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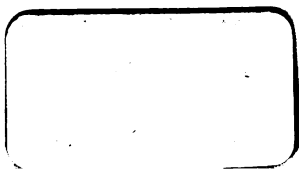


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GLAMIS CASTLE
(From a Photograph)

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TRAGEDY OF MACBETH.

WITH

INTRODUCTION, AND NOTES EXPLANATORY AND CRITICAL

FOR USE IN SCHOOLS AND CLASSES.

BY THE

REV. HENRY N. HUDSON, LL.D.



BOSTON, U.S.A.

GINN & COMPANY, PUBLISHERS

The Athenæum Press

1898



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INTRODUCTION.

History of the Play.

THE TRAGEDY OF MACBETH was first printed in the folio of 1623, where it stands the seventh in the division of tragedies. On the 8th of November, that year, it was registered at the Stationers' by Blount and Jaggard, as one of the plays "not formerly entered to other men."

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

The minute and searching criticism of our time has made out, almost, if not altogether, beyond question, that considerable portions of *Macbeth* were not written by Shakespeare. I have been very slow and reluctant to admit this conclusion; but the evidence, it seems to me, is not to be with-

stood. It is, moreover, highly probable, to say the least, that few of the scenes, perhaps none, have reached us altogether in the form they received from the Poet's hand. But, as this matter is to be discussed under the heading "Shakespeare and Middleton," it need not be enlarged upon here.

The date of the composition has been variously argued and concluded. Until a recent period, there was nothing but internal evidence at hand for settling the date. Proceeding upon this, Malone and Chalmers agreed upon the year 1606 as the *probable* time of the writing. That the composition was subsequent to the union of the English and Scottish crowns, was justly inferred from what the hero says in his last interview with the Weird Sisters: "And some I see, that *twofold balls* and *treble sceptres* carry." James the First came to the throne of England in March, 1603; but the two crowns were not *formally* united, at least the union was not proclaimed, till October, 1604.

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

first, how Macbeth and Banquo, two noblemen of Scotland, riding through a wood, there stood before them three women, fairies or nymphs, and saluted Macbeth, saying three times unto him, Hail," &c.

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

Shakespeare in Scotland.

The drama yields some cause, in the accuracy of local description and allusion, for thinking that the Poet had been in Scotland. Nor are these internal likelihoods unsustained by external arguments. Companies of English players are known to have visited Scotland several times during Shakespeare's connection with the stage. The English ambassador at the Scottish Court in 1589 wrote to Lord Treasurer Burleigh how "my Lord Bothwell showeth great kindness to our nation, using *her Majesty's players* with all courtesy." Archbishop Spottiswood, also, writing the history of the year 1599, gives the following: "In the end of the year happened

some new jars betwixt the King and the ministers of Edinburgh, because of a company of English comedians whom the King had licensed to play within the burgh. The ministers, being offended with the liberty given them, did exclaim in their sermons against stage-players ; and in their sessions made an Act prohibiting people to resort to their plays, under pain of Church censures. The King, taking this to be a discharge of his license, called the sessions before the Council, and ordained them to annul their Act, and not to restrain the people from going to these comedies ; which they promised, and accordingly performed." The public records of Scotland show, also, that English players were liberally rewarded by the King on several occasions in 1600 and 1601. And the registers of Aberdeen inform us that the same players were received by the public authorities of that place, under the sanction of a special letter from the King, styling them "our servants." There, too, they had a reward in cash ; and the freedom of the city was conferred on "Laurence Fletcher, Comedian to his Majesty" ; he being, no doubt, the leader of the company. Next, we have a patent made out by the King's order, May 7, 1603, authorizing Laurence Fletcher, William Shakespeare, Richard Burbage, and others, to perform plays in any part of the kingdoms. In this instrument the players are termed "our servants," — the same style which the King had used to the authorities of Aberdeen. All which, to be sure, does not prove the Poet to have been of the number who were in Scotland ; still I think that, coupled with the internal likelihoods of the play itself, it may fairly be held to warrant a belief to that effect, there being no evidence to the contrary.

Historic Basis of the Action.

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

According to the history, Malcolm, King of Scotland, had two daughters, Beatrice and Doada, severally married to Abanath Crinen and to Sinel, Thanes of the Isles and of Glamis, by whom each had a son named Duncan and Macbeth. The former succeeded his grandfather in the king-

dom ; and, he being of a soft and gentle disposition, his reign was at first very quiet and peaceable, but afterwards, by reason of his slackness, was greatly harassed with troubles and seditions, wherein his cousin, who was of a valiant and warlike spirit, did great service to the State.

Instead of giving at length the wordy narration of Holinshed, I must, for economy of space, condense the main particulars of the historic matter. After narrating the victory of the Scottish generals over the rebels and invaders, the chronicler proceeds in substance as follows : —

Macbeth and Banquo were on their way to Forres, where the King then lay ; and, as they were passing through the fields alone, three women in strange and wild attire suddenly met them ; and, while they were rapt with wonder at the sight, the first said, “ All hail, Macbeth, Thane of Glamis ” ; the second, “ Hail, Macbeth, Thane of Cawdor ” ; the third, “ Hail, Macbeth, that hereafter shalt be King.” Then said Banquo, “ What manner of women are you, that to my fellow here, besides high offices, ye assign the kingdom, but promise nothing to me ? ” “ Yes,” said the first, “ we promise greater things to thee : for he shall reign indeed, but shall have no issue to succeed him ; whereas thou indeed shalt not reign, but from thee shall spring a long line of kings.” Then the women immediately vanished. At first the men thought this was but a fantastical illusion, insomuch that Banquo would call Macbeth king in jest, and Macbeth in like sort would call him father of many kings. But afterwards the women were believed to be the Weird Sisters ; because, the Thane of Cawdor being condemned for treason, his lands and titles were given to Macbeth. Whereupon Banquo said to him jestingly, “ Now, Macbeth, thou hast what two of the Sisters promised ; there remaineth only what the other said

should come to pass." And Macbeth began even then to devise how he might come to the throne, but thought he must wait for time to work his way, as in the former preferment. But when, shortly after, the King made his oldest son Prince of Cumberland, thereby in effect appointing him successor, Macbeth was sorely troubled thereat, as it seemed to cut off his hope ; and, thinking the purpose was to defeat his title to the crown, he studied to usurp it by force. Encouraged by the words of the Weird Sisters, and urged on by his wife, who was "burning with unquenchable desire to bear the name of queen," he at length whispered his design to some trusty friends, and, having a promise of their aid, slew the King at Inverness ; then got himself proclaimed king, and forthwith went to Scone, where, by common consent, he was invested after the usual manner.

The circumstances of the murder, as set forth in the play, were taken from another part of the history, where Holinshed relates how King Duff, being the guest of Donwald and his wife in their castle at Forres, was there murdered. The story ran as follows : King Duff having retired for the rest of the night, his two chamberlains, as soon as they saw him well a-bed, came forth, and fell to banqueting with Donwald and his wife, who had prepared many choice dishes and drinks for their rear-supper ; wherewith they so gorged themselves, that their heads no sooner got to the pillow than they were so fast asleep that the chamber might have been removed without waking them. Then Donwald, goaded on by his wife, though in heart he greatly abhorred the act, called four of his servants, whom he had already framed to the purpose with large gifts ; and they, entering the King's chamber, cut his throat as he lay asleep, and carried the body forth into the fields. In the morning, a noise being

made that the King was slain, Donwald ran thither with the watch, as though he knew nothing of it, and, finding cakes of blood in the bed and on the floor, forthwith slew the chamberlains as guilty of the murder.

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

Macbeth, after the departure of Duncan's sons, used great liberality towards the nobles of the realm, thereby to win their favour ; and, when he saw that no man went about to trouble him, he set his whole endeavour to maintain justice, and to punish all enormities and abuses which had chanced through the feeble administration of Duncan. He continued governing the realm for the space of ten years in equal justice : but this was but a counterfeit zeal, to purchase thereby the favour of the people. Shortly after, he began to show what he was, practising cruelty instead of equity. For the prick of conscience caused him ever to fear, lest he should be served with the same cup as he had ministered to his predecessor. The words, also, of the Weird Sisters would not out of his mind ; which, as they promised him the kingdom, did likewise promise it at the same time to the posterity of Banquo. He therefore desired Banquo and his son named Fleance to come to a supper that he had prepared for them ; but hired certain murderers to meet them without the palace as they returned to their lodgings, and there to slay them. Yet it chanced, by the benefit of the dark night,

that, though the father was slain, the son escaped that danger; and afterwards, having some inkling how his life was sought no less than his father's, to avoid further peril he fled into Wales.

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

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

Shortly after, Macbeth, coming to behold how the work

went forward, was sore offended because he found not Macduff there, and said, "I perceive this man will never obey my commands till he be ridden with a snaffle ; but I shall provide enough for him." Nor could he afterwards abide to look upon Macduff, either because he thought his puissance over-great, or else because he had learned of certain wizards, in whose words he put great confidence, that he ought to take heed of Macduff. And surely he had put Macduff to death, but that a certain witch, in whom he had great trust, had told him he should never be slain by a man born of any woman, nor be vanquished till the wood of Birnam came to the castle of Dunsinane. By this prophecy Macbeth put all fear out of his heart, supposing he might do what he would. This vain hope caused him to do many outrageous things, to the grievous oppression of his subjects.

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

his support, to revenge the slaughter of his wife, his children, and other friends. libtool.com.cn

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

Soon after, Macduff, repairing to the borders of Scotland, addressed letters with secret dispatch to the nobles of the realm, declaring how Malcolm was confederate with him, to come hastily into Scotland to claim the crown. In the meantime, Malcolm gained such favour at King Edward's hands, that old Siward, Earl of Northumberland, was appointed with ten thousand men to go with him into Scotland, to support him in this enterprise. After this news was spread abroad in Scotland, the nobles drew into several factions, the one taking part with Macbeth, the other with Malcolm.

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

On the morrow, when Macbeth beheld them coming in this sort, he first marvelled what the matter meant ; but in the end remembered himself, that the prophecy, which he

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

As before remarked, the original copy prints *Macbeth* in the division of Tragedies. Yet the foregoing sketch shows its frame-work to be in great part made of historic material. For this cause, several modern editors have taken it out of the division of Tragedies, and transferred it to that of Histories; an order clearly and entirely wrong. *Hamlet*, also, and *King Lear* have something of an historical basis, though not so much as *Macbeth*. But in all three the historical matter is so merged in the form and transfigured with the spirit of Tragedy, as to put it wellnigh out of thought to class them as histories, since this is subjecting them to wrong

tests, and implies the right to censure them for not being what they were never meant to be. They are tragedies, and nothing else. So, it appears, the Poet himself called them; and in the use of words "he knew his cue without a prompter." Historic truth was not his aim, nor any part of his aim, in the construction of them; and whatever of history they contain is used not at all as forming or guiding the plot, but merely as subserving it. So that they are to be viewed simply as works of art; and the only proper question respecting them is, whether and how far they have that truth to Nature, that organic proportion and self-consistency, which the laws of Art require.

The Weird Sisters.

Thomas Middleton has a play called *The Witch*, wherein are delineated with considerable skill the vulgar hags of old superstition, whose delight it was to "raise jars, jealousies, strifes, and heart-burning disagreements, like a thick scurf o'er life." The relation between Middleton's piece and Shakespeare's tragedy is to be considered more fully at the end of the play; and the former is referred to here as not unaptly introducing the peculiar and subordinate use which the Poet makes of the old witchcraft lore in the delineation and the machinery of his *Weird Sisters*. I say the use he makes of that lore; for the cauldron-scene, in the fourth Act, is unquestionably Shakespeare's work; all, I mean, except those parts where Hecate figures. But the witchcraft language and machinery there drawn upon is penetrated with a soul-appalling efficacy, and dominated by a potency of terror, such as old witchcraft never dreamed of.

In sorting the materials out of which the *Weird Sisters* weave their incantations, and compound their "hell-broth,"

so as to "make the gruel thick and slab," the Poet gathered and condensed the popular belief of his time. Ben Jonson, whose mind dwelt more in the circumstantial, and who spun his poetry much more out of the local and particular, made a grand showing from the same source in his *Masque of Queens*. But his powers did not permit, nor did his purpose require, him to select and dispose his materials so as to cause any thing like the mixed impression of the terrible and the grotesque, which is here conveyed. Shakespeare so spins his incantations as to cast a spell upon the mind, and engage its acquiescence in what he represents.

From the subordinate part old witchcraft plays in some portions of the work which are Shakespeare's, and still more, perhaps, from the exclusive part it plays in some portions which are not Shakespeare's, criticism for a long time almost, if not altogether, identified the Weird Sisters with the vulgar old-woman witches of popular belief. It was reserved for the better critics of our century to set this matter right. "The Weird Sisters," says Coleridge, "are as true a creation of Shakespeare's as his Ariel and Caliban; fates, furies, and materializing witches being the elements. They are wholly different from any representation of witches in the contemporary writers, and yet presented a sufficient external resemblance to the creatures of vulgar prejudice, to act immediately on the audience." Charles Lamb, also, speaks to the same purpose, having the witches of Rowley and Dekker in his eye. "They are," says he, "the plain, traditional, old-woman witches of our ancestors, — poor, deformed, and ignorant, the terror of villages, — themselves amenable to a justice. That should be a hardy sheriff, with the power of the county at his heels, that should lay hands on the Weird Sisters. They are of another jurisdiction."

All which, I believe, sufficiently clears the way for what seems to me a right statement of the matter in hand.

The old witches of superstition were foul, ugly, mischievous beings, generally actuated by vulgar envy or hate ; not so much wicked as mean, and more apt to excite disgust than to inspire terror or awe ; who could inflict injury, but not guilt ; and could work men's temporal ruin, but not win them to work their own spiritual ruin. The Weird Sisters are cast in quite another mould, and are beholden to those old witches for little if any thing more than the drapery of the representation. Resembling old women, save that they have long beards, they bubble up in human shape, but own no human relations ; are without age, or sex, or kin ; without birth or death ; passionless and motiveless. A combination of the terrible and the grotesque, unlike the Furies of the Greek drama they are petrific, not to the senses, but to the thoughts. At first, indeed, on merely looking *at* them, we can scarce help laughing, so uncouth and grotesque is their appearance ; but afterwards, on looking into them, we find them terrible beyond description : and the more we look, the more terrible do they become ; the blood almost curdling in our veins, as, dancing, and singing their infernal glees over embryo murders, they unfold to our thoughts the cold, passionless, inexhaustible malignity and deformity of their nature. Towards Macbeth they have nothing of personal hatred or revenge ; their malice is of a higher strain, and savours as little of any such human ranklings as the thunder-storms and elemental perturbations amidst which they come and go. Coleridge describes their character as " consisting in the imaginative disconnected from the good " ; than which I can scarce frame an idea any thing more dreadful to contemplate. But, with all their essential wickedness, the

Weird Sisters have nothing gross or vulgar or sensual about them. "Fair is foul, and foul is fair," to them, by constitution of nature ; darkness is their light, storms their sunshine, tumults, terrors, hideous rites, and Satanic liturgies their religion. They are indeed the very purity of sin incarnate ; the vestal virgins, so to speak, of Hell ; in whom every thing is reversed ; whose ascent is downwards ; whose proper eucharist is a sacrament of evil ; and the law of whose being is violation of law !

But is there any thing of permanent truth in the matter of the Weird Sisters? and, if so, what? These are questions that may fairly claim to be considered in any attempt to interpret the drama.

Probably no form of superstition ever prevailed to much extent, but that it had a ground and principle of truth. The old system of witchcraft, I take it, was an embodiment of some natural law, a local and temporary outgrowth from something as general and permanent as human nature. Our moral being must breathe ; and therefore, in default of other provision, it puts forth some such arrangement of breathing-organs spontaneously, just as a tree puts forth leaves. The point of art, then, in the case before us, was to raise and transfigure the literal into the symbolical ; to take the body, so brittle and perishable in itself, and endow it with immortality ; which could be done only by filling and animating it with the efficacy of imperishable truth. Accordingly the Poet took enough of current and traditionary matter to enlist old credulity in behalf of agents suited to his peculiar purpose ; representing to the age its own thoughts, and at the same time informing that representation with a moral significance suited to all ages alike. In *The Witch of Middleton* we have the literal form of a transient superstition ; in

Macbeth that form is made the transparent vehicle of a truth coeval and coextensive with the workings of human guilt. In their literal character the Weird Sisters answer to something that was, and is not ; in their symbolical character, they answer to something that was, and is, and will abide ; for they represent the mysterious action and reaction between the evil mind and external nature. ||

For the external world serves in some sort as a looking-glass wherein we behold the image of our inner man. And the evil suggestions, which seem to us written in the face or speaking from the mouth of outward objects and occasions, are in reality but projections from our own evil hearts. In a moral sense, the world around us only gives us back ourselves ; its aspect is but a reflection of what we bring to it. So that, if the things we look on seem inviting us to crime, it is only because our depraved lusts and most frail affections construe their innocent meanings into wicked invitations.

In the spirit and virtue of this principle, the Weird Sisters symbolize the inward moral history of each and every man ; and therefore they may be expected to live in the faith of reason so long as the present moral order or disorder of things shall last. So that they may be aptly enough described as poetical or mythical impersonations of evil influences. They body forth in living forms the fearful echo which the natural world gives back to the evil that speaks out from the human heart. And the secret of their power over *Macbeth* lies mainly in that they present to him his embryo wishes and half-formed thoughts. At one time they harp his fear aright, at another his hope ; and this too before his hope and fear have distinctly reported themselves in his consciousness ; and, by thus harping them, nurse them into purpose and draw them into act. As men often know they

would something, yet know not clearly what they would, till an articulation of it, or what seems such, comes to them from without. For so we are naturally made conscious of what is within us by the shadow it casts in the light of occasion ; and therefore it is that trials and opportunities have such an effect in revealing us to ourselves.

Character of Macbeth.

All which may serve to suggest the real nature and scope of the Weird influences on the action of the play. The office of the Weird Sisters is not so properly to deprave as to develop the characters whereon they act. They do not create the evil heart, they only untie the evil hands. They put nothing into Macbeth's mind, but merely draw out what was already there ; breathing fructification upon his indwelling germs of sin, and thus acting as mediators between the secret upspringing purpose and the final accomplishment of crime. He was already minded to act as he does, only there needed something to "trammel up the consequence" ; which, in his apprehension, is just what the Weird Sisters do.

Accordingly it well appears in the course of the play that the thought of murdering Duncan is by no means new to Macbeth. Perhaps I ought to remark here that, as the Scottish crown was elective in a certain line, Macbeth's claim to it was *legally* as good as Duncan's till the vote was declared ; while his consciousness of superior fitness for the office might naturally have filled him with high expectations. At all events, it is plain enough that he has more than dallied with the purpose of retrieving that disappointment by crime ; he has entertained it seriously, and has had talks with his wife about it ; she no doubt encouraging him in it with all her fiery vehemence of spirit. In his boldness of

imagination he was then even ready to make an opportunity for the deed; and it is a profound stroke of nature that, when the opportunity makes itself to his hands, its effect is to unman him. This is evident from his wife's stinging reproaches when at last his resolution falters and breaks down: "Was the hope drunk wherein you 'dress'd yourself?" — "When you durst do it, then you were a man"; and, "Nor time nor place did then adhere, and yet you would make both." These plainly refer to conversations they have formerly, perhaps often, had on the subject.

So that in the salutation of the Weird Sisters Macbeth just meets with an external temptation to that which he has been inwardly tempted or instigated to before. Yet he cannot all at once rest secure in the thoughts which at that prophetic greeting spring up within him; and therefore it is that he "burns in desire to question them further." Fears and scruples as to the consequence still shake him: a general pledge of security is not enough: he craves to know further how and whence the means of safety are to come; his faith in the Weird promise not being strong enough at first to silence the warnings of experience, reinforced as these are by the instinctive apprehensions of conscience: —

But in these cases

We still have judgment here; that we but teach
 Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
 To plague th' inventor: this even-handed justice
 Commends th' ingredients of our poison'd chalice
 To our own lips.

It seems worthy of remark how Buchanan represents the salutation of the Weird Sisters to have been the coinage of Macbeth's dreams; as if his mind were so swollen with ambitious thoughts, that these haunt his pillow and people his

sleep : and afterwards, when a part of the dream came to pass without his help, this put him upon working out a fulfilment of the remainder. Nor, in this view of the matter, is it easy to see but that a dream would every way satisfy the moral demands of the case, though it might not answer the conditions of the drama.

It is wisely ordered that the Weir Sisters meet Macbeth "in the day of success," when the exultations of victory would naturally prompt such a mind as his to catch at ambitious hopes. And "the early birth-date of his guilt" appears in that, on hearing the first Weir salutation, he is instantly seized with a kind of mental delirium. This comes out in what Banquo says : —

Good sir, why do you start, and seem to fear
 Things that do sound so fair ? — I'the name of truth,
 Are ye fantastical ? or that indeed
 Which outwardly ye show ? My noble partner
 You greet with present grace and great prediction
 Of noble having and of royal hope,
 That he seems rapt withal : to me you speak not.
 If you can look into the seeds of time,
 And say which grain will grow, and which will not,
 Speak then to me, who neither beg nor fear
 Your favours nor your hate.

Macbeth's behaviour as here indicated is profoundly symptomatic of his moral predispositions. It is a full revelation of his criminal aptitudes that so startles and surprises him into a rapture of meditation. The Weir greeting is as a spark to a magazine of wickedness in him ; and he is at once seized with a trance of terror at the result : —

Between the acting of a dreadful thing
 And the first motion, all the interim is
 Like a phantasma or a hideous dream :
 The genius and the mortal instruments

Are then in council ; and the state of man,
Like to a little kingdom, suffers then
The nature of an insurrection.

“So surely,” says Coleridge, “is the guilt in its germ anterior to the supposed cause and immediate temptation.” Whether the Weird Sisters “look into the seeds of time” or not, they manifestly look into the seeds of Macbeth’s character ; and they drop just the right stuff on them to make them sprout, as is evident from the fact that they instantly do sprout. And it was their insight of the unhatched eggs of evil within him, that drew them to him.

Macbeth has another like trance of guilty thought and terror, when the messengers come from the King, and hail him Thane of Cawdor, and thus give his faith a fresh start against the misgivings of prudence and conscience : —

Macb. [*To himself.*] Glamis, and Thane of Cawdor !
The greatest is behind. — Thanks for your pains. —
[*To BANQ.*] Do you not hope your children shall be kings,
When those that gave the Thane of Cawdor to me
Promised no less to them ?

Banq. [*To MACB.*] That, trusted home,
Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,
Besides the Thane of Cawdor. But 'tis strange :
And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
The instruments of darkness tell us truths ;
Win us with honest trifles, to betray us
In deepest consequence.

Macb [*To himself.*] Two truths are told,
As happy prologues to the swelling act
Of the imperial theme ! — I thank you, gentlemen. —
[*To himself.*] This supernatural soliciting
Cannot be ill, — cannot be good : — if ill,
Why hath it given me earnest of success,
Commencing in a truth ? I'm Thane of Cawdor :
If good, why do I yield to that suggestion
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair,

And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,
 Against the use of nature? Present fears
 Are less than horrible imaginings:
 My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
 Shakes so my single state of man, that function
 Is smother'd in surmise, and nothing is,
 But what is not,

Banq. Look, how our partner's rapt.—
 Worthy Macbeth, we stay upon your leisure.

Macb. Give me your favour: my dull brain was wrought
 With things forgotten.

Macbeth's rapture here is the same as in the preceding instance, only running to a higher pitch. And it tells with startling emphasis how greedily the "swelling evil of his conception" springs at the food of criminal hopes and desires. His conscience here acts through his imagination, and sets it all on fire; and, as the elements of evil gather and fashion themselves into the conscious purpose, he is seized and shaken with terrors which he knows to be imaginary, yet cannot allay.

It seems, then, quite clear to me that in the Poet's idea Macbeth already had the will, and that what he wanted further was but an earnest and assurance of success. The ordering of things so as to meet that want, and the tracing of the mental processes and the subtle workings of evil consequent thereon,—this it is that renders the drama such a paragon of ethical meaning organized into art. The Weird Sisters rightly strike the key-note and lead off the terrible chorus, because they embody and realize to us, and even to the hero himself, that secret preparation of evil within him out of which the whole action proceeds. In their fantastical and unearthly aspect, awakening mingled emotions of terror and mirth; in their mysterious reserve, and oracular brevity of speech, so fitted at once to sharpen curiosity and awe

down scepticism ; in the circumstances of their prophetic greeting, — a blasted heath, with the elements wrangling over it, as if Nature were at odds with herself, and in love with desolation ;—in all this we may discern a peculiar aptness to generate, even in strong minds, a belief in what they utter.

Macbeth and Banquo.

The contrast in the behaviour of the two men at this point is deeply significant. Belief takes hold of them both alike, for aught appears. Yet, while Macbeth is beside himself with excitement, and transported with guilty thoughts and imaginations, Banquo remains calm, unexcited, and perfectly self-poised. His intellectual forces are indeed stimulated by the preternatural address, but stimulated only to moralize the occasion, and to draw arguments in support of his better mind. He hears the speakers with simple wonder ; shows no interest in them but that of an honest and rational curiosity ; his mind is absorbed in the matter before him ; and because he sees nothing of himself in them, and has no germs of wickedness for them to work upon, therefore he “neither begs nor fears their favours nor their hate.” Macbeth, on the contrary, as we have seen, goes off in a trance of meditation, and loses what is before him in a stress of introversion : roused from this, he is eager and impatient to have them speak further, and his heart leaps forth to catch their words : and again, when his ear is saluted with a partial fulfilment of their promise, a still more violent fit of abstraction seizes him ; his very senses being palsied by the horrid suggestion which at once charms and terrifies him, and which makes him shudder simply because it reveals an answering spirit and purpose within him. That which so

entrances and appals him is but the image of his moral self, as he beholds it in the mirror of his newly-awakened consciousness. It is indeed a fearful transpiration of character !

Macbeth himself never thinks of making the Weird Sisters anyway responsible for what he does. The workings of his mind, throughout, manifestly infer that he feels just as free in his actions as if no supernatural soliciting had come near him. He therefore never offers to soothe his conscience or satisfy his reason on the score of his being under any fatal charm or fascination of evil. For, in truth, the promise of the throne is no more an instigation to murder for it, than a promise of wealth in like sort would be to steal. To a truly honest man, such a promise, in so far as he believed it, would preclude the motives to theft. His thought would be, "Wealth is coming; I have but to work, and let it come." If, however, he were already a thief at heart, and kept from stealing only by fear of the consequences, he would be apt to construe the promise of wealth into a promise of impunity in theft. Which just marks the difference of Banquo and Macbeth. What with the one precludes the motive to crime, with the other itself becomes the motive to crime.

Banquo's moral reason, indeed, grows more vigilant and discerning for the temptations laid before him: his virtue, instead of being staggered by them, is rendered more circumspective and firm: he disarms or repels them by prayer; and the more they press upon him, the more he prays for help against them. For so we find that the having merely dreamed of the Weird Sisters moves him to exclaim, "Merciful Powers, restrain in me the cursèd thoughts that nature gives way to in repose!" And when Macbeth, on hearing of the dream, tries to draw him into his counsels, telling

him "it shall make honour for him," he gives the prompt reply, — www.libtool.com.cn

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

than which nothing could better approve his firmness of moral tone.

Macbeth.

So much for the origin of the murderous purpose, and the agency of the Weird Sisters in bringing it to a head. Henceforth Macbeth's falterings and misgivings spring from the peculiar structure of his intellect as inflamed with the poison of meditated guilt. His understanding and imagination rush into irregular, convulsive action; conscience being indeed the main cause of that action, yet hiding itself in the agitations of mind which it stirs up. Thus a strange, fearful hallucination, all begotten of guilt, takes possession of him. Hence his long and fatal course of self-delusion. He has done the greatest possible violence to his moral nature, and thereby "put rancours in the vessel of his peace"; but the agonies thence resulting he still misderives from external causes, and keeps mistranslating them into the warnings of prudence, the forecastings of reason, and the threatenings of danger. His strong and excitable imagination, set on fire of conscience, fascinates and spell-binds his other faculties, and so gives objectiveness to its internal workings. His moral forces even usurp his eyes and ears, turning them into "miraculous organs," so that he cannot choose but see and hear things that are not; as in case of "the air-drawn dagger which leads him to Duncan," and the cry that haunts

him, "Sleep no more! Macbeth does murder sleep." Thus his conscience, instead of acting directly in the form of remorse, comes to act through imaginary terrors, which in turn react on his conscience, as fire is made hotter by the current of air which itself generates.

It is probably from oversight of this that some have set Macbeth down as a timid, cautious, remorseless villain, withheld from crime only by a shrinking, selfish apprehensiveness. He does indeed seem strangely dead to the guilt, and morbidly alive to the dangers, of his enterprise; free from remorse of conscience, and filled with imaginary fears: but whence his uncontrollable irritability of imagination? how comes it that his mind so swarms with horrible imaginings, but that his imagination itself is set on fire of Hell? Such "paintings of fear," it scarce need be said, are not the offspring of a mind in which the moral sense is weak or dead; rather they attest a peculiar strength and quickness in that sense. Call it insanity, if you will; but it is an insanity full of moral inspiration. And what a lesson does it read us of the secret possibilities of evil, ay, and of punishment too, wrapped up in the moral constitution of man!

Macbeth's conscience thus acting in disguise, the natural effect is, at first, to make him wavering and irresolute: the harrowings of guilty fear have a certain prospective and preventive operation, causing him to recoil, he scarce knows why, from the work he has in hand. So that he would never be able to go through without other instigations. To launch him fairly in the career of crime, not only his ambition and thirst of power, but also his household affections and virtues must be arrayed against his scruples of reason and conscience. Not so, however, after the first great step has been taken. Then the self-same workings of conscience

have the effect of goading him on from crime to crime. (He still mistakes his inward pangs for outward perils.) Guilt peoples his whereabout with fantastical terrors, which he labours to beat down, and thereby only multiplies. In his efforts to dissimulate he loses his self-control, and spills, or thinks he spills, the secret he is trying to hide; and in giving others cause to suspect him he plants his own heart full of suspicions against them. Thus his cowardice of conscience urges him on to fresh murders, and every murder adds to that cowardice; the very blood which he spills to quiet his fears sprouting up in "gorgons and chimeras dire," to awaken new fears and call for more victims.

I suppose it is a natural result of an imagination so redundant and excitable as his, that the agonies of remorse should project and embody themselves in imaginary terrors, and so spur him on to further crimes for security against those terrors. To give himself peace, Macbeth must still keep using his dagger; and yet every thrust he makes with it just stabs a new wound in his own soul. Such is the dreadful madness which guilt engenders in him! His moral forces indeed turn to a downright fury and venom of infatuation, insomuch that he boldly enters the lists against the very powers in which he has trusted.

All this comes out in his interview with Lady Macbeth on the eve of Banquo's murder:—

We have but scotch'd the snake, not kill'd it:
 She'll close, and be herself; whilst our poor malice
 Remains in danger of her former tooth. But let
 The frame of things disjoint, both the worlds suffer,
 Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep
 In the affliction of these terrible dreams
 That shake us nightly. better be with the dead,
 Whom we, to gain our place, have sent to peace.

Than on the torture of the mind to lie
 In restless ecstasy. Duncan is in his grave;
 After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well;
 Treason has done his worst: not steel, nor poison,
 Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing
 Can touch him further.

Here we see that crime has filled his mind with scorpions, and still he thinks of no way to clear them out but by crime. And the thought of Duncan instantly charms him into a feverish brooding over the dangers which he seems to have invited against himself by murdering him. And it is well worth noting how, in this speech, as in several others, he goes on kindling more and more with his theme, till he fairly loses himself in a trance of moral and imaginative thought. The inward burnings of guilt act as a sort of inspiration to him. For the preternatural illumination of mind, which so often transports him, marks the insurgent stress of those moral forces which I have already noted in him.

Critics of a certain school have, in characteristic fashion, found fault with the huddling together and confusion of metaphors which Macbeth pours forth in his most excited moments. Here is an instance of what I mean: —

Methought I heard a voice cry, *Sleep no more!*
Macbeth does murder sleep! — the innocent sleep;
 Sleep, that knits up the ravell'd sleeve of care,
 The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
 Balm of hurt minds, great Nature's second course,
 Chief nourisher in life's feast.

In this, and other like strains, the aforesaid critics take it rather ill, that Macbeth does not talk more according to the rules of grammar and Blair. Shakespeare was content to let him talk according to his state of mind and the laws of

his character. Nor, in this view, could any thing better serve than such a preternatural rush and redundancy of imagination, hurrying him on from thought to thought, and running and massing a multitude of half-formed images together. And such a cast of mind in the hero was perhaps necessary to the health of the drama : otherwise such a manifold tragedy had been in danger of turning out a mere accumulation of horrors. As it is, the impression is at once softened and deepened, after a style of art which Shakespeare alone could evoke and manage ; the terrible treading, sometimes trembling, on the outermost edge, yet never passing over into the horrible. Thus a much higher degree of tragic effect is attained than would else stand within the terms of pleasurable emotion. Macbeth's imagination so overwrought and self-accelerating, — this it is that glorifies the drama with such an interfusion of tragic rapture and lyrical sweetness, and pours over the whole that baptism of terrible beauty which forms its distinctive excellence. (If you would move men deeply, you must stimulate their active powers in proportion as you tax their receptive.) And when a man's imaginative forces are duly kindled, he will bear, and even enjoy, a stress of appeal, which would else defeat itself by stunning or revolting his sensibilities. Which is one reason, no doubt, why so many rather ambitious attempts at tragedy have proved in effect but “lamentable comedies.”

Before passing on from the hero, I will advert briefly to one or two minute, but, I think, highly significant notes of character. Thus, at the first meeting of Macbeth and his wife : —

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

Lady M. And when goes hence ?

Macb. To-morrow, — as he purposes.

Again in the morning after the murder, when several Thanes make an early call upon him : —

Lenox. Goes the King hence to-day ?

Macb. He does ; — he did appoint so.

In the former case he meditates defeating the King's purpose by killing him ; in the latter he has made it impossible for the King's appointment to be kept. And in both his mind is struck with a sudden impulse to be true to itself. He is wickedly ambitious, but not meanly false : honour, and the truthfulness that belongs to it, is something of a passion with him ; and in these cases the instant conscience of falsehood pricks him into a mending of his speech. (He finds it not easy at first to keep his tongue and heart from beating time together :) it is hardly in his nature indeed to "look like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under it" ; and therefore it is that his wife so pointedly warns him, ("Your face, my thane, is as a book, where men may read strange matters.") There is indeed much truth in her soliloquized description of him : —

Thou wouldst be great ;

Art not without ambition, but without

The illness should attend it : what thou wouldst highly,

That wouldst thou holily ; wouldst not play false,

And yet wouldst wrongly win.

Character of Lady Macbeth.

In the structure and working of her mind and moral frame, Lady Macbeth is the opposite of her husband, and therefore all the fitter to countervail his infirmity of purpose ; that is, she differs from him in just the right way to supplement him. Of a firm, sharp, wiry, matter-of-fact intellect, doubly charged with energy of will, she has little in common

with him save a red-hot ambition : hence, while the Weird disclosures act on her will just as on his, and she jumps forthwith into the same purpose, the effect on her mind is wholly different. Without his irritability of understanding and imagination, she is therefore subject to no such involuntary transports of thought. Accordingly she never loses herself in any raptures of meditation ; no illusions born of guilty fear get the mastery of her ; at least, not when her will is in exercise : in her waking moments, her senses are always so thoroughly in her keeping, that she hears and sees things just as they are. As conscience draws no visions before her eyes, and shapes no voices in her hearing ; so, while he is shaken and quite unmanned with fantastical terrors, she remains externally calm, collected, and cool. Her presence of mind indeed seems firmest when his trances of illusion run highest ; so that, instead of being at all infected with his agitations, her forces then move in the aptest order to recover him from them. Which shows that her sympathy with his ambition, intense as it is, has no power to make her sympathize with his mental workings. It may almost be said indeed, that what stimulates his imagination stifles hers.

Almost any other dramatist would have brought the Weird Sisters to act immediately on Lady Macbeth, and on her husband through her, as thinking her more open to superstitious allurements and charms. Shakespeare seems to have judged that aptness of mind for them to work upon would have disqualified her for working upon her husband in aid of them. Enough of such influence has already been brought to bear : what is needed further, is quite another sort of influence, such as could only come from a mind not much accessible to the Weird Sisters.

There was strong dramatic reason, therefore, why Lady

Macbeth should have such a mind and temper as to be moved and impressed, when awake, by nothing but facts. She ought to be, as indeed she is, so constituted, that the evil which has struck its roots so deep within never comes back to her in the elements and aspects of Nature, either to mature the guilty purpose or to obstruct the guilty act. It is remarkable that she does not once recur to the Weird Sisters, nor make any use of their salutations : they seem to have no weight with her, but for the impression they have wrought on her husband. That this impression may grow to the desired effect, she refrains from meddling with it, and seeks only to fortify it with impressions of another sort. And what could better approve her shrewdness and tact than that, instead of overstraining this one motive, and so weakening it, she thus lets it alone, and labours to strengthen it by mixing others with it. For, in truth, the Weird Sisters represent, in most appalling sort, the wickedness of the purpose they suggest : so that Macbeth's fears as well as his hopes are stimulated, and his fears even more than his hopes, by the recollection of their greetings : the instant he reverts to them, his imagination springs into action, — an organ of which ambition works the bellows indeed, but conscience still governs the stops and keys. The very thought of them indeed seems to put him at once under a fascination of terror. All this does not escape his wife ; who therefore judges it best rather to draw his thoughts off from that matter, and fix them on other inducements. He had thought of the murder, when as yet he could see no opportunities for doing it. When those opportunities come, *they* are the arguments that tell with her ; and she therefore makes it her business to urge them upon him, invoking his former manhood withal, to re-integrate and shame him out of his present weakness : —

Nor time nor place
 Did then adhere, and yet you would make both :
 They've made themselves, and that their fitness now
 Does unmake you.

Coleridge justly remarks upon her adroit boldness in first pressing those very considerations which most stagger her husband's purpose. That the King has cast himself unreservedly on their loyalty and hospitality, this she puts forth as the strongest argument for murdering him ! An awful stroke of character indeed, and therefore awful, because natural. By thus anticipating his greatest drawbacks, and urging them as the chief incentives, she forecloses all debate. Which is just what she wants ; for she knows full well that the thing will not stand the tests of reason a moment : it must be done first, and discussed afterwards. And throughout this wrestling-match she surveys the whole ground, and darts upon the strongest points with the quickness and sureness of instinct ; the sharpness of the exigency being to her a sort of practical inspiration. The finishing stroke in this part of the work is when, her husband's resolution being all in a totter, she boldly (cuts the sinews of retreat,) casting the thing into a personal controversy, and making it a theme of domestic war : —

<i>Lady M.</i>	Art thou afeard
	To be the same in thine own act and valour
	As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou lack that
	Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,
	And live a coward in thine own esteem,
	Letting <i>I dare not</i> wait upon <i>I would</i> ,
	Like the poor cat i' the adage?
<i>Macb.</i>	Pr'ythee, peace!
(I dare do all that may become a man;)
)	Who dares do more is none.
<i>Lady M.</i>	What beast was't then,
)	That made you break this enterprise to me?

After this, it is hardly possible they should live together, unless he do the deed. The virtues and affections of the husband are now drawn up against the conscience of the man. For, to be scorned and baited as a coward by the woman he loves, and by whom he is loved, is the last thing a soldier can bear: death is nothing to it. Macbeth, accordingly, goes about the deed, and goes through it, with an assumed ferocity caught from his wife.

Nor is that ferocity native to her own breast: surely, on her part too, it is assumed; for though in her intense overheating of expectant passion it is temporarily fused into her character, it is disengaged and thrown off as soon as that heat passes away; as men, in the ardour of successful effort, sometimes pass for a while into a character which they undertake to play. Lady Macbeth begins with acting a part which is really foreign to her; but which, notwithstanding, such is her energy of will, she braves out to issues so overwhelming, that her husband and many others believe it to be her own. I here refer especially to the speech beginning, "I have given suck, and know how tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me." It is said that Mrs. Siddons used to utter the closing words of that speech in a scream, as though scared from her propriety by the audacity of her own tongue. And I can well conceive how a spasmodic action of fear might lend to such a woman as Lady Macbeth an appearance of superhuman or inhuman boldness. At all events, it seems clear enough that in this case her fierce vehemence of purpose rasps her woman's feelings to the quick; and the pang thence resulting might well utter itself in a scream.

Lady Macbeth is indeed a great bad woman whom we fear and pity; but neither so great nor so bad, I am apt to think, as is commonly supposed. She has closely studied

her husband, and penetrated far into the heart of his mystery : yet she knows him rather as he is to her than as he is in himself ; hence in describing his character she interprets her own. She has indeed the ambition to wish herself unsexed, but not the power to unsex herself except in words. For, though she invokes the "murdering ministers" to "come to her woman's breasts, and take her milk for gall," still she cannot make them come ; and her milk, in spite of her invocation, continues to be milk. Verplanck describes her as "a woman of high intellect, bold spirit, and lofty desires, who is mastered by a fiery thirst of power, and that for her husband as well as herself."

Two characters, however, may easily be made out for Lady Macbeth, according as we lay the chief stress on what she says or what she does. For, surely, no one can fail to remark that the anticipation raised by her earlier speeches is by no means sustained in her subsequent acts. When she looks upon the face of the sleeping King, and sees the murderous thought passing, as it were, into a *fact* before her, a gush of womanly feeling or of native tenderness suddenly stays her hand. "Had he not resembled my father as he slept, I had done't." That such a real or fancied resemblance should thus rise up and unsew her purpose in the moment of action, is a rare touch of nature indeed ; and shows that conscience works even more effectually through the feelings in her case than through the imagination in that of her husband. And the difference of imagination and feeling in this point is, that the one acts most at a distance, the other on the spot. This sharp contradiction between her tongue and her hand has often reminded me of a line which Schiller puts into the mouth of Wallenstein : "Bold were my words, because my deeds were *not*." And it seems to me

that the towering audacity of her earlier speeches arises, at least in part, from an overstrained endeavour to school herself into a firmness and fierceness of which she feels the want.

Her whole after-course, I think, favours this view. For instance, when she hears from Macbeth how he has murdered the two grooms also, she sinks down at the tale. For I can by no means regard that as a counterfeit swoon. The thing takes her by surprise, and her iron-ribbed self-control for once gives way. The announcement of the King's murder had no such effect upon her, for she was prepared for that. And that was when she would have counterfeited fainting, if at all. So bold of tongue, she could indeed say, "the sleeping and the dead are but as pictures; 'tis the eye of childhood, that fears a painted devil"; but the sequel proves her to have been better than she was aware. In truth, she has undertaken too much: in her efforts to screw her own and her husband's courage to the sticking-place, there was exerted a force of will which answered the end indeed, but at the same time flawed the core of her being. She has quite as much of conscience as her husband; but no such sensitive redundancy of imagination, as that her conscience should be in her senses, causing the howlings of the storm to syllable the notes of remorse. Here, again, we see her characteristic matter-of-factness. It is deeds, not thoughts, that kindle the furies in her soul. And because the workings of guilt do not pass out of her, as it were, and take on the form of spectral illusions, therefore they just eat back and consume all the more fatally within: had she an organ to project and shape them outwardly in fantastical terrors, their action would be tempered more equally to her powers of endurance. With her prodigious force of will, she may indeed keep them hidden from others,

but she can neither repress nor assuage them. And for the same cause she is free alike from the terrible apprehensions which make her husband flinch from the first crime, and from the maddening and merciless suspicions that sting him on to other crimes.

Accordingly she gives no waking sign of the dreadful work that is doing within : the unmitigable corrodings of her rooted sorrow, even when busiest in destruction, do not once betray her, except when her self-rule is dissolved in sleep. But the truth comes out, with an awful mingling of pathos and terror, in the scene where her conscience, sleepless amidst the sleep of nature, nay, most restless even then when all other cares are at rest, drives her forth, open-eyed yet sightless, to sigh and groan over spots on her hands that are visible to none but herself, nor even to herself save when she is blind to every thing else : (a living automaton worked by the agonies of remorse !) How perfectly her senses are then dominated by the conscience, is shown with supreme effect in "Here's the smell of blood still" ; which has been aptly noted as the only instance in modern times where the sense of smell has been successfully employed in high tragic expression. An awful mystery, too, hangs over her death. We know not, the Poet himself seems not to know, whether the gnawings of the undying worm drive her to suicidal violence, or themselves cut asunder the cords of her life : all we know is, that the death of her body springs somehow from the inextinguishable life and the immedicable wound of her soul. What a history of her woman's heart is written in her thus sinking, sinking away where imagination shrinks from following her, under the violence of an invisible yet unmistakable disease, which still sharpens its inflictions and at the same time quickens her sensibilities !

Lady Macbeth dies before her husband. This is one of the most judicious points of the drama. Her death touches Macbeth in the only spot where he seems to retain the feelings of a man, and draws from him some deeply-solemn, soothing, elegiac tones ; so that one rises from the contemplation of his history “ a sadder and a wiser man ” : —

Macb. Wherefore was that cry ?

Seyton. The Queen, my lord, is dead.

Macb. She should have died hereafter :

There would have been a time for such a word. —

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,

Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,

To the last syllable of recorded time ;

And all our yesterdays have lighted fools

The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle !

Life's but a walking shadow ; a poor player,

That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,

And then is heard no more : it is a tale

Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,

Signifying nothing.

It has been justly observed that “ Macbeth, left alone, resumes much of that connection with humanity which he had so long abandoned : his thoughtfulness becomes pathetic ; and when at last he dies the death of a soldier, the stern satisfaction, with which we contemplate the act of justice that destroys him, is unalloyed by feelings of personal wrath or hatred. His fall is a sacrifice, and not a butchery.” *

This guilty couple are patterns of conjugal virtue. A tender, delicate, respectful affection sweetens and dignifies their intercourse ; the effect of which is rather heightened than otherwise by their ambition, because they seem to thirst for each other's honour as much as for their own. And this sentiment of mutual respect even grows by their crimes, since

* *The Edinburgh Review*, July, 1840.

their inborn greatness is developed through them. (For they both sin heroically, and they both suffer heroically too.) And when they find that the crown, which they have waded through so much blood to grasp, does but scald their brows and stuff their pillow with thorns, this begets a still deeper and finer play of sympathy between them. Thenceforth (and how touching its effect !) a soft subdued undertone of inward sympathetic woe and anguish mingles audibly in the wild rushing of the moral tempest which hangs round their footsteps. Need I add how free they are from any thing little or mean, any thing vulgar or gross? The very intensity of their wicked passion seems to have assoiled their minds of all such earthy and ignoble incumbrances. And so manifest, withal, is their innate fitness to reign, that their ambition almost passes as the instinct of faculty for its proper sphere.

General Remarks.

Dr Johnson observes, with singular infelicity, that this play "has no nice discriminations of character." How far this dictum is from being just, I trust has been made clear enough already. In this respect, the hero and heroine are equalled only by the Poet's other masterpieces, — by Shylock, Hamlet, Lear, and Iago; while the Weird Sisters, so seemingly akin (though whether as mothers or sisters or daughters, we cannot tell) to the thunder-storms that come and go with them, occupy the summit of his preternatural creations. Nevertheless it must be owned that the grandeur of the dramatic combination somewhat overshadows the individual characters; insomuch that something of special effort is required to keep the delicate limning of the agents from being lost sight of in the magnitude, the manifold unity, and thought-like rapidity of the action.

The style of this mighty drama is pitched in the same high tragic key as the action. Throughout, we have an explosion, as of purpose into act, so also of thought into speech, both literally kindling with their own swiftness. No sooner thought than said, no sooner said than done, is the law of the piece. Therewithal thoughts and images come crowding and jostling each other in such quick succession as to prevent a full utterance ; a second leaping upon the tongue before the first is fairly off. I should say the Poet here specially endeavoured how much of meaning could be conveyed in how little of expression ; with the least touching of the ear to send vibrations through all the chambers of the mind. Hence the large, manifold suggestiveness which lurks in the words : they seem instinct with something which the speakers cannot stay to unfold. And between these invitations to linger and the continual drawings onward the reader's mind is kindled to an almost preternatural activity. All which might at length grow wearisome, but that the play is, moreover, throughout, a conflict of antagonist elements and opposite extremes, which are so managed as to brace up the interest on every side : so that the effect of the whole is to refresh, not exhaust the powers ; the mind being sustained in its long and lofty flight by the wings that grow forth as of their own accord from its superadded life. The lyrical element, instead of being interspersed here and there in the form of musical lulls and pauses, is thoroughly interfused with the dramatic ; while the ethical sense underlies them both, and is forced up through them by their own pressure. The whole drama indeed may be described as a tempest set to music.

My mind has long been made up, that in the banquet-

scene the actual reappearance of the murdered Banquo ought by all means to be discontinued on the stage. It can hardly fail to excite feelings just the reverse of suitable to the occasion : in a word, the thing is simply ludicrous, and cannot be made to seem otherwise in our time. It is indeed certain, from Forman's *Notes*, that such reappearance was used in the Poet's time ; but there were good reasons for it then which do not now exist. In the right conception of the matter, the ghost is manifestly a thing existing only in the diseased imagination of Macbeth ; what we call a *subjective* ghost, a Banquo of the mind ; and having no more objective being than the air-drawn dagger of a previous scene ; the difference being that Macbeth is there so well in his senses as to be aware of the unreality, while he is here quite out of his senses, and completely hallucinated. All this is evident in that the apparition is seen by none of the other persons present. In Shakespeare's time, the generality of people could not possibly take the conception of a subjective ghost ; but it is not so now. To be sure, it was part of the old superstition in this behalf, that a ghost could make itself visible, if it chose, only to such as it had some special concern with ; but this is just what we mean by a subjective ghost. The same arguments and the same conclusion hold also respecting the Ghost in the closet-scene of *Hamlet*, where the hero has the interview with his mother.

It has often struck me as a highly-significant fact, that the sleep-walking scene, which is more intensely tragic than any other scene in Shakespeare, is all, except the closing speech, written in prose. Why is this ? The question is at least not a little curious. The diction is of the very plainest and simplest texture ; yet what an impression of sublimity it

carries ! In fact, I suspect the matter is too sublime, too austere grand, to admit of any thing so artificial as the measured language of verse, even though the verse were Shakespeare's ; and that the Poet, as from an instinct of genius, saw or felt that any attempt to heighten the effect by any such arts or charms of delivery would unbrace and impair it. And I think that the very diction of the closing speech, poetical as it is, must be felt by every competent reader as a letting-down to a lower intellectual plane. Is prose, then, after all, a higher form of speech than verse ? *

Divers critics have spoken strongly against the Porter-scene : Coleridge denounces it as unquestionably none of Shakespeare's work. Which makes me almost afraid to trust my own judgment concerning it ; yet I always feel it to be in the true spirit of the Poet's method. This strain of droll broad humour, oozing out amid such a congregation of terrors, to my mind deepens their effect, the strange but momentary diversion causing them to return with the greater force. Of the murder-scene, the banquet-scene, the sleep-walking-scene, with their dagger of the mind, and Banquo of the mind, and blood-spots of the mind, it were vain to speak. Yet over these sublimely-terrific passages there everywhere hovers a magic light of poetry, at once disclosing the

* It has just struck my feelings that, the Phrencydean origin of prose being granted, prose must have struck men with greater admiration than poetry. In the latter it was the language of passion and emotion : it is what they themselves spoke and heard in moments of exaltation, indignation, &c. But to hear an evolving roll or a succession of leaves talk continually the language of deliberate reason in the form of a continued preconception,—this must have appeared godlike. I feel myself in the same state when, in the perusal of a sober, yet elevated and harmonious, succession of sentences and periods, I abstract my mind from the particular passage, and sympathize with the wonder of the common people, who say of an eloquent man, " He talks like a book ! " — COLERIDGE.

horrors of the scene and annealing them into matter of delight. — Hallam sets the work down as being, in the language of Drake, “the greatest effort of our author’s genius, the most sublime and impressive drama which the world has ever beheld”; a judgment from which most readers will perhaps be less inclined to dissent, the older they grow.

It seems hardly right to close this Introduction without quoting two brief but very apposite passages of criticism; one from the well-known work of Gervinus, the other from Heraud’s *Inner Life of Shakespeare*.

“*Macbeth*,” says Gervinus, “stands forth uniquely pre-eminent in the splendours of poetic and picturesque diction and in the living representation of persons, times, and places. Here Schlegel has perceived the vigorous heroic age of the North depicted with powerful touches, the generations of an iron time, whose virtue was bravery. How grandly do the mighty forms arise, how grandly do they move in a heroic style! Justly has Reynolds admired that description of the martlet’s resort at Macbeth’s dwelling as a charming image of repose, following by way of contrast the lively picture of the fight. More justly has praise been ever lavished on the powerful representation of the terrible in the sleep-walking of Lady Macbeth, in the banquet-scene, in the dismal creation of the Weird Sisters. Still far above all this is the speaking truth of the scene at the murder of Duncan, which has a powerful effect even in the most imperfect representation. The fearful whispered conference, in the horrible dimness of which the pair arrange and complete their atrocious project; the heart-rending portraiture of Macbeth’s state of mind at the deed itself; — all this is so perfectly natural, and wrought to such powerful effect with so little art,

that it would be difficult to find its equal in the poetry of any age." www.libtool.com.cn

"All this tragedy," says Heraud, "is symbolic, — the diction, the action, the dialogue. That is, each is but a representative portion of a larger whole. Lady Macbeth's letter is only suggestive, not the entire document; and the conversation in the seventh scene of the first Act refers to a long-previous one. Of Sinel and Cawdor, to whose titles Macbeth succeeds, nothing is told but the names: the Witches themselves are introduced without any explanation, and we have to refer them to a system of mythology which we can only guess at. Lady Macbeth in the last Act comes suddenly before us as a somnambulist; and what she says then in her soliloquy — and she says it in the briefest way — is to indicate to us a psychological process very obscurely foreshadowed in the third Act, scene second, and which, on account of that obscurity, has been misunderstood. By this method of composition Shakespeare has gained a rapidity in the conduct of this drama which brings it into contrast with almost all the others. Thus, in illustrating a subject which reveals itself in types and symbols only on the stage of history and real life, Shakespeare, with a fine inner instinct, gives the same form to his religious tragedy. The symbolical style of this drama almost imparts to it a Biblical character. The type condenses a world of examples in a single one. A lesson which is a man; a myth with a human face so plastic that it looks at you, and that its look is a mirror; a parable which warns you; a symbol which cries out 'Beware!' an idea which is nerve, muscle, and flesh, and which has a heart to love, eyes to weep, and teeth to devour or laugh; a psychical conception with the relief of actual fact, — that is the type."

THE TRAGEDY OF MACBETH.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

DUNCAN, King of Scotland.	Young SIWARD, his Son.
MALCOLM, } his Sons.	SEYTON, an Officer attending on
DONALBAIN, }	Macbeth.
MACBETH, } Generals of his Army.	Boy, Son to Macduff.
BANQUO, }	An English Doctor.
MACDUFF, }	A Scotch Doctor.
LENNOX, }	A Soldier. A Porter.
ROSS, }	An old Man.
MENTETH, } Thanes of Scotland.	Lady MACBETH.
ANGUS, }	Lady MACDUFF.
CATHNESS, }	Gentlewoman attending on Lady
FLEANCE, Son to Banquo.	Macbeth.
SIWARD, Earl of Northumberland,	HECATE, and Witches.
General of the English forces.	

Lords, Gentlemen, Officers, Soldiers, Murderers, Attendants, Messengers,
and Apparitions.

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

ACT I.

SCENE I. — *An Open Place.*

Thunder and lightning. Enter three Witches.

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

2 *Witch.* When the hurlyburly's¹ done,
When the battle's lost and won.

3 *Witch.* That will be ere th' set of Sun.

1 *Witch.* Where the place?

2 *Witch.* Upon the heath.

5 3 *Witch.* There to meet with Macbeth.

1 *Witch.* *I come, graymalkin!*

2 *Witch.* *Paddock*² *calls:—Anon!*³

All. Fair is foul, and foul is fair:⁴

Hover through the fog and filthy air. [Exeunt.

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

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

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

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

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

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

SCENE II. — *A Camp near Forres.*
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Alarum within. Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN,
 LENNOX, with Attendants, meeting a bleeding Sergeant.

Dun. What bloody man is that? He can report,
 As seemeth by his plight, of the revolt
 The newest state.¹

Mal. This is the sergeant,²
 Who like a good and hardy soldier fought
 5 'Gainst my captivity. — Hail, brave friend!
 Say to the King thy knowledge of the broil
 As thou didst leave it.

Serg. Doubtful it stood;
 As two spent swimmers, that do cling together
 And choke their art. The merciless Macdonwald —
 10 Worthy to be a rebel, for, to that,³
 The multiplying villanies of nature
 Do swarm upon him — from the Western Isles
 Of⁴ kerns and gallowglasses is supplied;

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

² *Sergeants*, in ancient times, were not the petty officers now so called; but men performing one kind of feudal military service, in rank next to esquires.

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

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

And Fortune, on his damnèd quarrel⁵ smiling,
 Show'd like a rebel's trull; but all's too weak;⁶
 For brave Macbeth, — well he deserves that name, —
 Disdaining fortune, with his brandish'd steel,
 5 Which smoked with bloody execution,
 Like valour's minion,
 Carved out his passage till he faced the slave;
 And ne'er shook hands,⁷ nor bade farewell to him,
 Till he unseam'd him from the navel to th' chops,⁸
 10 And fix'd his head upon our battlements.

Dun. O valiant cousin! worthy gentleman!

Serg. As whence the Sun gives his reflection⁹
 Shipwrecking storms and direful thunders break;
 So from that spring whence comfort seem'd to come
 15 Discomfort swells. Mark, King of Scotland, mark:
 No sooner justice had, with valour arm'd,
 Compell'd these skipping kerns to trust their heels,

⁵ *Quarrel* was often used for *cause*. So in Bacon's essay *Of Marriage and Single Life*: "Wives are young men's mistresses, companions for middle age, and old men's nurses; so as a man may have a *quarrel* to marry when he will." See, also, the quotation from Holinshed in scene 4, note 9.

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

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

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

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

But the Norwegian lord, surveying vantage,
With furbish'd arms¹⁰ and new supplies of men
Began a fresh assault.

Dun. Dismay'd not this
Our captains,¹¹ Macbeth and Banquo?

Serg. Yes;

5 As sparrows eagles, or the hare the lion.
If I say sooth,¹² I must report they were
As cannons overcharged with double cracks;¹³
So they redoubled strokes upon the foe:
Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds,
10 Or memorize¹⁴ another Golgotha,
I cannot tell:—

But I am faint, my gashes cry for help.

Dun. So well thy words become thee as thy wounds;
They smack of honour both.— Go get him surgeons.—

[*Exit Sergeant, attended.*]

Who comes here?

Enter Ross.

15 *Mal.* The worthy Thane of Ross.

— *Len.* What haste¹⁵ looks through his eyes! So should
he look

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

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

¹² *Sooth* is *truth*. So, originally, *sooth-sayer* was *truth-speaker*.

¹³ *Overcharged* with double *cracks* is, as we should say, *loaded* with double *charges*; *crack* being put for that which makes the crack.

¹⁴ To *memorize* is to *make famous* or *memorable*. *Except* is here equivalent to *unless*. "Unless they meant to make the spot as famous as Golgotha, I cannot tell *what they meant*."

¹⁵ We should say, "What a haste." So in *Julius Cæsar*, i. 3: "Cassius, what night is this!"

That seems ¹⁶ to speak things strange.

Ross. www.libtool.com.cn God save the King!

Dun. Whence camest thou, worthy thane?

Ross. From Fife, great King;

Where the Norwegian banners flout the sky,

— And fan our people cold.¹⁷ Norway himself,

5 With terrible numbers,

Assisted by that most disloyal traitor,

The Thane of Cawdor, 'gan a dismal conflict;

Till that Bellona's bridegroom, lapp'd in proof,¹⁸

Confronted him with self caparisons,¹⁹

10 Point against point rebellious, arm 'gainst arm,

Curbing his lavish spirit: ²⁰ and, to conclude,

The victory fell on us;—

Dun. Great happiness!

Ross. — that ²¹ now

¹⁶ It appears that to *seem* was sometimes used with the exact sense of to *will* or to *mean*. So, afterwards, in scene 5: "Which fate and metaphysical aid doth *seem* to have thee crown'd withal."

¹⁷ "The banners, proudly reared aloft and fluttering in the wind, seemed to mock or insult the sky,—'laughing banners'; while the sight of them struck chills of dread and dismay into our men." *Flout* and *fan* for *flouted* and *fanned*; instances of what is called "the historic present." See note 6.

¹⁸ "Lapp'd in proof" is covered with impenetrable armour, or "armour of proof," as it is called.—Bellona was the old Roman goddess of war; the companion and, as some thought, the sister of Mars. Steevens laughed at the Poet's ignorance in making her the wife of Mars; whereas he plainly makes her the bride of Macbeth.

¹⁹ *Caparisons* for *arms*, offensive and defensive; the trappings and furniture of personal fighting. Here, as often, *self* is equivalent to *self-same*. So that the meaning is, Macbeth confronted the rebel Cawdor with just such arms as Cawdor himself had. It was Scot against Scot. See Critical Notes.

²⁰ That is, checking or repressing his *reckless* or *prodigal daring*.

²¹ *That* was continually used with the force of *so that*, or *insomuch that*.—*Composition* for *armistice* or *terms of peace*; as in the phrase to *compound a quarrel*.

Sweno, the Norways' King, craves composition ;
 Nor would we deign him burial of his men,
 Till he disbursèd, at Saint Colme's-Inch,²²
 Ten thousand dollars to our general use.

- 5 *Dun.* No more that Thane of Cawdor shall deceive
 Our bosom interest : — go pronounce his present death,
 And with his former title greet Macbeth.

Ross. I'll see it done.

Dun. (What he hath lost noble Macbeth hath won.)

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. — *A Heath.*

Thunder. Enter the three Witches.

- 10 *1 Witch.* Where hast thou been, sister ?

2 Witch. Killing swine.

3 Witch. Sister, where thou ?

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

- 15 *Aroint thee,*¹ *witch !* the rump-fed ronyon² cries.
 Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' the Tiger :
 But in a sieve I'll thither sail,
 And, like a rat without a tail,³

²² *Colme's* is here a dissyllable. *Colme's Inch*, now called *Inchcomb*, is a small island, lying in the Firth of Edinburgh, with an abbey upon it dedicated to St. Columb. *Inch* or *inse*, in Erse, signifies an island.

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

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

³ Scot, in his *Discovery of Witchcraft*, 1584, says it was believed that witches "could sail in an egg-shell, a cockle or muscle-shell through and

I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do.⁴

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

1 *Witch.* Thou art kind.⁵

3 *Witch.* And I another.

5 1 *Witch.* I myself have all the other ;

And the very points they blow,

All the quarters that they know

I' the shipman's card.⁶

I will drain him dry as hay :

10 Sleep shall neither night nor day

Hang upon his penthouse lid ;⁷

He shall live a man forbid :⁸

Wearv sev'n-nights nine times nine

Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine :⁹

15 Though his bark cannot be lost,

under the tempestuous seas." And in the *Life of Doctor Fian, a notable Sorcerer* : " All they together went to sea, each one in a riddle or cive, and went in the same very substantially, with flaggons of wine making merrie, and drinking by the way in the same riddles or cives." — It was the belief of the times that, though a witch could assume the form of any animal she pleased, the *tail* would still be wanting.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yet it shall be tempest-toss'd.

Look what I have.

2 *Witch.* Show me, show me.

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

5 Wreck'd as homeward he did come.

[*Drum within.*

3 *Witch.* A drum, a drum!

Macbeth doth come.

All. The Weird Sisters,¹⁰ hand in hand,

Posters¹¹ of the sea and land,

10 Thus do go about, about :

Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,

And thrice again, to make up nine.¹²

Peace! — the charm's wound up.

Enter MACBETH and BANQUO.

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

¹⁰ *Weird* is from the Saxon *wyrd*, and means the same as the Latin *fatum*; so that *weird sisters* is the *fatal sisters*, or the *sisters of fate*. Gawin Douglas, in his translation of Virgil, renders *Parcæ* by *weird sisters*. Which agrees well with Holinshed in the passage which the Poet no doubt had in his eye: "The common opinion was, that these women were either the *weird sisters*, that is (as ye would say) the *goddesses of destinie*, or else some nymphs or feiries, indued with knowledge of prophesie by their necromantical science, bicause everie thing came to passe as they had spoken."

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

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

¹³ A day fouled with storm, but brightened with victory. Professor Dowden, however, thinks a deeper meaning is here intended: "Observe that the last words of the witches in the opening scene of the play are the first words which Macbeth himself utters: 'Fair is foul, and foul is fair.' Shakespeare intimates by this that, although Macbeth has not yet set eyes upon these hags, the connection is already established between his soul and them. Their spells have already wrought upon his blood."

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

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

10 *1 Witch.* All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, Thane of
 Glamis!

2 Witch. All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, Thane of Caw-
 dor!

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

Ban. Good sir, why do you start, and seem to fear
 Things that do sound so fair? — I' the name of truth,
 15 Are ye fantastical,¹⁴ or that indeed
 Which outwardly ye show? My noble partner
 You greet with present grace and great prediction
 Of noble having and of royal hope,
 That he seems rapt withal:¹⁵ to me you speak not:

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

¹⁵ Here, again, *that* has the force of *so that*. — *Present grace* refers to *noble having*, and *great prediction* to *royal hope*; and the Poet often uses *having* for *possession*. A similar distribution of terms occurs a little after: "Who neither beg nor fear your favours nor your hate." — Macbeth's rapture or trance of thought on this occasion is deeply significant of his moral predispositions. Coleridge remarks upon the passage as follows: "How truly Shakespearian is the opening of Macbeth's character given in the *unpossessedness* of Banquo's mind, wholly present to the present object; an unsullied, unscarified mirror! And how strictly true to nature it is that Banquo, and not Macbeth himself, directs our notice to the effect produced on Macbeth's mind, rendered temptable by previous dalliance of the fancy

If you can look into the seeds of time,
 And say which grain will grow and which will not,)
 Speak, then, to me, who neither beg nor fear
 Your favours nor your hate.

5 *1 Witch.* Hail !

2 Witch. Hail !

3 Witch. Hail !

1 Witch. Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.

2 Witch. Not so happy, yet much happier.

10 *3 Witch.* Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none.

All Three. So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo !

Banquo and Macbeth, all hail !

Macb. Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more :

By Sinel's death I know I'm Thane of Glamis ;¹⁶

15 But how of Cawdor ? the Thane of Cawdor lives,

A prosperous gentleman ;¹⁷ and to be king

Stands not within the prospect of belief,

No more than to be Cawdor. Say from whence

You owe¹⁸ this strange intelligence ; or why

with ambitious thoughts. Banquo's questions are those of natural curiosity, such as a girl would put after hearing a gipsy tell her school-fellow's fortune ; — all perfectly general, or rather planless. But Macbeth, lost in thought, raises himself to speech only by the witches being about to depart ; and all that follows is reasoning on a problem already discussed in his mind, — on a hope which he welcomes, and the doubts concerning the attainment of which he wishes to have cleared up."

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

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

¹⁸ To *owe* for to *own*, to *have*, to *possess*, occurs continually in Shakespeare. The original form of the word was *owen* ; and the shortened form of *own* finally carried the day against *owe*.

Upon this blasted heath you stop our way
 With such prophetic greeting : speak, I charge you.

[Witches *vanish*.]

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

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

Ban. Were such things here as we do speak about?
 Or have we eaten on the insane root
 That takes the reason prisoner?¹⁹

Macb. Your children shall be kings.

10 *Ban.* You shall be king.

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

Ban. To th'²⁰ selfsame tune and words. Who's here?

Enter ROSS and ANGUS.

Ross. The King hath happily received, Macbeth,
 The news of thy success : and, when he reads
 15 Thy personal venture in the rebels' fight,
 His wonders and his praises do contend
 What should be thine or his :²¹ silenced with that,

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

²⁰ The Poet, especially in his later plays, very often thus elides *the*, so as to make it coalesce with the preceding word into one syllable. So he has *by th', for th', from th'*, and even the double elision *wi' th'*.

²¹ The meaning probably is, "His wonders and his praises are so earnest and enthusiastic, that they seem to be debating or raising the question, whether what is his ought not to be thine, — whether you ought not to be in

In viewing o'er the rest o' the selfsame day,
 He finds thee in the stout Norway ranks,
 Nothing afeard of what thyself didst make,²²
 Strange images of death. As thick as tale
 5 Came post with post,²³ and every one did bear
 Thy praises in his kingdom's great defence,
 And pour'd them down before him.

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

Ross. And, for an earnest of a greater honour, —
 He bade me, from him, call thee Thane of Cawdor :
 In which addition,²⁴ hail, most worthy Thane !
 For it is thine.

Ban. What, can the Devil speak true? —
 15 *Macb.* The Thane of Cawdor lives : why do you dress me
 — In borrow'd robes.

Angus. Who was the thane lives yet ;
 But under heavy judgment bears that life
 Which he deserves to lose. Whether he was combined

his place." Such a thought, or *seeming* thought, on the King's part, would naturally act upon Macbeth as a further spur to his ambition. But that is a thought which the King of course cannot breathe aloud ; it would be a sort of treason to the State and to himself ; he is *silenced* by it. See Critical Notes.

²² That is, "not at all afraid of the death which you were dealing upon the enemy." The Poet often uses *nothing* thus as a strong negative.

²³ Meaning, "messengers came as fast as one can count." The use of *thick* for *fast* occurs repeatedly. So we have *speaks thick* used of one who talks so fast that his words tread on each other's heels. — The Poet often has to *tell* also for to *count*. And we still say "keep *tally*" for "keep *count*." So Milton in *L'Allegro* : "And every shepherd *tells* his tale"; that is, *counts* the number of his sheep, or to see whether the number is full.

²⁴ Here, as often, *addition* is *title*, mark of *distinction*.

With those of Norway, or did line²⁵ the rebel
 With hidden help and vantage, or that with both
 He labour'd in his country's wreck, I know not ;
 But treasons capital, confess'd and proved,
 Have overthrow'n him.

5 *Macb.* [*Aside.*] Glamis, and Thane of Cawdor!
 The greatest is behind. — [*To ROSS and ANGUS.*] Thanks
 for your pains. —

[*Aside to BANQUO.*] Do you not hope your children shall be
 kings,

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

Ban. [*Aside to MACBETH.*] That, trusted home,²⁶
 10 Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,
 Besides the Thane of Cawdor. But 'tis strange :
 And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
 The instruments of darkness tell us truths ;
 Win us with honest trifles, to betray's
 15 In deepest consequence.²⁷ —
 Cousins, a word, I pray you.

Macb. [*Aside.*] Two truths are told,
 As happy prologues to the swelling act
 Of the imperial theme.²⁸ — I thank you, gentlemen. —

²⁵ To *line* is to *strengthen*. The Poet has it repeatedly so.

²⁶ Shakespeare often thus uses *home* for *thoroughly* or *to the uttermost*. So in *Measure for Measure*, iv. 3: "Accuse him *home* and *home*."

²⁷ *Betray's* for *betray us*. The Poet has many such contractions. — It is nowise likely that Shakespeare was a reader of Livy; yet we have here a striking resemblance to a passage in that author, Book xxviii. 42, 4: "An Syphaci Numidisque credis? satis sit semel creditum: non semper temeritas est felix, et *fraus fidem in parvis sibi præstruit ut, quum operæ pretium sit, cum mercede magna fallit.*"

²⁸ *Happy* is *auspicious*, like the Latin *felix*; *swelling* is *grand, imposing*; and *act* is *drama*. Thus the image is of the stage, with an august drama

[*Aside.*] This supernatural soliciting
 Cannot be ill, cannot be good, if ill,
 Why hath it given me earnest of success,
 Commencing in a truth? I'm Thane of Cawdor :

5 If good, why do I yield to that suggestion²⁹

Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair,
 And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,
 Against the use of nature? / Present fears³⁰
 Are less than horrible imaginings :)

10 My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
 Shakes so my single state of man,³¹ that function
 Is smother'd in surmise, and nothing is
 But what is not.³²

Ban. Look, how our partner's rapt.

of kingly state to be performed: the inspiring prologue has been spoken, and the glorious action is about to commence.

²⁹ The use of *suggestion* for *temptation* was common in the Poet's time. — Macbeth construes the "prophetic greeting" into an instigation to murder, and accepts it as such, though while doing so he shudders at the conception.

³⁰ *Fears* for the *objects* of fear, *dangers* or *terrors*; the effect for the cause; — a common figure of speech.

³¹ "My thought, though it is only of a murder in imagination or fantasy, so disturbs my feeble manhood of reason." The Poet repeatedly uses *single* thus for *weak* or *feeble*.

³² That is, *facts* are lost sight of; he *sees* nothing but what is unreal, nothing but the spectres of his own fancy. So, likewise, in the preceding clause: the mind is crippled, disabled for its proper function or office by the apprehensions and surmises that throng upon him. Macbeth's conscience here acts through his imagination, sets it all on fire, and he is terror-stricken, and lost to the things before him, as the elements of evil within him gather and fashion themselves into the wicked purpose. Of this wonderful development of character Coleridge justly says: "So surely is the guilt in its germ anterior to the supposed cause and immediate temptation." And again: "Every word of his soliloquy shows the early birth-date of his guilt. He wishes the end, but is irresolute as to the means; conscience distinctly warns him, and he lulls it imperfectly."

Macb. [*Aside.*] If chance will have me king, why, chance
may crown me.
Without my stir.

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

Macb. [*Aside.*] (Come what come may,
5 Time and the hour³³ runs through the roughest day.)

Ban. Worthy Macbeth, we stay upon your leisure.³⁴

Macb. Give me your favour: my dull brain was wrought
With things forgotten.³⁵ Kind gentlemen, your pains
Are register'd where every day I turn
10 The leaf to read them.³⁶ Let us toward the King.—
[*Aside to BANQUO.*] Think upon what hath chanced; and at
more time,

The interim having weigh'd it, let us speak
Our free hearts³⁷ each to other.

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

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

³³ "Time and the hour" is an old reduplicate phrase occurring repeatedly in the writers of Shakespeare's time. The Italians have one just like it,—*il tempo e l'ore*. The sense of the passage is well explained by Heath: "The advantage of time and of seizing the favourable hour, whenever it shall present itself, will enable me to make my way through all obstruction and opposition. Every one knows the Spanish proverb,—'Time and I against any two.'"

³⁴ "Stay upon your leisure" is stay for or await your leisure.

³⁵ "Was exercised or absorbed in trying to recall forgotten things." A pretext put forth to hide the true cause of his trance of guilty thought.

³⁶ He means that he has noted them down on the tablets of his memory. See *Hamlet*, page 85, notes 20 and 21.

³⁷ "Speak our free hearts" is speak our hearts freely.

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

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

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

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

Dun. (There's no art
To find the mind's construction in the face :)
(He was a gentleman on whom I built
An absolute trust,³ —)

true?

Enter MACBETH, BANQUO, ROSS, and ANGUS.

O worthiest cousin !
15 The sin of my ingratitude even now
Was heavy on me : thou'rt so far before,

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

² "A careless trifle" is a trifle *not worth caring for*. Here *as* stands for *as if*. Often so.

³ Duncan's childlike spirit makes a moment's pause of wonder at the act of treachery, and then flings itself, like Gloucester in *King Lear*, with still more absolute trust and still more want of reflection, into the toils of a far deeper and darker treason. — MOBERLY.

That swiftest wing of recompense is slow
 To overtake thee.⁴ (Would thou hadst less deserved,
 That the proportion both of thanks and payment
 Might have been mine!⁵ only I've left to say,

5 More is thy due than more than all can pay.

Macb. The service and the loyalty I owe,
 In doing it, pays itself. Your Highness' part
 Is to receive our duties: and our duties
 Are to your throne and state children and servants;⁶
 10 Which do but what they should, by doing every thing
 Safe toward your love and honour.⁷

Dun.

Welcome hither:

I have begun to plant thee, and will labour
 To make thee full of growing. — Noble Banquo,
 That hast no less deserved, nor must be known
 15 No less to have done so, let me infold thee,
 And hold thee to my heart.

Ban.

There if I grow,

The harvest is your own.

Dun.

My plenteous joys,

Wanton in fulness, seek to hide themselves

⁴ The meaning is, "too slow to overtake thee."

⁵ "That my return of thanks and payment might have been *proportionable* to thy deserts, or *in due proportion* with them."

⁶ *Duties* is here put, apparently, for the faculties and labours of duty; the meaning being, "All our works and forces of duty are children and servants to your throne and state." Hypocrisy and hyperbole are apt to go together; and so here Macbeth overacts the part of loyalty, and tries how high he can strain up his expression of it. We have a parallel instance in Goneril and Regan's finely-worded professions of love. Such high-pressure rhetoric is the right vernacular of hollowness.

⁷ I am not quite clear whether this means "With a firm and *sure* purpose to have you loved and honoured," or, "So as to merit and *secure* love and honour from you." Perhaps both; as the Poet is fond of condensing two or more meanings into one expression.

In drops of sorrow.⁸ — Sons, kinsmen, thanes,
And you whose places are the nearest, know
We will establish our estate upon

Our eldest, Malcolm ; whom we name hereafter

5 The Prince of Cumberland :⁹ which honour must

Not unaccompanied invest him only,

But signs of nobleness, like stars, shall shine

On all deservers. — From hence to Inverness,

And bind us further to you.

10 *Macb.* The rest is labour, which is not used for you.¹⁰

I'll be myself the harbinger, and make joyful

The hearing of my wife with your approach :

So humbly take my leave.

Dun.

My worthy Cawdor !

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

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

*For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires !*¹¹

Let not light see my black and deep desires :

⁸ The gentle and amiable sovereign means that his joys swell up so high as to overflow in tears. The Poet has several like expressions.

⁹ So in Holinshed : " Duncan, having two sons, made the elder of them, called Malcolm, Prince of Cumberland, as it was thereby to appoint him his successor in his kingdome immediatlie after his decease. Macbeth sorely troubled herewith, for that he saw by this means his hope sore hindered, began to take counsel how he might usurpe the kingdome by force, having a just quarrel so .o doe, (as he tooke the matter,) for that Duncane did what in him lay to defraud him of all manner of title and claime, which he might in time to come pretend, unto the crowne." Cumberland was then held in fief of the English crown.

¹⁰ *Which* refers to *rest*, not to *labour*. "Even the repose, which is not taken for your sake, is a labour to me."

¹¹ We are not to understand from this that the present scene takes place in the night. Macbeth is evidently contemplating night as the time when the murder is to be done, and his appeal to the stars has reference to that.

*The eye wink¹² at the hand; yet let that be
Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see.* [Exit.

Dun. *True, worthy Banquo: ¹³ he is full so valiant,
And in his commendations I am fed;
5 It is a banquet to me. Let's after him,
Whose care is gone before to bid us welcome:
It is a peerless kinsman* [Flourish. *Exeunt.*

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

Enter Lady MACBETH, reading a letter.

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

20 Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be
What thou art promised. Yet do I fear thy nature;
(It is too full o' the milk of human kindness
To catch the nearest way, thou wouldst be great;

¹² "Let the eye wink" is the meaning. *Wink* at is encourage or prompt.

¹³ During Macbeth's last speech Duncan and Banquo were conversing apart, he being the subject of their talk. The beginning of Duncan's speech refers to something Banquo has said in praise of Macbeth.

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

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

Enter a Messenger.

What is your tidings?

Mess. The King comes here to-night.

Lady M. Thou'rt mad to say it:

Is not thy master with him? who, were't so,

15 Would have inform'd for preparation.

Mess. So please you, it is true. Our thane is coming:
 One of my fellows had the speed of him;
 Who, almost dead for breath, had scarcely more

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

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

⁴ *Metaphysical* for *supernatural*. So in Florio's *World of Words*, 1598: "Metafisico, one that professeth things supernatural." And in Minsheu's *Spanish Dictionary*, 1599: "Metafisica, things supernatural, metaphisickes." — For the use of *seem*, see page 52, note 16.

Than would make up his message.

Lady M. Give him tending ;
He brings great news. — [Exit Messenger.

The raven himself is hoarse

That croaks the fatal entrance⁵ of Duncan

Under my battlements. — Come, you spirits

5 That tend on mortal⁶ thoughts, unsex me here ;

And fill me from the crown to th' toe top-full

Of direst cruelty ! make thick my blood ;

Stop up th' access and passage to remorse,⁷

That no compunctious visitings of nature

10 Shake my fell purpose, nor break peace between

The effect and it !⁸ Come to my woman's breasts,

And take my milk for gall,⁹ you murdering ministers,

Wherever in your sightless substances

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

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

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

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

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

You wait on Nature's mischief! Come, thick night,
 And pall thee¹⁰ in the dunnest smoke of Hell,
 That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
 Nor Heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,¹¹
 To cry *Hold, hold!* —

Enter MACBETH.

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

Macb. My dearest love,

Duncan comes here to-night.

10 *Lady M.* And when goes hence?

Macb. To-morrow, — as he purposes.

Lady M. O, never

Shall Sun that morrow see!

Your face, my thane, is as a book where men
 May read strange matters: to beguile the time,

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

¹¹ The metaphor of darkness being a blanket wrapped round the world, so as to keep the Divine Eye from seeing the deed which Lady Macbeth longs and expects to have done, is just such a one as it was fitting for the boldest of poets to put into the mouth of the boldest of women. The old poets, however, were rather fond of representing night in some such way. So in *Romeo and Juliet*, iii. 2: "Spread thy close *curtain*, love-performing night." Also in *The Faerie Queene*, i. 4, 44: "Now whenas darksome night had all displayd her coleblacke *curtein* over brightest skye." And in Milton's *Ode on the Passion*: "Befriend me, night; over the pole thy thickest *mantle* throw."

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

Look like the time ;¹³ bear welcome in your eye,
 Your hand, ~~your tongue~~ look like the innocent flower,
 But be the serpent under't. He that's coming
 Must be provided for : and you shall put

5 This night's great business into my dispatch ;
 Which shall to all our nights and days to come
 Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom.

Macb. We will speak further.

Lady M.

Only look up clear ;

To alter favour¹⁴ ever is to fear :

10 *Leave all the rest to me.*

[*Exeunt.*]

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

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

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

Ban.

The guest of Summer,

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

¹⁴ *Favour* is *countenance*. — Lady Macbeth is here mad, or inspired, with a kind of extemporized ferocity, so that she feels herself able to perform without flinching the crime she has conceived, if her husband will only keep his face from telling any tales of their purpose. As Coleridge says, "hers is the mock fortitude of a mind deluded by ambition : she shames her husband with a superhuman audacity of fancy which she cannot support, but sinks in the season of remorse, and dies in suicidal agony."

¹ That is, "The air, by its purity and sweetness, attempers our senses to its own state, and so *makes* them gentle, or sweetens them into gentleness." Another proleptical form of speech. See page 68, note 5.

The temple-haunting martlet, does approve,²
 By his loved mansionry, that the heavens' breath
 Smells wooingly here: no jutting, frieze,
 Buttress, nor coign of vantage,³ but this bird
 5 Hath made his pendent bed and procreant cradle:
 Where they most breed and haunt, I have observed
 The air is delicate.⁴—

*Repose
happiness*

Enter Lady MACBETH.

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

Lady M. All our service
 In every point twice done, and then done double,
 Were poor and single⁷ business, to contend

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

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

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

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

⁶ "God yield us," that is, *reward* us. The Poet has *yield* or *'ield* repeatedly so.—To *bid* is here used in its old sense of to *pray*. So to *bid* the beads is to pray through the rosary. See *Richard the Second*, page 103, note 11.—The kind-hearted monarch means that his love is what puts him upon troubling them thus, and therefore they will be grateful for the pains he causes them.

⁷ Here, again, *too* is understood before *poor*. *Single*, again, also, in the sense of *weak* or *small*. See page 61, note 31, and page 64, note 4.

Against⁸ those honours deep and broad wherewith
 Your Majesty loads our House; for those of old,
 And the late dignities heap'd up to⁹ them,
 We rest your hermits.¹⁰

Dun. Where's the Thane of Cawdor?

5 We coursed him at the heels, and had a purpose
 To be his purveyor:¹¹ but he rides well;
 And his great love, sharp as his spur, hath holp¹² him
 To his home before us. Fair and noble hostess,
 We are your guest to-night.

Lady M. Your servants ever

10 Have theirs, themselves, and what is theirs, in compt,¹³ <
 To make their audit at your Highness' pleasure,
 Still to return your own.

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

15 By your leave, hostess.¹⁴ [*Exeunt.*]

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

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

¹⁰ That is, "We *remain* as hermits or *beadsmen* to pray for you."—Here, again, I quote from Coleridge: "The lyrical movement with which this scene opens, and the free and unengaged mind of Banquo, loving Nature, and rewarded in the love itself, form a highly dramatic contrast with the laboured rhythm and hypocritical over-much of Lady Macbeth's welcome, in which you cannot detect a ray of personal feeling, but all is thrown upon the *dignities*, the general duty."

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

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

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

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

SCENE VII.—*The Same.* MACBETH'S Castle.

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

Macb. If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
 It were done quickly :² if th' assassination
 Could trammel up the consequence, and catch,
 With his surcease, success ;³ that but this blow
 5 Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
 But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
 We'd jump⁴ the life to come. But in these cases
 We still have judgment here ; that⁵ we but teach
 Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return

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

² "If all were done when the murder is done, or if the mere doing of the deed were sure to finish the matter, then the quicker it were done the better." He then goes on to amplify and intensify the same thought in other language : "If the murdering of Duncan could be secure against all after-claps," &c.

³ That is, if the assassination could foreclose or shut off all sequent issues, and end with itself. *His* for *its*, referring to *assassination*. So *his* was continually used. See *Hamlet*, page 47, note 8.—To *trammel up* is to *entangle* as in a net. So Spenser has the noun in *The Faerie Queene*, iii. 9, 20. "Her golden locks, that were in *tramells* gay upbounden."—*Surcease* is, properly, a legal term, meaning the arrest or stay of a suit. So in Bacon's essay *Of Church Controversies* : "It is more than time that there were an end and *surcease* made of this immodest and deformed manner of writing," &c.—Here, as often, *success* probably has the sense of *sequel*, *succession*, or *succeeding events*. So that to *catch success* is to arrest and stop off all further outcome, or all entail of danger.

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

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

- To plague th' inventor : this even-handed justice
 Commends th' ingredients of our poison'd chalice
 To our own lips. He's here in double trust :
 First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
 5 Strong both against the deed ; then, as his host,
 Who should against his murderer shut the door,
 Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
 Hath borne his faculties⁶ so meek, hath been
 So clear in his great office, that his virtues
 10 Will plead like angels trumpet-tongued against
 The deep damnation of his taking-off ;
 And pity, like a naked new-born babe
 Striding the blast, or Heaven's cherubin, horsed
 Upon the sightless couriers⁷ of the air,
 15 Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
 That tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur
 To prick the sides of my intent, but only
 Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself,⁸
 And falls on th' other side. —

Enter Lady MACBETH.

How now ! what news ?

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

Macb. Hath he ask'd for me ?

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

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

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

Lady M. Know you not he has?

Macb. We will proceed no further in this business :
He hath honour'd me of late ; and I have bought
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,

5 Which would⁹ be worn now in their newest gloss,
Not cast aside so soon.

Lady M. (Was the hope drunk
Wherein you 'dress'd yourself?¹⁰) hath it slept since?
And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
At what it did so freely? From this time

10 Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard
To be the same in thine own act and valour
As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou lack that
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,
And live a coward in thine own esteem,

15 Letting *I dare not wait upon I would*,
Like the poor cat i' the adage?¹¹

Macb. Pr'ythee, peace :
I dare do all that may become a man ;
Who dares do more is none.

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

¹⁰ Every student of Shakespeare knows that he often uses to *address* for to *make ready* or to *prepare*. And he repeatedly has the shortened form '*dress*' in the same sense. So in *Troilus and Cressida*, i. 3: "As he being '*dress'd*' to some oration." From oversight of this, some strange comments have been made upon the present passage, as if it meant that Macbeth had put on hope as a *dress*. The meaning I take to be something thus: "Was it a drunken man's hope, in the strength of which you made yourself ready for the killing of Duncan? and does that hope now wake from its drunken sleep, to shudder and turn pale at the preparation which it made so freely?" In accordance with this explanation, the Lady's next speech shows that at some former time Macbeth had been, or had fancied himself, ready to make an opportunity for the murder.

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

And we'll not fail. When Duncan is asleep, —
 Whereto the rather shall his day's hard journey
 Soundly invite him, — his two chamberlains
 Will I with wine and wassail so convince,¹⁷

- 5 That memory, the warder of the brain,
 Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason
 A limbeck only: ¹⁸ when in swinish sleep
 Their drenchèd natures lie as in a death,
 What cannot you and I perform upon
 10 Th' unguarded Duncan? what not put upon
 His spongy ¹⁹ officers, who shall bear the guilt
 Of our great quell?²⁰

Macb. Bring forth men-children only ;

For thy undaunted mettle should compose
 Nothing but males. Will it not be received,

- 15 When we have mark'd with blood those sleepy two
 Of his own chamber, and used their very daggers,
 That they have done't?

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

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

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

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

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

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

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT II.

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

Enter BANQUO, and FLEANCE bearing a torch before him.

Ban. How goes the night, boy?

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

Ban. And she goes down at twelve.

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

Ban. Hold, take my sword. There's husbandry in
10 Heaven ;¹

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

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

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

² It appears afterwards that Banquo has been dreaming of the Weird Sisters. He understands full well how their greeting may act as an incentive to crime, and shrinks with pious horror from the poison of such evil

Enter MACBETH, and a Servant with a torch.

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Give me my sword. —

Who's there ?

Macb. A friend.

Ban. What, sir, not yet at rest? The King's a-bed :

5 He hath been in unusual pleasure, and
Sent forth great largess to your officers :³
This diamond he greets your wife withal,
By th' name of most kind hostess ; and shut up⁴
In measureless content.

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

Ban. All's well.

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

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

suggestions, and seeks refuge in prayer from the invasion of guilty thoughts even in his sleep. Herein his character stands in marked contrast with that of Macbeth, whose mind is inviting wicked thoughts, and catching eagerly at temptation, and revolving how he may work the guilty suggestions through into act.

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

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

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

Ban. At your kind'st leisure.

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

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

Macb. Good repose the while !

Ban. Thanks, sir : the like to you !

[*Exeunt BANQUO and FLEANCE.*]

Macb. Go bid thy mistress, when my drink is ready,
She strike upon the bell. Get thee to bed. — [*Exit* Servant.]
10 Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling as to sight? or art thou but
15 A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppress'd brain?
I see thee yet, in form as palpable
As this which now I draw :
Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going ;
20 And such an instrument I was to use. —
Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses,
Or else worth all the rest.⁷ I see thee still ;

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

⁷ *Senses* is here used with a double reference, to the bodily organs of sense and the inward faculties of the mind. Either his eyes are deceived by his imaginative forces in being made to see that which is not, or else his other senses are at fault in not being able to find the reality which his eyes behold. — *Dudgeon*, next line, is the handle or haft of the dagger: *gouts* is drops; from the French *gouttes*.

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

[A bell rings.]

⁸ That is, makes offerings or sacrifices to Hecate, who was the Queen of Hades, the patroness of all infernal arts, and of course the mistress of all who practised them; here called *pale*, because, under the name of Diana, she was identified with the Moon. The name is, properly, three syllables; but Shakespeare and other dramatic poets use it as a dissyllable.

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

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

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

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

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

[*Exit.*

Enter Lady MACBETH.

Lady M. That which hath made them drunk hath made
me bold ;

What hath quench'd them hath given me fire.¹³ — Hark !
5 Peace !

It was the owl that shriek'd, the fatal bellman,
Which gives the stern'st good-night.¹⁴ He is about it :
The doors are open ; and the surfeited grooms
Do mock their charge with snores : I've drugged their pos-
sets,

10 That death and nature do contend about them,
Whether they live or die.

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

Lady M. Alack, I am afraid they have awaked,
And 'tis not done. Th' attempt and not the deed
Confounds us.¹⁵ Hark ! I laid their daggers ready ;

15 He could not miss 'em. Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had done't.¹⁶ — My husband !

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

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

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

¹⁶ This little touch of nature is one of Shakespeare's most pregnant hints of character, and is enough of itself, I think, to upset the more common

Enter MACBETH.

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

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

Macb. When?

Lady M. Now.

Macb. As I descended?

Lady M. Ay.

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

Lady M. Donalbain.

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

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

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

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

Lady M. There are two lodged together.

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

notion of Lady Macbeth. It tells us that, notwithstanding her appalling invocation to the "murdering ministers," her milk continues to be milk. And what a suggestive contrast it makes to the terrible audacity of thought and speech she has just displayed! It is the tenderness of her woman's heart that causes her to see in the sleeping King an image of her father. See the Introduction, page 37.

¹⁷ *Address'd* for *composed* or *prepared*. See page 75, note 10.

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

Lady M. Consider it not so deeply.

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

Lady M. These deeds must not be thought
5 After these ways: so, it will make us mad.

Macb. Methought I heard a voice cry *Sleep no more!*
Macbeth does murder sleep; — the innocent sleep,
Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleeve¹⁹ of care;
The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
10 Balm of hurt minds, great Nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast, —

Lady M. What do you mean?

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

15 *Lady M.* Who was it that thus cried? Why, worthy thane,
You do unbend your noble strength, to think
So brainsickly²⁰ of things. Go get some water,
And wash this filthy witness from your hand.
Why did you bring these daggers from the place?
20 They must lie there: go carry them, and smear
The sleepy grooms with blood.

Macb. I'll go no more:

I am afraid to think what I have done;
Look on't again I dare not.

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

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

Lady M. Infirm of purpose,
 Give me the daggers! the sleeping and the dead
 Are but as pictures; 'tis the eye of childhood
 That fears a painted devil.²¹ If he do bleed,
 5 I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal;
 For it must seem their guilt.²² [*Exit. Knocking within.*]

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

Re-enter Lady MACBETH.

Lady M. My hands are of your colour, but I shame
 To wear a heart so white. [*Knocking within.*] I hear a
 knocking
 15 At the south entry: retire we²⁴ to our chamber.
 A little water clears us of this deed:
 How easy is it, then! Your constancy
 Hath left you unattended.²⁵ [*Knocking within.*] Hark!
 more knocking.

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

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

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

²⁴ *Retire we* is plainly an instance of the first person in the imperative mood. See *Hamlet*, page 55, note 47.

²⁵ That is, "Your firmness hath *forsaken* you, *doth not attend* you."

Get on your nightgown, lest occasion call us,
And show us to be watchers. Be not lost
So poorly in your thoughts.

Macb. To know my deed, 'twere best not know my-
self.²⁶ — [Knocking within.]

5 Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I would thou couldst!
[Exeunt.]

Enter a Porter. Knocking within.

Port. Here's a knocking indeed! If a man were porter
of hell-gate, he should have old²⁷ turning the key.—
[Knocking.] Knock, knock, knock! Who's there, i' the
name of Beelzebub? *Here's a farmer that hang'd himself*
10 *on the expectation of plenty.* Come in time; have napkins²⁸
enough about you; here you'll sweat for't. [Knocking.]
Knock, knock! Who's there, in the other devil's name?
Faith, here's an equivocator that could swear in both the
scales against either scale; who committed treason enough for

²⁶ This is said in answer to Lady Macbeth's "Be not lost so poorly in your thoughts"; and the meaning is, "While thinking of what I have done, it were best I should be lost to myself, or should not know myself as the doer of it." Macbeth is now burnt with the conscience of his deed, and would fain lose the memory of it. *To know* is another gerundial infinitive, and so has the force of *in* or *while knowing*. See note 20.

²⁷ *Old* was a common intensive or augmentative, used much as *huge* is now.—The Porter now proceeds to hold a dialogue with several imaginary persons at the door, who are supposed to be knocking for admission to a warmer place.—Coleridge and several others think this part of the scene could not have been written by Shakespeare. My thinking is decidedly different. I am sure it is like him, I think it is worthy of him, and would by no means have it away. Its broad drollery serves as a proper foil to the antecedent horrors, and its very discordance with the surrounding matter imparts an air of verisimilitude to the whole.

²⁸ In the old dictionaries *sudarium* is explained "*napkin* or *handkerchief*, wherewith we wipe away the sweat."—"Come in time" probably means "you are welcome."

*God's sake, yet could not equivocate to Heaven.*²⁹ O, come in, equivocator. [*Knocking.*] Knock, knock, knock! Who's there? *Faith, here's an English tailor come hither for stealing out of a French hose.*³⁰ Come in, tailor; here you may
 5 roast your goose.³¹ [*Knocking.*] Knock, knock; never at quiet! What are you?— But this place is too cold for Hell. I'll devil-porter it no further: I had thought to have let in some of all professions, that go the primrose way to the everlasting bonfire.³² [*Knocking.*] Anon, anon! I pray
 10 you, remember the porter. [*Opens the gate.*]

Enter MACDUFF and LENNOX.

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

Port. Faith, sir, we were carousing till the second cock.

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

15 *Port.* That it did, sir, i' the very throat on me: but I requited him for his lie; and, I think, being too strong for

²⁹ "Could not equivocate *himself* into Heaven," or could not win Heaven by equivocating, is the meaning.— To "swear in both the scales against either scale" is to commit direct and manifest perjury.

³⁰ *Hose* was used for what we call *trousers*. Warburton says, "The joke consists in this, that, a French hose being very short and strait, a tailor must be master of his trade who could steal any thing from thence." Others say, perhaps more truly, that the allusion is to a French fashion, which made the hose very large and wide, and so with more cloth to be stolen.

³¹ A tailor's *goose* is the heavy "flat-iron" with which he smoothes and presses his work; so called because the handle bore some resemblance to the neck of a goose.

³² Hereupon Mr. F. G. Fleay, in his *Shakespeare Manual*, has the following: "A bonfire at that date is invariably given in Latin Dictionaries as equivalent to *pyra* or *rogus*; it was the fire for consuming the human body after death: and the hell-fire differed from the earth-fire only in being everlasting. This use of a word so remarkably descriptive in a double meaning is intensely Shakespearian."

him, though he took up my legs sometime, yet I made a shift to cast him. www.libtool.com.cn

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

Re-enter MACBETH.

Len. Good morrow, noble sir.

5 *Macb.* Good-morrow, both.

Macd. Is the King stirring, worthy thane?

Macb. Not yet.

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

Macb. I'll bring you to him.

Macd. I know this is a joyful trouble to you ;

10 But yet 'tis one.

Macb. The labour we delight in physics pain.³³
This is the door.

Macd. I'll make so bold to call,
For 'tis my limited³⁴ service.

[*Exit.*

Len. Goes the King hence to-day?

Macb. He does ; — he did appoint so.³⁵

15 *Len.* The night has been unruly : where we lay,
Our chimneys were blown down ; and, as they say,
Lamentings heard i' the air, strange screams of death :
And, prophesying, with accents terrible,

³³ To *heal*, to *cure*, to *relieve*, is the old meaning of to *physic*.

³⁴ The Poet repeatedly uses to *limit* in the exact sense of to *appoint*.

³⁵ Here we have a significant note of character. Macbeth catches himself in the utterance of a falsehood, which, I take it, is something at odds with his nature and habitual feelings ; and he starts back into a mending of his speech, as from a spontaneous impulse to be true to himself. Much the same thing occurs before, when, upon his saying to his wife "Duncan comes here to-night," she asks, "And when goes hence?" and he replies, "To-morrow, — as he purposes."

Of dire combustion and confused events
 New hatch'd to th' woeful time, the obscene bird
 Clamour'd the livelong night :³⁶ some say the Earth
 Was feverous and did shake.

Macb. 'Twas a rough night.

5 *Len.* My young remembrance cannot parallel
 A fellow to it.³⁷

Re-enter MACDUFF.

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

Macb. }

Len. }

What's the matter ?

Macd. Confusion³⁸ now hath made his masterpiece !
 10 Most sacrilegious murder hath broke ope
 The Lord's anointed temple,³⁹ and stole thence
 The life o' the building.

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

Len. Mean you his Majesty ?

Macd. Approach the chamber, and destroy your sight
 15 With a new Gorgon. Do not bid me speak ;

See, and then speak yourselves. — [*Exeunt MACB. and LEN.*

Awake, awake ! —

Ring the alarum-bell. — Murder and treason ! —
 Banquo and Malcolm ! Donalbain ! awake !
 Shake off this downy sleep, death's counterfeit,

³⁶ "The obscene bird" is the owl, which was regarded as a bird of ill omen, and is here represented as a prophet of the direful events in question. *Obscene* is used in its proper Latin sense, *ill-boding* or *portentous*. See Critical Notes.

³⁷ Here, as often, *fellow* is *equal*. To *parallel* is to *put alongside*.

³⁸ *Confusion* for *destruction* ; as *confound* for *destroy*, before.

³⁹ In 1 Samuel, xxiv. 10, David speaks of King Saul as "the Lord's anointed" ; and St. Paul calls Christians "the temple of the living God."

And look on death itself ! up, up, and see
 The great doom's image !⁴⁰ Malcolm ! Banquo ! all !
 As from your graves rise up, and walk like sprites,
 To countenance this horror.⁴¹ [*Alarum-bell rings.*]

Re-enter Lady MACBETH.

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

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

Re-enter BANQUO.

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

Lady M. Woe, alas !
 What, in our house ?⁴²

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

Re-enter MACBETH and LENNOX.

15 *Macb.* Had I but died an hour before this chance,
 I had lived a blessèd time ; for from this instant

⁴⁰ "The great doom" means the Judgment-day, of which this occasion is regarded as a representation. So in *King Lear*, v. 3: "Is this the promised end ? Or *image* of that horror ?"

⁴¹ "To countenance this horror" is to put on a likeness of it ; to augment or intensify it ; an effect which the further horror of men rising up as from the dead, and walking like ghosts, would naturally produce.

⁴² Her ladyship's first thought appears to be, that she and her husband may be suspected of the murder.

There's nothing serious in mortality : ⁴³
 All is but toys : ~~renown and grace is~~ dead ;
 The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees
 Is left this vault to brag of. ⁴⁴

Enter MALCOLM and DONALBAIN.

Don. What is amiss ?

5 *Macb.* You are, and do not know't :
 The spring, the head, the fountain of your blood
 Is stopp'd, — the very source of it is stopp'd.

Macd. Your royal father's murder'd.

Mal. O, by whom ?

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

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

Macd. Wherefore did you so ?

Macb. Who can be wise, amazed, temperate and furious,
 Loyal and neutral, in a moment ? No man.
 The expedition ⁴⁵ of my violent love
 20 Outrun the pauser, reason. Here lay Duncan,
 His silver skin laced with his golden blood ; ⁴⁶

⁴³ *Mortality* is here put for *humanity*, or the *state of human life*.

⁴⁴ Observe the fine links of association in *wine* and *vault* ; the latter having a double reference, to the wine-vault and to the firmament over-arching the world of human life.

⁴⁵ *Expedition* for *swiftness* or *haste*. Repeatedly so.

⁴⁶ To *gild* with blood is a very common phrase in old plays. Johnson says, " It is not improbable that Shakespeare put these forced and unnatural metaphors into the mouth of Macbeth, as a mark of artifice and dis-

And his gash'd stabs look'd like a breach in nature
 For ruin's wasteful entrance :⁴⁷ there, the murderers,
 Steep'd in the colours of their trade, their daggers
 Unmannerly breech'd with gore :⁴⁸ who could refrain,
 5 That had a heart to love, and in that heart
 Courage to make's love known ?

Lady M. Help me hence, ho !

Macd. Look to the lady.

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

10 *Don.* [*Aside to MAL.*] What should be spoken
 Here, where our fate, hid in an auger-hole,⁴⁹
 May rush and seize us ? Let's away : our tears
 Are not yet brew'd.

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

15 *Ban.* Look to the lady : —

[*Lady MACBETH is carried out.*⁵⁰

simulation, to show the difference between the studied language of hypocrisy and the natural outcries of sudden passion. The whole speech, so considered, is a remarkable instance of judgment, as it consists entirely of antithesis and metaphor."

⁴⁷ The image is of a besieging army making a breach in the walls of a city, and thereby opening a way for general massacre and pillage.

⁴⁸ This probably means rudely covered, dressed, *trousered* with blood. A metaphor harsh and strained enough.

⁴⁹ "Where there is no hiding-place so small but that murder may be lurking therein, ready to spring upon us at any moment." The Princes divine at once that their father has been murdered for the crown, and that the same motive means death to themselves as well.

⁵⁰ Some regard this swoon as feigned, others as real. The question is very material in the determining of Lady Macbeth's character. If feigned, why was it not done when the murder of Duncan was announced? The announcement of these additional murders takes her by surprise; she was not prepared for it; whereas in the other case she had, by her fearful energy of will, steeled her nerves up to it beforehand. As Professor Dowden justly

And when we have our naked frailties hid,⁵¹
 That suffer in exposure, let us meet,
 And question this most bloody piece of work,
 To know it further. Fears and scruples shake us :
 5 In the great hand of God I stand ; and thence
 Against the undivulged pretence I fight
 Of treasonous malice.⁵²

Macd. And so do I.

All. So all.

Macb. Let's briefly⁵³ put on manly readiness,
 And meet i' the hall together.

All. Well contented.

[*Exeunt all but MALCOLM and DONALBAIN.*]

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

Don. To Ireland, I ; our separated fortune
 Shall keep us both the safer : where we are,
 15 There's daggers in men's smiles : the near' in blood,
 The nearer bloody.⁵⁴

observes, "For dreadful deeds anticipated and resolved upon, she has strength ; but the surprise of a novel horror, on which she has not counted, deprives her suddenly of consciousness : when Macbeth announces his butchery of Duncan's grooms, the lady swoons,—not in feigning but in fact,—and is borne away insensible."

⁵¹ Banquo and the others who slept in the castle have rushed forth undressed. This is what he refers to in "our naked frailties."

⁵² The natural construction is, "and thence I fight against the undivulged pretence of treasonous malice." *Pretence* here means *intention* or *purpose*. A frequent usage. So the verb, a little further on : "What good could they *pretend*?"

⁵³ *Briefly*, here, is *quickly* or *speedily*. Often so.—"Manly readiness" probably means *man's attire* ; the opposite of "naked frailties."

⁵⁴ Meaning that he suspects Macbeth, who is the next in blood, or kin.—The Poet sometimes uses the form of the positive with the sense of the

Mal. This murderous shaft that's shot
 Hath not yet lighted;⁵⁵ and our safest way
 Is to avoid the aim. Therefore, to horse;
 And let us not be dainty of leave-taking,⁵⁶
 5 But shift away: *there's warrant in that theft*
Which steals itself when there's no mercy left. [Exeunt.]

SCENE II. — *The Same. Without the Castle.*

Enter Ross and an old Man.

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

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

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

comparative; which is indicated here by the printing, *near'*, for *nearer*. See *King Richard the Second*, page 102, note 8.

⁵⁵ Suspecting this murder to be the work of Macbeth, Malcolm thinks it could have no purpose but what himself and his brother equally stand in the way of; that the "murderous shaft" must pass through them to reach its mark.

⁵⁶ That is, *punctilious* or *particular about* leave-taking.

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

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

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

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

Enter MACDUFF.

How goes the world, sir, now?

Macd. Why, see you not?

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

Macd. Those that Macbeth hath slain.

10 *Ross.* Alas, the day!

What good could they pretend?

Macd. They were suborn'd:⁴

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

Ross. 'Gainst nature still:

15 Thriftless ambition, that wilt ravin up⁵

Thine own life's means! Then 'tis most like
 The sovereignty will fall upon Macbeth.

² In divers cases, the Poet uses the form of the singular with a plural sense; as *horse'* for *horses*, *house'* for *houses*, *corpse* for *corpses*, &c.

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

⁴ *Suborned* is a technical term in law for *bribed* or *hired*. So we have the phrases "*suborn false witnesses*," and "*subornation of perjury.*"

⁵ To *ravin up* is to consume or devour *ravenously*. The Poet elsewhere has *ravin down* in exactly the same sense.

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

Ross. Where is Duncan's body?

Macd. Carried to Colme-kill,⁶
The sacred storehouse of his predecessors,
And guardian of their bones.

5 *Ross.* Will you to Scone?

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

Ross. Well, I will thither.⁷

Macd. *Well, may you see things well done there; adieu!*
*Lest our old robes sit easier than our new!*⁸

Ross. Farewell, father.

10 Old M. *God's benison*⁹ *go with you, and with those*
That would make good of bad, and friends of foes!

[*Exeunt.*]

⁶ *Colme-kill* is the famous Iona, one of the Western Isles mentioned by Holinshed as the burial-place of many ancient kings of Scotland. *Colme-kill* means the *cell* or chapel of St. Columba. The place was visited by Dr. Johnson during his tour in Scotland, and drew from him the following memorable passage: "We were now treading that illustrious island which was once the luminary of the Caledonian regions, whence savage clans and roving barbarians derived the benefits of knowledge and the blessings of religion. Far from me and from my friends be such frigid philosophy as may conduct us indifferent and unmoved over any ground which has been dignified by wisdom, bravery, or virtue. That man is little to be envied whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plain of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona."

⁷ That is, "I will go to *Scone*."

⁸ This latter clause logically connects with "see things well done there"; *adieu!* being awkwardly thrust in for a rhyming couplet.

⁹ *Benison* is *blessing*, and is used whenever the verse requires a trisyllable. The opposite sense was expressed by *malison*.

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ACT III.

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

Enter BANQUO.

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

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

Macb. Here's our chief guest.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Macb. Ride you this afternoon?

5 *Ban.* Ay, my good lord.

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

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

Macb. Fail not our feast.

Ban. My lord, I will not.

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

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

Macb. I wish your horses swift and sure of foot ;
And so I do commend you to their backs.

25 Farewell. —

[*Exit* BANQUO.]

Let every man be master of his time
Till seven at night : to make society
The sweeter welcome, we will keep ourself

⁴ Probably meaning, " *If* my horse go not better *than usual*."

Till supper-time alone : while then, God b' wi' you !⁵ —

[*Exeunt all but MACBETH and an Attendant.*

Sirrah, a word with you : attend those men

Our pleasure ?

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

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

5 To be thus is nothing,

But to be safely thus.⁶ Our fears in⁷ Banquo

Stick deep ; and in his royalty of nature

Reigns that which would⁸ be fear'd : 'tis much he dares ;

And, to⁹ that dauntless temper of his mind,

10 He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour

To act in safety. There is none but he

Whose being I do fear : and under him

My Genius is rebuked ; as, it is said,

Mark Antony's was by Cæsar's.¹⁰ He chid the Sisters,

15 When first they put the name of king upon me,

⁵ "God be with you" is the original of our phrase *good by*; and the text here aptly illustrates the process of the contraction: God be with you, God b' wi' you, God by you, good by.— *While* here means *until*; a sense in which it was often used. See *King Richard the Second*, page 57, note 13. And even in Defoe's *Colonel Jack*: "I could not rest night or day *while* I made the people easy from whom the things were taken."

⁶ That is, "nothing, *without being* safely thus," or, "*unless we* be safely thus." The exceptive *but*, from *be out*, is used repeatedly so by the Poet. See *Hamlet*, page 68, note 3.

⁷ Here *in* has the force of *on account of*. So in *Julius Cæsar*, ii. i: "There is no fear *in* him; let him not die." Spoken upon the question of putting Antony to death along with Cæsar.

⁸ *Would*, again, for *should*. See page 75, note 9.— "Royalty of nature" is *royal* or *noble* nature. The Poet has many like forms of expression. See *Hamlet*, page 61, note 24.

⁹ *To*, again, for *in addition to*. See page 72, note 9.

¹⁰ Octavius Cæsar is the person referred to. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, ii. 3, *genius* is explained by the words *demon*, *angel*, and "thy *spirit* which keeps thee."

And bade them speak to him ; then, prophet-like,
 They hail'd him father to a line of kings :
 Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown,
 And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,
 5 Thence to be wrench'd with an unlineal hand,
 No son of mine succeeding. If't be so,
 For Banquo's issue have I filed¹¹ my mind ;
 For them the gracious Duncan have I murder'd ;
 Put rancours in the vessel of my peace
 10 Only for them ; and mine eternal jewel¹²
 Given to the common enemy of man,
 To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings !
 Rather than so, come, fate, into the list,
 And champion me to th' utterance !¹³ — Who's there ? —

Re-enter Attendant, with two Murderers.

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

[*Exit Attendant.*

Was it not yesterday we spoke together ?

1 Mur. It was, so please your Highness.

Macb.

Well then, now

Have you consider'd of my speeches ? Know

¹¹ *File* for *defile*. So in Wilkins's *Inforced Marriage*: "Oaths are necessary for nothing ; they pass out of a man's mouth like smoke through a chimney, that *files* all the way it goes." *Foul* and *filth* are from the same original.

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

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

That it was he, in the times past, which held you
 So under fortune; which you thought had been
 Our innocent self: this I made good to you
 In our last conference, pass'd in probation ¹⁴

5 With you, how you were borne in hand; ¹⁵ how cross'd;
 The instruments; who wrought with them;
 And all things else that might to half a soul
 And to a notion ¹⁶ crazed say *Thus did Banquo.*

I Mur. You made it known to us.

10 *Macb.* I did so; and went further, which is now
 Our point of second meeting. Do you find
 Your patience so predominant in your nature,
 That you can let this go? Are you so gospell'd,
 To pray ¹⁷ for this good man and for his issue,
 15 Whose heavy hand hath bow'd you to the grave,
 And beggar'd yours for ever!

I Mur.

We are men, my liege.

Macb. Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men;
 As hounds and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs,
 Shoughs, water-rugs, and demi-wolves, are clept ¹⁸
 20 All by the name of dogs: the valued file ¹⁹

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

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

¹⁶ *Notion* for *understanding* or *judgment*. Repeatedly so.

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

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

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

Distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle,
 The housekeeper, the hunter, every one
 According to the gift which bounteous Nature
 Hath in him closed ; whereby he does receive
 5 Particular addition,²⁰ from the bill
 That writes them all alike : and so of men.
 Now, if you have a station in the file,
 And not i' the worsè rank of manhood, say't ;
 And I will put that business in your bosoms,
 10 Whose execution takes your enemy off ;
 Grapples you to the heart and love of us,
 Who wear our health but sickly in his life,
 Which in his death were perfect.

2 *Mur.*

I am one, my liege,

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

1 *Mur.*

And I another

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

Macb.

Both of you

Know Banquo was your enemy.

20 *Both Mur.*

True, my lord.

Macb. So is he mine ; and in such bloody distance,²¹
 That every minute of his being thrusts
 Against my near'st of life : and though I could

²⁰ *Addition*, again, for *title* or *note of distinction*. See page 59, note 24.

²¹ *Distance* here carries the sense of *degree* or *measure*. It is a term of fencing for the space between two antagonists. When men are in a hot mortal encounter with swords, they stand at just the right distance apart for the bloodiest strokes or thrusts. Hence the word came to be used for *enmity* in general.

With barefaced power sweep him from my sight,
 And bid my ~~will avouch it, yet I must~~ not,
 For ²² certain friends that are both his and mine,
 Whose loves I may not drop ; but wail his fall ²³
 5 Who I myself struck down : and thence it is,
 That I to your assistance do make love ;
 Masking the business from the common eye
 For sundry weighty reasons.

2 Mur.

We shall, my lord,

Perform what you command us.

1 Mur.

Though our lives —

Macb. Your spirits shine through you. Within this hour

10 at most,

I will advise you where to plant yourselves ;
 Acquaint you with the perfect spy o' the time, ²⁴
 The moment on't ; for't must be done to-night,
 And something from the palace : always thought
 15 That I require a clearness. ²⁵ And, with him, —
 To leave no rubs ²⁶ nor botches in the work, —
 Fleance his son, that keeps him company,
 Whose absence is no less material to me
 Than is his father's, must embrace the fate
 20 Of that dark hour. Resolve yourselves apart :
 I'll come to you anon.

²² For is here *because of*, or *on account of*. Repeatedly so.

²³ The language is elliptical ; the sense being "but *I must wail*."

²⁴ Will furnish you with an *exact and sure note* or *signal* of the time when to strike ; which is probably done by or through the third murderer, who joins them just before the murder is done. The success of the undertaking depends on the assault being rightly timed. So that "the perfect *spy* of the time" is the *sure means of spying* or knowing the time.

²⁵ That is, "it being always borne in mind that I must stand clear of blame or suspicion."

²⁶ *Rubs* is *hindrances* or *impediments*. See *Hamlet*, page 127, note 7.

Both Mur.

We are resolved, my lord.

Macb. I'll call upon you straight :²⁷ abide within. —

[*Exeunt* Murderers.

It is concluded : Banquo, thy soul's flight,

If it find Heaven, must find it out to-night.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II. — *The Same. Another Room.*

Enter Lady MACBETH and a Servant.

5 *Lady M.* Is Banquo gone from Court ?

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

Lady M. Say to the King, I would attend his leisure¹

For a few words.

Serv. Madam, I will.

[*Exit.*

Lady M.

Nought's had, all's spent,

Where our desire is got without content :

10 'Tis safer to be that which we destroy

Than, by destruction, dwell in doubtful joy. —

²⁷ *Straight* for *straightway*, *presently*. So the word was often used in all sorts of writing, verse and prose. See *Hamlet*, page 199, note 1.

¹ "Attend his leisure" is *wait* for him to be at leisure. — Heraud's *Inner Life of Shakespeare* has a passage that may not unfitly come in here : "Lady Macbeth is not demonstratively imaginative. She therefore neither sees witches, airy daggers, nor ghosts, and ridicules the two latter as phantoms. And it is her provisional freedom from such imaginary terrors which makes her superior to her husband in the first instance. No sooner, however, is the crime committed than the feelings, which are latent even in apparently the most insensate natures, are awakened by the act; and the fancies which till then had slept begin to haunt the guilty woman, and to kindle the same remorse after the act which her husband had felt before it. She has now become 'brainsickly,' and retires apart 'of sorriest fancies her companions making'; while Macbeth, restored to his normal state of consciousness, is busy with the murderers planning the death of Banquo. Yet, judging of his condition by her own, she charges him with affecting loneliness, and 'using those thoughts which should indeed have died with them they think on.'" —

Enter MACBETH.

How now, my lord! why do you keep alone,
Of sorriest fancies your companions making;
Using those thoughts which should indeed have died
With them they think on? Things without² all remedy
5 Should be without regard: what's done is done.

Macb. We have but scotch'd³ the snake, not kill'd it:
She'll close, and be herself; whilst our poor malice
Remains in danger of her former tooth. But let
The frame of things disjoint, both the worlds suffer,
10 Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep
In the affliction of these terrible dreams
That shake us nightly: ⁴ better be with the dead,
Whom we, to gain our place, have sent to peace,
Than on the torture of the mind to lie
15 In restless ecstasy.⁵ Duncan is in his grave;
After life's fitful fever he sleeps well;
Treason has done his worst: nor steel, nor poison,

² *Without*, here, is *beyond*. Often so. In *The Tempest*, v. 1, the witch Sycorax is described as "one so strong, that could control the Moon, and deal in her command *without* her power."

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

⁴ What "these terrible dreams" are, is shown in Lady Macbeth's sleep-walking agonies. It is of her state of mind, not of his own, that Macbeth is here thinking. I quote again from Professor Dowden: "No witches have given her 'hail'; no airy dagger marshals her the way she is going; nor is she afterwards haunted by the terrible vision of Banquo's gory head. As long as her will remains her own she can throw herself upon external facts, and maintain herself in relation with the definite, actual surroundings; it is in her sleep, when the will is incapable of action, that she is persecuted by the past which perpetually renews itself, not in ghostly shapes, but by the imagined recurrence of real and terrible incidents."

⁵ *Ecstasy*, in its general sense, is any violent perturbation of mind.

Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing,
Can touch him further.

Lady M. Come on ; gentle my lord,⁶
Sleek o'er your rugged looks ; be bright and jovial
Among your guests to-night.

Macb. So shall I, love ;
5 And so, I pray, be you : let your remembrance
Apply⁷ to Banquo ; present him eminence, both
With eye and tongue :⁸ unsafe the while, that we
Must lave our honours in these flattering streams ;⁹
And make our faces vizards to our hearts,
Disguising what they are.

10 *Lady M.* You must leave this.

Macb. O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife !
Thou know'st that Banquo and his Fleance live.¹⁰

⁶ We should say "my gentle lord." The Poet abounds in such inversions. "Good my lord," "dread my lord," "dear my brother," "sweet my sister," and "gracious my lord," are instances.

⁷ Here *apply* has the force of *attach itself*. So in *Antony and Cleopatra*, v. 2: "If you *apply yourself* to our intents, — which towards you are most gentle, — you shall find a benefit in this change."

⁸ "Treat him with the highest consideration, or as the most eminent of our guests." Rather strange language, and not very happy withal ; but such appears to be the meaning. — Is this a piece of irony? or is it meant as a blind, to keep his wife ignorant and innocent of the new crime on foot? I suspect he is trying to jest off the pangs of remorse.

⁹ *Flattering streams* is *streams of flattery*. The meaning is, "The very fact of our being obliged thus to use the arts of hypocrisy and dissimulation proves that we are not safe in our seats, not secure in the tenure of our honours : we can retain them only by making our life, even in social intercourse, a studied, continuous lie."

¹⁰ Macbeth mistranslates the recoilings and ominous whispers of conscience into prudential and selfish reasonings, and, after the deed is done, the terrors of remorse into fear from external dangers ; like delirious men who run away from the phantoms of their own brains, or, raised by terror to rage, stab the real object that is within their reach. — COLERIDGE.

Lady M. But in them nature's copy's not eterne.¹¹

Macb. There's comfort yet; they are assailable ;
Then be thou jocund : ere the bat hath flown
His cloister'd ¹² flight; ere, to black Hecate's summons,
5 The shard-borne beetle ¹³ with his drowsy hums
Hath rung night's yawning peal, there shall be done
A deed of dreadful note.

Lady M. What's to be done ?

Macb. Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,
Till thou applaud the deed. — Come, seeling¹⁴ night,
10 Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day,
And with thy bloody and invisible hand
Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond
Which keeps me paled !¹⁵ — Light thickens, and the crow
Makes wing to th' rooky wood :¹⁶

¹¹ Ritson has justly observed that *nature's copy* alludes to *copyhold* tenure; in which the tenant holds an estate for *life*, having nothing but the *copy* of the rolls of his lord's court to show for it. A *life-hold* tenure may be well said to be not *eternal*.

¹² The bats wheeling round the dim cloisters of Queen's College, Cambridge, have frequently impressed on me the singular propriety of this original epithet. — STEEVENS.

¹³ *Shard* or *sherd* is an old word for *scale*. So that "the shard-borne beetle" is the beetle borne along the air by its *shards* or *scaly* wings. — "Night's yawning peal" is the nocturnal signal for going to sleep.

¹⁴ *Seeling* is *blinding*; a term in falconry. To *seel* the eyes of a hawk was to close them by sewing the eyelids together.

¹⁵ "That great *bond*" is Banquo's life; the "copyhold tenure" of note *ix*. — *Paled* is shut in or confined with *palings*. As Macbeth afterwards puts it, Banquo's life has the effect of keeping him "cabin'd, cribb'd, confined, bound-in to saucy doubts and fears."

¹⁶ To *thicken* seems to have been a common expression for *it grows dark*. So in Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess*: "Fold your flocks up, for the air 'gins to *thicken*." — *Crow* and *rook* were used of the same bird. So that the meaning is, the crows are hastening to their nightly resort, the wood where they gather for society and sleep.

Good things of day begin to droop and drowse ;
 While night's black agents¹⁷ to their preys do rouse.
 Thou marvell'st at my words ; but hold thee still :
 Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill.
 5 So, pr'ythee, go with me. [Exeunt.

SCENE III. — *The Same. A Park near the Palace.*

Enter three Murderers.

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

3 *Mur.*

Macbeth.

2 *Mur.* He needs not our mistrust ;¹ since he delivers

¹⁷ A covert allusion to the exploit which Macbeth's murderers are going about. He seems to want that his wife should suspect the new crime he has in hand, while he shrinks from telling her of it distinctly. And the purpose of his dark hints probably is, to prepare her, as far as may be, for a further strain upon her moral forces, which he sees to be already overstrained. For he fears that, if she has full knowledge beforehand of the intended murder, she may oppose it, and that, if she has no suspicion of it the shock may be too much for her.

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

Our offices, and what we have to do,
To the direction just.

1 *Mur.* Then stand with us.

The West yet glimmers with some streaks of day :
Now spurs the lated traveller apace²

5 To gain the timely inn ; and near approaches
The subject of our watch.

3 *Mur.* Hark ! I hear horses.

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

2 *Mur.* Then 'tis he : the rest

1) That are within the note of expectation³
Already are i' the Court.

1 *Mur.* His horses go about.

10 3 *Mur.* Almost a mile : but he does usually,
So all men do, from hence to th' palace-gate
Make it their walk.

2 *Mur.* A light, a light !

Enter BANQUO, and FLEANCE with a Torch.

3 *Mur.* 'Tis he.

1 *Mur.* Stand to't.

Ban. It will be rain to-night.

15 1 *Mur.* Let it come down.

[*They set upon BANQUO.*

Ban. O, treachery ! — Fly, good Fleance, fly, fly, fly !

Thou mayst revenge. — O slave ! [*Dies.* FLEANCE escapes.]

3 *Mur.* Who did strike out the light ?

1 *Mur.* Was't not the way ?

much ; he may there be feigning. On the other hand, Macbeth's actual sharing in the deed of murder would go far to account for his terrible hallucination at the banquet.

² *Lated* is the same as *belated*. — *Apace* is *rapidly*.

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

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

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

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

[*Exeunt.*]

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

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

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

5 *Lords.* Thanks to your Majesty.

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

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

First Murderer appears at the door.

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

15 *Mur.* 'Tis Banquo's, then.

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

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

Macb. Thou art the 'best o' the cut-throats : yet he's
good

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

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

That did the like for Fleance : if thou didst it,
Thou art the nonpareil.

Mur. Most royal sir,

Fleance is 'scaped.

Macb. [*Aside.*] Then comes my fit again : I had else
been perfect ;

5 Whole as the marble, founded as the rock ;
As broad and general as the casing³ air :
But now I am cabin'd, cribb'd, confined, bound-in
To saucy doubts and fears. — But Banquo's safe ?

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

Macb. Thanks for that.

[*Aside.*] There the grown serpent lies ; the worm⁴ that's
fled

Hath nature that in time will venom breed,
No teeth for th' present. — Get thee gone : to-morrow
We'll hear't, ourself, again. [*Exit Murderer.*]

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

³ *Casing* is *enclosing, surrounding*. — "Broad and general" is having full and free scope; *unclogged*.

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

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

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

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

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

Macb. Here had we now our country's honour roof'd,
5 Were the graced person of our Banquo present ;
Who may I rather challenge for unkindness
Than pity for mischance.

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

Macb. The table's full !

10 *Len.* Here is a place reserved, sir.

Macb. Where ?

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

Macb. Which of you have done this ?

Lords. What, my good lord ?

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

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

Lady M. Sit, worthy friends : my lord is often thus,
And hath been from his youth : pray you, keep seat ;
The fit is momentary ; upon a thought —
20 He will again be well : if much you note him,
You shall⁸ offend him and extend his passion ;

⁷ On the subject of the Ghost in this scene, see Introduction, page 43.

⁸ In Shakespeare's time, the auxiliaries *shall* and *will*, like *could*, *should*, and *would*, were often used indiscriminately. The same usage has occurred before in this play ; as, "memory, the warder of the brain, *shall* be a fume" ; and, "If you *shall* cleave to my consent."

Feed, and regard him not. — Are you a man?

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

Lady M. [*Aside to MACBETH.*] O proper stuff!

5 This is the very painting of your fear :

This is the air-drawn dagger which, you said,
Led you to Duncan. O, these flaws and starts,
Impostors to true fear,⁹ would well become
A woman's story at a Winter's fire,

10 Authorized by her grandam. Shame itself!

Why do you make such faces? When all's done,
You look but on a stool.

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

Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak too. —

15 If charnel-houses and our graves must send

Those that we bury back, our monuments

Shall be the maws of kites.¹⁰

[*GHOST vanishes.*]

Lady M.

What, quite unmann'd in folly?

Macb. If I stand here, I saw him.

Lady M.

Fie, for shame!

Macb. Blood hath been shed ere now: i' the olden time,
20 Ere humane statute purged the gentle weal,¹¹

⁹ These self-generated fears are impostors compared to true fear, — that fear which springs from real danger. This use of *to* for *compared to*, or *in comparison with*, is very common in the old writers.

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

¹¹ The meaning is, ere humane statute made the commonwealth gentle by purging and cleansing it from the wrongs and pollutions of barbarism. Another prolepsis. See page 70, note 1. — The sense of *gentle*, here, is *civil, sociable, amenable* to order and law.

Ay, and since too, murders have been perform'd
 Too terrible for the ear. The time has been,
 That when the brains were out the man would die,
 And there an end ; but now they rise again,
 5 With twenty mortal gashes on their crowns,
 And push us from our stools : this is more strange
 Than such a murder is.

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

Macb. I do forget : —
 Do not muse¹² at me, my most worthy friends ;
 10 I have a strange infirmity, which is nothing
 To those that know me. Come, love and health to all ;
 Then I'll sit down. — Give me some wine, fill full. —
 I drink to th' general joy of the whole table,
 And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss :
 15 Would he were here ! to all and him we thirst,
 And all to all.¹³

Lords. Our duties, and the pledge.

*Re-enter the Ghost.*¹⁴

Macb. Avaunt ! and quit my sight ! let the earth hide thee !
 Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold ;

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

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

¹⁴ Much question has been made, whether there be not two several ghosts in this scene ; some maintaining that Duncan's enters here, and Banquo's before ; others, that Banquo's enters here, and Duncan's before. The question is best disposed of by referring to Dr. Forman, who, as he speaks of Banquo's ghost, would doubtless have spoken of Duncan's, had there been any such : "The night, being at supper with his noblemen, whom he had bid to a feast, (to the which also Banquo should have come,) he began to speak of noble Banquo, and to wish that he were there. And as

Thou hast no speculation¹⁵ in those eyes
Which thou dost glare with.

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

5 *Macb.* What man dare, I dare:

Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,
The arm'd¹⁶ rhinoceros, or the Hyrcan tiger;
Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves
Shall never tremble: or be alive again,

10 And dare me to the desert with thy sword;

If trembling I inhabit then,¹⁷ protest me
The baby of a girl.¹⁸ Hence, horrible shadow!
Unreal mockery; hence!

[*Ghost vanishes.*]

Why, so: being gone,

I am a man again. — Pray you, sit still.

15 *Lady M.* You have displaced the mirth, broke the good
meeting,

he thus did, *standing up to drink a carouse to him, the ghost of Banquo came and sat down in his chair behind him. And he, turning about to sit down again, saw the ghost of Banquo, which fronted him, so that he fell in a great passion of fear and fury.*"

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

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

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

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

1 With most admired¹⁹ disorder.

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

5 When now I think you can behold such sights,
And keep the natural ruby of your cheeks,
When mine are blanch'd with fear.

Ross. What sights, my lord?

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

Question enrages him. At once, good night:

10 Stand not upon the order of your going,²²
But go at once.

Len. Good night; and better health
Attend his Majesty!

Lady M. A kind good night to all!

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

Macb. It will have blood; they say blood will have blood:
Stones have been known to move, and trees to speak;
15 Augurs, and understood relations,²³ have
By magot-pies and choughs and rooks brought forth
The secret'st man of blood. What is the night?

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

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

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

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

²³ A passage very obscure to general readers, but probably intelligible enough to those experienced in the course of criminal trials; where two or three little facts or items of testimony may be of no significance taken sin-

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

Macb. How say'st thou ²⁴ that Macduff denies his person
At our great bidding?

Lady M. Did you send to him, sir?

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

5 There is not one of them but in his house

I keep a servant fee'd,²⁵ I will to-morrow —

Ay, and betimes I will — to th' Weird Sisters :

More shall they speak ; for now I'm bent to know,

By the worst means, the worst. For mine own good

10 All causes shall give way : *I am in blood*

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

Returning were as tedious as go o'er.

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

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

15 *Lady M.* You lack the season ²⁶ of all natures, sleep.

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

gly'or by themselves; yet, when they are put together and their *relations understood*, they may be enough to convict or acquit the accused. And even so trifling a matter as the note or talk of a parrot, interpreted in the light of such relations, may prove decisive of the case. *Magot-pie* or *magpie* and *chough* are old words for *parrot* or *paraquito*.

²⁴ "What do you say of this *fact* or *circumstance* ? — By "our great bidding" is meant, not any particular request or order to Macduff, but the *general invitation* implied in the very purpose of the banquet. Macbeth has heard of his refusal only "by the way," that is, *incidentally*, or through a "fee'd servant." Such is the substance of Elwin's explanation as given in Mr. Furness's *Variorum*. — See, below, scene vi., note 5.

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

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

*Is the initiate fear²⁷ that wants hard use :
We're yet but young in deed.*

[Exeunt.

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SCENE V. — *A Heath. Thunder.*

Enter the three Witches, meeting HECATE.

1 Witch. Why, how now, Hecate ! you look angrily.

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

5 Saucy and overbold? How did you dare

To trade and traffic with Macbeth

In riddles and affairs of death ;

And I, the mistress of your charms,

The close¹ contriver of all harms,

10 Was never call'd to bear my part,

Or show the glory of our art?

And, which is worse, all you have done

Hath been but for a wayward son,

Spiteful and wrathful ; who, as others do,

15 Loves for his own ends, not for you.

But make amends now : get you gone,

And at the pit of Acheron

Meet me i' the morning : thither he

Will come to know his destiny :

20 Your vessels and your spells provide,

Your charms, and every thing beside.

I am for th' air ; this night I'll spend

Unto a dismal and a fatal end :

Great business must be wrought ere noon :

25 Upon the corner of the Moon

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

¹ *Close*, here, is *secret*. Shakespeare often uses it so.

There hangs a vapourous drop profound ;²
 I'll catch it ere it come to ground :
 And that, distill'd by magic sleights,³
 Shall raise such artificial sprites,
 5 As, by the strength of their illusion,
 Shall draw him on to his confusion :
 He shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear
 His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace, and fear ;
 And you all know security⁴
 10 Is mortals' chiefest enemy.

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

Hark ! I am call'd ; my little spirit, see,
 Sits in a foggy cloud, and stays for me.

[*Exit.*

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

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

Enter LENNOX and another Lord.

Len. My former speeches have but hit your thoughts,
 15 Which can interpret further : only I say
 Things have been strangely borne. The gracious Duncan
 Was pitied of Macbeth : marry,¹ he was dead :

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

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

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

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

¹ *Marry* was much used as a general intensive, and has the force of *indeed*, *forsooth*, or *to be sure*. See *Hamlet*, page 72, note 24.

- And the right-valiant Banquo walk'd too late ;
 Whom, you may say, if 't please you, Fleance kill'd,
 For Fleance fled : men must not walk too late.
 Who can now want the thought,² how monstrous
- 5 It was for Malcolm and for Donalbain
 To kill their gracious father? damnèd fact !
 How it did grieve Macbeth ! did he not straight,
 In pious rage, the two delinquents tear,
 That were the slaves of drink and thralls of sleep?
- 10 Was not that nobly done? Ay, and wisely too ;
 For 'twould have anger'd any heart alive
 To hear the men deny't. So that, I say,
 He has borne all things well : and I do think
 That, had he Duncan's sons under his key, —
- 15 As, an't please Heaven, he shall not, — they should find
 What 'twere to kill a father ; so should Fleance.
 But, peace ! for from broad³ words, and 'cause he fail'd
 His presence at the tyrant's feast, I hear
 Macduff lives in disgrace. Sir, can you tell
 Where he bestows himself?
- 20 *Lord.* The son of Duncan,
 From whom this tyrant holds the due of birth,
 Lives in the English Court ; and is received
 Of the most pious Edward with such grace,
 That the malevolence of fortune nothing
- 25 Takes from his high respect. Thither Macduff
 Is gone to pray the holy King, upon his aid
 To wake Northumberland and warlike Siward ;
 That by the help of these, with Him above

² An old form of speech, meaning "be without the thought," or lack it. We should say, "Who can help thinking?"

³ Broad, here, is plain, outright, free-spoken.

To ratify the work, we may again
 Give to our tables meat, sleep to our nights ;
 Keep from our feasts and banquets bloody knives ;
 Do faithful homage and receive free honours ;
 5 All which we pine for now : and this report
 Hath so exasperate ⁴ the King, that he
 Prepares for some attempt of war.

Len. Sent he to Macduff?

Lord. He did : and with an absolute *Sir, not I,*
 The cloudy messenger turns me his back,
 10 And hums, as who should say, ⁵ *You'll rue the time*
That clogs me with this answer.

Len. And that well might
 Advise him to a caution, to hold what distance
 His wisdom can provide. Some holy Angel
 Fly to the Court of England, and unfold
 15 His message ere he come ; that a swift blessing
 May soon return to this our suffering country
 Under a hand accursed ! ⁶

Lord. I'll send my prayers with him !

[*Exeunt.*]

⁴ *Exasperate* for *exasperated*. The Poet has many such shortened preterites ; as *consecrate, contaminate, dedicate*.

⁵ "As who should say" is equivalent to *as if he were saying*. A frequent usage.—*Cloudy* is *angry, frowning*.—In "turns *me* his back," *me* is redundant. Often so.—It appears, at the close of scene 4, that Macbeth did not give Macduff a special and direct invitation to the banquet ; but his attendance was expected as a matter of course ; and his failure to attend made him an object of distrust and suspicion to the tyrant. We are to suppose that Macbeth learned, from the paid spy and informer whom he kept in Macduff's house, that the latter had declared he would not go to the feast. So that the messenger here spoken of was probably not sent to invite Macduff, but to call him to account for his non-attendance. See page 117, notes 24 and 25.

⁶ The order is, "our country suffering under a hand accursed."

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ACT IV.

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

Thunder. Enter the three Witches.

1 *Witch.* Thrice the brinded¹ cat hath mew'd.

2 *Witch.* Thrice and once² the hedge-pig whined.

3 *Witch.* Harpy cries : — 'tis time, 'tis time.³

1 *Witch.* Round about the cauldron go ;

5 In the poison'd entrails throw. —
Toad, that under the cold stone
Days and nights hast thirty-one
Swelter'd venom sleeping got,
Boil thou first i' the charmèd pot.

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

2 *Witch.* Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the cauldron boil and bake ;
Eye of newt and toe of frog,
15 Wool of bat and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork and blind-worm's sting,⁴
Lizard's leg and owlet's wing, —

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

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

³ Harpy's cry is the signal, showing that it is time to begin their work. *Harpy* is of course a familiar. See page 48, note 2.

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

For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

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

5 3 *Witch.* Scale of dragon ; tooth of wolf ;
Witch's mummy ;⁵ maw and gulf
Of the ravin'd salt-sea shark ;⁶
Root of hemlock digg'd i' the dark ;⁷
Liver of blaspheming Jew ;
10 Gall of goat ; and slips of yew
Sliver'd in the Moon's eclipse ;⁸
Nose of Turk, and Tartar's lips ;
Finger of birth-strangled babe
Ditch-deliver'd by a drab, —
15 Make the gruel thick and slab :
Add thereto a tiger's chaudron,⁹
For the ingredients of our cauldron.

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

⁶ *Ravin'd* for *ravening* or *ravenous* ; the passive form with the active sense. — *Maw* is *stomach*. — *Gulf* is *gullet* or *throat* ; that which swallows or *gulps down* any thing.

⁷ Any poisonous root was thought to become more poisonous if dug on a dark night. See *Hamlet*, page 144, note 39.

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

⁹ *Chaudron* is *entrails*. — *Slab* is *glutinous* or *slabby* ; what, in making soft soap, used to be called *ropy*. — "The Weird Sisters of our dramatist," says Professor Dowden, "may take their place beside the terrible old women of Michael Angelo, who spin the destinies of man. Shakespeare is no more afraid than Michael Angelo of being vulgar. And thus he fearlessly

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

2 *Witch.* Cool it with a báboon's blood,
 Then the charm is firm and good.

Enter HECATE.

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

[Music and a Song : *Black spirits, &c.*¹⁰

[*Exit* HECATE.]

10 2 *Witch.* *By the pricking of my thumbs,
 Something wicked this way comes : —
 Open, locks, whoever knocks.*

Enter MACBETH.

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

All. A deed without a name.

15 *Macb.* I conjure you, by that which you profess, —

showed us his Weird Sisters, 'the goddesses of destiny,' brewing infernal charms in their wicked cauldron. We cannot quite dispense in this life with ritualism, and the ritualism of evil is foul and ugly: the hell-broth which the witches are cooking bubbles up with no refined, spiritual poison; the quintessence of mischief is brewed out of foul things which can be enumerated; thick and slab the gruel must be made. Yet these Weird Sisters remain terrible and sublime. They tingle in every fibre with evil energy, as the tempest does with the electric current; their malignity is inexhaustible; they are wells of sin springing up unto everlasting death; they have their raptures and ecstasies in crime; they snatch with delight at the relics of impiety and foul disease; they are the awful inspirers of murder, insanity, suicide."

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

Howe'er you come to know it, — answer me :
 Though you untie the winds, and let them fight
 Against the churches ; though the yesty¹¹ waves
 Confound and swallow navigation up ;

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

1 Witch. Speak. .

2 Witch. Demand.

3 Witch. We'll answer.

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

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

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

All. Come, high or low ;

Thyself and office deftly¹⁵ show !

Thunder. An Apparition of an armed Head rises.¹⁶

¹¹ Yesty is foaming, frothy ; like yeast.

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

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

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

¹⁵ Deftly is adroitly, dexterously.

¹⁶ The armed head represents symbolically Macbeth's head cut off and

Macb. Tell me, thou unknown power, —

1 Witch. He knows thy thought:

Hear his speech, but say thou nought.¹⁷

1 App. Macbeth ! Macbeth ! Macbeth ! beware Macduff ;

5 Beware the Thane of Fife. — Dismiss me : enough.¹⁸

[*Descends.*]

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

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

Thunder. An Apparition of a bloody Child rises.

10 *2 App.* Macbeth ! Macbeth ! Macbeth ! —

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

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

[*Descends.*]

15 *Macb.* Then live, Macduff : what need I fear of thee ?

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

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

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

¹⁸ Spirits thus evoked were supposed impatient of being questioned.

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

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

*Thunder. An Apparition of a Child crowned, with a Tree
in his Hand, rises.*

What is this,

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

All. Listen, but speak not to't.

5 *3 App.* Be lion-mettled, proud; and take no care
Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are:
Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be, until
Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane ²² hill
Shall come against him. [*Descends.*

Macb. That will never be:

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

All. Seek to know no more.

Macb. I will be satisfied: deny me this,

²¹ The *round* is that part of a crown which encircles the head: the *top* is the ornament which rises above it, and is symbolical of sovereign power and honour.

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

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

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

And an eternal curse fall on you ! Let me know —
Why sinks that cauldron ? and what noise is this ?

[*Hautboys.*

1 *Witch.* Show !

2 *Witch.* Show !

5 3 *Witch.* Show !

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

Eight Kings appear in succession ; the last with a glass in his hand ; BANQUO'S Ghost following.

Macb. Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo ; down !
Thy crown does sear mine eyeballs. — And thy air,²⁵
10 Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first : —
A third is like the former. — Filthy hags !
Why do you show me this ? — A fourth ! — Start, eyes !
What, will the line stretch out to th' crack of doom ?
Another yet ! — A seventh ! — I'll see no more :
15 And yet the eighth appears, who bears a glass²⁶
Which shows me many more ; and some I see

²⁵ *Air* is here put for *look* or *appearance*. So in *The Winter's Tale*, v. 1: "Your father's image is so hit in you, his very *air*, that I should call you brother."

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

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

That twofold balls and treble sceptres carry :²⁷
 Horrible sight ! — Nay, now I see 'tis true ;
 For the blood-bolter'd²⁸ Banquo smiles upon me,
 And points at them for his. — What, is this so ?

5 1 Witch. *Ay, sir, all this is so. But why
 Stands Macbeth thus amazedly ? —
 Come, sisters, cheer we up his sprites,
 And show the best of our delights :
 I'll charm the air to give a sound,
 10 While you perform your antic round ;
 That this great King may kindly say
 Our duties did his welcome pay.*

[Music. The Witches dance, and then vanish.

Macb. Where are they ? Gone ? — Let this pernicious hour
 Stand aye accursèd in the calendar !²⁹ —
 Comè in, without there !

Enter LENNOX.

15 *Len.* What's your Grace's will ?
 Macb. Saw you the Weird Sisters ?
 Len. No, my lord.

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

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

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

Macb. Came they not by you?

Len. www.libtool.com.cn No indeed, my lord.

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

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

Macb. Fled to England !

Len. Ay, my good lord.

Macb. [*Aside.*] Time, thou anticipatest³⁰ my dread exploits :
The flighty purpose never is o'ertook
10 Unless the deed go with it : from this moment
The very firstlings of my heart shall be
The firstlings of my hand. And even now,
To crown my thoughts with acts, be't thought and done :
The castle of Macduff I will surprise ;
15 Seize upon Fife ; give to the edge o' the sword
His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls
That trace him in his line. *No boasting like a fool ;
This deed I'll do before this purpose cool :*
But no more sights !³¹ — Where are these gentlemen ?
20 Come, bring me where they are. [*Exeunt.*]

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

Enter Lady MACDUFF, her Son, and ROSS.

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

Ross. You must have patience, madam.

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

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

L. Macd. He had none ;
His flight was madness: when our actions do not,
Our fears do make us traitors.¹

Ross. You know not
Whether it was his wisdom or his fear.

5 *L. Macd.* Wisdom ! to leave his wife, to leave his babes,
His mansion and his titles, in a place
From whence himself does fly ! He loves us not ;
He wants the natural touch :² for the poor wren,
The most diminutive of birds, will fight,
10 Her young ones in her nest,³ against the owl.
All is the fear, and nothing is the love ;
As little is the wisdom, where the flight
So runs against all reason.

Ross. My dearest coz,
I pray you, school yourself : but, for your husband,⁴
15 He's noble, wise, judicious, and best knows
The fits o' the season.⁵ I dare not speak much further :
But cruel are the times, when we are traitors,
And do not know't ourselves ; when we hold rumour
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear,⁶
20 But float upon a wild and violent sea

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

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

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

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

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

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

Each way it moves. I take my leave of you ;
 Shall not be long, but I'll be here again.
 Things at the worst will cease, or else climb upward
 To what they were before.⁷ — My pretty cousin,

5 Blessing upon you !

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

Ross. I am so much a fool, should I stay longer,
 It would be my disgrace and your discomfort :⁸

I take my leave at once.

[*Exit.*

L. Macd.

Sirrah,⁹ your father's dead :

10 And what will you do now? How will you live?

Son. As birds do, mother.

L. Macd.

What, with worms and flies?

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

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

The pitfall nor the gin.¹⁰

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

My father is not dead, for all your saying.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹⁰ *Gin* is *trap* or *snare*. — *Lime* for *birdlime*, the name of an old device for ensnaring birds. See *Hamlet*, page 154, note 8.

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

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

Son. Was my father a traitor, mother ?

L. Macd. Ay, that he was.

5 *Son.* What is a traitor ?

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

Son. And be all traitors that do so ?

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

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

L. Macd. Every one.

Son. Who must hang them ?

L. Macd. Why, the honest men.

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

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

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

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

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. Bless you, fair dame !¹² I am not to you known,
Though in your state of honour I am perfect.¹³

25 I doubt¹⁴ some danger does approach you nearly :

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

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

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

If you will take a homely man's advice,
 Be not found here; hence, with your little ones.
 To fright you thus,¹⁵ methinks I am too savage;
 To do worse to you were fell cruelty,
 5 Which is too nigh your person. Heaven preserve you!

I dare abide no longer.

[*Exit.*]

L. Macd.

Wherefore should I fly?

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

Enter Murderers.

What are these faces?

1 Mur. Where is your husband?

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

15 *1 Mur.*

He's a traitor.

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

1 Mur. [*Stabbing him.*]

What, you egg!

Young fry of treachery!

Son.

He has kill'd me, mother:

Run away, I pray you!¹⁷

[*Dies.*]

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

¹⁵ "To fright you" for *in frightening* you. See page 84, note 20.

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

¹⁷ "This scene," says Coleridge, "dreadful as it is, is still a relief, because a variety, because domestic, and therefore soothing, as associated with the only real pleasures of life. The conversation between Lady Mac-

SCENE III. — *England. Before the King's Palace.**Enter MALCOLM and MACDUFF.*

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

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

Mal. What I believe, I'll wail ;
What know, believe ; and what I can redress,
10 As I shall find the time to friend, I will.
What you have spoke, it may be so perchance.
This tyrant, whose sole name blisters our tongues, /
Was once thought honest : you have loved him well ;
He hath not touch'd you yet. I'm young ; but something
15 You may deserve of him through me ; and wisdom
To offer up a weak, poor, innocent lamb
T' appease an angry god.²

duff and her child heightens the pathos, and is preparatory for the deep tragedy of their assassination. Shakespeare's fondness for children is everywhere shown : — in Prince Arthur in *King John* ; in the sweet scene in *The Winter's Tale* between Hermione and her son ; nay, even in honest Evans' examination of Mrs. Page's schoolboy."

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

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

Macd. I am not treacherous.

Mal. www.libtool.com.cn But Macbeth is.

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

Macd. I've lost my hopes.

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

Macd. Bleed, bleed, poor country !—
 15 Great tyranny, lay thou thy basis sure,
 For goodness dare not check thee ! wear thou thy wrongs,
 Thy title is affeer'd !⁷— Fare thee well, lord :

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

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

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

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

⁷ Ritson, a lawyer, explains this rightly, no doubt : "To *affeer* is to assess, or reduce to certainty. All amerçiements are, by *Magna Charta*, to be affeered by lawful men, sworn and impartial. This is the ordinary prac-

I would not be the villain that thou think'st
For the whole space that's in the tyrant's grasp,
And the rich East to boot.

Mal. Be not offended :

I speak not as in absolute fear of you.

5 I think our country sinks beneath the yoke ;
It weeps, it bleeds ; and each new day a gash
Is added to her wounds : I think, withal,
There would be hands uplifted in my right ;
And here, from gracious England,⁸ have I offer
10 Of goodly thousands : but, for all this,
When I shall tread upon the tyrant's head,
Or wear it on my sword, yet my poor country
Shall have more vices than it had before ;
More suffer, and more sundry ways than ever,
By him that shall succeed.

15 *Macd.* What should he be ?

Mal. It is myself I mean ; in whom I know
All the particulars of vice so grafted
That, when they shall be open'd, black Macbeth
Will seem as pure as snow ; and the poor State
20 Esteem him as a lamb, being compared
With my confineless⁹ harms.

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

tice of a Court Leet, with which Shakespeare seems to have been intimately acquainted."— In "wear thou thy wrongs," the meaning probably is, wrongs as opposed to *rights*; or, perhaps, place and honours *gained by wrong*.

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

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

¹⁰ To *top* is, in old English, to *surpass*. See *Hamlet*, page 110, note 49.

Mal. I grant him bloody,
 Luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful,
 Sudden, malicious, smacking of every sin
 That has a name : but there's no bottom, none,
 5 In my voluptuousness ; and my desire
 All continent¹¹ impediments would o'erbear
 That did oppose my will. Better Macbeth
 Than such an one to reign.

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

Mal. With this, there grows,
 In my most ill-composed affection, such
 20 A stanchless avarice that, were I king,
 I should cut off the nobles for their lands ;
 Desire his jewels, and this other's house :¹³
 And my more-having would be as a sauce
 To make me hunger more ; that I should forge
 25 Quarrels unjust against the good and loyal,
 Destroying them for wealth.

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

¹² To *convey* was sometimes used for to *manage* or *carry through* a thing artfully and secretly. So the Poet has it several times.

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

Macd.

This avarice

Sticks deeper, grows with more pernicious root
Than summer-seeming lust ;¹⁴ and it hath been
The sword of our slain kings :¹⁵ yet do not fear ;

5 Scotland hath foisons to fill up your will,
Of your mere own. All these are portable,
With other graces weigh'd.¹⁶

Mal. But I have none : the king-becoming graces,
As justice, verity, temperance,¹⁷ stableness,
10 Bounty, persévérance, mercy, lowliness,
Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude,
I have no relish of them ; but abound
In the division¹⁸ of each several crime,
Acting it many ways. Nay, had I power, I should
15 Pour the sweet milk of concord into Hell,
Uproar the universal peace, confound
All unity on Earth.¹⁹

Macd.

O Scotland, Scotland !

Mal. If such a one be fit to govern, speak :
I am as I have spoken.

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

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

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

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

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

¹⁹ A singular use of *uproar* ; but probably meaning to *turmoil*, to *fill with tumult* and *uproar*. — *Confound*, again, for *destroy*.

Macd.

Fit to govern !

No, not to live. — O nation miserable,
 With an untitled tyrant bloody-scepter'd,
 When shalt thou see thy wholesome days again,
 5 Since that the truest issue of thy throne
 By his own interdiction stands accursed,
 And does blaspheme his breed? — Thy royal father
 Was a most sainted king : the queen that bore thee,
 Oftener upon her knees than on her feet,
 10 Died every day she livèd. Fare thee well !
 These evils thou repeat'st upon thyself
 Have banish'd me from Scotland. — O my breast,
 Thy hope ends here !

Mal.

Macduff, this noble passion,

Child of integrity, hath from my soul
 15 Wiped the black scruples, reconciled my thoughts
 To thy good truth and honour. Devilish Macbeth
 By many of these trains²⁰ hath sought to win me
 Into his power ; and modest wisdom plucks me
 From over-credulous haste : but God above
 20 Deal between thee and me ! for even now
 I put myself to thy direction, and
 Unspeak mine own detraction ; here abjure
 The taints and blames I laid upon myself,
 For strangers to my nature. I am yet
 25 Unknown to woman ; never was forsworn ;
 Scarcely have coveted what was mine own ;

²⁰ *Trains* is *arts or devices of circumvention*. *The Edinburgh Review*, October, 1872, shows the word to have been "a technical term both in hawking and hunting: in hawking, for the lure thrown out to reclaim a falcon given to ramble; and in hunting, for the bait trailed along the ground, and left exposed, to tempt the animal from his lair or covert, and bring him fairly within the power of the lurking huntsman."

At no time broke my faith ; would not betray
 The Devil to his fellow ;²¹ and delight
 No less in truth than life : my first false-speaking
 Was this upon myself. What I am truly,
 5 Is thine and my poor country's to command ;
 Whither indeed, before thy here-approach,
 Old Siward, with ten thousand warlike men,
 Already at a point,²² was setting forth :
 Now we'll together ; and the chance of goodness
 10 Be like our warranted quarrel !²³ Why are you silent ?

Macd. Such welcome and unwelcome things at once
 'Tis hard to reconcile.

Enter a Doctor.

Mal. Well, more anon. — Comes the King forth, I pray
 you ?

Doct. Ay, sir ; there are a crew of wretched souls
 15 That stay his cure : their malady convinces²⁴
 The great assay of art ; but, at his touch,
 Such sanctity hath Heaven given his hand,
 They presently amend.

Mal. I thank you, doctor. [*Exit Doctor.*]

Macd. What's the disease he means ?

Mal. 'Tis call'd the evil :
 20 A most miraculous work in this good King ;

²¹ *Fellow* for *friend* or *companion* ; and the sense is, that, if he would not betray the Devil to his friend, much less would he betray him to his enemy. Pretty strong !

²² *At a point* is *ready, prepared* ; or at a stop or period where there is nothing further to be said or done.

²³ " May the chance for virtue to succeed be as good, as well warranted, as our cause is just." For this use of *quarrel* in the sense of *cause*, see page 50, note 5.

²⁴ *Convince*, again, in its old sense of *overcome*. See page 77, note 17.

Which often, since my here-remain in England,
 I've seen him do. How he solicits Heaven,
 Himself best knows : but strangely-visited people,
 All swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
 5 The mere²⁵ despair of surgery, he cures ;
 Hanging a golden stamp about their necks,
 Put on with holy prayers : and 'tis spoken,
 To the succeeding royalty he leaves
 The healing benediction.²⁶ With this strange virtue,
 10 He hath a heavenly gift of prophecy ;
 And sundry blessings hang about his throne,
 That speak him full of grace.

Enter Ross.

Macd. See, who comes here ?

Mal. My countryman ; but yet I know him not.

Macd. My ever-gentle cousin, welcome hither.

15 *Mal.* I know him now.²⁷ — Good God, betimes remove
 The means that makes us strangers !

Ross. Sir, amen.

Macd. Stands Scotland where it did ?

Ross. Alas, poor country,

²⁵ *Mere*, again, for *absolute* or *utter*. See page 139, note 16.

²⁶ Holinshed has the following respecting Edward the Confessor: "As it has been thought, he was inspired with the gift of prophecy, and also to have the gift of healing infirmities and diseases. He used to help those that were vexed with the disease commonly called the king's evil, and left that virtue as it were a portion of inheritance unto his successors, the kings of this realm." The custom of touching for the king's evil was not wholly laid aside till the days of Queen Anne, who used it on the infant Dr. Johnson. — The *golden stamp* was the coin called *angel*.

²⁷ The Prince at first distrusts Ross, just as he had before distrusted Macduff: but he has given his confidence *unreservedly* to the latter; and now he has full faith in Ross as soon as he sees how Macduff regards him. The passage is very delightful. — *Means*, next line, is put for *cause*.

Almost afraid to know itself ! It cannot
 Be call'd our mother, but our grave : where nothing,
 But who knows nothing, is once seen to smile ;²⁸
 Where sighs, and groans, and shrieks that rend the air,
 5 Are made, not mark'd ; where violent sorrow seems
 A modern ecstasy :²⁹ the dead man's knell
 Is there scarce ask'd for who ; and good men's lives
 Expire before the flowers in their caps,
 Dying or ere they sicken.

Macd. O, relation

Too nice,³⁰ and yet too true !

10 *Mal.* What's the newest grief?

Ross. That of an hour's age doth hiss the speaker ;³¹
 Each minute teems a new one.

Macd. How does my wife ?

Ross. Why, well.³²

Macd. And all my children ?

Ross. Well too.

Macd. The tyrant has not batter'd at their peace ?

Ross. No ; they were well at peace when I did leave
 15 'em.

Macd. Be not a niggard of your speech : how goes't ?

Ross. When I came hither to transport the tidings,
 Which I have heavily borne, there ran a rumour

²⁸ Where none but *idiots* and *innocents* are ever seen to smile.

²⁹ *Ecstasy* is any strong disturbance of mind. See page 105, note 5. — *Modern* is common, trite, every-day ; as in the well-known passage, " Full of wise saws and modern instances."

³⁰ Too *nice*, because too elaborate, or having too much an air of study and art ; and so not like the frank utterance of deep feeling.

³¹ That which is but an hour old seems out of date, and so causes the speaker to be hissed as tedious.

³² An equivocal phrase, the sense of which is explained in *Antony and Cleopatra*, ii. 5 : " We use to say *the dead are well!*"

Of many worthy fellows that were out ;³³
 Which was to my belief witness'd the rather,
 For that I saw the tyrant's power a-foot :
 Now is the time of help ; your eye in Scotland
 5 Would create soldiers, make our women fight,
 To doff³⁴ their dire distresses.

Mal. Be't their comfort
 We're coming thither : gracious England hath
 Lent us good Siward and ten thousand men ;
 An older and a better soldier none
 That Christendom gives out.

10 *Ross.* Would I could answer
 This comfort with the like ! But I have words
 That would be howl'd out in the desert air,
 Where hearing should not latch them.³⁵

Macd. What concern they ?
 The general cause ? or is it a fee-grief³⁶
 Due to some single breast ?

15 *Ross.* No mind that's honest
 But in it shares some woe ; though the main part
 Pertains to you alone.

Macd. If it be mine,
 Keep it not from me, quickly let me have it.

Ross. Let not your ears despise my tongue for ever,

³³ Here *out* has the force of *in arms*, or *in open revolt*.— What follows means that the *rumour* is confirmed by the fact that Macbeth has put his troops in motion.— *For that is because*, or for *the reason* that. A frequent usage.

³⁴ *Doff* is *do off*. So the Poet has *don* for *do on*, and *dup* for *do up*.

³⁵ Present usage would here transpose *should* and *would*. See page 75, note 9.— *Latch* is an old North-of-England word for *catch*. Our *door-latch* is that which *catches* the door.

³⁶ A *fee-grief* is a *private* or *individual* grief, as distinguished from one that is public or common.

Which shall possess them with the heaviest sound
That ever yet they heard.

Macd. Hum ! I guess at it.

Ross. Your castle is surprised ; your wife and babes
Savagely slaughter'd : to relate the manner,
5 Were, on the quarry³⁷ of these murder'd deer,
To add the death of you.

Mal. Merciful Heaven ! —

What, man ! ne'er pull your hat upon your brows :
Give sorrow words ; the grief that does not speak
Whispers the o'er-fraught heart, and bids it break.

Macd. My children too ?

10 *Ross.* Wife, children, servants, all
That could be found.

Macd. And I must be from thence ! —

My wife kill'd too ?

Ross. I've said.

Mal. Be comforted :

Let's make us medicines of our great revenge,
To cure this deadly grief.

15 *Macd.* He has no children.³⁸ — All my pretty ones ?
Did you say all ? — O hell-kite ! — All ?

³⁷ *Quarry* was a hunter's term for a heap of dead game, and was often applied as here. See *Hamlet*, page 231, note 65. — In "murder'd deer," it may seem that the Poet intended a pun ; but probably not ; at least I can hardly think he meant the speaker to be conscious of it as such.

³⁸ "He has no children" is most likely said of Malcolm, and with reference to what he has just spoken ; though I believe it is commonly taken as referring to Macbeth, and in the idea that, as he has no children, there can be no adequate revenge upon him. But the true meaning, I have no doubt, is, that if Malcolm were a father, he would know that such a grief cannot be healed with the medicine of revenge. Besides, it would seem that Macbeth *has* children ; else why should he strain so hard to have the regal succession "stand in his posterity" ? And Lady Macbeth "knows how tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me."

What, all my pretty chickens and their dam

At one fell swoop?³⁹

Mal. Dispute it like a man.

Macd.

I shall do so ;

But I must also feel it as a man :

5 I cannot but remember such things were,

That were most precious to me. Did Heaven look on,

And would not take their part? Sinful Macduff,

They were all struck for thee ! naught⁴⁰ that I am,

Not for their own demerits, but for mine,

10 Fell slaughter on their souls. Heaven rest them now !

Mal. Be this the whetstone of your sword : let grief

Convert to anger ; blunt not the heart, enrage it.

Macd. O, I could play the woman with mine eyes,

And braggart with my tongue !— But, gentle Heaven,

15 Cut short all intermission ; front to front

Bring Thou this fiend of Scotland and myself ;

Within my sword's length set him ; if he scape,

Heaven forgive him too !⁴¹

Mal.

This tune goes manly.⁴²

Come, go we to the King : our power is ready ;

³⁹ *Swoop* was a term for the descent of a bird of prey upon his quarry.

⁴⁰ *Naught* appears to have had the same meaning as *bad*, only stronger. It should not be confounded with *nought*.

⁴¹ The little word *too* is so used here as to intensify, in a very remarkable manner, the sense of what precedes. "Put him once within the reach of my sword, and if I don't kill him, then I am as bad as he, and may God forgive us both!" I cannot point to an instance anywhere of language more intensely charged with meaning.

⁴² How admirably Macduff's grief is in harmony with the whole play! It rends, not dissolves the heart. "The tune of it goes manly." Thus is Shakespeare always master of himself and of his subject,—a genuine Proteus ;—we see all things in him, as images in a calm lake, most distinct, most accurate,—only more splendid, more glorified.—COLERIDGE.

Our lack is nothing but our leave :⁴³ Macbeth
 Is ripe for shaking, and the powers above
 Put on their instruments.⁴⁴ Receive what cheer you may :
 The night is long that never finds the day. [Exeunt.]

 ACT V.

SCENE I. — *Dunsinane. A Room in the Castle.*

Enter a Doctor of Physic and a Waiting-Gentlewoman.

5 *Doct.* I have two nights watch'd with you, but can perceive no truth in your report. When was it she last walk'd?

Gentlew. Since his Majesty went into the field,¹ I have seen her rise from her bed, throw her nightgown² upon her, unlock her closet, take forth paper, fold it, write upon't, read
 10 it, afterwards seal it, and again return to bed ; yet all this while in a most fast sleep.

Doct. A great perturbation in nature, to receive at once the benefit of sleep and do the effects³ of watching ! In this slumbery agitation, besides her walking and other actual per-
 15 formances, what at any time have you heard her say?

⁴³ That is, "nothing remains to be done here but to take our leave of the King." A ceremony of parting.

⁴⁴ *Instruments* is here used of *persons*. — *Put on* means *stir up, instigate, urge on*. Often so. See *Hamlet*, page 195, note 28.

¹ In the preceding scene, Macbeth was said to have his "power a-foot" against "many worthy fellows that were out." Probably the coming of the English forces has induced him to withdraw his troops from the field, and put them within the strong fortress of Dunsinane.

² That is, *dressing-gown*, not what we call a *night-gown*.

³ *Effects* here means *acts or actions*. Repeatedly so.

Gentlew. That, sir, which I will not report after her.

Doct. You may to me; and 'tis most meet you should.

Gentlew. Neither to you nor any one; having no witness to confirm my speech.

Enter Lady MACBETH, with a Taper.

5 Lo you, here she comes! This is her very guise; and, upon my life, fast asleep. Observe her; stand close.⁴

Doct. How came she by that light?

Gentlew. Why, it stood by her: she has light by her continually; 'tis her command.⁵

10 *Doct.* You see, her eyes are open.

Gentlew. Ay, but their sense is shut.

Doct. What is it she does now? Look, how she rubs her hands.

Gentlew. It is an accustom'd action with her, to seem
15 thus washing her hands: I have known her continue in this a quarter of an hour.

Lady M. Yet here's a spot.

Doct. Hark! she speaks: I will set down what comes from her, to satisfy my remembrance the more strongly.

20 *Lady M.* Out, damnèd spot! out, I say!—One, two; why, then 'tis time to do't.—Hell is murky!⁶—Fie, my

⁴ Here, as often, *close* is *secret, hidden, or in concealment.*

⁵ Was this to avert the presence of those "sightless substances" once impiously invoked? She seems washing her hands, and "continues in this a quarter of an hour." What a comment on her former boast, "A little water clears us of this deed!"—BUCKNILL.

⁶ Some commentators think that Lady Macbeth imagines her husband to utter these words, and repeats them after him with a peculiar intonation as in ridicule or reproach of his fears. And so I suspect it is. But the learned Editors of the "Clarendon Press Series" think otherwise decidedly and note as follows: "Her recollections of the deed and its motives alternate with recollections of subsequent remorse and dread of future punishment."

lord, fie ! a soldier, and afeard? What need we fear who knows it, when none ~~can call our~~ power to account?— Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?

5 *Doct.* Do you mark that?

Lady M. The Thane of Fife had a wife: where is she now?— What, will these hands ne'er be clean?— No more o' that, my lord, no more o' that: you mar all with this starting.⁷

10 *Doct.* Go to, go to; you have known what you should not.

Gentlew. She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of that: Heaven knows what she has known.

Lady M. Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand.⁸ O!

15 O! O!

Doct. What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely charged.

Gentlew. I would not have such a heart in my bosom for the dignity of the whole body.

Doct. Well, well, well,—

⁷ She is alluding to the terrors of Macbeth on seeing the Ghost of Banquo in the banquet-scene.

⁸ Upon this passage, Verplanck, after remarking how fertile the sense of smell is in the milder and gentler charms of poetry, adds the following: "But the smell has never been successfully used as the means of impressing the imagination with terror, pity, or any of the deeper emotions, except in this dreadful sleep-walking of the guilty Queen, and in one parallel scene of the Greek Drama, as wildly terrible as this. It is that passage of the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus, where the captive prophetess Cassandra, wrapt in visionary inspiration, scents first the smell of blood, and then the vapours of the tomb breathing from the palace of Atrides, as ominous of his approaching murder. These two stand alone in poetry; and Fuseli in his lectures informs us that when, in the kindred art of painting, it has been attempted to produce tragic effect through the medium of ideas drawn from 'this squeamish sense,' even Raphael and Poussin have failed, and excited disgust instead of terror or compassion."

Gentlew. Pray God it be, sir.⁹

Doct. — ~~this disease is beyond~~ my practice: yet I have known those which have walk'd in their sleep, who have died holily in their beds.

5 *Lady M.* Wash your hands, put on your nightgown; look not so pale. I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried; he cannot come out on's grave.

Doct. Even so?

Lady M. To bed, to bed! there's knocking at the gate:
10 come, come, come, give me your hand: what's done cannot be undone: to bed, to bed, to bed! [*Exit.*

Doct. Will she go now to bed?

Gentlew. Directly.

Doct. Foul whisperings are abroad: unnatural deeds
15 Do breed unnatural troubles: infected minds
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets.
More needs she the divine than the physician. —
God, God forgive us all! — Look after her;
Remove from her the means of all annoyance,¹⁰
20 And still keep eyes upon her. So, good night:
*My mind she has mated*¹¹ *and amazed my sight.*
I think, but dare not speak.

Gentlew.

Good night, good doctor.

[*Exeunt.*

⁹ Does the Gentlewoman misunderstand the Doctor's "Well, well, well," or does she mean this as a further hint how dreadful the thing is? At all events, I have long been wont to pause upon it as one of the Poet's quiet, unobtrusive master-strokes of delineation.

¹⁰ That is, the means of doing violence to herself.

¹¹ To *mate* or *amate* is to *astonish*, to *strike with dismay*.

SCENE II.—*The Country near Dunsinane.*

Drum and Colours. Enter MENTEITH, CAITHNESS, ANGUS,
LENNOX, and Soldiers.

Ment. The English power is near, led on by Malcolm,
His uncle Siward, and the good Macduff :
Revenge burn in them ; for their dear causes
Would to the bleeding and the grim alarm
Excite the mortified man.¹

5 *Ang.* Near Birnam wood
Shall we well meet them ; that way are they coming.

Caith. Who knows if Donalbain be with his brother ?

Len. For certain, sir, he is not : I've a file
Of all the gentry : there is Siward's son,
10 And many unrough² youths, that even now
Protest their first of manhood.

Ment. What does the tyrant ?

Caith. Great Dunsinane he strongly fortifies :
Some say he's mad ; others, that lesser hate him,
Do call it valiant fury :³ but, for certain,
15 He cannot buckle his distemper'd course
Within the belt of rule.

Ang. Now does he feel
His secret murders sticking on his hands ;

¹ Would rouse and impel even a hermit to the war, to the signal for carnage and horror. By "the *mortified man*" is meant a *religious* man ; one who has mortified his passions, is dead to the world.

² *Unrough* is *unbearded, smooth-faced*. So in *The Tempest* : "Till newborn chins be *rough* and razorable."

³ *Fury* in the poetical sense ; *inspiration, or heroic rapture*. So in Hoby-noll's lines to Spenser in praise of *The Faerie Queene* : "Some sacred *fury* hath enrich'd thy brains."

Now minutely revolts⁴ upbraid his faith-breach ;
 Those he ~~commands move only in~~ command,
 Nothing in love : now does he feel his title
 Hang loose about him, like a giant's robe
 Upon a dwarfish thief.

5 *Ment.* Who, then, shall blame
 His pester'd senses to recoil and start,⁵
 When all that is within him does condemn
 Itself for being there ?

Caith. Well, march we on,
 To give obedience where 'tis truly owed :
 10 Meet we the medicine of the sickly weal ;⁶
 And with him pour we in our country's purge
 Each drop of us.

Len. Or so much as it needs,
 To dew the sovereign flower and drown the weeds.⁷
 Make we our march towards Birnam. [*Exeunt, marching.*]

SCENE III. — *Dunsinane. A Room in the Castle.*

Enter MACBETH, the Doctor, and Attendants.

15 *Macb.* Bring me no more reports ; let them fly all :
 Till Birnam wood remove to Dunsinane,
 I cannot taint¹ with fear. What's the boy Malcolm ?
 Was he not born of woman ? The spirits that know

⁴ " *Minutely* revolts " are revolts occurring *every minute*.

⁵ That is, *for recoiling and starting*. See page 86, note 26.

⁶ " The *medicine* of the sickly weal " refers to Malcolm, the lawful Prince. In the olden time, the best remedy for the evils of tyranny, or the greater evils of civil war, was thought to be a king with a clear and unquestioned title.

⁷ " Let us shed so much of our blood as may be necessary in order to seat our rightful Prince on the throne, and destroy the usurping tyrant."

¹ To *taint* is to *corrupt*, to *infect* ; here used intransitively.

All mortal consequences have pronounced me thus :
Fear not, Macbeth ; no man that's born of woman
Shall e'er have power upon thee. Then fly, false thanes,
 And mingle with the English epicures :²

5 *The mind I sway by and the heart I bear*
Shall never sag³ with doubt nor shake with fear. —

Enter a Servant.

The Devil damn thee black, thou cream-faced loon !⁴
 Where gott'st thou that goose look ?

Serv. There is ten thousand —

Macb. Geese, villain ?

Serv. Soldiers, sir.

10 *Macb.* Go prick thy face, and over-red thy fear,
 Thou lily-liver'd boy.⁵ What soldiers, patch ?⁶
 Death of thy soul ! those linen cheeks of thine
 Are counsellors to fear. What soldiers, whey-face ?

Serv. The English force, so please you.

Macb. Take thy face hence. — [*Exit Servant.*

15 Seyton ! — I'm sick at heart,

² Scotland being a comparatively lean and sterile country, the Scotch might naturally plume themselves on being plain livers and high thinkers, and so speak of the high-feeding English as epicures.

³ To *sag*, or *swag*, is to hang down by its own weight. "A word," says Mr. Furness, "of every-day use in America among mechanics and engineers." And I can add that I used to hear it often among farmers.

⁴ This word, which signifies a *base, abject fellow*, was formerly common in England, but spelt *loun*, and is justly considered by Horne Tooke as the past participle of *to low* or *abase*. *Lout* has the same origin.

⁵ *Lily-liver'd, white-liver'd, milk-liver'd*, were all strong words for *cowardly*; the liver being formerly considered the special seat of courage; where, however, courage could not live without a good supply of the *red* fluid.

⁶ *Patch* was often used as a term of contempt. The use probably grew from the motley or *patch-work* dress worn by professional fools.

When I behold — Seyton, I say ! — This push
Will chair me ever, or dis-seat me now.⁷

I have lived long enough : my way of life
Is fall'n into the sere, the yellow leaf ;⁸

5 And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have ; but, in their stead,
Curses, not loud but deep, mouth-honour, breath,
Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not. —
10 Seyton !

Enter SEYTON.

Seyt. What is your gracious pleasure ?

Macb. What news more ?

Seyt. All is confirm'd, my lord, which was reported.

Macb. I'll fight, till from my bones my flesh be hack'd. —
Give me my armour.

Seyt. 'Tis not needed yet.

15 *Macb.* I'll put it on.
Send out more horses, skirr⁹ the country round ;
Hang those that talk of fear. — Give me mine armour. —
How does your patient, doctor ?

Doct. Not so sick, my lord,
As she is troubled with thick-coming fancies,
That keep her from her rest.

20 *Macb.* Cure her of that :

⁷ " Will *seat* me firmly on the throne, or else will *unseat* me utterly." If he whip the present enemy, his tenure of the crown will be confirmed ; if he fail now, there will be no more hope for him.

⁸ *Sere* is *dry, withered*. Often so used. — " Way of life " is merely an enlarged expression for *life*. Macbeth's complaint is, that he is now growing old, and that he cannot expect to have the natural comforts of old age.

⁹ *Skirr* is an old word for *scour*, and has the sense of *moving swiftly*. So in *King Henry V.*, iv. 7 : " And make them *skirr* away, as swift as stones enforced from the old Assyrian slings."

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased ;
 Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow ;
 Raze out the written troubles of the brain ;
 And with some sweet-oblivious antidote
 5 Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff
 Which weighs upon the heart ?

Doct.

Therein the patient

Must minister to himself.

Macb. Throw physic to the dogs, I'll none of it. —
 Come, put mine armour on ; give me my staff.¹⁰ —
 10 Seyton, send out. — Doctor, the thanes fly from me. —
 Come, sir, dispatch. — If thou couldst, doctor, cast
 The water of my land,¹¹ find her disease,
 And purge it to a sound and pristine health,
 I would applaud thee to the very echo,
 15 That should applaud again. — Pull't off, I say.¹² —
 What rhubarb, senna, or what purgative drug,
 Would scour these English hence ? Hear'st thou of them ?

Doct. Ay, my good lord ; your royal preparation
 Makes us hear something.

Macb.

Bring it¹³ after me. —

20 *I will not be afraid of death and bane,
 Till Birnam forest come to Dunsinane.*

[Exeunt all but the *Doctor*.

Doct. *Were I from Dunsinane away and clear,
 Profit again should hardly draw me here.*

[Exit.

¹⁰ *Staff* probably means his symbol of military command ; general's *baton*. Or it may mean a fighting-tool ; his *lance*.

¹¹ Probably alluding to the old custom of medical diagnosis by inspecting or *casting* the patient's water. So that the language is equivalent to " *diagnosicate* all the people of Scotland."

¹² Spoken to the armourer, who has got a piece of the armour on wrong.

¹³ Referring to the piece which he has just ordered the armourer to pull off.

SCENE IV. — *Country near Birnam Wood.*

Drum and Colours. Enter MALCOLM, Old SIWARD and his Son, MACDUFF, MENTEITH, CAITHNESS, ANGUS, LENNOX. ROSS, and Soldiers, marching.

Mal. Cousins, I hope the days are near at hand
That chambers will be safe.¹

Ment. We doubt it nothing.

Siw. What wood is this before us?

Ment. The wood of Birnam.

Mal. Let every soldier hew him down a bough,
5 And bear't before him : thereby shall we shadow
The numbers of our host, and make discovery
Err in report of us.

Soldiers. It shall be done.

Siw. We learn no other but the confident tyrant
Keeps still in Dunsinane, and will endure
Our sitting down before't.

10 *Mal.* 'Tis his main hope :
For, where there is advantage to be ta'en,
Both more and less² have given him the revolt ;
And none serve with him but constrained things,
Whose hearts are absent too.

Macd. Let our just censures
15 Attend the true event,³ and put we on
Industrious soldiership.

¹ Referring, probably, to the spies and informers whom Macbeth keeps in the noblemen's houses, prowling about their private chambers, and listening at their key-holes. See page 117, note 25.

² *More and less* is the old phrase for *great and small*, or *high and low*.

³ Another proleptical form of speech ; the meaning being, " Let our judgments wait for the actual result, the issue of the contest, *in order that they may be just.*" See page 113, note 11.

Siw. *The time approaches
That will with due decision make us know
What we shall say we have, and what we owe.⁴
Thoughts speculative their unsure hopes relate ;
5 But certain issue strokes must arbitrate :⁵
Towards which advance the war.* [Exeunt, marching.

SCENE V. — *Dunsinane. Within the Castle.*

Enter MACBETH, SEYTON, and Soldiers, with Drum and Colours.

Macb. Hang out our banners on the outward walls ;
The cry is still *They come !* Our castle's strength
Will laugh a siege to scorn : here let them lie
10 Till famine and the ague eat them up :
Were they not forced¹ with those that should be ours,
We might have met them dareful, beard to beard,
And beat them backward home. — [*A cry of women within.*
What is that noise ?

Seyt. It is the cry of women, my good lord. [*Exit.*
15 *Macb.* I have almost forgot the taste of fears :
The time has been, my senses would have quail'd
To hear a night-shriek, and my fell² of hair

⁴ Evidently meaning, "When we have a king that will rule by law we shall know both our rights and our duties." I make this note simply because some have vented an unworthy sneer, not indeed at the Poet, but at the brave old warrior for speaking thus.

⁵ Referring, apparently, to Malcolm's last speech, which proceeds somewhat upon conjecture and seeming likelihood. The old war-horse means, "There's no use in talking about it, and eating the air of expectation ; nothing but plain old-fashioned fighting will decide the matter."

¹ *Forced* is *strengthened, reinforced*. A frequent usage.

² *Fell* is *hairy scalp*, or any skin covered with hair or wool. — *To hear* is still another gerundial infinitive ; *at hearing*.

Would at a dismal treatise³ rouse and stir
 As life were in't. I have supp'd full with horrors ;
 Direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts,
 Cannot once start me. —

Re-enter SEYTON.

Wherefore was that cry?

5 *Seyt.* The Queen, my lord, is dead.

Macb. She should have died hereafter ;
 There would have been a time for such a word.⁴
 To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
 Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
 10 To the last syllable of recorded time ;⁵
 And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
 The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle !
 Life's but a walking shadow ; a poor player,
 That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
 15 And then is heard no more : it is a tale

³ *Dismal treatise* probably means a tale of cruelty, or of suffering.

⁴ Another instance of the indiscriminate use of *should* and *would*; and the meaning is, "If she had not died now, she *would* have died hereafter; the time would have come when such a word must be spoken." The explanation of the whole passage comes to me well worded from Mr. Joseph Crosby; though the substance of it was put forth many years ago by the Rev. Mr. Arrowsmith: "Macbeth's soliloquy is pure *fatalism*. 'I used to be frightened out of my senses at almost any thing: now nothing — not even the most terrible calamities — can make any impression upon me. What *must* be, I know *will* be.' 'The Queen, my lord, is dead.' 'Well, be it so: had she not died *now*, she would have had to die some time. So creeps along every thing in the world, with petty pace from day to day: every to-morrow has its yesterday, and every yesterday its to-morrow; and thus men go on from yesterdays to to-morrows, like automatic fools, until they drop into the dusty grave.'"

⁵ "The last syllable of *recorded* time" means simply the last syllable of the record of time. Such proleptical forms of speech are uncommonly frequent in this play.

Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.⁶—

Enter a Messenger.

Thou comest to use thy tongue ; thy story quickly.

Mess. Gracious my lord,

5 I should report that which I'd say I saw,
But know not how to do't.

Macb. Well, say it, sir.

Mess. As I did stand my watch upon the hill,
I look'd toward Birnam, and anon, methought,
The wood began to move.

Macb. Liar and slave !

10 *Mess.* Let me endure your wrath, if't be not so :
Within this three mile may you see it coming ;
I say, a moving grove.

Macb. If thou speak'st false,

Upon the next tree shalt thou hang alive,
Till famine cling⁷ thee ; if thy speech be sooth,

15 I care not if thou dost for me as much. —

I pall⁸ in resolution, and begin

To doubt th' equivocation of the fiend,

That lies like truth : *Fear not, till Birnam wood*

Do come to Dunsinane ; and now a wood

⁶ Alas for Macbeth ! Now all is inward with him ; he has no more prudential prospective reasonings. His wife, the only being who could have had any seat in his affections, dies : he puts on despondency, the final heart-armour of the wretched, and would fain think every thing shadowy and unsubstantial ; as indeed all things are to those who cannot regard them as symbols of goodness. — COLERIDGE.

⁷ To *cling*, in the northern counties, signifies to *shrivel, wither, or dry up*. *Clung-wood* is wood of which the sap is entirely dried or spent.

⁸ To *pall* is to *droop, to fall away, to languish, to grow faint*. See *Hamlet*, page 212, note 4.

Comes toward Dunsinane. — Arm, arm, and out !

*If this which he avouches does appear,
There is nor flying hence nor tarrying here.*

I 'gin to be aweary of the Sun,

5 *And wish th' estate o' the world were now undone. —*

Ring the alarum-bell ! — Blow, wind ! come, wrack !

At least we'll die with harness⁹ on our back. [Exeunt.]

SCENE VI. — *Dunsinane. Before the Castle.*

Drum and Colours. Enter MALCOLM, Old SIWARD, MACDUFF, and their Army, with Boughs.

Mal. Now near enough ; your leafy screens throw down,
And show like those you are. — You, worthy uncle,

10 Shall, with my cousin, your right-noble son,
Lead our first battle :¹ worthy Macduff and we
Shall take upon's what else remains to do,
According to our order.

⁹ *Harness* for *armour*, and so the word was often used. — Here I must again quote from Professor Dowden : "The soul of Macbeth never quite disappears into the blackness of darkness. He is a cloud without water carried about of winds ; a tree whose fruit withers, but not even to the last plucked up by the roots. For the dull ferocity of Macbeth is joyless. All his life has gone irretrievably astray, and he is aware of this. His suspicion becomes uncontrollable ; his reign is a reign of terror ; and, as he drops deeper and deeper into the solitude and the gloom, his sense of error and misfortune, futile and unproductive as that sense is, increases. Finally his sensibility has grown so dull that even the intelligence of his wife's death — the death of her who had been bound to him by such close communion in crime — hardly moves him, and seems little more than one additional incident in the weary, meaningless tale of human life. Macbeth remembers that he once knew there was such a thing as human goodness. He stands a haggard shadow against the hand's-breadth of pale sky which yields us sufficient light to see him."

¹ *Battle* was often put for *army in battle-array* : here it is put, apparently, for a *part* of such an army ; the *van*.

Siw. Fare you well.

Do we but find the tyrant's power to-night,
Let us be beaten, if we cannot fight.

Macd. *Make all our trumpets speak ; give them all breath,*
5 *Those clamorous harbingers of blood and death.* [Exeunt.

SCENE VII. — *Another Part of the Field.*

Alarums. Enter MACBETH.

Macb. They've tied me to a stake ; I cannot fly,
But, bear-like, I must fight the course.² What's he
That was not born of woman ? Such a one
Am I to fear, or none.

Enter Young SIWARD.

Yo. Siw. What is thy name ?

10 *Macb.* Thou'lt be afraid to hear it.

Yo. Siw. No ; though thou call'st thyself a hotter name
Than any is in Hell.

Macb. My name's Macbeth.

Yo. Siw. The Devil himself could not pronounce a title
More hateful to mine ear.

Macb. No, nor more fearful.

15 *Yo. Siw.* Thou liest, abhorred tyrant ; with my sword
I'll prove the lie thou speak'st.

[*They fight, and Young SIWARD is slain.*

² This was a phrase of bear-baiting, where the bear was tied to a stake, and then the dogs set upon him : the poor bear could not run, and so had no way but to fight it out. — "The end of Macbeth," says Professor Dowden, "is savage, and almost brutal, — a death without honour or loveliness. He fights now, not like 'Bellona's bridegroom lapp'd in proof,' but with a wild and animal clinging to life. His followers desert him ; he feels himself taken in a trap. The powers of evil in which he had trusted turn against him and betray him. His courage becomes a desperate rage. We are in pain until the horrible necessity is accomplished."

Macb. Thou wast born of woman.
 But swords I smile at, weapons laugh
 to scorn,
 Brandish'd by man that's of a woman born. [Exit.

Alarums. Enter MACDUFF.

Macd. That way the noise is. — Tyrant, show thy face !
 5 If thou be'st slain and with no stroke of mine,
 My wife and children's ghosts will haunt me still.
 I cannot strike at wretched kerns, whose arms
 Are hired to bear their staves : either thou, Macbeth,
 Or else my sword, with an unbatter'd edge,
 10 I sheathe again undecided. There thou shouldst be ;
 By this great clatter, one of greatest note
 Seems bruided.³ — Let me find him, fortune !
 And more I beg not. [Exit. *Alarums.*

Enter MALCOLM and Old SIWARD.

Siw. This way, my lord. The castle's gently render'd :
 15 The tyrant's people on both sides do fight ;
 The noble thanes do bravely in the war :
 The day almost itself professes yours,
 And little is to do.

Mal. We've met with foes
 That strike beside us.⁴

Siw. Enter, sir, the castle.
 [Exeunt. *Alarum.*

³ *Bruited* is reported, noised abroad. See *Hamlet*, page 61, note 26. — Of course, wherever Macbeth goes, he has a strong guard or escort attending him ; and the clattering of so many feet and swords would indicate his approach.

⁴ "Foes who take pains not to hit us ; who are only shamming fight against us, while their hearts are on our side."

SCENE VIII.—*Another Part of the Field.**Enter* MACBETH.

Macb. Why should I play the Roman fool,¹ and die
On mine own sword? whiles I see lives, the gashes
Do better upon them.²

Enter MACDUFF.

Macd. Turn, hell-hound, turn !

Macb. Of all men else I have avoided thee :
5 But get thee back ; my soul is too much charged
With blood of thine already.

Macd. I have no words,
My voice is in my sword ; thou bloodier villain
Than terms can give thee out ! [*They fight.*]

Macb. Thou lovest labour :
As easy mayst thou the intrenchant³ air
10 With thy keen sword impress, as make me bleed :
Let fall thy blade on vulnerable crests ;
I bear a charmed life,⁴ which must not yield
To one of woman born.

Macd. Despair thy charm ;
And let the angel whom thou still hast served

¹ Probably alluding either to the suicide of Cato at Utica or that of Brutus at Philippi ; perhaps to both.

² " While I see *living foes*, it is better to be killing them than to kill myself."

³ To *trench* is to *cut*, to *wound* ; so that *intrenchant* is *invulnerable* ; literally, *uncuttable*.

⁴ " A *charmed life* " is a life secured against human assault by " the might of magic spells." So in *Cymbeline*, v. 3 : " I, in mine own woe *charm'd*, could not find death where I did hear him groan, nor feel him where he struck."

Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb
Untimely ripp'd.

Macb. Accursèd be that tongue that tells me so,
For it hath cow'd my better part of man !
5 And be these juggling fiends no more believed,
That palter ⁵ with us in a double sense ;
That keep the word of promise to our ear,
And break it to our hope. — I'll not fight with thee.

Macd. Then yield thee, coward,
10 And live to be the show and gaze o' the time :
We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,
Painted upon a pole, and underwrit
*Here may you see the tyrant.*⁶

Macb. I will not yield,
To kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet,
15 And to be baited ⁷ with the rabble's curse.
Though Birnam wood be come to Dunsinane,
And thou opposed, being of no woman born,
Yet I will try the last : *before my body*
I throw my warlike shield : lay on, Macduff ;
20 And damn'd be he that first cries *Hold, enough!*⁸

[*Exeunt, fighting. Alarums.*]

⁵ To *palter* is to *shuffle* or *equivocate*, to *haggle* or *dodge*. Often so.

⁶ Alluding to the Barnum practice of the time ; which was, to get some strange animal for a show, and then hang out an exaggerated painting of the beast to attract customers.

⁷ *Baited* is *barked at* or *worried*, as dogs worried a chained bear.

⁸ To cry *hold!* when persons were fighting, was an authoritative way of separating them, according to the old military laws. This is shown by a passage in Bellay's *Instructions for the Wars*, declaring it to be a capital offence, "Whosoever shall strike stroke at his adversary, either in the heat or otherwise, if a third do cry *hold*, to the intent to part them." This illustrates the passage in i. 5, of this play: "Nor Heaven peep through the blanket of the dark to cry *Hold! hold!*"

Retreat. Flourish. Enter, with Drum and Colours, MALCOLM, Old SIWARD, ROSS, the other Thanes, and Soldiers.

Mal. I would the friends we miss were safe arrived.

Siw. Some must go off :⁹ and yet, by these I see,
So great a day as this is cheaply bought.

Mal. Macduff is missing, and your noble son.

5 *Ross.* Your son, my lord, has paid a soldier's debt :
He only lived but till he was a man ;
The which no sooner had his prowess confirm'd
In the unshrinking station where he fought,¹⁰
But like a man he died.

Siw. Then he is dead ?

10 *Ross.* Ay, and brought off the field : your cause of sorrow
Must not be measured by his worth, for then
It hath no end.

Siw. Had he his hurts before ?

Ross. Ay, on the front.

Siw. Why, then God's soldier be he !

Had I as many sons as I have hairs,
15 I would not wish them to a fairer death :
And so, his knell is knoll'd.

Mal. He's worth more sorrow,
And that I'll spend for him.

Siw. He's worth no more :
They say he parted well, and paid his score :¹¹
And so, God b' wi' him ! Here comes newer comfort.

⁹ The meaning probably is, that in such a contest some must *be killed of course*.

¹⁰ That is, the *place* where he fought *without shrinking*.

¹¹ To *part* and to *depart* were used indiscriminately. The allusion is to a traveller taking leave of an inn.—*Score* is *account* or *bill*. Tavern accounts were commonly kept either by marking down the items with chalk

Re-enter MACDUFF, with MACBETH'S Head on a Pole.

Macd. Hail, King! for so thou art : behold, where stands
Th' usurper's cursèd head : the time is free.
I see thee compass'd with thy kingdom's pearl,¹²
That speak my salutation in their minds ;
5 Whose voices I desire aloud with mine :
Hail, King of Scotland !

All. Hail, King of Scotland ! [*Flourish.*]

Mal. *We shall not spend a large expense of time
Before we reckon with your several loves,
And make us even with you. My thanes and kinsmen,*
10 *Henceforth be earls, the first that ever Scotland
In such an honour named,¹³ What's more to do,
Which would be planted newly with the time, —
As calling home our exiled friends abroad,¹⁴
That fled the snares of watchful tyranny ;*

on a board, or by notches cut, *scored*, in a stick. — This little episode of old Siward and his son is taken from Holinshed : " It is recorded also, that in the foresaid battell, in which earle Siward vanquished the Scots, one of Siwards sonnes chanced to be slaine, whereof although the father had good cause to be sorrowfull, yet when he heard that he died of a wound which he had received in fighting stoutlie in the forepart of his bodie, and that with his face towards the enimie, he greatlie reioised thereat, to heare that he died so manfullie."

¹² *Pearl* is here a collective noun, and equivalent to *jewels*. The metaphor is of a string of pearls encircling the neck, or the head, of royalty. Just the right thing to be said of the brave men who have vindicated Malcolm's title, and rid their country of the butchering tyrant. Milton has a like use of *pearl* in one of his sonnets : " But this is got by casting *pearl* to hogs."

¹³ Malcolm, immediately after his coronation, called a parliament at Forfair ; in the which he rewarded them with lands and livings that had assisted him against Macbeth. Manie of them that were before *thanes* were at this time made *earles* ; as Fife, Menteith, Atholl, Levenox, Murrey, Caithness, Rosse, and Angus. — HOLINSHED.

¹⁴ " Friends exiled abroad " is the natural order of the words.

*Producing forth the cruel ministers
Of this dead butcher and his fiend-like Queen,
Who, as 'tis thought, by self and violent hands
Took off her life ; — this, and what needful else*
5 *That calls upon us, by the grace of Grace
We will perform in measure, time, and place :
So, thanks to all at once and to each one,
Whom we invite to see us crown'd at Scone.*

[Flourish. Exeunt.

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SHAKESPEARE AND MIDDLETON.

EVERY one ripely conversant with Shakespeare's manner, and thoroughly at home in his idiom of thought and language, especially in his peculiar mode of conceiving and working out character, must, I think, have at least a dim sense, if not a clear perception, of disharmony and incongruity in certain portions of this tragedy. Many years ago I had something of this feeling; but, as the whole play was then universally ascribed to Shakespeare, I did not dare to trust such feeling: I sought, and of course easily found, refuge from it in the thought, that Shakespeare, even in his wisest days, was not wise at all hours, and that in his highest hours he had occasional moments of nodding, as Homer is said to have; that sometimes, for popular effect, he put in, or let in, things which his own imperial judgment could not approve; and that, in his serene carelessness, or perhaps in his calm assurance, of fame, both his genius and his taste indulged themselves now and then in rather emphatic lapses, and even — I almost dread to speak it — in pretentious platitudes.

The feeling in question was first moved by the wide contrast between what comes from the Witches, in Act i., scene 3, before the entrance of Macbeth and Banquo, and what comes from the Weird Sisters after that entrance. The difference is not merely one of degree, but of kind; a difference as broad and as pronounced as that between a tadpole and an eagle. In the former case, they are neither more nor less than the coarse, foul old-woman witches of ancient superstition; creatures actuated by the worst and low-

est human motives and passions, envy, malice, and spite; killing swine, sailing in sieves, assuming the forms of rats without tails, dealing in the thumbs of wrecked pilots, and riding through the air on broomsticks. Their aspect and behaviour are in the last degree commonplace and vulgar; there is nothing even respectable about them; all is of the earth earthy. In the latter case, they are mysterious and supernatural beings, unearthly and terrible, such as we may well conceive "the Goddesses of Destiny" to be: their very aspect at once strikes the beholder with dread and awe: they "look not like the inhabitants of the Earth": they do not come and go, they appear and vanish; bubbling up, as it were, through the ground from the lower world, in something of a human shape, to breathe the contagion of Hell upon a soul which they know to be secretly in sympathy with them, and inwardly attuned to their purposes. Surely every one who reads that scene, with his thoughts about him, and having himself fairly in hand, must catch at least some glimpses of this huge discrepancy: still I felt bound to presume that the Poet's great and wonderful art had some way of reconciling it.

Again, in the second scene of Act i., it was long ago apparent, that either Shakespeare assumed a style not properly his own, or else that another hand than Shakespeare's held the pen. But, for the peculiarity here displayed, Coleridge gave a plausible, if not a sufficient reason. "The style," says he, "and rhythm of the Captain's speeches in the second scene should be illustrated by reference to the interlude in *Hamlet*, in which the epic is substituted for the tragic, in order to make the latter be felt as the real-life diction." In this explanation of the matter I rested, as perhaps some others did. But surely the two cases are not parallel at all: there is no such occasion here for a change of style as there is in *Hamlet*: there, it is a play within a play; here, nothing of the kind.

At length, in the year 1869, Mr. W. G. Clark and Mr. W. A. Wright, the learned Editors of the "Clarendon Press Series," led off in a new solution of the difficulty. I propose, first, to reproduce, partly in their own words, so much of their theory, and

of their arguments in support thereof, as I concur in; my limited space not well affording room for the whole of it. Before doing this, however, I must advert briefly to another matter.

In the Introduction I have spoken of the peculiar relation which has long been known to subsist between Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and *The Witch* of Thomas Middleton. That relation was discovered in manner as follows. In the original copy of *Macbeth*, Act iii., scene 5, we have the stage-direction, "*Music, and a Song*"; and then, two lines after, another stage-direction, "*Sing within. Come away, come away, &c.*" Again, in Act iv., scene 1, we have the stage-direction, "*Music, and a Song. Black Spirits, &c.*" Thus in both places the songs are merely indicated, not printed.—In 1674, Sir William Davenant published an altered version of the tragedy, giving both songs in full, but making no sign as to the source of them; so that they were supposed to be his own composition. So the matter stood till 1779, when the manuscript of Middleton's play, *The Witch*, was discovered by George Steevens; and there both songs were found, in nearly the same words as Davenant had given them. From this it was easily gathered why the songs were not printed at length in the folio of 1623. *Macbeth* was of course there printed from a playhouse manuscript; and those songs were presumed to be so well known to the actors of the play in the form it then had, that a bare indication of them was enough.

The date of Middleton's play has not been ascertained, nor have we any means of ascertaining it. The forecited particulars infer, of course, that *The Witch* must have been written some time before *Macbeth* acquired the form in which it has come down to us. On the other hand, besides the particulars specified above, Clark and Wright point out various resemblances both of thought and language in the two plays,—resemblances much too close and literal to be merely accidental. So that one of the authors must have borrowed from the other. Now, several of these resemblances occur in those parts of the tragedy which are unquestionably Shakespeare's, and which bear the clearest tokens of his mintage. It is, on the face of the thing, nowise

likely that Shakespeare would have borrowed from Middleton: but, Middleton's connection with the tragedy being established, nothing is more likely than that he may have borrowed from Shakespeare. The natural conclusion therefore is, that *Macbeth* was well known, and its very language familiar, to Middleton before he wrote *The Witch*, or while he was writing it. Here, then, we have a contradiction, or seeming contradiction; which, however, is easily cleared up by supposing the *original* form of the tragedy to have been in being *before* *The Witch* was written, and that the tragedy received its *present* form *after* the writing of *The Witch*.

Middleton's play was doubtless highly popular on the stage for a time: the witchcraft-scenes especially yield ample food for a transient popularity. Finding that his representation of old-woman witches pleased the popular taste and took well with the multitude, he would naturally crave to repeat or prolong the thing with some variation. In Shakespeare's tragedy he may well have seen a cheap and ready way of catering still further to the popular taste. Upon the supposal of his having taken *Macbeth* in hand with this view, we can easily perceive strong inducements for him to assimilate, as far as might be, the sublime and unique creations of Shakespeare's imagination to the commonplace and vulgar offspring of his own fancy, which he had found so profitable.

To those at all booked in the usages of the Elizabethan stage, it is well known that stock plays, as they are called, belonging to the theatrical companies, and laid up in their archives, were often taken in hand, overhauled, altered, improved, and brought out afresh, either as new plays or as old plays with new attractions. It is as certain as any thing of the kind well can be, that Shakespeare himself exercised his hand more or less in thus recasting and amending old stock plays; and such, no doubt, was the genesis of the Second and Third Parts of *King Henry the Sixth*, of *The Taming of the Shrew*, of *Pericles*, and perhaps some others, as we now have them in the Poet's works. It is also well known that his manuscripts were owned by the theatrical com-

pany of which he was a member; and that they remained in the company's hands, as their property, both during his life and after his death. What, then, is more likely than that some of his plays may in turn have been subjected to the same process which he had himself used on the workmanship of others, though not indeed with the same result? And so, I have no doubt, it was. The thing was quite too common for any scruples to spring up about it. — I may as well add, here, that Middleton died in 1627, eleven years after the death of Shakespeare; and that he continued to write more or less for the stage till near the close of his life.

The matter, I believe, is now ready for something to be heard from Clark and Wright. — “If we were certain,” say they, “that the whole of *Macbeth*, as we now read it, came from Shakespeare's hand, we should be justified in concluding from the data before us, that Middleton, who was probably junior and certainly inferior to Shakespeare, consciously or unconsciously imitated the great master. But we are persuaded that there are parts of *Macbeth* which Shakespeare did not write; and the style of these seems to us to resemble that of Middleton. It would be very uncritical to pick out of Shakespeare's works all that seems inferior to the rest, and to assign it to somebody else. At his worst, he is still Shakespeare; and, though the least ‘mannered’ of all poets, he has always a manner which cannot well be mistaken. In the parts of *Macbeth* of which we speak we find no trace of his manner. But to come to particulars. We believe that the second scene of the first Act was not written by Shakespeare. Making all allowance for corruption of text, the slovenly metre is not like Shakespeare's work, even when he is most careless. The bombastic phraseology of the Sergeant is not like Shakespeare's language, even when he is most bombastic.”

The writers then go on to allege the fact, for such it is, that in one point this scene is strangely inconsistent with what is said in the following scene. For Ross, in giving Duncan an account of the battle, here represents the Thane of Cawdor as having

fought on the side of the invaders, till Macbeth "confronted him with self caparisons, point against point rebellious"; whereas in the next scene we have Macbeth speaking as if he knew nothing whatever of Cawdor's treason: "The Thane of Cawdor lives, a prosperous gentleman." Angus, also, who enters along with Ross, in the third scene, speaks of Cawdor thus. "Whether he was combined with those of Norway, or did line the rebel with hidden help and vantage, I know not; but treasons capital, confess'd and proved, have overthrown him." To be sure, Shakespeare has, not seldom, slight lapses of memory, or what seem such; but that he would have penned so glaring a contradiction as this amounts to, who can believe?

Nevertheless the writers in question admit that the second scene has a few lines which taste strongly of Shakespeare; such as, "The multiplying villainies of nature do swarm upon him"; and, "Confronted him with self caparisons, point against point rebellious, arm 'gainst arm, curbing his lavish spirit." To these I should certainly add "Where the Norway banners flout the sky, and fan our people cold"; which is to me distinctly Shakespearean.

The opening part, also, of the third scene, down to the entrance of Macbeth and Banquo, they rule off from Shakespeare. Here, again, I fully agree with them: for, besides that the style is not at all like Shakespeare's, I have a deeper reason in that, as before observed, his conception of the Weird Sisters is overlaid and strangled with discordant and irrelevant matter. How much out of keeping this is with Shakespeare's delineation of character, need not be said. Therewithal the dramatic flow and current, it seems to me, would be far better without this part of the scene.

Referring to the fifth scene of Act iii., they observe that, if this scene "had occurred in a drama not attributed to Shakespeare, no one would have discovered in it any trace of Shakespeare's manner." This is putting it very softly: for, besides that a new personage, Hecate, is here introduced without any apparent cause, the style and versification taste even less of Shakespeare than in

the forecited portion of i., 3; and the whole scene is, in point of dramatic order and sequence, a sheer incumbrance, serving no purpose but to untune the harmony of the action.

Again, touching the cauldron-scene, Act iv., scene 1, they speak as follows: "The rich vocabulary, prodigal fancy, and terse diction displayed in the first thirty-eight lines, show the hand of a master, and make us hesitate in ascribing the passage to any one but the master himself. There is, however, a conspicuous falling off in the eight lines after the entrance of Hecate." And of the last eight lines before the Witches vanish, beginning with "Ay, sir, all this is so," they say that these "cannot be Shakespeare's."

To all this I heartily subscribe; and thus, to my mind the Poet stands acquitted of all the choral passages; which, it seems to me, only blemish the proper dramatic austerity of the play, however they may add to its attractiveness as a popular performance. Nor do I believe it ever entered into Shakespeare's head to "unbend the noble strength" of this great tragedy with any such mellifluous intervals.

Besides the forecited passages, the same writers point out several "rhyming tags," and shorter passages, which they justly rule off from Shakespeare as interpolations. As these are distinguished in this edition by Italic type, they need not be specified here. The writers then add the following:—

"Finally, the last forty lines of the play show evident traces of another hand than Shakespeare's. The double stage-direction, '*Exeunt fighting.*'—'*Enter fighting, and Macbeth slain,*' proves that some alteration had been made in the conclusion of the piece. Shakespeare, who has inspired his audience with pity for Lady Macbeth, and made them feel that her guilt has been almost absolved by the terrible retribution which followed, would not have disturbed this feeling by calling her a 'fiend-like queen'; nor would he have drawn away the veil which with his fine tact he had dropped over her fate, by telling us that she had taken off her life 'by self and violent hands.'"

In reference, again, to the opening of the play, these writers

pronounce as follows: "The twelve lines which now make the first scene, and which, from long familiarity, we regard as a necessary introduction to the play, are not unworthy of Shakespeare; but, on the other hand, do not rise above the level which is reached by Middleton and others of his contemporaries in their happier moments."

As remarked in the Introduction, the opening of Forman's account looks as if the play did not then begin with the scene in question. Nothing, however, can be soundly inferred from this. He may have chosen to begin his account with what struck him with peculiar force; or, as Clark and Wright observe, "he may have arrived at the theatre a few minutes late." For my part, I have scarce any doubt that the first scene is Shakespeare's, all except the two lines which I print in *Italic* type, and in which the Weird Sisters are made to talk just like vulgar witches. For, as the entire course of the action turns on the agency of the Weird Sisters, it were in strict keeping with the Poet's usual manner to begin by thus striking the key-note of the whole play.

I must add, that the Clarendon Editors further rule off, as interpolations, the soliloquy and dialogue of the Porter, in Act ii., scene 1, and also the passage about "touching for the evil," in iv., 3. Here, however, I dissent from them altogether.

The theory whereby they account for the condition in which *Macbeth* has reached us is propounded as follows: "On the whole, we incline to think that the play was interpolated after Shakespeare's death, or at least after he had withdrawn from all connection with the theatre. The interpolator was, not improbably, Thomas Middleton; who, to please the 'groundlings,' expanded the parts originally assigned by Shakespeare to the Weird Sisters, and also introduced a new character, Hecate. The signal inferiority of her speeches is thus accounted for."

In 1876, the Rev. Frederick G. Fleay put forth a highly instructive volume entitled *Shakespeare Manual*. Mr. Fleay takes up the question where the Clarendon Editors left it, and handles it throughout with admirable learning and candour. He accepts all

their forecited conclusions, except that touching the Porter's soliloquy and dialogue, but insists on pushing the argument much further. First, he excludes the whole of the first scene, which, as before shown, Clark and Wright do not. Second, he rules off the second scene, as Clark and Wright also do; but thinks, and rightly, I have no doubt, that "in all probability this scene replaces one of Shakespeare's"; a few of his lines being perhaps retained, and worked in with the inferior matter. He concurs with Clark and Wright also about the third scene, down to the entrance of Macbeth and Banquo. And he takes the same course touching all the Hecate matter, both in iii., 5, and in iv., 1. I must here quote, with slight abbreviation, what he says of this matter: "This un-Shakespearian Hecate does not use Shakespearian language: there is not a line in her part that is not in Middleton's worst style; her metre is a jumble of tens and eights, (iambic, not trochaic like Shakespeare's short lines,) a sure sign of inferior work; and, what is of most importance, she is not of the least use in the play in any way: the only effect she produces is, that the three Fate-goddesses, who in the introduction of the play were already brought down to ordinary witches, are lowered still further to witches of an inferior grade, with a mistress who 'contrives their charms,' and is jealous if any 'trafficking' goes on in which she does not bear her part. She and her songs are all alike not only of the earth earthy, but of the mud muddy. They are the sediment of Middleton's puddle, not the sparkling foam of the living waters of Shakespeare."

But Mr. Fleay's distinctive position is in reference to the cauldron business in iv., 1. "What," he asks, "are the witches" of that scene? "are they the 'Weird Sisters,' fairies, nymphs, or goddesses? or are they ordinary witches or wizards, and entirely distinct from the three mysterious beings in i., 3? I hold the latter view." He then goes on to admit that the first thirty-eight lines of iv., 1, down to the entrance of Hecate, are greatly superior to the thirty-seven lines of i., 3, before the entrance of Macbeth and Banquo. And he fully agrees with Clark and Wright, that the former are Shakespeare's; but says he "cannot identify

these witches with the Nornæ" of i., 3, after the entrance of Macbeth and Banquo. "The witches," says he, "in iv., 1, are just like Middleton's witches, only superior in quality. They are clearly the originals from whom his imitations were taken. Their charms are of the sort popularly believed in. Their powers are to untie the winds, lodge corn, create storms, raise spirits; but of themselves they have not the prophetic knowledge of the Weird Sisters, the all-knowers of Past, Present, Future: they must get their knowledge from their *masters*, or call them up to communicate it themselves."

Thus he does not allow the Witches of that scene to be the 'Weird Sisters at all, or to have any thing in common with them. Nevertheless he candidly refers to two passages where they are clearly identified with the Weird Sisters: one near the close of iii., 4, where Macbeth himself says, "I will to-morrow, ay, and betimes I will, to th' Weird Sisters"; the other in iv., 1, just after the Witches vanish, where Macbeth asks Lennox, "Saw you the Weird Sisters?" And he frankly admits that both these passages are Shakespeare's. He then adds the following: "If my theory be true, those two passages must be explained. This is a real difficulty, and I cannot satisfactorily solve it at present. I can only conjecture that Shakespeare made a slip, or intended Macbeth to make one." Professor Dowden aptly searches the core of Mr. Fleay's position by observing, "It is hardly perhaps a sound method of criticism to invent a hypothesis, which creates an insoluble difficulty."

But is there any way of fairly accounting for the altered language and methods used in the cauldron business, without dispossessing the Weird Sisters of their proper character? Let us see.

The Weird Sisters of course have their religion; though, to be sure, that religion is altogether Satanic. For so essential is religion of some kind to all social life and being, that even the society of Hell cannot subsist without it. Now, every religion, whether human or Satanic, has, and must have, a liturgy and ritual of some sort, as its organs of action and expression. The

Weird Sisters know, by supernatural ways, that Macbeth is burning to question them further, and that he has resolved to pay them a visit. To instruct and inspire him in a suitable manner, they arrange to hold a religious service in his presence and behalf. And they fitly employ the language and ritual of witchcraft, as being the only language and ritual which he can understand and take the sense of: they adopt, for the occasion, the sacraments of witchcraft, because these are the only sacraments whereby they can impart to him the Satanic grace and efficacy which it is their office to dispense. The language, however, and ritual of witchcraft are in their use condensed and intensified to the highest degree of potency and impressiveness. Thus their appalling infernal liturgy is a special and necessary accommodation to the senses and the mind of the person they are dealing with. It really seems to me that they had no practicable way but to speak and act in this instance just like witches, only a great deal more so. But, in the Middleton scenes and parts of scenes, they are made to speak and act just like common witches, to no purpose, and without any occasion for it. This is, indeed, to disnature them, to empty them of their selfhood, and turn them clean out of themselves.

It may not be amiss to add, in this place, that Shakespeare of course wrote his plays for the stage; but then he also, in a far deeper and higher sense, wrote them for the human mind. And the divinity of his genius lies pre-eminently in this, that, while he wished to make his workmanship attractive and fruitful in the theatre, he could not choose but make it at the same time potent and delectable in the inner courts of man's intelligent and upward-reaching soul. But this latter service was a thing that Middleton knew nothing of, and had not the heart to conceive.

I return to Mr. Fleay.—To the few smaller interpolations pointed out by the Clarendon Editors, he adds a considerable number. These call for some notice. Clark and Wright make particular mention of a passage in Act v., scene 5, as follows:—

Arm, arm, and out!

*If this which he avouches does appear,
There is nor flying hence nor tarrying here.*

*I'gin to be aweary of the Sun,
And wish th' estate o' the world were now undone.—
Ring the alarum bell!— Blow, wind! come wrack!
At least we'll die with harness on our back.*

And of the four lines here underscôred they justly observe, "How much better the sense is without them!" Let any one read the passage without these lines, and surely he must see that Shakespeare could not have written them. In like manner, Mr. Fleay calls attention to the close of v., 6, where Macduff, whose speech is everywhere else so simple, so manly, and so condensed, is made to utter the following strutting and ambitious platitude :

Make all our trumpets speak; give them all breath,
Those clamorous harbingers of blood and death.

The other passages pointed out by Mr. Fleay are as follows: Act i., scene 4, the eight lines and a half beginning, "The Prince of Cumberland!" Also, ii., 1, at the end, "There's warrant in that theft," &c. Also, ii., 2, the two couplets beginning, "Well, may you see things," and, "God's benison go with you." Also, iii., 4, the four and a half lines beginning, "I am in blood." And so the end of the scene, "My strange and self-abuse," &c. Also, iv., 1, the four lines and two half-lines beginning, "bid the tree." And at the close of the scene, the line and a half, "No boasting," &c. Also, v., 1, last line but one of the scene, "My mind she has mated," &c. Also, v., 3, the two couplets at the close, "I will not be afraid," &c., and, "Were I away from Dunsinane," &c. Also, the five and a half lines at the end of v., 4, "The time approaches," &c.

In all the forecited cases I accept Mr. Fleay's rulings, and accordingly print the passages in *Italic type*. I have also distinguished in the same way two passages on my own judgment, as follows: Act i., scene 5, Lady Macbeth's speech at the end, "Only look up clear," &c.; and also, v., 3, the couplet beginning, "The mind I sway by." And there are several other pas-

sages which I strongly suspect ought to be put on the same list; particularly the couplet, i., 5, "Which shall to all our nights," &c. Perhaps, also, the couplet at the end of i., 7, "Away, and mock the time," &c. And perhaps the line and a half at the close of v., 2, "Or so much as it needs," &c. Again, in iii., 2, the three and a half lines beginning, "Nought's had, all's spent," taste strongly of another hand, and as if foisted in as a substitute for something Shakespeare had written. Lastly, and especially, the five lines and a half at the close of the same scene, beginning, "Light thickens, and the crow makes wing." I am all but satisfied that this is not Shakespeare's; for it is not only flat and feeble, but hardly consistent with what precedes; and seems, indeed, the work of one who fancied he was surpassing Shakespeare. In all these cases, however, I do not feel quite sure enough to venture a full decision, and therefore leave them unmarked.

As regards the closing part of the play, all, I mean, that follows, after Macbeth and Macduff go out fighting, I have not yet been able fully to make up my mind. The Clarendon Editors, as we have seen, rule it all off from Shakespeare. Mr. Fleay speaks of it as follows: "The account of young Siward's death and the unnatural patriotism of his father, which is derived from Holinshed's history of England, and not of Scotland like the rest of the play, is a bit of padding put in by Shakespeare after finishing the whole tragedy." To the best of my judgment, some portions of it are not unworthy of Shakespeare; especially the speech of Macduff on his re-entrance with Macbeth's head. On the other hand, what old Siward says about the death of his son seems too hard and unnatural for Shakespeare's healthy human-heartedness to have written. To be sure, we cannot but feel that the brave old father's heart is not in his words; and the latter may be taken as a spontaneous effort to hide his grief. So that I still hesitate. As to the last speech, however, I have no doubts whatever, and accordingly print it in *Italic type*.

I close with a statement, somewhat condensed, of Mr. Fleay's "theory as to the composition of the play." "It was written," says he, "by Shakespeare during his third period: I think, after

Hamlet and *King Lear*; so that its date was probably 1606. At some time after this, Middleton revised and abridged it: I agree with the Cambridge Editors in saying not earlier than 1613. There is a decisive argument that he did so after he wrote *The Witch*; namely, that he borrows the songs from the latter play, and repeats himself a good deal. It is to me very likely that he should repeat himself in *Macbeth*, and somewhat improve on his original conception, as he has done in the corresponding passages; and yet be unable to do a couple of songs, or to avoid the monotony of introducing Hecate in both plays. I believe that Middleton, having found the groundlings more taken with the Witches, and the cauldron, than with the grander art displayed in the Fate-goddesses, determined to amalgamate these, and to give us plenty of them. I believe also the extra fighting in the last scenes was inserted for the same reason. But, finding that the magic and the singing and the fighting made the play too long, he cut out large portions of the psychological Shakespeare work, in which, as far as quantity is concerned, this play is very deficient compared with the three other masterpieces of world-poetry, and left us the torso we now have. To hide the excisions, Middleton put on tags at the places where he made the scenes end: and, to my thinking, if any one will compare the endings of the scenes where Shakespeare has left them without tags with those where I have tried to show that Middleton put them in, he will find that there is a great difference in the completeness of the scenes. Or try another experiment: cut off the tags from the scenes where Shakespeare put them, and those where Middleton put them; a similarly decisive result will be felt."

There remains but to add, that I have no doubt whatever of the play's having been greatly shortened in the process of alteration. For the alteration was evidently prosecuted with a view to stage-effect. Such being the case, those parts which were most effective on the stage would naturally be retained, and others added still more suited to catch the applause of the groundlings; while such parts as were especially at home in the courts of reason and thought would be cast aside.

CRITICAL NOTES ON MACBETH.

ACT I., SCENE I.

Page 47. **When shall we three meet again**

In thunder, lightning, and in rain? — So Hanmer. The original has “Lightning, *or* in raine.” This makes the three, *thunder, lightning, rain*, alternative; the sense, expressed in full, being “*either in thunder or in lightning or in rain.*” The context and the occasion apparently require the sense of those three words to be cumulative.

P. 48. *1 Witch.* **Where the place?**

2 Witch.

Upon the heath.

3 Witch. **There to meet with Macbeth.** — There is surely some corruption here; for *Macbeth* was evidently meant to rhyme with *heath*, but there needs another syllable to make it do so. And everywhere else, I think, *Macbeth* has the ictus on the second syllable. Perhaps *bold, brave, proud, or great* should be supplied before the name.

P. 48. *1 Witch.* **I come, graymalkin.**

2 Witch. **Paddock calls: — Anon!**

All. **Fair is foul, and foul is fair:**

Hover through the fog and filthy air. — So Pope. The original prints the last two speeches as one, with *All* prefixed. Dyce's remark is right, beyond question: “Surely it is evident that the author intended only the concluding couplet to be spoken in chorus.” White prints “Anon!” as a separate speech, and prefixes to it “*3 Witch.*” In a note he says, “The arrangement of the text seems to me to be required both by the succession of the thoughts, and by the ternary sequence of the dialogue of the Witches throughout all the scenes in

which we see them at their incantations." Perhaps he is right. But I do not believe we have the scene as Shakespeare wrote it; and I am sure that the first two lines are not his. Probably Middleton threw out some of Shakespeare's gold, and thrust in some of his own dross.

ACT I., SCENE II.

P. 49. **Say to the King thy knowledge of the broil.** — So Walker. The original has "Say to the King *the* knowledge."

P. 50. **Of kerns and gallowglasses is supplied;
And Fortune, on his damnèd quarrel smiling,
Show'd like a rebel's trull; but all's too weak: &c.** In the first of these lines, the original has *Gallowgrosses*. Corrected in the second folio. In the second line, the original has "damnèd *quarry*." The change of *quarry* to *quarrel* is made in Collier's second folio, but had been adopted by most of the editors before that volume was heard of. It is amply justified by Holinshed's account of the matter: "Out of the Western Isles there came unto him a great multitude of people, offering themselves to assist him in that rebellious *quarrel*." And later in the play we have "the chance of goodness be like our warranted *quarrel*!" where "*warranted* quarrel" is just the opposite of "*damnèd* quarrel." See, also, foot-note 5. — For *is*, in the first line, Pope substitutes *was*, and also, in the third line, changes *all's* to *all*. Of course this is done to redress the confusion of tenses. And Lettsom says, "Read, with Pope, '*was* supplied': the corruption was caused by *Do* just above." And again, "Read, with Pope, '*all* too weak.'" But we have other like mixing of tenses in this scene. See foot-note 6.

P. 50. **And ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him.** — The original reads "*Which* nev'r shooke hands." As *Which* begins the third line above, it doubtless crept in here by accidental repetition. Corrected by Capell.

P. 50. **As whence the Sun gives his reflection
Shipwrecking storms and direful thunders break;
So from that spring whence comfort seem'd to come
Discomfort swells.** — So Pope. The word *break* is wanting in

the original; which thus leaves both sense and metre defective. The second folio supplied *breaking*.—There has been some stumbling at *swells* here; I hardly know why: the meaning clearly is, *grows big*; just as a thunder-cloud often swells up rapidly into a huge, dark mass, where, a little before, the sky was full of comfort. Capell reads *wells*, which, to my sense, is nothing near so good.—In the first line, the original has *'gins* instead of *gives*. Having never been able to understand the old text, I adopt Pope's reading. Heath comments as follows: "The fact, in this island at least, is, that storms and thunder do as frequently take their course from the North and West as from the East. The hurricanes always proceed from the North, and turn to the westward. But this was not the point Shakespeare had in view. He draws the similitude from a very common appearance; when a clear sky and bright sunshine are on a sudden overcast with dark clouds, which terminate in thunder and a short but very dangerous tempest, especially in the lochs and narrow, embarrassed seas of Scotland. It is evident therefore that we ought to prefer the other reading, 'As whence the Sun *gives* his reflection'; that is, As from a clear sky whence the light of the Sun is transmitted in its full brightness."—See footnote 9.

P. 51. As cannons overcharged with double cracks;

So they redoubled strokes upon the foe.—So Pope. The original has "So they *doubly* redoubled stroakes"; *doubly* being probably interpolated by some player in order to prolong the jingle on *double*. At all events, both sense and verse plead against it. Walker thinks the word has no business in the text.

P. 51. What haste looks through his eyes!—So the second folio. The first has "What *a* haste." But the Poet has many like exclamative phrases without the article, which here mars the verse. See foot-note 15.

P. 52. The Thane of Cawdor 'gan a dismal conflict;

Till that Bellona's bridegroom, lapp'd in proof,

Confronted him with self caparisons.—In the first of these lines, the original has *began* instead of *'gan*, and in the third, "*self-comparisons*." It is, I think, hardly possible to squeeze any fitting

sense out of *comparisons* here. The common explanation takes *him* as referring to *Norway*; but this is plainly inconsistent with "Point against point rebellious." *Self comparisons* means that they were both armed in the self-same way. The correction is Mr. P. A. Daniel's. The folio has the same misprint again in *Antony and Cleopatra*, iii. 13: "I dare him therefore to lay his gay *Comparisons* a-part," &c. Here Pope reads *caparisons*, and rightly, beyond question. See foot-note 19.

ACT I., SCENE III.

P. 54. **And the very points they blow,**

All the quarters that they know

I' the shipman's card. — So Pope. The original has *ports* instead of *points*. Davenant's alteration of the play has "From all the *points* that seamen know."

P. 56. **How far is't call'd to Forres?** — The original has *Soris*.

P. 57. *3 Witch*. **Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none.**

All three. **So, all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!**

Banquo and Macbeth, all hail! — The original makes the second of these lines a continuation of the preceding speech, and assigns the third to the first Witch. But surely Lettsom is right in saying, "These two verses should be pronounced by 1, 2, 3, in chorus." It seems rather strange that the error should have waited so long to be corrected.

P. 58. **His wonders and his praises do contend**

What should be thine or his. — The original has *Which* instead of *What*. Commentators have tugged mighty hard to wring a coherent and intelligible meaning out of the old reading, and I have tugged mighty hard to understand their explanations; but all the hard tugging has been in vain. As *Which* must needs refer to *wonders* and *praises*, I make bold to say that the passage so read cannot be approved to be either sense or English. With *What*, the passage yields a sense, at least, and, I think, a fitting one; though, to be sure, not of the clearest. See foot-note 21.

P. 59.

As thick as tale

Came post with post; and every one did bear, &c.—The original has *Can* instead of *Came*; an obvious error, which Rowe corrected. Some editors cannot stand *tale* here, and substitute *hail*. Dyce asks, "was such an expression as 'thick as *tale*' ever employed by any writer whatsoever?" To which it might be answered that Shakespeare seems to have used it here. Dyce also quotes from old writers divers instances of "as thick as hail"; which only shows that this was a commonplace hyperbole; whereas Shakespeare may have chosen to use one less hackneyed; as I think he had a right to do. *Tale* is the substantive form of the verb to *tell*; and Shakespeare repeatedly uses the verb in the exact sense of to *count*; as he also does *thick* in the exact sense of *fast*; and surely the phrase "as *fast* as you can *count*" is common enough. See foot-note 23.

ACT I., SCENE IV.

P. 63. **Is execution done on Cawdor? Are not**

Those in commission yet return'd?—So the second folio. The first has "*Or* not."

ACT I., SCENE V.

P. 67.

Thou'dst have, great Glamis,

**That which cries "Thus thou must do," if thou have it,—
An act which rather thou dost fear to do**

Than wishest should be undone.—Instead of "*An act which*," the original has "*and that which*." This defeats the right sense of the passage, as it naturally makes *which* refer to the same thing as *which* in the preceding line; whereas it should clearly be taken as referring to the words "*Thus thou must do*." Hanmer reads "*And that's what*"; and the same change occurred to me, as it also did to Mr. Joseph Crosby, before either of us knew of Hanmer's reading. But I prefer "*An act which*," and have little doubt that the original reading crept in by mistake from the line before.—The passage is commonly printed so as to make the words "if thou have it" a part of what is supposed to be cried by the crown. The original gives no sign as to how much of the speech is to be taken thus,—none, that

is, except what is implied in the word *it*. Of course the crown is the thing which Glamis would have; and if the crown is here represented as crying out to him "Thus thou must do, if thou have," there appears no way of getting the sense but by substituting *me* for *it*. If, however, we suppose only the words "*Thus thou must do*" to be spoken by the crown, and the following words to be spoken by Lady Macbeth in her own person, then *it* is right; and this is probably the way the passage ought to be understood and printed. Johnson saw the difficulty, and proposed to read "*if thou have me*."

P. 68. **That no compunctious visitings of nature**

Shake my fell purpose, nor break peace between

Th' effect and it. — The original has *keepe* instead of *break*, and *hit* instead of *it*. The attempts that have been made to explain "nor *keep* peace," are, it seems to me, either absurdly ingenious and over-subtile or something worse. The natural sense of it is plainly just the reverse of what was intended. To be sure, almost any language can be tormented into yielding almost any meaning. And we have too many instances of what may be called a fanaticism of ingenuity, which always delights especially in a reading that none but itself can explain, and in an explanation that none but itself can understand. See foot-note 8. — The other error, *hit*, corrects itself.

P. 69. **Nor Heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,**

To cry "Hold, hold!" — "The *blanket* of the dark" seems

to have troubled some persons greatly; and Collier's second folio substitutes *blankness* for *blanket*. This is dreadful. "The blanket of the dark" is indeed a pretty bold metaphor, but not more bold than apt; and I agree with Mr. Grant White, that "the man who does not apprehend the meaning and the pertinence of the figure had better shut his Shakespeare, and give his days and nights to the perusal of — some more correct and classic writer." See foot-note 11.

ACT I., SCENE VI.

P. 70.

The guest of Summer,

The temple-haunting martlet, does approve, &c. — The original has "*This* guest," and *Barlet* instead of *martlet*. The latter

was corrected by Rowe. As to the former, Lettsom says, "Read *the*. This was repeated by mistake from the beginning of the preceding speech."

P. 71. **Where they most breed and haunt, &c.** — The original has *must* instead of *most*. Corrected by Rowe.

ACT I., SCENE VII.

P. 73. **But here, upon this bank and shoal of time.** — The original has "*Schoole* of time." Theobald's correction.

P. 74. **Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
That tears shall drown the wind.** — Mr. P. A. Daniel would read "in every *ear*"; and in support of that lection he quotes the following from Southwell, *Saint Peter's Complaint*, lxxvii.: —

And seeke none other quintessence but tears,
That *eyes* may shed what enter'd at thine ears.

P. 74. **Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself,
And falls on th' other side.** — So Hanmer. The original lacks *side*, and yet puts a period after *other*. Walker notes upon it thus: "Evidently 'th' other *side*"; and this adds one to the apparently numerous instances of omission in this play." — It has been ingeniously proposed to change *itself* into *its sell*, an old word for *saddle*. But the Poet very seldom uses *its*: besides, no change is necessary. See footnote 8.

P. 75. **Wouldst thou lack that
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,
And live a coward in thine own esteem, &c.** — The original reads "Wouldst thou *have* that"; whereupon Johnson notes thus: "In this there seems to be no reasoning. I should read '*Or* live'; unless we choose rather '*Wouldst thou leave* that.'" The reading in the text was proposed anonymously, but occurred to me independently. Instead of *have*, *crave* has also been proposed. But Lady Macbeth evidently means that, with so good an opportunity as he now has for gaining the crown, nothing but cowardice can induce him to let it slip.

We have the same error again in *Antony and Cleopatra*, ii. 2: "If you'll patch a quarrel, as matter whole you *have*, to make it with," &c. Here *have* should be *lack*, beyond question.

P. 75. I dare do all that may become a man ;
Who dares do more is none.

Lady M.

What beast was't, then,

That made you break this enterprise to me?—The original reads "Who dares *no* more"; a very palpable error.—Collier's second folio substitutes *boast* for *beast*, and the change has been regarded with favour in some quarters. Mr. John Forster, in *The Examiner*, Jan. 29, 1853, disposes of it thus: "The expression immediately preceding and eliciting Lady Macbeth's reproach is that in which Macbeth declares that he dares do all that may become *a man*, and that who dares do more *is none*. She instantly takes up that expression. If not an affair in which *a man* may engage, what *beast* was it, then, in himself or others, that made him break this enterprise to her? The force of the passage lies in that contrasted word, and its meaning is lost by the proposed substitution."

P. 76. And dash'd the brains on't out, had I so sworn

As you have done to this. — So Lettsom. The original lacks *on't*, which is needful alike to sense and metre. The omission was doubtless owing to the close resemblance of *on't* and *out*.

P. 76. If we should fail,—

Lady M.

We fail.

But, screw your courage to the sticking-place,

And we'll not fail. — Such, I am very confident, is the right pointing of this much-disputed passage. It is commonly given either with an (!) or an (?) after *fail*, as if the speaker did not admit the possibility of failure, and scouted at any apprehension of the kind. Now I cannot think her so far gone in the infatuation of crime as not to see and own the possibility that the enterprise may fail; but she is no doubt ambitious enough to risk life and all for the chance or in the hope of being a queen. And so I take her meaning to be, "If we fail, then we fail, and there's the end of it." And the use of the adverbative *but* in what follows strongly favours this sense; in fact, will

hardly cohere with any other sense. Accordingly the simple period is said to have been fixed upon by Mrs. Siddons after long study and exercise in the speech. See foot-note 15.

ACT II., SCENE I.

P. 79. **Sent forth great largess to your officers.**—The original has *offices* instead of *officers*. The context fairly requires a word denoting persons. Corrected by Rowe.

P. 81. **Now o'er the one half-world**

Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse

The curtain'd sleep; now witchcraft celebrates

Pale Hecate's offerings.—The second *now* is wanting in the original. Some complete the verse by printing *sleeper*; but surely the repetition of *now* is much better. Rowe's correction.

P. 81. **With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design**

Moves like a ghost. — Thou sure and firm-set earth,

Hear not my steps which way they walk, &c.—In the first of these lines, the original has *sides* instead of *strides*; in the second, *soure* instead of *sure*; in the third, "which *they may walke*." The first two corrections are Pope's; the other, Rowe's.

P. 85. **This my hand will rather**

The multitudinous sea incarnardine.—So Rowe. The original has *Seas incarnardine*. Some editors adopt *incarnadine*, but retain *seas*. In the former they are right, of course, there being really no such word as *incarnardine*: but surely *multitudinous* loses more than half its force, if made the epithet of a plural noun.

P. 89. **Lamentings heard i' the air; strange screams of death:**

And, prophesying, with accents terrible,

Of dire combustion and confused events

New-hatch'd to th' woeful time, the obscene bird

Clamour'd the livelong night.—The original has *obscure* instead of *obscenc*. The correction was proposed by Walker and White independently. See foot-note 36.—Most editors have a differ-

ent pointing in this passage ; putting a colon after *woeful time*, and thus separating *bird* from *prophesying*, and turning the latter into a substantive. But surely it is far better, both in poetry and in sense, to regard the *obscene*, that is, *ill-omened*, bird as predicting the dreadful events in question. Or, if this be thought inconsistent with *new-hatch'd*, we may, as White suggests, take *prophesying* in an interpretive sense, — the sense of croaking or wailing a dismal and awful meaning into what is occurring. The word is often so used in the Bible ; especially in Ezekiel, xxxvii.

P. 90. Banquo and Malcolm ! Donalbain ! awake !

Shake off this downy sleep, death's counterfeit,

And look on death itself ! up, up, and see

The great doom's image ! Malcolm, Banquo ! all !

As from your graves rise up, and walk like sprites,

To countenance this horror ! [Alarum-bell rings.]

— In the first of these lines, the original reads “and Donalbaine : Malcolme,” &c. I transpose the names for metre's sake. Also, in the fourth line, the original is without *all*, thus leaving a breach in the rhythm. The addition is Lettsom's. Again, the original has the last line thus : “To countenance this horror. Ring the bell” ; and then, in another line, the stage-direction, “Bell rings. Enter Lady.” Here, no doubt, as Malone observes, the players mistook “Ring the bell” for a portion of Macduff's speech, and so inserted the stage-direction, “Bell rings.”

ACT II., SCENE II.

P. 95. And Duncan's horse', — a thing most strange and certain, &c. — Instead of *horse'*, the original has *Horses*. But elsewhere the Poet uses the singular form both of this word and of various others with the plural sense. See foot-note 2.

ACT III., SCENE I.

P. 97. It had been as a gap in our great feast,
And all things unbecoming. — So the third and fourth folios. The first has *all-thing*, the second *all-things*. But the hyphen was so

used in a great many instances where no one would now think of retaining it. Some editors here print *all-thing*, and explain it by *altogether* or *in every way*. But I am not aware of any other instance being produced of the phrase so used in Shakespeare's time.

P. 98. **Lay your Highness'**

Command upon me. — So Rowe and Collier's second folio. The original has "*Let your Highnesse,*" &c.; which, surely, is not English, and never was. Mason proposes *Set*.

P. 99. **My genius is rebuked; as, it is said,**

Mark Antony's was by Cæsar's. — So Hanmer. The original has *Cæsar* instead of *Cæsar's*. The correction is approved by a passage in *Antony and Cleopatra*, ii., 3: "Thy demon, that's thy spirit which keeps thee, is noble, courageous, high, unmatchable, where *Cæsar's* is not."

P. 100. **To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings!** — Instead of *seed*, the original has *Seedes*. Pope's correction.

P. 102. **Now, if you have a station in the file,**

And not i' the worser rank of manhood, say't. — The original lacks *And*, and has *worst* instead of *worser*. The insertion was made by Rowe; the correction proposed by Jervis. Shakespeare has *worser* repeatedly in the same sense.

P. 102. **So wearied with disasters, tugg'd with fortune.** — So Capell, Collier's second folio, and Lettsom. The old text has "So *wearie* with Disasters."

P. 103. **I will advise you where to plant yourselves;**

Acquaint you with the perfect spy o' the time, &c. — Johnson proposed, and White prints, "with *a* perfect spy." It is a nice point which of the articles should here be used. "*The* spy" may mean the *espial* or *discovery*, that is, the *signal*, of the time; "*a* spy" would mean the *person* giving it. So I do not see that any thing is gained by the change. See foot-note 24.

ACT III., SCENE II.
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P. 105. **We have but scotch'd the snake, not kill'd it.** — The original reads "We have *scorch'd* the snake." The words, "She'll *close*," in the next line, show that *scotch'd* is right. Theobald's correction. — The word *but* is wanting in the old text, but given in Davenant's version of the play. It both saves the metre and helps the sense.

P. 105. **Better be with the dead,**

Whom we, to gain our place, have sent to peace,

Than on the torture of the mind to lie, &c. — So the second folio. The first has *peace* instead of *place*. But *peace* is nowise that which Macbeth has been seeking: his end was simply to gain the throne, the *place* which he now holds, and the fear of losing which is the very thing that keeps peace from him. The methods by which some editors try to justify the old reading seem to me altogether too ingenious and too fine.

P. 107. **Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond**

Which keeps me paled. — The old text has *pale* instead of *paled*. Probably the Poet wrote *pal'd* or *pald*; and here, as often, final *d* and final *e* were confounded. The correction is Staunton's. It is hardly needful to observe how well *paled* brings out the Poet's meaning; which evidently was, that Banquo's life was, so to speak, a strong bond that kept Macbeth "*bound-in* to saucy doubts and fears." See foot-note 15.

ACT III., SCENE IV.

P. 110. **'Tis better thee without than him within.** — So Hamer and Collier's second folio. The original has "than *he* within."

P. 111. **Get thee gone: to-morrow**

We'll hear't, ourself, again. — Instead of *ourself*, which Capell proposed, the original has *ourselves*, which I have tried in vain to understand. The use of *ourselves* for *each other*, as it has been ex-

plained, is not English. I suspect the true reading to be "We'll hear you tell't again." The pronoun *our* seems quite out of place here; and we have many instances of *our* and *your* confounded, as also of *your* and *you*; and *tell't* might easily be misprinted *selves*, when the long *s* was used. I cannot now recover the source of the proposed reading. — The original has *hear*, also, instead of *hear't*. — Theobald's correction.

P. 113. **Blood hath been shed ere now : i' the olden time,**

Ere humane statute purged the gentle weal,

Ay, and since too, &c. — I here adopt Mr. P. A. Daniel's punctuation, which, I think, greatly helps the sense. The passage is commonly printed with a comma after *ere now*, and a colon or semicolon after *gentle weal*.

P. 114.

But now they rise again,

With twenty mortal gashes on their crowns, &c. — The original has "mortal *murders*," which is justly condemned by Walker: "*Murders* occurs four lines above, and *murder* two lines below. This, by the way, would alone be sufficient to prove that *murders* was corrupt. '*Mortal murders*,' too, seems suspicious." Walker, however, proposes no substitute: that in the text is Lettsom's: "Read 'With twenty mortal *gashes* on their crowns.' Macbeth is thinking of what he has just heard from the Murderer: —

- With *twenty* trenchéd *gashes* on his head,
The least a death to nature."

P. 115. **If trembling I inhabit then, protest me**

The baby of a girl. — I keep the old reading here, because I cannot see that any of the changes made or proposed really help the matter. Theobald thought it should be, "If trembling *me inhibit*." Pope changed *inhabit* to *inhibit*; and Steevens proposed *thee* for *then*. Johnson conjectured "If trembling I *evade it*, then protest me," &c. This, I think, is the best of them all, as regards the sense. Collier's second folio reads "If trembling I *exhibit*"; which turns *trembling* into a substantive. "If trembling I *unknight* me," "If trembling I *inherit*," "If trembling I *flinch at it*," have also been proposed. Dyce prints "If trembling I *inhibit thee*." But I think the old reading admits of a sense not unfitting. See foot-note 17.

P. 116. **And keep the natural ruby of your cheeks,
When mine are blanch'd with fear.** — The original reads
“mine *is* blanch d.” But, as *mine* clearly refers to *cheeks*, it is hardly
possible that *is* can be right. Hammer and some others read *cheek*;
but surely, as Dyce notes, the plural is required there.

P. 117. **There is not one of them but in his house
I keep a servant fee'd.** — So Pope. The original has “*There's*
not a one.” Theobald reads “*There's* not a *Thane*”; White, “*There's*
not a *man*.”

P. 117. **I will to-morrow —
Ay, and betimes I will — to th' Weird Sisters.** — The orig-
inal quite untunes the rhythm of the line by having nothing in the
place of *Ay*. The insertion was proposed anonymously.

ACT III., SCENE V.

P. 119. [Music and a Song within: Come away, come away,
&c. — Thus much is all that the original prints of the song here used.
I subjoin, from *The Witch*, by Middleton, the whole song, or rather
musical dialogue, which begins with the forecited words: —

Song above. Come away, come away,
Hecate, Hecate, come away!

Hecate. I come, I come, I come, I come,
With all the speed I may,
With all the speed I may.
Where's Stadlin?

Voice above. Here.

Hecate. Where's Puckle?

Voice above. Here;
And Hoppo too, and Hellwain too;
We lack but you, we lack but you:
Come away, make up the count.

Hecate. I will but 'noint, and then I mount.

[A Spirit like a cat descends.

Voice above. There's one come down to fetch his dues,
A kiss, a coll, a sip of blood;
And why thou stay'st so long, I muse, I muse,
Since the air's so sweet and good.

Hecate. O, art thou come? What news, what news?

Spirit. All goes still to our delight:
Either come, or else refuse, refuse.

Hecate. Now I'm furnish'd for the flight.

Fire. Hark, hark! the cat sings a brave treble in her own language.

Hecate. [*Going up.*] Now I go, now I fly,
Malkin my sweet spirit and I.
O, what a dainty pleasure 'tis
To ride in the air
When the Moon shines fair,
And sing and dance, and toy and kiss!
Over woods, high rocks, and mountains,
Over seas, our mistress' fountains,
Over steeples, towers, and turrets,
We fly by night, 'mongst troops of spirits:
No ring of bells to our ears sounds,
No howls of wolves, no yelps of hounds;
No, not the noise of water's breach,
Or cannon's throat, our height can reach.

Voices above. No ring of bells, &c.

ACT III., SCENE VI.

P. 120. Who can now want the thought, how monstrous

It was for Malcolm and for Donalbain

To kill their gracious father? — The original reads "Who cannot want the thought," &c. This gives a sense just the opposite of what was manifestly intended. Keightley proposes "*We cannot want the thought*"; which would yield the right sense indeed, but at the cost of too much force and point of expression. *The Edinburgh Review*, July, 1869, undertakes to vindicate the old reading by showing that *cannot want* was, and still is, often used in the sense of *cannot lack* or *cannot be without*. This is very true, but I think it quite misses the point; and I am sure it is no more than we all knew before. The reading in the text was proposed by Cartwright, but occurred to me independently.

P. 120.

The son of Duncan,

From whom this tyrant holds the due of birth,

Lives in the English Court. — The original has *Sonnes* instead of *son*. Corrected by Theobald.

P. 121. **Keep from our feasts and banquets bloody knives ;
Do faithful homage, and receive free honours.** — So Lett-
som. The original has *Free* instead of *Keep*. Malone proposed, and
Rann adopted, "Our feasts and banquets *free* from bloody knives."

P. 121. **And this report
Hath so exasperate the King, that he, &c.** — The original
reads "exasperate *their* King." Corrected by Hanmer.

ACT IV., SCENE I.

P. 122. **Harpie cries : — 'tis time, 'tis time.** — The original has
Harpier, the word having probably been written *Harpie*. Of course
it stands for some animal, real or fabulous, which is supposed to be
serving the Witches as a familiar, and giving them a signal. But I
think there was no real animal so called ; and the Poet most likely
had in mind the harpies of Virgil. The correction was proposed by
Steevens.

P 122. **Toad, that under the cold stone
Days and nights hast thirty-one, &c.** — The old text is with-
out *the*, which was supplied by Rowe.

P. 124. **Enter Hecate.** — Here the original has the stage-direction,
"*Enter Hecat, and the other three Witches.*" It is not easy to say posi-
tively what this means ; but the probability is, that in Middleton's
ordering of the matter Hecate came with three ordinary witches to aid
the Weird Sisters in the performance of their Satanic ritual. The
Clarendon Editors print "*Enter HECATE to the other three Witches,*"
thus substituting *to* for *and*.

P. 124. **Music and a Song : Black Spirits, &c.** — Here, again,
as in iii. 5, the original merely indicates the song by printing the first
words of it. And here, again, I subjoin the song as it stands in *The
Witch* : —

Black spirits and white, red spirits and gray,
Mingle, mingle, mingle, you that mingle may!

Firedrake, Puckey, make it lucky;
 Liard, Robin, you must bob in.
 Round, around, around, about, about!
 All ill come running in, all good keep out!

P. 125. **Though the treasure**

Of Nature's germens tumble all together, &c. — The original has "Natures *Germaine*." But the plural is evidently required; and we have the same spelling of *germens* in *King Lear*, iii. 2: "Cracke Natures moulds, all *germaines* spill at once that makes ingratefull Man."

P. 127. **Rebellion's head rise never, till the wood**

Of Birnam rise, &c. — So Hanmer and Collier's second folio. The original has "*Rebellious dead, rise never,*" &c.

P. 128. **Thy crown does sear mine eyeballs: — and thy air,**

Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first. — The original has *hair* instead of *air*. The correction is Johnson's. The Poet elsewhere uses *air* for *look* or *appearance*. A family likeness is evidently the thing meant; and *hair* is not general enough for that. See foot-note 16.

P. 129. **Horrible sight! — Nay, now I see 'tis true;**

For the blood-bolter'd Banquo, &c. — So Pope. The original is without *Nay*. Steevens inserted *Ay*.

P. 130. **This deed I'll do before this purpose cool:**

But no more sights! — This accords with Macbeth's exclamation, a little before, at the vision of Banquo and his descendants: "Horrible *sight!*" Notwithstanding, much fault has been found with *sights*. Collier's second folio changes it to *flights*, referring to the flight of Macduff. White substitutes *sprites*. Both changes, it seems to me, impair the poetry without bettering the sense; and *sprites* is particularly unhappy.

P. 131. **But cruel are the times, when we are traitors,**

And do not know't ourselves. — So Hanmer and Collier's second folio. The original has "not *know* ourselves."

P. 131. **But float upon a wild and violent sea**

Each way it moves. — So Mr. P. A. Daniel. The original has "Each way, *and move*"; out of which it is not easy to make any thing. Theobald printed "Each way and *wave*," and Steevens conjectured "*And each way move*"; but surely Daniel's reading is much the best.

P. 134. **Wherefore should I fly?**

I've done no harm. — Instead of *Wherefore*, the old text has *Whither*, which does not suit the context at all. Lettsom proposes *Why*.

P. 134. **Thou liest, thou shag-hair'd villain!** — The original has "thou *shagge-ea'd* Villaine." Doubtless, as Dyce notes, *ear'd* is "a corruption of *hear'd*, which is an old spelling of *hair'd*." And he fully substantiates this by quotations.

P. 135. **Hold fast the mortal sword; and like good men**

Bestride our down-fall'n birthdom. — The original has "our *downfall* Birthdome."

P. 135. **I'm young; but something**

You may deserve of him through me. — The original has *discerne* instead of *deserve*. Corrected by Theobald.

P. 136. **Wear thou thy wrongs,**

Thy title is affer'd! — So Malone and Collier's second folio. The original has "*The* Title, is *affer'd*."

P. 141. **Whither indeed, before thy here-approach, &c.** — The original has *they* instead of *thy*. Corrected in the second folio.

P. 146. **This tune goes manly.**

Come, go we to the King. — The original has *time* instead of *tune*. Corrected by Rowe.

ACT V., SCENE I.

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P. 148. *Doct.* You see, her eyes are open.

Gent. Ay, but their sense is shut. — The original has “their sense are shut.” Doubtless an accidental repetition from the line above. Rowe’s correction.

ACT V., SCENE II.

P. 151. He cannot buckle his distemper’d course

Within the belt of rule. — So Walker and Collier’s second folio. The old text has “distemper’d *cause*.” As Macbeth is said to be acting like a madman, or going wild and crazy in his course, there need, I think, be no scruple of the correction.

ACT V., SCENE III.

P. 154. This push

Will chair me ever, or dis-seat me now. — So Percy and Collier’s second folio. The original reads “Will *cheere* me ever, or *dis-eate* me now.” The second folio changes *dis-eate* to *disease*. But the reading thus given seems to me very tame and unsuited to the occasion. *Chair* is often used for *throne*; and Macbeth may well think that the present assault will either confirm his tenure of the throne, or oust him from it entirely.

P. 154. I have lived long enough: my way of life

Is fall’n into the sere, the yellow leaf. — Collier’s second folio has “my *May* of life”; and so Johnson proposed to read. This reading would imply Macbeth to be a young man, which he is not, and to be struck with premature old age, which cannot be his meaning. As Gifford says, “way of life” is “a simple periphrasis for *life*.” Macbeth is in the autumn of life, is verging upon old age, the winter of life; for such is the meaning of “the sere, the yellow leaf”; and what he here laments so pathetically is, that his old age cannot have the comforts, honours, friendships which naturally attend it, and are needful, to make it supportable.

P. 154. Cure her of that :

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased? — So the second folio. The first omits *her*.

P. 155. Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff. — It has been thought, as it might well be, that *stuff* occurs once too often in this line. Collier's second folio has "perilous *grief*"; which is less acceptable than "Cleanse the *foul* bosom," proposed by Steevens. The other conjectures offered seem to me out of the question.

P. 155. What rhubarb, senna, or what purgative drug,

Would scour these English hence? — Instead of *senna*, the original has *Cyme*, which is not, and never was, the English name of any drug. The correction is from the fourth folio.

ACT V., SCENE IV.

P. 156. For, where there is advantage to be ta'en,

Both more and less have given him the revolt. — So Walker. The original reads "advantage to be *given*." Collier's second folio reads "advantage to be *gotten*."

ACT V., SCENE V.

P. 157. The time has been, my senses would have quail'd

To hear a night-shriek. — So Collier's second folio. The original reads "my senses would have *cool'd*"; which, surely, is quite too tame for the occasion. In *Julius Caesar*, iv., 3, we have "That makest my *blood cold*"; but this is very different from "makes my *senses cold*." Dyce remarks that "examples of the expression, *senses quailing*, may be found in our early writers."

P. 159. I should report that which I'd say I saw,

But know not how to do't.

Mach. Well, say it, sir. — The original reads "which *I* say I saw," and "Well, say sir." The first of these corrections is Hanmer's; the other, Pope's,

P. 159. I pall in resolution, and begin

To doubt th' equivocation of the fiend, &c. — The old text has "I *pull* in resolution." Johnson proposed *pall*, which, as the Clarendon edition observes, "better expresses the required sense, involuntary loss of heart and hope." Besides, with *pull*, "we must emphasize *in*, contrary to the rhythm of the verse."

ACT V., SCENE VIII.

P. 164. And damn'd be he that first cries "Hold." — The old text has *him* instead of *he*. Corrected by Pope.

P. 164. [Exeunt, fighting. Alarums. — In the original, this stage-direction is immediately followed, in the next line, by another, which is difficult to explain, and is omitted in all modern editions known to me; thus: "*Enter fighting, and Macbeth slain.*" Then comes the stage-direction, which modern editors retain, "*Retreat, and Flourish. Enter with Drumme and Colours, Malcolm, Seyward,*" &c. What makes the matter still more perplexing is, that, nineteen lines further on, the original, without any intervening *exit*, has the stage-direction, "*Enter Macduffe; with Macbeths head.*" The likeliest explanation seems to be, that the play originally ended with "*Exeunt, fighting,*" and that what follows was afterwards tacked on by Middleton, in order to gratify the audience with more fighting, and with the sight of Macbeth's head on a pole. Surely it is not like Shakespeare's Macduff thus to mutilate the body of Macbeth after killing him; an act neither gentle nor brave.

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Shakespeare.

A vision of crowded city streets
With human life in endless un-
flow.
Thunder of thoroughfares; trumpets
that blow
To battle; clamor in obscure se-
treats,
Of sailors landed from their
anchored fleets;
Rolling of bells in turrets, and,
below,
Voices of children, and bright
flowers that throw
O'er garden walls their inter-
mingled sweets!

This vision comes to me when
I unfold
The volume of the "Poet para-
mount"
Whom all the muses
loved — not one alone,
Into his hand they put the
lyre of gold,
And, crowned with sacred
laurel at their fount,
Placed him as Musagetes
on their throne.

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