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# H A M L E T .

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The Essay on Hamlet, by the celebrated German critic Gervinus, contains, perhaps, the most complete and accurate history of the play, and the most close and searching analysis of the character which has appeared.

As we believe no translation of it has yet been published, the one we now offer which—with the exception of a very few additions and omissions—strictly follows the text, may not be uninteresting.

The story of Hamlet originally appeared in Saxo Grammaticus, though in a crude and unpolished form. We next find it in a more finished and refined state in "Belleforest's Novels," published in 1564, and subsequently in an English work taken from them and published in 1608, entitled the history of Hamblett. In the story as here narrated, Horvendile is killed by his brother Fengon, who grasps possession at the same time of both his empire and his wife. Hamblett's counterfeited madness is the center of the story, and the many enigmas, difficult of solution, in which it abounds, was its main charm for the Northern taste. As thus told the tale ends with Hamlet's successful revenge and his becoming king. Indeed, the scene in which Hamlet induces his mother to return to the paths of virtue, during which he takes the life of a listener behind the screen, and that in which, going to England, he lays a trap for the ambassadors, are the only ones which, in any way, contributed material to Shakespeare in the diverging conception with which he treats the tale. The figures of Laertes and Ophelia are nowhere to be found in the original story, though there is one of a maiden, quite disconnected with the principal action, who, having been brought up with Hamlet from childhood, yields to him the last favor a woman grants, and promises, with solemnity, to reveal to the world nothing of what has passed. This trait in the story is raw, rough and incapable of use, and all the others are of a similar character. Yet though this beautiful drama of Shakespeare took its rise from so poor and primitive a source, it has become more identified with his name than any other which has sprung from the fountain of his genius. When you speak of Shakespeare you speak of Hamlet. In Hamlet are presented the most contradictory sides of his heart and of his mind. Equally in originality of thought, as in the popularity of its tone, it surpasses all his other works. It is nature's own text, taken from life, and almost every line is a mine of precious wisdom. It possesses, too, the peculiar charm which belongs to it, in common with Henry IV., of giving more intuition into the character of Shakespeare, and letting more light upon his inner nature than any other of his plays. Full of that spirit of prophecy, which is near divine, it anticipated time and looked far into the future only to be thoroughly comprehended, after the lapse of two or three centuries. It is not only as a household word now, wherever the English tongue is spoken, but has penetrated modern German life with an intensity of depth only equaled in German literature by Goethe's Faust.

There was another play of Hamlet, written between the two before-mentioned tales in 1560, in which the feature of Hamlet's revenge was made very prominent and fully treated. There was also, according to a letter of Philip Nash, published in a preface to one of Robert Greene's works, a drama of Hamlet, well spiced with sentences from Seneca, which ap-

peared in 1587, and was played in 1594, in the theatre of Newington Butts. The date of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is fixed by Dyce and Collier at 1600-1602. Frequent allusions to Cæsar make it evident that it must have occupied Shakespeare's mind about the same time as his *Julius Cæsar* did. There is an old edition in quarto, dated 1603, which differs widely from that now adopted even so far as to change the names of Polonius and his son into Corambis and Montana. The *Hamlet* of 1603 contains all the *action* of the piece but not the workings of the inner nature, which are its greatest beauties. For instance, the charming contrast of character between Hamlet and Horatio finds no picturing in this edition.

All those delicate and conflicting phases of feeling in the king's prayer in act third—which gives the best clue to the understanding of the play, and which is alone introduced by Mr. EDWIN BOOTH, of all modern representatives of the character—are all omitted. So also is the entire scene where Hamlet meets Fortinbras' troops, and the entire soliloquy containing the key to the piece. Were all these omissions made by some piratical copyist there would have been method in it; but it is much more probable that Shakespeare—as the enigma of the drama remained for a long period a sealed book to the many who desired to unravel it—intended, in this last version, to throw out some clearer inklings of his own inner conception.

Since Goethe so beautifully and clearly solved the mystery in his "*Wilhelm Meister*," one wonders how it could ever have existed. In none of Shakespeare's works is the intention more clearly marked, though in none except, perhaps, his *Sonnets*, has it been so misinterpreted. Voltaire's delectable notions of the play and character of Hamlet are well known. Malone's are not much more profound. He found the disguised madness theory led to nothing. Others, as Akenside, held that Shakespeare made Hamlet a real madman. It is well known that in our days even Tieck held a similar idea. Dr. Johnson could not find sufficient reason for Hamlet's pretended madness. He called Hamlet more an instrument than a free-acting being, never endeavoring to punish the guilty king, who fell a victim finally through mere accidental circumstances, and not through any pre-intended purpose of a son sworn to revenge his father. All Voltaire's exposition of what he calls the want of design in Hamlet fell worthless to the earth when Goethe showed, by invincible argument, the true and strong logic of the piece. All the faults found by Johnson and Malone sprang into virtues when Goethe showed Shakespeare's intention to picture Hamlet as a man who, staggering under the weight of a task solemnly imposed on him, and yet too weighty for his nature to sustain, loses his center of gravity and grows giddy, as Horatio describes, whenever he mentally nears the dizzy height of the steep deed he has sworn to execute. In Goethe's own language, "Shakespeare paints a *soul*, on which a deed has been imposed which is too much for it." That this was the intention of the poet is clearly manifest throughout the entire piece. Let us take this idea and the action of the piece as it recurs, and bring both accurately together.

At the opening of the panorama we find a noble king of Denmark, a man described as without his equal, of divine form and majesty, who is murdered by his brother, who, too, robs his nephew of his heritage and then marries his mother, his murdered brother's wife, whom he had seduced during her husband's life by flatteries and gifts. The bloated, puffy form of this Claudius, whom Hamlet calls frog, cat, peacock, a lusty, vain brute, whose business was to gamble and drink, give little clue to his character. It is only the restless peering into everything, and the uneasy conscience which makes him regard with suspicion everybody and everything that is done about him, and surround himself with a pack of tools, that, under the smiling mask, betray the knave. Next we see the spirit of the murdered hero rise from the grave and conjure his son, if he has nature in him, not to leave his death unavenged; not to become blunt to so unnatural a crime, like some fat weed on



Lethe's shore. A slave of fate, wandering in the tortures of purgatory, makes this solemn and fearful appeal to Hamlet's heart. Revenge, in those days, was a duty to be fulfilled without warning. In addition to this call to revenge, Hamlet had just motives for inflicting punishment, being defrauded of the throne and being also Chief Judge of the kingdom.

To all these weighty causes we must add many other ready incitements. His dead father was warmly loved and highly esteemed by the whole people of Denmark; every fool knows, as the grave-digger says, the year and date when he overcame Fortinbras. Toward the new king the people already feel bitterly on account of Polonius' death, and are ready to make Laertes their new ruler. Claudius, therefore, is not a man to be dreaded, except for the precautions which his own fear and conscience always gather around him. Young Hamlet, on the other hand, enjoys, in a golden degree, the good graces of the nation, which regards even his faults as so many virtues.

Even his mother, who fondly loves him, would become his ally in such a conflict. All these external opportunities are still further increased by the qualities themselves which Hamlet possesses. Ophelia thinks of him as a courtier, a scholar, and a soldier, in every way fitted and inclined to handle well his physical and mental weapons. He is but thirty years, also; an age at which the physical and mental strength is most abundant and most evenly balanced. To the carrying out, then, of the object committed to him by his father, and advocated by his own sense of personal wrong and public justice, nothing is wanting but a strong will. Even that Hamlet at first seems to possess. When he meets his father's ghost, he swears by Heaven to make his command his all-absorbing purpose, to efface everything else in his memory, and fly to revenge on the wings of thought, but even, at the very first soliloquy, it is apparent that this man, seemingly so resolved, has to bid his heart to halt, his nerves not to grow old so suddenly, but to bear him up, and sighs forth in the deepest woe, that the world is out of joint, and left to him to set it right. It is strange that he only speaks to Horatio of his secret after some lapse of time, and that to accomplish a business so near at hand, he adopts such roundabout methods, counterfeiting madness for a time, like Brutus, although he has no huge tyranny to overthrow. It is most singular, too, to see him constantly awakening the suspicions of those who have most cause to fear him, thus drawing the attention of the king, who is already disturbed by Hamlet's melancholy sadness. While enacting this rôle of a madman we see Hamlet disquieting the whole court, putting enigmas to his listeners, annoying the lady he loved, and even forgetting his purpose for two months. He seems to neglect his great object until a declaiming actor, in the second act, by a well-rendered representation of an imaginary passion, reminds him of his work; then he assails himself in harshest, though well-merited terms of reproach, calling himself John à Dreams, a dull, feelingless rascal, a coward who would submit to any insult; a man having the liver of a pigeon and no gall. But even all this self-reproach does not drive him to action. The player merely starts the idea in him to try the king's conscience by a spectacle. His hesitating mind has, by this time, arrived at a doubt whether the ghost of his father, whom he calls so emphatically before his friends an honorable ghost with so much pride, might not have been one of those devils which is supposed to prey on men of weakness and melancholy as himself. The play commences. Shakespeare intends Hamlet to be as much affected by it as the guilty king. For Gonzago, who plays the rôle of his father, says to him, in the name of his father's ghost, "what we do determine oft we break;" purpose is but the slave of memory, of vehement birth, but short duration; like the fruit, which, when green, clingeth to the tree, but when ripe, falls by its own weight. Resolutions taken in passion die with the passion which inspired them. Vehemence, either in joy or grief, destroys itself. The trial, through the means of the play, succeeds. Hamlet has the king closely watched by Horatio, in order to appear idle and indifferent himself. Both are certain of the king's

guilt, who now appears alone trying to pray and repent. Every line of his soliloquy bears a comparison to the situation of Hamlet's own mind. The one owes repentance, the other revenge. The king is as willing to pray as Hamlet is to punish, neither being equal to their task. The one is too guilty to pray, the other too conscientious to kill. What is the good of mercy, says Claudius; what is the use of punishment unless the sin is brought before the world's eye. The double power of prayer consists in guarding against sin and in repenting when it is committed. The king tries to do penance, but he has not the heart to fulfill the first condition demanded by his conscience—to give up his wife and throne. On the other hand revenge is in the mind of Hamlet, but the power to avenge is wanting. Even while the king is contemplating his condition in this soliloquy Hamlet is close by him, the very opportunity he might wish for. It is the hour of midnight, when ghosts are supposed to appear; he is in the excited mood to fulfill the deed, but irresolute as ever he finds a new cause for deferring his purpose. He does not wish to send the praying murderer, who has killed his father, to Heaven in the blossom of his sin, and thus misses another opportunity to wait for yet another more terrible and effective. He departs, and the spared king rises to tell us that he was unable to pray. In this excited mood Hamlet rushes forth to his mother, flings daggers at her in every word, and unconsciously stabs the poor listening Polonius instead of the king. Thus he who was so conscientious to avenge murder becomes unwarily a murderer.

Hamlet sees in it a punishment for himself as well as for Polonius. The ghost appears again, and only seems bent on punishing Hamlet for not fulfilling his solemn promise. In spite of all this Hamlet remains idle. He meets young Fortinbras at this juncture—his very counterpart, who owes Denmark an old grudge, and would fight it against his uncle's will, but being unable to do so gives vent to his fiery temper in the Polack war.

Hamlet at once acknowledges the spirit of ambition in this young man who is fighting for a mere egg-shell, whilst he himself remains idle, spite of his good cause and the many golden opportunities of accomplishing it. Again he assails himself with harsh epithets, a beast made up of eating and sleeping, and so forth. It is by accident he returns so speedily from his voyage to Denmark. Even now he remains idle, although informed of the king's seeking his life. Every moment he expects the news from England that the ambassadors have died in his stead; he dreads an interview with the king, whom he fears, and his poor heart pales. His uncle's plot and cunning get the better of him, and it is only when mortally wounded, he, in exasperation, kills the murderer of his mother.

Another striking contrast of character is presented in Laertes. Hamlet kills Polonius. The latter's son, Laertes, a gallant gentleman, a bit of a modern hero, a fencer, and in every respect a finished cavalier of the French school, of a temper as choleric as Hamlet's is melancholy, flies back at once from distant Paris to Denmark to avenge his father's death. The precept given him by his father in regard to treating an adversary when once he has entered into a quarrel seem not to have left his memory. Revenge fills his whole soul, and his every nerve is ready for action before he knows the murderer. His only means of ascertaining who he is is through the stray whisperings here and there which reach him. He has no promptings of a noble ghost risen from the earth. Not having Hamlet's great means for executing vengeance, he endeavors to use the small means he has to good advantage. He is not the heir to the throne, but he incites a revolt, menacing even the king. He swears by all that's holy he despises damnation; nothing but his purpose clings to him. He would not spare the murderer in church; he does not hesitate to poison his weapons to reach his victim. All this Laertes is willing to do for a man like Polonius, who is nothing but a courtier, a tool in the king's hands, laughed at and ridiculed; whilst Hamlet hesitates to do the same for a father of whom the poet says: "Take him all in all, he was a man I ne'er

shall look upon his like again." Thus stands the structure of this piece in perfect harmony before us. Every action aims at one center, all the most remote figures being in close relation to it. The action, as in the Merchant of Venice, is always, with Shakespeare, of secondary moment, being merely a deduction, the very center of his works leading to the source and secret causes in which such action took its birth. In spite of Hamlet's inaction we feel deeply interested in him, as a character, and anxious to inquire minutely into all the inward motives which produced such effect. Hamlet is pictured by his mother as fat and short-breathed, such as he was played by Burbage, and not at all in the splendor of a first lover as Garrick was accustomed to represent him. His temper is quiet, phlegmatic, without gall; his mother compares him to a turtle-dove sitting over her brood; he says to Laertes of himself that he is not passionate nor rash, but there is something dangerous about him to be feared. This very danger only appears, however, when he is cornered, and there is no escape. His timidity lies in a slow nature, hard to move. His cautiousness is over-great, he sees nothing but danger, and he believes in ghosts and goblins in contrast to Horatio, who does not believe but who is almost a skeptic. Hamlet is, so to say, moved by a constant ebb and flood of feelings. Now, the one prompts him to great deeds; then, the other sets in, obliterates the impression of the last and calms him down again to apathy. His weakness makes Hamlet cling to Horatio, who is cool and able to stand the shocks of fortune or misfortune. If Hamlet had been born under happier circumstances his satirical inclinations would have made him happy and merry, at times perhaps somewhat sentimental and fond of visiting solitudes and church-yards; but under the circumstances under which he was placed they made him melancholy and despairing. The actor who represents Hamlet should resist carefully the temptation to produce effects by emphasizing too much his merry jokes and puns in order to produce laughter, or to mark the change from tragic to comic too intensely. Such might suit the pit but it would shock the critic who desires to see the picture presented in unbroken harmony to his mind. Hamlet's oddities in the church-yard scene should not alter the solemnity of the occasion. In his bitter woe he utters things which would create laughter in a comedy. You can apply to Hamlet, equally as well as to Richard II., Gonzago's words, That where joy exults the highest, grief laments the deepest. Hamlet is not unlike Prince Henry, but his love of abstract thinking and a natural bashfulness altered him and unfitted him for manly deeds. He is a philosopher, and not by any means proud, his favorite society being actors, and his friend Horatio, and his love Ophelia, far below him in station. He has a contempt for everything base, for politicians, lawyers and courtiers. His irresolution is not entirely weakness, but based on conscientiousness and virtue. He calls it himself three-quarters cowardice and one-quarter wisdom. He is a true scholar, having remained longer than was customary at the University, and yearned for it after he left. Much as he dislikes dissimulation in others in life, it gives him but little labor to assume it himself. After he killed Polonius he becomes a fatalist, believing himself a mere instrument in the hands of Providence in spite of all his purposes. Life becomes a burden to him, and he is constantly on the brink of suicide. His soliloquy "to be or not to be," is an evidence of this. Shakespeare intended to show in Hamlet, the difference between a great soul and a great character; between power of intellect and strength of action. He shows the necessity of educating the will to make it strong and ready for work.

Henry and Percy, ever ready to carry out their purpose, are true types of a life of action, whilst the heavenly, harmonious soul of Hamlet, forever remains idle. Hamlet has none of that ambition and spurring pride which drove Henry and Percy into action.

Unlike Alexander's ambition, for which the world was too small, Hamlet's would find accommodation in a nut-shell. Hamlet was centuries ahead of his time; a man full of the

loftiest sentiment and philosophy, living in an era full of barbarous customs and daring deeds. This continuous contrast of great and weak qualities which we find in Hamlet, belonging much, as it does, to the Germanic character as it is now, the poet anticipating it by centuries, has made him familiar in every household in Germany. The mirror-like similarity to the modern Germanic mind, is indeed astounding. One of the greatest modern German poets begins with these words: "Hamlet is Germany."

Great objections have been made to the Drama of Hamlet ending in the style in which it does, belonging rather to a barbarian age; but it seems to have been the intention of the poet to use this very wholesale slaughter as a punishment to Hamlet, being the consequence of his irresolution in sparing a little blood. Shakespeare himself explains this clearly. When the king asks Laertes whether it is written in his revenge to destroy all and everybody, friend, foe, guilty and not guilty ones, the spirit of revenge in Laertes, although little conscientious, is satisfied with punishing the guilty one. But conscientious Hamlet, by his unsettled purpose, creates in the end an awkward revenge which destroys them all. Consequently the ending of the piece is not an essential mistake of the poet, but represents, and is created by a moral fault of Hamlet's, and is a fit sequel to the character as carried all through the piece.

—“It was not without cause and just occasion, that my gesturcs, countenances, and words, seeme to proceed from a madman, and that I desire to have all men esteeme me wholly deprived of sense and reasonable understanding; bycause I am weil assured, that he that hath made no conscience to kill his owne brother, will not spare to save himselfe with the like crueltie, in the blood and flesh of the loyne of his brother, by him massacred; and therefore it is better for me to fayne madnesse, than to use my right senses as nature hath bestowed them upon me. The bright shining clearness thereof I am forced to hide under this shadow of dissimulation, as the sun doth his beames under some great cloud, when the weather in summer-time overcasteth: the face of a madman serveth to cover my gallant countenance, and the gestures of a fool are fit for me, to the end that, guiding myself wisely therein, I may preserve my life for the Danes and the memory of my late deceased father; for that the desire of revenging his death is so engraven in my heart, that if I dye not shortly, I hope to take such and so great vengeance, that these countryses shall for ever speak thereof. Nevertheless I must stay the time, meanes, and occasion, lest by making over-great haste, I be now the cause of mine own sodaine ruine and overthrow, and by that meanes end, before I beginne to effect my hearte's desire; hee that hath to doe with a wicked, disloyall, cruell, and discourteous man, must use craft, and politike inventions, such as a fine witte can best imagine, not to discover his interprise; for seeing that by force I cannot effect my desire, reason alloweth me by dissimulation, subiltie and secret practices to proceed therein.”—*Historie of Hamblet.*

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The following is the distribution of characters:

HAMLET, Prince of Denmark .....	MR. EDWIN BOOTH
CLAUDIUS, King of Denmark .....	(first appearance).....MR. EDWIN VARREY
GHOST OF HAMLET'S FATHER.....	(first appearance).....MR. CHARLES KEMBLE MASON
POLONIUS, Lord Chamberlain .....	MR. G. H. ANDREWS
LAERTES, Son to Polonius .....	MR. J. G. HANLEY
HORATIO, friend to Hamlet .....	MR. C. WALCOT, Jr.
OSRIC, a Courtier .....	MR. O. S. FAWCET
ROSENCRANTZ .....	} Courtiers {
GUILDENSTERN .....	
MARCELLUS .....	} Officers {
BERNARDO .....	
FRANCISCO, a Soldier .....	MR. J. W. BURGESS
FIRST ACTOR .....	MR. E. POST
SECOND ACTOR.....	MR. N. DECKER
FIRST GRAVE-DIGGER.....	MR. S. K. CHESTER
SECOND GRAVE-DIGGER .....	MR. H. E. EVANS
PRIEST .....	MR. THOMAS PLACIDE
GERTRUDE, Queen of Denmark and Mother of Hamlet .....	MR. E. A. EBERLE
OPHELIA .....	MR. P. EVERDELL
ACTRESS .....	MRS. J. W. WALLACK
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THE MUSIC of Booth's HAMLET .....by.....MR. ROBERT STOEPPEL.

# HAMLET.

## ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Elsinore.—A Platform near the Palace.—Night.—FRANCISCO at his Post.*

*Ber.* Who's there?  
*Fran.* Nay, answer me:—stand, and unfold yourself.  
*Ber.* Long live the king! [*Enter Ber.*]  
*Fran.* Bernardo?  
*Ber.* He.  
*Fran.* You come most carefully upon your hour.  
*Ber.* (L. c.) 'Tis now struck twelve; get thee to bed, Francisco.  
*Fran.* (R. c.) For this relief, much thanks:—'tis bitter cold,  
 And I am sick at heart.  
*Ber.* Have you had quiet guard?  
*Fran.* (L. c.) Not a mouse stirring.  
*Ber.* (R.) Well, good night.  
 If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,  
 The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste.  
*Fran.* I think I hear them. Stand, ho! (L.)  
 Who is there? [*Exit Fran.*]  
*Hor.* (L.) Friends to this ground.  
*Mar.* (R.) And liegemen to the Dane.  
*Fran.* Give you good night.  
*Mar.* Oh, farewell, honest soldier!  
 Who hath relieved you?  
*Fran.* Bernardo hath my place.  
 Give you good night.  
*Mar.* Holloa Bernardo! [*Enter Mar.*]  
*Ber.* Say,  
 What, is Horatio there?  
*Hor.* A piece of him. [*Enter Hor.*]  
*Ber.* Welcome, Horatio; welcome, good Marcellus.  
*Hor.* What, has this thing appeared again to-night?  
*Ber.* I have seen nothing.  
*Mar.* Horatio says, 'tis but our fantasy;  
 And will not let belief take hold of him,  
 Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us;  
 Therefore I have entreated him along  
 With us to watch the minutes of this night;  
 That, if again this apparition come,  
 He may approve our eyes,\* and speak to it.  
*Hor.* (L. c.) Tush! tush! 'twill not appear.  
*Ber.* Come, let us once again assail your ears,  
 That are so fortified against our story,  
 What we two nights have seen.  
*Hor.* Well, let us hear Bernardo speak of this.  
*Ber.* (c.) Last night of all,  
 When you same star, that's westward from the pole,  
 Had made his course to illumine that part of heaven  
 Where now it burns, Marcellus, and myself,  
 The bell then beating one,—

*Mar.* (R.) Peace, break thee off; look, where it comes again.

*Enter GHOST, L.*

*Ber.* In the same figure, like the king that's dead.  
*Hor.* (L. c.) Most like:—it harrows me with fear and wonder.  
*Ber.* It would be spoke to.  
*Mar.* Speak to it, Horatio.  
*Hor.* What art thou, that usurp'st this time of night,  
 Together with that fair and warlike form,  
 In which the majesty of buried Denmark  
 Did sometimes march? By heaven, I charge thee, speak. [*Ghost crosses to R.*]  
*Mar.* It is offended.  
*Ber.* See! it stalks away.  
*Hor.* Stay; speak; speak, I charge thee, speak!  
 [*Exit Ghost, R. crosses R.*]  
*Mar.* 'Tis gone, and will not answer.  
*Ber.* How now, Horatio? you tremble and look pale:  
 Is not this something more than fantasy?  
 What think you of it?  
*Hor.* (R.) I might not this believe,  
 Without the sensible and true avouch  
 Of mine own eyes.  
*Mar.* (c.) Is it not like the king?  
*Hor.* As thou art to thyself:  
 Such was the very armour he had on,  
 When he the ambitious Norway combated.  
*Mar.* Thus, twice before, and jump\* at this dead hour,  
 With martial stalk he has gone by our watch.  
*Hor.* In what particular thought to work, I know not;  
 But, in the gross and scope of mine opinion,  
 This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

*Re-enter GHOST.*

But, soft; behold! lo, where it comes again!  
 I'll cross it, though it blast me. [*Ghost crosses.*]  
 Stay, illusion!  
 If thou hast any sound or use of voice,  
 Speak to me. [*Ghost stops.*]  
 If there be any good thing to be done,  
 That may to thee do ease and grace to me,  
 Speak to me.  
 If thou art privy to thy country's fate,  
 Which, happily, fore-knowing may avoid,  
 Oh, speak!  
 Or if thou hast uphorded in thy life  
 Extorted treasure in the womb of the earth,  
 For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death,  
 Speak of it:—[*Exit Ghost*]—stay, and speak.  
*Mar.* 'Tis gone!  
 We do it wrong, being so majestical,  
 To offer it the show of violence.

\* He may, by his own experience, be assured of that which we have related. To approve, in Shakespeare's age, signified to make good, or establish.—MALONE.

\* Jump and just were synonymous.

*Ber.* It was about to speak, when the cock crew.

*Hor.* And then it started like a guilty thing Upon a fearful summons. I have heard The cock, that is the trumpet of the morn, Doth, with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat, Awake the god of day; and, at his warning, Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air, The extravagant\* and erring† spirit hies To his confine. But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad, Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill: Break we our watch up; [*Crosses, l.*] and, by my advice,

Let (l. c.) us impart what we have seen to-night Unto young Hamlet; for, upon my life, This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.

[*Exeunt, l.*]

SCENE II.—*The Palace.—Flourish of Trumpets.*

POLONIUS, the KING, QUEEN, HAMLET, Ladies and Attendants, LAERTES. (L. c.)

*King.* (c.) Though yet of Hamlet, our dear brother's death, The memory be green; and that it us befitted To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom

To be contracted in one brow of woe; Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature, That we, with wisest sorrow, think on him, Together with remembrance of ourselves. Therefore, our sometime sister, now our queen, The imperial jointress of this warlike state, Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy, Taken to wife; nor have we herein barred Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone With this affair along: for all, our thanks,— And now, Laertes, what's the news with you? You told us of some suit.—What is't, Laertes?

*Laer.* My dread lord, Your leave and favor to return to France; From whence, though willingly, I came to Denmark,

To show my duty in your coronation; Yet now, I must confess, that duty done, My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France,

And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

*King.* Have you your father's leave? What says Polonius?

*Pol.* He hath, my lord;

I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

*King.* Take thy fair hour, Laertes; time be thine,

And thy best graces; spend it at thy will.

But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son. [*Rises.*]

*Ham.* A little more than kin, and less than kind.†

*King.* How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

*Ham.* Not so, my lord; I am too much i' the sun.§

*Queen.* [*Crosses to H.*] Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted color off,

And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark. Do not, forever, with thy veiled lids, Seek for thy noble father in the dust. Thou know'st 'tis common; all that live must die, Passing through nature to eternity.

*Ham.* Ay, madam, it is common.

*Queen.* If it be, [*King and Pol. confer.*] Why seems it so particular with thee?

*Ham.* Seems, madam! nay, it is; I know not seems.

'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother, Nor customary suits of solemn black, No, nor the fruitful river in the eye, Nor the dejected 'haviour of the visage, Together with all forms, modes, shows of grief, That can denote me truly: these, indeed, seem, For they are actions that a man might play; But I have that within, which passeth show; These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

*King.* 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,

To give these mourning duties to your father: But, you must know, your father lost a father; That father lost, lost his; and the survivor bound In filial obligation for some term To do obsequious\* sorrow: but to persevere In obstinate condolence, is a course Of impious stubbornness; 'tis unmanly grief; It shows a will most incorrect to heaven.

We pray you, throw to earth This unprevailing woe, and think of us As of a father; for let the world take note You are the most immediate to our throne, Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

*Queen.* Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet,

I pray thee, stay with us, go not to Wittenberg.

*Ham.* I shall, in all my best, obey you madam.

*King.* Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply; Be as ourself in Denmark. Madam, come; This gentle and unforced accord of Hamlet Sits smiling to my heart: in grace whereof, No jocund health, that Denmark drinks to day, But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell; And the king's rouse the heaven shall bruit again,

Re-speaking earthly thunder.

[*Flourish of trumpets.*]

[*Exeunt all but Hamlet.*]

*Ham.* Oh, that this too, too solid flesh would melt,

Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew! Or that the Everlasting had not fixed His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! O God! How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable, Seem to me all the uses of this world! Fie on't! O fie! 'Tis an unweeded garden, That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature,

Possess it merely.† That it should come to this! But two months dead!—nay, not so much, not two—

So excellent a king; that was, to this, Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother,

\* Out of his bounds. † Wandering.—STEVENS.

† Somewhat more than cousin and less than son.—JOHNSON.

§ Too much exposed at his uncle's marriage as his chiefest courtier.—STEVENS. Dr. Farmer thinks a quibble between son and sun is intended.

\* From obsequies, or funeral ceremonies.—JOHNSON.

† Entirely, absolutely.—STEVENS.



That he might not beteem\* the winds of heaven  
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!  
Must I remember? Why, she would hang on  
him,

As if increase of appetite had grown  
By what it fed on—and yet, within a month—  
Let me not think on't;—Frailty, thy name is wo-  
man!—

A little month; or ere those shoes were old,  
With which she followed my poor father's body,  
Like Niobe, all tears;—  
She married with my uncle,  
My father's brother; but no more like my father  
Than I to Hercules.

It is not, nor can it come to, good;—  
But break, my heart: for I must hold my tongue!

*Enter HORATIO, MARCELLUS, and BERNARDO.*

*Hor. (L.)* Hail to your Lordship!

*Ham.* I am glad to see you well:

Horatio—or I do forget myself?

*Hor.* The same, my Lord, and your poor serv-  
ant ever.

*Ham.* Sir, my good friend; I'll change that  
name with you.

And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio?—  
Marcellus?

*Mar. (R.)* My good Lord—

*Ham. (C.)* I am very glad to see you—Good  
even, sir—

But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?

*Hor. (L. C.)* A truant disposition, good my  
lord. [*Marcellus and Bernardo stand, R.*]

*Ham.* I would not hear your enemy say so;

Nor shall you do mine ear that violence,

To make it truster of your own report

Against yourself: I know you are no truant.

But, what is your affair in Elsinore?

We'll teach you to drink deep, ere you depart.

*Hor.* I came to see your father's funeral.

*Ham.* I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow-  
student;

I think it was to see my mother's wedding.

*Hor.* Indeed, my lord, it followed hard upon.

*Ham.* Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral baked  
meats

Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.†

Would I had met my dearest foe‡ in heaven,

Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio!

My father—methinks I see my father.

*Hor.* Where,

My lord!

*Ham.* In my mind's eye, Horatio!

*Hor.* I saw him once: he was a goodly king.

*Ham.* He was a man. Take him for all in all,

I shall not look upon his like again.

*Hor.* My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

*Ham.* Saw! who?

*Hor.* My lord, the king, your father.

*Ham.* The king, my father!

*Hor.* Season your admiration for awhile

With an attent ear; till I may deliver,

Upon the witness of these gentlemen,  
This marvel to you.

*Ham.* For heaven's love, let me hear.

*Hor.* Two nights together had these gentlemen,  
Marcellus and Bernardo, on their watch,  
In the dead waste and middle of the night,  
Been thus encountered;—a figure like your  
father,

Armed at point, exactly cap-à-pié,  
Appears before them, and, with solemn march,  
Goes slow and stately by them: thrice he walked,  
By their oppressed and fear-surprised eyes,  
Within his truncheon's length; whilst they, dis-  
till'd

Almost to jelly with the act of fear,  
Stand dumb and speak not to him. This to me  
In dreadful secrecy impart they did;  
And I with them, the third night, kept the watch:  
Where, as they had delivered, both in time,  
Form of the thing, each word made true and good,  
The apparition comes.

*Ham. [To Bernardo and Marcellus.]* But where  
was this?

*Mar.* My lord, upon the platform where we  
watched.

*Ham.* Did you not speak to it?

*Hor. (L.)* My lord, I did;

But answer made it none; yet once, methought,  
It lifted up its head, and did address  
Itself to motion, like as it would speak;

But, even then, the morning cock crew loud;—

And, at the sound, it shrunk in haste away,  
And vanished from our sight.

*Ham.* 'Tis very strange.

*Hor.* As I do live, my honoured lord, 'tis true:  
And we did think it writ down in our duty,  
To let you know of it.

*Ham.* Indeed, indeed, sirs: but this troubles  
me.—

Hold you the watch to-night?

*Mar.* We do, my lord.

*Ham. [To Hor.]* Armed, say you?

*Hor.* Armed, my lord.

*Ham.* From top to toe?

*Hor.* My lord, from head to foot.

*Ham.* Then saw you not his face?

*Hor.* Oh, yes, my lord, he wore his beaver\* up.

*Ham.* What, looked he frowningly?

*Hor.* A countenance more

In sorrow than in anger.

*Ham.* Pale, or red?

*Hor.* Nay, very pale.

*Ham.* And fixed his eyes upon you?

*Hor.* Most constantly.

*Ham.* I would I had been there.

*Hor.* It would have much amazed you.

*Ham.* Very like,

Very like:—stayed it long?

*Hor.* While one, with moderate haste,

Might tell a hundred.

*Mar.* Longer, longer.

*Hor.* Not when I saw it.

*Ham.* His beard was grizzled?—no?

*Hor.* It was, as I have seen it in his life,  
A sable silvered.

\* To permit, or suffer.

† It was anciently the custom to give a cold entertain-  
ment to mourners at a funeral.—MALONE.

‡ Most immediate.—STEVENS.

\* That part of the helmet which may be lifted up to take  
breath the more freely.—BULLOKAR'S ENG. EXPOSITOR.

*Ham.* I will watch to-night;  
Perchance 'twill walk again.

*Hor.* I warrant 'twill.

*Ham.* If it assumes my noble father's person,  
I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape,  
And bid me hold my peace! I pray you all  
If you have hitherto concealed this sight,  
Let it be tenable in your silence still;  
And whatsoever else shall hap to-night,  
Give it an understanding, but no tongue.  
I will requite your loves: so, fare you well:  
Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,  
I'll visit you.

*Hor.* Our duty to your honour.

*Ham.* Your loves, as mine to you:

[*Exeunt all but Hamlet.*]

My father's spirit!—in arms!—all is not well;  
I doubt some foul play: 'would the night were  
come!

Till then, sit still, my soul; foul deeds will rise.  
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's  
eyes.

SCENE III.—*An Apartment in Polonius's House.*

*Enter LAERTES and OPHELIA, R.*

*Laer.* (R.) My necessaries are embarked; fare-  
well!

And, sister, as the winds give benefit,  
Pray, let me hear from you.

*Oph.* (R.) Do you doubt that?

*Laer.* For Hamlet, and the trifling of his favor,  
Hold it a fashion, and a toy in blood;  
He may not, as unvalued persons do,  
Carve for himself; for on his choice depends  
The safety and the health of the whole state;  
Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain,  
If with too credent ears you list his songs.  
Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister;  
And keep you in the rear of your affection,  
Out of the shot and danger of desire  
The chariest\* maid is prodigal enough,  
If she unmask her beauty to the moon.

*Oph.* (R. c.) I shall the effect of this good les-  
son keep

As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother,  
Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,  
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven:  
Whilst, like a reckless libertine,  
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,  
And recks not his own rede.†

*Laer.* (C.) Oh, fear me not!

I stay too long;—But here my father comes.

*Enter POLONIUS, L.*

*Pol.* Yet here, Laertes! aboard, aboard, for  
shame!

The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,  
And you are staid for. [*Laer. kneels.*] There,  
my blessing with you!

[*Laying his hand on LAERTES' head.*]  
And these few precepts in thy memory

See thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,  
Nor unproportion'd thought his act.

Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.  
The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,  
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel;  
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment  
Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd comrade. Beware  
Of entrance to a quarrel; but, being in,  
Bear't that the opposed may beware of thee.  
Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice:  
Take each man's censure,\* but reserve thy judg-  
ment.

Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,  
But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy;  
For the apparel oft proclaims the man;  
And they in France of the best rank and station  
Are of a most select and generous chief in that.  
Neither a borrower, nor a lender be:  
For loan oft loses both itself and friend;  
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.  
This above all,—To thine ownself be true;  
And it must follow, as the night the day,  
Thou must not then be false to any man.  
Farewell; my blessing season this in thee!

*Laer.* Most humbly do I take my leave, my  
lord.

*Pol.* The time invites you; go, your servants  
tend.

*Laer.* Farewell, Ophelia; and remember well  
What I have said to you.

*Oph.* 'Tis in my memory lock'd,  
And you yourself shall keep the key of it.

*Laer.* Farewell. [*Exit Laertes.*]

*Pol.* What is't, Ophelia, he hath said to you?

*Oph.* So please you, something touching the  
lord Hamlet.

*Pol.* Marry, well bethought;  
'Tis told me he hath very oft of late,  
Given private time to you; and you yourself  
Have of your audience been most free and boun-  
teous.

If it be so (as so 'tis put on me,  
And that in way of caution), I must tell you,  
You do not understand yourself so clearly,  
As it behooves my daughter, and your honor.  
What is between you? give me up the truth.

*Oph.* He hath, my lord, of late made many  
tenders

Of his affection to me.

*Pol.* Affection! puh! you speak like a green  
girl,

Unsifted† in such perilous circumstance.

Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?

*Oph.* I do not know, my lord, what I should  
think.

*Pol.* Marry, I'll teach you: think yourself a  
baby;

That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,  
Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more  
dearly;

Or you'll tender me a fool.

*Oph.* My lord, he hath importuned me with  
love,

In honorable fashion.‡

*Pol.* Ay, fashion you may call it; go to, go to.

\* The most cautious.—STEEVENS.  
† Needs not his own lessons.—POPE.

\* Opinion.—STEEVENS. † Untried.—WARBURTON.  
‡ Manner.—JOHNSON.

*Oph.* And hath given countenance to his speech, my lord,  
With almost all the holy vows of heaven.  
*Pol.* Ay, springs to catch woodcocks. I do know,  
When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul Lends the tongue vows.  
This is for all,—  
I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth, Have you so slander any moment's leisure, As to give words or talk with the lord Hamlet. Look to't, I charge you; come your ways.  
*Oph.* I shall obey, my lord. [*Exeunt, r.*]

SCENE IV.—*The Platform.*

*Enter* HAMLET, HORATIO, and MARCELLUS.

*Ham.* The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.  
*Hor.* It is a nipping and an eager air.  
*Ham.* What hour now?  
*Hor.* I think it lacks of twelve.  
*Mar.* No, it is struck.  
*Hor.* I heard it not; it then draws near the season,  
Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.  
[*Flourish of Trumpets and Drums, and Ordnance shot off, within.*]  
What doth this mean, my lord?  
*Ham.* The king doth wake to-night, and takes his rouse;  
And as he drains his draughts of Rheinisch down\* the kettle-drum and trumpet thus Bray out the triumph of his pledge.  
*Hor.* Is it a custom?  
*Ham:* Ay, marry, is't;  
But to my mind—though I am a native here, And to the manner born—it is a custom More honored in the breach, than the observance.

*Enter* GHOST.

*Hor.* Look, my lord, it comes!  
*Ham.* Angels and ministers of grace defend us!  
Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damned,  
Bring with thee airs from heaven, or blasts from hell,  
Be thy intents wicked, or charitable,  
Thou com'st in such a questionable† shape,  
That I will speak to thee: I'll call thee Hamlet, King, father!—Royal Dane: Oh, answer me!  
Let me not burst in ignorance! but tell,  
Why thy canonized bones, hearsed in death,  
Have burst their cerements! why the sepulchre,  
Wherein we saw thee quietly in-urned,  
Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws,  
To cast thee up again! What may this mean,  
That thou, dread corpse, again, in complete steel,  
Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,  
Making night hideous; and we fools of nature,  
So horribly to shake our disposition,  
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?

\* Hamlet takes particular care that his uncle's love of drink shall not be forgotten.—JOHNSON.  
† Provoking question.—HAMMER.

Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we do?  
[*Ghost beckons.*]

*Hor.* It beckons you to go away with it, As if it some impartment did desire To you alone.

*Mar.* Look with what courteous action It waves you to a more removed\* ground; But do not go with it.

*Hor.* No, by no means.

*Ham.* It will not speak; then I will follow it.

*Hor.* Do not, my Lord,

*Ham.* Why, what should be the fear?

I do not set my life at a pin's fee;  
And, for my soul, what can it do to that,  
Being a thing immortal as itself?—  
It waves me forth again;—I'll follow it.

*Hor.* What, if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord!

Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff,  
And there assume some other horrible form,  
And draw you into madness?

*Ham.* It waves me still;

Go on, I'll follow thee.

*Mar.* You shall not go, my lord.

[*Both hold him.*]

*Ham.* Hold off your hands.

*Hor.* Be ruled, you shall not go.

*Ham.* My fate cries out,  
And makes each petty artery in this body  
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.

[*Ghost beckons.*]

Still am I called—unhand me, gentlemen;—  
By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me.†

[*Breaks away from them.*]

I say away:—Go on—I'll follow thee.

[*Exeunt Ghost and Hamlet, l.—Horatio and Marcellus slowly follow.*]

SCENE V.—*A remote part of the Platform.*

GHOST and HAMLET.

*Ham.* Whither wilt thou lead me? speak,  
I'll go no further.

*Ghost.* Mark me.

*Ham.* I will.

*Ghost.* My hour is almost come  
When I to sulph'rous and tormenting flames  
Must render up myself.

*Ham.* Alas, poor ghost!

*Ghost.* Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing  
To what I shall unfold.

*Ham.* Speak, I am bound to hear.

*Ghost.* So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

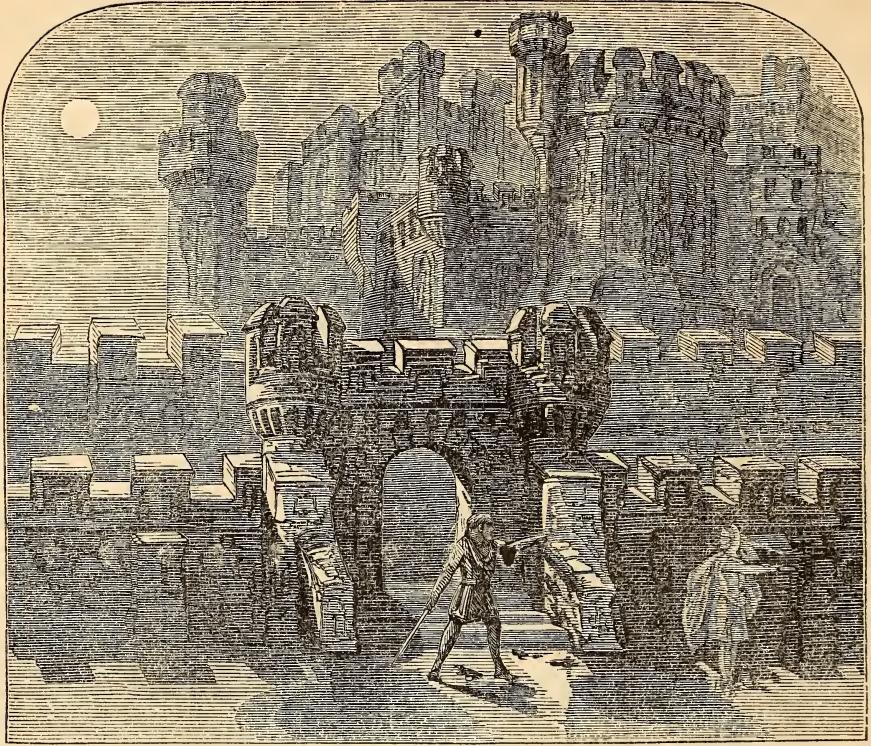
*Ham.* What?

*Ghost.* I am thy father's spirit;  
Doomed for a certain term to walk the night;  
And, for the day, confined to fast in fires,  
Till the foul crimes, done in my days of nature,  
Are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid

To tell the secrets of my prison-house,  
I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word

\* Remote.—STEVENS.

† Prevents, or hinders me.



Would harrow up thy soul; freeze thy young blood;

Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres;

Thy knotted and combined locks to part,  
And each particular hair to stand on end,  
Like quills upon the fretful porcupine:  
But this eternal blazon must not be  
To ears of flesh and blood:—List, list, Oh list!—  
If thou didst ever thy dear father love—

*Ham.* Oh, heaven!

*Ghost.* Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

*Ham.* Murder!

*Ghost.* Murder most foul, as in the best it is;  
But this most foul, strange, and unnatural.

*Ham.* Haste me to know it, that I with wings  
as swift

As meditation, or the thoughts of love,  
May sweep to my revenge.

*Ghost.* I find thee apt.—

Now Hamlet, hear;

'Tis given out, that, sleeping in my orchard,  
A serpent stung me; so the whole ear of Den-  
mark

Is, by a forged process of my death,  
Rankly abused: but know, thou noble youth,  
The serpent that did sting thy father's life,  
Now wears his crown.

*Ham.* Oh, my prophetic soul! my uncle?

*Ghost.* Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate  
beast,

With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts,  
Won to his shameful lust

The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen:  
Oh, Hamlet, what a falling off was there!

From me, whose love was of that dignity,  
That it went hand in hand, even with the vow  
I made to her in marriage; and to decline  
Upon a wretch, whose natural gifts were poor  
To those of mine!—

But, soft, methinks I scent the morning air—  
Brief let me be:—sleeping within mine orchard,

My custom always of the afternoon,  
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,

With juice of curs'd hebenon in a phial,

And in the porches of mine ears did pour

The leprous distillment: whose effect

Holds such an enmity with blood of man,  
That swift as quicksilver it courses through

The natural gates and alleys of the body;  
So it did mine.

Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand,

Of life, of crown, of queen, at once despatched!

Cut off, even in the blossoms of my sin,

Unhouse'd, † disappointed, unanel'd; ‡

No reck'ning made, but sent to my account

With all my imperfections on my head.

*Ham.* Oh, horrible! Oh, horrible! most hor-  
rible!

\* Garden.

† Without having received the sacrament.—JOHNSON.

‡ Without extreme unction.—STEEVENS.

*Ghost.* If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not ;  
Let not the royal bed of Denmark be  
A couch for luxury and damn'd incest,  
But, howsoever thou pursu'st this act,  
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive  
Against thy mother aught ; leave her to Heaven,  
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,  
To goad and sting her. Fare thee well at once !  
The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,  
And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire.—  
Adieu, adieu, adieu ! remember me. [*Exit.*]

*Ham.* Hold, hold, my heart ;  
And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,  
But bear me stiffly up ; Remember thee ?  
Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat  
In this distracted globe. Remember thee ?  
Yea, from the table of my memory  
I'll wipe away all forms, all pressures past,  
And thy commandment all alone shall live  
Within the book and volume of my brain,  
Unmixed with baser matter ; yes, by heaven,  
I have sworn it.

*Hor.* [*Within.*] My lord, my lord.—

*Mar.* [*Within.*] Lord Hamlet,—

*Hor.* [*Within.*] Heaven secure him !

*Ham.* So be it !

*Hor.* [*Within.*] Hillo, ho, ho, my lord !

*Ham.* Hillo, ho, ho, boy ! come, bird, come

*Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.*

*Mar.* How is't, my noble lord ?

*Hor.* What news, my lord ?

*Ham.* Oh, wonderful

*Hor.* Good, my lord, tell it ?

*Ham.* No ; you will reveal it.

*Hor.* Not I, my lord, by heaven.

*Ham.* How say you, then ; would heart of man  
once think it ?—

But you'll be secret ?

*Hor.* Ay, by heaven, my lord.

*Ham.* There's ne'er a villain, dwelling in all  
Denmark,

But he's an arrant knave.

*Hor.* There needs no ghost, my lord, come  
from the grave,

To tell us this.

*Ham.* Why, right ; you are in the right ;

And so without more circumstance at all,  
I hold it fit, that we shake hands and part ;  
You, as your business and desire shall point  
you ;—

For every man hath business and desire,  
Such as it is—and, for my own poor part,  
I will go pray.

*Hor.* These are but wild and whirling words,  
My lord.

*Ham.* I am sorry they offend you, heartily.

*Hor.* There's no offence, my lord.

*Ham.* Yes, by Saint Patrick,\* but there is,  
Horatio,

And much offence, too. Touching this vision  
here—

It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you  
For your desire to know what is between us,  
O'ermaster it as you may. And now, good  
friends,

As you are friends, scholars, and soldiers,  
Give me one poor request.

*Hor.* What is't, my lord ?

We will.

*Ham.* Never make known what you have seen  
to-night.

*Hor. & Mar.* My Lord, we will not.

*Ham.* Nay, but swear it.

*Hor.* Propose the oath, my lord.

*Ham.* Never to speak of this that you have  
seen ;

Swear by my sword.\*

*Ghost.* [*Beneath.*] Swear !

*Hor.* Oh, day and night, but this is wond'rous  
strange !

*Ham.* And therefore as a stranger give it wel-  
come.

There are more things in heav'n and earth. Ho-  
ratio,

Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

But come :—

Here, as before, never, so help you mercy !

How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself—

As I, perchance, hereafter shall think meet

To put an antic disposition on—

That you, at such times seeing me never shall,

With arms encumbered thus, or this head-shake,

Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,

As, " Well, well, we know ;"—or, " We could, an  
if we would. " or, " If we list to speak ;"

or, " There be, an if they might ;"

Or such ambiguous giving out, to note  
That you know aught of me :—this do ye swear,  
So grace and mercy at your most need help  
you !

*Ghost.* [*Beneath.*] Swear !  
*Ham.* Rest, rest, perturbed spirit ! So, gen-  
tlemen,

With all my love I do commend me to you :  
And what so poor a man as Hamlet is,  
May do to express his love and friending to you,  
Heaven willing shall not lack. Let us go in to-  
gether.

And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.  
The time is out of joint ;—Oh, curséd spite !  
That ever I was born to set it right ! [*Exeunt.*]

*rick*, I know not. However, at this time all the whole North-  
ern world had their learning from Ireland ; to which place  
it had retired, and there flourished under the auspices of  
this Saint. But it was, I suppose, only said at random, for  
he makes Hamlet a student of Wittenberg.—WARBURTON.

\* " By the crosse of this sword which doth represent  
unto you the crosse which our Saviour suffered his most  
payneful death upon."

*The oath taken by a Master of Defence.*

\* How the poet comes to make Hamlet swear by *St. Pat-*

## ACT II.

SCENE I. *An Apartment in Polonius's House.*

*Enter* POLONIUS, L., *and* OPHELIA, R.

*Pol.* How now, Ophelia? what's the matter?

*Oph.* Oh, my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted.

*Pol.* With what, in the name of heaven?

*Oph.* My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,  
Lord Hamlet—with his doublet all unbraced,  
No hat upon his head,<sup>3</sup>  
Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other,  
He comes before me.

*Pol.* Mad for thy love?

*Oph.* My lord, I do not know;  
But, truly, I do fear it.

*Pol.* What said he?

*Oph.* He took me by the wrist, and held me hard;

Then goes he to the length of all his arm,  
And with his other hand thus o'er his brow,  
He falls to such perusal of my face,  
As he would draw it. Long stayed he so;  
At last, a little shaking of mine arm,  
And thrice his head thus waving up and down—  
He raised a sigh so piteous and profound,  
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk,  
And end his being: that done, he lets me go;  
And, with his head over his shoulder turned,  
He seemed to find his way without his eyes;  
For out o' doors he went without their helps,  
And, to the last, bended their light on me.

*Pol.* Come, go with me; I will go seek the king.

This is the very ecstasy of love.  
What, have you given him any hard words of late?

*Oph.* No, my good lord; but, as you did command,

I did repel his letters, and denied  
His access to me.

*Pol.* That hath made him mad.

Come, go we to the king;  
This must be known; which, being kept close,  
might move

More grief to hide, than hate to utter love.\*

[*Exeunt*, L.]

SCENE II.—*The Palace.*

*The KING, QUEEN, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN,  
FRANCISCO and BERNARDO, C.*

*King.* Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern!

Moreover that we did much long to see you,  
The need we have to use you, did provoke  
Our hasty sending. Something have you heard  
Of Hamlet's transformation;  
What it should be,

More than his father's death, that thus hath put  
him

So much from the understanding of himself,  
I cannot dream of; I entreat you both,  
That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court  
Some little time; so by your companies,  
To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather,  
Whether aught, to us unknown, afflicts him thus,  
That, opened, lies within our remedy.

*Queen.* Good gentlemen, he hath much talked  
of you;

And sure I am, two men there are not living  
To whom he more adheres. If it will please you  
So to expend your time with us awhile,  
Your visitation shall receive such thanks  
As fits a king's remembrance.

*Ros.* Both your majesties

Might, by the sovereign power you have of us,  
Put your dread pleasures more into command  
Than to entreaty.

*Guild.* But we both obey;  
And here give up ourselves, in the full bent,\*  
To lay our service freely at your feet.

*King.* Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.

*Queen.* I do beseech you instantly to visit  
My too much changed son. Go, some of you,  
And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.

[*Exeunt* all but *King* and *Queen*]

*Enter* POLONIUS, C.

*Pol.* I now do think (or else this brain of mine  
Hunts not the trail of policy so sure  
As it hath used to do), that I have found  
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

*King.* Oh, speak of that; that do I long to hear.  
*Pol.* My liege and madam, to expostulate†  
What majesty should be, what duty is,  
Why day is day, night, night, and time is time,  
Were nothing but to waste night, day, and time.  
Therefore—since brevity is the soul of wit,  
And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes—

I will be brief: your noble son is mad:  
Mad call I it, for, to define true madness,  
What is't, but to be nothing else but mad?  
But let that go.

*Queen.* More matter, with less art.

*Pol.* Madam, I swear, I use no art at all.  
That he is mad, 'tis true; 'tis true, 'tis pity;  
And pity 'tis, 'tis true; a foolish figure;  
But farewell it; for I will use no art.  
Mad let us grant him, then: and now remains,  
That we find out the cause of this effect;  
Or, rather say, the cause of this defect;  
For this effect, defective, comes by cause:  
Thus it remains, and the remainder thus.  
Perpend—

I have a daughter: have, while she is mine;  
Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,

\* This must be made known to the king, for (being kept secret) the hiding of Hamlet's love might occasion more mischief to us from him and the queen, than the revealing of it would occasion hate and resentment from Hamlet—  
JOHNSON.

\* Utmost extremity of exertion—MALONE.

† To enquire, or discuss—JOHNSON.

Hath given me this: [*Shows a paper.*] now gather, and surmise.

[*Reads.*]—"To the celestial, and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia,"—That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase; beautified is a vile phrase; but you shall hear:—

[*Reads.*]—"In her excellent white bosom, these," &c.

*Queen.* Came this from Hamlet to her?

*Pol.* Good madam, stay awhile; I will be faithful:—

[*Reads.*]—"Doubt thou, the stars are fire;  
Doubt, that the sun doth move;  
Doubt truth to be a liar;  
But never doubt, I love.

"Oh, dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers; I have no art to reckon my groans; but, that I love thee best, oh, most best, believe it! Adieu.

"Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst this machine\* is to him, HAMLET."

This, in obedience, hath my daughter shown me; And more above, hath his solicitings, As they fell out by time, by means, and place, All given to mine ear.

*King.* How hath she Received his love?

*Pol.* What do you think of me?

*King.* As of a man faithful and honourable.

*Pol.* I would fain prove so. But what might you think,

When I had seen this hot love on the wing,  
(As I perceived it, I must tell you that,  
Before my daughter told me), what might you,  
Or my dear majesty, your queen here, think,  
If I had played the desk or table-book;  
Or looked upon this love with idle sight;  
What might you think? No, I went round to work.  
And my young mistress thus did I bespeak:  
Lord Hamlet is a Prince; out of thy sphere;  
This must not be: and then I precepts gave her  
That she should lock herself from his resort,  
Admit no messengers, receive no tokens;  
Which done, she took the fruits of my advice:  
And he, repulsed (a short tale to make),  
Fell into a sadness;  
Thence into a weakness;  
Thence to a lightness; and by this declension,  
Into the madness wherein now he raves,  
And all we mourn for.

*King.* Do you think 'tis this?

*Queen.* It may be, very likely.

*Pol.* Hath there been such a time (I'd fain know that),

That I have positively said, 'Tis so,  
When it proved otherwise?

*King.* Not that I know.

*Pol.* Take this from this, if this be otherwise.

[*Pointing to his head and shoulders.*

If circumstances lead me, I will find  
Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed  
Within the centre.

*King.* How may we try it further?

*Pol.* You know, sometimes he walks for hours together  
Here in the lobby.

*Queen.* So he does, indeed.

*Pol.* At such a time, I'll loose my daughter to him:

Mark the encounter: if he love her not,  
And be not from his reason fallen thereon,  
Let me be no assistant for a state,  
But keep a farm, and carters.

*King.* We will try it.

*Queen.* But, look, where sadly the poor wretch comes reading!

*Pol.* Away, I do beseech you; both away!  
I'll board him presently.

[*Exeunt King and Queen.*

*Enter HAMLET, Reading.*

How does my good Lord Hamlet?

*Ham.* Excellent well.

*Pol.* Do you know me, my Lord?

*Ham.* Excellent well: you are a fishmonger.\*

*Pol.* Not I, my Lord.

*Ham.* Then I would you were so honest a man.

*Pol.* Honest, my Lord?

*Ham.* Ay, sir! to be honest as this world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand.

*Pol.* That's very true, my lord.

*Ham.* For, if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a god, kissing carrion—Have you a daughter?

*Pol.* I have, my lord.

*Ham.* Let her not walk i' the sun: conception is a blessing; but as your daughter may conceive—friend, look to't.

*Pol.* Still harping on my daughter!—yet he knew me not at first; he said, I was a fishmonger. I'll speak to him again. [*Aside.*] What do you read, my lord!

*Ham.* Words, words, words.

*Pol.* What is the matter, my lord?

*Ham.* Between who?

*Pol.* I mean, the matter that you read, my lord?

*Ham.* Slanders, sir; for the satirical rogue† says here, that old men have grey beards; that their faces are wrinkled; their eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gum; and that they have plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams: all of which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it no honesty to have it thus set down; for yourself, sir, shall be old as I am, if, like a crab, you could go backward.

*Pol.* Though this be madness, yet there's method in't. [*Aside.*] Will you walk out of the air, my lord?

*Ham.* Into my grave?

*Pol.* Indeed, that is out o'the air. How pregnant† sometime his replies are! a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be delivered of. I will leave him, and suddenly contrive the means of

\* You are sent to fish out this secret.—COLERIDGE.

† By "the satirical rogue" he means Juvenal in his tenth satire. Nothing could be finer imagined for Hamlet in his circumstances, than the bringing him in reading a description of the evils of long life.—WARBURTON.

‡ Ready, apt.

\* "Whyle my witts be my owne."—*Letters of the Paston Family.*

meeting between him and my daughter. (c.) [Aside.]—My honourable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.

*Ham.* You cannot, sir, take from me anything that I will more willingly part withal; except my life, except my life, except my life.

*Pol.* Fare you well, my lord.

*Ham.* These tedious old fools!

*Pol.* You go to seek the Lord Hamlet, there he is.

*Ros.* Heaven save you, sir!

*Guil.* My honoured lord!

[Enter *Ros.* and *Guil.*

*Ham.* My excellent good friends! How dost thou, Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz! Good lads, how do ye both? What news?

*Ros.* None, my lord; but that the world's grown honest.

*Ham.* Then is doomsday near; but your news is not true. In the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore?

*Ros.* To visit you, my lord; no other occasion.

*Ham.* Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks! but I thank you. Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, come; deal justly with me; come; nay, speak.

*Guil.* What should we say, my Lord?

*Ham.* Anything—but to the purpose. You were sent for; and there is a kind of confession in your looks which your modesties have not craft enough to colour; I know, the good king and queen have sent for you.

*Ros.* To what end, my Lord?

*Ham.* That you must teach me. But let me conjure you, by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by what more dear a better proposer could charge you withal, be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for, or no?

*Ros.* What say you? [Aside to *Guildenstern.*

*Ham.* Nay, then, I have an eye of you.\*

[Aside.] If you love me, hold not off.

*Guil.* My lord, we were sent for.

*Ham.* I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the king and queen moult no feather. I have of late (but wherefore, I know not), lost all my mirth, foregone all custom of exercises; and, indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition, that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours.—What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form and moving, how express and admirable! in action, how like an angel! in apprehension, how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me—nor woman neither; though by your smiling, you seem to say so.

*Ros.* My lord, there was no such stuff in my thoughts.

*Ham.* (L.) Why did you laugh, then, when I said, "Man delights not me?"

*Ros.* To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what lenten\* entertainment the players shall receive from you: we coted† them on the way; and hither are they coming, to offer you service.

*Ham.* He that plays the King shall be welcome; his majesty shall have tribute of me; the adventurous knight shall use his foil and target; the lover shall not sigh gratis; the humourous man shall end his part in peace; and the lady shall say her mind freely, or the blank verse shall halt for!‡—What players are they?

*Ros.* Even those you were wont to take such delight in, the tragedians of the city.

*Ham.* How chances it they travel? Their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways. Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city? Are they so followed?

*Ros.* No, indeed, they are not.

*Ham.* It is not very strange: for my uncle is king of Denmark; and those that would make mouths at him while my father lived, give twenty, forty, fifty, an hundred ducats apiece, for his picture in little. There is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out.

*Guil.* There are the players.

*Ham.* Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore: your hands; you are welcome,—but my uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceived.

*Guil.* In what, my dear lord?

*Ham.* I am but mad north-north-west: when the wind is southerly, I know a hawk from a handsaw.§

*Pol.* [Within.] Well be with you, gentlemen!

*Ham.* Hark you, Guildenstern and Rosencrantz—that great baby you see there, is not yet out of his swaddling-clouts.

*Ros.* Happily, he's the second time come to them; for, they say, an old man is twice a child.

*Ham.* I will prophesy, he comes to tell me of the players; mark it. You say right, sir; 'o' Monday morning; 'twas then, indeed—

Enter *Polonius.*

*Pol.* My lord, I have news to tell you.

*Ham.* My lord, I have news to tell you. When *Roscius* was an actor in Rome—

*Pol.* The actors are come hither, my lord.

*Ham.* Buz, buz!

*Pol.* Upon my honour—

*Ham.* "Then come each actor on his ass"—

*Pol.* The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-

\* Sparring, like the entertainments given in Lent.—STEEVENS.

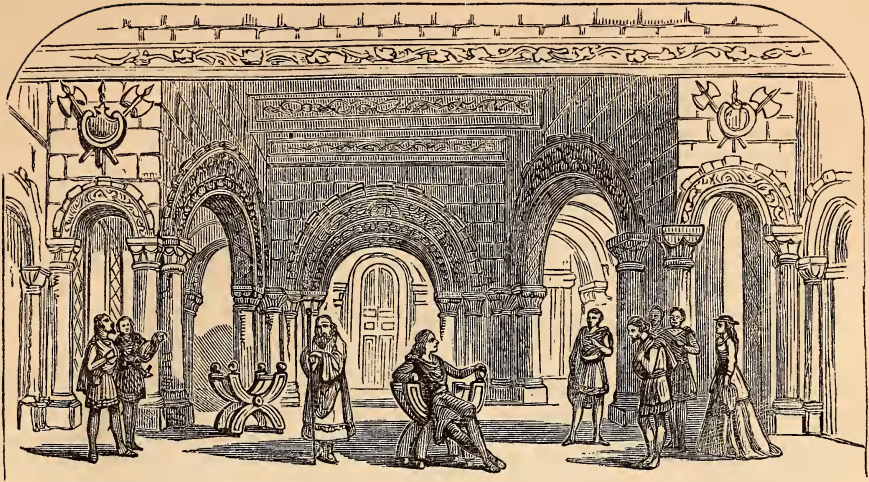
† To overtake.

‡ On account of her bad memory.

§ This was a common proverbial speech. The Oxford editor alters it to "I know a hawk from a *herness*," as if the other had been a corruption of the players; whereas the poet found the proverb thus corrupted in the mouths of the people: so that this critic's alteration only serves to show us the original of the expression.—WARBURTON.

\* I have a glimpse of your meaning.—STEEVENS.





comical, historical-pastoral, scene individable, or poem unlimited; Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light. For the law of writ, and the liberty, these are the only men.

*Ham.* "Oh, Jephthah, Judge of Israel!"—what a treasure hadst thou!

*Pol.* What a treasure had he, my lord?

*Ham.* Why—"One fair daughter, and no more.

The which he lovéd passing well."

*Pol.* Still on my daughter. [*Aside.*

*Ham.* Am I not i' the right, old Jephthah?

*Pol.* If you call me Jephthah, my lord, I have a daughter that I love passing well.

*Ham.* Nay, that follows not.

*Pol.* What follows, then, my lord?

*Ham.* Why, "As by lot, God wot"—and then, you know, "It came to pass, as most like it was"—The first row of the pious chanson will show you more; for look, my abridgment comes.

*Polonius, Guildenstern and Rosencrantz stand, r.*

*Enter ACTORS and an ACTRESS, L.\**

You are welcome, masters; welcome, all. Oh, old friend! Why, thy face is valanced since I saw thee last; Com'st thou to beard me in Denmark? What, my young lady and mistress! By'r-lady, your ladyship is nearer to heaven

than when I saw you last, by the altitude of a chopine.\* You are all welcome. We'll e'en to't like French Falconers, fly at anything we see: we'll have a speech straight: Come, give us a taste of your quality: come, a passionate speech.

[*The Actors and Actress retire up the stage, near L. U. E.*]

*1 Act.* What speech, my lord?

*Ham.* I heard thee speak me a speech once—but it was never acted; or, if it was, not above once: for the play, I remember, pleased not the million; 'twas caviare† to the general: but it was an excellent play; well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning. One speech in it I chiefly loved: 'twas *Aeneas'* tale to Dido; and thereof of it especially, where he speaks of Priam's slaughter: If it live in your memory, begin at this line: "The rugged Pyrrhus, like the Hyrcanian beast"—

'Tis not so; it begins with Pyrrhus. "The rugged Pyrrhus—he, whose sable arms, Black as his purpose, did the night resemble, Old grandsire Priam seeks."

*Pol.* Fore heaven, my lord, well spoken: with good accent, and good discretion.

*Ham.* So;—proceed you.

*1 Act.* "Anon he finds him Striking too short at Greeks; his antique sword, Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls, Repugnant to command. Unequal match'd, Pyrrhus at Priam drives, in rage, strikes wide, But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword The unnerved father falls. But as we often see, against some storm A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still, The bold winds speechless, and the orb below

\* This character should still, as in Shakespeare's time, be represented by a very young man. Hamlet's playful remarks to the "actress," particularly those usually omitted in the representation, lose their "point" when a woman is addressed. It was not until after the Reformation that females were introduced on the stage. To this great improvement, as well as for that of moving scenes, we are indebted to Sir William Davenant (who was supposed by many to be a natural son of Shakespeare). Previous to his time, all the female characters were personated by men. Stephen Hammerton, Hart, Clun, Burt, and Alex. Goffe, were among the "most noted and beautiful women actors" in the age immediately succeeding Shakespeare. Mrs. Saunderson was the first woman who appeared on an English stage; in the spring of 1662, at Lincoln's Inn Fields.

\* A high shoe, or rather a clog, worn by the Italians.—STEVENS.

† A delicacy made of the roes of fishes, not relished by the multitude.—STEVENS.

As hush as death : anon, the dreadful thunder  
Doth rend the region : So, after Pyrrhus' pause,  
Arous'd vengeance sets him new awork,  
And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall  
On Mars's armour, forged for proof eterne,  
With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword  
Now falls on Priam.—  
Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune !”

*Pol.* This is too long.

*Ham.* It shall to the barber's, with your beard.  
—Say on : come to Hecuba.

1 *Act.* “ But who, ah woe ! had seen the mobled queen ”—\*

*Hec.* The mobled queen !

*Pol.* That's good ; the mobled queen is good.

1 *Act.* “ Run barefoot up and down, threat'ning the flames ;

A clout upon that head,

Where late the diadem stood ; and, for a robe,

A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up :

Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steeped,  
'Gainst fortune's state would treason have pronounced ?”

*Pol.* Look, whether he has not turned his colour, and has tears in's eyes. Pr'ythee, no more.

*Hec.* 'Tis well : I'll have thee speak out the rest of this soon. Good, my lord, will you see the players well bestowed ? Do you hear, let them be well used ; for they are the abstract and brief chronicles of the time ; after your death you were better have a bad epitaph, than their ill report while you live.

*Pol.* My lord, I will use them according to their desert.

*Ham.* Much better. Use every man after his desert, and who shall 'scape whipping ? Use them after your own honour and dignity ; the less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty. Take them in.

*Pol.* Come, sirs. [*Exeunt Pol. and Actors.*]

*Ham.* Follow him, friends ; we'll hear a play to-morrow. Old friend,—

[*To 1st Actor.*]  
My good friends. [*To Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*]  
I'll leave you 'till night : you are welcome to Elsinore. [*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, r.*]  
Can you play the murder of Gonzago ?

1 *Act.* Ay, my lord.

*Ham.* We'll have it to-morrow night. You could, for a need, study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which I would set down, and insert in't ? could you not ?

1 *Act.* Ay, my lord.

*Ham.* Very well. Follow that lord : and look you mock him not.

Now I am alone.

Oh what a rogue and peasant slave am I !

Is it not monstrous, that this player here,

But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,

Could force his soul so to his own conceit,

That, from her working, all his visage wann'd ;  
Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,  
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting  
With forms to his conceit ? And all for nothing !  
For Hecuba !

What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,  
That he should weep for her ? What would he

do,  
Had he the motive and the cue for passion,  
That I have ? He would drown the stage with

tears,  
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech ;  
Make mad the guilty, and appal the free,  
Confound the ignorant, and amaze, indeed,  
The very faculties of eyes and ears.

Yet I,  
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,  
Like John a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,  
And can say nothing ; no, not for a king,  
Upon whose property, and most dear life,  
A damned defeat was made. Am I a coward ?  
Who calls me villain ? gives me the lie i' the

throat,  
As deep as to the lungs ? Who does me this ?

Ha !  
Why, I should take it : for it cannot be,  
But I am pigeon-livered, and lack gall  
To make oppression bitter ; or, ere this,  
I should have fatted all the region kites  
With this slave's offal : Bloody, bawdy villain !  
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless  
villain !

Why, what an ass am I ? This is most brave ;  
That I, the son of a dear father murdered,  
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,  
Must, like a bawd, unpack my heart with words,  
And fall a cursing like a very drab,

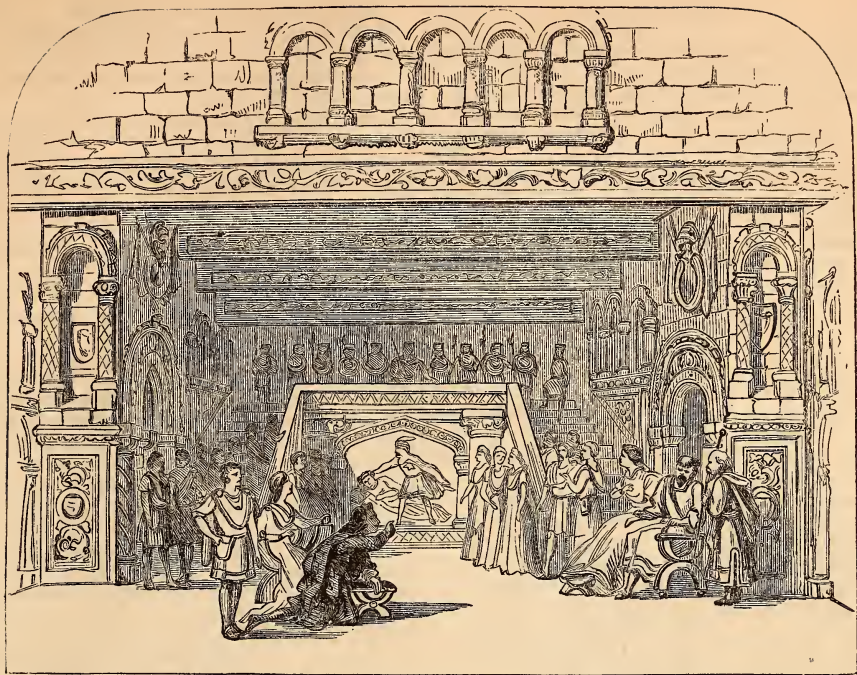
A scullion !  
Fie upon't ! foh ! About, my brains ! Humph !

I have heard  
That guilty creatures, sitting at a play,  
Have, by the very cunning of the scene,  
Been struck so to the soul, that presently  
They have proclaimed their malefactions ;  
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak  
With most miraculous organ. I'll have these

players  
Play something like the murder of my father,  
Before mine uncle ; I'll observe his looks ;  
I'll tent him to the quick ; if he do blench,  
I know my course. The spirit that I have seen,  
May be a devil : and the devil hath power  
To assume a pleasing shape : yea, and, perhaps,  
Out of my weakness, and my melancholy  
(As he is very potent with such spirits),  
Abuses me to damn me : I'll have grounds  
More relative\* than this : The play's the thing,  
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.

\* Nearly related, closely connected.—JOHNSON.

\* Huddled, grossly covered.—JOHNSON.



## ACT III.

*A Hall in the Palace. Theatre in Background.*

POLONIUS, KING, QUEEN and OPHELIA, ROSINCRAUNTZ and GUILDENSTERN, &c.

*King.* And can you, by no drift of conference, Get from him, why he puts on this confusion?

*Ros.* He does confess he feels himself distracted;

But from what cause, he will by no means speak.  
*Guild.* Nor do we find him forward to be sounded;

But with a crafty madness, keeps aloof,  
When we would bring him on to some confession

Of his true state.

*Queen.* Did you assay him  
To any pastime?

*Ros.* Madame, it so fell out, that certain players  
We o'er-raught on the way: of these we told him;

And there did seem in him a kind of joy  
To hear of it: they are about the court;  
And, as I think, they have already order  
This night to play before him.

*Pol.* 'Tis most true:

And he beseech'd me to entreat your majesties,  
To hear and see the matter.

*King.* With all my heart; and it doth much content me

To hear him so inclined.

Good gentlemen, give him a further edge,  
And drive his purpose on to these delights.

*Ros.* We shall, my lord,

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*]

*King.* Sweet Gertrude, leave us, too.

For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither;  
That he, as 'twere by accident, may here  
\*Affront Ophelia;

Her father and myself (lawful espials),  
Will so bestow ourselves, that, seeing, unseen,  
We may of their encounter frankly judge;  
And gather by him, as he is behaved,  
If 't be the affliction of his love, or no,  
That thus he suffers for.

*Queen.* I shall obey you:—

And, for your part, Ophelia, I do wish,  
That your good beauties be the happy cause  
Of Hamlet's wildness; so shall I hope, your virtues

Will bring him to his wonted ways again,  
To both your honours.

*Oph.* Madam, I wish it may. [*Exit Queen.*]

*Pol.* Ophelia, walk you here;

Read on this book;

That show of such an exercise may colour  
Your loneliness.

[*Ophelia goes up the stage, and retires.*]

I hear him coming; let's withdraw, my lord.

[*Exeunt.*]

\* Meet directly.—JOHNSON.

*Enter HAMLET.*

*Ham.* To be, or not to be, that is the question;  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind, to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune;  
Or to take up arms against a sea of troubles,  
And, by opposing, end them? (c).—to die?—to  
sleep,—

No more;—and, by a sleep, to say we end  
The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to—'tis a consummation  
Devoutly to be wished. To die:—to sleep:—  
To sleep!—perchance, to dream—Ay, there's the  
rub;

For in that sleep of death what dreams may  
come,

When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
Must give us pause: there's the respect\*  
That makes calamity of so long life:  
For who would bear the whips and scorns of  
time,

The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's con-  
tumely,

The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,  
The insolence of office, and the spurns  
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,  
When he himself might his quietus make  
With a bare bodkin?† who would fardels bear,  
To groan and sweat under a weary life;  
But that the dread of something after death—  
The undiscovered country, from whose bourn  
No traveller returns—puzzles the will,  
And makes us rather bear those ills we have,  
Than fly to others that we know not of.  
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;  
And thus the native hue of resolution  
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought;  
And enterprises of great pith and moment,  
With this regard, their currents turn awry,  
And lose the name of action.—Soft you, now!

[*Seeing Ophelia, who advances.*

The fair Ophelia:—Nymph, in thy orisons  
Be all my sins remembered?

*Oph.* Good my lord,  
How does your honour for this many a day?

*Ham.* I humbly thank you; well.

*Oph.* My lord, I have remembrances of yours,  
That I have longed long to re-deliver.  
I pray you, now receive them.

*Ham.* No, not I.

I never gave you aught.

*Oph.* My honoured lord, you know right well,  
you did;

And, with them, words of so sweet breath com-  
posed  
As made the things more rich; their perfume  
lost,

Take these again; for to the noble mind,  
Rich gifts wax poor, when givers prove unkind.  
There, my lord.

*Ham.* Ha, ha? are you honest?

*Oph.* My lord?

*Ham.* Are you fair?

*Oph.* What means your lordship?

*Ham.* That if you be honest and fair, you  
should admit no discourse to your beauty.\*

*Oph.* Could beauty, my lord, have better com-  
merce than with honesty?

*Ham.* Ay, truly, for the power of beauty will  
sooner transform honesty from what it is to a  
bawd, than the force of honesty can translate  
beauty into his likeness; this was some time a  
paradox, but now the time gives it proof. I did  
love you once.

*Oph.* Indeed, my lord, you made me believe  
so.

*Ham.* You should not have believed me; for  
virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock, but we  
shall relish of it: I loved you not.

*Oph.* I was the more deceived.

*Ham.* Get thee to a nunnery. Why would'st  
thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself in-  
different honest; but yet I could accuse me of  
such things, that it were better my mother had  
not borne me; I am very proud, revengeful, am-  
bitious; with more offences at my beck, than I  
have thoughts to put them in,† imagination to  
give them shape, or time to act them in; what  
should such fellows as I do, crawling between  
earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves, all;  
believe none of us; go thy ways to a nunnery.  
—Where's your father?

*Oph.* At home, my lord.

[*King and Pol. are seen above.*

*Ham.* Let the doors be shut upon him; that  
he may play the fool no where but in's own  
house. Farewell. [*Runs off.*

*Oph.* Oh, help him, you sweet Heavens

*Ham.* [*Runs back to her.*] If thou dost marry,  
I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry: be thou  
as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not  
escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery. Or, if  
thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool; for wise  
men know well enough what monsters you make  
of them. To a nunnery, go.

*Oph.* Heavenly powers, restore him!

*Ham.* I have heard of your paintings, too, well  
enough; Heaven hath given you one face, and  
you make yourselves another; you jig, you am-  
ble, and you lisp, and nickname heaven's crea-  
tures, and make your wantonness your ignorance.‡  
Go to; I'll no more of't; it hath made me mad.  
I say, we will have no more marriages; those  
that are married already, all but one, shall live;  
the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery,  
go. [*Exit.*

*Oph.* Oh, what a noble mind is here o'er-  
thrown!

The expectancy and rose of the fair state,  
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,  
The observed of all observers, quite, quite down!  
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,  
That sucked the honey of his music vows,  
Now see that most noble and sovereign reason,  
Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh.

\* Consideration.—MALONE.

† Unsheathed dagger.

‡ With *bodkins* was *Cæsar Julius*  
Murdered at Rome, of *Drutus Crassus*."

—STEEVENS.

\* The true reading seems to be this: "If you be honest  
and fair, you should admit your honesty to no discourse  
with your beauty."—JOHNSON.

† To put a thing into thought is to think of it.—JOHNSON.

‡ You mistake by wanton affectation, and pretend to mis-  
take by ignorance.—JOHNSON.

Oh, woe is me!  
To have seen what I have seen, see what I see!  
*Exit.*

KING and POLONIUS come from above.

*King.* Love! his affections do not that way tend.

Nor what he spake, though it lacked form a little,  
Was not like madness. (c.) There's something  
in his soul,

O'er which his melancholy sits on brood.

He shall with speed to England,

For the demand of our neglected tribute;

Haply, the seas, and countries different,

With variable objects, shall expel

This something-settled matter in his heart;

Whereon his brain's still beating, puts him thus  
From fashion of himself.—What think you on't?

*Pol.* It shall do well: but yet I do believe,

The origin and commencement of his grief,

Sprung from neglected love.

My lord, do as you please;

But, if you hold it fit, after the play,

Let his queen mother all alone entreat him

To show his grief: let her be round with him;

And I'll be placed, so please you, in the ear

Of all their conference: if she find him not,

To England send him: or confine him, where

Your wisdom best shall think.

*King.* It shall be so:

Madness in great ones must not unwatched go.

*[Exeunt.]*

• Enter the ACTOR and HAMLET.

*Ham.* Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but, if you mouth it, as many of our players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus; but use all gently; for in the very torrent, tempest, and (as I may say) whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance, that may give it smoothness. Oh, it offends me to the soul, to hear a robustious, periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags; to split the ears of the groundlings;\* who, for the most part, are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows, and noise: I would have such a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Termagant;†‡ it out-herods Herod: pray you, avoid it.‡

*1st Act.* I warrant your honour.

*Ham.* Be not too tame, neither; but let your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature: for anything so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at

the first, and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time,\* his form and pressure. Now this, over-done, or come tardy off, though it make the unskillful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of which one, must, in your allowance,‡ o'erweigh a whole theatre of others. Oh, there be players that I have seen play—and heard others praise, and that highly—not to speak it profanely, that neither having the accent of Christians, nor the gait of Christian, Pagan, or man, have so strutted, and bellowed, that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

*1st Act.* I hope we have reformed that indifferently with us.

*Ham.* Oh, reform it altogether. And let those that play your clowns, speak no more than is set down for them;‡ for there be of them, that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too; though, in the mean time, some necessary question of the play be then to be considered; that's villainous; and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it. Go, make you ready.—  
Horatio!

*[Exit Actor.]*

Enter HORATIO, R.

*Hor.* Here, sweet lord, at your service.

*Ham.* Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man  
As e'er my conversation coped withal.

*Hor.* Oh, my dear lord!—

*Ham.* Nay, do not think I flatter:

For what advancement may I hope from thee,  
That no revenue hast, but thy good spirits,  
To feed and clothe thee? Why should the poor  
be flattered?

No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp,  
And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee,  
Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou  
hear?

Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice,  
And could of men distinguish her election,  
She hath sealed thee for herself: for thou hast  
been

As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing:  
A man, that fortune's buffets and rewards  
Hast ta'en with equal thanks: and blessed are  
those

Whose blood and judgment are so well com-  
mingled§

\* It is the end of playing, says Hamlet, to show the age in which we live, and the body of the time, its form and pressure (*i. e.* its resemblance, as in a *print*): to delineate exactly the manners of the age, and the particular humour of the day.—MALONE.

† In your approbation.—MALONE.

Rather in your *estimation*.

‡ The clown very often addressed the audience, in the middle of the play, and entered into a contest of rally and sarcasm with such of the audience as chose to engage with him. It is to this absurd practice that Shakespeare alludes.—MALONE.

§ According to the doctrine of the four humors, *desire* and *confidence* were seated in the blood, and *judgment* in the phlegm, and the due mixture of the humors made a perfect character.—JONSON.

\* Ben Jonson mentions the *groundlings* (the meaner people who then sat below) with equal contempt.  
"The *understanding* gentlemen of the ground here."  
—MALONE.

Fleury, in THE FRENCH STAGE, says, that seats were not introduced into the "pit" until near the close of the eighteenth century.

† Termagant was a Saracen deity, very clamorous and violent, in the old moralities.—PERCY.

‡ Herod, in the ancient mysteries, was always a violent character.—STEEVENS.

That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger  
To sound what stop she please; give me that  
man

That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him  
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,  
As I do thee. Something too much of this.—  
There is a play to-night before the king;  
One scene of it comes near the circumstance,  
Which I have told thee of my father's death.  
I pr'ythee, when thou see'st that act a-foot,  
Even with the very comment of thy soul  
Observe my uncle; if his occulted guilt  
Do not itself unkennel in one speech,  
It is a damn'd ghost that we have seen;  
And my imaginations are as foul  
As Vulcan's stithy; give him heedful note:  
For I mine eyes will rivet to his face;  
And, after, we will both our judgments join  
In censure of his seeming. *Music.*

*Hor.* Well, my lord.

*Ham.* They are coming to the play; I must be  
idle. Get you a place. [*Ex. Hor.*]

*Enter* POLONIUS, KING, QUEEN, OPHELIA, ROSEN-  
CRANTZ, GULDENSTERN, MARCELLUS, BERNARDO,  
FRANCISCO, *Lords and Ladies.*

*King.* [*Seated.*] How fares our cousin Hamlet?

*Ham.* Excellent, 'faith; of the camelion's dish;  
I eat the air, promise-crammed; you cannot feed  
capons so.

*King.* I have nothing with this answer, Ham-  
let; these words are not mine.

*Ham.* No, nor mine now.\* My lord, you played  
once in the university, you say? [*To Polonius.*]

*Pol.* That did I, my lord; and was accounted  
a good actor.

*Ham.* And what did you enact?

*Pol.* I did enact Julius Cæsar: I was killed  
'the capitol: Brutus killed me.

*Ham.* It was a brute part of him to kill so cap-  
ital a calf there. Be the players ready?

*Ros.* Ay, my lord; they stay upon your pa-  
tience.

*Queen.* Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by  
me.

*Ham.* No, good mother, here's metal more at-  
tractive.

*Pol.* Oh, ho! do you mark that?

[*Aside to the King.*]

*Ham.* Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

[*Lying down at Ophelia's feet.*]

*Oph.* [*Seated.*] You are merry, my lord.

*Ham.* Oh! you only jig-maker. † What should  
a man do, but be merry? for, look you, how  
cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died  
within these two hours.

[*Polonius goes and stands at the back of the State  
Chairs, L.; Horatio stands R.*]

\* A man's words, says the proverb, are his own no longer  
than he keeps them unspoken.—JOHNSON.

† To lie at the feet of a mistress during any dramatic rep-  
resentation, seems to have been a common act of gallantry.  
As the *Queen of Corinth*, by Beaumont and Fletcher:  
"Ushers her to her couch, lies at her feet at solemn  
*masques*, applauding what she laughs at."

‡ A jig, in Shakespeare's time, signified a ludicrous met-  
rical composition as well as a dance.—JOHNSON.

*Oph.* Nay, tis quite two months, my lord  
*Ham.* So long! Nay then, let the devil wear  
black, for I'll have a suit of sables.\* Die two  
months ago, and not forgotten yet? Then there's  
hope a great man's memory may outlive his life  
half a year: but by'r-lady, he must build churches,  
then. †

*Oph.* What means the play, my lord:

*Ham.* Miching mallecho; it means mischief;

*Oph.* But what is the argument of the play?

*Enter* SECOND ACTOR as the *Prologuz*, on a raised  
*Stage.*

*Ham.* We shall know by this fellow.

*2d Act.* "For us, and for our tragedy,  
Here stooping to your clemency,  
We beg your hearing patiently."  
[*Exit.*]

*Ham.* Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring?

*Oph.* 'Tis brief, my lord.

*Ham.* As woman's love.

*Enter* FIRST ACTOR and the ACTRESS, as a *Duke  
and Duchess*; on the raised stage.

*1st Act.* "Full thirty times hath Phœbus' cart  
gone round,

Since love our hearts, and Hymen did our hands  
Unite commutual in most sacred bands."

*Actress.* "So many journeys may the sun and  
moon

Make us again count o'er, ere love be done!  
But, we is me; you are so sick of late,  
So far from cheer, and from your former state,  
That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,  
Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must;  
For women fear too much, even as they love.  
Now, what my love is, proof hath made you  
know.

And as my love is fixed, my fear is so.  
Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear.  
Where little fears grow great, great love grows  
there."

*1st Act.* "Faith, I must leave thee, love, and  
shortly, too;

My operant powers their functions leave to do:  
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,  
Honoured, beloved,—and, haply, one as kind  
For husband shalt thou"—

*Actress.* "Oh, confound the rest!

Such love must needs be treason in my breast:  
In second husband let me be accurst!  
None wed the second but who killed the first."

*Ham.* Wormwood; wormwood. [*Aside.*]

*1st Act.* "I do believe you think what now you  
speak;

But what we do determine, oft we break.  
So think thou wilt no second husband wed,  
But die thy thoughts, when thy first lord is  
dead."

*Actress.* "Nor earth to me give food, nor  
heaven light,

\* A suit trimmed with sables was in Shakespeare's time,  
the richest dress worn by men in *England*. Wherever his  
scene might happen to be, the customs of his own country  
were still in his thoughts.—MALONE.

† Such benefactors to society were sure to be recorded by  
means of the feast-day on which the patron saints and found-  
ers of churches were commemorated in every parish.—TEB-  
VESS.

Sport and repose lock from me, day and night,  
Both here, and hence, pursue me, lasting strife,  
If once a widow, ever I be a wife!"

[Embraces him.]

1st Act. "'Tis deeply sworn."  
Ham. If she should break it now—

1st Act. "Sweet leave me here awhile;  
My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile  
The tedious day with sleep."

[Crosses to the seat—sleeps.]

Actress. "Sleep rock thy brain;  
And never come mischance between us twain."

[Exit.]

Ham. Madam, how like you this play?

Queen. The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

Ham. Oh, but she'll keep her word.

King. Have you heard the argument? Is there no offence in't?

Ham. No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest;  
no offence i' the world.

King. What do you call the play?

Ham. The mouse-trap.\* Marry, how? Tropically.† This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna: Gonzago is the duke's name; his wife, Baptista. You shall see anon; 'tis a knavish piece of work: but what of that? your majesty, and we that have free souls, it touches us not; let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung.

Enter THIRD ACTOR as LUCIANUS.

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the duke.

Oph. You are as good as a chorus, my lord.

Ham. I could interpret between you and your love, if I could see the puppets dallying. Begin, murderer—leave thy damnable faces, and begin. Come:—

. . . . . The croaking raven  
Doth bellow for revenge.

3d Act. "Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit,  
and time agreeing;

Confederate season, else no creature seeing;  
Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,  
With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,  
Thy natural magic, and dire property,  
On wholesome life usurp immediately."

[Pours the poison into the sleeper's ear.]

Ham. He poisons him i' the garden for his estate. His name's Gonzago; the story is extant, and written in very choice Italian; you shall see anon, how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

King. [Jumping up.] Give me some light:—  
away!

Pol. Lights, lights, lights!

[Exeunt all but Hamlet and Horatio, severally.]

Ham. "Why, let the stricken deer go weep,

The hart ungalld play;

For some must watch, while some must sleep;

Thus runs the world away."

Oh, good Horatio, I'll take the Ghost's word for a thousand pound. Didst perceive?

Hor. Very well, my lord.

Ham. Upon the talk of the poisoning—

Hor. I did very well note him.

Ham. Ah, ha!—Come, some music; come, the recorders.

[Exit Horatio.]

Enter GUILDENSTERN and ROSENCRANTZ.

Guil. Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

Ham. Sir, a whole history.

Guil. The king, sir—

Ham. Ay, sir, what of him?

Guil. Is in his retirement, marvelous distempered.

Ham. With drink, sir?

Guil. No, my lord, with choler.

Ham. Your wisdom should show itself more richer, to signify this to the doctor; for, for me to put him to his purgation, would perhaps, plunge him into more choler.

Guil. Good, my lord, put your discourse into some frame, and start not so wildly from my affair.

Ham. I am tame, sir: pronounce.

Guil. The queen, your mother, in most great affliction of spirit, has sent me to you.

Ham. You are welcome.

Guil. Nay, good my lord, this courtesy is not of the right breed. If it shall please you to make me a wholesome answer. I will do your mother's commandment; if not, your pardon, and my return shall be the end of my business.

Ham. Sir, I cannot.

Guil. What, my lord?

Ham. Make you a wholesome answer; my wit's diseased: but, sir, such answer as I can make, you shall command; or, rather, as you say, my mother: therefore, no more, but to the matter: my mother, you say—

Ros. Then, thus she says: your behaviour hath struck her into amazement and admiration.

Ham. Oh wonderful son, that can so astonish a mother! But is there no sequel at the heels of this mother's admiration? impart.

Ros. She desires to speak with you, in her closet, ere you go to bed.

Ham. We shall obey, were she ten times our mother. Have you any further trade with us?

Ros. My lord, you once did love me.

Ham. And do still, by these pickers and stealers.\*

Ros. Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper? You do surely bar the door upon your own liberty, if you deny your griefs to your friend.

Ham. Sir, I lack advancement.

Ros. How can that be, when you have the voice of the king himself for your succession in Denmark?

Ham. Ay, sir; but, while the grass grows—The proverb is something musty.†

Enter HORATIO and two musicians with Recorders.

\* Because it is—

"—the thing  
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King."  
† Figuratively.

\* Alluding to the *Church Catechism*: "To keep my hands from picking and stealing."—MALONE.

† "While grass doth growe, oft starves the silly steed."—MALONE.

*Ham.* Oh! the recorders, let me see one.—  
[*Takes one.*]—To withdraw with you:—

[*Exeunt, Horatio and Musicians.*

Why do you go about to recover the wind of me,  
as if you would drive me into a toil?

*Guil.* Oh! my lord, if my duty be too bold,  
my love is too unmannerly.\*

*Ham.* I do not well understand that. Will  
you play upon this pipe?

*Guil.* My lord, I cannot.

*Ham.* I pray you.

*Guil.* Believe me, I cannot.

*Ham.* I do beseech you.

*Ros.* I know no touch of it, my lord.

*Ham.* 'Tis as easy as lying: govern these ven-  
tages with your fingers and thumb, give it breath  
with your mouth, and it will discourse most elo-  
quent music. Look you, these are the stops.

*Guil.* But these cannot I command to any utter-  
ance of harmony; I have not the skill.

*Ham.* Why, look you now, how unworthy a  
thing you make of me! You would play upon  
me; you would seem to know my stops; you  
would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you  
would sound me from my lowest note to the top  
of my compass: and there is much music, excel-  
lent voice, in this little organ; yet cannot you  
make it speak. 'Sdeath, do you think I am easier  
to be played on than a pipe? Call me what in-  
strument you will, though you may fret me, you  
cannot play upon me.

*Enter POLONIUS, L.*

*Pol.* My lord, the Queen would speak with  
you, and presently.

*Ham.* Do you see yonder cloud, that's almost  
in shape of a camel?

*Pol.* By the mass, and 'tis like a camel, indeed.

*Ham.* Methinks it is like a weasel.

*Pol.* It is backed like a weasel.†

*Ham.* Or, like a whale?

*Pol.* Very like a whale.

*Ham.* Then I will come to my mother by-and-  
bye.—They fool me to the top of my bent.‡ I  
will come by-and-bye.

*Pol.* I will say so. [*Exit Polonius.*

*Ham.* By-and-bye is easily said.

Leave me, friends. [*Exeunt Rosencrantz & Guild.*

'Tis now the very witching time of night;

When churchyards yawn, and hell itself breathes  
out

Contagion to this world. Now could I drink hot  
blood,

And do such bitter business as the day

Would quake to look on. Soft—now to my  
mother.

Oh! heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever

The soul of Nero enter this ill bosom:

Let me be cruel—not unnatural—  
I will speak daggers to her, but use none.

[*Exit, L.*

SCENE II.—*The King's Closet.*

*Enter the KING, ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*

*King.* (c.) I like him not: nor stands it safe  
with us,  
To let his madness range. Therefore, prepare  
you:

I your commission will forthwith dispatch,  
And he to England shall along with you:  
Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage;  
For we will fetters put upon this fear,  
Which now goes too free-footed.

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*

*Enter POLONIUS.*

*Pol.* My lord, he's going to his mother's closet:  
Behind the arras\* I'll convey myself,  
To hear the process; I'll warrant she'll tax him  
home;

And, as you said, and wisely was it said,  
'Tis meet that some more audience, than a mo-  
ther,

Since nature makes them partial, should o'erhear  
The speech of vantage. Fare you well, my  
liege;

I'll call upon you e'er you go to bed,

And tell you what I know.

*King.* Thanks, dear my lord.

[*Exit Polonius, L.*

O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven;

It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,

A brother's murder!—Pray, can I not,

Though inclination be as sharp as will;

My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent;

And, like a man to double business bound,

I stand in pause where I shall first begin,

And both neglect. What if this cursed hand

Were thicker than itself with brother's blood?

Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens,

To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves  
mercy,

But to confront the visage of offence?

And what's in prayer, but this two-fold force,—

To be forestalled, ere we come to fall,

Or pardon'd, being down? Then I'll look up;

My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer

Can serve my turn? Forgive me my foul mur-  
der!—

That cannot be; since I am still possess'd

Of those effects for which I did the murder,

My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.

May one be pardon'd, and retain the offence?

In the corrupted currents of this world,

Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice;

\* If my duty to the king makes me press you a little, my love to you makes me still more importunate. If that makes me bold, this makes me unmannerly.—WARBURTON.

† Perhaps we should read—"beck'd like a weasel," *i. e.*, weasel-snouted. Hollinshed uses "weasel-becked," and Quarles, in his *Virgin Widow*, "weasel-snouted."—SREEVENS.

‡ They compel me to play the fool 'till I can endure it no longer.—JOHNSON.

\* The arras hangings were hung at such a distance from the walls, that a person might easily stand behind them unperceived. The principal witness against the *Countess of Exeter*, who was unjustly charged, in the year 1616, with a design to poison *Lady Lake* and *Lady Rosse*, was Sarah Wharton, a chambermaid, who swore that she stood behind the hangings at the entrance of the great chamber at Wimbleton, and heard the Countess confess her guilt.—MALONE.



And oft 'tis seen, the wicked prize itself  
 Buys out the law: But 'tis not so above:  
 There is no shuffling, there the action lies  
 In his true nature; and we ourselves compell'd,  
 Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,  
 To give in evidence. What then? what rests?  
 Try what repentance can: What can it not?  
 Yet what can it,\* when one cannot repent?  
 O wretched state! O bosom, black as death!  
 O limed soul, that struggling to be free,  
 Art more engag'd! Help, angels, make assay!  
 Bow, stubborn knees! and, heart, with strings of  
 steel,  
 Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe:  
 All may be well! [*Retires and kneels.*]

*Enter HAMLET.*

*Ham.* Now might I do it, pat, now he is praying;  
 And now I'll do't:—and so he goes to heaven:  
 And so am I reveng'd? That would be scann'd:†  
 A villain kills my father; and, for that,  
 I, his sole son, do this same villain send  
 To heaven.  
 O, this is hire and salary, not revenge.  
 He took my father grossly, full of bread;‡  
 With all his crimes broad blown, as fresh as May;  
 And, how his audit stands, who knows, save  
 heaven?  
 But, in our circumstance and course of thought,  
 'Tis heavy with him: And am I then reveng'd,  
 To take him in the purging of his soul,  
 When he is fit and season'd for his passage?  
 No.  
 Up, sword; and know thou a more horrid hent:  
 When he is drunk, asleep, or in his rage;  
 At gaming, swearing; or about some act  
 That has no relish of salvation in't:  
 Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven;  
 And that his soul may be as damn'd, and black,  
 As hell, whereto it goes.§ My mother stays:  
 This physic but prolongs thy sickly days. [*Exit.*]

*The KING rises and advances.*

*King.* My words fly up, my thoughts remain  
 below:  
 Words, without thoughts, never to heaven go. [*Exit.*]

SCENE III.—*Queen's Closet.*

*Enter QUEEN and POLONIUS.*

*Pol.* He will come straight. Look, you lay  
 home to him:  
 Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear  
 with:

\* What can repentance do for a man that cannot be penitent? for a man that has only a part of penitence, distress of conscience, without the other part, resolution of amendment.—JOHNSON.

† Considered.—STEEVENS.

‡ This expression is borrowed from the sacred writings, Ezekiel xvi. 49.—STEEVENS.

§ This horrid thought was adopted by many writers of the time.

And that your grace hath screen'd and stood  
 between  
 Much heat and him. I'll silence me e'en here,  
 Pray you, be round with him.  
*Queen.* I'll warrant you,  
 Fear me not:—withdraw, I hear him coming.  
 [*POLONIUS hides himself.*]

*Enter HAMLET.*

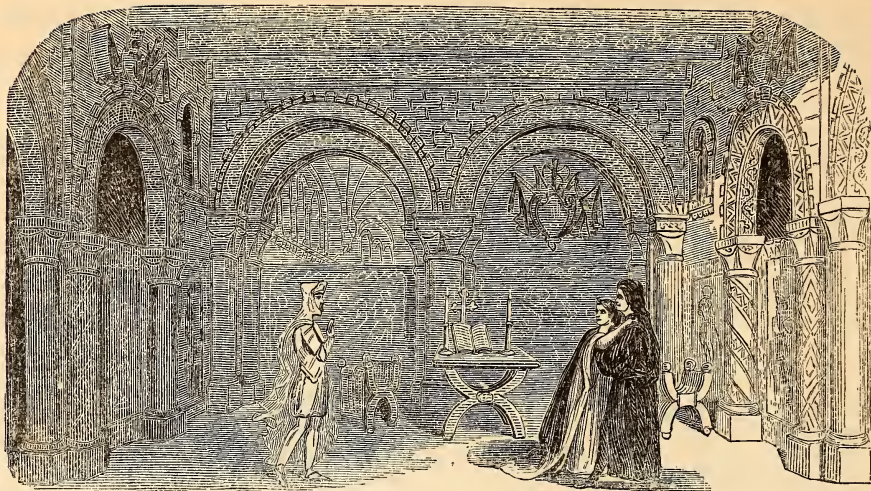
*Ham.* Now, mother, what's the matter?  
*Queen.* Hamlet, thou hast thy father much  
 offended.  
*Ham.* Mother, you have my father much of-  
 fended.  
*Queen.* Come, come, you answer with an idle  
 tongue.  
*Ham.* Go, go, you question with a wicked  
 tongue.  
*Queen.* Why, how now, Hamlet?  
*Ham.* What's the matter now?  
*Queen.* Have you forgot me?  
*Ham.* No, by the rood, not so;  
 You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife;  
 And—'would it were not so!—you are my mother.  
*Queen.* Nay, then, I'll set those to you that  
 can speak.  
*Ham.* Come, come, and sit you down; you  
 shall not budge;  
 You go not, till I set you up a glass  
 Where you may see the inmost part of you.  
*Queen.* What wilt thou do? Thou wilt not  
 murder me?  
 Help, help, ho!  
*Pol.* [*Behind.*] What, ho! help!  
*Ham.* How now, a rat?  
 Dead, for a ducat, dead!  
 [*Makes a pass through the arras.*]  
*Pol.* [*Behind.*] Oh! Oh! Oh! [*Falls and dies.*]  
*Queen.* Oh, me! what hast thou done?  
*Ham.* Nay, I know not—  
 Is it the king?  
*Queen.* Oh, what a rash and bloody deed is  
 this!  
*Ham.* A bloody deed; almost as bad, good  
 mother,  
 As kill a king, and marry with his brother.  
*Queen.* As kill a king?  
*Ham.* Ay, lady, 'twas my word.  
 [*Takes a candle, lifts up the arras, and  
 sees Polonius.*]

Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!  
 I took thee for thy better. [*To the Queen.*]  
 Leave wringing of your hands—peace—sit you  
 down,  
 And let me wring your heart: for so I shall,  
 If it be made of penetrable stuff;  
 If damn'd custom have not brazed it so,  
 That it be proof and bulwark against sense.  
*Queen.* What have I done that thou dar'st wag  
 thy tongue

In noise so rude against me?

*Ham.* Such an act,

That blurs the blush and grace of modesty;  
 Calls virtue, hypocrite: takes off the rose  
 From the fair forehead of an innocent love,  
 And sets a blister there; makes marriage vows  
 As false as dicers' oaths. Oh! such a deed,



As from the body of contraction\* plucks  
The very soul; and sweet religion makes  
A rhapsody of words—  
Heaven's face doth glow;  
Yea, this solidity and compound mass,  
With tristful visage, as against the doom,  
Is thought sick at the act.

*Queen.* Ah, me! what act?

*Ham.* Look here, upon this picture, and on this;  
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.  
See, what a grace was seated on this brow—  
Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself:  
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;  
A station like the herald Mercury,  
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;  
A combination, and a form, indeed,  
Where every god did seem to set his seal,  
To give the world assurance of a man:—  
This was your husband.—Look you now, what  
follows:

Here is your husband, like a mildew'd ear,  
Blasting his wholesome brother.† Have you eyes?  
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,  
And batten‡ on this moor? Ha! have you eyes?  
You cannot call it love: for, at your age,  
The heyday in the blood is tame, it's humble,  
And waits upon the judgment—and what judg-  
ment

Would step from this to this?  
Oh, shame! where is thy blush? Rebellious hell,  
If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,  
To flaming youth left virtue be as wax,  
And melt in her own fire.

*Queen.* Oh, Hamlet, speak no more;  
Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul;  
And there I see such black and grain'd§ spots,  
As will not leave their tinct.

*Ham.* Nay, but to live  
In the rank sweat of an enseam'd bed—

\* Marriage contract.—WARBURTON.

† This alludes to Pharaoh's dream in the 41st chapter of  
Genesis.—STEEVENS.

‡ To grow fat.

§ Dyed in grain.

*Queen.* No more, sweet Hamlet.

*Ham.* A murderer, and a villain;  
A slave that is not twentieth part the tythe  
Of your precedent lord—a vice\* of kings;  
A cutpurse of the empire and the rule,  
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole.†

*Enter GHOST.*

A king of shreds and patches‡—  
Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,  
You heavenly guards! what would your gracious  
figure?

*Queen.* Alas! he's mad.

*Ham.* Do you not come your tardy son to  
chide,  
That, lapsed in time and passion,§ lets go by  
The important acting of your dread command?  
Oh, say!

*Ghost.* Do not forget—this visitation  
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.  
But, look, amazement on thy mother sits:  
Oh, step between her and her fighting soul.  
Speak to her, Hamlet.

*Ham.* How is it with you, lady?

*Queen.* Alas! how is't with you?  
That you do bend your eye on vacancy,  
And with the incorporal air do hold discourse?  
Oh, gentle son,  
Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper  
Sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look?

*Ham.* On him! on him!—Look you, how pale  
he glares!  
His form and cause conjoined, preaching to  
stones,

† A low mimic of kings. The vice is the fool of a farce  
from whom the modern Punch is descended.—JOHNSON.

‡ He came not to the crown by any glorious villainy that  
carried danger with it, but by the low, cowardly theft of a  
common pilferer.—WARBURTON.

§ The vice was dressed as a fool, in a coat of parti-col-  
oured patches.—JOHNSON.

¶ Having suffered time to slip and passion to cool.—  
JOHNSON.

Would make them capable. Do not look upon me;

Lest, with this piteous action, you convert My stern effects; then what I have to do, Will warrant true colour; tears, perchance, for blood.

*Queen.* To whom do you speak this?

*Ham.* Do you see nothing there?

*Queen.* Nothing at all; yet all, that is, I see.

*Ham.* Nor did you nothing hear?

*Queen.* No, nothing but ourselves.

*Ham.* Why, look you there! Look how it steals away!

My father, in his habit as he lived!

Look where he goes, even now, out at the portal!

[*Exit Ghost.*]

*Queen.* This is the very coinage of your brain. This bodiless creation, ecstasy

Is very cunning in.

*Ham.* Ecstasy!

My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time, And makes as healthful music; it is not madness That I have uttered: bring me to the test,

And I the matter will re-word; which madness Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace, Lay not that flattering unction to your soul, That not your trespass, but my madness, speaks; It will but skin and film the ulcerous place; Whiles rank corruption, mining all within, Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven; Repent what's past;—avoid what is to come.

*Queen.* Oh, Hamlet! thou hast cleft my heart in twain.

*Ham.* Oh! throw away the worse part of it, And live the purer with the other half.

Good night; but go not to my uncle's bed;

Assume a virtue, if you have it not.

Once more, good night!

And when you are desirous to be blessed,

I'll blessing beg of you.—For this same lord,

I do repent:

I will bestow him, and will answer well

The death I gave him. So, again, good night!—

[*Exit Queen.*]

I must be cruel, only to be kind:

Thus bad begins, and worse remains behind.

END OF ACT III.

## ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*An apartment in the Palace.*

*Enter KING.*

*King.* How dangerous is it, that this man goes loose!

Yet must not we put the strong law on him;

He's loved of the distracted multitude,

Who like not in their judgment, but their eyes;

And, where 'tis so, the offender's scourge is weighed

But never the offence.

*Enter ROSENCRANTZ, R.*

How now? what hath befallen?

*Ros.* Where the dead body is bestowed, my lord, We cannot get from him.

*King.* But where is he?

*Ros.* Without, my lord, guarded, to know your pleasure.

*King.* Bring him before us.

*Ros.* Ho, Guildenstern! bring in my lord.

*Enter GUILDENSTERN and HAMLET with guards.*

*King.* Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

*Ham.* At supper.

*King.* At supper? where?

*Ham.* Not where he eats, but where he is eaten, a certain convocation of politic worms are e'en at him.

*King.* Where is Polonius?

*Ham.* In heaven; send thither to seek; if your messenger find him not there, seek him in the other place yourself.—But, indeed, if you find him not within the month you shall nose him as you go up stairs into the lobby.

*King.* Go seek him there.

*Ham.* He will stay till you come.

[*Exit Guildenstern.*]

*King.* Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety,

Must send thee hence;

Therefore prepare thyself:—

The bark is ready, and the wind at help,

For England.

*Ham.* For England?

*King.* Ay, Hamlet.

*Ham.* Good.

*King.* So is it, if thou knewest our purposes.

*Ham.* I see a cherub, that sees them.—But, come; for England!—Farewell, dear mother.

*King.* Thy loving father, Hamlet.

*Ham.* My mother:—Father and mother is man and wife; man and wife is one flesh and so, my mother. Come, for England. [*Exit.*]

*King.* Follow him at foot, tempt him with speed aboard:

Away; for everything is sealed and done—

[*Exit Rosencrantz.*]

And England, if my love thou holdest at aught, Let it be testified by Hamlet's death. [*Exit.*]

*Enter the QUEEN and HORATIO, L.*

*Queen.* I will not speak with her.

*Hor.* She is importunate; indeed, distract:

'Twere good she were spoken with; for she may strew

Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds.

*Queen.* Let her come in. [*Exit Horatio.*]

*Oph.* [*Without.*] Where is the beautiful majesty of Denmark?

*Queen.* How now, Ophelia?

Re-enter HORATIO, with OPHELIA.\*

Oph. [Sings.] How should I your true love  
From another one? [know  
By his cockle hat and staff, †  
And his sandal shoes.

Queen. Alas, sweet lady, what imports this  
song?

Oph. Say you? nay, pray you, mark.  
[Sings.] He is dead and gone, lady,  
He is dead and gone;  
At his head a grass-green turf,  
At his heels, a stone.

Enter the KING, L., and stands, L. C.

Queen. Nay, but, Ophelia—

Oph. Pray you mark.  
[Sings.] White his shroud as the mountain snow,  
Larded all with sweet flowers,  
Which bewept to the grave did go,  
With true-love showers.

[Crosses to the King.

King. How do you, pretty lady?

Oph. Well, heaven 'ield you! ‡ They say, the  
owl was a baker's daughter, § We know what  
we are, but know not what we may be.

King. Conceit upon her father.

Oph. Pray, let's have no words of this; but  
when they ask you what it means, say this—

[Sings.] Good morrow, 'tis Saint Valentine's  
day,

All in the morning betime,  
And I a maid at your window,  
To be your Valentine.

King. Pretty Ophelia!

Oph. Indeed, without an oath, I'll make an  
end on't.

[Sings.] Then up he rose, and donned his clothes,  
And dugged the chamber door;  
Let in the maid, that out a maid,  
Never departed more.

King. How long hath she been thus?

Oph. I hope all will be well. We must be pa-  
tient; but I cannot choose but weep, to think  
that they should lay him i'the cold ground; my  
brother shall know of it, and so I thank you for  
your good counsel. Come, my coach. Good

\* There is no part in this play, in its representation on the stage, more pathetic than this scene; which, I suppose, proceeds from the utter insensibility Ophelia has to her own misfortunes. A great sensibility, or none at all, seems to produce the same effect. In the latter the audience supply what she wants, and with the former they sympathize.—SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

† This is a description of a pilgrim.—WARBURTON.

‡ Heaven reward you! In *Antony and Cleopatra*:

“And the Gods yield you for't.”

§ This is a common story among the vulgar in Gloucester, and is thus related:

“Our Saviour went into a baker's shop when they were baking, and asked for some bread to eat. The mistress of the shop immediately put a piece of dough into the oven to bake for him, but was reprimanded by her daughter, who, insisting that the dough was too large, reduced it to a very small size. The dough, however, immediately after began to swell, and presently became of a most enormous size. Whereupon the baker's daughter cried out, ‘hough, hough,’ which owl-like noise probably induced our Saviour, for her wickedness, to transform her into that bird.”

This story is often related to children, in order to deter them from such illiberal behaviour to poor people.—DOUCE.

night, ladies! good night, sweet ladies; good night, good night. [Exit.

King. Follow her close: give her good watch,  
I pray you. [Exit Horatio.

Oh! this is the poison of deep grief; it springs  
All from her father's death.

[Noise of arms without.

Enter MARCELLUS, C.

What's the matter?

Mar. Save yourself, my lord!  
The young Laertes, in a riotous head,  
O'erbears your officers; the rabble call him,  
lord;

They cry, “Choose we; Laertes shall be king!”  
Caps, hands, and tongues applaud it to the clouds,  
“Laertes shall be king! Laertes king!”

[Noise without, C.

Laer. [Without, C.] Where is this king?—Sir,  
stand you all without.

Enter LAERTES, C.

Oh, thou vile king!—

Give me my father. [Exit Marcellus.

Queen. Calmly, good Laertes.

Laer. That drop of blood that's calm, proclaims  
me bastard;

Cries cuckold, to my father; brands the harlot  
Even here, between the chaste, unsmirched\* brow  
Of my true mother.

King. What is the cause, Laertes,  
That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?—  
Let him go, Gertrude; do not fear our person;  
There's such divinity doth hedge a king,  
That treason can but peep to what it would.

Let him go, Gertrude.

Laer. Where's my father?

King. Dead.

Queen. But not by him.

King. Let him demand his fill.

Laer. How came he dead? I'll not be jug-  
gled with;

To hell, allegiance!

To this point I stand,—

That both the world I give to negligence,  
Let come what come; only I'll be revenged  
Most thruly for my father.

King. Who shall stay you?

Laer. My will, not all the world's:  
And for my means, I'll husband them so well,  
They shall go far with little.

King. Good, Laertes,  
That I am guiltless of your father's death,  
And am most sensibly in grief for it,  
It shall as level to your judgment 'pear,  
As day does to your eye.

Hor. [Without.] Oh, poor Ophelia!

King. Let her come in.

Enter OPHELIA, fantastically bedecked with long  
Wheat, Straws, and Flowers.

\* Clean, not defiled. This seems to be an allusion to a proverb often introduced in the old comedies.

“As true as the skin between any man's brows.”—STEEVENS.

*Laer.* Oh, rose of May—

Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!  
Oh, heavens! is it possible, a young maid's wits  
Should be as mortal as an old man's life?

*Oph.* [*Sings.*]

They bore him barefaced on the bier;  
And in his grave rained many a tear:—

Fare you well, my dove!

*Laer.* Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade  
revenge,

It could not move thus.

*Oph.* You must sing: [*Sings.*]

Down a-down, an' you call him a-down-a.

Oh, how the wheel becomes it!\* It is the false  
steward, that stole his master's daughter.

*Laer.* This nothing's more than matter.

*Oph.* [*To Laertes.*] There's rosemary,† that's  
for remembrance; pray you, love, remember; and  
there's pansies, that's for thoughts.

*Laer.* A document in madness; thoughts and  
remembrance fitted.

*Oph.* There's fennel for you, and columbines.

[*To the King, R. C.*] There's rue for you, [*To the Queen.*]  
and here's some for me:—we may call it herb  
of grace o'Sundays—you may wear your rue  
with difference.—There's a daisy; I would  
give you some violets, but they withered all  
when my father died.—They say he made a good  
end—[*Sings.*]—“For my bonny sweet Robin is  
all my joy.”

*Laer.* Thought and affliction, passion, hell it-  
self,

She turns to favour and to prettiness.

*Oph.* [*Sings.—Kneeling.*]

And will he not come again?

And will he not come again?

No, no, he is dead,

Go to thy death-bed,

He will never come again.

[*Rises.*]—His beard was as white as snow,

All flaxen was his poll:

He is gone, he is gone,

And we cast away moan;

And peace be with his soul!

And with all Christian souls! I pray heaven.

[*Exeunt Ophelia and Queen.*]

*King.* Laertes, I must commune with your  
grief,

Or you deny me right. Go but apart,

Make choice of whom your wisest friends you  
will,

And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and  
me:

If by direct, or by collateral hand

They find us touched, we will our kingdom give,

Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours,

To you in satisfaction; but, if not,

Be you content to lend your patience to us,

And we shall jointly labor with your soul,

To give it due content.

*Laer.* Let this be so;

His means of death, his obscure funeral,—  
No trophy, sword or hatchment, o'er his bones,  
No noble right, nor formal ostentation—  
Cry to be heard, as 'twere, from heaven to earth,  
That I must call't in question.

*King.* So you shall;

And where the offence is, let the great axe fall.

*Enter BERNARDO.*

*Ber.* Letters, my lord, from Hamlet:

This to your majesty; this to the Queen.

*King.* From Hamlet! Who brought them?

*Ber.* Sailors, my lord, they say; I saw them  
not.

*King.* Laertes, you shall hear them.

Leave us. [*To Bernardo, who exits.*]

[*Reads.*] “High and mighty, you shall know, I  
am set naked on your kingdom. To-morrow shall  
I beg leave to see your kingly eyes: when I  
shall, first asking your pardon thereunto, recount  
the occasion of my sudden and more strange re-  
turn.”

“HAMLET.”

What should this mean? Are all the rest come  
back?

Or is it some abuse, and no such thing?

*Laer.* Know you the hand?

*King.* 'Tis Hamlet's character.—“Naked”—

And, in a postscript here, he says, “alone.”  
Can you advise me?

*Laer.* I am lost in it, my lord. But let him  
come;

It warms the very sickness in my heart,  
That I shall live and tell him to his teeth,  
“Thus diddest thou.”

*King.* If it be so, Laertes,

Will you be ruled by me?

*Laer.* Ay, my lord;

So you will o'er-rule me to a peace.

*King.* To thine own peace. If he be now re-  
turned—

As checking at his voyage, and that he means

No more to undertake it—I will work him

To an exploit, now ripe in my device,

Under the which he shall not choose but fall:

And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe;

But even his mother shall uncharge the practice,  
And call it accident.

*Laer.* My lord, I will be ruled;

The rather, if you could devise it so,

That I might be the organ.

*King.* It falls right.

You have been talked of since your travel much,

And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality

Wherein, they say, you shine.

*Laer.* What part is that, my lord?

*King.* A very riband in the cap of youth.

Here was a gentleman of Normandy—

He made confession of you;

And gave you such a masterly report

For art and exercise in your defence,

And for your rapier most especial,

That he cried out, 'twould be a sight indeed,

If one could match you:

This report of his,

Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy,

That he could nothing do, but wish and beg

\* Johnson thinks the lady stolen by the steward, was, per-  
haps, reduced to spin.

† The *Song* we had last night:

The *spinsters* and the knitters in the sun,

Do use to *chant* it.”—TWELFTH NIGHT.

† Rosemary was anciently supposed to strengthen the  
memory. It was not only carried at funerals, but worn at  
weddings as an emblem of fidelity in lovers.—STEEVENS.

Your sudden coming o'er, to play with you.  
Now, out of this—

*Laer.* What out of this, my lord?

*King.* Laertes, was your father dear to you?  
Or, are you like the painting of a sorrow,  
A face without a heart?

*Laer.* Why ask you this?

*King.* Hamlet comes back. what would you  
undertake,  
To show yourself in deed your father's son,  
More than in words?

*Laer.* To cut his throat i'th' church.

*King.* No place, indeed, should murder sanctuarize.

Hamlet, returned, shall know you are come home;  
We'll put on those shall praise your excellence,  
And set a double varnish on the fame  
The Frenchman gave you; bring you, in fine,  
together

And wager o'er your heads: he, being remiss,  
Most generous, and free from all contriving,  
Will not peruse the foils; so, that with ease,  
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose  
A sword unbated,\* and, in a pass of practice,  
Requite him for your father.

*Laer.* I will do't:

And, for the purpose, I'll anoint my sword.  
I bought an unction of a mountebank,  
So mortal, that, but dip a knife in it,  
Where it draws blood, no cataplasm so rare,  
Collected from all simples that have virtue  
Under the moon, can save the thing from death,  
That is but scratched withal: I'll touch my point

\* Not blunted as foils are, by a button fixed to the end,  
In *Love's Labor's Lost*:

"——— hate his scythe's keen edge."

MALONE.

With this contagion; that if I gall him slightly,  
It may be death.

*King.* Let's further think of this;  
We'll make a solemn wager on your cunning.  
When in your motion you are hot and dry,  
(As make your bouts more violent to that end),  
And that he calls for drink, I'll have preferred  
him

A chalice for the nonce; whereon but sipping,  
If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,\*  
Our purpose may hold there. But stay, what  
noise?

*Enter the QUEEN.*

*Queen.* One woe doth tread upon another's heel,  
So fast they follow:—your sister's drowned, Laertes.

*Laer.* Drowned! Oh, where?

*Queen.* There is a willow grows ascaunt the  
brook

That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream:  
Therewith fantastic garlands did she make  
Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples;

There on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds  
Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke;  
When down her weedy trophies, and herself,  
Fell in the weeping brook.

*Laer.* I forbid my tears:—but yet  
It is our trick; nature her custom holds,  
Let shame say what it will:—  
Adieu, my lord!

I have a speech of fire, that fain would blaze,  
But that this folly drowns it.

[*Exeunt Laertes, King and Queen.*]

\* A term of the fencing-school, meaning a thrust. *Stoc-cota—a thrust.*—FLORIO'S IT. DICTIONARY.

END OF ACT IV

## ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Church-Yard.*

*Two GRAVE-DIGGERS.*

*1st Grave.* Is she to be buried in christian burial, that willfully seeks her own salvation?

*2d Grave.* I tell thee, she is; therefore, make her grave straight; the crowner hath set on her, and finds it christian burial?

*1st Grave.* How can that be, unless she drowned herself in her own defence?

*2d Grave.* Why, 'tis found so.

*1st Grave.* It must be *se offendendo*; it cannot be else. For here lies the point: if I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act; and an act hath three branches: it is, to act, and to perform. Argal, she drowned herself wittingly.

*2d Grave.* Nay, but hear you, goodman delver.

*1st Grave.* Give me leave. Here lies the water; good: here stands the man; good. If the man go to the water, and drown himself, it is,

will he, nill he, he goes: mark you that: but, if the water come to him, and drown him, he drowns not himself. Argal, he that is not guilty of his own death, shortens not his own life.

*2d Grave.* But is this law?

*1st Grave.* Ay, marry is't, crowner's-quest law.

*2d Grave.* Will you ha' the truth on't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out of christian burial.

*1st Grave.* Why, there thou say'st; and the more pity, that great folks should have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves, more than their even Christian.\* Come, my spade. There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers; they hold up Adam's profession.

*2d Grave.* Was he a gentleman?

*1st Grave.* He was the first that ever bore arms.

\* An old English expression for fellow-christian.



I'll put a question to thee: if thou answerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself—

*2d Grave.* Go to.

*1st Grave.* What is he, that builds stronger than either the mason, shipwright, or the carpenter?

*2d Grave.* The gallows-maker; for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.

*1st Grave.* I like thy wit well, in good faith; the gallows does well. But how does it well? it does well to those that do ill: now thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the church. Argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To't again: come.

*2d Grave.* Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?

*1st Grave.* Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.

*2d Grave.* Marry, now I can tell.

*1st Grave.* To't.

*2d Grave.* Mass, I cannot tell.

*1st Grave.* Cudgel thy brains no more about it; for your dull ass will not mend his pace with beating; and, when you are asked this question next, say, a grave-maker; the houses that he makes last till doomsday. Go, get thee to, Yaughan, and fetch me a stoup of liquor.

*(Exit 2d Grave-digger, l.—1st Grave-digger sings while digging.)*

In youth, when I did love, did love,\*

Methought it was very sweet,

\* The three stanzas, sung here by the grave-digger, are from a little poem by Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, who was beheaded in Henry VIIIth's reign, on a strained accusation of treason.—THEOBALD.

To contract, oh, the time, for, ah, my behove,  
Oh, methought there was nothing meet!

*Enter HAMLET and HORATIO, and stand behind the grave, c.*

*Ham.* Has this fellow no feeling of his business? he sings at grave-making.

*Hor.* (r. c.) Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.

*Ham.* (r. c.) 'Tis even so: the hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.

*[Grave-digger sings.]*

But age, with his stealing steps,  
Hath clawed me in his clutch,  
And hath shipped me into the land,  
As if I had never been such.

*[Throws up a skull.]*

*Ham.* That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once. How the knave jowls it to the ground, as if it were Cain's jaw-bone, that did the first murder! This might be the pate of a politician, which this ass now o'er-reaches; one that would circumvent heaven; might it not?

*[The grave-digger throws up bones.]*

*Hor.* It might, my lord.

*Ham.* Did these bones cost no more the breeding, but to play at loggats\* with them? Mine ache to think on't.

\* This is a game played in several parts of England, even to this time. It is one of the unlawful games enumerated

[*Grave-digger sings.*

A pick-axe and a spade, a spade,  
For—and a shrouding sheet:  
Oh, a pit of clay for to be made  
For such a guest is meet.

[*Throws up another skull.*

*Ham.* There's another. Why may not that be the skull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddits now, his quillits, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? Why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery? I will speak to this fellow? Whose grave's this, sirrah?

*1st Grave.* Mine, sir.

[*Sings.*] Oh, a pit of clay for to be made  
For such a guest is meet.

*Ham.* I think it be thine, indeed; for thou liest in it.

*1st Grave.* [*Digging.*] You lie out on't, sir, and therefore it is not yours; for my part, I do not lie in it, yet it is mine.

*Ham.* Thou dost lie in't, to be in't, and say it is thine; 'tis for the dead, not for the quick; therefore thou liest.

*1st Grave.* 'Tis a quick lie, sir; 'twill away again from me to you.

*Ham.* What man dost thou dig it for?

*1st Grave.* For no man, sir.

*Ham.* What woman, then?

*1st Grave.* For none, neither.

*Ham.* Who is to be buried in't?

*1st Grave.* One that was a woman, sir; but, rest her soul! she's dead.

*Ham.* How absolute the knave is! We must speak by the card,\* or equivocation will undo us. How long hast thou been a grave-maker?

*1st Grave.* Of all the days i'the year, I came to't that day that our last king Hamlet overcame Fortinbras.

*Ham.* How long is that since?

*1st Grave.* Cannot you tell that? Every fool can tell that; it was that very day that young Hamlet was born; he that is mad, and sent into England.

*Ham.* Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?

*1st Grave.* Why, because he was mad. He shall recover his wits there; or, if he do not, 'tis no great matter there.

*Ham.* Why?

*1st Grave.* 'Twill not be seen in him there; there the men are as mad as he.

*Ham.* How came he mad?

*1st Grave.* Very strangely, they say.

*Ham.* How strangely?

*1st Grave.* 'Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

*Ham.* Upon what ground?

*1st Grave.* Why, here in Denmark. I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years.

*Ham.* How long will a man lie i'the earth ere he rot?

*1st Grave.* 'Faith, if he be not rotten before he die, he will last some eight year, or nine year: a tanner will last you a nine year.

*Ham.* Why he more than another?

*1st Grave.* Why, sir, his hide is so tanned with his trade, that he will keep out water a great while; and your water is a sore decayer of your whorson dead body. Here's a skull, now, hath lain you i'the earth three-and-twenty years.

*Ham.* Whose was it?

*1st Grave.* A whorson mad fellow's it was. Whose do you think it was?

*Ham.* Nay, I know not.

*1st Grave.* A pestilence on him for a mad rogue? He poured a flagon of Rhenish on my head once! This same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the king's jester.

[*Gives skull up to Hamlet.*

*Ham.* This?

*1st Grave.* E'en that.

*Ham.* Alas! poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio; a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy. He hath borne me on his back a thousand times. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table in a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning? quite chap-fallen? Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour must she come: make her laugh at that.—Pr'ythee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

*Hor.* What's that, my lord?

*Ham.* Dost thou think that Alexander looked o'this fashion i'the earth?

*Hor.* E'en so.

*Ham.* And smelt so? pah!

[*Lays down the skull.*

*Hor.* E'en so, my lord.

*Ham.* To what base uses may we return, Horatio! Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till he find it stopping a bung-hole?

*Hor.* 'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.

*Ham.* No, 'faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither with modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it; As thus, Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returned to dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam: and why of that loam, whereto he was converted, might they not stop a beer-barrel?

Imperious Caesar, dead and turned to clay,  
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away:  
Oh, that the earth, which kept the world in awe,  
Should patch a wall, t'expel the winter's flaw!

[*Bell tolls. Music.*

But soft! but soft! aside:—here comes the king,  
The queen, the courtiers. Who is this they follow?

And with such maim'd rites! This doth betoken,

The course they follow did, with desperate hand,

In the statute of 33 of Henry VIII. I have seen it played in different counties at their sheep-shearing feasts, where the winner was entitled to a black fleece, which he afterward presented to the farmer's maid, on condition that she knelt down to be kissed by all the rustics present. A stake is fixed into the ground those who play *loggats* at it, and he that is nearest the stake wins.—STEVENS.

\* The card is the paper on which the different points of the compass were described. To do anything by the card, is to do it with nice observation.—JONSON.



Foredo its own life. 'Twas of some estate :  
Couch we awhile, and mark.

[Retires with Horatio. Bell tolls.]

Enter KING, QUEEN, LAERTES, Lords, Ladies,  
Priests, &c., from chapel, attending the corpse  
of OPHELIA, L. U. E., and attendants.

Laer. What ceremony else ?

Ham. That is Laertes,

A very noble youth.

[Aside to Horatio.]

Priest. Her obsequies have been as far enlarged

As we have warranty. Her death was doubtful,  
And, but that great command o'ersways the order,

She should in ground unsanctified have lodged  
Till the last trumpet; for charitable prayers,  
Shards, flints, and pebbles, should be thrown on her;

Yet here she is allowed her virgin crants,  
Her maiden strewments, and the bringing home  
Of bell and burial.

Laer. Must there no more be done ?

Priest. No more be done ?

We should profane the service of the dead,  
To sing a requiem, and such rest to her,  
As to peace-parted souls.

Laer. Lay her i' the earth;—

And from her fair and unpolluted flesh,  
May violets spring!—I tell thee, churlish Priest,  
A ministring angel shall my sister be,  
When thou liest howling.

Ham. What, the fair Ophelia!

Queen. Sweets to the sweet: farewell!

[Takes a basket from a Lady, and scatters flowers.]

I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's  
wife;

I thought thy bride-bed to have decked sweet  
maid,

And not have strewed thy grave.

Laer. Oh, treble woe,

Fall ten times treble on that curséd head,  
Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense  
Deprived thee of!—Hold off the earth awhile,  
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms:

[Leaps into the grave.]

Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,  
To o'ertop old Pelion, or the skyish head  
Of blue Olympus.

Ham. [Advancing.] What is he whose grief  
Bears such an emphasis! Whose phrase of sor-  
row

Conjures the wand'ring stars, and makes them  
stand

Like wonder-wounded hearers? This is I,  
Hamlet, the Dane.

Laer. The devil take thy soul!

[Leaping out of the grave, and grappling with him.]

Ham. Thou prayest not well.

I pr'ythee, take thy fingers from my throat;  
For though I am not splenetic and rash,  
Yet have I in me something dangerous,  
Which let thy wisdom fear. Hold off thy hand!

King. Pluck them asunder.

Ham. Why, I will fight with him upon this  
theme,

Until my eyelids no longer wag.

Queen. Oh, my son! what theme?

Ham. I loved Ophelia; forty thousand bro-  
thers

Could not, with all their quantity of love,  
Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her?

Queen. Oh, he is mad, Laertes.

Ham. Come, show me what thou'lt do:

Woul't weep? woul't fight? woul't fast? woul't  
tear thyself?

I'll do it. Dost thou come here but to whine?

To outface me with leaping in her grave?

Be buried quick with her, and so will I:

And, if thou prate of mountains, let them throw  
Millions of acres on us; till our ground,  
Singing his pate against the burning zone,  
Make Ossa like a wart! Nay, and thou'lt mouth,  
I'll rant as well as thou.

Queen. This is mere madness;

And thus awhile the fit will work on him;

Anon, as patient as the female dove,

When that her golden couplets are disclosed,

His silence will sit drooping.

Ham. Hear you, sir;

What is the reason that you use me thus?

I loved you ever: but it is no matter:

Let Hercules himself do what he may,

The cat will mew, and dog will have his day.

[Exit.]

King. I pray thee, good Horatio, wait upon  
him.

[Exit Horatio.]

Strengthen your patience in our last night's  
speech;

[To Laertes.]

We'll put the matter to the present push.

Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.

This grave shall have a living monument.

SCENE II.—A Hall in the Palace.

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO.

Ham. But I am very sorry, good Horatio,

That to Laertes I forgot myself;

For, by the image of my cause, I see

The portraiture of his.

Hor. Peace. Who comes here?

Enter OSRICK.

Osrick. Your lordship is right welcome back to  
Denmark.

Ham. I humbly thank you, sir. Dost know  
this water-fly

Hor. No, my good lord.

Ham. Thy state is more gracious: for 'tis a  
vice to know him.

Osrick. Sweet lord, if your lordship were at  
leisure, I should impart a thing to you, from his  
majesty.

Ham. I will receive it, sir, with all diligence  
of spirit.—Your bonnet to its right use; 'tis for  
the head.

Osrick. I thank your lordship, 'tis very hot.

Ham. No, believe me, 'tis very cold, the wind  
is northerly.

*Osrick.* It is indifferent cold; my lord, indeed.

*Ham.* But yet, methinks, it is very sultry and hot; or my complexion—

*Osrick.* Exceedingly, my lord; it is very sultry—as 'twere—I cannot tell how.—My lord, his majesty bade me signify to you, that he has laid a great wager on your head; sir, this is the matter—

*Ham.* I beseech you, remember—

*[Signs to him to put on his hat.]*

*Osrick.* Nay, good my lord; for my ease, in good faith—Sir, here is newly come to court, Laertes; believe me, an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent difference, of soft society, and great showing; indeed, to speak feelingly of him, he is the card or calendar of gentry; for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see.

*Ham.* What imports the nomination of this gentleman?

*Osrick.* Of Laertes?

*Ham.* Of him, sir.

*Osrick.* You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is—

*Ham.* I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with him in excellence;\* but, to know a man well, were to know himself.

*Osrick.* I mean, for his weapon.

*Ham.* What is his weapon?

*Osrick.* Rapier and dagger.

*Ham.* That's two of his weapons:—But, well—

*Osrick.* The king, sir, hath wagered with him, six Barbary horses: against the which he hath impawned, as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hangers, and so: Three of the carriages, in faith, are very dear to fancy, very responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages, and of very liberal conceit.

*Ham.* What call you the carriages?

*Osrick.* The carriages, sir, are the hangers.

*Ham.* The phrase would be more german to the matter, if we could carry a cannon by our sides.

*Osrick.* The king, sir, hath laid, that in a dozen passes between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you three hits: and it would come to immediate trial, if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer.

*Ham.* How, if I answer, no?

*Osrick.* I mean, my lord, the opposition of your person in trial.

*Ham.* Sir, it is the breathing time of day with me: let the foils be brought; the gentleman willing, and the king hold his purpose, I will win for him, if I can; if not, I will gain nothing but my shame, and the odd hits.

*Osrick.* Shall I deliver you so?

*Ham.* To this effect, sir; after what flourish your nature will.

*Osrick.* I commend my duty to your lordship.

*[Exit.]*

*Hor.* You will lose this wager, my lord.

*Ham.* I do not think so; since he went into France, I have been in continual practice; I shall

win at the odds. But thou wouldst not think, how ill all's here about my heart; but it is no matter.

*Hor.* Nay, good my lord—

*Ham.* It is but toolery; but it is such a kind of gain-giving, as would, perhaps, trouble a woman.

*Hor.* If your mind dislike anything, obey it: I will forestall their repair hither, and say you are not fit.

*Ham.* Not a whit, we defy augury; there is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come; the readiness is all. Let be. *[Exit.]*

SCENE III.—*The Court of Denmark.*

KING and QUEEN, seated; LAERTES, OSRICK, MARCELLUS, BERNARDO, FRANCISCO, Lords and Ladies Discovers.—*Flourish of Trumpets.*

*Enter HAMLET and HORATIO.*

*King.* Come, Hamlet, and take this hand from me.

*Ham.* Give me your pardon, sir; I've done you wrong. *[To Laertes.]*

But pardon it, as you're a gentleman, Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil, Free me so far in your most generous thoughts: That I have shot my arrow o'er the house, And hurt my brother.

*Laer.* I am satisfied in nature, Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most To my revenge:—

I do receive your offered love like love, And will not wrong it.

*Ham.* I embrace it freely; And will this brother's wager frankly play. Give us the foils.

*Laer.* Come, one for me.

*Ham.* I'll be your foil, Laertes; in mine ignorance,

Your skill shall, like a star i'the darkest night, Stick fiery off indeed.

*Laer.* You mock me, sir.

*Ham.* No, by this hand.

*King.* Give them the foils, young Osrick. Cousin Hamlet,

You know the wager?

*Ham.* Very well, my lord;

Your grace hath laid the odds o'the weaker side.

*King.* I do not fear it; I have seen you both:— But since he's bettered, we have therefore odds.

*Laer.* This is too heavy; let me see another.

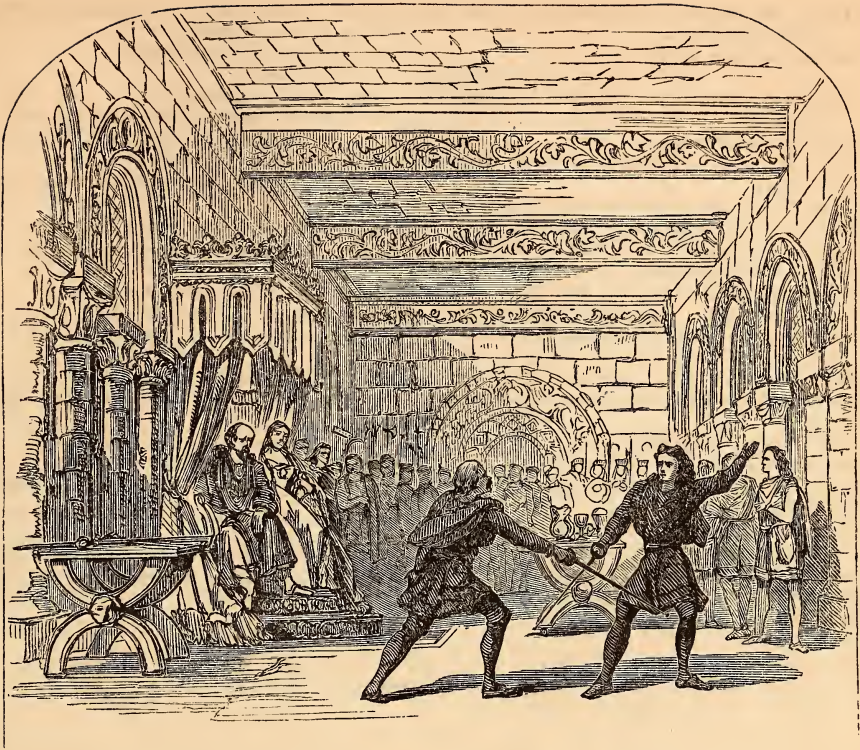
*Ham.* This likes me well—these foils have all a length?

*Osrick.* Ay, my good lord.

*King.* If Hamlet give the first or second hit, Or quit in answer of the third exchange, Let all the battlements their ordnance fire; The king shall drink to Hamlet's better breath, And in the cup an union\* shall be thrown,

\* I dare not pretend to know him, lest I should pretend to an equality; no one can completely know another but by knowing himself, which is the utmost extent of human wisdom.—JOHNSON.

\* An union is the finest sort of pearl, and has its place in all crowns and coronets.—THEOBALD.



Richer than that which four successive kings  
In Denmark's crown have worn.—Give me the  
cups ; [To Francisco.

And let the kettle to the trumpet speak—  
The trumpet to the cannoneer without—  
The cannons to the heavens—the heavens to  
earth—

Now the king drinks to Hamlet. [Drinks.  
[Drums and trumpets sound—Cannons within.

Come, begin ,  
And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

Ham. Come on, sir.

Laer. Come, my lord. [They play.

Ham. One.

Laer. No.

Ham. Judgment.

Osrick. A hit, a very palpable hit.

Laer. Well—again—

King. Stay, give me drink.—Hamlet, this pearl  
is thine ; [Pretends to drink.

[Drums and trumpets sound—Cannons shot off  
within.

Give him the cup.

Ham. I'll play this bout first ; set it by awhile.  
Come—[They play]—another hit?—What say  
you ?

Laer. A touch, a touch, I do confess.

King. Our son shall win.

Queen. The Queen carouses to thy fortune,  
Hamlet.

[The Queen drinks, and returns the cup to Francisco.

Ham. Good madam—

King. [Aside to the Queen.] Gertrude, do not  
drink.

Queen. I have, my lord. I pray you, pardon me.

King. It is the poisoned cup—it is too late.

[Turning aside from the Queen.

Laer. I'll hit him now ;

And yet it is almost against my conscience.

Ham. Come, for the third, Laertes.—You do  
but dally. [Aside.

I pray you, pass with your best violence ;

I am afeard you make a wanton\* of me.

Laer. Say you so :—Come on. [They play.—  
Laertes wounds Hamlet ; and, while strug-  
gling, they exchange rapiers.

King. Part them : they are incensed.

[The Queen swoons.

Ham. Nay, come again.

[Hamlet wounds Laertes.

Osrick. Look to the Queen there, ho !

Hor. How is't, my lord ?

Osrick. How is't Laertes ?

Laer. Why, as a woodcock to my own springe,  
Osrick ; I am justly killed with mine own treach-  
ery.

Ham. How does the Queen ?

King. She swoons to see them bleed.

\* A man feeble and effeminate.—JOHNSON.

“ He dalled with my point, and when I thrust,  
He frown'd and smil'd, and foil'd me like a fencer.”—LEW.

*Queen.* No, no, the drink, the drink.—Oh, my dear Hamlet!—  
The drink.—I am poisoned.

[*She is led off.*]

*Ham.* Oh, villainy!—Ho! let the door be locked.—

Treachery! seek it out.

*Laer.* It is here, Hamlet.—Hamlet, thou art slain;

No medicine in the world can do thee good;  
In thee there is not half an hour's life;  
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,  
Unbated, and envenomed: the foul practice  
Hath turned itself on me; lo, here I lie,  
Never to rise again; thy mother's poisoned;—  
I can no more: the king, the king's to blame.

*Ham.* The point

Envenomed, too! Then, venom, to thy work!  
Here, thou incestuous, murd'rous, damnéd Dane,  
Follow my mother. [*Kills the King.*]

*Laer.* He is justly served.

Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet:  
Mine and my father's death come not upon thee;  
Nor thine on me! [*Dies.*]

*Ham.* Heaven make thee free of it! I follow thee.

You that look pale and tremble at this chance  
That are but mutes or audience to this act,  
Had I but time (as this fell sergeant, death,

Is strict in his arrest), Oh, I could tell you—  
But let it be.—Horatio,

Report me and my cause aright  
To the unsatisfied.

*Hor.* Never, believe it;

I am more an antique Roman than a Dane.

Here's yet some liquor left. [*Takes the cup.*]

*Ham.* As thou art a man—

Give me the cup—let go—by heaven, I'll have it.  
[*Throws away the cup.*]

Oh, good Horatio, what a wounded name,  
Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind  
me!

If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,  
Absent thee from felicity awhile,  
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,  
To tell my story.—

Oh! I die, Horatio!

The potent poison quite o'ercrows\* my spirit—  
The rest is silence. [*Dies.*]

*Hor.* Now cracks a noble heart:—

Good night, sweet prince,  
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!

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\* Hollinshed, in his *History of Ireland*, says: "These noblemen labored with tooth and nail to overcrow, and consequently to overthrow one another." It alludes, I suppose, to a victorious cock exulting over his conquered antagonist.  
—STEVENS.

# APPENDIX.

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## THE REPRESENTATIVES OF HAMLET.

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THE first representative of Hamlet on the stage was Taylor, who performed the part under the direction of Shakespeare himself. There is, unfortunately, no account extant of the excellencies or defects of his performance, but from its having been played under the eye and instruction of its great creator, we may, without much stretch of imagination, indulge the belief that it approached perfection. And this pleasant fancy is confirmed by the fact that Sir William Davenant, who saw Taylor play, was enabled, from the mere remembrance of his performance, to give Betterton a lesson which has gained for him a universal and lasting reputation in the part. Betterton was the first representative of Hamlet of whose performance we have any account. And he has, generally, down to these latter days, been regarded as "*facile princeps*" among the many claimants for the crown. Of the excitement which attended his appearance after the restoration, at the Duke of York's Theatre, it may not be uninteresting, at this particular moment, to offer to the visitors of the Winter Garden the following pleasant picture from Doran's Annals of the Stage:

"On a December night in 1661, there is a crowded house at the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields. The play is Hamlet, with young Mr. Betterton, who has been two years on the stage, in the part of the Dane. Old ladies and gentlemen repairing in capacious coaches to this representation remind one another of the lumbering and crushing of carriages about the old play-house in the Blackfriars. The Jehus contend for place with the eagerness of ancient Britons in a battle of chariots. At length they get in, and the audience are safely housed and eager. Indifferent enough, however, they are during the opening scenes. The fine gentlemen laugh loudly and comb their periwigs in the best rooms. The fops stand erect in the boxes, to show how folly looks in clean linen, and the orange nymphs, with their costly entertainment of fruit from Seville, giggle and chatter as they stand on the benches below, with young and old admirers, proud of being recognized in the boxes. The whole Court of Denmark is before them, but it is not until the words 'tis not my inky cloak, good mother,' is the general ear charmed, or the general tongue arrested. Then, indeed, the vainest fops and pertest orange-girls look round and listen, too. The voice is so low, and sad, and sweet, the modulation so tender, the dignity so natural, the grace so consummate, that all yield themselves silently to the delicious enchantment. 'It's beyond imagination,' whispers Mr. Pepys to his neighbor, who only answers by a low and long-drawn '*hush*.' I can never look on Kneller's masterly portrait of this great player without envying the good fortunes of those who saw the original, especially in Hamlet. How grand the head, how lofty the brow, what eloquence and fire in the eyes, how firm the mouth, how manly the sum of all! How is the whole audience subdued almost to tears at the mingled love and awe which he displays in presence of the spirit of his father! And now, as Hamlet's first soliloquy closes, and the charmed but silent audience feel music's pulse in all their arteries, Mr. Pepys almost too loudly exclaims in his ecstasy: 'It's the best-acted part ever done by man.' And the audience think so, too! There is a hurricane of applause, after which the fine gentlemen renew their prattle with the fine ladies, and the orange-girls beset the Sir Foplings, and this universal trifling is felt as a relief after the general emotion."

The following is Colley Cibber's account of Betterton's enacting of the part :

"You may have seen a Hamlet, perhaps, who, on the first appearance of his father's spirit, has thrown himself into all the straining vociferation requisite to express rage and fury, and the house

has thundered with applause, though the misguided actor was all the while tearing a passion into rags. I am the more bold to offer you this instance, because the late Mr. Addison, while I sat by him to see this scene acted, made the same observation, asking me, with some surprise, if I thought Hamlet should be in so violent a passion with the ghost, which, though it might have astonished, had not provoked him? *Betterton* opened the scene with a pause of mute amazement; then rising slowly to a solemn trembling voice, *he made the ghost equally terrible to the spectator as to himself*; and in the descriptive part of the natural emotions which the ghastly vision gave him, the boldness of his expostulation was still governed by decency, manly, but not braving, his voice never rising into that seeming outrage or wild defiance of what he naturally revered. But alas! to preserve this medium between mouthing and meaning too little, to keep the attention more pleasingly awake by a tempered spirit than by mere vehemence of voice, is of all the master-strokes of an actor the most difficult to reach. In this none have yet equaled *Betterton*.

"I have been told," says another writer, 'by a gentleman who has frequently seen *Betterton* perform Hamlet, that he observed his countenance, which was naturally ruddy and sanguine, in the scene of the third act where his father's ghost appears, through the violent and sudden emotion of amazement and horror, turn instantly, on the sight of his father's spirit, as pale as his neckcloth, when his whole body seemed to be affected with a tremor inexpressible, so that, had his father's ghost actually risen before him, he could not have been seized with more real agonies. And this was felt so stongly by the audience, that the blood seemed to shudder in their veins likewise; and they, in some measure, partook of the astonishment and horror with which they saw this excellent actor affected.'

"Of this same *Betterton*, the good and great Addison remarks: 'Such an actor as Mr. *Betterton* ought to be recorded with the same respect as *Roscus* among the Romans.' And he adds, in vindication of the stage: 'there is no human invention so aptly calculated for the forming a free-born people as that of a theatre.'

The next in order after *Betterton*, comes *Barton Booth*, a younger son of a Lancashire Squire, of the family of the Earl of Warrington. His ease, grace, and fire, and the peculiar harmony of his voice, altogether distinct from that of *Betterton*, created a great impression. "*Booth*, with the silver tongue," gained the epithet before *Barry* was born, and *Westminster* celebrated him in one of her prologues:—

"Old *Roscus* to our *Booth* must bow,  
'Twas then but art, 'tis nature now."

"*Booth* had the faculty," writes *Hill*, "of discovering passions which lay hid from other actors, and when he discovered, of expressing them; and his secret of obtaining this great lesson, was an adaptation of his look to his voice, by which artful imitation of nature, the variation in the sounds of his words gave propriety to every change in his countenance. So that it was his facility to be heard and seen the same whether as the pleased, the grieved, the pitying, the reproachful, or the angry. One would be almost tempted to borrow the aid of a very bold figure and express this excellency the more significantly, by permission to affirm 'that the blind might have seen him in his voice, and the deaf have heard him in his visage.' His *Hamlet* was not, however, held in such admiration as *Betterton's*, probably because it was overshadowed by his performance of the ghost. Of this performance, represented on all hands to have produced the most wondrous effect, *Davies* writes: 'His slow, solemn, and undertone of voice; his noiseless tread, as if he had been composed of air, and his whole deportment inspired the audience with that feeling which is excited by awful astonishment!' The impression of his appearance in this part was so powerful upon a constant frequenter of the theatre for near sixty years, that he assured me, when long after *Booth's* death he was present at the tragedy of *Hamlet*, as soon as the name of the ghost was announced on the stage, he felt a kind of awe and terror, of which, he said, 'I was soon cured by his appearance.'

Next in succession came *Wilks*. Of him, *Colley Cibber* tells us, that visiting the theatre one night, in company with Addison, they were both surprised at the vociferous manner in which *Wilks* spoke to the ghost. This was greatly censured by them both, and with justice, for awe and terror will never excite a loud and intemperate exertion of the voice. *Wilks* was so mistaken in this treatment of *Hamlet's* ghost, that *Booth*, one day at rehearsal, reproached him for it. "I thought," said he, "Bob, that last night you wanted to play at fisticuffs with me; you bullied that which you ought to have revered. When I acted the ghost with *Betterton*, instead of my awing him, he terrified me." But divinity hung round that man. Yet *Davies* writes:

"If Addison and Cibber justly blamed Wilks for his behavior to the ghost in the first act, they could not possibly censure his conduct with his mother in the third. His action was indeed a happy mixture of warm indignation tempered with the most affecting tenderness. His whole deportment was princely and graceful. When he presented the pictures, the reproaches his animation produced were guarded with filial reluctance; and when he came to that pathetic expostulation of

'Mother, for love of grace,'

there was something in his manner inexpressibly gentle, and powerfully persuasive."

To Wilks, Milward succeeded, who is represented as not only an agreeable but most skillful actor. His interview with the ghost, and the closet scene, were especially fine. His voice was full and musical, and in this character he seemed to forget that love of ranting which was his greatest fault, or as Shakespeare would express it, his drum of base in acting.

Whatever deficiencies might be observed in Wilks and Milward, were amply supplied by the genius of Garrick, who followed them. In this character he had an ample opportunity to display that fine expression of countenance, energy of speech, and warmth of passion for which he was justly admired, though he was perhaps wanting in that tenderness which at times imparts so much beauty to the character.

Murphy thus speaks of Garrick's demeanor in the part:

"When Garrick entered the scene, the character he assumed was legible in his countenance. By the force of deep meditation he transformed himself into the very man. He remained fixed in a pensive attitude, and the sentiments that possessed his mind could be discovered by the attentive spectator. When he spoke, the tone of his voice was in unison with the workings of his mind, and as soon as he said—

'But I have that within, which passeth show,'

his every feature proved and confirmed the truth. The soliloquy beginning,

'Oh that this too, too solid flesh would melt,'

brings to light, as if by accident, the character of Hamlet. His grief, his anxiety, and irresolute temper, are strongly marked. He does not as yet know that his father was poisoned, but his mother's marriage excites resentment and abhorrence. He begins, but stops for want of words. Reflections crowd upon him, and he runs off in commendation of his deceased father. His thoughts soon turn again to his mother. In an instant he flies off again, and continues in a strain of sudden transitions, taking no less than eighteen lines to tell us, that in less than two months his mother married his father's brother. In all these shiftings of the passions, Garrick's voice and attitude changed with wonderful celerity, and, at every pause, his face was an index to his mind.

"On the first appearance of the ghost, such a figure of consternation was never seen. He stood fixed in mute astonishment, and the audience saw him growing paler and paler. After an interval of suspense, he spoke in a low, trembling accent, and uttered his questions with the greatest difficulty. His directions to the players were given *con amore*. The closet-scene with his mother was highly interesting, warm and pathetic. He spoke daggers to her, till her conscience turned her eyes inward on her own guilt. In the various soliloquies, Garrick proved himself the proper organ of Shakespeare's genius."

Next, on the 30th of September, 1783, John Philip Kemble made his first appearance at Drury Lane in the character of Hamlet. His biographer, Boaden, says of this performance:

"To his general conception of the character I remember but one objection—that the deportment was too scrupulously graceful. There were points in the dialogue in almost every scene which called upon the critic, where the young actor indulged his own sense of the meaning; and these were to be referred to the text or context of Shakespeare, and also to the previous manner of Garrick's delivery, or the existing one of Anderson's. For instance, Kemble said:

'And for for my soul, what CAN it do to *that*,  
Being a thing immortal as itself?'

Garrick here, with great quickness, said: 'What can it do to *that*?' There is more impressiveness in Kemble's manner of putting it. Having drawn his sword to menace the friends, who would

prevent him from following the ghost, every Hamlet before Mr. Kemble presented the point to the phantom as he followed him to the removed ground. Kemble, having drawn it on his friends, retained it in his right hand, but turned his left towards the ghost, and drooped the weapon after him—a change both tasteful and judicious. As a defense against such a being, a sword was ridiculous. The kneeling at the descent of the ghost was censured as a trick. Henderson saw it, and adopted it immediately. These two great actors agreed in the seeming intention of particular disclosures to Horatio. ‘Yes, but there is, Horatio—and much offence, too’—and they turned off upon the pressing forward of Marcellus to partake of the communication. Kemble only, however, prepared the way for this by the marked address to Horatio, ‘Did you not speak to it!’

“In the scene with Polonius, where Hamlet is asked what is the matter that he reads, and he answers, ‘Slanders, sir,’ Kemble, to give the stronger impression of his wildness, tore the leaf out of the book.

‘The *mobled* queen.’

“Garrick repeated this after the player, as in doubt; Kemble, as in sympathy. And accordingly Polonius echoes his approbation, and says the expression is good. Henderson and Kemble concurred in saying to Horatio:

‘Ay, in my heart of heart as I do thee!’

“Garrick gave it differently—‘Heart of HEART.’ The emphasis should be on the first word heard, according to our judgment. In the mock play before the king, Garrick threw out an unnecessary rant, addressed to Lucanus, the line—

‘The croaking raven doth bellow for revenge.’

But Kemble and Henderson made it a reflection of Hamlet, applicable to his own case. In the adjuration to the queen, ‘Mother, for love of grace,’ &c., Kemble knelt. His exclamation on hearing that the dead body was Ophelia’s had not the pathos of Henderson’s, who seemed here struck to the very soul: ‘What! the fair Ophelia!’ Henderson’s mode of uttering this was so unutterably fine, that his tones lingered like some exquisite strain of music in the memory.

“Kemble played this part in a modern court-dress of rich black velvet, with a star on his breast, the garter, and pendant ribbon of an order, mourning sword and buckles, with deep ruffles; the hair in powder, which, in the scene of feigned distraction, flowed dishevelled in front and over his shoulders.”

The Hamlets of Charles Kemble and Edmund Kean, *who* come next in this succession of dramatic worthies, had each their hosts of admirers, though Hamlet was certainly neither a favorite nor a great part of Mr. Kean’s. Speaking of them, Hazlitt, a critic who cannot be accused of any disposition to underrate Mr. Kean, says:

“Mr Kemble, unavoidably, fails in this character for want of ease and variety. The character of Hamlet is made up of undulating lines. It has the yielding flexibility of a ‘Wave o’ the sea.’ Mr. Kemble plays it like a man in armor, with a determined inveteracy of purpose, in one undeviating, straight line, which is as remote from the natural grace and refined susceptibility of the character as the sharp angles and abrupt starts which Mr. Kean introduces into the part. Mr. Kean is as much too splenetic and rash as Mr. Kemble is too deliberate and formal. His manner is too strong and pointed. He throws a severity approaching virulence into the common observations and answers. There is nothing of this in Hamlet. He is, as it were, wrapped up in his own reflections and only *thinks aloud*. There should, therefore, be no attempt to impress what he says upon others by a studied exaggeration of emphasis or manner. No *talking at* his hearers. There should be as much of the gentleman and scholar as possible infused into the part, and as little of the actor.”

Of the Hamlet of Mr. Macready who, though living, is dead to the stage, we have received from one, who is regarded as one of the ablest critics in England, and who had many opportunities of judging of his performance, the following description:

“No actor ever brought to the practice of his profession more study or deeper thought than William Charles Macready. Indeed, to use a homely expression, he ‘overdid it.’ If it be true that the highest achievement of art is ‘*celare artem*,’ he may be said, in many of his characters, to have failed; for with him art was so prominent and conspicuous, that nature was seldom perceptible.



“Macready had worked out in his own mind a comprehension of this great and difficult character, but the impersonation and portrayal of it to his audience was monotonous, harsh, and severe.

“In those parts of the play which are essentially dramatic, and can be made effective by action and passion, he succeeded, but in the more subtle and refined portions of the character, his action was cold and occasionally repulsive.

“The opening scene, where the grand effect of bringing the supernatural in contact with the real is so boldly attempted by Shakespeare, as Æschylus before him had probed the mysterious volume of destiny in the Grecian Drama, was enacted by Macready with great skill. The play scene was always performed with power; but he scolded Ophelia, and ranted at his mother. In the enunciation of those beautiful soliloquies, the revelations to the world of the deep thoughts in which the soul of Hamlet is absorbed, he lamentably failed; they were the cold declamations of the practiced elocutionist, but not the audible meditations of the man who had held communion with unearthly things, and to whom the dark mysteries of the future had been revealed. You could never realize from his acting of this character, the irresolution of Hamlet, the metaphysical workings of a mind that had a great act to do and sickens at the thought of its performance.

“There are two Hamlets—the Hamlet of Shakespeare and the conventional Hamlet of the stage. Macready’s Hamlet ranked in the latter category, studied and eminently correct, but without one ray of the ‘*mens divini*’ to illustrate the grand conception of the poet.”

The last niche in our gallery of Hamlets belongs to Junius Brutus Booth. Mr. Booth did not love to play Hamlet in the latter period of his life, partly because although Hamlet is thirty years old, in the prime of manhood, his instinct taught him that the imagination ever surrounds the ideal Hamlet with a perfume of poetry and romance, which belongs alone to youth or its confines, and makes age a positive disqualification for perfection in the part, and partly because Hamlet with its dreamy self-communings and abstract speculations was least suited of all Shakespeare’s plays to the school of artists of which Booth and Edmund Kean were the great master-minds, who chiefly produced their effects by startling “points,” and to see whom act has been felicitously characterized by Coleridge as “reading Shakespeare by flashes of lightning.” That his Hamlet had, however, many beauties, and was in some parts intensely admired, may be judged from the following criticism:

“The Hamlet of Mr. Junius Brutus Booth had many beauties and some defects. He possessed many of those physical advantages with which imagination delights to clothe in a peculiar degree this character. His figure, from the waist up, was, in youth, the perfection of manly architecture. The chest, massive without heaviness; the thoroughbred head, with its clusterings of small brown curls so proudly set on, rising like a Grecian urn from its pedestal; and the face of singular spiritual beauty, the gray eye being at times full of fire, intelligence, and splendor, and again of the most fascinating softness, and the nose of that peculiar oriental construction which gives an air of so much distinction and command. But then again the support of this structure was of an entirely opposite order, the limbs being short, of coarse vigor, and gnarled like clumps of oak, and calculated to detract from that grace and dignity of deportment which belonged to the most elegant of princes and of courtiers. In Hamlet, where there are so many scenes of quiet and contemplation, this defect was more glaring than in plays where the tragic passions were predominant and the surge within swelled the small figure to the stature of the character he portrayed; but even in Hamlet the general magnetism of his presence covered and carried away attention from it. Then his voice, wondrous in its variety of cadence and susceptible of the most delicate modulations and inflections, could express tenderness, terror, anger, or sarcasm, at will. This gift, so all-essential in Hamlet, he often wholly threw away, and never took full advantage of, hurrying carelessly over some of the most exquisite soliloquies, impatient to reach the point in which he could, by some play of passion, some gesture, a look or some single utterance of a word, impress his power upon his audience. This was the less excusable, as Mr. Booth was an accomplished scholar, and an elocutionist of rare and surpassing excellence, unlike Kean, who knew nothing of scholarship, and had little or no power of elocution unless when sustained by some strong emotion, when the voice of nature came with wondrous music forth.

“His splendor, too, was most irregular. Although no doubt his performance, as a whole, was prearranged in his mind, and regulated, as all matters of art which hope to be enduring must be, he still trusted, in a large measure, for the carrying out of his effects, to the impulse of the moment, and the promptings of that inner and unknown something called genius. He had, consequently, like all men of this class, his days, even his moments of inspiration. There were times when the auditor, following him through Hamlet, would have to travel for hours over a flat, level, and murky waste, waiting for some touch of grandeur to relieve the desolate evenness, when suddenly would come a flash across the gloom which, though when you cried behold it, it was gone, electrified the

audience, and burned on every memory its mark. On other nights, when in the mood, his splendor would be sustained, and all the lovely lights and shades of Hamlet's character, the profound and overwrought sensibility—the moody waywardness of temper, whose sadness breaks off into melancholy mirthfulness, while the passionate outbursts of indignation and grief lapse into idle speculation—would find a most exquisite interpretation. In the passages of tenderness, and in those in which Hamlet, overcome with the forlorn sense of desolation, and bewildered with all that is going on around him, and his own peculiar relation to it, contemplates closing his existence, Booth found his greatest excellence. He seemed to linger with special love on those velvety spots of tenderness, as in the scene with Ophelia, with which Shakespeare delights to relieve his landscape. In the expression of passion he was superb. At times, so possessed was he with the spirit and influence of the power he would portray, that, in his eagerness, he clutched the passion by the blade, and terrified the audience with the gash. He had the rare art of discovering the most subtle changes of feeling, and of marking those slight variations of expression which take place on the turn of a thought or the impulse of a fancy. No other actor, perhaps, has produced so all-powerful and overwhelming an impression by a single word or look. In the utterance of a word, in a sudden look, Mr. Booth has thrilled his audience with awe, and realized the very height of that intensity which is the greatest characteristic of genius. Mr. Booth, like Mr. Kean, was also a master of all those external accomplishments which could serve to beautify his art, and the grace and elegance with which he played his part in the passage of arms in Hamlet, might well challenge the compliments and admiration of the king. We know not if this picture of Booth be too highly colored. Such as he is to us now we make him. There is ever a softening, idealizing tendency in memory to exaggerate excellence. Few who ever heard it will forget the beautiful sadness with which Rachel, as Adrienne Lecouvreur, the actress, used to exclaim: 'All that remains of us is a memory.' But is not memory the best embalmer? Chatham, who trusted his fame to memory, will rank higher as an orator than his great son Pitt, who trusted his to paper. So the fame of a great artist, like the breath of the holy man, will survive the organ which contained it, and find in the halls of imagination an imperishable home."

Of the representatives of Hamlet now on the stage, it is not our purpose, and would not become us, to speak.





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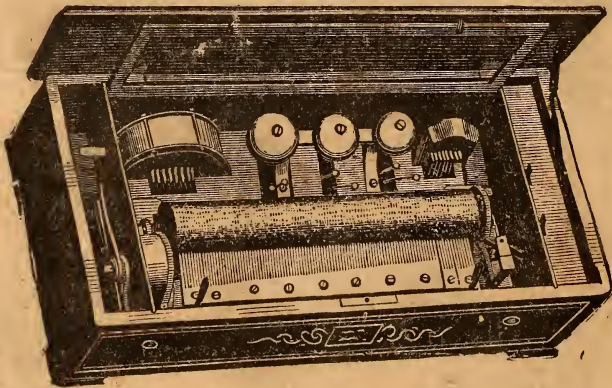
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