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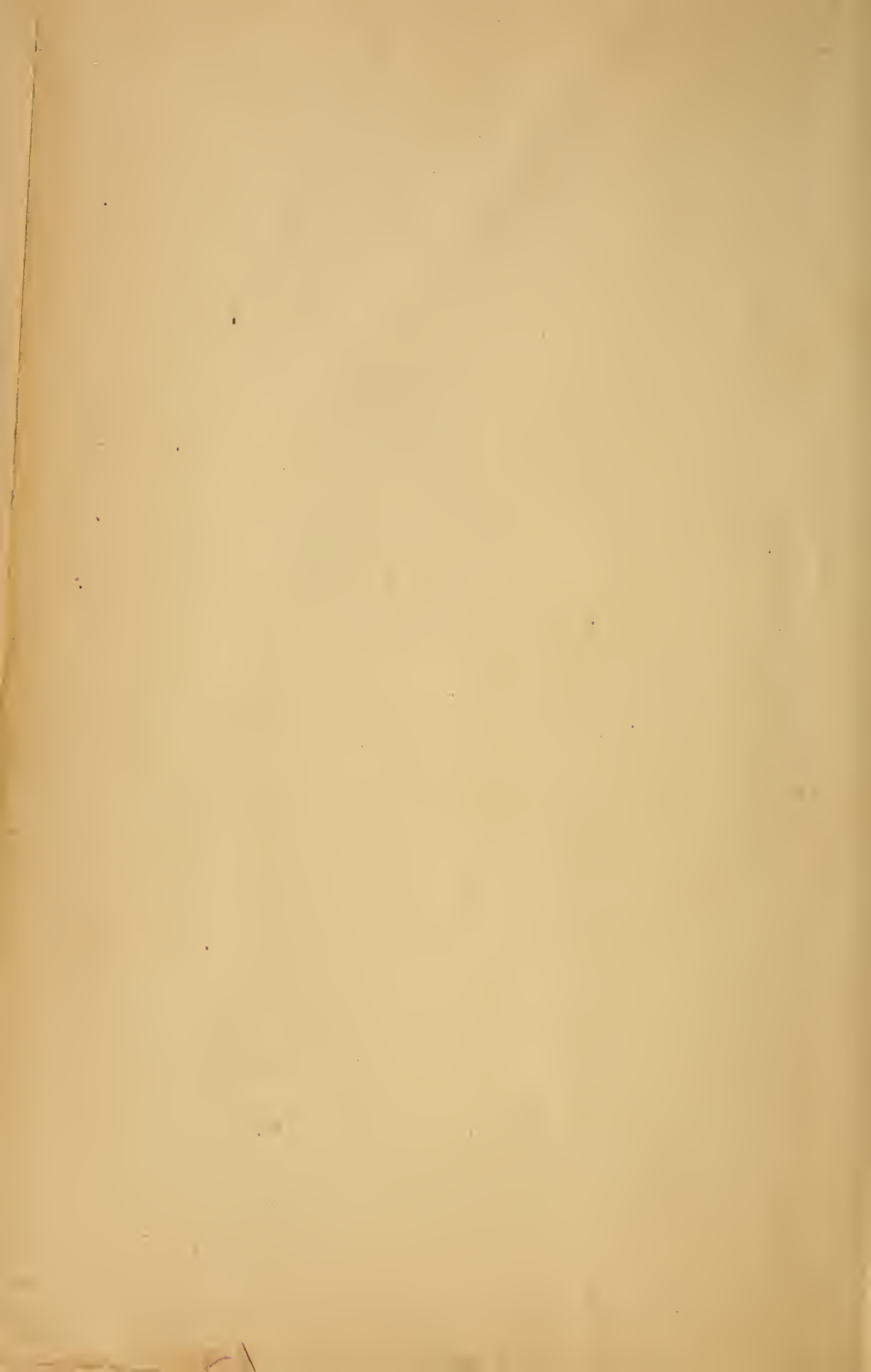
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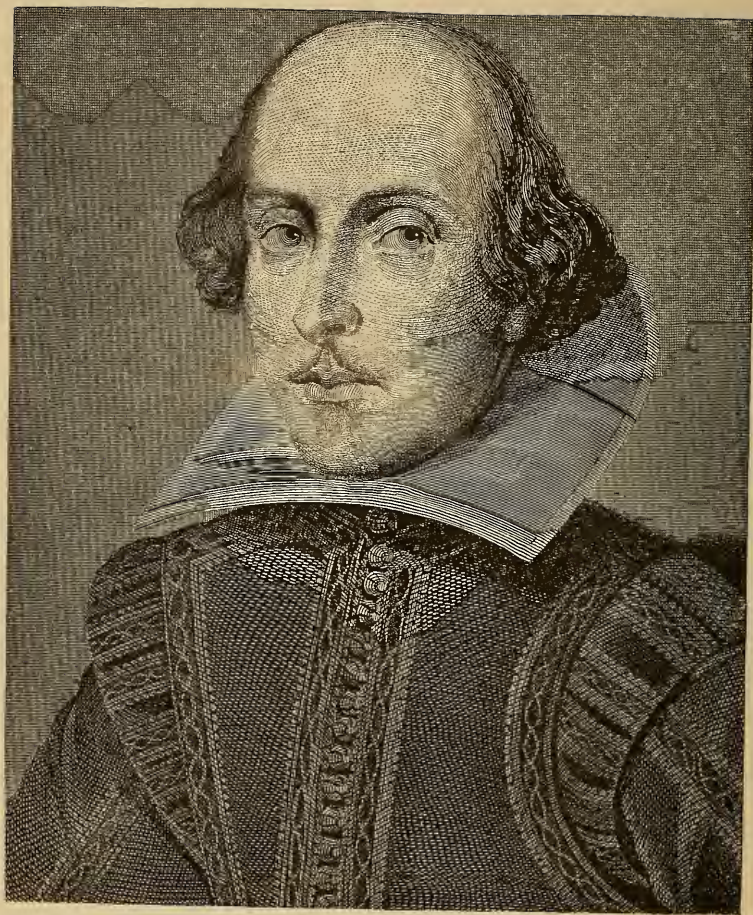
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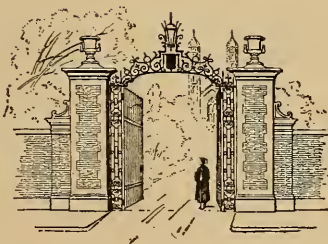
GATEWAY SERIES

MACBETH

EDITED BY

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PREFACE BY THE GENERAL EDITOR

THIS series of books aims, first, to give the English texts required for entrance to college in a form which shall make them clear, interesting, and helpful to those who are beginning the study of literature; and, second, to supply the knowledge which the student needs to pass the entrance examination. For these two reasons it is called *The Gateway Series*.

The poems, plays, essays, and stories in these small volumes are treated, first of all, as works of literature, which were written to be read and enjoyed, not to be parsed and scanned and pulled to pieces. A short life of the author is given, and a portrait, in order to help the student to know the real person who wrote the book. The introduction tells what it is about, and how it was written, and where the author got the idea, and what it means. The notes at the foot of the page are simply to give the sense of the hard words so that the student can read straight on without turning to a dictionary. The other notes, at the end of the book, explain difficulties and allusions and fine points,

6 Preface by the General Editor

The editors are chosen because of their thorough training and special fitness to deal with the books committed to them, and because they agree with this idea of what a Gateway Series ought to be. They express, in each case, their own views of the books which they edit. Simplicity, thoroughness, shortness, and clearness, — these, we hope, will be the marks of the series.

HENRY VAN DYKE.

PREFACE

It has been my aim in preparing this edition of *Macbeth* to bring one of the greatest creations of English literature within the comprehension of the average school-boy. The biography and introduction have been composed with the hope of awakening in the young student some interest in Shakespeare's life and work, and of thus inducing him to approach the play, not as a piece of task work, but in a spirit of intellectual curiosity.

The text itself has been carefully prepared with a view to reproducing as far as possible the exact words which Shakespeare wrote. One passage alone I have felt called upon to excise, and that has been lifted cleanly out of the play without garbling the context.

The glossarial notes, based for the most part upon Schmidt's *Shakespeare Dictionary* and the *New English Dictionary*, have been placed at the bottom of the page in order to save the student's time and distract his attention as little as possible from the real subject of study, the play itself.

The critical and explanatory notes have a twofold purpose. They are meant to explain in the simplest terms possible the difficulties in the text itself and the allusions and references which stand in the way of an intelligent appreciation of the play. And they are also

meant to interpret in the simplest fashion the play as a piece of dramatic art, to show the relation of one scene to another, and the place of each in the scheme of the whole. I trust that these notes are not over-copious; their bulk is due to my conviction that the average school-boy is at once incapable of understanding Shakespeare by the light of nature, and that he is in practice wholly dependent for aid upon the text-book which is put into his hands.

The textual notes are an attempt to justify the text here presented. They may, perhaps, serve also in the case of students advanced above the average as an introduction to the study of textual criticism.

The brief note on metre is intended to give the student such elementary knowledge of this subject as is usually required for entrance into college.

In the preparation of this book I have drawn upon many sources, particularly upon Dr. Furness's *Variorum* edition. I have been particularly fortunate in being able to check and correct my work by reference to Dr. Liddell's scholarly and stimulating commentary in the *Elizabethan Macbeth*.

In conclusion I wish to thank, not for the first time, Mr. D. L. Chambers and my colleague, Mr. Long, for illuminating suggestion, severe and kindly criticism, and valued assistance in the matter of proof reading.

THOMAS MARC PARROTT.

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY.

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BIOGRAPHY

It has sometimes been said that we know next to nothing about Shakespeare the man ; but this statement is far from accurate. We know a great deal about the world he lived in and the influences which shaped and coloured his work ; we know as many facts about his life as about that of almost any poet of his day ; and from his plays we may learn far more than is usually admitted about his character and temperament. It is a mistaken reverence which loses itself in admiration of the work of the poet and forgets the very human man who lies behind this work.

William Shakespeare was born probably on April 22 or 23, 1564. His father, John Shakespeare, was at this time a prosperous citizen in the little town of Stratford-on-Avon. Some twelve years before the poet's birth, John Shakespeare had come into town and opened a sort of general store for the sale of country produce. He rapidly rose into prominence, filled one office after another, and, four years after William's birth, was elected to the highest position in the town, that of bailiff. During his year of office he twice extended the hospitalities of the town to travelling actors, and it is most likely that William Shakespeare got his first impressions of the drama

as a boy upon his father's knees in the town hall of Stratford. The poet's mother, Mary Arden, was connected with one of the most prominent families in the county and was, moreover, better provided with the world's goods than her husband.

At the age of seven or eight William Shakespeare entered the grammar school of Stratford. His studies, which were probably continued for at least five or six years, were, after the fashion of the day, almost entirely confined to Latin. He committed the grammar to memory, learned to repeat easy conversations in Latin, and read selections from such authors as Virgil, Horace, Cicero, and Seneca. His favourite poet seems to have been Ovid. Probably he also obtained at school some little knowledge of Greek, enough at least to read the standard authors in the popular editions which printed the Greek text on one page and a Latin translation on the other. Ben Jonson's remark that Shakespeare had "small Latin and less Greek" has sometimes been accepted as showing that the poet's education was very superficial; but it must be remembered that Jonson was one of the best classical scholars of his time, and judged Shakespeare by his own standard. There can be no doubt that as far as a reading knowledge of the classics goes, Shakespeare was at least on a level with the average graduate of an American college.

Very little, if any, instruction in mathematics was given in English schools in Shakespeare's day, and there was no opportunity whatever for studying either his native

tongue, or the modern languages. Shakespeare's knowledge of the Bible was obtained at home and in the town church, and his acquaintance with French and Italian, such as it was, he probably acquired during his later life in London.

Shakespeare cannot have done much reading in his youth, — his father's house contained at most a Bible, a chronicle, and, perhaps, some old romance, and there was no free library in Stratford in those days, — but he had all the more time for boyish games, for the legends of ghosts and fairies which served to pass the long winter evenings, and above all for the sights and sounds of the beautiful English country which lay about him. Stratford was a very tiny town, and a few steps from the main street would take the boy into some of the loveliest scenery in England. Warwickshire was wilder then than now, and the forest of Arden covered a great part of the county. To Shakespeare, with his belief in witchcraft and wood-spirits, rambles in its shades must have seemed like voyages in fairyland; and we may be sure that when in after years he wrote of the haunted wood outside of Athens, or the great forest in France where the banished Duke and his companions chased the deer, he was dreaming of his own English Arden.

But we may be sure, too, that Shakespeare was no mere dreamy boy. He had eyes and ears for all that he saw or heard. He knew all the flowers of the field, and all the notes of the birds. But perhaps the best proof of Shakespeare's genuine boyishness was his devotion to

sports. He loved dogs, hawks, and horses, and knew all their good points ; and his love of hunting seems at one time to have involved him in serious trouble.

During Shakespeare's school days his father became entangled in business difficulties and was forced to mortgage the property he had received from his wife. It was probably on this account that he withdrew his son from school at an early age, and set him to work, perhaps in his own shop in Stratford.

Some five or six years after leaving school, Shakespeare, then a lad of eighteen, suddenly and perhaps secretly, married Anne Hathaway, a woman eight years his senior. His first child, Susanna, was born within a year. In January, 1585, his wife gave birth to twins, Hamnet and Judith, and shortly after Shakespeare left Stratford and his wife never to return, except for an occasional visit, until the main work of his life was over. Various causes, no doubt, contributed to his departure from Stratford,—his father's poverty, his own increasing family, the impossibility of finding suitable employment in the little town, but probably the immediate occasion of his flight was the trouble in which his love of sport had involved him.

The most important personage in or about Stratford at this time was a certain Sir Thomas Lucy, a country squire of wide acres and strict principles. He owned a rabbit warren on which Shakespeare made frequent raids. He was at last detected and the great man's anger was so fierce that Shakespeare sought safety in flight.

The same tendency to expansion and assimilation appeared in the intellectual and artistic life of the nation. The great outburst of literature which marks the beginning of the second half of Elizabeth's reign, was by no means a mere development of the literature of the Middle Ages. On the contrary it was based upon the New Learning, the passionate study of the classics which for the last half century had been dominating the schools and universities of England; and it was coloured by contact at many points with the rich and varied literature of Italy. The intellectual eagerness of the nation to learn is proved by the multitude of translations which opened even to those who were ignorant of all languages but their own, the treasures of the classics and of foreign literatures. But there was little or no slavish imitation; what the English borrowed they assimilated, and reproduced in a thoroughly English form; and this was particularly the case with the drama, the most characteristic form of Elizabethan art.

For centuries dramatic performances had been a popular form of amusement in England. But the old mediæval drama was a very crude affair. It took its subjects mainly from the stories of the Bible and presented them in the simplest fashion. There were neither theatres nor professional actors; the plays were presented upon movable stages by amateur performers chosen from the various trade guilds. About the middle of the sixteenth century, however, the influence of the classical dramatists began to be felt, and English plays were

written in direct imitation of Plautus and Seneca. But the effort to enforce the strict rules of the classic drama had broken down even before Shakespeare came to London. The new spirit of patriotism had given birth to a new form of dramatic art, the history or chronicle play, which appealed to the interest felt by English audiences in their country's glorious past. And a new school of playwrights, Lyly, Greene, Peele, Kyd, and Marlowe, — men for the most part of classical education, but forced by the circumstances of their lives to rely directly upon the applause of the public, — were, during the early years of Shakespeare's life in London, creating a new drama as different from the conventional regularity of the classic as from the formlessness of the mediæval stage. The new drama was, in fact, a blending of classical and romantic elements, choosing its themes at will from classical mythology and history, from English history and tradition, or from the passionate stories of love, hatred, and revenge so common in the Renaissance literature of Italy and France. It was for the most part composed in verse, and appealed by its stately rhetoric and its lyric charm to the Elizabethan passion for high-sounding phrases and beautiful words. At the same time, in order to hold the attention of the common people, it crowded its scenes with action; battle, murder, and sudden death were the commonest of incidents. And the indomitable good humour of the age was seen in the constant presence of the clown, whose coarse jests and boisterous horse-play cast a gleam of mirth over even the gloomiest of tragedies.

While the drama was thus developing toward the point where Shakespeare found it, the instruments for the interpretation of the drama were also in process of evolution. Professional actors had come into existence perhaps a century before Shakespeare's birth; but they were long regarded with scorn by the staid civic authorities. The law indeed ranked them with strollers and "lusty vagabonds." But the pleasure-loving aristocracy took up their cause and invited them to enrol themselves in companies under the patronage of some noblemen. These licensed companies, as they were called, enjoyed a degree of respect which their humbler fellows lacked, and were permitted to give performances about the country, in the suburbs of London, and even in the city itself. They were composed wholly of men and boys; no women belonged to professional companies till after the Restoration.

There were as yet no theatres and for a long time after the formation of these companies, they were obliged to play in the courtyards of inns, in the halls of gentlemen's houses, or on booths erected at town or county fairs. For a private performance they received a fee from the person who had requested their services; after a public performance they passed around the hat. In 1576, however, while Shakespeare was still a boy at Stratford, James Burbage, the father of Shakespeare's friend, hit on the happy thought of erecting a building for theatrical performances by professional actors and of charging a fixed price for admission. The city authorities refused to allow such a place within the walls of London, so Burbage built

"The Theatre" in one of the suburbs just outside the town limits. It was soon followed by the "Curtain" and the "Rose," and just as the century was closing, the Burbages pulled down "The Theatre" and with its materials erected the most famous of all Elizabethan playhouses, the "Globe." Before Shakespeare's death there were probably ten or twelve theatres in and about the city.

These theatres were, of course, very simple affairs. They were for the most part mere sheds, open to the sky, except for a scaffolding over the stage, and sometimes over the boxes in which the better class of the audience were seated. Performances were always given in the afternoon, so that there was no need of the elaborate devices for the illumination of the stage to which we are accustomed. Scenery was practically unknown, and stage machinery was of the very simplest sort. The stage itself projected forward into the body of the house so that the actors could be seen from three sides. At the rear of the stage there was a recess, before which hung a curtain and over which there projected a balcony. These places served to diversify the action, since they could be used to indicate a change of scene in the play. The recess, for instance, might stand for a royal throne, a lady's bed-chamber, or a magician's study. The balcony might be anything from the deck of a vessel to the walls of a city. There was naturally no attempt at realistic stage-setting; the place of the action was sometimes indicated by a placard hung out to announce that the

scene was laid in Rome, or Athens, or England. It is evident that performances upon such a stage had to rely largely on the imagination of the audience, but the Elizabethan audience was ready of response, and the beautiful descriptive passages in Shakespeare's plays show that he knew that the people for whom he wrote would meet him halfway.

It was into this busy, eager, pleasure-loving world that Shakespeare plunged when he joined Lord Leicester's company. In a very short time he had become one of the busiest men in London. He had, in the first place, his work as an actor, and since there were no long runs in those days, his time must have been fairly well filled with rehearsals and performances alone. His experience as an actor gave him invaluable insight into the methods of dramatic composition and before long his skill as a dramatist began to manifest itself. At first he attempted nothing more than the revision of old plays. There was no law of copyright in those days. When a playwright finished his drama, he sold it for cash to one of the companies and it became their absolute property. They might use it as they pleased, perform it as it came from the author, add various striking scenes and characters to it, or have it written over to suit their taste. It seems certain that in his first historical plays, the three parts of *King Henry VI*, Shakespeare was in the main revising and strengthening the work of older writers. But it was not long before he attempted original composition; and after he had once begun, he worked steadily for nearly

twenty years, turning out on an average two plays a year. His first editors declared that there was hardly a blot or correction in his manuscripts, and on the strength of this statement it has been believed that Shakespeare was one of the great unconscious artists who do their work without knowing how or why they do it. But there seems to be good evidence that Shakespeare worked hard over his plays, that he revised and corrected, and, in some cases, practically rewrote them before he was satisfied. His dramatic genius, the greatest the world has ever known, did not spring full-grown into life, but was developed and perfected by long years of strenuous effort.

Shakespeare's first unqualified success as a man of letters was attained by the publication of his poems *Venus and Adonis*, 1593, and *The Rape of Lucrece*, 1594. Critics who looked down with scorn upon the productions of the common stage welcomed these poems with rapturous applause; and the reading public bought them up as fast as they could be issued from the press. Only two of his plays, *Richard III* and the first part of *King Henry IV*, if we may judge by the frequency of contemporary publication, enjoyed anything like a corresponding popularity.

The most noteworthy contemporary testimony to Shakespeare's reputation as a dramatist is that of Francis Meres, a scholar and clergyman, who published, in 1598, a work entitled *Palladis Tamia, or The Treasury of Wit*. In a very complete review of contemporary literature Meres declared that Shakespeare excelled all others in both

comedy and tragedy, and he cited twelve plays to justify his assertion.

Less than half of these plays had been published when Meres wrote. The actors who held the copyright believed that the publication of a play would lessen its drawing power as a stage performance. But as Shakespeare's reputation increased, the reading public became so eager to obtain his works that unscrupulous publishers resorted to all sorts of devices to satisfy the demand. They sent shorthand writers to the theatre to take notes, they bought parts of plays from needy actors, and sometimes they even persuaded the company to part with a copy of the manuscript. In 1600 there were published no less than six separate plays by Shakespeare. A further testimony to his popularity is borne by the fact that the piratical publishers of the time took to printing other men's plays with his name, or at least his initials, upon the title-page. Seven of such publications appeared during Shakespeare's lifetime.

Shakespeare's reputation as an actor and playwright soon spread from the public theatre to the court of Queen Elizabeth. Probably some of the young noblemen of her intimate circle carried a report of his genius to her. As early as 1594 he was summoned along with Burbage, the tragedian, and Kemp, the famous comic actor, to play before her at Greenwich. His early comedy, *Love's Labour's Lost*, was rewritten and presented at court by special request in the Christmas holidays of 1597. The Queen, with her strong masculine sense of humour, took

a special delight in the character of Falstaff, and a plausible tradition relates that she ordered Shakespeare to write a play which should exhibit the fat knight as a lover, and thus inspired the *Merry Wives of Windsor*.

King James showed himself an even more gracious patron of Shakespeare and his friends. Almost immediately after his accession he took the company under his special protection, granting them a license to perform, not only in the Globe Theatre, but also in the town hall of any town in England. Throughout the reign of James, Shakespeare's company bore the enviable title of the "King's Servants." Even before the new king entered the capital the company was requested to play before him; and on his public entry into London, Shakespeare and eight of his fellows walked in the royal procession robed in scarlet cloaks bestowed upon them by the royal bounty. Throughout his reign James remained a generous benefactor of his "Servants." By his special request many of Shakespeare's plays were performed at court, and for these performances the players were always handsomely rewarded. *The Tempest*, perhaps the last play that Shakespeare wrote, was given at the festivities attending the marriage of James's daughter to the Prince Palatine.

It is well known that Shakespeare made his fortune in London. It is not, perhaps, a matter of general acquaintance that he devoted this fortune to regaining for himself and his family the social position in Stratford which his father's bankruptcy and, perhaps, his own wild youth

had forfeited. By 1596 Shakespeare had made money enough to lift his father from the slough of debts in which he had for years been struggling. In the same year, John Shakespeare, no doubt, at the suggestion of his son, applied to the College of Heralds, in London, for a coat of arms, the outward and visible sign of the possessor's rank as a gentleman.

Even before the coat of arms was granted to his father, Shakespeare had given evidence of his ability as well as his desire to re-establish himself in Stratford as a substantial citizen. In 1597 he bought the largest dwelling in Stratford, — New Place, — the “great house” erected by Sir Hugh Clopton a hundred years before. It had long since fallen into a ruinous condition, so that the sum which Shakespeare paid for it, equivalent to about \$2500, probably represented but a small part of his outlay upon the property.

On his father's death, in 1601, Shakespeare inherited the double house on Henley Street, now shown to visitors as the “Birthplace”; in the following year he bought a large farm of 107 acres near Stratford; and in the same year he acquired a cottage and garden facing the grounds of New Place. In 1605 he invested a sum equal to between \$15,000 and \$20,000 in purchasing a share in the tithes of Stratford, an investment which not only paid him a handsome profit, but established his position as one of the moneyed men of the town. It is said, indeed, that after his retiring from the stage he spent about \$8000 a year on his Stratford house and estate.

Shakespeare's income was derived in part from his plays, in part from his profession as an actor. To these sources must be added for the years between 1599 and 1611 or 1612 his shares in the Globe and Blackfriars theatres. All in all, it is hardly an exaggeration to say that Shakespeare's income in the latter years of his life approximated the sum of \$25,000 a year. There is a certain satisfaction in knowing that the greatest of English poets, the poet who, as actor and playwright, appealed most directly to the English people, received his due reward of wealth, as well as of fame.

Shakespeare's life in London was, however, by no means wholly given over to work. His sympathetic and sensitive temperament craved the companionship of friends and his gentleness and charm of manner soon won the hearts of men and held them to him in lasting bonds. There is no trace of Shakespeare's having been involved in the bitter quarrels which raged in the theatrical world of his day. On the contrary his closest friends were those of his own calling, actors like Burbage, Heming, and Condell, poets and playwrights like Drayton and Ben Jonson. Jonson, indeed, allowed himself the freedom of criticizing Shakespeare's methods of work, but he said: "I loved the man, and do honour his memory on this side idolatry as much as any." Shakespeare mingled in the merry life of the London taverns where poets, playwrights, and actors met to discuss their work and to fleet the time carelessly. "Many were the wit-combats" wrote Thomas Fuller in the next generation "betwixt

him and Ben Jonson, which two I behold like a Spanish great galleon and an English man-of-war ; Master Jonson (like the former) was built far higher in learning, solid but slow in his performances. Shakespear, with the English man-of-war, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds by the quickness of his wit and invention."

Outside of his immediate circle Shakespeare had probably few friends, though many admirers. The dedications of his two poems show the strength of the tie which bound him to the Earl of Southampton ; "the love I dedicate to your lordship is without end" he wrote. Shakespeare's sonnets reveal a passionate conception of friendship unmatched in English literature, and many critics believe that they were addressed to this same nobleman. Another claimant for this honour is William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, who is said by Shakespeare's friends, Heming and Condell, to have been a patron of the poet. The sonnets seem to tell a strange and sad story of Shakespeare's devotion to a noble youth, of his passion for a fascinating but dangerous woman, of his betrayal by his friend and the lady, of his bitter grief, and of his final reconciliation with his friend. Many attempts have been made to throw light upon this story and to ascertain the identity of the friend and the lady, but we know too little of Shakespeare's life in London to come to any positive conclusion on these points. One thing alone seems plain, that Shakespeare had sinned and been even more deeply sinned against, that he had suffered

and sorrowed, and forgiven, and that these sad experiences of life gave him a tender sympathy with erring humanity and a deep sense of the necessity of charity for human weakness.

Shakespeare seems to have left London for Stratford about the year 1611, and, although he paid an occasional visit to the capital, his last years were spent in the comfort and quiet retirement of his country home. There can have been little charm for Shakespeare in the society of Stratford. His wife was now an elderly woman, ignorant of the world, and devoutly puritanical. His little son, Hamnet, whom he had hoped to make the heir of his estate, was long since dead, and his eldest daughter had married an able, but narrow and fanatical, country doctor. In the town itself the growing strength and bitterness of Puritanism, shown by the fact that in 1612 the town council imposed a prohibitive fine of something like \$400, upon all stage-plays, must have been most repugnant to him. Yet there is no reason to suppose that Shakespeare's last years were unhappy. It would have been easy for him to have remained in London, had he preferred. But he had grown weary of the city and deliberately broke the bonds that held him there, selling his shares in the two theatres and turning over the manuscripts of his unfinished plays to be worked up by other and weaker hands. He found in Stratford what he sought, — rest, a retreat from the noises of the world, and the companionship of nature. His little grandchild was growing up into girlhood, and many a passage in

Shakespeare's plays shows his tender love of children. He saw his daughter Judith married to the son of one of his old friends, and Jonson and Drayton, who visited him in this year, may have come down to help celebrate the wedding festivities. Shortly afterward Shakespeare fell ill of a fever, rising probably from the dirty streets and choked gutters of the little town. He had time to make his will and dispose of all his property, leaving the greater part of his estate to Susanna, a handsome portion to Judith, and his second best bed to his wife. He died on the 23d of April, 1616, and was buried inside the beautiful parish church of Stratford. The handsome monument erected over the grave testifies as plainly to the affection with which his family regarded the poet, as its pompous Latin epitaph does to their entire incomprehension of his genius. The true monument to Shakespeare's genius is that erected by his friends, Heming and Con-dell, who, in 1623, seven years after his death, published the first collected edition of his dramas; and one line of the poem by Ben Jonson prefixed to this edition is, perhaps, the most fitting epitaph ever penned for Shakespeare:—

“He was not of an age, but for all time.”

INTRODUCTION

In the year 1610 Dr. Simon Forman, a notorious London quack, entered in a little note-book, which some lucky chance has preserved for us, a detailed account of a performance of *Macbeth* at the Globe Theatre on April 20 of that year. This gives us, of course, positive proof that *Macbeth* was already on the stage in 1610. That it cannot have been written before the accession of James VI of Scotland to the English throne in 1603 is established by the reference in the play to the union of the kingdoms (iv. 1. 120, 121), and by the allusion to James's practice of "touching for the evil" (iv. 3. 141-156). Somewhere between these dates, then, the play must have been composed, and most editors now agree on the year 1606. It is not impossible that Shakespeare's attention was attracted to the story by a college performance at Oxford in August of 1605, when three students, attired like the weird sisters of the legend, reminded King James of the prophecy once made to his ancestor, Banquo.

Shakespeare found the story of Banquo and Macbeth told at full length in one of his favourite books, Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*. In brief Holinshed's account is as follows:—

King Duncan was so soft and gentle of nature that he was unable to restrain his unruly subjects. A certain Macdowald headed a rebellious army, including numbers of men from the western isles and many kerns and gallowglasses from Ireland. After some successes he was attacked and defeated by Macbeth and Banquo, whereupon he slew himself, and his head was cut off and sent as a present to King Duncan.

Immediately thereafter Sweno, king of Norway, landed in Fife with a great army. He was, however, expelled by Macbeth, who also defeated an invading army of Danes, and forced them to pay a great sum of gold to secure the burial of their dead at St. Colme's Inch.

Not long after these victories, while Macbeth and Banquo were walking alone through the woods and fields, there met them three women "in strange and wild apparel, resembling creatures of elder world." The first of these spake and said, "All hail, Macbeth, thane of Glamis;" the second, "Hail, Macbeth, thane of Cawdor;" but the third said "All hail, Macbeth, that hereafter shalt be king of Scotland." When Banquo bade the women speak to him, the first of them replied that they promised him greater benefits than Macbeth, who should reign indeed, but should come to an unlucky end and leave no heirs to the crown, whereas Banquo, though not destined himself to reign, should be the father of a long line of Scottish kings. And hereupon the women vanished.

At first Macbeth and Banquo thought little of this vision and even jested over the prophecies. But afterward it was thought that these women were either the weird sisters, that is, the goddesses of destiny, or else nymphs or fairies, because all came to pass as they had spoken. For in a little while the thane of Cawdor was condemned for high treason and his title and estate were conferred upon Macbeth. Thereupon Macbeth began to consider how he might obtain the crown as well. At first he decided to wait until Divine Providence should make him king; but when Duncan proclaimed his first-born son, Malcolm, Prince of Cumberland and heir to the kingdom, Macbeth determined to seize the throne by force.

In this design he was encouraged by his wife, who was very ambitious, "burning in unquenchable desire to bear the name of a queen." At last Macbeth with a number of trusty friends, of whom Banquo was the chief, fell upon Duncan and slew him at Inverness. Duncan's body was interred at Colmekill; and Macbeth went to Scone, where he was

crowned king. The sons of Duncan, Malcolm, and Donald Bane, fled to England and Ireland respectively, and Macbeth reigned unopposed in Scotland.

For ten years Macbeth ruled the land with impartial justice. But at last, through fear that he might be treated as he had served Duncan, he began to practise cruelty. Remembering the prophecy of the witches to Banquo, he invited his old friend, along with his son, Fleance, to a banquet, and set murderers upon them as they left the palace. Banquo was slain; but Fleance escaped and fled to Wales.

After the murder of Banquo nothing prospered with Macbeth, his subjects distrusted him, and he in turn feared them. Certain wizards warned him against Macduff, one of his nobles, and he would surely have slain him at once, but a witch whom he trusted prophesied that he should never be killed by any man born of woman, and never vanquished until Birnam wood came to his castle of Dunsinane. Confident in this prophecy he took no steps against Macduff, but oppressed his people more cruelly than before.

Finally Macduff decided to invite the exiled Malcolm to claim his father's throne. Macbeth heard of this through a spy, and came to Macduff's castle where he massacred Macduff's wife and children, and all his retainers. But Macduff himself had already escaped to England, where he told Malcolm of the usurper's cruelty, and urged him to invade Scotland. Malcolm, however, suspected that Macduff might be sent by Macbeth to betray him, and, to put him to the test, he began to accuse himself of all sorts of vices, especially of licentiousness, avarice, and falsehood. Thereupon Macduff broke out into lament over the wretched state of Scotland, oppressed by a bloody tyrant, and deserted by the true heir who was unworthy to obtain the crown. At this proof of his true patriotism Malcolm embraced Macduff, and shortly after they invaded Scotland, supported by Siward of Northumberland with ten thousand men.

On his way to attack Dunsinane, where Macbeth had shut himself up, Malcolm passed through Birnam wood, and in order to conceal the numbers of his troop he ordered every soldier to cut down a bough and bear it before him. When Macbeth saw the moving wood approaching, he realized that the prophecy was now fulfilled, and straightway took to flight. Macduff, however, overtook him, and destroyed his last hope by declaring that he was the destined slayer of

Macbeth, inasmuch as he had not been born of woman, but had been ripped from his mother's womb. And with these words he cut off Macbeth's head and brought it on a pole to Malcolm. This prince was then crowned at Scone, and rewarded his followers by promoting those who had before been thanes to be earls. And these were the first earls in Scotland.

It is plain that Shakespeare not only held closely to the general outline of the story as he read it in Holinshed, but that he also borrowed from it many minute details and even phrases which with the finest art he adapted to his dramatic purposes. At the same time there are several notable divergences.

In the first place Shakespeare compressed the introductory matter as much as possible, only reporting Macbeth's double victory on one great day of battle in order to set him before us as a loyal and successful soldier. For the sake of unity he brought the treason of Cawdor into connection with Sweno's invasion, and he heightened the rapidity of the action by bestowing Cawdor's title upon Macbeth immediately after the prophecy of the weird sisters.

More important, however, is Shakespeare's departure from his sources as regards his treatment of the character of Banquo. This departure was probably due in the first place to the fact that Shakespeare felt it impossible to represent the ancestor of the reigning sovereign as a rebel and a partner with Macbeth in the murder of their king. And, secondly, he realized that from the dramatic point of view it would be a great improvement on the story if he presented in Banquo a sharp contrast to Macbeth, and

asserted the freedom of the human will by exposing him to the same temptation as Macbeth, without permitting him to fall into sin.

The details of the murder of Duncan, Shakespeare drew for the most part from Holinshed's account of the murder of King Duff by his trusted servant, Donwald. This nobleman had a private grudge against the king which his wife worked upon until she induced him to kill his master. Waiting for their opportunity until a time when the king was staying with them, Donwald and his wife intoxicated the two chamberlains who guarded the king's bed and then sent in assassins who slew him. In the morning when the murder was discovered Donwald rushed into the king's room and killed the chamberlains with his own hand, accusing them of having been accomplices in the deed. For six months thereafter the people of Scotland saw neither sun nor moon, but were continually troubled by darkness and great storms. Horses were seen to eat their own flesh, and a sparrowhawk was strangled by an owl,—evident omens of the anger of Heaven.

One or two other incidents of minor importance, such as the death of young Siward and, possibly, the voice that cried, "Macbeth shall sleep no more," were suggested to Shakespeare by other passages in the chronicle.

In Holinshed we hear of certain wizards and a witch who warned and encouraged Macbeth, as well as of the three women who first prophesied that he should be king. The statement in Holinshed that these women were commonly regarded as the "weird sisters," that is, the "god-

dessees of destiny" probably shows that in an old form of the legend they appeared as the Norns, or Fates of Scandinavian mythology. Shakespeare, however, who knew little or nothing of the Norns, simply identified the three sisters with the witches of popular superstition, and assigned to them the warning and the prophecies of the wizards and the trusted witch of Holinshed.

The belief in witchcraft, that is, in the existence of men and women who had voluntarily sold themselves to the devil and had obtained from him supernatural powers, was, in Shakespeare's day, almost universally accepted. It was held as an article of faith both by the Roman Catholic and the Protestant churches, and it was recognized by the laws of both England and Scotland. Even so enlightened a thinker as Bacon did not deny the possibility of witchcraft, and Shakespeare probably accepted without question the common belief of his day. It is remarkable, moreover, that a great revival of this belief had occurred in Scotland toward the close of the sixteenth century, and that in England also the smouldering fires of superstition had been fanned into new life by the accession of the orthodox and witch-hating Scottish king. James, it seems, had strong personal grounds for his hatred of witchcraft. In 1589 the fleet which was bringing home his bride, Princess Anne of Denmark, was dispersed by a violent storm, which was popularly attributed to the devilish arts of a company of Scottish sorcerers and witches, against whom the monarch promptly instituted an aggressive campaign. It is said that in the

next year he condemned and burned no less than two hundred men and women as guilty of witchcraft. Nine years later James published a learned treatise on witchcraft, called *Demonologie*. This book was reprinted about the time of his accession to the English throne and may possibly have been known to Shakespeare. In 1604 James induced the English Parliament to pass a law inflicting capital punishment on all persons who by magical acts killed or harmed the bodies of his subjects. This law remained in force for more than a century, and this century was especially noteworthy in England for the frequency of trials for witchcraft. It is plain, therefore, that in treating the topic of witchcraft as he did in *Macbeth*, Shakespeare was dealing with no antiquated prejudice, but with one of the most widespread and virulent superstitions of his time.

The witches of *Macbeth* possess quite enough of the characteristics of the witches of Elizabethan superstition to establish the identity of the two. They are hideously ugly, with choppy fingers, skinny lips, and unwomanish beards. Each has a familiar spirit, cat, toad, or harpy. They kill swine, sail the sea in sieves, fly through the air, drive away sleep, cause sickness, and raise up tempests. The ingredients of their "hell-broth" were the familiar materials of witchcraft. These are all realistic touches, and yet the idealistic method of Shakespeare is nowhere more plainly visible to the thoughtful reader than in the manner in which he lifts the witches of his play above the miserable creatures of popular superstition. Their

very appearance has something supernatural about it; they "look not like the inhabitants of earth." There is not the faintest reference in *Macbeth* to the foul sexual practices commonly attributed to witches. In their dealings with Macbeth the witches are prompted neither by greed of profit nor thirst for revenge, the usual motives assigned to the witch, but by a sheer love of evil for evil's sake. And in the case of Macbeth at least, the evil that they do is not material, but spiritual, a thing uncommon, if not altogether unknown, in the popular accounts of witches. In short, Shakespeare has exalted the witches into true and typical representatives of the Principle of Evil. It is as such that they are recognized by the wise and virtuous Banquo, who speaks of them as "instruments of darkness." And Macbeth himself, when at last awakened from the fatal dream of security into which their predictions have cast him, realizes that their words were nothing more than the "equivocation of the fiend." There was an absurd discrepancy in the popular belief between the powers of the witch and her performances, limited as these were for the most part to malicious mischief or the infliction of bodily harm. Shakespeare wiped out this discrepancy by directing the attacks of the weird sisters not against the body, but against the soul of Macbeth. The one scene in the play which is inconsistent with this conception of the witches as representatives of the Evil One, the fifth scene of the third act, is assuredly not the work of Shakespeare.

The fact is that *Macbeth*, as it has come down to us, is not wholly the work of Shakespeare's hand. For some incomprehensible reason this masterpiece of tragedy does not seem to have been especially popular in his day. We have but one notice of its performance during Shakespeare's lifetime, and only one direct allusion to it has been discovered in the literature of his day.¹ When it was revived in the reign of Charles II, it was transformed into something like an opera with flying machines, songs, and a "variety of dancing and music," so that a theatre-goer of the day pronounced it a most excellent play in all respects, "but especially in divertissement, though it be a deep tragedy." In an edition of *Macbeth* published in 1674, which gives us this new version, there are two songs which are indicated in the Folio text (see Notes, pp. 219 and 223), and which are found in full in *The Witch* by Thomas Middleton.

There has been some dispute as to whether Shakespeare or Middleton was the author of these songs; but they are now universally assigned to the latter. A mere glance should, I think, be enough to show that they are not the sort of thing that Shakespeare would put in the mouth of the weird sisters, or their familiar spirits. The first of them is mentioned in *Macbeth* in the stage direction to iii. 5. 32; the second in that to iv. 1. 43. The versions in *The Witch* are as follows:—

- I. Come away, come away,
Hecate, Hecate, come away!

¹ In Beaumont and Fletcher's *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, v. 1.

Hec. I come, I come, I come, I come,
 With all the speed I may,
 With all the speed I may.
 Where's Stadlin ?¹

(*Voice above*) Here.

Hec. 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.

Hec. I will but 'noint, and then I mount.

[*A Spirit like a cat descends*

- II. Black spirits and white, red spirits and gray,
 Mingle, mingle, mingle, you that mingle may.
 Titty, Tiffin,
 Keep it stiff in ;
 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.

It seems fairly certain that Middleton, who frequently wrote plays for Shakespeare's company, was invited by the actors to touch up *Macbeth* for some revival which took place between the date of Shakespeare's leaving London and the publication of the Folio. By way of increasing the attractiveness of the play Middleton inserted in it these two songs from his own unpublished *Witch*, and a marginal direction for this insertion in the play-house manuscript of the drama was reproduced in the first printed copy of *Macbeth*.

¹ The name of another witch, as are those of Puckle, Hoppo, and Hellwain.

There has been much dispute as to the extent of Middleton's interference with the original form of *Macbeth*. Some critics suppose him to have made extensive cuts; but there is no evidence of this. It has also been stated that Middleton added several scenes of his own composition; i. 2; i. 3. 1-37; ii. 3. 1-46; and v. 2, for example, have been assigned to him. But there is no good reason for this statement, and the general consensus of scholars limits Middleton's additions, apart from the songs, to one scene, iii. 5, and a few lines in another, iv. 1. 39-49, and 125-132.

The reasons for assigning these passages to Middleton may be briefly stated. Hecate, who appears in iii. 5, is a prominent character in his play, *The Witch*, where she figures as the mistress of a band of hags. She contributes nothing to the action in *Macbeth*, and her rebuke to the witches and their fear of her is quite inconsistent with Shakespeare's conception of their characters. The iambic rhythm of her speeches is a favourite of Middleton's, but contrasts strongly with the trochaic metre which Shakespeare puts into the mouths of the witches. The same iambic metre appears in the speech of the First Witch in iv. 1. 125-132, where the idea that the witches should cheer up Macbeth by a dance is much more suggestive of Middleton than of Shakespeare. Middleton's additions, in short, were mere devices to introduce music and dancing and so lighten the sternly tragic character of the play.

The un-Shakespearean element in *Macbeth* is, after all,

a minor matter. It is limited in quantity, and although it is out of keeping with Shakespeare's genuine work, it does not impair the essential unity of his conception. *Macbeth* is one of the shortest of Shakespeare's plays; it is by far the shortest of his great tragedies. It includes no underplot; it contains, with the single brief exception of the Porter scene, no comic relief; it holds with stern self-restraint to the development of the main action and discards the broader and more varied presentation of life which Shakespeare, as a rule, employed in his dramatic treatment of tragic and historic themes. There is not a single scene in the play which does not either contribute to, or comment upon, the main story. The movement of the action is so swift as to produce the effect of breathless haste. And the whole interest of the drama centres round the heroic figure of Macbeth, to whom all the other characters are but reliefs and foils. And as a result there is no other play of Shakespeare's which possesses in so marked a degree the characteristic of unity. It has the effect of a magnificent improvisation upon a theme which, at one period of his life, completely dominated his mind and impelled him irresistibly to give it dramatic expression.

The theme of *Macbeth* is the word which once came to the prophet Ezekiel: "The soul that sinneth it shall die." There is a sense, indeed, in which this may be said to be the theme of all the great tragedies of Shakespeare. Thus Brutus perishes because of his inability to square his ideal conceptions with the practical demands of life,

and Hamlet because he prefers until too late melancholy brooding to resolute action; Othello's fault is want of faith in womanly purity; Coriolanus is the victim of his selfish pride, Lear of his own folly and impatience, Antony of his lustful passion. But the peculiar and distinguishing characteristic of *Macbeth* is that its hero alone of Shakespeare's great tragic figures sins deliberately and wilfully, realizing from the beginning the unpardonable nature of his crime. No sooner does the temptation to seize the crown enter his mind than he calls the act which he must commit to gain his end by its proper name of murder. He is willing to "jump the life to come" in order to obtain his desire upon earth; but he realizes perfectly what price he must pay for the satisfaction of his desire. And that this realization comes to him even before he has committed the deed is amply shown by a phrase in the great soliloquy of the first act, where he speaks of the "deep damnation" of the murder. Macbeth's later crimes spring from his first deed of blood, but in no case does he pretend to any higher motive than that which actually impels him, the securing of the fruits of his sin. Macbeth, in short, sells himself to the devil deliberately, and the witches who tempt him to this sin may, in a sense, be regarded as the poet's symbols, or personifications, of its deliberate and wilful nature, for witches were in Shakespeare's day regarded in no sense as supernatural powers, but simply as human beings who had of their own free will renounced God and chosen Satan as their master.

And just as Macbeth's sin is more conscious and deliberate than that of any other of the protagonists of Shakespeare's tragedies, so his fall is deeper and his ruin more complete and hopeless. It does not consist so much in his loss of the throne, or his death upon the battle-field, as in the utter degeneration of his moral nature. He whose whole "state of man" was shaken by the first temptation to murder comes at last to love blood for its own sake. It takes all the powerful influence of his wife to nerve him to the actual killing of Duncan, but he needs no encouragement to plot the assassination of Banquo, and he massacres the household of Macduff with as little reason as remorse. Through the isolating influence of his career of guilt he forfeits even the companionship of her who had been his "dearest partner," and turns for aid and counsel to the witches from whose first apparition he had recoiled in horror. The final revelation that the powers of evil have mocked him brings him no hope of pardon or escape, but only fills him with a wild beast's desire of selling his life as dearly as possible. No other hero in Shakespeare's plays passes away in a catastrophe of such utter darkness.

Macbeth's punishment, like his fall, is progressive and corresponds to the depth of his plunge into sin. The first stage is marked by violent mental suffering. He has no sooner slain Duncan than he bitterly regrets the deed. Terrible dreams shake him nightly; his very meals are haunted by the fear of detection; the vessel of his peace is full of rancours. His words to Lady Macbeth in the

early part of the third act sum up this stage : he lies " on the torture of the mind in restless ecstasy."

This mental agony is succeeded by a lethargy, or numbness of feeling, which marks the gradual mortification of his soul. Lulled into a false security by the predictions of the witches, Macbeth forgets the sense of fear and ceases to suffer from the torture of the mind. The report of Ross in the fourth act shows that this period was attended by frequent acts of bloodshed, but Macbeth is no longer troubled by the ghosts of his victims. Yet he is none the less sick at heart. Now that he has ceased to fear, he realizes as never before the utter futility of his crimes. The crown has brought him nothing of all that he had hoped to enjoy with it ; and looking forward to a lonely and loveless old age, devoid of " honour, love, obedience, troops of friends," he feels that he has already lived too long. The news of his wife's death fails to rouse in him any emotion of sorrow, for existence in general seems to him in this mood of world-weariness as devoid of purpose or meaning as the babble of an idiot. He seems, indeed, on the point of suicide out of utter disgust with life. From this miserable state, Macbeth is roused by the report of the moving wood. His dream of safety broken, he plunges into action only to discover that the powers he trusted have delivered him into the hands of the avenger of blood. He has already tasted the bitterness of death before he falls under the sword of Macduff. Shakespeare's exposition of his theme, the utter ruin and inevitable punishment of the deliberately sinning soul, is complete and triumphant.

A few words are necessary to clear the character of the hero from current misconceptions. Macbeth is by no means a representative of the old barbaric Highland chieftains, no rough soldier, or mere man of action. On the contrary he is a noble and courteous gentleman. His wife characterizes him as "too full of the milk of human kindness"; and his hesitation before and his suffering after the murder of Duncan show how abhorrent such a deed of blood was to his original disposition. His relation to his wife in the first part of the play and his bitter sense of loneliness at its close, show him to be a man of warm human affections; and he is by no means indifferent to the breath of popular opinion.

Macbeth is a man of vivid imagination: he sees a visionary dagger marshalling him to Duncan's chamber, he hears ghostly voices proclaiming his future punishment, his overwrought mind conjures up the spectre of the murdered Banquo. He is intensely susceptible to the influence of superstition, and has no firm belief in an overruling Providence to protect him against its ravages. In short Macbeth, though by no means base or brutal, is not a strong man mentally or morally. His reasoning faculties are as simple as his imagination is extraordinary, and hence it comes that he yields so readily to the stronger intellect and the firmer will of his wife. He lacks a true ideal of loyalty or duty; mere earthly power appears to him in the stress of temptation as the highest good. And yet we feel as we close the play that in Macbeth there perished a man who under happier cir-

cumstances might have lived an honourable and even glorious life. Susceptible, impulsive, fearless of human foes, he is no bad type of the mediæval knights who followed the lead of Peter the Hermit, or the gentlemen adventurers of Shakespeare's own day who singed the beard of the Spanish king. But the height to which he might have risen serves only to measure the depth of his fall.

✓ Inasmuch as the whole interest of this drama centres about Macbeth, all the other personages are, quite properly, subordinated to him. Lady Macbeth alone claims for a time an equal share of our attention. But a very brief consideration of the structure of the drama will show how little, comparatively speaking, Shakespeare cared for her. She does not appear in the story at all until Macbeth has resolved to murder Duncan, and she drops out of it almost unnoticed before the final catastrophe. The truth is that her part in the drama is merely relative; it is a foil which serves to bring out more vividly the character of her husband.

The character of Lady Macbeth, then, must be considered as a masterly sketch dashed in with a few strong strokes rather than as an elaborate piece of portrait painting. And as is often the case with sketches, the significance of the work has been frequently misunderstood. Lady Macbeth is no monster of bloodthirstiness nor incarnate demon of ambition. Nor is she to be thought of as one of the wild heroines of Scandinavian legend. On the contrary there is evidence in the play to show that

Shakespeare thought of her as a slight and delicate woman. We hear of her "little hand"; we learn that she needs the stimulus of wine to carry her through the ordeal of the night of murder; we see her swooning in the reaction that follows. And Macbeth's caressing phrase, "dearest chuck," is hardly the pet name that one would apply to a Valkyrie. So far from being bloodthirsty, it is hardly too much to say that Lady Macbeth is naturally of an affectionate and gentle disposition. She has been a loving daughter and a tender mother; her whole attitude toward her husband is that of a devoted wife. The tremendous invocation to the powers of evil, which Shakespeare puts into her mouth, to unsex her, to fill her "top full of direst cruelty," shows in itself that she is not cruel by nature.

Lady Macbeth is no doubt ambitious; but she is ambitious solely for her husband. There is not a word in the play which can be construed into a shadow of evidence that she desired the crown for her own sake. In this point Shakespeare has departed, with the fine instinct of a great artist, from the sources of his story. Holinshed speaks of Lady Macbeth's insatiable ambition, but to have introduced this motive into the play would at once have destroyed the unity of interest which centres round Macbeth alone.

The dominant note in Lady Macbeth's character is her imperious and masterful will. What she wishes, she wishes most intensely; and she drives herself and her husband relentlessly on to the attainment of the goal. She

has none of his fears and scruples, simply because she will not permit herself to consider anything but the object of her desire. On the other hand she shows no trace of Macbeth's sensitiveness to exterior impressions nor of his exalted imaginative powers. She sees no visions and hears no ghostly voices. Her final ruin is due not so much to remorse as to a complete collapse of body and mind brought about, not only by the reaction from the terrible strain which her fierce will had imposed upon all her faculties, but, in an even greater degree, by the crushing disappointment which followed upon the attainment of her goal. The crown which was to give "solely sovereign sway and masterdom" to her husband, brought him only terrible dreams and bitter misery. And as he drifted farther and farther away from her upon a sea of guilt, she awoke to a realization of the irremediable mistake that she had made, like a traveller who has strained every nerve to reach some fancied fountain in the desert, only to find it a mirage. She is not sustained by any belief like her husband's in the false prophecies of the witches; she has not even the last resource of desperate battle. Nothing is left her but death, and she seems to have sought death by her own hands.

Of the remaining characters of the play only four deserve special notice. Banquo and Macduff are very obviously a pair of figures introduced, not merely for the sake of the action, but, in large measure at least, for the sake of character contrast with Macbeth. The importance of Banquo's relation to the witches has already been

pointed out. He fights against the temptation to which Macbeth succumbs, and invokes heavenly aid to banish the suggestions of evil. Yet Banquo is not wholly unaffected by the prophecy of the witches. In spite of his well-founded suspicions as to the real murderer of Duncan, he makes no attempt to avenge his old master. On the contrary, he swears allegiance to Macbeth in the hope, it would seem, that by passively acquiescing in the crime he might hope to reap the profit foretold to his house. And this passive acquiescence is the direct cause of his own tragic fall.

Macduff, on the other hand, who begins to play a prominent part in the story just as Banquo drops out of it, represents the simplicity and straightforwardness of a nature untouched by any dealings with the powers of evil. Of all the nobles he is evidently the most horror-stricken at the murder; with the instinctive abhorrence of virtue to guilt, he assumes at once an attitude of opposition to Macbeth, declines to attend his coronation, and refuses the invitation to his solemn feast. His flight to England is prompted not so much by fear, for he has no knowledge of Macbeth's designs, as by the hope of restoring the true heir to the throne. His wild amazement at the fate which overwhelms his wife and children shows plainly that he has no conception of the depth of guilt to which Macbeth has sunk, and his own essential innocence appears in his despairing outcry that his loved ones were punished for his sins.

Duncan and Malcolm are a pair of characters intro-

duced to represent the true king in contrast to Macbeth, the bloody usurper. Duncan's goodness is merely passive, and consists in gentleness, courtesy, and gratitude. He has been "clear in his great office." Malcolm, on the other hand, represents a more active type of virtue. He is prudent, wise in his choice of friends and councillors, active to redress wrongs and to avenge injuries. It is not without significance that Shakespeare repeatedly puts into his mouth pious expressions of his reliance on the power of God. The child of sainted parents, the friend and ally of the holy Confessor, he is the destined instrument of heaven for the overthrow of a tyranny in league with all the powers of darkness.

Enough has already been said to enable us to realize the position of Macbeth among Shakespeare's plays. It is one of the four great dramas on which his fame as the supreme tragic poet rests. And if it lacks the subtlety of *Hamlet*, the pathos of *Othello*, and the wild sublimity of *King Lear*, it surpasses all three in unity of design, in swiftness of action, and in profound solemnity of purpose. In no other play does Shakespeare show so deep a sense of the reality and the power of evil; in no other does he present so true and terrible a picture of moral ruin. In Professor Dowden's noble words, *Macbeth* is "a tragedy of twilight and the setting-in of thick darkness upon a human soul."

MACBETH

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

DUNCAN, king of Scotland.	A Scotch Doctor.
MALCOLM, } his sons.	A Captain.
DONALBAIN, }	A Porter.
MACBETH, } generals of the king's	An Old Man.
BANQUO, } army.	
MACDUFF, }	LADY MACBETH.
LENNOX, }	LADY MACDUFF.
ROSS, }	Gentlewoman attending on Lady Mac-
MENTEITH, } noblemen of Scotland.	beth.
ANGUS, }	
CAITHNESS, }	HECATE.
FLEANCE, son of Banquo.	Three Witches.
SIWARD, earl of Northumberland, gen- eral of the English forces.	Apparitions.
YOUNG SIWARD, his son.	
SEYTON, an officer attending on Mac- beth.	Lords, Gentlemen, Officers, Soldiers, Murderers, Attendants, and Mes- sengers.
Boy, son to Macduff.	
An English Doctor.	SCENE: <i>Scotland; England.</i>

ACT I

SCENE I. *A desert place*

Thunder and lightning. Enter three Witches

First Witch. When shall we three meet again?

In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

Second Witch. When the hurlyburly's done,
When the battle's lost and won.

3. *hurlyburly*, uproar of battle.

Third Witch. That will be ere the set of sun.

First Witch. Where the place?

Second Witch. Upon the heath.

Third Witch. There to meet with Macbeth.

First Witch. I come, Graymalkin.

Second Witch. Paddock calls.

Third Witch. Anon!

10

All. Fair is foul, and foul is fair.

Hover through the fog and filthy air. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *A camp near Forres*

Alarum within. Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONAL-
BAIN, LENNOX, with Attendants, meeting a bleed-
ing CAPTAIN

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

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

Captain. Doubtful it stood;
As two spent swimmers, that do cling together

8. *Graymalkin*, grey cat. 9. *Paddock*, toad. 10. *Anon*, at once, here used in answer to a call, like our 'coming!' 12. *filthy*, murky. Scene II. *Alarum*, noise of battle. 3. *newest*, latest.
8. *spent*, worn out.

And choke their art. The merciless Macdon-
wald —

Worthy to be a rebel, for to that 10

The multiplying villainies of nature

Do swarm upon him — from the western isles

Of kerns and gallowglasses is supplied ;

And fortune, on his damned quarrel smiling,

Show'd like a rebel's whore : but all's too
weak :

For brave Macbeth — well he deserves that
name —

Disdaining fortune, with his brandish'd steel

Which smoked with bloody execution,

Like valour's minion,

Carved out his passage till he faced the slave ; 20

Which ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to
him,

Till he unseam'd him from the nave to the
chaps,

And fix'd his head upon our battlements.

Duncan. O valiant cousin ! worthy gentleman !

Captain. As whence the sun 'gins his reflection

Shipwrecking storms and direful thunders break,

So from that spring whence comfort seem'd to
come

13. *kerns*, light-armed foot-soldiers. 13. *gallowglasses*, heavy-armed foot-soldiers. 13. *supplied*, reinforced. 19. *minion*, favourite. 22. *unseam'd*, ripped open. 22. *nave*, navel. 22. *chaps*, jaws.

Discomfort swells. Mark, king of Scotland,
mark :

No sooner justice had, with valour arm'd,
Compell'd these skipping kerns to trust their
heels,

30

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

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

Captain. Yes ;

As sparrows eagles, or the hare the lion.
If I say sooth, I must report they were
As cannons overcharged with double cracks ; so
they

Doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe :
Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds,
Or memorize another Golgotha,
I cannot tell —

40

But I am faint ; my gashes cry for help.

Duncan. So well thy words become thee as thy
wounds ;

They smack of honour both. Go get him sur-
geons. [*Exit Captain, attended.*

Who comes here ?

32. *furbish'd*, burnished. 36. *sooth*, truth. 37. *cracks*, a word applied by Shakespeare to the roar of thunder.

Enter ROSS *and* ANGUS

Malcolm. The worthy thane of Ross.

Lennox. What a haste looks through his eyes! So
should he look

That seems to speak things strange.

Ross. God save the king!

Duncan. Whence camest thou, worthy thane?

Ross. From Fife, great king;

Where the Norwegian banners flout the sky

And fan our people cold. 50

Norway himself with terrible numbers,

Assisted by that most disloyal traitor

The thane of Cawdor, began a dismal conflict;

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

Confronted him with self-comparisons,

Point against point rebellious, arm 'gainst arm,

Curbing his lavish spirit: and, to conclude,

The victory fell on us.

Duncan. Great happiness!

Ross. That now

Sweno, the Norways' king, craves composition;

Nor would we deign him burial of his men 60

Till he disbursed, at Saint Colme's inch,

Ten thousand dollars to our general use.

47. *seems*, is about to. 49. *flout*, insult. 53. *dismal*, dis-

astrous. 55. *self-comparisons*, rivalry to himself. 57. *lavish*,

unbridled. 58. *That*, so that. 59. *Norways'*, Norwegians'.

59. *composition*, treaty of peace. 62. *general*, public.

Duncan. 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.

Duncan. What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *A heath*

Thunder. *Enter the three Witches*

First Witch. Where hast thou been, sister?

Second Witch. Killing swine.

Third Witch. Sister, where thou?

First Witch. A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap,
And munch'd, and munch'd, and munch'd.

'Give me,' quoth I:

'Aroint thee, witch!' the rump-fed ronyon 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,
I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do.

10

Second Witch. I'll give thee a wind.

First Witch. Thou'rt kind.

Third Witch. And I another.

64. *present*, instant. Scene III. 6. *Aroint thee*, begone.

6. *ronyon*, scabby woman.

First Witch. I myself have all the other ;
 And the very ports they blow,
 All the quarters that they know
 I' the shipman's card.
 I'll drain him dry as hay :
 Sleep shall neither night nor day
 Hang upon his pent-house lid ;
 He shall live a man forbid :
 Weary se'nnights nine times nine
 Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine :
 Though his bark cannot be lost,
 Yet it shall be tempest-tost.
 Look what I have.

20

Second Witch. Show me, show me.

First Witch. Here I have a pilot's thumb,
 Wreck'd as homeward he did come.

[*Drum within.*

Third Witch. A drum, a drum !
 Macbeth doth come.

30

All. The weird sisters, hand in hand,
 Posters of the sea and land,
 Thus do go about, about :
 Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,
 And thrice again, to make up nine.
 Peace ! the charm's wound up.

20. *pent-house lid*, eyelid.

21. *forbid*, banned, bewitched.

22. *se'nnights*, weeks.

33. *Posters*, couriers.

Enter MACBETH and BANQUO

Macbeth. So foul and fair a day I have not seen.

Banquo. How far is't call'd to Forres? What are these

So wither'd, and so wild in their attire, 40
That look not like the inhabitants o' the earth,
And yet are on't? Live you? or are you aught
That man may question? You seem to under-
stand 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.

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

First Witch. All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, thane
of Glamis!

Second Witch. All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, thane
of Cawdor!

Third Witch. All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king
hereafter! 50

Banquo. 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

44. *choppy*, chapped. 53. *fantastical*, imaginary. 54. *show*, seem to be.

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 60

Your favours nor your hate.

First Witch. Hail !

Second Witch. Hail !

Third Witch. Hail !

First Witch. Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.

Second Witch. Not so happy, yet much happier.

Third Witch. Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none :

So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo !

First Witch. Banquo and Macbeth, all hail !

Macbeth. Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more : 70

By Sinel's death I know I am thane of Glamis ;

But how of Cawdor ? the thane of Cawdor lives,

A prosperous gentleman ; and to be king

Stands not within the prospect of belief,

No more than to be Cawdor. Say from whence

You owe this strange intelligence ? or why

Upon this blasted heath you stop our way

With such prophetic greeting ? Speak, I charge

you.

[*Witches vanish.*]

56. *having*, estate. 57. *That*, so that. 57. *withal*, therewith.

67. *get*, beget. 76. *owe*, get.

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

80

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

Banquo. Were such things here as we do speak
 about?

Or have we eaten on the insane root
 That takes the reason prisoner?

Macbeth. Your children shall be kings.

Banquo. You shall be king.

Macbeth. And thane of Cawdor too: went it not so?

Banquo. To the selfsame tune and words. Who's
 here?

Enter ROSS and ANGUS

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

90

In viewing o'er the rest o' the selfsame day,
 He finds thee in the stout Norwegian ranks,
 Nothing afraid of what thyself didst make,
 Strange images of death. As thick as hail

90. *reads, learns.* 96. *Nothing, not at all.*

Came post with post, and every one did bear
Thy praises in his kingdom's great defence,
And pour'd them down before him.

Angus. We are sent 100

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

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

Banquo. What, can the devil speak true ?

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

Angus. Who was the thane lives yet,
But under heavy judgement bears that life 110
Which he deserves to lose. Whether he was
combined

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

Macbeth. [*Aside*] Glamis, and thane of Cawdor :
The greatest is behind. [*To Ross and Angus*]
Thanks for your pains. —

[*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?

Banquo. That, trusted home, 120
 Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,
 Besides the thane of Cawdor. But 'tis strange :
 And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
 The instruments of darkness tell us truths,
 Win us with honest trifles, to betray's
 In deepest consequence.

[*To Ross and Angus*] Cousins, a word, I pray
 you.

Macbeth. [*Aside*] Two truths are told,
 As happy prologues to the swelling act
 Of the imperial theme. [*To Ross and Angus*]
 I thank you, gentlemen. —

[*Aside*] This supernatural solliciting 130
 Cannot be ill; cannot be good: if ill,
 Why hath it given me earnest of success,
 Commencing in a truth? I am 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 :

121. *enkindle*, incite. 128. *happy*, lucky, successful. 134. *sug-*
gestion, temptation. 135. *image*, idea.

My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
Shakes so my single state of man that function 140
Is smother'd in surmise, and nothing is
But what is not.

Banquo. Look, how our partner's rapt.

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

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

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

Banquo. Worthy Macbeth, we stay upon your
leisure.

Macbeth. Give me your favour: my dull brain was
wrought

With things forgotten. Kind gentlemen, your
pains 150

Are register'd where every day I turn
The leaf to read them. Let us toward the king.

[*To Banquo*] Think upon what hath chanced,
and at more time,

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

140. *function*, activity of the intellect. 141. *surmise*, thought
of the future. 149. *wrought*, worked upon, agitated.

Banquo. Very gladly.

Macbeth. Till then, enough. Come, friends.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV. *Forres. The palace*

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

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


Malcolm. My liege,

They are not yet come back. But I have spoke

With one that saw him die, who did report

That very frankly he confess'd his treasons,

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 death,

To throw away the dearest thing he owed

10

As 'twere a careless trifle.

Duncan. There's no art

To find the mind's construction in the face :

He was a gentleman on whom I built

An absolute trust.

Enter MACBETH, BANQUO, ROSS, and ANGUS

O worthiest cousin !

6. *set forth*, declared. 10. *owed*, owned. 11. *careless*, worth-
less. 12. *construction*, interpretation.

The sin of my ingratitude even now
 Was heavy on me : thou art so far before,
 That swiftest wing of recompense is slow
 To overtake thee. Would thou hadst less
 deserved,

That the proportion both of thanks and pay-
 ment

Might have been mine ! only I have left to say, 20
 More is thy due than more than all can pay.

Macbeth. 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 ;

Which do but what they should, by doing every-
 thing

Safe toward your love and honour.

Duncan. 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 30
 No less to have done so : let me infold thee
 And hold thee to my heart.

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

Duncan. My plenteous joys,
 Wanton in fulness, seek to hide themselves
 In drops of sorrow. Sons, kinsmen, thanes,
 And you whose places are the nearest, know,

We will establish our estate upon
 Our eldest, Malcolm, whom we name hereafter
 The Prince of Cumberland: which honour
 must

Not unaccompanied invest him only, 40
 But signs of nobleness, like stars, shall shine
 On all deservers. [*To Macbeth*] From hence
 to Inverness,
 And bind us further to you.

Macbeth. The rest is labour, which is not used for
 you:

I'll be myself the harbinger, and make joyful
 The hearing of my wife with your approach;
 So humbly take my leave.

Duncan. My worthy Cawdor!

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

On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap,
 For in my way it lies. (Stars, hide your fires; 50
 Let not light see my black and deep desires:
 The eye wink at the hand; yet let that be
 Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see.)
[Exit.]

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

SCENE V. *Inverness. Macbeth's Castle**Enter* LADY MACBETH, *reading a letter*

Lady Macbeth. 'They met me in the day of success ;
 and I have learned by the perfectest report, they
 have more in them than mortal knowledge.
 When I burned in desire to question them fur-
 ther, they made themselves air, into which they
 vanished. Whiles I stood rapt in the wonder
 of it, came missives from the king, who all-
 hailed me "Thane of Cawdor ;" by which title,
 before, these weird sisters saluted me, and re-
 ferred me to the coming on of time, with "Hail,
 king that shalt be !" This have I thought good
 to deliver thee, my dearest partner of greatness,
 that thou mightst not lose the dues of rejoicing,
 by being ignorant of what greatness is promised
 thee. Lay it to thy heart, and farewell.'

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be
 What thou art promised : yet do I fear thy na-
 ture ;

(It is too full o' the milk of human kindness)
 To catch the nearest way : thou wouldst be
 great ;

Art not without ambition, but without
 The illness should attend it : what thou wouldst
 highly,

7. *missives*, messengers. 12. *deliver*, report.

That wouldst thou holily ; wouldst not play
 false,
 And yet wouldst wrongly win : thou'ldst have,
 great Glamis,
 That which cries ' Thus thou must do, if thou
 have it ; '
 And that which rather thou dost fear to do
 Than wishest should be undone. Hie thee
 hither,
 That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,
 And chastise with the valour of my tongue
 All that impedes thee from the golden round,
 Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem
 To have thee crown'd withal.

30

Enter a Messenger

What is your tidings ?

Messenger. The king comes here to-night.

Lady Macbeth. Thou'rt mad to say it :

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

Messenger. 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
 Than would make up his message.

Lady Macbeth. Give him tending ;

30. *metaphysical*, supernatural. 31. *withal*, with. 38. *tending*,
 attention.

He brings great news. [Exit Messenger.

(The raven himself is hoarse
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan 40
Under my battlements. Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full
Of direst cruelty! make thick my blood,
Stop up the access and passage to remorse,
That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
The effect and it! Come to my woman's
breasts,
And take my milk for gall, you murdering
ministers,
Wherever in your sightless substances 50
You wait on nature's mischief! Come, thick
night,
And pall thee 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,
To cry 'Hold, hold!'

Enter MACBETH

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

42. *mortal*, murderous. 45. *remorse*, pity. 47. *fell*, cruel.

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

Lady Macbeth. And when goes hence? 60

Macbeth. To-morrow, as he purposes.

Lady Macbeth. O, never
Shall sun that morrow see!

Your face, my thane, is as a book where men
May read strange matters. To beguile the time,
Look like the time; bear welcome in your eye,
Your hand, your tongue: look like the inno-
cent flower,

But be the serpent under't. He that's coming
Must be provided for: and you shall put
This night's great business into my dispatch;
Which shall to all our nights and days to come 70
Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom.

Macbeth. We will speak further.

Lady Macbeth. Only look up clear;
To alter favour ever is to fear:
Leave all the rest to me. [Exit.

SCENE VI. *Before Macbeth's castle*

Hautboys and torches. Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM,
DONALBAIN, BANQUO, LENNOX, MACDUFF, ROSS,
ANGUS, and Attendants

Duncan. This castle hath a pleasant seat; the air

73. *favour*, countenance. Scene VI. *Hautboys*, wind instru-
ments. 1. *seat*, situation.

Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses.

Banquo. This guest of summer,
The temple-hunting martlet, does approve
By his loved mansionry that the heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here : no jutting, frieze,
Buttress, nor coign of vantage, but this bird
Hath made his pendent bed and procreant cradle :
Where they most breed and haunt, I have ob-
served
The air is delicate.

Enter LADY MACBETH

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

Lady Macbeth. All our service
In every point twice done, and then done
double,
Were poor and single business to contend
Against those honours deep and broad where-
with

4. *martlet*, martin, swallow. 4. *approve*, prove, show. 5. *mansionry*, abode. 6. *jutting*, projection. 10. *delicate*, delicious. 13. *bid*, pray. 13. *God'ild*, God reward.

Your majesty loads our house : for those of old,
And the late dignities heap'd up to them,
We rest your hermits.

Duncan. Where's the thane of Cawdor? 20

We coursed him at the heels, and had a purpose
To be his purveyor : but he rides well,
And his great love, sharp as his spur, hath holp
him

To his home before us. Fair and noble hostess,
We are your guest to-night.

Lady Macbeth. Your servants ever

Have theirs, themselves, and what is theirs, in
compt,

To make their audit at your highness' pleasure,
Still to return your own.

Duncan. Give me your hand ;

Conduct me to mine host : we love him highly,
And shall continue our graces towards him. 30

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

SCENE VII. *Macbeth's castle*

*Hautboys and torches. Enter a Sewer, and divers Ser-
vants with dishes and service, and pass over the
stage. Then enter MACBETH*

Macbeth. If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere
well

21. *coursed*, chased. 22. *purveyor*, forerunner. 26. *in compt*,
accountable. 27. *audit*, reckoning. Scene VII. *Sewer*, chief butler.

It were done quickly : if the assassination
 Could trammel up the consequence, and catch,
 With his surcease, success ; that but this blow
 Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
 But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
 We'd jump the life to come. But in these cases
 We still have judgement here ; that we but teach
 Bloody instructions, which being taught return
 To plague the inventor : this even-handed justice ¹⁰
 Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice
 To our own lips. He's here in double trust :
 First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
 Strong both against the deed ; then, as his host,
 Who should against his murderer shut the door,
 Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
 Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
 So clear in his great office, that his virtues
 Will plead like angels trumpet-tongued against
 The deep damnation of his taking-off ; ²⁰
 And pity, like a naked new-born babe,
 Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubin horsed
 Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
 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

3. *trammel up*, entangle as in a net. 7. *jump*, risk. 8. *still*,
 always. 8. *that*, because. 11. *Commends*, presents. 17. *facul-
 ties*, royal prerogatives. 18. *clear*, blameless. 25. *That*, so that.

Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
And falls on the other —

Enter LADY MACBETH

How now! what news?

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

Macbeth. Hath he ask'd for me?

Lady Macbeth. Know you not he has? 30

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

Lady Macbeth. Was the hope drunk
Wherein you dress'd yourself? hath it slept since?
And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
At what it did so freely? From this time
Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard
To be the same in thine own act and valour 40
As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have that
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,
And live a coward in thine own esteem,
Letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would,'
Like the poor cat i' the adage?

Macbeth. Prithee, peace:
I dare do all that may become a man;
Who dares do more is none.

29. *supp'd*, finished supper. 32. *bought*, gained.

Lady Macbeth.

What beast was't then

That made you break this enterprise to me?

When you durst do it, then you were a man;

And, to be more than what you were, you would 50

Be so much more the man. Nor time nor place

Did then adhere, and yet you would make both:

They have made themselves, and that their fitness

now

Does unmake you. I have given suck, and know

How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:

I would, while it was smiling in my face,

Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,

And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as you

Have done to this.

Macbeth.

If we should fail?

Lady Macbeth.

We fail!

But screw your courage to the sticking-place, 60

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,

That memory, the warder of the brain,

Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason

A limbec only: when in swinish sleep

Their drenched natures lie as in a death,

48. *break*, disclose. 52. *adhere*, suit. 62. *the rather*, the earlier.
 63. *chamberlains*, grooms of the chamber, attendants. 64. *was-*
sail, revelry. 64. *convince*, overpower. 66. *receipt*, receptacle.
 67. *limbec*, alembic, distilling vessel.

What cannot you and I perform upon
 The unguarded Duncan? what not put upon 70
 His spongy officers, who shall bear the guilt
 Of our great quell?

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

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

Macbeth. I am settled, and bend up
 Each corporal agent to this terrible feat. 80
 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 with a torch before him

Banquo. How goes the night, boy?

Fleance. The moon is down; I have not heard the
 clock.

72. *quell*, murder. 73. *mettle*, temper. 73. *compose*, form, give birth to. 74. *received*, accepted as true. 77. *other*, otherwise. 79. *settled*, resolved. 81. *time*, world.

Banquo. And she goes down at twelve.

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

Banquo. Hold, take my sword. There's husbandry
in heaven,

— (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 cursed thoughts that nature
Gives way to in repose !

Enter MACBETH, and a Servant with a torch

Give me my sword.

Who's there ?

10

Macbeth. A friend.

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

He hath been in unusual pleasure, and
Sent forth great largess to your offices :
This diamond he greets your wife withal,
By the name of most kind hostess ; and shut up
In measureless content.

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

Banquo. All's well.
I dreamt last night of the three weird sisters : 20
To you they have show'd some truth.

4. *husbandry*, frugality, economy. 14. *largess*, gifts. 14. *offices*, servants' quarters.

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

Banquo. At your kind'st leisure.

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

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

Macbeth. Good repose the while !

Banquo. Thanks, sir : the like to you !

30

[*Exeunt Banquo and Fleance.*

Macbeth. Go bid thy mistress, when my drink is
 ready,
 She strike upon the bell. Get thee to bed.

[*Exit Servant.*

Is this a dagger which I see before me,
 The handle toward my hand? Come, let me
 clutch thee.

I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
 Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
 To feeling as to sight? or art thou but
 A dagger of the mind, a false creation,

25. *cleave to*, join. 25. *consent*, counsel. 28. *franchised*, free.
 28. *clear*, unstained. 36. *fatal*, ominous. 36. *sensible*, percep-
 tible.

Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?

I see thee yet, in form as palpable

40

As this which now I draw.

Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going ;
And such an instrument I was to use.

Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other
senses,

Or else worth all the rest : I see thee still ;

And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,
Which was not so before. | There's no such
thing :

It is the bloody business which informs

Thus to mine eyes. Now o'er the one half-
world

Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse

50

The curtain'd sleep ; witchcraft celebrates

Pale Hecate's offerings ; and wither'd murder,
Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,

Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy
pace,

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, for fear
Thy very stones prate of my whereabouts,

42. *marshall'st*, leadest. 46. *dudgeon*, handle. 46. *gouts*, drops.
48. *informs*, takes shape. 50. *abuse*, deceive. 58. *whereabout*,
purpose.

And take the present horror from the time,
Which now suits with it. Whiles I threat, he
lives :

60

Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.

[*A bell rings.*

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.*]

SCENE II. *The same*

Enter LADY MACBETH

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

What hath quench'd them hath given me fire.

Hark! Peace!

It was the owl that shriek'd, the fatal bellman,
Which gives the stern'st good-night. He is
about it :

The doors are open, and the surfeited grooms
Do mock their charge with snores : I have
drugg'd their possets,

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

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

Lady Macbeth. Alack, I am afraid they have awaked

6. *possets*, hot drinks containing curdled milk, taken before retiring. 7. *That*, so that. 7. *nature*, life.

And 'tis not done : the attempt and not the deed 10
 Confounds us. Hark! I laid their daggers
 ready ;

He could not miss 'em. Had he not resembled
 My father as he slept, I had done 't.

Enter MACBETH

My husband!

Macbeth. I have done the deed. Didst thou not
 hear a noise?

Lady Macbeth. I heard the owl scream and the
 crickets cry.

Did not you speak?

Macbeth. When?

Lady Macbeth. Now.

Macbeth. As I descended?

Lady Macbeth. Ay.

Macbeth. Hark!

Who lies i' the second chamber?

Lady Macbeth. Donalbain.

Macbeth. This is a sorry sight. 20

[*Looking on his hands.*]

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

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

That they did wake each other : I stood and
 heard them :

11. *Confounds*, ruins. 20. *sorry*, sad.

But they did say their prayers, and address'd
them

Again to sleep.

Lady Macbeth. There are two lodged together.

Macbeth. One cried 'God bless us!' and 'Amen'
the other,

As they had seen me with these hangman's
hands:

Listening their fear I could not say 'Amen,'
When they did say 'God bless us!'

Lady Macbeth. Consider it not so deeply. 30

Macbeth. But wherefore could not I pronounce
'Amen'?

I had most need of blessing, and 'Amen'
Stuck in my throat.

Lady Macbeth. These deeds must not be thought
After these ways; so, it will make us mad.

Macbeth. 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, —

Lady Macbeth. What do you mean? 40

Macbeth. 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.

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

Macbeth. I’ll go no more : 50
 I am afraid to think what I have done ;
 Look on’t again I dare not.

Lady Macbeth. 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. If he do bleed,
 I’ll gild the faces of the grooms withal,
 For it must seem their guilt.

[*Exit. Knocking within.*

Macbeth. 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 60

Clean from my hand? No; this my hand will
 rather
 The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
 Making the green one red.

Re-enter LADY MACBETH

Lady Macbeth. My hands are of your colour, but I
 shame

To wear a heart so white. [*Knocking within.*]
 I hear a knocking

At the south entry: retire we to our chamber:
 A little water clears us of this deed:
 How easy is it then! Your constancy
 Hath left you unattended. [*Knocking within.*]

Hark! more knocking:

Get on your nightgown, lest occasion call us 70
 And show us to be watchers: be not lost
 So poorly in your thoughts.

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

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

SCENE III. *The same*

Enter a Porter. *Knocking within*

Porter. Here's a knocking indeed! If a man were
 porter of hell-gate, he should have old turning

62. *incarnadine*, dye red. 70. *nightgown*, dressing-gown.

72. *poorly*, dejectedly. 2. *old*, plenty of.

the key. [*Knocking within.*] Knock, knock, knock! Who's there, i' the name of Beelzebub? Here 's a farmer, that hanged himself on th' expectation of plenty: come in time; have napkins enow about you; here you'll sweat for't. [*Knocking within.*] Knock, knock! Who's there, in th' other devil's name? Faith, here's an equivocator, that could swear in both the scales against 10 either scale; who committed treason enough for God's sake, yet could not equivocate to heaven: O, come in, equivocator. [*Knocking within.*] Knock, knock, knock! Who's there? Faith, here's an English tailor come hither, for stealing out of a French hose: come in, tailor; here you may roast your goose. [*Knocking within.*] 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 20 all professions, that go the primrose way to the everlasting bonfire. [*Knocking within.*] Anon, anon! I pray you, remember the porter.

[*Opens the gate.*]

Enter MACDUFF *and* LENNOX

Macduff. Was it so late, friend, ere you went to bed,

That you do lie so late?

6. *napkins*, handkerchiefs. 7. *enow*, enough. 17. *goose*, tailor's smoothing-iron.

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

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

42

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

Macduff. Is thy master stirring ?

Enter MACBETH

Our knocking has awaked him ; here he comes.

Lennox. Good morrow, noble sir.

Macbeth. Good morrow, both.

Macduff. Is the king stirring, worthy thane ?

Macbeth. Not yet. 50

Macduff. He did command me to call timely on
him :

I had almost slipp'd the hour.

Macbeth. I'll bring you to him.

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

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

Macduff. I'll make so bold to call,
For 'tis my limited service. [Exit.

27. *cock*, cock-crow.

51. *timely*, early.

55. *physics*, cures.

57. *limited*, appointed.

Lennox. Goes the king hence to-day?

Macbeth. He does: he did appoint so.

Lennox. The night has been unruly: where we lay,
Our chimneys were blown down, and, as they
say,

60

Lamentings heard i' th' air, strange screams of
death,

And prophesying with accents terrible

Of dire combustion and confused events

New hatch'd to the woful time: the obscure bird
Clamour'd the livelong night: some say, the
earth

Was feverous and did shake.

Macbeth. 'Twas a rough night.

Lennox. My young remembrance cannot parallel
A fellow to it.

Re-enter MACDUFF

Macduff. O horror, horror, horror! Tongue nor
heart

Cannot conceive nor name thee.

Macbeth. }
Lennox. } What's the matter? 70

Macduff. Confusion now hath made his master-
piece.

Most sacrilegious murder hath broke ope

The Lord's anointed temple, and stole thence

The life o' the building.

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

Lennox. Mean you his majesty?

Macduff. Approach the chamber, and destroy your sight

With a new Gorgon : do not bid me speak ;
See, and then speak yourselves.

[*Exeunt Macbeth and Lennox.*

Awake, awake !

Ring the alarum-bell. Murder and treason !

Banquo and Donalbain ! Malcolm ! awake ! 80

Shake off this downy sleep, death's counterfeit,

And look on death itself ! up, up, and see

The great doom's image ! Malcolm ! Banquo !

As from your graves rise up, and walk like
sprites,

To countenance this horror. Ring the bell.

[*Bell rings.*

Enter LADY MACBETH

Lady Macbeth. What's the business,

That such a hideous trumpet calls to parley

The sleepers of the house ? speak, speak !

Macduff. O gentle lady,

'Tis not for you to hear what I can speak :

The repetition, in a woman's ear, 90

Would murder as it fell.

84. *sprites*, spirits, ghosts. 85. *countenance*, be in keeping with.

90. *repetition*, recital.

Enter BANQUO

O Banquo, Banquo!

Our royal master's murder'd.

Lady Macbeth.

Woe, alas!

What, in our house?

Banquo.

Too cruel any where.

Dear Duff, I prithee, contradict thyself,

And say it is not so.

Re-enter MACBETH *and* LENNOX, *with* ROSS

Macbeth. Had I but died an hour before this
chance,

I had lived a blessed time; for from this
instant

There's nothing serious in mortality:

All is but toys: renown and grace is dead;

The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees 100

Is left this vault to brag of.

Enter MALCOLM *and* DONALBAIN

Donalbain. What is amiss?

Macbeth.

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.

Macduff. Your royal father's murder'd.

Malcolm.

O, by whom?

Lennox. Those of his chamber, as it seem'd, had
done 't :

Their hands and faces were all badged with
blood ;

So were their daggers, which unwiped we found
Upon their pillows :

They stared, and were distracted ; no man's
life

110

Was to be trusted with them.

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

Macduff. Wherefore did you so ?

Macbeth. Who can be wise, amazed, temperate and
furious,

Loyal and neutral, in a moment ? No man :
The expedition of my violent love

Outrun the pauser reason. Here lay Duncan,
His silver skin laced with his golden blood,
And his gash'd stabs look'd like a breach in
nature

For ruin's wasteful entrance : there, the mur-
derers,

120

Steep'd in the colours of their trade, their
daggers

Unmannerly breech'd with gore : who could
refrain,

107. *badged*, marked as with a badge. 114. *amazed*, dazed.

116. *expedition*, haste. 118. *laced*, ornamented as with lace.

120. *wasteful*, wasting, devastating.

That had a heart to love, and in that heart
 Courage to make's love known ?

Lady Macbeth. Help me hence, ho ! [*She faints.*

Macduff. Look to the lady.

Malcolm. [*Aside to Donalbain*] Why do we hold
 our tongues,

That most may claim this argument for ours ?

Donalbain. [*Aside to Malcolm*] What should be
 spoken here, where our fate,

Hid in an auger-hole, may rush, and seize us ?

Let us away ; our tears are not yet brew'd.

Malcolm. [*Aside to Donalbain*] Nor our strong
 sorrow upon the foot of motion. 130

Banquo. Look to the lady :

[Lady Macbeth is carried out.]

And when we have our naked frailties hid,

That suffer in exposure, let us meet,

And question this most bloody piece of work,

To know it further. Fears and scruples shake us :

In the great hand of God I stand, and thence

Against the undivulged pretence I fight

Of treasonous malice.

Macduff. And so do I.

All. So all.

Macbeth. Let's briefly put on manly readiness,
 And meet i' the hall together.

124. *make's*, make his. 126. *argument*, theme for speech.
 134. *question*, investigate. 135. *scruples*, doubts. 137. *pretence*,
 intention. 139. *briefly*, quickly.

All. Well contented. 140

[*Exeunt all but Malcolm and Donalbain.*

Malcolm. 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.

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

Malcolm. This murderous shaft that's shot
Hath not yet lighted, and our safest way
Is to avoid the aim. Therefore to horse;
And let us not be dainty of leave-taking, 150
But shift away: there's warrant in that theft
Which steals itself when there's no mercy left.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *Outside MACBETH'S castle*

Enter Ross with an Old Man

Old Man. Threescore and ten I can remember well:
Within the volume of which time I have seen
Hours dreadful and things strange, but this
sore night
Hath trifled former knowings.

142. *office*, duty. 150. *dainty*, particular. 151. *shift*, steal.
3. *sore*, sad.

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

Old Man. 'Tis unnatural, 10
 Even like the deed that's done. On Tuesday
 last
 A falcon towering in her pride of place
 Was by a mousing owl hawk'd at and kill'd.

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

Old Man. 'Tis said they eat each other.

Ross. They did so, to the amazement of mine
 eyes,
 That look'd upon't.

8. *predominance*, astrological influence. 16. *flung out*, rushed out. 17. *as*, as if.

Enter MACDUFF

Here comes the good Macduff. 20

How goes the world, sir, now?

Macduff. Why, see you not?

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

Macduff. Those that Macbeth hath slain.

Ross. Alas, the day!

What good could they pretend?

Macduff. They were suborn'd :
Malcolm and Donalbain, the king's two sons,
Are stol'n away and fled, which puts upon them
Suspicion of the deed.

Ross. 'Gainst nature still :

Thriftless ambition, that will ravin up

Thine own life's means! Then 'tis most like

The sovereignty will fall upon Macbeth. 30

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

Ross. Where is Duncan's body?

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

Ross. Will you to Scone?

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

24. *pretend*, intend. 24. *suborn'd*, instigated. 28. *Thriftless*, prodigal. 28. *ravin*, devour. 32. *invested*, formally crowned.
34. *storehouse*, burying-place.

Ross. Well, I will thither.

Macduff. Well, may you see things well done
there : adieu !

Lest our old robes sit easier than our new !

Ross. Farewell, father.

Old Man. God's benison go with you, and with
those

40

That would make good of bad and friends of
foes ! [*Exeunt.*

ACT III

SCENE I. *Forres. The palace*

Enter BANQUO

Banquo. Thou hast it now : king, Cawdor, Glamis,
all,

As the weird women promised, and I fear
Thou play'dst most foully for't : yet it was said
It should not stand in thy posterity,
But that myself should be the root and father
Of many kings. If there come truth from
them —

As upon thee, Macbeth, their speeches shine —
Why, by the verities on thee made good,
May they not be my oracles as well
And set me up in hope ? But hush, no more. 10

40. *benison*, blessing. 7. *shine*, are brilliantly fulfilled.

Sennet sounded. Enter MACBETH, as king; LADY MACBETH, LENNOX, ROSS, Lords, and Attendants

Macbeth. Here's our chief guest.

Lady Macbeth. If he had been forgotten,
It had been as a gap in our great feast,
And all-thing unbecoming.

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

Banquo. Let your highness
Command upon me, to the which my duties
Are with a most indissoluble tie
For ever knit.

Macbeth. Ride you this afternoon?

Banquo. Ay, my good lord.

20

Macbeth. 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?

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

Macbeth. Fail not our feast.

Banquo. My lord, I will not.

Macbeth. We hear our bloody cousins are bestow'd 30
 In England and in Ireland, not confessing
 Their cruel parricide, filling their hearers
 With strange invention: but of that to-morrow,
 When therewithal we shall have cause of state
 Craving us jointly. Hie you to horse: adieu,
 Till you return at night. Goes Fleance with
 you?

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

Macbeth. I wish your horses swift and sure of foot,
 And so I do commend you to their backs.
 Farewell. [*Exit Banquo.* 40

Let every man be master of his time
 Till seven at night; to make society
 The sweeter welcome, we will keep ourself
 Till supper-time alone: while then, God be with
 you!

[*Exeunt all but Macbeth and an Attendant.*

Sirrah,

A word with you: attend those men our pleasure?

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

Macbeth. Bring them before us. [*Exit Attendant.*

To be thus is nothing;

But to be safely thus: our fears in Banquo

Stick deep; and in his royalty of nature 50

30. *bestow'd*, settled. 34. *therewithal*, in addition thereto.

34. *cause*, subject-matter. 39. *commend*, commit. 44. *while*,

till. 45. *sirrah*, fellow.

Reigns that which would be fear'd : 'tis much he dares,

And, to that dauntless temper of his mind,
He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour
To act in safety. There is none but he
Whose being I do fear : and under him
My Genius is rebuked, as it is said

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

When first they put the name of king upon me,
And bade them speak to him ; then prophet-like

They hail'd him father to a line of kings : 60

Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown

And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,

Thence to be wrench'd with an unlineal hand,

No son of mine succeeding. If't be so,

For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind ;

For them the gracious Duncan have I murder'd ;

Put rancours in the vessel of my peace

Only for them, and mine eternal jewel

Given to the common enemy of man,

To make them kings, the seeds of Banquo kings ! 70

Rather than so, come, fate, into the list,

And champion me to the utterance ! Who's there ?

52. *to*, in addition to. 56. *Genius*, presiding spirit. 56. *rebuked*, checked, restrained. 63. *with*, by. 65. *filed*, defiled. 71. *fate*, death.

Re-enter Attendant, with two Murderers

Now go to the door, and stay there till we call.

[*Exit Attendant.*]

Was it not yesterday we spoke together?

First Murderer. It was, so please your highness.

Macbeth.

Well then, now

Have you consider'd of my speeches? Know
That it was he in the times past which held you
So under fortune, which you thought had been
Our innocent self: this I made good to you
In our last conference, pass'd in probation with
you,

80

How you were borne in hand, how cross'd, the
instruments,

Who wrought with them, and all things else that
might

To half a soul and to a notion crazed

Say 'Thus did Banquo.'

First Murderer.

You made it known to us.

Macbeth.

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 for this good man and for his issue,

79. *made good*, showed clearly. 80. *probation*, proving. 81. *borne in hand*, deceived by false promises. 81. *cross'd*, thwarted.

83. *notion*, mind. 88. *gospell'd*, full of the spirit of the gospel.

Whose heavy hand hath bow'd you to the grave 90
 And beggar'd yours for ever?

First Murderer. We are men, my liege.

Macbeth. Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men;
 As hounds and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels,
 curs,

Shoughs, water-rugs and demi-wolves, are cleft
 All by the name of dogs: the valued file
 Distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle,
 The housekeeper, the hunter, every one
 According to the gift which bounteous nature
 Hath in him closed, whereby he does receive
 Particular addition, from the bill

100

That writes them all alike: and so of men.
 Now if you have a station in the file,
 Not i' the worst rank of manhood, say't,
 And I will put that business in your bosoms
 Whose execution takes your enemy off,
 Grapples you to the heart and love of us,
 Who wear our health but sickly in his life,
 Which in his death were perfect.

Second Murderer. I am one, my liege,

Whom the vile blows and buffets of the world
 Hath so incensed that I am reckless what

110

I do to spite the world.

First Murderer. And I another

94. *Shoughs*, shock dogs. 94. *water-rugs*, poodles. 94. *demi-wolves*, crosses between a dog and a wolf. 94. *clept*, called.
 97. *housekeeper*, watch-dog. 105. *execution*, performance.

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

Macbeth. Both of you
Know Banquo was your enemy.

Both Murderers. True, my lord.

Macbeth. So is he mine, and in such bloody distance
That every minute of his being thrusts
Against my near'st of life: and though I could
With barefaced power sweep him from my sight
And bid my will avouch it, yet I must not, 120
For certain friends that are both his and mine,
Whose loves I may not drop, but wail his fall
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.

Second Murderer. We shall, my lord;
Perform what you command us.

First Murderer. Though our lives —

Macbeth. Your spirits shine through you. Within
this hour at most
I will advise you where to plant yourselves,
Acquaint you with the perfect spy o' the time, 130
The moment on't; for't must be done to-night,
And something from the palace; always thought

112. *tugg'd with*, hauled about by. 116. *distance*, enmity.
119. *barefaced*, open. 121. *For*, on account of. 132. *something from*, some distance away from. 132. *thought*, borne in mind.

That I require a clearness : and with him —
 To leave no rubs nor botches in the work —
 Fleance his son, that keeps him company,
 Whose absence is no less material to me
 Than is his father's, must embrace the fate
 Of that dark hour. Resolve yourselves apart :
 I'll come to you anon.

Both Murderers. We are resolved, my lord.

Macbeth. I'll call upon you straight : abide within. 140

[*Exeunt Murderers.*

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

[*Exit.*

SCENE II. *The palace*

Enter LADY MACBETH *and a* Servant

Lady Macbeth. Is Banquo gone from court ?

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

Lady Macbeth. Say to the king, I would attend his
 leisure

For a few words.

Servant. Madam, I will. [*Exit.*

Lady Macbeth. Nought's had, all's spent,

Where our desire is got without content :

'Tis safer to be that which we destroy

Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy.

134. *rubs*, rough places. 136. *material*, important. 140. *straight*, straightway.

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

10

With them they think on ? Things without all
 remedy

Should be without regard : what's done is done.

Macbeth. We have scorch'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 peace, have sent to peace, 20

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 : nor steel, nor
 poison,

Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing,

Can touch him further.

9. *sorriest*, most dismal. 10. *Using*, cherishing. 13. *scorch'd*,
 hacked. 22. *ecstasy*, madness. 25. *levy*, army.

Lady Macbeth.

Come on ;

Gentle my lord, sleek o'er your rugged looks ;
Be bright and jovial among your guests to-night.

Macbeth. So shall I, love ; and so, I pray, be
you :

Let your remembrance apply to Banquo ; 30
Present him eminence, both with eye and tongue :
Unsafe the while, that we
Must lave our honours in these flattering
streams,
And make our faces visards to our hearts,
Disguising what they are.

Lady Macbeth.

You must leave this.

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

Lady Macbeth. But in them nature's copy's not
eterne.

Macbeth. There's comfort yet ; they are assailable ;
Then be thou jocund : ere the bat hath flown 40
His cloister'd flight ; ere to black Hecate's sum-
mons
The shard-borne beetle with his drowsy hums
Hath rung night's yawning peal, there shall be
done
A deed of dreadful note.

26. *Come on*, hold, enough. 34. *visards*, masks. 38. *copy*,
lease. 41. *to*, in obedience to. 42. *shard-borne*, borne on scaly
wings. 43. *yawning*, drowsy. 44. *note*, notoriety.

Lady Macbeth.

What's to be done?

Macbeth. Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest
chuck,

Till thou applaud the deed. Come, seeling
night,

Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day,

And with thy bloody and invisible hand

Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond

Which keeps me pale! Light thickens, and the
crow

50

Makes wing to the rooky wood:

Good things of day begin to droop and drowse,

Whiles night's black agents to their preys do
rouse.

Thou marvell'st at my words: but hold thee
still;

Things bad begun make strong themselves by
ill:

So, prithee, go with me.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. *A park near the palace*

Enter three Murderers

First Murderer. But who did bid thee join with us?

Third Murderer.

Macbeth.

Second Murderer. He needs not our mistrust; since
he delivers

45. *chuck*, darling. 46. *seeling*, blinding. 51. *rooky*, frequented
by rooks. 2. *delivers*, reports.

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

First Murderer. Then stand with us.
The west yet glimmers with some streaks of
day :

Now spurs the lated traveller apace
To gain the timely inn, and near approaches
The subject of our watch.

Third Murderer. Hark ! I hear horses.

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

Second Murderer. Then 'tis he : the rest
That are within the note of expectation 10
Already are i' the court.

First Murderer. His horses go about.

Third Murderer. Almost a mile : but he does usu-
ally —

So all men do — from hence to the palace gate
Make it their walk.

Second Murderer. A light, a light !

Enter BANQUO, and FLEANCE with a torch

Third Murderer. 'Tis he.

First Murderer. Stand to't.

Banquo. It will be rain to-night.

First Murderer. Let it come down.

[*They set upon Banquo.*]

3. *offices*, business. 7. *timely*, appropriate to the time, welcome.
11. *about*, the long way around.

Banquo. O, treachery! Fly, good Fleance, fly, fly, fly!
Thou mayst revenge. O slave!

[*Dies.* FLEANCE *escapes.*

Third Murderer. Who did strike out the light!

First Murderer. Was't not the way?

Third Murderer. There's but one down; the son
is fled.

Second Murderer. We have lost 20
Best half of our affair.

First Murderer. Well, let's away and say how much
is done. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *Hall in the palace*

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

Macbeth. You know your own degrees; sit down
at first

And last a hearty welcome.

Lords. Thanks to your majesty.

Macbeth. Ourselves will mingle with society

And play the humble host.

Our hostess keeps her state, but in best time

We will require her welcome.

Lady Macbeth. Pronounce it for me, sir, to all our
friends,

For my heart speaks they are welcome.

1. *degrees*, ranks. 3. *Ourselves*, we (the royal plural). 6. *require*, ask for.

Enter first Murderer to the door

Macbeth. See, they encounter thee with their hearts'
thanks.

Both sides are even : here I'll sit i' the midst : 10
Be large in mirth ; anon we'll drink a measure
The table round. [*Approaching the door*] There's
blood upon thy face.

Murderer. 'Tis Banquo's then.

Macbeth. 'Tis better thee without than he within.
Is he dispatch'd ?

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

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

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

Murderer. Most royal sir,
Fleance is 'scaped. 20

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

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

11. *large*, unrestrained. 11. *anon*, soon. 22. *founded*, firmly based. 23. *general*, free to go everywhere. 23. *casing*, enveloping. 25. *saucy*, insolent.

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

Macbeth. Thanks for that.
 [*Aside*] There the grown serpent lies; the
 worm that's fled
 Hath nature that in time will venom breed, 30
 No teeth for the present. Get thee gone: to-
 morrow

We'll hear ourselves again. [*Exit Murderer.*]

Lady Macbeth. 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: to feed were best at
 home;
 From thence the sauce to meat is ceremony;
 Meeting were bare without it.

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

Lennox. May't please your highness sit.
 [*The Ghost of Banquo enters, and sits
 in Macbeth's place.*]

Macbeth. Here had we now our country's honour
 roof'd, 40
 Were the graced person of our Banquo present;

27. *trenched*, carved. 29. *worm*, snake. 33. *cheer*, welcome.
 37. *Meeting*, a formal gathering. 40. *roof'd*, under one roof.
 41. *graced*, gracious.

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 ?

Macbeth. The table's full.

Lennox. Here is a place reserved, sir.

Macbeth. Where ?

Lennox. Here, my good lord. What is't that
moves your highness ?

Macbeth. Which of you have done this ?

Lords. What, my good lord ?

Macbeth. 'Thou canst not say I did it : never shake 50
Thy gory locks at me.

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

Lady Macbeth. Sit, worthy friends : my lord is often
thus,

And hath been from his youth : pray you, keep
seat ;

The fit is momentary ; upon a thought

He will again be well : if much you note him,

You shall offend him and extend his passion :

Feed, and regard him not. [*To Macbeth*] Are
you a man ?

Macbeth. Ay, and a bold one, that dare look on that
Which might appal the devil.

48. *moves*, excites. 56. *note*, pay attention to. 57. *passion*,
suffering,

Lady Macbeth. O proper stuff ! 60

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

Macbeth. Prithee, see there! behold! look! lo!
 how say you?

Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak
 too. 70

If charnel-houses and our graves must send
 Those that we bury back, our monuments
 Shall be the maws of kites. [*Exit Ghost.*]

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

Macbeth. If I stand here, I saw him.

Lady Macbeth. Fie, for shame!

Macbeth. Blood hath been shed ere now, i' the
 olden time,

Ere humane statute purged the gentle weal ;
 Ay, and since too, murders have been perform'd
 Too terrible for the ear : the times has been,

60. *proper*, fine. 62. *air-drawn*, drawn in the air, imaginary.

63. *flaws*, outbursts. 64. *become*, suit. 68. *stool*, chair.

71. *charnel-houses*, places where the bones of the dead are stored.

72. *monuments*, tombs. .

That, when the brains were out, the man would
die,

And there an end ; but now they rise again, 80

With twenty mortal murders on their crowns,
And push us from our stools : this is more
strange

Than such a murder is.

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

Macbeth. I do forget.

Do not muse at me, my most worthy friends ;
I have a strange infirmity, which is nothing
To those that know me. Come, love and health
to all ;

Then I'll sit down. Give me some wine, fill full.
I drink to the general joy o' the whole table,
And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss ; 90
Would he were here ! to all and him we thirst,
And all to all.

Lords. Our duties, and the pledge.

Re-enter Ghost

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

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

81. *mortal murders*, deadly wounds. 85. *muse*, wonder.

95. *speculation*, power of sight.

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

Macbeth. What man dare, I dare :
Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear, 100
The arm'd rhinoceros, or the Hyrcan tiger ;
Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves
Shall never tremble : or be alive again,
And dare me to the desert with thy sword ;
If trembling I inhabit then, protest me
The baby of a girl. Hence, horrible shadow !
Unreal mockery, hence ! *[Exit Ghost.*

Why, so : being gone,
I am a man again. *[The Lords rise.]* Pray you,
sit still.

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

Macbeth. Can such things be, 110
And overcome us like a summer's cloud,
Without our special wonder ? You make me
strange
Even to the disposition that I owe,
When now I think you can behold such sights,
And keep the natural ruby of your cheeks,
When mine is blanch'd with fear.

102. *nerves*, muscles. 105. *protest*, declare. 109. *displaced*,
driven away. 110. *admired*, amazing. 111. *overcome*, pass over.

113. *disposition*, character. 113. *owe*, own, possess.

Ross. What sights, my lord ?

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

Question enrages him : at once, good night :
Stand not upon the order of your going,
But go at once.

Lennox. Good night; and better health 120
Attend his majesty !

Lady Macbeth. A kind good night to all !

[*Exeunt all but Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.*

Macbeth. It will have blood, they say : blood will
have blood :

Stones have been known to move and trees to
speak ;

Augures and understood relations have

By maggot-pies and choughs and rooks brought
forth

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

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

Macbeth. How say'st thou that Macduff denies his
person

At our great bidding ?

Lady Macbeth. Did you send to him, sir ?

Macbeth. I hear it by the way, but I will send : 130

There's not a one of them but in his house

118. *enrages*, maddens. 124. *Augures*, auguries. 125. *maggot-pies*, magpies. 125. *choughs*, jack-daws. 125. *brought forth*, revealed. 130. *by the way*, by chance.

I keep a servant fee'd. I will to-morrow,
 And betimes I will, to the weird sisters :
 More shall they speak, for now I am bent to
 know,
 By the worst means, the worst. ~ For mine own
 good

All causes shall give way : I am in blood
 Stepp'd in so far that, should I wade no more,
 Returning were as tedious as go o'er :
 Strange things I have in head that will to hand,
 Which must be acted ere they may be scann'd. 140

Lady Macbeth. You lack the season of all natures,
 sleep.

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

Is the initiate fear that wants hard use :

We are yet but young in deed. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V. *A heath*

Thunder. Enter the three Witches, meeting HECATE

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

Hecate. Have I not reason, beldams as you are ?

Saucy and over-bold, how did you dare

To trade and traffic with Macbeth

136. *causes*, considerations. 140. *scann'd*, closely examined.

141. *the season*, the seasoning, the preservative. 142. *self-abuse*,
 self-deception. 143. *wants*, lacks. 2. *beldams*, hags.

In riddles and affairs of death ;
 And I, the mistress of your charms,
 The close contriver of all harms,
 Was never call'd to bear my part,
 Or show the glory of our art ?
 And, which is worse, all you have done 10
 Hath been but for a wayward son,
 Spiteful and wrathful ; who, as others do,
 Loves for his own ends, not for you.
 But make amends now : get you gone,
 And at the pit of Acheron
 Meet me i' the morning : thither he
 Will come to know his destiny :
 Your vessels and your spells provide,
 Your charms and every thing beside.
 I am for th' air ; this night I'll spend 20
 Unto a dismal and a fatal end :
 Great business must be wrought ere noon :
 Upon the corner of the moon
 There hangs a vaporous drop profound ;
 I'll catch it ere it come to ground :
 And that distill'd by magic sleights
 Shall raise such artificial sprites
 As by the strength of their illusion
 Shall draw him on to his confusion :
 He shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear 30
 His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace and fear :

7. *close contriver*, secret plotter. 24. *profound*, ready to fall.
 26. *sleights*, devices.

And you all know security
Is mortals' chiefest enemy.

[*Music and a song.*

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

[*Song within: 'Come away, come away,' etc.*

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

SCENE VI. *Forres. The palace*

Enter LENNOX and another Lord

Lennox. My former speeches have but hit your
thoughts,

Which can interpret farther: only I say
Things have been strangely borne. The
gracious Duncan

Was pitied of Macbeth: marry, he was dead:
And the right-valiant Banquo walk'd too late;
Whom, you may say, if't please you, Fleance
kill'd,

For Fleance fled: men must not walk too late.
Who cannot want the thought, how monstrous
It was for Malcolm and for Donalbain

To kill their gracious father? damned fact! 10

How it did grieve Macbeth! did he not straight,
In pious rage, the two delinquents tear,

32. *security*, confidence. 1. *hit*, agreed with. 3. *borne*, managed. 4. *of*, by. 8. *want*, lack. 10. *fact*, deed. 12. *tear*, mangle.

That were the slaves of drink and thralls of
sleep?

Was not that nobly done? Ay, and wisely
too;

For t'would have anger'd any heart alive
To hear the men deny't. So that, I say,
He has borne all things well: and I do think
That, had he Duncan's sons under his key —
As, and't please heaven, he shall not — they
should find

What 'twere to kill a father; so should Fleance. 20
But, peace! for from broad words, and 'cause
he fail'd

His presence at the tyrant's feast, I hear,
Macduff lives in disgrace: sir, can you tell
Where he bestows himself?

Lord. The son of Duncan,
From whom this tyrant holds the due of birth,
Lives in the English court, and is received
Of the most pious Edward with such grace
That the malevolence of fortune nothing
Takes from his high respect. Thither Macduff
is gone

To pray the holy king, upon his aid 30
To wake Northumberland and warlike Siward:
That by the help of these, with Him above
To ratify the work, we may again

21. *from*, on account of. 21. *broad*, frank. 21. *fail'd*, refused.
25. *holds*, withholds. 31. *wake*, call to arms. 33. *ratify*, sanction.

Give to our tables meat, sleep to our nights,
Free from our feasts and banquets bloody
knives,

Do faithful homage and receive free honours :
All which we pine for now : and this report
Hath so exasperate their king that he
Prepares for some attempt of war.

Lennox. Sent he to Macduff ?

Lord. He did : and with an absolute ' Sir, not I,' 40
The cloudy messenger turns me his back,
And hums, as who should say ' You'll rue the
time
That clogs me with this answer.'

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

Lord. I'll send my prayers with him.

[*Exeunt.*

40. *absolute*, positive. 41. *cloudy*, sullen. 46. *unfold*, tell.

ACT IV

SCENE I. *A cavern. In the middle, a boiling cauldron*

Thunder. Enter the three Witches

First Witch. Thrice the brinded cat hath mew'd.

Second Witch. Thrice and once the hedge-pig
whined.

Third Witch. Harpier cries ' 'Tis time, 'tis time.'

First Witch. Round about the cauldron go :

In the poison'd entrails throw.

Toad, that under cold stone

Days and nights has thirty one

Swelter'd venom sleeping got,

Boil thou first i' the charmed pot.

All. Double, double toil and trouble ;

10

Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

Second Witch. Fillet of a fenny snake,

In the cauldron boil and bake ;

Eye of newt and toe of frog,

Wool of bat and tongue of dog,

Adder's fork and blind-worm's sting,

Lizard's leg and howlet's wing,

For a charm of powerful trouble,

Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

All. Double, double toil and trouble ;

20

Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

1. *brinded*, brindled. 2. *hedge-pig*, hedgehog. 3. *Harpier*, harpy. 16. *fork*, forked tongue. 17. *howlet*, a little owl.

Third Witch. Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf,
 Witches' mummy, maw and gulf
 Of the ravin'd salt-sea shark,
 Root of hemlock digg'd i' the dark,
 Liver of blaspheming Jew,
 Gall of goat and slips of yew
 Sliver'd in the moon's eclipse,
 Nose of Turk and Tartar's lips,
 Finger of birth-strangled babe
 Ditch-deliver'd by a drab,
 Make the gruel thick and slab :
 Add thereto a tiger's chaudron,
 For the ingredients of our cauldron.

30

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

Second Witch. Cool it with a baboon's blood,
 Then the charm is firm and good.

Enter HECATE and the other three Witches

Hecate. 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.

40

[*Music and a song : ' Black spirits,' etc.*

[*Hecate retires.*

Second Witch. By the pricking of my thumbs,

23. *gulf*, gullet. 24. *ravin'd*, gorged with prey. 31. *Ditch-deliver'd*, born in a ditch. 32. *slab*, slimy. 33. *chaudron*, entrails.

Something wicked this way comes :
 Open, locks.
 Whoever knocks !

Enter MACBETH

Macbeth. How now, you secret, black, and midnight
 hags !

What is't you do ?

All. A deed without a name.

Macbeth. I conjure you, by that which you profess, 50

Howe'er you came to know it, answer me :

Though you untie the winds and let them fight

Against the churches ; though the yesty waves

Confound and swallow navigation up ;

Though bladed corn be lodged 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 germens tumble all together,

Even till destruction sicken ; answer me 60

To what I ask you.

First Witch. Speak.

Second Witch. Demand.

50. *profess*, make claim to know. 53. *ysty*, frothy, like yeast.

54. *navigation*, ships. 55. *bladed corn*, corn in the green ear.

55. *lodged*, beaten down. 57. *pyramids*, towers, or steeples.

59. *germens*, seeds of life.

Third Witch.

We'll answer.

First Witch. Say, if thou'dst rather hear it from our
mouths,

Or from our masters ?

Macbeth.

Call 'em, let me see 'em.

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

All.

Come, high or low ;

Thyself and office deftly show !

Thunder. *First Apparition : an armed Head*

Macbeth. Tell me, thou unknown power, —

First Witch.

He knows thy thought :

Hear his speech, but say thou nought.

70

First Apparition. Macbeth ! Macbeth ! Macbeth !
beware Macduff ;

Beware the thane of Fife. Dismiss me : enough.

[*Descends.*

Macbeth. Whate'er thou art, for thy good caution
thanks ;

Thou hast harp'd my fear aright : but one word
more, —

First Witch. He will not be commanded : here's
another,

More potent than the first.

65. *nine farrow*, litter of nine. 68. *deftly*, fitly. 74. *harp'd*,
touched.

Thunder. *Second Apparition: a bloody Child*

Second Apparition. Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!

Macbeth. Had I three ears, I'd hear thee.

Second Apparition. Be bloody, bold and resolute;
laugh to scorn

The power of man, for none of woman born . 80

Shall harm Macbeth. [*Descends.*

Macbeth. Then live, Macduff: what need I fear of
thee?

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

Thunder. *Third Apparition: a Child crowned, with a
tree in his hand*

What is this,

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

All. Listen, but speak not to't.

Third Apparition. Be lion-mettled, proud, and take
no care 90

Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are:
Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be until
Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill
Shall come against him. [*Descends.*

Macbeth. That will never be:

Who can impress the forest, bid the tree
Unfix his earth-bound root? Sweet bodements!
good!

Rebellious head, rise never till the wood
Of Birnam rise, and our high-placed Macbeth
Shall live the lease of nature, pay his breath
To time and mortal custom. Yet my heart 100
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.

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

First Witch. Show!

Second Witch. Show!

Third Witch. Show!

All. Show his eyes, and grieve his heart; 110
Come like shadows, so depart!

*A show of eight Kings, the last with a glass in his hand;
BANQUO'S Ghost following*

Macbeth. Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo:
down!

Thy crown does sear mine eye-balls. And thy
hair,

95. *impress*, force into service. 96. *bodements*, predictions.
106. *noise*, music.

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 the crack of
 doom ?

Another yet ? A seventh ? I'll see no more :
 And yet the eighth appears, who bears a glass
 Which shows me many more ; and some I see 120
 That two-fold balls and treble sceptres carry :
 Horrible sight ! Now I see 'tis true ;
 For the blood-bolter'd Banquo smiles upon me,
 And points at them for his. What, is this so ?

First 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,
 While you perform your antic round, 130
 That this great king may kindly say
 Our duties did his welcome pay.

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

Macbeth. Where are they ? Gone ? Let this per-
 nicious hour
 Stand aye accursed in the calendar !
 Come in, without there !

119. *glass*, mirror. 123. *blood-bolter'd*, with hair matted with
 blood. 127. *sprites*, spirits. 130. *antic*, fantastic, grotesque.

Enter LENNOX

Lennox. What's your grace's will?

Macbeth. Saw you the weird sisters?

Lennox. No, my lord.

Macbeth. Came they not by you?

Lennox. No indeed, my lord.

Macbeth. 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? 140

Lennox. 'Tis two or three, my lord, that bring you
word

Macduff is fled to England.

Macbeth. Fled to England!

Lennox. Ay, my good lord.

Macbeth. [*Aside*] Time, thou anticipatest my dread
exploits:

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

The castle of Macduff I will surprise; 150
Seize upon Fife; give to the edge o' the sword
His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls

144. *anticipatest*, preventest. 145. *flighty*, fleeting. 147. *firstlings*, first offsprings.

That trace him in his line. No boasting like a
fool ;

This deed I'll do before this purpose cool :
But no more sights ! — Where are these gentle-
men ?

Come, bring me where they are. [Exeunt.

SCENE II. *Fife. Macduff's castle*

Enter LADY MACDUFF, *her* SON, *and* ROSS

Lady Macduff. What had he done, to make him
fly the land ?

Ross. You must have patience, madam.

Lady Macduff. He had none :
His flight was madness : when our actions do
not,

Our fears do make us traitors.

Ross. You know not
Whether it was his wisdom or his fear.

Lady Macduff. 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 : for the poor wren,
The most diminutive of birds, will fight,

Her young ones in her nest, against the owl.

10

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,
 He is noble, wise, judicious, and best knows
 The fits o' the season. I dare not speak much
 further ;
 But cruel are the times, when we are traitors
 And do not know ourselves ; when we hold
 rumour

From what we fear, yet know not what we fear, 20
 But float upon a wild and violent sea
 Each way and move. 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. My pretty cousin,
 Blessing upon you !

Lady Macduff. Father'd he is, and yet he's father-
 less.

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

Lady Macduff. Sirrah, your father's dead : 30
 And what will you do now ? How will you live ?

14. *coz*, cousin. 15. *for*, as for. 17. *fits*, violent disorders.
 22. *move*, are tossed about.

Son. As birds do, mother.

Lady Macduff. What, with worms and flies?

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

Lady Macduff. Poor bird! thou'ldst never fear the
net nor lime,

The pitfall nor the gin.

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

My father is not dead, for all your saying.

Lady Macduff. Yes, he is dead: how wilt thou do
for a father?

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

Lady Macduff. Why, I can buy me twenty at any
market.

40

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

Lady Macduff. Thou speak'st with all thy wit, and
yet, i' faith,

With wit enough for thee.

Son. Was my father a traitor, mother?

Lady Macduff. Ay, that he was.

Son. What is a traitor?

Lady Macduff. Why, one that swears and lies.

Son. And be all traitors that do so?

Lady Macduff. Every one that does so is a traitor,
and must be hanged.

50

Son. And must they all be hanged that swear and
lie?

Lady Macduff. Every one.

Son. Who must hang them ?

Lady Macduff. Why, the honest men.

Son. Then the liars and swearers are fools : for there are liars and swearers enow to beat the honest men and hang up them.

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

60

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

Lady Macduff. Poor prattler, how thou talk'st !

Enter a Messenger

Messenger. Bless you, fair dame ! I am not to you known,

Though in your state of honour I am perfect.

I doubt some danger does approach you nearly :

If you will take a homely man's advice,

Be not found here ; hence, with your little ones.

To fright you thus, methinks I am too savage ;

70

To do worse to you were fell cruelty,

Which is too nigh your person. Heaven preserve you !

I dare abide no longer.

[*Exit.*

Lady Macduff. Whither should I fly ?

I have done no harm. But I remember now

I am in this earthly world, where to do harm

Is often laudable, to do good sometime

Accounted dangerous folly : why then, alas,
Do I put up that womanly defence,
To say I have done no harm ? — What are these
faces ?

Enter Murderers

First Murderer. Where is your husband ? 80

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

First Murderer. He's a traitor.

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

First Murderer. What, you egg !
[*Stabbing him.*

Young fry of treachery !

Son. He has kill'd me, mother :
Run away, I pray you ! [Dies.

[*Exit Lady Macduff, crying ' Murder !'*
Exeunt Murderers, following her.

SCENE III. *England. Before the king's palace*

Enter MALCOLM and MACDUFF

Malcolm. Let us seek out some desolate shade, and
there

Weep our sad bosoms empty.

Macduff. Let us rather
Hold fast the mortal sword, and like good men

78. *womanly*, womanish, weak. 84. *fry*, offspring. 3. *mortal*,
death-dealing.

Bestride our down-fall'n birthdom : each new
 morn
 New widows howl, new orphans cry, new
 sorrows
 Strike heaven on the face, that it resounds
 As if it felt with Scotland and yell'd out
 Like syllable of dolour.

Malcolm. What I believe, I'll wail ;
 What know, believe ; and what I can redress,
 As I shall find the time to friend, I will. 10
 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 am young ; but
 something
 You may discern of him through me ; and
 wisdom
 To offer up a weak, poor, innocent lamb
 To appease an angry god.

Macduff. I am not treacherous.

Malcolm. But Macbeth is.
 A good and virtuous nature may recoil
 In an imperial charge. But I shall crave your
 pardon ; 20

4. *birthdom*, mother-country. 6. *that*, so that. 10. *to friend*, favourable. 13. *honest*, honourable. 14. *touch'd*, injured. 15. *discern*, learn.

That which you are, my thoughts cannot
transpose :

Angels are bright still, though the brightest
fell :

Though all things foul would wear the brows of
grace,

Yet grace must still look so.

Macduff. I have lost my hopes.

Malcolm. Perchance even there where I did find
my doubts.

Why in that rawness left you wife and child,
Those precious motives, those strong knots of
love,

Without leave-taking? I pray you,

Let not my jealousies be your dishonours,

But mine own safeties. You may be rightly
just,

Whatever I shall think.

Macduff. Bleed, bleed, poor country ;

Great tyranny, lay thou thy basis sure,

For goodness dare not check thee : wear thou
thy wrongs ;

The title is affeer'd. Fare thee well, lord :

I would not be the villain that thou think'st

For the whole space that's in the tyrant's grasp

And the rich East to boot.

21. *transpose*, alter the nature of. 24. *so*, like itself. 26. *rawness*, rash haste. 27. *motives*, causes for action. 29. *jealousies*, suspicions. 34. *affeer'd*, confirmed.

Malcolm.

Be not offended :

I speak not as in absolute fear of you.

I think our country sinks beneath the yoke ;

It weeps, it bleeds, and each new day a gash 40

Is added to her wounds : I think withal

There would be hands uplifted in my right ;

And here from gracious England have I offer

Of goodly thousands : but for all this,

When I shall tread upon the tyrant's head,

Or wear it on my sword, yet my poor country

Shall have more vices than it had before,

More suffer and more sundry ways than ever,

By him that shall succeed.

Macduff.

What should he be ?

Malcolm. It is myself I mean : in whom I know 50

All the particulars of vice so grafted

That, when they shall be open'd, black Macbeth

Will seem as pure as snow, and the poor state

Esteem him as a lamb, being compared

With my confineless harms.

Macduff.

Not in the legions

Of horrid hell can come a devil more damn'd

In evils to top Macbeth.

Malcolm.

I grant him bloody,

Luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful,

Sudden, malicious, smacking of every sin

41. *withal*, moreover. 46. *wear*, bear. 48. *sundry*, diverse.
 57. *top*, surpass. 58. *Luxurious*, licentious. 59. *Sudden*, hasty,
 violent.

That has a name : but there's no bottom, none, 60
 In my voluptuousness : your wives, your daughters,
 ters,

Your matrons, and your maids, could not fill up
 The cistern of my lust, and my desire
 All continent impediments would o'erbear,
 That did oppose my will : better Macbeth
 Than such an one to reign.

Macduff. Boundless intemperance
 In nature is a tyranny ; it hath been
 The untimely emptying of the happy throne,
 And fall of many kings. But fear not yet
 To take upon you what is yours : you may 70
 Convey your pleasures in a spacious plenty,
 And yet seem cold, the time you may so
 hoodwink :

We have willing dames enough ; there cannot
 be
 That vulture in you, to devour so many
 As will to greatness dedicate themselves,
 Finding it so inclined.

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

64. *continent*, restraining. 65. *will*, desire, lust. 69. *fall*, cause of fall. 69. *yet*, nevertheless. 71. *convey*, manage secretly. 72. *hoodwink*, blind, deceive. 77. *ill-composed*, compounded of evil qualities. 77. *affection*, disposition. 78. *stanchless*, unstanchable.

Desire his jewels and this other's house : 80
 And my more-having would be as a sauce
 To make me hunger more, that I should forge
 Quarrels unjust against the good and loyal,
 Destroying them for wealth.

Macduff. This avarice
 Sticks deeper, grows with more pernicious root
 Than summer-seeming lust, and it hath been
 The sword of our slain kings : yet do not fear ;
 Scotland hath foisons to fill up your will
 Of your mere own : all these are portable,
 With other graces weigh'd. 90

Malcolm. But I have none : the king-becoming
 graces,
 As justice, verity, temperance, stableness,
 Bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness,
 Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude,
 I have no relish of them, but abound
 In the division of each several crime,
 Acting it many ways. Nay, had I power, I
 should
 Pour the sweet milk of concord into hell,
 Uproar the universal peace, confound
 All unity on earth.

Macduff. O Scotland, Scotland ! 100

81. *sauce*, stimulant. 86. *summer-seeming*, summer-like.
 88. *foisons*, plenties. 89. *mere own*, very own. 89. *portable*, en-
 durable. 95. *relish of*, trace of. 99. *Uproar*, disturb by revolu-
 tion. 99. *confound*, destroy.

Malcolm. If such a one be fit to govern, speak :
I am as I have spoken.

Macduff. Fit to govern !
No, not to live. O nation miserable !
With an untitled tyrant bloody-sceptre'd,
When shalt thou see thy wholesome days again,
Since that the truest issue of thy throne
By his own interdiction stands accursed,
And does blaspheme his breed ? Thy royal
father
Was a most sainted king : the queen that bore
thee,
Oftener upon her knees than on her feet, 110
Died every day she lived. Fare thee well !
These evils thou repeat'st upon thyself
Have banish'd me from Scotland. O my breast,
Thy hope ends here !

Malcolm. Macduff, this noble passion,
Child of integrity, hath from my soul
Wiped the black scruples, reconciled my thoughts
To thy good truth and honour. Devilish Mac-
beth
By many of these trains hath sought to win me
Into his power ; and modest wisdom plucks me
From over-credulous haste : but God above 120
Deal between thee and me ! for even now

104. *untitled*, unlawful. 105. *wholesome*, healthy, prosperous.
114. *passion*, passionate outburst. 118. *trains*, tricks. 119. *mod-
est*, sober. 119. *plucks*, restrains.

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
 Unknown to woman, never was forsworn,
 Scarcely have coveted what was mine own,
 At no time broke my faith, would not betray
 The devil to his fellow, and delight
 No less in truth than life : my first false speaking 130
 Was this upon myself : what I am truly,
 Is thine and my poor country's to command :
 Whither indeed, before thy here-approach,
 Old Siward, with ten thousand warlike men,
 Already at a point, was setting forth.
 Now we'll together, and the chance of goodness
 Be like our warranted quarrel ! Why are you
 silent ?

Macduff. Such welcome and unwelcome things at
 once
 'Tis hard to reconcile.

Enter a Doctor

Malcolm. Well, more anon. Comes the king forth,
 I pray you ? 140

Doctor. Ay, sir ; there are a crew of wretched souls
 That stay his cure : their malady convinces (*overcomes*)

124. *blames*, accusations. 125. *For*, as. 135. *at a point*, prepared. 137. *warranted*, just. 141. *crew*, company. 142. *stay*, wait for.

The great assay of art ; but at his touch,
Such sanctity hath heaven given his hand,
They presently amend.

Malcolm. I thank you, doctor. [*Exit Doctor.*]

Macduff. What's the disease he means?

Malcolm. 'Tis call'd the evil :

A most miraculous work in this good king ;
Which often, since my here-remain in England,
I have seen him do. How he solicits heaven,
Himself best knows : but strangely-visited
people,

150

All swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
The mere 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. With this strange
virtue

He hath a heavenly gift of prophecy,
And sundry blessings hang about his throne
That speak him full of grace.

Enter Ross

Macduff. See, who comes here ?

Malcolm. My countryman ; but yet I know him not. 160

Macduff. My ever gentle cousin, welcome hither.

145. *presently*, straightway. 149. *solicits*, moves by petitions.

150. *strangely-visited*, strangely afflicted. 153. *stamp*, coin.

156. *virtue*, power. 159. *speak*, proclaim.

Malcolm. I know him now : good God, betimes remove

The means that makes us strangers !

Ross. Sir, amen.

Macduff. Stands Scotland where it did ?

Ross. Alas, poor country !

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 ;

Where sighs and groans and shrieks that rend the air,

Are made, not mark'd ; where violent sorrow seems

A modern ecstasy : the dead man's knell

170

Is there scarce ask'd for who ; and good men's lives

Expire before the flowers in their caps,

Dying or ere they sicken.

Macduff. O, relation

Too nice, and yet too true !

Malcolm. What's the newest grief ?

Ross. That of an hour's age doth hiss the speaker ;
Each minute teems a new one.

Macduff. How does my wife ?

Ross. Why, well.

169. *made*, uttered. 170. *modern ecstasy*, ordinary fit. 173. *relation*, report. 173. *or ere*, before. 174. *nice*, fancifully minute. 176. *teems*, brings forth.

Macduff. And all my children ?

Ross. Well too.

Macduff. The tyrant has not batter'd at their
peace ?

Ross. No ; they were well at peace when I did
leave 'em.

Macduff. Be not a niggard of your speech : how
goes't ?

180

Ross. When I came hither to transport the tidings,
Which I have heavily borne, there ran a rumour
Of many worthy fellows that were out ;
Which was to my belief witness'd the rather,
For that I saw the tyrant's power a-foot :
Now is the time of help ; your eye in Scotland
Would create soldiers, make our women fight,
To doff their dire distresses.

Malcolm. Be't their comfort
We are coming thither : gracious England
hath

Lent us good Siward and ten thousand men ; 190
An older and a better soldier none
That Christendom gives out.

Ross. Would I could answer
This comfort with the like ! But I have words
That would be howl'd out in the desert air,
Where hearing should not latch them.

182. *heavily*, sadly. 183. *out*, up in arms. 185. *For that*, be-
cause. 185. *power*, army. 188. *doff*, put away, get rid of.
192. *gives out*, proclaims. 195. *latch*, catch.

Macduff. What concern they?
The general cause? or is it a fee-grief
Due to some single breast?

Ross. No mind that's honest
But in it shares some woe, though the main part
Pertains to you alone.

Macduff. If it be mine,
Keep it not from me, quickly let me have it. 200

Ross. Let not your ears despise my tongue for ever,
Which shall possess them with the heaviest
sound

That ever yet they heard.

Macduff. Hum! I guess at it.

Ross. Your castle is surprised; your wife and babes
Savagely slaughter'd: to relate the manner,
Were, on the quarry of these murder'd deer,
To add the death of you.

Malcolm. Merciful heaven!
What, man! ne'er pull your hat upon your brows;
Give sorrow words: the grief that does not speak
Whispers the o'erfraught heart, and bids it break. 210

Macduff. My children too?

Ross. Wife, children, servants, all
That could be found.

Macduff. And I must be from thence!
My wife kill'd too?

Ross. I have said.

196. *fee-grief*, private sorrow. 202. *possess*, in form.
206. *quarry*, heap of bodies. 210. *o'erfraught*, overburdened.

Malcolm. Be comforted :
 Let's make us medicines of our great revenge,
 To cure this deadly grief.

Macduff. He has no children. All my pretty ones ?
 Did you say all ? O hell-kite ! All ?
 What, all my pretty chickens and their dam
 At one fell swoop ?

Malcolm. Dispute it like a man.

Macduff. I shall do so ; 220
 But I must also feel it as a man :
 I cannot but remember such things were,
 That were most precious to me. Did heaven
 look on,
 And would not take their part ? Sinful Mac-
 duff,
 They were all struck for thee ! naught that I am,
 Not for their own demerits, but for mine,
 Fell slaughter on their souls ! heaven rest them
 now !

Malcolm. Be this the whetstone of your sword : let
 grief
 Convert to anger ; blunt not the heart, enrage it.

Macduff. O, I could play the woman with mine
 eyes, 230
 And braggart with my tongue ! But, gentle
 heavens,
 Cut short all intermission ; front to front

220. *Dispute*, fight against. 225. *naught*, wicked. 229. *Con-
 vert*, turn. 232. *intermission*, delay.

Bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself ;
 Within my sword's length set him ; if he 'scape,
 Heaven forgive him too !

Malcolm. This time goes manly.

Come, go we to the king ; our power is ready ;
 Our lack is nothing but our leave. Macbeth
 Is ripe for shaking, and the powers above
 Put on their instruments. Receive what cheer
 you may ;

The night is long that never finds the day. 240

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT V

SCENE I. *Dunsinane. Ante-room in the castle*

MD

Enter a Doctor of Physic and a Waiting-Gentlewoman

Doctor. I have two nights watched with you, but
 can perceive no truth in your report. When
 was it she last walked ?

Gentlewoman. Since his majesty went into the field,
 I have seen her rise from her bed, throw her
 nightgown upon her, unlock her closet, take forth
 paper, fold it, write upon't, read it, afterwards
 seal it, and again return to bed ; yet all this
 while in a most fast sleep.

235. *time, tune.* 239. *Put on, push forward, encourage.*

6. *closet, cabinet.*

Doctor. A great perturbation in nature, to receive at once the benefit of sleep and do the effects of watching! In this slumbery agitation, besides her walking and other actual performances, what, at any time, have you heard her say? 10

Gentlewoman. That, sir, which I will not report after her.

Doctor. You may to me, and 'tis most meet you should.

Gentlewoman. Neither to you nor any one, having no witness to confirm my speech. 20

Enter LADY MACBETH, with a taper

Lo you, here she comes! This is her very guise, and, upon my life, fast asleep. Observe her; stand close.

Doctor. How came she by that light?

Gentlewoman. Why, it stood by her: she has light by her continually; 'tis her command.

Doctor. You see, her eyes are open.

Gentlewoman. Ay, but their sense are shut.

Doctor. What is it she does now? Look, how she rubs her hands. 30

Gentlewoman. It is an accustomed action with her, to seem thus washing her hands: I have known her continue in this a quarter of an hour.

Lady Macbeth. Yet here's a spot.

Doctor. Hark! she speaks; I will set down what

16. *report*, repeat. 24. *stand close*, keep concealed.

comes from her, to satisfy my remembrance the more strongly.

Lady Macbeth. Out, damned spot! out, I say! One :
two : why, then 'tis time to do't. Hell is murky. 40
Fie, my lord, fie! a soldier, and afeard? What
need we fear who knows it, when none can call
our power to account? Yet who would have
thought the old man to have had so much blood
in him?

Doctor. Do you mark that?

Lady Macbeth. 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. 50

Doctor. Go to, go to ; you have known what you
should not.

Gentlewoman. She has spoke what she should not, I
am sure of that : heaven knows what she has
known.

Lady Macbeth. Here's the smell of the blood still :
all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this
little hand. Oh, oh, oh !

Doctor. What a sigh is there ! The heart is sorely
charged. 60

Gentlewoman. I would not have such a heart in my
bosom for the dignity of the whole body.

Doctor. Well, well, well !

37. *satisfy*, assure. 50. *starting*, sudden motion. 51. *go to*, an
expression of reproof.

Gentlewoman. Pray God it be, sir.

Doctor. This disease is beyond my practice : yet I have known those which have walked in their sleep who have died holily in their beds.

Lady Macbeth. Wash your hands ; put on your night-gown ; look not so pale :—I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried ; he cannot come out on's 70
grave.

Doctor. Even so ?

Lady Macbeth. To bed, to bed ; there's knocking at the gate : come, come, come, come, give me your hand : what's done cannot be undone : to bed, to bed, to bed. [Exit.

Doctor. Will she go now to bed ?

Gentlewoman. Directly.

Doctor. Foul whisperings are abroad : unnatural deeds

Do breed unnatural troubles : infected minds 80
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,
And still keep eyes upon her. So good night :
My mind she has mated and amazed my sight :
I think, but dare not speak.

Gentlewoman. Good night, good doctor.

[Exeunt.

70. on's, of his.

72. Even so? an expression of surprise.

86. mated, bewildered.

SCENE II. *The country near Dunsinane*

Drum and colours. Enter MENTEITH, CAITHNESS, ANGUS, LENNOX, and Soldiers

Menteith. 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.

Angus. Near Birnam wood
Shall we well meet them; that way are they
coming,

Caithness. Who knows if Donalbain be with his
brother?

Lennox. For certain, sir, he is not: I have a file
Of all the gentry: there is Siward's son,
And many unrough youths, that even now 10
Protest their first of manhood.

Menteith. What does the tyrant?

Caithness. Great Dunsinane he strongly fortifies:
Some say he's mad; others, that lesser hate
him,
Do call it valiant fury: but, for certain,
He cannot buckle his distemper'd cause
Within the belt of rule.

4. *bleeding*, bloody. 4. *alarm*, call to arms. 5. *mortified*, dead.
10. *unrough*, beardless.

Angus. Now does he feel
 His secret murders sticking on his hands ;
 Now minutely revolts upbraid his faith-breach ;
 Those he commands move only in command,
 Nothing in love : now does he feel his title 20
 Hang loose about him, like a giant's robe
 Upon a dwarfish thief.

Menteith. Who then shall blame
 His pester'd senses to recoil and start,
 When all that is within him does condemn
 Itself for being there ?

Caithness. Well, march we on,
 To give obedience where 'tis truly owed :
 Meet we the medicine of the sickly weal,
 And with him pour we, in our country's purge,
 Each drop of us.

Lennox. Or so much as it needs
 To dew the sovereign flower and drown the
 weeds. 30
 Make we our march towards Birnam.
 [*Exeunt, marching.*]

SCENE III. *Dunsinane. A room in the castle*

Enter MACBETH, Doctor, *and* Attendants

Macbeth. Bring me no more reports ; let them fly
 all :

18. *minutely*, every minute. 23. *pester'd*, troubled. 27. *medicine*, doctor. 27. *weal*, commonwealth.

Till Birnam wood remove to Dunsinane
I cannot taint with fear. What's the boy
Malcolm?

Was he not born of woman? The spirits that
know

All mortal consequences have pronounced me
thus :

'Fear not, Macbeth; no man that's born of
woman

Shall e'er have power upon thee.' Then fly,
false thanes,

And mingle with the English epicures :

The mind I sway by and the heart I bear

Shall never sag with doubt nor shake with fear. 10

Enter a Servant

The devil damn thee black, thou cream-faced
loon !

Where got'st thou that goose look ?

Servant. There is ten thousand —

Macbeth. Geese, villain ?

Servant. Soldiers, sir.

Macbeth. Go prick thy face and over-red thy fear,
Thou lily-liver'd boy. What soldiers, patch ?
Death of thy soul ! those linen cheeks of thine
Are counsellors to fear. What soldiers, whey-
face ?

3. *taint*, be infected. 9. *sway*, move. 11. *loon*, worthless fellow. 15. *lily-liver'd*, cowardly. 15. *patch*, fool.

Servant. The English force, so please you.

Macbeth. Take thy face hence. [Exit *Servant.*

Seyton! — I am sick at heart,
When I behold — Seyton, I say! — This push 20
Will cheer me ever, or disseat me now.

I have lived long enough : my way of life
Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf,
And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have ; but, in their stead,
Curses, not loud but deep, mouth-honour,
breath,

Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare
not.

Seyton!

Enter SEYTON

Seyton. What's your gracious pleasure ?

Macbeth. What news more ? 30

Seyton. All is confirm'd, my lord, which was
reported.

Macbeth. I'll fight, till from my bones my flesh be
hack'd.

Give me my armour.

Seyton. 'Tis not needed yet.

Macbeth. I'll put it on.

Send out moe horses, skirr the country round ;

20. *push*, attack. 21. *disseat*, dethrone. 27. *breath*, flattery.
35. *skirr*, scour.

Hang those that talk of fear. Give me mine
armour.

How does your patient, doctor ?

Doctor. Not so sick, my lord,
As she is troubled with thick-coming fancies,
That keep her from her rest.

Macbeth. Cure her of that.

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow, 40
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart ?

Doctor. Therein the patient
Must minister to himself.

Macbeth. Throw physic to the dogs, I'll none of it.
Come, put mine armour on ; give me my staff.
Seyton, send out. Doctor, the thanes fly from
me.

Come, sir, dispatch. If thou couldst, doctor, cast 50
The water of my land, find her disease
And purge it to a sound and pristine health,
I would applaud thee to the very echo,
That should applaud again. Pull't off, I say.
What rhubarb, senna, or what purgative drug,
Would scour these English hence ? Hear'st
thou of them ?

43. *oblivious*, causing forgetfulness. 48. *staff*, baton. 50. *dispatch*, be quick.

Doctor. Ay, my good lord : your royal preparation
Makes us hear something.

Macbeth. Bring it after me.

I will not be afraid of death and bane
Till Birnam forest come to Dunsinane. 60

Doctor. [*Aside*] Were I from Dunsinane away and
clear,

Profit again should hardly draw me here.

[*Exeunt.*]

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*

Malcolm. Cousins, I hope the days are near at hand
That chambers will be safe.

Menteith. We doubt it nothing.

Siward. What wood is this before us?

Menteith. The wood of Birnam.

Malcolm. Let every soldier hew him down a bough,
And bear't before him : thereby shall we
shadow

The numbers of our host, and make discovery
Err in report of us.

Soldiers. It shall be done.

59. *bane*, ruin. 1. *Cousins*, kinsmen. 6. *discovery*, reconnaissance.

Siward. We learn no other but the confident tyrant
Keeps still in Dunsinane, and will endure
Our setting down before't.

Malcolm. 'Tis his main hope : 10
For where there is advantage to be given,
Both more and less have given him the revolt,
And none serve with him but constrained things
Whose hearts are absent too.

Macduff. Let our just censures
Attend the true event, and put we on
Industrious soldiership.

Siward. The time approaches,
That will with due decision make us know
What we shall say we have and what we owe.
Thoughts speculative their unsure hopes relate,
But certain issue strokes must arbitrate : 20
Towards which advance the war.

[*Exeunt marching.*]

SCENE V. DUNSINANE. *Within the castle*

Enter MACBETH, SEYTON, *and* Soldiers, *with drum*
and colours

Macbeth. Hang out our banners on the outward
walls ;
The cry is still ' They come : ' our castle's
strength

8. *but*, but that. 11. *advantage*, good opportunity. 12. *more*
and less, great and small. 19. *relate*, utter.

Will laugh a siege to scorn : here let them lie
 Till famine and the ague eat them up :
 Were they not forced 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 ?

Seyton. It is the cry of women, my good lord.

[*Exit.*

Macbeth. I have almost forgot the taste of fears :
 The time has been, my senses would have cool'd 10
 To hear a night-shriek, and my fell of hair
 Would at a dismal treatise 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 ?

Seyton. The queen, my lord, is dead.

Macbeth. 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, 20

5. *forced*, reinforced. 11. *fell of hair*, the hair of my scalp.

12. *treatise*, story. 13. *As*, as if. 13. *with*, on. 15. *start*, startle.

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.

Enter a Messenger

Thou comest to use thy tongue ; thy story quickly.

Messenger. Gracious my lord,

30

I should report that which I say I saw,

But know not how to do it.

Macbeth.

Well, say, sir.

Messenger. As I did stand my watch upon the hill,

I look'd toward Birnam, and anon, methought,

The wood began to move.

Macbeth.

Liar and slave !

Messenger. Let me endure your wrath, if't be not so :

Within this three mile may you see it coming ;

I say, a moving grove.

Macbeth.

If thou speak'st false,

Upon the next tree shalt thou hang alive,

Till famine cling thee : if thy speech be sooth,

40

I care not if thou dost for me as much.

I pull in resolution, and begin

To doubt the equivocation of the fiend

That lies like truth : ' Fear not, till Birnam wood
 Do come to Dunsinane ; ' and now a wood
 Comes toward Dunsinane. Arm, arm, and out!
 If this which he avouches does appear,
 There is nor flying hence nor tarrying here.
 I 'gin to be a-weary of the sun,
 And wish th' estate o' the world were now un-
 done.

50

Ring the alarum-bell! Blow, wind! come,
 wrack!

At least we'll die with harness on our back.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI. *Dunsinane. Before the castle*

*Drum and colours. Enter MALCOLM, old SIWARD,
 MACDUFF, and their Army, with boughs*

Malcolm. Now near enough; your leavy screens
 throw down,

And show like those you are. You, worthy uncle,
 Shall, with my cousin, your right noble son,
 Lead our first battle: worthy Macduff and we
 Shall take upon's what else remains to do,
 According to our order.

Siward. Fare you well.

Do we but find the tyrant's power to-night,
 Let us be beaten, if we cannot fight.

47. *avouches*, asserts. 51. *wrack*, wreck. 52. *harness*, armour.
 2. *show*, appear. 4. *battle*, line. 6. *order*, plan of battle.

Macduff. Make all our trumpets speak ; give them
 all breath,
 Those clamorous harbingers of blood and death. 10
 [Exeunt.

SCENE VII. *Another part of the field*

Alarums. Enter MACBETH

Macbeth. They have tied me to a stake ; I cannot
 fly,
 But bear-like I must fight the course. What's he
 That was not born of woman ? Such a one
 Am I to fear, or none.

Enter YOUNG SIWARD

Young Siward. What is thy name ?

Macbeth. Thou'lt be afraid to hear it.

Young Siward. No ; though thou call'st thyself a
 hotter name
 Than any is in hell.

Macbeth. My name's Macbeth.

Young Siward. The devil himself could not pro-
 nounce a title
 More hateful to mine ear.

Macbeth. No, nor more fearful.

Young Siward. Thou liest, abhorred tyrant ; with
 my sword 10
 I 'll prove the lie thou speak'st.

[*They fight, and young Siward is slain.*

Macbeth. 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

Macduff. That way the noise is. Tyrant, show thy
 face!

If thou be'st slain and with no stroke of mine,
 My wife and children's ghosts will haunt me
 still.

I cannot strike at wretched kerns, whose arms
 Are hired to bear their staves: either thou,
 Macbeth,

Or else my sword, with an unbatter'd edge,
 I sheathe again undeeded. There thou shouldst
 be;

20

By this great clatter, one of greatest note
 Seems bruited: let me find him, fortune! And
 More I beg not. [*Exit. Alarums.*

Enter MALCOLM and old SIWARD

Siward. This way, my lord; the castle's gently
 render'd:

The tyrant's people on both sides do fight;
 The noble thanes do bravely in the war;

18. *staves*, spears. 20. *undeeded*, unmarked by deeds.
 20. *shouldst*, must. 21. *note*, importance, rank. 22. *bruited*, an-
 nounced by the noise.

The day almost itself professes yours,
And little is to do.

Malcolm. We have met with foes
That strike beside us.

Siward. Enter, sir, the castle.
[*Exeunt. Alarum.*]

SCENE VIII. *Another part of the field*

Enter MACBETH

Macbeth. Why should I play the Roman fool, and
die
On mine own sword? whiles I see lives, the
gashes
Do better upon them.

Enter MACDUFF

Macduff. Turn, hell-hound, turn!

Macbeth. Of all men else I have avoided thee:
But get thee back; my soul is too much charged
With blood of thine already.

Macduff. I have no words:
My voice is in my sword, thou bloodier villain
Than terms can give thee out! [*They fight.*]

Macbeth. Thou lovest labour:
As easy, mayst thou the intrenchant air
With thy keen sword impress as make me bleed: 10

2. *lives*, living men. 9. *intrenchant*, invulnerable. 10. *impress*, make a mark on.

Let fall thy blade on vulnerable crests ;
 I bear a charmed life, which must not yield
 To one of woman born.

Macduff. Despair thy charm,
 And let the angel whom thou still hast served
 Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb
 Untimely ripp'd.

Macbeth. Accursed be that tongue that tells me so,
 For it hath cow'd my better part of man !
 And be these juggling fiends no more believed,
 That palter with us in a double sense ; 20
 That keep the word of promise to our ear,
 And break it to our hope. I'll not fight with
 thee.

Macduff. Then yield thee, coward,
 And live to be the show and gaze o' the time :
 We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,
 Painted upon a pole, and underwrit,
 ' Here may you see the tyrant.'

Macbeth. I will not yield,
 To kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet,
 And to be baited with the rabble's curse.
 Though Birnam wood be come to Dunsinane, 30
 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 ;

14. *angel*, demon. 14. *still*, continually. 24. *gaze*, gazing-stock. 26. *underwrit*, written underneath. 32. *the last*, the last resource.

Malcolm. He's worth more sorrow, 50
And that I'll spend for him.

Siward. He's worth no more :
They say he parted well and paid his score :
And so God be with him ! Here comes newer
comfort.

Re-enter MACDUFF, with MACBETH'S head

Macduff. Hail, king ! for so thou art : behold,
where stands
The usurper's cursed head : the time is free :
I see thee compass'd with thy kingdom's pearl,
That speak my salutation in their minds ;
Whose voices I desire aloud with mine :
Hail, King of Scotland !

All. Hail, King of Scotland !
[*Flourish.*

Malcolm. We shall not spend a large expense of time 60
Before we reckon with your several loves,
And make us even with you. My thanes and
kinsmen,
Henceforth be earls, the first that ever Scotland
In such an honour named. What's more to do,
Which would be planted newly with the time,
As calling home our exiled friends abroad
That fled the snares of watchful tyranny,
Producing forth the cruel ministers

52. *parted*, died. 52. *score*, debt. 55. *time*, world. 68. *min-
isters*, servants,

Of this dead butcher and his fiend-like queen,
Who, as 'tis thought, by self and violent hands (70
Took off her life; this, and what needful else
That calls upon us, by the grace of Grace
We will perform in measure, time and place :
So thanks to all at once and to each one,
Whom we invite to see us crown'd at Scone.

[*Flourish. Exeunt.*

70. *self and violent*, her own violent.

NOTES

CRITICAL AND EXPLANATORY

ACT I. SCENE I

Shakespeare's dramatic genius is especially to be noted in the art with which he manages his beginnings. The first scene of *Macbeth* strikes the keynote of the play. The desert place, the wild storm, the appearance of the witches, "the wayward rhythm" of their songs, all help to prepare us for a drama in which a human soul succumbs to the supernatural suggestions of evil and ranges itself along with the witches on the devil's side. We hear of a battle that is even now being fought, we hear of the trysting-place of the witches at the conclusion of the fray, and last of all we hear the name of the man they are planning to meet. No sooner has the name "Macbeth" been uttered than the calls of the attendant spirits are heard and the witches hurry off. The action of the scene is over with the naming of the man against whose soul these ministers of darkness are plotting.

1. The dialogue of the witches is a sort of chant. It is thrown into a verse form, trochaic tetrameter,¹ which Shakespeare rarely uses except for supernatural beings, witches, fairies, or the like. In order to bring out the rhyme the last syllable is dropped from the end of each line. In line 2 the rhythm is reversed and the stress falls on the second syllable of each foot. In line 7 the stressed syllable in the third foot is omitted. This forces us to pause in the middle of the line and so secures additional emphasis for the

¹ See Note on Metre, page 269.

closing word, "Macbeth." We may imagine the Third Witch pausing for a moment while her sisters gather round her and then shrieking out the name of the hero in an ecstasy of devilish joy.

8. *Graymalkin*. According to the popular belief a witch was always attended by a familiar spirit which was bound to execute her commands. This spirit usually took the form of an animal; very often that of a cat. In this scene we hear the familiars of the First and Second Witches, respectively, spoken of as a cat, "Graymalkin," and a toad, "Paddock." The Third Witch's familiar is mentioned in iv. 1. 3. as "Harpier," that is, a harpy.

11, 12. The couplet with which the witches take their departure is a confession of their creed. All that is good, "fair," to others is evil, "foul," to them, and *vice versa*. This applies to both the physical and the moral world; they revel in the "fog and filthy air," and in every sort of mischief and evil-doing from killing swine to entrapping human souls.

ACT I. SCENE II

This scene is one of the most difficult of the play. Indeed, the extraordinary character of its diction and the irregularity of its metre have induced some critics to condemn it as un-Shakespearean and to assign it to Thomas Middleton.¹ But there seems to be no good ground for this. The scene has very probably been 'cut' for purposes of representation, and the high-flown language of the principal speakers is due in part at least to their excitement of mind. Each of them has come hot-foot from a field of battle where he has seen a glorious victory over the enemies of his country; and at such a time men do not talk plain prose.

The purpose of the scene is to tell us something about Macbeth, who has only been named in the preceding scene. We learn here that he is a Scottish nobleman, a near kinsman of the old king, and

¹ For Middleton's share in *Macbeth*, see Introduction, page 38.

a valiant warrior. In a single day he has routed two hostile armies, one of the Scotch rebels under Macdonwald, whom he has slain with his own hand, the other that of the invading Norwegians under Sweno. He has been assisted by another nobleman, Banquo, but the main glory of the victory is ascribed to Macbeth.

The scene is laid in the king's camp near Forres, a little town in the north of Scotland. Forres is really some ninety miles north of the county of Fife, in which Macbeth is supposed to be fighting, but Shakespeare, who knew little, and cared less, about Scotch geography, makes it within earshot of the battle. The phrase "alarum within," in the stage directions, indicates the noise of the battle; and as the king and his lords enter, they meet a wounded soldier who has just come from the front.

2. *revolt*. Duncan uses this word because he is thinking of the rebels with whom Macbeth is fighting. He knows nothing as yet of the foreign invaders.

3. *sergeant* a word of three syllables. In the old stage direction, retained in this edition, this character is called a captain. "Sergeant" in Shakespeare's day meant a member of the king's bodyguard; and this man is evidently a captain of that company.

5. *my captivity*. It is plain from this phrase that Malcolm, the king's son, had been in the battle, and would have been taken prisoner but for the bravery of this captain.

There is an unaccented syllable wanting in the fourth foot of this line. Its place is supplied by the brief pause in Malcolm's speech as he turns from his father to address the captain.

7. An accented syllable is wanting in the third foot of this line. The pause before the captain begins to speak takes its place.

9. *choke their art*, render their skill in swimming useless.

9. *Macdonwald*, the leader of the rebels.

10. *for to that*, because to that end, *i.e.* to be a rebel. "The multiplying villainies of nature" refer to the many evil qualities of Macdonwald which naturally fitted him to play the part of a rebel.

12. *the western isles*, the islands off the west coast of Scotland, including Ireland.

13. *kerns and gallowglasses*. Shakespeare got these unusual words from Holinshed's chronicle. A writer in Shakespeare's day,¹ in speaking of the Irish soldiery, says that it consists of three parts, horsemen, the rear-guard, "*whom they call gallowglasses*," armed with axes, and light-armed foot-soldiers called kerns, who fought with thonged javelins and knives. Originally, at least, the gallowglasses were heavy-armed foreign soldiers, hired by the chief, and used as a reserve in battle; the kerns, on the other hand, were the badly armed peasantry of the country.

Note the peculiar idiom, "supplied of," instead of our "supplied with."

14. *his damned quarrel*, his accursed cause. See Textual Notes, page 247.

15. *Show'd like a rebel's whore*, appeared like the flattering mistress of a rebel.

18. *execution*, the termination *-ion* is here pronounced as two syllables.

20. *the slave*, Macdonwald. The word, of course, is not used literally, but only as a term of reproach.

21. *Which*. Possibly something has been omitted after the word "slave," for the text as it stands is somewhat obscure. "Which" is equivalent to our modern "who," and would naturally refer to "the slave," *i.e.* Macdonwald. But the sense seems to require that it refer to Macbeth. Compare i. 5. 36-37 for a somewhat similar construction.

The phrases "shook hands" and "bade farewell" have about the same meaning, equivalent to "left." The sense of the whole passage, then, is that Macbeth cut his way through the battle to Macdonwald and never left him until he had killed him.

24. *cousin*. According to Holinshed Macbeth was Duncan's first cousin.

¹ Camden, *Britannia*, ed. 1590, p. 718.

27, 28. *So . . . swells.* Just as storms come from the east, where the sun rises, so trouble, *i.e.* a fresh battle, arises from the victory of Macbeth which seemed a source of comfort to his nation.

29. *justice . . . with valour arm'd.* The reference, of course, is to Macbeth.

31. *Norwegian lord.* Sweno, king of Norway, who is here for the first time alluded to.

31. *surveying vantage,* spying a good opportunity. Sweno thought it a good time to attack Macbeth when the former was wearied with his battle against the rebels.

32. *furbiſh'd arms,* the reference is to the bright arms of the fresh Norwegians as contrasted with the battered and blood-stained weapons of Macbeth and his men.

34. *captains,* probably pronounced as a word of three syllables. An old form of spelling, "captain," shows this pronunciation.

34. *Yes,* spoken in irony.

38. *Doubly, etc.* For remarks on this disputed line, see Textual Notes, page 247.

40. *memorize another Golgotha,* make the field of battle as famous for bloodshed as was Calvary.

41. *I cannot tell,* I do not know what to say.

45. For the scansion of this line, see Textual Notes, page 248.

45. *thane,* an old English title of rank. It meant, first of all, a servant, then a servant of the king, and finally a nobleman. The title was retained in Scotland after it had been exchanged in England for that of earl. In the last scene of *Macbeth* we find Malcolm promoting his thanes to be earls.

50. *fan our people cold,* strike the chill of fear into the hearts of our people.

54. *Bellona's bridegroom,* Macbeth, whose courage fitted him to be a mate for Bellona, the Goddess of War. *lapp'd in proof,* clad in proved armor.

55. *Confronted him with self-comparisons.* Macbeth met the Norse king in hand-to-hand fight, and proved a match for him.

56. *rebellious*. It is not exactly accurate to speak of Sweno's sword as "rebellious." He was an invader, not a rebel; but he was assisted by the rebel Cawdor, and so the adjective is not altogether inappropriate.

61. *Saint Colme's inch*, the "inch," or island, of St. Colme, or Columba, a little island in the Firth of Forth. We may imagine that the Norwegian ships were lying in the Firth, and that after Sweno's defeat he fled to them. Then, in order to secure the bodies of his dead warriors, he paid down ten thousand dollars at the abbey on the island.

64. *Our bosom interest*, our dear friendship. As Duncan's words in i. 4. 11-14 show, Cawdor had been completely trusted by the king.

ACT I. SCENE III

With this scene the real action of the play begins. The first scene brought the witches before us; the second gave us a noble picture of Macbeth. Now the two parties, the tempters and the tempted, meet, and from their meeting and the witches' prophecy proceed directly all the remaining events of the story. The witches awaken in Macbeth the passion of ambition, which henceforth is the mainspring of his action. But we must not think that they in any way enchant Macbeth or compel him to do their evil will. After the meeting, as before, he is a free man, and can act or refrain from action as he sees fit. This is shown, in part at least, by the fact that Banquo, although also greeted by the witches with prophecies of future honour for his house, is not led on to any crime to make good the prophecy. There is something in Macbeth's own heart that receives and answers the greeting of the witches. This is Shakespeare's way of writing tragedy; he makes the fate of his men and women depend upon their own characters, not upon chance or outside influences.

In the first thirty-seven lines of the scene, the witches recount to each other the evil deeds in which they have been engaged since

their last meeting. It is worth noting that these deeds are petty and vulgar; but just as every good deed—even the giving of a cup of cold water,—is a blessed thing, so every evil deed—even the killing of swine—is a delight to the powers of evil. This conversation, moreover, serves to identify the “weird sisters” of the play with the familiar witches of Elizabethan superstition.

2. *Killing swine.* One of the commonest charges brought against supposed witches in Shakespeare’s day was that they maliciously killed by pestilence, or the evil eye, the domestic animals of those they had a grudge against.

6. *rump-fed.* There has been a good deal of dispute over the exact meaning of this phrase. The best interpretations are either “well-fed,” “pampered,” or “fat-rumped.” I rather prefer the latter as being a coarse expression in keeping with the following “ronyon,” *i.e.* scab.

7. *Aleppo*, a town in Syria, not on the sea-shore as might be imagined from this line, but some distance in the interior.

8. *in a sieve.* It was a common belief in Shakespeare’s day, especially in Scotland, that witches possessed the power of sailing on the sea in a sieve.

9. *like . . . tail*, in the shape of a rat without a tail. It was commonly believed that witches could assume the forms of animals. They could often, however, be detected by some physical defect.

10. *I’ll do, etc.* The witch does not say what she will do. The threat gains in force from its very vagueness.

11. *a wind.* Witches were supposed to have control of the winds; they could either call up tempests or give sailors favouring breezes.

15. *the ports they blow.* The witch controls not only the winds, but the harbours they blow upon.

17. *the shipman’s card*, either the card on which the points of the compass are marked, or a chart showing the direction of the prevailing winds along a coast.

20. *pent-house lid*, the eyelid. Properly speaking the eyebrow is the “pent-house,” *i.e.* the projecting roof over the window of the eye.

32. *weird sisters*, women of fate. "Weird," now an adjective, was originally a noun, Old English "wyrd," and meant "fate" or "destiny." Shakespeare applies the term to the witches because of their knowledge of the future.

38. *So foul and fair*. It is more than a mere coincidence that the first words Macbeth speaks echo the parting chorus of the witches in the opening scene. Macbeth is perhaps speaking of the weather with its sudden alternations of storm and sunshine, or he may be referring to the "fair" victory on the "foul" day. To the audience, however, who know that the witches are even now lying in wait for him, the words seem to show a certain affinity with the powers of evil which will predispose him to yield to their temptations. In Macbeth himself there is this blending of "foul and fair," of criminal and heroic qualities; and it is by playing upon the former that the witches work his ruin.

39. *Forres*. Banquo and Macbeth are going to the king's camp near Forres to give an account of their victories. These words of Banquo are addressed to Macbeth and are spoken, of course, before he sees the witches.

44, 45. *By each . . . lips*. The witches lay their fingers on their lips to hush Banquo into silence. Their business is not with him, but with Macbeth; and they will not speak to Banquo until they have discharged their errand.

46. *beards*. Witches were generally thought of as bearded women.

48. *All hail, Macbeth*. The witches, like ghosts, will not speak until they are spoken to; but as soon as Macbeth questions them, they break out in their triple hail.

48. *Glamis*, an old castle in Scotland, still standing. The title "Thane of Glamis" was hereditary in Macbeth's family. See line 71 of this scene.

51. *start*. Macbeth starts because the witches' prophecy that he shall be king is an echo of his secret ambition. Indeed it would seem from his wife's words (i. 7. 48-52) that he had on

some previous occasion gone so far as to plot the murder of Duncan.

55. *present grace*, "honour," "honourable distinction," referring to the title of Thane of Glamis, which Macbeth then enjoyed.

56. *royal hope*, the hope, or expectation, of royalty.

57. *rapt*. Macbeth is so struck with the greeting of the witches that he stands silent as in a trance, while Banquo speaks.

65-67. *Lesser . . . none*. The ambiguity of the witches' address to Banquo is in marked contrast to the directness of their speeches to Macbeth. He is to be "lesser than Macbeth" in rank, and "greater," because he will never be the slave of guilt; not so "happy," *i.e.* "fortunate," because he will never be king, "happier" because he will never fall from his estate. The prediction that he shall "get," *i.e.* "beget," kings, is also vague, since it only asserts that some of his descendants shall be kings. According to tradition, the royal house of Stuart sprang from Banquo's son, Fleance.

68, 69. See Textual Notes, page 249.

71. *Sinel's*. Sinel was Macbeth's father.

73. *A prosperous gentleman*. This statement has been supposed to be inconsistent with the fact that Cawdor was a traitor and had already been condemned to death. But there is no need of taking it for granted that Cawdor was present at the battle between Macbeth and Sweno, and certainly Macbeth knew nothing of the sentence which had been pronounced against him.

79-82. Note the different way in which the sudden vanishing of the witches affects Banquo and Macbeth. The former is only surprised; the latter regrets that they did not remain to tell him more.

84. *eaten on the insane root*, eaten of the root which causes insanity. The root of hemlock was in Shakespeare's day supposed to make men see visions, and this may be the plant alluded to.

86, 87. *Your children, etc.* Macbeth cannot free his mind from the predictions of the witches, but he carefully avoids mentioning the most startling of them.

88. Scan :

To the selfsame ^{tu}n^e and ^wo^rd^s. Who's ^her^e ?

92, 93. *His wonders, etc.* Duncan is divided between wonder at Macbeth's deeds and the desire of giving them their due meed of praise.

93. *silenced with that*, reduced to silence by this conflict between admiration and the desire to praise.

97. *Strange images of death*, terribly mangled corpses, such as Macdonwald's must have been after Macbeth had "unseamed him from the nave to the chaps."

98. *post with post*, messenger after messenger. For the text of this much disputed passage, see Textual Notes, page 249.

107. *devil* in this line is pronounced as a monosyllable like the Scotch "deil."

108, 109. *dress me In borrow'd robes*, adorn me with honours that are not mine.

109. *Who was the thane*, he who formerly was the thane. Cawdor had already been deprived of his rank and possessions.

110. *under heavy judgement*, under sentence of death.

111. This line is an Alexandrine.

120. *trusted home*, completely trusted.

126. *In deepest consequence*, in matters of the greatest importance.

128. *the swelling act*, the performance developing in my mind.

129. *imperial theme*, theme of empire. "Theme" denotes the subject of the "act" in line 128.

130. *This supernatural solliciting*, this temptation which comes from supernatural beings, *i.e.* the witches.

133. *I am* in this line should be contracted in reading into "I'm" to preserve the meter.

135. *unfix my hair*, make my hair stand up in fright.

137. *Against the use of nature*, unnaturally.

137. *Present fears*, the fear of things actually present to the

senses. Macbeth speaks like a brave soldier who is not in the least afraid of enemies present in flesh and blood, but who may be greatly alarmed by the thought of some impending evil. The "horrible imaginings" refer, of course, to the thoughts already rising in his mind of the murder of Duncan.

140. *my single state of man*, my whole mind. "Single" is here used in the sense of "undivided," "harmonious," and "state of man" is equivalent to "man's kingdom," *i.e.* the mind.

143. *If chance, etc.* In this speech, as in the following, we see Macbeth pushing aside the murderous thoughts that are crowding into his mind. He determines to leave the fulfilment of the oracle to chance or fate, and to bide his time. He remains in this frame of mind until he hears Duncan proclaim Malcolm heir to the kingdom.

144. *New honours.* Banquo attributes Macbeth's absent-mindedness to his absorption in his new honours, *i.e.* the title and estates of Cawdor.

147. *Time . . . day.* The hardest day must have an end. Macbeth means that however rough the road to the throne may be, Time will finally bring him there.

148. *we stay upon your leisure*, we are waiting for you. Note the habitual courtesy of Banquo's language.

149. *Give me your favour*, pardon me.

150. *With things forgotten.* Macbeth, roused from his reverie by Banquo's speech, pretends that he has been trying to recall some events of the past. The almost involuntary lie is a sign of the guilty nature of his thoughts.

153. *at more time*, at a better opportunity.

154. *The interim having weigh'd it.* The interim, *i.e.* the time between the present and the future interview, is here personified and represented as weighing or considering what had chanced, that is, of course, the witches' prophecy.

ACT I. SCENE IV

This scene is supposed to be laid in the royal palace at Forres. The time is perhaps on the morning after the events recorded in the previous scenes. The chief purpose of the scene is to bring Macbeth and Duncan together and, by showing the touching gratitude of the old monarch toward his chief warrior, to give us a double sense of the wickedness of the crime which Macbeth is already meditating against his sovereign.

Two incidents in the scene contribute directly to the perpetration of this crime. The first of these is Duncan's proclamation of his son, Malcolm, as heir to the throne. So long as no heir was named it was possible for Macbeth to wait patiently, hoping that at the king's death, which could not be far distant, he might be chosen as his successor. But the nomination of Malcolm implied that all the nobles must take an oath to support his succession to his father's throne; and thus Macbeth feels that it will no longer be possible to wait for chance to crown him. If he is to be king at all, he must make himself king. The second incident is Duncan's sudden resolve to visit Macbeth's castle. This step puts him into Macbeth's hands and offers such an opportunity for the murder as may not occur again. Macbeth realizes this, and under pretense of hurrying home to make preparation for the king, departs to consult with his wife as to what should be done.

2. *Those in commission*, the committee of nobles entrusted with the execution of Cawdor. It was common in Shakespeare's day to intrust the trial of important personages to a special commission.

9. *studied*. The phrase is, perhaps, taken from the technical language of the theatre. Cawdor played his part on the scaffold like an actor who has studied his part well; he had, so to speak, rehearsed his death.

11-14. *There's . . . trust*. Note the tragic irony of the situation. Duncan is lamenting that he had been so deceived in Cawdor. At

this moment Macbeth enters, and Duncan turns to greet this far more dangerous enemy with a glad welcome.

14. A foot is wanting in this line. The lack is due to the pause on Macbeth's entrance.

18-20. *Would . . . mine!* I wish that you had done less for me so that I might be able to thank and pay you proportionately.

22-27. *The service, etc.* We should not consider this speech of Macbeth as a pure piece of hypocrisy. He has, indeed, contemplated the possibility of murdering Duncan, but he has decided to wait and trust to chance. And now, at the affectionate welcome of the old king, his natural impulse of loyalty breaks out, and, for the time at least, he means what he says.

27. *Safe toward*, with a sure regard to.

28. *I have begun to plant thee*, the allusion is to the title and estates of Cawdor which Duncan has bestowed on Macbeth.

29. *make thee full of growing*, make thee grow to full height.

29, 30. *Noble Banquo, etc.* Note the royal courtesy of the king's speech to Banquo. He has greeted Macbeth, his kinsman, first; but he does not mean to slight Macbeth's fellow-soldier.

34. *Wanton in fulness*, capricious because they are full.

35. *drops of sorrow*, tears. There is something very pathetic in the figure of the good old king weeping for very joy as he stands between the two warriors, one of whom is to murder him and the other to let the murder go unrevenged.

36. *whose places are the nearest*, who are next to the king in rank.

37. *establish our estate*, settle the succession to the throne.

39. *Prince of Cumberland*. Cumberland, a county in the north-west of England, was for a long time held by the Scotch under the suzerainty of England. The title, Prince of Cumberland, like that of Prince of Wales to-day, served to distinguish the heir to the throne.

39, 40. *which . . . only*. He, Malcolm, must not be the only man to be invested with a new title of honour.

42. *Inverness*, a town in Scotland, some twenty or twenty-five miles from Forres. Macbeth is supposed to have had a castle here, and as a mark of royal favour Duncan now proposes to visit him.

43. *bind us further to you*, lay us under still greater obligations to you, *i.e.* by acting as our host at Inverness.

44. *The rest, etc.* The leisure time which is not spent in your service is no leisure, but rather labour. It may be that this stilted compliment marks the agitation of Macbeth's mind. We see a few lines below that he has resumed his plan of the murder.

45. *harbinger*, originally a messenger sent ahead to provide a lodging for a king on his travels.

47. *My worthy Cawdor*. Duncan bids farewell to Macbeth by his new title and then turns to Banquo. This gives Macbeth an opportunity before he leaves the stage for the 'aside' of lines 48-53. This 'aside,' it should be noted, represents the thoughts that are passing through Macbeth's mind, rather than any words actually spoken.

48-53. *The Prince . . . see*. Macbeth realizes that the naming of Malcolm as heir-apparent leaves him no other choice than that between renouncing his ambition or taking violent action to realize it. He is by no means disposed to abandon his hopes of the crown, and instantly his heart is filled anew with "black and deep desires," which he fears to expose to the light.

52. *The eye wink at the hand*, let the eye refuse to see what the hand is doing. It is as if Macbeth already saw himself stabbing the king, and wished to close his eyes to the sight.

54. *he is full so valiant*, he is quite as brave as you say. Banquo seems to have been telling Duncan of some brave deed of Macbeth.

57. *Whose care*. Macbeth's carefulness for the king's welfare is here personified by the kindly monarch, and thought of as a harbinger riding ahead to prepare a welcome for him.

ACT I. SCENE V

With this scene a new figure appears upon the stage. It is unnecessary to repeat here what has been said in the Introduction as to the character of Lady Macbeth; but we may note the striking fashion in which that character is revealed to us. The lady enters reading a letter in which her husband tells of his encounter with the witches, and of their prophetic greeting. He has already made inquiries as to the witches, and has learned that their prophecies always come true.¹ So he writes to her that she may rejoice in the greatness that is promised to her as the future queen. It is interesting to note that there is no suggestion in the letter of any criminal attempt to hasten the fulfilment of the oracle. Macbeth must have written while in the same mood of half-formed resolve to bide his time that marks the close of scene 3. But Lady Macbeth has no intention of waiting for chance to crown her. She prefers "the nearest way," that of speedy and violent action. As yet she knows nothing of the obstacle which the proclamation of Malcolm as heir-apparent puts between Macbeth and the crown. The only obstacle she sees lies in the character of her husband. He is ambitious, but is unwilling to play false to attain the objects of his ambition. Yet she is so sure of her influence over him that she prays he may return speedily, in order that she may inspire him to action and drive out any scruples that may bar the way to his goal. When she hears of Duncan's approaching visit, she realizes instantly that Fate has delivered the king into her husband's hands, and invokes the powers of evil to strengthen her for the terrible

¹ Macbeth must have made these inquiries immediately after the encounter with the witches, and before his meeting with Duncan, since there is no reference in his letter to Duncan's approaching visit. We may imagine that Macbeth found some one at Forres who had already had dealings with the witches, and who could assure him of their credibility.

deed that must be done at once. On Macbeth's arrival she takes the matter into her own hands ; she does not argue or persuade, but with quiet determination assures him that Duncan will never leave their castle alive, and that she will arrange all the details. Macbeth is, as it were, stunned by her decision. He has, indeed, meditated the murder of his master; but he has by no means decided upon it, and he would like more time for consideration. His wife, however, cuts the scene short, bidding him show a friendly face to his royal guest and leave all the rest to her.

1. From the abruptness with which the scene begins, we must fancy that Lady Macbeth has already read a part of the letter before she comes on the stage. Perhaps, when she came to the prophecy of the witches, she felt that she must be alone, and withdrew from the hall of the castle to the chamber in which the scene takes place.

2. *the perfectest report*, the most accurate information.

9, 10. *referred me to the coming on of time*, directed me to the future.

13. *dues of rejoicing*, the due, or natural, joy.

18. *the milk of human kindness*, the gentleness of humanity, of human nature. Lady Macbeth knows her husband well enough to feel sure that, however brave he is on the field of battle, he will hesitate to commit a murder. Compare Macbeth's own words when the idea of the crime enters his mind, i. 3. 134-7.

21. *The illness should attend it*, the wickedness, or at least the unscrupulousness, which must go along with ambition, if the ambition is to be gratified.

21, 22. *what thou . . . holily*, the high objects which you aim at, you would like to gain innocently.

24. *That which cries*. The best interpretation of this much disputed passage is probably that which takes "that" as referring to Duncan's death. The passage may then be paraphrased as follows : "Thou wouldst like to have, great Glamis, that [the death of Duncan] which cries 'Thus thou must do [kill Duncan] if thou

art to have it, [the crown], and that [the murder] is a thing which thou dost rather fear to do thyself than wishest to be left undone."

28. *chastise*. The accent is on the first syllable.

29. *the golden round*, the crown.

30, 31. *doth seem . . . withal*, seems about to crown you with.

32. *comes here to-night*. It seems for the moment so impossible that the opportunity for instant action can thus be placed in her hands that Lady Macbeth exclaims that the messenger must be crazy.

34. *inform'd for preparation*, given me the news so that I might prepare.

36. *had the speed of*, outstripped.

39. *The raven*, a bird of ill omen.

40. *entrance*, pronounced like a word of three syllables, "entrance."

41. *Come, you spirits, etc.* Note how Lady Macbeth nerves herself to meet the terrible strain of the coming night. It is plain from line 53 that she means to commit the murder herself. And that she may be strong enough in mind and body to do so, she invokes all the spirits that delight in thoughts and deeds of blood to strip her of her woman's weakness and fill her with the power of evil. Note the pause in the line before the invocation begins.

44. *thick*, coarse, unfeeling, and so the readier for deeds of cruelty.

46. *compunctious visitings of nature*, natural feelings of pity.

47, 48. *keep peace . . . it*, interpose between the "effect," *i.e.* the murder, and her purpose to commit it.

49. *take my milk for gall*, turn my kindness (cf. line 18 above) into bitterness.

49. *murdering ministers*, servants, or instruments, of murder.

50. *sightless substances*, invisible forms.

51. *nature's mischief*, all that is evil in nature.

56. *the all-hail hereafter*. Lady Macbeth unconsciously echoes the words of the third witch in i. 3. 50.

58. *This ignorant present*, either "this present which is ignorant of the glory that awaits it," or "this obscure, inglorious present." The second seems somewhat the better meaning. The metre of this line is somewhat irregular. "Ignorant" must be pronounced almost like a word of two syllables; and there is a heavy stress on the words "feel" and "now" which necessitates a slight pause between them. We may scan as follows:

This *ig*norant *pre*sent and I *fe*el *no*w.

59. *in the instant*, at this moment.

64, 65. *To beguile . . . like the time*, in order to deceive the world, appear with a smiling face as the present occasion requires.

69. *into my dispatch*, into my management.

71. *solely sovereign sway*, undisputed royal power.

72-74. Macbeth is still undecided; he can neither accept nor reject the situation. His wife, however, does not deign to discuss the matter any further. She only repeats her injunction to beware of showing his thoughts in his face.

73, 74. *To alter favour . . . fear*. To change the expression or the colour of one's face is always a sign of fear.

ACT I. SCENE VI

This scene brings Duncan, in the early evening, to Macbeth's castle. We may note first the 'irony of situation' in Duncan's praising the "pleasant seat" of the castle where he is to meet a sudden and bloody end; and secondly, the effective character contrast between the gentle, unsuspecting courtesy of the king, and the feigned humility and hypocritical welcome of Lady Macbeth. Nowhere in the play does she appear so repulsive as here where she is leading Duncan on to his death, with speeches of mock loyalty.

1. Note the natural and easy way in which the king is introduced. He is at peace with himself and all mankind. Banquo seems to

have caught the king's mood, and answers him in the same tone. Compare the impression that is given here of the castle, its beautiful situation, its nesting martlets, and its "delicate air," with the totally different impression given in Lennox's speech (ii. 3. 59-66) of the terrible night that followed, with its fierce storms, strange screams of death, and its gloomy and long-delayed dawn (ii. 4. 6-9). In both scenes the natural surroundings reflect the temper of men's minds.

3. *our gentle senses*, our senses which are soothed by the sweet air; cf. iii. 4. 76.

5. *By his loved mansionry*, by making it his favourite nesting-place.

6. A foot is lacking in this line. It is possible that some word or phrase has dropped out of the text; but if the line be read with a marked pause after "here," the rhythmical effect is not unpleasant.

7. *coign of vantage*, convenient corner.

11-14. *The love . . . trouble*. The love that attends us is sometimes troublesome, but still we thank it because it is love. In saying this I teach you how to receive our troublesome visit; you should pray God to reward us, and you should thank us yourself, because the visit, which entails this trouble, is a proof of our affection. The compliment is somewhat formal but undoubtedly sincere.

16. *poor and single business to contend*, a small matter to compare.

20. *hermits*, holy men bound to pray for their benefactors.

22. *purveyor*, originally a messenger sent before to provide food for the king and his train.

26. *theirs . . . theirs*. The first "theirs" means "their family"; the second "their property."

28. *Still to return your own*, always bound to return to you what was originally yours.

30. *our*, here pronounced as a dissyllable.

31. *By your leave*. Duncan takes Lady Macbeth's hand and leads her into the castle.

ACT I. SCENE VII

This is perhaps the most important single scene of the play. Here for the last time we see Macbeth a free man, still capable of choice between good and evil. The motives that are at work to deter him from committing the murder, fear of the consequences in this world, mingled feelings of kinship, loyalty, and hospitality, admiration for Duncan's goodness, are not, perhaps, of the highest moral character; but in comparison with the reckless lust of power which urges him on, they are certainly motives for good. The conflict rages in his soul, and it seems as if the powers of good were triumphing, when Lady Macbeth enters. Instantly she throws into the scale all the weight of her influence, backed by a relentless decision to contemplate nothing but the immediate necessity for action. Macbeth wavers for an instant, and then, not so much overpersuaded, as stung into action by the taunts of his wife, plunges headlong into the crime. From this time till the end of the play Macbeth is no longer a free man. All his remaining actions spring by the logical necessity of crime from his first deed of blood.

1. Note the double meaning of "done" in this line: in the first instance it means "finished," in the second "performed." Macbeth's meaning, which he goes on to illustrate through the next seven lines, is that if the whole matter could be settled by one blow, it would be well to strike that blow quickly.

4. *his surcease*, its cessation. "His" is generally used instead of the modern "its" in Shakespeare. The antecedent is probably "consequence" in the preceding line. The passage may be paraphrased thus: "If the murder could ensnare the consequences, so as to prevent them from occurring, and by stopping them catch success, it would indeed be well to act quickly."

4. *that but this blow*, if just this blow.

6. *But here*, only here.

8. *have judgement here*, receive our sentence in this life.

9. *Bloody instructions*, lessons in bloodshed.

14. *Strong both*, both strong arguments.

21. *pity*. In this passage where the wild emotions of Macbeth's mind are struggling for utterance, one metaphor crowds upon and displaces another. "Pity" is first personified as a newborn infant, naked and miserable, such as would appeal to the sympathy of all men; then this infant bestrides the wind for a charger to carry the news of Duncan's murder throughout the world. This figure of a messenger seated upon the wind calls up a confused memory of a verse of the Bible (*Psalms*, xviii. 10.) to Macbeth's mind, and his imagination embodies pity as an angel riding on the wind.

22. *cherubin*, Shakespeare always uses this form as a singular.

23. *sightless couriers of the air*, invisible airy messengers, the winds. The angel is represented like a royal messenger riding post, *i.e.* changing from horse to horse to carry his message the faster. See Textual Notes, p. 252.

24. *blow the horrid deed in every eye*, proclaim the murder in the presence of all men.

25. *tears shall drown the wind*. The figure is taken from a burst of rain which lays the wind.

25. *I have no spur*. Here again we have a mixture of metaphors due to the conflict of emotions in Macbeth's mind. He thinks of his purpose to murder Duncan as a charger; but he has no spur, *i.e.* no good motive, to urge it into action and so it stands still. Instantly the figure changes and his ambition is pictured as a rider springing into his saddle, who overleaps himself and falls on the other side of his steed. Macbeth means that his ambition to be king would, if it led him to murder Duncan, carry him too far.

28. An accented syllable is missing in the third foot. Some editors have wished to supply "side"; but it is better to think of the speech as interrupted by the entrance of Lady Macbeth.

29. *Why have you left the chamber?* Macbeth, conscious of his guilty wish, has been unable to remain in the presence of his benefactor. Duncan has noticed his absence and asked for him. Lady

Macbeth, under the pretense of recalling him to the banquet, comes to confirm him in his purpose. Her speeches in this scene should be most carefully studied. A careful analysis of them will show how she plays upon Macbeth's feelings and appeals to the strongest motives. She taunts him first with irresolution and lack of love for her. She charges him with cowardice, — the bitterest possible charge for a soldier to endure from the woman he loves. She appeals to him to keep the vow he has sworn, and declares that she would have stopped at no crime if she had taken such an oath. Finally seeing that the chief, perhaps the only, cause that holds Macbeth back from the deed is a fear, not only of failure in the attempt, but of the consequences in case of its accomplishment, she points out a plan by which the murder may be safely committed and the consequences shifted upon the shoulders of others.

34. *would be worn*, should be, ought to be, worn.

35. *cast aside*, as they would be if Macbeth exchanged his fame as a warrior for a murderer's infamy.

35, 36. *drunk . . . dress'd yourself*, another mixture of metaphors. "Hope" is first presented as a person intoxicated with the prospect of success, and then a robe in which Macbeth arrayed himself. The latter figure is caught from his own phrase of "wearing golden opinions" in the preceding speech.

37. *green and pale*, sickly and pale, as a man might look on waking from a drunken slumber.

38. *At what it did so freely*, at what it, *i.e.* "hope," faced so boldly before it fell asleep.

39. *Such*, so "green and pale"; *i.e.* so sickly and weak. She declares that she will henceforth consider his love for her no stronger nor more enduring than his weak ambition for the crown.

42. *the ornament of life*. This phrase may either refer to the crown or to the "golden opinions" of line 33. The latter interpretation is probably the better.

45. *the adage*. A familiar proverb in Shakespeare's day ran: "The cat would eat fish, and would not wet her feet."

46. *I dare do all, etc.* Note how bitterly Macbeth resents the taunt of cowardice.

47. *Who dares . . . none.* He who dares do more than is proper for a man, is unhuman.

48, 49. It seems plain from these lines that at some period before the beginning of the play Macbeth had actually proposed to his wife the murder of Duncan. She seems to have induced him to abandon the project as ill-timed, cf. lines 51, 52. Now she reverts to this occasion in order to stimulate him to action at the present favourable opportunity, reminding him, lines 58, 59, of the oath that he had sworn to kill the king.

50. *to be more than what you were,* by being more than you then were, by actually performing the deed which you then dared to propose.

52. *you would make both,* you wanted to force time and place into accordance with your plan for the murder. It is highly characteristic of Macbeth that his first plan for murdering Duncan was rash and unsuitable. As the report of his deeds in battle shows, he was a headstrong and impetuous warrior. His wife, on the other hand, was a cool and determined nature; she waited for a good opportunity and then struck home. Observe that it is she, not Macbeth, who plans the details of the treacherous murder.

53. *that their fitness,* their very fitness.

54. *Does unmake you,* renders you incapable of action.

59. *If we should fail?* Macbeth reverts to his old anxiety as to the consequences of the deed, or rather as to the consequences of an unsuccessful attempt. Lady Macbeth's answer has been variously interpreted. It may be rendered either as a contemptuous question, or as a scornful exclamation with the accent on "we," or lastly as a real answer to her husband's question. "What will happen if we fail?" he asks; "We fail, and that's the end of the matter and of us," she answers. I prefer this last interpretation as eminently characteristic of the cool determination of Lady Macbeth, who can look even failure in the face. Note, however, that she

will not dwell upon the possibility of failure for fear of discouraging her husband ; she goes on at once to assure him of the practical certainty of success.

60. *But screw, etc.* But brace your courage up to the point where it holds fast. The metaphor is, perhaps, taken from the screwing up of the string of a crossbow.

65. *memory, the warder.* According to old anatomists the faculty of memory was situated in the hindmost part of the brain by which that organ is connected with the rest of the body. Memory stands therefore like a warder, or guard, at the gate of the brain. Drunkenness turns memory into a "fume," *i.e.* a mere smoke, and this rises into that part of the brain where the reason is situated, "the receipt," *i.e.* receptacle, "of reason," as the fumes from a retort rise into the "limbec," *i.e.* alembic or cap, of the vessel.

68. *lies*, an old plural form of the verb, called the Northern plural, from its occurrence in the Northern dialects of England. It appears very frequently in Shakespeare, but is often altered without comment by the editors into our modern form.

70. *put upon*, attribute to.

78. *As we shall make*, seeing that we shall make.

80. *Each corporal agent*, every bodily power.

ACT II. SCENE I

The second act is devoted wholly to the murder of Duncan. There is practically no time interval between this and the preceding act. It begins after midnight on the day of the king's arrival at Inverness, with a scene devoted to the preliminaries of the murder, and closes late in the following day with a scene telling us of the immediate consequences of the deed, the flight of the princes and the election of Macbeth to the sovereignty.

The first scene falls into three parts ; the dialogue between Banquo and his son, the dialogue between Macbeth and Banquo, and the soliloquy of Macbeth before the murder. It is laid in the

inner court of Macbeth's castle, from which there was easy access to the bedchambers by means of the gallery that surrounded the court. Banquo is on his way to bed, accompanied by his son, who bears the torch. On his way he hands over to Fleance his sword (line 4) and perhaps his dagger (line 5), which he will not need to have by his bedside in a friendly house.

5. *thee*, to thyself, the dative of interest.

6. *A heavy summons*, a drowsy influence.

7. *I would not sleep*. Banquo's reason for wishing to remain awake is given in the next lines. On the night before this he had dreamt of the witches (l. 20), and their prophecy has seemed to him, in his sleep, a temptation to evil. This explains his prayer to heaven to restrain "the cursed thoughts." Shakespeare, no doubt, means us to contrast the two figures who appear in this scene, both tried by the same temptation, Banquo praying against its power over even his hours of sleep, Macbeth waking, and watching to turn its suggestions into deeds.

9. *Gives way to*, gives free rein to.

9. *my sword*. It marks, perhaps, the excited state of Banquo's mind, that when he sees the light of Macbeth's torch, he at once calls to Fleance to return him his sword.

16. *shut up*, concluded, *i.e.* finished the banquet, and went to bed. Note the irony of the situation as described in these lines.

17-19. *Being unprepared . . . wrought*. Since I was taken by surprise, my desire, to entertain the king fittingly, was impeded by unavoidable deficiencies; otherwise, it would have displayed itself at full, liberally.

19. *All's well*. Banquo assures Macbeth that his entertainment has been suitable.

22. *entreat an hour to serve*, beg an hour of your time for our service. Note how Macbeth in this speech adopts unconsciously the royal mode of speaking of himself in the plural. He knows that when he has this conversation with Banquo he will be king, and speaks as if he were already crowned.

25. *cleave to my consent.* Macbeth is throwing out a line, so to speak, for Banquo. "If you join my party," he says, "you'll gain new honours by so doing."

25. *When 'tis.* This phrase is purposely obscure; Macbeth does not care to speak out plainly. We may take it, however, as referring to the proposed conference on the subject of the witches' prophecy.

26-29. *So I lose . . . counsell'd.* It is hard to decide just what was in the mind of Banquo when he uttered these words. He may possibly have suspected Macbeth of wishing to form some conspiracy against the king. In this case he wished to give him a friendly but emphatic warning that he would be no party to it. "I'll take your advice," he says, referring to Macbeth's phrase, 'cleave to my consent,' "so long as I do not forfeit thereby my character as an honourable man, but still keep my heart free from guilt and my loyalty to my king unstained."

29. Macbeth sees that nothing is to be gained from Banquo, and closes the conversation.

32. The bell is really to let Macbeth know that everything is in readiness for the murder.

33-64. In this long soliloquy we find Macbeth, whose mind is wrought almost to madness by the deed he is about to perpetrate, the victim of a hallucination. He thinks for a moment that he actually sees a dagger floating before him; but with a strong effort he recovers his self-possession and pronounces the vision unreal. Then he plunges into a gloomy reverie, illumined by lightning flashes of poetic imagination. He is roused from this mood by the sound of the signal for action, and without hesitating longer hurries to Duncan's chamber.

44, 45. *Mine eyes . . . rest.* If the dagger is unreal, his eyes, which testify to its presence, are pronounced foolish by his other senses. If on the contrary, the dagger is really there, the testimony of his eyes is more reliable than that of his other senses.

46. Notice how the dagger seems to grow more real to Macbeth; he can now distinguish drops of blood on its blade and handle.

48. *the bloody business*, the murder, which is occupying his mind, seems to take visible shape in the form of a dagger.

51. An unaccented syllable is lacking in the third foot of this line. Its place is taken by the pause between two clauses. "Sleep" is here personified as a man resting in a curtained bed. Evil dreams play about him and deceive his mind.

52. *Hecate*, one of the many names of Diana. In Shakespeare's day she was regarded as the goddess and queen of the witches. Shakespeare always pronounces her name as two syllables.

52. *wither'd murder*, murder is here personified as a gaunt and ghostlike man.

53. *Alarum'd*, called to arms. The word comes from the Italian phrase *all'arme*, "to arms."

54. *Whose howl's his watch*, the long howl of the wolf is thought of as the call of a sentinel upon his watch.

55. *Tarquin's*, Sextus Tarquin who ravished Lucretia. The adjective "ravishing" is transferred from Tarquin to the "strides" that took him into Lucretia's chamber.

57. *Hear not . . . take*. Hear not the direction my steps take, *i.e.* toward Duncan's chamber. Macbeth fancies in his overwrought mood that if the very stones of the courtyard knew which way he was going they would cry out and reveal his presence.

59. *take the present horror*, take away, by their outcry, the prevailing silence, "present horror," which so befits the time.

61. *gives*, another instance of the Northern plural. The line means that words blow cold upon the heat of action.

ACT II. SCENE II

There is really no change of scene here. Lady Macbeth enters the courtyard as Macbeth leaves it and waits there for his return

from Duncan's chamber. Her soliloquy fills up the time during which the murder is performed and her dialogue with her husband on his return carries us on till the knocking at the gate shows that the day is dawning and the inmates of the castle awaking.

1. *That which, etc.* Lady Macbeth has fortified herself with a draught of wine against the strain of these terrible hours. This is another proof of her physical weakness.

3. *bellman.* It was common in Shakespeare's day to send the bellman, *i.e.* the night watchman, to spend the last night with a man condemned to death. The cry of the owl over Duncan's chamber seems to Lady Macbeth like the bellman's warning that the hours of life are numbered.

4. *the stern'st good-night.* The grimmest good-night, or farewell. The owl's cry was then and long afterward considered an omen of death.

4. *He is about it.* Macbeth is actually committing the murder.

5. *The doors are open.* Lady Macbeth must have unlocked the doors into Duncan's room. Her words in lines 11, 12 show that she had been in this room after the king had gone to sleep.

5. *the surfeited grooms,* the drunken attendants of the king.

6. *mock their charge,* turn their care of the king's person into a mockery.

7, 8. The sleeping-potion which Lady Macbeth had mingled in the possets was so strong that the grooms were half poisoned by it.

8. *Who's there?* Macbeth utters these words as he is returning from Duncan's chamber. As he says in line 14, he heard a noise, and he probably thought for a moment that some one had surprised him. See Textual Notes, p. 253.

10. *the attempt and not the deed,* an unsuccessful attempt.

12. *Had he not resembled.* This reference to her father is one of the few traces of womanly feeling that Lady Macbeth shows. It is a genuinely Shakespearean touch which saves even so wicked a character from utter inhumanity.

18. *Hark!* This line is usually accompanied in stage repre-

sentations by a clap of thunder. This really detracts from the horror of the scene. Macbeth's nerves are so overwrought that he starts at imaginary noises. His next words show that he fancies he has heard a voice.

19. *the second chamber*, the room next to Duncan's.

19. *Donalbain*, the second son of Duncan, here mentioned for the first time.

22. *There's*. Macbeth is perhaps referring to the "second chamber." As he descended he heard some people in it talking in their sleep.

24. *address'd them*, turned themselves.

25. *two lodged together*. Lady Macbeth, who is trying to quiet her husband, remarks calmly that there are two men sleeping in the second chamber, Donalbain and an attendant.

27. *hangman's hands*, bloody hands. In Shakespeare's day the hangman not only adjusted the noose and pushed the victims from the ladder, but in cases of treason chopped up the bodies of the criminals. Thus this phrase suggested a vivid picture to Shakespeare's hearers.

31. '*Amen*.' The phrase "God bless us" was used as a charm against witchcraft and the devil. Macbeth, who has sold himself to evil, cannot say amen to this prayer.

33, 34. *thought After these ways*, thought of in this fashion.

34. *mad*. There is a dreadful irony in these words; Macbeth is half mad already; and before the play closes, Lady Macbeth's strong mind breaks down utterly. Cf. v. 1.

35-40. See Textual Notes, p. 254.

39, 40. *nature's second course*, *Chief nourisher*, etc. In Shakespeare's day the second course of a dinner was the most substantial.

40. *What do you mean?* Macbeth is talking so wildly that his wife cannot follow him.

42-43. See Textual Notes, p. 254.

44-50. Lady Macbeth tries to recall her husband from his

ravings by pointing out the necessity for prompt action if they are to escape discovery.

47. *witness*, evidence ; the king's blood which would testify to Macbeth's guilt.

56, 57. *gild . . . guilt*. The pun on "gild" and "guilt" was doubtless plainer to Shakespeare's hearers than to us. Gold was regularly spoken of in the old songs as "red." Lady Macbeth's ghastly jest was perhaps intended to rouse her husband to a perception of his cowardice ; he is afraid to re-enter the chamber of death, she is ready not only to go there, but even to jest about it.

57. *knocking*. This knocking is explained by the dialogue of the next scene. De Quincey has a famous essay upon "The Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth," in which he points out that the knocking makes known that the reaction against the world of unnatural horror, which we have been contemplating, has commenced ; that the pulses of life are beginning to beat again. The whole essay should, if possible, be read by every student of the play.

63. *one red*, entirely red. See Textual Notes, p. 255.

67, 68. With these lines compare the broken utterances of the sleep-walking scene, v. I. 35, 39, 48, 49, and 68-70.

68, 69. *Your constancy . . . unattended*. Your firmness has deserted you.

70. *nightgown*. In Shakespeare's day people went to bed naked. The "nightgown" was the garment they threw around them on first rising, corresponding to our dressing-gown. Lady Macbeth wants her husband to undress and put on his "nightgown" so that he may appear, when the alarm is given, just to have sprung from his bed.

70, 71. *lest occasion . . . watchers*, lest necessity summon us, and reveal the fact that we have not been in bed.

73. *To know, etc.* This obscure line is an answer to Lady Macbeth's reproach that he is "poorly lost" in his thoughts. Macbeth says in effect that he had better remain lost, "not know myself,"

than awake to a full realization of what he had done, "know my deed."

74. *I would thou couldst.* This is the first note of genuine remorse that has appeared in Macbeth's speeches in this scene.

ACT II. SCENE III

There is no change of scene here. As Macbeth and his wife leave the courtyard, the porter, who has been slowly wakened from his drunken sleep by the repeated knocking on the gate, staggers upon the stage. Evidently he is not quite sober yet; he is in no hurry to open the gate, and he improves the time by a whimsical speech on the duties of the porter of hell-gate. Indeed he seems for a time to fancy himself in the position of that functionary, and exhausts his ingenuity in guessing who the malefactors may be that are so clamorous for admittance to the infernal regions.

The authenticity of this scene has been denied by some famous critics and editors; but there seems no good ground for any such suspicion. In the first place an intervening scene of this kind is absolutely necessary to give Macbeth time to wash his hands and change his dress; in the second the porter's speech contains several distinctly Shakespearean phrases, "old turning of the key," "devil-porter it," and "the primrose way to the everlasting bon-fire." The jokes about the farmer, the equivocator, and the tailor, seem rather flat to us, but they are topical 'gags' which likely enough set the audience in a roar when first spoken. A 'gag' can hardly be expected to retain its charm for three centuries.

1. *a knocking indeed.* We must imagine the scene opening with a rousing series of thumps from the impatient visitors who are standing in the cold gateway of the castle.

2. *should have, would certainly have.*

5. *a farmer.* The farmer is supposed to have stored up his grain in the hope of selling it at famine prices. When there came

the promise of a good harvest, "expectation of plenty," and he saw that he would lose rather than make money, he hanged himself in despair. Stories of this kind were current in Shakespeare's day, and there was a special timeliness in the allusion, since the plentiful harvest of 1606 had brought the price of wheat down very low.

6. *come in time*, you've come in good time.

8. *in th' other devil's name*. The porter knows there is some other devil besides Beelzebub in the infernal court, but for the moment he cannot recall his name.

9. *an equivocator*. This is, no doubt, an allusion to a notorious Jesuit, Henry Garnet, who had been tried for high treason in the spring of 1606. He had committed perjury on that occasion, and when detected had tried to excuse himself by saying that he had merely equivocated. Garnet's "equivocation" was, doubtless, a current jest at the time *Macbeth* was first produced.

11. *the scales, i.e. of Justice*.

11, 12. *treason . . . for God's sake*. There may be an allusion here to the Jesuit motto, *ad majorem gloriam Dei*.

16. *a French hose*. Tailors were often accused of stealing some of the cloth given them to make a garment with. The tailor who could steal anything from the small piece of cloth necessary for the tight breeches, a French fashion, popular in 1606 and thereabouts, must have been a particularly skilful rogue.

23. *remember the porter*, don't forget to tip the porter. It seems strange that two men of such high rank as Macduff and Lennox should have passed the night outside of the castle. They were perhaps in command of a body of royal troops.

26, 27. *the second cock*, about three A.M.

46. *made a shift to cast*, found a way to throw. There is a pun on "cast" which means both "throw" and "throw up."

50. *Not yet*. Note the extreme brevity of Macbeth's speeches in this dialogue. He is usually a fluent and graceful talker, but now while he is waiting for his terrible deed to be discovered, and

nerving himself for the part he will then have to play, he can hardly do more than force out a few words.

53. *this is a joyful trouble*, your entertaining the king is a trouble that you are glad to take upon you.

61. *heard*. "Were" is understood before this participle.

62. *prophesying*. This word is here used, not as a participle, but as a noun, the subject of "were heard" in line 61.

64. *the obscure bird*, the bird of darkness, the owl. "Obscure" is accented on the first syllable.

73. *The Lord's anointed temple*, the temple of the Lord's anointed, that is, the body of the king.

77. *Gorgon*. The Gorgons were monsters of Grecian mythology whose aspect turned all who saw them into stone. Macduff means that the figure of the murdered king is as terrible a sight as a Gorgon would be.

81. *death's counterfeit*, the picture, or likeness, of death.

83. *The great doom's image*, a picture of the Judgment Day. Macduff compares the horror of the murder of Duncan to those of the last day itself, and calls on all within the castle to rise up, as the dead will on the last day. Note how his extreme excitement finds utterance in broken ejaculations and startling figures. Scan:

The gréat dóom's image. Málcolm! Bánquo.

87. *hideous trumpet*. Lady Macbeth compares the bell which has so suddenly roused the sleepers of the house to a trumpet in war time.

90, 91. *The repetition . . . fell*. The mere recital to a gentle lady of what has happened would be enough to kill her. Note how Macduff restrains himself for a moment out of consideration for his hostess, and then, overmastered by his horror, bursts out with the news to Banquo.

96-101. *Had I but died, etc.* This beautiful speech of Macbeth's is by no means to be regarded as a piece of pure hypocrisy. He has no sooner committed the murder than he has been seized with

remorse (cf. ii. 2. 74) and he seizes the opportunity to give vent to his feelings, well knowing that his hearers will not understand the full meaning of his words.

101. *this vault*, the world, here compared to an empty cellar from which the wine has been taken.

110. *were distracted*. The distraction of the grooms was no doubt due in part to the sleeping-potion with which their possets had been drugged.

113. *wherefore, etc.* Note how Macduff here assumes the attitude of opposition to Macbeth which characterizes him to the very end. It seems as if he already suspected him of the murder.

114-124. *Who can be wise, etc.* The pompous diction and strained imagery of this speech of Macbeth's is Shakespeare's way of indicating his hypocrisy. Compare this speech with lines 96-101, where Macbeth is really lamenting his own ruined life, not the death of Duncan.

117. *the pauser reason*, reason which bids us pause and not act hastily.

122. *Unmannerly breech'd*. The naked daggers had put on breeches of blood. But these breeches, instead of being decent coverings, were "unmannerly," *i.e.* indecent.

124. Macbeth's description of the murdered king recalls to his wife so terrible a remembrance of the chamber of death into which she had stolen barely an hour before that she is unable to endure it and faints. This is another indication of her slight physical strength.

128. *an auger-hole*, a small unnoticeable hole. Donalbain thinks that fate, *i.e.* a bloody death, may be lurking for him and his brother in any corner of Macbeth's castle.

130. *upon the foot of motion*, ready to move and show itself. These speeches of the princes are exchanged in swift whispers while the nobles are crowding about Lady Macbeth. The young men are not heartless, but their fear overmasters their sorrow, and their one thought is flight.

132. *our naked frailties*, our half-dressed, weak bodies. The

nobles have rushed half-dressed from their rooms at the sound of the alarm bell, and the courtyard where they have gathered is bitter cold.

134-138. *And question . . . malice.* Banquo realizes that there is something behind the murder of the king that calls for investigation. He feels that the company of nobles is shaken with fears and suspicions; but he puts his trust in God and declares himself the foe of whatever secret intention the treason that has slain the king may yet have in store. If Banquo suspected Macbeth, this was a direct declaration of hostilities; but he did nothing to make his words good, for when next we find him he is the most submissive servant of the new king.

139. *manly readiness*, the dress, perhaps the armour, that suits a man.

140. *Well contented*, agreed. When the nobles go out the princes remain to consult about their flight. Malcolm seems to distrust all the nobles; Donalbain's words, lines 145, 146, show that he suspects Macbeth. The flight of the princes is one of the fortunate accidents that help Macbeth in the first part of the play. It shifts the suspicion upon them and opens the way for his election to the throne.

146. *daggers in men's smiles.* Donalbain is thinking of the smiles with which his father had been welcomed into the castle.

146. *near.* This is an old comparative form of the adjective "nigh." The phrase may be paraphrased as follows: "The nearer a man stands to you in blood relationship, the likelier he is to shed your blood." The reference, of course, is to Macbeth, the nearest relative of the princes.

147, 148. *This murderous shaft, etc.* This murderous plot is not yet fully accomplished. So long as the princes lived they stood between Macbeth and the throne.

151, 152. *There's warrant, etc.* That theft is justifiable which steals itself away from a place where it can expect no mercy. This is one of the many sententious rhyme tags that abound in Macbeth.

ACT II. SCENE IV

This scene serves as a link to connect what has gone before with the next act. It probably takes place in the late morning of the day following the murder of Duncan. The dialogue between Ross and the old man renews our feeling of horror at the deed. Macduff's brief report of the decision of the council of nobles as to the agents and instigators of the murder, and of the election of Macbeth, puts us in possession of the necessary facts, and his refusal to attend the coronation strengthens our feeling that he is entering into an attitude of marked opposition to the new king.

4. *Hath trifled former knowings*, hath made my former experiences seem mere trifles.

5, 6. *heavens . . . act . . . stage*. These words are drawn from the vocabulary of the Elizabethan theatre. The "heavens" were the hangings with which the stage was draped. When a tragedy was to be performed, these hangings were black. "Act" means "performance."

7. *the travelling lamp*, the sun.

8, 9. *Is't night's . . . entomb*. Has night got the better of the sun, or is day ashamed to look upon the deed that darkness still buries the earth as in a tomb?

12. *towering in her pride of place*, soaring at her highest point before swooping on her prey.

15. *minions of their race*, the best of their class.

18. *eat*, the past tense of the verb. This portent, along with the foregoing story of the owl and the falcon, and the prolonged eclipse, was taken by Shakespeare direct from Holinshed. He uses them to show how nature itself seemed to reflect the murder of Duncan in startling and unnatural phenomena.

21. *How goes the world, sir, now?* What is the latest news? Ross appears to have been absent from the council of the peers held after the close of the preceding scene. Macduff answers him

very curtly ; he is evidently deeply dissatisfied with what has been done.

23. Macduff does not believe this ; he is simply giving Ross the official, accepted report of the king's death.

24. *What good, etc.* What benefit could they intend to derive for themselves from the murder ?

28. *Thrifless ambition.* Ross is referring to the supposed ambition of the princes which led them to kill their father. It was "thrifless," *i.e.* "wasteful," because it destroyed that by which it lived and so defeated its own end. Instead of gaining anything by their father's death, the princes have had to fly the land. Note that Ross accepts without question the official view of the king's death.

29. A line of four feet.

31. *named.* At the council of the peers Macbeth, as the next of kin to Duncan in the absence of the princes, was naturally chosen king.

31. *Scone*, an ancient royal city in Scotland, near the present town of Perth. It contained the ancient throne, inclosing the stone which Jacob used for his pillow (*Genesis*, xxviii. 11), on which the Scottish kings were crowned. When Edward I overran Scotland he took this throne to England, and it is now used in the coronation of English sovereigns in Westminster Abbey.

33. *Colme-kill*, Iona, an island off the west coast of Scotland. St. Columba, who converted Scotland to Christianity, founded a monastery here from which the name in the text was derived. Colme-kill means Columba's cell. Owing to the high reputation of this monastery for holiness, its precincts became a favourite burial place for Scottish kings. Altogether, forty-eight kings are said to be buried there. It is interesting to note that the historical Macbeth, as well as Duncan, was interred in this cemetery.

36. *Fife*, a county on the east coast of Scotland, ruled over by Macduff. A ruined castle on the shore of Fife is still called Macduff's Castle.

38. This clause depends upon "adieu" in the preceding line. Macduff bids Ross farewell since things may turn out badly for them under the new king and they may not meet again.

40, 41. *God's benison*. The old man blesses Ross as a well-meaning person who will try to make the best of things and reconcile adversaries.

ACT III. SCENE I

This act is devoted to the second great crime of Macbeth's career, the murder of Banquo. The first scene shows us Banquo's suspicions of Macbeth, and Macbeth's fears of Banquo. As a result of the witches' prediction the two old friends are wholly estranged, although outwardly they preserve the forms of a gracious king and a loyal subject. Macbeth's dialogue with the murderers at the close of the scene informs us of the fate that is hanging over Banquo's head. The scene is laid at the palace some time after the coronation of Macbeth.

1-10. This speech shows Banquo in a wholly different mood from that in which we last saw him. Then he declared that he placed his trust in God and stood opposed to all the designs of treason. Now, although he strongly suspects Macbeth of the treacherous murder of Duncan, he makes no threat of vengeance, but rather broods over the prophecy of the witches that his descendants shall reign, and hopes that this prophecy too may be made good. In other words, he is paltering with evil; he is not yet ready to take any step to hasten the fulfilment of the prediction, but he is content to serve the murderer and usurper in the hope that some profit may come out of it to him and his house. Perhaps if Banquo had lived he would have headed a revolt against Macbeth. This monologue of his at least explains and in part justifies Macbeth's fears.

1. *it*, the crown.

4. *stand in thy posterity*, abide in thy line.

8. *by the verities on thee made good*, in accordance with the true prophecies fulfilled in thy case.

11. *Sennet*, a blast upon the trumpet indicating the approach of the king.

16. *to the which*, to your commands. The antecedent of "which" is understood from the verb "command."

19. *Ride you . . . afternoon*. Under the pretense of a friendly interest, Macbeth is informing himself of Banquo's plans, so that he may know when and where to set the ambush.

22. *grave and prosperous*, weighty and followed by success.

33. *strange invention*, fantastic stories. Macbeth perhaps alludes to the reports circulated by the princes that it was he who murdered Duncan.

36. *Goes Fleance with you?* Macbeth asks this question to see whether he can cut off father and son at one blow.

37. *our time does call upon's*, our engagement demands us.

42. *seven at night*, the hour for the formal supper.

43. *welcome*, either an adjective or a noun. If the first, "sweeter" must be taken as an adverb; if the second, "society" is the indirect object of "make." The first seems somewhat the simpler reading.

44. *God be with you!* Macbeth dismisses his court so as to have an opportunity to speak to the men whom he wishes to murder Banquo. This line is not an Alexandrine; the phrase "God be with you," equivalent to our "good-bye," is pronounced "God b' wi' you," so that we have merely the feminine ending.

48. *To be thus . . . safely thus*, to be king is nothing unless I am secure in that position. This soliloquy of Macbeth's deserves the most careful study. It gives us a fine characterization of Banquo, and shows what cause Macbeth had to fear him. It shows how far from content Macbeth is with the crown that he had won by murder, and it reveals the distinct deterioration of Macbeth's character. Over his first crime he hesitated and faltered; possibly he would never have committed it except for the influence of his wife. But no pity nor remembrance of their old friendship holds him back from plotting the treacherous murder of Banquo. It is no sooner thought than done.

50. *royalty of nature*, kingly nature.

51. *would be fear'd*, naturally inspires fear.

56. *Genius*, the demon, or presiding spirit, of a man. Shakespeare got this story about Mark Antony and Augustus Cæsar from Plutarch's *Lives*, which he had read a few years before when preparing to write his play, *Julius Cæsar*. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, written shortly after *Macbeth*, he makes an augur say to the hero :

Therefore, O Antony, stay not by his side :
Thy demon, that's thy spirit which keeps thee, is
Noble, courageous, high, unmatchable,
Where Cæsar's is not ; but, near him, thy angel
Becomes a fear, as being overpowered.

— *Antony and Cleopatra*, ii. 3. 18-22.

63. *an unlineal hand*, a hand belonging to some other family than Macbeth's.

64. *No son*. It seems plain that Shakespeare regarded Macbeth as childless ; but not too old to be without the hope of having a son to succeed him.

67. *Put rancour . . . peace*. Put poisonous drugs into the cup from which I drank peace, *i.e.* his conscience.

68. *mine eternal jewel*, my immortal soul.

69. *the common enemy of man*, the devil.

72. *champion me to the utterance*, take my part in a mortal duel. Macbeth calls upon fate, or death, to enter the lists as his champion against Banquo.

73. *Two murderers*. From what Macbeth says to them, it is plain that these men are not common murderers whom he could hire to kill any one he pleased. On the contrary, they seem to have been soldiers with some claims to promotion which were set aside in a way that had deeply offended them. They had thought that Macbeth had been responsible for this ; but at his first meeting with them, he had succeeded in diverting their suspicions from

himself to Banquo, and he now proceeds to urge them to revenge themselves.

77. *he*, Banquo.

80. *pass'd in probation*, which was spent with you in proving; "pass'd" is a participle agreeing with "conference."

81. *borne in hand*, deluded with false hopes.

91. *We are men*. The murderer's answer is spoken in a grim tone, implying that they are still men enough to be eager to revenge an injury. This line may be scanned as follows :

And beggar'd yours for ever? We are men, my liege.

95. *the valued file*, a file, or catalogue, showing the value of the different objects contained in it.

100. *particular addition*, special distinction.

100, 101. *bill That writes them all alike*, a list or catalogue which puts them all down as "dogs" without specifying their qualities. It is interesting to note in this connection that Shakespeare was so fond of dogs, horses, and falcons, that he never misses an opportunity to expand on these topics.

102. *in the file*, in the list of values referred to in line 95.

103. To scan this line "worst" must be pronounced as a disyllable.

104. *put . . . your bosoms*, entrust a charge to you.

105. *Whose execution*, the performance of which.

107. *wear our health*, possess our health. "Health," of course, refers to Macbeth's mental, not his physical well-being.

108. This line is an Alexandrine. The necessary emphasis on "I" forbids any such contraction as occurs in line 91.

118. *my near'st of life*, my most vital parts.

120. *bid my will avouch it*, bid my royal will warrant it; *i.e.* give no other reason for the execution of Banquo than my royal pleasure.

122. *Whose loves . . . drop*, and it is impossible for me to drop their friendship.

122. *but wail his fall*, but I must lament the fall of him.

123. *Who*, whom, as often in Shakespeare.

130. *the perfect spy*. There has been much discussion over this phrase. Some commentators take "spy" in the sense of "knowledge obtained by spying"; but there is no authority for this. It seems better to take "spy" as equivalent to "scout" and paraphrase the line: "I will acquaint you with the time by means of the best of my scouts."

133. *require a clearness*, must be kept clear, must not be involved.

138. *Resolve yourselves apart*, make up your minds in my absence.

139. An Alexandrine.

ACT III. SCENE II

This scene is particularly important for the view it gives us of Lady Macbeth. We see her lamenting that the accomplishment of her desire has not brought her content, and this inward unrest, stifled in the presence of her husband by her strong will and her desire to be of assistance to him, prepares us for the total collapse of her mind exhibited in the sleep-walking scene. She has plunged into guilt to give her husband his heart's desire, and now she sees that the attainment of his desire has brought him no satisfaction. It is plain, moreover, that the relation between Macbeth and his wife is no longer what it was. He is unconsciously drawing away from her; he conceals from her his plot against the life of Banquo; at one time (lines 30-31), indeed, he even seems to be deceiving her. This prepares us for the total separation of the two guilty souls, and for the strangely passive way in which Macbeth receives the news of his wife's death in the last act. As regards Macbeth, we have in this scene stronger testimony than even the preceding has afforded us to the guilty anguish of his mind, and to the strong compulsion under which he feels himself to step from crime to crime.

1. Banquo is evidently on Lady Macbeth's mind. She knew of the prophecy of the witches that his descendants should be kings, and it may be that she, like her husband, is thinking of the possibility of taking action to prevent the fulfilment of this prediction. Her words in line 38 sound as if some such idea were in her mind.

8. *alone*. Lady Macbeth knows nothing of her husband's interview with the murderers, and fancies that since he dismissed the court he has been brooding alone over the murder of Duncan.

12. *Should be without regard*, should not be thought of.

14. *She'll close*. It was a common belief that a snake, even though mangled, would soon recover; the wounds would close.

14. *poor malice*, weak desire to do harm.

15. *former tooth*, former power to bite. "Former" refers to the period before the snake was "scorch'd."

16. *the frame of things*, the universe.

16. *both the worlds*, heaven and earth.

This line is an Alexandrine with a feminine ending. Scan:

But let the frame of things disjoint, both the worlds suffer.

18. *terrible dreams*. Already Macbeth is beginning to realize the meaning of the prophetic voice which proclaimed that he should sleep no more.

20. *peace . . . peace*. The first "peace" refers to the satisfaction of his fierce desire for power which Macbeth had hoped to gain by killing Duncan; the second to the peace of death. Such a play on words is very characteristic of Shakespeare. See Textual Notes, p. 257.

21. *on the torture of the mind to lie*, as if on the rack.

22-26. *Duncan . . . further*. Note the solemn beauty of this passage. Macbeth nowhere gives us a clearer vision of his own "restless ecstasy" than here where he envies the sound sleep of the dead king.

25. *Malice domestic, foreign levy*. Macbeth, no doubt, is thinking of the troubles Duncan had in his lifetime, of Macdonwald's

revolt, and Sweno's invasion. Now, however, the old king is safe in death; nothing can touch him further.

26, 27. Note how Lady Macbeth rallies to the aid of her husband. She sees that it is useless to reproach or counsel him, so she addresses him in the tenderest tones. He responds at once, but soon falls back into his gloomy brooding.

30. *remembrance*. This word must be pronounced as if it had four syllables, "rememberance."

This line and the following may be paraphrased as follows: "Do not forget Banquo; distinguish him above his fellow-courtiers both by your looks of favour and by your speeches." It is hard to see just why Macbeth should say this. He certainly expected that Banquo would be dead before nightfall; how then could Lady Macbeth "present him eminence"? Either he says this to hide from her his plot against Banquo's life, or else he fancies that the plot may miscarry, in which case the advice will hold good. The former is, perhaps, the better view.

32, 33. *Unsafe . . . streams*. This is an obscure passage. It has been conjectured that some words have dropped out, but the broken line may be due to Macbeth's emotion. The passage may be paraphrased as follows: "How unsafe we are so long as we must keep on dipping our dignities (as king and queen) in streams of flattery."

38. *copy*, a technical word, drawn from the vocabulary of the law. It is equivalent to "copy-hold," a form of lease common in Shakespeare's day. The line means: "Their lease of life is not eternal." Lady Macbeth has now fallen so far behind her husband that she only hints vaguely at a crime which he has already planned to the smallest detail.

39. *There's comfort yet*, there is still some comfort in that thought.

41. *cloister'd flight*, flight around the cloisters.

46. *seeling*. It was a common practice in Shakespeare's day to "seel," *i.e.* to sew up, the eyes of hawks in order to render them tame and manageable. So night is pictured here as a falconer

sewing up the eyes of day lest it should struggle against the deed that is to be done.

49. *bond*, Banquo's lease of life, equivalent to the "copy" of line 38.

52. Professor Dowden says very aptly that this line might serve as a motto of the entire tragedy.

ACT III. SCENE III

This scene, short as it is, contains the climax of the drama. So far everything has been in Macbeth's favour, and, outwardly at least, his career has been one unbroken series of successes. The escape of Fleance is his first piece of bad luck. From this time on, however, everything goes wrong with Macbeth. The various incidents that contribute to his downfall will be pointed out as they occur in the course of the action. It is enough, here, to call the attention of the student to the fact that this scene is the turning-point of the drama.

It has been rather foolishly asserted that the Third Murderer who appears in this scene is Macbeth himself. Had Shakespeare meant this, we may be sure that he would have given the audience a hint to that effect. The speeches of Macbeth to the First Murderer in the next scene show conclusively, I think, that he was ignorant of the details of the assault on Banquo, which would not have been the case had he himself been one of the murderers. We may perhaps take the Third Murderer to be the "perfect spy" of iii. 1. 130 whom Macbeth sends at the last moment as a re-enforcement to the ambush.

2. *needs not our mistrust*, we need not distrust him. The Second Murderer says these words to the First, who is evidently suspicious of the newcomer. He goes on to say that the third man has repeated Macbeth's instructions as to the time and place of the deed exactly as they were given in the first place, "to the direction just," which shows that he comes straight from the king.

8. *The subject of our watch*, the man we are waiting for.

9. *Give us a light*. Banquo says these words to one of his servants. He sends them on the winding road with the horses while he and Fleance take the straight path through the woods to the palace. Fleance carries the torch to light them on their way.

10. *the note of expectation*, the list of the expected guests.

15. *stand to't*, get ready.

16. *It will be rain to-night*. This remark of Banquo's shows how utterly unprepared he is for the treacherous assault.

17, 18. It is characteristic of the brave and self-possessed Banquo, that even at this terrible moment he thinks of his son, and contrives to get him away in the hope that he may revenge his father's death.

19. *Was't not the way?* Was not that the right thing to do?

20, 21. *lost Best half of our affair*, left the best part of our work undone.

ACT III. SCENE IV

From every point of view this superb scene is one of the most remarkable in the whole play. The poetry rises to the highest pitch, and the theatrical effects are overwhelming. But it is, perhaps, most noteworthy for the light it casts upon Macbeth's state of mind. As, from the point of view of plot construction, the last scene marked the climax of the play, so, to the student of character, this scene is the turning-point in Macbeth's career. Up to this time, with all his hesitation and wild fancies and gloomy suspicions, he has had strength of mind and self-control enough to push forward to his objects and to hide from public view the bloody means by which he has obtained them. In this scene, however, we see a fatal collapse of his powers. Confronted by the spectre of his murdered victim he loses all self-control, and before the assembled nobility breaks out into speeches which must inevitably betray his guilt. It is interesting to compare his behaviour immedi-

ately after the discovery of the murder of Duncan with his actions in the presence of Banquo's ghost. In the former case he retained all his presence of mind; his speeches, though perhaps somewhat exaggerated, conveyed the impression of wild grief for the king's death, and his act of putting the bewildered grooms to instant death was, perhaps, the most practical thing that he could have done at such a time. In the banquet scene, after one feeble effort to play his part, he loses consciousness of the witnesses and speaks to the ghost as if they were alone together. Equally noticeable is the fact that in this scene he passes altogether beyond his wife's control. She had been able to brace him up to the murder of Duncan and to control and direct him in the outburst of excitement which followed. In this scene, however, she is utterly unable to restrain him, and is forced to listen helplessly to the ravings that betray his guilty secret.

In the dialogue between Macbeth and his wife which follows the retirement of the guests, we see evident signs of moral degeneration as well as of the collapse of his mental powers. His expressed determination to seek out the witches and to wade through a sea of blood to obtain his objects shows how far he has fallen from the Macbeth who was horrified by the suggestion implied in the witches' greeting, and who needed all the powerful influence of his wife to nerve him to the murder of Duncan. The mention of Macduff and the witches serves also to link this scene to those of the next act, and so provides for continuity of action.

1, 2. *at first And last*, from the beginning to the end of the feast, once for all.

5. *keeps her state*, remains in her throne; the "state" meant originally the canopy over the chair in which a king sat.

6. *require her welcome*, ask her to give us welcome.

9. *encounter thee with their hearts' thanks*, meet thy greeting with hearty thanks.

10. *Both sides*, of the long table at which the guests are sitting. Macbeth is playing the part of the genial king who leaves his throne

to mingle with his nobles. He says he will sit down among them, but his anxiety to get news of the assault on Banquo keeps him on his feet. At this moment he catches sight of the murderer at the door, and telling the nobles that in a few moments he'll drink a formal toast, a "measure," with them, he turns to the door and converses in low tones with the assassin.

14. *'Tis better . . . within.* An ungrammatical but very emphatic way of saying, "Banquo's blood is better on your face than in his body."

21. *my fit.* Macbeth speaks as if he were subject to an intermittent fever. He had hoped to be wholly cured of it by the death of Banquo and Fleance, but with the news of the latter's escape, his "fit" of fear attacks him again.

21. *I had else been perfect,* I would otherwise, *i.e.* if Fleance had been killed, have been completely well.

24. *cabin'd, cribb'd,* shut up in a narrow space, as in a cabin, or a hovel.

24, 25. *bound in To,* confined along with.

28. *a death to nature,* a mortal wound.

29. By Banquo's death Macbeth is, at least, relieved of his present fears. Fleance, although one of the hated house to whom the witches have prophesied that the kingdom shall descend, is as yet too young to undertake anything against Macbeth.

32. *hear ourselves,* talk with each other.

33. *the feast is sold,* like a meal at an inn.

34, 35. *That is . . . welcome,* of which it is not repeatedly affirmed during its progress that it is gladly given.

35. *to feed were best at home,* merely to eat a man had better stay at home where he can do as he likes.

36. *From thence,* away from home.

36. *ceremony* is a trisyllable; and the line is scanned:

F̄rom thence the s̄auce to m̄eat is cer'mony.

We must imagine the ghost as sitting, not in the chair of state but

at the table in the chair where Macbeth had proposed (line 10) to sit.

40. *our country's honour*, the best men in the country.

42, 43. *who may . . . mischance*, I hope I may rather be obliged to rebuke him as an unkind friend who forgot his engagement to sup with us, than to pity him for any misfortune which may have prevented him from keeping it. This speech is shamelessly hypocritical, for Macbeth is secretly rejoicing that his dreaded enemy will trouble him no more. All the more overwhelming is the effect when he turns and perceives the ghost.

46. *The table's full*. Macbeth at first does not realize what has happened; he only sees that all the seats at the long table are occupied. When Lennox calls his attention to the seat reserved for him, Macbeth recognizes Banquo's ghost sitting in it.

49. *Which of you have done this?* At the sight of the ghost Macbeth utterly loses his self-command. He makes, however, one vain attempt to shake off the overpowering sense of guilt by shifting the burden of the crime upon some member of the company.

53, 54. *my lord . . . youth*. Note the quick tact with which Lady Macbeth comes to her husband's help. Laying the blame of Macbeth's sudden emotion and wild words upon a disorder which has afflicted him from his youth, she induces the nobles, who are rising excitedly from their places, to sit down again. Then she leaves the throne and hurries to Macbeth. Catching his arm, she draws him aside and attempts in low whispers to shame him into presence of mind by taunting him with cowardice.

55. *upon a thought*, in a moment.

57. *You shall offend him*, you are bound to make him worse, do him harm.

61. *painting of your fear*, an image created by your fear, like the air-drawn dagger.

64. *Impostors to true fear*, mere counterfeits when compared to those caused by an object truly to be feared.

66. *Authorized*, the accent is on the second syllable.

72, 73. *our monuments Shall be the maws of kites*, our graves shall be in the stomachs of carrion crows. Macbeth seems to think that if the dead body were torn to pieces by kites, it would be impossible for the ghost to rise.

73. An Alexandrine with the feminine ending.

76. *Ere humane statute . . . weal*, before laws passed by men, "humane statute," freed the country from anarchy and rendered it civilized. "Humane" is the regular spelling for "human" with Shakespeare; "weal" means "the commonwealth," "the nation"; "gentle" is used to characterize the nation as it was after the passage of the laws. The line is a characteristic example of the compact brevity and force of Shakespeare's later style.

81. *twenty mortal murders*. Macbeth is thinking of the murderer's report in line 27.

83, 84. *My worthy lord . . . lack you*. Lady Macbeth sees that it is useless to try to shame Macbeth back to his senses. She returns to the throne, and, speaking to him quietly as if nothing had happened, calls his attention to the fact that he is neglecting his guests. The appeal succeeds in rousing him, and he turns to the company with an excuse for his strange behaviour, and proposes a toast. In the effort to play his part, however, he overdoes it, drinks to the health of Banquo, and expresses the wish that he were present. This piece of bravado is promptly and effectively punished by the return of the ghost.

91. *we thirst*, we are eager to drink.

92. *all to all*, all good wishes to all of you.

92. *Our duties, and the pledge*, a formula equivalent to "we pay our homage to you as king, and drink the health you propose."

93. *Avaunt!* Note the change in Macbeth's tone. He is no longer overcome with fear at the sight of the ghost, but rather roused to wild anger. Lady Macbeth does not dare to address him, but devotes herself to the almost impossible task of inducing the peers to treat his words and actions as things of no importance.

101. *arm'd*, clad in armour. The reference is to the thick hide of the rhinoceros.

101. *Hyrchan*, Hyrcanian. Hyrcania was a district in central Asia supposed to be full of tigers.

105. *If trembling I inhabit then*. There has been an immense amount of discussion over this passage. If "inhabit" is taken intransitively in the sense of continuing in a certain place, the meaning of the passage is plain enough. "Come to life again," says Macbeth, "and challenge me to a duel. If I remain trembling at home, call me a coward."

106. *The baby of a girl*, a little girl's doll, or, perhaps, the baby of a girlish mother, *i.e.* a puny infant.

110. *disorder*. The word applies to Macbeth's conduct, not to any disorder among the nobles.

112-115. *You make me . . . cheeks*, you make me seem a stranger to myself, *i.e.* forget my natural quality of manhood, when I see that such a sight has no effect on you. Macbeth is addressing his wife, not the guests, whom he no longer notices.

117. *speak not*. Lady Macbeth interposes hastily lest Macbeth should tell the nobles plainly what it was he saw. She herself has not seen the ghost, but from what she knew of her husband and his hatred of Banquo, and from the hints he had dropped in the afternoon, it was not difficult for her to guess what the vision was that had so affected him.

119. *stand not . . . going*, do not depart ceremoniously in the order of your ranks.

122. *It will have blood*. With the departure of the guests Macbeth relapses into melancholy brooding over the consequences of his deed. He feels sure that the murder of Banquo will be discovered and that he will have to pay the penalty. Note that Lady Macbeth makes no effort either to reproach or to comfort him; she sees plainly that her influence over him is gone. All she can do is to try to get him to sleep and forget his thoughts.

124. *understood relations*, the secret relations between things, understood by diviners and soothsayers.

126. *What is the night?* What time of the night is it?

127. *Almost at odds with morning*, so near day that you can hardly tell whether it is night or morning.

128, 129. *How say'st thou . . . bidding?* What do you say to Macduff's refusing to accept our royal invitation to the feast.

130. *by the way*, incidentally, *i.e.* I have not received a direct refusal from Macduff, but I know that he will not come. Macbeth explains the source of his information in the following reference to the paid spies he keeps in the houses of his nobles.

133. A very irregular line. Perhaps it can best be scanned:

And betimes I will, to the weird sisters.

139. *Strange things*. Macbeth is perhaps referring to his designs against Macduff.

142. *My strange and self-abuse*, my strange self-deception. Macbeth speaks as if he were now convinced that the vision of Banquo was only a deception of his senses.

143. *the initiate fear*, the fear of the novice.

144. *young in deed*, inexperienced in deeds of bloodshed.

ACT III. SCENE V

As this scene is now generally considered un-Shakespearean we need not dwell upon it. The part of Hecate is wholly omitted from some modern representations, and there can be no doubt that the play gains in effectiveness by this excision. Were it not for the fact that Hecate reappears in iv. 1. we might even in reading simply pass over this scene.

13. *Loves for his own ends*, follows you for his own purposes.

15. *the pit of Acheron*. In classical mythology Acheron is one

of the rivers of Hades. The "pit" may be taken here as meaning some dark ravine, or cave, supposed to lead down to the lower world.

20. *I am for th' air*, I must fly up.

27. *artificial sprites*, spirits called up, made visible, by magic art.

34. *my little spirit*, my familiar demon.

35. *a song*. See Introduction, p. 38.

ACT III. SCENE VI

This scene is a counterpart to the closing scene of the second act. The dialogue between Ross and the old man in the former scene represents public opinion which regards the murder of Duncan as something dreadful and unnatural, but does not in the least suspect Macbeth. So in this scene the conversation between Lennox and the unnamed lord shows the attitude of the Scotch nobility toward Macbeth. Beginning with bitter irony Lennox finally calls Macbeth outright a tyrant; the lord agrees and tells of the attempt that is being made to raise an army to overthrow him. Both of them join in prayers for the speedy success of this attempt, thus preparing us for the revolt of the lords in Act V. The change of public opinion may be plausibly assigned to Macbeth's behaviour at the banquet. When it became known on the following day that Banquo had been killed on his way to the palace, no man who had heard Macbeth's ravings on the previous night could have any doubt as to who had planned the murder. The fact that Macbeth took advantage of the flight of Fleance to charge him with the murder of his father threw a new light on the accusation that Malcolm and Donalbain had murdered Duncan. Thus Macbeth's second crime instead of securing him upon the throne served only to reveal his first.

I. *My former speeches . . . thoughts*, what I have said has only

been what you have already suspected. We may imagine that this lord had been absent from Scotland at the time of the murder of Duncan and of Banquo ; and that Lennox has just told him all the details.

4. *marry*, by the Virgin Mary. In Shakespeare's time this phrase was no longer regarded as an oath ; it had become a mere ejaculation.

4. *he was dead*, and so Macbeth's pity couldn't help him. The implication is that Macbeth did not pity the king till after he had killed him.

8. *monstrous*, pronounced like a word of three syllables, "mon-sterous."

12. *pious rage*, rage inspired by his pious loyalty to Duncan.

15, 16. Lennox here reveals the real reason of Macbeth's murder of the grooms.

18. *under his key*, in his power. If Macbeth could lay hands on the princes he would put them to death on the charge of having murdered their father.

25. *the due of birth*, the throne due to him as his birthright.

27. *the most pious Edward*, Edward the Confessor, the last of the old line of Saxon kings of England, famous for his sanctity.

28, 29. *That the malevolence . . . respect*, his ill fortune, as an exiled prince, in no way diminishes the honour with which he is received.

30. *upon his aid*, in aid of Malcolm. The phrase depends not upon "pray" but on "to wake."

31. *Northumberland*, a great district, once an independent kingdom, in northern England. It was governed at this time with almost kingly powers by Earl Siward, the descendant of a famous line of Vikings.

34, 35. *Give to our tables . . . knives*. Lennox is thinking of Duncan killed in his sleep and Banquo murdered on the way to a banquet. "Free," line 35, means "banish."

36. *faithful homage*, in contrast with the forced homage which the thanes render to Macbeth.

36. *free honours*, honours fit for freemen.
37. *this report*, the report of this condition of things in Scotland.
38. *their king*, the English king, Edward.
42. Professor Manly says: “‘*Hums*’ is not the word *hums*, it represents an inarticulate sound, well-known, but not easily expressed in letters.” The messenger did not dare to utter his anger in the presence of Macduff, but left him with an inarticulate growl of rage.
- 43-45. *that well . . . provide*, that anger on the part of the messenger might warn him to shun the more terrible wrath of Macbeth.
47. *His*, Macduff’s.

ACT IV. SCENE I

The interest in this act centres around Macbeth’s relation to Macduff, who has been already pointed out as his sole opponent among the Scottish nobles. In the first scene, Macbeth is warned against him by name and resolves to put him to death; in the second, assassins, who have come too late to find him in his castle, massacre by Macbeth’s orders his entire household; in the third we find him in England stirring up Malcolm to war against the tyrant, receiving the terrible news of the slaughter of his wife and children, and vowing revenge upon their murderer. We see less of Macbeth in this act than in any other, but we see enough to show us how, by this time, he has wholly given himself over to evil. The difference between the Macbeth whom the witches waylaid and the Macbeth who seeks them out has been already pointed out. Even more terrible is the difference between the Macbeth who was “too full o’ the milk of human kindness to catch the nearest way,” and the Macbeth who orders the massacre of Macduff’s wife and children. The wanton cruelty of this crime, by which Macbeth has absolutely nothing to gain, marks the lowest point of his fall. At the close of the act, we join with Macduff in thinking of him

as "this fiend of Scotland," and look forward eagerly to the punishment that is about to be meted out to him. It will be shown later on with what art the poet contrives to regain for him a certain portion of our sympathy.

The witches who know that Macbeth is coming to consult them are revealed in a cavern preparing their enchantments. We may suppose that the caldron with all its horrible ingredients was necessary to call up the apparitions which the witches mean to show Macbeth. The student should note carefully the forms and utterances of these apparitions, and consider in what way their words confirm Macbeth in his evil purposes, and embolden him against repentance.

The speeches of the witches are thrown into the same trochaic metre that they have employed on their former appearances. The difference between this and the light iambic metre in which Hecate speaks, is one of the main reasons for rejecting that character as the interpolation of another poet than Shakespeare.

1. *Thrice*. Three was a magical number. The triple call of the familiar spirit in the form of a cat bids the witches begin their work.

2. *hedge-pig*. The hedgehog was thought to be an uncanny beast. Evil spirits were supposed to assume its shape; "urchin," another name for the hedgehog, denoted in Shakespeare's day, not a child as now, but a malicious fairy.

3. *Harpier*, a harpy, is probably the familiar of the third witch.

6. A syllable is wanting in the third foot of this line. The strong stress on "cold," and the slight pause after it, fill up the rhythm.

7. *has*. After "that," which must be in the second person to agree with its antecedent "Toad," we should expect "hast," but in Elizabethan English a relative pronoun subject was often followed by a verb in the third person, even when the antecedent of the pronoun was in the second person.

8. *Swelter'd*. It was one of the signs of the devilish nature of

the toad, that it "sweltered," *i.e.* sweated, even under a cold stone, and sweltered poison.

12. *Fillet of a fenny snake*, the lungs, or the liver, of a snake of the swamp.

16. *blind-worm*, a small snake-like lizard, supposed in Shakespeare's day to be both blind and poisonous.

23. *mummy*, a gum obtained by exposing an embalmed corpse to the fire. "Witches' mummy" was probably mummy obtained by magical art.

27. *yew*. The yew was planted in graveyards, and was considered poisonous.

28. *in the moon's eclipse*, an unlucky time, and so suitable for witches' work.

30. *babe*. Witches were supposed to boil the flesh of newborn infants to obtain a magical ointment from their fat.

37. *baboon*, accented on the first syllable.

39-43. These verses are in all probability interpolated by the author of iii. 5. It is quite out of keeping with Shakespeare's conception of the witches to fancy them dancing like "elves and fairies." Note the similarity between the metre of these lines and that of Hecate's long speech in iii. 5.

43. *a song, "Black Spirits," etc.* This song is found complete in the incantation scene in Middleton's *Witch*. See Introduction, page 39.

44. *pricking*. A sudden itching of the body was supposed to show that something important was about to happen. It may here denote the instinctive sympathy of the witch with the wicked Macbeth.

50. *conjure*, adjure. The accent is on the first syllable. The whole speech is very characteristic of the desperate recklessness of Macbeth. He is determined to have an answer from the witches, no matter what storms their enchantments raise, and no matter what destruction of life and property results.

63. *our masters*, the evil spirits, whom the witches serve and who presently take shape as the three apparitions.

64. *caten*. According to an old Scotch law a sow who ate her pigs was to be stoned to death as a monster.

67. *high or low*, great spirit or small.

68. The "armed," *i.e.* helmeted, head represents Macbeth's own head which was destined to be cut off by Macduff. The bloody child represents Macduff, who had been ripped from his mother's womb. Note the concealed meaning in the witch's statement that this apparition is more potent than the first.

78. *Had I . . . hear thee*, if I had more ears than I have, I'd listen to you with all of them; a figurative way of saying that Macbeth is listening with eager attention.

83. *double*, used here as an adverb.

84. *take a bond of fate*. "Fate" is probably used here in the sense of "Death." Macbeth intends to kill Macduff, and by so doing he will obtain a "bond," a sure pledge, from Death that Macduff will never harm him. Thus he will be doubly sure, first by the prediction just uttered, next by Macduff's death.

86. *sleep in spite of thunder*. Macbeth has already complained of his restless sleeplessness. It is natural to suppose that a stormy night, recalling to him the terrors of the night in which he murdered Duncan, would still further heighten his distress. But he thinks that if he can get rid of his last fear by killing Macduff, he will be able to rest again.

86. The third apparition represents young Malcolm; the tree represents Birnam wood.

88, 89. *round And top*, the crown and highest attainment.

93. *Birnam wood*, a forest twelve miles from Dunsinane. In this line "Dunsinane" is accented on the second syllable, elsewhere in the play on the first.

97. *Rebellious head*, an army of rebels.

98. *our high-placed Macbeth*. The phrase seems rather awkward, coming from Macbeth himself. Possibly "our" has something of the force of the royal "We" in it. "High-placed" is thought by Dr. Liddell to refer to Macbeth's situation on Dunsinane hill.

99. *the lease of nature*, the allotted span.

100. *mortal custom*, the custom of mortality, *i.e.* death.

111. *Eight Kings*, the eight sovereigns of the Scottish house of Stuart, from Robert II to James VI, inclusive. According to Holinshed, this house traced its descent back to Banquo.

118. *I'll see*, I wish to see.

119. *a glass*, a magic glass by means of which one could foresee the future. The eighth king who bears the glass is James VI of Scotland, ruling in England as James I when this play was written. Shakespeare meant to pay him a compliment by declaring that many of his descendants should reign. The present king of England is descended on the mother's side from James I.

121. *balls*, the golden orb carried by the monarch at his coronation. James was twice crowned, once in Scotland, and once in England.

121. *treble sceptres*, indicating the official title of the English monarchs from James I to George III, viz.: "King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland."

122. A syllable is wanting in the third foot. Its place is supplied by the pause after Macbeth's ejaculation, "Horrible sight!"

124. *What, is this so?* These words, and the following lines to 132, inclusive, are almost certainly interpolated. Macbeth has just said, "I see 'tis true," and it is therefore out of keeping for him to ask the witches, "is this so?" The metre of the witch's speech is like that of Hecate in iii. 5, and unlike that which Shakespeare uses for the witches, and the suggestion of the witch that she and her sisters cheer up Macbeth by a dance, is too absurd to need discussion. The passage is one of the spectacular interpolations with which the reviser sought to increase the drawing power of *Macbeth*.

132. *Our duties . . . pay*, our dutiful service (shown in the dance) gave him a welcome; an awkward and un-Shakespearean line.

134. *Stand . . . calendar*, became a day marked in the calendar as one of ill omen.

135. *Enter Lennox.* Lennox, we must imagine, had accompanied Macbeth on his visit to the witches, but had been left outside the cave. There is a distinct significance in the fact that the lord who, in the preceding scene, had called Macbeth a tyrant, appears here as his confidential companion. In spite of his spies Macbeth did not know how his nobles hated him.

139. *damn'd all those that trust them.* Macbeth does not realize that he is pronouncing judgment on himself, for, in spite of the show of the kings, he still trusts in the predictions of the witches.

153. *trace him in his line,* his relatives.

155. *no more sights.* Macbeth has had more than enough of the witches and their apparitions.

ACT IV. SCENE II

This scene represents the perpetration of Macbeth's third crime. It is usually omitted from stage performances since our modern nerves would be too greatly shocked by the murder of the child. The Elizabethan audience however was far less sensitive, and the actual representation of the deed added, of course, immensely to the effect of the following scene, where Ross hesitates to disclose the dreadful news, and Macduff bursts out in his passion of grief and prayer for revenge.

4. *make us traitors,* make us seem traitors. She means that Macduff was not a traitor to Macbeth, but fear drove him to flight, and made him appear a rebel.

8. *He loves us not.* At first sight, this accusation seems only too true. But Macduff fled to England not so much to save himself, as to rescue his country by stirring up Malcolm to attack Macbeth. He had, moreover, no reason to fear that Macbeth would butcher his wife and children in his absence.

15. *school yourself,* blame yourself. Ross tells her to blame herself for doubting her husband's love.

19. *ourselves*, each other. The pronoun is used reciprocally as in iii. 4. 32. Owing to Macbeth's system of espionage, even the good men in his kingdom are being denounced as traitors, and are becoming suspicious of each other.

19. *hold rumour*. Various explanations have been offered of this phrase. Perhaps the best is that which interprets "hold" as equivalent to "judge" and makes "from" in the next line equal "by." The sense of the passage then is "when we judge by our fears whether a rumour is true or not."

22. *Each way*, in every direction.

23. The subject "it" is omitted before "shall."

27. *fatherless*, because his father has forsaken him.

28, 29. *I am . . . discomfort*. Ross means that he is so soft-hearted that if he stayed longer he would burst into tears, and thus disgrace himself and trouble Lady Macduff.

34. *lime*, birdlime, a sticky substance smeared on twigs to catch little birds.

36. *they*. The snares mentioned above. The line is to be scanned as follows :

Why should I, móther? Poor' birds they áre not sét for.

47. *swears and lies*, swears allegiance and breaks his oath.

66. *Though . . . perfect*, though I am perfectly acquainted with your rank.

70. *To fright*, in frightening.

81. *unsanctified*, without sanctuary, unprotected.

83. *egg*, a term of contempt applied to a small person, as here to the child.

ACT IV. SCENE III

This long scene serves at once to sum up the fourth act and to introduce the fifth. It gives us a picture of the wretched state of Scotland under Macbeth's tyranny, and by way of contrast shows

us the blessings conferred upon his people by a virtuous monarch. The long dialogue between Malcolm and Macduff with which the scene opens is, perhaps, the only tiresome passage of the play. It is drawn directly from Holinshed, and it seems as if in this case Shakespeare did not have full mastery over his sources. At the same time this dialogue gives us a good idea of the prudence and virtue of Malcolm who is to succeed Macbeth as king, and, in the rugged honesty of Macduff, a picture of the loyal subject as Shakespeare conceived him. The episodic account of the "royal touch" is introduced, not merely by way of compliment to King James, but also to show that God through his earthly representative, the holy king, is on the side of Malcolm, as the devil, through his instruments, the witches, is pushing on Macbeth. The appearance of Ross at the English court shows that even the most time-serving of the Scottish nobles are abandoning the tyrant, and the news that he brings gives Macduff a personal as well as a public cause of vengeance on Macbeth.

1. Malcolm, as he frankly confesses later on, is suspicious of Macduff and imagines that he has been sent by Macbeth to encourage him to an invasion of Scotland and then to betray him. He therefore feigns a weakness and reluctance to undertake the attempt that he does not really feel.

4. *Bestride our down-fall'n birthdom*, stand over the prostrate form of our mother-country, as a soldier would bestride a fallen comrade to protect him from the enemy.

8. *syllable of dolour*, cry of grief and pain. Heaven is thought of as echoing the cries that rise up from Scotland.

12. *whose sole name*, the mere utterance of whose name.

14. *He hath not touched you yet*. Note the unconscious irony of this speech. Of course neither Malcolm nor Macduff knows anything of the fate of the latter's family.

14, 15. *I am young . . . wisdom*, although I am still young, you may learn something of Macbeth's nature through my experience, and understand that it would be a wise thing. "Wisdom" like

“something” is the object of “discern,” which here has a double meaning, first, “learn”; second, “understand.” See Textual Notes, page 261.

18. Scan :

Í am not tréacherous. Bú Macbeth is.

The stress-reversal in the latter part of the line shows the emphasis with which the words are spoken.

19, 20. *A good . . . charge*, even a virtuous man may fall, “recoil” = give way, degenerate, in the execution of a commission, “charge,” imposed on him by royal, “imperial,” authority. Malcolm plainly hints that Macduff’s virtuous character may have been so wrought upon by Macbeth that it has sunk to a point where it might well be suspected of treachery.

20. *shall crave*, ought to ask.

21. *thoughts*, used here with reference to Malcolm’s suspicions of Macduff.

23. *would wear*, should, were to, wear.

24. *my hopes*. Macduff had, of course, expected to be received with open arms by Malcolm as a strong ally against Macbeth. He is deeply hurt by the prince’s suspicions, and speaks out with his usual frankness.

25. *even there*, in that action which has aroused my doubts. Malcolm goes on to say why he distrusts Macduff. He can hardly believe that if Macduff really means to fight Macbeth, he would have left his family defenceless in Scotland.

28. An imperfect line. The first half really concludes the rhythmical phrase of the two preceding lines. The last half begins a new phrase. Scan :

Without leave-taking? I pray you

29, 30. *Let not . . . safeties*, let not my suspicions be regarded as something dishonourable to you, but as something intended to secure my own safety.

30. *rightly just*, wholly honourable.

31. *shall think*, may think of you.

33. *wear thou thy wrongs*, enjoy the benefit of the wrongs you have inflicted on your country. The subject of "wear" is "tyranny."

37. *Be not offended*. Malcolm sees that he has gone too far. He has no wish to drive Macduff away, but he is not wholly satisfied, and now puts him to another test.

42. *in my right*, in support of my claim.

43. *England*, the king of England. This use of the name of a country to denote the monarch is very common in Shakespeare. Cf. i. 2. 51.

49. *What should he be?* What sort of a person is he, Macbeth's successor, to be? Macduff is naturally slow to believe that Malcolm is referring to himself.

51. *particulars of vice*, special forms of vice.

52. *open'd*, revealed. There is also a reference to the figure implied in "grafted" of the preceding line. Malcolm means that the vices grafted into his nature will some day open in full flower.

55. *my confineless harms*, the unbounded injuries that I shall inflict.

66, 67. *Boundless intemperance In nature*, absolute lack of self-control in a man's character.

71. *a spacious plenty*, an ample liberty.

74. *That vulture . . . to devour*, such a vulture as to devour.

76. *With this*, moreover, in addition to my licentiousness.

85. *Sticks deeper*, strikes a deeper root. Cf. iii. i. 50.

87. *The sword of our slain kings*, the sword which has slain our kings.

89. *Of your mere own*, with what is yours alone. There is enough that belongs to the king alone in Scotland to satisfy even such an avarice as Malcolm attributes to himself.

90. *With other graces weigh'd*, when balanced by other virtues.

93. *perseverance*, pronounced "persev'rance."

96. *In the division of*, in every shade of. The word "division"

is taken from the musical vocabulary of Shakespeare's day, and denotes a rapid succession of varying notes in the scale.

97. An Alexandrine.

104. *With an untitled . . . bloody-sceptred*, swayed by the bloody sceptre of a usurping tyrant.

106. *the truest issue*, the true heir.

107. *interdiction*, a sort of ecclesiastical injunction, which when launched against a king, put him under the curse of the church and forbade him to perform his royal duties. Malcolm's confession of his sinful nature is here compared to such an interdict.

108. *blaspheme his breed*, brings scandal upon his ancestry.

111. *Died every day she lived*. Compare I *Corinthians*, xv. 31: "I die daily," where St. Paul speaks of himself as dying to the world.

111. *Lived*, probably pronounced as a word of two syllables.

112. *The evils . . . thyself*, the vices which you have repeatedly charged yourself with.

123. *Unspeak . . . detraction*, contradict what I have said against myself.

136. *the chance of goodness*, the successful issue.

137. *silent*. Macduff's silence and his hesitating speech when Malcolm questions him show how he has been baffled by the prince's sudden change of front. Some commentators have even suggested that Macduff would at this point have abandoned Malcolm, if it had not been for the news Ross brings him.

138. *welcome and unwelcome*. The disavowal of the crimes that Malcolm had charged himself with was, of course, welcome to Macduff; but the suspicions which had led the prince to act as he did were most unwelcome. Altogether the brave, frank warrior is completely puzzled.

143. *The great assay of art*, the strongest efforts of medical skill.

146. *the evil*, scrofula, formerly called the "king's evil," because the English kings were supposed to have the power to cure it by the laying on of hands. So late as 1712 Samuel Johnson,

then a child in his third year, was brought up to London to be "touched" by Queen Anne. This gift was supposed to have descended to English sovereigns from Edward the Confessor. When James ascended the English throne he was, or pretended to be, reluctant to exercise this power for fear lest he might be considered superstitious. He consented, however, to continue the practice of touching, ascribing the cures which followed to the efficacy of his prayers.

160. *countryman*. Malcolm recognizes a Scotchman by his dress, but is not certain who he is.

163. *the means . . . strangers*, the cause that makes us strangers to each other. Malcolm's delay in recognizing Ross is probably to be attributed to his long absence from Scotland. This absence is due to Macbeth's usurpation, which he prays God to put an end to.

166. *where*, in which place, in Scotland.

169, 170. *violent sorrow . . . ecstasy*. Ross says that terrible outbursts of sorrow are regarded as of no more importance than common fits of madness. This seems a strange speech, but it reflects the feeling of Shakespeare's day when madness was little regarded and even laughed at.

175. *hiss the speaker*, for bringing stale news.

177. *children*, pronounced "childeren."

178. The almost careless way in which Macduff asks this question shows how unprepared he is for the news, and makes it harder for Ross to tell him.

179. *they were well . . . leave them*. Ross is reluctant to break the news to Macduff, and puts him off with this evasive answer. Before he tells him the truth he makes sure that Malcolm is about to invade Scotland.

184. *Which was . . . rather*, which rumour was the more strongly attested to my belief.

186. *time of help*, opportunity for military aid.

ACT V. SCENE I

The last act brings about the catastrophe of the play. This does not consist merely in the death of Macbeth upon the field of battle. Shakespeare is always more interested in the tragedy of the soul than in external events, and he here employs all his powers to paint for us the state of loneliness and hopeless misery to which a long succession of crimes has reduced Macbeth. Still clinging desperately to the deceitful promises of the witches the tyrant sees his subjects fly from him ; he loses the support and companionship of his wife, and looks forward to a solitary old age, accompanied only by "curses, not loud, but deep." It is not until the very close of the act, when he realizes how he has been trapped by the juggling fiends, that Macbeth recovers his old heroic self ; but he dies, sword in hand, as befits the daring soldier that he was before he yielded to temptation.

It is worth noting how in this act Shakespeare contrives to re-engage our sympathies for Macbeth. The hero of the play no longer appears as a traitor and a murderer, but as a man oppressed by every kind of trouble, yet fighting desperately against an irresistible fate. His bitter remorse for the past and his reckless defiance of the future alike move us with overwhelming power, and we view his tragic end, not with self-righteous approval, but with deep and human pity.

The number of scenes in this act and the frequent changes of place have necessitated many alterations for modern stage performances. But when the construction is regarded with an eye to the simple Elizabethan stage for which Shakespeare composed his work, it will be found a masterpiece of dramatic art. It opens with a prologue which shows us the mental ruin of Lady Macbeth and at the same time recalls to our minds the sins for which she and her husband are now to receive their just reward. The second scene shows us the revolt of the Scotch nobles ; the third, Macbeth's still unshaken reliance upon the witches' prediction ; the fourth, the union

of the Scottish nobles with the English forces. In the fifth we see Macbeth reduced to the lowest pitch of misery by his forced inaction and by the news of his wife's death. The report of the moving wood which is brought to him in this scene opens his eyes to the "equivocation of the fiend," and the manner in which he receives it prepares us for his final outburst of defiance. The sixth scene brings the avengers before the walls of Dunsinane. The seventh, shows us Macbeth still clinging desperately to his last hope, that no man, born of woman, can harm him; but in the eighth even this hope is wrested from him, and he falls by the hand of the man he has most deeply wronged. The last scene, for there should be another, beginning at line 35 of the eighth scene, shows Malcolm in Macbeth's stronghold, "compassed by his kingdom's pearl," and points forward to a new era of peace and happiness in Scotland.

At the beginning of this act Lady Macbeth who has apparently dropped out of the story is brought back upon the stage that we may see how she too pays the penalty of her crimes. The strong will that enabled her to defy her woman's nature has broken down utterly; left alone in her castle while Macbeth is in the field she broods by day over past crimes and future punishment, and at night wanders in uneasy sleep through the halls, betraying to all who hear her the deadly secrets of the past. In spite of the doctor's statement (lines 65-67), we feel that she is doomed, and we are prepared not only for the news of her death in scene v., but also for the report in the last scene that she died by her own hands. The most tragic part of her punishment is that she, who had sinned so deeply for her husband's sake, drifts away from him and dies in lonely isolation.

4. *field*. We must suppose that at this time Macbeth is in the field endeavouring to suppress the revolt of the Scotch nobles, alluded to in iv. 3. 182-185.

12, 13. *do the effects of watching*, perform the acts of waking hours.

13. *slumbery agitation*, activity of sleep.

16. The gentlewoman is afraid lest she should get into trouble by repeating Lady Macbeth's words.

22, 23. *her very guise*, exactly her habit.

27. *'tis her command*. Note Lady Macbeth's terror of darkness. She who had invoked thick night to come and cover her deeds of blood dares not now be left alone in the dark.

29. *sense*, an old plural form.

32. *accustomed*. Note how Shakespeare impresses on us the fact that this scene is only one of a number.

39. *Out, damned spot*. Lady Macbeth imagines herself trying to wash the blood of Duncan from her hands.

40. *to do't*, to kill Duncan. She is living over again the night of Duncan's murder. She thinks she hears the bell strike two, and knows that this is the signal for her husband to enter the king's chamber.

40. *Hell is murky*. These words reveal Lady Macbeth's brooding fear of the hereafter. They have no connection with the sentence that follows, for Macbeth never showed the slightest dread of future punishment.

44, 45. *old man . . . him*. She now fancies herself in Duncan's chamber, standing over the bed which streams with the blood of the murdered king.

47, 48. *The thane of Fife . . . now*. Lady Macbeth had not been a party to the murder of Macduff's wife; but this crime of her husband's is another of the burdens on her conscience. The words in which she mentions Lady Macduff are thrown into the form of an old song. Perhaps she had heard the snatch of a lament sung for her husband's victims, and is now reproducing it in her sleep.

49, 50. *No more o' that . . . starting*. She now imagines herself back at the feast where Banquo's ghost had appeared.

57. *Arabia*, a land famous for its spices and perfumes.

58. *little hand*, one of the few allusions in the play to Lady Macbeth's personal appearance.

59, 60. *sorely charged*, heavy laden.

65. *beyond my practice*, outside of my experience.

68. *Wash your hands*. She now fancies herself speaking to her husband directly after the murder of Duncan. In the next line she recurs to the scene at the banquet.

79. Note the change to blank verse. The vivid realism of Lady Macbeth's broken utterances would have been impossible in metre, and while she spoke in prose her hearers naturally used the same form.

79. *Foul whisperings*, terrible rumours. The doctor may have heard some such talk as that between Lennox and the Lord in iii. 6. If so his suspicions would be more than confirmed by what he has heard Lady Macbeth say.

79, 80. *unnatural deeds . . . troubles*, deeds against nature (cf. ii. 4. 10, 11) give rise to abnormal evils in the body.

80. *infected minds*, guilty souls.

84. *the means of all annoyance*, anything by which she could harm herself.

ACT V. SCENE II

2. *His uncle Siward*. In Holinshed, Siward appears as the father-in-law of Duncan, and so as the grandfather of Malcolm.

3. *Revenues*. This use of an abstract noun in the plural is frequent in Shakespeare when more than one person is affected by the quality or feeling denoted by the noun.

3. *their dear causes*, causes that affect them nearly. The meaning of the whole passage is: "the cause they have for revenge would rouse even a dead man to the fierce and bloody call to arms."

11. *Protest . . . manhood*, first proclaim themselves men, *i.e.* by going on a campaign.

13. *lesser*, used here as an adverb.

15-16. *buckle . . . rule*, control his discontented party. As the

next speaker shows Macbeth's followers are constantly revolting from him.

17. *sticking on his hands*, clinging to him. He can no longer attribute his murders to others, as he did that of Duncan to the princes and that of Banquo to Fleance.

18. *faith-breach*, disloyalty to Duncan.

19. *in command*, by reason of his command. So "in love" in the following lines.

23. *to recoil and start*, for breaking down (cf. iv. 3. 19) and bursting out in wild fits of passion.

28. *in our country's purge*, in the draught which is to purge our country.

30. *the sovereign flower*. Malcolm, who in line 28 has been spoken of as the doctor of the sick country, now becomes the "sovereign flower," which the nobles are ready to bedew with their blood. Beneath the usual meaning of "sovereign" lies, perhaps, the meaning, common enough in Shakespeare's day, medicinal, powerful to heal.

ACT V. SCENE III

Macbeth, who has been absent from the stage for some time, reappears in this scene. The student will note at once that he is in a different mood from that which characterized him in the earlier acts. He is no longer disturbed by "terrible dreams" and seeking to lull them by the perpetration of acts of violence. On the contrary, he relies so fully on the witches' prediction that not even the revolt of his thanes and the approach of the English army alarm him. Nevertheless he is restless, imperious, and gloomy. He has obtained all that he sought to win and is confident of the future, and yet he knows all happiness has gone out of his life.

1. *reports*, of the revolt of his subjects.

5. *all mortal consequences*, the future of all men.

5. *me*, the indirect object of "pronounced." The line contains

a feminine ending before the cæsura and a trisyllabic fourth foot.
Scan :

All mórtal cónsequénces || have pronóunced me thús.

Or it may, perhaps, be taken as an Alexandrine and scanned :

All mórtal cónsequénces háve pronóunced me thús.

8. *English epicures.* The hardy Scotch despised the luxurious manners of their English neighbours.

11. *loon*, fool, a characteristically Scottish term of abuse.

12. *goose look*, look of foolish fear.

20. *behold.* Macbeth interrupts his speech here to call Seyton again. Perhaps he would have added some such phrase as "these cowards around me."

20, 21. *This push . . . now*, this struggle, *i.e.* the approaching battle, will give me peace forever, or will at once push me from my throne. See Textual Notes, page 262.

22. *way of life*, course of life, or simply, life.

30. The unaccented syllable is wanting in the first foot of this line.

47. *Throw physic, etc.* Macbeth turns impatiently from the doctor. If "physic" can do nothing, if the cure for such a sickness as Lady Macbeth's lies in the power of the patient only, Macbeth scorns the medical art. He, too, has been troubled by "thick-coming fancies," but he means to seek relief from them in action, not in a doctor's prescription.

50. *Come, sir.* Probably addressed to the servant who is buckling on Macbeth's armour.

50, 51. *cast The water*, inspect the urine. This was an Elizabethan method of diagnosis.

52. *purge . . . health*, cure it so that the land would be as healthy as before.

54. *Pull't off.* Another phrase addressed to the attendant. Macbeth's restlessness is shown in the way he orders his armour to

be put on in haste, although there is no need of it, and then has it, or part of it, perhaps the helmet, taken off again. The phrase, "Bring it after me," in line 58, refers to the same piece of armour.

55. *rhubarb, senna*. Plants from which purgative medicines are obtained.

61, 62. *Were I . . . here*. The doctor is thoroughly frightened. Between his discovery of Lady Macbeth's terrible secrets and the rough contempt with which Macbeth has treated him, his one desire is to get out of this dangerous neighbourhood as quickly as possible.

ACT V. SCENE IV

This scene presents the union of the English forces with the Scottish lords near Birnam wood. Malcolm's order to the soldiers to cut down boughs in order to conceal the numbers of the army, points to the fulfilment of the witches' prophecy.

2. *chambers*, private rooms. Malcolm is thinking of the murder of Duncan in his bedchamber.

7. *in report of us*, in the report carried back concerning us.

9. *keeps still*, remains.

9, 10. *endure . . . before't*, stand a siege there.

11. *advantage to be given*, where an opportunity, *i.e.* to desert, has to be given them. If Macbeth led his army into the field, he would necessarily give the discontented spirits a better chance to desert than if he remained in his castle.

14, 15. *Let . . . event*, let our true opinion await the actual event. Macduff is not so sure that all Macbeth's soldiers are ready to desert. His next words show that he thinks the battle will demand all their efforts; "put on industrious soldiership" means "play the part of good soldiers." Siward carries on the idea in the next speech; "whatever we may fancy our hopes to be, blows alone will settle the matter."

ACT V. SCENE V

In this scene more perhaps than in any other of the play the poet arouses our sympathy for Macbeth. Deserted by his followers, forced to await the attack of his enemies instead of meeting them "dareful, beard to beard," he is plunged into still greater misery by the news of his wife's sudden death. He even seems to contemplate suicide, when the shock of the messenger's report brings him back to himself. He begins at last to realize that the powers of evil have been deceiving him, and with a sudden resolution to trust henceforth to the strength of his own arm and to die, if needs be, with harness on his back, he sallies out to meet the foe.

It is worth noting how little is said of Lady Macbeth. We hear the cry of her women and the brief report of her death, — nothing more. Shakespeare wishes at this point to concentrate all our interest and sympathy on the hero of the drama. It is not the manner of Lady Macbeth's death, but the way in which it affects her husband that he wishes us to notice.

14. *slaughterous thoughts*, thoughts of bloodshed.

17, 18. *She should . . . word*, she must have died sometime; there must have come a time for such an announcement. This speech of Macbeth's does not show callous indifference to his wife's death, as some critics have supposed. It rather shows him so sunk in misery that he thinks life not worth living. He can hardly grieve for his wife's death; sooner or later she must have died, and what does it matter whether early or late? The following lines continue the same train of thought.

22. *lighted*, guided, as a servant with a torch guides his master.

23. *Out . . . brief candle*. Dr. Liddell suggests that these words show that Macbeth is on the point of killing himself.

24. *a walking shadow*, a fitting unreality.

31. *should report*, am bound to report to you.

42. *pull in resolution*, check my courage. Such, at least, is the meaning of the words as they stand. Various emendations have,

however, been proposed, of which "pall" *i.e.* "languish," "grow weak" is the most plausible.

43. *To doubt . . . fiend*, to fear that the devil (who inspired the witches when they uttered their predictions) has been equivocating with me.

46. *arm, and out*. In his rage at having been deceived by the "fiend," Macbeth abandons his prudent plan of permitting the enemy to waste their strength in a vain siege, and sallies out to meet them. This act throws away his last chance, for it gives his men a chance to desert him (see v. 7. 25) and brings him face to face with the man who is destined to slay him.

ACT V. SCENE VI

2. *show like those you are*, appear in your true shapes.

7. *Do we but find*, if we can but meet.

7. *to-night*. It seems as if they had planned to assault Dunsinane toward the end of the day. There is a picturesque justice in Macbeth's meeting his fate in the gathering gloom of twilight.

ACT V. SCENE VII

In spite of the fact that one of the witches' prophecies has betrayed him, Macbeth still holds faith in the other. He is encouraged to greater confidence in this scene by his easy victory over young Siward, and this renders the shock of his disillusion in the following scene all the more terrible.

Alarums. This stage direction of the old text represents the noise of the battle.

1, 2. *They have tied . . . course*. The metaphor is taken from the popular Elizabethan pastime of bear-baiting. In this sport a bear was tied to a stake and worried by dogs. Macbeth, who finds it impossible to escape from the overwhelming force of his enemies,

compares himself to such a baited bear. "Course" in line 2 is the technical word for a "round" in this sport.

2. *What's he*, what sort of a man is he?

7. Note the omission of the subject-pronoun "which" before "is."

10. Scan :

Thou líest, abhórred tírant; wíth my s'wórd.

18. *Either*, pronounced as a monosyllable.

21. *one of greatest note*, a man of the highest rank. Macduff recognizes Macbeth's whereabouts in the battle by the clash of arms about him. Elsewhere the fight is a mere pretense, see lines 28-29.

24. *gently render'd*, tamely surrendered.

27. *The day . . . yours*, victory is about to declare itself yours.

29. *strike beside us*, do not strike directly at us, but intentionally miss us.

ACT V. SCENE VIII

There is no scene division here in the old text and there is really no need for one. As Malcolm and Siward enter the castle, Macbeth reappears on the field before the walls.

1. *the Roman fool*. Macbeth is thinking, no doubt, of some old Roman, such as Brutus or Cassius, who killed himself when he saw that his cause was lost.

2. *the gashes*, the wounds my sword can make.

4. *Of all men else*, more than any other man. Macbeth has avoided Macduff in the fight, not because he fears him, for he still believes himself invulnerable, but because he is conscious of his own great guilt toward him, and does not wish to add the death of Macduff to that of his wife and children. This is another of the many little touches by which Shakespeare regains our sympathy for Macbeth, so great a criminal, and yet so human.

8. *Than terms can give thee out*, than words can express.

8. *Thou lovest labour*. We must imagine that Macduff rushes furiously upon Macbeth. Confident in his supposed charm the latter repels him. There is a moment's pause in the attack, and Macbeth, perhaps in the hope of still saving Macduff's life, speaks these words.

12. *must not yield*, is fated not to yield.

18. *my better part of man*, the stronger part of my manhood.

26. *Painted upon a pole*, painted on a flag hung from a pole, like an advertisement before a circus tent.

31. *thou opposed*, thou my adversary.

There should certainly be another scene indicated between lines 34 and 35. Malcolm has entered the castle, see v. 7. 29. He is not likely to come out again and wander over the field. Probably in Shakespeare's theatre this scene was played on the raised platform at the back of the stage which would here represent the courtyard of Dunsinane. Malcolm is standing in the usurper's stronghold receiving reports of the victory.

35. *Retreat*. A technical phrase for a bugle call sounded to stop the pursuit.

36. *by these I see*, to judge by the number I see present.

41. *prowess*, a monosyllable.

42. *In the unshrinking . . . fought*, in the position where he fought unshrinking.

44. *cause of sorrow*, reason for grief.

49. *wish them . . . death*, commend them to a fairer death.

56. *pearl*, the word is used collectively, as in our expression, "the flower of the kingdom."

61. *reckon . . . loves*, settle with, *i.e.* pay back, the love that each one of you has shown.

63. *earls*. See Note on i. 2. 45.

65. *Which should be . . . time*, which demands to be established anew in accordance with the time.

71. *what needful else*, whatever else is necessary.

72. *the grace of Grace*, the favour of God.

74, 75. "One" and "Scone" rhymed in Shakespeare's day. This speech of Malcolm is usually omitted upon the stage, but it is a characteristically Shakespearean conclusion. No man ever saw deeper into the power and mystery of sin than Shakespeare, but no man was ever more confident of the final victory of righteousness, and he gives evidence of his faith by closing even his darkest tragedies with an outlook upon a better time. So here after the downfall of the bloody tyranny of Macbeth, he points us forward to the peaceful reign of the gentle, prudent, and devout heir of good king Duncan.

TEXTUAL NOTES

Macbeth was printed for the first time in the collection of Shakespeare's plays made by his friends, the actors Heming and Condell, and published in 1623. This volume is known as the First Folio, and is designated in these notes by the symbol F. *Macbeth* appeared again in the second, third, and fourth Folios, designated here by the symbol Ff. 2-4, in 1632, 1663-4, and 1685, respectively. The symbol Ff. denotes that all the folios agree on a certain reading. Unlike Shakespeare's other famous tragedies, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *Lear*, *Othello*, it did not appear in an independent edition before the publication of F.,—one of several circumstances which go to show that this play was not so popular in its day as might be imagined.

The text of *Macbeth*, as it stands in the Folio, is very faulty. "That it is piteously rent and ragged and clipped and garbled in some of its earlier scenes," says Swinburne, "the rough construction and the polt-foot metre, lame sense, and limping verse . . . combine to bear indisputable and intolerable witness." There can be little doubt but that *Macbeth* was revised after Shakespeare's retirement from the King's Company by some inferior dramatist, probably Middleton, who, perhaps, cut out certain passages, and added one scene and a few lines of his own.

Apart from this the text, even where undoubtedly genuine, presents considerable difficulties. It was printed in all probability not from Shakespeare's manuscript, but from a transcript, "not copied from the original, but written to dictation."¹ This hypothesis accounts for many of the palpable mistakes, particularly for the constant errors in the division of lines. It has needed all the ingenuity of later commentators to put this matter right, and there are still a few places where the correct lining is unsettled.

¹ Clarendon Press, *Macbeth*, page v.

In these notes the matter of the division of lines is left unnoticed except in one or two places. As I have in general followed the Cambridge editors, I have as a rule accepted their division of lines without comment; only when I disagree with them have I noticed this matter. On the other hand, I have attempted to note every departure in word or phrase from the text of F. and to assign proper credit to the originator of the emendation. Changes in punctuation I have only noted when they involve some real change in the meaning of the passage.

ACT I. SCENE I

1. Ff. have a question mark at the end of this line, as well as after line 2. Most modern editors omit the first question mark, thus making the witch's question relate simply to the time, and not to the circumstances also, of their next meeting. The old text should, I think, be retained.

9-12. In Ff. these lines are assigned to all the witches speaking in unison. The change in the text, first proposed by Hunter, has been accepted by many modern editors, including Dr. Furness and the Cambridge editors in their Globe and Clarendon Press editions. In the Cambridge edition they retain the arrangement of the Ff. But as the old text,

Padock calls anon: faire is foule, and foule is faire,

is certainly wrong in punctuation and division of lines, we may well believe it wrong also in its assignment of speeches. The arrangement of the text permits each witch to speak three times — and three is a magical number — before they all join in the final chorus.

ACT I. SCENE II

7. Here and throughout the scene Ff. print *Cap.* (Captain) instead of *Ser.* (Sergeant) as the title of the speaker.

13. *Gallowglasses*. So Ff. 2-4; F. *Gallowgrosses*.

14. *quarrel*. This correction, suggested independently by Johnson and Warburton for the *quarry* of Ff. has been generally, though not universally, accepted. *Quarry*, i.e. "a heap of slaughtered animals" can hardly be wrested to make good sense; while *quarrel*, i.e. "cause" gives a perfectly plain meaning. Moreover the word *quarrel* occurs in Holinshed's account of Macdonwald's rebellion: "There came unto him a great multitude . . . to assist him in that rebellious quarrel." The word probably lingered in Shakespeare's memory while writing this passage.

16-20. There is undoubtedly some corruption in this passage. Either something has been lost after *slave*, line 20; or, as Mitford conjectured, "*Like valour's minion*," line 19, is an alternative reading for "*Disdaining fortune*," line 17, which was originally noted on the margin of the Ms., and was inserted in the wrong place by the printer. This conjecture is, I think, supported by the fact that the phrase, "*Like valour's minion*," is in F. inclosed in brackets. No one, however, has ventured to receive this conjecture into the text, and to discard "*Disdaining fortune*." Allowing the old text to stand, we should, I think, rearrange the lines. No one can read the passage without feeling that the words "*carved out . . . the slave*" were originally one line. "*Like valour's minion*" is more satisfactory as a fragmentary line than "*Till he faced the slave*" which opens with the rare trisyllabic foot, or the even rarer initial truncation.

22. *chaps*, Reed's correction for *chops* of Ff. *Chaps* is the usual spelling with Shakespeare.

26. *break*. This word is wanting in F. Ff. 2-4 read *breaking*. Pope altered this to *break*, and his correction has been almost universally adopted. Dr. Liddell, however, believes the text of F. to be correct.

38, 39. In Ff. line 38 reads, *So they doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe*. Steevens printed *So they* as a separate line, in which he has been followed by a number of modern editors. The Cam-

bridge editors in the Globe and Clarendon Press editions print *so they* as the last words of the preceding line ; in the Cambridge edition they follow Steevens. But the phrase *so they*, without any pause after it, makes a very unsatisfactory line. Pope omitted *double* which improves the metre, and avoids the awkward triplcation of the word. This seems to me a very plausible correction. The retention of *doubly* is urged by some editors on the ground that the same phrase occurs in *Rich. II.* i. 3. 80. But in that passage *redoubled* is pronounced like a word of four syllables. If Shakespeare had merely repeated the phrase, he would probably have repeated the rhythm also. White suspects that some words have dropped out after *so they*.

45. The first foot of this line is defective. Pope inserted *But* before *Who*. Mayer (*English Metre*, page 150) and Conrad (*Shakespeare Jahrbuch XXXI*, metrical table) scan the line

Who comes heré ? The worthy tháne of Róss.

This is most displeasing, and Mayer himself prefers Pope's emendation. I take it that we have in this line one of the few cases of initial truncation in Shakespeare. Compare, "What, unjust ! Be not so hot ; the duke" — *Measure for Measure*, v. 1. 135.

Enter Ross and Angus. So the Ff. Many editors omit Angus, inasmuch as he neither speaks nor is spoken to in this scene. But this may possibly be due to some omission in the text. In i. 3. 114, Angus does not seem to know just what treason Cawdor was guilty of, though it is distinctly stated by Ross in this scene that Cawdor had assisted the invaders. But this is just the sort of slip that a dramatist writing at full speed might very well make. It is hard to account for the presence of Angus in i. 3. unless he appears in i. 2. and is there charged by Duncan with the message to Macbeth. I have therefore preferred to let the stage direction of the Ff. stand.

50, 51. I have restored here the line-division of the Ff. Most

modern editors agree with the Cambridge editors in printing *Norway himself* as part of line 50. But since we must have a short line in this passage, it is better to preserve the division of Ff. As a rule the short lines in *Macbeth* mark a pause in the speech, such as occurs here after *cold*.

56. The punctuation in the text is due to Theobald. The Ff. read :

“Point against Point, rebellious Arme 'gainst Arme.”

Some editors prefer this, but it is better to take *rebellious* as referring to the sword of Norway than to the loyal arm of Macbeth. The Cambridge editors point out that *rebel* and its derivatives are used by Shakespeare almost invariably in a bad sense.

58. I would prefer to consider this line a regular Alexandrine with Mayer (page 161), rather than to print, with the Cambridge editors, *That now* as a fragmentary line.

ACT I. SCENE III

18. *I'll*. Most editors follow Pope's suggestion of *I will* for the *I'll* of Ff.; but *I'll* pronounced almost like a dissyllable probably gives us the true rhythm.

32. *weird*. Theobald's correction for *weyward* of the Ff. The word does not occur in Shakespeare except in this play, where it is spelled *weyard* and *weyward*. Shakespeare no doubt got the phrase *weird sisters* from Holinshed where it occurs twice over.

39. *Forres*. Ff. have the misprint *Soris*.

57. *rapt*. Pope's correction for the Ff. *wrapt*.

68, 69. It has been plausibly suggested that these two lines should be spoken by all three witches in chorus; but there hardly seems as good reason here as in i. i. 9-11 for altering the direction of the old texts.

97, 98. The Ff. read :

Strange Images of death, as thick as Tale
Can post with post.

Rowe changed the comma after *death* to a semicolon, and altered *Tale* to *hail*, and *Can* to *Came*. Most subsequent editors have adopted *Came* for *Can*,¹ but there has been much dispute over the substitution of *hail* for *Tale*, for which, see Dr. Furness's *Variorum Macbeth*, pp. 35-36. To me it is an *emendatio certissima*. The mistake of *Can* for *Came* immediately following shows either that the Ms. was illegible, or that the printer was careless at this point; there is no parallel instance of the phrase *thick as tale*, while *thick as hail* is a commonplace of speech; and thirdly, it is impossible to explain *thick as tale* without wresting the language. Elwin's note that the simile is continued in the phrase *pour'd them down* seems to me to settle the matter.

117, 118. I prefer to follow, for the sake of clearness, the Globe edition in inserting in these lines the stage directions omitted in the Cambridge edition. So in line 127, I follow Rowe in inserting a direction before the line; and in line 129, another before *I thank you*.

ACT I. SCENE IV

1. *are*, so Ff. 2-4, followed by most modern editors. F. reads *or*. The stress which falls on this syllable makes *are* the preferable reading.

25. I prefer the punctuation of Dr. Furness, as in the text, to that of the Cambridge editors, who omit the commas after *are* and *state*. F. has commas after *throne* and *state*.

42. I have followed Keightly in inserting a stage direction here.

ACT I. SCENE V

24. There has been much debate as to where the speech begun by the words, *Thus thou must*, should end. There are no quotation marks in the old texts. Pope placed them before *Thus* and

¹ Dr. Liddell prefers *Ran* as conjectured by Delius.

after *undone*. Most editors follow his reading, including the Cambridge editors, except in the Clarendon Press, where they place them after *it*, line 24. This latter arrangement seems to me very much the better, since the voice which cries *Thus thou must do*, whether it be the voice of the personified murder or of the personified crown, can hardly be supposed to comment upon Macbeth's nature. On the other hand, the remark that he rather fears to do the deed, than wishes it left undone, is very appropriate in the mouth of Lady Macbeth.

ACT I. SCENE VI

4. *martlet*. Rowe's correction for *Barlet* of the Ff.
5. *mansionry*. Theobald's correction for *mansonry* of the Ff.
9. *most*. Rowe's correction for *must* of the Ff.

ACT I. SCENE VII

1-2. There has been a good deal of debate over the punctuation of these lines. The Ff. read :

If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well,
It were done quickly : if the assassination.

Most modern editors omit the comma after the first *done* and after *well*. It has been proposed to put a period after *well*, and change the colon after *quickly* to a comma. This makes the first line very emphatic, but seems to me to mar the construction of the rest of the passage. The context shows that the clause, *If the assassination . . . success*, is the protasis of "*We'ld jump*."

5. The Ff. put a period after *end all*, which ruins the syntax of the passage.

6. *shoal*. Theobald's correction for the *schoole* of Ff. 1-2 (Ff. 3-4 *school*).

The old reading has been defended by taking *bank* in the sense

of "bench," *i.e.* the school-bench. But Shakespeare never uses *bank* in this sense of "bench"; and the *New English Dictionary* gives no instance where "bank" is used for school-bench. The image, in the corrected phrase, of life as a "bank and shoal" in the sea of eternity is certainly much finer than in the reading of the Ff.

11. *ingredients*. Pope's correction for the *ingredience* of the Ff.

23. If we were permitted to read "coursers" for *couriers* in this line, the sense would be somewhat plainer. The word "courier" occurs nowhere else in the genuine work of Shakespeare.

28. *the other*. Various attempts have been made to correct this passage, which, after all, needs no correction. The word "side" is understood, not spoken, after *other*, since Macbeth breaks off his soliloquy on the entrance of his wife. This accounts, also, for the break in the metre.

47. *do*. Rowe's correction for the *no* of the Ff. The only possible way in which the old reading can be retained is by assigning the words to Lady Macbeth, and this takes the sting out of her quick retort, "What beast was't then?"

59. *fail . . . fail*. The Ff. put question marks after both words. The Cambridge editors retain the first, and change the second to an exclamation mark in their first edition; in their second they also change the first to a colon. This seems to me unsatisfactory. Macbeth is meant, I think, to ask a hesitating question: "What will become of us if we fail?" Inasmuch as the old compositors often confused question and exclamation marks, we may well adopt the exclamation mark proposed after the second "fail," on account of the finer shade of dramatic significance that it gives. See note, page 189.

68. *lies*. The reading of F. *lyes* was changed as early as F. 2 to *lye*. But Shakespeare, no doubt, used the so-called Northern plural as in many other lines.

ACT II. SCENE I

13. *and*. This 'light ending' is in Ff. printed as the first word of the following line. It was restored to its proper place by Jennens.

55. *strides*. Pope's correction for *sides* of Ff. Dr. Liddell reads "slides."

56. *sure*. Pope's conjecture for the *sowre* of F. It was first received into the text by Capell, Pope himself preferring *sound*. Dr. Liddell prints *sowre*, explaining it as "sour," *i.e.* sullen. He suggests, however, that *sowre* may be a misprint for "sowrd," *i.e.* deaf.

57. *which way they*. Rowe's correction for *which they may* of the Ff.

ACT II. SCENE II

8. For the stage direction in this line the Ff. have *Enter Macbeth*. If this is correct we must suppose him to enter the balcony above the stage, which would in this scene represent the gallery around the courtyard of the castle, and to withdraw after speaking the lines. The Ff., however, neither mark his withdrawal nor his subsequent entrance to his wife below in line 13. It is therefore better to accept Steevens' correction, *within*, and suppose these words to be spoken behind the scenes by Macbeth while returning from Duncan's chamber, just before his appearance in the courtyard. On the stage, however, I fancy the former reading would be much more effective.

10. Ff. have commas after *attempt* and *deed*, but it seems better to take the phrase, *and not the deed*, as logically modifying *attempt*. It is not the attempt, but the unsuccessful attempt which would confound them. This being the case, it seems better to omit both commas, as suggested by Hunter and approved by the Cambridge editors and Dr. Furness.

16. *Did you not speak?* Dr. Furness, following the suggestion of Hunter, assigns these words to Macbeth. The passage then reads as follows:

Macbeth. Did you not speak?

Lady Macbeth.

When? Now?

Macbeth. As I descended.¹

Lady Macbeth.

Ay.

It seems to me most unfortunate that Dr. Furness should have lent the great weight of his authority to the support of this ingenious, but wholly unnecessary alteration. The passage is not only intelligible, but very effective as it stands. Lady Macbeth's question probably relates to Macbeth's ejaculation in line 8.

27, 28. There has been much dispute over the punctuation of these lines. The Cambridge editors retain that of the Ff., *i.e.* a colon after *hands* and nothing after *fear*. Dr. Furness prefers Capell's correction, *i.e.* a comma after *hands* and a period after *fear*. This gives, perhaps, a somewhat more vivid picture; but the text is perfectly intelligible as it stands.

35, 36. There has been some dispute as to the words uttered by the voice here. There are no quotation marks in the Ff. Hanmer, the first editor to insert them, included the whole passage from *sleep* (line 35) to *feast* (line 40). It seems rather absurd to suppose that the voice would indulge in such a prolonged eulogy of sleep; and most modern editors terminate the speech of the voice with *sleep* (line 36), taking the remainder as the "comments of Macbeth's unstrung mind."

In lines 42, 43 there is a similar question. Hanmer placed quotation marks before *Glamis* (line 42) and at the close of line 43. In this he has been followed by the Cambridge editors and Dr. Furness. I prefer Dr. Johnson's arrangement as in the text. This makes the second speech of the voice practically a repetition

¹ Note that this alteration requires the omission of the question mark after this line. No change is made in the revised *Variorum*, 1903.

of the first; and attributes the foreboding of future evil (*Cawdor shall sleep no more*) to Macbeth's own troubled mind. Professor Manly in his admirable edition of *Macbeth* inclines to this view, although he has not ventured to modify the text of the Cambridge editors. Dr. Liddell retains Hanmer's arrangement.

63. *the green one red*. Ff. 1-3 have a comma after *one*. F. 4 omits this. Nearly all modern editors follow F. 4. The reading of Ff. 1-3 appears to me indefensible, since the reference is not to a singular word such as "ocean," which, by the way, Pope substituted here for *one*, but to the plural *seas* of the preceding line.

ACT II. SCENE III

Lines 27-40 inclusive are omitted in this edition.

61. *i' th' air*. Most editors neglect the elision in *the* which is plainly indicated by F.

124. I have taken the liberty of inserting a stage direction at the close of this line for the sake of bringing the action more distinctly before the reader.

129. *Let us*. Ff. *Let's*. I prefer to expand this contraction, which may easily have arisen through an actor's error, and read *Let . . . brewed* as one line. Then the following speech of Malcolm becomes one line, and Banquo opens his speech with a broken line, a not uncommon occurrence in this play (cf. line 86, above). This seems to me a more rhythmical arrangement than that of the Cambridge editors who print *Let's away* as a separate line. Mayer (page 155) pronounces this expansion essential to the metre.

ACT II. SCENE IV

4. *Ah*. Rowe's correction for the *Ha* of Ff. *Ah* denoting pity or complaint seems more in harmony with what follows.

6. *Threatens*. So the Ff. Most modern editors change it to *threaten*.

7. *travelling*. So Ff. 3-4; Ff. 1-2, *travailing*, another spelling of *travelling*. It has been proposed to keep the reading of Ff. 1-2 and interpret it of the sun's struggle to dispel the darkness. But the epithet *travelling* is required with *lamp* to denote the sun.

28. *will*. So the Ff. Warburton altered it to *wilt*, and many modern editors have followed him. But it is no part of an editor's duty to modernize Shakespeare's grammar. Compare *has*, iv. i. 7, which some editors change to *hast*, and some allow to stand.

29. *life's*. Pope's correction for the *lives* of the Ff.

ACT III. SCENE I

41, 42. The Ff. put a comma after *night* and a colon after *welcome*. The context seems to require the punctuation of the text — first suggested by Theobald — since it was Macbeth's absence from the company of his nobles which would make his society the more welcome at night.

45. *Sirrah*. I prefer to print this word as a detached foot, thus making *a word . . . pleasure* a regular line. The Cambridge editors follow the Ff., printing *our pleasure* as a fragmentary line. Abbott, *Shakespearean Grammar*, § 512, says *our pleasure* cannot possibly be a detached foot. Mayer (page 149) also prefers the arrangement of the text.

70. *seeds*. Pope's alteration to *seed* has been adopted by most modern editors. But since *seeds* may mean "descendants," there is no need of changing the text.

94. *clept*. Capell's correction for the *clipt* of Ff.

106. *heart*. The Ff. have a semicolon after this word. Pope made the necessary correction.

110. *Hath*. So the Ff. Most modern editors read *Have*.

115. *Both Murderers*. Dyce's correction for the *Murth*. of the Ff. which some editors interpret as equivalent to "Second Murderer." Dyce made a similar correction in line 139 below.

ACT IV. SCENE I

2. The Ff. have a comma after *thrice*.

7. The Ff. have a colon after *one*.

38. *Hecate and the other three witches*. So the Ff. Many editors strike out the words *and . . . witches*. The Cambridge editors change *and* to *to*. But it seems probable that Middleton, who introduced the character of Hecate, brought in here three other witches for the sake of spectacular effect in the dance (line 132). The change proposed by the Cambridge editors is objectionable, since it makes Hecate a witch, and obscures the alteration in the play made by Middleton.

59. *germens*. Theobald's correction for *germaine* of the Ff. The word seems to have been coined by Shakespeare, and in the parallel passage, *Lear* iii. 2. 8, — the only other place in which he uses it — it appears in the plural. We are justified, I think, in believing that here, as elsewhere, the printer has dropped the final *s*.

59. *all together*. Pope's correction for the *altogether* of the Ff.

83. F. has a comma after *assurance*.

97. *Rebellious head*. Theobald's correction for the *Rebellious dead* of the Ff. Most modern editors adopt another conjecture of Theobald's, *Rebellion's head*. But Theobald himself preferred the reading in the text. It is a slighter alteration of the original, and makes as good, if not better, sense.

98. *Our high-placed Macbeth*. I agree with Manly that this passage, from *Sweet bodements* to *custom*, is probably the insertion of the reviser. It is singularly weak and ineffective.

105. The Ff. have a period after *know*. The Cambridge editors alter to a colon. A dash seems better as the speech is interrupted.

111. The stage direction of the Ff. reads: *A shew . . . and Banquo last with a glass in his hand*. Line 119 shows that this is wrong.

116 and 118. I follow F. in printing question marks instead of

exclamation marks, as in most modern texts, after *fourth*, *yet*, and *seventh*, in these lines.

ACT IV. SCENE II

22. *Each way and move*. Many suggestions have been made looking to a possible emendation of this passage. Dr. Liddell, however, has shown that *move* in Elizabethan English, means "to toss," or reflexively "to toss one's self." This interpretation seems to me to remove all obscurity from the passage.

38-41, 44-64. These passages are in prose. The way in which this dialogue between Lady Macduff and her son begins in verse, lines 30-37, changes to prose, lines 38-41, goes back to verse, lines 42-43, and then closes in prose, is, to say the least, peculiar. Compare the Mamillius scenes in *The Winter's Tale*, in which Shakespeare has managed to convey in blank verse the prattle of a child. Dr. Liddell is inclined to reject these prose passages.

73. *Whither*. Ff. 1-2 read *whether*, a common Elizabethan spelling of "whither." Thus in iv. 3. 133 F. has *whether*, when the sense demands "whither." In this passage, however, the old text might possibly be defended. If Lady Macduff were to fly, she would hardly ask *whither*, since she would naturally seek to join her husband in England. But, conscious of innocence and yet alarmed for her safety, she might well ask, "*Whether shall I fly?*" i.e. "shall I fly or not?" This use of *whether* to introduce a direct question, with an unexpressed alternative, cannot, so far as I am aware, be paralleled in Shakespeare, but we have instances of it in Latimer and Spenser. See *Century Dictionary*, sub *whether*.

83. *shag-hair'd*. Steevens correction for the *shagge-ear'd* of the Ff. Some modern editors, among them the Cambridge editors, retain the old reading. But *shag-eared* is a word which, so far as I am aware, occurs nowhere else in the language and is somewhat difficult of explanation. *Shag-haired*, on the contrary, was a common term of abuse, and is particularly applicable to the wild High-

land cateran (cf. 2 *King Henry VI.*, iii. 1. 367), who appears here as the murderer. It is easy to see how the corruption might have occurred from the old spelling of *heare* for *hair*.

ACT IV. SCENE III

4. *down-fall'n*. Malone's correction for the *downfall* of Ff. The participial form *fall* does, however, occur in English of the 17th century.

15. *discern*. Theobald's suggestion *deserve* has been generally adopted. But the old text is capable of explanation and should I think be retained. See note, p. 228.

33. In F. and F. 2 this line is printed :

For goudnesse dare not check thee: wear $\overset{u}{y}$ thy wrongs.

Ff. 3-4 expand $\overset{u}{y}$ to *thou* in which they have been followed by all modern editors. This gives to my ear a very unmusical line, and since the sense would be unharmed by the omission of *thou*, I have thought of deleting it. After some hesitation, however, I have allowed the text to stand.

34. *affeer'd*, Hanmer's correction for F. *affear'd*.

72. The Ff. put a period after *cold*. The punctuation in the text was suggested by Theobald.

107. *accursed*, so Ff. 2-4; F. *accust*. Dr. Liddell retains *accust*, calling it an anomalous spelling of "accused" in the sense of "revealed." To do so, however, involves the taking of *interdiction* in a special sense found only in the phraseology of Scottish law. It seems better to take *accust* as a simple misprint corrected as early as F. 2.

168. *rend*. Rowe's correction for the *rent* of the Ff. The latter form was an Elizabethan variant of *rend*.

235. *time*. So the Ff. Rowe's suggestion of *tune* has been generally received. But *time* in the sense of "tune," "melody," is not infrequent in Elizabethan English.

ACT V. SCENE I

29. *sense are*, so the Ff. Many editors prefer D'Avenant's correction *sense is*. "Sense" as a plural form occurs in *Sonnet* cxii, line 10.

42, 43. The Ff. put the question mark after *fear*, not after *account*.

ACT V. SCENE III

21. *cheer . . . disseat*. There has been much dispute over these words. It has been proposed to read "chair" (in the sense of "enthroned") for F. *cheere*. But this seems uncalled for, and "cheere" for "chair" is an anomalous spelling. Another suggestion is to follow Ff. 2-4 in changing *dis-eate* of F. to *disease*, meaning "trouble." This gives a sharper antithesis with *cheer*, and many editors, among them Dr. Furness, favour it. But as Verity points out "trouble" is too weak a word for the fate that would befall Macbeth in case he were defeated. *Dis-seate*, meaning "unseat," occurs in a scene in the *Two Noble Kinsmen* (v. 4. 72), which evidently is the work of Shakespeare's hand.

22. *way of life*. Johnson's famous suggestion, *May of life*, is rejected by all modern editors.

39. The word *her* after *cure* omitted by F. is supplied by Ff. 2-4.

44. *stuff'd . . . stuff*. Many suggestions have been made with a view of changing one or the other of these words. But none have proved acceptable nor is there any need of change. The repetition is thoroughly Shakespearean.

55. *senna*, so F. 4. F. has *Cyme*; F. 2-3, *Cany*.

ACT V. SCENE IV

11. Many editors have stumbled over this line and have proposed to substitute some other word for *given*. Of these sug-

gestions Johnson's *gone* is perhaps the most plausible. But there is really no need of emendation, since the passage can be explained as it stands. The use of *is* in the sense of "have to" is not uncommon in Shakespeare. Compare *Merchant of Venice*, i. 1. 5.

ACT V. SCENE V

8 and 15. The stage directions in these lines are wanting in the Ff.

39. *shall*. So F. Most modern editors read *shalt*; but compare *A. and C.* v. 2. 208, where F. reads *thou . . . shall*. See also ii. 4. 28. of the present play.

ACT V. SCENE VII

22. The word *and* at the close of this line appears in the Ff. as the first word of line 23. The metre, however, is greatly improved by its transposition to the close of line 22. This gives us a five-foot line with the weak ending in line 22, and in line 23 throws the stress on the emphatic words *more* and *not*. I would call attention to the fact that in a similar passage, ii. 1. 13, *and* appears in the Ff. at the beginning of line 14.

ACT V. SCENE VIII

34. The stage direction of the Ff. reads: "*Exeunt fighting. Alarums. Enter fighting, and Macbeth slaine.*" This double direction is sometimes taken as showing that something has been omitted here.

A NOTE ON METRE

IN order to enjoy to the full the poetry of such a play as *Macbeth* the student should be able to read it rhythmically, and to do this demands some knowledge, at least, of the general principles of Shakespearean versification. The metre of *Macbeth* is, as is well known, very irregular. This is due, perhaps, in some few places to the corrupt state of the text, but more generally to the fact that by the time he wrote *Macbeth* Shakespeare had acquired such a mastery of language and metre that he often disregarded the rules which earlier poets, and he himself in his earlier works, had carefully observed. One often feels in reading *Macbeth* that Shakespeare did not compose the drama line by line, but rather in groups of lines, and that so long as each group produced the rhythmical effect he sought, it mattered little to him whether or not the individual lines conformed to strict metrical rule. At the same time it is necessary for us to know these rules, if only to appreciate the freedom with which Shakespeare departs from them.

The simplest division of the drama is into prose and verse. There is comparatively little prose in *Macbeth*. The letter in i. 5 is naturally in prose; the porter in ii. 3 talks prose as do most of Shakespeare's low comedy characters; the dialogue between Lady Macduff and her son in iv. 2 wavers between verse and prose in a rather curious fashion (see note on this passage, page 260); and finally the sleep-walking scene, v. 1, is for the most part in prose. This may be explained by the fact that Shakespeare almost without exception puts prose rather than verse into the mouths of the insane, and Lady Macbeth's somnambulism is meant by him to be regarded as a symptom of her mental disorder.

The verse of the drama falls naturally into two parts: (a) blank verse, that is, unrhymed lines in iambic pentameter; (b) rhymed lines in various metres.

Blank verse.—The normal blank verse line is an iambic pentameter, that is, it contains five feet of two syllables each, the second

of which is accented; or, to use a more modern terminology, it is a sequence of ten alternately unstressed and stressed syllables. We may denote this line most simply by placing an accent (´) over each stressed syllable, as,

But gé[´]t thee bá[´]ck; my só[´]l is too[´] much chá[´]rged. (v. 8. 5.)

To point out the stresses of a line in this way corresponds in the study of English metre to the elaborate system of scanning classical verse which has sometimes been applied to English poetry.

It is evident that a prolonged succession of such regular lines would be extremely monotonous. This may easily be seen by reading aloud some of the longer passages in Shakespeare's earlier plays, such as the *Comedy of Errors*, where many of these regular lines occur in unbroken succession. In order to avoid such monotony Shakespeare soon began to make use of a number of variations from the normal line. Some of these from their frequent occurrence in *Macbeth* deserve particular notice.

Instead of ending with a stressed syllable Shakespeare frequently added an unstressed syllable to the line. This so-called feminine ending, appears in something over a quarter of the blank verse lines of *Macbeth*:

To-mó[´]rrow a[´]nd to-mó[´]rrow a[´]nd to-mó[´]rrow. (v. 5. 19.)

Sometimes two such syllables are added, making what is called the triple, or the double feminine, ending.

My thó[´]ught, whose mú[´]rdér yé[´]t is bú[´]t fá[´]ntástical. (i. 3. 139.)

The Alexandrine or line of six feet resembles the line with the double feminine ending in having twelve syllables, but differs from it in closing with a stressed syllable. Thus:

Actí[´]ng it má[´]ny wá[´]ys. Ná[´]y, há[´]d I pó[´]wer, I shó[´]uld. (iv. 3. 97.)

Sometimes an Alexandrine takes on an extra unstressed syllable at the close. Thus:

In an imperial charge. But I shall crave your pardon. (iv. 3. 20.)

Akin to the feminine ending is the addition of an unstressed syllable to the foot preceding the cæsura, *i.e.* the pause in the middle of the line. Thus:

Give me the daggers: the sleeping and the dead. (ii. 2. 53.)

Occasionally two unstressed syllables are added here. Thus:

In restless ecstasy. Duncan is in his grave. (iii. 2. 22.)

On the other hand Shakespeare often dropped an unstressed syllable from the line. Thus:

The curtain'd sleep; witchcraft celebrates. (ii. 1. 51.)

Occasionally a stressed syllable is omitted giving us a line of four feet:

And falls on the other. How now! what news? (i. 7. 28.)

We find also lines in which one or more feet are entirely omitted. Thus:

Which else should free have wrought. All's well. (ii. 1. 19.)

Your favours nor your hate. (i. 3. 61.)

I'll see it done. (i. 2. 66.)

Stand to't. (iii. 3. 15.)

Of these fragmentary lines it may be remarked that lines of two and three feet are by no means uncommon, twenty-nine of the first class, and fifty-one of the second, occurring in *Macbeth*. Lines of four feet are rarer, and lines of one foot rarest of all.

Another method of varying the normal line is the substitution of some other foot for the iamb in one or more places of the line. The commonest substitution is that of the trochee, *i.e.* a foot of two syllables with the stress on the first. This substitution is sometimes called "stress-inversion." As a rule it appears in the first foot or after the *cæsura*; but it may occur in any foot of the line. Thus we have it in the first foot,

Painted upon a pole, and underwrit. (v. 8. 26.)

in the second,

Do not muse at me, my most worthy friends. (iii. 4. 85.)

in the third,

His silver skin laced with his golden blood. (ii. 3. 118.)

in the fourth,

And make my seated heart knock at my ribs. (i. 3. 136.)

in the fifth

But know not how to do it. Well, say, sir. (v. 5. 32.)

Occasionally we find two and very rarely three such inversions in one line.

Sometimes an anapaest, *i.e.* a foot consisting of two unstressed and one stressed syllable, is substituted for an iamb. This substitution is often more apparent than real, for many such cases can be explained by the contraction of words common in Shakespeare's day; but there are some cases where contraction is impossible. Thus we have,

When those that gave the thane of Cawdor to me. (i. 3. 119.)
and

No teeth for the present. Get thee gone: to-morrow. (iii. 4. 31.)

In scanning, attention must, of course, be paid to differences of pronunciation between the English of Shakespeare's time and our

own. Some of the more striking of these have been pointed out in the notes. Attention must also be paid to the frequent contraction of two words or two syllables into one. Such contractions as "I'll" for "I will," "I've" for "I have" are sometimes indicated in the text, but frequently are left to the judgment of the reader. An unaccented syllable in the middle of a word is often slurred over in scanning; thus in such a line as

Each corpóral ágent tó this férrible féat. (i. 7. 80.)

the second syllables of "corporal" and "terrible" are barely heard, if at all. On the other hand there are a few cases where one syllable is expanded into two for the sake of the metre. Thus in the line

Nót i' the wórst ránk of mánhood, say't (iii. 1. 103),

"worst" is practically equivalent to "worest." The same word is sometimes pronounced differently in different places according to the requirement of the meter. Thus the termination "-ion" is pronounced as two syllables in i. 2. 18, but is contracted to one in i. 4. 1. Compare also the pronunciations of "remembrance" in ii. 3. 67 and iii. 2. 30. No rule can be given for such cases; the reader's ear for rhythm must serve as his guide.

We must not forget that Shakespeare wrote his verse to be declaimed from the boards of a theatre, not to be puzzled over in a schoolroom. Many lines that tax the ingenuity of scholars who attempt to fit them into an exact metrical scheme, would flow smoothly enough when spoken by a good actor.

Rhymed Lines.—The rhymed lines in *Macbeth* may be divided into

(1) Heroic couplets, *i.e.* iambic pentameter lines, each pair of lines rhyming as

Away, and móck the tíme with fáirest shów:

False fáce must híde wát the false héart dóth knów.

(i. 7. 81, 82.)

Such couplets frequently occur at the end of a scene, where they are called rhymed "tags." Out of twenty-eight scenes in *Macbeth* nineteen end with a "tag" of this kind. Heroic couplets, however, appear occasionally in the middle of a scene in blank verse. See lines 90-101 of iv. 1. There are some fifty-four such couplets in *Macbeth*.

(2) Lyrical passages. The ordinary dialogue of the witches, as has been pointed out in the notes is thrown into rhymed verse, consisting for the most part of trochaic tetrameter, *i.e.* lines of four feet, having two syllables to a foot, with the stress falling on the first. Thus:

Whén shall wé three méet agáin? (i. 1. 1.)

As a rule the second syllable of the last foot is wanting in this metre; but see i. 3. 14. Occasionally we find iambic lines in the speeches of the witches as

But in a síeve I'll thíther saíl. (i. 3. 8.)

In the speeches of Hecate on the other hand (see iii. 5. and iv. 1.) the rhythm is iambic. There is occasional stress inversion but not a single trochaic line. This is one of several arguments against the Shakespearean authorship of these passages. The same argument would hold against the speech of the First Witch iv. 1. 125-132. Here and there in the witches' speeches we have lines that exceed the regular number of feet as

Her húsbánd's tó Aléppo góne, máster ó' the Tíger. (i. 3. 7.)

or fall short of it as

Í' the shípman's cárd. (i. 3. 17.)

There are about 120 short rhyming lines in the whole play.

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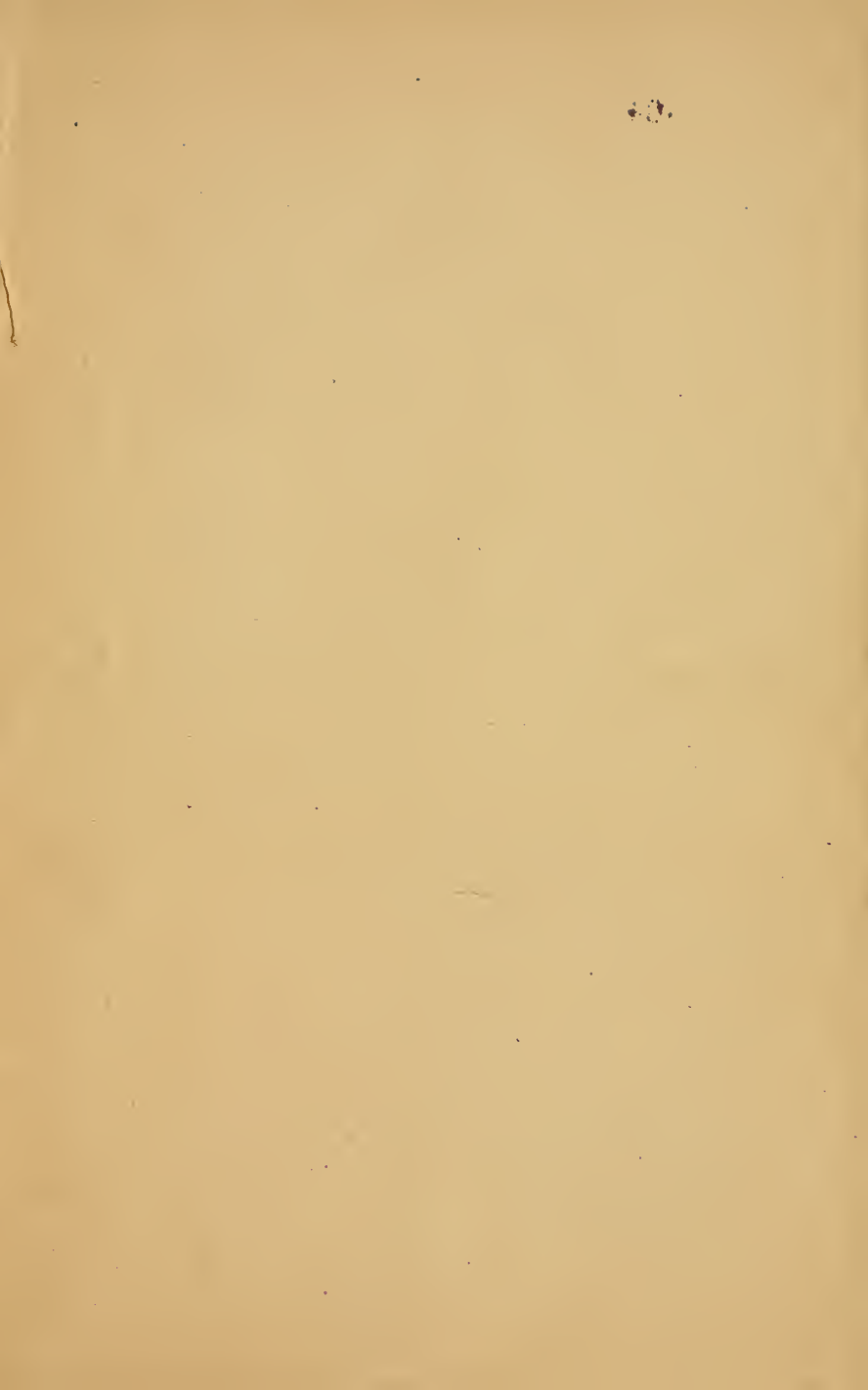
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