sir; we are undone already.

Menenius. I tell you, friends, most charitable care
Have the patricians of you. For your wants,
Your suffering in this dearth, you may as well
Strike at the heaven with your staves as lift them
Against the Roman state; whose course will on
The way it takes, cracking ten thousand curbs
Of more strong link asunder than can ever
Appear in your impediment. For the dearth,
The gods, not the patricians, make it, and
Your knees to them, not arms, must help. Alack,
You are transported by calamity
Thither where more attends you, and you slander
The helms o' the state, who care for you like fathers,
When you curse them as enemies.

First Citizen. Care for us! True, indeed! They ne'er cared for us yet: suffer us to famish, and their store-houses crammed with grain: make edicts for usury, to support usurers; repeal daily any wholesome act established against the rich, and provide more piercing statutes daily, to chain

up and restrain the poor. If the wars eat us not up, they will; and there's all the love they bear us.

Menenius. Either you must
Confess yourselves wondrous malicious,
Or be accused of folly. I shall tell you
A pretty tale: it may be you have heard it;
But, since it serves my purpose, I will venture
To stale't a little more.

First Citizen. Well, I'll hear it, sir: yet you must not think to fob off our disgrace with a tale: but, an't please you, deliver.

Men. There was a time when all the body's members
Rebell'd against the belly; thus accused it:
That only like a gulf it did remain
I' the midst o' the body, idle and unactive,
Still cupboarding the viand, never bearing
Like labour with the rest; where the other instruments
Did see and hear, devise, instruct, walk, feel,
And, mutually participate, did minister
Unto the appetite and affection common
Of the whole body. The belly answer'd,—

First Citizen. Well, sir,
What answer made the belly?

Menenius. Sir, I shall tell you. With a kind of smile,
Which ne'er came from the lungs, but even thus—
For, look you, I may make the belly smile
As well as speak—it tauntingly replied
To the discontented members, the mutinous parts
That envied his receipt; even so most fitly
As you malign our senators for that
They are not such as you.

First Citizen. Your belly's answer? What!
The kingly-crowned head, the vigilant eye,

The counsellor heart, the arm our soldier,
Our steed the leg, the tongue our trumpeter,
With other muniments and petty helps
In this our fabric, if that they—
Menenius. What then?
'Fore me, this fellow speaks! What then? what then?
First Cit. Should by the cormorant belly be restrain'd,
Who is the sink o' the body,—
Menenius. Well, what then?
First Citizen. The former agents, if they did complain,
What could the belly answer?
Menenius. I will tell you;
If you'll bestow a small—of what you have little—
Patience awhile, you'll hear the belly's answer.
First Cit. You're long about it.
Menenius. Note me this, good friend;
Your most grave belly was deliberate,
Not rash like his accusers, and thus answer'd:
"True is it, my incorporate friends," quoth he,
"That I receive the general food at first,
Which you do live upon; and fit it is,
Because I am the store-house and the shop
Of the whole body: but, if you do remember,
I send it through the rivers of your blood,
Even to the court, the heart, to the seat o' the brain;
And, through the cranks and offices of man,
The strongest nerves and small inferior veins
From me receive that natural competency
Whereby they live: and though that all at once,
You, my good friends,"—this says the belly, mark me,—
First Cit. Ay, sir; well, well.
Menenius. "Though all at once can not
See what I do deliver out to each,

Yet I can make my audit up, that all
From me do back receive the flour of all,
And leave me but the bran." What say you to't?

First Citizen. It was an answer: how apply you this?

Menenius. The senators of Rome are this good belly,
And you the mutinous members: for examine
Their counsels and their cares, digest things rightly
Touching the weal o' the common, you shall find
No public benefit which you receive
But it proceeds or comes from them to you,
And no way from yourselves. What do you think,
You, the great toe of this assembly?

First Citizen. I the great toe! why the great toe?

Men. For that, being one o' the lowest, basest, poorest,
Of this most wise rebellion, thou go'st foremost:
Thou rascal, that art worst in blood to run,
Lead'st first to win some vantage.
But make you ready your stiff bats and clubs:
Rome and her rats are at the point of battle:
The one side must have bale.

Enter CAIUS MARCIUS.

Hail, noble Marcius!

Mar. Thanks. What's the matter, you dissentious rogues,
That, rubbing the poor itch of your opinion,
Make yourselves scabs?

First Citizen. We have ever your good word.

Mar. He that will give good words to thee will flatter
Beneath abhorring. What would you have, you curs,
That like nor peace nor war? the one affrights you,
The other makes you proud. He that trusts to you,
Where he should find you lions, finds you hares;

Where foxes, geese: you are no surer, no,
Than is the coal of fire upon the ice,
Or hailstone in the sun. Your virtue is
To make him worthy whose offence subdues him,
And curse that justice did it. Who deserves greatness
Deserves your hate; and your affections are
A sick man's appetite, who desires most that
Which would increase his evil. He that depends
Upon your favour swims with fins of lead
And hews down oaks with rushes. Hang ye! Trust ye?
With every minute you do change a mind,
And call him noble that was now your hate,
Him vile that was your garland. What's the matter,
That in these several places of the city
You cry against the noble senate, who,
Under the gods, keep you in awe, which else
Would feed on one another? What's their seeking?

Men. For corn at their own rates; whereof, they say,
The city is well stored.

Marcius. Hang 'em! They say!
They'll sit by the fire, and presume to know
What's done i' the Capitol; who's like to rise,
Who thrives, and who declines; side factions, and give out
Conjectural marriages; making parties strong,
And feebling such as stand not in their liking
Below their cobbled shoes. They say there's grain enough!
Would the nobility lay aside their ruth,
And let me use my sword, I'd make a quarry
With thousands of these quarter'd slaves, as high
As I could pick my lance.

Men. Nay, these are almost thoroughly persuaded;
For though abundantly they lack discretion,
Yet are they passing cowardly. But, I beseech you,

What says the other troop?

Marcius. They are dissolved: hang 'em!
They said they were an-hungry; sigh'd forth proverbs—
That hunger broke stone walls, that dogs must eat,
That meat was made for mouths, that the gods sent not
Corn for the rich men only: with these shreds
They vented their complainings; which being answer'd,
And a petition granted them, a strange one—
To break the heart of generosity,
And make bold power look pale—they threw their caps
As they would hang them on the horns o' the moon,
Shouting their emulation.

Menenius. What is granted them?

Marcius. Five tribunes to defend their vulgar wisdoms,
Of their own choice: one's Junius Brutus,
Sicinius Velutus, and I know not—'Sdeath!
The rabble should have first unroof'd the city,
Ere so prevail'd with me: it will in time
Win upon power, and throw forth greater themes
For insurrection's arguing.

Menenius. This is strange.

Marcius. Go, get you home, you fragments!

Enter a Messenger, *hastily.*

Mess. Where's Caius Marcius?

Marcius. Here: what's the matter?

Messenger. The news is, sir, the Volsces are in arms.

Marcius. I am glad on't; then we shall ha' means to vent
Our musty superfluity. See, our best elders.

Enter COMINIUS, TITUS LARTIUS, *and other* Senators; JUNIUS BRUTUS *and* SICINIUS VELUTUS.

First Sen. Marcius, 'tis true that you have lately told us;
The Volsces are in arms.
Marcius. They have a leader,
Tullus Aufidius, that will put you to't.
I sin in envying his nobility,
And were I any thing but what I am,
I would wish me only he.
Cominius. You have fought together.
Mar. Were half to half the world by the ears, and he
Upon my party, I'ld revolt, to make
Only my wars with him: he is a lion
That I am proud to hunt.
First Senator. Then, worthy Marcius,
Attend upon Cominius to these wars.
Cominius. It is your former promise.
Marcius. Sir, it is;
And I am constant. Titus Lartius, thou
Shalt see me once more strike at Tullus' face.
What, art thou stiff? stand'st out?
Citizen. No, Caius Marcius;
I'll lean upon one crutch, and fight with t'other,
Ere stay behind this business.
Menenius. O, true-bred!
First Sen. Your company to the Capitol; where, I know,
Our greatest friends attend us.
Titus. [*To Cominius*] Lead you on.
[*To Marcius*] Follow Cominius: we must follow you;
Right worthy you priority.
Cominius. Noble Marcius!
First Sen. [*To the Cits.*] Hence to your homes; be gone!

Marcius. Nay, let them follow:
The Volsces have much corn; take these rats thither
To gnaw their garners. Worshipful mutiners,
Your valour puts well forth: pray, follow.

[*The citizens steal away. Exeunt all but Brutus and Sicinius.*

Sicinius. Was ever man so proud as is this Marcius?

Brutus. He has no equal.

Sic. When we were chosen tribunes for the people,—

Brutus. Mark'd you his lip and eyes?

Sicinius. Nay, but his taunts.

Brutus. Being moved, he will not spare to gird the gods.

Sicinius. Be-mock the modest moon.

Brutus. The present wars devour him! He is grown
Too proud to be so valiant.

Sicinius. Such a nature,
Tickled with good success, disdains the shadow
Which he treads on at noon: but I do wonder
His insolence can brook to be commanded
Under Cominius.

Brutus. Fame, at the which he aims,—
In whom already he's well graced,—can not
Better be held, nor more attain'd, than by
A place below the first: for what miscarries
Shall be the general's fault, though he perform
To the utmost of a man; and giddy censure
Will then cry out of Marcius, "O, if he
Had borne the business!"

Sicinius. Besides, if things go well,
Opinion, that so sticks on Marcius, shall
Of his demerits rob Cominius.

Brutus. Come:
Half all Cominius' honours are to Marcius,

Though Marcius earn'd them not; and all his faults
To Marcius shall be honours, though indeed
In aught he merit not.
Sicinius. Let's hence, and hear
How the dispatch is made, and in what fashion,
More than his singularity, he goes
Upon this present action.
Brutus. Let's along. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Corioli. The Senate-house.*

Enter TULLUS AUFIDIUS *and certain* Senators.

First Senator. So, your opinion is, Aufidius,
That they of Rome are enter'd in our counsels,
And know how we proceed.
Aufidius. Is it not yours?
What ever have been thought on in this state,
That could be brought to bodily act ere Rome
Had circumvention? 'Tis not four days gone
Since I heard thence; these are the words: I think
I have the letter here; yes, here it is: [*Reads.*
"They have press'd a power, but it is not known
Whether for east or west: the dearth is great;
The people mutinous: and it is rumour'd,
Cominius, Marcius your old enemy,
Who is of Rome worse hated than of you,
And Titus Lartius, a most valiant Roman,
These three lead on this preparation
Whither 'tis bent: most likely 'tis for you:

Consider of it."

First Sen. Our army's in the field:
We never yet made doubt but Rome was ready
To answer us.

Aufidius. Nor did you think it folly
To keep your great pretences veil'd till when
They needs must show themselves; which in the hatching,
It seem'd, appear'd to Rome. By the discovery
We shall be shorten'd in our aim; which was
To take in many towns, ere almost Rome
Should know we were afoot.

Second Senator. Noble Aufidius,
Take your commission; hie you to your bands:
Let us alone to guard Corioli:
If they set down before's, for the remove
Bring up your army; but, I think, you'll find
They've not prepared for us.

Aufidius. O, doubt not that;
I speak from certainties. Nay, more,
Some parcels of their power are forth already,
And only hitherward. I leave your honours.
If we and Caius Marcius chance to meet,
'Tis sworn between us we shall ever strike
Till one can do no more.

All. The gods assist you!

Aufidius. And keep your honours safe!

First Senator. Farewell.

Second Senator. Farewell.

All. Farewell. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *Rome. A room in* MARCIUS' *house.*

Enter VOLUMNIA *and* VIRGILIA: *they set them down on two low stools, and sew.*

Volumnia. I pray you, daughter, sing; or express yourself in a more comfortable sort: if my son were my husband, I should freelier rejoice in that absence wherein he won honour than in the embracements of his bed where he would show most love. When yet he was but tender-bodied, and the only son of my womb; when youth with comeliness plucked all gaze his way; when, for a day of kings' entreaties, a mother should not sell him an hour from her beholding; I—considering how honour would become such a person: that it was no better than picture-like to hang by the wall, if renown made it not stir—was pleased to let him seek danger where he was like to find fame. To a cruel war I sent him; from whence he returned, his brows bound with oak. I tell thee, daughter, I sprang not more in joy at first hearing he was a man-child than now in first seeing he had proved himself a man. 16

Vir. But had he died in the business, madam; how then?

Volumnia. Then his good report should have been my son; I therein would have found issue. Hear me profess sincerely: had I a dozen sons, each in my love alike, and none less dear than thine and my good Marcius, I had rather had eleven die nobly for their country than one voluptuously surfeit out of action. 23

Enter a Gentlewoman.

Gent. Madam, the Lady Valeria is come to visit you.

Virgilia. Beseech you, give me leave to retire myself.

Volumnia. Indeed you shall not.
Methinks I hear thither your husband's drum,
See him pluck Aufidius down by the hair;
As children from a bear, the Volsces shunning him:
Methinks I see him stamp thus, and call thus:
"Come on, you cowards! you were got in fear,
Though you were born in Rome:" his bloody brow
With his mail'd hand then wiping, forth he goes,
Like to a harvest-man, that's task'd to mow
Or all, or lose his hire.

Virgilia. His bloody brow! O Jupiter, no blood!

Volumnia. Away, you fool! it more becomes a man
Than gilt his trophy: the breasts of Hecuba,
When she did suckle Hector, look'd not lovelier
Than Hector's forehead when it spit forth blood
At Grecian sword, contemning. Tell Valeria
We are fit to bid her welcome. [*Exit Gentlewoman.*

Virgilia. Heavens bless my lord from fell Aufidius!

Volumnia. He'll beat Aufidius' head below his knee,
And tread upon his neck.

Enter VALERIA *with an* Usher *and* Gentlewoman.

Valeria. My ladies both, good day to you.

Volumnia. Sweet madam.

Virgilia. I am glad to see your ladyship.

Valeria. How do you both? you are manifest housekeepers. What are you sewing here? A fine spot, in good faith. How does your little son?

Virgilia. I thank your ladyship, well, good madam.

Volumnia. He had rather see the swords, and hear a drum, than look upon his schoolmaster.

Valeria. O' my word, the father's son: I'll swear, 'tis

a very pretty boy. O' my troth, I looked upon him o' Wednesday half an hour together: has such a confirmed countenance. I saw him run after a gilded butterfly; and when he caught it, he let it go again; and after it again; and over and over he comes, and up again; catched it again: or whether his fall enraged him, or how 'twas, he did so set his teeth, and tear it; O, I warrant, how he mammocked it!

Volumnia. One on's father's moods.

Valeria. Indeed, la, 'tis a noble child.

Virgilia. A crack, madam.

Valeria. Come, lay aside your stitchery; I must have you play the idle huswife with me this afternoon.

Virgilia. No, good madam; I will not out of doors.

Valeria. Not out of doors!

Volumnia. She shall, she shall.

Virgilia. Indeed, no, by your patience; I'll not over the threshold till my lord return from the wars.

Valeria. Fie, you confine yourself most unreasonably: come, you must go visit the good lady that lies in.

Virgilia. I will wish her speedy strength, and visit her with my prayers; but I cannot go thither.

Volumnia. Why, I pray you?

Virgilia. 'Tis not to save labour, nor that I want love.

Valeria. You would be another Penelope: yet, they say, all the yarn she spun in Ulysses' absence did but fill Ithaca full of moths. Come; I would your cambric were sensible as your finger, that you might leave pricking it for pity. Come, you shall go with us.

Vir. No, good madam, pardon me; indeed, I will not forth.

Valeria. In truth, la, go with me; and I'll tell you excellent news of your husband.

Virgilia. O, good madam, there can be none yet.

Valeria. Verily, I do not jest with you; there came news from him last night.

Virgilia. Indeed, madam?

Valeria. In earnest, it's true; I heard a senator speak it. Thus it is: the Volsces have an army forth; against whom Cominius the general is gone, with one part of our Roman power: your lord and Titus Lartius are set down before their city Corioli; they nothing doubt prevailing, and to make it brief wars. This is true, on mine honour; and so, I pray, go with us.

Virgilia. Give me excuse, good madam; I will obey you in every thing hereafter.

Volumnia. Let her alone, lady: as she is now, she will but disease our better mirth.

Valeria. In troth, I think she would. Fare you well, then. Come, good sweet lady. Prithee, Virgilia, turn thy solemness out o' door, and go along with us.

Virgilia. No, at a word, madam; indeed, I must not. I wish you much mirth.

Valeria. Well, then, farewell. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *Before Corioli.*

Enter, with drum and colours, MARCIUS, TITUS LARTIUS, Officers, *and* Soldiers.

Marcius. Yonder comes news: a wager they have met.

Lartius. My horse to yours, no.

Marcius. 'Tis done.

Lartius. Agreed.

Enter a Messenger.

Marcius. Say, has our general met the enemy?

Messenger. They lie in view; but have not spoke as yet.

Lartius. So, the good horse is mine.

Marcius. I'll buy him of you.

Lar. No, I'll nor sell nor give him; lend you him I will
For half a hundred years. Summon the town.

Mar. How far off lie these armies?

Messenger. Within this mile and half.

Marcius. Then shall we hear their 'larum, and they ours.
Now, Mars, I prithee, make us quick in work,
That we with smoking swords may march from hence,
To help our fielded friends! Come, blow thy blast.

They sound a parley. Enter two Senators *with others, on the walls.*

Tullus Aufidius, is he within your walls?

First Sen. No, nor a man that fears you less than he,
That's lesser than a little. [*Drums afar off.*] Hark, our drums
Are bringing forth our youth! we'll break our walls,
Rather than they shall pound us up: our gates,
Which yet seem shut, we have but pinn'd with rushes;
They'll open of themselves. [*Alarum afar off.*] Hark you, far off!
There is Aufidius; list, what work he makes
Amongst your cloven army.

Marcius. O, they are at it!

Lartius. Their noise be our instruction. Ladders, ho!

Enter the army of the Volsces.

Marcius. They fear us not, but issue forth their city.
Now put your shields before your hearts, and fight
With hearts more proof than shields. Advance, brave Titus:
They do disdain us much beyond our thoughts,
Which makes me sweat with wrath. Come on, my fellows:
He that retires, I'll take him for a Volsce,
And he shall feel mine edge.

Alarum. The Romans *are beat back to their trenches. Re-enter* MARCIUS, *cursing.*

Marcius. All the contagion of the south light on you,
You shames of Rome! you herd of—Boils and plagues
Plaster you o'er, that you may be abhorr'd
Further than seen, and one infect another
Against the wind a mile! You souls of geese,
That bear the shapes of men, how have you run
From slaves that apes would beat! Pluto and hell!
All hurt behind; backs red, and faces pale
With flight and agued fear! Mend, and charge home,
Or, by the fires of heaven, I'll leave the foe,
And make my wars on you: look to't: come on;
If you'll stand fast, we'll beat them to their wives,
As they us to our trenches followed.

Another alarum. The Volsces *fly, and* MARCIUS *follows them to the gates.*

So, now the gates are ope: now prove good seconds:
'Tis for the followers fortune widens them,
Not for the fliers: mark me, and do the like.

[*Enters the gates.*

First Soldier. Fool-hardiness; not I.
Second Soldier. Nor I.
[*Marcius is shut in.*
First Soldier. See, they have shut him in.
All. To the pot, I warrant him.
[*Alarum continues.*

Re-enter TITUS LARTIUS.

Lartius. What is become of Marcius?
All. Slain, sir, doubtless.
First Soldier. Following the fliers at the very heels,
With them he enters; who, upon the sudden,
Clapp'd to their gates: he is himself alone,
To answer all the city.
Lartius. O noble fellow!
Who sensibly outdares his senseless sword,
And, when it bows, stands up! Thou art left, Marcius:
A carbuncle entire, as big as thou art,
Were not so rich a jewel. Thou wast a soldier
Even to Cato's wish, not fierce and terrible
Only in strokes; but, with thy grim looks and
The thunder-like percussion of thy sounds,
Thou madest thine enemies shake, as if the world
Were feverous and did tremble.

Re-enter MARCIUS, *bleeding, assaulted by the enemy.*

First Soldier. Look, sir.
Lartius. O, 'tis Marcius!
Let's fetch him off, or make remain alike.
[*They fight, and all enter the city.*

SCENE V. *Corioli. A street.*

Enter certain Romans, *with spoils.*

First Roman. This will I carry to Rome.
Second Roman. And I this.
Third Roman. A murrain on't! I took this for silver.
[*Alarum continues still afar off.*

Enter MARCIUS *and* TITUS LARTIUS *with a trumpet.*

Marcius. See here these movers that do prize their hours
At a crack'd drachma! Cushions, leaden spoons,
Irons of a doit, doublets that hangmen would
Bury with those that wore them, these base slaves,
Ere yet the fight be done, pack up: down with them!
And hark, what noise the general makes! To him!
There is the man of my soul's hate, Aufidius,
Piercing our Romans: then, valiant Titus, take
Convenient numbers to make good the city;
Whilst I, with those that have the spirit, will haste
To help Cominius.
Lartius. Worthy sir, thou bleed'st;
Thy exercise hath been too violent for
A second course of fight.
Marcius. Sir, praise me not;
My work hath yet not warm'd me: fare you well:
The blood I drop is rather physical
Than dangerous to me: to Aufidius thus
I will appear, and fight.
Lartius. Now the fair goddess, Fortune,
Fall deep in love with thee; and her great charms

Misguide thy opposers' swords! Bold gentleman,
Prosperity be thy page!
Marcius. Thy friend no less
Than those she placeth highest! So, farewell.
Lartius. Thou worthiest Marcius! [*Exit Marcius.*
Go, sound thy trumpet in the market-place;
Call thither all the officers o' the town,
Where they shall know our mind: away! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI. *Near the camp of* COMINIUS.

Enter COMINIUS, *as it were in retire, with* Soldiers.

Cominius. Breathe you, my friends: well fought; we are come off
Like Romans, neither foolish in our stands
Nor cowardly in retire: believe me, sirs,
We shall be charged again. Whilst we have struck,
By interims and conveying gusts we have heard
The charges of our friends. Ye Roman gods,
Lead their successes as we wish our own,
That both our powers, with smiling fronts encountering,
May give you thankful sacrifice!

Enter a Messenger.

Thy news?
Messenger. The citizens of Corioli have issued,
And given to Lartius and to Marcius battle:
I saw our party to their trenches driven,
And then I came away.
Cominius. Though thou speak'st truth,

Methinks thou speak'st not well. How long is't since?

Messenger. Above an hour, my lord.

Cominius. 'Tis not a mile; briefly we heard their drums:
How couldst thou in a mile confound an hour,
And bring thy news so late?

Messenger. Spies of the Volsces
Held me in chase, that I was forced to wheel
Three or four miles about; else had I, sir,
Half an hour since brought my report.

Cominius. Who's yonder,
That does appear as he were flay'd? O gods!
He has the stamp of Marcius; and I have
Before-time seen him thus.

Marcius. [*Within*] Come I too late?

Com. The shepherd knows not thunder from a tabor
More than I know the sound of Marcius' tongue
From every meaner man.

Enter MARCIUS.

Marcius. Come I too late?

Cominius. Ay, if you come not in the blood of others,
But mantled in your own.

Marcius. O, let me clip ye
In arms as sound as when I woo'd, in heart
As merry!

Com. Flower of warriors,
How is't with Titus Lartius?

Marcius. As with a man busied about decrees:
Condemning some to death, and some to exile;
Ransoming him, or pitying, threatening the other;
Holding Corioli in the name of Rome,

Even like a fawning greyhound in the leash,
To let him slip at will.
Cominius. Where is that slave
Which told me they had beat you to your trenches?
Where is he? call him hither.
Marcius. Let him alone;
He did inform the truth: but for our gentlemen,
The common file—a plague!—tribunes for them!—
The mouse ne'er shunn'd the cat as they did budge
From rascals worse than they.
Cominius. But how prevail'd you?
Marcius. Will the time serve to tell? I do not think.
Where is the enemy? are you lords o' the field?
If not, why cease you till you are so?
Cominius. Marcius,
We have at disadvantage fought, and did
Retire to win our purpose.
Marcius. How lies their battle? know you on which side
They have placed their men of trust?
Cominius. As I guess, Marcius,
Their bands i' the vaward are the Antiates,
Of their best trust; o'er them Aufidius,
Their very heart of hope.
Marcius. I do beseech you,
By all the battles wherein we have fought,
By the blood we have shed together, by the vows
We have made to endure friends, that you directly
Set me against Aufidius and his Antiates;
And that you not delay the present, but,
Filling the air with swords advanced and darts,
We prove this very hour.
Cominius. Though I could wish
You were conducted to a gentle bath,

And balms applied to you, yet dare I never
Deny your asking: take your choice of those
That best can aid your action.

Marcius. Those are they
That most are willing. If any such be here—
As it were sin to doubt—that love this painting
Wherein you see me smear'd; if any fear
Lesser his person than an ill report;
If any think brave death outweighs bad life,
And that his country's dearer than himself;
Let him alone, or so many so minded,
Wave thus, to express his disposition,
And follow Marcius.

[*They all shout and wave their swords, take him up in their arms, and cast up their caps.*

O, me alone! make you a sword of me?
If these shows be not outward, which of you
But is four Volsces? none of you but is
Able to bear against the great Aufidius
A shield as hard as his. A certain number,
Though thanks to all, must I select from all: the rest
Shall bear the business in some other fight,
As cause will be obey'd. Please you to march;
And four shall quickly draw out my command,
Which men are best inclined.

Cominius. March on, my fellows:
Make good this ostentation, and you shall
Divide in all with us. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII. *The gates of Corioli.*

TITUS LARTIUS, *having set a guard upon Corioli, going with drum and trumpet toward* COMINIUS *and* CAIUS MARCIUS, *enters with a* Lieutenant, *other* Soldiers, *and a* Scout.

Lartius. So, let the ports be guarded: keep your duties,
As I have set them down. If I do send, dispatch
Those centuries to our aid; the rest will serve
For a short holding: if we lose the field,
We cannot keep the town.
Lieutenant. Fear not our care, sir.
Lartius. Hence, and shut your gates upon's.
Our guider, come; to the Roman camp conduct us. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VIII. *A field of battle between the Roman and the Volscian camps.*

Alarum as in battle. Enter, from opposite sides, MARCIUS *and* AUFIDIUS.

Marcius. I'll fight with none but thee; for I do hate thee
Worse than a promise-breaker.
Aufidius. We hate alike:
Not Afric owns a serpent I abhor
More than thy fame and envy. Fix thy foot.
Marcius. Let the first budger die the other's slave,
And the gods doom him after!
Aufidius. If I fly, Marcius,
Holloa me like a hare.
Marcius. Within these three hours, Tullus,

Alone I fought in your Corioli walls,
And made what work I pleased: 'tis not my blood
Wherein thou seest me mask'd; for thy revenge
Wrench up thy power to the highest.
Aufidius. Wert thou the Hector
That was the whip of your bragg'd progeny,
Thou shouldst not scape me here.
[*They fight, and certain Volsces come in the aid of Aufidius. Marcius fights till they be driven in breathless.*
Officious, and not valiant, you have shamed me
In your condemned seconds.

SCENE IX. *The Roman camp.*

Flourish. Alarum. A retreat is sounded. Flourish. Enter, from one side, COMINIUS *with the* Romans; *from the other side,* MARCIUS, *with his arm in a scarf.*

Cominius. If I should tell thee o'er this thy day's work,
Thou'lt not believe thy deeds: but I'll report it
Where senators shall mingle tears with smiles,
Where great patricians shall attend and shrug,
I' th' end admire; where ladies shall be frighted,
And, gladly quaked, hear more; where the dull tribunes,
That, with the fusty plebeians, hate thine honours,
Shall say, against their hearts, "We thank the gods
Our Rome hath such a soldier!"
Yet camest thou to a morsel of this feast,
Having fully dined before.

Enter TITUS LARTIUS, *with his power, from the pursuit.*

Lartius. O general,
Here is the steed, we the caparison:
Hadst thou beheld—

Marcius. Pray now, no more: my mother,
Who has a charter to extol her blood,
When she does praise me grieves me. I have done
As you have done,—that's what I can; induced
As you have been,—that's for my country:
He that has but effected his good will
Hath overta'en mine act.

Cominius. You shall not be
The grave of your deserving; Rome must know
The value of her own: 'twere a concealment
Worse than a theft, no less than a traducement,
To hide your doings; and to silence that,
Which, to the spire and top of praises vouch'd,
Would seem but modest: therefore, I beseech you—
In sign of what you are, not to reward
What you have done—before our army hear me.

Marcius. I have some wounds upon me, and they smart
To hear themselves remember'd.

Cominius. Should they not,
Well might they fester 'gainst ingratitude,
And tent themselves with death. Of all the horses,
Whereof we have ta'en good, and good store,—of all
The treasure in this field achieved and city,
We render you the tenth; to be ta'en forth,
Before the common distribution, at
Your only choice.

Marcius. I thank you, general;
But cannot make my heart consent to take
A bribe to pay my sword: I do refuse it;

And stand upon my common part with those
That have beheld the doing.

[*A long flourish. They all cry*, "Marcius! Marcius!" *cast up their caps and lances: Cominius and Lartius stand bare.*

May these same instruments, which you profane,
Never sound more! When drums and trumpets shall
I' the field prove flatterers, let courts and cities be
Made all of false-faced soothing!
When steel grows soft as the parasite's silk,
Let him be made a coverture for the wars!
No more, I say! For that I have not wash'd
My nose that bled, or foil'd some debile wretch,—
Which, without note, here's many else have done,—
You shout me forth
In acclamations hyperbolical;
As if I loved my little should be dieted
In praises sauced with lies.

Cominius. Too modest are you;
More cruel to your good report than grateful
To us that give you truly: by your patience,
If 'gainst yourself you be incensed, we'll put you,
Like one that means his proper harm, in manacles,
Then reason safely with you. Therefore, be it known,
As to us, to all the world, that Caius Marcius
Wears this war's garland: in token of the which,
My noble steed, known to the camp, I give him,
With all his trim belonging; and from this time,
For what he did before Corioli, call him,
With all the applause and clamour of the host,
CAIUS MARCIUS CORIOLANUS. Bear
The addition nobly ever!

[*Flourish. Trumpets sound, and drums.*

All. Caius Marcius Coriolanus!

Coriolanus. I will go wash;
And when my face is fair, you shall perceive
Whether I blush or no: howbeit, I thank you.
I mean to stride your steed, and at all times
To undercrest your good addition
To the fairness of my power.
Cominius. So, to our tent;
Where, ere we do repose us, we will write
To Rome of our success. You, Titus Lartius,
Must to Corioli back: send us to Rome
The best, with whom we may articulate,
For their own good and ours.
Lartius. I shall, my lord.
Coriolanus. The gods begin to mock me. I, that now
Refused most princely gifts, am bound to beg
Of my lord general.
Cominius. Take't; 'tis yours. What is't?
Coriolanus. I sometime lay here in Corioli
At a poor man's house; he used me kindly:
He cried to me; I saw him prisoner;
But then Aufidius was within my view,
And wrath o'erwhelm'd my pity: I request you
To give my poor host freedom.
Cominius. O, well begg'd!
Were he the butcher of my son, he should
Be free as is the wind. Deliver him, Titus.
Lartius. Marcius, his name?
Coriolanus. By Jupiter, forgot:
I am weary; yea, my memory is tired.
Have we no wine here?
Cominius. Go we to our tent:
The blood upon your visage dries; 'tis time
It should be look'd to: come. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE X. *The camp of the* Volsces.

A flourish. Cornets. Enter TULLUS AUFIDIUS *bloody, with two or three* Soldiers.

Aufidius. The town is ta'en!

First Soldier. 'Twill be deliver'd back on good condition.

Aufidius. Condition!
I would I were a Roman; for I cannot,
Being a Volsce, be that I am. Condition!
What good condition can a treaty find
I' the party that is at mercy? Five times, Marcius,
I have fought with thee; so often hast thou beat me;
And wouldst do so, I think, should we encounter
As often as we eat. By the elements,
If e'er again I meet him beard to beard,
He's mine, or I am his: mine emulation
Hath not that honour in't it had; for where
I thought to crush him in an equal force,
True sword to sword, I'll potch at him some way,
Or wrath or craft may get him.

First Soldier. He's the devil.

Auf. Bolder, though not so subtle. My valour's poison'd
With only suffering stain by him; for him
Shall fly out of itself: nor sleep nor sanctuary,
Being naked, sick, nor fane nor Capitol,
The prayers of priests nor times of sacrifice,
Embarquements all of fury, shall lift up
Their rotten privilege and custom 'gainst
My hate to Marcius: where I find him, were it
At home, upon my brother's guard, even there,
Against the hospitable canon, would I

Wash my fierce hand in's heart. Go you to the city;
Learn how 'tis held; and what they are that must
Be hostages for Rome.

First Soldier. Will not you go?

Auf. I am attended at the cypress grove: I pray you—
'Tis south the city mills—bring me word thither
How the world goes, that to the pace of it
I may spur on my journey.

First Soldier. I shall, sir. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I. *Rome. A public place.*

Enter MENENIUS *with the two Tribunes of the people,* SICINIUS *and* BRUTUS.

Men. The augurer tells me we shall have news to-night.

Brutus. Good or bad?

Menenius. Not according to the prayer of the people, for they love not Marcius.

Sicinius. Nature teaches beasts to know their friends.

Menenius. Pray you, who does the wolf love?

Sicinius. The lamb.

Menenius. Ay, to devour him; as the hungry plebeians would the noble Marcius.

Brutus. He's a lamb indeed, that baes like a bear.

Men. He's a bear indeed, that lives like a lamb. You two are old men: tell me one thing that I shall ask you.

Both. Well, sir.

Menenius. In what enormity is Marcius poor in, that you two have not in abundance?

Brutus. He's poor in no one fault, but stored with all.

Sicinius. Especially in pride.

Brutus. And topping all others in boasting.

Menenius. This is strange now: do you two know how you are censured here in the city, I mean of us o' the right-hand file? do you?

Both. Why, how are we censured?

Menenius. Because you talk of pride now,—will you not be angry?

Both. Well, well, sir, well.

Menenius. Why, 'tis no great matter; for a very little thief of occasion will rob you of a great deal of patience: give your dispositions the reins, and be angry at your pleasures; at the least, if you take it as a pleasure to you in being so. You blame Marcius for being proud?

Brutus. We do it not alone, sir.

Menenius. I know you can do very little alone; for your helps are many, or else your actions would grow wondrous single: your abilities are too infant-like for doing much alone. You talk of pride: O that you could turn your eyes toward the napes of your necks, and make but an interior survey of your good selves! O that you could!

Brutus. What then, sir?

Menenius. Why, then you should discover a brace of unmeriting, proud, violent, testy magistrates, alias fools, as any in Rome.

Sicinius. Menenius, you are known well enough too.

Menenius. I am known to be a humorous patrician, and one that loves a cup of hot wine with not a drop of allaying Tiber in't; said to be something imperfect in favouring the first complaint, hasty and tinder-like upon too trivial motion; one that converses more with the buttock of the night than with the forehead of the morning: what I think I utter, and spend my malice in my breath. Meeting two such wealsmen as you are,—I cannot call you Lycurguses,—if the drink you give me touch my palate adversely, I make a crooked face at it. I can't say your worships have delivered the matter well, when I find the ass in compound with the major part of your syllables: and though I must be content to bear with those that say you are reverend grave men, yet they lie deadly that tell you you have good faces. If you see this in the map of my microcosm, follows it that I am known

well enough too? what harm can your bisson conspectuities glean out of this character, if I be known well enough too?

Brutus. Come, sir, come, we know you well enough.

Menenius. You know neither me, yourselves, nor any thing. You are ambitious for poor knaves' caps and legs: you wear out a good wholesome forenoon in hearing a cause between an orange-wife and a fosset-seller; and then rejourn the controversy of three-pence to a second day of audience. When you are hearing a matter between party and party, if you chance to be pinched with the colic, you make faces like mummers; set up the bloody flag against all patience; and dismiss the controversy bleeding, the more entangled by your hearing: all the peace you make in their cause is, calling both the parties knaves. You are a pair of strange ones.

Brutus. Come, come, you are well understood to be a perfecter giber for the table than a necessary bencher in the Capitol.

Menenius. Our very priests must become mockers, if they shall encounter such ridiculous subjects as you are. When you speak best unto the purpose, it is not worth the wagging of your beards; and your beards deserve not so honourable a grave as to stuff a botcher's cushion, or to be entombed in an ass's pack-saddle. Yet you must be saying, Marcius is proud; who, in a cheap estimation, is worth all your predecessors since Deucalion; though peradventure some of the best of 'em were hereditary hangmen. God-den to your worship: more of your conversation would infect my brain, being the herdsmen of the beastly plebeians: I will be bold to take my leave of you. [*Brutus and Sicinius go aside.*

Enter VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA, *and* VALERIA.

How now, my as fair as noble ladies,—and the moon, were she earthly, no nobler,—whither do you follow your eyes so fast?

Volumnia. Honourable Menenius, my boy Marcius approaches; for the love of Juno, let's go.

Menenius. Ha! Marcius coming home!

Volumnia. Ay, worthy Menenius; and with most prosperous approbation.

Menenius. Take my cap, Jupiter, and I thank thee. Hoo! Marcius coming home!

Virgilia, Valeria. Nay, 'tis true.

Volumnia. Look, here's a letter from him: the state hath another, his wife another; and, I think, there's one at home for you.

Menenius. I will make my very house reel to-night: a letter for me!

Virgilia. Yes, certain, there's a letter for you; I saw't.

Menenius. A letter for me! it gives me an estate of seven years' health; in which time I will make a lip at the physician: the most sovereign prescription in Galen is but empiricutic, and, to this preservative, of no better report than a horse-drench. Is he not wounded? he was wont to come home wounded.

Virgilia. O, no, no, no.

Volumnia. O, he is wounded; I thank the gods for't.

Menenius. So do I too, if it be not too much: brings 'a victory in his pocket? the wounds become him.

Volumnia. On's brows: Menenius, he comes the third time home with the oaken garland.

Menenius. Has he disciplined Aufidius soundly?

Volumnia. Titus Lartius writes, they fought together, but Aufidius got off.

Menenius. And 'twas time for him too, I'll warrant him that: an he had stayed by him, I would not have been so fidiused for all the chests in Corioli, and the gold that's in them. Is the senate possessed of this?

Volumnia. Good ladies, let's go. Yes, yes, yes; the senate has letters from the general, wherein he gives my son the whole name of the war: he hath in this action outdone his former deeds doubly.

Valeria. In troth, there's wondrous things spoke of him.

Menenius. Wondrous! ay, I warrant you, and not without his true purchasing.

Virgilia. The gods grant them true!

Volumnia. True! pow, wow.

Menenius. True! I'll be sworn they are true. Where is he wounded? [*To the Tribunes*] God save your good worships! Marcius is coming home: he has more cause to be proud. Where is he wounded?

Volumnia. I' the shoulder and i' the left arm: there will be large cicatrices to show the people, when he shall stand for his place. He received in the repulse of Tarquin seven hurts i' the body.

Menenius. One i' the neck, and two i' the thigh,—there's nine that I know.

Volumnia. He had, before this last expedition, twenty-five wounds upon him.

Men. Now it's twenty-seven: every gash was an enemy's grave. [*A shout and flourish within.*] Hark! the trumpets.

Volumnia. These are the ushers of Marcius: before him he carries noise, and behind him he leaves tears:

Death, that dark spirit, in's nervy arm doth lie;
Which, being advanced, declines, and then men die.

A sennet. Trumpets sound. Enter COMINIUS *the general, and* TITUS LARTIUS; *between them,* CORIOLANUS, *crowned with an oaken garland; with* Captains *and* Soldiers, *and a* Herald.

Herald. Know, Rome, that all alone Marcius did fight
Within Corioli gates: where he hath won,
With fame, a name to Caius Marcius; these
In honour follows Coriolanus.
Welcome to Rome, renowned Coriolanus! [*Flourish.*
All. Welcome to Rome, renowned Coriolanus!
Coriolanus. No more of this, it does offend my heart;
Pray now, no more.
Cominius. Look, sir, your mother!
Coriolanus. O,
You have, I know, petition'd all the gods
For my prosperity. [*Kneels.*
Volumnia. Nay, my good soldier, up;
My gentle Marcius, worthy Caius, and
By deed-achieving honour newly named,—
What is it?—Coriolanus must I call thee?—
But, O, thy wife!
Coriolanus. My gracious silence, hail!
Wouldst thou have laugh'd had I come coffin'd home,
That weep'st to see me triumph? Ah, my dear,
Such eyes the widows in Corioli wear,
And mothers that lack sons.
Menenius. Now, the gods crown thee!
Coriolanus. And live you yet? [*To Valeria*] O my sweet lady, pardon.
Volumnia. I know not where to turn: O, welcome home;
And welcome, general; and ye're welcome all.

Menenius. A hundred thousand welcomes: I could weep,
And I could laugh; I am light and heavy: welcome:
A curse begin at very root on's heart
That is not glad to see thee! You are three
That Rome should dote on: yet, by the faith of men,
We have some old crab-trees here at home that will not
Be grafted to your relish. Yet welcome, warriors:
We call a nettle but a nettle and
The faults of fools but folly.

Cominius. Ever right.

Coriolanus. Menenius ever, ever.

Herald. Give way there, and go on!

Coriolanus. [*To Vol. and Vir.*] Your hand, and yours:
Ere in our own house I do shade my head,
The good patricians must be visited;
From whom I have received not only greetings,
But with them change of honours.

Volumnia. I have lived
To see inherited my very wishes
And the buildings of my fancy; only
There's one thing wanting, which I doubt not but
Our Rome will cast upon thee.

Coriolanus. Know, good mother,
I had rather be their servant in my way
Than sway with them in theirs.

Cominius. On, to the Capitol!

[*Flourish. Cornets. Exeunt in state, as before. Brutus and Sicinius come forward.*

Brutus. All tongues speak of him, and the bleared sights
Are spectacled to see him: your prattling nurse
Into a rapture lets her baby cry
While she chats him: the kitchen malkin pins
Her richest lockram 'bout her reechy neck,

Clambering the walls to eye him: stalls, bulks, windows,
Are smother'd up, leads fill'd, and ridges horsed
With variable complexions, all agreeing
In earnestness to see him: seld-shown flamens
Do press among the popular throngs and puff
To win a vulgar station: our veil'd dames
Commit the war of white and damask in
Their nicely-gawded cheeks to the wanton spoil
Of Phœbus' burning kisses: such a pother,
As if that whatsoever god who leads him
Were slily crept into his human powers,
And gave him graceful posture.

Sicinius. On the sudden,
I warrant him consul.

Brutus. Then our office may,
During his power, go sleep.

Sicinius. He cannot temperately transport his honours
From where he should begin and end, but will
Lose those he hath won.

Brutus. In that there's comfort.

Sicinius. Doubt not
The commoners, for whom we stand, but they
Upon their ancient malice will forget
With the least cause these his new honours; which
That he will give them make I as little question
As he is proud to do't.

Brutus. I heard him swear,
Were he to stand for consul, never would he
Appear i' the market-place, nor on him put
The napless vesture of humility;
Nor, showing, as the manner is, his wounds
To the people, beg their stinking breaths.

Sicinius. 'Tis right.

Brutus. It was his word: O, he would miss it rather
Than carry't but by the suit of the gentry to him,
And the desire of the nobles.

Sicinius. I wish no better
Than have him hold that purpose, and to put it
In execution.

Brutus. 'Tis most like he will.

Sicinius. It shall be to him then, as our good wills,
A sure destruction.

Brutus. So it must fall out
To him or our authorities. For an end,
We must suggest the people in what hatred
He still hath held them; that to's power he would
Have made them mules, silenced their pleaders, and
Dispropertied their freedoms; holding them,
In human action and capacity,
Of no more soul nor fitness for the world
Than camels in the war, who have their provand
Only for bearing burdens, and sore blows
For sinking under them.

Sicinius. This, as you say, suggested
At some time when his soaring insolence
Shall touch the people,—which time shall not want,
If he be put upon't; and that's as easy
As to set dogs on sheep,—will be his fire
To kindle their dry stubble; and their blaze
Shall darken him for ever.

Enter a Messenger.

Brutus. What's the matter?

Messenger. You are sent for to the Capitol. 'Tis thought
That Marcius shall be consul:

I have seen the dumb men throng to see him and
The blind to hear him speak: matrons flung gloves,
Ladies and maids their scarfs and handkerchers,
Upon him as he pass'd: the nobles bended,
As to Jove's statue, and the commons made
A shower and thunder with their caps and shouts:
I never saw the like.

Brutus. Let's to the Capitol;
And carry with us ears and eyes for the time,
But hearts for the event.

Sicinius. Have with you. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *The same. The Capitol.*

Enter two Officers, *to lay cushions.*

First Officer. Come, come, they are almost here. How many stand for consulships?

Second Officer. Three, they say: but 'tis thought of every one Coriolanus will carry it.

First Officer. That's a brave fellow; but he's vengeance proud and loves not the common people.

Second Officer. Faith, there have been many great men that have flattered the people, who ne'er loved them; and there be many that they have loved, they know not wherefore: so that, if they love they know not why, they hate upon no better a ground: therefore, for Coriolanus neither to care whether they love or hate him manifests the true knowledge he has in their disposition; and out of his noble carelessness let's them plainly see't.

First Officer. If he did not care whether he had their love or no, he waved indifferently 'twixt doing them neither

good nor harm: but he seeks their hate with greater devotion than they can render it him; and leaves nothing undone that may fully discover him their opposite. Now, to seem to affect the malice and displeasure of the people is as bad as that which he dislikes,—to flatter them for their love.

Second Officer. He hath deserved worthily of his country: and his ascent is not by such easy degrees as those who, having been supple and courteous to the people, bonneted, without any further deed to have them at all into their estimation and report: but he hath so planted his honours in their eyes, and his actions in their hearts, that for their tongues to be silent, and not confess so much, were a kind of ingrateful injury; to report otherwise, were a malice, that, giving itself the lie, would pluck reproof and rebuke from every ear that heard it.

First Officer. No more of him; he's a worthy man: make way, they are coming.

A sennet. Enter, with Lictors *before them*, COMINIUS *the consul*, MENENIUS, CORIOLANUS, Senators, SICINIUS, *and* BRUTUS. *The* Senators *take their places; the* Tribunes *take their places by themselves.* CORIOLANUS *stands.*

Menenius. Having determined of the Volsces and
To send for Titus Lartius, it remains,
As the main point of this our after-meeting,
To gratify his noble service that
Hath thus stood for his country; therefore, please you,
Most reverend and grave elders, to desire
The present consul, and last general
In our well-found successes, to report

A little of that worthy work perform'd
By Caius Marcius Coriolanus; whom
We met here, both to thank and to remember
With honours like himself.
First Senator. Speak, good Cominius:
Leave nothing out for length, and make us think
Rather our state's defective for requital
Than we to stretch it out. [*To the Tribunes*] Masters o' the people,
We do request your kindest ears, and, after,
Your loving motion toward the common body,
To yield what passes here.
Sicinius. We are convented
Upon a pleasing treaty, and have hearts
Inclinable to honour and advance
The theme of our assembly.
Brutus. Which the rather
We shall be blest to do, if he remember
A kinder value of the people than
He hath hereto prized them at.
Menenius. That's off, that's off;
I would you rather had been silent. Please you
To hear Cominius speak?
Brutus. Most willingly:
But yet my caution was more pertinent
Than the rebuke you give it.
Menenius. He loves your people;
But tie him not to be their bedfellow.
Worthy Cominius, speak. [*Coriolanus offers to go away.*] Nay, keep your place.
First Senator. Sit, Coriolanus; never shame to hear
What you have nobly done.
Coriolanus. Your honours' pardon:

I had rather have my wounds to heal again
Than hear say how I got them.
Brutus. Sir, I hope
My words disbench'd you not.
Coriolanus. No, sir: yet oft,
When blows have made me stay, I fled from words.
You soothed not, therefore hurt not: but your people,
I love them as they weigh.
Menenius. Pray now, sit down.
Cor. I had rather have one scratch my head i' the sun,
When the alarum were struck, than idly sit
To hear my nothings monster'd. [*Exit.*
Menenius. Masters of the people,
Your multiplying spawn how can he flatter—
That's thousand to one good one—when you now see
He had rather venture all his limbs for honour
Than one on's ears to hear't? Proceed, Cominius.
Cominius. I shall lack voice: the deeds of Coriolanus
Should not be utter'd feebly. It is held
That valour is the chiefest virtue, and
Most dignifies the haver: if it be,
The man I speak of cannot in the world
Be singly counterpoised. At sixteen years,
When Tarquin made a head for Rome, he fought
Beyond the mark of others: our then dictator,
Whom with all praise I point at, saw him fight,
When with his Amazonian chin he drove
The bristled lips before him: he bestrid
An o'er-press'd Roman, and i' the consul's view
Slew three opposers: Tarquin's self he met,
And struck him on his knee: in that day's feats,
When he might act the woman in the scene,
He proved best man i' the field, and for his meed

Was brow-bound with the oak. His pupil age
Man-enter'd thus, he waxed like a sea;
And in the brunt of seventeen battles since
He lurch'd all swords of the garland. For this last,
Before and in Corioli, let me say,
I cannot speak him home: he stopp'd the fliers;
And by his rare example made the coward
Turn terror into sport: as weeds before
A vessel under sail, so men obey'd,
And fell below his stem: his sword, death's stamp,
Where it did mark, it took; from face to foot
He was a thing of blood, whose every motion
Was timed with dying cries: alone he enter'd
The mortal gate of the city, which he painted
With shunless destiny; aidless came off,
And with a sudden re-enforcement struck
Corioli like a planet: now all's his:
When, by and by, the din of war gan pierce
His ready sense; then straight his doubled spirit
Re-quicken'd what in flesh was fatigate,
And to the battle came he; where he did
Run reeking o'er the lives of men, as if
'Twere a perpetual spoil: and till we call'd
Both field and city ours, he never stood
To ease his breast with panting.

Menenius. Worthy man!

First Sen. He cannot but with measure fit the honours
Which we devise him.

Cominius. Our spoils he kick'd at,
And look'd upon things precious as they were
The common muck of the world: he covets less
Than misery itself would give; rewards
His deeds with doing them, and is content

To spend the time to end it.

Menenius. He's right noble:
Let him be call'd for.

First Senator. Call Coriolanus.

Officer. He doth appear.

Re-enter CORIOLANUS.

Menenius. The senate, Coriolanus, are well pleased
To make thee consul.

Coriolanus. I do owe them still
My life and services.

Menenius. It then remains
That you do speak to the people.

Coriolanus. I do beseech you,
Let me o'erleap that custom; for I cannot
Put on the gown, stand naked, and entreat them,
For my wounds' sake, to give their suffrage: please you
That I may pass this doing.

Sicinius. Sir, the people
Must have their voices; neither will they bate
One jot of ceremony.

Menenius. Put them not to't:
Pray you, go fit you to the custom, and
Take to you, as your predecessors have,
Your honour with your form.

Coriolanus. It is a part
That I shall blush in acting, and might well
Be taken from the people.

Brutus. [*To Sicinius*] Mark you that?

Coriolanus. To brag unto them, thus I did, and thus;
Show them the unaching scars which I should hide,
As if I had received them for the hire

Of their breath only!

Menenius. Do not stand upon't.
We recommend to you, tribunes of the people,
Our purpose to them; and to our noble consul
Wish we all joy and honour.

Senators. To Coriolanus come all joy and honour!

[*Flourish of cornets. Exeunt all but Brutus and Sicinius.*

Brutus. You see how he intends to use the people.

Sic. May they perceive's intent! He will require them,
As if he did contemn what he requested
Should be in them to give.

Brutus. Come, we'll inform them
Of our proceedings here: on the market-place
I know they do attend us. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *The same. The Forum.*

Enter several Citizens.

First Citizen. Once, if he do require our voices, we ought not to deny him.

Second Citizen. We may, sir, if we will.

Third Citizen. We have power in ourselves to do it, but it is a power that we have no power to do: for if he show us his wounds, and tell us his deeds, we are to put our tongues into those wounds, and speak for them; so, if he tell us his noble deeds, we must also tell him our noble acceptance of them. Ingratitude is monstrous: and for the multitude to be ingrateful, were to make a monster of the multitude; of the which we being members, should bring ourselves to be monstrous members.

First Citizen. And to make us no better thought of, a little help will serve; for once we stood up about the corn, he himself stuck not to call us the many-headed multitude.

Third Cit. We have been called so of many; not that our heads are some brown, some black, some auburn, some bald, but that our wits are so diversely coloured: and truly I think, if all our wits were to issue out of one skull, they would fly east, west, north, south; and their consent of one direct way should be at once to all the points o' the compass.

Second Citizen. Think you so? Which way do you judge my wit would fly? 23

Third Citizen. Nay, your wit will not so soon out as another man's will; 'tis strongly wedged up in a block-head; but if it were at liberty, 'twould, sure, southward. 26

Second Citizen. Why that way?

Third Citizen. To lose itself in a fog; where being three parts melted away with rotten dews, the fourth would return for conscience sake, to help to get thee a wife. 30

Second Citizen. You are never without your tricks: you may, you may.

Third Cit. Are you all resolved to give your voices? But that's no matter, the greater part carries it. I say, if he would incline to the people, there was never a worthier man.

Enter CORIOLANUS *in a gown of humility, with* MENENIUS.

Here he comes, and in the gown of humility: mark his behaviour. We are not to stay altogether, but to come by him where he stands, by ones, by twos, and by threes. He's to make his requests by particulars; wherein every one of us has a single honour, in giving him our own voices with our own tongues: therefore follow me, and I'll direct you how you shall go by him. 42

All. Content, content. [*Exeunt Citizens.*

Menenius. O sir, you are not right: have you not known
The worthiest men have done't?

Coriolanus. What must I say?
"I pray, sir,"—Plague upon't! I cannot bring
My tongue to such a pace:—"Look, sir, my wounds!
I got them in my country's service, when
Some certain of your brethren roar'd and ran
From the noise of our own drums."

Menenius. O me, the gods!
You must not speak of that: you must desire them
To think upon you.

Coriolanus. Think upon me! hang 'em!
I would they would forget me, like the virtues
Which our divines lose by 'em.

Menenius. You'll mar all:
I'll leave you: pray you, speak to 'em, I pray you,
In wholesome manner.

Coriolanus. Bid them wash their faces,
And keep their teeth clean. [*Exit Menenius.*] So, here comes a brace.

Re-enter two Citizens.

You know the cause, sir, of my standing here.

First Cit. We do, sir; tell us what hath brought you to't.

Coriolanus. Mine own desert.

Second Citizen. Your own desert!

Coriolanus. Ay, not mine own desire!

First Citizen. How! not your own desire!

Coriolanus. No, sir, 'twas never my desire yet to trouble the poor with begging.

First Citizen. You must think, if we give you any thing, we hope to gain by you.

Cor. Well, then, I pray, your price o' the consulship?

First Citizen. The price is, to ask it kindly.

Coriolanus. Kindly! Sir, I pray, let me ha't: I have wounds to show you, which shall be yours in private. Your good voice, sir; what say you?

Second Citizen. You shall ha't, worthy sir.

Coriolanus. A match, sir. There's in all two worthy voices begged. I have your alms: adieu.

First Citizen. But this is something odd.

Second Cit. An 'twere to give again,—but 'tis no matter.

[*Exeunt the two Citizens.*

Re-enter two other Citizens.

Cor. Pray you now, if it may stand with the tune of your voices that I may be consul, I have here the customary gown.

Third Citizen. You have deserved nobly of your country, and you have not deserved nobly.

Coriolanus. Your enigma?

Third Citizen. You have been a scourge to her enemies, you have been a rod to her friends; you have not indeed loved the common people.

Coriolanus. You should account me the more virtuous, that I have not been common in my love. I will, sir, flatter my sworn brother, the people, to earn a dearer estimation of them; 'tis a condition they account gentle: and since the wisdom of their choice is rather to have my hat than my heart, I will practise the insinuating nod, and be off to them most counterfeitly; that is, sir, I will counterfeit the bewitchment of some popular man, and give it bountiful to the desirers. Therefore, beseech you I may be consul.

Fourth Citizen. We hope to find you our friend; and therefore give you our voices heartily.

Third Citizen. You have received many wounds for your country.

Coriolanus. I will not seal your knowledge with showing them. I will make much of your voices, and so trouble you no further.

Both Cit. The gods give you joy, sir, heartily! [*Exeunt.*

Coriolanus. Most sweet voices!
Better it is to die, better to starve,
Than crave the hire which first we do deserve.
Why in this woolvish toge should I stand here,
To beg of Hob and Dick, that do appear,
Their needless vouches? Custom calls me to't:
What custom wills, in all things should we do't,
The dust on antique time would lie unswept,
And mountainous error be too highly heapt
For truth to o'er-peer. Rather than fool it so,
Let the high office and the honour go
To one that would do thus. I am half through;
The one part suffer'd, the other will I do.

Re-enter three Citizens *more.*

Here come moe voices.
Your voices: for your voices I have fought;
Watch'd for your voices; for your voices bear
Of wounds two dozen odd; battles thrice six
I have seen and heard of; for your voices have
Done many things, some less, some more: your voices:
Indeed, I would be consul.

Fifth Citizen. He has done nobly, and cannot go without any honest man's voice.

Sixth Citizen. Therefore let him be consul: the gods give him joy, and make him good friend to the people!

All. Amen, amen. God save thee, noble consul!
[*Exeunt.*

Coriolanus. Worthy voices!

Re-enter MENENIUS, *with* BRUTUS *and* SICINIUS.

Men. You have stood your limitation; and the tribunes
Endue you with the people's voice: remains
That, in the official marks invested, you
Anon do meet the senate.

Coriolanus. Is this done?

Sicinius. The custom of request you have discharged:
The people do admit you, and are summon'd
To meet anon, upon your approbation.

Cor. Where? at the senate-house?

Sicinius. There, Coriolanus.

Coriolanus. May I change these garments?

Sicinius. You may, sir.

Cor. That I'll straight do; and, knowing myself again,
Repair to the senate-house.

Menenius. I'll keep you company. Will you along?

Brutus. We stay here for the people.

Sicinius. Fare you well.
[*Exeunt Coriolanus and Menenius.*
He has it now, and by his looks methinks
'Tis warm at's heart.

Brutus. With a proud heart he wore his humble weeds.
Will you dismiss the people?

Re-enter Citizens.

Sic. How now, my masters! have you chose this man?

First Citizen. He has our voices, sir.

Brutus. We pray the gods he may deserve your loves.

Second Cit. Amen, sir: to my poor unworthy notice,

He mock'd us when he begg'd our voices.
Third Citizen. Certainly
He flouted us downright.
First Cit. No, 'tis his kind of speech; he did not mock us.
Second Cit. Not one amongst us, save yourself, but says
He used us scornfully; he should have show'd us
His marks of merit, wounds received for's country.
Sic. Why, so he did, I am sure.
All the Citizens. No, no; no man saw 'em.
Third Citizen. He said he had wounds, which he could show in private;
And with his hat, thus waving it in scorn,
"I would be consul," says he; "aged custom,
But by your voices, will not so permit me;
Your voices therefore." When we granted that,
Here was, "I thank you for your voices: thank you:
Your most sweet voices: now you have left your voices,
I have no further with you." Was not this mockery?
Sicinius. Why, either were you ignorant to see't,
Or, seeing it, of such childish friendliness
To yield your voices?
Brutus. Could you not have told him,
As you were lesson'd, when he had no power,
But was a petty servant to the state,
He was your enemy; ever spake against
Your liberties and the charters that you bear
I' the body of the weal; and now, arriving
A place of potency and sway o' the state,
If he should still malignantly remain
Fast foe to the plebeii, your voices might
Be curses to yourselves? You should have said
That as his worthy deeds did claim no less
Than what he stood for, so his gracious nature

Would think upon you for your voices and
Translate his malice towards you into love,
Standing your friendly lord.

Sicinius. Thus to have said,
As you were fore-advised, had touch'd his spirit
And tried his inclination; from him pluck'd
Either his gracious promise, which you might,
As cause had call'd you up, have held him to;
Or else it would have gall'd his surly nature,
Which easily endures not article
Tying him to aught; so, putting him to rage,
You should have ta'en the advantage of his choler,
And pass'd him unelected.

Brutus. Did you perceive
He did solicit you in free contempt,
When he did need your loves; and do you think
That his contempt shall not be bruising to you,
When he hath power to crush? Why, had your bodies
No heart among you? or had you tongues to cry
Against the rectorship of judgment?

Sicinius. Have you,
Ere now, denied the asker? and now again,
Of him that did not ask, but mock, bestow
Your sued-for tongues?

Third Citizen. He's not confirm'd; we may
Deny him yet.

Second Cit. And will deny him:
I'll have five hundred voices of that sound.

First Citizen. I twice five hundred, and their friends to piece 'em.

Brutus. Get you hence instantly, and tell those friends,
They have chose a consul that will from them take
Their liberties; make them of no more voice

Than dogs, that are as often beat for barking
As therefore kept to do so.
Sicinius. Let them assemble;
And on a safer judgment all revoke
Your ignorant election: enforce his pride,
And his old hate unto you: besides, forget not
With what contempt he wore the humble weed,
How in his suit he scorn'd you; but your loves,
Thinking upon his services, took from you
The apprehension of his present portance,
Which most gibingly, ungravely, he did fashion
After the inveterate hate he bears you.
Brutus. Lay
A fault on us, your tribunes; that we labour'd,
No impediment between, but that you must
Cast your election on him.
Sicinius. Say, you chose him
More after our commandment than as guided
By your own true affections, and that your minds,
Pre-occupied with what you rather must do
Than what you should, made you against the grain
To voice him consul: lay the fault on us.
Brutus. Ay, spare us not. Say we read lectures to you,
How youngly he began to serve his country,
How long continued; and what stock he springs of,—
The noble house o' the Marcians; from whence came
That Ancus Marcius, Numa's daughter's son,
Who, after great Hostilius, here was king;
Of the same house Publius and Quintus were,
That our best water brought by conduits hither;
And [Censorinus,] nobly named so,
Twice being [by the people chosen] censor,
Was his great ancestor.

Sicinius. One thus descended,
That hath beside well in his person wrought
To be set high in place, we did commend
To your remembrances; but you have found,
Scaling his present bearing with his past,
That he's your fixed enemy, and revoke
Your sudden approbation.

Brutus. Say you ne'er had done't—
Harp on that still—but by our putting on:
And presently, when you have drawn your number,
Repair to the Capitol.

All the Citizens. We will so: almost all
Repent in their election. [*Exeunt.*

Brutus. Let them go on;
This mutiny were better put in hazard,
Than stay, past doubt, for greater:
If, as his nature is, he fall in rage
With their refusal, both observe and answer
The vantage of his anger.

Sicinius. To the Capitol, come:
We will be there before the stream o' the people;
And this shall seem, as partly 'tis, their own,
Which we have goaded onward. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I. *Rome. A street.*

Cornets. Enter CORIOLANUS, MENENIUS, *all the Gentry*, COMINIUS, TITUS LARTIUS, Senators, *and other* Senators.

Cor. Tullus Aufidius then had made new head?

Lartius. He had, my lord; and that it was which caused
Our swifter composition.

Coriolanus. So then the Volsces stand but as at first;
Ready, when time shall prompt them, to make road
Upon's again.

Cominius. They are worn, lord consul, so,
That we shall hardly in our ages see
Their banners wave again.

Coriolanus. Saw you Aufidius?

Lartius. On safe-guard he came to me; and did curse
Against the Volsces, for they had so vilely
Yielded the town: he is retired to Antium.

Coriolanus. Spoke he of me?

Lartius. He did, my lord.

Coriolanus. How? what?

Lartius. How often he had met you, sword to sword;
That of all things upon the earth he hated
Your person most; that he would pawn his fortunes
To hopeless restitution, so he might
Be call'd your vanquisher.

Coriolanus. At Antium lives he?

Lartius. At Antium.

Coriolanus. I wish I had a cause to seek him there,
To oppose his hatred fully. Welcome home.

Enter SICINIUS *and* BRUTUS.

Behold, these are the tribunes of the people,
The tongues o' the common mouth: I do despise them;
For they do prank them in authority,
Against all noble sufferance.

Sicinius. Pass no further.

Coriolanus. Ha! what is that?

Brutus. It will be dangerous to go on: no further.

Coriolanus. What makes this change?

Menenius. The matter?

Com. Hath he not pass'd the noble and the common?

Brutus. Cominius, no.

Coriolanus. Have I had children's voices?

First Senator. Tribunes, give way; he shall to the market-place.

Brutus. The people are incensed against him.

Sicinius. Stop,
Or all will fall in broil.

Coriolanus. Are these your herd?
Must these have voices, that can yield them now,
And straight disclaim their tongues? What are your offices?
You being their mouths, why rule you not their teeth?
Have you not set them on?

Menenius. Be calm, be calm.

Coriolanus. It is a purposed thing, and grows by plot.
To curb the will of the nobility:
Suffer't, and live with such as cannot rule,
Nor ever will be ruled.

Brutus. Call't not a plot:

The people cry you mock'd them, and of late,
When corn was given them gratis, you repined;
Scandal'd the suppliants for the people, call'd them
Time-pleasers, flatterers, foes to nobleness.

Cor. Why, this was known before.

Brutus. Not to them all.

Cor. Have you inform'd them sithence?

Brutus. How! I inform them!

Com. You are like to do such business.

Brutus. Not unlike,
Each way, to better yours.

Cor. Why then should I be consul? By yond clouds
Let me deserve so ill as you, and make me
Your fellow tribune.

Sicinius. You show too much of that
For which the people stir: if you will pass
To where you are bound, you must inquire your way,
Which you are out of, with a gentler spirit;
Or never be so noble as a consul,
Nor yoke with him for tribune.

Menenius. Let's be calm.

Com. The people are abused: set on. This paltering
Becomes not Rome, nor has Coriolanus
Deserved this so dishonour'd rub, laid falsely
I' the plain way of his merit.

Coriolanus. Tell me of corn!
This was my speech, and I will speak't again,—

Men. Not now, not now.

First Senator. Not in this heat, sir, now.

Cor. Now, as I live, I will. My nobler friends,
I crave their pardons:
For the mutable, rank-scented many, let them
Regard me as I do not flatter, and

Therein behold themselves: I say again,
In soothing them, we nourish 'gainst our senate
The cockle of rebellion, insolence, sedition,
Which we ourselves have plough'd for, sow'd, and scatter'd,
By mingling them with us, the honour'd number;
Who lack not virtue, no, nor power, but that
Which they have given to beggars.

Menenius. Well, no more.

First Sen. No more words, we beseech you.

Coriolanus. How! no more!
As for my country I have shed my blood,
Not fearing outward force, so shall my lungs
Coin words till their decay against those measles,
Which we disdain should tetter us, yet sought
The very way to catch them.

Brutus. You speak o' the people,
As if you were a god to punish, not
A man of their infirmity.

Sicinius. 'Twere well
We let the people know't.

Menenius. What, what? his choler?

Coriolanus. Choler!
Were I as patient as the midnight sleep,
By Jove, 'twould be my mind!

Sicinius. It is a mind
That shall remain a poison where it is,
Not poison any further.

Coriolanus. Shall remain!
Hear you this Triton of the minnows? mark you
His absolute "shall"?

Cominius. 'Twas from the canon.

Coriolanus. "Shall"!
O good but most unwise patricians! why,

You grave but reckless senators, have you thus
Given Hydra here to choose an officer,
That with his peremptory "shall," being but
The horn and noise o' the monster's, wants not spirit
To say he'll turn your current in a ditch,
And make your channel his? If he have power,
Then vail your ignorance; if none, awake
Your dangerous lenity. If you are learn'd,
Be not as common fools; if you are not,
Let them have cushions by you. You are plebeians,
If they be senators: and they are no less,
When, both your voices blended, the great'st taste
Most palates theirs. They choose their magistrate,
And such a one as he, who puts his "shall,"
His popular "shall," against a graver bench
Than ever frown'd in Greece. By Jove himself,
It makes the consuls base! and my soul aches
To know, when two authorities are up,
Neither supreme, how soon confusion
May enter 'twixt the gap of both and take
The one by the other.

Cominius. Well, on to the market-place.

Coriolanus. Whoever gave that counsel, to give forth
The corn o' the storehouse gratis, as 'twas used
Sometime in Greece,—

Menenius. Well, well, no more of that.

Cor. Though there the people had more absolute power,—
I say, they nourish'd disobedience, fed
The ruin of the state.

Brutus. Why, shall the people give
One that speaks thus their voice?

Coriolanus. I'll give my reasons,
More worthier than their voices. They know the corn

Was not our recompense, resting well assured
They ne'er did service for't: being press'd to the war,
Even when the navel of the state was touch'd,
They would not thread the gates: this kind of service
Did not deserve corn gratis. Being i' the war,
Their mutinies and revolts, wherein they show'd
Most valour, spoke not for them: the accusation
Which they have often made against the senate,
All cause unborn, could never be the native
Of our so frank donation. Well, what then?
How shall this bosom multiplied digest
The senate's courtesy? Let deeds express
What's like to be their words: "We did request it;
We are the greater poll, and in true fear
They gave us our demands." Thus we debase
The nature of our seats, and make the rabble
Call our cares fears; which will in time
Break ope the locks o' the senate and bring in
The crows to peck the eagles.

Menenius. Come, enough.

Brutus. Enough, with over-measure.

Coriolanus. No, take more:
What may be sworn by, both divine and human,
Seal what I end withal! This double worship,
Where one part does disdain with cause, the other
Insult without all reason; where gentry, title, wisdom,
Cannot conclude but by the yea and no
Of general ignorance,—it must omit
Real necessities, and give way the while
To unstable slightness: purpose so barr'd, it follows,
Nothing is done to purpose Therefore, beseech you,—
You that will be less fearful than discreet,
That love the fundamental part of state

More than you doubt the change on't, that prefer
A noble life before a long, and wish
To jump a body with a dangerous physic
That's sure of death without it,—at once pluck out
The multitudinous tongue; let them not lick
The sweet which is their poison: your dishonour
Mangles true judgment, and bereaves the state
Of that integrity which should become't;
Not having the power to do the good it would,
For the ill which doth control't.

Brutus. Has said enough.

Sicinius. Has spoken like a traitor, and shall answer
As traitors do.

Coriolanus. Thou wretch, despite o'erwhelm thee!
What should the people do with these bald tribunes?
On whom depending, their obedience fails
To the greater bench: in a rebellion,
When what's not meet, but what must be, was law,
Then were they chosen: in a better hour,
Let what is meet be said it must be meet,
And throw their power i' the dust.

Brutus. Manifest treason!

Sicinius. This a consul? no.

Brutus. The ædiles, ho!

Enter an Ædile.

Let him be apprehended.

Sicinius. Go, call the people [*Exit Ædile*]: in whose name myself
Attach thee as a traitorous innovator,
A foe to the public weal: obey, I charge thee,
And follow to thine answer.

Coriolanus. Hence, old goat!

Senators, &c. We'll surety him.
Cominius. Aged sir, hands off.
Cor. Hence, rotten thing! or I shall shake thy bones
Out of thy garments.
Sicinius. Help, ye citizens!

Enter a rabble of Citizens, *with the* Ædiles.

Menenius. On both sides more respect.
Sic. Here's he that would take from you all your power.
Brutus. Seize him, ædiles!
Citizens. Down with him! down with him!
Senators, &c. Weapons, weapons, weapons!
[*They all bustle about Coriolanus, crying*
"Tribunes!" "Patricians!" "Citizens!" "What, ho!"
"Sicinius!" "Brutus!" "Coriolanus!" "Citizens!"
"Peace, peace, peace!" "Stay, hold, peace!"
Menenius. What is about to be? I am out of breath;
Confusion's near; I cannot speak. You, tribunes
To the people! Coriolanus, patience!
Speak, good Sicinius.
Sicinius. Hear me, people; peace!
Citizens. Let's hear our tribune: peace! Speak, speak, speak.
Sicinius. You are at point to lose your liberties:
Marcius would have all from you; Marcius,
Whom late you have named for consul.
Menenius. Fie, fie, fie!
This is the way to kindle, not to quench.
First Senator. To unbuild the city, and to lay all flat.
Sicinius. What is the city but the people?
Citizens. True,
The people are the city.

Brutus. By the consent of all, we were establish'd
The people's magistrates.
Citizens. You so remain.
Menenius. And so are like to do.
Cominius. That is the way to lay the city flat;
To bring the roof to the foundation,
And bury all, which yet distinctly ranges,
In heaps and piles of ruin.
Sicinius. This deserves death.
Brutus. Or let us stand to our authority,
Or let us lose it. We do here pronounce,
Upon the part o' the people, in whose power
We were elected theirs, Marcius is worthy
Of present death.
Sicinius. Therefore lay hold of him;
Bear him to the rock Tarpeian, and from thence
Into destruction cast him.
Brutus. Ædiles, seize him!
Citizens. Yield, Marcius, yield!
Menenius. Hear me one word:
Beseech you, tribunes, hear me but a word.
Ædiles. Peace, peace!
Menenius. Be that you seem, truly your country's friends,
And temperately proceed to what you would
Thus violently redress.
Brutus. Sir, those cold ways,
That seem like prudent helps, are very poisonous
Where the disease is violent. Lay hands upon him,
And bear him to the rock.
Coriolanus. No, I'll die here. [*Drawing his sword.*
There's some among you have beheld me fighting:
Come, try upon yourselves what you have seen me.
Men. Down with that sword! Tribunes, withdraw awhile.

Brutus. Lay hands upon him.

Menenius. Help, help Marcius, help,
You that be noble; help him, young and old!

Citizens. Down with him! down with him!

[*In this mutiny, the Tribunes, the Ædiles, and the People are beat in.*

Menenius. Go, get you to your house; be gone, away!
All will be naught else.

Second Senator. Get you gone.

Coriolanus. Stand fast;
We have as many friends as enemies.

Menenius. Shall it be put to that?

First Senator. The gods forbid!
I prithee, noble friend, home to thy house;
Leave us to cure this cause.

Menenius. For 'tis a sore upon us
You cannot tent yourself: be gone, beseech you.

Cominius. Come, sir, along with us.

Coriolanus. I would they were barbarians, as they are,
Though in Rome litter'd; not Romans, as they are not,
Though calved i' the porch o' the Capitol—

Menenius. Be gone;
Put not your worthy rage into your tongue;
One time will owe another.

Coriolanus. On fair ground
I could beat forty of them.

Menenius. I could myself
Take up a brace o' the best of them; yea, the two tribunes.

Cominius. But now 'tis odds beyond arithmetic;
And manhood is call'd foolery, when it stands
Against a falling fabric. Will you hence,
Before the tag return? whose rage doth rend
Like interrupted waters, and o'erbear

What they are used to bear.

Menenius. Pray you, be gone:
I'll try whether my old wit be in request
With those that have but little: this must be patch'd
With cloth of any colour.

Cominius. Nay, come away.

[*Exeunt Coriolanus, Cominius, and others.*

First Patrician. This man has marr'd his fortune.

Menenius. His nature is too noble for the world:
He would not flatter Neptune for his trident,
Or Jove for's power to thunder. His heart's his mouth:
What his breast forges, that his tongue must vent;
And, being angry, does forget that ever
He heard the name of death. [*A noise within.*
Here's goodly work!

Second Patrician. I would they were a-bed!

Men. I would they were in Tiber! What, the vengeance,
Could he not speak 'em fair?

Re-enter BRUTUS *and* SICINIUS *with the rabble.*

Sicinius. Where is this viper,
That would depopulate the city, and
Be every man himself?

Menenius. You worthy tribunes,—

Sicinius. He shall be thrown down the Tarpeian rock
With rigorous hands; he hath resisted law,
And therefore law shall scorn him further trial
Than the severity of the public power,
Which he so sets at naught.

First Citizen. He shall well know
The noble tribunes are the people's mouths,

And we their hands.

Citizens. He shall, sure on't.

Menenius. Sir, sir,—

Sicinius. Peace!

Menenius. Do not cry havoc, where you should but hunt
With modest warrant.

Sicinius. Sir, how comes't that you
Have holp to make this rescue?

Menenius. Hear me speak:
As I do know the consul's worthiness,
So can I name his faults,—

Sicinius. Consul! what consul?

Menenius. The consul Coriolanus.

Brutus. He consul!

Citizens. No, no, no, no, no.

Men. If, by the tribunes' leave, and yours, good people,
I may be heard, I would crave a word or two;
The which shall turn you to no further harm
Than so much loss of time.

Sicinius. Speak briefly, then;
For we are peremptory to dispatch
This viperous traitor: to eject him hence
Were but one danger, and to keep him here
Our certain death: therefore it is decreed
He dies to-night.

Menenius. Now the good gods forbid
That our renowned Rome, whose gratitude
Towards her deserved children is enroll'd
In Jove's own book, like an unnatural dam
Should now eat up her own!

Sicinius. He's a disease that must be cut away.

Men. O, he's a limb that has but a disease;
Mortal, to cut it off; to cure it, easy.

What has he done to Rome that's worthy death?
Killing our enemies, the blood he hath lost—
Which, I dare vouch, is more than that he hath,
By many an ounce—he dropp'd it for his country;
And what is left, to lose it by his country,
Were to us all that do't and suffer it
A brand to the end o' the world.

Sicinius. This is clean kam.

Brutus. Merely awry: when he did love his country,
It honour'd him.

Menenius. The service of the foot
Being once gangrened, is not then respected
For what before it was.

Brutus. We'll hear no more.
Pursue him to his house, and pluck him thence;
Lest his infection, being of catching nature,
Spread further.

Menenius. One word more, one word.
This tiger-footed rage, when it shall find
The harm of unscann'd swiftness, will, too late,
Tie leaden pounds to's heels. Proceed by process;
Lest parties, as he is beloved, break out
And sack great Rome with Romans.

Brutus. If it were so,—

Sicinius. What do ye talk?
Have we not had a taste of his obedience?
Our ædiles smote? ourselves resisted? Come.

Menenius. Consider this: he has been bred i' the wars
Since he could draw a sword, and is ill school'd
In bolted language; meal and bran together
He throws without distinction. Give me leave,
I'll go to him, and undertake to bring him
Where he shall answer, by a lawful form,

In peace, to his utmost peril.

First Senator. Noble tribunes,
It is the humane way: the other course
Will prove too bloody, and the end of it
Unknown to the beginning.

Sicinius. Noble Menenius,
Be you then as the people's officer.
Masters, lay down your weapons.

Brutus. Go not home.

Sic. Meet on the market-place. We'll attend you there:
Where, if you bring not Marcius, we'll proceed
In our first way.

Men. I'll bring him to you. [*To the Senators*] Let me
Desire your company: he must come, or what
Is worst will follow.

First Senator. Pray you, let us to him. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *A room in* CORIOLANUS'S *house.*

Enter CORIOLANUS *and* Patricians.

Cor. Let them pull all about mine ears, present me
Death on the wheel or at wild horses' heels,
Or pile ten hills on the Tarpeian rock,
That the precipitation might down stretch
Below the beam of sight; yet will I still
Be thus to them.

First Pat. You do the nobler.

Coriolanus. I muse my mother
Does not approve me further, who was wont
To call them woollen vassals, things created
To buy and sell with groats, to show bare heads

In congregations, to yawn, be still, and wonder,
When one but of my ordinance stood up
To speak of peace or war.

Enter VOLUMNIA.

I talk of you:
Why did you wish me milder? would you have me
False to my nature? Rather say, I play
The man I am.

Volumnia. O, sir, sir, sir,
I would have had you put your power well on,
Before you had worn it out.

Coriolanus. Let go.

Vol. You might have been enough the man you are,
With striving less to be so: lesser had been
The thwartings of your dispositions, if
You had not show'd them how ye were disposed
Ere they lack'd power to cross you.

Coriolanus. Let them hang.

Volumnia. Ay, and burn too.

Enter MENENIUS *and* Senators.

Menenius. Come, come, you have been too rough, something too rough;
You must return and mend it.

First Senator. There's no remedy;
Unless, by not so doing, our good city
Cleave in the midst, and perish.

Volumnia. Pray, be counsell'd:
I have a heart as little apt as yours,
But yet a brain that leads my use of anger
To better vantage.

Menenius. Well said, noble woman!

Before he should thus stoop to the herd, but that
The violent fit o' the time craves it as physic
For the whole state, I would put mine armour on,
Which I can scarcely bear.

Coriolanus. What must I do?

Men. Return to the tribunes.

Coriolanus. Well, what then? what then?

Menenius. Repent what you have spoke.

Coriolanus. For them? I cannot do it to the gods;
Must I then do't to them?

Volumnia. You are too absolute;
Though therein you can never be too noble,
But when extremities speak. I have heard you say,
Honour and policy, like unsever'd friends,
I' the war do grow together: grant that, and tell me,
In peace what each of them by the other lose,
That they combine not there.

Coriolanus. Tush, tush!

Menenius. A good demand.

Volumnia. If it be honour in your wars to seem
The same you are not,—which, for your best ends,
You adopt your policy,—how is it less or worse.
That it shall hold companionship in peace
With honour as in war, since that to both
It stands in like request?

Coriolanus. Why force you this?

Volumnia. Because that now it lies you on to speak
To the people; not by your own instruction,
Nor by the matter which your heart prompts you,
But with such words that are but roted in
Your tongue, though but bastards and syllables
Of no allowance to your bosom's truth.
Now, this no more dishonours you at all

Than to take in a town with gentle words,
Which else would put you to your fortune and
The hazard of much blood.
I would dissemble with my nature where
My fortunes and my friends at stake required
I should do so in honour: I am, in this,
Your wife, your son, these senators, the nobles;
And you will rather show our general louts
How you can frown than spend a fawn upon 'em,
For the inheritance of their loves, and safeguard
Of what that want might ruin.

Menenius. Noble lady!
Come, go with us; speak fair: you may salve so,
Not what is dangerous present, but the loss
Of what is past.

Volumnia. I prithee now, my son,
Go to them, with this bonnet in thy hand;
And thus far having stretch'd it,—here be with them,—
Thy knee bussing the stones,—for in such business
Action is eloquence, and the eyes of the ignorant
More learned than the ears,—waving thy head,
Which often, thus, correcting thy stout heart,
Now humble as the ripest mulberry
That will not hold the handling: or say to them,
Thou art their soldier, and being bred in broils
Hast not the soft way which, thou dost confess,
Were fit for thee to use, as they to claim,
In asking their good love; but thou wilt frame
Thyself, forsooth, hereafter theirs, so far
As thou hast power and person.

Menenius. This but done,
Even as she speaks, why, their hearts were yours;
For they have pardons, being ask'd, as free

As words to little purpose.

Volumnia. Prithee now,
Go, and be ruled: although I know thou hadst rather
Follow thine enemy in a fiery gulf
Than flatter him in a bower. Here is Cominius.

Enter COMINIUS.

Com. I have been i' the market-place; and, sir, 'tis fit
You make strong party, or defend yourself
By calmness or by absence: all's in anger.

Menenius. Only fair speech.

Cominius. I think 'twill serve, if he
Can thereto frame his spirit.

Volumnia. He must, and will.
Prithee now, say you will, and go about it.

Cor. Must I go show them my unbarb'd sconce? must I
With my base tongue give to my noble heart
A lie that it must bear? Well, I will do't:
Yet, were there but this single plot to lose,
This mould of Marcius, they to dust should grind it,
And throw't against the wind. To the market-place!
You have put me now to such a part, which never
I shall discharge to the life.

Cominius. Come, come, we'll prompt you.

Volumnia. I prithee now, sweet son, as thou hast said
My praises made thee first a soldier, so,
To have my praise for this, perform a part
Thou hast not done before.

Coriolanus. Well, I must do't:
Away, my disposition, and possess me
Some harlot's spirit! my throat of war be turn'd,
Which quired with my drum, into a pipe

Small as an eunuch, or the virgin voice
That babies lulls asleep! the smiles of knaves
Tent in my cheeks, and schoolboys' tears take up
The glasses of my sight! a beggar's tongue
Make motion through my lips, and my arm'd knees,
Who bow'd but in my stirrup, bend like his
That hath received an alms! I will not do't,
Lest I surcease to honour mine own truth,
And by my body's action teach my mind
A most inherent baseness.

Volumnia. At thy choice, then:
To beg of thee, it is my more dishonour
Than thou of them. Come all to ruin: let
Thy mother rather feel thy pride than fear
Thy dangerous stoutness; for I mock at death
With as big heart as thou. Do as thou list.
Thy valiantness was mine, thou suck'dst it from me;
But owe thy pride thyself.

Coriolanus. Pray, be content:
Mother, I am going to the market-place;
Chide me no more. I'll mountebank their loves,
Cog their hearts from them, and come home beloved
Of all the trades in Rome. Look, I am going:
Commend me to my wife. I'll return consul;
Or never trust to what my tongue can do
I' the way of flattery further.

Volumnia. Do your will. [*Exit.*

Com. Away! the tribunes do attend you: arm yourself
To answer mildly; for they are prepared
With accusations, as I hear, more strong
Than are upon you yet.

Coriolanus. The word is "mildly:" pray you, let us go:
Let them accuse me by invention, I

Will answer in mine honour.

Menenius. Ay, but mildly.

Cor. Well, mildly be it; then mildly! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *The same. The Forum.*

Enter SICINIUS *and* BRUTUS.

Brutus. In this point charge him home, that he affects
Tyrannical power: if he evade us there,
Enforce him with his envy to the people,
And that the spoil got on the Antiates
Was ne'er distributed.

Enter an Ædile.

What, will he come?

Ædile. He's coming.

Brutus. How accompanied?

Ædile. With old Menenius, and those senators
That always favour'd him.

Sicinius. Have you a catalogue
Of all the voices that we have procured,
Set down by the poll?

Ædile. I have; 'tis ready.

Sicinius. Have you collected them by tribes?

Ædile. I have.

Sicinius. Assemble presently the people hither:
And when they hear me say, "It shall be so
I' the right and strength o' the commons," be it either
For death, for fine, or banishment, then let them,
If I say fine, cry "Fine,"— if death, cry "Death;"

Insisting on the old prerogative
And power i' the truth o' the cause.

Ædile. I shall inform them.

Brutus. And when such time they have begun to cry,
Let them not cease, but with a din confused
Enforce the present execution
Of what we chance to sentence.

Ædile. Very well.

Sicinius. Make them be strong, and ready for this hint,
When we shall hap to give't them.

Brutus. Go about it. [*Exit Ædile.*
Put him to choler straight: he hath been used
Ever to conquer, and to have his worth
Of contradiction: being once chafed, he cannot
Be rein'd again to temperance; then he speaks
What's in his heart; and that is there which looks
With us to break his neck.

Sicinius. Well, here he comes.

Enter CORIOLANUS, MENENIUS, COMINIUS, Senators, *and* Patricians.

Menenius. Calmly, I do beseech you.

Coriolanus. Ay, as an ostler, that for the poorest piece
Will bear the knave by the volume. The honour'd gods
Keep Rome in safety, and the chairs of justice
Supplied with worthy men! plant love among's!
Throng our large temples with the shows of peace,
And not our streets with war!

First Senator. Amen, amen.

Menenius. A noble wish.

Re-enter Ædile, *with* Citizens.

Sicinius. Draw near, ye people.

Ædile. List to your tribunes; audience! peace, I say!
Coriolanus. First, hear me speak.
Both Tribunes. Well, say. Peace, ho!
Cor. Shall I be charged no further than this present?
Must all determine here?
Sicinius. I do demand,
If you submit you to the people's voices,
Allow their officers, and are content
To suffer lawful censure for such faults
As shall be proved upon you?
Coriolanus. I am content.
Menenius. Lo, citizens, he says he is content:
The warlike service he has done, consider; think
Upon the wounds his body bears, which show
Like graves i' the holy churchyard.
Coriolanus. Scratches with briers,
Scars to move laughter only.
Menenius. Consider further,
That when he speaks not like a citizen,
You find him like a soldier: do not take
His rougher accents for malicious sounds,
But, as I say, such as become a soldier,
Rather than envy you.
Cominius. Well, well, no more.
Coriolanus. What is the matter,
That being pass'd for consul with full voice,
I am so dishonour'd that the very hour
You take it off again?
Sicinius. Answer to us.
Coriolanus. Say, then: 'tis true, I ought so.
Sicinius. We charge you, that you have contrived to take
From Rome all season'd office, and to wind
Yourself into a power tyrannical;

For which you are a traitor to the people.

Coriolanus. How! traitor!

Menenius. Nay, temperately; your promise.

Coriolanus. The fires i' the lowest hell fold-in the people!
Call me their traitor! Thou injurious tribune!
Within thine eyes sat twenty thousand deaths,
In thy hands clutch'd as many millions, in
Thy lying tongue both numbers, I would say
"Thou liest" unto thee with a voice as free
As I do pray the gods.

Sicinius. Mark you this, people?

Citizens. To the rock, to the rock with him!

Sicinius. Peace!
We need not put new matter to his charge:
What you have seen him do and heard him speak,
Beating your officers, cursing yourselves,
Opposing laws with strokes, and here defying
Those whose great power must try him: even this,
So criminal and in such capital kind,
Deserves the extremest death.

Brutus. But since he hath
Served well for Rome,—

Coriolanus. What do you prate of service?

Brutus. I talk of that that know it.

Coriolanus. You?

Menenius. Is this the promise that you made your mother?

Cominius. Know, I pray you,—

Coriolanus. I'll know no further:
Let them pronounce the steep Tarpeian death,
Vagabond exile, flaying, pent to linger
But with a grain a day, I would not buy
Their mercy at the price of one fair word;
Nor check my courage for what they can give,

To have't with saying "Good morrow."

Sicinius. For that he has,
As much as in him lies, from time to time
Envied against the people, seeking means
To pluck away their power; as now at last
Given hostile strokes, and that not in the presence
Of dreaded justice, but on the ministers
That do distribute it; in the name o' the people,
And in the power of us the tribunes, we,
Even from this instant, banish him our city;
In peril of precipitation
From off the rock Tarpeian, never more
To enter our Rome gates: i' the people's name,
I say it shall be so.

Citizens. It shall be so, it shall be so; let him away:
He's banish'd, and it shall be so.

Com. Hear me, my masters and my common friends,—

Sicinius. He's sentenced; no more hearing.

Cominius. Let me speak:
I have been consul, and can show for Rome
Her enemies' marks upon me. I do love
My country's good with a respect more tender,
More holy and profound, than mine own life,
My dear wife's estimate, her womb's increase,
And treasure of my loins; then if I would
Speak that,—

Sicinius. We know your drift: speak what?

Brutus. There's no more to be said, but he is banish'd,
As enemy to the people and his country:
It shall be so.

Citizens. It shall be so, it shall be so.

Cor. You common cry of curs! whose breath I hate
As reek o' the rotten fens, whose loves I prize

As the dead carcasses of unburied men
That do corrupt my air, I banish you;
And here remain with your uncertainty!
Let every feeble rumour shake your hearts!
Your enemies, with nodding of their plumes,
Fan you into despair! Have the power still
To banish your defenders; till at length
Your ignorance, which finds not till it feels,
Making not reservation of yourselves,
Still your own foes, deliver you as most
Abated captives to some nation
That won you without blows! Despising,
For you, the city, thus I turn my back:
There is a world elsewhere.

[*Exeunt Coriolanus, Cominius, Menenius, Senators, and Patricians.*

Ædile. The people's enemy is gone, is gone!

Citizens. Our enemy is banish'd! he is gone! Hoo! hoo! [*Shouting and throwing up their caps.*

Sicinius. Go, see him out at gates, and follow him,
As he hath follow'd you, with all despite;
Give him deserved vexation. Let a guard
Attend us through the city.

Cits. Come, come, let's see him out at gates; come.
The gods preserve our noble tribunes! come. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *Rome. Before a gate of the city.*

Enter CORIOLANUS, VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA, MENENIUS, COMINIUS, *with the young Nobility of Rome.*

Cor. Come, leave your tears: a brief farewell: the beast
With many heads butts me away. Nay, mother,
Where is your ancient courage? you were used
To say extremity was the trier of spirits;
That common chances common men could bear;
That when the sea was calm all boats alike
Show'd mastership in floating; fortune's blows,
When most struck home, being gentle wounded, craves
A noble cunning: you were used to load me
With precepts that would make invincible
The heart that conn'd them.

Vir. O heavens! O heavens!

Coriolanus. Nay, I prithee, woman,—

Vol. Now the red pestilence strike all trades in Rome,
And occupations perish!

Coriolanus. What, what, what!
I shall be loved when I am lack'd. Nay, mother,
Resume that spirit, when you were wont to say,
If you had been the wife of Hercules,
Six of his labours you'ld have done, and saved
Your husband so much sweat. Cominius,
Droop not; adieu. Farewell, my wife, my mother:
I'll do well yet. Thou old and true Menenius,
Thy tears are salter than a younger man's,

And venomous to thine eyes. My sometime general,
I have seen thee stern, and thou hast oft beheld
Heart-hardening spectacles; tell these sad women,
'Tis fond to wail inevitable strokes,
As 'tis to laugh at 'em. My mother, you wot well
My hazards still have been your solace: and
Believe't not lightly,—though I go alone,
Like to a lonely dragon, that his fen
Makes fear'd and talk'd of more than seen,—your son
Will or exceed the common, or be caught
With cautelous baits and practice.

Volumnia. My first son,
Whither wilt thou go? Take good Cominius
With thee awhile: determine on some course,
More than a wild exposture to each chance
That starts i' the way before thee.

Coriolanus. O the gods!

Cominius. I'll follow thee a month, devise with thee
Where thou shalt rest, that thou mayst hear of us,
And we of thee: so, if the time thrust forth
A cause for thy repeal, we shall not send
O'er the vast world to seek a single man,
And lose advantage, which doth ever cool
I' th' absence of the needer.

Coriolanus. Fare ye well:
Thou hast years upon thee: and thou art too full
Of the wars' surfeits, to go rove with one
That's yet unbruised: bring me but out at gate.
Come, my sweet wife, my dearest mother, and
My friends of noble touch, when I am forth,
Bid me farewell, and smile. I pray you, come.
While I remain above the ground, you shall
Hear from me still, and never of me aught

But what is like me formerly.

Menenius. That's worthily
As any ear can hear. Come, let's not weep.
If I could shake off but one seven years
From these old arms and legs, by the good gods,
I'ld with thee every foot.

Coriolanus. Give me thy hand:
Come. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *The same. A street near the gate.*

Enter SICINIUS, BRUTUS, *and an* Ædile.

Sic. Bid them all home; he's gone, and we'll no further.
The nobility are vex'd, whom we see have sided
In his behalf.

Brutus. Now we have shown our power,
Let us seem humbler after it is done
Than when it was a-doing.

Sicinius. Bid them home;
Say their great enemy is gone, and they
Stand in their ancient strength.

Brutus. Dismiss them home. [*Exit Ædile.*
Here comes his mother.

Sicinius. Let's not meet her.

Brutus. Why?

Sicinius. They say she's mad.

Brutus. They have ta'en note of us: keep on your way.

Enter VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA *and* MENENIUS.

Vol. O, ye're well met: the hoarded plague o' the gods
Requite your love!

Menenius. Peace, peace; be not so loud.

Vol. If that I could for weeping, you should hear,—
Nay, and you shall hear some.—[*To Brutus*] Will you be
gone?

Virgilia. [*To Sicinius*] You shall stay too: I would
I had the power
To say so to my husband.

Sicinius. Are you mankind?

Vol. Ay, fool; is that a shame? Note but this fool.
Was not a man my father? Hadst thou foxship
To banish him that struck more blows for Rome
Than thou hast spoken words?

Sicinius. O blessed heavens!

Volumnia. Moe noble blows than ever thou wise words;
And for Rome's good. I'll tell thee what; yet go:
Nay, but thou shalt stay too: I would my son
Were in Arabia, and thy tribe before him,
His good sword in his hand.

Sicinius. What then?

Virgilia. What then!

He'ld make an end of thy posterity.

Volumnia. Bastards and all.
Good man, the wounds that he does bear for Rome!

Menenius. Come, come, peace.

Sicinius. I would he had continued to his country
As he began, and not unknit himself
The noble knot he made.

Brutus. I would he had.

Vol. "I would he had"! 'Twas you incensed the rabble;
Cats, that can judge as fitly of his worth
As I can of those mysteries which heaven
Will not have earth to know.

Brutus. Pray, let us go.

Volumnia. Now, pray, sir, get you gone:

You have done a brave deed. Ere you go, hear this:
As far as doth the Capitol exceed
The meanest house in Rome, so far my son,—
This lady's husband here, this, do you see,—
Whom you have banish'd, does exceed you all.
Brutus. Well, well, we'll leave you.
Sicinius. Why stay we to be baited
With one that wants her wits?
Volumnia. Take my prayers with you:
[*Exeunt Tribunes.*
I would the gods had nothing else to do
But to confirm my curses! Could I meet 'em
But once a-day, it would unclog my heart
Of what lies heavy to't.
Menenius. You have told them home;
And, by my troth, you have cause. You'll sup with me?
Volumnia. Anger's my meat; I sup upon myself,
And so shall starve with feeding. Come, let's go:
Leave this faint puling, and lament as I do,
In anger, Juno-like. Come, come, come.
Menenius. Fie, fie, fie! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *A highway between Rome and Antium.*

Enter a Roman *and a* Volsce, *meeting.*

Roman. I know you well, sir, and you know me: your name, I think, is Adrian.

Volsce. It is so, sir: truly, I have forgot you.

Roman. I am a Roman; and my services are, as you are, against 'em: know you me yet?

Volsce. Nicanor? no.

Roman. The same, sir.

Volsce. You had more beard when I last saw you; but your favour is well appeared by your tongue. What's the news in Rome? I have a note from the Volscian state, to find you out there: you have well saved me a day's journey.

Roman. There hath been in Rome strange insurrections; the people against the senators, patricians, and nobles.

Volsce. Hath been! is it ended, then? Our state thinks not so: they are in a most warlike preparation, and hope to come upon them in the heat of their division.

Roman. The main blaze of it is past, but a small thing would make it flame again; for the nobles receive so to heart the banishment of that worthy Coriolanus, that they are in a ripe aptness to take all power from the people, and to pluck from them their tribunes for ever. This lies glowing, I can tell you, and is almost mature for the violent breaking out.

Volsce. Coriolanus banished!

Roman. Banished, sir.

Vols. You will be welcome with this intelligence, Nicanor.

Roman. The day serves well for them now. Your noble Tullus Aufidius will appear well in these wars, his great opposer, Coriolanus, being now in no request of his country.

Volsce. He cannot choose. I am most fortunate thus accidentally to encounter you: you have ended my business, and I will merrily accompany you home.

Roman. I shall, between this and supper, tell you most strange things from Rome; all tending to the good of their adversaries. Have you an army ready, say you?

Volsce. A most royal one; the centurions and their charges, distinctly billeted, already in the entertainment, and to be on foot at an hour's warning.

Roman. I am joyful to hear of their readiness, and am the man, I think, that shall set them in present action. So, sir, heartily well met, and most glad of your company.

Volsce. You take my part from me, sir; I have the most cause to be glad of yours.

Roman. Well, let us go together. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *Antium. Before* AUFIDIUS'S *house.*

Enter CORIOLANUS *in mean apparel, disguised and muffled.*

Coriolanus. A goodly city is this Antium. City,
'Tis I that made thy widows: many an heir
Of these fair edifices 'fore my wars
Have I heard groan and drop: then know me not;
Lest that thy wives with spits and boys with stones
In puny battle slay me.

Enter a Citizen.

Save you, sir.

Citizen. And you.

Coriolanus. Direct me, if it be your will,
Where great Aufidius lies: is he in Antium?

Citizen. He is, and feasts the nobles of the state
At his house this night.

Coriolanus. Which is his house, beseech you?

Citizen. This, here, before you.

Coriolanus. Thank you, sir: farewell.
[*Exit Citizen.*

O world, thy slippery turns! Friends now fast sworn,
Whose double bosoms seem to wear one heart,

Whose house, whose bed, whose meal, and exercise,
Are still together, who twin, as 'twere, in love
Unseparable, shall within this hour,
On a dissension of a doit, break out
To bitterest enmity: so, fellest foes,
Whose passions and whose plots have broke their sleep
To take the one the other, by some chance,
Some trick not worth an egg, shall grow dear friends
And interjoin their issues. So with me:
My birth-place hate I, and my love's upon
This enemy town. I'll enter: if he slay me
He does fair justice; if he give me way,
I'll do his country service. [*Exit.*

SCENE V. *The same. A hall in* AUFIDIUS'S *house.*

Music within. Enter a Serving-man.

First Serving-man. Wine, wine, wine! What service is here! I think our fellows are asleep. [*Exit.*

Enter a second Serving-man.

Second Serving-man. Where's Cotus? my master calls for him. Cotus! [*Exit.*

Enter CORIOLANUS.

Cor. A goodly house: the feast smells well: but I Appear not like a guest.

Re-enter the first Serving-man.

First Serv. What would you have, friend? whence are you? Here's no place for you: pray, go to the door. [*Exit*

Coriolanus. I have deserved no better entertainment
In being Coriolanus.

Re-enter second Serving-man.

Second Serving-man. Whence are you, sir? Has the porter his eyes in his head, that he gives entrance to such companions? Pray, get you out.

Coriolanus. Away!

Second Serving-man. Away! get you away.

Coriolanus. Now thou'rt troublesome.

Second Serving-man. Are you so brave? I'll have you talked with anon.

Enter a third Serving-man. *The first meets him.*

Third Serving-man. What fellow's this?

First Serv. A strange one as ever I looked on: I cannot get him out o' the house: prithee, call my master to him.

Third Serving-man. What have you to do here, fellow? Pray you avoid the house.

Cor. Let me but stand; I will not hurt your hearth.

Third Serving-man. What are you?

Coriolanus. A gentleman.

Third Serving-man. A marvellous poor one.

Coriolanus. True, so I am.

Third Serv. Pray you, poor gentleman, take up some other station; here's no place for you; pray you, avoid: come.

Coriolanus. Follow your function, go, and batten on cold bits. [*Pushes him away.*

Third Serving-man. What, you will not? Prithee, tell my master what a strange guest he has here.

Second Serving-man. And I shall. [*Exit.*

Third Serving-man. Where dwellest thou?

Coriolanus. Under the canopy.

Third Serving-man. Under the canopy?

Coriolanus. Ay.

Third Serving-man. Where's that?

Coriolanus. I' the city of kites and crows.

Third Serving-man. I' the city of kites and crows! What an ass it is! Then thou dwellest with daws too?

Coriolanus. No, I serve not thy master.

Third Serv. How, sir? do you meddle with my master?

Cor. Ay—

Thou pratest, and pratest; serve with thy trencher, hence!

[*Beats him away.*

Enter AUFIDIUS, *with the second* Serving-man.

Aufidius. Where is this fellow?

Second Serving-man. Here, sir: I'ld have beaten him like a dog, but for disturbing the lords within. [*Retires.*

Aufidius. Whence comest thou? what wouldst thou? thy name?

Why speak'st not? speak, man: what's thy name?

Coriolanus. If, Tullus, [*Unmuffling.*

Not yet thou knowest me, and, seeing me, dost not

Think me for the man I am, necessity

Commands me name myself.

Aufidius. What is thy name?

Coriolanus. A name unmusical to the Volscians' ears,

And harsh in sound to thine.

Aufidius. Say, what's thy name!

Thou hast a grim appearance, and thy face

Bears a command in't; though thy tackle's torn,

Thou show'st a noble vessel: what's thy name?

Cor. Prepare thy brow to frown: know'st thou me yet?

Aufidius. I know thee not: thy name?

Coriolanus. My name is Caius Marcius, who hath done
To thee particularly and to all the Volsces
Great hurt and mischief; thereto witness may
My surname, Coriolanus: the painful service,
The extreme dangers, and the drops of blood
Shed for my thankless country, are requited
But with that surname; a good memory,
And witness of the malice and displeasure
Which thou shouldst bear me: only that name remains;
The cruelty and envy of the people,
Permitted by our dastard nobles, who
Have all forsook me, hath devour'd the rest;
And suffer'd me by the voice of slaves to be
Hoop'd out of Rome. Now, this extremity
Hath brought me to thy hearth; not out of hope—
Mistake me not—to save my life; for if
I had fear'd death, of all the men i' the world
I would have 'voided thee; but in mere spite
To be full quit of those my banishers,
Stand I before thee here. Then if thou hast
A heart of wreak in thee, that wilt revenge
Thine own particular wrongs, and stop those maims
Of shame seen through thy country, speed thee straight,
And make my misery serve thy turn: so use it,
That my revengeful services may prove
As benefits to thee; for I will fight
Against my canker'd country with the spleen
Of all the under fiends. But if so be
Thou darest not this and that to prove more fortunes
Thou'rt tired, then, in a word, I also am
Longer to live most weary, and present
My throat to thee and to thy ancient malice;
Which not to cut would show thee but a fool,

Since I have ever follow'd thee with hate,
Drawn tuns of blood out of thy country's breast,
And cannot live but to thy shame, unless
It be to do thee service.

Aufidius. O Marcius, Marcius!
Each word thou hast spoke hath weeded from my heart
A root of ancient envy. If Jupiter
Should from yond cloud speak divine things,
And say "'Tis true," I'ld not believe them more
Than thee, all noble Marcius. Let me twine
Mine arms about that body, where against
My grained ash an hundred times hath broke,
And scarred the moon with splinters: here I clip
The anvil of my sword, and do contest
As hotly and as nobly with thy love
As ever in ambitious strength I did
Contend against thy valour. Know thou first
I loved the maid I married: never man
Sigh'd truer breath; but that I see thee here,
Thou noble thing! more dances my rapt heart
Than when I first my wedded mistress saw
Bestride my threshold. Why, thou Mars! I tell thee,
We have a power on foot; and I had purpose
Once more to hew thy target from thy brawn,
Or lose mine arm for't: thou hast beat me out
Twelve several times, and I have nightly since
Dreamt of encounters 'twixt thyself and me;
We have been down together in my sleep,
Unbuckling helms, fisting each other's throat;
And waked half dead with nothing. Worthy Marcius,
Had we no quarrel else to Rome, but that
Thou art thence banish'd, we would muster all
From twelve to seventy, and pouring war

Into the bowels of ungrateful Rome,
Like a bold flood o'er-beat. O, come, go in,
And take our friendly senators by the hands;
Who now are here taking their leaves of me,
Who am prepared against your territories,
Though not for Rome itself.

Coriolanus. You bless me, gods!

Aufidius. Therefore, most absolute sir, if thou wilt have
The leading of thine own revenges, take
The one half of my commission; and set down—
As best thou art experienced, since thou know'st
Thy country's strength and weakness—thine own ways;
Whether to knock against the gates of Rome,
Or rudely visit them in parts remote,
To fright them, ere destroy. But come in;
Let me commend thee first to those that shall
Say yea to thy desires. A thousand welcomes!
And more a friend than e'er an enemy;
Yet, Marcius, that was much. Your hand: most welcome!

[*Exeunt Coriolanus and Aufidius. The two Serving-men come forward.*

First Serving-man. Here's a strange alteration!

Second Serving-man. By my hand, I had thought to have strucken him with a cudgel; and yet my mind gave me his clothes made a false report of him.

First Serv. What an arm he has! he turned me about with his finger and his thumb, as one would set up a top.

Second Serving-man. Nay, I knew by his face that there was something in him: he had, sir, a kind of face, methought,—I cannot tell how to term it.

First Serving-man. He had so; looking as it were,—would I were hanged, but I thought there was more in him than I could think.

Second Serving-man. So did I, I'll be sworn: he is simply the rarest man i' the world.

First Serving-man. I think he is: but a greater soldier than he, you wot one.

Second Serving-man. Who, my master?

First Serving-man. Nay, it's no matter for that.

Second Serving-man. Worth six on him.

First Serving-man. Nay, not so neither: but I take him to be the greater soldier.

Sec. Serv. Faith, look you, one cannot tell how to say that: for the defence of a town our general is excellent.

First Serving-man. Ay, and for an assault too.

Re-enter third Serving-man.

Third Serving-man. O slaves, I can tell you news,—news, you rascals!

First and Sec. Serv. What, what, what? let's partake.

Third Serving-man. I would not be a Roman, of all nations; I had as lief be a condemned man.

First and Second Serv. Wherefore? wherefore?

Third Serving-man. Why, here's he that was wont to thwack our general,—Caius Marcius.

First Serv. Why do you say "thwack our general"?

Third Serving-man. I do not say "thwack our general;" but he was always good enough for him.

Second Serv. Come, we are fellows and friends: he was ever too hard for him; I have heard him say so himself.

First Serving-man. He was too hard for him directly, to say the troth on't: before Corioli he scotched him and notched him like a carbonado.

Second Serving-man. An he had been cannibally given, he might have broiled and eaten him too.

First Serving-man. But, more of thy news?

Third Serving-man. Why, he is so made on here within as if he were son and heir to Mars; set at upper end o' the table; no question asked him by any of the senators, but they stand bald before him: our general himself makes a mistress of him; sanctifies himself with's hand, and turns up the white o' the eye to his discourse. But the bottom of the news is, our general is cut i' the middle, and but one half of what he was yesterday; for the other has half, by the entreaty and grant of the whole table. He'll go, he says, and sowl the porter of Rome gates by the ears: he will mow all down before him, and leave his passage polled. 201

Second Serving-man. And he's as like to do't as any man I can imagine.

Third Serving-man. Do't! he will do't; for, look you, sir, he has as many friends as enemies; which friends, sir, as it were, durst not, look you, sir, show themselves, as we term it, his friends whilst he's in directitude. 207

First Serving-man. Directitude! what's that?

Third Serving-man. But when they shall see, sir, his crest up again, and the man in blood, they will out of their burrows, like conies after rain, and revel all with him. 211

First Serving-man. But when goes this forward?

Third Serving-man. To-morrow; to-day; presently; you shall have the drum struck up this afternoon: 'tis, as it were, a parcel of their feast, and to be executed ere they wipe their lips. 216

Second Serving-man. Why, then we shall have a stirring world again. This peace is nothing, but to rust iron, increase tailors, and breed ballad-makers.

First Serving-man. Let me have war, say I; it exceeds peace as far as day does night; it's spritely, waking, audible, and full of vent. Peace is a very apoplexy, lethargy; mulled, deaf, sleepy, insensible. 223

First Serv. Ay, and it makes men hate one another.

Third Serv. Reason; because they then less need one another. The wars for my money. I hope to see Romans as cheap as Volscians. They are rising, they are rising.

All Three. In, in, in, in! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI. *Rome. A public place.*

Enter SICINIUS *and* BRUTUS.

Sicinius. We hear not of him, neither need we fear him;
His remedies are tame i' the present peace
And quietness of the people, which before
Were in wild hurry. Here do we make his friends
Blush that the world goes well; who rather had,
Though they themselves did suffer by't, behold
Dissentious numbers pestering streets, than see
Our tradesmen singing in their shops, and going
About their functions friendly.

Bru. We stood to't in good time. Is this Menenius?

Sicinius. 'Tis he, 'tis he: O, he is grown most kind
Of late.

Enter MENENIUS.

Hail, sir!

Menenius. Hail to you both!

Sicinius. Your Coriolanus, sir, is not much miss'd
But with his friends: the commonwealth doth stand;
And so would do, were he more angry at it.

Men. All's well; and might have been much better, if

He could have temporized.

Sicinius. Where is he, hear you?

Menenius. Nay, I hear nothing: his mother and his wife
Hear nothing from him.

Enter three or four Citizens.

Cits. The gods preserve you both!

Sicinius. God-den, our neighbours.

Brutus. God-den to you all, god-den to you all.

First Cit. Ourselves, our wives, and children, on our knees,
Are bound to pray for you both.

Sicinius. Live, and thrive!

Bru. Farewell, kind neighbours: we wish'd Coriolanus
Had loved you as we did.

Citizens. Now the gods keep you!

Both Tribunes. Farewell, farewell. [*Exeunt Citizens.*

Sicinius. This is a happier and more comely time
Than when these fellows ran about the streets
Crying confusion.

Brutus. Caius Marcius was
A worthy officer i' the war; but insolent,
O'ercome with pride, ambitious past all thinking,
Self-loving,—

Sicinius. And affecting one sole throne,
Without assistance.

Menenius. I think not so.

Sicinius. We should by this, to all our lamentation,
If he had gone forth consul, found it so.

Brutus. The gods have well prevented it, and Rome
Sits safe and still without him.

Enter an Ædile.

Ædile. Worthy tribunes,
There is a slave, whom we have put in prison,
Reports, the Volsces with two several powers
Are enter'd in the Roman territories,
And with the deepest malice of the war
Destroy what lies before 'em.
Menenius. 'Tis Aufidius,
Who, hearing of our Marcius' banishment,
Thrusts forth his horns again into the world;
Which were inshell'd when Marcius stood for Rome,
And durst not once peep out.
Sicinius. Come, what talk you
Of Marcius?
Brutus. Go see this rumourer whipp'd. It cannot be
The Volsces dare break with us.
Menenius. Cannot be!
We have record that very well it can;
And three examples of the like have been
Within my age. But reason with the fellow,
Before you punish him, where he heard this;
Lest you shall chance to whip your information,
And beat the messenger who bids beware
Of what is to be dreaded.
Sicinius. Tell not me:
I know this cannot be.
Brutus. Not possible.

Enter a Messenger.

Messenger. The nobles in great earnestness are going
All to the senate-house: some news is come

That turns their countenances.

Sicinius. 'Tis this slave;
Go whip him 'fore the people's eyes: his raising;
Nothing but his report.

Messenger. Yes, worthy sir,
The slave's report is seconded; and more,
More fearful, is deliver'd.

Sicinius. What more fearful?

Messenger. It is spoke freely out of many mouths—
How probable I do not know—that Marcius,
Join'd with Aufidius, leads a power 'gainst Rome,
And vows revenge as spacious as between
The young'st and oldest thing.

Sicinius. This is most likely!

Brutus. Raised only, that the weaker sort may wish
Good Marcius home again.

Sicinius. The very trick on't.

Menenius. This is unlikely:
He and Aufidius can no more atone
Than violentest contrariety.

Enter a second Messenger.

Second Messenger. You are sent for to the senate:
A fearful army, led by Caius Marcius
Associated with Aufidius, rages
Upon our territories; and have already
O'erborne their way, consumed with fire, and took
What lay before them.

Enter COMINIUS.

Com. O, you have made good work!

Menenius. What news? what news?

Cominius. You have holp
To melt the city leads upon your pates;
To see your wives dishonour'd to your noses,—
Menenius. What's the news? what's the news?
Cominius. Your temples burned in their cement, and
Your franchises, whereon you stood, confined
Into an augur's bore.
Menenius. Pray now, your news?
You have made fair work, I fear me.—Pray, your news?—
If Marcius should be join'd with Volscians,—
Cominius. If!
He is their god: he leads them like a thing
Made by some other deity than nature,
That shapes man better; and they follow him,
Against us brats, with no less confidence
Than boys pursuing summer butterflies,
Or butchers killing flies.
Menenius. You have made good work,
You and your apron-men; you that stood so much
Upon the voice of occupation and
The breath of garlic-eaters!
Cominius. He will shake
Your Rome about your ears.
Menenius. As Hercules
Did shake down mellow fruit. You have made fair work!
Brutus. But is this true, sir?
Cominius. Ay; and you'll look pale
Before you find it other. All the regions
Do smilingly revolt; and who resist
Are mock'd for valiant ignorance,
And perish constant fools. Who is't can blame him?
Your enemies and his find something in him.
Menenius. We are all undone, unless

The noble man have mercy.

Cominius. Who shall ask it?
The tribunes cannot do't for shame; the people
Deserve such pity of him as the wolf
Does of the shepherds: for his best friends, if they
Should say, "Be good to Rome," they charged him even
As those should do that had deserved his hate,
And therein show'd like enemies.

Menenius. 'Tis true:
If he were putting to my house the brand
That should consume it, I have not the face
To say, "Beseech you, cease." You have made fair hands,
You and your crafts! you have crafted fair!

Cominius. You have brought
A trembling upon Rome, such as was never
So incapable of help.

Both Tribunes. Say not, we brought it.

Men. How! Was it we? we loved him; but, like beasts
And cowardly nobles, gave way unto your clusters,
Who did hoot him out o' the city.

Cominius. But I fear
They'll roar him in again. Tullus Aufidius,
The second name of men, obeys his points
As if he were his officer: desperation
Is all the policy, strength and defence,
That Rome can make against them.

Enter a troop of Citizens.

Menenius. Here come the clusters.
And is Aufidius with him? You are they
That made the air unwholesome, when you cast
Your stinking greasy caps in hooting at

Coriolanus' exile. Now he's coming;
And not a hair upon a soldier's head
Which will not prove a whip: as many coxcombs
As you threw caps up will he tumble down,
And pay you for your voices. 'Tis no matter;
If he could burn us all into one coal,
We have deserved it.

Cits. Faith, we hear fearful news.

First Citizen. For mine own part,
When I said, banish him, I said, 'twas pity.

Second Citizen. And so did I.

Third Citizen. And so did I; and, to say the truth, so did very many of us: that we did, we did for the best; and though we willingly consented to his banishment, yet it was against our will.

Com. Ye're goodly things, you voices!

Menenius. You have made
Good work, you and your cry! Shall's to the Capitol?

Com. O, ay, what else? [*Exeunt Cominius and Menenius.*

Sic. Go, masters, get you home; be not dismay'd:
These are a side that would be glad to have
This true which they so seem to fear. Go home,
And show no sign of fear.

First Citizen. The gods be good to us! Come, masters, let's home. I ever said we were i' the wrong when we banished him.

Second Citizen. So did we all. But, come, let's home.
[*Exeunt Citizens.*

Brutus. I do not like this news.

Sicinius. Nor I.

Brutus. Let's to the Capitol. Would half my wealth
Would buy this for a lie!

Sicinius. Pray, let us go. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII. *A camp, at a small distance from Rome.*

Enter AUFIDIUS *and his* Lieutenant.

Aufidius. Do they still fly to the Roman?

Lieu. I do not know what witchcraft's in him, but
Your soldiers use him as the grace 'fore meat,
Their talk at table, and their thanks at end;
And you are darken'd in this action, sir,
Even by your own.

Aufidius. I cannot help it now,
Unless, by using means, I lame the foot
Of our design. He bears himself more proudlier,
Even to my person, than I thought he would
When first I did embrace him: yet his nature
In that's no changeling; and I must excuse
What cannot be amended.

Lieutenant. Yet I wish, sir,—
I mean for your particular,—you had not
Join'd in commission with him; but either
Had borne the action of yourself, or else
To him had left it solely.

Aufidius. I understand thee well; and be thou sure,
When he shall come to his account, he knows not
What I can urge against him. Although it seems,
And so he thinks, and is no less apparent
To the vulgar eye, that he bears all things fairly,
And shows good husbandry for the Volscian state,
Fights dragon-like, and does achieve as soon
As draw his sword; yet he hath left undone
That which shall break his neck or hazard mine,
Whene'er we come to our account.

Lieu. Sir, I beseech you, think you he'll carry Rome?
Aufidius. All places yield to him ere he sits down;
And the nobility of Rome are his:
The senators and patricians love him too:
The tribunes are no soldiers; and their people
Will be as rash in the repeal, as hasty
To expel him thence. I think he'll be to Rome
As is the osprey to the fish, who takes it
By sovereignty of nature. First he was
A noble servant to them; but he could not
Carry his honours even: whether 'twas pride,
Which out of daily fortune ever taints
The happy man; whether defect of judgment,
To fail in the disposing of those chances
Which he was lord of; or whether nature,
Not to be other than one thing, not moving
From the casque to the cushion, but commanding peace
Even with the same austerity and garb
As he controll'd the war; but one of these—
As he hath spices of them all, not all,
For I dare so far free him—made him fear'd,
So hated, and so banish'd: but he has a merit,
To choke it in the utterance. So our virtues
Lie in the interpretation of the time;
And power, unto itself most commendable,
Hath not a tomb so evident as a chair
To extol what it hath done.
One fire drives out one fire; one nail, one nail;
Rights by rights falter, strengths by strengths do fail.
Come, let's away. When, Caius, Rome is thine,
Thou art poor'st of all; then shortly art thou mine.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I. *Rome. A public place.*

Enter MENENIUS, COMINIUS, SICINIUS, BRUTUS, *and others.*

Menenius. No, I'll not go: you hear what he hath said
Which was sometime his general; who loved him
In a most dear particular. He call'd me father:
But what o' that? Go, you that banish'd him;
A mile before his tent fall down, and knee
The way into his mercy: nay, if he coy'd
To hear Cominius speak, I'll keep at home.
Cominius. He would not seem to know me.
Menenius. Do you hear?
Cominius. Yet one time he did call me by my name:
I urged our old acquaintance, and the drops
That we have bled together. Coriolanus
He would not answer to: forbad all names;
He was a kind of nothing, titleless,
Till he had forged himself a name o' the fire
Of burning Rome.
Menenius. Why, so; you have made good work!
A pair of tribunes that have rack'd for Rome,
To make coals cheap,—a noble memory!
Cominius. I minded him how royal 'twas to pardon
When it was less expected: he replied,
It was a bare petition of a state
To one whom they had punish'd.
Menenius. Very well:
Could he say less?

Cominius. I offer'd to awaken his regard
For's private friends: his answer to me was,
He could not stay to pick them in a pile
Of noisome musty chaff: he said 'twas folly,
For one poor grain or two, to leave unburnt,
And still to nose the offence.

Menenius. For one poor grain or two!
I am one of those; his mother, wife, his child,
And this brave fellow too, we are the grains:
You are the musty chaff; and you are smelt
Above the moon: we must be burnt for you.

Sicinius. Nay, pray, be patient: if you refuse your aid
In this so never-needed help, yet do not
Upbraid's with our distress. But, sure, if you
Would be your country's pleader, your good tongue,
More than the instant army we can make,
Might stop our countryman.

Menenius. No, I'll not meddle.

Sicinius. Pray you, go to him.

Menenius. What should I do?

Brutus. Only make trial what your love can do
For Rome, towards Marcius.

Menenius. Well, and say that Marcius
Return me, as Cominius is return'd,
Unheard; what then?
But as a discontented friend, grief-shot
With his unkindness? say't be so?

Sicinius. Yet your good will
Must have that thanks from Rome, after the measure
As you intended well.

Menenius. I'll undertake't:
I think he'll hear me. Yet, to bite his lip
And hum at good Cominius, much unhearts me.

He was not taken well; he had not dined:
The veins unfill'd, our blood is cold, and then
We pout upon the morning, are unapt
To give or to forgive; but when we have stuff'd
These pipes and these conveyances of our blood
With wine and feeding, we have suppler souls
Than in our priest-like fasts: therefore I'll watch him
Till he be dieted to my request,
And then I'll set upon him.

Brutus. You know the very road into his kindness,
And cannot lose your way.

Menenius. Good faith, I'll prove him,
Speed how it will. I shall ere long have knowledge
Of my success. [*Exit.*

Cominius. He'll never hear him.

Sicinius. Not?

Cominius. I tell you, he does sit in gold, his eye
Red as 'twould burn Rome; and his injury
The gaoler to his pity. I kneel'd before him;
'Twas very faintly he said "Rise;" dismiss'd me
Thus, with his speechless hand: what he would do,
He sent in writing after me, what he would not,
Bound with an oath to yield to his conditions:
So that all hope is vain,
Unless his noble mother and his wife;
Who, as I hear, mean to solicit him
For mercy to his country. Therefore let's hence,
And with our fair entreaties haste them on. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Entrance of the Volscian camp before Rome. Two Sentinels on guard.*

Enter to them MENENIUS.

First Sentinel. Stay: whence are you?

Second Sentinel. Stand, and go back.

Men. You guard like men; 'tis well: but, by your leave,
I am an officer of state, and come
To speak with Coriolanus.

First Sentinel. From whence?

Menenius. From Rome.

First S. You may not pass, you must return: our general
Will no more hear from thence.

Sec. S. You'll see your Rome embraced with fire before
You'll speak with Coriolanus.

Menenius. Good my friends,
If you have heard your general talk of Rome,
And of his friends there, it is lots to blanks
My name hath touch'd your ears: it is Menenius.

First S. Be it so; go back: the virtue of your name
Is not here passable.

Menenius. I tell thee, fellow,
Thy general is my lover: I have been
The book of his good acts, whence men have read
His fame unparallel'd, haply amplified;
For I have ever verified my friends,
Of whom he's chief, with all the size that verity
Would without lapsing suffer: nay, sometimes,
Like to a bowl upon a subtle ground,
I have tumbled past the throw, and in his praise
Have almost stamp'd the leasing: therefore, fellow,
I must have leave to pass.

First Sentinel. Faith, sir, if you had told as many lies in his behalf as you have uttered words in your own, you should not pass here; no, though it were as virtuous to lie as to live chastely. Therefore, go back.

Men. Prithee, fellow, remember my name is Menenius, always factionary on the party of your general.

Second Sentinel. Howsoever you have been his liar, as you say you have, I am one that, telling true under him, must say you cannot pass. Therefore, go back.

Menenius. Has he dined, canst thou tell? for I would not speak with him till after dinner.

First Sentinel. You are a Roman, are you?

Menenius. I am, as thy general is.

First S. Then you should hate Rome, as he does. Can you, when you have pushed out your gates the very defender of them, and, in a violent popular ignorance, given your enemy your shield, think to front his revenges with the easy groans of old women, the virginal palms of your daughters, or with the palsied intercession of such a decayed dotant as you seem to be? Can you think to blow out the intended fire your city is ready to flame in with such weak breath as this? No, you are deceived; therefore, back to Rome, and prepare for your execution: you are condemned, our general has sworn you out of reprieve and pardon.

Menenius. Sirrah, if thy captain knew I were here, he would use me with estimation.

Second Sentinel. Come, my captain knows you not.

Menenius. I mean, thy general.

First Sentinel. My general cares not for you. Back, I say, go; lest I let forth your half-pint of blood; back, —that's the utmost of your having: back.

Menenius. Nay, but, fellow, fellow,—

Enter CORIOLANUS *and* AUFIDIUS.

Coriolanus. What's the matter?

Menenius. Now, you companion, I'll say an errand for you: you shall know now that I am in estimation; you shall perceive that a Jack guardant cannot office me from my son Coriolanus: guess, but by my entertainment with him, if thou standest not i' the state of hanging, or of some death more long in spectatorship, and crueller in suffering; behold now presently, and swoon for what's to come upon thee. [*To Coriolanus*] The glorious gods sit in hourly synod about thy particular prosperity, and love thee no worse than thy old father Menenius does! O my son, my son! thou art preparing fire for us; look thee, here's water to quench it. I was hardly moved to come to thee; but being assured none but myself could move thee, I have been blown out of your gates with sighs; and conjure thee to pardon Rome, and thy petitionary countrymen. The good gods assuage thy wrath, and turn the dregs of it upon this varlet here, —this, who, like a block, hath denied my access to thee.

Coriolanus. Away!

Menenius. How! away!

Coriolanus. Wife, mother, child, I know not. My affairs
Are servanted to others: though I owe
My revenge properly, my remission lies
In Volscian breasts. That we have been familiar,
Ingrate forgetfulness shall poison, rather
Than pity note how much. Therefore, be gone.
Mine ears against your suits are stronger than
Your gates against my force. Yet, for I loved thee,
Take this along; I writ it for thy sake, [*Gives a letter.*
And would have sent it. Another word, Menenius,
I will not hear thee speak. This man, Aufidius,

Was my beloved in Rome: yet thou behold'st!

Aufidius. You keep a constant temper.

[*Exeunt Coriolanus and Aufidius.*

First Sentinel. Now, sir, is your name Menenius?

Second Sentinel. 'Tis a spell, you see, of much power: you know the way home again.

First Sentinel. Do you hear how we are shent for keeping your greatness back?

Second S. What cause, do you think, I have to swoon?

Menenius. I neither care for the world nor your general: for such things as you, I can scarce think there's any, ye're so slight. He that hath a will to die by himself fears it not from another: let your general do his worst. For you, be that you are, long; and your misery increase with your age! I say to you, as I was said to, Away! [*Exit.*

First Sentinel. A noble fellow, I warrant him.

Second Sentinel. The worthy fellow is our general: he's the rock, the oak not to be wind-shaken. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *The tent of* CORIOLANUS.

Enter CORIOLANUS, AUFIDIUS, *and others.*

Coriolanus. We will before the walls of Rome to-morrow
Set down our host. My partner in this action,
You must report to the Volscian lords, how plainly
I have borne this business.

Aufidius. Only their ends
You have respected; stopp'd your ears against
The general suit of Rome; never admitted
A private whisper, no, not with such friends

That thought them sure of you.

Coriolanus. This last old man,
Whom with a crack'd heart I have sent to Rome,
Loved me above the measure of a father;
Nay, godded me, indeed. Their latest refuge
Was to send him; for whose old love I have,
Though I show'd sourly to him, once more offer'd
The first conditions, which they did refuse,
And cannot now accept; to grace him only
That thought he could do more, a very little
I have yielded to: fresh embassies and suits,
Nor from the state nor private friends, hereafter
Will I lend ear to. Ha! what shout is this? [*Shout within.*
Shall I be tempted to infringe my vow
In the same time 'tis made? I will not.

Enter, in mourning habits, VIRGILIA, VOLUMNIA, *leading young* MARCIUS, VALERIA, *and* Attendants.

My wife comes foremost; then the honour'd mould
Wherein this trunk was framed, and in her hand
The grandchild to her blood. But out, affection!
All bond and privilege of nature, break!
Let it be virtuous to be obstinate.
What is that curt'sy worth? or those doves' eyes,
Which can make gods forsworn? I melt, and am not
Of stronger earth than others. My mother bows;
As if Olympus to a molehill should
In supplication nod: and my young boy
Hath an aspect of intercession, which
Great Nature cries "Deny not." Let the Volsces
Plough Rome, and harrow Italy: I'll never
Be such a gosling to obey instinct but stand,

As if a man were author of himself,
And knew no other kin.

Virgilia. My lord and husband!

Cor. These eyes are not the same I wore in Rome.

Virgilia. The sorrow that delivers us thus changed
Makes you think so.

Coriolanus. Like a dull actor now,
I have forgot my part, and I am out,
Even to a full disgrace. Best of my flesh,
Forgive my tyranny; but do not say,
For that, "Forgive our Romans." O, a kiss
Long as my exile, sweet as my revenge!
Now, by the jealous queen of heaven, that kiss
I carried from thee, dear, and my true lip
Hath virgin'd it e'er since. You gods! I prate,
And the most noble mother of the world
Leave unsaluted: sink, my knee, i' th' earth; [*Kneels.*
Of thy deep duty more impression show
Than that of common sons.

Volumnia. O, stand up bless'd! [*Raising him.*
Whilst, with no softer cushion than the flint,
I kneel before thee; and unproperly
Show duty, as mistaken all this while
Between the child and parent. [*Kneels.*

Coriolanus. What is this?
Your knees to me? to your corrected son?
Then let the pebbles on the hungry beach
Fillip the stars; then let the mutinous winds
Strike the proud cedars 'gainst the fiery sun;
Murdering impossibility, to make
What cannot be, slight work.

Volumnia. Thou art my warrior;
I holp to frame thee. Do you know this lady?

Coriolanus. The noble sister of Publicola,
The moon of Rome; chaste as the icicle
That's curdied by the frost from purest snow,
And hangs on Dian's temple: dear Valeria!

Volumnia. This is a poor epitome of yours,
Which by the interpretation of full time
May show like all yourself.

Coriolanus. The god of soldiers,
With the consent of supreme Jove, inform
Thy thoughts with nobleness; that thou mayst prove
To shame unvulnerable, and stick i' the wars
Like a great sea-mark, standing every flaw,
And saving those that eye thee!

Volumnia. Your knee, sirrah.

Coriolanus. That's my brave boy!

Volumnia. Even he, your wife, this lady, and myself,
Are suitors to you.

Coriolanus. I beseech you, peace:
Or, if you'ld ask, remember this before:
The thing I have forsworn to grant may never
Be held by you denials. Do not bid me
Dismiss my soldiers, or capitulate
Again with Rome's mechanics: tell me not
Wherein I seem unnatural: desire not
To allay my rages and revenges with
Your colder reasons.

Volumnia. O, no more, no more!
You have said you will not grant us any thing;
For we have nothing else to ask, but that
Which you deny already: yet we'll ask;
That, if you fail in our request, the blame
May hang upon your hardness: therefore hear us.

Coriolanus. Aufidius, and you Volsces, mark; for we'll

Hear naught from Rome in private. Your request?

Volumnia. Should we be silent and not speak, our raiment
And state of bodies would bewray what life
We have led since thy exile. Think with thyself
How more unfortunate than all living women
Are we come hither: since that thy sight, which should
Make our eyes flow with joy, hearts dance with comforts,
Constrains them weep and shake with fear and sorrow;
Making the mother, wife and child, to see
The son, the husband and the father tearing
His country's bowels out. And to poor we
Thine enmity's most capital: thou barr'st us
Our prayers to the gods, which is a comfort
That all but we enjoy; for how can we,
Alas, how can we for our country pray,
Whereto we are bound, together with thy victory,
Whereto we are bound? alack, or we must lose
The country, our dear nurse, or else thy person,
Our comfort in the country. We must find
An evident calamity, though we had
Our wish, which side should win; for either thou
Must, as a foreign recreant, be led
With manacles thorough our streets, or else
Triumphantly tread on thy country's ruin,
And bear the palm for having bravely shed
Thy wife and children's blood. For myself, son,
I purpose not to wait on fortune till
These wars determine: if I cannot persuade thee
Rather to show a noble grace to both parts
Than seek the end of one, thou shalt no sooner
March to assault thy country than to tread—
Trust to't, thou shalt not—on thy mother's womb,
That brought thee to this world.

Virgilia. Ay, and mine,
That brought you forth this boy, to keep your name
Living to time.

Young Mar. 'A shall not tread on me;
I'll run away till I am bigger, but then I'll fight.

Coriolanus. Not of a woman's tenderness to be,
Requires nor child nor woman's face to see.
I have sat too long. [*Rising.*

Volumnia. Nay, go not from us thus.
If it were so that our request did tend
To save the Romans, thereby to destroy
The Volsces whom you serve, you might condemn us,
As poisonous of your honour: no; our suit
Is, that you reconcile them: while the Volsces
May say, "This mercy we have show'd;" the Romans,
"This we received;" and each in either side
Give the all-hail to thee, and cry, "Be bless'd
For making up this peace!" Thou know'st, great son,
The end of war's uncertain, but this certain,
That, if thou conquer Rome, the benefit
Which thou shalt thereby reap is such a name,
Whose repetition will be dogg'd with curses;
Whose chronicle thus writ: "The man was noble,
But with his last attempt he wiped it out;
Destroy'd his country, and his name remains
To the ensuing age abhorr'd." Speak to me, son:
Thou hast affected the fine strains of honour,
To imitate the graces of the gods;
To tear with thunder the wide cheeks o' the air,
And yet to charge thy sulphur with a bolt
That should but rive an oak. Why dost not speak?
Think'st thou it honourable for a noble man
Still to remember wrongs? Daughter, speak you:

He cares not for your weeping. Speak thou, boy:
Perhaps thy childishness will move him more
Than can our reasons. There's no man in the world
More bound to's mother; yet here he lets me prate
Like one i' the stocks. Thou hast never in thy life
Show'd thy dear mother any courtesy;
When she, poor hen, fond of no second brood,
Has cluck'd thee to the wars, and safely home,
Loaden with honour. Say my request's unjust,
And spurn me back: but if it be not so,
Thou art not honest, and the gods will plague thee,
That thou restrain'st from me the duty which
To a mother's part belongs. He turns away:
Down, ladies; let us shame him with our knees.
To his surname Coriolanus 'longs more pride
Than pity to our prayers. Down; an end;
This is the last: so we will home to Rome,
And die among our neighbours. Nay, behold's:
This boy, that cannot tell what he would have,
But kneels and holds up hands for fellowship,
Does reason our petition with more strength
Than thou hast to deny't. Come, let us go:
This fellow had a Volscian to his mother;
His wife is in Corioli, and his child
Like him by chance. Yet give us our dispatch:
I am hush'd until our city be a-fire,
And then I'll speak a little.

[*He holds her by the hand, silent.*

Coriolanus. O mother, mother!
What have you done? Behold, the heavens do ope,
The gods look down, and this unnatural scene
They laugh at. O my mother, mother! O!
You have won a happy victory to Rome;

But, for your son,—believe it, O believe it,
Most dangerously you have with him prevail'd,
If not most mortal to him. But, let it come.
Aufidius, though I cannot make true wars,
I'll frame convenient peace. Now, good Aufidius,
Were you in my stead, would you have heard
A mother less? or granted less, Aufidius?

Aufidius. I was moved withal.

Coriolanus. I dare be sworn you were:
And, sir, it is no little thing to make
Mine eyes to sweat compassion. But, good sir,
What peace you'll make, advise me: for my part,
I'll not to Rome, I'll back with you; and pray you,
Stand to me in this cause. O mother! wife!

Aufidius. [*Aside*] I am glad thou hast set thy mercy and thy honour
At difference in thee: out of that I'll work
Myself a former fortune.

[*The ladies make signs to Coriolanus.*

Cor. [*To Volumnia, Virgilia, &c.*] Ay, by and by;
But we will drink together; and you shall bear
A better witness back than words, which we,
On like conditions, will have counter-seal'd.
Come, enter with us. Ladies, you deserve
To have a temple built you: all the swords
In Italy, and her confederate arms,
Could not have made this peace. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *Rome. A public place.*

Enter MENENIUS *and* SICINIUS.

Menenius. See you yon coign o' the Capitol, yon corner-stone?

Sicinius. Why, what of that?

Men. If it be possible for you to displace it with your little finger, there is some hope the ladies of Rome, especially his mother, may prevail with him. But I say there is no hope in't: our throats are sentenced and stay upon execution. 7

Sicinius. Is't possible that so short a time can alter the condition of a man?

Men. There is differency between a grub and a butterfly; yet your butterfly was a grub. This Marcius is grown from man to dragon: he has wings; he's more than a creeping thing. 13

Sicinius. He loved his mother dearly.

Menenius. So did he me: and he no more remembers his mother now than an eight-year-old horse. The tartness of his face sours ripe grapes: when he walks, he moves like an engine, and the ground shrinks before his treading: he is able to pierce a corslet with his eye; talks like a knell, and his hum is a battery. He sits in his state, as a thing made for Alexander. What he bids be done, is finished with his bidding. He wants nothing of a god but eternity, and a heaven to throne in. 23

Sicinius. Yes, mercy, if you report him truly.

Menenius. I paint him in the character. Mark what mercy his mother shall bring from him: there is no more mercy in him than there is milk in a male tiger; that shall our poor city find: and all this is long of you. 28

Sicinius. The gods be good unto us!

Men. No, in such a case the gods will not be good unto us. When we banished him, we respected not them; and, he returning to break our necks, they respect not us.

Enter a Messenger.

Messenger. Sir, if you'ld save your life, fly to your house:
The plebeians have got your fellow-tribune,
And hale him up and down, all swearing, if
The Roman ladies bring not comfort home,
They'll give him death by inches.

Enter a second Messenger.

Sicinius. What's the news?

Second Messenger. Good news, good news; the ladies have prevail'd,
The Volscians are dislodged, and Marcius gone:
A merrier day did never yet greet Rome,
No, not the expulsion of the Tarquins.

Sicinius. Friend,
Art thou certain this is true? is it most certain?

Second Messenger. As certain as I know the sun is fire:
Where have you lurk'd, that you make doubt of it?
Ne'er through an arch so hurried the blown tide
As the recomforted through the gates. Why, hark you!
[*Trumpets; hautboys; drums beat; all together.*
The trumpets, sackbuts, psalteries and fifes,
Tabors and cymbals, and the shouting Romans,
Make the sun dance. Hark you! [*A shout within.*

Menenius. This is good news;
I will go meet the ladies. This Volumnia
Is worth of consuls, senators, patricians,

A city full; of tribunes, such as you,
A sea and land full. You have pray'd well to-day:
This morning for ten thousand of your throats
I'ld not have given a doit. Hark, how they joy!
[*Music still, with shouts.*

Sic. First, the gods bless you for your tidings; next,
Accept my thankfulness.

Second Messenger. Sir, we have all
Great cause to give great thanks.

Sicinius. They are near the city?

Sec. Messenger. Almost at point to enter.

Sicinius. We will meet them,
And help the joy. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V. *The same. A street near the gate.*

Enter two Senators *with* VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA, VALERIA, &c., *passing over the stage, followed by* Patricians, *and others.*

First Senator. Behold our patroness, the life of Rome!
Call all your tribes together, praise the gods,
And make triumphant fires; strew flowers before them:
Unshout the noise that banish'd Marcius,
Repeal him with the welcome of his mother;
Cry, "Welcome, ladies, welcome!"

All. Welcome, ladies,
Welcome! [*A flourish with drums and trumpets. Exeunt.*

SCENE VI. *Antium. A public place.*

Enter TULLUS AUFIDIUS, *with* Attendants.

Aufidius. Go tell the lords o' the city I am here:
Deliver them this paper: having read it,
Bid them repair to the market-place; where I,
Even in theirs and in the commons' ears,
Will vouch the truth of it. Him I accuse
The city ports by this hath enter'd and
Intends to appear before the people, hoping
To purge himself with words: dispatch. [*Exeunt Attendants.*

Enter three or four Conspirators *of* AUFIDIUS'S *faction.*

Most welcome!

First Conspirator. How is it with our general?

Aufidius. Even so
As with a man by his own alms empoison'd,
And with his charity slain.

Second Conspirator. Most noble sir,
If you do hold the same intent wherein
You wish'd us parties, we'll deliver you
Of your great danger.

Aufidius. Sir, I cannot tell:
We must proceed as we do find the people.

Third Con. The people will remain uncertain whilst
'Twixt you there's difference; but the fall of either
Makes the survivor heir of all.

Aufidius. I know it;
And my pretext to strike at him admits
A good construction. I raised him, and I pawn'd
Mine honour for his truth: who being so heighten'd,
He water'd his new plants with dews of flattery,
Seducing so my friends; and, to this end,

He bow'd his nature, never known before
But to be rough, unswayable and free.

Third Conspirator. Sir, his stoutness
When he did stand for consul, which he lost
By lack of stooping,—

Aufidius. That I would have spoke of:
Being banish'd for't, he came unto my hearth;
Presented to my knife his throat: I took him;
Made him joint-servant with me; gave him way
In all his own desires; nay, let him choose
Out of my files, his projects to accomplish,
My best and freshest men; served his designments
In mine own person; holp to reap the fame
Which he did end all his; and took some pride
To do myself this wrong: till, at the last,
I seem'd his follower, not partner, and
He waged me with his countenance, as if
I had been mercenary.

First Conspirator. So he did, my lord:
The army marvell'd at it, and, in the last,
When he had carried Rome, and that we look'd
For no less spoil than glory,—

Aufidius. There was it:
For which my sinews shall be stretch'd upon him.
At a few drops of women's rheum, which are
As cheap as lies, he sold the blood and labour
Of our great action: therefore shall he die,
And I'll renew me in his fall. But, hark!

[*Drums and trumpets sound, with great shouts of the people.*

First Con. Your native town you enter'd like a post,
And had no welcomes home; but he returns,
Splitting the air with noise.

Second Conspirator. And patient fools,

Whose children he hath slain, their base throats tear
With giving him glory.

Third Conspirator. Therefore, at your vantage,
Ere he express himself, or move the people
With what he would say, let him feel your sword,
Which we will second. When he lies along,
After your way his tale pronounced shall bury
His reasons with his body.

Aufidius. Say no more:
Here come the lords.

Enter the Lords *of the city.*

Lords. You are most welcome home.

Aufidius. I have not deserved it.
But, worthy lords, have you with heed perused
What I have written to you?

Lords. We have.

First Lord. And grieve to hear't.
What faults he made before the last, I think
Might have found easy fines: but there to end
Where he was to begin, and give away
The benefit of our levies, answering us
With our own charge, making a treaty where
There was a yielding,—this admits no excuse.

Aufidius. He approaches: you shall hear him.

Enter CORIOLANUS, *marching with drum and colours;* Commoners *being with him.*

Coriolanus. Hail, lords! I am return'd your soldier,
No more infected with my country's love
Than when I parted hence, but still subsisting
Under your great command. You are to know,
That prosperously I have attempted, and

With bloody passage led your wars even to
The gates of Rome. Our spoils we have brought home
Do more than counterpoise a full third part
The charges of the action. We have made peace,
With no less honour to the Antiates
Than shame to the Romans: and we here deliver,
Subscribed by the consuls and patricians,
Together with the seal o' the senate, what
We have compounded on.

Aufidius. Read it not, noble lords;
But tell the traitor, in the high'st degree
He hath abused your powers.

Cor. Traitor! how now!

Aufidius. Ay, traitor, Marcius!

Coriolanus. Marcius!

Aufidius. Ay, Marcius, Caius Marcius: dost thou think
I'll grace thee with that robbery, thy stol'n name
Coriolanus in Corioli?
You lords and heads o' the state, perfidiously
He has betray'd your business, and given up,
For certain drops of salt, your city Rome—
I say, "your city"—to his wife and mother;
Breaking his oath and resolution, like
A twist of rotten silk, never admitting
Counsel o' the war; but at his nurse's tears
He whined and roar'd away your victory,
That pages blush'd at him and men of heart
Look'd wondering each at other.

Coriolanus. Hear'st thou, Mars?

Aufidius. Name not the god, thou boy of tears!

Coriolanus. Ha!

Aufidius. No more.

Coriolanus. Measureless liar, thou hast made my heart
Too great for what contains it. Boy! O slave!

Pardon me, lords; 'tis the first time that ever
I was forced to scold. Your judgments, my grave lords,
Must give this cur the lie: and his own notion—
Who wears my stripes impress'd upon him; that
Must bear my beating to his grave—shall join
To thrust the lie unto him.

First Lord. Peace, both, and hear me speak.

Coriolanus. Cut me to pieces, Volsces; men and lads,
Stain all your edges on me. Boy! false hound!
If you have writ your annals true, 'tis there,
That, like an eagle in a dove-cote, I
Flutter'd your Volscians in Corioli:
Alone I did it. Boy!

Aufidius. Why, noble lords,
Will you be put in mind of his blind fortune,
Which was your shame, by this unholy braggart,
'Fore your own eyes and ears?

All the Conspirators. Let him die for't!

All the people. Tear him to pieces! Do it presently!
He killed my son! My daughter! He killed my cousin
Marcus! He killed my father!

Second Lord. Peace, ho! no outrage: peace!
The man is noble, and his fame folds-in
This orb o' the earth. His last offences to us
Shall have judicious hearing. Stand, Aufidius,
And trouble not the peace.

Coriolanus. O that I had him,
With six Aufidiuses, or more, his tribe,
To use my lawful sword!

Aufidius. Insolent villain!

All the Conspirators. Kill, kill, kill, kill, kill him!

[*Aufidius and the Conspirators draw, and kill Coriolanus: Aufidius stands on his body.*

Lords. Hold, hold, hold, hold!

Aufidius. My noble masters, hear me speak.

First Lord. O Tullus,—

Second Lord. Thou hast done a deed whereat valour will weep.

Third Lord. Tread not upon him. Masters all, be quiet; Put up your swords.

Aufidius. My lords, when you shall know—as in this rage, Provoked by him, you cannot—the great danger Which this man's life did owe you, you'll rejoice That he is thus cut off. Please it your honours To call me to your senate, I'll deliver Myself your loyal servant, or endure Your heaviest censure.

First Lord. Bear from hence his body, And mourn you for him: let him be regarded As the most noble corse that ever herald Did follow to his urn.

Second Lord. His own impatience Takes from Aufidius a great part of blame. Let's make the best of it.

Aufidius. My rage is gone; And I am struck with sorrow. Take him up: Help, three o' the chiefest soldiers; I'll be one. Beat thou the drum, that it speak mournfully: Trail your steel pikes. Though in this city he Hath widow'd and unchilded many a one, Which to this hour bewail the injury, Yet he shall have a noble memory. Assist.

[*Exeunt, bearing the body of Coriolanus. A dead march sounded.*

NOTES.

G. = *Glossary*.
By "the Folio" is meant the First Folio (1623).

ACT I.

Scene 1.

The first scene counts for much in the evolution of a play. It should set before us (necessarily, to some extent, by retrospective explanation) the existing state of things at the point when the action starts, and give us some inkling as to the general character of the action that is to follow, and of the chief *dramatis personæ*. This first scene of *Coriolanus* is a singularly comprehensive introduction. It shows us the political conditions at Rome, focuses interest straightway (line 6) on the foremost person of the tragedy, and illuminates his character and motives in a few phrases which practically epitomise what ensues. "Chief enemy to the people": "he pays himself with being proud": "he did it to please his mother, and to be partly proud": these are key-notes —'leading motives' introduced in the overture and repeated at intervals through the piece. And when Coriolanus himself appears (156), we have an immediate example of his pride and enmity to the people, and a foreshadowing of that military prowess which accentuates the pitiful tragedy of his end. The tragedy gets under way very rapidly.

Scene 1. *Rome*. According to Plutarch it was at the Sacred Mount (*Mons Sacer*), outside Rome, that Menenius addressed to the people, on their secession thither, his "pretty tale" (83) of the belly and the body's members.

Enter a company of mutinous Citizens etc. Shakespeare's "usual plan in tragedy is to begin with a short scene, or part of a scene, either full of life and stir, or in some other way arresting. Then, having secured a hearing, he proceeds to conversations at a lower pitch, accompanied by little action but conveying much information. For example, *Romeo and Juliet* opens with a street-fight, *Julius Cæsar* and *Coriolanus* with a crowd in commotion; and when this excitement has had its effect on the audience, there follow quiet speeches, in which the cause of the excitement, and so a great part of the situation, are disclosed"—*Bradley*.

10. *Is't a verdict?* Are we all agreed? Shakespeare's partiality for legal figures has often been remarked.

14, 15. *the patricians, good;* it is to the patricians that the title "good" belongs. Compare, indeed, Coriolanus's own address to them in III. 1. 91, with II. 1. 183. The First Citizen is, of course, speaking ironically, and points his bitter irony with a verbal quibble on *good* in its other sense 'wealthy,' 'in good circumstances'—not "poor." Cf. *The Merchant of Venice*, I. 3. 12—17.

15. *authority*, those in authority; a variation of phrase for "the patricians," the aristocrats. *Coriolanus* presents some striking instances of the use of the abstract for the concrete. See again 71, 204, 213.

17. *guess*, think; cf. the American colloquialism "I guess." Many of their (to us) peculiar usages of language are simply survivals from older English.

18. *they think we are too dear;* "they think that the charge of maintaining us is more than we are worth"—*Johnson*.

18, 19. *the leanness...is as an inventory;* "our want only serves, like an inventory [i.e. list] of their goods, to make their wealth more manifest"—*Herford*. *object*, sight, spectacle.

particularize; literally 'to specify,' hence 'to make plain, set forth.'

20. *sufferance*, suffering; Shakespeare also uses it to mean 'endurance, bearing,' as where Shylock says of the Jews: "For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe," *The Merchant of Venice*, I. 3. 111.

21. *pikes*, lances; with a quibble on the sense 'pitchfork' (a weapon more readily associated than the lance with the "rake").

become rakes, i.e. as lean as rakes; said in reference to the old proverb "as lean as a rake." Editors quote Chaucer's description in the *Prologue*, 287, to the *Canterbury Tales* of the Clerk's steed:

"As lene was his hors as is a rake."

Shakespeare often makes a verbal quibble the expression of great,

especially of bitter, feeling. The classical example is Gaunt's dying jest in *Richard II.* II. I. 74: "Old Gaunt, indeed, and gaunt in being old."

26. The significant words are *All* and "first."

30. *he pays himself with being proud*, he repays himself for his services to the State by indulging in the luxury of pride.

33. *to that end*, i.e. with the object of "being proud" (30).

soft-conscienced men, people who are *too* charitably minded; a hit at the "Second Citizen." One naturally regards the "First" Citizen as the chief spokesman of the crowd; hence the significance of his bitterness against Coriolanus.

35. i.e. partly in order to please his mother, partly in order to have a ground and scope of "being proud."

36. *virtue*, valour; see G., and cf. the *Life* of Coriolanus in North's *Plutarch*: "Now in those days, valiantness was honoured in Rome above all other virtues: which they call *virtus*, by the name of virtue itself, as including in that general name all other special virtues besides. So that *virtus* in the Latin was as much as valiantness."

38. *You must in no way say he is covetous.* We shall see Coriolanus's indifference about wealth illustrated later (I. 9. 36—40).

50. *With bats and clubs*, i.e. like a London Elizabethan crowd. "Prentices and clubs" was the rallying cry of the London apprentices. Shakespeare refers more than once to the old custom, when any quarrel or affray occurred in the London streets, of crying out *Clubs! Clubs!* by way of calling for persons armed with clubs, especially the apprentices, to come and separate the combatants, and thus preserve the public peace. Cf. *As You Like It*, V. 2. 44, 45, "clubs cannot part them." Sometimes the cry was only an excuse for creating a disturbance.

"'The great long club,' as described by Stow, on the necks of the London apprentices, was as characteristic as the flat cap of the same quarrelsome body in the days of Elizabeth and James"—*Knight.*

bat; in old writers a common word for 'a club, staff, stick.'

61. *dearth;* the word in North's *Plutarch.*

66. *your*, any which *you* can make.

68. *Your knees to them, not arms* etc., supplications to the gods, not insurrection against the Senate.

70. i.e. you are carried away into a course of action in which more calamity awaits you. F. *attendre*, 'to wait for'; cf. 228.

71. *the helms*, those who guide the helm of the State; cf. line 15.

Patres, i.e. 'fathers,' was the title of the Senators of ancient Rome; hence *patrician* = 'of noble birth, noble, senatorial, not plebeian.' Originally the patricians were the descendants or reputed descendants of the families that founded Rome.

75, 76. *to support usurers;* a detail from Plutarch.

wholesome, salutary, conducing to the public good.

77. *more piercing*, severer, harsher.

83. *pretty*, neat; implying 'which serves the purpose.' A "notable *tale*," says North's *Plutarch*.

85. *stale*. The Folio has *scale*, which some retain, with the very forced sense 'to peel, to strip off the outside,' i.e. so as to lay bare the inner meaning of the fable.

The reading *stale*, 'to render stale' (due to Theobald and commonly adopted), gives admirable sense. Shakespeare uses the word in four other passages, e.g. in the famous lines on Cleopatra in *Antony and Cleopatra*, II. 2. 240:

> "Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
> Her infinite variety."

To Theobald we owe the finest textual corrections ever made—notably the immortal "and a' babbled of green fields" in *Henry V.* II. 3. 17, 18, and the restoration of *shoal* (for the Folio's *schoole*) in *Macbeth*, I. 7. 6, "this bank and *shoal* of time."

87. *to fob off our disgrace*, to put us off with the pretence that we are not treated disgracefully by the patricians; artfully to jest away their shameful treatment of us. *fob;* see G.

89. *There was a time* etc. This is one of the parts of *Coriolanus* in which Shakespeare's reproduction of the language of North's *Plutarch* is particularly striking.

91. *gulf*, whirlpool; something that engulfs or swallows. O.F. *golfe*, Gk. κόλπος.

93. *Still*, ever, always; see G.

94. *where*, whereas.

96. *participate*, participating, i.e. sharing in, assisting in, each other's functions. One of the features which distinguish Elizabethan English from modern is its free use of participial and adjectival terminations, now fixed but then in a fluid condition.

97. *the appetite and affection*, all the desires.

100—103. Suggested by Plutarch's "And so the belly...laughed at their folly"; but heightened by Menenius's humorous apology for making "the belly smile."

101. i.e. dry, satirical laughter; not the hearty, joyous laughter supposed to come from the lungs.

105, 106. *his receipt*, the fact that he received all the food.

even so most fitly As, just as reasonably as (ironical).

107. Note how the interruptions vivify the story. The same device is used in *The Tempest*, I. 2, where Miranda breaks in on Prospero's long narrative. Compare too Menenius's own pauses (like Prospero's reproofs of Miranda, *The Tempest*, I. 2. 78, 87, 106), to bespeak their close attention as he reaches the crucial point of his story. This is the dramatic, as distinct from the narrative, style.

109. "The heart was considered by Shakespeare as the seat of the understanding"—*Malone*.

113. *'Fore me*, 'by my soul!' This expletive seems to have arisen out of the common oath "Before (or "Fore") *God*."

120. *me;* the so-called ethic dative='for me,' equivalent often to 'I beg you; please'; as in "Villain, I say, knock me at this gate," *The Taming of the Shrew*, I. 2. 11.

121. The rhythm is designed to suggest the deliberateness (which Menenius himself is imitating) of the belly's manner of answering.

Your, of whom I am telling you. Shakespeare often uses *your* colloquially (cf. Lat. *iste*) to indicate some person or thing known to everyone.

122. *rash*, over-hasty, impetuous.

126. *the store-house and the shop;* the belly politely rejects *their* description of him as "like a gulf" (91).

127—133. An answer to their charge in line 93.

129. *the seat*, the abode, residence.

130. *cranks*, winding passages; see G. *offices;* the metaphor is taken from the *offices* of a house, i.e. the parts specially devoted to the household or service, such as the kitchen, pantry, cellars.

131. *nerves*, sinews, muscles (=Lat. *nervi*); as always in Shakespeare. So *nervy*='sinewy,' II. 1. 148.

137. *can make my audit up*, can make out my accounts of what (food) I receive and show you that etc. Shakespeare is rather fond of this metaphor of a steward of an estate who at the "audit"-day has to give an account of receipts and expenditure to the owner.

143. *digest;* a natural metaphor in the peculiar context. Similarly in 148 the metaphor rises out of the context.

144. *the weal o' the common*, the public weal, the welfare of the community. See *weal* in the Glossary.

145—147. The citizens might have retorted that they earned these "public benefits" (if any) by public services such as fighting for the State; also, that as a matter of fact they were starving, while the "members" of the body, on Menenius's own showing, received from the belly their "natural competency" (132) in return for *their* services.

152, 153. The metaphor is drawn from the chase of the deer.

Rascal (see G.) is a hunter's term for a worthless deer, unfit to hunt, and Menenius quibbles on this and its ordinary sense 'a worthless man.' *in blood*, in good condition; another technical term of venery.

Apparently, Menenius compares the citizens with a herd of deer, at the head of which some worthless stag has the presumption to put himself, though least able to afford the hunters good sport by giving them a "run."

The latter part of line 153 really applies to the First Citizen: *he*—"to win some advantage"—thrusts himself into the first place, though no more worthy of it than a "rascal" stag which somehow gets into the place of honour at the head of the herd and ought therefore to be fittest to hunt. Shakespeare's metaphors and similes are not always meant to be pressed in every detail.

155. *her rats;* the patrician's way of describing the "mutinous members" (142) of the community.

156. *The one side must have bale*, one side or other will suffer grievously. *bale*, destruction; see G.

Enter Caius Marcius. His first words are, designedly, a verification of the citizen's charges against him.

158. *rubbing the poor itch of*, inflaming by friction.

163. *makes you proud;* a fine touch of unconscious irony, after what they had said of Coriolanus himself.

166. "Professor Hales suggests a reference to the great frost of January 1608, when fires were lighted on the Thames"—*Beeching.*

167—169. *Your virtue is* etc.; all you are fit for is "to rehabilitate [in repute] the criminal justly condemned, and to execrate the justice which sentenced him"—*Herford.* The offender overtaken by justice who wins the sympathy of the mob is contrasted with the man who by achieving greatness incurs their malicious envy.

that justice did it, i.e. that justice *which* did it (="subdued him"). Omission of the subject relative pronoun, where the sense is not obscured thereby, is one of the commonest of Shakespearian ellipses. It is specially frequent where, as here, the verb follows the antecedent immediately.

177. *your garland*, the ornament of your city; or possibly 'he whom you crowned with the victor's laurel'—said in allusion to the Roman custom mentioned later (I. 9. 60).

178. *several*, different.

185, 186. Very like Lear's words to Cordelia (*King Lear*, v. 3. 11—15).

186. *side factions*, take sides in political parties. Some interpret: 'patch up imaginary parties, making this man belong to this side, and that man to that.'

188. *feebling*. Cf. *King John*, v. 2. 146, 147:

"Shall that victorious hand be feebled here,
That in your chambers gave you chastisement?"

It is a good illustration of Abbott's remark that in Shakespearian English "almost any part of speech can be used as any other part of speech...You can 'happy' your friend, 'malice' or 'foot' your enemy, or 'fall' an axe on his neck."

191. *quarry*, a heap of slain; see G.

192. *quarter'd*, cut to pieces.

193. *pick*, pitch, throw; akin to *pitch*.

194. *these;* emphasised; he does not know about "the other troop." *persuaded*, convinced of their mistake; for their cowardice succeeds where their intelligence fails, i.e. in restraining them. Menenius is generally ironical.

197. *the other troop*, i.e. on "the other side o' the city" (41, 42).

204. *To break the heart of generosity* etc., i.e. such as to break the spirit of the nobles. *generosity;* abstract for concrete. Shakespeare several times uses *generous* = Lat. *generosus*, 'well-born.'

207. *emulation*, malice; perhaps here 'malicious triumph.' See G.

208. *Five tribunes*. So much turns upon the Tribunes in *Coriolanus* that a short account of the office will not be out of place. The *Century Dictionary* defines a tribune and summarises his attributes thus:

"In Roman history, originally a magistrate presiding over a tribe, or representing a tribe for certain purposes; specifically, a tribune of the people (*tribunus plebis*), an officer or magistrate chosen by the people, from the time of the secession (probably in 494 B.C.), to protect them from the oppression of the patricians or nobles, and to defend their liberties against any attempts upon them by the Senate and consuls...Their persons [i.e. of the Tribunes] were inviolable, and any one who transgressed in regard to the respect due them was outlawed. These magistrates were at first two, but their number was increased to

five and ultimately to ten . The tribunes figured especially in the assembly of the tribes (*comitia tributa*); they could inflict no direct punishment, but could propose the imposition of fines, and from their personal inviolability could afford protection to any person." Gradually the scope of their powers was much increased. Lat. *tribunus;* originally 'the chief or representative of a *tribe*' (Lat. *tribus*).

210. *I know not.* Plutarch does not mention more than two names, and Shakespeare cleverly turns the omission into an illustration of Coriolanus's contempt for the people and all that concerns them. Similarly in I. 9. 90, he cannot call to mind the name of his humble benefactor. '*Sdeath*, i.e. *God's* (Christ's) *death;* cf. '*Swounds* = *God's wounds;* commonly contracted still further to *Zounds*.

213. *Win upon power;* encroach on the aristocracy ('the powerful class').

214. *For insurrection's arguing*, for revolutionaries to argue about or to press in argument. Coriolanus shows true political insight. He recognises in the Tribunes the foes of his own class, and the contest between himself and them is foreshadowed early.

216. *Where's Caius Marcius?* The cry of the State (we feel) in every emergency of war.

218, 219. The spirit which prompts these words is surely that which ultimately leads to his great wrong done against his country.

vent, get quit of. *musty;* cf. I. 9. 7.

221—229. This prepares us for Scene 2, where Aufidius appears.

222. *put you to't;* a colloquialism like 'give you a nice time!'

227. *Upon my party*, on my side; cf. I. 10. 7.

232. *constant*, true to my promise.

238. *attend*, await; cf. 70.

243. Shakespeare applies *mutiny* to any insurrection or seditious movement. Elizabethans often have *-er* as a suffix, equivalent to the modern *-eer*; cf. "pioner" in *Henry V.* III. 2. 92, *Hamlet*, I. 5. 163; "enginer," *Hamlet*, III. 4. 206, 207. The *er* was pronounced like *ere* in *there*, and bore a strong accent.

244. *Your;* emphatic. Seeing the "citizens steal away," he contrasts them with the patricians, notably Titus Lartius.

puts well forth, makes a fine show, appears to great advantage! The metaphor seems to be that of a plant putting forth leaves or blossoms.

Exeunt all but Brutus and Sicinius. According to the modern method of dramatic construction—the method, that is, of making the

curtain fall at the climax of the scene—this scene would close, I should think, at the exit of Coriolanus. Shakespeare, however, allows characters to remain behind, as the Tribunes remain here, and wind up the scene with further comments or some *slight extension* of the action. Thus in *Richard II.* I. 3, when the stirring scene in the lists at Coventry has culminated in the King's passing sentence on the rivals and then sweeping from the field with all his train, Gaunt and Bolingbroke stay behind for an interview which a modern playwright would throw into a fresh scene. In the Elizabethan theatre there was no curtain to fall, and practically no scenery to mark a change of scene. Hence the tendency was to extend a scene instead of starting a fresh one in a fresh locality: as if the playwright thought that certain of his *personæ* might as well stay behind as go off and return to the same spot.

249. *gird;* usually 'gird *at*'=gibe at.

251. *The present wars devour him!* literally 'may the wars about to begin destroy him,' i.e. 'may he fall in this war!'

252. *to be*, in being; courage is the root of his pride.

253. *success;* see G.

261. *giddy censure*, foolish public opinion; see *censure* in G.

264. *sticks on*, is set on.

265. *demerits*, merits, deserts (in good sense); see G.

270. *the dispatch*, the completion of the business, i.e. of preparing for the war.

271. *More than his singularity;* 'let us see in what manner, beyond his usual peculiarity of character, he enters upon the war,' i.e. whether with an exceptional manifestation of his usual pride.

Radically *singularity* means 'the state or character of being singular' (literally and figuratively); hence 'individual or personal peculiarity': whence the easily derived idea 'oddity, eccentricity.'

Scene 2.

2. *enter'd in*, privy to; from the sense 'initiated into.'

4. *What*, i.e. "counsels"; hence "have."

6. *Had circumvention*, was able to foil our design.

9. *press'd a power*, levied an army; cf. III. 1. 122. Shakespeare uses *press* and *impress* several times with the idea of compulsory military service. Cf. *Richard II.* III. 2. 58—61. Cf. the old system of 'press-gangs.'

15. *preparation.* Scan the *-ion* as *i-ön;* that is, sounding the *i*

instead of slurring it into the next syllable, which is stressed lightly. In Shakespeare and in Milton's early poems the termination *-ion*, especially with words ending in *-ction*, such as 'perfe*ction*,' 'distra*ction*,' is often treated as two syllables, especially at the end of a line. In Middle E. poetry the termination *-ion* was always two syllables.

19—21. Spoken ironically. *pretences*, designs; see G.

24. *take in*, capture; cf. III. 2. 59. The *in* has an intensive force, and perhaps originally the phrase implied not only 'to capture' but 'to take into one's hands' or 'to incorporate into one's own possessions.'

28. *for the remove*, to force him to raise the siege.

Scene 3.

The main purpose of the scene is to show up the character of Volumnia, the typical Roman matron, to whom Virgilia is obviously meant as a foil. Volumnia is important, not only *per se*, in that she has so much to do with the actual mechanism of the plot, but also in relation to Coriolanus, who is what he is largely through her and her training. As a scene of domestic interest set in a framework of national stress, this scene may be compared with the scene between Lady Macduff and Ross in *Macbeth*, IV. 2. The resemblance is heightened by the introduction of the little boy. There are not many children ("scarcely any little girls") in Shakespeare; and about almost all of them clings a certain pathos. Witness, above all, Prince Arthur in *King John*. The pathos lies in the ever-felt contrast between simple childhood and great surrounding circumstances. Moreover, the children of Shakespeare's plays are generally associated with unhappy mothers.

2. *comfortable*, cheerful; from *comfortable* used passively='in a state of consolation, of good comfort.'

10. *such a person*, an external appearance so "comely."

12—14. *To a cruel war* etc.; explained later (II. 2. 85—96).

bound with oak, i.e. with "the crown given by the Romans to him that saved the life of a citizen [in battle], which was accounted more honourable than any other"—*Johnson*. This *corona civica* was, in glory, the Roman equivalent of our 'Victoria Cross'; but it also carried with it certain material advantages, e.g. exemption from taxes.

23. *surfeit out of action*; abandon himself to a life of ignoble ease (*ignobile otium*).

25, 26. The request and the reply are significant in indicating the relative positions of the speakers.

Beseech you; compare the abbreviation *prithee* = '*I* pray thee.'

retire myself; cf. F. *se retirer*, 'to withdraw.' The reflexive use of verbs, especially of verbs derived from the French, was commoner in Elizabethan English than it is now.

31. *got*, begotten.

37. *you fool!* perhaps not quite so uncompromising as it sounds to us. The term "poor fool" (like "innocent") sometimes expresses pity and even endearment in Shakespeare. Thus Lear is probably referring to Cordelia, not the Jester, when he moans out "And my poor fool is hang'd" (v. 3. 305).

38. *Than gilt his trophy*, than gilding becomes (i.e. adorns) the man's sepulchral monument.

trophy; properly 'a monument of an enemy's defeat' = Gk. τρόπαιον, from τροπή, 'a turning, putting to flight' (τρέπειν, 'to turn'). It has the sense 'sepulchral monument' in *Hamlet*, IV. 5. 214.

Hecuba, the wife of Priam, king of Troy. See the Player's speech, the theme of which is the story of the Fall of Troy and death of Priam, in *Hamlet*, II. 2.

41. *contemning*, in contempt of it (the "sword"), spurning it. The reading here is uncertain. The 2nd folio has *Contending* and *swords*. This suggested the reading given in many old editions of Shakespeare, viz. "At Grecian swords' contending."

43. *bless*, keep, protect.

Usher (F. *huissier*, Lat. *ostiarius*) meant properly 'a door-keeper'; then 'one whose business is to walk before and introduce another.'

46. The dialogue from this point is a typical specimen of Shakespeare's use of prose as a medium of easy conversational intercourse.

49, 50. *manifest house-keepers*, stay-at-homes indeed! The adjective (='plain, unmistakable') has an intensive force. In *Twelfth Night*, IV. 2. 10, *house-keeper* probably means 'host'; in *Macbeth*, III. 1. 97, it is used of a watch-dog, one that "keeps," i.e. guards, the house.

50. *A fine spot*, a delicate pattern in embroidery. Cf. *Othello*, III. 3. 434, 435:

> "Have you not sometimes seen a handkerchief
> Spotted with strawberries in your wife's hand?"

i.e. embroidered with a pattern of strawberries. The *Century Dictionary* defines *spot-stitch* thus: "In crochet-work, a stitch by means of

which raised rounded figures are produced at equal intervals, forming a kind of pattern."

57. *confirmed*, resolute, determined.

61. *or whether;* the redundancy may originally have given more emphasis.

63. *mammocked*, tore to pieces; see G.

66. *A crack*, a lively boy; see G. A somewhat disparaging word, meant to turn aside Valeria's rather pronounced compliments, which are more to Volumnia's taste than Virgilia's.

80—82. *Penelope*, wife of Odysseus (Ulysses), king of Ithaca. "During the long absence of Odysseus [in the Trojan War], she was beleaguered by numerous and importunate suitors, whom she deceived by declaring that she must finish a large shroud which she was making for Laërtes, her aged father-in-law, before she should make up her mind. During the day-time she accordingly worked at the shroud, and in the night she undid the work of the day. By this means she succeeded in putting off the suitors"—*Classical Dictionary.*

82. *sensible*, sensitive, full of feeling; cf. I. 4. 53.

96. *Corioli.* Mr Craig notes that this form does not occur at all in the Folios. The name "is generally spelt 'Carioles' or 'Corioles' (once 'Corialus')." In North's *Plutarch* the form is "Corioles."

102. *disease our better mirth*, mar our mirth which were better without her. *disease;* see G.

106. *at a word*, in one word. Cf. IV. 5. 94.

107. *I wish you much mirth.* Spoken with a touch of irony, in reference to 102? For all her modesty and self-effacement, Virgilia sticks to her resolve, and her firmness (a little like Cordelia's?) is a significant touch of characterisation.

Scene 4.

This and the remaining scenes of the Act in which he appears show us Coriolanus at his greatest, i.e. as a great soldier. The picture is necessary to the peculiar pity and pitifulness of his end. And we must know him fully in the field before we can grasp the causes of his failure in the Forum. He is as detached from the average citizen in the one place as in the other. In the very virtues which make him so splendid "Before Corioli," but so unlike others, lie the tragic possibilities that work his downfall.

Herford emphasises "the Homeric quality of the battle-poetry in

the play...Nowhere else in Shakespeare, not even in *Henry V.* and the Fortinbras speech of *Hamlet* (IV. 4), is the poetry of battle expressed with the same magnificent energy. Compare, e.g., Volumnia's speech, II. 1. 148, and Cominius', II. 2. 80. Caius Marcius himself has in the field a grandeur which makes him far more a fellow of Achilles or Hector (cf. I. 8. 11) than of the affable English king" (Henry V.). The battle-element gives an epic colouring to the whole of Act I.

4. *spoke;* a euphemism for 'exchanged blows.'

7. *Summon the town,* i.e. to surrender.

9. *'larum;* see *alarum* in G. and cf. II. 2. 74.

12. *fielded,* who are in the field of battle. Cf. I. 1. 188, note.

14. Two ideas struggle for expression, because the speaker is thinking simultaneously but differently of the citizens inside Corioli and of Aufidius—thus: (1) 'There is no man in the city who fears you *more* than Aufidius does,' i.e. the besieged are not afraid of you at all; (2) 'Aufidius is not here, and (if he were) there is no man who fears you *less* than he does.'

Less illustrates that tendency to intensify a negative idea which we get so often in Shakespeare; compare the frequent use of the double negative. The tendency to repeat a negative is a general principle of language, and may be illustrated not from Shakespeare alone.

15. *lesser;* cf. I. 6. 69. A double comparative, like *worser,* as in *Hamlet,* III. 4. 157, "O, throw away the worser part of it!"

17. *pound,* shut up as in a *pen;* see G. The speaker designedly uses a contemptuous word.

25. *more proof,* harder, less penetrable; see *proof* in G.

30. *the south;* the quarter whence in Shakespeare's time pestilences and illnesses were supposed to come; such as are enumerated in *Troilus and Cressida,* V. 1. 20—28. Cf. *Cymbeline,* II. 3. 136, "The south-fog rot him!" The idea arose, presumably, from the fact that the south, especially the south-west, wind is enervating and rain-bringing. The east was regarded as the health-giving quarter: hence the popular belief in the peculiar excellence of the water of eastward-flowing springs. Eastward used to be a favourite aspect for houses.

31. The break (*aposiopesis*) well suggests Coriolanus's overmastering passion and contempt, as if no word of abuse were sufficient to express his angry scorn. Compare his abruptness in I. 1. 209, 210; I. 6. 42.

herds; cf. III. 1. 33; also III. 2. 32.

37. *All hurt behind;* quite a classical touch. Cf. *Macbeth,* V. 8, where old Siward hears of his son's death (46—50):

"*Siward.* Had he his hurts before?
Ross. Ay, on the front.
Siward. Why then, God's soldier be he!"

38. *agued*, quaking; literally 'stricken with ague' and so 'showing the effects of ague,' i.e. quaking, trembling.

home, to the full, to your utmost. Cf. II. 2. 101, IV. 2. 48.

40. *And make my wars on you.* Essentially "irony."

43. *seconds;* cf. I. 8. 15.

47. *To the pot.* The *New English Dictionary* has: "*To go to* (*the*) *pot*, to be destroyed, ruined, or wasted; come to destruction: possibly in allusion to the sending of old metal to the melting-pot." The phrase is now purely colloquial, but the illustrations given by editors show that it was in literary use in Shakespeare's time.

52. *answer*, meet, deal with; much the same use as in I. 2. 19.

53, 54. "Though Coriolanus has the feeling of pain like other men, he is more hardy in daring exploits than his senseless sword, for *after* it is bent, he yet stands firm in the field"—*Malone*. That is, Coriolanus's daring endurance lasts longer than his sword's, though the latter is without feeling ("senseless").

The adjective *sensible* (cf. I. 3. 82) would be rather simpler, but *sensibly* can be taken = 'having feeling,' literally 'in a state of being sensible, of having feeling.'

55. *entire*, i.e. a single large stone. Cf. *Othello*, V. 2. 145.

57. *Cato's*. The 1st Folio has *Caius*, the 2nd *Calves*. The corresponding passage in Plutarch shows the true reading here.

The passage illustrates very strikingly the closeness with which Shakespeare follows Plutarch. For the reference to Cato (the elder Cato, the Censor, who lived 234—149 B.C.) is part of Plutarch's own comment on Coriolanus as a soldier, whereas Shakespeare, ignoring the anachronism, transfers the description to one of the contemporaries of Coriolanus, who was supposed to have lived 250 years before Cato.

59. *sounds* = "the sound of his voice" (North's *Plutarch*).

60, 61. Cf. *Macbeth*, II. 3. 65, 66 (in the description of the signs and wonders on the night of Duncan's murder):

"some say, the earth
Was feverous and did shake."

The idea is of a man afflicted with ague (cf. I. 4. 38).

62. *make remain alike*, remain there like Coriolanus; a euphemism or 'fall with him.'

Scene 5.

4. *movers;* said ironically, meaning that they are 'loafers, shirkers.'

prize their hours; some consider *hours* a mistake for *honours;* if correct it must mean that they are wasting precious time, or choosing the wrong time to plunder.

5. *drachma.* "The principal silver coin of the ancient Greeks... Roughly speaking, the average value of the ancient drachma may be said to have been about the same as that of...the French franc"—*Century Dict.* Gk. δραχμή, 'a handful, a drachma'; from δράσσομαι, 'I grasp.' Our word *dram* is contracted from *drachm* = *drachma.*

The use of this Greek term here is "a trace of Shakespeare's authority Plutarch, who commonly reckons in terms of Greek money" —*Herford.* A striking illustration of the touch of Greek colouring which the influence of Plutarch imparts to Shakespeare's Roman plays is *Julius Cæsar,* III. 2. 247. There, as in North's *Plutarch,* the amount of Cæsar's legacy to each Roman citizen is given as "seventy drachmas" (not quite £3); but in Cæsar's will it was reckoned, of course, in *sestertii* (300), i.e. in Roman money.

6. *of a doit,* worth a farthing. Dutch *duit,* a small coin of the value of about a farthing.

doublet; the ordinary Elizabethan name for a jacket. Literally a 'double,' i.e. inner garment, as compared with the overcoat or outer garment. Shakespeare makes his characters (e.g. Julius Cæsar) wear "doublets," whatever their period or country.

12. *make good,* make sure of, hold.

18. i.e. the loss of blood is salutary. We may remember the old practice of "bleeding" a patient in illnesses like fevers. See *Richard II.* I. 1. 153—157. In Elizabethan almanacs "particular seasons [spring, autumn] were pointed out as the most proper time for being bled"—*Malone. physical,* pertaining to physic; hence 'medicinal.'

24. *Than those,* than *to* those; the preposition is easily supplied from *thy* = 'to thee.'

Scene 6.

5. *By interims and conveying gusts,* by gusts of wind bearing the sound of battle to us from time to time; cf. line 16. The preposition is used in different senses with the two nouns.

7. *successes,* fortunes.

16. *briefly;* a short while since.

17. *confound*, waste; from the common Elizabethan sense 'to destroy, ruin.'

25. *tabor;* a small drum used for rural festivities.

29. *clip*, embrace. This word was so much used by the Elizabethans that its passing out of currency is curious. Shakespeare uses it twice of the sea encircling our coasts; cf. *King John*, v. 2. 34, 1 *Henry IV.* III. 1. 44.

35. *Ransoming*, i.e. accepting (not paying) a ransom for; hence 'releasing.'

36—38. For the metaphor from coursing cf. *Henry V.* Prol. 1. 5—8:

"Then should the warlike Harry, like himself,
Assume the port of Mars; and at his heels,
Leash'd in like hounds, should famine, sword and fire
Crouch for employment";

and the same play, III. 1. 31, 32:

"I see you stand like greyhounds in the slips,
Straining upon the start. The game's afoot."

Shakespeare had a thorough knowledge of country life and sport. His "early literary work proves that while in the country he eagerly studied birds, flowers, and trees, and gained a detailed knowledge of horses and dogs. All his kinsfolk were farmers, and with them he doubtless as a youth practised many field sports. Sympathetic references to hawking, hunting [stag- and fox-hunting], coursing, and angling abound in his early plays and poems"—*Lee.*

As a boy he would know of the famous coursing matches on the Cotswolds (the northern range of which runs right up to Stratford); cf. *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 1. 1. 92, where Master Page's "fallow greyhound" is said to have been "outrun on *Cotsall*" (i.e. *Cotswold*).

Metaphors drawn from falconry are specially frequent in Shakespeare's plays, and his use of the technical terms shows the true sportsman's familiarity with the pastime.

37. *fawning*. The epithet is a singularly precise description of the peculiar caressing way a greyhound has. It is not, of course, meant to describe the animal just on the point of being "slipped"; *then* he would be "straining upon the start."

38. This completes the picture, but stands outside the actual comparison between Rome and Corioli.

let...slip; the technical term; cf. *Julius Cæsar*, III. 1. 273, "Cry 'havoc,' and let slip the dogs of war."

42. *The common file;* 'the rank and file,' as we say. Cf. II. 1. 21. It is the same abrupt style as in I. 4. 31.

49. *Retire to win our purpose;* compare the phrase *reculer pour mieux sauter.*

50. *battle,* army; a very common Elizabethan use.

52. *vaward,* vanguard, front; see G.

Antiates; The Folios have *Antients* or *Ancients.* The correction is made certain by line 58 and the corresponding passage in North's *Plutarch.* No doubt the printer thought that Shakespeare meant 'the veterans.'

57. *directly,* right opposite, exactly over against.

59. *not delay.* The inversion gives emphasis.

60. *advanced,* uplifted; see G.

63. *balms,* soothing ointments.

67. *this painting;* cf. II. 2. 109.

68, 69. *fear,* i.e. fears *for* his life less than he fears a reputation for cowardice; the verb is used (by *zeugma*) in two different senses. Shakespeare often uses *fear*='to be solicitous about, to fear for,' especially with pronouns, e.g. "fear me not." The phrase of our text occurs in *Hamlet,* IV. 5. 122 (where the Queen is holding back the angry Laertes), "Let him go, Gertrude; do not fear our person."

75. *O, me alone! make you a sword of me?* The reading and sense are very doubtful.

First, why "alone"? It must, I think, imply, 'Why not Cominius also?' As an old comrade in arms, Coriolanus deprecates the enthusiasm shown for himself at the expense of his superior officer.

Then, what does he mean by their "making a sword" of him? He refers, of course, to the fact that the soldiers are holding him aloft—"advancing" him—as if he were a sword; and perhaps his remark is simply a light way of dismissing the incident and cutting short the situation.

Some editors, however, would place a note of exclamation or a full-stop at the end of the line, taking the latter part as an imperative, not an interrogation—thus: "The soldiers, called upon to 'wave' their swords, have proceeded to 'wave' *him.* He plays on the fact. 'Yes, make *me* your weapon indeed! Follow me up as strenuously as the hand the sword!'"—*Herford.*

But this conveys a note of self-assertion, almost of pomposity, inconsistent with Coriolanus's soldierly modesty.

I see no real difficulty in "O, *me* alone!," which some would

change to "*Of* me alone make you a sword? of me?" The pronoun *me* in "O, *me* alone!" may surely be referred to a verb easily understood from the whole context as defined by the preceding stage-direction. Constructions 'according to the sense,' especially where the sense may be eked out by a gesture, are an essential part of elliptical dramatic utterance. And we must always remember that Shakespeare's plays were written to be acted.

82. *As cause will be obey'd*, as circumstances may require.

you, Cominius.

83, 84. i.e. four officers shall pick out, to go with Coriolanus as his "command," the keenest volunteers. Possibly *four* is used indefinitely='a few'; cf. line 77 and see *Hamlet*, II. 2. 160.

85, 86. "Cominius, who is less of an idealist than Coriolanus, and knows the men better, adds a promise of spoil. Cf. Cassius in *Julius Cæsar*, III. 1. 177"—where he is trying to win over Antony to the side of the conspirators, and says that Antony shall be as powerful as any of them in the distribution of offices and honours—*Beeching*.

Scene 7.

1. *ports*, gates, Lat. *portæ*; cf. v. 6. 6. Cf. *Psalm* ix. 14: "That I may shew all thy praises within the ports of the daughter of Sion."

5. *Fear not*, have no fear about; trust us to do our best.

Scene 8.

This scene of personal encounter recalls the meeting of Macbeth and Macduff in the last scene of *Macbeth*, and the single combats between the heroic figures of epic poetry, especially of the *Iliad* and *Æneid*. In epic pictures of battle the dominating element is the personal; the individual prowess of leaders. Contrast those vast modern struggles in which mighty masses of unnamed fighters make up, as it were, a collective hero.

It is particularly to be observed that in Plutarch's narrative Aufidius does not appear till much later. The germ of the present scene lies in Plutarch's bare reference to (not description of) the encounters and personal rivalry of Coriolanus and Aufidius.

4. *thy fame and envy*; 'thy envied fame' (a 'hendiadys').

7. *Holloa me*, cry after me like a huntsman giving 'a view holloa' at sight of the hare.

11. *Wrench up...to the highest.* The same figure as in Lady Macbeth's famous retort to Macbeth's suggestion that they may fail in executing the murder of Duncan (I. 7. 59—61):

"We fail!
But screw your courage to the sticking-place,
And we'll not fail."

Steevens says: "A metaphor perhaps taken from the *screwing up* the chords of string-instruments [e.g. the harp] to their proper degree of tension, when the peg remains fast in its *sticking-place*, i.e. in the place from which it is not to move." The instrument used for this purpose was called a "wrest."

the Hector; the famous ("the") hero of the Trojans, from whom the Romans liked to consider themselves descended, through Æneas and his followers. So Cassius, talking with Brutus, speaks of Æneas as "our great ancestor," i.e. of the Roman people, *Julius Cæsar*, I. 2. 112.

12. *the whip of your bragg'd progeny*, the whip with which your boasted ancestors (the Trojans) scourged their enemies (the Greeks)—*Johnson.* The natural sense would be 'the scourge of your progeny' (i.e. he by whom they were scourged), but here the meaning must be either 'the whip possessed by your ancestors' or (less precisely) 'the champion of.'

It is very improbable that Shakespeare confused Hector with any Greek hero such as Achilles; for *Troilus and Cressida*, without doubt, preceded *Coriolanus*, and in *Troilus* all the great figures of the Trojan War, on either side, are introduced—Achilles, Hector, Agamemnon and other of the Homeric heroes. The story of the Fall of Troy was the most popular of all classical legends, and had called into being a vast cycle of mediæval poems, romances, and 'histories.' No tolerably educated Elizabethan (and the old conception of Shakespeare as an inspired ignoramus is surely extinct) could possibly have mixed up Hector and Achilles.

progeny, progenitors, not 'offspring'; so in 1 *Henry VI.* v. 4. 38.

15. *In your condemned seconds*, by your accursed aid. *seconds;* cf. I. 4. 43. So we speak of a 'second,' i.e. supporter, in a duel.

Scene 9.

3. Compare the beautiful description of Cordelia's mingled joy and grief at the receipt of the letter about Lear (IV. 3. 19—24).

5, 6. Like an epitome of Othello's story how Desdemona listened to the tale of his exploits (I. 3. 128—166).

7. Abbott notes that Shakespeare almost always (III. 1. 101, V. 4. 34) accented *plébeians*, and compares the common Elizabethan scansion *Epicúrean*, instead of *Epicuréan*.

10, 11. *Yet camest thou to* etc. "What the hero has done here [i.e. in the final encounter, Scene 8] is but as a morsel compared to the full meal of fighting which he had before gone through at Corioli"—*Hudson*.

12. *Here is the steed, we the caparison.* "An odd encomium. The meaning is, 'this man performed the action, and we only filled up the show'"—*Johnson*. Shakespeare is applying in a figurative sense some words in North's *Plutarch*.

13. *my mother;* the emphatic position conveys the required idea '*even* my mother.'

14. *has a charter to*, has a special privilege to. *blood*, offspring.

17. *country;* three syllables.

18, 19. He "has done as much as I have done, inasmuch as my ardour to serve the state is such that I have never been able to effect all that I wished"—*Malone*.

20. *The grave of your deserving*, like a tomb in which your great deeds lie hidden and unhonoured. The idea is expanded in the next lines.

22. *a traducement*, a slander on Rome herself (since she deserves the credit of having produced so great a son).

23—25. *to silence that* etc.; to suppress that testimony which, set forth in the very highest terms, would still fall short of the facts.

25. *modest*, moderate; a common Shakespearian use; cf. again III. 1. 276.

26, 27. There can be no question of *repaying* Coriolanus, but at least his deeds should be made known, for the glory of the State, the encouragement of others, and such like reasons.

29. *Should they not.* "'Should they not hear themselves remembered, they might well (not only smart, but) fester at the ingratitude; if they were not tented by remembrance, death would search them more severely.' The smart of remembrance is compared to the necessary

pain caused by the surgeon's probing. 'To *tent* [see G.] themselves with death' is a strong way of saying 'Mortify because untented'"—*Beeching*.

32. *good, and good store*, i.e. good horses and plenty of them. This is a common Elizabethan use of *store*; cf. the old proverb "store is no sore."

39. *stand upon*, insist on; see again II. 2. 148.

42—51. The broken lines, and the general abruptness of the verse, are appropriate to Coriolanus's mood.

44. *false-faced soothing*, hypocritical flattery. 'Well may flattery be *all* powerful in the court and city when it can assert itself even on the battle-field.'

45, 46. 'Let the natural order of things be reversed: let the drum and trumpet be heard no more on the battle-field: let our armour or covering be made of *silk* when steel loses its character and becomes soft.'

him, silk; strongly emphatic. I think that *him* (=it) is used by a sort of attraction to "parasite": as if the antecedent were not simply "silk" but "*parasite's*-silk."

The reading *a coverture* is the alteration adopted generally of the reading in all the Folios, viz. *an overture*. The change involves a single letter, for if the *c* of *a c-overture* were written indistinctly it might easily be detached and joined to the indefinite article and so give us *a-n overture*. The word *overture* has two senses in Shakespeare, viz. 'disclosure, revelation' and 'offer, proposal'; neither would suit here.

48. *or foil'd*, or *have* defeated; this is the older sense of *foil*, implying ignominious defeat; see G.

49. *without note*, unnoticed, and so unmentioned.

55. *give*, represent, describe; more often 'give *out*.'

57. *proper harm*, self-destruction. *proper*, own (Lat. *proprius*).

60. *this war's garland*; cf. I. 1. 177.

66. *addition*, title; see G. Plutarch gives a full account and many illustrations of the custom among the Greeks and Romans of giving such "additions" or "surnames."

"Even so did the Grecians in old time give additions to princes, by reason of some notable act worthy memory. As when they have called some Soter and Callinicos, as much to say as saviour and conqueror. Or else of some notable apparent mark on one's face, or on his body, they have called him...Grypos; as ye would say, hook-nosed; or else

for some virtue, as Euergetes and Philadelphes, to wit, a benefactor, and lover of his brethren....And some kings have had surnames of jest and mockery."

The Romans too, he adds, often gave these surnames ironically.

71—73. 'And always to support, to the best of my ability, the title you have graciously conferred on me.'

To undercrest; not simply 'to wear as on the crest,' but 'to support as if it were my crest,' i.e. to act up to it and so justify its bestowal on me, just as a man feels that he must act up to some great family-motto. The metaphor from heraldry may be preserved by using the word "support," which is a technical heraldic term.

Coriolanus does not refuse *this* reward like the material reward offered him.

77. *The best*, the leading nobles of Corioli; cf. I. 1. 15, 219.

articulate, negotiate, come to terms; the idea is 'to arrange articles of peace,' i.e. terms set out in the *articles* or separate 'heads' of an agreement or treaty; cf. such a phrase as *articles of apprenticeship*= 'terms agreed on between employer and apprentice.'

79—90. The incident (from Plutarch) serves Shakespeare well, since it brings our sympathy back to Coriolanus after his recent unnecessary brusqueness. The broken style indicates Coriolanus's exhaustion.

82. *I sometime lay*, I once stayed; a common Elizabethan use ('to dwell, lodge, stay') of *lie*. Cf. IV. 4. 8. On a royal "progress" or tour the sovereign was said to "lie" at a place; and it was the term for an ambassador's residing abroad: hence the famous quibbling definition of an ambassador by Sir Henry Wotton (himself a diplomatist) as "an honest man sent to *lie* abroad for the good of his country."

83. *a poor man;* "an honest *wealthy* man" when he was Coriolanus's host, though "now a *poor prisoner*, in the hands of his enemies" (the Romans): so says Plutarch. Shakespeare's variation of the man's status tells in two ways: by heightening our admiration of the hero who at such a moment remembers his humble befriender, and by emphasising the aristocratic, exclusive temper to which the name of a mere man of the people had been of no account.

89. *the wind;* which "bloweth where it listeth"; a favourite symbol of freedom with Shakespeare; cf. Prospero's promise to Ariel (if obedient), *The Tempest*, I. 2. 498, 499:

"Thou shalt be as free
As mountain winds."

Scene 10.

The dominant idea of the scene is "dramatic irony." And there is, I think, a peculiar verbal deliberateness in the "irony." What Aufidius says in 24—27 is the precise opposite of what he afterwards does (IV. 5); though in the end (V. 6) he swings back to his first purpose. We have seen (I. 4. 40, I. 6. 71) the "ironical" method applied similarly to Aufidius's great rival: hence a sense of parallelism of design and development, in the story.

2. *on good condition*, on favourable terms.

5. *that I am;* what he feels himself to be, i.e. a brave man.

7. *I' the party*, on the side; cf. I. 1. 227. *mercy;* see G.

Five times; such touches of detail give definiteness to fiction and create an atmosphere of reality. It is the great secret of De Foe's narrative method. See again 30, 31.

13. The omission of the object relative ("*which* it had") is not so striking as that of the subject relative. *where*, whereas.

15. *potch*, thrust; a purposely mean word, as the context requires.

17. *not so subtle;* and thus everyone—Volumnia, the Tribunes, Aufidius—gets the better of him.

18. *With only suffering stain by*, merely by being eclipsed by.

for him, because of, an account of, him.

19. *Shall fly out of itself;* to do him harm "my valour shall *deviate from* its own native generosity"—*Johnson*. Perhaps 'shall discard its natural character' would be closer.

20. *Being naked, sick;* neither destitution (defencelessness?) nor sickness, i.e. of Coriolanus. Some take *naked* = 'unarmed.' The irregular syntax reflects the speaker's great emotion. This is a common device, especially on the stage.

22. *Embarquements*, impediments, restraints; see G.

25. *upon*, under; literally 'relying upon.'

26. *the hospitable canon*, the law of hospitality. *canon;* cf. III. 1. 90; Gk. κανών, 'rule, law.'

The whole form of phrase is very common in Shakespeare. The adjective is made to define the sphere or character of the noun: a relation that would be expressed in German by a compound. Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, I. 2. 9, "sterile curse" = curse of sterility; IV. 2. 16, "familiar instances" = instances (signs) of familiarity: the curse consists in sterility, the instance (sign) is one of familiarity.

28. *what*, of what sort, of what class.

29. *for*, i.e. as required by Rome.

30, 31. *attended;* cf. I. 1. 70, 238.

at the cypress grove...'Tis south the city mills. Malone says: "Shakespeare frequently introduces these minute local descriptions, probably to give an air of truth to his pieces." His topography of Rome sometimes suggests London. Thus here "Mr Wright points out that Shakespeare probably had in his mind four corn mills [built by the Corporation of London in 1588] which stood on the [south side of the] Thames near London Bridge, and not far from the Globe Theatre"—*Craig.* So in *Julius Cæsar*, I. 3. 75 ("As doth the lion in the Capitol"), it seems as if Shakespeare were thinking of the lions kept in the Tower of London.

ACT II.

Scene 1.

1—86. The purpose of this prelude is to show that Coriolanus's brilliant exploits and services to his country have not affected the causes of dissension between the patricians and the people (represented by the Tribunes), nor the popular feeling of grievance against Coriolanus himself.

The augurer. "Among the ancient Romans, a functionary whose duty it was to observe and to interpret, according to traditional rules, the auspices, or reputed natural signs concerning future events," i.e. signs and omens from the heavens (such as thunder and lightning), the flight and cries of birds, etc....."Before any public business or ceremony was undertaken the augurs decided whether the auspices were propitious, or whether unfavourable omens demanded interruption or delay; they conducted the inauguration of priests, temples, and places, such as new settlements, and fixed the times of movable festivals"—*Century Dict.* Hence the general sense 'soothsayer.' Lat. *augurium* is supposed by some to be connected with *avis*, 'a bird,' and *gar*, from the root of *garrire*, 'to talk.'

6. *who;* the neglect of the inflexion, in colloquial speech, is specially common in interrogative sentences.

Menenius implies "that there are beasts which love nobody, and that among those beasts are the people"—*Johnson*.

14. *In what...poor in;* one of those redundances of familiar speech which make dramatic dialogue lifelike.

20, 21. *censured*, judged: 'what our opinion of you is.' *the right-hand file*, the patricians; whom Menenius considers the right-hand men of the state. *file*, number, body; cf. I. 6. 42.

26—30. It matters little, he says, if he *does* make the Tribunes angry: a mere trifle upsets them, so he may as well give them a big cause of offence while he is about it!

34. *single;* used with a quibble on its secondary sense 'poor, weak, paltry'; which is an extension of the sense 'mere, only.' Class-prejudice leads Menenius to underrate the capacity of the Tribunes.

35—37. *towards the napes of your necks.* "With allusion to the fable which says that every man has a bag hanging before him, in which he puts his neighbours' faults, and another behind him, in which he stows his own"—*Johnson*; the fable being an allegory that we see the faults of others but not our own.

40. *unmeriting*, good for nothing. *testy*, touchy; see G.

43. *humorous*, 'capricious' or 'whimsical'; see *humour* in G.

45, 46. *something imperfect in favouring* etc.; seemingly a legal metaphor; 'too prone to lend a favourable ear to the accusation that first reaches me,' i.e. without waiting to hear the evidence on the other side. *motion*, motive, cause.

47, 48. *one that converses more* etc. "Rather a late lier down than an early riser"—*Johnson*. *converses*, associates; cf. *conversation* = 'intercourse with,' as often in the Bible.

49. *wealsmen*, statesmen (said ironically); see *weal* in G.

50. *Lycurguses*. "Shakespeare no doubt read the life of the Spartan law-giver in North's *Plutarch's Lives*" (Craig).

52, 53. *delivered the matter well*, stated your case well, i.e. their complaints against Coriolanus.

53, 54. *the ass in compound* etc.; "an element of the fool in all you say"—*Herford*.

"Probably Shakespeare had in mind some Latin grammar rule, in which were the words, '*As* in compound with the major part of the syllable,' though none such seems to occur in Lilly's *Grammar*, which Shakespeare probably used, whence is derived the famous 'As in præsenti'"—*Beeching*.

56. *this* = "this character" in 59, i.e. all that he has been saying

of himself. Menenius is nettled at Sicinius's words in 42, and shows his annoyance by reiterating them with ironical emphasis.

57. *the map of my microcosm*, i.e. his face. Shakespeare uses *map* = 'picture or image of,' and here the face is regarded as a picture of a man's whole character and constitution (a favourite thought with Spenser). For the figurative use of *map* cf. *Sonnet* 68, "Thus is his cheek the map of days outworn."

microcosm, little world, i.e. all that constitutes a man; the word being used in reference to the conception of man as an epitome of the Universe. See G., and cf. *King Lear*, III. 1. 10, "his little world of man."

58. *bisson conspectuities*, purblind eyes, dim-sighted visions. *bisson*; see G. *conspectuity*; "faculty of sight, vision....Apparently a humorous or random formation from L. *conspectus*, sight, view"—*New E. Dict.* A humorous purpose is appropriate to Menenius; cf. 107.

62. *ambitious for poor knaves' caps and legs*, i.e. to receive such marks of deference as removal of the hat and humble obeisances.

63. *wholesome*; "which might be spent more profitably"—*Schmidt*.

64. *fosset-seller*, a seller of wine-taps; see *fosset* in G.

64, 65. *and then rejourn* etc., and then you adjourn the dispute about 3*d*. to a second day's hearing of the case (in order to magnify the importance of their office). Really, the Tribunes at Rome did not exercise the judicial functions here attributed to them.

68. *set up the bloody flag*, raise the standard of battle; cf. *Henry V.* I. 2. 101, "Stand for your own; unwind your bloody flag." The adjective has a proleptic force = 'leading to bloodshed.'

69. *bleeding*, i.e. unhealed; the curious metaphor is an unconscious echo of "*bloody* flag."

73. *bencher*; "one who officially sits on a bench; a magistrate, judge, senator" (as here); now limited to a legal use, the "Benchers" of the legal societies or Inns of Court being the senior barristers who form the governing body.

79. *botcher*, patcher, mender; used specially of a tailor who repairs old, rather than makes new, clothes. Cf. *Twelfth Night*, I. 5. 51.

82. The story of Deucalion is the Greek analogue of the Biblical narrative of Noah and the Flood. "Shakespeare read of this in Golding's *Ovid*" (Craig); that is, the very popular translation, in rhymed couplets of seven feet (a ballad metre), of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, by a Cambridge scholar, Arthur Golding, published in 1565 and often reprinted. This (says Mr Lee) was "one of Shakespeare's

best-loved books in youth," and the source of much of his knowledge of classical mythology. To it he owed the story of "Pyramus and Thisbe" in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*.

83. *God-den;* an abbreviation of "God give you good even." It appears in various perversions in Elizabethan books, e.g. *Godden*, *Goodden*, *Gogigoden*. Everyday phrases are liable to such corruptions.

84. The "conversation" (in the modern sense) has been rather one-sided, but perhaps Menenius means 'society.' Compare 47, note.

85. *the herdsmen*, the leaders of the common "herd" (III. 1. 33).

95. *Take my cap, Jupiter.* "Shakespeare so often mentions throwing up caps in this play, that Menenius may be well enough supposed to throw up his *cap* in thanks to Jupiter"—*Johnson*.

105. *make a lip at;* cf. the French phrases *faire la moue* (and *la lippe*) *à* (indicating contempt, disgust).

106. *Galen;* the Greek physician, the father of medicine. He lived in the second century (A.D. 130—200 or 201), so that the allusion to him here is a more than usually daring anachronism.

107. *empiricutic*, quackish; see G. *to*, compared with; literally 'in relation to.'

112. *'a;* familiar for *he*.

114. *On's-brows*, i.e. he "brings victory."

115. *the oaken garland;* cf. I. 9. 60.

121. *fidiused;* joking on the name *Aufidius*. Editors quote *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, IV. 2. 191—193:

"*Mrs Page*. Come, Mother Prat; come, give me your hand.

Ford. I'll prat her [*Beating him*]," i.e. the disguised Falstaff.

122. *possessed*, informed fully; a common usage. Cf. *Twelfth Night*, II. 3. 149, "Possess us, possess us; tell us something of him." Literally 'to put in possession of the news, fact, that.'

129. *purchasing*, winning, acquiring; an Elizabethan sense.

130—132. A good contrast: Volumnia never doubts the truth of the reports, nor Menenius.

134, 135. Menenius is a master of irritating irony.

136—138. The first hint of the consulship comes from her, as again (185—189) when she is with him. *cicatrices*, scars; see G.

138. *in the repulse of Tarquin;* see again II. 2. 92, 93.

138—145. Here again the minute touches of circumstantial detail heighten the impression of actuality; cf. I. 10. 7, 30, 31.

148. *nervy*, sinewy, strong; see I. 1. 131, note.

149. *Which, being advanced* etc.; his arm, being raised (I. 6. 60), falls (i.e. with a sword).

What rhyme there is in Shakespeare's later plays is seldom, if ever, accidental. Here it lends a rhetorical emphasis to Volumnia's great pride in her son. It is a supreme moment, that demands an extra something for its full expression, and the rhyme gives the something.

sennet; see G.

152. *to*, in addition to. *these*, i.e. names.

157—159. To his mother first, as always.

161. *deed-achieving honour*, the distinction *of* (or *in*) achieving deeds; the form of phrase is similar to that in I. 10. 26. Some interpret 'achieved by deeds.'

163. *gracious silence!* Surely, a very striking use of the abstract for the concrete: and how clearly each word marks the contrast between Virgilia and Volumnia.

172. *light and heavy*, i.e. of heart.

177. *grafted to your relish*, inoculated with a liking for you.

178, 179. A contemptuous way of dismissing Coriolanus's detractors and enemies: 'poor things, they are what they are, and cannot help it!'

180. *Menenius ever;* that is, 'still the same, unchanged.' Cf. Antony's retort to Cassius, *Julius Cæsar*, v. 1. 63, "Old Cassius still!"

183. *good;* cf. I. 1. 15.

185. *change of honours*, fresh honours; literally 'a fresh set of honours'; cf. 'change of raiment, clothes,' e.g. in *Judges* xix., "thirty change of garments."

186. *inherited*, realised.

189—191. A significant foreshadowing. *Coriolanus* is, to a singular degree, a tragedy of premonitory hints, and casual utterances which the after-course of events makes terribly momentous.

192—208. The whole passage may be set beside the picture in *Julius Cæsar* of Pompey passing through the streets of Rome, I. 1. 41—47. In either case the street-architecture seems that of Elizabethan London (see I. 10. 31, note). Another example of Shakespeare's power of suggesting to the mind's eye some crowded moving pageant is that wonderful picture of Bolingbroke's state-entry into London with King Richard in his train, *Richard II.* v. 2. 1—40. No doubt, the use of these long passages of description was due to the lack of scenery on the Elizabethan stage, i.e. of means of appeal to the physical eye.

The classical example is the scene in *King Lear* (IV. 6. 11—22), where the blind Gloucester wishes to throw himself from what he supposes to be Dover Cliff (the so-called "Shakespeare's Cliff" at Dover).

192. Spectacles are said to have been invented in the 13th century by an Italian monk.

193. *your*. Colloquial, as in I. 1. 121. Cf. V. 4. 11.

194. *rapture*, fit.

195. *chats*, chats about. *malkin*, wench ; see G.

196. *lockram*, coarse linen ; see G. *reechy*, grimy ; see G.

197. *bulk ;* "a framework projecting from the front of a shop." Distinct from *bulk*, 'size.'

198, 199. *horsed With variable complexions*, covered with all sorts and conditions of people sitting astride, as if on horseback. *variable*, various, different. See *complexion* in G.

all agreeing ; placed in strong antithesis to "variable."

200. *seld-shown flamens ;* "priests who seldom exhibit themselves to public view"—*Steevens*. Compounds with *seld*, 'seldom, rarely,' are not uncommon in Elizabethan writers.

flamen. "In Roman Antiquities, a priest devoted to the service of one particular deity. Originally there were three priests so called : the *flamen Dialis*, consecrated to Jupiter ; the *flamen Martialis*, sacred to Mars ; and the *flamen Quirinalis*, who superintended the rites of Quirinus or Romulus. The number was gradually increased to fifteen"—*Century Dictionary*. They typified the Roman religion and ritual, and appeared only on ceremonial occasions.

The word is cognate with *flamma* (=*flagma*) ; the *flamen* being literally 'one who burns the sacrifices,' from *flagrare*, 'to burn.'

202. *a vulgar station*, a standing-place among the crowd.

203. *damask*, red ; see G. Cf. *The Taming of the Shrew*, IV. 5. 30, "Such war of white and red within her cheeks."

204. *nicely-gawded*, daintily-decked ; referring either to the use of pigments or (more probably) to some arrangement of the dress, e.g. a veil or high collar.

206. *whatsoever god*, i.e. *it be*.

209, 210. A significant indication of the motives of the Tribunes in regard to Coriolanus. From this point of view the remainder of the scene is very important.

211. *He cannot temperately transport* etc. "He cannot carry his honours temperately from where he should begin *to where he should*

end. The word *transport* includes the ending as well as the beginning" —*Malone.* The general sense seems to be the same as in IV. 7. 36, 37, viz. that in bearing his honours, throughout his career, Coriolanus cannot preserve his equilibrium.

218—223. Again a foreshadowing of the trouble to come.

221. "Plutarch says that a Roman general standing for the consulship used to appear in the Forum with his toga only, without the tunic beneath it, so as to display his scars more readily. Amyot used the phrase 'une robe simple.' North, who translated from Amyot, mistook the sense of 'simple' [i.e. 'only'] and rendered the phrase by 'a poor gown.' Shakespeare paraphrased this into the 'napless vesture of humility'"—*Beeching.*

napless, i.e. worn, threadbare.

231. *For an end*, to bring things to a climax (or crisis). "For *our* end" (='to suit our purpose') is an obvious, but needless change.

232. *suggest*, craftily remind; in 240 the idea is 'craftily insinuated.' The Shakespearian usage of this word, compared with the modern, is distinctly unfavourable. Thus the commonest meaning is 'to tempt, incite evilly'; as in *Richard II.* I. 1. 101 and III. 4. 76. So the noun means 'temptation' in *Macbeth*, I. 3. 134, "why do I yield to that suggestion?" (i.e. of murdering Duncan).

233. *still*, ever, always. *to*, to the best of his power.

235. *Dispropertied*, taken away, robbed them of.

235—240. Compare Antony's contemptuous estimate of Lepidus in *Julius Cæsar*, IV. 1.

238. *provand*, provender.

243. *put upon't*, instigated to "touch" the people.

246. *darken*, obscure, eclipse.

250—252. Here Shakespeare "has attributed some of the customs of his own age to a people who were wholly unacquainted with them. Few men of fashion in his time appeared at a tournament without a lady's favour upon his arm [cf. *Richard II.* V. 3. 17, 18]: and sometimes when a nobleman had tilted with uncommon grace and agility, some of the fair spectators used to *fling a scarf* or glove 'upon him as he pass'd'" —*Malone.* The various examples of "Elizabethan colouring" in *Coriolanus* should be observed.

254. A good illustration of the figure of speech used in this line is *Hamlet*, III. 1. 159, "The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword."

256, 257. 'Let us observe closely what happens now and lay our plans for the future.' Shakespeare often uses *the time* = 'the present time, current affairs and persons,' and *event* = 'issue' (Lat. *eventus*).

257. *Have with you;* apparently an ellipse = 'take *me* with you,' and so 'I'll follow.'

Scene 2.

Apparently Shakespeare understood "Capitol" to mean the citadel of ancient Rome, and thought that it was the regular meeting-place of the Senate; cf. *Julius Cæsar*, III. 1. But strictly the *Capitolium* was the great temple of Jupiter situate on the southern peak of the hill named *Mons Capitolinus*, after the temple; while the citadel, on the northern peak of this hill, was known as the *Arx*. Moreover no special building was devoted to the meetings of the Senate, nor was the citadel used for this purpose. In historical times the Senate's most frequent place of assembly was the *Curia Hostilia* near the Forum.

4. *carry it*, win the day, be successful. *it;* the indefinite object easily supplied from the context. We speak of 'carrying' an election.

5, 6. The "First" speaker is the spokesman of popular feeling. Among the "officers," as among the "citizens" (I. 1), it is only the "Second" speaker who defends Coriolanus.

5. *brave*, fine. *vengeance*, intensely, excessively. This intensive and colloquial use is elliptical for "with a vengeance" = 'vehemently.'

16. *waved;* the sense must be 'he would waver' (subjunctive).

19. *discover him their opposite*, reveal him as their foe. For *opposite* = 'adversary' (an example of the Elizabethan way of interchanging parts of speech) cf. *Hamlet*, V. 2. 62.

20. *affect*, aim at, seek (= Lat. *affectare*); cf. IV. 6. 32.

24. *degrees*, steps; cf. *Julius Cæsar*, II. 1. 26. O.F. *gre*, 'a step,' Lat. *gradus*.

as those, as *that* (the "ascent") of those.

25. *bonneted*, merely took off their *bonnets*, i.e. caps, by way of compliment to the people, and *did* nothing that might deservedly get them the people's good will. He means a cheap and easy popularity, won by flattering the mob, not by rendering the State solid services like those of Coriolanus.

Cf. the verb *cap* = 'to salute by taking the cap off'—as in the academic phrase "to *cap* a proctor."

26. *have;* there is no need to change this to *heave* (= 'raise').

35. *Lictors.* "Among the ancient Romans, [a *lictor* was] one of a number of officers, required to be free-born..., whose functions were to attend a magistrate, bearing the fasces, in some cases with the axe and in others without it, in order to clear the way and enforce due respect, and also to arrest offenders and to scourge or behead condemned persons. Magistrates were entitled to a number of lictors according to their rank, a dictator having twenty-four, a consul twelve, a prætor six"—*Century Dictionary.* Probably the word *lictor* is connected with *ligare*, 'to bind,' in reference to the *fasces*, a bundle of rods, bound up with an axe in the midst (the blade projecting).

36. *Titus Lartius*; cf. I. 9. 75—78.

38. *gratify*, requite; an obsolete use.

his...that, i.e. of *him* who; a frequent idiom.

47—49. *make us think* etc., let us feel that it is rather the State which is unable to reward him adequately than we who are unwilling to strain to the utmost the resources of the State in order to do so (i.e. to reward him properly). They may lack the means, certainly not the will, to requite Coriolanus fully.

50. Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, III. 2. 78, "Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears."

51, 52. *Your loving motion* etc., the friendly exercise of your influence with the people, that they may assent to what is decided here (meaning Coriolanus's nomination to the consulship by the Senate).

52, 53. *We are convented Upon*, we are summoned together to ratify; cf. II. 3. 136.

55. *The theme*, him who is the subject of our meeting, i.e. Coriolanus.

58. *That's off;* "that is nothing to the purpose"—*Johnson;* not "pertinent" (61).

64. *offers to*, is about to.

68, 69. The Tribunes lose no opportunity of exciting Coriolanus.

71. *soothed;* cf. I. 9. 44. *your people;* his tone is fiercely contemptuous here, as humorous in 62.

75. *monster'd*, made marvels of.

76—79. Menenius asks: "How can he be expected to practice flattery to others, who abhors it so much, that he cannot hear it even when offered to himself?"—*Johnson. Than one;* some verb ('give,' 'lend') must be supplied from "venture" in 78.

82. *virtue;* see the note on I. 1. 36.

85. *At sixteen years;* another particularising touch. Plutarch only says "being but a stripling."

86. *Tarquin*, i.e. *Tarquinius Superbus* ('the Proud'), the last king of Rome, driven out in 510 B.C. *made a head for*, invaded. Shakespeare often uses *head*='an armed force,' especially of rebels; cf. phrases like "to gather head," "make head against" (III. 1. 1).

87. *Beyond the mark;* "beyond the reach, beyond the power"—*Schmidt;* a metaphor from archery.

dictator. "In ancient Rome Dictators were appointed [with plenary powers] in times of exigency and distress for a term of six months." Hence the modern sense: "A person possessing unlimited powers of government; an absolute ruler"—*Century Dictionary.*

89. *Amazonian*, smooth as a woman's. Hippolyta in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* was Queen of the Amazons, the mythical race of female warriors conquered by Theseus, who married Hippolyta.

90. *bestrid.* Shakespeare uses more than once this picture of a soldier standing over a fallen comrade and defying the enemy to touch him. Cf. *Macbeth*, IV. 3. 2—4.

92. *Tarquin's self.* The common phrase "one's *self*" preserves this use of *self* as an independent noun.

93. *on his knee*, i.e. so as to bring Tarquin to his knees. This encounter is Shakespeare's addition—*Craig.*

94. i.e. when, as a "stripling," Coriolanus might, without discredit, have been merely an onlooker.

Shakespeare alludes to the fact that on the Elizabethan stage ("scene") boy-actors and young men did "act the woman," i.e. played the parts of female characters, women not being allowed to act in public.

Compare Rosalind's words in the Epilogue to *As You Like It*, "if I were a woman," and *Antony and Cleopatra*, V. 2. 216—220, where Cleopatra describes the fate which will befall herself and her attendants if they are taken prisoners to Rome:

> "the quick comedians
> Extemporally will stage us, and present
> Our Alexandrian revels; Antony
> Shall be brought drunken forth, and I shall see
> Some *squeaking* Cleopatra *boy* my greatness"

("squeaking" being scornfully applied to a boy's high-pitched treble). After the Restoration the practice of women acting in public (at private entertainments like Masques it had been quite usual) was legalised by a Royal Patent issued in 1662.

In Elizabethan plays female characters are often disguised as youths (cf. Rosalind, Portia, and Imogen in *Cymbeline*); and "the fact that

female parts were played by youths had, of course, something to do with the frequency of these disguises"—*Brandes*.

97. *Man-enter'd*, initiated into manhood. The metaphor is 'to *enter* or admit into a society, college and the like,' hence 'to initiate.'

98. *seventeen*. Here again Shakespeare particularises, where his original (Plutarch) only says "many wars and battles."

99. *lurch'd all swords of the garland*, won the prize of the garland easily from all *other* swords. No one else had a chance against Coriolanus of winning the garland.

Etymologically *lurch'd* is the preterite of *lurch* = 'to rob'—a not uncommon Elizabethan use (see G.). But probably Shakespeare used it here in allusion to another word *lurch*, which was first the name of a particular (unknown) game, then a gambler's term for 'a maiden set at any game.' Florio's *Italian Dict.* (1598) has: "A maiden set, or lurch, at any game." Taken thus, the word gives us a picturesque metaphor, as well as a statement of fact. For Ben Jonson's allusion to this passage see *Introduction*, p. xii. Jonson has several glances at Shakespeare's plays; cf. the famous passage in the "Induction" to *Bartholomew Fair*, which touches with unmistakable satire on *The Tempest*—"if there be never a *servant-monster* [i.e. a Caliban] in the fair"—and *The Winter's Tale*.

101. *home*, to the full, adequately.

103—105. *weeds;* so the 1st Folio; the 2nd substitutes *waves*. "*Rushes* ['weeds'] falling below a vessel passing over them is an image as expressive of the prowess of Coriolanus as well can be conceived"—*Malone*. And *weeds* signifies better than *waves* "the comparative feebleness of Coriolanus's adversaries"—*Boswell*.

105, 106. The sword of Coriolanus is likened to a seal which makes a deep impression.

107, 108. *whose every motion* etc.; the metaphor of a dance accompanied by well-timed music—*Johnson*.

109. *mortal*, deadly, fatal; as seemed to others (1. 4. 47). *which*, i.e. the city. *painted;* cf. 1. 6. 67.

110. *shunless*, inevitable; another example of Elizabethan freedom in the use of adjectival terminations.

111, 112. Shakespeare uses *strike* (='blast') several times in reference to the malign "influence" (a technical term) which the planets were supposed by astrologers to exercise upon the earth and its inhabitants. Cf. *Hamlet*, 1. 1. 162, "The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike" (i.e. at Christmas). In Shakespeare's time the moon was reckoned a planet, and we still have *moon-struck*.

There are, of course, many allusions in Shakespeare to the old ideas about the influence of the stars. Probably his own opinion is expressed through the mouth of Cassius (*Julius Cæsar*, I. 2. 139—141):

> "Men at some time are masters of their fates:
> The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
> But in ourselves, that we are underlings."

His teaching in fact may be summed up in the two sayings—'Character is Destiny' and 'Man is his own Star.'

113. *the din of war;* the fighting outside Corioli.

114. *ready*, ever quick to catch the sound of fighting.

121. *with measure*, proportionately, equally; no honour can be in excess of his high qualities. But, actually, "the honours" lead to the catastrophe. "Irony" again.

125. *misery*, abject poverty; abstract for concrete.

125—127. To do great deeds is, for Coriolanus, its own reward, and he is content so to spend his time as merely to pass it.

Cominius seems to mean by his last words that Coriolanus has no ulterior objects, cherishes no ambitious designs, in what he does (whereas the Tribunes accuse him of aiming at "tyrannical power," III. 3. 1, 2, 63—65): enough for him if his time be spent in doing, and end there, i.e. lead to nothing. The use of a literary artifice, here assonance (*spend...end*), often, I think, gives point to the style at the expense of clearness.

131. *still*, always.

132—137. Cf. II. 1. 218—223. *naked;* his exaggerated phrase for 'with wounds bared,' or "showing his wounds" (II. 1. 222).

138. *have their voices*, exercise their votes.

142. *your form*, the formality you must go through.

148. *Do not stand upon't*, do not insist on your objection.

149, 150. *We recommend to you* etc. "We entreat you, tribunes of the people, to recommend to the plebeians what we propose to them for their approbation; namely, the appointment of Coriolanus to the consulship"—*Malone.*

154. *they;* emphatic. *require*, ask; cf. II. 3. 1.

Scene 3.

1. *Once*, once for all: elliptical for 'let me say it *once* (emphatic), and let that suffice.'

6, 7. *to put our tongues into those wounds.* An echo of Antony's funeral oration over the body of Cæsar (III. 2. 228—234).

13, 14. *And to make us* etc.; it will not take much on our part to make Coriolanus think us no better than monsters. *once*, on the occasion when.

15. *stuck*, scrupled, hesitated. *the many-headed multitude;* see IV. 1. 1, 2, note and cf. the Prologue to 2 *Henry IV.* 18, 19:

"the blunt monster with uncounted heads,
The still-discordant wavering multitude."

20, 21. *their consent of one direct way*, their agreement to take one straight course. The passage is a "just description of the variety and inconsistency of the opinions, wishes, and actions of the multitude"—*Mason.*

26—28. *southward...in a fog;* see I. 4. 30, note.

31, 32. *You are never without* etc., you *will* have your little joke! *you may, you may;* a colloquial phrase='go on, don't mind me.'

39. *by particulars*, to each separately.

44. *you are not right;* Coriolanus still objects to comply with custom, and Menenius remonstrates.

54. *lose by'em*, fail to inculcate in them; the virtuous precepts are wasted on them, and so the virtues themselves may be said to be "lost" to the preacher.

You'll mar all. Compare Lady Macbeth's rebuke (in the sleep-walking scene, V. 1. 49, 50) to Macbeth: "No more o' that, my lord, no more o' that: you mar all with this starting" (i.e. at Banquo's Ghost).

56, 57. Suggested by "wholesome" (=reasonable).

62. *not;* the Folio has *but*. Editors show that *but* and *not* are sometimes confounded in the Folio. Cf. III. 3. 130.

66, 67. Not seeing that Coriolanus spoke ironically, the citizen encourages him—with wasted kindness.

74. *match*, bargain.

75. Keeping up the ironical notion of "begging."

76, 77. Another foreshadowing. The two remarks convey a fine idea of blank surprise and disgust.

78. *stand with*, be consistent with.

83—85. This represents the sole effort of the citizens to put in practice the "lessoning" of the Tribunes (168—184). And it is more than enough to stir the resentment of Coriolanus.

87. *not common in my love.* Cf. Polonius's advice to Laertes, *Hamlet*, I. 3. 61, "Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar."

88. *my sworn brother*, my dearly loved friend. In mediæval times two men would swear to share each other's fortunes, good or ill, on

some adventure or campaign and were called *fratres jurati* ('brothers bound by an oath') or *frères d'armes*, i.e. 'bosom friends'; like Palamon and Arcite in Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*. Cf. *Much Ado About Nothing*, I. 1, 72, 73, "Who is his companion now? He hath every month a new sworn brother."

91, 92. *off*, i.e. with his hat. *most counterfeitly*, with perfect make-believe.

93. *popular;* the word is always depreciatory in Shakespeare, generally implying 'vulgar, plebeian.' Here the sense is 'demagoguish'; cf. III. 1. 106. Words tend to deteriorate in meaning, but *popular* has gone up, with the rise of the democratic idea.

105. *starve*. The original editions have the old form *sterve* (cf. Germ. *sterben*) here and in IV. 2. 51. No doubt a rhyme was intended with *deserve*. The rhyme in this passage seems the rhyme partly of aphorising, partly of epigrammatic contempt.

106. *hire*, reward. The Folio has *higher*, "and this is one of the many proofs that several parts of the [Folio]...were dictated by one and written down by another"—*Malone*. *first*, to begin with, in the first instance, i.e. without "craving" it.

107. *this woolvish toge*. Commonly explained on these lines:

"*Toge* is a monosyllabic form of *toga*, the classical name of the civic *gown* which the Roman men wore in time of peace. Here, of course, it is what was called the *toga candida* [often whitened artificially with chalk], which was worn by those who canvassed for an office, and who were thence termed *candidati*. The *toga* was in fact made of *wool;* and an equivoque or double meaning was most likely intended in *woolvish*, referring both to the material of the gown and [still more?] to the fact, that the speaker is in effect playing the part of a '*wolf* in sheep's clothing,' wearing 'the napless vesture of humility' while he is conscious of being anything but humble within—and of feeling decidedly *wolflike* towards the people, though he has to disguise the feeling and appear as a suppliant. Coriolanus is disgusted at the masquerade, and his disgust finds vent in a bitter jest"—*Hudson*. It sounds rather forced, but an actor might, I suppose, suggest the quibble, 'a *wolf* in *wool*,' by the way he pronounced *woolvish* and by some gesture, such as fingering his gown of wool.

Johnson interprets *woolvish*='rough, hirsute,' but "napless" implies just the opposite, i.e. worn smooth and threadbare.

The 1st Folio has *woolluish*, the 2nd *woolvish*. Alterations such as *woolless*, *woollen*, *woolish*, are too obvious.

toge. The 1st Folio has *tongue;* no doubt the printer substituted a simple word for one he did not understand. The editor or printer of the 2nd Folio saw that *tongue* made no sense and changed it to *gowne*. The correction *toge* is confirmed by *Othello*, I. 1. 25, where the Quarto has the same mistake as the Folio here, viz. "*tongued* consuls" instead of "*toged* consuls" (=wearing the toga, gowned).

108. *Hob and Dick;* common names among the people in Shakespeare's time. Another example, like the reference to "our divines" (54), of the frank Elizabethanism of Shakespeare's Roman plays.

109. *vouches*, attestations, i.e. to the Senate's nomination.

111. *antique time*, time-honoured institutions and customs. Shakespeare, like Spenser, always accents *ántique*.

117—122. The repetition of "voices" emphasises the note of ironical contempt, lost on most of the citizens.

119. *Watch'd*, kept watch, as a soldier.

130. *limitation*, prescribed duty (not merely 'time'). This was a common legal use (='prescribe') of *limit*, e.g. "Upon the pains, forfeitures and penalties in the present Statute limited and expressed." Literally *limitation*="that to which one is limited; that which is required as a condition."

132. *the official marks*, the insignia (i.e. the *toga candida*).

136. *upon your approbation*, to "confirm" (200) your election.

145. *weeds*, robe, "gown"; cf. 212, and see G.

160. Editors note that according to history, or what passes for history in the case of Coriolanus, the consulship had been established only eighteen years; that is, on the expulsion of Tarquin, against whom Coriolanus had fought "as a stripling" (II. 2. 85—96).

166. *ignorant to see't;* literally 'ignorant (i.e. dull, stupid) in the matter of seeing,' hence 'too stupid to see.'

169. *As you were lesson'd;* cf. Sicinius's variation on the same theme (183). The remainder of this scene is a very significant part of Shakespeare's characterisation of the Tribunes.

172. *charters*, political rights.

173. *arriving;* for the transitive use cf. *Julius Cæsar*, I. 2. 110, 111. F. *arriver* is from Lat. *ad*, 'to,'+*ripa*, 'a bank.'

181. *Translate*, change.

183. *touch'd;* the metaphor of a touchstone (IV. 1. 49); 'tested.'

187—191. Probably the metaphor of a high-spirited horse, fretted and spurred; cf. *Richard II.* v. 5. 94 ("Spurr'd, gall'd and tired by jauncing Bolingbroke"). *article*, conditions, restriction.

192. *free*, free-spoken, undisguised.

196, 197. *heart;* here with the idea of 'mind, intelligence,' rather than 'courage.' *had you tongues* etc., were you given tongues that you might use them against the guidance of judgment?

199, 200. *Of*, on. *sued-for*, asked for by other candidates, some of whom you have ere now refused, but not asked for by Coriolanus, whom you promptly elect.

202. *I'll have*, I will find.

203. *and their friends to piece 'em*, and 500 more voices of the same sort to supplement them.

208. *therefore*, for that, i.e. in order that they *may* bark.

210. *enforce*, emphasise.

211. *forget not*, forget not to mention.

213. *but*, but *say* that; the verb is easily supplied from the others.

214, 215. *took from you The apprehension* etc., prevented your perceiving, blinded you to, his present bearing. The simpler word *port* was common in this sense, 'bearing, demeanour.'

229—236. All this is from the genealogy of Coriolanus in North's *Plutarch*. As in I. 4. 56, 57, Shakespeare puts into the mouth of men contemporary with Coriolanus (*circa* 490 B.C.) things which are said by Plutarch himself, and which really refer to people who lived long after Coriolanus.

233. The reference is to the *Aqua Marcia*, the chief of the aqueducts which supplied Rome with water; built, by command of the Senate, by *Q. Marcius* Rex, Prætor, B.C. 144.

"Pliny states that the water of the *Aqua Marcia* was the coldest and most wholesome of all which was brought to Rome; and Vitruvius and other writers refer to the excellence of the water as being proverbial"—*Dict. of Antiquities.*

"Two of the greatest distinctions of the *Marcia gens* were their alleged descent from Ancus [cf. line 230], and the aqueduct which bore their name"—*Classical Dict.* The earliest of the Roman aqueducts, the *Aqua Appia*, was not begun till many years (B.C. 313) after the time of Coriolanus.

234—236. In the Folio the passage is clearly mutilated through the omission of some words or of a whole line. The natural way of restoring it is to "follow Shakespeare's practice of taking so many of North's words in their order, as would fall into blank verse."

240. *Scaling*, weighing.

243. *putting on*, instigation.

244. *presently*, at once. *drawn your number*, assembled those who are like-minded with ourselves (cf. 202, 203).

248. *greater*, i.e. the greater hazard which is sure to arise from Coriolanus being made Consul. It is the "hazard" to themselves that Brutus has in mind (cf. II. 1. 209, 210).

250, 251. *observe and answer* etc., watch for and take advantage of any opportunity which his anger gives us against him; cf. 189—191.

ACT III.

Scene 1.

1—20. The Tullus Aufidius element of the tragedy has to be kept 'in being,' so that the instrument of the catastrophe may be forthcoming, and forthcoming *naturally*, when the time comes. It is a sort of thread that runs through the play as a parallel but subsidiary interest to the Coriolanus element, and the tense irony (11—20) here is meant to keep the connection vividly before us.

1. *made new head*, collected a fresh army; cf. II. 2. 86.

3. *swifter*, somewhat swift (cf. III. 3. 55); or 'swifter than we had intended.' *composition*, coming to terms, making peace. We speak of people '*composing* their differences,' i.e. settling them.

9. *On saje-guard*, under safe-conduct (of Roman troops).

16. *To hopeless restitution*, beyond hope of redress.

23. *prank them*, deck themselves out; see *prank* in G. For the metaphor (so common in Scripture) cf. *Measure for Measure*, II. 2. 118, "Drest in a little brief authority."

24. *Against all noble sufferance*, beyond all endurance by the patricians.

29. *pass'd;* here in a figurative sense, like 'passing a test'; 'been approved by.'

33. *broil*, turmoil, civil strife; F. *brouiller*, 'to jumble.' Usually plural.

36. *why rule you not their teeth?* "The metaphor is from setting a bull-dog or mastiff upon any one"—*Warburton*. Cf. "have you not *set them on?*" The metaphor was more pointed in those days of bear-baiting; *Macbeth*, v. 7. 1, 2; *King Lear*, III. 7. 54.

38—41. Coriolanus shows his penetration and scorn of concealment or compromise. *and live*, and you will have to live.

44. *Scandal'd*, calumniated, defamed.

45. *Time-pleasers;* "people-pleasers" in North's *Plutarch*.

nobleness, the "nobility" (as in North).

47. *sithence*, since that time.

48, 49. *Not unlike* etc.; "likely to provide better for the security of the commonwealth than you, whose business it is [i.e. as Consul], will do"—*Warburton*.

58. *abused*, duped; see G. *paltering*, shuffling, equivocating; more than 'trifling.' The word always has this strong sense in Shakespeare.

60. *dishonour'd rub*, dishonourable thwarting. The metaphor is taken from bowls, *rub* being the technical term in bowls for any obstacle which hinders the bowl from keeping on its proper course—e.g. an uneven bit of ground, a stone, etc. Hence the sense 'obstacle, hindrance,' as in the now proverbial phrase "there's the rub"—*Hamlet*, III. 1. 65.

The popularity of this game among the Elizabethans is shown by the frequent references (v. 2. 20) to it in the dramatists and by the common use of its terms, such as "rub" and "bias."

66. *the many;* exactly the Greek οἱ πολλοί. *Many* is the reading, adopted by almost all modern editors, of the 4th Folio. The earlier Folios have *meynie* or *meyny;* which is the word *meiny* = 'household, retinue' that we get in *King Lear*, II. 4. 35, "They summon'd up their meiny, straight took horse." Low Lat. *mansionata*, 'a household'; cf. F. *ménage* and *menial*, 'one of the household.' But it does not appear that this word *meiny* was ever used = 'multitude,' the sense required here. Possibly *meynie* was substituted in the 1st Folio for *many* in the same way as *higher* for *hire* (II. 3. 106). From similarity of sound and sense *many* and *meiny* were confused a good deal by old writers.

66—68. *let them Regard me* etc.; "let them look in the mirror which I hold up to them, a mirror which does not flatter, and see themselves"—*Johnson*.

70. *cockle;* not what we call "corn-cockle," but darnel, *lolium temulentum*, the "tares" of the parable, *Matthew* xiii. 25. "The naughty seed and cockle of insolence and sedition' (North's *Plutarch*).

78. *measles*, scurvy wretches. The word *measles* ('little spots' = German *masern*) was confused with *mesel*, 'a leper,' Lat. *misellus*,

'a wretch.' Probably to Shakespeare it meant leprosy or skin-disease rather than what we know as measles.

79. *tetter*, infect as with a skin disease; see G. Coriolanus speaks as if to have any dealings with the "people" were to be brought in contact with some loathsome disease.

82. *A man of their infirmity*, a man of like weaknesses with them. Cf. *The Tempest*, v. 1. 21—24 (with its suggestion of *Acts* xiv. 15, "men of like passions with you").

87. *where it is*, i.e. in a private station—not as consul.

89. *Triton;* in classical mythology the trumpeter or herald of Neptune and the marine deities. He summoned or dismissed their assemblies with his shell (*concha*) or trumpet. No doubt Triton made a great impression among the little fish, and your tribune is an equally important personage among those small fry, the citizens!

90. *from the canon;* "an infraction of the [established] rule; the tribunes have acted *ultra vires* in declaring what is to be, without the consent of the people"—*Herford*. *from*, away from, 'contrary to.'

92. *grave* is a favourite Shakespearian epithet for 'venerable, dignified, staid'; contrast "mutable" (66).

93. *Hydra*. The "multitude" has already been called "many-headed," and as such it may fitly be likened to the Lernean Hydra, a serpent or 'dragon,' with nine heads, of which the middle one was immortal. To slay the Hydra was one of the labours of Hercules. When he cut off one head two others came in its stead; but at last he burned away the heads and buried the ninth or immortal head under a rock. Cf. "Hydra-headed wilfulness," *Henry V.* 1. 1. 35.

here. Some editors substitute *heart;* but *here* lends a vivid touch: we see Coriolanus pointing contemptuously at the crowd. In any case no change is needed, as *given* may be used absolutely = 'given *to* Hydra (the right) to choose.'

95. *The horn and noise;* a hendiadys ('the noisy horn'). In his description of the Tribune, Coriolanus has "this Triton" (cf. "horn") in mind.

wants not spirit, has the hardihood.

Here Coriolanus flouts the Tribunes as no more than the blatant mouth-pieces of mob-clamour: earlier he charged them with being wire-pullers, in whose hands the people are mere puppets. Truly, "temper makes of us all an unjust judge."

98. *vail your ignorance;* "if this man has power, let the ignorance that gave it him vail [see G.] or bow down before him"—*Johnson*.

101. i.e. admit them to your "bench" (106, 167).

102—104. Malone explains: "the plebeians are no less than senators, when, the voices of the senate and the people being blended together, the predominant taste of the compound smacks [i.e. savours] more of the populace than of the senate."

Johnson proposed *must palate* = 'when the taste of the great must please that of the plebeians.' But to *palate* means 'to taste or to perceive by the taste': hence here 'to savour of.'

109. *are up*, are active, at work. Cf. the phrase "the hunt's up" = the chase has begun.

110. "It has been remarked that there was never a constitution which looks more unworkable on paper than the Roman. But the Romans had a genius for government, which prevented deadlocks"—*Herford.* In no nation was the "sense of the State" more developed. And this sense told them what the State needed, and regulated the working of its political machinery to that end. Much the same might be said of the English and the English constitution.

120. *More worthier.* Double comparatives and superlatives, to give emphasis, are frequent in Shakespeare. Cf. *The Tempest*, I. 2. 19, "I am more better than Prospero," and *The Merchant of Venice*, IV. 1. 251, "How much more elder art thou than thy looks!" So in *Julius Cæsar*, III. 1. 121, "With the most boldest and best hearts of Rome," and III. 2. 187, "This was the most unkindest cut of all."

123. *the navel;* cf. the similar figurative use of ὀμφαλός and *umbilicus.*

124. *thread*, pass through. In the two other places where Shakespeare uses this verb, viz. *King Lear*, II. 1. 121, and *Richard II.* V. 5. 17, the metaphor is explicit; cf. *Richard II.:*

"It is as hard to come as for a camel
To thread the postern of a small needle's eye."

127—129. *the accusation*, that with which they charge us; explained by the first scene of the play. *All cause unborn*, without any justification. *native*, motive; literally 'natural source, origin.'

131. *this bosom multiplied*, this multitudinous bosom, i.e. of the people. The Folio has *Bosome-multiplied.* Some editors change to *bisson* (II. 1. 58) *multitude.* But "*bosom* multiplied" is like "many-*headed* multitude" (II. 3. 15) and "multitudinous *tongue*" (156); "bosom" being more appropriate to this context; cf. "digest." An ultra-aristocrat like Coriolanus might well be supposed to ridicule the 'great heart of the people.'

132. *Let deeds express;* "let their past [and present] deeds be taken as an indication of what they are likely to speak openly"—*Hudson.*

142. *Seal,* confirm, attest; cf. II. 3. 100.

This double worship, i.e. the division of dignity and authority between the patricians and plebeians—*Schmidt.* Shakespeare more than once uses *worship* in the general sense 'dignity, honour.'

144. *without,* beyond, outside.

145. *Cannot conclude,* can decide nothing.

146. *omit,* neglect.

148, 149. *purpose so barr'd,* i.e. where a deliberate and continuous course is precluded there can be no successful policy: all is from hand to mouth, and unsatisfactory. There is, I think, a personal note in this passage which suggests that it expresses Shakespeare's own indictment of democracy. Want of continuity of policy has ever been the characteristic weakness of popular government.

150. i.e. rather wise than timid.

152. *doubt,* fear. "You who do not so much fear the danger of violent measures [e.g. the abolition of the Tribuneship—cf. 171], as wish the good to which they are necessary"—*Johnson.* The good meant is the preservation of the essential constitution of the State.

154. *To jump,* to risk; on the proverbial principle that desperate diseases require desperate remedies. There is not the least reason to change *jump;* it is a thoroughly Elizabethan word, both as noun and verb, for 'hazard, risk.' Cf. *Macbeth,* I. 7. 7, "We'ld jump the life to come," i.e. take our chance of. The sequence of meanings is, 'to skip over' (literal), 'to pass lightly over' (figurative), and so 'to disregard, to chance, to risk.'

157. *The sweet,* i.e. flattery.

159. *integrity,* unity, concentration; it has the notion of Lat. *integer,* 'whole, entire.' Coriolanus means that the State does not speak with one voice, and consistently: divided counsels spell weakness. *become,* adorn, befit; cf. 59.

162. *answer,* answer for it; cf. 177, 325.

165. *bald,* witless. The literal meaning 'bare' leads easily to the figurative idea 'destitute of force, meagre, paltry,' and so 'destitute of sense.' Similarly Shakespeare often has *barren*='barren of wits, empty-headed, stupid.' Or does *bald* imply 'in their dotage'?

170. *Let what is meet* etc.; "Let it be said by you that what is

meet to be done *must* be meet, i.e. *shall be done*, and put an end at once to the tribunitian power"—*Malone.*

Ædile. "In ancient Rome, a magistrate whose duty was originally the superintendence of public buildings and lands, out of which grew a large number of functions of administration and police. Among other duties, that of promoting the public games was incumbent on the ædiles, and cost them large sums of money"—*Century Dictionary.* Lat. *ædilis*, 'having to do with buildings' (Lat. *ædis*, 'a building, house').

175. *Attach;* a legal term='arrest.'

190. *Confusion*, ruin; a stronger word in Elizabethan E. than now.

You, i.e. do *you* speak (Menenius himself being unable).

206. *distinctly ranges*, ranks separately, i.e. is not yet merged in general ruin. Some interpret 'stands upright'—which is practically what the words come to.

212. *present*, immediate.

213. *the rock Tarpeian.* The Capitoline Hill (*Mons Capitolinus*), "the smallest but most famous of the seven hills on which Rome was built...terminates at its southern extremity within 250 yards of the river [Tiber] in a precipice with an abrupt fall of 80 feet—the 'Tarpeian Rock,' over which state-criminals were thrown"—*Chambers' Encyclopædia.*

220—222. For the sentiment compare the note on 154.

224. *There's some...have;* see note on I. 1. 169.

231. *naught*, lost, ruined.

233. *put to that*, come to that, i.e. civil war.

236. *tent;* cf. I. 9. 31.

242. *One time will owe another.* Perhaps 'time will bring the remedy; if the plebeians win to-day, we shall do so to-morrow.'

Or 'what you say now will have to be accounted for later': Menenius being afraid that Coriolanus may say something, in his present anger, which will compromise his position beyond redress.

243. *forty.* Elizabethans often use *forty* to imply an indefinitely large number. Other numbers, e.g. 3 and 13, have become significant through some ancient belief or historical event; and perhaps 40 gained some mysterious import through the Scripture. Thus the wanderings of the Israelites lasted forty years, the fast of our Lord forty days. Cf. *four*, I. 6. 83, note.

248. *tag;* usually *tag-rag*, as in *Julius Cæsar*, I. 2. 260, "the tag-rag people." Literally *tag and rag*='every end and scrap,' e.g. of cloth; cf. 'odds and ends.'

255—260. A striking estimate of Coriolanus's character: the estimate of his best friend and a keen judge.

262. *the vengeance;* formerly a common imprecation.

263, 264. *this viper* etc.; referring perhaps to the classical legends of ravaging monsters like the Lernean Hydra (93). I suspect, however, that the allusion is to the old belief about the young vipers and their unnatural behaviour. Compare Lyly's play *Midas*, III. 1: "like moths that eat the cloth in which they were bred, like vipers that gnaw the bowels of which they were born" (Bond's *Lyly*, III. 130).

To Sicinius, Coriolanus is a viper, in seeking to prey upon the city that bore and reared him. This interpretation seems to me favoured by "viperous *traitor*" in 287. The unnatural young viper, but not the Lernean Hydra, might be so described.

275. *cry havoc;* "proclaim war to the death"—*Herford.* See *havoc* in G.

276. *modest*, moderate; a common Shakespearian use. The metaphor seems to be that of hounds following a rather uncertain scent.

284. *turn;* often in Shakespeare='to put to, cause.'

288. *one danger.* If *one* be right, it must mean, 'a constant, an unending, source of danger.' But Theobald's correction *our* looks right.

292. *deserved*, well deserving.

293. *Jove's own book.* "A Jewish not a Roman idea"—*Herford.*

304. *clean kam;* exactly equivalent to "merely (i.e. absolutely) awry" in 305. The Tribunes both mean that Menenius's way of stating the case is a perversion of the facts, a crooked, distorted view of things. See *kam* and *mere* in G.

306—308. Reverting to the metaphor in 296, 297. Of course, he speaks ironically.

307. *is.* Grammatically the verb has no subject, for the sense prevents "service" being so taken, but "it" is easily supplied from "foot" in 306. The speakers are all somewhat stirred, and a touch of verbal irregularity seems to fit the context.

310. *his infection*, the infection of his evil qualities, e.g. pride.

313. *unscann'd;* used actively='inconsiderate, reckless.'

314. *to's*, to its.

320, 321. Cf. II. 2. 85—99; III. 2. 80—86; III. 3. 52—57.

322. *bolted*, sifted, refined; see G.

325, 326. *answer...to his peril*, i.e. receive your sentence on him, whatever it be.

Scene 2.

The primary interest of the scene lies in the clash between the two wills, mother's and son's. It anticipates, and foreshadows the issue of, a yet greater struggle (v. 3). A similar study is the scene in which Lady Macbeth overcomes Macbeth's reluctance to murder Duncan (I. 7). Incidentally, the scene brings out one point of difference between the characters of Volumnia and Coriolanus: her specious argument (46—61) evokes no response, and she is reduced to the sheer personal appeal (89, 90, 107—110), edged with reproach and the hint of her own sufferings (125—130). By the close she has played on every note.

"*To break upon the wheel*, to torture or put to death by stretching on a cart-wheel, or a wooden frame in the form of a St Andrew's cross, and breaking the limbs with an iron bar: a mode of punishment formerly much used in some parts of Europe"—*Century Dictionary*.

7. *muse*, wonder. *my mother;* always first in his thoughts.

9. *woollen*, clad in wool. The distinction present to Shakespeare's mind is that between the Elizabethan nobles in their rich dress (of silk, velvet, and the like fabrics), and the working-classes in coarse clothes. Cf. *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, III. 1. 79, "What hempen home-spuns have we swaggering here?" referring to Bottom and his fellow-workmen, whom Shakespeare pictures as Elizabethan artisans in smock-frocks of rough hemp, such as was manufactured in Suffolk.

10. *groat;* "An English silver coin, of the value of fourpence, first issued for circulation in the reign of Edward III. Groats were issued by subsequent sovereigns till 1662"—*Century Dictionary*.

12. *ordinance*, rank, order; from the sense 'ordering, orderly arrangement.'

23. *Ere they lack'd power*, before they lost the power, while they still had it in their power (by refusing to assent to his nomination to the Consulship). With verbs conveying a negative idea, e.g. 'lack,' 'want,' there is often some ambiguity of expression, due to the general tendency to duplicate the negative.

29. *apt*, amenable, susceptible. She does not define, but the context indicates, the sort of "aptness" she means, viz. readiness to yield. Some editors would alter line 29, e.g. "as little *soft*"; others think that after 29 a line has dropped out, which contains some infinitive dependent on *apt* and defining it, e.g. "To brook reproof."

39. *You are too absolute*. Surely one of the best criticisms ever passed on Coriolanus.

41. *speak*, require, i.e. require a milder course.

42. *unsever'd*, inseparable.

44. *lose;* attracted to the plural idea ("them").

45. *That they combine not there*, so that they should not unite in time of peace, as in war. *demand*, question. Cf. 2 *Samuel* xi. 7, "David demanded of him how Joab did" (Revised Version "asked"). Cf. F. *demander*, 'to ask.'

48, 49. *less or worse*, less desirable, or wrong. *it;* "to seem."

51. *force*, urge.

52. *it lies you on*, it is incumbent on you.

55. *such...that;* we have a similar sequence in 105. *roted*, learnt by heart; the idea of parrot-like repetition.

57. *Of no allowance to*, utterly disavowed by the real feelings in your heart. See *allow* in G. *to*, in relation to. Volumnia's advice seems to be that of the Euripidean formula: 'the tongue hath sworn, but the mind is unpledged.'

59. *take in*, capture; cf. I. 2. 24, note. The idea of deception is not necessarily implied.

64, 65. *I am, in this* etc.; in this advice I speak for, I represent.

66. *And you*, whereas you; *and* is adversative here.

68, 69. *For the inheritance* etc., to win the affection of the people and thus preserve all those things (his life and prospects, their position etc.) which the lack of that affection might destroy.

70—72. *you may salve so* etc.; in this way you can *not only* cure the immediate difficulty, but also retrieve what is lost (e.g. the Consulship).

73. *with this bonnet;* cf. II. 2. 25. *this*, she emphasises her pleading by holding out or touching his cap; surely a pretty detail, lost in the suggestion "*thy* bonnet."

74. *here be with them*, humour them thus much!

75—77. *bussing...waving*. Volumnia is at pains to show, by her contemptuous choice of words, that she despises, every whit as much as Coriolanus himself, the course of action which for expediency alone she is counselling. Thus "waving," to express 'often bending,' gives an admirable touch of irony and burlesque.

78—80. Probably there is some slight corruption of text; but it has been suggested to me that *which* depends on some verb (like 'bow, incline') implied by the *deictic* use of *thus*, as if she suited the action to the words. An obvious change is *while* for *which;* but so simple a word as *which*, at the beginning of a line, is not likely to have been

mistaken. To take *humble* as a verb, governing *which*, is very awkward; besides, it is clearly the adj. of "heart," contrasting with "stout."

78. *stout*, proud, overbearing; cf. 127. "A *stout* man of nature," we read in North's *Plutarch*.

81. *broils*, wars; we had a different use in III. 1. 33.

82. *Hast not the soft way*. Another great soldier, Othello, says of himself (I. 3. 81, 82):

"Rude am I in my speech,
And little bless'd with the soft phrase of peace."

85. *theirs*, after their taste, to suit them.

88, 89. *as free As words* etc.; as easy to win as it is to pay them a few idle compliments.

91. *in*, into. *gulf*, whirlpool; cf. I. 1. 91.

92. *bower*, chamber. Formerly *bower* meant any room other than the 'hall' in which the whole household assembled; but more particularly the ladies' private chamber or boudoir. Hence the common antithesis, *in hall or bower*. It is easy to see how *bower* came to connote effeminacy, as it does here in *Coriolanus*.

99. *unbarb'd sconce*, unprotected head. See both words in G. In his resentment and self-disgust Coriolanus uses the most depreciatory terms he can think of.

102, 103. *this single plot*, only his own body. *mould*, form, shape.

105. *such a part*, *which* = 'such a part *as*' + 'a part which.' For the metaphor cf. V. 3. 40—42; it is continued in 106 ("prompt") and 109.

106. *we'll prompt you*; like a stage-prompter.

113. *quired with*, harmonised with.

114. *Small;* used of a clear treble voice; cf. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, I. 2. 52, "you may speak as small as you will," i.e. like a woman. *eunuch*, i.e. eunuch's. The whole passage recalls Orsino's words to Viola (disguised as a page-boy) in *Twelfth Night*, I. 4. 30—34.

116. *Tent*, encamp, pitch their tents. *take up*, occupy.

123. *most inherent*, one which must inevitably cling to it.

125—127. "Go, do thy worst; let me rather feel the *utmost* extremity that thy pride can bring upon us, than live thus in fear of thy dangerous obstinacy [i.e. of what it may bring]"—*Johnson*.

Better, she means apparently, *experience* the worst *in one's own person* than live in constant *fear* of what the future may bring *to you and to us*. To know, even to suffer, the worst is a relief, compared with constant anticipations of evil.

130. *owe*, own, possess; see G. '*That* is yours—and you are

responsible for it.' But we know quite well that Coriolanus had his pride from her, and that she fostered it by his upbringing.

142. *The word*, the watchword. Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, v. 5. 4, "Sit thee down, Clitus: slaying is the word."

Scene 3.

The Tribunes are here seen at their worst: frankly treating the people as mere tools, exploiting the advantage which Coriolanus's passionate temperament gives them over him, and showing themselves inflated with the self-importance of the demagogue in office ("us"... "we"..."our," 100, 101).

1. *charge him home*, press the accusation against him; cf. II. 2. 101. *affects*, aims at; cf. II. 2. 20.

2. *Tyrannical power*. Cf. 65, IV. 6. 32. The word "tyrannical" suggests the Gk. *τύραννος*, 'a usurper who makes himself despot.' Shakespeare had come across "tyrants" in North's *Plutarch*. But to a Roman the hateful word was *rex* ('king'), which called to mind the Tarquins.

3. *Enforce him with*, urge against him, ply him hard with; cf. "force" in III. 2. 51. In 21 *enforce*='press for, demand.'

envy, malice, hatred; cf. 95, and see G.

4, 5. A singularly unfair and ungenerous complaint, seeing that Coriolanus was not general, and that he had refused his own share of the spoil.

10. *by the poll*, according to the register of voters.

11. *tribes;* political divisions of the Roman people; three of the patricians, and thirty of the plebeians.

12. *presently*, at once; cf. 21.

18. *i' the truth o' the cause;* an obscure phrase; perhaps 'according to the justice of their case.'

26, 27. *to have his worth Of contradiction*. Can this mean 'to get the better of opposition'? Some interpret 'to have his full quota or proportion of contradiction'; taking *his worth* as a colloquialism like his 'penny-worth,' where *worth* means 'value.' But this surely would imply that Coriolanus was used to and could put up with contradiction, whereas Brutus means the exact opposite. Rowe substituted *word*.

29, 30. *and that is there* etc., and there is in his heart that which

(i.e. pride and anger) is likely, with our help, to cost him his neck (by causing him to be flung from the Tarpeian Rock).

32. *piece*, of money.

33. *Will bear the knave by the volume*, will bear to be called 'thou knave!' a thousand times. Compare the scene in the inn-yard at Rochester, 1 *Henry IV.* II. 1.

40. *audience!* a hearing for them! listen!

43. *determine*, end; see G. Coriolanus means: 'Is this examination to be all, or is there something further?'

45. *Allow*, acknowledge; see G.

49—57. Menenius works the soldier-plea to the full. Cf. III. 1. 320—323.

51. *Like graves i' the holy churchyard;* effective as an appeal, but more Elizabethan than Roman; so again in 68.

55. *rougher;* the same sort of comparative as in III. 1. 3.

57. *envy you*, mean ill-will towards you.

63. *contrived*, plotted; the ordinary Shakespearian sense.

64. *season'd;* perhaps 'established and mature,' from *season*, 'to ripen, mature' (the metaphor of fruit), as in *Hamlet*, III. 3. 86, "When he is fit and season'd for his passage." By his behaviour as candidate, Coriolanus has shown that he wants to abolish the established character of the consulship and change it into something quite different, namely, "a power tyrannical."

Some take *season'd* = 'qualified, tempered' (the metaphor of seasoning a dish by the admixture of some ingredient); i.e. moderate, qualified by some popular control, not absolute and arbitrary like a tyrant's.

67. *How! traitor!* Observe the bitter "irony" of Coriolanus's resentment of the charge. *your promise;* cf. III. 2. 142—145.

69. *injurious*, insulting; see G.

79. *with strokes;* cf. 97, and III. 1. 223—229.

81. *capital;* like '*capital* treason.'

85. *You?* Brutus has not been at the wars.

97. *not*, not only.

104. *Rome gates.* The quasi-adjectival use of proper names is common in poetry; cf. "Tiber banks" in *Julius Cæsar*, I. 1. 63, and "Philippi fields," V. 5. 19. It is specially common before a noun in the plural, where *'s* closely followed by *s* would sound unpleasant—e.g. *Rome's gates.*

105. *it shall be so.* Again "his absolute 'shall'" (III. 1. 90).

106, 107. The citizens have not forgotten their instructions (12—18).

114. *estimate*, worth. "I love my country beyond the rate at which I value my dear wife"—*Johnson*.

120. *cry*, pack; so called from the hounds' *cry* or notes (to which Coriolanus mentally likens the shouts of the citizens). Dryden has "the common cry"=the mob, in *The Hind and the Panther*, II. 23, III. 1036.

121. *reek*, vapour, mist; see *reechy* in G. *rotten*, unwholesome.

123. *I banish you*. Editors compare *Richard II.* I. 3. 279, 280, where Gaunt consoles his son Bolingbroke, on whom Richard has just pronounced sentence of exile for six years:

> "Think not the king did banish thee,
> But thou the king."

There Shakespeare had in mind the classical story of Diogenes, and owed it to a passage in Lyly's *Euphues*.

130. *Making not reservation of yourselves*, not sparing even yourselves. Their ignorance, he says, which learns nothing except by bitter experience, will destroy the State without any reservation, even of themselves, since they are always their own worst enemies.

Here again (cf. II. 3. 62) for *not* the Folio has *but*, which can only yield a very forced sense, e.g. 'leaving none in the city but yourselves,' or 'preserving your lives, but ruining you in every other way.'

132. *Abated*, humbled; see G.

ACT IV.

Scene 1.

1, 2. *the beast With many heads;* cf. II. 3. 15 ("the many-headed multitude"). Editors quote Horace's description of the Roman mob—"bellua multorum est capitum."

Compare also that passage in Weever's *Mirror of Martyrs* (1601), which by its evident allusion to Antony's great speech in *Julius Cæsar*, III. 2, helps materially to fix the date of that play:

> "The many-headed multitude were drawne
> By Brutus' speech that Cæsar was ambitious;
> When eloquent Mark Antonie had showne
> His vertues, who but Brutus then was vicious?"

6, 7. A similar passage is *Troilus and Cressida*, I. 3. 33—45. See also *Sonnet* 80. Sea-metaphors would appeal specially to the Elizabethans.

7—9. *fortune's blows* etc. Combining the paraphrases of two editors we might render: 'when Fortune strikes her hardest blows, to be wounded and yet continue calm, demands a noble philosophy.'

home; cf. I. 4. 38, II. 2. 101. *gentle;* it is the same notion of the calm, unruffled mind, as in Horace's

aequam memento rebus in arduis
servare mentem.

craves; the verb is singular through attraction to the sense-subject, not the grammatical subject: it is not the "blows," but bearing the blows gently, that "craves" wisdom; and the idea of bearing them is implied by the qualifying clause "being *gentle* wounded." The interposition of so many words between the strict grammatical subject and its verb facilitates the attraction of the verb to the general sense. (This is not a case for considering the possible influence of the "northern" plural in *es* or *s*.)

cunning; often used by Shakespeare in its original and better sense, 'knowledge, wisdom, art.'

13, 14. Caliban pronounces the same curse on Prospero, *The Tempest*, I. 2. 363—365. Medical writers of that time mention three different kinds of plague-sore—the red, the yellow, and the black; but what disease they meant by this 'plague' or 'pestilence' cannot now be determined. One of them says, "the red plague doth most abounde from Midsomer to Autume."

trades...occupations; the abstract (cf. III. 2. 134) has a more comprehensive effect than the concrete. In *Julius Cæsar*, I. 2. 269, "a man of any occupation" (said contemptuously) means 'one of the mob,' literally 'a working man'; the word *occupation*, in Elizabethan English, implying manual labour.

23. *sometime*, former, late; cf. *King Lear*, I. 2. 122, where Lear having cast off Cordelia, calls her his "sometime daughter." So in academic phrases like "sometime scholar."

26. *fond*, foolish; see G.

27, 28. *wot;* see G. *still*, always, ever.

30, 31. *Like to a lonely dragon* etc.; such as the Hydra (III. 1. 93). But somehow the comparison has more the ring of mediæval romance; it might be a Spenserian touch. The monster Grendel slain by Beowulf inhabited a "fen." See *dragon* in G.

32. *exceed the common*, do anything exceptional: she shall have no cause to blush for him! Here, and in 51—53, the "irony" is clear.

33. *cautelous*, crafty; see G.

practice, stratagem, plot; as often in Shakespeare. Cf. *King Lear*, II. 1. 75, "To thy suggestion, plot and damned practice." So the verb often; cf. 2 *Henry VI.* II. 1. 171, (they) "Have practised dangerously against your state." Spenser uses *practick*='deceitful, treacherous'; cf. *The Faerie Queene*, II. 3. 9, "In cunning sleightes and practick knavery." Cf. our phrase "sharp practice."

first; "i.e. noblest, and most eminent of men"—*Warburton.* But this is a very forced interpretation. In view of what she says later (v. 3. 162), may we take it "first and last"? Some would read *fine* or *finest;* others *fierce* or *fiercest.*

36. *exposture*, exposure.

41. *repeal*, recall; F. *rappeler.*

43. *advantage*, the favourable moment.

47. *bring*, accompany.

49. *of noble touch;* "i.e. of true metal unalloyed. Metaphor from trying gold on the touchstone"—*Warburton.* *Touch* conveys the idea 'tested and found noble.' Testing has so much to do with friendship. Cf. *Timon of Athens*, III. 3. 6, 7 (referring to the false friends who refuse to help Timon in his trouble):

> "They have all been touch'd and found base metal, for
> They have all denied him."

51—53. In studying Shakespearian "irony" one notes how often it is made the means of emphasising a crucial moment.

53. *That's worthily.* Cf. *The Tempest*, II. 1. 321, "That's verily." Some verb is easily supplied, e.g. 'said.' Cf. our common phrase, "that's well," i.e. 'done.'

Scene 2.

5. *a-doing.* Here *a* is used for *an*, another form of *on*, which in turn is closely akin to *in;* while *doing* is the verbal noun. The use of the verbal noun, e.g. "long *a rising*," is now colloquial, or provincial, or intentionally archaic, but not current English.

13. *could;* a verb, e.g. 'speak loud,' is easily supplied from Menenius's last words.

14, 15. Volumnia detains Brutus, and Virgilia Sicinius. Cf. 36.

16. *Are you mankind?* "The word *mankind* is used maliciously

by [Brutus], and taken perversely by [Volumnia]. A *mankind* woman is a woman with the roughness of a man....In this sense Sicinius asks Volumnia if she be *mankind*. She takes *mankind* for a *human creature*, and accordingly cries out: 'Note but this, fool, Was not a *man* my father?'"—*Johnson*. Cf. *The Winter's Tale*, II. 3. 67, where Leontes in his anger calls Paulina "a mankind witch." 'Masculine,' applied to a woman, conveys the same depreciatory idea.

18. *Hadst thou foxship* etc.; "Hadst thou, fool as thou art, mean cunning enough to banish Coriolanus"—*Johnson*. And ingratitude is also implied, for the fox was the type of ingratitude as well as of cunning: hence Lear's delirious gibe at Goneril and Regan: "now, you she foxes!" (III. 6. 24). In the same play (III. 7. 28) Gloucester is called an "ingrateful fox."

24. *in Arabia*, i.e. in a desert place; *Arabia Deserta*. Cf. *Macbeth*, III. 4. 104. *thy tribe*, your pack of citizens.

25. *good;* a perpetual epithet for a sword; cf. *Othello*, v. 2. 261—264; *King Lear*, v. 3. 277, 278.

31, 32. *unknit...The noble knot*, cancelled his claims on his country's gratitude.

48. *told them home;* cf. II. 2. 101, III. 3. 1.

52. *puling;* contemptuous like 'whimpering.' Properly *pule* means 'to chirp like a young bird in a nest'; an imitative word.

53. *Juno-like*. Volumnia characterises herself as aptly as she characterised her son (III. 2. 39).

Scene 3.

This scene illustrates a very instructive feature of Shakespeare's dramatic method, his side-scenes (if I may so term them). Take two other instances, first *Richard II*. III. 4: Coleridge said of that scene: "Shakespeare's wonderful judgment appears in his historical plays, in the introduction of some incident or other, though no way connected, yet serving to give an air of historic fact. Thus the scene of the Queen and the Gardener realizes the thing, makes the occurrence no longer a segment, but gives an individuality, a liveliness and presence." As the gardener and servants talk about the unhappy state of England, and we hear their comments on contemporary events, those events appear much nearer to us and more vivid; we slip insensibly into the feelings of an onlooker. A somewhat similar scene is *Julius Cæsar*, II. 4, which depicts Portia, wife of Brutus, restlessly waiting to hear how the plot against

Cæsar at the Capitol has gone: we cannot help feeling something of her anxiety as she waits for news and suddenly thinks that she hears a sound from the direction of the Capitol.

Such scenes—always brief scenes—mark time: time to estimate and forecast. Hitherto we have been, as it were, amid the rush of tragic incidents; now we view them retrospectively, some way off, as when one turns to look back on a plain; we see them as they appear to the non-actors. We learn the immediate after-effects of the occurrences at which we have been present, and the next stage is foreshadowed. Thus this little scene is literally "a highway between Rome and Antium": and the end of the way is "Antium. Before Aufidius's house" (Scene 4).

8, 9. *You had more beard* etc. The very homeliness of such personal touches lends a circumstantialising touch.

your favour is well appeared by your tongue; your face is confirmed by your accent. *favour;* see G. *appeared* = 'made apparent, manifested'; a peculiar use.

31. *He cannot choose*, he cannot help "appearing well."

37. *centurion;* an officer who commanded a *century* (I. 7. 3), i.e. a company of (about) 100 men.

38. *distinctly*, separately. *already in the entertainment*, already engaged for active service; 'mobilised,' as we say. One of the commonest meanings of the verb *entertain* was 'to take into or keep in one's service'—as soldiers and servants. F. *entretenir*, 'to maintain, support.'

Scene 4.

Coriolanus's reflections on the mutability of friendship and enmity are designed to diminish the shock and unnaturalness of his own defection.

6, 7. *Save you, sir*, i.e. *God* save you; an Elizabethan greeting, like the reply—"And you."

8. *lies;* cf. I. 9. 82.

12. *turns*, vicissitudes.

12—16. This picture of friendship recalls a much earlier (1594—1595) and more elaborate description, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, III. 2. 198—214.

17. *of a doit;* cf. I. 5. 6.

20. *take*, destroy; cf. III. 1. 111, 112.

21. *trick*, trifle. From the original meaning, 'a crafty device...an artifice,' *trick* passed through a variety of senses down to 'any small article, a toy, trifle.' Dutch *trek*, 'a trick, a neat contrivance.'

25. *give me way*, grant my request; cf. v. 6. 32.

Scene 5.

1. *service*, waiting, attendance.

3. *Cotus*. This does not seem to be a classical name; there is no instance of it in Smith's *Classical Dictionary*. I suppose that Shakespeare's classical names came mostly from North's *Plutarch* and Golding's translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

5. Note the transition from prose to verse.

13. *companions*, fellows; cf. v. 2. 57. For this contemptuous use cf. *Julius Cæsar*, IV. 3. 137, 138:

> "What should the wars do with these jigging fools?
> Companion, hence!"

(where Brutus angrily drives the intruding "Poet" from his tent).

Literally 'one who takes meals with another'—Lat. *cum*, 'with,' + *panis*, 'bread.' The deterioration of "companion" and its counterpart "fellow" (line 19) illustrates the depressing proverb that "familiarity breeds contempt." F. *petit compagnon* and Germ. *geselle* show a similar decline.

17. *brave*, saucy, impertinent.

23. *avoid*, leave. This colloquial (and usually imperative) use is an extension of the radical idea 'to empty out, clear out, get quit of.' O.F. *vuide* (modern *vide*), 'empty.'

31. *batten*, feed; implying 'like an animal'; see G.

37. *Under the canopy*. Cf. the passage of wonderful metaphor in *Hamlet*, II. 2. 310—312: "This most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire."

41. *kites and crows*, i.e. birds of prey—cf. *Julius Cæsar*, v. 1. 85—89—to whom he bitterly likens his countrymen.

54—101. *If, Tullus* etc. The resemblance to North's *Plutarch* is very striking.

68. *painful*, laborious, toilsome. Shakespeare often uses *pain* = 'labour, trouble'; cf. F. *peine*. "The labour we delight in physics pain," i.e. remedies, compensates for, the trouble it involves—*Macbeth*, II. 3. 55.

69. Scan *éxtreme.* This is an illustration of the rule that in Shakespeare and Milton words like *obscúre*, *extréme*, *complète*, throw the accent on to the previous syllable when they are followed immediately by an accented syllable, e.g. a monosyllable like *fear*. Cf. *Lucrece*, 230, "And éxtreme fear can neither fight nor fly"; *Richard II.* III. 3. 154, "A little little grave, an óbscure grave." So in *Comus*, 421, "She that has that is clad *in cómplete steel.*"

71. *memory*, memorial; so perhaps in V. 1. 17.

74. *envy;* the very thing they charged Coriolanus with (III. 3. 3).

76. *hath;* singular because the two nouns (74) form a single idea—'cruel malice.' This idiom occurs where the two nouns express kindred ideas and therefore make up one general idea which forms the real subject. Cf. *Macbeth*, I. 3. 147, "Time and the hour runs through the longest day," i.e. 'lapse of time.'

78. *Hoop'd*, hooted; see G. and cf. III. 3. 137.

81, 82. Steevens aptly compares Macbeth's words to Macduff (V. 8. 4), "Of all men else I have avoided thee."

85. *A heart of wreak*, a revengeful heart.

86, 87. *maims Of shame*, shameful hurts, disgraceful wounds (such as loss of territory).

91. *canker'd*, corrupted, as Coriolanus judges, with the canker of democracy. The spleen was regarded as the seat of anger, passion.

92. *under*, nether, belonging to the lower world; the idea seems mediæval rather than classical.

93. *prove;* in its etymological sense 'to try' (Lat. *probare*).

94. *in a word;* cf. I. 3. 106.

101—147. We have noted how closely Shakespeare followed North's *Plutarch* in the speech assigned to Coriolanus. Here he has amplified the very brief reply of Tullus Aufidius given by Plutarch. This amplification is part of Shakespeare's general treatment of the Aufidius element, which bulks far more important in the play than in the history.

103—105. The classical conception of thunder as an omen of assent from Jupiter 'the Thunderer' (*Tonans* or *Tonitrualis*).

108. *My grained ash*, my tough lance of ashwood.

109. *scarred;* stronger and more vivid than the suggested alteration *scared. clip;* as in I. 6. 29.

110. "Aufidius styles Coriolanus the 'anvil of his sword,' because he had formerly laid as heavy blows on him as a smith strikes on his anvil"—*Steevens.*

116. *rapt*, enraptured.

120. *target*, targe, a shield commonly studded with nails.

121. *out*, thoroughly, completely.

126. *And waked*, and *I* have awoke.

131. *o'er-beat;* the metaphor of waves beating against and breaking down a barrier is a natural one, and the object of the verb is easily supplied. There seems no need for the change *o'er-bear*.

135. *You bless me, gods!* It would have been a far greater "blessing" if the Volscians had slain him at once.

136. *absolute;* "free from all imperfections or deficiency."

138. *my commission*, the troops committed to me, my command. *set down*, decide on.

150. *gave me*, told me; cf. *misgiving*. The Servants are made as ridiculous as the Roman crowd. In fact, they lend (unconsciously) a touch of that humorous relief which figures slightly in *Coriolanus;* another example being the dialogue between Menenius and the Sentinels (v. 2).

163. *you wot one*, you know the one I mean; "wot *on*" (Dyce) would be simpler, or "you wot *the* one."

165. *it's no matter for that*, never mind about that, i.e. 'no names!' The Servants are each afraid lest the other should peach upon him to Aufidius. But, later, the Second Servant plucks up courage to speak openly (183, 184).

176. *I had as lief* (or *lieve*); literally 'I would consider (=have) it as pleasant a thing' = 'I would just as soon.' Properly *lief* is an adjective = 'dear.'

185. *directly*, frankly, plainly.

186, 187. *troth* = *truth*, of which *troth* is only another form.

scotched, slashed, cut; as the cook cuts the surface of a piece of meat before broiling it. See G. and cf. *Macbeth*, III. 2. 13, "We have scotch'd the snake, not kill'd it," i.e. only slashed it with shallow wounds. So in *Antony and Cleopatra*, IV. 7. 10, where a soldier, making light of his wounds, says that he has "Room for six scotches more," i.e. a few more shallow cuts. *carbonado;* a piece of meat so prepared for broiling; see G.

189. *and eaten him too;* apparently a favourite Elizabethan joke. Cf. *Much Ado About Nothing*, I. 1. 42—45.

195. *sanctifies himself with's hand;* "considers the touch of his (Coriolanus's) hand as holy; clasps it with the same reverence as a lover would clasp the hand of his 'mistress'" (194)—*Malone*.

200. *sowl*, pull; see G.

201. *polled*, cleared. Properly 'to remove the *poll* or head,' hence 'to cut, shear' (especially the hair), and so 'to cut away, clear.'

207. *directitude;* perhaps a blunder for *discredit* or *discreditude*, whether it be the Servant's, or the printer's.

210. *crest;* the metaphor of an animal's crest. *in blood;* with the same notion 'in perfect condition and vigour,' as in I. 1. 152.

222. *full of vent;* literally 'full of the scent' of the game—see *vent* in G.—and so 'full of dash and spirit,' like a hound which strikes the trail and at once 'gives tongue'; cf. "audible."

The metaphor here from hunting follows naturally on the metaphor in 210, 211; and Shakespeare more than once compares war with a hound. Cf. "the dogs of war," *Julius Cæsar*, III. 1. 273.

Some say: "'Full of vent,' like wine, full of working, effervescent, opposed to 'mulled.'" But the other explanation of *vent* as a term of the chase is the one now commonly accepted. It opposes the phrase not merely to "mulled," but to the whole description of peace.

mulled, flat, insipid. Some say 'dispirited, heavy.'

Scene 6.

The Tribunes' note of self-content and "security," contrasting with the imminence of the danger already revealed to us, marks a favourite form of Shakespearian tragic "irony."

2. *His remedies*, his means of redress.

7. *pestering*, crowding; with the notion of disorder; see G.

28, 29. Cf. III. 1. 184—190 ("Confusion's near").

31. *ambitious;* true only as regards honour and great achievements. Coriolanus might have said with Henry V. that he was "not covetous for gold" (IV. 3. 24—29).

32, 33. The Tribunes back each other up. The first time (III. 3. 1, 2) it was Brutus who made this charge. Then (III. 3. 64, 65) Sicinius took it up; now he harps on it again.

33. *assistance*, assistants, colleagues.

38, 39. *There is a slave...Reports;* for the construction see I. 1. 169.

42. It is significant that Menenius speaks first: the Tribunes are too amazed, the news comes so swiftly on their recent self-congratulations. And the worse news is held back, as a climax (64—69).

45. *stood for*, stood up for.

52. *reason*, speak, talk (=F. *raisonner*); a common Shakespearian use. Cf. *The Merchant of Venice*, II. 8. 27, 28:

"I reason'd with a Frenchman yesterday,
Who told me...."

54. *information;* again the abstract for the concrete. He may be more than a "rumourer"! (47).

64. *deliver'd*, reported.

68. *as spacious as between*, i.e. so comprehensive as to include.

73. *atone*, agree together; see G.

74. *violentest contrariety*, things absolutely opposite to each other. For once Menenius himself agrees with the Tribunes.

87, 88. *Your franchises* etc., your political rights, on which you insisted so (or 'to which you attached mighty importance'), reduced to *nil*. Cf. *Macbeth*, II. 3. 127, 128:

"What should be spoken here, where our fate,
Hid in an auger-hole, may rush, and seize us?"

i.e. hid in a hole as small as that bored by a carpenter's auger=some imperceptible spot.

96. *flies;* perhaps a mistake due to the preceding line; Capell suggested *sheep*.

97. *apron-men;* much the same sort of Elizabethan touch as in I. 1. 50 (note). So Cleopatra, picturing to her attendant Iras what will befall them if taken to Rome for Octavius Cæsar's triumph, says

"mechanic slaves
With greasy aprons, rules and hammers, shall
Uplift us to the view" (V. 2. 209—211).

98. *the voice of occupation*, the votes of the working man. See IV. 1. 14.

99. *breath;* with a quibble on its other meaning 'words.' Cf. Bottom's order (*A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, IV. 2. 43—45): "And, most dear actors, eat no onions nor garlic, for we are to *utter sweet breath;* and I do not doubt but to hear them say it is a *sweet* comedy" (i.e. when they play before the Duke and his court).

100, 101. Referring, of course, to the golden apples guarded by the daughters of Hesperus and the dragon Ladon; it was one of the 'labours' of Hercules to get them.

101. *You have made fair work!* The repetition (cf. 96, 118, 147, 148) must be highly vexing to the Tribunes.

106. *constant*, firm in their allegiance to Rome.

113—115. *they charged him...and showed*, i.e. they *would* charge

(='implore') him...and would thereby show themselves. Cf. II. 2. 16 ("he waved").

119. *crafts...crafted;* bitter jesting, as in I. 1. 12. *crafts;* abstract for concrete, as in 33, 54, and 98.

123. *clusters,* swarms; contemptuous.

125. *roar him in again,* i.e. accompany with roars of pain his return to Rome.

126. *The second name,* he who is next to Coriolanus in renown. *name,* renown, eminence; here used concretely. *points,* commands, direction; from the verb *point*='to point out what to do.'

135. *coxcomb.* Properly 'a fool's cap,' so called because like a cock's comb in shape and colour; then one of the many jocular terms for the head.

147. *things;* cf. V. 2. 96; the very sound, like the sense, is disparaging.

148. *you and your cry;* probably the same as III. 3. 120.

150—153. A touch of shrewdness and dignity.

Scene 7.

Aufidius's jealousy of Coriolanus, which ultimately becomes the instrument of the catastrophe, is brought out by Plutarch.

A camp, at a small distance from Rome. "Going towards Rome [Coriolanus] lodged his camp within forty furlongs of the city, at the ditches called Cluiliæ"—North's *Plutarch.*

5. *darken'd,* eclipsed.

8. *more proudlier;* cf. III. 1. 120.

11. *no changeling,* true to itself, consistent; see *changeling* in G.

13. *particular.* The substantival use is most frequent in phrases like *for my* (or *your*) *particular*='As far as I am concerned, as regards my personal interest.'

14. "Thus he [Coriolanus] was *joined in commission* with Tullus as general of the Volsces"—*North.*

18. *When he shall come to his account.* "To render up *account* to the Volsces of his charge and government"—*North.*

20. *and is;* understand *it* from line 19.

21. *bears all things fairly,* acts with perfect loyalty (to the Volscians).

22. *husbandry,* management.

23. *dragon-like;* cf. IV. 1. 30.

28. *ere he sits down*, even before he begins to besiege them.

33—35. The osprey, Lat. *ossifragus* (the fishing-hawk or so-called sea-eagle), was supposed to fascinate fish, causing them to turn over on their backs and thus yield themselves an easier prey. Aufidius thinks that Rome will prove as easy a victim to Coriolanus. Editors quote various Elizabethan illustrations of this belief. Lyly's *Euphues* was responsible more than any other Elizabethan book for the vogue of this unnatural sort of natural history.

37. *even*, i.e. "without losing his equilibrium"—*Schmidt*. It seems the same verdict on Coriolanus as Sicinius's (II. i. 211—213).

40. *in the disposing of*, in making good use of.

41—45. *whether nature* etc., whether the fault lay in "a stubborn uniformity of nature, which could not make the proper transition from the *casque* or *helmet* to the *cushion* or *chair of civil authority* [cf. 52], but acted with the same despotism in peace as in war"—*Johnson*.

A great warrior, Coriolanus could not adapt himself to the conditions of civilian life.

43. *the cushion;* cf. III. i. 101.

44. *austerity and garb*, austere manner. Now *garb* suggests dress, but Shakespeare uses it = 'manner, mode, form,' of any kind.

46, 47. *spices of them all, not all*, a 'smack' of each of these faults, but not each in its *full* extent. *free*, absolve.

48, 49. *but he has a merit* etc.; yet he has one merit (i.e. courage), so great as to suppress the fault, whatever it be, even as we are speaking of it.

49—53. *So our virtues* etc. Aufidius has been saying that Coriolanus, spite of his noble services to the State, has been brought down by some failing which set his fellow-countrymen against him. This leads ("so") to the general reflection that no man, however great, is independent of public opinion, and that self-laudation, above all in the highly-placed, is suicidal.

"Our reputation for virtue is in the hands of our contemporaries; and power, confident of its own merits, has no more obvious road to ruin than by proclaiming them"—*Herford*.

True, Coriolanus had never shown the least tendency to "extol" his own merits, quite the reverse; but Aufidius speaks as a rival, at once jealous and ignorant of Coriolanus.

The obscurity and metre of lines 51—53, the uncertainty ("falter") in line 55, and the poor rhymes in 54—57, show that some corruption of the whole passage has taken place.

Note that "*the* time" (50) is Shakespeare's constant phrase for 'the age,' 'one's contemporaries.' We cannot interpret: "Time, the great interpreter, reveals our virtues"—as if Shakespeare had written "time" alone (not "*the* time"). *Lie in*='to be in the power of, to depend on,' is a common Shakespearian use.

52. *evident*, obvious; implying 'sure, certain.' Cf. v. 3. 112.

chair; probably with the same idea as in line 43 ("cushion") and in III. 3. 34 ("the chairs of justice"), the reference being to the official seat (*sella curulis*) of a Roman magistrate or officer of state, e.g. the Consul. Pride, says Aufidius, is deadly indeed when it uses official position as an instrument of self-laudation.

Some interpret *chair* the pulpit or *rostra* in the Forum from which orators addressed the people. In *Julius Cæsar*, III. 2. 68, it is called "*the public* chair." Here "*a* chair" seems hardly distinctive enough to bear the reference.

54. Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, III. 1. 171, "As fire drives out fire, so pity pity." Both proverbs occur in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, II. 4. 192, 193. The whole couplet is to be interpreted in the light of the rivalry between Coriolanus and Aufidius.

55. *falter;* Dyce's correction of the Folio's reading *fouler*.

ACT V.

Scene 1.

3. *In a most dear particular*, with a close personal affection.

6. *coy'd*, disdained; see G.

8. *would not seem to*, pretended not to.

9. *he did call me by my name;* not in the course of the play.

15. *you have made good work!* harping on his old note (IV. 6. 96, 101).

16. *rack'd*, striven, strained. Menenius ridicules the net result of their strenuous efforts on behalf of the common weal, viz. a fall in the price of coals. For who will want coals when the whole city is "burning"?

The metaphor is 'to strain, wrest,' as by means of a rack or instrument. Cf. *The Merchant of Venice*, I. 1. 179—182, where

Antonio tells Bassanio that he will use all his credit to raise money for him:

"That shall be rack'd, even to the uttermost,
To furnish thee to Belmont, to fair Portia."

17. *memory;* cf. IV. 5. 71.

18. *how royal 'twas to pardon.* Cf. Portia's great speech in the Trial-scene of *The Merchant of Venice*, IV. 1. 184—197 ("The quality of mercy" etc.); and *Timon of Athens*, III. 5. 8, 9, 52.

20. *bare*, mere.

23. *offer'd*, tried.

26. *noisome;* short for *anoisome*, from *annoy;* properly 'harmful, offensive' in any way, but especially of smell.

28. *to nose the offence*, to have to smell the offending matter.

33—38. There is dignity in Sicinius's pleading. The Tribunes keep their heads in the hours of danger: so much at least must be allowed them. And they play skilfully upon Menenius's vanity—"what *your* love can do" (40), "*You* know the very road" etc. (59).

50. *not taken well*, not approached at the right moment. Warburton justly remarks on the truth of the whole observation (50—58), and its appropriateness to the confessedly convivial (II. 1. 43—50) speaker.

63. *he does sit in gold;* a Plutarch echo; cf. V. 4. 20.

63, 64. *his eye Red;* for this token of an angry temperament, cf. the striking phrase "with eyes like carbuncles" in the Player's speech, *Hamlet*, II. 2. 485. So in *Julius Cæsar*, I. 2. 185—188.

Scott uses the same touch in describing Amy Robsart, in a great scene of *Kenilworth* (XXII.): "her eyes were like those of an imprisoned eagle, flashing red lightning on the foes whom it cannot reach with its talons." Birds of prey have reddish eyes.

64, 65. *and his injury* etc., and his sense of injury has turned the key on his pity, so that it can neither come out nor be approached.

67—69. The passage is undoubtedly corrupt. A man cannot "yield" *to his own* terms. Shakespeare meant either that Coriolanus, being bound with an oath to the Volscians (cf. V. 2. 46, 47, V. 3. 80, 81), must *hold* to the terms imposed, or that the Romans must *yield* to his terms. The two things have got jumbled.

Johnson's is clearly the right interpretation; he proposed to read:

"What he would not,
Bound by an oath. To yield to his conditions—"

the assumption being that the imperfect line 70 commenced with some such words as *Were utter shame;* which would give us a normal line of

five feet. The simplest emendation of the text is *hold* for *yield:* Coriolanus had sworn to hold to, not to relax, the terms he had offered. But *hold* could hardly be corrupted into *yield*.

Keeping the passage unchanged we must emphasize *his* and paraphrase: 'having solemnly pledged himself to yield *only* to the terms he had imposed' (i.e. not to those which the Romans asked). But this is very forced.

71—73. The passage is usually printed thus, line 71 being treated as an ellipse. An obvious simplification would be:

"Unless his noble mother and his wife,
Who, as I hear, mean to, solicit him."

The change from that to the present reading is just such a one as would occur in the process of writing or printing from dictation.

Scene 2.

There is a pleasant grimness in the Sentinels' translation (24—32) of Menenius's self-praise into the mere vernacular. And Menenius's assurance as to his influence with Coriolanus lends the humour inseparable from vanity. But, as ever, humour's twin brother pathos is not far off (95—100).

10. *it is lots to blanks.* Here *lot* means 'prize in a lottery,' and the whole phrase = 'it is a thousand to one' (literally 'to nothing').

13. *Is not here passable*, does not command a free passage here.

14. *lover*, close friend. Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, III. 2. 49, 50. So in *Psalm* lxxxviii. 18, "Lover and friend hast thou put far from me."

17. *verified*, supported, seconded. In speaking of his friends Menenius has always backed them up, to the very limits of veracity. The word cannot, I think, be taken exactly in the sense 'been true, loyal, to,' though some so interpret it.

20. For the metaphor, see III. 1. 60. *subtle*, deceptive (e.g. sloping).

21. i.e. sometimes overshot the mark.

22. *stamp'd the leasing*, set my seal to the falsehood. Metaphors drawn from sealing are very common in Shakespeare's plays. For obvious reasons the practice of sealing letters etc. would be commoner then than it is now.

29. *factionary on the party of*, active in the interests of. *factionary*, zealous as a partisan; in a good sense.

48, 49. *were;* attracted to the rest of the conditional sentence. *use me with estimation*, treat me with esteem.

57. *companion;* cf. IV. 5. 13.

59. "*Jack guardant*, Jack on guard (with the suggestion of 'Jack in office,' and hence of officious intervention, made explicit in the following words)"—*Herford*. The name Jack is often used by Shakespeare as a term of disparagement = 'a saucy, paltry fellow.'

60. *entertainment*, reception.

67. *here's water;* cf. IV. 1. 21—23.

68. *hardly moved*, with difficulty induced.

77, 78. *owe...properly*, possess as my own. The moral right to take revenge is his, the actual right to remit it is the Volscians', now that he has subordinated himself and his affairs to them. *owe;* see G.

80. *Ingrate forgetfulness*, i.e. the ingratitude of the "dastard nobles" (IV. 5. 75) like Menenius, who had suffered Coriolanus to be banished.

89. Silence often tells more than words. The silence of Menenius may be compared with Macduff's (*Macbeth*, IV. 3. 207—210).

92. *shent*, rebuked, rated; see G.

97. *slight*. Cf. Antony's estimate of Lepidus, "This is a slight unmeritable man," i.e. contemptible, *Julius Cæsar*, IV. 1. 12.

Scene 3.

1—21. All this is to point the "irony" of the contrast with what ensues.

3. *plainly*, without any artifice, in an above-board fashion.

4. *borne this business;* cf. IV. 7. 21. *their;* emphatic; not his own purposes, nor Rome's.

7, 8. *such...that;* cf. III. 2. 105.

9. Cf. *King Lear*, II. 1. 92, "O madam, my *old* heart is crack'd—it's crack'd." The word "crack'd" conveys a physiological fact; and "old" (cf. line 8) heightens the accuracy.

14. *The first conditions;* cf. IV. 1. 67—69.

Enter, in mourning habits [i.e. dress], *Virgilia, Volumnia.* Of all the scenes in *Coriolanus* this one should be compared closely with the narrative in North's *Plutarch*.

22. *mould*, i.e. *matrix*.

30. *Olympus*, the mountain in Thessaly on which the deities of

Greek mythology were supposed to dwell; proverbial for height; cf. *Julius Cæsar*, IV. 3. 92, "As huge as high Olympus."

32. The scansion *aspéct* is invariable in Shakespeare and Milton. Many words retained in Elizabethan E. the French accent, derived from the original Latin words. By "accent" one means, of course, the stress laid by the voice on any syllable in pronouncing it. So Shakespeare scans *accéss*, *edíct*, *exíle*, when it suits him.

33. Cf. Macbeth's description of sleep (II. 2. 39):

"Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast."

38. *These eyes are not the same* etc. She has addressed him in her former style, but he replies that *he* no longer looks on her in the same light.

40—42. Coriolanus used this metaphor before (III. 2. 105, 106). Himself an actor as well as playwright, Shakespeare is fond of images drawn from the stage; cf. the famous "All the world's a stage" in *As You Like It*, II. 7. 139—143.

41. *out*, at fault.

46. *by the jealous queen of heaven.* "That is, by *Juno*, the guardian of marriage, and consequently the avenger of connubial perfidy"—*Johnson.* "The queen o' the sky," *The Tempest*, IV. 1. 70.

48. *virgin'd it.* Abbott notes that *it* is often added thus to "nouns or words that are not generally used as verbs, in order to give them the force of verbs"; cf. "Lord Angelo dukes it well," *Measure for Measure*, III. 2. 100='plays the duke.' This is an extension of the common idiom where *it* is used as a cognate accusative referring to the action expressing the verb, e.g. in 'fight *it* out,' i.e. the fight, 'foot *it*,' i.e. the dance (*Tempest*, I. 2. 380).

58. Why "hungry"?

59. *Fillip*, strike; properly 'to *flip* with the finger.'

63. *Do you know this lady?* "Valeria, methinks, should not have been brought only to fill up the procession without speaking"—*Johnson.* It may be noted too that in Plutarch it is Valeria who suggests to Volumnia the idea of this embassy of intercession. But Shakespeare's obvious intention was to concentrate the interest on Volumnia and her son.

64. Suggested by the mention of Valeria in the *Life* of Publicola in North's *Plutarch*. Plutarch compares Publicola with Solon.

65. *The moon of Rome;* cf. II. 1. 87, 88. The moon-goddess

(*Luna*) was, of course, the type of virginity; identified with the maiden-goddess Diana.

68. *This*, i.e. "young Marcius."

70—75. Somehow one is reminded of Sophocles's Ajax with his boy Eurysaces.

70. Mars.

71. *Jove;* because he was "the tutelary deity of Rome"—*Warburton.* For the scansion *súpreme* see note on *éxtreme*, IV. 5. 69.

74. *sea-mark;* some conspicuous object, such as a lighthouse or beacon, which serves as a guide to mariners. Shakespeare uses the word once elsewhere, in the play that came not long before *Coriolanus* and had for its protagonist a somewhat similar hero. Compare Othello's words when the end faces him (V. 2. 267, 268):

"Here is my journey's end, here is my butt,
And very sea-mark of my utmost sail"

(where *butt* means 'end,' F. *bout*). The metaphor is more appropriate to Othello the soldier of fortune, who had served under many a sun and died the officer of the great sea-power Venice.

flaw, gust of wind; see G.

75. *sirrah;* not always, though commonly, a contemptuous or reproving form of address.

81. *denials*, personal refusals.

82. *capitulate;* properly 'to draw up terms under heads (*capita*) or articles in a treaty or agreement'; hence 'to come to terms with'—as here; whence the ordinary meaning 'to surrender on terms.'

94. *Should we*, even if we should.

95. *bewray*, reveal; now an archaic word commonly used in allusion to *Matthew* xxvi. 73 ("for thy speech bewrayeth thee"). A.S. prefix *be*+*wrégan*, 'to accuse'; cf. Germ. *rügen*, 'to censure.'

100. *weep and shake;* the verbs belong to their respective subjects in 99. The same turn of speech occurs in the next lines.

103—111. Octavia describes very similarly the conflict of her feelings and duty between her husband (Antony) and brother (Octavius) —*Antony and Cleopatra*, III. 4. 12—20.

103. *to poor we.* A clear case of neglected inflexion. *Hamlet*, I. 4. 54, is less certain, as some verb might be supplied there.

104. *capital*, deadly.

112. *evident*, certain, indubitable; as in IV. 7. 52.

120. *determine*, end; as in III. 3. 43.

121. *both parts*, both sides; Romans and Volscians,

129, 130. A beautiful piece of rhyme, voicing the pity of the situation to which pride has brought him inexorably.

130. *nor child nor woman's.* Shakespeare often makes one termination, whether inflexion or suffix, serve for a pair of words. Cf. *Sonnet* 21, "With sun and moon, with earth and sea's rich gems," i.e. earth's; *Sonnet* 80, "The humble as the proudest sail," i.e. humble*st*; *Cymbeline*, IV. 2. 347, "I fast and pray'd," i.e. fast*ed*; *Julius Cæsar*, II. 1. 224, "Good gentlemen, look fresh and merily," i.e. fresh*ly*. So in line 189 ("moral").

139. *Give the all-hail to thee.* An echo of *Macbeth*. Cf. I. 2. 48—50, "All hail, Macbeth!" etc. *Macbeth* (1605—1606) did not long precede *Coriolanus*; so that the similarity illustrates what we saw in the note on "sea-mark" (74), viz. that plays of Shakespeare written about the same date often have these verbal links.

149. *the fine strains;* "the niceties, the refinements"—*Johnson*. The Folio has *five* for *fine*.

150. *of the gods;* the comparison (151—153) more particularly is with Jove, the Thunderer.

151. *the wide cheeks o' the air.* Cf. *Richard II.* III. 3. 54—57, *The Tempest*, I. 2. 3—5.

The occurrence of a notable piece of imagery in an early and then again in a late play is always interesting; one feels that it thoroughly approved itself to Shakespeare's taste.

152. *And yet* etc.; and yet to temper might with mercy, the highest attribute of the gods (V. 4. 24, and *The Merchant of Venice*, IV. 1. 195—197).

153. i.e. only an oak.

160. The mere ring of "in the stocks" (Shakespeare is here *very* Elizabethan) recalls Kent in *King Lear* (II. 4).

162. *When*, whereas, while. *fond of no*, not caring to have.

166. *honest*, fair, right in your dealing. Cf. IV. 1. 32 (note).

175. *for fellowship*, to keep us company.

176. *Does reason our petition;* "does argue for us and our petition"—*Johnson*.

178. *to his mother;* a common idiom in which *to* = 'equivalent to,' 'for.' Cf. the Prayer-Book, "I take thee to my wedded wife"; and *Luke* iii. 8, "we have Abraham to our father."

186. *a happy victory to Rome.* Such inversions of the natural order of words were common. Cf. V. 6. 89, 90.

189. *mortal*, mortally, in a way deadly to him; see note on 130.

189—199. *let it come* etc. Another of the foreshadowings that mark *Coriolanus*.

195, 196. Othello says the same of himself (v. 2. 348, 359).

197. *advise*, inform.

199. *O mother! wife!* always this order.

200. *honour*, honourable obligations to the Volscians.

201, 202. Aufidius will restore his own position by ruining Coriolanus. This was his previous intention (IV. 7. 17—26); but Coriolanus's last action in making peace has given Aufidius a better weapon than he had hoped for. So again in V. 6. 49, "I'll renew me in his fall." *a former fortune*, a fortune like my former one.

207. *To have a temple built you*, i.e. as if they were goddesses. A "temple of Fortune for the women" was built in their honour at Rome (Plutarch).

Scene 4.

Here again we have the "irony" of misplaced assurance. And the scene illustrates the pleasant vanity of Menenius, who thinks that where *he* failed, Coriolanus's wife and mother must fail to.

1. *coign;* see G.

7. *stay upon*, stay for, await.

11. *your;* colloquial, as in II. 1. 293.

16. *than an eight-year-old horse*, i.e. "remembers *his* mother."

18. *an engine*, an instrument of war, e.g. a battering ram.

20. *state*, chair of state, commonly used of a raised canopied throne; cf. V. 1. 63. So, at the banquet, Macbeth says (III. 4. 5): "Our hostess keeps her state," i.e. remains in her chair. No doubt, *state* in this sense was originally short for 'chair (or 'seat') of *state*' (='dignity,' 'honour').

20, 21. *made for Alexander*, made to represent Alexander.

25. *in the character*, as he really is, in his true character. Menenius resents "if you report him *truly*."

28. *long;* short for *along;* only used in this colloquial phrase *long of*='owing to.'

35. *hale;* an earlier form of *haul*.

39. *are dislodged*, have broken up their camp.

45, 46. The river-simile would appeal equally to a Roman and a Londoner. Editors quote *Lucrece*, 1667, 1668:

> "As through an arch the violent roaring tide
> Outruns the eye that doth behold his haste."

blown, probably 'swollen,' from the sense 'inflated,' but the reference might be to the effect of the wind on the waters.

hautboy, a wooden instrument with a high tone; F. *hautbois*, whence the Italian form *oboè*, which gives us our form *oboe*.

47, 48. Biblical rather than classical.

49. *Make the sun dance;* alluding to the old belief that the sun danced on Easter day.

59. *at point;* cf. III. 1. 194.

Scene 6.

The action reverts at once to Coriolanus, and the catastrophe follows as foreshadowed by Aufidius (V. 3. 200—202). Plutarch places the death of Coriolanus at Antium, the "native town" of Aufidius.

5. *Him;* the attraction is to the neighbouring verb ("accuse") rather than the suppressed relative ('he *whom*').

6. *ports;* cf. I. 7. 1.

13—15. Similarly Macbeth, in planning the murder of Banquo and Fleance, wraps his purpose in vague euphemisms (III. 1. 133—142), just as he had spoken of Duncan's "taking-off" (I. 7. 20), i.e. mere removal.

22. *truth*, loyalty.

27. *stoutness;* cf. III. 2. 127.

37. *End* is a term still used in some counties in the sense 'to put corn, hay etc. in a barn or stack, i.e. to get in a harvest'; and "well-*ended*"=well-harvested, e.g. 'a rick of well-ended hay,' is not uncommon among country-people. The word is now interpreted on these lines—'which Coriolanus appropriated as *his* harvest'—in this passage (cf. "reap"); and by some in Milton's *L'Allegro*, 109:

> "When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
> His shadowy flail hath threshed the corn
> That ten day-labourers could not end"

(the reference being to the sprite Robin Goodfellow). Personally I think that to accept thus provincial words is somewhat precarious, and that here *end* in its ordinary signification gives good sense: Aufidius helped "to reap" the crop, but in the end Coriolanus made it all his own. Collier suggested *ear*, but *ear* means 'to till, cultivate,' as in *Richard II.* III. 2. 212; A.S. *erian* being from the same Aryan root as Gk. ἀρόειν, Lat. *arare*, 'to plough.'

40. *waged me with his countenance.* This seems to mean "rewarded

me with his approbation"—*Herford;* or 'remunerated me with his patronage' (spoken ironically). It is in accordance with Shakespeare's way of interchanging parts of speech to use *wage* = 'pay, remuneration,' as a verb. Aufidius chooses a depreciatory word.

45. *For which my sinews* etc.; "this is the point on which I will attack him with my utmost abilities"—*Johnson.*

46. *rheum*, moisture (i.e. tears); Gk. ῥεῦμα, 'a flowing.'

50. *like a post*, like a common messenger.

54. *at your vantage*, seizing your opportunity; cf. II. 3. 250, 251.

57—59. When Coriolanus is dead Aufidius will be able to give *his* version of Coriolanus's conduct in making peace with the Romans, and Coriolanus's own justification will be buried with him.

67, 68. *answering us* etc.; "rewarding us with our own expenses; making the cost of war its recompense"—*Johnson.* The natural sense would be 'refunding to us the money spent on the war,' but this is inconsistent with 77—79.

82. *Subscribed*, signed; from the literal sense 'to underwrite, to write underneath.'

83. *with the seal o' the senate;* cf. V. 3. 205.

84. *Compounded on*, come to terms on.

87. Contrast IV. 5. 106, "*all noble* Marcius"; 126, "*worthy* Marcius."

89, 90. i.e. this name "Coriolanus" stolen in Corioli; the same inversions of words as at V. 3. 186.

94. *I say*, "*your city*"; because they had had Rome at their mercy. Cf. 43.

96, 97. *never admitting Counsel;* though nominally "joint-servant" (32) with Aufidius.

97—100. Contrast V. 3. 194. *that*, so that.

102. *No more*, "i.e. No more than a boy of tears.—But perhaps Tyrwhitt was right in supposing that these words belonged to the *First Lord*, and in understanding them to mean *Have done.*" (Dyce.)

104. *Boy!* Cf. *Much Ado About Nothing*, V. 1. 83—85:

> "Come, follow me, *boy;* come, sir *boy*, come, follow me:
> Sir *boy*, I'll whip you from your foining fence;
> Nay, as *I am a gentleman*, I will."

107. *notion*, understanding; its only Shakespearian sense.

114. *'tis there*, it is recorded in your annals.

116. *Flutter'd;* so the 3rd Folio; the 1st and 2nd Folios have *flattered.*

118. *blind fortune*, a mere chance, a piece of good luck.

125, 126. *his fame folds-in* etc.; "his fame overspreads the world"—*Johnson.*

127. *judicious*, judicial. Steevens compares "*imperious* Cæsar" =*imperial;* cf. *Hamlet*, v. 1. 236.

138. *did owe you;* literally 'possessed *for* you,' hence 'made you liable to.' For *owe* = 'have, possess,' cf. III. 2. 130, and see G.

140, 141. *deliver Myself*, prove myself to be.

143. *regarded*, treated with regard (respect).

144, 145. "This allusion is to a custom unknown, I believe, to the ancients, but observed in the public funerals of English princes, at the conclusion of which a herald proclaims the style [i.e. the full name and titles] of the deceased"—*Steevens.* *urn*, tomb.

148. The deed is regretted almost in the doing (as with most of the great crimes in Shakespeare); and the tragedy closes on the mingled notes of sorrow and foreboding (133, 147), more than justified by the sequel. For the Volsces fell to dissensions among themselves; and "after that, the Romans overcame them in battle, in which Tullus was slain in the field, and the flower of all their force was put to the sword: so that they were compelled to accept most shameful conditions of peace, in yielding themselves subject unto the conquerors, and promising to be obedient at their commandment" (North's *Plutarch*).

151. *Trail your steel pikes.* This sounds Elizabethan.

154. *memory*, memorial; cf. IV. 5. 71.

"The tragedy of *Coriolanus* is one of the most amusing [='interesting'?] of our author's performances. The old man's merriment in Menenius; the lofty lady's dignity in Volumnia; the bridal modesty in Virgilia; the patrician and military haughtiness in Coriolanus; the plebeian malignity and tribunitian insolence in Brutus and Sicinius, make a very pleasing and interesting variety: and the various revolutions of the hero's fortune fill the mind with anxious curiosity. There is, perhaps, too much bustle in the first Act, and too little in the last"—*Johnson.*

GLOSSARY.

Abbreviations:—

A.S. = Anglo-Saxon, i.e. English down to about the Conquest.
Middle E. = Middle English, i.e. English from about the Conquest to about 1500.
Elizabethan E. = the English of Shakespeare and his contemporaries (down to about 1650).
O.F. = Old French, i.e. till about 1600. F. = modern French.
Germ. = modern German. Gk. = Greek.
Ital. = Italian. Lat. = Latin.

NOTE: In using the Glossary the student should pay very careful attention to the context in which each word occurs.

abated; literally 'beaten-down,' hence 'humbled, down-trodden' (III. 3. 132). O.F. *abatre*, 'to beat down.' The original sense of *abate* survives in a legal use 'to demolish' (a building).

abuse; literally 'to use amiss,' and so 'to misuse in a particular way,' viz. 'to deceive' (III. 1. 58). O.F. *abuser*, formed from Lat. *abusus* (the p.p. of *abuti*).

addition, I. 9. 66, 72, 'title'; cf. *Macbeth*, III. 1. 100. Literally "something annexed to a man's name, to show his rank, occupation...or otherwise to distinguish him; 'style' of address."

advance, I. 6. 60, II. 1. 149, 'to raise, lift'; often used of uplifting a standard or sword; cf. *King John*, II. 207, "These flags of France, that are advanced here." F. *avancer*, 'to go forward,' from F. *avant*, 'before.'

alarum, II. 2. 74; another form of *alarm*, from Ital. *all' arme*,

'to arms!' (Lat. *ad illa arma*); properly an *alarum* or *alarm* was a summons to take up arms. Now *alarum* keeps the idea 'summons, call,' while *alarm* indicates the fear which such a summons causes.

allow, III. 3. 45, 'to acknowledge.' Hence **allowance**, 'acknowledgment' (III. 2. 57). This is an off-shoot of the old etymological sense 'to approve' (Lat. *allaudare*, 'to praise'); cf. *Romans* vii. 15, "that which I do I allow not."

atone, IV. 6. 73, 'to agree'; cf. *As You Like It*, V. 4. 114—116:

"Then there is mirth in heaven,
When earthly things made even
Atone together,"

i.e. are in a state of harmony. This is the etymological idea of *atone*, the word being formed from *at one*, used in phrases like 'to make, to set, *at one*,' i.e. bring into a state of *oneness*, harmony. An essential idea of *atonement* in theology is reconciliation. Usually *atone* in this original sense is transitive; cf. *Othello*, IV. 1. 243, 244:

"I would do much
To atone them, for the love I bear to Cassio."

bale, I. 1. 156; literally 'evil' (A.S. *bealu*), e.g. death (in oldest writers), suffering, pain, woe, misery, destruction. Often used in antithesis to 'bliss'; Mr Craig quotes from Lodge's *Rosalynde* (the tale on which *As You Like It* is founded): "The greatest seas subject to the most storms, the highest bliss subject to the most bale." Shakespeare does not use the noun again, but *baleful*='harmful, pernicious,' occurs in *Romeo*, II. 3. 8 ("baleful weeds"), 1 *Henry VI.* II. 1. 15 ("baleful sorcery"), and elsewhere. Milton seems to use *baleful* in two senses—'full of sorrow, unhappy' (*Par. Lost*, I. 56, "baleful eyes"), and 'full of harm' (*Comus*, 255, "baleful drugs").

batten, IV. 5. 32, 'to feed,' literally 'to grow fat' like an animal; from the same root signifying 'excellence, prosperity,' as *better*, *best*, Germ. *besser*. Cf. Herrick, *Content in the Country:*

"We eate our own, and batten more,
Because we feed on no man's score."

bisson, II. 1. 58, 'purblind, dim-sighted.' The usual sense was 'destitute of sight, blind.' Used actively in *Hamlet*, II. 2. 529 (the Player's speech), where "bisson rheum"=blinding tears. The word seems to have been not uncommon in the northern dialects. Some derive *bisson* from A.S. *bīsēonde*, literally 'by, near'+'seeing,' i.e. near-sighted; but this is very doubtful. (*New E. Dict.*)

bolt, III. 1. 322. To *bolt* (or *boult*) is a miller's term='to sift meal

from bran in the preparation of flour.' O.F. *buleter*, from an earlier form *bureter*, 'to sift through coarse red cloth' (Low Lat. *burra*).

The figurative use is well illustrated in *Comus*, 760:

"I hate when Vice can bolt her arguments,
And Virtue has no tongue to check her pride,"

i.e. can use subtle, refined reasoning. Similarly in one of his prose-tracts (*Animadversions*, 1641) Milton refers to his opponent as "this passing fine sophistical bolting-hutch." There was a legal term *boltings* = 'the private arguing of law cases for practice.'

bonnet, III. 2. 73, 'head-dress, cap.' Cf. *Richard II.* I. 4. 31, "Off goes his bonnet to an oyster-wench"; *Lycidas*, 104, "His mantle hairy and his bonnet sedge" (the description of the river-god Camus). Some people, says Bacon in his *Essay* on Usury, think "that usurers should have orange-tawney bonnets" as a distinctive badge.

buss, III. 2. 75. An onomatopœic word, i.e. one which imitates or suggests in its sound the thing or action signified. Cf. *pat*, *smack*.

carbonado, IV. 5. 187, 'a piece of meat cut and slashed for broiling on the coals'; Spanish *carbonada*, from Span. *carbon*, Lat. *carbo*, 'coal.' Spanish words came into Elizabethan E. through wars, voyages, and trade. Most words imported from Spanish, Portuguese and Italian got Anglicised by affixing the termination *o*, as a mark of foreign extraction. Cf. *coranto* ('a quick dame'), *duello* etc.

cautelous, IV. 1. 33, 'crafty.' Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, II. 1. 129, "Swear priests and cowards and men cautelous" (i.e. make to swear); and the noun *cautel* = 'deceit, wile' in *Hamlet*, I. 3. 15. Sometimes *cautel* has the good sense 'caution, heedfulness' or 'a precaution' (Lat. *cautela* from *cavere*, 'to beware'), and *cautelous* the corresponding sense 'cautious, heedful, circumspect.'

censure. The original sense, common in Elizabethan E., of the verb was 'to judge' = Lat. *censere;* so *censure* = 'judgment, opinion' (I. 1. 261). As we are apt to judge others unfavourably, *censure* came to mean 'condemnation' (III. 3. 46), 'blame.' Words tend to deteriorate in sense.

changeling, IV. 7. 11, 'one given to change; a fickle, inconstant person'; cf. "fickle changelings," 1 *Henry IV.* V. 1. 76; an obsolete use. Usually *changeling* means an elf-child left by the fairies in place of one stolen by them.

"The King is not the King,
But only changeling out of Fairy-land,"

said the enemies of King Arthur, in reference to the story of his

discovery on the Cornish coast by the wizard Merlin (*Idylls of the King, Gareth*).

cicatrice, II. 1. 137, 'the scar left by a wound' (Lat. *cicatrix*). So in *Hamlet*, IV. 3. 62:

"Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red
After the Danish sword."

cog, III. 2. 133, 'to wheedle'; from the ordinary sense 'to cheat, trick, deceive.' A gambling-term for cheating with the dice, found as early as 1532 in a work on *Dice-Play*. Of unknown origin, like most slang terms.

coign, V. 4. 1. Properly *coign* means 'a projecting corner,' being an obsolete spelling of *coin*, 'a corner-stone,' hence 'a corner, angle.' F. *coin*, 'a corner'; literally 'a wedge' (Lat. *cuneus*). The word is familiar in the common quotation from *Macbeth*, I. 6. 7, "coign of vantage" = 'any position that affords special facility for observation or action.'

complexion, II. 1. 199; this was an old physiological term for 'the combination of the four "humours" of the body in a certain proportion'; hence 'the disposition, temperament,' arising from this combination, and so 'the general appearance' (II. 1. 199) as indicating the character or type of person. Lat. *complexio* used in Late Lat. = 'bodily constitution, habit,' from *complectere*, 'to embrace, combine.'

coy, V. 1. 6, 'to disdain'; an extension of the verb *coy* = 'to act coyly, to affect shyness or reserve.' The starting-point of the adj. *coy* (O.F. *coi*, Lat. *quietus*) is 'quiet, still'; hence 'shy, reserved'; leading naturally to the notion of 'affected shyness.' A good illustration of the tendency of words to deteriorate in sense.

crank, I. 1. 130, 'a winding passage.' Cf. North's *Plutarch* ("Life of Theseus"): She (Ariadne) "did give him a clue of thread, by the help whereof she taught him, how he might easily wind out of the turnings and crancks of the labyrinth." Shakespeare does not use the noun elsewhere, but he has the verb twice: cf. 1 *Henry IV.* III. 1. 98, "See how this river comes me cranking in," and *Venus and Adonis*, 682, "He cranks and crosses with a thousand doubles" (i.e. the hunted hare). From the radical notion 'a crook, bend, a winding path or channel' comes the figurative sense 'a twist or fanciful turn of speech'; familiar to us from Milton's lines in *L'Allegro*, 27, 28:

"Quips, and cranks, and wanton wiles,
Nods and becks, and wreathed smiles."

damask. The Syrian city of *Damascus* was famous for its red roses,

and a favourite species called the "damask rose" was (and is) much cultivated in England. In Shakespeare *damask* implies red (II. 1. 203), or red and white mixed.

demerit, 'merit, desert.' Shakespeare uses the word three times (always in the plural); twice (I. 1. 265, and *Othello*, I. 2. 22) in a good sense, once in a bad (*Macbeth*, IV. 3. 226). The normal Elizabethan meaning is 'desert' in a bad sense; or 'censurable conduct, misdeed,' i.e. in antithesis to *merit*.

determine, III. 3. 43, 'to end, terminate.' The senses 'to put an end to (in time), to bring to an end,' and 'to come to an end, cease to exist or be in force,' are common in Elizabethan E., but now chiefly confined to legal documents. The idea of 'end' runs through all the uses of *determine;* cf. II. 2. 35 ('having come to a final decision about'). Lat. *de+terminari*, 'to set a limit or *terminus* to.'

disease, I. 3. 102, 'to spoil, upset.' Elizabethan writers often use *disease* with its radical notion="to deprive of ease, make uneasy; to put to discomfort or inconvenience; to trouble, annoy, incommode, molest." Compare the noun in *King Lear*, I. 1. 177, where Lear, banishing Kent, says:

> "Five days we do allot thee, for provision
> To shield thee from diseases of the world,"

i.e. to make provision against the inconveniences of exile. It is not hard to trace the transition to *disease* in its modern sense.

doom, I. 8. 6, 'to sentence, condemn.' Cf. *doomsday*, A.S. *dómes dæg*, 'day of judgment.' Cognate with A.S. *déman*, 'to judge,' whence *deem*.

dragon, IV. 1. 30; properly 'a huge serpent or snake; a python'; hence (vaguely) 'a mythical monster,' pictured as half snake, half crocodile, with strong claws like those of a beast or bird of prey. Compare the description of the "old Dragon" in *The Faerie Queene*, I. 11. 8—14. The word suggests the classical and mediæval tales of dragons, like "those which watchfully guarded the Gardens of the Hesperides, those which drew the chariot of Cynthia or the moon, those fought and slain by Beowulf, St George, and other champions." Gk. δράκων, from a root meaning 'to see clearly.'

embarquement, I. 10. 22, 'hindrance, impediment.' A variant form of the obsolete word *embargement*='a placing under *embargo*.'

Embargo is a Spanish word; lit. 'a putting a *bar* in the way of ships,' hence 'a prohibition from entering or leaving harbour'; and so any 'prohibition, impediment.'

empiricutic, II. 1. 107 = *empirical*, as applied to a doctor "who bases his methods of practice on the results of observations and experiment, not on scientific theory": hence, in a bad sense, 'one who practises without scientific knowledge, a quack.' A quack medicine was termed *empiric*. Gk. ἐμπειρικός, from ἐμπειρία, 'experience.'

emulation, I. 1. 207, 'jealousy, envy'; the usual sense in Shakespeare. Cf. *As You Like It*, I. 1. 149, 150, "an envious *emulator* of every man's good parts" (i.e. envier). In *Galatians* v. 20, "variance, *emulations*, wrath," the Revised Version changes to "jealousies"; see too *Romans* xi. 14. Lat. *æmulari*, 'to strive to equal.'

engine, v. 4. 18. Properly 'a contrivance,' i.e. something made with *ingenuity* (Lat. *ingenium*); hence 'instrument,' especially 'a machine of war,' as in the early translations of the Bible.

envy. The primary idea is 'malignant or hostile feeling; malice, spite'; as in the Bible often, e.g. in *Romans* xiii. 13, "Let us walk honestly...not in strife and envying." The comprehensive use of *envy* in Bacon's *Essay* on the subject has often been remarked.

favour; often = 'face, features' (IV. 3. 9). So *well-favoured* = 'of good looks, handsome,' as in *Genesis* xxix. 17, "Rachel was beautiful and well favoured"; and *ill-favoured* = 'ugly.' *Favour* meant (1) 'kindness,' (2) 'expression of kindness in the face,' (3) 'the face itself.'

flaw, v. 3. 74, 'a sudden gust of wind.' Cf. *Hamlet*, v. 1. 238, 239:

> "O, that that earth, which kept the world in awe,
> Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw!"

Milton has a fine description of northern winds (*Paradise Lost*, x. 697, 698):

> "Bursting their brazen dungeon, armed with ice
> And snow and hail and stormy gust and flaw."

The same as *flaw*, 'a crack' = Swedish *flaga*, 'a crack,' also 'blast of wind.' Perhaps 'sudden burst' is the radical notion.

fob, 'to cheat, deceive, trick'; hence to *fob off* (I. 1. 87) = 'to put or shift off a thing by deceit or pretence; to get rid of, or set aside by a trick.' Cf. Germ. *foppen*, 'to deceive, befool.'

There is a variant form *fub*; cf. 2 *Henry IV.* II. 1. 37, "I have borne, and borne...and been fubbed off, and fubbed off" (the Hostess complaining that Falstaff will not pay his debts).

foil, I. 9. 48, 'to defeat.' O.F. *fouler*, 'to trample under foot,' just as a *fuller* is wont to trample on or beat cloth; hence 'to treat like a beaten enemy.' Cf. *The Faerie Queene*, v. 11. 33:

"Whom he did all to peeces breake, and foyle
In filthy durt, and left so in the loathely soyle."

fond, IV. 1. 26, 'foolish'; its old meaning. Cf. *King Lear*, IV. 7. 60, 'I am a very foolish, fond old man." Hence *fondly*='foolishly.' The transition to the modern sense is clear: 'foolish—foolishly affectionate—affectionate.' The root (='fool') is Scandinavian.

fosset. Properly 'a peg or spigot to stop the vent-hole in a cask or in a tap; a vent-peg': hence 'a tap for drawing liquor from a barrel'—as here (II. 1. 64). An obsolete form of *faucet*.

franchise, IV. 6. 87. The root-idea is 'freedom': hence 'immunity' from any burden, e.g. taxation, and so 'privilege,' 'right,' especially a political privilege or right such as a vote. O.F. *franc*, 'free,' came from the "name *Francus*, which acquired the sense of 'free' because in Frankish Gaul full freedom was possessed only by those belonging to, or adopted into, the dominant people," i.e. the Germanic people, the *Franks*, who conquered Gaul in the 6th century, and from whom the country came to be called *France*.

gentry, 'the quality or rank of a gentleman, gentle birth' (III. 1. 144); hence those who are of this class (II. 1. 225). The primary sense of *gentle* was 'well-born, belonging to a family of position.' L. *gentilis*, belonging to the same *gens* or race. It is easy to see how the fact of belonging to a *gens* would come to imply high birth.

guardant, literally 'guarding, protecting,' hence 'on guard' (V. 2. 59). Used as a noun in 1 *Henry VI.* IV. 7. 9, "my angry guardant." Now limited to heraldry, in which an animal *guardant* is one that has its face full towards the spectator.

havoc, III. 1. 275. The old phrase *cry havoc* (=O.F. *crier havot*) meant "originally to give to an army the order *havoc!* as the signal for the seizure of spoil, and so of general spoliation or pillage." Hence the notion 'merciless destruction, giving no quarter.' Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, III. 1. 273, "Cry 'havoc!' and let slip the dogs of war."

his; this was the ordinary *neuter* (as well as masculine) possessive pronoun in Middle E. and remained so in Elizabethan E. Cf. *Genesis* iii. 15, "*it* shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise *his* heel." There was also a use, not common, of *it* as a possessive, though uninflected; especially in the phrase **it own**. Cf. *The Tempest*, II. 1. 163, "of it own kind," and the Bible of 1611 in *Leviticus* xxv. 5, "of it owne accord."

Then from the possessive use of *it* uninflected there arose, about the

close of the 16th century, the inflected form *its*, in which *-s* is the usual possessive inflection, as in *his*. This new form *its* came into use slowly, the old idiom *his* being generally retained by Elizabethans. There are no instances of *its* in Spenser or the Bible (1611), and only three in Milton's poetical works (*Paradise Lost*, I. 254, IV. 813, *Nativity Ode*, 106). *Its* does not occur in any extant work of Shakespeare printed prior to his death: hence it seems not improbable that the nine instances in the 1st Folio (five in a single play, *The Winter's Tale*) were due to the editors or printers.

hoop, 'to shout,' generally with the idea of wonder and surprise, here of insult (IV. 5. 78). For the former cf. *As You Like It*, III. 2. 201, 203: "O wonderful, wonderful!...out of all hooping!" i.e. too marvellous for words. O.F. *houper;* cf. '*hooping*-cough.'

humour. It was an old belief that all existing things consist of four *elements;* that in the human body these *elements* appear as four *humours*—fire=choler, water=phlegm, earth=melancholy or black bile, air=blood; and that a man's 'temperament' or nature depends upon the way in which these *humours* are 'tempered,' i.e. mixed, in him. So in Elizabethan E. *humour* often='prevailing character, peculiarity of disposition.' Compare the titles of Ben Jonson's comedies, *Every Man in his Humour* and *Every Man out of his Humour*. Hence **humorous** (II. 1. 43)='prone to be moved by humour or mood, whimsical.'

inherit; then often used='to have, possess' without (as now) the notion of '*heir*ship' (Lat. *heres*, 'an heir'); hence 'to obtain, to realise' (II. 1. 186). So **inheritance**='possession' (III. 2. 68).

injurious, III. 3. 69, 'insulting,' like F. *injurieux*. So *injury*='insult, abusive speech' in 3 *Henry VI*. IV. 1. 107: "But what said Warwick to these injuries?"

kam, or **cam**, III. 1. 304; a Celtic word, which England owed to Wales; Welsh *cam*, 'crooked, bent, awry.' The phrase "clean, or quite, *cam*" is used figuratively='awry, athwart, cross from the purpose.' Cf. Cotgrave's *Dictionary* (1611): "*contrefoil*, the wrong way, cleane contrarie, quite kamme"; and "*contrepoil*, against the wool, the wrong way, quite kamme." *Cam* survives as a dialect-word, especially in the figurative sense 'obstinate, perverse'; also literally in compounds, e.g. '*cam*-handed'='awkward, clumsy.' It appears in names, e.g. *Cam*, the river of *Cam*bridge, More*cambe* Bay, 'the crooked-sea bay,' *Cam*den, 'the crooked vale.'

leasing, V. 2. 22, 'falsehood'; cf. *Psalm* v. 6, "Thou shalt destroy

them that speak leasing." The notion in *leasing* (A.S. *lēasung*, 'falsehood) is '*looseness* of statement.'

lockram, II. 1. 196, a coarse linen fabric for wearing apparel and household use; so called from the name of a village (*Locronan*='the cell of St Ronan') in Brittany, where it was formerly made. Other fabrics called after the original place of manufacture or export are *calico* from *Calicut* on the Malabar coast, *cambric* (1. 3. 82) from *Cambray* in Flanders, *cyprus* (a kind of crape or gauze) from the Island of *Cyprus*, *frieze* from *Friesland*, *fustian* from *Fustát*, an Arabic name of Cairo.

lurch, II. 2. 99; a variant of *lurk*. From the original sense 'to remain in or about a place furtively, especially for some evil purpose,' came the meaning 'to get hold of by stealth, to pilfer, steal.' Now used of poaching; cf. *lurcher*='a poacher' or 'a poacher's dog.'

maim, 'a wound,' IV. 5. 86; *maimed* was the special term applied to a knight disabled from fighting by the loss of a limb. Chivalry as embodied in the mediæval system of the Duello or single combat, with its code of rules and technical terms, left a lasting mark on the language.

malkin, II. 1. 195, 'a wench.' The name *Malkin* (=*Maldkin*) is a diminutive of *Mald* (whence the softened form *Maud*). These forms are cognate with *Matilda*.

mammock, I. 3. 63, 'to tear in pieces'; rare as a verb in literary English. *Mammock* seems to be still quite common as a dialect-word, both noun and verb; apparently most used of children (as in *Coriolanus*) in reference to eating their food awkwardly or tumbling and messing their clothes.

mankind; literally 'resembling man, not woman, in form or nature' ('kind'): hence 'unwomanly, masculine (in bad sense), bold' (IV. 2. 16); finally 'ferocious, furious.' See Lyly's play *The Woman in the Moon*, II. 1: "What! is my mistress mankind on the sudden?" (where Pandora, in a fit of wrath, begins to cudgel her suitors).

mercy, I. 10. 7, 'power, discretion.' Cf. the O.F. phrase *estre à merci*='to be in the power of anyone as to the amount of a fine (Late Lat. *merx*) which he could impose.' To *amerce* is to impose a fine (*merx*) upon. A false derivation from Lat. *misericordia*, 'pity,' has affected the general meaning of *mercy*.

mere, 'absolute, utter'; the regular Shakespearian sense. Lat. *merus*, 'pure, unmixed.' So **merely**='absolutely, entirely' (III. 1. 305).

microcosm, II. 1. 57. "A little world or cosmos; the world in

miniature; something representing or assumed to represent the principle of universality: often applied to man regarded as an epitome, physically and morally, of the universe or great world (the *macrocosm*)"—*Century Dict.* Used sometimes in its classical guise; cf. Lyly's play *Endymion*, IV. 2: "I am an absolute Microcosmus, a pettie world of myself."

mountebank, III. 2. 132, 'to gull,' like a quack doctor; literally 'one who *mounts a bench*, to proclaim the merits of his medicines' etc. Ital. *montambanco*. Evelyn in his *Diary* says: "I spent an afternoon in Piazza Navona [at Rome], as well to see what antiquities I could purchase...as to heare the Mountebanks prate and distribute their medicines."

mutiny, II. 3. 247, 'insurrection, strife'; not merely of soldiers, as now. Cognate with F. *émeute;* from the root of Lat. *movere*, 'to move,' the original idea being '*motion*, tumult.'

nicely. *Nice* comes through O.F. *nice*, from Lat. *nescius*, 'ignorant,' and one can trace its meanings from the original notion of 'ignorance' to the modern sense, thus: 'ignorant'—'unwise, foolish' (the Chaucerian sense)—'foolishly particular, fastidious'—'satisfying to a fastidious taste, i.e. delicate, fine, agreeable.' The main Shakespearian senses are 'precise, subtle'; 'scrupulous, too particular,' and so 'coy, prudish'; 'petty, trifling'—cf. "nice offence" in *Julius Cæsar*, IV. 3. 8, i.e. one which only a *very* scrupulous person would trouble about; and 'fine, delicate, dainty' (II. 1. 204). The notion 'foolish' or 'foolishly particular' is often to be found in Elizabethan uses of *nice*. The word is noticeable as having improved in sense.

owe, III. 2. 130, V. 2. 77, 'to own, possess.' *Owe* meant originally 'to possess,' being closely akin to *own;* then 'to possess another's property,' and so 'to be in debt for.' Cf. *King John*, II. 1. 246—248:

> "Be pleased then
> To pay that duty which you truly owe
> To him that owes it, namely this young prince."

parcel, 'a portion, a single constituent, an item' (I. 2. 32, IV. 5. 215). This is the regular Shakespearian use of *parcel*. Late Lat. *particella*, 'a small part.'

pester, IV. 6. 7. Short for *impester* = F. *empêtrer*, which "signifies properly to hobble a horse while he feeds a-field." Lat. *in*, 'on, upon,' + Late Lat. *pastorium*, 'a clog for horses at *pasture*.' The etymological sense is seen in Milton's line (*Comus*, 7), "*Confined* and *pester'd* in this *pinfold* here," i.e. penned up and shackled, like animals

in a *pound*. The connection between 'hampering'—'crowding'—'harassing' is obvious.

pound, I. 4. 17; literally 'to confine, like stray cattle, in a *pound* or *pinfold*'; from A.S. *pyndan*, 'to *pen* up.' Cf. *Henry V.* I. 2. 160:

"She hath herself not only well defended
But taken and *impounded as a stray*
The King of Scots."

prank, III. 1. 23, 'to deck, dress up'; often rather contemptuous, as here, with the idea of 'showiness.' Cf. Perdita's description of herself (*The Winter's Tale*, IV. 4. 10):

"me, poor lowly maid,
Most goddess-like prank'd up."

A favourite word with old writers, e.g. Herrick; and still common amongst country-folk. In some counties *pranked* or *prankied* is used of a brindled cow, also of a jay. Akin to *prance* (properly 'to make a show') and Germ. *prunk*, 'show, pomp.'

pretence, I. 2. 20, 'intention, design'; the original meaning, common in Elizabethan E.; cf. *Macbeth*, II. 3. 137:

"Against the undivulged pretence fight
Of treasonous malice" (i.e. the secret design).

So the verb = 'to intend, mean'; cf. *Macbeth*, II. 4. 24, "what good could they pretend?" Lat. *prætendere*, 'to hold out something' before oneself, e.g. as a screen, or (figuratively) as an object of aim: whence respectively the ideas 'to deceive' and 'to intend.'

proof, I. 4. 25, 'able to resist, impenetrable.' This adjectival use is elliptical for the phrase "of proof" (='impenetrable'). *Proof* was specially applied to arms and armour to denote that they had been properly tested and found impenetrable or true. F. *preuve*, Late Lat. *proba*, 'a test.'

puny, IV. 4. 6, 'petty'; literally 'younger,' F. *puis né*, Lat. *post natus*. Cf. "*Puisne* Judge," a judge of inferior rank. Milton uses it in its etymological sense in the *Areopagitica*, where he speaks of "a puny with his guardian," i.e. a young man not yet of age.

pupil, II. 2. 96. Lat. *pupillus*, 'an orphan'; diminutive of *pupus*, 'a boy,' which is cognate with *puer*.

quarry, I. 1. 191, 'a heap of slaughtered game'; a hunting-term. O.F. *cuiree*, the intestines of a slain animal, the part given to the hounds; so called because wrapped in the skin (F. *cuir*, 'a skin, hide,' from Lat. *corium*, 'hide'). Most terms of the chase came from the Normans (the great nobles), as was natural.

rascal, I. 1. 152. A term of the chase for animals not worth hunting on account of their lean, poor condition, or too young. Cf. 1 *Henry VI.* IV. 2. 48, 49:

"If we be English deer, be then in blood,
Not rascal-like, to fall down with a pinch."

Hence the general sense 'mean,' 'good for nothing.' F. *racaille*, 'rabble.'

recreant, V. 3. 114, 'a coward, spiritless creature,' said of the knight who in a trial by combat owns himself vanquished and yields (Late Lat. *se recredit*) to his foe, thereby acknowledging his guilt.

reechy, II. 1. 196, 'grimy, dirty'; literally 'smoky.' A softened form of *reeky*, from *reek* (III. 3. 121), 'smoke, vapour,' cognate with Germ. *rauch*, 'smoke.' "Auld *Reekie*" is a popular title of Edinburgh.

repeal, V. 5. 5; in the literal sense 'to recall' (F. *rappeler*, Lat. *re*, 'back,' + *appellare*, 'to call, summon'), especially from exile; cf. *Richard II.* II. 2. 49, "The *banish'd* Bolingbroke *repeals* himself," i.e. returns from exile. So the noun in IV. 1. 41.

ruth, I. 1. 190, 'pity'; akin to Germ. *reue*, 'repentance.' Cf. the Gardener's words in *Richard II.* III. 4. 106, 107:

"Rue, even for ruth, here shortly shall be seen,
In the remembrance of a weeping queen."

sconce, 'a fortification, bulwark'; hence 'a protection for the head, helmet'; and so (contemptuously) 'the head' itself (III. 2. 99). O.F. *esconse*, 'a hiding-place,' Lat. *absconsa* (from *abscondere*, 'to hide').

scotch, IV. 5. 186; 'to cut, slash.' Isaac Walton's recipe (*Complete Angler*) for dressing a chub was: "Give him three or four scotches or cuts on the back with your knife, and broil him on charcoal." In masonry, *scotching* is a term for dressing stone by chipping it out with a chisel in a particular way. There are various provincial uses of *scotch*, e.g. 'to *scotch* a hedge,' i.e. trim it, 'to *scotch* a score,' i.e. notch a tally. But as a literary word it is obsolete, except in the common *Macbeth* quotation (III. 2. 13).

sennet; a term frequent in Elizabethan stage-directions for a set of notes on a trumpet, sounded as a signal, e.g. of entrance (II. 1. 149) or departure; different from a "flourish" (II. 1. 154). Sometimes spelt *signet*, which shows the derivation—O.F. *signet*, Lat. *signum*, 'a sign.'

shent, V. 2. 92, 'rebuked, rated.' Shakespeare uses only the p.p. of *shend*, which Spenser has often, especially in the sense 'to disgrace, shame.' Hamlet says (of his mother), III. 2. 416, 417:

"How in my words soever she be shent,
To give them seals never, my soul, consent!"

sowl, or **sole**, IV. 5. 200, 'to pull, drag'; generally with the qualification "by the ears." Still a living word among country-people, meaning 'to pull by the ears,' 'handle roughly,' 'to thrash, chastise.' In the game of bowls there is a phrase "to *sole* the bowl"='handle it skilfully.'

still. The radical meaning of the adj. *still* is 'abiding in its place'; hence='constantly, ever,' as an adverb. Cf. "the still-vexed Bermoothes," i.e. continually disturbed by storms, *The Tempest*, I. 2. 229.

success. Its usual sense in Elizabethan E. is 'result, fortune'—how a person fares in a matter, or a thing turns out, whether well or ill. So clearly in I. 1. 253, "good success," V. 1. 62, and in *Troilus and Cressida*, II. 2. 117, "Nor fear of bad success in a bad cause." It also meant, as always now, 'good fortune'; cf. I. 9. 75.

surcease, III. 2. 121, 'cease'; properly a legal term='the arrest or stoppage of a legal suit'; O.F. *sursis*, from O.F. *surseoir*, 'to pause'=Lat. *supersedere*, 'to forbear.' Note that *surcease* is quite distinct from (though its form may have been affected by) *cease*=F. *cesser*, Lat. *cessare*.

tent, I. 9. 31, III. 1. 236, 'to cure,' properly 'to probe' a wound. The noun *tent* means a roll of linen to probe, i.e. try (Lat. *tentare*), a wound. For the secondary sense 'to cure,' cf. *King Lear*, I. 4. 322, "untented woundings," i.e. incurable.

testy, II. 1. 40, 'easily angered, touchy'; O.F. *testu*, 'heady,' from O.F. *teste* (i.e. *tête*), 'head.' Cf. *Richard III.* III. 4. 38—40:

"Catesby hath sounded Hastings in our business,
And finds the testy gentleman so hot,
As he will lose his head ere give consent."

tetter, III. 1. 79, 'to affect with *tetter*.' This was a comprehensive name of several cutaneous diseases, such as eczema. Applied in *Hamlet*, I. 5. 71, to the effect of the poison poured into the ear of Hamlet's father.

unbarbed, III. 2. 99, literally 'not equipped with a *barb*=a covering for the breast and flanks of a war-horse'; *barb* seems to be corrupted from *bard*=F. *barde*, 'horse-armour.' Cf. Holinshed, "the duke of Hereford, mounted on a white courser, *barded* with greene & blew velvet." Here the protection meant is a helmet.

unsevered, III. 2. 42, 'inseparable.' Elizabethan writers constantly treat the termination *-ed*, which belongs to the passive participle, as

equal to the adjectival ending *-able;* especially with words which have the negative prefix *un-*. Cf. "unvalued jewels," i.e. invaluable, *Richard III.* I. 4. 27. So in Milton often; cf. *L'Allegro*, 40:

"To live with her and live with thee,
In unreproved pleasures free."

urn, V. 6. 145. Elizabethan writers often use *urn*='grave'; so in *Lycidas*, 20, "With lucky words favour my destined urn."

vail, III. 1. 98, 'to lower'; especially to lower a cap or mast as a sign of respect. F. *avaler*, 'to put down,' hence 'to swallow,' from Lat. *ad*+*vallem*, 'to the valley.' Scott means *vail* when he describes (*The Lord of the Isles*, I. xii.) a vessel "stooping" her mast

"As if she veil'd its banner'd pride
To greet afar her prince's bride."

vaward, I. 6. 52, 'vanguard of the army'; another spelling of *vanward*=O.F. *avantwarde*, 'foreguard.' Cf. Scott, *Lord of the Isles*, VI. xii.:

"To centre of the vaward line
Fitz-Louis guided Amadine."

vent, IV. 5. 222; a technical term of the chase='scent,' i.e. "the odour left on the ground by which the track of game is followed in the chase"; Lat. *ventus*, 'wind.' Cf. Turberville's *Art of Venery* (='hunting, the chase'): "I have seen the houndes passe by such a hart within a yard of him and never vent him."

virtue, I. 1. 36; what a man (*vir*) should specially be, i.e. 'brave.' This was the oldest sense in English as in Latin (*virtus*).

weal, II. 3. 173, 'state'; used thus, *weal* is short for *common weal*, literally 'the common welfare'; cf. I. 1. 144, "the weal o' the common." So *public weal*, *general weal*. Hence **wealsman**, 'statesman' (II. 1. 49), said contemptuously. Properly *weal*='the condition of being *well*, in *wealth*'—cf. "in health, wealth, and prosperity"; and *well* means 'according to one's *will*, as one would desire.'

weed, II. 3. 145, 212, 'garment'; A.S. *wēd*, 'a garment, dress.' The singular is rare, but cf. *A Midsummer-N. D.*, II. 1. 255, 256:

"And there the snake throws her enamell'd skin,
Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in."

Now a poetical usage, apart from the phrase "widow's weeds."

wot, IV. 1. 27, V. 163; this is the present tense of the 'anomalous' verb *wit*, 'to know,' A.S. *witan*. The Bible (1611) preserves the past tense *wist*, e.g. in *Mark* ix. 6, "he wist not what to say." Akin to Germ. *wissen*, 'to know'; also to Lat. *videre*.

EXTRACTS FROM NORTH'S "PLUTARCH[1]" THAT ILLUSTRATE "CORIOLANUS."

The following passages will give some idea of the relation of "Coriolanus" to its source—North's *Plutarch*.

Extracts 1—5 correspond with scenes 1—3 of Act v. and, taken together, may, I think, be said to form a typical piece of illustration. To quote only extracts 3, 4, 5 would be unfair to Shakespeare: a wrong impression would be conveyed: the student could not help overestimating the resemblance of the play to its source. Extracts 1, 2 redress the balance. They show how Shakespeare merely utilised the incidents found in Plutarch, with only an occasional reminiscence of the language of North's translation; and this was his general practice throughout the play. But extracts 3, 4, 5 show also how, at times, he did something more: how he reproduced the very language of the translation in places, especially in speeches, where Plutarch and his translator were at their greatest—so great indeed that they could hardly be bettered. And thus the five passages form a typical group.

The Romans send ambassadors to Coriolanus.

1. And when the news of the Volscian invasion reached Rome there was great dismay, and dissension until "they all agreed together to send ambassadors unto Coriolanus, to let him understand how his countrymen did call him home again, and restored him to all his goods, and besought him to deliver them from this war. The ambassadors that were sent were Martius' familiar friends and acquaintance, who looked at the least for a courteous welcome of him, as of their familiar friend

[1] Taken from Professor Skeat's selection entitled *Shakespeare's Plutarch*. The italics, introduced by me, emphasize verbal resemblances to *Coriolanus*.

and kinsman. Howbeit they found nothing less: for at their coming they were brought through the camp to the place where *he was set in his chair of state*, with a marvellous and an unspeakable majesty, having the chiefest men of the Volsces about him: so he commanded them to declare openly the cause of their coming. Which they delivered in the most humble and lowly words they possibly could devise, and with all modest countenance and behaviour agreeable to the same. When they had done their message, for[1] the injury they had done him, he answered them very hotly and in great choler: but as general of the Volsces he willed[2] them to restore unto the Volsces all their lands and cities they had taken from them in former wars: and moreover, that they should give them the like honour and freedom of Rome as they had before given to the Latins. For otherwise they had no other mean to end this war, if they did not grant these honest and just conditions of peace. Thereupon he gave them thirty days' respite to make him answer. So the ambassadors returned straight to Rome, and Martius forthwith departed with his army out of the territories of the Romans. This was the first matter wherewith the Volsces (that most envied Martius' glory and authority) did charge Martius with. Among those, Tullus was chief: who though he had received no private injury or displeasure of Martius, yet the common fault and imperfection of man's nature wrought in him, and it grieved him to see his own reputation blemished through Martius' great fame and honour, and so himself to be less esteemed of the Volsces than he was before. This fell out the more, because every man honoured Martius, and thought he only could do all, and that all other governors and captains must be content with such credit and authority as he would please to countenance them with. From hence they derived all their first accusations and secret murmurings against Martius."

"Shall I be tempted to infringe my vow?"

2. And when, at the end of the thirty days, Coriolanus came back into the dominions of the Romans and camped before Rome, then his mother Volumnia, at the entreaty of the lady Valeria and other ladies, "took her daughter-in-law and Martius' children with her, and being accompanied with all the other Roman ladies, they went in troup together unto the Volsces' camp: whom when they saw, they of themselves did both pity and reverence her, and there was not a man among them that once durst say a word unto her. Now was Martius *set then*

[1] in regard to. [2] demanded that they should.

in his chair of state, with all the honours of a general, and when he had spied the women coming afar off, he marvelled what the matter meant: but afterwards knowing *his wife* which *came foremost*, he determined at the first to persist in his obstinate and inflexible rancour. But overcome in the end with natural affection, and being altogether altered to see them, his heart would not serve him to tarry their coming to his chair, but coming down in haste he went to meet them, and first he kissed his mother, and embraced her a pretty while, then his wife and little children. And nature so wrought with him that the tears fell from his eyes, and he could not keep himself from making much of them, but yielded to the affection of his blood, as if he had been violently carried with the fury of a most swift running stream. After he had thus lovingly received them, and perceiving that his mother Volumnia would begin to speak to him, he called the chiefest of the council of the Volsces to hear what she would say."

Volumnia's pleading.

3. "Then she spake in this sort: '*If we held our peace, my son, and determined not to speak, the state of our poor bodies, and present sight of our raiment, would easily bewray to thee what life we have led at home, since thy exile and abode abroad; but think now with thyself, how much more unfortunate than all the women living, we are come hither, considering that the sight which should* be most pleasant to all other to behold, spiteful fortune had made most fearful to us: *making myself to see my son, and my daughter here her husband*, besieging the walls of his native country: so as[1] *that which is the only comfort to all other* in their adversity and misery, *to pray unto the gods* and to call to them for aid, is the only thing which plungeth us into most deep perplexity. *For we cannot, alas! together pray both for victory to our country and for safety of thy life also:* but a world of grievous curses, yea, more than any mortal enemy can heap upon us, are forcibly wrapt up in our prayers. For the bitter sop of most hard choice is offered thy wife and children, to forego one of the two: *either to lose the person of thyself, or the nurse of their native country. For myself, my son, I am determined not to tarry till fortune, in my lifetime, do make an end of this war. For if I cannot persuade thee, rather to do good unto both parties* than to overthrow and destroy the one, preferring love and nature before the malice and calamity of wars, thou shalt see, my son, and trust unto it, *thou*

[1] that.

shalt no sooner march forward to assault thy country, but thy foot shall tread upon thy mother's womb, that brought thee first into this world. And I may[1] *not defer*[2] *to see the day, either that my son be led prisoner in triumph by his natural countrymen, or that he himself do triumph of them, and of his natural country. For if it were so, that my request tended to save thy country, in destroying the Volsces*, I must confess, thou wouldest hardly and doubtfully resolve on that. For as, to destroy thy natural country, it is altogether unmeet and unlawful, so were it not just, and less honourable, to betray those that put their trust in thee. But my only demand consisteth, to make a gaol-delivery of all evils, which delivereth equal benefit and safety both to the one and the other, but most honourable for the Volsces. For it shall appear, that, having victory in their hands, they have of special favour granted us singular graces, peace, and amity, albeit themselves have no less part of both than we. Of which good, if so it came to pass, thyself is the only author, and so hast thou the only honour. But if it fail and fall out contrary, thyself alone deservedly shalt carry the shameful reproach and burthen of either party. So, *though the end of war be uncertain, yet this notwithstanding is most certain, that, if it be thy chance to conquer, this benefit shalt thou reap of thy goodly conquest, to be chronicled the plague and destroyer of thy country.* And if fortune overthrow thee, then the world will say, that, through desire to revenge thy private injuries, thou hast for ever undone thy good friends, who did most lovingly and courteously receive thee.'"

"Why dost not speak?"

4. "Martius gave good ear unto his mother's words, without interrupting her speech at all, and after she had said what she would, he held his peace a pretty while, and answered not a word. Hereupon she began again to speak unto him, and said: '*My son, why dost thou not answer me?* Dost thou think it good altogether to give place[3] unto thy choler and desire of revenge, and *thinkest thou it not honesty*[4] for thee to grant thy mother's request, in so weighty a cause? *Dost thou take it honourable for a noble man to remember the wrongs and injuries done him*, and dost not in like case think it an *honest*[5] noble man's part, to be thankful for the goodness that parents do shew to their children, acknowledging the duty and reverence they ought to bear unto them? *No man living is more bound to shew himself thankful in all parts and*

[1] can. [2] wait. [3] yield to. [4] right. [5] fair, honourable.

respects than thyself: who so unnaturally shewest all ingratitude. Moreover (my son) thou hast sorely taken of[1] thy country, exacting grievous payments upon them, in revenge of the injuries offered thee; *besides, thou hast not hitherto shewed thy poor mother any courtesy.* And therefore it is not only honest, but due unto me, that without compulsion I should obtain my so just and reasonable request of thee. But since by reason I cannot persuade thee to it, to what purpose do I defer my last hope?' And with these words, herself, his wife, and children fell down upon their knees before him."

"O mother, mother!"

5. "Martius, seeing that, could refrain no longer, but went straight and lift her up, crying out, '*Oh mother, what have you done to me?*' *And holding her hard by the right hand,* '*Oh mother,*' *said he,* '*you have won a happy victory for your country, but mortal and unhappy for your son:* for I see myself vanquished by you alone.' These words being spoken openly, he spake a little apart with his mother and wife, and then let them return again to Rome, for so they did request him; and so remaining in camp that night, the next morning he dislodged, and marched homeward into the Volsces' country again, who were not all of one mind, nor all alike contented. For some misliked[2] him and that[3] he had done: other[4], being well pleased that peace should be made, said that neither the one nor the other deserved blame nor reproach. Other, though they misliked that was done, did not think him an ill man for that he did, but said he was not to be blamed, though he yielded to such a forcible extremity. Howbeit no man contraried[5] his departure, but all obeyed his commandment, more for respect of his worthiness and valiancy than for fear of his authority."

The following is the original of Menenius' famous fable (I. 1. 89—139). It is complete in itself and easily detached from its context, and I therefore give it.

The "pretty tale" of Menenius.

"The Senate, being afraid of their departure, did send unto them certain of the pleasantest old men, and the most acceptable to the people among them. Of those Menenius Agrippa was he, who was sent for

[1] Cf. our colloquialism 'to take it out of.' [2] were displeased with. [3] what. [4] others. [5] opposed.

chief man of the message from the Senate. He, after many good persuasions and gentle requests made to the people, on the behalf of the Senate, knit up his oration in the end with a notable tale, in this manner: That '*on a time all the members of man's body did rebel against the belly, complaining of it, that it only*[1] *remained in the midst of the body* without doing any thing, *neither did bear any labour* to the maintenance *of the rest:* whereas all other parts and members did labour painfully[2], and were very careful, *to satisfy the appetites* and desires *of the body*. And so the belly, all this notwithstanding, laughed at their folly, and said: *It is true, I first receive all meats* that nourish man's body: but afterwards *I send it* again to the nourishment of other parts of the same. *Even so* (quoth he) O you, my masters, and citizens of Rome, the reason is alike between the Senate and you. For matters being well *digested*[3], *and their counsels throughly examined, touching the benefit of the commonwealth*, the Senators are cause of the common commodity[4] that cometh unto every one of you.' These persuasions pacified the people conditionally, that the Senate would grant there should be yearly chosen five Magistrates, which they now call Tribuni plebis, whose office should be to defend the poor people from violence and oppression."

An interesting parallel, but in a lesser degree of obligation, to Shakespeare's reproduction of the actual words of North's *Plutarch* is Tennyson's use in *The Idylls of the King* of Malory's *Morte Darthur*. The *Idylls* have many echoes of Malory's grand English, such as the description "clothed in white samite," applied both to the Holy Grail (513) and to the arm of the Lady of the Lake who gave King Arthur the sword Excalibur (*The Coming of Arthur*, 282—286) and took it back (*The Passing*, 311—314). And sometimes "Tennyson has woven the words of the original into new connections," as Shakespeare did with Plutarch in places (e.g. I. 9. 12).

[1] alone. [2] laboriously [3] considered. [4] advantage.

APPENDIX.

DRAMATIC[1] IRONY.

One of the most effective of dramatic devices is the use of "irony." The essential idea of "irony" is double dealing, as when some speech has a double meaning—the obvious one which all perceive, and the cryptic which only certain of the hearers understand. And "irony" of fate or circumstances is a sort of double dealing by which Destiny substitutes for what we might expect just the opposite, the unexpected, thing. Thus in *Macbeth* this "irony" of the broader kind informs Macbeth's later relations (IV. 1) with the Witches, in that through them revelations are made from which he anticipates certain results, whereas it happens that precisely the opposite results accrue to him. "The entire atmosphere of *Macbeth*" (it has been well said), "as of no other tragedy, is oppressive with the sense of something subtly malignant as well as inexorably revengeful in the forces that rule the world; of a tragic irony in the ultimate scheme of things."

But understood in the more limited sense in which "irony" is used as a dramatic term, it may be said, roughly, to lie in the difference between the facts as known to the audience and as imagined by the characters of

[1] The term "tragic irony" does not cover the full scope of this literary artifice, which, as we shall see, is equally used in the romantic drama for comic purposes, and equally effective as in the classical tragic drama. Gk. εἰρωνεία, 'dissembling' (Lat. *dissimulatio*). Literally εἴρων='one who speaks,' but the word came to mean specifically one who speaks after a particular manner, namely, as a dissembler who says less than he knows or thinks and affects ignorance, e.g. in argument—like Socrates. See Mr Moulton's sections on "irony."

the play or by some of them. Of this "irony" it may be useful to give some illustrations from three or four of the most familiar plays.

In *Macbeth*, the unsuspecting Duncan's lavish eulogy of Macbeth, whom the audience know to be a deeper traitor than Cawdor (I. 4); the King's pausing at Macbeth's castle-gate to commend the place which we know is to be the scene of his awful end (I. 6); his "unusual pleasure" and "measureless content" in the very last hour (II. 1); and the Porter's jesting about "hell-gate" all unconscious that the castle *is* a very hell (II. 3): these are signal instances of tragic "irony."

Again, in *Henry V.* II. 2. 12—69, the situation is pregnant with "irony" because the audience know (6, 7) that the conspiracy has been revealed to Henry, while the conspirators imagine that it is still a secret. Hence for the audience Henry's bearing and many of his remarks have a significance which is quite lost upon the conspirators themselves, who on their part are unconscious that their hollow protestations of loyalty are being estimated at their true value. The incident of the pardon (39—60) is introduced—we may remember that it has no parallel in Holinshed's account—entirely for the sake of the "irony." The conspirators urge Henry to be stern, and the audience know how their pleading will recoil upon themselves (79—83). This is "irony" of situation. It often takes the form of attributing to a character a bold, self-confident tone just when he is, as the audience know, on the brink of some catastrophe, as the conspirators are. Thus in *Richard II.* the King gives vent (III. 2. 54—62) to triumphant confidence in his cause just when he is about to know what the audience know already, and feel that he must shortly know, viz. that the Welsh army on which his hope rests (cf. 76, 77) has dispersed. For similar "irony" of situation cf. *Julius Cæsar*, III. 1, where Cæsar is made to use the most exalted language about himself when we know that he is on the very edge of destruction.

Often the "irony" is verbal: a crystallisation into phrase of the pervading and general irony of situation. The dramatist puts into the mouth of a character remarks which the audience, with their fuller knowledge of the facts, can interpret in two ways, while the speaker himself (or his fellow-characters) is quite unconscious of any secondary point in his words. In a tragedy this verbal irony, which is specially associated with the Sophoclean drama, frequently takes the form of "innocent phrases covering sinister depths of meaning." In comedy it is effectively provocative of mirth. Thus in *Twelfth Night* the humour and interest of the scenes in which Viola is with Olivia and Orsino turn

largely upon the fact that they do not know her to be a girl, while the audience do. Shakespeare purposely makes Olivia and Orsino say things which have for the audience a point whereof the speaker is quite unconscious. In the same way many of Viola's remarks (cf. III. 1. 169—172) contain veiled allusions to her sex which the audience perceive at once, whereas Olivia or Orsino sees no allusion at all.

The same effect is gained in *As You Like It* through the same cause, viz. Rosalind's disguise. No more perfect specimen of verbal "irony" could be instanced than the dialogue at the end of the scene (IV. 3) where Rosalind, disguised as a youth, faints at the sight of the blood-stained handkerchief and Oliver lightly chides the "youth" for being so womanly:

"*Oliver.* Be of good cheer, youth: *you a man! you lack a man's heart.*

Rosalind. I do so. I confess it. Ah, sirrah, a body would think this was well counterfeited! I pray you, tell your brother how well I counterfeited. Heigh-ho!

Oliver. This was not counterfeit: there is too great testimony in your complexion, that it was a passion of earnest.

Rosalind. Counterfeit, I assure you.

Oliver. Well then, take a good heart, and *counterfeit to be a man.*

Rosalind. So I do: but, i' faith, I should have been a woman by right."

Often, of course, "irony" of situation and of remark are united. Greek tragedy is full of "irony," especially verbal "irony." Indeed, it compensated to some extent for the lack of freshness in the themes treated. The chief themes of Greek tragedy were drawn from those great cycles of Hellenic myth and story which were common property, so that the audience were supposed to know from the outset what would be the course and issue of a play.

Verbal "irony," therefore, was made a partial substitute for the absence of the element of surprise and novelty. This is especially the case in the dramas of Sophocles[1]. It is one of the classical features of the most perfect piece of classicism in the English language—Milton's *Samson Agonistes*. As in Greek tragedy a character will let fall some seemingly casual remark which exactly describes (as the

[1] The *locus classicus* on "The Irony of Sophocles" is Bishop Thirlwall's essay, originally printed in the *Philological Museum* (Cambridge, 1833), vol. II. pp. 483—537.

audience see) the doom that awaits him, so Samson foreshadows his own and his enemies' end literally when he says (1265—1267):

"Yet so it may fall out, because their end
Is hate, not help to me, it may with mine
Draw their own ruin who attempt the deed."

For the words *draw* and *ruin* (Lat. *ruina*, 'falling') literally describe the catastrophe which the audience know to be approaching (i.e. the fall of the roof). And other illustrations from *Samson Agonistes* might be given.

Shakespeare dramatising history was to some extent in the same position as Æschylus or Sophocles dramatising well-known legends. Naturally, the effect of the "irony" varies according to the familiarity of the story dramatised.

HINTS ON METRE.

I. Regular Type of Blank Verse.

BLANK verse[1] consists of unrhymed lines, each of which, if constructed according to the regular type, contains five feet, each foot being composed of two syllables and having a strong stress or accent on the second syllable, so that each line has five stresses, falling respectively on the even syllables, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10. Here are examples from *Coriolanus*:

"If wé | and Caí|us Már|cius chánce | to méet,
'Tis swórn | betwéen | us wé | shall é|ver stríke
Till óne | can dó | no móre" (I. 2. 34—36).

The rhythm of a line like this is a "rising" rhythm.

Blank verse prior to Marlowe, the great Elizabethan dramatist whose work influenced Shakespeare, was modelled strictly on this type. Further, this early blank verse was what is termed "end-stopt": that is to say, there was almost always *some* pause, however slight, in the sense, and consequently in the rhythm, at the close of each line; while the couplet was normally the limit of the sense. As an example of this "end-stopt," strictly regular verse, take the following extract from the first play written in blank verse, viz. the tragedy called *Gorboduc* (1561):

"Why should I live and linger forth my time,
In longer life to double my distress?

[1] The metre is sometimes called "iambic pentameter verse," but this and other terms of Greek prosody, with its symbols, should be avoided, since classical metres, Greek and Latin, are based on a different principle from English prosody. The basis of classical metre is the "quantity" of syllables, and this is represented by the symbols – (long syllable) and ⏑ (short). The basis of English metre is stress or accent (i.e. the stress laid by the voice on a syllable in pronouncing it); and stress should be represented by the symbols ′ (strong stress) and ` (weak).

O me most woeful wight! whom no mishap
Long ere this day could have bereaved hence:
Mought not these hands by fortune or by fate
Have pierced this breast, and life with iron reft?"

If the whole of *Coriolanus* were written in verse of this kind the effect, obviously, would be intolerably monotonous. Blank verse before Marlowe *was* intolerably monotonous, and in an especial degree unsuited to the drama, which with its varying situations and moods needs a varied medium of expression more than any other kind of poetry. Marlowe's great service to metre, carried further by Shakespeare, was to introduce variations into the existing type of the blank decasyllabic measure. In fact, analysis of the blank verse of any writer really resolves itself into a study of his modifications of the "end-stopt" regular type.

II. Shakespeare's Variations of the Regular Type.

The chief variations found in Shakespeare (some of them often combined in the same line) are these:

1. *Weak stresses.* As we read a passage of blank verse our ear tells us that the stresses or accents are not always[1] of the same weight in all the five feet of each line. Thus in the line

"To ím|itáte | the grá|ces òf | the góds" (v. 3. 150)

we feel at once that the stress in the 4th foot is not equal to that which comes in the other feet. A light stress like this is commonly called a "weak stress." Two weak stresses may occur in the same line, but rarely come together. The foot in which a weak stress is least frequent is the first. It is perhaps with prepositions that a weak stress, in any foot, occurs most often. Here are lines with weak stresses:

"Becáuse | I ám | the stóre-|house ànd | the shóp" (I. 1. 126).

"I sénd | it throúgh | the rí|vers òf | your blóod" (I. 1. 128).

"And tò | the bát|tle cáme | he; whére | he díd
Run réek|ing ó'er | the líves | of mén" (II. 2. 116, 117).

"Lét it | be vír|tuous tò | be ób|stináte" (v. 3. 26).

[1] Dr Abbott estimates that rather less than one line of three has the full number of five strong stresses, and that about two lines out of three have four strong stresses.

"Bést of | my flésh,
Forgíve | my tý|rannỳ; | but dó | not sáy" (v. 3. 42, 43).

It may not be amiss to remind the young student that in reading a passage of Shakespeare aloud he should be careful to give the weak stresses as weak, i.e. not lay the same emphasis indiscriminately on all the stressed syllables.

2. *Inverted stresses*[1]. The strong stress may fall on the first of the two syllables that form a foot—as the student will have observed in several of the lines quoted above. The following extracts also contain examples:

"Whát has | he dóne | to Róme | that's wór|thy déath?
Kílling | our éne|mies, thè | blóod he | hath lóst" (III. 1. 298, 299).

"Lét them | pronoúnce | the stéep | Tarpéi|an déath" (III. 3. 88).

"And wák'd | half déad | with nó(thing). | Wórthy | Március"
(IV. 5. 126).

"You máy | as wéll
Stríke at | the héav'n | wi' your stá|ves às | líft them
Agaínst | the Ró|man státe; | whose coúrse | will ón
The wáy | it tákes, | crácking | ten thoú|sand cúrbs"
(I. 1. 61—64).

Inversion of the stress is most frequent after a pause: hence the foot in which it occurs most often is the first (i.e. after the pause at the end of the preceding line). There may be two inversions in one line, but they are seldom consecutive. This shifting of the stress generally *emphasises* a word. It also varies the regular "rising rhythm" of the normal blank verse by a "falling rhythm."

3. *Extra syllables.* Instead of ten syllables a line may contain eleven or even twelve. An extra syllable, unstressed, may occur at any point in the line, and usually comes before a pause: hence it is commonest in the last foot (the end of a line being the commonest place for a pause), and frequent about the middle of a line (where there is often a break in the sense or rhythm). Compare

"There wás | a tíme | when áll | the bód|y's mém(bers)
Rebéll'd | agaínst | the bél|ly; thús | accús'd (it)" (I. 1. 89, 90).

[1] Cf. Mr Robert Bridges's work, *Milton's Prosody*, pp. 19—21, where Milton's use of inversions is fully analysed and illustrated in a way that helps the study of Shakespeare's inversions.

"Or wráth | or cráft | may gét | him.
Hé's | the dé(vil).
Bólder, | though nót | so súb(tle). | My vál|our's poí(son'd)"
(I. 10. 16, 17).

"And thén | I'll spéak | a lít(tle). |
O mó|ther, mó(ther)"
(V. 3. 182).

An extra syllable, unstressed[1], at the end of a line, as in the first and last of these examples, is variously called a "double ending" and a "feminine ending." The use of the "double ending" becomes increasingly frequent as Shakespeare's blank verse grows more complex. "Double endings" increase[2] from 4 per cent. in *Love's Labour's Lost* to 33 in *The Tempest*, middle plays such as *Henry V.* having a percentage of about 18. The percentage of "double endings" is therefore one of the chief of the metrical tests which help us to fix the date of a play. In fact the use of "double endings" is the commonest of Shakespeare's variations of the normal blank verse. The extra syllable at the end of a line not only gives variety by breaking the regular movement of the ten-syllabled lines, but also, where there is no pause after it, carries on the sense and rhythm to the next line.

Sometimes two extra syllables occur at the end—less commonly, in the middle—of a line. Compare

"I'm glád | on't; thén | we sháll | ha' méans | to vént
Our mús|ty sú|perflú(ity). | Sée, our | best él(ders)"
(I. 1. 218, 219).

"Like óne | that méans | his pró|per hárm | in mán(acles)"
(I. 9. 57).

"Shall flý | out òf | itsélf; | nor sléep | nor sánct(uary)" (I. 10. 19).

"Thy knée | bússing | the stónes, | for ìn | súch bu(siness)"
(III. 2. 75).

This licence is specially frequent with proper names; compare

"To Róme | of oúr | succéss. | Yoú, Ti|tus Lár(tius)" (I. 9. 75).

[1] An extra syllable that bears or would naturally bear a stress is rare in Shakespeare. The use of such syllables at the end of a line is a feature of Fletcher's verse, and the frequent occurrence of them in *Henry VIII.* is one of the metrical arguments that he wrote a good deal of that play. Milton has one or two instances in *Comus;* cf. 633, "Bore a bright golden flower, but not in this soil."

[2] The metrical statistics in these "Hints" are taken from various sources.

"And hángs | on Dí|an's tém|ple; déar | Valé(ria)" (v. 3. 67).

"I práy | thee, stáy | with ús, | gó not | to Wít(tenberg)"
(*Hamlet*, I. 2. 119).

"My Lórd | of Wést|moreland, | and ún|cle Éx(eter)"
(*Henry V.* II. 2. 70).

"My déar | Lord Glós|ter, ànd | my góod | Lord Éx(eter)"
(*Henry V.* IV. 3. 9).

The number of lines with two extra syllables increases much in the later plays of Shakespeare. Generally one of the extra syllables admits of some degree of slurring—e.g. in *business*.

4. *Unstopt* (*or Run-on*) *verse*. The blank verse of Shakespeare's early plays shows clearly the influence of the rhymed couplet which he had used so much in his very earliest work. In his early blank verse the rhyme indeed is gone, but the couplet form remains, with its frequent pause of sense, and consequently of rhythm, at the end of the first line, and its still more frequent stop at the end of the second. Lines of this type mark only the first step in the evolution of blank verse: freedom in the expression of sense and varied rhythm are still absent; and freedom and variety come only when the sense "runs on," without a break, from one line to another.

If at the end of a line there is *any* pause—anything, that is, in the sense or rhythm which involves an actual pause of the voice, however brief—the line is termed "end-stopt." If there is no pause at the end of the line—nothing to prevent the sound overflowing[1] into the next line

[1] The overflow is helped by the use of "light" and "weak" endings to a line. "Light endings" are monosyllables on which "the voice can to a small extent dwell": such as the parts of the auxiliary verbs *be*, *have*, *will*, *shall*, *can*, *do*; pronouns like *I*, *we*, *thou*, *you*, *he*, *she*, *they*, *who*, *which*, etc.; and conjunctions such as *when*, *where*, *while*. "Weak endings" are those monosyllables over which the voice passes with practically no stress at all—e.g. the prepositions *at*, *by*, *for*, *from*, *in*, *of*, *on*, *to*, *with*; also *and*, *but*, *if*, *nor*, *or*, *than*, *that*: all words which go very closely with what follows and therefore link the end of one line with the beginning of the next. The use of these endings belongs to the later plays. "Light endings" are first numerous (21) in *Macbeth* (1606), and "weak endings" (28) in *Antony and Cleopatra* (1608). Some of the early plays have neither "light endings" nor "weak." Some have a very few "light endings." Of "weak endings" no play has more than *two* up till *Antony and Cleopatra*. The proportion of these endings—"light" and "weak"—is therefore another of the metrical tests applied to the later plays (Ingram).

—it is termed "unstopt" or "run-on[1]." There is a progressive increase of "unstopt" verse in the plays. The proportion of "unstopt" to "end-stopt" lines is in *Love's Labour's Lost* only 1 in 18 (approximately); in *The Winter's Tale* it is about 1 in 2. The amount, therefore, of "unstopt" verse in a play is another of the metrical tests by which the period of its composition may, to some extent, be inferred. But necessarily it is not a fixed test, since sensibility to sound depends on the individual ear, and even punctuation is an uncertain quantity. Roughly, however, we may say that the sound and the sense go together.

5. *A syllable slurred.* "Provided there be only one accented syllable, there may be more than two syllables in any foot. 'It is he' is as much a foot as ''tis he'; 'we will serve' as 'we'll serve'; 'it is over' as ''tis o'er.'

"Naturally it is among pronouns and the auxiliary verbs [*and prepositions*] that we must look for unemphatic syllables in the Shakespearian verse. Sometimes the unemphatic nature of the syllable is indicated by a contraction in the spelling. Often, however, syllables may be dropped or slurred in sound, although they are expressed to the sight" (Abbott).

This principle that two unstressed syllables may go in the same foot with one stressed syllable is very important, because feet so composed have the rapid, trisyllable effect which tends much to vary the normal line. This trisyllabic rhythm is a recognised element of English verse[2], especially in the foot which classical prosody calls an anapæst (⏑⏑–). There are many examples in *Coriolanus*, e.g.:

"É'en to | the coúrt, | the héart, | to the[3] séat | o' the braín."
"That méat | was máde | for moúths, | that the góds | sént not."
(I. 1. 129, 200.)

This licence is specially characteristic of the later plays. Compare

"Bút that | the séa, | moúnting | to the wél'kin's chéek"
(*The Tempest*, I. 2. 4).

[1] "In considering verse as such it is sound alone that counts, and a line at the end of which the voice should not pause perceptibly is an unstopped line, whether or no the determination of the line is punctuated"—*The Age of Shakespeare*, II. p. 113. But as a rule, even a comma involves some pause.

[2] It was "a marked feature of the Old English alliterative verse" (Mayor).

[3] Sometimes in such cases the Folio prints *th'*, showing that the word was meant to be slurred (Abbott).

"And hére | was léft | by the saíl|ors. Thoú, | my sláve"
(*The Tempest*, I. 2. 270).

"Hím that | you térm'd, sir, | 'The góod | old lórd, | Gonzá|lo'"
(*The Tempest*, V. 1. 15).

"I' the lást | night's stórm | I súch | a fél|low sáw"
(*King Lear*, IV. 1. 34).

6. *Omissions.* After a pause or interruption there is sometimes an omission (*a*) of a stressed or unstressed syllable (oftenest in the first foot), or (*b*) even of a whole foot.

"It is obvious" (says Abbott) "that a syllable or foot may be supplied by a gesture, as beckoning, a movement of the head to listen, or of the hand to demand attention": or the blank may be accounted for by an interruption, such as the entrance of another character, or by a marked pause or break in the sense. Compare

(*a*) "Withoút | assís|tance. [*Break*] | Í think | not só" (IV. 6. 33).

"As hé | would dráw | it. [*Hamlet* '*peruses*'] | Long stáy'd | he só" (*Hamlet*, II. 1. 91).

"And fálls | on th' óth|er. [*Enter Lady M.*] | How nów! | what néws?" (*Macbeth*, I. 7. 28).

"Flátter|ers! [*Turns to Brutus*] | Now, Brú|tus, thánk | yoursélf"
(*Julius Cæsar*, V. 1. 45).

"Messá|la! [*Messala turns and salutes*] | Whát says | my gén|eràl?"
(*Julius Cæsar*, V. 1. 70).

"Whó | comes hére? | The wór|thy tháne | of Róss"
(*Macbeth*, I. 2. 45).

"Má|ny yéars | of háp|py dáys | befál" (*Richard II.* I. 1. 20).

"Thén | the whí|ning schóol|boy with | his sát|chel"
(*As You Like It*, II. 7. 145).

(*b*) "Must gíve | us paúse. | [*Meditation*] | Thére's the | respéct"
(*Hamlet*, III. 1. 68).

"He's tá'en. | [*Shout*] | And, hárk! | they shoút | for jóy"
(*Julius Cæsar*, V. 3. 32).

7. *Lines of irregular length.* Shakespeare uses lines of three feet often; less frequently, lines of two feet, especially to break the course of some passionate speech; lines of four feet; half-lines occasionally;

brief questions, answers and exclamations, which metrically need not count; and rarely lines with six strong stresses, i.e. Alexandrines[1] (the sonorous type of verse which ends each stanza in *The Faerie Queene*).

As a rule, the use of a short line corresponds with something in the sense, e.g. a break (as at the end of a speech), agitation, conversational effect of question and answer, strong emphasis. Thus in *Hamlet* agitation is obviously expressed by the metrical breaks in Horatio's apostrophe of the Ghost (I. 1. 129, 132, 135), and passion of varying moods by the pauses in Hamlet's soliloquy (II. 2. 575—634). At the close of a speech a short line gives perhaps greater emphasis, and certainly variety.

In Shakespeare's later plays especially there are not a few lines which look like Alexandrines ("apparent Alexandrines," as Abbott calls them) but which on examination are found not to have six unmistakeable stresses. Thus in many seemingly long lines one syllable or more can be slurred[2] or elided or treated as extra-metrical.

We have already noted several illustrations, and others may be found easily, e.g.

"You múst | retúrn | and ménd | it.
Thére's | no rém(*e*dy)"
(III. 2. 26).

"A wór|thy óffícer | i' the wár, | but ín|solènt" (IV. 6. 30).

Again, some seemingly six-foot lines are really "trimeter couplets": that is, "couplets of two verses of three accents each...often thus printed as two separate short verses in the Folio....Shakespeare seems to have used this metre mostly for rapid dialogue and retort, and in comic and the lighter kind of serious poetry" (Abbott). Generally some notion of division is suggested, as where a line is divided between two speakers (which is often the case with the trimeter couplet).

These, then, are the chief modes by which Shakespeare diversifies

[1] So called either from Alexandre Paris, an old French poet, or from the *Roman d'Alexandre*, a 12th century poem about Alexander the Great, written in rhymed lines of six feet, in couplets. It is the metre of French tragedy (e.g. of the tragedies of Racine and Corneille).

[2] In some cases the symbol ' serves to show that a vowel is ignored in the scansion, though heard more or less in pronunciation. There is no means of marking the different degrees of slurring: thus, *ign'rance* represents with fair accuracy the pronunciation which must be given the word sometimes, whereas *o'f'cers* in IV. 6. 10 or *rem'dy* in III. 2. 26 would over-emphasise the slurring sound required there

the structure of regular blank verse. Their general result has been well summed up thus: they make the effect of Shakespeare's maturer blank verse rather rhythmical than rigidly metrical: i.e. more a matter of stresses distributed with endless variety than of syllables calculated and accented according to a normal standard; and there is a progressive development in the trisyllabic direction. Every student should grasp these variations thoroughly, particularly the first five, and observe the illustrations of them that occur in any play (especially the later plays) that he may be studying.

And he must, of course, remember that scansion depends much on the way in which a writer abbreviates or lengthens sounds, as the metre requires.

Abbreviation comprises all the cases in which a syllable does not count metrically—whether it be elided[1], or slurred. Many abbreviations belong to everyday speech, others to poetical usage.

Of lengthening of sounds the most important example is the scansion of a monosyllable as two syllables[2], especially from antithesis, or emphasis.

For full details the student must refer to the standard authority, viz. Dr Abbott's *Shakespearian Grammar*, pp. 344—387.

III. Shakespeare's use of Rhyme.

In his early plays Shakespeare uses the rhymed couplet[3] very largely; but gradually the amount of rhyme declines, so that the proportion of rhymed couplets in a piece is one of the surest indications of the period to which it belongs.

Is there much rhyme? the play is early.
Is there little rhyme? the play is late.

"In *Love's Labour's Lost* there are about two rhymed lines to every one of blank verse. In *The Comedy of Errors* there are 380 rhymed lines to 1150 unrhymed. In *The Tempest* two rhymed lines occur; in *The Winter's Tale* not one" (Dowden).

In applying the rhyme test we must exclude the cases where there is a special reason for the use of rhyme—as in the Witches-scenes

[1] Cf. the common elision of *the* before a vowel.

[2] Abbott gives the following instances in *Coriolanus*: *gods* (I. 1. 75); *yours* (I. 4. 2); *our* (II. 2. 122); *nay* (III. 3. 67); *Ay* (V. 3. 125); *you* (V. 3. 192); *tears* (V. 6. 101). I should add *soft* (not *steel*) in I. 9. 45, and *cares* and *fears* in III. 1. 137.

[3] i.e. of five feet in each line; cf. II. 1. 148, 149.

of *Macbeth*. Thus the rhyme of the Masque in Act IV. of *The Tempest* has no bearing whatsoever on the date of the play, because Masques were usually written in rhymed measures. Similarly all songs such as we get in *As You Like It*, *The Tempest*, and *The Winter's Tale* must, of course, be excluded. Again, the Play-scene in *Hamlet* (III. 2) is designedly written in the manner of the old-fashioned rhymed tragedy.

Let us consider for a moment the reasons which led Shakespeare to adopt blank verse and gradually abandon rhyme.

As a medium of dramatic expression blank verse, of the varied Shakespearian type, has three points of superiority over rhyme:

1. *Naturalness.* Rhyme is artificial. It reminds us, therefore,—perhaps I should say, never lets us forget—that the play *is* a play, fiction and not reality, because in real life people do not converse in rhyme. Especially in moments of great emotion does rhyme destroy the illusion of reality: we cannot conceive of Lear raving at Goneril in rhymed couplets. Blank verse on the other hand has something of the naturalness of conversation, and naturalness is a very great help towards making fiction appear like truth.

2. *Freedom.* The necessity of rhyming imposes restraint upon a writer such as blank verse obviously does not involve, and often forces him to invert the order of words or even to use a less suitable word. The rhythm too of the rhymed couplet tends strongly to confine the sense within the limits of the couplet, whereas in the blank verse of a skilful writer the sense "runs on" easily from line to line. In fact, in the rhymed couplet the verse is apt to dominate the sense; while in blank verse the sense finds unfettered expression. And so blank verse has not only something of the naturalness but also something of the freedom of conversation.

3. *Variety.* In a paragraph of rhymed couplets the pauses in the sense and therefore in the rhythm are monotonous. We constantly have a pause at the end of the first line and almost always a pause at the end of the second. With the uniformity of a passage composed in this form contrast the varied rhythms of such blank verse as that of *The Tempest*, where the pauses are distributed with ever-changing diversity of cadence.

Again, the rhyme of a long narrative poem when read, or of a short lyric when recited, has a pleasing effect; but in a long spell of spoken verse I think that the sound of rhyme, though at first agreeable to it, gradually tires the ear.

These considerations on the comparative merits of rhymed and unrhymed verse on the stage can be tested by reference to early and late plays.

What rhyme we do get in Shakespeare's later plays is mainly at the end of a scene, when it serves to indicate the conclusion, and (less commonly) at the close of a long speech, when it forms a kind of climax[1]. As to the former use Dr Abbott says: "Rhyme was often used as an effective termination at the end of the scene. When the scenery[2] was not changed, or the arrangements were so defective that the change was not easily perceptible, it was, perhaps, additionally desirable to mark that a scene was finished."

And just as rhyme often marks the close of a scene so it sometimes marks the close of a chapter in a man's career, and suggests farewell. A striking example of this use of rhyme occurs in *As You Like It*, II. 3. 67—76, where old Adam and Orlando, about to set forth on their expedition, severally bid farewell to their former life. Similarly in *Richard II.* II. 2. 142—149, the rhyme expresses the feeling of the King's favourites that their period of prosperity is over and they are parting for ever; while in V. 5. 110—119, it emphasises the tragedy of the close of Richard's life. Again, in *King Lear* (a comparatively late play, 1605—1606) the banished Kent is made to use rhyme in his leave-taking (I. 1. 183—190).

One other noticeable purpose of rhyme is found in plays as late as *Othello* (about 1604) and *Lear*, viz. to express moralising reflections on life and give them a sententious, epigrammatic effect. Dowden instances *Othello*, I. 3. 202—219, and II. 1. 149—161. This use of rhyme is natural because proverbial wisdom so often takes a rhymed form. Maxims stick better in the memory when they are rhymed.

IV. Shakespeare's use[3] of Prose.

The chief use to which Shakespeare puts prose is as a conversational medium of expression. He introduces it where he wishes "to lower the

[1] See note on II. 1. 148, 149.

[2] There was no moveable scenery; the only outward indication of the locality intended was some stage 'property'—e.g. "a bed to signify a bed-chamber; a table with pens upon it to signify a counting-house; or a board bearing in large letters the name of the place"—*Dowden*.

[3] Strictly, it does not come under the heading "metre"; but it is convenient to treat the subject here. See Abbott, p. 429; also *The Age of Shakespeare*, II. pp. 117—122.

dramatic pitch," and does not desire a poetical effect: where, in fact, he wants to convey the impression of people talking together, like the three Roman ladies in I. 3, or the Roman and the Volscian (IV. 3). This use is illustrated so fully in *Coriolanus* that it is needless to particularise further. Attention, however, may be drawn to the interesting transitions from prose to verse and verse to prose in the same scene, e.g. in I. 1 and 3; II. 1, 2 and 3 (a very striking instance); IV. 5; V. 2 and 4. These alternations are very suggestive as indications of change of mood or circumstances, and the motive in each case should be carefully considered. It should be observed too how characters (such as Coriolanus himself and Volumnia) conceived in a tragic spirit speak wholly or mainly in verse. Hence in the great tragedies like *Hamlet*, "the normal form of expression is verse. Prose is here used only for special reasons." It discriminates.

The use of prose next in importance is for comic parts and the speech of comic characters like the "Clowns" of the comedies, e.g. Touchstone in *As You Like It*, who never drops into blank verse. Indeed, in this and the other comedies of Shakespeare's middle period, prose becomes practically "the language of comedy," its natural means of expression. *Much Ado About Nothing* is really "a *prose* comedy."

Prose is commonly assigned to characters of humble position, e.g. servants (*Coriolanus*, IV. 5), sailors and soldiers like Bates, Court and Williams in *Henry V.* It is the normal medium in scenes of "low life," such as the Grave-diggers' scene in *Hamlet* (V. 1). Thus in *Henry V.* the Hostess, Bardolph, Nym and the Boy speak wholly in prose as being at once humorous (three of them unintentionally) and of humble status; and the same remark applies to the Grave-diggers, whom the stage-directions describe as "clowns." Compare too the famous Porter's speech in *Macbeth*, II. 3.

Shakespeare's crowd uses prose. It marks the gulf between "people" and patricians (represented by Menenius), I. 1; in *Julius Cæsar*, I. 1, between "people" and officials.

Other minor uses of prose by Shakespeare are for letters, proclamations, documents, etc., and occasionally (as though even blank verse were too artificial) for the expression of extreme emotion and mental derangement. Compare Ophelia in the mad-scene, *Hamlet*, IV. 5, and *Lear*, III. 4; similarly Hamlet and Edgar (*Lear*, III. 4, IV. 1) are both made to use prose when they are feigning insanity.

In one of the most remarkable passages in *Hamlet* ("this goodly frame...the paragon of animals," II. 2. 290—298) the prose is not

specially introduced to express a particular tone of thought or emotion: it merely continues the *form* of the preceding dialogue, for the sake of general harmony of effect, but breathes into that form the spirit of the loftiest imaginative ardour. The passage, indeed, like many in the Bible, is a signal illustration of the poetical resources of prose; and the poetical quality of rhythm and imaginativeness is the note of Elizabethan prose.

It has been noted that Hamlet invariably uses prose in speaking to Ophelia and Polonius, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Bitterness and contempt, irony and wit, and abruptness of thought or feeling, find vent more naturally and pointedly in prose than in blank verse. Prose may be used to convey an impression of unreality where a character is dealing in a trifling or assumed manner with some serious emotion.

Shakespeare's use of prose increases as the character of his plays grows more varied and complex. For instance, *Richard II.*, written five or six years before *Henry V.*, has no prose. The amount of prose in a play therefore is an indication of its date, like the amount of rhyme, though not so conclusive an indication.

I. INDEX OF WORDS AND PHRASES.

This List applies to the **Notes** *only; words of which longer explanations are given will be found in the* **Glossary**. *The references are to the pages.*

Abbreviations: adj. = adjective. n. = noun. syll. = syllable or syllables. trans. = transitive. vb = verb.

II. GENERAL INDEX TO NOTES.

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