



Bodleian Libraries

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

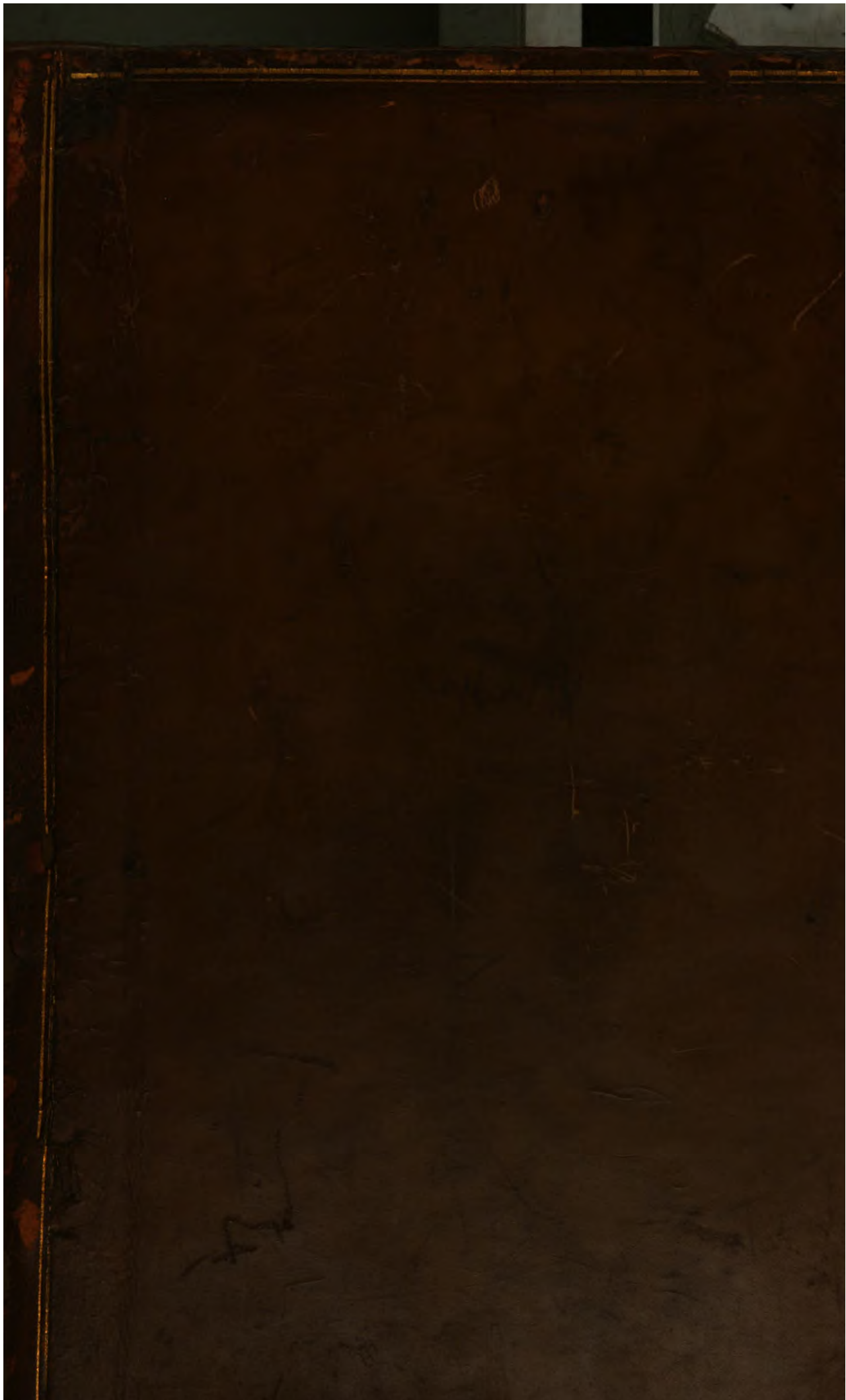
This book is part of the collection held by the Bodleian Libraries and scanned by Google, Inc. for the Google Books Library Project.

For more information see:

<http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/dbooks>

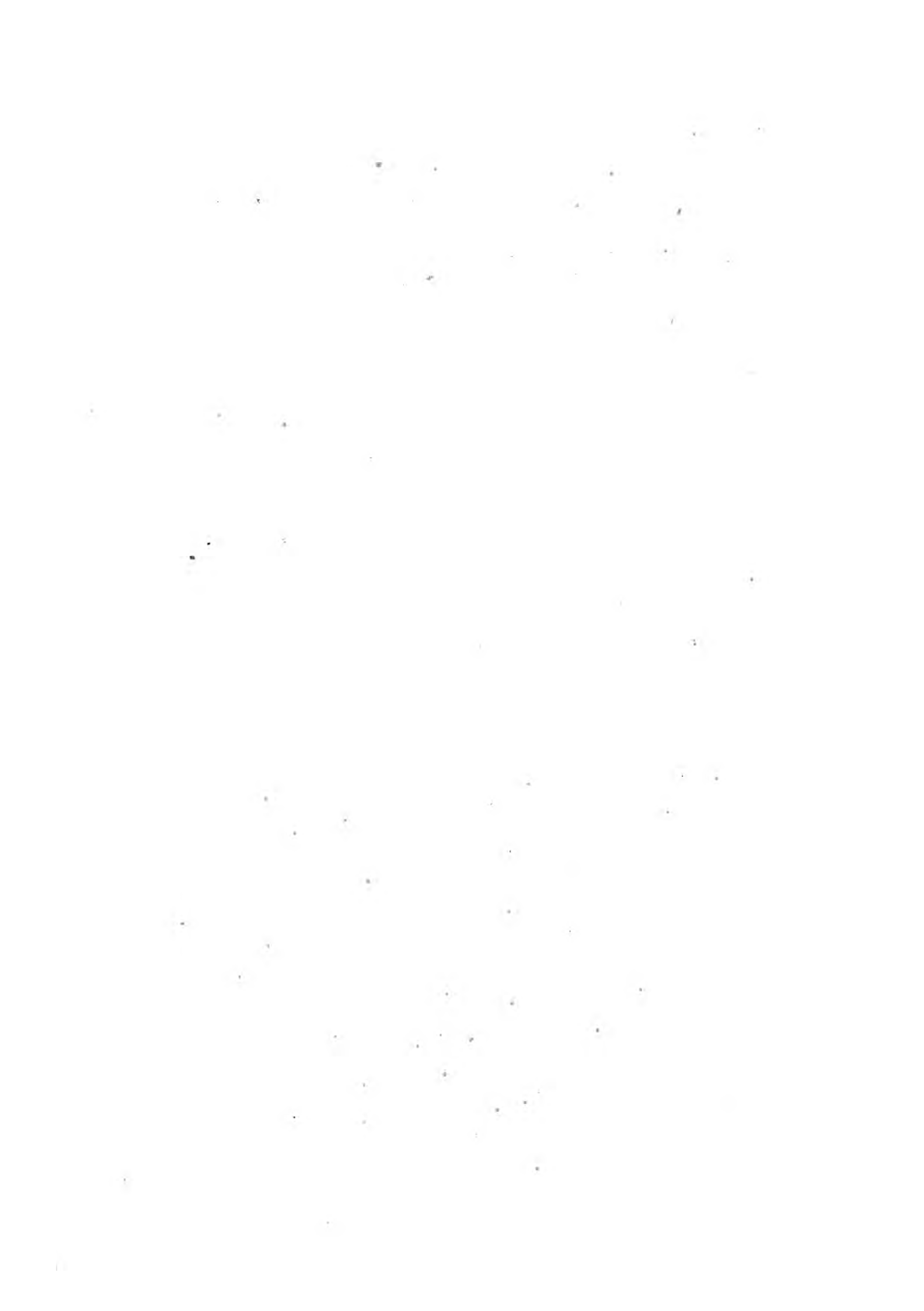


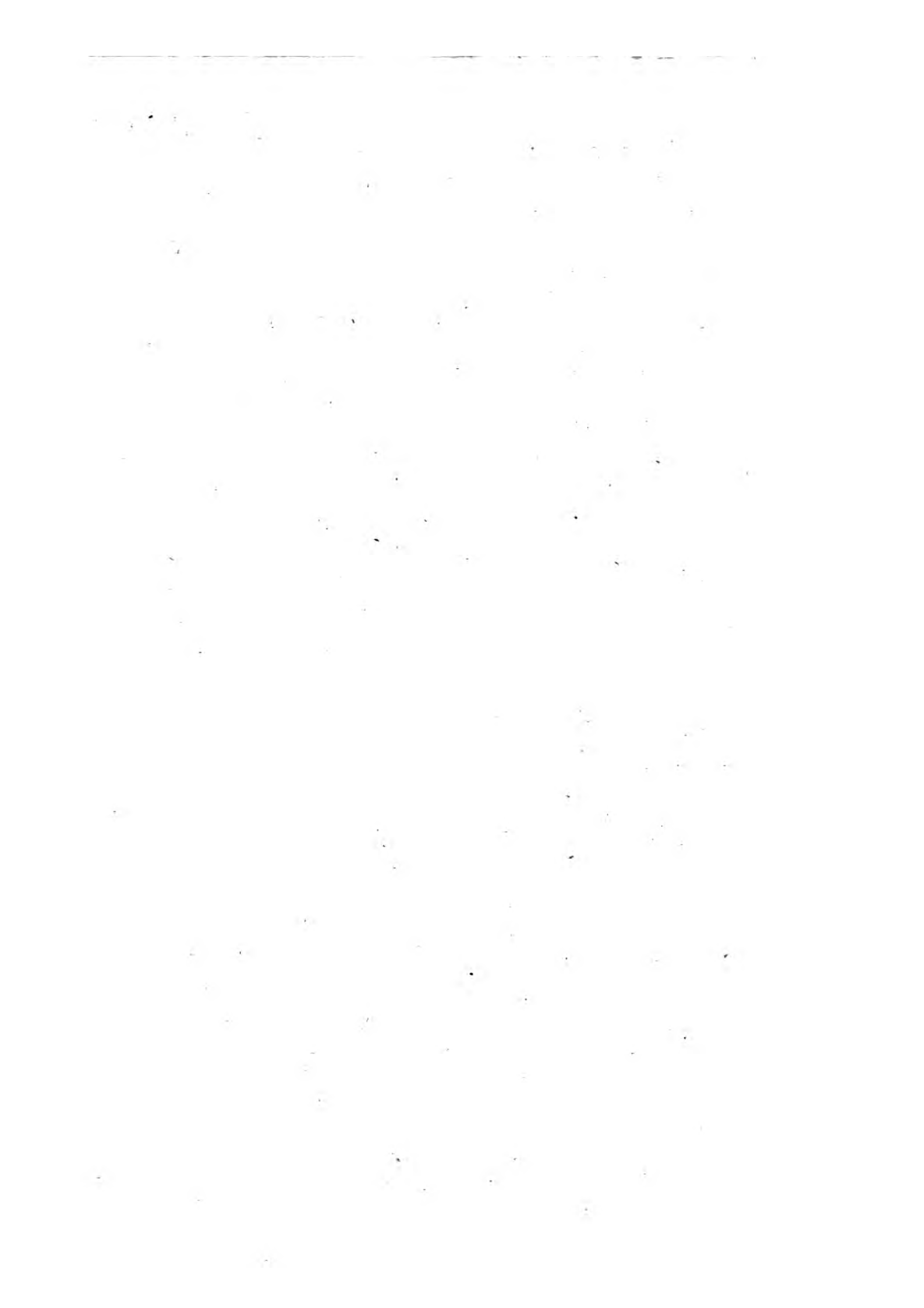
This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 UK: England & Wales (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0) licence.



M. addis. 51 e. $\frac{107}{8}$







1844

WILLIAM SHARPLES

Author of

THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

OF AMERICA

FROM THE DISCOVERY OF THE CONTINENT TO THE PRESENT TIME

IN

SEVEN VOLUMES

BY

WILLIAM SHARPLES, ESQ.

Author of

A HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

IN

SEVEN VOLUMES

BY

WILLIAM SHARPLES

ESQ.

Author of

THE

HISTORY

OF

AMERICA

IN

SEVEN VOLUMES

BY

WILLIAM SHARPLES

ESQ.

Author of

THE

HISTORY

OF

AMERICA

THE
PLAYS
OF
WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE,

ACCURATELY PRINTED
FROM THE TEXT OF THE CORRECTED COPIES
LEFT BY THE LATE
GEORGE STEEVENS, Esq., AND EDMOND MALONE, Esq.

WITH
MR. MALONE'S VARIOUS READINGS;
A SELECTION OF
EXPLANATORY AND HISTORICAL NOTES,

FROM THE MOST EMINENT COMMENTATORS;

A History of the Stage, and a Life of Shakspeare;

BY

ALEXANDER CHALMERS, F.S.A.

A NEW EDITION, IN EIGHT VOLUMES.

VOLUME VIII.

KING LEAR.
ROMEO AND JULIET.
HAMLET.
OTHELLO.

LONDON:

Printed for F. C. and J. Rivington; T. Egerton; J. Cuthell; J. Scatcherd; Longman and Co.; T. Cadell; J. and W. T. Clarke; J. Booker; J. Booth; J. Richardson; J. M. Richardson; R. H. Evans; J. Mawman; R. Scholey; W. Earle; J. Bohn; C. Brown; R. Pheney; Baldwin and Co.; Newman and Co.; Ogle and Co.; T. Tegg; T. Hamilton; W. Wood; J. Sheldon; Whitmore and Fenn; Harding and Co.; E. Edwards; W. Mason; G. Mackie; J. H. Bohte; T. Wilkie; G. and W. B. Whittaker; Kingsbury and Co.; Simpkin and Co.; and R. Saunders: also for Deighton and Sons, Cambridge; Wilson and Sons, York; for Stirling and Slade, A. Black, P. Brown, and J. Fairbairn, Edinburgh

1823.

6511



K I N G L E A R.

VOL. VIII.

B

THE story of this tragedy had found its way into many ballads and other metrical pieces; yet Shakspeare seems to have been more indebted to *The True Chronicle History of King Leir and his Three Daughters, Gonorill, Ragan, and Cordella*, 1605, than to all the other performances together. It appears from the books at Stationers' Hall, that some play on this subject was entered by Edward White, May 14, 1594. "A booke entituled, *The moste famous Chronicle Hystorie of Leire King of England, and his three Daughters.*" A piece with the same title is entered again, May 8, 1605; and again Nov. 26, 1607. From *The Mirror of Magistrates*, 1587, Shakspeare has, however, taken the hint for the behaviour of the steward, and the reply of Cordelia to her father concerning her future marriage. The episode of Gloster and his sons must have been borrowed from Sidney's *Arcadia*, as I have not found the least trace of it in any other work. For the first *King Lear*, see likewise *Six old Plays on which Shakspeare founded*, &c. published for S. Leacroft, Charing-Cross.

The reader will also find the story of *K. Lear*, in the second book and 10th canto of Spenser's *Fairy Queen*, and in the 15th chapter of the third book of Warner's *Albion's England*, 1602.

The whole of this play, however, could not have been written till after 1603. Harsnet's pamphlet, to which it contains so many references, was not published till that year. STEEVENS.

Camden, in his *Remains*, (p. 306. ed. 1674,) tells a similar story to this of *Leir* or *Lear*, of Ina king of the West Saxons; which, if the thing ever happened, probably was the real origin of the fable. See under the head of *Wise Speeches*. PERCY.

The story told by Camden in his *Remaines*, 4to. 1605, is this:

"Ina, king of West Saxons, had three daughters, of whom upon a time he demanded whether they did love him, and so would do during their lives, above all others: the two elder sware deeply they would; the youngest, but the wisest, told her father flatly, without flattery, that albeit she did love, honour, and reverence him, and so would whilst she lived, as much as nature and daughterly dutie at the uttermost could expect, *yet she did think that one day it would come to passe that she should affect another more fervently, meaning her husband, when she were married*; who being made one flesh with her, as God by commandement had told, and nature had taught her, she was to cleave fast to, forsaking father and mother, kiffe and kinne. [Anonymous.] One referreth this to the daughters of king Leir."

It is, I think, more probable that Shakspeare had this passage in his thoughts, when he wrote Cordelia's reply concerning her future marriage, than *The Mirror for Magistrates*, as Camden's book was published recently before he appears to have composed this play, and that portion of it which is entitled *Wise Speeches*, where the foregoing passage is found, furnished him with a hint in *Coriolanus*.

The story of King Leir and his three daughters was originally told by Geoffrey of Monmouth, from whom Holinshed transcribed it; and in his Chronicle Shakspeare had certainly read it, as it occurs not far from that of *Cymbeline*; though the old play on the same subject probably *first* suggested to him the idea of making it the ground-work of a tragedy.

Geoffrey of Monmouth says, that Leir, who was the eldest son of Bladud, "nobly governed his country for sixty years." According to that historian, he died about 800 years before the birth of Christ.

The name of Leir's youngest daughter, which in Geoffrey's history, in Holinshed, *The Mirror for Magistrates*, and the old anonymous play, is *Cordeilla*, *Cordila*, or *Cordella*, Shakspeare found softened into *Cordelia*, by Spenser, in his Second Book, Canto X. The names of Edgar and Edmund were probably suggested by Holinshed. See his *Chronicle*, vol. I. p. 122. "*Edgar*, the son of *Edmund*, brother of Athelstane," &c.

This tragedy, I believe, was written in 1605. MALONE.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

LEAR, *King of Britain.*
King of FRANCE.
Duke of BURGUNDY.
Duke of CORNWALL.
Duke of ALBANY.
Earl of KENT.
Earl of GLOSTER.
EDGAR, *Son to Gloster.*
EDMUND, *Bastard Son to Gloster.*
CURAN, *a Courtier.*
Old Man, tenant to Gloster.
Physician.
Fool.
OSWALD, *Steward to Goneril.*
An Officer, employed by Edmund.
Gentleman, attendant on Cordelia.
A Herald.
Servants to Cornwall.

GONERIL, }
REGAN, } *Daughters to Lear.*
CORDELIA, }

*Knights attending on the King, Officers, Messengers,
Soldiers, and Attendants.*

SCENE, BRITAIN.

KING LEAR.

ACT I.

SCENE I. — *A Room of State in King Lear's Palace.*

Enter KENT, GLOSTER, and EDMUND.

Kent.

I THOUGHT, the king had more affected the duke of Albany, than Cornwall.

Glo. It did always seem so to us : but now, in the division of the kingdom¹, it appears not which of the dukes he values most ; for equalities are so weigh'd, that curiosity in neither² can make choice of either's moiety.³

Kent. Is not this your son, my lord ?

¹ — *in the division of the kingdom,*] There is something of obscurity or inaccuracy in this preparatory scene. The king has already divided his kingdom, and yet when he enters he examines his daughters, to discover in what proportions he should divide it. Perhaps Kent and Gloster only were privy to his design, which he still kept in his own hands, to be changed or performed as subsequent reasons should determine him. JOHNSON.

² — *that curiosity in neither* —] *Curiosity* is scrupulousness, or captiousness.

³ — *of either's moiety.*] The strict sense of the word *moiety* is *half, one of two equal parts* : but Shakspeare commonly uses it for *any part or division*.

Glo. His breeding, sir, hath been at my charge : I have so often blush'd to acknowledge him, that now I am brazed to it.

Kent. I cannot conceive you.

Glo. Sir, this young fellow's mother could : whereupon she grew round-wombed ; and had, indeed, sir, a son for her cradle, ere she had a husband for her bed. Do you smell a fault ?

Kent. I cannot wish the fault undone, the issue of it being so proper.⁴

Glo. But I have, sir, a son by order of law, some year elder than this⁵, who yet is no dearer in my account : though this knave came somewhat saucily into the world before he was sent for, yet was his mother fair ; there was good sport at his making, and the whoreson must be acknowledged. — Do you know this noble gentleman, Edmund ?

Edm. No, my lord.

Glo. My lord of Kent : remember him hereafter as my honourable friend.

Edm. My services to your lordship.

Kent. I must love you, and sue to know you better.

Edm. Sir, I shall study deserving.

Glo. He hath been out nine years, and away he shall again : — The king is coming. [*Trumpets sound within.*]

Enter LEAR, CORNWALL, ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN, CORDELIA, and Attendants.

Lear. Attend the lords of France and Burgundy, Gloster.

Glo. I shall, my liege.

[*Exeunt* GLOSTER and EDMUND.]

⁴ — being so proper.] i. e. handsome.

⁵ — some year elder than this,] i. e. about a year.

Lear. Mean-time we shall express our darker purpose.⁶

Give me the map there. — Know, that we have divided,
In three, our kingdom : and 'tis our fast intent⁷
To shake all cares and business from our age ;
Conferring them on younger strengths, while we
Unburden'd crawl toward death. — Our son of Cornwall

And you, our no less loving son of Albany,
We have this hour a constant will⁸ to publish
Our daughters' several dowers, that future strife
May be prevented now. The princes, France and Burgundy,

Great rivals in our youngest daughter's love,
Long in our court have made their amorous sojourn,
And here are to be answer'd. — Tell me, my daughters,
(Since now we will divest us, both of rule,
Interest of territory, cares of state,)
Which of you, shall we say, doth love us most ?
That we our largest bounty may extend
Where merit doth most challenge it. — Goneril,
Our eldest-born, speak first.

Gon.

Sir, I

Do love you more than words can wield the matter,
Dearer than eye-sight, space and liberty ;
Beyond what can be valued, rich or rare ;
No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honour :
As much as child e'er lov'd, or father found.

⁶ — *express our darker purpose.*] That is, we have already made known in some measure our desire of parting the kingdom ; we will now discover what has not been told before, the reasons by which we shall regulate the partition. This interpretation will justify or palliate the exordial dialogue. JOHNSON.

⁷ — *and 'tis our fast intent* —] Our determined resolution.

⁸ — *constant will* —] *Constant* is *firm, determined*. *Constant will* is the *certa voluntas* of Virgil.

A love that makes breath poor, and speech unable ;
Beyond all manner of so much⁹ I love you.

Cor. What shall Cordelia do? Love, and be silent.

[*Aside.*

Lear. Of all these bounds, even from this line to this,
With shadowy forests and with champains rich'd,
With plenteous rivers and wide-skirted meads,
We make thee lady : To thine and Albany's issue
Be this perpetual. — What says our second daughter,
Our dearest Regan, wife to Cornwall? Speak.

Reg. I am made of that self metal as my sister,
And prize me at her worth. In my true heart
I find, she names my very deed of love ;
Only she comes too short, — that I profess¹
Myself an enemy to all other joys,
Which the most precious square of sense possesses ;²
And find, I am alone felicitate
In your dear highness' love.

Cor. Then poor Cordelia ! [*Aside.*

And yet not so ; since, I am sure, my love's
More richer than my tongue.

Lear. To thee, and thine, hereditary ever,
Remain this ample third of our fair kingdom ;
No less in space, validity³, and pleasure,
Than that confirm'd on Goneril. — Now, our joy,
Although the last, not least ; to whose young love
The vines of France, and milk of Burgundy,

⁹ *Beyond all manner of so much* —] Beyond all assignable quantity. I love you beyond limits, and cannot say it is *so much*, for how much soever I should name, it would be yet more.

¹ ——— that *I profess, &c.*] *In that*, i. e. *inasmuch as*, I profess myself, &c.

² *Which the most precious square of sense possesses ;*] Perhaps *square* means only *compass, comprehension* ; or, the full complement of all the senses.

³ *No less in space, validity,*] *Validity*, for worth, value ; not for integrity, or good title.

Strive to be interest'd⁴; what can you say, to draw
A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak.

Cor. Nothing, my lord.

Lear. Nothing?

Cor. Nothing.

Lear. Nothing can come † of nothing: speak again.

Cor. Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave
My heart into my mouth: I love your majesty
According to my bond; nor more, nor less.

Lear. How, how, Cordelia? mend your speech a
little,

Lest it may mar your fortunes.

Cor. Good my lord,
You have begot me, bred me, lov'd me: I
Return those duties back as are right fit,
Obey you, love you, and most honour you,
Why have my sisters husbands, if they say,
They love you, all? Haply, when I shall wed,
That lord, whose hand must take my plight, shall carry
Half my love with him, half my care, and duty:
Sure, I shall never marry like my sisters,
To love my father all.

Lear. But goes this with thy heart?

Cor. Ay, good my lord.

Lear. So young, and so untender?

Cor. So young, my lord, and true.

Lear. Let it be so, — Thy truth then be thy dower:
For, by the sacred radiance of the sun;
The mysteries of Hecate, and the night;
By all the operations of the orbs,
From whom we do exist, and cease to be;
Here I disclaim all my paternal care,

⁴ *Strive to be interest'd*;] To *interest* and to *interesse*, are not, perhaps, different spellings of the same verb, but are two distinct words though of the same import; the one being derived from the Latin, the other from the French *interessier*.

† "will come" — MALONE.

Propinquity and property of blood,
And as a stranger to my heart and me
Hold thee, from this, for ever. The barbarous Scy-
thian,

Or he that makes his generation⁵ messes
To gorge his appetite, shall to my bosom
Be as well neighbour'd, pitied, and reliev'd,
As thou my sometime daughter.

Kent. Good my liege, —

Lear. Peace, Kent!

Come not between the dragon and his wrath:
I lov'd her most, and thought to set my rest
On her kind nursery. — Hence, and avoid my sight! —

[*To CORDELIA.*]

So be my grave my peace, as here I give
Her father's heart from her! — Call France; — Who
stirs?

Call Burgundy. — Cornwall, and Albany,
With my two daughters' dowers digest this third:
Let pride, which she calls plainness, marry her.
I do invest you jointly with my power,
Pre-eminence, and all the large effects
That troop with majesty. — Ourselves, by monthly course,
With reservation of an hundred knights,
By you to be sustain'd, shall our abode
Make with you by due turns. Only we still retain
The name, and all the additions to a king;⁶
The sway,

Revenue, execution of the rest,⁷
Beloved sons, be yours: which to confirm,
This coronet part between you. [*Giving the Crown.*]

Kent. Royal Lear,

Whom I have ever honour'd as my king,

⁵ — *generation* —] i. e. his children.

⁶ — *all the additions to a king* ;] All the titles belonging to a king.

⁷ — *execution of the rest,*] *All the other business.*

Lov'd as my father, as my master follow'd,
As my great patron thought on in my prayers, —

Lear. The bow is bent and drawn, make from the
shaft.

Kent. Let it fall rather, though the fork invade
The region of my heart : be Kent unmannerly,
When Lear is mad. What would'st thou do, old man?
Think'st thou, that duty shall have dread to speak,
When power to flattery bows? To plainness honour's
bound,

When majesty stoops to folly. Reverse thy doom ;
And, in thy best consideration, check
This hideous rashness : answer my life my judgment,
Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least ;
Nor are those empty-hearted, whose low sound
Reverbs⁸ no hollowness.

Lear. Kent, on thy life, no more.

Kent. My life I never held but as a pawn
To wage against thine enemies ; nor fear to lose it,
Thy safety being the motive.

Lear. Out of my sight !

Kent. See better, Lear ; and let me still remain
The true blank of thine eye.⁹

Lear. Now, by Apollo, —

Kent. Now, by Apollo, king,
Thou swear'st thy gods in vain.

Lear. O, vassal ! miscreant !

[*Laying his Hand on his Sword.*]

Alb. Corn. Dear sir, forbear.

Kent. Do ;
Kill thy physician, and the fee bestow

⁸ *Reverbs* —] This is, perhaps, a word of the poet's own making, meaning the same as *reverberates*.

⁹ *The true blank of thine eye.*] The *blank* is the *white* or exact mark at which the arrow is shot. See better, says Kent, and keep me always in your view.

Upon the foul disease. Revoke thy gift ;
Or, whilst I can vent clamour from my throat,
I'll tell thee, thou dost evil.

Lear. Hear me, recreant !
On thine allegiance hear me ! —
Since thou hast sought to make us break our vow,
(Which we durst never yet,) and, with strain'd pride,
To come betwixt our sentence and our power ;
(Which nor our nature nor our place can bear,)
Our potency made good¹, take thy reward.
Five days we do allot thee, for provision
To shield thee from diseases of the world ;
And, on the sixth, to turn thy hated back
Upon our kingdom : if, on the tenth day following,
Thy banish'd trunk be found in our dominions,
The moment is thy death : Away ! by Jupiter,²
This shall not be revok'd.

Kent. Fare thee well, king : since thus thou wilt
appear,
Freedom lives hence, and banishment is here. —
The gods to their dear shelter take thee, maid,
[To CORDELIA.
That justly think'st, and hast most rightly said ! —
And your large speeches may your deeds approve,
[To REGAN and GONERIL.
That good effects may spring from words of love. —
Thus Kent, O princes, bids you all adieu ;
He'll shape his old course³ in a country new. [Exit.

¹ (*Which nor our nature nor our place can bear,*)

Our potency made good,] i. e. *They to whom I have yielded my power and authority, yielding me the ability to dispense it in this instance, take thy reward.*

² — *By Jupiter,*] Shakspeare makes his Lear too much a mythologist : he had Hecate and Apollo before. JOHNSON.

³ *He'll shape his old course —*] He will follow his old maxims ; he will continue to act upon the same principles.

Re-enter GLOSTER; *with* FRANCE, BURGUNDY, and Attendants.

Glo. Here's France and Burgundy, my noble lord.

Lear. My lord of Burgundy,
We first address towards you, who with this king
Hath rivall'd for our daughter; What, in the least,
Will you require in present dower with her,
Or cease your quest of love? ⁴

Bur. Most royal majesty,
I crave no more than hath your highness offer'd,
Nor will you tender less.

Lear. Right noble Burgundy,
When she was dear to us, we did hold her so;
But now her price is fall'n: Sir, there she stands;
If aught within that little, seeming⁵ substance,
Or all of it, with our displeasure piec'd,
And nothing more, may fitly like your grace,
She's there, and she is yours.

Bur. I know no answer.

Lear. Sir,
Will you, with those infirmities she owes, ⁶
Unfriended, new-adopted to our hate,
Dower'd with our curse, and stranger'd with our oath,
Take her, or leave her?

Bur. Pardon me, royal sir;
Election makes not up on such conditions. ⁷

Lear. Then leave her, sir; for, by the power that
made me,

⁴ — quest of love?] *Quest of love* is *amorous expedition*. The term originated from Romance. A quest was the expedition in which a knight was engaged.

⁵ — *seeming* —] is *beautiful*, or rather, *specious*.

⁶ *owes*,] i. e. is possessed of.

⁷ *Election makes not up on such conditions.*] *Election comes not to a decision*; in the same sense as when we say, "I have *made up* my mind on that subject."

I tell you all her wealth. — For you, great king,
[To FRANCE.]

I would not from your love make such a stray,
 To match you where I hate; therefore beseech you
 To avert your liking a more worthier way,
 Than on a wretch whom nature is asham'd
 Almost to acknowledge hers.

France. This is most strange!
 That she, that even but now was your best object,
 The argument of your praise, balm of your age,
 Most best, most dearest, should in this trice of time
 Commit a thing so monstrous, to dismantle
 So many folds of favour! Sure, her offence
 Must be of such unnatural degree,
 That monsters it, or your fore-vouch'd affection
 Fall into taint⁸: which to believe of her,
 Must be a faith, that reason without miracle
 Could never plant in me.

Cor. I yet beseech your majesty,
 (If for I want⁹ that glib and oily art,
 To speak and purpose not; since what I well intend,
 I'll do't before I speak,) that you make known
 It is no vicious blot, murder, or foulness,
 No unchaste action, or dishonour'd step,
 That hath depriv'd me of your grace and favour:
 But even for want of that, for which I am richer;
 A still-soliciting eye, and such a tongue
 That I am glad I have not, though, not to have it,
 Hath lost me in your liking.

Lear. Better thou
 Had'st not been born, than not to have pleas'd me better.

⁸ — or your fore-vouch'd affection

Fall into taint:] Either her offence *must be* monstrous, or, if she has not committed any such offence, the affection which you always professed to have for her *must be tainted and decayed*, and is now without reason alienated from her.

⁹ *If for I want, &c.*] If this be my offence, that I want the glib and oily art, &c.

France. Is it but this †? a tardiness in nature,
Which often leaves the history unspoke,
That it intends to do? — My lord of Burgundy,
What say you to the lady? Love is not love,
When it is mingled with respects¹, that stand
Aloof from the entire point.² Will you have her?
She is herself a dowry.

Bur. Royal Lear,
Give but that portion which yourself propos'd,
And here I take Cordelia by the hand,
Duchess of Burgundy.

Lear. Nothing: I have sworn; I am firm.

Bur. I am sorry then, you have so lost a father,
That you must lose a husband.

Cor. Peace be with Burgundy!
Since that respects of fortune are his love,
I shall not be his wife.

France. Fairest Cordelia, that art most rich, being
poor;
Most choice, forsaken; and most lov'd, despis'd!
Thee and thy virtues here I seize upon:
Be it lawful, I take up what's cast away.
Gods, gods! 'tis strange, that from their cold'st neglect
My love should kindle to inflam'd respect. —
Thy dowerless daughter, king, thrown to my chance,
Is queen of us, of ours, and our fair France:
Not all the dukes of wat'rish Burgundy
Shall buy this unpriz'd precious maid of me. —
Bid them farewell, Cordelia, though unkind:
Thou lovest here³, a better where to find.

† "It is no more but this?" — MALONE.

¹ — *with respects,*] i. e. with cautious and prudential considerations.

² — *from the entire point.*] Single, unmixed with other considerations.

³ *Thou lovest here,*] *Here* and *where* have the power of nouns. Thou lovest this residence to find a better residence in another place.

Lear. Thou hast her, France; let her be thine;
for we

Have no such daughter, nor shall ever see
That face of her's again: — Therefore be gone,
Without our grace, our love, our benison.
Come, noble Burgundy.

[*Flourish.* *Exeunt* LEAR, BURGUNDY, CORN-
WALL, ALBANY, GLOSTER, and Attendants.

France. Bid farewell to your sisters.

Cor. The jewels of our father, with wash'd eyes
Cordelia leaves you: I know you what you are;
And, like a sister, am most loath to call
Your faults, as they are nam'd. Use well our father:
To your professed bosoms I commit him:
But yet, alas! stood I within his grace,
I would prefer him to a better place.
So farewell to you both.

Gon. Prescribe not us our duties.

Reg.

Let your study

Be, to content your lord; who hath receiv'd you
At fortune's alms. You have obedience scanted,
And well are worth the want that you have wanted.

Cor. Time shall unfold what plaited cunning⁴ hides;
Who covers faults, at last shame them derides.
Well may you prosper!

France.

Come, my fair Cordelia.

[*Exeunt* FRANCE and CORDELIA.

Gon. Sister, it is not a little I have to say, of what
most nearly appertains to us both. I think, our father
will hence to-night.

Reg. That's most certain, and with you; next month
with us.

Gon. You see how full of changes his age is; the ob-
servation we have made of it hath not been little: he
always loved our sister most; and with what poor

⁴ — plaited *cunning* —] i. e. *complicated, involved* cunning.

judgment he hath now cast her off, appears too grossly.

Reg. 'Tis the infirmity of his age: yet he hath evre but slenderly known himself.

Gon. The best and soundest of his time hath been but rash; then must we look to receive from his age, not alone the imperfections of long-engrafted condition⁵, but, therewithal, the unruly waywardness that infirm and cholerick years bring with them.

Reg. Such unconstant starts are we like to have from him, as this of Kent's banishment.

Gon. There is further compliment of leave-taking between France and him. Pray you, let us hit⁶ together: If our father carry authority with such dispositions as he bears, this last surrender of his will but offend us.

Reg. We shall further think of it.

Gon. We must do something, and i'the heat.⁷

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A Hall in the Earl of Gloster's Castle.

Enter EDMUND, with a Letter.

Edm. Thou, nature, art my goddess⁸; to thy law
My services are bound: Wherefore should I
Stand in the plague of custom⁹; and permit

⁵ — of long-engrafted condition,] i. e. of qualities of mind, confirmed by long habit.

⁶ — let us hit —] i. e. let us agree.

⁷ — i'the heat.] i. e. We must strike while the iron's hot.

⁸ *Thou, nature, art my goddess;*] Edmund calls *nature* his goddess. for the same reason that we call a bastard a *natural* son; one, who according to the law of nature, is the child of his father, but according to those of civil society, is *nullius filius*.

⁹ *Stand in the plague of custom;*] Wherefore should I acquiesce, submit tamely to the plagues and injustice of custom?

The curiosity of nations¹ to deprive me,²
 For that I am some twelve or fourteen moon-shines
 Lag of a brother? Why bastard? wherefore base?
 When my dimensions are as well compact,
 My mind as generous, and my shape as true,
 As honest madam's issue? Why brand they us
 With base? with baseness? bastardy? base, base?
 Who, in the lusty stealth of nature, take
 More composition and fierce quality,
 Than doth, within a dull, stale, tired bed,
 Go to the creating a whole tribe of fops,
 Got 'tween asleep and wake?— Well then,
 Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land:
 Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund,
 As to the legitimate: Fine word,—legitimate!
 Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed,
 And my invention thrive, Edmund the base
 Shall top the legitimate. I grow; I prosper:—
 Now, gods, stand up for bastards!

Enter GLOSTER.

Glo. Kent banish'd thus! And France in choler
 parted!
 And the king gone to-night! subscrib'd his power!³
 Confin'd to exhibition!⁴ All this done
 Upon the gad!⁵— Edmund! How now; what news!
Edm. So please your lordship, none.
 [*Putting up the Letter.*]

¹ *The curiosity of nations* —] i. e. the idle, nice distinctions of the world.

² — *to deprive me,*] *To deprive* was, in our author's time, synonymous to *disinherit*.

³ — *subscrib'd his power!*] *To subscribe* in Shakspeare, is to *yield* or *surrender*.

⁴ — *exhibition!*] is *allowance*. The term is yet used in the universities.

⁵ — *All this done*

Upon the gad!] i. e. is done suddenly, or, as before, while the *iron is hot*. A *gad* is an *iron bar*.

Glo. Why so earnestly seek you to put up that letter ?

Edm. I know no news, my lord.

Glo. What paper were you reading ?

Edm. Nothing, my lord.

Glo. No ? what needed then that terrible despatch of it into your pocket ? the quality of nothing hath not such need to hide itself. Let's see : Come, if it be nothing, I shall not need spectacles.

Edm. I beseech you, sir, pardon me : it is a letter from my brother, that I have not all o'er-read ; for so much as I have perus'd, I find it not fit for your overlooking.

Glo. Give me the letter, sir.

Edm. I shall offend, either to detain or give it. The contents, as in part I understand them, are to blame.

Glo. Let's see, let's see.

Edm. I hope, for my brother's justification, he wrote this but as an essay or taste of my virtue.

Glo. [reads.] *This policy, and reverence of age, makes the world bitter to the best of our times ; keeps our fortunes from us, till our oldness cannot relish them. I begin to find an idle and fond⁶ bondage in the oppression of aged tyranny ; who sways, not as it hath power, but as it is suffered. Come to me, that of this I may speak more. If our father would sleep till I waked him, you should enjoy half his revenue for ever, and live the beloved of your brother, Edgar.—Humph —Conspiracy !—Sleep till I waked him,—you should enjoy half his revenue,—My son Edgar ! Had he a hand to write this ? a heart and brain to breed it in ?—When came this to you ? Who brought it ?*

Edm. It was not brought me, my lord, there's the cunning of it ; I found it thrown in at the casement of my closet.

Glo. You know the character to be your brother's ?

⁶ — *idle and fond*—] Weak and foolish.

Edm. If the matter were good, my lord, I durst swear it were his; but, in respect of that, I would fain think it were not.

Glo. It is his.

Edm. It is his hand, my lord; but I hope, his heart is not in the contents.

Glo. Hath he never heretofore sounded you in this business?

Edm. Never, my lord: But I have often heard him maintain it to be fit, that, sons at perfect age, and fathers declining, the father should be as ward to the son, and the son manage his revenue.

Glo. O villain, villain!—His very opinion in the letter!—Abhorred villain! Unnatural, detested, brutish villain! worse than brutish!—Go, sirrah, seek him; I'll apprehend him:—Abominable villain!—Where is he?

Edm. I do not well know, my lord. If it shall please you to suspend your indignation against my brother, till you can derive from him better testimony of his intent, you shall run a certain course; where, if you⁷ violently proceed against him, mistaking his purpose, it would make a great gap in your own honour, and shake in pieces the heart of his obedience. I dare pawn down my life for him, that he hath writ this to feel my affection to your honour⁸, and to no other pretence⁹ of danger.

Glo. Think you so?

Edm. If your honour judge it meet, I will place you where you shall hear us confer of this, and by an auricular assurance have your satisfaction; and that without any further delay than this very evening.

Glo. He cannot be such a monster.

⁷ — where, if you—] *Where*, for *whereas*.

⁸ — to your honour,] It has been already observed that this was the usual mode of address to a lord in Shakspeare's time.

⁹ — pretence —] *Pretence* is design, purpose.

Edm. Nor is not, sure.

Glo. To his father, that so tenderly and entirely loves him. — Heaven and earth! — Edmund, seek him out; wind me into him, I pray you; frame the business after your own wisdom: I would unstate myself, to be in a due resolution.¹

Edm. I will seek him, sir, presently; convey the business² as I shall find means, and acquaint you withal.

Glo. These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us: Though the wisdom of nature³ can reason it thus and thus, yet nature finds itself scourged by the sequent effects: love cools, friendship falls off, brothers divide: in cities, mutinies; in countries, discord; in palaces, treason; and the bond cracked between son and father. This villain of mine comes under the prediction; there's son against father; the king falls from bias of nature; there's father against child. We have seen the best of our time: Machinations, hollowness, treachery, and all ruinous disorders, follow us disquietly to our graves! — Find out this villain, Edmund: it shall lose thee nothing; do it carefully: — And the noble and true-hearted Kent banished! his offence, honesty! — Strange! strange! [*Exit.*]

Edm. This is the excellent foppery of the world! that, when we are sick in fortune, (often the surfeit of our own behaviour,) we make guilty of our disasters, the sun, the moon, and the stars: as if we were villains by necessity; fools, by heavenly compulsion; knaves,

¹ — *I would unstate myself to be in a due resolution.*] i. e. he would give all he possessed to be certain of the truth; for that is the meaning of the words *to be in a due resolution*.

² — *convey the business* —] To *convey* is to *carry through*; in this place it is to *manage artfully*: we say of a juggler, that he has a clean *conveyance*.

³ — *the wisdom of nature* —] That is, though natural philosophy can give account of eclipses, yet we feel their consequences.

thieves, and treachers⁴, by spherical predominance; drunkards, liars, and adulterers, by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on: An admirable evasion of whore-master man, to lay his goatish disposition to the charge of a star! My father compounded with my mother under the dragon's tail: and my nativity was under *ursa major*; so that it follows, I am rough and lecherous. — Tut, I should have been that I am, had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardizing. Edgar —

Enter EDGAR.

and pat he comes, like the catastrophe of the old comedy; My cue is villainous melancholy, with a sigh like Tom o'Bedlam. — O, these eclipses do portend these divisions! *fa, sol, la, mi.*⁵

Edg. How now, brother Edmund? What serious contemplation are you in?

Edm. I am thinking, brother, of a prediction I read this other day, what should follow these eclipses.

Edg. Do you busy yourself with that?

⁴ — and treachers,] for treacherous.

⁵ — O, these eclipses do portend these divisions! *fa, sol, la, mi.*] The commentators, not being musicians, have regarded this passage perhaps as unintelligible nonsense, and therefore left it as they found it, without bestowing a single conjecture on its meaning and import. Shakspeare however shows by the context that he was well acquainted with the property of these syllables in solmization, which imply a series of sounds so unnatural, that ancient musicians prohibited their use. The monkish writers on musick say, *mi contra fa est diabolus*: the interval *fa mi*, including a *tritonus*, or sharp 4th, consisting of three tones, without the intervention of a semi-tone, expressed in the modern scale by the letters F G A B, would form a musical phrase extremely disagreeable to the ear. Edmund, speaking of eclipses as portents and prodigies, compares the dislocation of events, *the times being out of joint*, to the unnatural and offensive sounds, *fa, sol, la, mi.* DR. BURNEY.

Edm. I promise you, the effects he writes of, succeed unhappily; as of unnaturalness between the child and the parent; death, dearth, dissolutions of ancient amities; divisions in state, menaces and maledictions against king and nobles; needless diffidences, banishment of friends, dissipation of cohorts, nuptial breaches, and I know not what.

Edg. How long have you been a sectary astronomical?

Edm. Come, come; when saw you my father last?

Edg. Why, the night gone by.

Edm. Spake you with him?

Edg. Ay, two hours together.

Edm. Parted you in good terms? Found you no displeasure in him, by word, or countenance?

Edg. None at all.

Edm. Bethink yourself, wherein you may have offended him: and at my entreaty, forbear his presence, till some little time hath qualified the heat of his displeasure; which at this instant so rageth in him, that with the mischief of your person it would scarcely allay.

Edg. Some villain hath done me wrong.

Edm. That's my fear. I pray you, have a continent forbearance, till the speed of his rage goes slower; and, as I say, retire with me to my lodging, from whence I will fitly bring you to hear my lord speak: Pray you, go; there's my key: — If you do stir abroad, go armed.

Edg. Armed, brother?

Edm. Brother, I advise you to the best; go armed; I am no honest man, if there be any good meaning towards you: I have told you what I have seen and heard, but faintly; nothing like the image and horror of it: Pray you, away.

Edg. Shall I hear from you anon?

Edm. I do serve you in this business. —

[*Exit* EDGAR.]

A credulous father, and a brother noble,

Whose nature is so far from doing harms,
 That he suspects none ; on whose foolish honesty
 My practices ride easy ! — I see the business. —
 Let me, if not by birth, have lands by wit :
 All with me's meet, that I can fashion fit. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

A Room in the Duke of Albany's Palace.

Enter GONERIL and Steward.

Gon. Did my father strike my gentleman for chiding
 of his fool ?

Stew. Ay, madam.

Gon. By day and night ! he wrongs me ; every hour
 He flashes into one gross crime or other,
 That set us all at odds : I'll not endure it :
 His knights grow riotous, and himself upbraids us
 On every trifle : — When he returns from hunting,
 I will not speak with him ; say, I am sick : —
 If you come slack of former services,
 You shall do well ; the fault of it I'll answer.

Stew. He's coming, madam ; I hear him.

[*Horns within.*

Gon. Put on what weary negligence you please,
 You and your fellows ; I'd have it come to question :
 If he dislike it, let him to my sister,
 Whose mind and mine, I know, in that are one,
 Not to be over-rul'd. Idle old man,
 That still would manage those authorities,
 That he hath given away ! — Now, by my life,
 Old fools are babes again ; and must be us'd
 With checks, as flatteries, — when they are seen abus'd.⁵
 Remember what I have said.

⁵ *Old fools are babes again ; and must be us'd*

With checks, as flatteries, — when they are seen abus'd.] i. e.
 When old fools will not yield to the appliances of persuasion,

Stew. Very well, madam.

Gon. And let his knights have colder looks among
you ;

What grows of it, no matter ; advise your fellows so :
I would breed from hence occasions, and I shall,
That I may speak : — I'll write straight to my sister,
To hold my very course : — Prepare for dinner.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

A Hall in the same.

Enter KENT, disguised.

Kent. If but as well I other accents borrow,
That can my speech diffuse⁶, my good intent
May carry through itself to that full issue
For which I raz'd my likeness. — Now, banish'd Kent,
If thou can'st serve where thou dost stand condemn'd,
(So may it come !) thy master, whom thou lov'st,
Shall find thee full of labours.

Horns within. Enter LEAR, Knights, and Attendants.

Lear. Let me not stay a jot for dinner ; go, get it
ready. [*Exit an Attendant.*] How now, what art thou ?

Kent. A man, sir.

Lear. What dost thou profess ? What would'st thou
with us ?

Kent. I do profess to be no less than I seem ; to
serve him truly, that will put me in trust ; to love him
that is honest ; to converse with him that is wise, and

harsh treatment must be employed to compel their submission.
When *flatteries are seen to be abus'd* by them, *checks must be used*,
as the only means left to subdue them.

⁶ *That can my speech diffuse,*] To *diffuse* speech, signifies to *dis-*
order it, and so to *disguise* it.

says little⁷; to fear judgment; to fight, when I cannot choose; and to eat no fish.⁸

Lear. What art thou?

Kent. A very honest-hearted fellow, and as poor as the king.

Lear. If thou be as poor for a subject, as he is for a king, thou art poor enough. What would'st thou?

Kent. Service.

Lear. Who would'st thou serve?

Kent. You.

Lear. Dost thou know me, fellow?

Kent. No, sir; but you have that in your countenance, which I would fain call master.

Lear. What's that?

Kent. Authority.

Lear. What services canst thou do?

Kent. I can keep honest counsel, ride, run, mar a curious tale in telling it, and deliver a plain message bluntly; that which ordinary men are fit for, I am qualify'd in; and the best of me is diligence.

Lear. How old art thou?

Kent. Not so young, sir, to love a woman for singing; nor so old, to dote on her for any thing: I have years on my back forty-eight.

Lear. Follow me; thou shalt serve me; if I like thee no worse after dinner, I will not part from thee yet. — Dinner, ho, dinner! — Where's my knave? my fool? Go you, and call my fool hither:

Enter Steward.

You, you, sirrah, where's my daughter?

⁷ — to converse with him that is wise, and says little;] To converse signifies immediately and properly to keep company, not to discourse or talk.

⁸ — and to eat no fish.] In queen Elizabeth's time the Papists were esteemed, and with good reason, enemies to the government. Hence the proverbial phrase of, *He's an honest man, and eats no fish*; to signify he's a friend to the government and a Protestant.

Stew. So please you, —

[*Exit.*

Lear. What says the fellow there? Call the clotpoll back. — Where's my fool, ho? — I think the world's asleep. — How now? where's that mongrel?

Knight. He says, my lord, your daughter is not well.

Lear. Why came not the slave back to me, when I call'd him?

Knight. Sir, he answer'd me in the roundest manner, he would not.

Lear. He would not!

Knight. My lord, I know not what the matter is; but, to my judgment, your highness is not entertain'd with that ceremonious affection as you were wont; there's a great abatement of kindness appears, as well in the general dependants, as in the duke himself also, and your daughter.

Lear. Ha! say'st thou so?

Knight. I beseech you, pardon me, my lord, if I be mistaken: for my duty cannot be silent, when I think your highness is wrong'd.

Lear. Thou but remember'st me of mine own conception; I have perceived a most faint neglect of late; which I have rather blamed as mine own jealous curiosity⁹, than as a very pretence¹ and purpose of unkindness: I will look further into't. — But where's my fool? I have not seen him this two days.

Knight. Since my young lady's going into France, sir, the fool hath much pined away.²

Lear. No more of that; I have noted it well. — Go you, and tell my daughter I would speak with her. — Go you, call hither my fool. —

⁹ — *jealous curiosity,*] *Punctilious jealousy.*

¹ — *a very pretence* —] *Pretence* in Shakspeare generally signifies *design*.

² *Since my young lady's going into France, sir, the fool hath much pined away.*] This is an endearing circumstance in the fool's character, and creates such an interest in his favour, as his wit alone might have failed to procure for him. STEEVENS.

Re-enter Steward.

O, you sir, you sir, come you hither: Who am I, sir?

Stew. My lady's father.

Lear. My lady's father! my lord's knave: you whoreson dog! you slave! you cur!

Stew. I am none of this, my lord; I beseech you, pardon me.

Lear. Do you bandy looks with me, you rascal?

[*Striking him.*]

Stew. I'll not be struck, my lord.

Kent. Nor tripped neither; you base foot-ball player.

[*Tripping up his Heels.*]

Lear. I thank thee, fellow; thou servest me, and I'll love thee.

Kent. Come, sir, arise, away; I'll teach you differences; away, away: If you will measure your lubber's length again, tarry: but away: go to; Have you wisdom? so.

[*Pushes the Steward out.*]

Lear. Now, my friendly knave, I thank thee: there's earnest of thy service.

[*Giving KENT Money.*]

Enter Fool.

Fool. Let me hire him too; — Here's my coxcomb.

[*Giving KENT his Cap.*]

Lear. How now, my pretty knave? how dost thou?

Fool. Sirrah, you were best take my coxcomb.

Kent. Why, fool?

Fool. Why? For taking one's part that is out of favour: Nay, an thou canst not smile as the wind sits, thou'lt catch cold shortly: There, take my coxcomb: Why, this fellow has banish'd two of his daughters, and did the third a blessing against his will; if thou follow him, thou must needs wear my coxcomb. — How, now, nuncle? 'Would I had two coxcombs, and two daughters!

Lear. Why, my boy?

Fool. If I gave them all my living³, I'd keep my coxcombs myself: There's mine; beg another of thy daughters.

Lear. Take heed, sirrah; the whip.

Fool. Truth's a dog that must to kennel; he must be whipp'd out, when Lady, the brach⁴, may stand by the fire and stink.

Lear. A pestilent gall to me!

Fool. Sirrah, I'll teach thee a speech.

Lear. Do.

Fool. Mark it, nuncle:

Have more than thou showest,
 Speak less than thou knowest,
 Lend less than thou owest,⁵
 Ride more than thou goest,
 Learn more than thou trowest,⁶
 Set less than thou throwest;
 Leave thy drink and thy whore,
 And keep in-a-door,
 And thou shalt have more
 Than two tens to a score.

Lear. This is nothing, fool.

Fool. Then 'tis like the breath of an unfee'd lawyer; you gave me nothing for't: Can you make no use of nothing, nuncle?

Lear. Why, no, boy; nothing can be made out of nothing.

Fool. Pr'ythee, tell him, so much the rent of his land comes to; he will not believe a fool. [To KENT.]

Lear. A bitter fool!

³ — all my living,] *Living* in Shakspeare's time signified estate, or property.

⁴ — *Lady, the brach,*] *Brach* is a bitch of the hunting kind.

⁵ *Lend less than thou owest,*] That is, do not lend all that thou hast. To owe, in old English, is to possess.

⁶ *Learn more than thou trowest.*] To *trow*, is an old word which signifies to believe.

Fool. Dost thou know the difference, my boy, between a bitter fool and a sweet fool?

Lear. No, lad; teach me.

Fool. That lord, that counsel'd thee
To give away thy land,
Come place him here by me, —
Or do thou for him stand:
The sweet and bitter fool
Will presently appear;
The one in motley here,
The other found out there.

Lear. Dost thou call me fool, boy?

Fool. All thy other titles thou hast given away; that thou wast born with.

Kent. This is not altogether fool, my lord.

Fool. No, 'faith, lords and great men will not let me; if I had a monopoly out, they would have part on't⁴: and ladies too, they will not let me have all fool to myself; they'll be snatching — Give me an egg, nuncle, and I'll give thee two crowns.

Lear. What two crowns shall they be?

Fool. Why, after I have cut the egg i'the middle, and eat up the meat, the two crowns of the egg. When thou clovest thy crown i'the middle, and gavest away both parts, thou borest thine ass on thy back over the dirt: Thou had'st little wit in thy bald crown, when thou gavest thy golden one away. If I speak like myself in this, let him be whipp'd that first finds it so.

*Fools had ne'er less grace in a year;*⁸ [Singing.
For wise men are grown foppish;
And know not how their wits to wear,
Their manners are so apish.

⁷ — if I had a monopoly out, they would have part on't:] A satire on the gross abuses of monopolies at that time; and the corruption and avarice of the courtiers, who commonly went shares with the patentee.

⁸ *Fools had ne'er less grace in a year;*] There never was a time

Lear. When were you wont to be so full of songs,
sirrah?

Fool. I have used it, nuncle, ever since thou madest
thy daughters thy mother: for when thou gavest them
the rod, and put'st down thine own breeches,

Then they for sudden joy did weep, [Singing.
And I for sorrow sung,
That such a king should play bo-peep,
And go the fools among.

Pr'ythee, nuncle, keep a schoolmaster that can teach thy
fool to lie; I would fain learn to lie.

Lear. If you lie, sirrah, we'll have you whipp'd.

Fool. I marvel, what kin thou and thy daughters are:
they'll have me whipp'd for speaking true, thou'lt have
me whipp'd for lying; and, sometimes, I am whipp'd for
holding my peace. I had rather be any kind of thing,
than a fool: and yet I would not be thee, nuncle; thou
hast pared thy wit o'both sides, and left nothing in the
middle: Here comes one o'the parings.

Enter GONERIL.

Lear. How now, daughter? what makes that frontlet⁹
on? Methinks, you are too much of late i' the frown.

Fool. Thou wast a pretty fellow, when thou had'st no
need to care for her frowning; now thou art an O with-
out a figure: I am better than thou art now: I am a
fool, thou art nothing. — Yes, forsooth, I will hold my
tongue; so your face [to GON.] bids me, though you
say nothing. Mum, mum,

when fools were less in favour; and the reason is, that they were
never so little wanted, for wise men now supply their place. Such
I think is the meaning. JOHNSON.

⁹ — *that frontlet* —] A *frontlet* was a forehead-cloth, used for-
merly by ladies at night to render that part smooth. Lear, I suppose,
means to say, that Goneril's brow wa as completely covered by a
frown, as it would be by a frontlet. MALONE.

He that keeps nor crust nor crum,
Weary of all, shall want some. —

That's a sheal'd peascod.¹ [*Pointing to LEAR.*]

Gon. Not only, sir, this your all-licens'd fool,
But other of your insolent retinue
Do hourly carp and quarrel; breaking forth
In rank and not-to-be-endured riots. Sir,
I had thought, by making this well known unto you,
To have found a safe redress; but now grow fearful,
By what yourself too late have spoke and done,
That you protect this course, and put it on²
By your allowance³; which if you should, the fault
Would not 'scape censure, nor the redresses sleep;
Which, in the tender of a wholesome weal,
Might in their working do you that offence,
Which else were shame, that then necessity
Will call discreet proceeding.

Fool. For you trow, nuncle,
The hedge-sparrow fed the cuckoo so long,
That it had its head bit off by its young.

So, out went the candle, and we were left darkling.⁴

Lear. Are you our daughter?

Gon. Come, sir, I would, you would make use of

¹ *That's a sheal'd peascod.*] i. e. Now a mere husk, which contains nothing. The outside of a king remains, but all the intrinsic parts of royalty are gone: he has nothing to give.

² — *put it on* —] i. e. promote, push it forward.

³ *By your allowance*;] By your *approbation*.

⁴ — *were left darkling.*] Shakspeare's fools are certainly copied from the life. The originals whom he copied were no doubt men of quick parts; lively and sarcastick. Though they were licensed to say any thing, it was still necessary to prevent giving offence, that every thing they said should have a playful air: we may suppose therefore that they had a custom of taking off the edge of too sharp a speech by covering it hastily with the end of an old song, or any glib nonsense that came into the mind. I know no other way of accounting for the incoherent words with which Shakspeare often finishes this fool's speeches.

that good wisdom whereof I know you are fraught ; and put away these dispositions, which of late transform you from what you rightly are.

Fool. May not an ass know when the cart draws the horse ? — Whoop, Jug ! I love thee.

Lear. Does any here know me ? — Why this is not Lear : does Lear walk thus ? speak thus ? Where are his eyes ? Either his notion weakens, or his discernings are lethargied. — Sleeping or waking ? — Ha ! sure 'tis not so. — Who is it that can tell me who I am ? — Lear's shadow ? I would learn that ; for by the marks of sovereignty, knowledge, and reason, I should be false persuaded I had daughters. ⁵

Fool. Which they will make an obedient father. ⁶

Lear. Your name, fair gentlewoman ?

Gon. Come, sir ;

This admiration is much o'the favour ⁷
Of other your new pranks. I do beseech you
To understand my purposes aright :
As you are old and reverend, you should be wise :
Here do you keep a hundred knights and squires ;
Men so disorder'd, so debauch'd, and bold,
That this our court, infected with their manners,
Shows like a riotous inn : epicurism and lust
Make it more like a tavern, or a brothel,
Than a grac'd palace. The shame itself doth speak
For instant remedy : Be then desir'd
By her, that else will take the thing she begs,

⁵ — *for by the marks of sovereignty, knowledge, and reason, &c.]* Were I to judge from the marks of sovereignty, of knowledge, or reason, I should be induced to think I had daughters, yet that must be a false persuasion ; — It cannot be.

⁶ *Which they will make an obedient father.]* *Which*, is on this occasion used with two deviations from present language. It is referred, contrary to the rules of grammarians, to the pronoun *I*, and is employed, according to a mode now obsolete, for *whom*, the accusative case of *who*.

⁷ — *o'the favour* —] i. e. of the complexion.

A little to disquantity your train ;
 And the remainder, that shall still depend, ⁸
 To be such men as may besort your age,
 And know themselves and you.

Lear. Darkness and devils ! —
 Saddle my horses ; call my train together. —
 Degenerate bastard ! I'll not trouble thee ;
 Yet have I left a daughter.

Gon. You strike my people ; and your disorder'd
 rabble
 Make servants of their betters.

Enter ALBANY.

Lear. Woe, that too late repents, — O, sir, are you
 come ?
 Is it your will ? [*to ALB.*] Speak, sir. — Prepare my
 horses.

Ingratitude ! thou marble-hearted fiend,
 More hideous, when thou show'st thee in a child,
 Than the sea-monster ! ⁹

Alb. Pray, sir, be patient.

Lear. Detested kite ! thou liest : [*to GONERIL.*]
 My train are men of choice and rarest parts,
 That all particulars of duty know :
 And in the most exact regard support
 The worships of their name. — O most small fault,
 How ugly didst thou in Cordelia show !
 Which, like an engine ¹, wrench'd my frame of nature
 From the fix'd place ; drew from my heart all love,
 And added to the gall. O Lear, Lear, Lear !

⁸ — *still depend,*] *Depend,* for continue in service.

⁹ *Than the sea-monster !]* Mr. Upton observes, that the sea-monster is the *hippopotamus*, the hieroglyphical symbol of impiety and ingratitude.

¹ *like an engine,*] By an engine is meant the *rack*.

Beat at this gate, that let thy folly in,

[*Striking his head.*]

And thy dear judgment out! — Go, go, my people.

Alb. My lord, I am guiltless, as I am ignorant
Of what hath mov'd you.

Lear. It may be so, my lord, — Hear, nature, hear ;
Dear goddess, hear ! Suspend thy purpose, if
Thou didst intend to make this creature fruitful !
Into her womb convey sterility !
Dry up in her the organs of increase ;
And from her derogate body ² never spring
A babe to honour her ! If she must teem,
Create her child of spleen ; that it may live,
And be a thwart disnatur'd torment to her !
Let it stamp wrinkles in her brow of youth ;
With cadent tears ³ fret channels in her cheeks ;
Turn all her mother's pains, and benefits, ⁴
To laughter and contempt ; that she may feel
How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child ! — Away, away ! [Exit.

Alb. Now, gods, that we adore, whereof comes this ?

Gon. Never afflict yourself to know the cause ;
But let his disposition have that scope
That dotage gives it.

Re-enter LEAR.

Lear. What, fifty of my followers, at a clap !
Within a fortnight ?

Alb. What's the matter, sir ?

Lear. I'll tell thee ; — Life and death ! I am asham'd
That thou hast power to shake my manhood thus :

[*To GONERIL.*]

² — from her derogate body —] *Derogate* for *degraded*, *blasted*.

³ — cadent tears —] i. e. falling tears.

⁴ *Turn all her mother's pains, and benefits,*] Her maternal cares and good offices.

That these hot tears, which break from me perforce,
Should make thee worth them. — Blasts and fogs upon
thee !

The untented woundings⁵ of a father's curse
Pierce every sense about thee ! — Old fond eyes,
Bewep this cause again, I'll pluck you out ;
And cast you, with the waters that you lose,
To temper clay. — Ha ! is it come to this ?
Let it be so : — Yet have I left a daughter,
Who, I am sure, is kind and comfortable ;
When she shall hear this of thee, with her nails
She'll flay thy wolfish visage. Thou shalt find,
That I'll resume the shape which thou dost think
I have cast off for ever ; thou shalt, I warrant thee.

[*Exeunt* LEAR, KENT, and Attendants.

Gon. Do you mark that, my lord ?

Alb. I cannot be so partial, Goneril,
To the great love I bear you, —

Gon. Pray you, content. — What, Oswald, ho !
You, sir, more knave than fool, after your master.

[*To the Fool.*

Fool. Nuncle Lear, nuncle Lear, tarry, and take the
fool with thee.

A fox, when one has caught her,
And such a daughter,
Should sure to the slaughter,
If my cap would buy a halter ;
So the fool follows after.

[*Exit.*

Gon. This man hath had good counsel : — A hundred
knights !

'Tis politick, and safe, to let him keep
At point⁶, a hundred knights. Yes, that on every dream,

⁵ *The untented woundings* —] *Untented* wounds, means wounds in their worst state, not having a *tent* in them to digest them : and may possibly signify here such as will not admit of having a tent put into them for that purpose.

⁶ *At point,*] Completely armed, and consequently ready at appointment or command on the slightest notice.

Each buz, each fancy, each complaint, dislike,
He may enguard his dotage with their powers,
And hold our lives in mercy. — Oswald, I say ! —

Alb. Well, you may fear too far.

Gon. Safer than trust : †
Let me still take away the harms I fear,
Not fear still to be taken. I know his heart :
What he hath utter'd, I have writ my sister ;
If she sustain him and his hundred knights,
When I have show'd the unfitness.—How now, Oswald?

Enter Steward.

What, have you writ that letter to my sister ?

Stew. Ay, madam.

Gon. Take you some company, and away to horse :
Inform her full of my particular fear ;
And thereto add such reasons of your own,
As may compact it more.⁷ Get you gone ;
And hasten your return. [*Exit Stew.*] No, no, my lord,
This milky gentleness, and course of yours,
Though I condemn it not, yet, under pardon,
You are much more attask'd⁸ for want of wisdom,
Than prais'd for harmful mildness.

Alb. How far your eyes may pierce, I cannot tell ;
Striving to better, oft we mar what's well.

Gon. Nay, then —

Alb. Well, well ; the event. [*Exeunt.*]

† “ trust too far : ” — MALONE.

⁷ — *compact it more.*] Unite one circumstance with another, so as to make a consistent account.

⁸ — *more attask'd* —] *To be at task*, is to be liable to *reprehension and correction*.

SCENE V.

Court before the same.

Enter LEAR, KENT, and Fool.

Lear. Go you before to Gloster with these letters : acquaint my daughter no further with any thing you know, than comes from her demand out of the letter : If your diligence be not speedy, I shall be there before you.⁹

Kent. I will not sleep, my lord, till I have delivered your letter. [*Exit.*

Fool. If a man's brains were in his heels, were't not in danger of kibes ?

Lear. Ay, boy.

Fool. Then, I pr'ythee, be merry ; thy wit shall not go slip-shod.

Lear. Ha, ha, ha !

Fool. Shalt see, thy other daughter will use thee kindly¹ : for though she's as like this as a crab is like an apple, yet I can tell what I can tell.

Lear. Why, what canst thou tell, my boy ?

Fool. She will taste as like this, as a crab does to a crab. Thou canst tell, why one's nose stands i'the middle of his face ?

Lear. No.

Fool. Why, to keep his eyes on either side his nose ; that what a man cannot smell out, he may spy into.

Lear. I did her wrong :² —

⁹ — *there before you.*] He means the town of Gloster.

¹ — *thy other daughter will use thee kindly :*] The fool uses the word *kindly* here in two senses : it means *affectionately*, and like the rest of her *kind*.

² *I did her wrong :*] He is musing on Cordelia.

Fool. Can'st tell how an oyster makes his shell?

Lear. No.

Fool. Nor I neither; but I can tell why a snail has a house.

Lear. Why?

Fool. Why, to put his head in; not to give it away to his daughters, and leave his horns without a case.

Lear. I will forget my nature. — So kind a father! — Be my horses ready?

Fool. Thy asses are gone about 'em. The reason why the seven stars are no more than seven, is a pretty reason.

Lear. Because they are not eight?

Fool. Yes, indeed: Thou wouldest make a good fool.

Lear. To take it again perforce!³ — Monster ingratitude!

Fool. If thou wert my fool, nuncle, I'd have thee beaten for being old before thy time.

Lear. How's that?

Fool. Thou should'st not have been old, before thou hadst been wise.

Lear. O let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven! Keep me in temper; I would not be mad!

Enter Gentleman.

How now! are the horses ready?

Gent. Ready, my lord.

Lear. Come, boy.

Fool. She that is maid now, and laughs at my departure,
Shall not be a maid long, unless things be cut shorter.

[Exeunt.]

³ *To take it again perforce!*] The subject of Lear's meditation is the resumption of that moiety of the kingdom which he had given to Goneril.

ACT II.

SCENE I. — *A Court within the Castle of the Earl of Gloster.*

Enter EDMUND and CURAN, meeting.

Edm. Save thee, Curan.

Cur. And you, sir. I have been with your father; and given him notice, that the duke of Cornwall, and Regan his duchess, will be here with him to-night.

Edm. How comes that?

Cur. Nay, I know not: You have heard of the news abroad; I mean, the whispered ones, for they are yet but ear-kissing arguments?

Edm. Not I; 'Pray you, what are they?

Cur. Have you heard of no likely wars toward, 'twixt the dukes of Cornwall and Albany?

Edm. Not a word.

Cur. You may then, in time. Fare you well, sir.

[Exit.

Edm. The duke be here to-night? The better! Best! This weaves itself perforce into my business! My father hath set guard to take my brother; And I have one thing, of a queazy question,⁴ Which I must act: — Briefness, and fortune, work! — Brother, a word; — descend: — Brother, I say;

Enter EDGAR.

My father watches: — O sir, fly this place;
Intelligence is given where you are hid;
You have now the good advantage of the night: —

⁴ — queazy question,] *Queazy*, means *delicate*, *unsettled*, what requires to be handled nicely.

Have you not spoken 'gainst the duke of Cornwall?
 He's coming hither; now, i'the night, i'the haste,
 And Regan with him; Have you nothing said
 Upon his party 'gainst the duke of Albany?
 Advise yourself.⁵

Edg. I am sure on't, not a word.

Edm. I hear my father coming, — Pardon me: —
 In cunning, I must draw my sword upon you: —
 Draw: Seem to defend yourself: Now quit you well.
 Yield: come before my father; — Light, ho, here! —
 Fly, brother; — Torches! torches! — So, farewell. —
 [*Exit* EDGAR.]

Some blood drawn on me would beget opinion
 [*Wounds his arm.*]
 Of my more fierce endeavour: I have seen drunkards
 Do more than this in sport. — Father! father!
 Stop, stop! No help?

Enter GLOSTER, and Servants with Torches.

Glo. Now, Edmund, where's the villain?

Edm. Here stood he in the dark, his sharp sword out
 Mumbling of wicked charms, conjuring the moon
 To stand his auspicious mistress: —

Glo. But where is he?

Edm. Look, sir, I bleed.

Glo. Where is the villain, Edmund?

Edm. Fled this way, sir. When by no means he
 could —

Glo. Pursue him, ho! — Go after. — [*Exit* Servant.]
 By no means, — what?

Edm. Persuade me to the murder of your lordship;
 But that I told him, the revenging gods
 'Gainst parricides did all their thunders bend;
 Spoke, with how manifold and strong a bond
 The child was bound to the father: — Sir, in fine,

⁵ Advise *yourself*.] i. e. consider, recollect yourself.

Seeing how loathly opposite I stood
 To his unnatural purpose, in fell motion,
 With his prepared sword, he charges home
 My unprovided body, lanc'd mine arm :
 But when he saw my best alarum'd spirits,
 Bold in the quarrel's right, rous'd to the encounter,
 Or whether gasted⁶ by the noise I made,
 Full suddenly he fled.

Glo. Let him fly far :
 Not in this land shall he remain uncaught ;
 And found — Despatch. — The noble duke my master,
 My worthy arch⁷ and patron, comes to-night :
 By his authority I will proclaim it,
 That he, which finds him, shall deserve our thanks,
 Bringing the murderous coward to the stake ;
 He, that conceals him, death.

Edm. When I dissuaded him from his intent,
 And found him pight to do it, with curst speech⁷
 I threaten'd to discover him : He replied,
*Thou unpossessing bastard ! dost thou think,
 If I would stand against thee, would the reposal
 Of any trust, virtue, or worth, in thee
 Make thy words faith'd ? No : what I should deny,
 (As this I would ; ay, though thou didst produce
 My very character⁹,) I'd turn it all
 To thy suggestion, plot, and damned practice :
 And thou must make a dullard of the world,
 If they not thought the profits of my death
 Were very pregnant and potential spurs
 To make thee seek it.*

Glo. Strong and fasten'd villain !
 Would he deny his letter ? — I never got him.
[Trumpets within.]

⁶ — gasted —] Frighted.

⁷ — arch —] i. e. chief ; a word now used only in composition,
 as arch-angel, arch-duke.

⁸ And found him pight to do it, with curst speech —] Pight is
 pitched, fixed, settled. Curst is severe, harsh, vehemently angry.

⁹ My very character, —] i. e. my very handwriting.

Hark, the duke's trumpets ! I know not why he comes :
 All ports I'll bar ; the villain shall not 'scape ;
 The duke must grant me that : besides, his picture
 I will send far and near, that all the kingdom
 May have due note of him ; and of my land,
 Loyal and natural boy, I'll work the means
 To make thee capable.¹

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, *and* Attendants.

Corn. How now, my noble friend ? since I came
 hither,

(Which I can call but now,) I have heard strange news.

Reg. If it be true, all vengeance comes too short,
 Which can pursue the offender. How dost, my lord ?

Glo. O, madam, my old heart is crack'd, is crack'd !

Reg. What, did my father's godson seek your life !
 He whom my father nam'd ? your Edgar ?

Glo. O, lady, lady, shame would have it hid !

Reg. Was he not companion with the riotous knights
 That tend upon my father ?

Glo. I know not, madam :

It is too bad, too bad. —

Edm. Yes, madam, he was.

Reg. No marvel then, though he were ill affected ;
 'Tis they have put him on the old man's death,
 To have the waste and spoil of his revenues.
 I have this present evening from my sister
 Been well inform'd of them ; and with such cautions,
 That, if they come to sojourn at my house,
 I'll not be there.

Corn. Nor I, assure thee, Regan. —

Edmund, I hear that you have shown your father
 A child-like office.

Edm. 'Twas my duty, sir.

¹ — of my land, —

To make thee capable.] i. e. capable of succeeding to my land.

Glo. He did bewray his practice²; and receiv'd
This hurt you see, striving to apprehend him.

Corn. Is he pursued?

Glo. Ay, my good lord, he is.

Corn. If he be taken, he shall never more
Be fear'd of doing harm: make your own purpose,
How in my strength you please. — For you, Edmund,
Whose virtue and obedience doth this instant
So much commend itself, you shall be ours;
Natures of such deep trust we shall much need;
You we first seize on.

Edm. I shall serve you, sir,
Truly, however else.

Glo. For him I thank your grace.

Corn. You know not why we came to visit you, —

Reg. Thus out of season; threading dark-ey'd night.
Occasions, noble Gloster, of some poize,³
Wherein we must have use of your advice: —
Our father he hath writ, so hath our sister,
Of differences, which I best thought it fit
To answer from our home⁴; the several messengers
From hence attend despatch. Our good old friend,
Lay comforts to your bosom; and bestow
Your needful counsel to our business,
Which craves the instant use.

Glo. I serve you, madam:
Your graces are right welcome. [Exeunt.]

² *He did bewray his practice;*] i. e. *Discover, betray.* *Practice* is always used by Shakspeare for *insidious mischief.*

³ — *of some poize,*] i. e. of some weight or moment.

⁴ — *from our home;*] Not at home, elsewhere.

SCENE II.

*Before Gloster's Castle.**Enter KENT and Steward, severally.*

Stew. Good dawning to thee, friend: Art of the house?

Kent. Ay.

Stew. Where may we set our horses?

Kent. I'the mire.

Stew. Pr'ythee, if thou love me, tell me.

Kent. I love thee not.

Stew. Why, then I care not for thee.

Kent. If I had thee in Lipsbury pinfold, I would make thee care for me.

Stew. Why dost thou use me thus? I know thee not.

Kent. Fellow, I know thee.

Stew. What dost thou know me for?

Kent. A knave; a rascal, an eater of broken meats; a base, proud, shallow, beggarly, three-suited, hundred-pound, filthy worsted-stocking knave; a lily-liver'd, action-taking knave⁵; a whorson, glass-gazing, superserviceable, finical rogue; one-trunk-inheriting slave; one that would'st be a bawd, in way of good service, and art nothing but the composition of a knave, beggar, coward, pander, and the son and heir of a mongrel bitch: one whom I will beat into clamorous whining, if thou deny'st the least syllable of thy addition.⁶

Stew. Why, what a monstrous fellow art thou, thus

⁵ — *action-taking knave*;] i. e. a fellow, who, if you beat him, would bring an action for the assault.

⁶ — *addition*.] i. e. titles. These titles were probably familiar in Shakspeare's time among the lower classes, although their meaning be now lost. The conjectures of the annotators have been but idly employed on them.

to rail on one, that is neither known of thee, nor knows thee?

Kent. What a brazen-faced varlet art thou, to deny thou know'st me? Is it two days ago, since I tripp'd up thy heels, and beat thee, before the king? Draw, you rogue: for, though it be night, the moon shines; I'll make a sop o'the moonshine of you: Draw, you whorson cullionly barber-monger, draw. [*Drawing his Sword.*]

Stew. Away; I have nothing to do with thee.

Kent. Draw, you rascal: you come with letters against the king; and take vanity the puppet's part⁷, against the royalty of her father: Draw, you rogue, or I'll so carbonado your shanks: — draw, you rascal: come your ways.

Stew. Help, ho! murder! help!

Kent. Strike, you slave; stand, rogue, stand; you neat slave⁸, strike. [*Beating him.*]

Stew. Help, ho! murder! murder!

Enter EDMUND, CORNWALL, REGAN, GLOSTER, and Servants.

Edm. How now? What's the matter? Part.

Kent. With you, goodman boy, if you please; come, I'll flesh you; come on, young master.

Glo. Weapons! arms! What's the matter here?

Corn. Keep peace, upon your lives;

He dies, that strikes again: What is the matter?

Reg. The messengers from our sister and the king.

Corn. What is your difference? speak.

Stew. I am scarce in breath, my lord.

Kent. No marvel, you have so bestirr'd your valour. You cowardly rascal, nature disclaims in thee; a tailor made thee.

⁷ — *vanity the puppet's part,*] Alluding to the old *moralities*, in which vanity, iniquity, and other vices, were personified.

⁸ — *neat slave,*] You finical rascal.

Corn. Thou art a strange fellow : a tailor make a man ?

Kent. Ay, a tailor, sir ; a stone-cutter, or a painter, could not have made him so ill, though they had been but two hours at the trade.

Corn. Speak yet, how grew your quarrel ?

Stew. This ancient ruffian, sir, whose life I have spar'd, At suit of his grey beard, —

Kent. Thou whorson zed ! thou unnecessary letter ! — My lord, if you will give me leave, I will tread this unbolted villain⁹ into mortar, and daub the wall of a jakes with him. — Spare my grey beard, you wagtail ?

Corn. Peace, sirrah !

You beastly knave, know you no reverence ?

Kent. Yes, sir ; but anger has a privilege.

Corn. Why art thou angry ?

Kent. That such a slave as this should wear a sword,
Who wears no honesty. Such smiling rogues as these,
Like rats, oft bite the holy cords in twain
Which are too intrinse¹ t'unloose : smooth every passion
That in the natures of their lords rebels ;
Bring oil to fire, snow to their colder moods ;
Renege, affirm, and turn their halcyon² beaks
With every gale and vary of their masters,
As knowing nought, like dogs, but following. —
A plague upon your epileptick visage !³
Smile you my speeches, as I were a fool ?

⁹ — *this unbolted villain* —] *Unbolted* mortar is mortar made of unsifted lime, and therefore to break the lumps it is necessary to tread it by men in wooden shoes. This *unbolted* villain is therefore this coarse rascal.

¹ *Which are too intrinse*] for *intrinsecate*.

² — *and turn their halcyon beaks, &c.*] The *halcyon* is the bird otherwise called the *king-fisher*. The vulgar opinion was, that this bird, if hung up, would *vary* with the wind, and by that means show from what point it blew.

³ — *epileptick visage !*] The frighted countenance of a man ready to fall in a fit.

Goose, if I had you upon Sarum plain,
I'd drive ye cackling home to Camelot.⁴

Corn. What, art thou mad, old fellow?

Glo. How fell you out?

Say that.

Kent. No contraries hold more antipathy,
Than I and such a knave.

Corn. Why dost thou call him knave? What's his
offence?

Kent. His countenance likes me not.⁵

Corn. No more, perchance, does mine, or his, or hers.

Kent. Sir, 'tis my occupation to be plain;
I have seen better faces in my time,
Than stands on any shoulder that I see
Before me at this instant.

Corn. This is some fellow,
Who, having been praised for bluntness, doth affect
A saucy roughness; and constrains the garb,
Quite from his nature⁶: He cannot flatter, he! —
An honest mind and plain, — he must speak truth:
An they will take it, so; if not, he's plain.
These kind of knaves I know, which in this plainness
Harbour more craft, and more corrupter ends,
Than twenty silly ducking observants,
That stretch their duties nicely.

Kent. Sir, in good sooth, in sincere verity,
Under the allowance of your grand aspect,
Whose influence, like the wreath of radiant fire
On flickering Phœbus' front.⁷ —

⁴ — *Camelot.*] was the place where the romances say king Arthur kept his court in the West; so this alludes to some proverbial speech in those romances.

⁵ — *likes me not.*] i. e. pleases me not.

⁶ — *constrains the garb,*

Quite from his nature:] Forces his *outside* or his *appearance* to something totally *different* from his natural disposition.

⁷ *On flickering Phœbus' front.*] To *flicker* is to *flutter*; like the motion of a *flame*.

Corn. What mean'st by this ?

Kent. To go out of my dialect, which you discommend so much. I know, sir, I am no flatterer : he that beguiled you, in a plain accent, was a plain knave : which, for my part, I will not be, though I should win your displeasure to entreat me to it.⁷

Corn. What was the offence you gave him ?

Stew. Never any : †

It pleas'd the king his master, very late,
To strike at me, upon his misconstruction ;
When he, conjunct, and flattering his displeasure,
Tripp'd me behind : being down, insulted, rail'd,
And put upon him such a deal of man,
That worthy'd him, got praises of the king
For him attempting who was self-subdu'd ;
And, in the fleshment⁸ of this dread exploit,
Drew on me here. †

Kent. None of these rogues, and cowards,
But Ajax is their fool.⁹

Corn. Fetch forth the stocks, ho !
You stubborn ancient knave, you reverend braggart,
We'll teach you —

Kent. Sir, I am too old to learn :
Call not your stocks for me : I serve the king ;
On whose employment I was sent to you :
You shall do small respect, show too bold malice
Against the grace and person of my master,
Stocking his messenger.

⁷ *though I should win your displeasure to entreat me to it.*] Though I should win you, displeas'd as you now are, to like me so well as to entreat me to be a knave. JOHNSON.

† " I never gave him any : " — MALONE.

⁸ — *fleshment* — A young soldier is said to flesh his sword; the first time he draws blood with it. *Fleshment*, therefore, is here metaphorically applied to the first act of service, which Kent, in his new capacity, had performed for his master.

* here again." MALONE.

⁹ *But Ajax is their fool.*] i. e. is a fool to them.

Corn. Fetch forth the stocks :

As I've life and honour, there shall he sit till noon.

Reg. Till noon ! till night, my lord ; and all night too.

Kent. Why, madam, if I were your father's dog,
You should not use me so.

Reg. Sir, being his knave, I will.

[*Stocks brought out.*]

Corn. This is a fellow of the self-same colour
Our sister speaks of : — Come, bring away the stocks.

Glo. Let me beseech your grace not to do so :
His fault is much, and the good king his master
Will check him for't : your purpos'd low correction
Is such, as basest and contemned'st wretches,
For pilferings and most common trespasses,
Are punish'd with : the king must take it ill,
That he's so slightly valued in his messenger,
Should have him thus restrain'd.

Corn. I'll answer that.

Reg. My sister may receive it much more worse,
To have her gentleman abus'd, assaulted,
For following her affairs. — Put in his legs. —

[*KENT is put in the Stocks.*¹]

Come, my good lord ; away.

[*Exeunt REGAN and CORNWALL.*]

Glo. I am sorry for thee, friend ; 'tis the duke's pleasure,

Whose disposition, all the world well knows,
Will not be rubb'd, nor stopp'd : I'll entreat for thee.

Kent. Pray, do not, sir : I have watch'd, and travell'd
hard ;

Some time I shall sleep out, the rest I'll whistle.

A good man's fortune may grow out at heels :
Give you good morrow !

Glo. The duke's to blame in this ; 'twill be ill taken.

[*Exit.*]

¹ It should be remembered, that formerly in great houses, as still in some colleges, there were moveable *stocks* for the correction of the servants. FARMER.

Kent. Good king, that must approve the common
saw!²

Thou out of heaven's benediction com'st
To the warm sun!
Approach, thou beacon to this under globe,
That by thy comfortable beams I may
Peruse this letter! — Nothing almost sees miracles,
But misery; — I know, 'tis from Cordelia;
Who hath most fortunately been inform'd
Of my obscured course; and shall find time
From this enormous state, — seeking to give
Losses their remedies: — All weary and o'er-watch'd,
Take vantage, heavy eyes, not to behold
This shameful lodging.
Fortune, good night; smile once more; turn thy wheel!
[*He sleeps.*]

SCENE III.

A part of the Heath.

Enter EDGAR.

Edg. I heard myself proclaim'd;
And, by the happy hollow of a tree,
Escap'd the hunt. No port is free; no place,
That guard, and most unusual vigilance,
Does not attend my taking. While I may scape,
I will preserve myself: and am bethought
To take the basest and most poorest shape,
That ever penury, in contempt of man,
Brought near to beast: my face I'll grime with filth;
Blanket my loins; elf all my hair in knots;³

² *Good king, that must approve the common saw! &c.*] The *saw* alluded to, is in Heywood's *Dialogues on Proverbs*,

“In your running from him to me, *ye runne*

“*Out of God's blessing into the warme sunne.*”

³ — *elf all my hair in knots;*] Hair thus knotted, was vulgarly supposed to be the work of *elves* and fairies in the night.

And with presented nakedness out-face
 The winds, and persecutions of the sky.
 The country gives me proof and precedent
 Of Bedlam beggars⁴, who, with roaring voices,
 Strike in their numb'd and mortified bare arms
 Pins, wooden pricks⁵, nails, sprigs of rosemary;
 And with this horrible object, from low farms,
 Poor pelting villages⁶, sheep-cotes and mills,
 Sometime with lunatick bans⁷, sometime with prayers,
 Enforce their charity. — Poor Turlygood! poor Tom!⁸
 That's something yet; — Edgar I nothing am. [*Exit.*]

SCENE IV.

Before Gloster's Castle.

Enter LEAR, Fool, and Gentleman.

Lear. 'Tis strange, that they should so depart from
 home,

And not send back my messenger.

Gent.

As I learn'd,

The night before there was no purpose in them
 Of this remove.

Kent. Hail to thee, noble master!

Lear. How!

Mak'st thou this shame thy pastime?

Kent.

No, my lord.

⁴ *Of Bedlam beggars,*] These were a species of beggars, such as had been in Bedlam, and when partly recovered and allowed to go out, were licensed to beg. Edgar borrows his dress from them, and the phrases of *Poor Tom*, *Poor Tom is a-cold*.

⁵ — *wooden pricks,*] i. e. skewers.

⁶ *Poor pelting villages,*] beggarly or petty.

⁷ — *lunatick bans,*] To *ban*, is to curse.

⁸ — *poor Turlygood! poor Tom!*] For *Turlupin*. In the fourteenth century there was a new species of gipsies, called *Turlupins*, a fraternity of naked beggars, which ran up and down Europe.

Fool. Ha, ha; look! he wears cruel garters⁹! Horses are tied by the heads; dogs, and bears, by the neck; monkees by the loins, and men by the legs: when a man is over-lusty at legs, then he wears wooden nether-stocks.¹

Lear. What's he, that hath so much thy place mistook
To set thee here?

Kent. It is both he and she,
Your son and daughter.

Lear. No.

Kent. Yes.

Lear. No, I say.

Kent. I say, yea.

Lear. No, no; they would not.

Kent. Yes, they have.

Lear. By Jupiter, I swear, no.

Kent. By Juno, I swear, ay.

Lear. They durst not do't;

They could not, would not do't; 'tis worse than murder,
To do upon respect such violent outrage:²
Resolve me, with all modest haste, which way
Thou might'st deserve, or they impose, this usage,
Coming from us.

Kent. My lord, when at their home,
I did commend your highness' letters to them,
Ere I was risen from the place that show'd
My duty kneeling, came there a reeking post,
Stew'd in his haste, half breathless, panting forth
From Goneril his mistress, salutations;
Deliver'd letters, spite of intermission,³

⁹ — *he wears cruel garters!*] Probably a quibble was here intended. *Crewel* signifies *worsted*, of which stockings, garters, night-caps, &c. are made.

¹ — *wooden nether-stocks.*] *Nether-stocks* is the old word for *stockings*. *Breeches* were at that time called "men's *overstockes*."

² *To do upon respect such violent outrage:*] To be so grossly deficient in respect.

³ — *spite of intermission,*] i. e. *without pause, without suffering time to intervene.*

Which presently they read: on whose contents,
 They summon'd up their meiny⁴, straight took horse;
 Commanded me to follow, and attend
 The leisure of their answer; gave me cold looks:
 And meeting here the other messenger,
 Whose welcome, I perceiv'd, had poison'd mine,
 (Being the very fellow that of late
 Display'd so saucily against your highness,
 Having more man than wit about me, drew;
 He rais'd the house with loud and coward cries:
 Your son and daughter found this trespass worth
 The shame which here it suffers.

Fool. Winter's not gone yet, if the wild-geese fly that way.

Fathers, that wear rags,
 Do make their children blind;

But fathers, that bear bags,
 Shall see their children kind.

Fortune, that arrant whore,
 Ne'er turns the key to the poor. —

But, for all this, thou shalt have as many dolours⁵ for thy daughters, as thou can'st tell in a year.

Lear. O, how this mother⁶ swells up toward my heart!

Hysterica passio! down, thou climbing sorrow,
 Thy elements below! — Where is this daughter?

Kent. With the earl, sir, here within.

Lear. Follow me not;
 Stay here. [Exit.

Gent. Made you no more offence than what you speak of?

⁴ *They summon'd up their meiny,*] *Meiny*, i. e. people; from *mesne*, a house. *Mesnie*, a family, Fr.

⁵ — *dolours* —] Quibble between *dolours* and *dollars*.

⁶ *O, how this mother, &c.*] *Lear* here affects to pass off the swelling of his heart ready to burst with grief and indignation, for the disease called the *Mother*, or *Hysterica passio*, which, in our author's time, was not thought peculiar to women only.

Kent. None.

How chance the king comes with so small a train?

Fool. An thou hadst been set i'the stocks for that question, thou hadst well deserved it.

Kent. Why, fool?

Fool. We'll set thee to school to an ant, to teach thee there's no labouring in the winter. All that follow their noses are led by their eyes, but blind men; and there's not a nose among twenty, but can smell him that's stinking. Let go thy hold, when a great wheel runs down a hill, lest it break thy neck with following it; but the great one that goes up the hill, let him draw thee after. When a wise man gives thee better counsel, give me mine again; I would have none but knaves follow it, since a fool gives it.

That, sir, which serves and seeks for gain,

And follows but for form,

Will pack, when it begins to rain,

And leave thee in the storm.

But I will tarry; the fool will stay,

And let the wise man fly:

The knave turns fool, that runs away;

The fool no knave, perdy.

Kent. Where learn'd you this, fool?

Fool. Not i'the stocks, fool.

Re-enter LEAR, with GLOSTER.

Lear. Deny to speak with me? They are sick? they are weary?

They have travell'd hard to-night? Mere fetches;

The images of revolt and flying off!

Fetch me a better answer.

Glo. My dear lord,

You know the fiery quality of the duke;

How unremoveable and fix'd he is

In his own course.

Lear. Vengeance! plague! death! confusion! —
Fiery? what quality? why, Gloster, Gloster,
I'd speak with the duke of Cornwall, and his wife.

Glo. Well, my good lord, I have inform'd them so.

Lear. Inform'd them! Dost thou understand me,
man?

Glo. Ay, my good lord.

Lear. The king would speak with Cornwall; the
dear father

Would with his daughter speak, commands her service:
Are they inform'd of this? — My breath and
blood! —

Fiery? the fiery duke? — Tell the hot duke, that —

No, but not yet: — may be, he is not well:

Infirmity doth still neglect all office,

Whereto our health is bound; we are not ourselves,

When nature, being oppress'd, commands the mind

To suffer with the body: I'll forbear;

And am fallen out with my more headier will,

To take the indispos'd and sickly fit

For the sound man. — Death on my state! wherefore

[*Looking on* KENT.]

Should he sit here? This act persuades me,

That this remotion⁷ of the duke and her

Is practice only.⁸ Give me my servant forth:

Go, tell the duke and his wife, I'd speak with them,

Now, presently: bid them come forth and hear me,

Or at their chamber door I'll beat the drum,

Till it cry — *Sleep to death.*

Glo. I'd have all well betwixt you. [Exit.]

Lear. O me, my heart, my rising heart! — but,
down.

Fool. Cry to it, nuncle, as the cockney did to the

⁷ — *this remotion* —] From their own house to that of the earl of Gloster.

⁸ *Is practice only.*] *Practice* is, in Shakspeare, and other old writers, used commonly in an ill sense for *unlawful artifice*.

eels, when she put them i'the paste⁸ alive; she rapp'd 'em o'the coxcombs with a stick, and cry'd, *Down, wantons, down*: 'Twas her brother, that, in pure kindness to his horse, butter'd his hay.

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, GLOSTER, and *Servants*.

Lear. Good morrow to you both.

Corn. Hail to your grace!
[*KENT is set at liberty.*]

Reg. I am glad to see your highness.

Lear. Regan, I think you are; I know what reason I have to think so: if thou should'st not be glad, I would divorce me from thy mother's tomb, Sepulch'ring an adultress. — O, are you free?

[*To KENT.*]

Some other time for that. — Beloved Regan, Thy sister's naught: O Regan, she hath tied Sharp-tooth'd unkindness, like a vulture, here, —

[*Points to his Heart.*]

I can scarce speak to thee; thou'lt not believe, Of how deprav'd a quality — O Regan!

Reg. I pray you, sir, take patience; I have hope, You less know how to value her desert, Than she to scant her duty.⁹

Lear. Say, how is that?

Reg. I cannot think, my sister in the least Would fail her obligation: If, sir, perchance, She have restrain'd the riots of your followers, 'Tis on such ground, and to such wholesome end, As clears her from all blame.

Lear. My curses on her!

Reg. O, sir, you are old; Nature in you stands on the very verge

⁸ ——— i'the paste —] The *paste*, or *crust of a pie*, in Shakspeare's time, was called a *coffin*.

⁹ — scant *her duty*,] i. e. be deficient in her duty, but the expression is inaccurate.

Of her confine: you should be rul'd, and led
 By some discretion, that discerns your state
 Better than you yourself: Therefore, I pray you,
 That to our sister you do make return;
 Say, you have wrong'd her, sir.

Lear. Ask her forgiveness?
 Do you but mark how this becomes the house?¹

*Dear daughter, I confess that I am old;
 Age is unnecessary²: on my knees I beg, [Kneeling.
 That you'll vouchsafe me raiment, bed, and food.*

Reg. Good sir, no more; these are unsightly tricks:
 Return you to my sister.

Lear. Never, Regan:
 She hath abated me of half my train;
 Look'd black upon me; struck me with her tongue,
 Most serpent-like, upon the very heart:—
 All the stor'd vengeance of heaven fall
 On her ingrateful top! Strike her young bones,
 You taking airs, with lameness!

Corn. Fye, fye, fye!

Lear. You nimble lightnings, dart your blinding
 flames
 Into her scornful eyes! Infect her beauty,
 You fen-suck'd fogs, drawn by the powerful sun,
 To fall and blast her pride!

Reg. O the blest gods!
 So will you wish on me, when the rash mood's on. †

Lear. No, Regan, thou shalt never have my curse;
 Thy tender-hefted nature³ shall not give
 Thee o'er to harshness; her eyes are fierce, but thine

¹ — the house?] The order of families, duties of relation.

² *Age is unnecessary:*] i. e. Old age has few wants, or it may mean that *old people are useless*.

† "mood is on." MALONE.

³ *Thy tender-hefted nature*—] *Hefted* seems to mean the same as *heaved*. *Tender-hefted*, i. e. whose bosom is agitated by tender passions.

Do comfort, and not burn : 'Tis not in thee
 To grudge my pleasures, to cut off my train,
 To bandy hasty words, to scant my sizes,⁴
 And, in conclusion, to oppose the bolt.
 Against my coming in : thou better know'st
 The offices of nature, bond of childhood,
 Effects of courtesy, dues of gratitude ;
 Thy half o'the kingdom hast thou not forgot,
 Wherein I thee endow'd.

Reg. Good sir, to the purpose,
 [*Trumpets within.*]

Lear. Who put my man i'the stocks ?

Corn. What trumpet's that ?

Enter Steward.

Reg. I know't, my sister's : this approves her letter,
 That she would soon be here. — Is your lady come ?

Lear. This is a slave, whose easy-borrow'd pride
 Dwells in the fickle grace of her he follows : —
 Out, varlet, from my sight !

Corn. What means your grace ?

Lear. Who stock'd my servant ? Regan, I have good
 hope
 Thou didst not know of't. — Who comes here ? O,
 heavens,

Enter GONERIL.

If you do love old men, if your sweet sway
 Allow obedience⁵, if yourselves are old,
 Make it your cause ; send down, and take my part ! —

⁴ ——— *to scant my sizes,*] To contract my allowances or proportions settled. *Sizes* are certain portions of bread, beer, or other victuals, which in publick societies are set down to the account of particular persons : a word still used in colleges.

⁵ Allow *obedience,*] Allow sometimes signifies *approve.*

Art not asham'd to look upon this beard?—

[To GONERIL.

O, Regan, wilt thou take her by the hand?

Gon. Why not by the hand, sir? How have I offended?

All's not offence, that indiscretion finds,⁶

And dotage terms so.

Lear. O, sides, you are too tough!
Will you yet hold?—How came my man i'the stocks?

Corn. I set him there, sir: but his own disorders
Deserv'd much less advancement.⁷

Lear. You! did you?

Reg. I pray you, father, being weak, seem so.⁸
If, till the expiration of your month,
You will return and sojourn with my sister,
Dismissing half your train, come then to me;
I am now from home, and out of that provision
Which shall be needful for your entertainment.

Lear. Return to her, and fifty men dismiss'd?
No, rather I abjure all roofs, and choose
To wage against the enmity o'the air;
To be a comrade with the wolf and owl,—
Necessity's sharp pinch!—Return with her?
Why, the hot-blooded France, that dowerless took
Our youngest born, I could as well be brought
To knee his throne, and, squire-like, pension beg
To keep base life afoot:—Return with her?
Persuade me rather to be slave and sumpter⁹
To this detested groom. [Looking on the Steward.]

Gon. At your choice, sir.

⁶ — *that indiscretion finds,*] Or *thinks*.

⁷ — *less advancement.*] A still worse or more disgraceful situation.

⁸ — *being weak, seem so.*] Since *you are weak*, be content to think yourself weak.

⁹ — *and sumpter* —] *Sumpter* is a horse that carries necessaries on a journey, though sometimes used for the case to carry them in.

Lear. I pr'ythee, daughter, do not make me mad ;
 I will not trouble thee, my child ; farewell :
 We'll no more meet, no more see one another :—
 But yet thou art my flesh, my blood, my daughter ;
 Or, rather, a disease that's in my flesh,
 Which I must needs call mine : thou art a boil,
 A plague-sore, an embossed carbuncle,¹
 In my corrupted blood. But I'll not chide thee ;
 Let shame come when it will, I do not call it ;
 I do not bid the thunder-bearer shoot,
 Nor tell tales of thee to high-judging Jove :
 Mend, when thou canst ; be better, at thy leisure :
 I can be patient ; I can stay with Regan,
 I, and my hundred knights.

Reg. Not altogether so, sir ;
 I look'd not for you yet, nor am provided
 For your fit welcome : Give ear, sir, to my sister ;
 For those that mingle reason with your passion,
 Must be content to think you old, and so—
 But she knows what she does.

Lear. Is this well spoken now ?

Reg. I dare avouch it, sir : What, fifty followers ?
 Is it not well ? What should you need of more ?
 Yea, or so many ? sith that both charge and danger
 Speak 'gainst so great a number ? How, in one house,
 Should many people, under two commands,
 Hold amity ? 'Tis hard : almost impossible.

Gon. Why might not you, my lord, receive attendance
 From those that she call servants, or from mine ?

Reg. Why not, my lord ? If then they chanc'd to
 slack you,
 We could control them : If you will come to me,
 (For now I spy a danger,) I entreat you
 To bring but five-and-twenty ; to no more
 Will I give place, or notice.

Lear. I gave you all —

¹ — embossed carbuncle,] Embossed is, swelling, protuberant.

Reg. And in good time you gave it.

Lear. Made you my guardians, my depositaries;
But kept a reservation to be follow'd
With such a number: What, must I come to you
With five-and-twenty, Regan? said you so?

Reg. And speak it again, my lord; no more with me.

Lear. Those wicked creatures yet do look well-
favour'd,

When others are more wicked; not being the worst,
Stands in some rank of praise:—I'll go with thee;

[To GONERIL.

Thy fifty yet doth double five-and-twenty,
And thou art twice her love.

Gon. Hear me, my lord;
What need you five-and-twenty, ten, or five,
To follow in a house, where twice so many
Have a command to tend you?

Reg. What need one?

Lear. O, reason not the need: our basest beggars
Are in the poorest thing superfluous:
Allow not nature more than nature needs,
Man's life is cheap as beast's: thou art a lady;
If only to go warm were gorgeous,
Why, nature needs not what thou gorgeous wear'st,
Which scarcely keeps thee warm.—But, for true need,—
You heavens, give me that patience, patience I need!
You see me here, you gods, a poor old man,
As full of grief as age; wretched in both!
If it be you that stir these daughters' hearts
Against their father, fool me not so much
To bear it tamely; touch me with noble anger!
O, let not women's weapons, water-drops,
Stain my man's cheeks!—No, you unnatural hags,
I will have such revenges on you both,
That all the world shall—I will do such things,—
What they are, yet I know not; but they shall be
The terrors of the earth. You think, I'll weep;
No, I'll not weep:—

I have full cause of weeping; but this heart
Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws,
Or ere I'll weep:—O, fool, I shall go mad!

[*Exeunt* LEAR, GLOSTER, KENT, and Fool.]

Corn. Let us withdraw, 'twill be a storm.

[*Storm heard at a distance.*]

Reg. This house
Is little; the old man and his people cannot
Be well bestow'd.

Gon. 'Tis his own blame; he hath put †
Himself from rest, and must needs taste his folly.

Reg. For his particular, I'll receive him gladly,
But not one follower.

Gon. So am I purpos'd.
Where is my lord of Gloster?

Re-enter GLOSTER.

Corn. Follow'd the old man forth:—he is return'd.

Glo. The king is in high rage.

Corn. Whither is he going?

Glo. He calls to horse; but will I know not whither.

Corn. 'Tis best to give him way; he leads himself.

Gon. My lord, entreat him by no means to stay.

Glo. Alack, the night comes on, and the bleak winds
Do sorely ruffle; for many miles about
There's scarce a bush.

Reg. O, sir, to wilful men,
The injuries, that they themselves procure,
Must be their schoolmasters: Shut up your doors;
He is attended with a desperate train;
And what they may incense him to, being apt
To have his ear abus'd, wisdom bids fear.

Corn. Shut up your doors, my lord; 'tis a wild night;
My Regan counsels well: come out o'the storm.

[*Exeunt.*]

† " 'Tis his own blame; hath put himself," &c.] — MALONE.

ACT III.

SCENE I.— *A Heath.*

A Storm is heard, with Thunder and Lightning. Enter KENT, and a Gentleman, meeting.

Kent. Who's here, beside foul weather?

Gent. One minded like the weather, most unquietly.

Kent. I know you; Where's the king?

Gent. Contending with the fretful element:
Bids the wind blow the earth into the sea,
Or swell the curled waters 'bove the main,
That things might change, or cease: tears his white hair;
Which the impetuous blasts, with eyeless rage,
Catch in their fury, and make nothing of:
Strives in his little world of man to out-scorn
The to-and-fro-conflicting wind and rain.
This night, wherein the cub-drawn bear² would couch,
The lion and the belly-pinched wolf
Keep their fur dry, unbonneted he runs,
And bids what will take all.

Kent. But who is with him?

Gent. None but the fool; who labours to out-jest
His heart-struck injuries.

Kent. Sir, I do know you;
And dare, upon the warrant of my art,³
Commend a dear thing to you. There is division,
Although as yet the face of it be cover'd
With mutual cunning, 'twixt Albany and Cornwall;
Who have (as who have not, that their great stars
Thron'd and set high?) servants, who seem no less;

² — the cub-drawn bear —] i. e. whose dugs are drawn dry by its young. For no animals leave their dens by night but for prey.

³ — the warrant of my art,] On the strength of my skill in physiognomy.

Which are to France the spies and speculations
 Intelligent of our state; what hath been seen,
 Either in snuffs and packings⁴ of the dukes;
 Or the hard rein which both of them have borne
 Against the old kind king; or something deeper,
 Whereof, perchance, these are but furnishings;⁵
 But, true it is, from France there comes a power
 Into this scatter'd kingdom; who already,
 Wise in our negligence, have secret feet⁶
 In some of our best ports, and are at point
 To show their open banner. — Now to you:
 If on my credit you dare build so far
 To make your speed to Dover, you shall find
 Some that will thank you, making just report
 Of how unnatural and bemadding sorrow
 The king hath cause to plain.
 I am a gentleman of blood and breeding;
 And, from some knowledge and assurance, offer
 This office to you.

Gent. I will talk further with you.

Kent.

No, do not.

For confirmation that I am much more
 Than my out wall, open this purse, and take
 What it contains: If you shall see Cordelia,
 (As fear not but you shall,) show her this ring;
 And she will tell you who your fellow is
 That yet you do not know. Fye on this storm!
 I will go seek the king.

Gent. Give me your hand: Have you no more to say?

Kent. Few words, but, to effect, more than all yet;
 That, when we have found the king, (in which your pain
 That way; I'll this:) he that first lights on him,
 Holla the other.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

⁴ *Either in snuffs and packings —*] *Snuffs* are dislikes, and *packings* underhand contrivances.

⁵ — *are but furnishings;*] Or *samples*.

⁶ *have secret feet —*] i. e. *secret footing*.

SCENE II.

Another part of the Heath. Storm continues.

Enter LEAR and Fool.

Lear. Blow, wind, and crack your cheeks! rage!
blow!

You cataracts, and hurricanoes, spout
Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the cocks!
You sulphurous and thought-executing⁷ fires,
Vaunt couriers⁸ to oak-cleaving thunder-bolts,
Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking thunder,
Strike flat the thick rotundity o'the world!
Crack nature's moulds, all germens spill at once,
That make ingrateful man!

Fool. O, nuncle, 'court holy-water⁹ in a dry house is
better than this rain-water out o'door. Good nuncle, in,
and ask thy daughters' blessing; here's a night pities
neither wise men nor fools.

Lear. Rumble thy bellyfull! Spit, fire! spout, rain!
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters:
I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness,
I never gave you kingdom, call'd you children,
You owe me no subscription¹; why then let fall
Your horrible pleasure; here I stand, your slave,
A poor, infirm, weak, and despis'd old man:—
But yet I call you servile ministers,
That have with two pernicious daughters join'd
Your high-engender'd battles, 'gainst a head
So old and white as this. O! O! 'tis foul!

⁷ — *thought-executing* —] Doing execution with rapidity equal to thought.

⁸ *Vaunt couriers* —] *Avant couriers*, Fr. This phrase is not unfamiliar to other writers of Shakspeare's time. It originally meant the foremost scouts of an army.

⁹ — *court holy-water* —] Proverbial for *fair words*.

¹ *You owe me no subscription*;] *Subscription* for obedience.

Fool. He that has a house to put his head in, has a good head-piece.

*The cod-piece that will house,
Before the head has any,
The head and he shall louse; —
So beggars marry many.*

*The man that makes his toe
What he his heart should make,
Shall of a corn cry woe,
And turn his sleep to wake.*

— for there was never yet fair woman, but she made mouths in a glass.

Enter KENT.

Lear. No, I will be the pattern of all patience, I will say nothing.

Kent. Who's there?

Fool. Marry, here's grace, and a cod-piece; that's a wise man, and a fool.

Kent. Alas, sir, are you here? things that love night, Love not such nights as these; the wrathful skies Gallow² the very wanderers of the dark, And make them keep their caves: Since I was man, Such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder, Such groans of roaring wind and rain, I never Remember to have heard: man's nature cannot carry The affliction, nor the fear.

Lear. Let the great gods,
That keep this dreadful pother o'er our heads,
Find out their enemies now. Tremble, thou wretch,
That hast within thee undivulged crimes,
Unwhipp'd of justice: Hide thee, thou bloody hand;

² — Gallow —] signifies to scare or frighten.

Thou perjur'd, and thou simular man of virtue
 Thou art incestuous : Caitiff, to pieces shake,
 That under covert and convenient seeming
 Hast practis'd on man's life ! — Close pent-up guilts,
 Rive your concealing continents³, and cry
 These dreadful summoners grace⁴. — I am a man,
 More sinn'd against, than sinning.

Kent. Alack, bare-headed !
 Gracious my lord, hard by here is a hovel ;
 Some friendship will it lend you 'gainst the tempest ;
 Repose you there : while I to this hard house,
 (More hard than is the stone whereof 'tis rais'd ;
 Which even but now, demanding after you,
 Denied me to come in,) return, and force
 Their scant'd courtesy.

Lear. My wits begin to turn. —
 Come on, my boy ; How dost, my boy ? Art cold ?
 I am cold myself. — Where is this straw, my fellow ?
 The art of our necessities is strange,
 That can make vile things precious. Come, your hovel,
 Poor fool and knave, I have one part in my heart
 That's sorry yet for thee.

Fool. *He that has a little tiny wit, —
 With heigh, ho, the wind and the rain, —
 Must make content with his fortunes fit ;
 For the rain it raineth every day.*

Lear. True, my good boy. — Come, bring us to this
 hovel. [*Exeunt LEAR and KENT.*]

Fool. This is a brave night to cool a courtezan. —
 I'll speak a prophecy ere I go :

³ — *concealing continents,*] *Continent* stands for that which contains or incloses.

⁴ *These dreadful summoners grace.*] *Summoners* are here the officers that summon offenders before a proper tribunal.

When priests are more in word than matter ;
When brewers mar their malt with water ;
When nobles are their tailors' tutors ;
No hereticks burn'd, but wenches' suitors ;
When every case in law is right ;
No squire in debt, nor no poor knight ;
When slanders do not live in tongues ;
Nor cutpurses come not to throngs ;
When usurers tell their gold i'the field ;
And bawds and whores do churches build ; —
Then shall the realm of Albion
Come to great confusion.
Then comes the time, who lives to see't,
That going shall be us'd with feet.

This prophecy Merlin shall make ; for I live before his
time. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

A Room in Gloster's Castle.

Enter GLOSTER and EDMUND.

Glo. Alack, alack, Edmund, I like not this unnatural dealing : When I desired their leave that I might pity him, they took from me the use of mine own house ; charged me, on pain of their perpetual displeasure, neither to speak of him, entreat for him, nor any way sustain him.

Edm. Most savage, and unnatural !

Glo. Go to ; say you nothing : There is division between the dukes ; and a worse matter than that : I have received a letter this night ; — 'tis dangerous to be spoken ; — I have locked the letter in my closet : these injuries the king now bears will be revenged home ; there is part of a power already footed : we must incline to

the king. I will seek him, and privily relieve him : go you, and maintain talk with the duke, that my charity be not of him perceived : If he ask for me, I am ill, and gone to bed. If I die for it, as no less is threatened me, the king my old master must be relieved. There is some strange thing toward, Edmund ; pray you, be careful. *[Exit.]*

Edm. This courtesy, forbid thee, shall the duke Instantly know ; and of that letter too : —
This seems a fair deserving, and must draw me
That which my father loses ; no less than all :
The younger rises, when the old doth fall. *[Exit.]*

SCENE IV.

A part of the Heath, with a Hovel.

Enter LEAR, KENT, and Fool.

Kent. Here is the place, my lord ; good my lord,
enter :

The tyranny of the open night's too rough
For nature to endure. *[Storm still.]*

Lear. Let me alone.

Kent. Good my lord, enter here.

Lear. Wilt break my heart ?

Kent. I'd rather break mine own : Good my lord,
enter.

Lear. Thou think'st 'tis much, that this contentious
storm

Invades us to the skin : so 'tis to thee ;
But where the greater malady is fix'd,
The lesser is scarce felt. Thou'dst shun a bear :
But if thy flight lay toward the raging sea,
Thou'dst meet the bear i'the mouth. When the mind's
free,
The body's delicate : the tempest in my mind

Doth from my senses take all feeling else,
 Save what beats there. — Filial ingratitude !
 Is it not as this mouth should tear this hand,
 For lifting food to't? — But I will punish home : —
 No, I will weep no more. — In such a night
 To shut me out ! — Pour on ; I will endure : —
 In such a night as this ! O Regan, Goneril ! —
 Your old kind father, whose frank heart gave all, — †
 O, that way madness lies ; let me shun that ;
 No more of that, —

Kent. Good my lord, enter here.

Lear. Pr'ythee, go in thyself ; seek thine own ease ;
 This tempest will not give me leave to ponder
 On things would hurt me more. — But I'll go in :
 In, boy ; go first. — [*To the Fool.*] You houseless po-
 verty, —

Nay, get thee in. I'll pray, and then I'll sleep. —

[*Fool goes in.*]

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
 That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
 How shall your houseless heads, and unfed sides,
 Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you
 From seasons such as these ? O, I have ta'en
 Too little care of this ! Take physick, pomp ;
 Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel ;
 That thou may'st shake the superflux to them,
 And show the heavens more just.

Edg. [*within.*] Fathom and half, fathom and half !
 Poor Tom !

[*The Fool runs out from the Hovel.*]

Fool. Come not in here, nuncle, here's a spirit.
 Help me, help me !

Kent. Give me thy hand. — Who's there ?

Fool. A spirit, a spirit ; he says his name's poor
 Tom.

† — “ gave you all,” — MALONE.

Kent. What art thou that dost grumble there i'the
straw?
Come forth.

Enter EDGAR, disguised as a Madman.

Edg. Away! the foul fiend follows me! —
Through the sharp hawthorn blows the cold wind. —
Humph! go to thy cold bed, and warm thee.

Lear. Hast thou given all to thy two daughters?
And art thou come to this?

Edg. Who gives any thing to poor Tom? whom the
foul fiend hath led through fire and through flame,
through ford and whirlpool, over bog and quagmire;
that hath laid knives under his pillow, and halters in
his pew; set ratsbane by his porridge; made him proud
of heart, to ride on a bay trotting-horse over four-inched
bridges, to course his own shadow for a traitor: — Bless
thy five wits⁵! Tom's a-cold. — O, do de, do de, do
de. — Bless thee from whirlwinds, star-blasting, and
taking⁶! Do poor Tom some charity, whom the foul
fiend vexes: There could I have him now, — and there,
— and there, — and there again, and there.

[*Storm continues.*]

Lear. What, have his daughters brought him to this
pass? —
Could'st thou save nothing? Did'st thou give them all?
Fool. Nay, he reserved a blanket, else we had been
all shamed.

Lear. Now, all the plagues that in the pendulous air
Hang fated o'er men's faults, light on thy daughters!

Kent. He hath no daughters, sir.

Lear. Death, traitor! nothing could have subdu'd
nature

⁵ — *Bless thy five wits!*] So the five senses were called by our
old writers.

⁶ — *taking!*] To *take* is to blast, or strike with malignant
influence.

To such a lowness, but his unkind daughters. —
 Is it the fashion, that discarded fathers
 Should have thus little mercy on their flesh?
 Judicious punishment! 'twas this flesh begot
 Those pelican daughters.⁷

Edg. Pillicock sat on pillicock's-hill; —
 Halloo, halloo, loo, loo!

Fool. This cold night will turn us all to fools and madmen.

Edg. Take heed o'the foul fiend: Obey thy parents; keep thy word justly; swear not; commit not with man's sworn spouse; set not thy sweet heart on proud array: Tom's a-cold.

Lear. What hast thou been?

Edg. A serving-man, proud in heart and mind; that curled my hair; wore gloves in my cap⁸, served the lust of my mistress's heart, and did the act of darkness with her; swore as many oaths as I spake words, and broke them in the sweet face of heaven: one, that slept in the contriving of lust, and waked to do it: Wine loved I deeply; dice, dearly; and in woman, out-paramoured the Turk: False of heart, light of ear⁹, bloody of hand; Hog in sloth, fox in stealth, wolf in greediness, dog in madness, lion in prey. Let not the creaking of shoes, nor the rustling of silks, betray thy poor heart to women: Keep thy foot out of brothels, thy hand out of plackets, thy pen from lenders' books, and defy the foul fiend. — Still through the hawthorn blows the cold wind: Says suum, mun, ha no nonny, dolphin my boy, my boy, sessa; let him trot by. [*Storm still continues.*]

Lear. Why, thou were better in thy grave, than to answer with thy uncovered body this extremity of the

⁷ — *pelican daughters.*] The young pelican is fabled to suck the mother's blood.

⁸ — *wore gloves in my cap,*] i. e. his mistress's favours: which was the fashion of that time.

⁹ — *light of ear,*] *Credulous of evil,* ready to receive malicious reports.

skies. — Is man no more than this? Consider him well: Thou owest the worm no silk, the beast no hide, the sheep no wool, the cat no perfume: — Ha! here's three of us are sophisticated! — Thou art the thing itself: unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal as thou art. — Off, off, you lendings: — Come; unbutton here. —

[*Tearing off his Clothes.*]

Fool. Pr'ythee, nuncle, be contented; this is a naughty night to swim in. — Now a little fire in a wild field were like an old lecher's heart; a small spark, all the rest of his body cold. — Look, here comes a walking fire.

Edg. This is the foul fiend Flibbertigibbet: he begins at curfew, and walks till the first cock; he gives the web and the pin¹, squints the eye, and makes the hare-lip; mildews the white wheat, and hurts the poor creature of earth.

*Saint Withold*² *footed thrice the wold;*
He met the night-mare, and her nine-fold;
Bid her alight,
And her troth plight,
And, aroint thee, witch, aroint thee!

Kent. How fares your grace?

Enter GLOSTER, with a Torch.

Lear. What's he?

Kent. Who's there? What is't you seek?

Glo. What are you there? Your names?

¹ — *web and the pin,*] Diseases of the eye.

² *Saint Withold, &c.*] i. e. Saint Withold traversing the *wold* or *downs*, met the night-mare; he obliged her to *alight* from those persons whom she rides, and *plight her troth* to do no more mischief. This is taken from a story of him in his legend. *Ninefold* means her nine familiars.

Edg. Poor Tom ; that eats the swimming frog, the toad, the tadpole, the wall-newt, and the water³ ; that in the fury of his heart, when the foul fiend rages, eats cow-dung for sallets ; swallows the old rat, and the ditch-dog ; drinks the green mantle of the standing pool ; who is whipped from tything to tything⁴, and stocked, punished, and imprisoned ; who hath had three suits to his back, six shirts to his body, horse to ride, and weapon to wear, —

*But mice, and rats, and such small deer,
Have been Tom's food for seven long year.*

Beware my follower : — Peace, Smolkin ; peace, thou fiend !

Glo. What, hath your grace no better company ?

Edg. The prince of darkness is a gentleman ;
Modo he's call'd, and Mahu.⁵

Glo. Our flesh and blood, my lord, is grown so vile,
That it doth hate what gets it.

Edg. Poor Tom's a-cold.

Glo. Go in with me ; my duty cannot suffer
To obey in all your daughters' hard commands :
Though their injunction be to bar my doors,
And let this tyrannous night take hold upon you ;
Yet have I ventur'd to come seek you out,
And bring you where both fire and food is ready.

Lear. First let me talk with this philosopher : —
What is the cause of thunder ?

Kent. Good my lord, take his offer ;
Go into the house.

³ — *the wall-newt, and the water ;] i. e. the water-newt.*

⁴ — *whipped from tything to tything,] A tything is a division of a place, a district ; the same in the country, as a ward in the city. In the Saxon times every hundred was divided into tythings.*

⁵ *Modo he's call'd, and Mahu.] The names of pretended spirits.*

Lear. I'll talk a word with this same learned Theban:—
What is your study?

Edg. How to prevent the fiend, and to kill vermin.

Lear. Let me ask you one word in private.

Kent. Impórtune him once more to go, my lord,
His wits begin to unsettle.

Glo. Can'st thou blame him?
His daughters seek his death:— Ah, that good Kent!—
He said it would be thus:— Poor banish'd man!—
Thou say'st, the king grows mad; I'll tell thee, friend,
I am almost mad myself: I had a son,
Now outlaw'd from my blood: he sought my life,
But lately, very late; I lov'd him, friend,—
No father his son dearer: true to tell thee,

[*Storm continues.*]

The grief hath craz'd my wits. What a night's this!
I do beseech your grace, —

Lear. O, cry you mercy,
Noble philosopher, your company.

Edg. Tom's a-cold.

Glo. In, fellow, there, to the hovel: keep thee warm.

Lear. Come, let's in all.

Kent. This way, my lord.

Lear. With him;
I will keep still with my philosopher.

Kent. Good my lord, sooth him; let him take the fellow.

Glo. Take him you on.

Kent. Sirrah, come on; go along with us.

Lear. Come, good Athenian.

Glo. No words, no words:
Hush.

Edg. *Child Rowland*⁶ to the dark tower came,
His word was still, — Fie, foh, and fum,
I smell the blood of a British man. [Exeunt.]

⁶ *Child Rowland*—] The word *child* (however it came to have this sense) is often applied to *knights*, &c. in old historical songs and romances.

SCENE V.

A Room in Gloster's Castle.

Enter CORNWALL and EDMUND.

Corn. I will have my revenge, ere I depart his house.

Edm. How, my lord, I may be censured, that nature thus gives way to loyalty, something fears me to think of.

Corn. I now perceive, it was not altogether your brother's evil disposition made him seek his death; but a provoking merit, set a-work by a reproveable badness in himself.

Edm. How malicious is my fortune, that I must repent to be just! This is the letter he spoke of, which approves him an intelligent party to the advantages of France. O heavens! that this treason were not, or not I the detector!

Corn. Go with me to the duchess.

Edm. If the matter of this paper be certain, you have mighty business in hand.

Corn. True, or false, it hath made thee earl of Gloster. Seek out where thy father is, that he may be ready for our apprehension.

Edm. [*aside.*] If I find him comforting the king, it will stuff his suspicion more fully. — I will persevere in my course of loyalty, though the conflict be sore between that and my blood.

Corn. I will lay trust upon thee; and thou shalt find a dearer father in my love. [*Excunt.*

SCENE VI.

A Chamber in a Farm-House, adjoining the Castle.

Enter GLOSTER, LEAR, KENT, Fool, and EDGAR.

Glo. Here is better than the open air; take it thankfully: I will piece out the comfort with what addition I can: I will not be long from you.

Kent. All the power of his wits has given way to his impatience. — The gods reward your kindness!

[Exit GLOSTER.

Edg. Frateretto calls me; and tells me, Nero is an angler in the lake of darkness. Pray, innocent⁷, and beware the foul fiend.

Fool. Pr'ythee, nuncle, tell me, whether a madman be a gentleman, or a yeoman?

Lear. A king, a king!

Fool. No; he's a yeoman, that has a gentleman to his son; for he's a mad yeoman, that sees his son a gentleman before him.

Lear. To have a thousand with red burning spits
Come hizzing[†] in upon them: —

Edg. The foul fiend bites my back.

Fool. He's mad, that trusts in the tameness of a wolf,
a horse's health, a boy's love, or a whore's oath.

Lear. It shall be done, I will arraign them straight:—
Come, sit thou here, most learned justicer; —

[To EDGAR.

Thou, sapient sir, sit here. *[To the Fool.]* — Now, you
she foxes! —

Edg. Look, where he stands and glares! —
Wantest thou eyes at trial, madam?

⁷ — *Pray, innocent,*] Perhaps he is here addressing the *fool*.
Fools were anciently called *innocents*.

[†] “whizzing” — MALONE.

Come o'er the bourn⁸, Bessy, to me: —

Fool. *Her boat hath a leak,
And she must not speak
Why she dares not come over to thee.*

Edg. The foul fiend haunts poor Tom in the voice of a nightingale. *Hopdance* cries in Tom's belly for two white herring. Croak not, black angel; I have no food for thee.

Kent. How do you, sir? Stand you not so amaz'd: Will you lie down and rest upon the cushions?

Lear. I'll see their trial first: — Bring in the evidence. —

Thou robed man of justice, take thy place; —

[*To EDGAR.*

And thou, his yoke-fellow of equity, [*To the Fool.*

Bench by his side: — You are of the commission,

Sit you too.

[*To KENT.*

Edg. Let us deal justly.

Sleepest, or wakest thou, jolly shephér?

Thy sheep be in the corn;

And for one blast of thy minikin mouth,

Thy sheep shall take no harm.

Pur! the cat is grey.

Lear. Arraign her first; 'tis Goneril. I here take my oath before this honourable assembly, she kicked the poor king her father.

Fool. Come hither, mistress; Is your name Goneril?

Lear. She cannot deny it.

Fool. Cry you mercy, I took you for a joint-stool.

Lear. And here's another, whose warp'd looks proclaim

⁸ *Come o'er the bourn, —*] A *boorn* in the north signifies a *rivulet* or *brook*.

What store her heart is made of. — Stop her there!
Arms, arms, sword, fire! — Corruption in the place!
False justicer, why hast thou let her 'scape?

Edg. Bless thy five wits!

Kent. O pity! — Sir, where is the patience now,
That you so oft have boasted to retain?

Edg. My tears begin to take his part so much,
They'll mar my counterfeiting. [*Aside.*]

Lear. The little dogs and all,
Tray, Blanch, and Sweet-heart, see, they bark at me.

Edg. Tom will throw his head at them: — Avaunt,
you curs!

Be thy mouth or black or white,
Tooth that poisons if it bite;
Mastiff, grey-hound, mongrel grim,
Hound, or spaniel, brach, or lym;⁹
Or bobtail tike, or trundle-tail;
Tom will make them weep and wail:
For, with throwing thus my head,
Dogs leap the hatch, and all are fled.

Do de, de, de. Sessa. Come, march to wakes and
fairs, and market towns: — Poor Tom, thy horn is dry.

Lear. Then let them anatomize Regan, see what
breeds about her heart: Is there any cause in nature,
that makes these hard hearts? — You, sir, I entertain
you for one of my hundred; only, I do not like the
fashion of your garments: you will say, they are Persian
attire¹; but let them be changed. [*To EDGAR.*]

Kent. Now, good my lord, lie here, and rest awhile.

Lear. Make no noise, make no noise; draw the cur-
tains: So, so, so: We'll go to supper i'the morning:
So, so, so.

⁹ *brach, or lym; &c.*] Names of particular sorts of dogs.

¹ — *you will say, they are Persian attire;*] Alluding, perhaps,
to Clytus refusing the Persian robes offered him by Alexander.

Fool. And I'll go to bed at noon.

Re-enter GLOSTER.

Glo. Come hither, friend: Where is the king my master?

Kent. Here, sir; but trouble him not, his wits are gone.

Glo. Good friend, I pr'ythee, take him in thy arms; I have o'er-heard a plot of death upon him: There is a litter ready; lay him in't, And drive towards Dover, friend, where thou shalt meet

Both welcome and protection. Take up thy master: If thou should'st dally half an hour, his life, With thine, and all that offer to defend him, Stand in assured loss: Take up, take up; And follow me, that will to some provision Give thee quick conduct.

Kent. Oppress'd nature sleeps: — This rest might yet have balm'd thy broken senses, Which, if convenience will not allow, Stand in hard cure. Come, help to bear thy master; Thou must not stay behind. [*To the Fool.*

Glo. Come, come, away.
[*Exeunt KENT, GLOSTER, and the Fool, bearing off the King.*

Edg. When we our betters see bearing our woes,
We scarcely think our miseries our foes.
Who alone suffers, suffers most i'the mind;
Leaving free things², and happy shows, behind:
But then the mind much sufferance doth o'erskip,
When grief hath mates, and bearing fellowship.
How light and portable my pain seems now,
When that, which makes me bend, makes the king bow;

² — *free things,*] States clear from distress.

He childed, as I father'd! — Tom, away:
 Mark the high noises³; and thyself bewray,⁴
 When false opinion, whose wrong thought defiles thee,
 In thy just proof, repeals, and reconciles thee.
 What will hap more to-night, safe scape the king!
 Lurk, lurk. [Exit.]

SCENE VII.

A Room in Gloster's Castle.

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, GONERIL, EDMUND, *and*
 Servants.

Corn. Post speedily to my lord your husband; show
 him this letter: — the army of France is landed: —
 Seek out the villain Gloster.

[Exeunt some of the Servants.]

Reg. Hang him instantly.

Gon. Pluck out his eyes.

Corn. Leave him to my displeasure. — Edmund, keep
 you our sister company; the revenges we are bound
 to take upon your traitorous father, are not fit for your
 beholding. Advise the duke, where you are going,
 to a most festinate preparation; we are bound to the
 like. Our posts shall be swift, and intelligent betwixt
 us. Farewell, dear sister; — farewell, my lord of
 Gloster.⁵

Enter Steward.

How now? Where's the king?

³ *Mark the high noises;*] Attend to the great events that are approaching, and make thyself known when that *false opinion* now prevailing against thee shall, in consequence of *just proof* of thy integrity, revoke its erroneous sentence.

⁴ — *and thyself bewray,*] i. e. *discover.*

⁵ — *my lord of Gloster.*] Meaning Edmund, newly invested with his father's titles. The steward, speaking immediately after, mentions the old earl by the same title.

Stew. My lord of Gloster hath convey'd him hence :
Some five or six and thirty of his knights,
Hot questrists after him⁶, met him at gate ;
Who, with some other of the lord's dependants,
Are gone with him towards Dover ; where they boast
To have well-armed friends.

Corn. Get horses for your mistress.

Gon. Farewell, sweet lord, and sister.

[*Exeunt GONERIL and EDMUND.*]

Corn. Edmund, farewell. — Go, seek the traitor
Gloster,

Pinion him like a thief, bring him before us :

[*Exeunt other Servants.*]

Though well we may not pass upon his life
Without the form of justice ; yet our power
Shall do a courtesy to our wrath⁷, which men
May blame, but not control. Who's there ? The
traitor ?

Re-enter Servants, with GLOSTER.

Reg. Ingrateful fox ! 'tis he.

Corn. Bind fast his corky arms.⁸

Glo. What mean your graces ? — Good my friends,
consider

You are my guests : do me no foul play, friends.

Corn. Bind him, I say. [Servants bind him.]

Reg. Hard, hard : — O filthy traitor !

Glo. Unmerciful lady as you are, I am none.

Corn. To this chair bind him : — Villain, thou shalt
find — [REGAN plucks his Beard.]

⁶ Hot questrists after him.] A *questrist* is one who goes in search or *quest* of another.

⁷ Though well we may not pass upon his life
— yet our power

Shall do a courtesy to our wrath,] To do a *courtesy* is to gratify, to comply with. To *pass*, is to pass a judicial sentence.

⁸ — corky arms.] Dry, withered, husky arms.

Glo. By the kind gods, 'tis most ignobly done
To pluck me by the beard.

Reg. So white, and such a traitor!

Glo. Naughty lady,
These hairs, which thou dost ravish from my chin,
Will quicken⁹, and accuse thee: I am your host;
With robbers' hands, my hospitable favours¹
You should not ruffle thus. What will you do?

Corn. Come, sir, what letters had you late from
France?

Reg. Be simple-answer'd, for we know the truth.

Corn. And what confederacy have you with the
traitors
Late footed in the kingdom?

Reg. To whose hands have you sent the lunatick
king?

Speak.

Glo. I have a letter guessingly set down,
Which came from one that's of a neutral heart,
And not from one oppos'd.

Corn. Cunning.

Reg. And false.

Corn. Where hast thou sent the king?

Glo. To Dover.

Reg. Wherefore
To Dover? Wast thou not charg'd at thy peril — †

Corn. Wherefore to Dover? Let him first answer
that.

Glo. I am tied to the stake, and I must stand the
course.¹

Reg. Wherefore to Dover?

Glo. Because I would not see thy cruel nails

⁹ *Will quicken,*] i. e. quicken into life.

¹ — *my hospitable favours* —] *Favours* means the same as *features*, i. e. the different parts of which a face is composed.

† "at peril" — MALONE.

¹ — *the course.*] The running of the dogs upon me.

Pluck out his poor old eyes; nor thy fierce sister
 In his anointed flesh stick boarish fangs.
 The sea, with such a storm as his bare head
 In hell-black night endur'd, would have buoy'd up,
 And quench'd the stelled fires: yet, poor old heart,
 He holp the heavens to rain.

If wolves had at thy gate howl'd that stern time,
 Thou should'st have said, *Good porter, turn the key;*
 All cruels else subscrib'd²: — But I shall see
 The winged vengeance overtake such children.

Corn. See it shalt thou never: — Fellows, hold the
 chair: —

Upon these eyes of thine I'll set my foot.

[*GLOSTER is held down in his Chair, while
 CORNWALL plucks out one of his Eyes, and
 sets his Foot on it.*

Glo. He that will think to live till he be old,
 Give me some help: — O cruel! O ye gods!

Reg. One side will mock another; the other too.

Corn. If you see vengeance, —

Serv. Hold your hand, my lord:
 I have serv'd you ever since I was a child;
 But better service have I never done you,
 Than now to bid you hold.

Reg. How now, you dog?

Serv. If you did wear a beard upon your chin,
 I'd shake it on this quarrel: What do you mean?

Corn. My villain! [*Draws, and runs at him.*

Serv. Nay, then come on, and take the chance of
 anger.

[*Draws. They fight. CORNWALL is wounded.*

Reg. Give me thy sword. — [*To another Servant.*] A
 peasant stand up thus!

[*Snatches a Sword, comes behind, and stabs him.*

² — *subscrib'd.*] Yielded, submitted to the necessity of the
 occasion.

Serv. O, I am slain! — My lord, you have one eye left

To see some mischief on him: — O! [Dies.

Corn. Lest it see more, prevent it: — Out, vile jelly!
Where is thy lustre now?

[Tears out GLOSTER's other Eye, and throws it on the Ground.

Glo. All dark and comfortless. — Where's my son Edmund?

Edmund enkindle all the sparks of nature,
To quit this horrid act.

Reg. Out, treacherous villain!
Thou call'st on him that hates thee: it was he
That made the overture of thy treasons³ to us;
Who is too good to pity thee.

Glo. O my follies!
Then Edgar was abus'd. —
Kind gods, forgive me that, and prosper him!

Reg. Go, thrust him out at gates, and let him smell
His way to Dover. — How is't, my lord? How look
you?

Corn. I have receiv'd a hurt: — Follow me, lady. —
Turn out that eyeless villain; — throw this slave
Upon the dunghill. — Regan, I bleed apace:
Untimely come this hurt: give me your arm.

[Exit CORNWALL, led by REGAN; — Servants unbind GLOSTER, and lead him out.

1 *Serv.* I'll never care what wickedness I do,
If this man come to good.

2 *Serv.* If she live long,
And, in the end, meet the old course of death,⁴
Women will all turn monsters.

1 *Serv.* Let's follow the old earl, and get the bedlam

³ — the overture of thy treasons —] Overture is here used for an opening or discovery. It was he who first laid thy treasons open to us.

⁴ — the old course of death,] that is, die a natural death.

To lead him where he would; his roguish madness
Allows itself to any thing.

2 *Serv.* Go thou; I'll fetch some flax, and whites of
eggs,
To apply to his bleeding face. Now, heaven help him!
[*Exeunt severally.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I. — *The Heath.*

Enter EDGAR.

Edg. Yet better thus, and known to be contemn'd,
Than still contemn'd and flatter'd. To be worst,
The lowest, and most dejected thing of fortune,
Stands still in esperance, lives not in fear:
The lamentable change is from the best;
The worst returns to laughter. Welcome then,
Thou unsubstantial air, that I embrace!
The wretch, that thou hast blown unto the worst,
Owes nothing to thy blasts. — But who comes here? —

Enter GLOSTER, led by an old Man.

My father, poorly led? — World, world, O world!
But that thy strange mutations make us hate thee,⁵
Life would not yield to age.

⁵ — *World, world, O world!*

But that thy strange mutations make us hate thee,] O world! if
reverses of fortune and changes such as I now see and feel, from
ease and affluence to poverty and misery, did not show us the little
value of life, we should never submit with any kind of resignation
to the weight of years, and its necessary consequence, infirmity and
death. MALONE.

Old Man. O my good lord, I have been your tenant,
and your father's tenant, these fourscore years.

Glo. Away, get thee away; good friend, be gone:
Thy comforts can do me no good at all,
Thee they may hurt.

Old Man. Alack, sir, you cannot see your way.

Glo. I have no way, and therefore want no eyes;
I stumbled when I saw: Full oft 'tis seen,
Our mean secures us⁶: and our mere defects
Prove our commodities. — Ah, dear son Edgar,
The food of thy abused father's wrath!
Might I but live to see thee in my touch,
I'd say, I had eyes again!

Old Man. How now? Who's there?

Edg. [*aside.*] O gods! Who is't can say, *I am at the worst?*

I am worse than e'er I was.

Old Man. 'Tis poor mad Tom.

Edg. [*aside.*] And worse I may be yet: The worst is not,

So long as we can say, *This is the worst.*

Old Man. Fellow, where goest?

Glo. Is it a beggar-man?

Old Man. Madman and beggar too.

Glo. He has some reason, else he could not beg.

I'the last night's storm I such a fellow saw;
Which made me think a man a worm: My son
Came then into my mind; and yet my mind
Was then scarce friends with him: I have heard more
since:

As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods;
They kill us for their sport.

Edg. How should this be? —

Bad is the trade must play the fool to sorrow,

⁶ *Our mean secures us*;] *Mean* is here a substantive, and signifies a middle state. Mr. Malone reads "Our means secure us."

Ang'ring itself and others. [*Aside.*] — Bless thee,
master !

Glo. Is that the naked fellow ?

Old Man. Ay, my lord.

Glo. Then, pr'ythee, get thee gone : If, for my sake,
Thou wilt o'ertake us, hence a mile or twain,
I'the way to Dover, do it for ancient love ;
And bring some covering for this naked soul,
Whom I'll entreat to lead me.

Old Man. Alack, sir, he's mad.

Glo. 'Tis the times' plague, when madmen lead the
blind.

Do as I bid thee, or rather do thy pleasure ;
Above the rest, be gone.

Old Man. I'll bring him the best 'parrel that I have,
Come on't what will. [*Exit.*]

Glo. Sirrah, naked fellow.

Edg. Poor Tom's a-cold. — I cannot daub⁷ it further.
[*Aside.*]

Glo. Come hither, fellow.

Edg. [*aside.*] And yet I must. — Bless thy sweet eyes,
they bleed.

Glo. Know'st thou the way to Dover ?

Edg. Both stile and gate, horse-way, and foot-path.
Poor Tom hath been scared out of his good wits : Bless
the good man from the foul fiend ! Five fiends have been
in poor Tom at once ; of lust, as *Obidicut* ; *Hobbididance*,
prince of dumbness ; *Mahu*, of stealing ; *Modo*, of murder ;
and *Flibbertigibbet*, of mopping and mowing ; who
since possesses chamber-maids and waiting-women.
So, bless thee, master !

Glo. Here, take this purse, thou whom the heaven's
plagues

Have humbled to all strokes : that I am wretched,
Makes thee the happier : — Heavens, deal so still !
Let the superfluous, and lust-dieted man,

⁷ — I cannot daub it—] i. e. disguise.

That slaves your ordinance ⁸, that will not see
 Because he doth not feel, feel your power quickly;
 So distribution should undo excess,
 And each man have enough. — Dost thou know Dover?

Edg. Ay, master.

Glo. There is a cliff, whose high and bending head
 Looks fearfully in the confined deep:
 Bring me but to the very brim of it,
 And I'll repair the misery thou dost bear,
 With something rich about me: from that place
 I shall no leading need.

Edg. Give me thy arm;

Poor Tom shall lead thee.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

Before the Duke of Albany's Palace.

Enter GONERIL and EDMUND; Steward meeting them.

Gon. Welcome, my lord: I marvel, our mild husband
 Not met us on the way: — Now, where's your master?

Stew. Madam, within; but never man so chang'd:
 I told him of the army that was landed;
 He smil'd at it: I told him, you were coming;
 His answer was, *The worse*: of Gloster's treachery,
 And of the loyal service of his son,
 When I inform'd him, then he call'd me sot;
 And told me, I had turn'd the wrong side out: —
 What most he should dislike, seems pleasant to him;
 What like, offensive.

⁸ *That slaves your ordinance, &c.*] The language of Shakspeare is very licentious, and his words have often meanings remote from the proper and original use. To *slave* or *beslave* another is to *treat him with terms of indignity*: in a kindred sense, to *slave the ordinance*, may be, to *slight* or *ridicule* it. JOHNSON.

To *slave an ordinance*, is to treat it as a *slave*, to make it subject to us, instead of acting in obedience to it.

Gon. Then shall you go no further.

[*To EDMUND.*]

It is the cowish terror of his spirit,
That dares not undertake : he'll not feel wrongs,
Which tie him to an answer : Our wishes, on the way,
May prove effects ⁹. Back, Edmund, to my brother ;
Hasten his musters, and conduct his powers :
I must change arms at home, and give the distaff
Into my husband's hands. This trusty servant
Shall pass between us : ere long you are like to hear,
If you dare venture in your own behalf,
A mistress's command. Wear this ; spare speech ;

[*Giving a Favour.*]

Decline your head ¹ : this kiss, if it durst speak,
Would stretch thy spirits up into the air ; —
Conceive, and fare thee well.

Edm. Yours in the ranks of death.

Gon. My most dear Gloster !

[*Exit EDMUND.*]

O, the difference of man, and man ! To thee
A woman's services are due ; my fool
Usurps my bed.

Stew. Madam, here comes my lord.

[*Exit Steward.*]

Enter ALBANY.

Gon. I have been worth the whistle. ²



⁹ — *Our wishes, on the way,*

May prove effects.] What we wish, before our march is at an end, may be brought to happen, i. e. the murder or despatch of her husband.

¹ *Decline your head : &c.*] She bids him decline his head, that she might give him a kiss (the steward being present), and that it might appear only to him as a whisper.

² *I have been worth the whistle.*] Goneril's meaning seems to be — *There was a time when you would have thought me worth the calling to you ;* reproaching him for not having summoned her to consult with on the present critical occasion.

Alb.

O Goneril!

You are not worth the dust which the rude wind
Blows in your face. — I fear your disposition:
That nature, which contemns its origin,
Cannot be border'd certain in itself;
She that herself will sliver and disbranch
From her material sap³, perforce must wither,
And come to deadly use.

Gon. No more; the text is foolish.

Alb. Wisdom and goodness to the vile seem vile:
Filths savour but themselves. What have you done?
Tigers, not daughters, what have you perform'd?
A father, and a gracious aged man,
Whose reverence the head-lugg'd bear would lick,
Most barbarous, most degenerate! have you madd'd.
Could my good brother suffer you to do it?
A man, a prince, by him so benefited?
If that the heavens do not their visible spirits
Send quickly down to tame these vile offences,
'Twill come,
Humanity must perforce prey on itself,
Like monsters of the deep.

Gon.

Milk-liver'd man!

That bear'st a cheek for blows, a head for wrongs;
Who hast not in thy brows an eye discerning
Thine honour from thy suffering; that not know'st,
Fools do those villains pity, who are punish'd
Ere they have done their mischief. Where's thy drum?
France spreads his banners in our noiseless land;
With plumed helm thy slayer begins threats;
Whilst thou, a moral fool, sit'st still, and cry'st,
Alack! why does he so?

³ *She that herself will sliver and disbranch*

From her material sap,] She who breaks the bonds of filial duty, and becomes wholly alienated from her father, must wither and perish like a branch separated from that *sap* which supplies it with nourishment, and gives life to the *matter* of which it is composed.

Alb. See thyself, devil !
Proper deformity seems not in the fiend
So horrid, as in woman.

Gon. O vain fool !

Alb. Thou changed and self-cover'd thing, for shame,
Be-monster not thy feature. Were it my fitness
To let these hands obey my blood,
They are apt enough to dislocate and tear
Thy flesh and bones : — Howe'er thou art a fiend,
A woman's shape doth shield thee.

Gon. Marry, your manhood now ! —

Enter a Messenger.

Alb. What news ?

Mess. O, my good lord, the duke of Cornwall's dead :
Slain by his servant, going to put out
The other eye of Gloster.

Alb. Gloster's eyes !

Mess. A servant that he bred, thrill'd with remorse,
Oppos'd against the act, bending his sword
To his great master ; who, thereat enrag'd,
Flew on him, and amongst them fell'd him dead :⁴
But not without that harmful stroke, which since
Hath pluck'd him after.

Alb. This shows you are above,
You justicers, that these our nether crimes
So speedily can venge ! — But, O, poor Gloster !
Lost he his other eye !

Mess. Both, both, my lord. —
This letter, madam, craves a speedy answer ;
'Tis from your sister.

Gon. [*aside.*] One way I like this well ;
But being widow, and my Gloster with her,
May all the building in my fancy pluck

⁴ — amongst them fell'd him dead:] i. e. they fell'd.

Upon my hateful life : Another way,
The news is not so tart. — I'll read, and answer. [*Exit.*

Alb. Where was his son, when they did take his eyes?

Mess. Come with my lady hither.

Alb. He is not here.

Mess. No, my good lord ; I met him back again.

Alb. Knows he the wickedness ?

Mess. Ay, my good lord ; 'twas he inform'd against
him ;

And quit the house on purpose, that their punishment
Might have the freer course.

Alb. Gloster, I live

To thank thee for the love thou showd'st the king,
And to revenge thine eyes. — Come hither, friend ;

Tell me what more thou knowest. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

The French Camp, near Dover.

Enter KENT, and a Gentleman.

Kent. Why the king of France is so suddenly gone
back know you the reason ?

Gent. Something he left imperfect in the state,
Which since his coming forth is thought of ; which
Imports to the kingdom so much fear and danger,
That his personal return was most requir'd,
And necessary.

Kent. Who hath he left behind him general ?

Gent. The Mareschal of France, Monsieur le Fer.

Kent. Did your letters pierce the queen to any de-
monstration of grief ?

Gent. Ay, sir ; she took them, read them in my pre-
sence ;

And now and then an ample tear trill'd down

Her delicate cheek: it seem'd, she was a queen
Over her passion; who, most rebel-like,
Sought to be the king o'er her.

Kent. O, then it mov'd her.

Gent. Not to a rage: patience and sorrow strove
Who should express her goodliest. You have seen
Sunshine and rain at once: her smiles and tears
Were like a better day†: Those happy smiles,
That play'd on her ripe lip, seem'd not to know
What guests were in her eyes; which parted thence,
As pearls from diamonds dropp'd. — In brief, sorrow
Would be a rarity most belov'd, if all
Could so become it.

Kent. Made she no verbal question?⁵

Gent. 'Faith, once, or twice, she heav'd the name of
father

Pantingly forth, as if it press'd her heart;
Cried, *Sisters! sisters! — Shame of ladies! sisters!*
Kent! father! sisters! What? i'the storm? i'the night?
*Let pity not be believed*⁶! — There she shook
The holy water from her heavenly eyes,
And clamour moisten'd⁷: — then away she started
To deal with grief alone.

Kent. It is the stars,
The stars above us, govern our conditions;⁸
Else one self mate and mate could not beget
Such different issues. You spoke not with her since?

Gent. No.

Kent. Was this before the king return'd?

† "better May:" — MALONE.

⁵ *Made she no verbal question?*] Means only, Did she enter into no conversation with you? In this sense our poet frequently uses the word *question*, and not simply as the act of *interrogation*.

⁶ *Let pity not be believed!*] i. e. Let not such a thing as pity be supposed to exist!

⁷ — *clamour moisten'd:*] that is, *her out-cries were accompanied with tears.*

⁸ — *govern our conditions;*] i. e. regulate our *dispositions.*

Gent. No, since.

Kent. Well, sir; The poor distress'd Lear is i'the town :

Who sometime, in his better tune, remembers
What we are come about, and by no means
Will yield to see his daughter.

Gent. Why, good sir?

Kent. A sovereign shame so elbows him : his own unkindness,

That stripp'd her from his benediction, turn'd her
To foreign casualties, gave her dear rights
To his dog-hearted daughters, — these things sting
His mind so venomously, that burning shame
Detains him from Cordelia.

Gent. Alack, poor gentleman !

Kent. Of Albany's and Cornwall's powers you heard not ?

Gent. 'Tis so ; they are afoot.

Kent. Well, sir, I'll bring you to our master Lear,
And leave you to attend him : some dear cause⁹
Will in concealment wrap me up awhile ;
When I am known aright, you shall not grieve
Lending me this acquaintance. I pray you, go
Along with me. [Exeunt.

SCENE IV.

The same. A Tent.

Enter CORDELIA, Physician, and Soldiers.

Cor. Alack, 'tis he ; why, he was met even now
As mad as the vex'd sea : singing aloud ;
Crown'd with rank fumiter¹, and furrow weeds,

⁹ some dear cause —] Some important business.

¹ — fumiter,] i. e. fumitory.

With harlocks¹, hemlock, nettles, cuckoo-flowers,
 Darnel, and all the idle weeds that grow
 In our sustaining corn. — A century send forth ;
 Search every acre in the high-grown field,
 And bring him to our eye. [*Exit an Officer.*] — What
 can man's wisdom do,
 In the restoring his bereaved sense ?
 He, that helps him, take all my outward worth.

Phy. There is means, madam :
 Our foster-nurse of nature is repose,
 The which he lacks ; that to provoke in him,
 Are many simples operative, whose power
 Will close the eye of anguish.

Cor. All bless'd secrets,
 All you unpublish'd virtues of the earth,
 Spring with my tears ! be aidant and remediate,
 In the good man's distress ! — Seek, seek for him ;
 Lest his ungovern'd rage dissolve the life
 That wants the means to lead it.²

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. Madam, news ;
 The British powers are marching hitherward.

Cor. 'Tis known before ; our preparation stands
 In expectation of them. — O dear father,
 It is thy business that I go about ;
 Therefore great France
 My mourning, and important³ tears, hath pitied.
 No blown ambition⁴ doth our arms incite,
 But love, dear love, and our ag'd father's right :
 Soon may I hear, and see him ! [*Exeunt.*]

¹ — harlocks,] A typographical error for *charlock*, or wild mustard.

² — *the means to lead it.*] The reason which should guide it.

³ — *important* —] For *importunate*.

⁴ *No blown ambition* —] No inflated, no swelling pride.

SCENE V.

*A Room in Gloster's Castle.**Enter REGAN and Steward.**Reg.* But are my brother's powers set forth?*Stew.*

Ay, madam.

Reg.

Himself

In person there?

Stew.

Madam, with much ado:

Your sister is the better soldier.

Reg. Lord Edmund spake not with your lord at home?*Stew.* No, madam.*Reg.* What might import my sister's letter to him?*Stew.* I know not, lady.*Reg.* 'Faith, he is posted hence on serious matter.

It was great ignorance, Gloster's eyes being out,

To let him live; where he arrives, he moves

All hearts against us; Edmund, I think, is gone,

In pity of his misery, to despatch

His nighted life;⁵ moreover, to descry

The strength o'the enemy.

Stew. I must needs after him, madam, with my letter.*Reg.* Our troops set forth to-morrow; stay with us;

The ways are dangerous.

Stew.

I may not, madam;

My lady charg'd my duty in this business.

Reg. Why should she write to Edmund? Might not
you

Transport her purposes by word? Belike,

Something — I know not what: — I'll love thee much,

Let me unseal the letter.

Stew.

Madam, I had rather —

Reg. I know, your lady does not love her husband;

I am sure of that: and, at her late being here,

⁵ *His nighted life;*] i. e. His life made dark as night, by the extinction of his eyes.

She gave strange œiliads⁶, and most speaking looks
To noble Edmund: I know, you are of her bosom.

Stew. I, madam?

Reg. I speak in understanding; you are, I know it:
Therefore, I do advise you, take this note:⁷

My lord is dead; Edmund and I have talk'd;
And more convenient is he for my hand,
Than for your lady's: — You may gather more.
If you do find him, pray you, give him this;
And when your mistress hears thus much from you,
I pray, desire her call her wisdom to her.
So, fare you well.

If you do chance to hear of that blind traitor,
Preferment falls on him that cuts him off.

Stew. 'Would I could meet him, madam! I would
show
What party I do follow.

Reg. Fare thee well. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI.

The Country near Dover.

Enter GLOSTER, and EDGAR, dressed like a Peasant.

Glo. When shall we come to the top of that same
hill?

Edg. You do climb up it now: look, how we labour.

Glo. Methinks, the ground is even.

Edg. Horrible steep:

Hark, do you hear the sea?

Glo. No, truly.

Edg. Why, then your other senses grow imperfect
By your eyes' anguish.

⁶ *She gave strange œiliads,*] *œillade*, Fr. a cast, or significant glance of the eye.

⁷ — *I do advise you, take this note:*] *Note* means in this place not a *letter*, but a *remark*. Therefore *observe* what I am saying.

Glo. So may it be, indeed :
Methinks, thy voice is alter'd ; and thou speak'st
In better phrase, and matter, than thou didst.

Edg. You are much deceiv'd ; in nothing am I
chang'd,
But in my garments.

Glo. Methinks, you are better spoken.

Edg. Come on, sir ; here's the place ; — stand still. —
How fearful

And dizzy 'tis, to cast one's eyes so low !
The crows, and choughs, that wing the midway air,
Show scarce so gross as beetles : Half way down
Hangs one that gathers samphire ; dreadful trade !
Methinks, he seems no bigger than his head :
The fishermen, that walk upon the beach,
Appear like mice ; and yon' tall anchoring bark,
Diminish'd to her cock^s ; her cock, a buoy
Almost too small for sight : The murmuring surge,
That on the unnumber'd idle pebbles chafes,
Cannot be heard so high : — I'll look no more ;
Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight
Topple down headlong.

Glo. Set me where you stand.

Edg. Give me your hand : You are now within a
foot

Of the extreme verge : for all beneath the moon
Would I not leap upright.

Glo. Let go my hand.

Here, friend, is another purse ; in it, a jewel
Well worth a poor man's taking : Fairies, and gods,
Prosper it with thee ! Go thou further off ;
Bid me farewell, and let me hear thee going.

Edg. Now fare you well, good sir. [*Seems to go.*]

Glo. With all my heart.

Edg. Why I do trifle thus with his despair,
Is done to cure it.

^s — *her cock* ;] Her cock-boat.

Glo. O you mighty gods !
 This world I do renounce ; and, in your sights,
 Shake patiently my great affliction off :
 If I could bear it longer, and not fall
 To quarrel with your great opposeless wills,
 My snuff, and loathed part of nature, should
 Burn itself out. If Edgar live, O, bless him ! —
 Now, fellow, fare thee well. [*He leaps, and falls along.*]

Edg. Gone, sir ? farewell. —

And yet I know not how conceit may rob
 The treasury of life, when life itself
 Yields to the theft⁹ : Had he been where he thought,
 By this, had thought been past. — Alive, or dead ?
 Ho, you sir ! friend ! — Hear you, sir ? — speak !
 Thus might he pass indeed¹ : — Yet he revives :
 What are you, sir ?

Glo. Away, and let me die.

Edg. Had'st thou been aught but gossomer², feathers,
 air,

So many fathom down precipitating,
 Thou had'st shiver'd like an egg : but thou dost breathe ;
 Hast heavy substance ; bleed'st not ; speak'st ; art sound.
 Ten masts at each make not the altitude,
 Which thou hast perpendicularly fell ;
 Thy life's a miracle : Speak yet again.

Glo. But have I fallen, or no ?

Edg. From the dread summit of this chalky bourn :⁴
 Look up a-height ; — the shrill-gorg'd lark so far
 Cannot be seen or heard : do but look up.

⁹ — *when life itself*

Yields to the theft :] When life is willing to be destroyed.

¹ *Thus might he pass indeed :*] Thus might he *die* in reality.

² *Had'st thou been aught but gossomer, —*] *Gossomore*, the white and cobweb-like exhalations that fly about in hot sunny weather.

⁴ — *chalky bourn :*] *Bourn* seems here to signify a *hill*. Its common signification is a *brook*. But in Milton and Shakspeare it means only a *boundary*, and here certainly means “this chalky boundary of England, towards France.”

Glo. Alack, I have no eyes.—
Is wretchedness depriv'd that benefit,
To end itself by death? 'Twas yet some comfort,
When misery could beguile the tyrant's rage,
And frustrate his proud will.

Edg. Give me your arm :
Up ;—So ;—How is't ? Feel you your legs ? You stand.

Glo. Too well, too well.

Edg. This is above all strangeness.
Upon the crown o'the cliff, what thing was that
Which parted from you ?

Glo. A poor unfortunate beggar.

Edg. As I stood here below, methought, his eyes
Were two full moons ; he had a thousand noses,
Horns whelk'd⁵, and wav'd like the enridged sea ;
It was some fiend : Therefore, thou happy father,
Think that the clearest gods⁶, who make them honours
Of men's impossibilities, have preserv'd thee.

Glo. I do remember now : henceforth I'll bear
Affliction, till it do cry out itself,

Enough, enough, and, die. That thing you speak of,
I took it for a man ; often 'twould say,
The fiend, the fiend : he led me to that place.

Edg. Bear free and patient thoughts.—But who comes
here ?

Enter LEAR, fantastically dressed up with Flowers.

The safer sense will ne'er accommodate
His master thus.

Lear. No, they cannot touch me for coining ; I am
the king himself.

Edg. O, thou side-piercing sight !

Lear. Nature's above art in that respect. — There's

⁵ *Horns whelk'd,*] *Whelk'd,* signifies *varied with protuberances ;* or twisted, convolved.

⁶ — *the clearest gods,*] The purest ; the most free from evil.

your press-money. That fellow handles his bow like a crow-keeper⁷: draw me a clothier's yard.—Look, look, a mouse! Peace, peace;—this piece of toasted cheese will do't.—There's my gauntlet; I'll prove it on a giant.—Bring up the brown bills.⁸—O, well-flown, bird!—i'the clout⁹, i'the clout: hewgh!—Give the word.

Edg. Sweet marjoram.

Lear. Pass.

Glo. I know that voice.

Lear. Ha! Goneril!—with a white beard!—They flatter'd me like a dog; and told me, I had white hairs in my beard, ere the black ones were there. To say *ay*, and *no*, to every thing I said!—*Ay* and *no* too was no good divinity. When the rain came to wet me once, and the wind to make me chatter; when the thunder would not peace at my bidding; there I found them, there I smelt them out. Go to, they are not men o'their words: they told me I was every thing; 'tis a lie; I am not ague-proof.

Glo. The trick of that voice¹ I do well remember: Is't not the king?

Lear. Ay, every inch a king:
When I do stare, see, how the subject quakes.
I pardon that man's life: What was thy cause?—
Adultery.—
Thou shalt not die: Die for adultery! No:

⁷ *That fellow handles his bow like a crow-keeper:*] In several counties, to this day, they call a stuffed figure, representing a man, and armed with a bow and arrow, set up to fright the crows from the fruit and corn, a *crow-keeper*, as well as a *scare-crow*.

⁸ — *the brown-bills.*] A *bill* was a kind of battle-axe, affixed to a long staff.

O, well-flown, bird!—*i'the clout, &c.*] *Lear* is here raving of *archery*, and shooting at *buts*, as is plain by the words *i'the clout*, that is, the *white* mark they set up and aim at; hence the phrase, to *hit the white*.

¹ *The trick of that voice*—] *Trick* is a word frequently used for the *air*, or *that peculiarity in a face, voice, or gesture, which distinguishes it from others*.

The wren goes to't, and the small gilded fly
 Does lecher in my sight.
 Let copulation thrive, for Gloster's bastard son
 Was kinder to his father, than my daughters
 Got 'tween the lawful sheets.
 To't, luxury, pell-mell, for I lack soldiers.—
 Behold yon' simpering dame,
 Whose face between her forks presageth snow ;
 That minces virtue, and does shake the head
 To hear of pleasure's name ;
 The fitchew, nor the soiled horse, goes to't
 With a more riotous appetite.
 Down from the waist they are centaurs,
 Though women all above :
 But to the girdle² do the gods inherit,
 Beneath is all the fiends' ; there's hell, there's darkness,
 there is the sulphurous pit, burning, scalding, stench,
 consumption ;—Fye, fye, fye ! pah ; pah ! Give me an
 ounce of civet, good apothecary, to sweeten my imagina-
 tion : there's money for thee.

Glo. O, let me kiss that hand !

Lear. Let me wipe it first ; it smells of mortality.

Glo. O ruin'd piece of nature ! This great world
 Shall so wear out to nought.—Dost thou know me ?

Lear. I remember thine eyes well enough. Dost
 thou squiny at me³ ? No, do thy worst, blind Cupid ;
 I'll not love. — Read thou this challenge ; mark but the
 penning of it

Glo. Were all the letters suns, I could not see one.

Edg. I would not take this from report ; — it is,
 And my heart breaks at it.

Lear. Read.

Glo. What, with the case of eyes ?

Lear. O, ho, are you there with me ? No eyes in

² But to the girdle, &c.] *But* is here used for *only*.

³ *Dost thou squiny at me?*] To *squiny* is to look asquint.

your head, nor no money in your purse? Your eyes are in a heavy case, your purse in a light: Yet you see how this world goes.

Glo. I see it feelingly.

Lear. What, art mad? A man may see how this world goes, with no eyes. Look with thine ears: see how yon' justice rails upon yon' simple thief. Hark, in thine ear: Change places; and, handy-dandy, which is the justice, which is the thief? — Thou hast seen a farmer's dog bark at a beggar?

Glo. Ay, sir.

Lear. And the creature run from the cur? There thou might'st behold the great image of authority; a dog's obeyed in office. — Thou rascal beadle, hold thy bloody hand: Why dost thou lash that whore? Strip thine own back; Thou hotly lust'st to use her in that kind For which thou whipp'st her. The usurer hangs the cozener.

Through tatter'd clothes small vices do appear;
Robes, and furr'd gowns, hide all. Plate sin with gold,
And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks:
Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw doth pierce it.
None does offend, none, I say, none; I'll able 'em:⁴
Take that of me, my friend, who have the power
To seal the accuser's lips. Get thee glass eyes;
And, like a scurvy politician, seem
To see the things thou dost not. — Now, now, now, now:
Pull off my boots: — Harder, harder; so.

Edg. O, matter and impertinency mix'd!
Reason in madness!

Lear. If thou wilt weep my fortunes, take my eyes.
I know thee well enough; thy name is Gloster:
Thou must be patient; we came crying hither.

⁴ — *I'll able 'em:*] An old phrase signifying to qualify, or uphold them.

Thou know'st, the first time that we smell the air,
We wawl, and cry: — I will preach to thee; mark me.

Glo. Alack, alack the day!

Lear. When we are born, we cry, that we are come
To this great stage of fools; — This a good block? —
It were a delicate stratagem, to shoe
A troop of horse with felt: I'll put it in proof;
And when I have stolen upon these sons-in-law,
Then, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill.

Enter a Gentleman, with Attendants.

Gent. O, here he is; lay hand upon him. — Sir,
Your most dear daughter —

Lear. No rescue? What, a prisoner? I am even
The natural fool of fortune. — Use me well;
You shall have ransome. Let me have a surgeon,
I am cut to the brains.

Gent. You shall have any thing.

Lear. No seconds? All myself?
Why, this would make a man, a man of salt,⁵
To use his eyes for garden water-pots,
Ay, and for laying autumn's dust.

Gent. Good sir, —

Lear. I will die bravely, like a bridegroom; What?
I will be jovial; come, come; I am a king,
My masters, know you that?

Gent. You are a royal one, and we obey you.

Lear. Then there's life in it.⁶ Nay, an you get it,
you shall get it by running. Sa, sa, sa, sa.

[Exit running; Attendants follow.]

Gent. A sight most pitiful in the meanest wretch;
Past speaking of in a king! — Thou hast one daughter,
Who redeems nature from the general curse
Which twain have brought her to.

⁵ — a man of salt,] *A man of salt is a man of tears.*

⁶ *Then there's life in it.] The case is not yet desperate.*

Edg. Hail, gentle sir.

Gent. Sir, speed you : What's your will ?

Edg. Do you hear aught, sir, of a battle toward ?

Gent. Most sure, and vulgar : every one hears that,
Which can distinguish sound.

Edg. But, by your favour,
How near's the other army ?

Gent. Near, and on speedy foot ; the main descry
Stands on the hourly thought.⁷

Edg. I thank you, sir : that's all.

Gent. Though that the queen on special cause is here,
Her army is mov'd on.

Edg. I thank you, sir. [*Exit Gent.*]

Glo. You ever gentle gods, take my breath from me ;
Let not my worser spirit⁸ tempt me again
To die before you please !

Edg. Well pray you, father.

Glo. Now, good sir, what are you ?

Edg. A most poor man, made tame† by fortune's
blows ;

Who, by the art of known and feeling sorrows,
Am pregnant to good pity. Give me your hand,
I'll lead you to some bidding.

Glo. Hearty thanks :
The bounty and the benison of heaven
To boot, and boot !

Enter Steward.

Stew. A proclaim'd prize ! Most happy !
That eyeless head of thine was first fram'd flesh
To raise my fortunes. — Thou old unhappy traitor,

⁷ — the main descry,
Stands on the hourly thought.] The main body is expected to be
descry'd every hour. The expression is harsh.

⁸ — my worser spirit —] Perhaps, my evil genius.

† "made lame" — MALONE.

Briefly thyself remember⁹: — The sword is out
That must destroy thee.

Glo. Now let thy friendly hand
Put strength enough to it. [EDGAR opposes.

Stew. Wherefore, bold peasant,
Dar'st thou support a publish'd traitor? Hence;
Lest that the infection of his fortune take
Like hold on thee. Let go his arm.

Edg. Chill not let go, zir, without vurther 'casion.

Stew. Let go, slave, or thou diest.

Edg. Good gentleman, go your gait¹, and let poor
volk pass. And ch'ud ha' been zwagger'd out of my
life, 'twould not ha' been zo long as 'tis by a vortnight.
Nay, come not near the old man; keep out, che vor'ye,²
or ise try whether your costard³ or my bat⁴ be the
harder: Ch'll be plain with you.

Stew. Out, dunghill!

Edg. Ch'll pick your teeth, zir: Come; no matter
vor your foins.⁵

[*They fight; and EDGAR knocks him down.*

Stew. Slave, thou hast slain me: — Villain, take my
purse;
If ever thou wilt thrive, bury my body;
And give the letters, which thou find'st about me,
To Edmund earl of Gloster; seek him out
Upon the British party: — O, untimely death!

[*Dies.*

⁹ *Briefly thyself remember:*] i. e. Quickly recollect the past offences of thy life, and recommend thyself to heaven.

¹ — *go your gait,*] *Gang your gait* is a common expression in the North.

² — *che vor'ye,*] *I warn you.* Edgar counterfeits the western dialect.

³ — *your costard* —] *Costard*, i. e. head.

⁴ — *my bat* —] i. e. club, or staff.

⁵ — *no matter vor your foins.*] *To foin* is to make what we call a *thrust* in fencing. Shakspeare often uses the word.

Edg. I know thee well: A serviceable villain;
As duteous to the vices of thy mistress,
As badness would desire.

Glo. What, is he dead?

Edg. Sit you down, father; rest you. —
Let's see his pockets: these letters, that he speaks of,
May be my friends. — He's dead; I am only sorry
He had no other death's-man. — Let us see: —
Leave, gentle wax: and, manners, blame us not:
To know our enemies' minds, we'd rip their hearts;
Their papers, is more lawful.

[*Reads.*] *Let our reciprocal vows be remembered. You have many opportunities to cut him off: if your will want not, time and place will be fruitfully offered. There is nothing done, if he return the conqueror: Then am I the prisoner, and his bed my gaol; from the loathed warmth whereof deliver me, and supply the place for your labour.*

Your wife, (so I would say,) and your affectionate servant,

GONERIL.

O undistinguish'd space of woman's will! ⁶ —
A plot upon her virtuous husband's life;
And the exchange, my brother! — Here, in the sands,
Thee I'll rake up, the post un sanctified ⁷
Of murderous lechers: and, in the mature time,
With this ungracious paper strike the sight
Of the death-practis'd duke: For him 'tis well,
That of thy death and business I can tell.

[*Exit EDGAR, dragging out the Body.*

⁶ *O undistinguish'd space of woman's will!*] *O undistinguishing licentiousness of a woman's inclinations!*

⁷ *Thee I'll rake up, the post un sanctified, &c.*] I'll cover thee. In Staffordshire, to rake the fire, is to cover it with fuel for the night. The epithet, *un sanctified*, refers to his want of burial in consecrated ground.

Glo. The king is mad: How stiff is my vile sense,
That I stand up, and have ingenious feeling
Of my huge sorrows! Better I were distract:
So should my thoughts be sever'd from my griefs;
And woes, by wrong imaginations, lose
The knowledge of themselves.

Re-enter EDGAR.

Edg. Give me your hand:
Far off, methinks, I hear the beaten drum.
Come, father, I'll bestow you with a friend. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VII.

*A Tent in the French Camp. LEAR on a Bed, asleep;
Physician, Gentleman, and Others, attending: Enter
CORDELIA and KENT.*

Cor. O thou good Kent, how shall I live and work,
To match thy goodness? My life will be too short,
And every measure fail me.

Kent. To be acknowledg'd, madam, is o'er-paid.
All my reports go with the modest truth;
Nor more, nor clipp'd, but so.

Cor. Be better suited:⁸
These weeds are memories⁹ of those worser hours;
I pr'ythee, put them off.

Kent. Pardon me, dear madam;
Yet to be known, shortens my made intent:¹
My boon I make it, that you know me not,
Till time and I think meet.

Cor. Then be it so, my good lord. — How does the
king? [*To the Physician.*]

⁸ *Be better suited:*] i. e. Be better dressed.

⁹ *These weeds are memories —*] i. e. memorials, remembrancers.

¹ — *my made intent:*] An intent *made*, is an intent *formed*.

Phys. Madam, sleeps still.

Cor. O you kind gods,
Cure this great breach in his abused nature !
The untun'd and jarring senses, O, wind up
Of this child-changed father !²

Phys. So please your majesty,
That we may wake the king? he hath slept long.

Cor. Be govern'd by your knowledge, and proceed
I' the sway of your own will. Is he array'd?

Gent. Ay, madam; in the heaviness of his sleep,
We put fresh garments on him.

Phys. Be by, good madam, when we do awake him;
I doubt not of his temperance.

Cor. Very well.

Phys. Please you, draw near. — Louder the musick
there.

Cor. O my dear father ! Restoration, hang
Thy medicine on my lips; and let this kiss
Repair those violent harms, that my two sisters
Have in thy reverence made !

Kent. Kind and dear princess !

Cor. Had you not been their father, these white flakes
Had challeng'd pity of them. Was this a face
To be expos'd against the warring winds?
To stand against the deep dread-bolted thunder?
In the most terrible and nimble stroke
Of quick, cross lightning? to watch (poor perdu !)
With this thin helm³? Mine enemy's dog,
Though he had bit me, should have stood that night
Against my fire; And wast thou fain, poor father,
To hovel thee with swine, and rogues forlorn,

² *Of this child-changed father!*] i. e. changed to a child by his years and wrongs; or changed by his children.

³ — to watch (poor perdu !)

With this thin helm?] The allusion is to the forlorn hope in an army, which are put upon desperate adventures, and called in French *enfants perdus*. With this thin helm? i. e. bare-headed.

In short and musty straw? Alack, alack!
'Tis wonder, that thy life and wits at once
Had not concluded all. — He wakes; speak to him.

Phys. Madam, do you; 'tis fittest.

Cor. How does my royal lord? How fares your
majesty?

Lear. You do me wrong, to take me out o'the
grave: —

Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
Do scald like molten lead.

Cor. Sir, do you know me?

Lear. You are a spirit, I know; When did you die?

Cor. Still, still, far wide!

Phys. He's scarce awake; let him alone awhile.

Lear. Where have I been? Where am I? — Fair
day-light? —

I am mightily abus'd. — I should even die with pity,
To see another thus. — I know not what to say. —
I will not swear, these are my hands: — let's see;
I feel this pin prick. 'Would I were assur'd
Of my condition.

Cor. O, look upon me, sir,
And hold your hands in benediction o'er me: —
No, sir, you must not kneel.

Lear. Pray, do not mock me:
I am a very foolish fond old man,
Fourscore and upward; and, to deal plainly,
I fear, I am not in my perfect mind.
Methinks, I should know you, and know this man;
Yet I am doubtful: for I am mainly ignorant
What place this is; and all the skill I have
Remembers not these garments; nor I know not
Where I did lodge last night: Do not laugh at me;
For, as I am a man, I think this lady
To be my child Cordelia.

Cor. And so I am, I am.

Lear. Be your tears wet? Yes, 'faith. I pray, weep not:

If you have poison for me, I will drink it.
I know, you do not love me; for your sisters
Have, as I do remember, done me wrong:
You have some cause, they have not.

Cor. No cause, no cause.

Lear. Am I in France?

Kent. In your own kingdom, sir.

Lear. Do not abuse me.

Phys. Be comforted, good madam: the great rage,
You see, is cur'd in him: and yet it is danger
To make him even o'er the time he has lost.⁵
Desire him to go in; trouble him no more,
Till further settling.

Cor. Will't please your highness walk?

Lear. You must bear with me:
Pray now, forget and forgive: I am old, and foolish.

[*Exeunt* LEAR, CORDELIA, Physician, and
Attendants.]

Gent. Holds it true, sir;
That the duke of Cornwall was so slain?

Kent. Most certain, sir.

Gent. Who is conductor of his people?

Kent. As 'tis said,

The bastard son of Gloster.

Gent. They say, Edgar,
His banish'd son, is with the earl of Kent
In Germany.

Kent. Report is changeable.
'Tis time to look about; the powers o'the kingdom
Approach apace.

Gent. The arbitrement is like to be a bloody.
Fare you well, sir.

[*Exit.*]

⁵ *To make him even o'er the time he has lost.*] i. e. to reconcile it to his apprehension.

Kent. My point and period will be thoroughly wrought,
Or well, or ill, as this day's battle's fought. [Exit.]

ACT V.

SCENE I. — *The Camp of the British Forces, near Dover.*

Enter, with Drums and Colours, EDMUND, REGAN, Officers, Soldiers, and Others.

Edm. Know of the duke, if his last purpose hold;
Or, whether since he is advis'd by aught
To change the course: He's full of alteration,
And self-reproving: — bring his constant pleasure.⁵

[To an Officer, who goes out.]

Reg. Our sister's man is certainly miscarried.

Edm. 'Tis to be doubted, madam.

Reg. Now, sweet lord,
You know the goodness I intend upon you:
Tell me, — but truly, — but then speak the truth,
Do you not love my sister?

Edm. In honour'd love.

Reg. But have you never found my brother's way
To the forefended place?⁶

Edm. That thought abuses you.⁷

Reg. I am doubtful that you have been conjunct
And bosom'd with her, as far as we call hers.

Edm. No, by mine honour, madam.

Reg. I never shall endure her: Dear my lord,
Be not familiar with her.

Edm. Fear me not: —
She, and the duke her husband, —

⁵ — *his constant pleasure.*] His settled resolution.

⁶ — *forefended place?*] i. e. *prohibited, forbidden.*

⁷ *That thought abuses you.*] That thought imposes on you.

Enter ALBANY, GONERIL, and Soldiers.

Gon. I had rather lose the battle, than that sister
Should loosen him and me. [*Aside.*]

Alb. Our very loving sister, well be met. —
Sir, this I hear, — The king is come to his daughter,
With others, whom the rigour of our state
Forc'd to cry out. Where I could not be honest,
I never yet was valiant: for this business,
It toucheth us as France invades our land,
Not bolds the king⁸; with others, whom, I fear,
Most just and heavy causes make oppose.⁹

Edm. Sir, you speak nobly.¹

Reg. Why is this reason'd?

Gon. Combine together 'gainst the enemy:
For these domestick and particular broils
Are not to question here.

Alb. Let us then determine
With the ancient of war on our proceedings.

Edm. I shall attend you presently at your tent.

Reg. Sister, you'll go with us?

Gon. No.

Reg. 'Tis most convenient; pray you, go with us.

Gon. O, ho, I know the riddle: [*aside.*] I will go.

As they are going out, enter EDGAR, disguised.

Edg. If e'er your grace had speech with man so poor,
Hear me one word.

Alb. I'll overtake you. — Speak.

[*Exeunt EDMUND, REGAN, GONERIL, Officers,
Soldiers, and Attendants.*]

⁸ Not bolds the king;] i. e. emboldens him to assert his former title.

⁹ — make oppose.] Compel to oppose us.

¹ Sir, you speak nobly.] This reply must be understood ironically.

Edg. Before you fight the battle, ope this letter.
 If you have victory, let the trumpet sound
 For him that brought it: wretched though I seem,
 I can produce a champion, that will prove
 What is avouched there: If you miscarry,
 Your business of the world hath so an end,
 And machination ceases.² Fortune love you!

Alb. Stay till I have read the letter.

Edg. I was forbid it.
 When time shall serve, let but the herald cry,
 And I'll appear again. [Exit.

Alb. Why, fare thee well; I will o'erlook thy paper.

Re-enter EDMUND.

Edm. The enemy's in view, draw up your powers.
 Here is the guess of their true strength and forces
 By diligent discovery; — but your haste
 Is now urg'd on you.

Alb. We will greet the time.³ [Exit.

Edm. To both these sisters have I sworn my love;
 Each jealous of the other, as the stung
 Are of the adder. Which of them shall I take?
 Both? one? or neither? Neither can be enjoy'd,
 If both remain alive: To take the widow,
 Exasperates, makes mad her sister Goneril;
 And hardly shall I carry out my side,⁴
 Her husband being alive. Now then, we'll use
 His countenance for the battle; which being done,
 Let her, who would be rid of him, devise
 His speedy taking off. As for the mercy
 Which he intends to Lear, and to Cordelia, —
 The battle done, and they within our power,

² *And machination ceases.]* i. e. All designs against your life will have an end.

³ — *greet the time.]* i. e. Be ready to meet the occasion.

⁴ — *carry out my side.]* Edmund means, hardly shall I be able to make my party good; to maintain my cause.

Shall never see his pardon : for my state
Stands on me to defend, not to debate.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

A Field between the two Camps.

*Alarum within. Enter, with Drum and Colours, LEAR,
CORDELIA, and their Forces; and exeunt.*

Enter EDGAR and GLOSTER.

Edg. Here, father, take the shadow of this tree
For your good host; pray that the right may thrive :
If ever I return to you again,
I'll bring you comfort.

Glo. Grace go with you, sir !
[*Exit EDGAR.*

Alarums; afterwards a Retreat. Re-enter EDGAR.

Edg. Away, old man, give me thy hand, away ;
King Lear hath lost, he and his daughter ta'en :
Give me thy hand, come on.

Glo. No further, sir ; a man may rot even here.

Edg. What, in ill thoughts again ? Men must endure
Their going hence, even as their coming hither :
Ripeness is all⁵ : Come on.

Glo. And that's true too.
[*Excunt.*

⁵ *Ripeness is all :*] i. e. To be ready, prepared, is all.

SCENE III.

The British Camp near Dover.

*Enter, in Conquest, with Drum and Colours, EDMUND;
LEAR and CORDELIA, as Prisoners; Officers, Sol-
diers, &c.*

Edm. Some officers take them away: good guard;
Until their greater pleasures first be known
That are to censure them.⁶

Cor. We are not the first,
Who, with best meaning, have incurr'd the worst.
For thee, oppressed king, am I cast down;
Myself could else out-frown false fortune's frown. —
Shall we not see these daughters, and these sisters?

Lear. No, no, no, no! Come, let's away to prison:
We two alone will sing like birds i'the cage:
When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down,
And ask of thee forgiveness: So we'll live,
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues
Talk of court news; and we'll talk with them too, —
Who loses, and who wins; who's in, who's out; —
And take upon us the mystery of things,
As if we were God's spies: And we'll wear out,
In a wall'd prison, packs and sects of great ones,
That ebb and flow by the moon.

Edm. Take them away.

Lear. Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia,
The gods themselves throw incense. Have I caught
thee?

He that parts us, shall bring a brand from heaven,
And fire us hence, like foxes. Wipe thine eyes;

⁶ — to censure them.] i. e. to pass sentence or judgment on them.

The goujeers⁷ shall devour them, flesh and fell,⁸
 Ere they shall make us weep: we'll see them starve first.
 Come. [*Exeunt LEAR and CORDELIA, guarded.*]

Edm. Come hither, captain; hark.
 Take thou this note; [*giving a paper.*] go, follow
 them to prison:

One step I have advanc'd thee; if thou dost
 As this instructs thee, thou dost make thy way
 To noble fortunes: Know thou this, — that men
 Are as the time is: to be tender-minded
 Does not become a sword: — Thy great employment
 Will not bear question⁹; either say, thou'lt do't,
 Or thrive by other means.

Off. I'll do't, my lord.

Edm. About it; and write happy, when thou hast
 done.

Mark, — I say, instantly; and carry it so,
 As I have set it down.

Off. I cannot draw a cart, nor eat dried oats;
 If it be man's work, I will do it. [*Exit Officer.*]

Flourish. Enter ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN, Officers,
 and Attendants.

Alb. Sir, you have shown to-day your valiant strain,
 And fortune led you well: You have the captives
 Who were the opposites of this day's strife:
 We do require them of you; so to use them,
 As we shall find their merits and our safety
 May equally determine.

Edm. Sir, I thought it fit
 To send the old and miserable king
 To some retention, and appointed guard;

⁷ *The goujeers* —] *The goujeers*, i. e. *Morbus Gallicus*.

⁸ — *flesh and fell*,] *Flesh and skin*.

⁹ *Will not bear question* ;] *Question*, here, as in many other places,
 signifies *discourse, conversation*.

Whose age has charms in it, whose title more,
 To pluck the common bosom on his side,
 And turn our impress'd lances in our eyes ¹
 Which do command them. With him I sent the queen;
 My reason all the same; and they are ready
 To-morrow, or at further space, to appear
 Where you shall hold your session. At this time,
 We sweat, and bleed: the friend hath lost his friend;
 And the best quarrels, in the heat, are curs'd
 By those that feel their sharpness: —
 The question of Cordelia, and her father,
 Requires a fitter place. ²

Alb. Sir, by your patience,
 I hold you but a subject of this war,
 Not as a brother.

Reg. That's as we list to grace him.
 Methinks, our pleasure might have been demanded,
 Ere you had spoke so far. He led our powers;
 Bore the commission of my place and person;
 The which immediacy ³ may well stand up,
 And call itself your brother.

Gon. Not so hot:
 In his own grace he doth exalt himself,
 More than in your advancement.

Reg. In my rights,
 By me invested, he compeers the best.

Gon. That were the most, if he should husband you.

Reg. Jesters do oft prove prophets.

Gon. Holla, holla!
 That eye, that told you so, look'd but a-squint.

¹ *And turn our impress'd lances in our eyes* —] i. e. Turn the *launcemen* whom we have hired by giving them *press-money*.

² *Requires a fitter place.*] i. e. The determination of the question what shall be done with Cordelia and her father, should be reserved for greater privacy.

³ *The which immediacy* —] *Immediacy* is close and immediate connexion with me, and direct authority from me.

Reg. Lady, I am not well; else I should answer
From a full-flowing stomach. — General,
Take thou my soldiers, prisoners, patrimony;
Dispose of them, of me; the walls are thine:
Witness the world, that I create thee here
My lord and master.

Gon. Mean you to enjoy him?

Alb. The let-alone lies not in your good will.⁴

Edm. Nor in thine, lord.

Alb. Half-blooded fellow, yes.

Reg. Let the drum strike, and prove my title thine.

[To EDMUND.]

Alb. Stay yet; hear reason: — Edmund, I arrest thee
On capital treason; and, in thy arrest,
This gilded serpent: [*pointing to GON.*] — for your
claim, fair sister,

I bar it in the interest of my wife;
'Tis she is sub-contracted to this lord,
And I, her husband, contradict your bans.
If you will marry, make your love to me,
My lady is bespoke.

Gon. An interlude!

Alb. Thou art arm'd, Gloster: — Let the trumpet
sound:

If none appear to prove upon thy person,
Thy heinous, manifest, and many treasons,
There is my pledge; [*throwing down a Glove.*] I'll prove
it on thy heart,

Ere I taste bread, thou art in nothing less
Than I have here proclaim'd thee.

Reg. Sick, O, sick!

Gon. If not, I'll ne'er trust poison. [*Aside.*]

Edm. There's my exchange: [*throwing down a Glove.*]
what in the world he is

That names me traitor, villain-like he lies:

⁴ *The let-alone lies not in your good will.*] Whether he shall not
or shall, depends not on your choice.

Call by thy trumpet: he that dares approach,
On him, on you, (who not?) I will maintain
My truth and honour firmly.

Alb. A herald, ho!

Edm. A herald, ho, a herald!

Alb. Trust to thy single virtue^s; for thy soldiers,
All levied in my name, have in my name
Took their discharge.

Reg. This sickness grows upon me.

Enter a Herald.

Alb. She is not well; convey her to my tent.

[*Exit REGAN, led.*]

Come hither, herald, — Let the trumpet sound, —
And read out this.

Off. Sound, trumpet. [A Trumpet sounds.]

Herald reads.

*If any man of quality, or degree, within the lists of the
army, will maintain upon Edmund, supposed earl of Gloster,
that he is a manifold traitor, let him appear at the third
sound of the trumpet: He is bold in his defence.*

Edm. Sound. [1 Trumpet.]

Her. Again. [2 Trumpet.]

Her. Again. [3 Trumpet.]

[Trumpet answers within.]

Enter EDGAR, armed, preceded by a Trumpet.

Alb. Ask him his purposes, why he appears
Upon this call o'the trumpet.

Her. What are you?

Your name, your quality? and why you answer
This present summons?

Edg. Know, my name is lost;

— *thy single virtue;*] i. e. valour; a Roman sense of the word.

By treason's tooth bare-gnawn, and canker-bit :
 Yet am I noble, as the adversary
 I come to cope withal.

Alb. Which is that adversary ?

Edg. What's he, that speaks for Edmund earl of
 Gloster ?

Edm. Himself; — What say'st thou to him ?

Edg. Draw thy sword ;

That, if my speech offend a noble heart,
 Thy arm may do thee justice : here is mine.
 Behold, it is the privilege of mine honours,
 My oath, and my profession⁶ ; I protest, —
 Maugre thy strength, youth, place, and eminence,
 Despite thy victor sword, and fire-new fortune,
 Thy valour, and thy heart, — thou art a traitor :
 False to thy gods, thy brother, and thy father ;
 Conspirant 'gainst this high illustrious prince ;
 And, from the extremest upward of thy head,
 To the descent and dust beneath thy feet,
 A most toad-spotted traitor. Say thou, *No*,
 This sword, this arm, and my best spirits, are bent
 To prove upon thy heart, whereto I speak,
 Thou liest.

Edm. In wisdom, I should ask thy name ;
 But, since thy outside looks so fair and warlike,
 And that thy tongue some 'say of breeding breathes,⁷
 What safe and nicely I might well delay
 By rule of knighthood, I disdain and spurn :
 Back do I toss these treasons to thy head :
 With the hell-hated lie o'erwhelm thy heart ;
 Which, (for they yet glance by, and scarcely bruise,)

⁶ — *Behold, it is the privilege of mine honours,*

My oath, and my profession.] The *privilege* of this *oath* means the privilege gained by taking the oath administered in the regular initiation of a knight professed.

⁷ — 'say of *breeding breathes*,] *Say* is sample, a taste.

This sword of mine shall give them instant way,
Where they shall rest for ever.⁸ — Trumpets, speak.

[*Alarums. They fight. EDMUND falls.*

Alb. O save him, save him !

Gon. This is mere practice, Gloster :
By the law of arms, thou wast not bound to answer
An unknown opposite ; thou art not vanquish'd,
But cozen'd and beguil'd.

Alb. Shut your mouth, dame,
Or with this paper shall I stop it : — Hold, sir : —
Thou worse than any name, read thine own evil : —
No tearing, lady ; I perceive you know it.

[*Gives the Letter to EDMUND.*

Gon. Say, if I do : the laws are mine, not thine :
Who shall arraign me for't ?

Alb. Most monstrous !
Know'st thou this paper ?

Gon. Ask me not what I know.

[*Exit GONERIL.*

Alb. Go after her : she's desperate ; govern her.

[*To an Officer, who goes out.*

Edm. What you have charg'd me with, that have I
done ;

And more, much more : the time will bring it out ;
'Tis past, and so am I : But what art thou,
That hast this fortune on me ? If thou art noble,
I do forgive thee.

Edg. Let's exchange charity.
I am no less in blood than thou art, Edmund ;
If more, the more thou hast wrong'd me.
My name is Edgar, and thy father's son.
The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to scourge us :
The dark and vicious place where thee he got,
Cost him his eyes.

⁸ Where they shall rest for ever.] To that place, where they shall rest for ever ; i. e. thy heart.

Edm. Thou hast spoken right, 'tis true ;
The wheel is come full circle ; I am here.

Alb. Methought, thy very gait did prophecy
A royal nobleness : — I must embrace thee ;
Let sorrow split my heart, if ever I
Did hate thee, or thy father !

Edg. Worthy prince,
I know it well. †

Alb. Where have you hid yourself ?
How have you known the miseries of your father ?

Edg. By nursing them, my lord. — List a brief tale ; —
And, when 'tis told, O, that my heart would burst ! —
The bloody proclamation to escape,
That follow'd me so near, (O our lives' sweetness !
That with the pain of death we'd hourly die,
Rather than die at once !) taught me to shift
Into a mad-man's rags ; to assume a semblance
That very dogs disdain'd : and in this habit
Met I my father with his bleeding rings,
Their precious stones new lost ; became his guide,
Led him, begg'd for him, sav'd him from despair ;
Never (O fault !) reveal'd myself unto him,
Until some half hour past, when I was arm'd,
Not sure, though hoping, of this good success,
I ask'd his blessing, and from first to last
Told him my pilgrimage : But his flaw'd heart,
(Alack, too weak the conflict to support !)
'Twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief,
Burst smilingly.

Edm. This speech of yours hath mov'd me,
And shall, perchance, do good : but speak you on ;
You look as you had something more to say.

Alb. If there be more, more woful, hold it in ;
For I am almost ready to dissolve,
Hearing of this.

Edg. This would have seem'd a period

† " I know't." MALONE.

To such as love not sorrow ; but another,
 To amplify too-much, would make much more,
 And top extremity.⁹
 Whilst I was big in clamour, came there a man,
 Who having seen me in my worst estate,
 Shunn'd my abhorr'd society ; but then, finding
 Who 'twas that so endur'd, with his strong arms
 He fasten'd on my neck, and bellow'd out
 As he'd burst heaven ; threw him on my father : †
 Told the most piteous tale of Lear and him,
 That ever ear receiv'd : which in recounting
 His grief grew puissant, and the strings of life
 Began to crack : Twice then the trumpet sounded,
 And there I left him tranc'd.

Alb. But who was this ?

Edg. Kent, sir, the banish'd Kent ; who in disguise
 Follow'd his enemy king, and did him service
 Improper for a slave.

Enter a Gentleman hastily, with a bloody Knife.

Gent. Help ! help ! O help !

Edg. What kind of help ?

Alb. Speak, man.

Edg. What means that bloody knife ?

Gent. 'Tis hot, it smokes ;

It came even from the heart of —

Alb. Who, man ? speak.

Gent. Your lady, sir, your lady : and her sister
 By her is poison'd ; she confesses it. †

Edm. I was contracted to them both ; all three
 Now marry in an instant.

⁹ — *This would have seem'd a period, &c.]* The sense may probably be this: *This would have seem'd a period to such as love not sorrow ; but — another, i. e. but I must add another, i. e. another period, another kind of conclusion to my story, such as will increase the horrors of what has been already told.*

† “threw me on my father :— MALONE.

† “she hath confess'd it.” MALONE.

Alb. Produce their bodies, be they alive or dead! —
This judgment¹ of the heavens, that makes us tremble,
Touches us not with pity. [*Exit Gentleman.*]

Enter KENT.

Edg. Here comes Kent, sir.

Alb. O! it is he.

The time will not allow the compliment,
Which very manners urges.

Kent. I am come
To bid my king and master aye good night;
Is he not here?

Alb. Great thing of us forgot! —
Speak, Edmund, where's the king; and where's Cor-
delia? —

See'st thou this object, Kent?

[*The Bodies of GONERIL and REGAN are
brought in.*]

Kent. Alack, why thus?

Edm. Yet Edmund was belov'd:
The one the other poison'd for my sake,
And after slew herself.

Alb. Even so. — Cover their faces.

Edm. I pant for life: — Some good I mean to do,
Despite of mine own nature. Quickly send, —
Be brief in it, — to the castle; for my writ
Is on the life of Lear, and on Cordelia: —
Nay, send in time.

Alb. Run, run, O, run —

Edg. To who, my lord? — Who has the office? send
Thy token of reprieve.

Edm. Well thought on; take my sword,
Give it the captain.

Alb. Haste thee, for thy life. [*Exit EDGAR.*]

¹ *This judgment, &c.*] If Shakspeare had studied Aristotle all his life, he would not perhaps have been able to mark with more precision the distinct operations of *terror* and *pity*. TYRWHITT.

Edm. He hath commission from thy wife and me
To hang Cordelia in the prison, and
To lay the blame upon her own despair,
That she fordid herself.²

Alb. The gods defend her! Bear him hence awhile.
[EDMUND is borne off.]

*Enter LEAR, with CORDELIA dead in his arms; EDGAR,
Officer, and Others.*

Lear. Howl, howl, howl, howl! — O, you are men
of stones;
Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so
That heaven's vault should crack: — O, she is gone for
ever! —

I know when one is dead, and when one lives;
She's dead as earth: — Lend me a looking-glass;
If that her breath will mist or stain the stone,
Why, then she lives.

Kent. Is this the promis'd end?

Edg. Or image of that horror?³

Alb. Fall, and cease!⁴

Lear. This feather stirs; she lives! if it be so,
It is a chance that does redeem all sorrows
That ever I have felt.

Kent. O my good master! [Kneeling.]

Lear. Pr'ythee, away.

Edg. 'Tis noble Kent, your friend.

² *That she fordid herself.*] To *fordo* signifies to destroy.

³ *Kent. Is this the promis'd end?*

Edg. Or image of that horror?] By the *promised end* Kent does not mean that conclusion which the state of their affairs seemed to promise, but the end of the world.

⁴ *Fall, and cease!*] Albany is looking with attention on the pains employed by Lear to recover his child, and knows to what miseries he must survive, when he finds them to be ineffectual. Having these images present to his eyes and imagination, he cries out, *Rather fall, and cease to be, at once, than continue in existence only to be wretched.*

Lear. A plague upon you, murderers, traitors all!
I might have sav'd her; now she's gone for ever! —
Cordelia, Cordelia, stay a little. Ha!
What is't thou say'st? — Her voice was ever soft,
Gentle, and low: an excellent thing in woman: —
I kill'd the slave that was a hanging thee.

Off. 'Tis true, my lords, he did.

Lear. Did I not, fellow?
I have seen the day, with my good biting falchion
I would have made them skip: I am old now,
And these same crosses spoil me. — Who are you?
Mine eyes are none o'the best: — I'll tell you straight.

Kent. If fortune brag of two she lov'd and hated,
One of them we behold.⁵

Lear. This is a dull sight: Are you not Kent?

Kent. The same;
Your servant Kent: Where is your servant Caius?

Lear. He's a good fellow, I can tell you that;
He'll strike, and quickly too: He's dead and rotten.

Kent. No, my good lord; I am the very man; —

Lear. I'll see that straight.

Kent. That, from your first of difference and decay,⁶
Have follow'd your sad steps.

Lear. You are welcome hither.

Kent. Nor no man else⁷; all's cheerless, dark, and
deadly. —

Your eldest daughters have fore-doom'd themselves,
And desperately are dead.

Lear. Ay, so I think.

⁵ *If fortune brag of two she lov'd and hated,*

One of them we behold.] i. e. If Fortune, to display the plenitude of her power, should brag of two persons, one of whom she had highly elevated, and the other she had wofully depressed, we now behold the latter.

⁶ — *of difference and decay,]* Decay for misfortunes.

⁷ *Nor no man else;]* Kent means, *I welcome!* No, nor no man else.

Alb. He knows not what he says; and vain it is
That we present us to him.

Edg. Very bootless.

Enter an Officer.

Off. Edmund is dead, my lord.

Alb. That's but a trifle here. —
You lords, and noble friends, know our intent.
What comfort to this great decay may come,⁸
Shall be applied: For us, we will resign,
During the life of this old majesty,
To him our absolute power: — You, to your rights;
[*To EDGAR and KENT.*

With boot⁹, and such addition as your honours
Have more than merited. — All friends shall taste
The wages of their virtue, and all foes
The cup of their deservings. — O, see, see!

Lear. And my poor fool is hang'd!¹ No, no, no life:
Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,
And thou no breath at all? O, thou wilt come no more,
Never, never, never, never, never! —
Pray you, undo this button²: Thank you, sir. —
Do you see this? — Look on her, — look, — her lips, —
Look there, look there! — [He dies.

Edg. He faints! — My lord, my lord, —
Kent. Break, heart; I pr'ythee, break!

⁸ — *this great decay may come,*] This *great decay* is Lear, *this piece of decay'd royalty, this ruin'd majesty.*

⁹ *With boot,*] With advantage, with increase.

¹ *And my poor fool is hang'd!*] This is an expression of tenderness for his dead Cordelia, (not his fool, as some have thought,) on whose lips he is still intent, and dies away while he is searching there for indications of life. *Poor fool*, in the age of Shakspeare, was an expression of endearment.

² *Pray you, undo this button:*] The Rev. Dr. J. Warton judiciously observes, that the swelling and heaving of the heart is described by *this* most expressive circumstance.

Edg. Look up, my lord.

Kent. Vex not his ghost: O, let him pass! he hates him,

That would upon the rack of this tough world
Stretch him out longer.

Edg. O, he is gone, indeed.

Kent. The wonder is, he hath endur'd so long:
He but usurp'd his life.

Alb. Bear them from hence. — Our present business
Is general woe. Friends of my soul, you twain
[*To KENT and EDGAR.*

Rule in this realm, and the gor'd state sustain.

Kent. I have a journey, sir, shortly to go;
My master calls, and I must not say, no.

Alb. The weight of this sad time we must obey;
Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.
The oldest hath borne most: we, that are young,
Shall never see so much, nor live so long.

[*Exeunt, with a Dead March.*³

³ The tragedy of Lear is deservedly celebrated among the dramas of Shakspeare. There is perhaps no play which keeps the attention so strongly fixed; which so much agitates our passions, and interests our curiosity. The artful involutions of distinct interests, the striking oppositions of contrary characters, the sudden changes of fortune, and the quick succession of events, fill the mind with a perpetual tumult of indignation, pity, and hope. There is no scene which does not contribute to the aggravation of the distress or conduct of the action, and scarce a line which does not conduce to the progress of the scene. So powerful is the current of the poet's imagination, that the mind which once ventures within it, is hurried irresistibly along.

On the seeming improbability of Lear's conduct, it may be observed, that he is represented according to histories at that time vulgarly received as true. And, perhaps, if we turn our thoughts upon the barbarity and ignorance of the age to which this story is referred, it will appear not so unlikely as while we estimate Lear's manners by our own. Such preference of one daughter to another, or resignation of dominion on such conditions, would be yet credible,

if told of a petty prince of Guinea or Madagascar. Shakspeare, indeed, by the mention of his earls and dukes, has given us the idea of times more civilized, and of life regulated by softer manners; and the truth is, that though he so nicely discriminates, and so minutely describes the characters of men, he commonly neglects and confounds the characters of ages, by mingling customs ancient and modern, English and foreign.

My learned friend, Mr. Warton, [afterwards Dr. Joseph Warton,] who has in *The Adventurer* very minutely criticised this play, remarks, that the instances of cruelty are too savage and shocking, and that the intervention of Edmund destroys the simplicity of the story. These objections may, I think, be answered, by repeating, that the cruelty of the daughters is an historical fact, to which the poet has added little, having only drawn it into a series of dialogue and action. But I am not able to apologize with equal plausibility for the extrusion of Gloster's eyes, which seems an act too horrid to be endured in dramattick exhibition, and such as must always compel the mind to relieve its distresses by incredulity. Yet let it be remembered that our author well knew what would please the audience for which he wrote.

The injury done by Edmund to the simplicity of the action is abundantly recompensed by the addition of variety, by the art with which he is made to co-operate with the chief design, and the opportunity which he gives the poet of combining perfidy with perfidy, and connecting the wicked son with the wicked daughters, to impress this important moral, that villainy is never at a stop, that crimes lead to crimes, and at last terminate in ruin.

But though this moral be incidentally enforced, Shakspeare has suffered the virtue of Cordelia to perish in a just cause, contrary to the natural ideas of justice, to the hope of the reader, and what is yet more strange, to the faith of chronicles. Yet this conduct is justified by *The Spectator*, who blames Tate for giving Cordelia success and happiness in his alteration, and declares, that in his opinion, *the Tragedy has lost half its beauty*. Dennis has remarked, whether justly or not, that, to secure the favourable reception of *Cato*, *the town was poisoned with much false and abominable criticism*, and that endeavours had been used to discredit and decry poetical justice. A play in which the wicked prosper, and the virtuous miscarry, may doubtless be good, because it is a just representation of the common events of human life; but since all reasonable beings naturally love justice, I cannot easily be persuaded, that the observation of justice makes a play worse; or, that if other excellencies are equal, the audience will not always rise better pleased from the final triumph of persecuted virtue.

In the present case the publick has decided.* Cordelia, from the time of Tate, has always retired with victory and felicity. And, if my sensations could add any thing to the general suffrage, I might relate, I was many years ago so shocked by Cordelia's death, that I know not whether I ever endured to read again the last scenes of the play till I undertook to revise them as an editor.

There is another controversy among the criticks concerning this play. It is disputed whether the predominant image in Lear's disordered mind be the loss of his kingdom or the cruelty of his daughters. Mr. Murphy, a very judicious critick, has evinced by induction of particular passages, that the cruelty of his daughters is the primary source of his distress, and that the loss of royalty affects him only as a secondary and subordinate evil. He observes, with great justness, that Lear would move our compassion but little, did we not rather consider the injured father than the degraded king.

The story of this play, except the episode of Edmund, which is derived, I think, from Sidney, is taken originally from Geoffry of Monmouth, whom Holinshed generally copied; but perhaps immediately from an old historical ballad. My reason for believing that the play was posterior to the ballad, rather than the ballad to the play, is, that the ballad has nothing of Shakspeare's nocturnal tempest, which is too striking to have been omitted, and that it follows the chronicle; it has the rudiments of the play, but none of its amplifications: it first hinted Lear's madness, but did not array it in circumstances. The writer of the ballad added something to the history, which is a proof that he would have added more, if more had occurred to his mind, and more must have occurred if he had seen Shakspeare. JOHNSON.

* Dr. Johnson should rather have said that the managers of the theatres royal have decided, and the publick has been obliged to acquiesce in their decision. The altered play has the upper gallery on its side; the original drama was patronized by Addison.

“*Victrix causa Düs placuit, sed victa Catoni.*” STEEVENS.



ROMEO AND JULIET.



THE original relater of the story on which this play is formed, was Luigi da Porto, a gentleman of Vicenza, who died in 1529. His novel did not appear till some years after his death; being first printed at Venice in 1555, under the title of *La Giulietta*. A second edition was published in 1539; and it was again reprinted at the same place in 1553; (without the author's name,) with the following title: *Historia nuovamente ritrovata di due nobili Amanti, con la loro pietosa morte; intervenuta già nella cita di Verona, nell tempo del Signor Bartolomeo della Scala. Nuovamente stampata.*

In 1554 Bandello published, at Lucca, a novel on the same subject; [Tom. II. Nov. ix.] and shortly afterwards Boisteau exhibited one in French, founded on the Italian narratives, but varying from them in many particulars. From Boisteau's novel the same story was, in 1562, formed into an English poem, with considerable alterations and large additions, by Mr. Arthur Brooke. This piece was printed by Richard Tottle with the following title, written probably, according to the fashion of that time, by the bookseller: *The Tragicall Hystory of Romeus and Juliet, containing a rare Example of true Constance: with the subtill Counsels, and Practices of an old Fryer, and their ill event.* It was again published by the same bookseller in 1582. Painter, in the second volume of his *Palace of Pleasure*, 1567, published a prose translation from the French of Boisteau, which he entitled *Rhomeo and Julietta*. Shakspeare had probably read Painter's novel, having taken one circumstance from it or some other prose translation of Boisteau; but his play was undoubtedly formed on the poem of Arthur Brooke. This is proved decisively by the following circumstance. 1. In the poem the prince of Verona is called *Escalus*; so also in the play.—In Painter's translation from Boisteau he is named *Signor Escala*; and sometimes *Lord Bartholomew of Escala*. 2. In Painter's novel the family of Romeo are called the *Montesches*; in the poem and in the play, the *Montagues*. 3. The messenger employed by friar Lawrence to carry a letter to Romeo to inform him when Juliet would awake from her trance, is in Painter's translation called *Anselme*: in the poem, and in the play, friar *John* is employed in this business. 4. The circumstance of Capulet's writing down the names of the guests whom he invites to supper, is found in the poem and in the play, but is not mentioned by Painter, nor is it found in the original Italian novel. 5. The residence of the Capulets, in the original, and in Painter, is called *Villa Franca*; in the poem and in the play, *Freetown*. 6. Several passages of *Romeo and Juliet* appear to have been formed on hints furnished by the poem, of which no traces are found either in Painter's novel, or in Boisteau, or the original; and several expressions are borrowed from thence, which will be found in their proper places.

As what has been now stated has been controverted, (for what may not be controverted?) I should enter more largely into the subject, but various passages of the poem furnish such a decisive proof of the play's having been constructed upon it, as not to leave in my apprehension, a shadow of doubt upon the subject. The question is not, whether Shakspeare had read other novels, or other poetical pieces, founded on this story, but whether the poem written by Arthur Brooke was the *basis* on which this play was built.

With respect to the name of Romeo, this also Shakspeare might have found in the poem; for in one place that name is given to him: or he might have had it from Painter's novel, from which or from some other prose translation of the same story he has, as I have already said, taken one circumstance not mentioned in the poem. In 1570 was entered on the Stationers' books by Henry Bynneman, *The Pitifull Hystory of ij lovynge Italians*, which I suspect was a prose narrative of the story on which our author's play is constructed.

Breval says in his travels, that on a strict inquiry into the histories of Verona, he found that Shakspeare had varied very little from the truth, either in the names, characters, or other circumstances of his play. MALONE.

It is plain, from more than one circumstance, that Shakspeare had read this novel, both in its prosaick and metrical form. He might likewise have met with other poetical pieces on the same subject. We are not yet at the end of our discoveries relative to the originals of our author's dramattick pieces. STEEVENS.

This play, Mr. Malone conjectures, was written in 1596.

PROLOGUE.

Two households, both alike in dignity,
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life;
Whose misadventur'd piteous overthrows
Do, with their death, bury their parents' strife.
The fearful passage of their death-mark'd love,
And the continuance of their parents' rage,
Which, but their children's end, nought could remove,
Is now the two hours' traffick of our stage;
The which if you with patient ears attend,
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.¹

¹ This prologue, after the first copy was published in 1597, received several alterations, both in respect of correctness and versification. In the folio it is omitted. — The play was originally performed by *the Right Hon. the Lord of Hunsdon his servants*.

In the first of king James I. was made an act of parliament for some restraint or limitation of noblemen in the protection of players, or of players under their sanction. STEEVENS.

Under the word PROLOGUE, in the copy of 1599, is printed *Chorus*, which I suppose meant only that the prologue was to be spoken by the same person who personated the chorus at the end of the first act.

The original prologue, in the quarto of 1597, stands thus:

“ Two household frends, alike in dignitie,
“ In faire Verona, where we lay our scene,
“ From civil broyles broke into enmitie,
“ Whose civill warre makes civill handes uncleane.
“ From forth the fatall loynes of these two foes
“ A paire of starre-crost lovers tooke their life;
“ Whose misadventures, piteous overthrowes,
“ (Through the continuing of their fathers' strife,
“ And death-markt passage of their parents' rage,)
“ Is now the two howres traffique of our stage.
“ The which if you with patient eares attend,
“ What here we want, wee'll studie to amend.” MALONE.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

ESCALUS, *Prince of Verona.*

PARIS, *a young Nobleman, Kinsman to the Prince.*

MONTAGUE, } *Heads of two Houses, at variance with*
CAPULET, } *each other.*

An old Man, Uncle to Capulet.

ROMEO, *Son to Montague.*

MERCUTIO, *Kinsman to the Prince, and Friend to Romeo.*

BENVOLIO, *Nephew to Montague, and Friend to Romeo.*

TYBALT, *Nephew to Lady Capulet.*

FRIAR LAWRENCE, *a Franciscan.*

FRIAR JOHN, *of the same Order.*

BALTHAZAR, *Servant to Romeo.*

SAMPSON, } *Servants to Capulet.*
GREGORY, }

ABRAM, *Servant to Montague.*

An Apothecary.

Three Musicians.

CHORUS. *Boy; Page to Paris; PETER; an Officer.*

LADY MONTAGUE, *Wife to Montague.*

LADY CAPULET, *Wife to Capulet.*

JULIET, *Daughter to Capulet.*

Nurse to Juliet.

Citizens of Verona; several Men and Women, Relations to both Houses; Maskers, Guards, Watchmen, and Attendants.

SCENE, *during the greater part of the Play, in VERONA; once in the fifth Act, at MANTUA.*

ROMEO AND JULIET.

ACT I.

SCENE I. — *A publick Place.*

Enter SAMPSON *and* GREGORY, *armed with Swords and Bucklers.*

Sampson.

GREGORY, o'my word, we'll not carry coals.¹

Gre. No, for then we should be colliers.

Sam. I mean, an we be in choler, we'll draw.

Gre. Ay, while you live, draw your neck out of the collar.

Sam. I strike quickly, being moved.

Gre. But thou art not quickly moved to strike.

Sam. A dog of the house of Montague moves me.

Gre. To move, is — to stir; and to be valiant, is — to stand to it: therefore, if thou art moved, thou run'st away.

Sam. A dog of that house shall move me to stand: I will take the wall of any man or maid of Montague's.

Gre. That shows thee a weak slave: for the weakest goes to the wall.

¹ — *we'll not carry coals.*] A phrase formerly used to signify *the bearing injuries.*

Sam. True; and therefore women, being the weaker vessels, are ever thrust to the wall:—therefore I will push Montague's men from the wall, and thrust his maids to the wall.

Gre. The quarrel is between our masters, and us their men.

Sam. 'Tis all one, I will show myself a tyrant: when I have fought with the men, I will be cruel with the maids; I will cut off their heads.

Gre. The heads of the maids?

Sam. Ay, the heads of the maids, or their maiden-heads; take it in what sense thou wilt.

Gre. They must take it in sense, that feel it.

Sam. Me they shall feel, while I am able to stand: and, 'tis known, I am a pretty piece of flesh.

Gre. 'Tis well, thou art not fish; if thou hadst, thou hadst been poor John.² Draw thy tool; here comes two of the house of the Montagues.³

Enter ABRAM and BALTHAZAR.

Sam. My naked weapon is out; quarrel, I will back thee.

Gre. How? turn thy back, and run?

Sam. Fear me not.

Gre. No, marry: I fear thee!

Sam. Let us take the law of our sides; let them begin.

Gre. I will frown, as I pass by; and let them take it as they list.

Sam. Nay, as they dare. I will bite my thumb at them; which is a disgrace to them, if they bear it.

² — *poor John.*] is hake, dried, and salted.

³ — *here comes two of the house of the Montagues.*] It should be observed, that the partizans of the Montague family wore a token in their hats, in order to distinguish them from their enemies, the Capulets. Hence throughout this play, they are known at a distance.

Abr. Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

Sam. I do bite my thumb, sir.

Abr. Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

Sam. Is the law on our side, if I say — ay?

Gre. No.

Sam. No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir;
but I bite my thumb, sir.

Gre. Do you quarrel, sir?

Abr. Quarrel, sir? no, sir.

Sam. If you do, sir, I am for you; I serve as good a
man as you.

Abr. No better.

Sam. Well, sir.

Enter BENVOLIO, *at a distance.*

Gre. Say — better; here comes one of my master's
kinsmen.

Sam. Yes, better, sir.

Abr. You lie.

Sam. Draw, if you be men. — Gregory, remember
thy swashing blow. *[They fight.]*

Ben. Part, fools; put up your swords; you know not
what you do. *[Beats down their swords.]*

Enter TYBALT.

Tyb. What, art thou drawn among these heartless
hinds?

Turn thee, Benvolio, look upon thy death.

Ben. I do but keep the peace; put up thy sword,
Or manage it to part these men with me.

Tyb. What, drawn, and talk of peace? I hate the
word,

As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee:

Have at thee, coward.

[They fight.]

Enter several Partizans of both Houses, who join the fray: then enter Citizens, with Clubs.

1 *Cit.* Clubs, bills⁴, and partizans! strike! beat them down!

Down with the Capulets! down with the Montagues!

Enter CAPULET, in his Gown; and Lady CAPULET.

Cap. What noise is this? — Give me my long sword, ho!

La. Cap. A crutch, a crutch! — Why call you for a sword?

Cap. My sword, I say! — Old Montague is come, And flourishes his blade in spite of me.

Enter MONTAGUE and Lady MONTAGUE.

Mon. Thou villain Capulet, — Hold me not, let me go.

La. Mon. Thou shalt not stir one foot to seek a foe.

Enter Prince, with Attendants.

Prin. Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace,
Profaners of this neighbour-stained steel, —
Will they not hear? — what ho! you men, you beasts, —
That quench the fire of your pernicious rage
With purple fountains issuing from your veins,
On pain of torture, from those bloody hands
Throw your mis-temper'd weapons⁵ to the ground,
And hear the sentence of your moved prince. —
Three civil brawls, bred of an airy word,
By thee, old Capulet, and Montague,
Have thrice disturb'd the quiet of our streets;

⁴ Clubs, *bills*, &c.] When an affray arose in the streets, *clubs* was the usual exclamation.

⁵ — mis-temper'd *weapons* —] *are angry weapons*.

And made Verona's ancient citizens
Cast by their grave beseeming ornaments,
To wield old partizans, in hands as old,
Canker'd with peace, to part your canker'd hate :
If ever you disturb our streets again,
Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.
For this time, all the rest depart away :
You, Capulet, shall go along with me ;
And, Montague, come you this afternoon,
To know our further pleasure in this case,
To old Free-town, our common judgment-place.
Once more, on pain of death, all men depart.

[*Exeunt Prince, and Attendants ; CAPULET,
Lady CAPULET, TYBALT, Citizens, and
Servants.*

Mon. Who set this ancient quarrel new abroad? —
Speak, nephew, were you by, when it began?

Ben. Here were the servants of your adversary,
And yours, close fighting ere I did approach :
I drew to part them ; in the instant came
The fiery Tybalt, with his sword prepar'd ;
Which, as he breath'd defiance to my ears,
He swung about his head, and cut the winds,
Who, nothing hurt withal, hiss'd him in scorn :
While we were interchanging thrusts and blows,
Came more and more, and fought on part and part,
Till the prince came, who parted either part.

La. Mon. O, where is Romeo! — saw you him to-
day?

Right glad I am, he was not at this fray.

Ben. Madam, an hour before the worshipp'd sun
Peer'd forth the golden window of the east,
A troubled mind drave me to walk abroad ;
Where, — underneath the grove of sycamore,
That westward rooteth from the city's side, —
So early walking did I see your son :
Towards him I made ; but he was 'ware of me,
And stole into the covert of the wood :

I, measuring his affections by my own, —
 That most are busied when they are most alone, —
 Pursu'd my humour, not pursuing his,
 And gladly shunn'd who gladly fled from me.

Mon. Many a morning hath he there been seen,
 With tears augmenting the fresh morning's dew,
 Adding to clouds more clouds with his deep sighs :
 But all so soon as the all-cheering sun
 Should in the further east begin to draw
 The shady curtains from Aurora's bed,
 Away from light steals home my heavy son,
 And private in his chamber pens himself;
 Shuts up his windows, locks fair daylight out,
 And makes himself an artificial night :
 Black and portentous must this humour prove,
 Unless good counsel may the cause remove.

Ben. My noble uncle, do you know the cause ?

Mon. I neither know it, nor can learn of him.

Ben. Have you importun'd him by any means ?

Mon. Both by myself, and many other friends :
 But he, his own affections' counsellor,
 Is to himself — I will not say, how true —
 But to himself so secret and so close,
 So far from sounding and discovery,
 As is the bud bit with an envious worm,
 Ere he can spread his sweet leaves to the air,
 Or dedicate his beauty to the sun. †
 Could we but learn from whence his sorrows grow,
 We would as willingly give cure, as know.

Enter ROMEO, *at a distance.*

Ben. See, where he comes : So please you, step aside ;
 I'll know his grievance, or be much denied.

Mon. I would, thou wert so happy by thy stay,
 To hear true shrift. — Come, madam, let's away.

[*Exeunt* MONTAGUE and Lady.]

† "to the same." MALONE.

Griefs of mine own lie heavy in my breast ;
 Which thou wilt propagate, to have it prest
 With more of thine : this love, that thou hast shown,
 Doth add more grief to too much of mine own.
 Love is a smoke rais'd with the fume of sighs ;
 Being purg'd, a fire sparkling in lovers' eyes ;
 Being vex'd, a sea nourish'd with lovers' tears :
 What is it else ? a madness most discreet,
 A choking gall, and a preserving sweet.
 Farewell, my coz. [Going.]

Ben. Soft, I will go along ;
 An if you leave me so, you do me wrong.

Rom. Tut, I have lost myself ; I am not here ;
 This is not Romeo, he's some other where.

Ben. Tell me in sadness ⁸, who she is you love.

Rom. What, shall I groan, and tell thee ?

Ben. Groan ? why, no ;
 But sadly tell me, who.

Rom. Bid a sick man in sadness make his will : —
 Ah, word ill urg'd to one that is so ill ! —
 In sadness, cousin, I do love a woman.

Ben. I aim'd so near, when I suppos'd you lov'd.

Rom. A right good marks-man ! — And she's fair I
 love.

Ben. A right fair mark, fair coz, is soonest hit.

Rom. Well, in that hit, you miss ; she'll not be hit
 With Cupid's arrow, she hath Dian's wit ;
 And, in strong proof of chastity well arm'd,⁹
 From love's weak childish bow she lives unharm'd.

⁸ *Tell me in sadness,*] That is, *gravely*, or *seriously*.

⁹ *And, in strong proof, &c.*] As this play was written in the reign of queen Elizabeth, I cannot help regarding these speeches of Romeo as an oblique compliment to her majesty, who was not liable to be displeas'd at hearing her chastity praised after she was suspected to have lost it, or her beauty commended in the 67th year of her age, though she never possessed any when she was young. Her declaration that she would continue unmarried, increases the probability of the present supposition. STEEVENS.

She will not stay the siege of loving terms,
 Nor bide the encounter of assailing eyes,
 Nor ope her lap to saint-seducing gold :
 O, she is rich in beauty ; only poor,
 That, when she dies, with beauty dies her store.

Ben. Then she hath sworn, that she will still live
 chaste ?

Rom. She hath, and in that sparing makes huge waste ;
 For beauty, starv'd with her severity,
 Cuts beauty off from all posterity.
 She is too fair, too wise ; wisely too fair,¹
 To merit bliss by making me despair :
 She hath forsworn to love ; and, in that vow,
 Do I live dead, that live to tell it now.

Ben. Be rul'd by me, forget to think of her.

Rom. O, teach me how I should forget to think.

Ben. By giving liberty unto thine eyes ;
 Examine other beauties.

Rom. 'Tis the way
 To call hers, exquisite, in question more :²
 These happy masks³, that kiss fair ladies' brows,
 Being black, put us in mind they hide the fair ;
 He, that is stricken blind, cannot forget
 The precious treasure of his eyesight lost :
 Show me a mistress that is passing fair,
 What doth her beauty serve⁴, but as a note
 Where I may read, who pass'd that passing fair ?
 Farewell ; thou canst not teach me to forget.

Ben. I'll pay that doctrine, or else die in debt.

[*Exeunt.*

¹ — *wisely too fair, &c.*] There is in her too much sanctimonious wisdom united with beauty, which induces her to continue chaste with the hopes of attaining heavenly bliss.

² *To call hers, exquisite, in question more :*] More into talk ; to make her unparalleled beauty more the subject of thought and conversation.

³ *These happy masks, &c.*] i. e. the masks worn by female spectators of the play.

⁴ *What doth her beauty serve,*] i. e. what end does it answer ?

SCENE II.

*A Street.**Enter CAPULET, PARIS, and Servant.*

Cap. And Montague is bound as well as I,
In penalty alike; and 'tis not hard, I think,
For men so old as we to keep the peace.

Par. Of honourable reckoning are you both;
And pity 'tis, you liv'd at odds so long.
But now, my lord, what say you to my suit?

Cap. But saying o'er what I have said before:
My child is yet a stranger in the world,
She hath not seen the change of fourteen years;
Let two more summers wither in their pride,
Ere we may think her ripe to be a bride.

Par. Younger than she are happy mothers made.

Cap. And too soon marr'd are those so early made.
The earth hath swallow'd all my hopes but she,
She is the hopeful lady of my earth:⁵
But woo her, gentle Paris, get her heart,
My will to her consent is but a part;⁶
An she agree, within her scope of choice
Lies my consent and fair according voice.
This night I hold an old accustom'd feast,
Whereto I have invited many a guest,
Such as I love; and you, among the store,
One more, most welcome, makes my number more.
At my poor house, look to behold this night
Earth-treading stars, that make dark heaven light:
Such comfort, as do lusty young men feel

⁵ *She is the hopeful lady of my earth:]* This is a Gallicism: *Fille de terre* is the French phrase for an heiress.

⁶ *My will to her consent is but a part;]* *To*, in this instance, signifies in comparison with, in proportion to.

When well apparell'd April on the heel
 Of limping winter treads, even such delight
 Among fresh female buds shall you this night
 Inherit at my house⁷; hear all, all see,
 And like her most, whose merit most shall be:
 Such, amongst view of many, mine, being one,
 May stand in number, though in reckoning none.
 Come, go with me; — Go, sirrah, trudge about
 Through fair Verona; find those persons out,
 Whose names are written there, [*gives a Paper.*] and
 to them say,

My house and welcome on their pleasure stay.

[*Exeunt* CAPULET and PARIS.

Serv. Find them out, whose names are written here?
 It is written — that the shoemaker should meddle with
 his yard, and the taylor with his last, the fisher with
 his pencil, and the painter with his nets; but I am sent
 to find those persons, whose names are here writ, and
 can never find what names the writing person hath here
 writ. I must to the learned: — In good time.

Enter BENVOLIO and ROMEO.

Ben. Tut, man! one fire burns out another's burning,
 One pain is lessen'd by another's anguish;
 Turn giddy, and be help by backward turning;
 One desperate grief cures with another's languish:
 Take thou some new infection to thy eye,
 And the rank poison of the old will die.

Rom. Your plantain leaf is excellent for that.⁸

Ben. For what, I pray thee?

Rom. For your broken shin.

Ben. Why, Romeo, art thou mad?

⁷ Inherit *at my house*;] To *inherit*, in the language of Shakspeare's age, is to *possess*.

⁸ *Your plantain leaf is excellent for that.*] The plantain leaf is a blood-stauncher, and was formerly applied to green wounds.

Rom. Not mad, but bound more than a madman is :
Shut up in prison, kept without my food,
Whipp'd, and tormented, and — Good-e'en, good
fellow.

Serv. God gi' good e'en. — I pray, sir, can you read ?

Rom. Ay, mine own fortune in my misery.

Serv. Perhaps you have learn'd it without book :
But I pray, can you read any thing you see ?

Rom. Ay, if I know the letters, and the language.

Serv. Ye say honestly ; Rest you merry !

Rom. Stay, fellow : I can read. [*Reads.*

Signior Martino, and his wife, and daughters ; County Anselme, and his beauteous sisters ; The lady widow of Vitruvio ; Signior Placentio, and his lovely nieces ; Mercutio, and his brother Valentine ; Mine uncle Capulet, his wife, and daughters ; My fair niece Rosaline ; Livia ; Signior Valentio, and his cousin Tybalt ; Lucio, and the lively Helena.

A fair assembly ; [*gives back the Note.*] Whither should they come ?

Serv. Up.

Rom. Whither ?

Serv. To supper ; to our house.

Rom. Whose house ?

Serv. My master's.

Rom. Indeed, I should have asked you that before.

Serv. Now I'll tell you without asking : My master is the great rich Capulet ; and if you be not of the house of Montagues, I pray, come and crush a cup of wine.⁹
Rest you merry. [*Exit.*

Ben. At this same ancient feast of Capulet's
Supps the fair Rosaline, whom thou so lov'st ;

⁹ — crush a cup of wine.] This cant expression seems to have been once common among low people. We still stay, in cant language — to crack a bottle.

With all the admired beauties of Verona :
Go thither ; and, with unattainted eye,
Compare her face with some that I shall show,
And I will make thee think thy swan a crow.

Rom. When the devout religion of mine eye
Maintains such falsehood, then turn tears to fires !
And these, — who, often drown'd, could never die, —
Transparent hereticks, be burnt for liars !
One fairer than my love ! the all-seeing sun
Ne'er saw her match, since first the world begun.

Ben. Tut ! you saw her fair, none else being by,
Herself pois'd with herself in either eye :
But in those crystal scales, let there be weigh'd
Your lady's love ¹ against some other maid
That I will show you, shining at this feast,
And she shall scant show well, that now shows best.

Rom. I'll go along, no such sight to be shown,
But to rejoice in splendour of mine own. [Exeunt.]

SCENE III.

A Room in Capulet's House.

Enter Lady CAPULET and Nurse.

La. Cap. Nurse, where's my daughter ? call her forth
to me.

Nurse. Now, by my maiden-head, — at twelve year
old, —

I bade her come. — What, lamb ! what, lady-bird ! —
God forbid ! — where's this girl ? — what, Juliet !

Enter JULIET.

Jul. How now, who calls ?

¹ *Your lady's love* —] *Your lady's love* is the love you bear to
your lady.

Nurse. Your mother.

Jul. Madam, I am here:

What is your will?

La. Cap. This is the matter: — Nurse, give leave awhile,

We must talk in secret. — Nurse, come back again; I have remember'd me, thou shalt hear our counsel. Thou know'st, my daughter's of a pretty age.

Nurse. 'Faith, I can tell her age unto an hour.

La. Cap. She's not fourteen.

Nurse. I'll lay fourteen of my teeth, And yet, to my teen² be it spoken, I have but four, — She is not fourteen. — How long is it now To Lammas-tide?

La. Cap. A fortnight, and odd days.

Nurse. Even or odd, of all days in the year, Come Lammas-eve at night, shall she be fourteen. Susan and she, — God rest all Christian souls! Were of an age. — Well, Susan is with God; She was too good for me: But, as I said, On Lammas-eve at night shall she be fourteen; That shall she, marry; I remember it well. 'Tis since the earthquake now eleven years; And she was wean'd, — I never shall forget it, — Of all the days of the year, upon that day: For I had then laid wormwood to my dug, Sitting in the sun under the dove-house wall; My lord and you were then at Mantua: — Nay, I do bear a brain³: — but, as I said, When it did taste the wormwood on the nipple Of my dug, and felt it bitter, pretty fool! To see it tetchy, and fall out with the dug. Shake, quoth the dove-house: 'twas no need, I trow, To bid me trudge.

² — to my teen —] To my sorrow.

³ Nay, I do bear a brain:] That is, I have a perfect remembrance or recollection.

And since that time it is eleven years :
 For then she could stand alone ; nay, by the rood,
 She could have run and waddled all about.
 For even the day before, she broke her brow :
 And then my husband — God be with his soul !
 'A was a merry man ; — took up the child :
Yea, quoth he, dost thou fall upon thy face ?
Thou wilt fall backward, when thou hast more wit ;
Wilt thou not, Jule ? and, by my holy dam,
 The pretty wretch left crying, and said — *Ay :*
 To see now, how a jest shall come about !
 I warrant, an I should live a thousand years,
 I never should forget it ; *Wilt thou not, Jule ?* quoth he :
 And, pretty fool, it stinted ⁴, and said — *Ay.*

La. Cap. Enough of this ; I pray thee, hold thy peace.

Nurse. Yes, madam ; yet I cannot choose but laugh,
 To think it should leave crying, and say — *Ay :*
 And yet, I warrant, it had upon its brow
 A bump as big as a young cockrel's stone ;
 A parlous knock ; and it cried bitterly.
Yea, quoth my husband, fall'st upon thy face ?
Thou wilt fall backward, when thou com'st to age ;
Wilt thou not, Jule ? it stinted, and said — *Ay.*

Jul. And stint thou too, I pray thee, nurse, say I.

Nurse. Peace, I have done. God mark thee to his
 grace !

Thou wast the prettiest babe that e'er I nurs'd :
 An I might live to see thee married once,
 I have my wish.

La. Cap. Marry, that marry is the very theme
 I came to talk of : — Tell me, daughter Juliet,
 How stands your disposition to be married ?

Jul. It is an honour that I dream not of.

Nurse. An honour ! were not I thine only nurse,
 I'd say, thou hadst suck'd wisdom from thy teat.

⁴ — *it stinted,*] i. e. it stopped, it forbore from weeping.

La. Cap. Well, think of marriage now; younger
than you,

Here in Verona, ladies of esteem,
Are made already mothers: by my count,
I was your mother much upon these years
That you are now a maid. Thus then, in brief; —
The valiant Paris seeks you for his love.

Nurse. A man, young lady! lady, such a man,
As all the world — Why, he's a man of wax.⁵

La. Cap. Verona's summer hath not such a flower.

Nurse. Nay, he's a flower; in faith, a very flower.

La. Cap. What say you? can you love the gentleman?
This night you shall behold him at our feast:
Read o'er the volume of young Paris' face,
And find delight writ there with beauty's pen;
Examine every married lineament,
And see how one another lends content;
And what obscur'd in this fair volume lies,
Find written in the margin of his eyes.⁶
This precious book of love, this unbound lover,
To beautify him, only lacks a cover:
The fish lives in the sea⁷; and 'tis much pride,
For fair without the fair within to hide:
That book in many's eyes doth share the glory,
That in gold clasps locks in the golden story;
So shall you share all that he doth possess,
By having him, making yourself no less.

Nurse. No less? nay, bigger; women grow by men.

La. Cap. Speak briefly, can you like of Paris' love?

Jul. I'll look to like, if looking liking move:
But no more deep will I endart mine eye,
Than your consent gives strength to make it fly.

⁵ — *a man of wax.*] Well made, as if he had been modelled in wax.

⁶ — *the margin of his eyes.*] The comments on ancient books were always printed in the margin.

⁷ *The fish lives in the sea; &c.*] i. e. is not yet caught.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Madam, the guests are come, supper served up, you called, my young lady asked for, the nurse cursed in the pantry, and every thing in extremity. I must hence to wait; I beseech you, follow straight.

La. Cap. We follow thee. — Juliet, the county stays.

Nurse. Go, girl, seek happy nights to happy days.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

A Street.

Enter ROMEO, MERCUTIO, BENVOLIO, with five or six Maskers, Torch-bearers, and Others.

Rom. What, shall this speech be spoke for our excuse?

Or shall we on without apology?

Ben. The date is out of such prolixity:⁸

We'll have no Cupid hood-wink'd with a scarf,

Bearing a Tartar's painted bow of lath,

Scaring the ladies like a crow-keeper;

Nor no without-book prologue, faintly spoke

After the prompter, for our entrance:

But, let them measure us by what they will,

We'll measure them a measure⁹, and be gone.

Rom. Give me a torch¹, — I am not for this ambling;
Being but heavy, I will bear the light.

Mer. Nay, gentle Romeo, we must have you dance.

⁸ *The date is out of such prolixity:]* Introductory speeches are out of date or fashion.

⁹ *We'll measure them a measure,]* i. e. a dance.

¹ *Give me a torch,]* A torch-bearer seems to have been a constant appendage on every troop of masks, and was not reckoned a degrading office.

Rom. Not I, believe me: you have dancing shoes,
With nimble soles: I have a soul of lead,
So stakes me to the ground, I cannot move.

Mer. You are a lover; borrow Cupid's wings,
And soar with them above a common bound.

Rom. I am too sore enpierced with his shaft,
To soar with his light feathers; and so bound,
I cannot bound a pitch above dull woe:
Under love's heavy burden do I sink.

Mer. And, to sink in it, should you burden love;
Too great oppression for a tender thing.

Rom. Is love a tender thing? it is too rough,
Too rude, too boist'rous; and it pricks like thorn.

Mer. If love be rough with you, be rough with love;
Prick love for pricking, and you beat love down.—
Give me a case to put my visage in:

[*Putting on a Mask.*

A visor for a visor! — what care I,
What curious eye doth quote deformities?²
Here are the beetle-brows, shall blush for me.

Ben. Come, knock, and enter; and no sooner in,
But every man betake him to his legs.

Rom. A torch for me: let wantons, light of heart,
Tickle the senseless rushes with their heels;³
For I am proverb'd with a grandsire phrase,—
I'll be a candle-holder, and look on,—
The game was ne'er so fair, and I am done.⁴

Mer. Tut! dun's the mouse, the constable's own
word:

If thou art dun, we'll draw thee from the mire

² — doth quote deformities?] To quote is to observe.

³ Tickle the senseless rushes with their heels;] It has been already observed, that it was anciently the custom to strew rooms with rushes, before carpets were in use.

⁴ I'll be a candle-holder, and look on,—

The game was ne'er so fair, and I am done.] An allusion to an old proverbial saying, which advises to give over when the game is at the fairest.

Of this (save reverence) love, wherein thou stick'st
Up to the ears. — Come, we burn day-light, ho.

Rom. Nay, that's not so.

Mer. I mean, sir, in delay
We waste our lights in vain, like lamps by day.
Take our good meaning: for our judgment sits
Five times in that, ere once in our five wits.

Rom. And we mean well, in going to this mask;
But 'tis no wit to go.

Mer. Why, may one ask?

Rom. I dreamt a dream to-night.

Mer. And so did I.

Rom. Well, what was yours?

Mer. That dreamers often lie.

Rom. In bed, asleep, while they do dream things true.

Mer. O, then, I see, queen Mab hath been with you.
She is the fairies' midwife⁵; and she comes
In shape no bigger than an agate-stone
On the fore-finger of an alderman,
Drawn with a team of little atomies⁶
Athwart men's noses as they lie asleep:

⁵ *She is the fairies' midwife* ;] I apprehend, and with no violence of interpretation, that by "the fairies' midwife," the poet means, *the midwife among the fairies*, because it was her peculiar employment to steal the new-born babe in the night, and to leave another in its place. The poet here uses her *general* appellation, and character, which yet has so far a proper reference to the present train of fiction, as that her illusions were practised on persons in bed or asleep; for she not only haunted women in child-bed, but was likewise the incubus or night-mare. Shakspeare, by employing her here, alludes at large to her midnight pranks performed on sleepers: but denominates her from the most notorious one, of her personating the drowsy midwife, who was insensibly carried away into some distant water, and substituting a new birth in the bed or cradle. It would clear the appellation to read the *fairy midwife*. The poet avails himself of Mab's appropriate province, by giving her this nocturnal agency.

T. WARTON.

⁶ — *of little atomies* —] An obsolete substitute for *atoms*.

Her waggon-spokes made of long spinners' legs ;
 The cover, of the wings of grasshoppers ;
 The traces, of the smallest spider's web ;
 The collars, of the moonshine's wat'ry beams :
 Her whip, of cricket's bone ; the lash, of film :
 Her waggoner, a small grey-coated gnat,
 Not half so big as a round little worm
 Prick'd from the lazy finger of a maid :
 Her chariot is an empty hazel-nut,
 Made by the joiner squirrel, or old grub,
 Time out of mind the fairies' coach-makers.
 And in this state she gallops night by night
 Through lovers' brains, and then they dream of love :
 On courtiers' knees, that dream on court'sies straight :
 O'er lawyers' fingers, who straight dream on fees :
 O'er ladies' lips, who straight on kisses dream ;
 Which oft the angry Mab with blisters plagues,
 Because their breaths with sweet-meats tainted are.
 Sometime she gallops o'er a courtier's nose,
 And then dreams he of smelling out a suit :⁷
 And sometimes comes she with a tithe-pig's tail,
 Tickling a parson's nose as 'a lies asleep,
 Then dreams he of another benefice :
 Sometime she driveth o'er a soldier's neck,
 And then dreams he of cutting foreign throats,
 Of breaches, ambuscadoes, Spanish blades,⁸
 Of healths five fathom deep ; and then anon
 Drums in his ear ; at which he starts, and wakes ;
 And, being thus frighted, swears a prayer or two,
 And sleeps again. This is that very Mab,
 That plats the manes of horses in the night ;

⁷ *And then dreams he of smelling out a suit, &c.*] In our author's time, a court solicitation was called, simply, a *suit*, and a process, a *suit at law*, to distinguish it from the other.

⁸ *Spanish blades,*] A sword is called a toledo, from the excellence of the Toletan steel.

2 *Serv.* When good manners shall lie all in one or two men's hands, and they unwashed too, 'tis a foul thing.

1 *Serv.* Away with the joint-stools, remove the court-cupboard¹, look to the plate: — good thou, save me a piece of marchpane²; and, as thou lovest me, let the porter let in Susan Grindstone, and Nell. — Antony! and Potpan!

2 *Serv.* Ay, boy; ready.

1 *Serv.* You are look'd for, and called for, asked for, and sought for, in the great chamber.

2 *Serv.* We cannot be here and there too. — Cheerly, boys; be brisk a while, and the longer liver take all.

[*They retire behind.*]

Enter CAPULET, &c. with the Guests, and the Maskers.

Cap. Gentlemen, welcome! ladies, that have their toes Unplagu'd with corns, will have a bout with you: — Ah ha, my mistresses! which of you all Will now deny to dance? she that makes dainty, she, I'll swear, hath corns; Am I come near you now? You are welcome, gentlemen! I have seen the day, That I have worn a visor; and could tell A whispering tale in a fair lady's ear, Such as would please; — 'tis gone, 'tis gone, 'tis gone: You are welcome, gentlemen! — Come, musicians, play. A hall! a hall³! give room, and foot it, girls.

[*Musick plays, and they dance.*]

¹ — *court-cupboard*,] The *court-cupboard* perhaps served the purpose of what we call at present the *side-board*. The use which now is made of those *cupboards* is to display at publick festivals the *flaggons, cans, cups, beakers*, and other antique silver vessels of the company, some of which, (with the names of the donors inscribed on them,) are remarkably large.

² — *save me a piece of marchpane*;] *Marchpanes* were composed of filberts, almonds, pistachoes, pine-kernels, and sugar of roses, with a small proportion of flour.

³ *A hall! a hall!*] An exclamation signifying *make room*.

More light, ye knaves ; and turn the tables up,⁴
 And quench the fire, the room is grown too hot. —
 Ah, sirrah, this unlook'd-for sport comes well.
 Nay, sit, nay, sit, good cousin Capulet ;
 For you and I are past our dancing days :
 How long is't now, since last yourself and I
 Were in a mask ?

2 *Cap.* By'r lady, thirty years.

1 *Cap.* What, man ! 'tis not so much, 'tis not so
 much :

'Tis since the nuptial of Lucentio,
 Come pentecost as quickly as it will,
 Some five and twenty years ; and then we mask'd.

2 *Cap.* 'Tis more, 'tis more : his son is elder, sir ;
 His son is thirty.

1 *Cap.* Will you tell me that ?
 His son was but a ward two years ago.

Rom. What lady's that, which doth enrich the hand
 Of yonder knight ?

Serv. I know not, sir.

Rom. O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright !
 Her beauty hangs upon † the cheek of night
 Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear :
 Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear !
 So shows a snowy dove trooping with crows,
 As yonder lady o'er her fellows shows.
 The measure done, I'll watch her place of stand,
 And, touching hers, make happy my rude hand.
 Did my heart love till now ? forswear it, sight !
 For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.

Tyb. This, by his voice, should be a Montague : —

⁴ — *turn the tables up,*] Before this phrase is generally intelligible, it should be observed that ancient tables were flat leaves, joined by hinges, and placed on tressels. When they were to be removed ; they were therefore *turned up*.

† “ It seems she hangs upon,” &c. — MALONE.

Fetch me my rapier, boy : — What ! dares the slave
Come hither, cover'd with an antick face,
To flear and scorn at our solemnity ?
Now, by the stock and honour of my kin,
To strike him dead I hold it not a sin.

1 *Cap.* Why, how now, kinsman ? wherefore storm
you so ?

Tyb. Uncle, this is a Montague, our foe ;
A villain, that is hither come in spite,
To scorn at our solemnity this night.

1 *Cap.* Young Romeo is't ?

Tyb. 'Tis he, that villain Romeo.

1 *Cap.* Content thee, gentle coz, let him alone,
He bears him like a portly gentleman ;
And, to say truth, Verona brags of him,
To be a virtuous and well-govern'd youth :
I would not for the wealth of all this town,
Here in my house, do him disparagement :
Therefore be patient, take no note of him,
It is my will ; the which if thou respect,
Show a fair presence, and put off these frowns,
An ill-beseeming semblance for a feast.

Tyb. It fits, when such a villain is a guest ;
I'll not endure him.

1 *Cap.* He shall be endur'd ;
What, goodman boy ! — I say, he shall ; — Go to ; —
Am I the master here, or you ? go to.
You'll not endure him ! — God shall mend my soul —
You'll make a mutiny among my guests !
You will set cock-a-hoop ! you'll be the man !

Tyb. Why, uncle, 'tis a shame.

1 *Cap.* Go to, go to,
You are a saucy boy : — Is't so, indeed ? —
This trick may chance to scath you^s ; — I know what.
You must contráry me ! marry, 'tis time —

^s — to scath you ;] i. e. to do you an injury.

Well said, my hearts : — You are a princox ; go : —⁶
 Be quiet, or — More light, more light, for shame ! —
 I'll make you quiet ; What ! — Cheerly, my hearts.

Tyb. Patience perforce with wilful choler meeting,
 Makes my flesh tremble in their different greeting.

I will withdraw : but this intrusion shall,
 Now seeming sweet, convert to bitter gall. [Exit.]

Rom. If I profane with my unworthy hand †
 [To JULIET.]

This holy shrine, the gentle fine is this, —
 My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand
 To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.

Jul. Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too
 much,

Which mannerly devotion shows in this ;
 For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,
 And palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss.

Rom. Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too ?

Jul. Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.

Rom. O then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do ;
 They pray, grant thou, lest faith turn to despair.

Jul. Saints do not move, though grant for prayers'
 sake.

Rom. Then move not, while my prayer's effect I take.
 Thus from my lips, by yours, my sin is purg'd.

[Kissing her.]⁷

Jul. Then have my lips the sin that they have took.

Rom. Sin from my lips ? O trespass sweetly urg'd !
 Give me my sin again.

Jul. You kiss by the book.

Nurse. Madam, your mother craves a word with you.

Rom. What is her mother ?

⁶ — You are a princox ; go :] A *princox* is a coxcomb, or a spoiled child.

† “unworthiest” — MALONE.

⁷ [Kissing her.] Our poet here, without doubt, copied from the mode of his own time ; and kissing a lady in a publick assembly, we may conclude, was not thought indecorous.

Nurse. Marry, bachelor,
Her mother is the lady of the house,
And a good lady, and a wise, and virtuous :
I nurs'd her daughter, that you talk'd withal ;
I tell you, — he, that can lay hold of her,
Shall have the chinks.

Rom. Is she a Capulet ?
O dear account ! my life is my foe's debt.

Ben. Away, begone ; the sport is at the best.

Rom. Ay, so I fear ; the more is my unrest.

1 Cap. Nay, gentlemen, prepare not to be gone ;
We have a trifling foolish banquet towards.*

Is it e'en so ? Why, then I thank you all ;
I thank you, honest gentlemen ; good night : —
More torches here ! — Come on, then let's to bed.

Ah, sirrah, [*to 2 Cap.*] by my fay, it waxes late ;
I'll to my rest. [*Exeunt all but JULIET and Nurse.*]

Jul. Come hither, nurse : What is yon gentleman ?

Nurse. The son and heir of old Tiberio.

Jul. What's he, that now is going out of door ?

Nurse. Marry, that, I think, be young Petruchio.

Jul. What's he, that follows there, that would not
dance ?

Nurse. I know not.

Jul. Go, ask his name : — if he be married,
My grave is like to be my wedding bed.

Nurse. His name is Romeo, and a Montague ;
The only son of your great enemy.

Jul. My only love sprung from my only hate !
Too early seen unknown, and known too late !
Prodigious birth of love it is to me,
That I must love a loathed enemy.

Nurse. What's this ? what's this ?

Jul. A rhyme I learn'd even now
Of one I danc'd withal. [*One calls within, JULIET.*]

* — towards.] *Towards* is ready at hand.

Nurse. Anon, anon : —
Come, let's away; the strangers all are gone. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter CHORUS.

Now old desire doth in his death-bed lie,
And young affection gapes to be his heir;
That fair⁹, which love groan'd for, and would die,
With tender Juliet match'd, is now not fair.
Now Romeo is belov'd, and loves again,
Alike bewitched by the charm of looks;
But to his foe suppos'd he must complain,
And she steal love's sweet bait from fearful hooks:
Being held a foe, he may not have access
To breathe such vows as lovers use to swear;
And she as much in love, her means much less
To meet her new-beloved any where:
But passion lends them power, time means to meet,
Temp'ring extremities with extreme sweet. [*Exit.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I. — *An open Place, adjoining Capulet's Garden.*

Enter ROMEO.

Rom. Can I go forward, when my heart is here?
Turn back, dull earth, and find thy center out.
[*He climbs the Wall, and leaps down within it.*]

Enter BENVOLIO and MERCUTIO.

Ben. Romeo! my cousin Romeo!

⁹ *That fair,]* *Fair*, it has been already observed, was formerly used as a substantive, and was synonymous to beauty. Mr. Malone reads "for which love groan'd for."

Mer. He is wise ;
And, on my life, hath stolen him home to bed.

Ben. He ran this way, and leap'd this orchard wall :
Call, good Mercutio.

Mer. Nay, I'll conjure too.
Romeo ! humours ! madman ! passion ! lover !
Appear thou in the likeness of a sigh,
Speak but one rhyme, and I am satisfied ;
Cry but — Ah me ! couple but — † love and dove ;
Speak to my gossip Venus one fair word,
One nick-name for her purblind son and heir,
Young Adam Cupid, he that shot so trim,
When king Cophetua lov'd the beggar-maid.¹ —
He heareth not, stirreth not ‡, he moveth not ;
The ape is dead², and I must conjure him. —
I conjure thee by Rosaline's bright eyes,
By her high forehead³, and her scarlet lip,
By her fine foot, straight leg, and quivering thigh,
And the demesnes that there adjacent lie,
That in thy likeness thou appear to us.

Ben. An if he hear thee, thou wilt anger him.

Mer. This cannot anger him : 'twould anger him
To raise a spirit in his mistress' circle
Of some strange nature, letting it there stand
Till she had laid it, and conjur'd it down ;
That were some spite : my invocation
Is fair and honest, and, in his mistress' name,
I conjure only but to raise up him.

† "pronounce but—" MALONE.

¹ *When king Cophetua, &c.*] Alluding to an old ballad preserved in the first volume of Dr. Percy's *Reliques of ancient English Poetry*.

‡ "he stirreth not," — MALONE.

² *The ape is dead,*] This phrase appears to have been frequently applied to young men, in our author's time, without any reference to the mimickry of that animal. It was an expression of tenderness, like *poor fool*.

³ *By her high forehead,*] A high forehead was in Shakspeare's time thought eminently beautiful.

Ben. Come, he hath hid himself among those trees,
To be consorted with the humorous night:³
Blind is his love, and best befits the dark.

Mer. If love be blind, love cannot hit the mark.
Now will he sit under a medlar tree,
And wish his mistress were that kind of fruit,
As maids call medlars, when they laugh alone.—†
Romeo, good night;—I'll to my truckle-bed;
This field-bed is too cold for me to sleep:
Come, shall we go?

Ben. Go, then; for 'tis in vain
To seek him here, that means not to be found. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

Capulet's Garden.

Enter ROMEO.

Rom. He jests at scars⁴, that never felt a wound.—
[*JULIET appears above, at a Window.*]
But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks!
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun!—
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
Who is already sick and pale with grief,
That thou her maid art far more fair than she:
Be not her maid⁵, since she is envious;
Her vestal livery is but sick and green,
And none but fools do wear it; cast it off.—

³ — *the humorous night:*] means humid, the moist dewy night.

† Mr. Malone has thought proper to add two indecent lines here, which all other editors have omitted.

⁴ *He jests at scars,*] Mercutio, whose jests he overheard; or perhaps it is an allusion to his having conceived himself so armed with the love of Rosaline, that no other beauty could make any impression on him.

⁵ *Be not her maid,*] Be not a votary to the moon, to Diana.

It is my lady ; O, it is my love :
 O, that she knew she were !
 She speaks, yet she says nothing ; What of that ?
 Her eye discourses, I will answer it. —
 I am too bold, 'tis not to me she speaks :
 Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
 Having some business, do entreat her eyes
 To twinkle in their spheres till they return.
 What if her eyes were there, they in her head ?
 The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,
 As daylight doth a lamp ; her eye in heaven
 Would through the airy region stream so bright,
 That birds would sing, and think it were not night.
 See, how she leans her cheek upon her hand !
 O, that I were a glove upon that hand,
 That I might touch that cheek !

Jul.

Ah me !

Rom.

She speaks : —

O, speak again, bright angel ! for thou art
 As glorious to this night, being o'er my head,
 As is a winged messenger of heaven
 Unto the white-upturned wond'ring eyes
 Of mortals, that fall back to gaze on him,
 When he bestrides the lazy-pacing clouds,
 And sails upon the bosom of the air.

Jul. O Romeo, Romeo ! wherefore art thou Romeo ?
 Deny thy father, and refuse thy name :
 Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
 And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

Rom. Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this ?

[*Aside.*

Jul. 'Tis but thy name, that is my enemy ; —
 Thou art thyself though, not a Montague.
 What's Montague ? it is nor hand, nor foot,
 Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
 Belonging to a man. O, be some other name !
 What's in a name ? that which we call a rose,
 By any other name would smell as sweet ;

So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,
Retain that dear perfection which he owes,
Without that title : — Romeo, doff thy name ;
And for that name, which is no part of thee,
Take all myself.

Rom. I take thee at thy word :
Call me but love, and I'll be new baptiz'd ;
Henceforth I never will be Romeo.

Jul. What man art thou, that, thus bescreen'd in
night,
So stumblest on my counsel ?

Rom. By a name
I know not how to tell thee who I am :
My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself,
Because it is an enemy to thee ;
Had I it written, I would tear the word.

Jul. My ears have not yet drunk a hundred words
Of that tongue's utterance, yet I know the sound ;
Art thou not Romeo, and a Montague ?

Rom. Neither, fair saint, if either thee dislike.

Jul. How cam'st thou hither, tell me ? and where-
fore ?

The orchard walls are high, and hard to climb ;
And the place death, considering who thou art,
If any of my kinsmen find thee here.

Rom. With love's light wings did I o'er-perch these
walls ;
For stony limits cannot hold love out :
And what love can do, that dares love attempt ;
Therefore thy kinsmen are no let ⁶ to me.

Jul. If they do see thee, they will murder thee.

Rom. Alack ! there lies more peril in thine eye,
Than twenty of their swords ; look thou but sweet,
And I am proof against their enmity.

Jul. I would not for the world, they saw thee here.

⁶ — no let —] i. e. no stop or hinderance.

Rom. I have night's cloak to hide me from their sight;
And, but thou love me⁷, let them find me here:
My life were better ended by their hate,
Than death prorogued, wanting of thy love.

Jul. By whose direction found'st thou out this place?

Rom. By love, who first did prompt me to inquire;
He lent me counsel, and I lent him eyes.
I am no pilot; yet, wert thou as far
As that vast shore wash'd with the furthest sea,
I would adventure for such merchandise.

Jul. Thou know'st, the mask of night is on my face;
Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek,
For that which thou hast heard me speak to-night.
Fain would I dwell on form, fain, fain deny
What I have spoke; But farewell compliment!
Dost thou love me? I know, thou wilt say — Ay;
And I will take thy word: yet, if thou swear'st,
Thou may'st prove false; at lovers' perjuries,
They say, Jove laughs. O, gentle Romeo,
If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully;
Or if thou think'st I am too quickly won,
I'll frown, and be perverse, and say thee nay,
So thou wilt woo; but, else, not for the world.
In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond;
And therefore thou may'st think my haviour light:
But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true
Than those that have more cunning to be strange.⁸
I should have been more strange, I must confess,
But that thou over-heard'st, ere I was ware,
My true love's passion: therefore pardon me;
And not impute this yielding to light love,
Which the dark night hath so discovered.

⁷ *And, but thou love me,*] And so thou do but love me. Or it may mean, *unless* thou love me.

⁸ — *cunning to be strange.*] *To be strange*, is to put on affected coldness, to appear shy.

Rom. Lady, by yonder blessed moon I swear,
That tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops, —

Jul. O, swear not by the moon, the inconstant moon
That monthly changes in her circled orb,
Lest that thy love prove likewise variable.

Rom. What shall I swear by?

Jul. Do not swear at all;
Or, if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self,
Which is the god of my idolatry,
And I'll believe thee.

Rom. If my heart's dear love—

Jul. Well, do not swear: although I joy in thee,
I have no joy of this contract to-night:
It is too rash, too unadvis'd, too sudden;
Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be,
Ere one can say — It lightens. Sweet, good night!
This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath,
May prove a beauteous flower when next we meet.
Good night, good night! as sweet repose and rest
Come to thy heart, as that within my breast!

Rom. O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?

Jul. What satisfaction canst thou have to-night?

Rom. The exchange of thy love's faithful vow for
mine.

Jul. I gave thee mine before thou didst request it:
And yet I would it were to give again.

Rom. Would'st thou withdraw it? for what purpose,
love?

Jul. But to be frank, and give it thee again.
And yet I wish but for the thing I have:
My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
My love as deep; the more I give to thee,
The more I have, for both are infinite.

[Nurse calls within.

I hear some noise within; Dear love, adieu!
Anon, good nurse! — Sweet Montague, be true.
Stay but a little, I will come again.

[Exit.

Rom. O blessed blessed night! I am afeard,
Being in night, all this is but a dream,
Too flattering-sweet to be substantial.

Re-enter JULIET above.

Jul. Three words, dear Romeo, and good night, indeed.

If that thy bent of love be honourable,
Thy purpose marriage, send me word to-morrow,
By one that I'll procure to come to thee,
Where, and what time, thou wilt perform the rite;
And all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay,
And follow thee my lord throughout the world:

Nurse. [*within.*] Madam.

Jul. I come, anon: — But if thou mean'st not well,
I do beseech thee, —

Nurse. [*within.*] Madam.

Jul. By and by, I come: —
To cease thy suit, and leave me to my grief:
To-morrow will I send.

Rom. So thrive my soul, —

Jul. A thousand times good night! [*Exit.*]

Rom. A thousand times the worse, to want thy
light. —

Love goes toward love, as school-boys from their books;
But love from love, toward school with heavy looks.

[*Retiring slowly.*]

Re-enter JULIET, above.

Jul. Hist! Romeo, hist! — O, for a falconer's voice,
To lure this tassel-gentle back again!⁹
Bondage is hoarse, and may not speak aloud;

⁹ *To lure this tassel-gentle back again!*] The *tassel* or *tiercel* (for so it should be spelt) is the male of the *goshawk*; so called, because it is a *tierce* or *third* less than the female. This is equally true of all birds of prey.

Else would I tear the cave where echo lies,
And make her airy tongue more hoarse than mine
With repetition of my Romeo's name.

Rom. It is my soul, that calls upon my name :
How silver-sweet sound lovers' tongues by night,
Like softest musick to attending ears !

Jul. Romeo !

Rom. My sweet ! †

Jul. At what o'clock to-morrow
Shall I send to thee ?

Rom. At the hour of nine.

Jul. I will not fail ; 'tis twenty years till then.
I have forgot why I did call thee back.

Rom. Let me stand here till thou remember it.

Jul. I shall forget, to have thee still stand there,
Rememb'ring how I love thy company.

Rom. And I'll still stay, to have thee still forget,
Forgetting any other home but this.

Jul. 'Tis almost morning, I would have thee gone :
And yet no further than a wanton's bird ;
Who lets it hop a little from her hand,
Like a poor prisoner in his twisted gyves,
And with a silk thread plucks it back again,
So loving-jealous of his liberty.

Rom. I would, I were thy bird.

Jul. Sweet, so would I :
Yet I should kill thee with much cherishing.
Good night, good night ! parting is such sweet sorrow,
That I shall say—good night, till it be morrow. [*Exit.*

Rom. Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy
breast ! —

Would I were sleep and peace, so sweet to rest !
Hence will I to my ghostly father's cell ;
His help to crave, and my dear hap to tell. [*Exit.*

† " Madam !" MALONE

SCENE III.

*Friar Laurence's Cell.**Enter Friar LAURENCE, with a basket.*

Fri. The grey-ey'd morn smiles on the frowning night,
 Checkering the eastern clouds with streaks of light;
 And flecked darkness¹ like a drunkard reels
 From forth day's path-way, made by Titan's wheels : †
 Now ere the sun advance his burning eye,
 The day to cheer, and night's dank dew to dry,
 I must up-fill this osier cage of ours,
 With baleful weeds, and precious-juiced flowers.
 The earth, that's nature's mother, is her tomb;
 What is her burying grave, that is her womb :
 And from her womb children of divers kind
 We sucking on her natural bosom find ;
 Many for many virtues excellent,
 None but for some, and yet all different.
 O, mickle is the powerful grace², that lies
 In herbs, plants, stones, and their true qualities :
 For nought so vile that on the earth doth live,
 But to the earth³ some special good doth give ;
 Nor aught so good, but, strain'd from that fair use,
 Revolts from true birth, stumbling on abuse :
 Virtue itself turns vice, being misapplied ;
 And vice sometime's by action dignified.
 Within the infant rind of this small flower
 Poison hath residence, and med'cine power :

¹ *And flecked darkness* —] *Flecked* is spotted, dappled, streaked, or variegated.

† “ From forth day's path and Titan's fiery wheels : ” — MALONE.

² — *powerful grace*,] Efficacious virtue.

³ — *to the earth* —] i. e. to the inhabitants of the earth.

For this, being smelt, with that part⁴ cheers each part;
 Being tasted, slays all senses with the heart.
 Two such opposed foes encamp them still
 In man as well as herbs, grace, and rude will;
 And, where the worser is predominant,
 Full soon the canker death eats up that plant.

Enter ROMEO.

Rom. Good morrow, father!

Fri. *Benedicite!*

What early tongue so sweet saluteth me? —
 Young son, it argues a distemper'd head,
 So soon to bid good morrow to thy bed:
 Care keeps his watch in every old man's eye,
 And where care lodges, sleep will never lie;
 But where unbruised youth with unstuff'd brain
 Doth couch his limbs, there golden sleep doth reign:
 Therefore thy earliness doth me assure,
 Thou art up-rous'd by some distemp'rature;
 Or if not so, then here I hit it right —
 Our Romeo hath not been in bed to-night.

Rom. That last is true, the sweeter rest was mine.

Fri. God pardon sin! wast thou with Rosaline?

Rom. With Rosaline, my ghostly father? no;
 I have forgot that name, and that name's woe.

Fri. That's my good son: But where hast thou been
 then?

Rom. I'll tell thee, ere thou ask it me again.
 I have been feasting with mine enemy;
 Where, on a sudden, one hath wounded me,
 That's by me wounded; both our remedies
 Within thy help and holy physick lies:
 I bear no hatred, blessed man; for, lo,
 My intercession likewise steads my foe.

⁴ — *with that part* —] i. e. with the part which smells; with the olfactory nerves.

Fri. Be plain, good son, and homely in thy drift ;
Riddling confession finds but riddling shrift.

Rom. Then plainly know, my heart's dear love is set
On the fair daughter of rich Capulet :
As mine on her's, so her's is set on mine ;
And all combin'd, save what thou must combine
By holy marriage : When, and where, and how,
We met, we woo'd, and made exchange of vow,
I'll tell thee as we pass ; but this I pray,
That thou consent to marry us this day.

Fri. Holy Saint Francis ! what a change is here !
Is Rosaline, whom thou didst love so dear,
So soon forsaken ? young men's love then lies
Not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes.
Jesu Maria ! what a deal of brine
Hath wash'd thy sallow cheeks for Rosaline !
How much salt water thrown away in waste,
To season love, that of it doth not taste !
The sun not yet thy sighs from heaven clears,
Thy old groans ring yet in my ancient ears ;
Lo, here upon thy cheek the stain doth sit
Of an old tear that is not wash'd off yet :
If e'er thou wast thyself, and these woes thine,
Thou and these woes were all for Rosaline ;
And art thou chang'd ? pronounce this sentence then —
Women may fall, when there's no strength in men.

Rom. Thou chidd'st me oft for loving Rosaline.

Fri. For doting, not for loving, pupil mine.

Rom. And bad'st me bury love.

Fri. Not in a grave,
To lay one in, another out to have.

Rom. I pray thee, chide not : she, whom I love now,
Doth grace for grace, and love for love allow ;
The other did not so.

Fri. O, she knew well,
Thy love did read by rote, and could not spell.
But come, young waverer, come go with me,
In one respect I'll thy assistant be ;

For this alliance may so happy prove,
To turn your households' rancour to pure love.

Rom. O, let us hence; I stand on sudden haste.⁵

Fri. Wisely, and slow; They stumble, that run fast.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

A Street.

Enter BENVOLIO and MERCUTIO.

Mer. Where the devil should this Romeo be?—
Came he not home to-night?

Ben. Not to his father's; I spoke with his man.

Mer. Ah, that same pale hard-hearted wench, that
Rosaline,

Torments him so, that he will sure run mad.

Ben. Tybalt, the kinsman of old Capulet,
Hath sent a letter to his father's house.

Mer. A challenge, on my life.

Ben. Romeo will answer it.

Mer. Any man, that can write, may answer a letter.

Ben. Nay, he will answer the letter's master, how he
dares, being dared.

Mer. Alas, poor Romeo, he is already dead! stabbed
with a white wench's black eye; shot thorough the ear
with a love-song; the very pin of his heart cleft with
the blind bow-boy's butt-shaft⁶; And is he a man to
encounter Tybalt?

Ben. Why, what is Tybalt?

⁵ — *I stand on sudden haste.*] i. e. it is of the utmost consequence for me to be hasty.

⁶ — *the very pin of his heart cleft with the blind bow-boy's butt-shaft;*] The allusion is to archery. The clout or white mark at which the arrows are directed, was fastened by a black *pin* placed in the center of it. To hit this was the highest ambition of every marksman.

Mer. More than prince of cats⁷, I can tell you. O, he is the courageous captain of compliments. He fights as you sing prick-song, keeps time, distance, and proportion; rests me his minim rest, one, two, and the third in your bosom: the very butcher of a silk button, a duellist, a duellist; a gentleman of the very first house, — of the first and second cause⁸: Ah, the immortal pasado! the punto reverso! the hay!⁹

Ben. The what?

Mer. The pox of such antick, lispings, affecting fantasticoes; these new tuners of accents! — *By Jesu, a very good blade!* — *a very tall man!* — *a very good whore!* — Why, is not this a lamentable thing, grandsire, that we should be thus afflicted with these strange flies, these fashion-mongers, these *pardonnez-moys*, who stand so much on the new form, that they cannot sit at ease on the old bench? O, their *bons*, their *bons*!

Enter ROMEO.

Ben. Here comes Romeo, here comes Romeo.

Mer. Without his roe, like a dried herring: — O flesh, flesh, how art thou fishified! — Now is he for the numbers that Petrarch flow'd in: Laura, to his lady, was but a kitchen-wench; — marry, she had a better love to be-rhyme her: Dido, a dowdy; Cleopatra, a gipsy; Helen and Hero, hildings and harlots; Thisbé,

⁷ *More than prince of cats,*] *Tybert*, the name given to the *cat*, in the story-book of *Reynard the Fox*.

⁸ — *a gentleman of the very first house,* — *of the first and second cause:*] i. e. a gentleman of the first rank, of the first eminence among these duellists; and one who understands the whole science of quarrelling, and will tell you of the *first cause*, and the *second cause*, for which a man is to fight.

⁹ — *the hay!*] All the terms of the modern fencing-school were originally Italian; the rapier, or small thrusting-sword, being first used in Italy. The *hay* is the word *hai*, you *have* it, used when a thrust reaches the antagonist, from which our fencers, on the same occasion, without knowing, I suppose, any reason for it, cry out *ha!*

a grey eye or so, but not to the purpose. — Signior Romeo, *bon jour!* there's a French salutation to your French slop.¹ You gave us the counterfeit fairly last night.

Rom. Good morrow to you both. What counterfeit did I give you?

Mer. The slip, sir, the slip²; Can you not conceive?

Rom. Pardon, good Mercutio, my business was great; and, in such a case as mine, a man may strain courtesy.

Mer. That's as much as to say — such a case as yours constrains a man to bow in the hams.

Rom. Meaning — to court'sy.

Mer. Thou hast most kindly hit it.

Rom. A most courteous exposition.

Mer. Nay, I am the very pink of courtesy.

Rom. Pink for flower.

Mer. Right.

Rom. Why, then is my pump well flowered.³

Mer. Well said: Follow me this jest now, till thou hast worn out thy pump; that, when the single sole of it is worn, the jest may remain, after the wearing, solely singular.

Rom. O single-soled jest⁴, solely singular for the singleness!

Mer. Come between us, good Benvolio; my wits fail.

Rom. Switch and spurs, switch and spurs; or I'll cry a match.

Mer. Nay, if thy wits run the wild-goose chase⁵, I

¹ — *your French slop.*] *Slops* are large loose *breeches* or *trowsers*, worn at present only by sailors.

² *The slip, sir, the slip;*] In our author's time there was a counterfeit piece of money distinguished by the name of a *slip*.

³ — *then is my pump well flowered.*] It was the custom to wear ribbons in the shoes formed into the shape of roses, or of any other flowers.

⁴ *O single-soled jest,*] i. e. slight, unsolid, feeble.

⁵ — *if thy wits run the wild-goose chase,*] One kind of horse-race, which resembled the flight of *wild-geese*, was formerly known

have done ; for thou hast more of the wild-goose in one of thy wits, than, I am sure, I have in my whole five : Was I with you there for the goose ?

Rom. Thou wast never with me for any thing, when thou wast not there for the goose.

Mer. I will bite thee by the ear for that jest.

Rom. Nay, good goose, bite not.

Mer. Thy wit is a very bitter sweeting⁶ ; it is a most sharp sauce.

Rom. And is it not well served in to a sweet goose ?

Mer. O, here's a wit of cheverel⁷, that stretches from an inch narrow to an ell broad !

Rom. I stretch it out for that word — broad : which added to the goose, proves thee far and wide a broad goose.

Mer. Why, is not this better now than groaning for love ? now art thou sociable, now art thou Romeo ; now art thou what thou art, by art as well as by nature : for this drivelling love is like a great natural, that runs loling up and down to hide his bauble in a hole.

Ben. Stop there, stop there.

Mer. Thou desirest me to stop in my tale against the hair.

Ben. Thou would'st else have made thy tale large.

Mer. O, thou art deceived, I would have made it short : for I was come to the whole depth of my tale : and meant, indeed, to occupy the argument no longer.

Rom. Here's goodly geer !

Enter Nurse and PETER.

Mer. A sail, a sail, a sail !

by this name. Two horses were started together ; and which ever rider could get the lead, the other was obliged to follow him over whatever ground the foremost jockey chose to go. That horse which could distance the other, won the race.

⁶ — bitter sweeting ;] Is an apple of that name.

⁷ — a wit of cheverel,] Cheverel is soft leather for gloves.

Ben. Two, two; a shirt, and a smock.

Nurse. Peter!

Peter. Anon?

Nurse. My fan, Peter.⁸

Mer. Pr'ythee, do, good Peter, to hide her face; for her fan's the fairer of the two.

Nurse. God ye good morrow, gentlemen.

Mer. God ye good den⁹, fair gentlewoman.

Nurse. Is it good den?

Mer. 'Tis no less, I tell you; for the bawdy hand of the dial is now upon the prick of noon.

Nurse. Out upon you! what a man are you?

Rom. One, gentlewoman, that God hath made himself to mar.

Nurse. By my troth, it is well said; — For himself to mar, quoth'a? — Gentlemen, can any of you tell me where I may find the young Romeo?

Rom. I can tell you; but young Romeo will be older when you have found him, than he was when you sought him: I am the youngest of that name, for 'fault of a worse.

Nurse. You say well.

Mer. Yea, is the worst well? very well took, i'faith; wisely, wisely.

Nurse. If you be he, sir, I desire some confidence with you.

Ben. She will indite him to some supper.

Mer. A bawd, a bawd, a bawd! So ho!

Rom. What hast thou found?

Mer. No hare, sir; unless a hare, sir, in a lenten pie, that is something stale and hoar ere it be spent.

⁸ *My fan, Peter.*] The business of *Peter* carrying the *nurse's fan*, seems ridiculous according to modern manners; but such was formerly the practice.

⁹ *God ye good den,*] i. e. God give you a good even.

*An old hare hoar,
And an old hare hoar,
Is very good meat in lent :
But a hare that is hoar,
Is too much for a score,
When it hoars ere it be spent. —*

Romeo, will you come to your father's? we'll to dinner thither.

Rom. I will follow you.

Mer. Farewell, ancient lady; farewell, lady, lady, lady.¹ [*Exeunt MERCUTIO and BENVOLIO.*]

Nurse. Marry, farewell! — I pray you, sir, what saucy merchant was this², that was so full of his ropery?³

Rom. A gentleman, nurse, that loves to hear himself talk; and will speak more in a minute, than he will stand in a month.

Nurse. An 'a speak any thing against me, I'll take him down an 'a were lustier than he is, and twenty such Jacks; and if I cannot, I'll find those that shall. Scurvy knave! I am none of his flirt-gills; I am none of his skains-mates⁴: — And thou must stand by too, and suffer every knave to use me at his pleasure?

Pet. I saw no man use you at his pleasure: if I had, my weapon should quickly have been out, I warrant

¹ — *lady, lady, lady.*] The burthen of an old song.

² — *what saucy merchant was this, &c.*] The term *merchant*, which was, and even now is, frequently applied to the lowest sort of dealers, seems anciently to have been used on these familiar occasions in contradistinction to *gentleman*; signifying that the person showed by his behaviour he was a low fellow. The term *chap*, i. e. *chapman*, a word of the same import with *merchant* in its less respectable sense, is still in common use among the vulgar, as a general denomination for any person of whom they mean to speak with freedom or disrespect.

³ — *of his ropery?*] *Ropery* was anciently used in the same sense as *roguery* is now.

⁴ — *none of his skains-mates.*] A *skein* or *skain* was either a knife or a short-dagger. By *skains-mates* the nurse means none of his

you : I dare draw as soon as another man, if I see occasion in a good quarrel, and the law on my side.

Nurse. Now, afore God, I am so vexed, that every part about me quivers. Scurvy knave !—Pray you, sir, a word : and as I told you, my young lady bade me inquire you out; what she bade me say, I will keep to myself : but first let me tell ye, if ye should lead her into a fool's paradise, as they say, it were a very gross kind of behaviour, as they say : for the gentlewoman is young ; and, therefore, if you should deal double with her, truly, it were an ill thing to be offered to any gentlewoman, and very weak dealing.

Rom. Nurse, commend me to thy lady and mistress. I protest unto thee, —

Nurse. Good heart ! and, i'faith, I will tell her as much : Lord, lord, she will be a joyful woman.

Rom. What wilt thou tell her, nurse ? thou dost not mark me.

Nurse. I will tell her, sir, — that you do protest ; which, as I take it, is a gentlemanlike offer.

Rom. Bid her devise some means to come to shrift
This afternoon ;
And there she shall at friar Laurence' cell
Be shriv'd, and married. Here is for thy pains.

Nurse. No, truly, sir ; not a penny.

Rom. Go to ; I say, you shall.

Nurse. This afternoon, sir ? well, she shall be there.

Rom. And stay, good nurse, behind the abbey-wall :
Within this hour my man shall be with thee ;
And bring thee cords made like a tackled stair :⁵
Which to the high top-gallant of my joy⁶

loose companions who frequent the fencing-school with him, where we may suppose the exercise of this weapon was taught.

⁵ — *like a tackled stair :*] Like stairs of rope in the tackle of a ship.

⁶ — *top-gallant of my joy* —] The *top-gallant* is the highest extremity of the mast of a ship.

Must be my convoy in the secret night.
Farewell! — Be trusty, and I'll quit thy pains.
Farewell! — Commend me to thy mistress.

Nurse. Now God in heaven bless thee! — Hark you,
sir.

Rom. What say'st thou, my dear nurse?

Nurse. Is your man secret? Did you ne'er hear say—
Two may keep counsel, putting one away?

Rom. I warrant thee; my man's as true as steel.

Nurse. Well, sir; my mistress is the sweetest lady—
Lord, lord! — when 'twas a little prating thing, — O,
there's a nobleman in town, one Paris, that would fain
lay knife aboard; but she, good soul, had as lieve see
a toad, a very toad, as see him. I anger her some-
times, and tell her that Paris is the properer man;
but, I'll warrant you, when I say so, she looks as
pale as any clout in the varsal world. Doth not rose-
mary and Romeo begin both with a letter?

Rom. Ay, nurse; What of that? both with an R.

Nurse. Ah, mocker! that's the dog's name. R. is
for the dog. No; I know it begins with some other
letter: and she hath the prettiest sententious of it, of
you and rosemary, that it would do you good to hear it.

Rom. Commend me to thy lady. [*Exit.*

Nurse. Ay, a thousand times. — Peter!

Pet. Anon?

Nurse. Peter, Take my fan, and go before. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

Capulet's Garden.

Enter JULIET.

Jul. The clock struck nine, when I did send the nurse;
In half an hour she promis'd to return.

Perchance, she cannot meet him : — that's not so. —
 O, she is lame ! love's heralds should be thoughts,
 Which ten times faster glide than the sun's beams,
 Driving back shadows over low'ring hills :
 Therefore do nimble-pinion'd doves draw love,
 And therefore hath the wind-swift Cupid wings.
 Now is the sun upon the highmost hill
 Of this day's journey ; and from nine till twelve
 Is three long hours, — yet she is not come.
 Had she affections, and warm youthful blood,
 She'd be as swift in motion as a ball ;
 My words would bandy her to my sweet love,
 And his to me :
 But old folks, many feign as they were dead ;
 Unwieldy, slow, heavy and pale as lead.

Enter Nurse and PETER.

O God, she comes ! — O honey nurse, what news ?
 Hast thou met with him ? Send thy man away.

Nurse. Peter, stay at the gate. [*Exit PETER.*

Jul. Now, good sweet nurse, — O lord ! why look'st
 thou sad ?

Though news be sad, yet tell them merrily ;
 If good, thou sham'st the musick of sweet news
 By playing it to me with so sour a face.

Nurse. I am aweary, give me leave a while ; —
 Fye, how my bones ache ! What a jaunt have I had !

Jul. I would, thou hadst my bones, and I thy news :
 Nay, come, I pray thee, speak ; — good, good nurse,
 speak.

Nurse. Jesu, What haste ? can you not stay awhile ?
 Do you not see, that I am out of breath ?

Jul. How art thou out of breath, when thou hast
 breath

To say to me — that thou art out of breath ?
 The excuse, that thou dost make in this delay,

Is longer than the tale thou dost excuse,
Is thy news good, or bad? answer to that;
Say either, and I'll stay the circumstance:
Let me be satisfied, Is't good or bad?

Nurse. Well, you have made a simple choice; you know not how to choose a man: Romeo! no, not he; though his face be better than any man's, yet his leg excels all men's; and for a hand, and a foot, and a body, — though they be not to be talked on, yet they are past compare: He is not the flower of courtesy, — but, I'll warrant him, as gentle as a lamb. — Go thy ways, wench; serve God. — What, have you dined at home?

Jul. No, no: But all this did I know before;
What says he of our marriage? what of that?

Nurse. Lord, how my head akes! what a head have I!
It beats as it would fall in twenty pieces,
My back o' t'other side, — O, my back, my back! —
Beshrew your heart, for sending me about,
To catch my death with jaunting up and down!

Jul. I'faith, I am sorry that thou art not well:
Sweet, sweet, sweet nurse, tell me, what says my love?

Nurse. Your love says like an honest gentleman,
And a courteous, and a kind, and a handsome,
And, I warrant, a virtuous: — Where is your mother?

Jul. Where is my mother? — why, she is within;
Where should she be? How oddly thou reply'st?

*Your love says like an honest gentleman, —
Where is your mother?*

Nurse. O, God's lady dear!
Are you so hot? Marry, come up, I trow;
Is this the poultice for my aking bones?
Henceforward do your messages yourself.

Jul. Here's such a coil, — Come, what says Romeo?

Nurse. Have you got leave to go to shrift to-day?

Jul. I have.

Nurse. Then hie you hence to friar Laurence' cell,
There stays a husband to make you a wife:
Now comes the wanton blood up in your cheeks,

They'll be in scarlet straight at any news.
 Hie you to church; I must another way,
 To fetch a ladder, by the which your love
 Must climb a bird's nest soon, when it is dark:
 I am the drudge, and toil in your delight;
 But you shall bear the burden soon at night.
 Go, I'll to dinner; hie you to the cell.

Jul. Hie to high fortune! — honest nurse, farewell.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI.

Friar Laurence's Cell.

Enter Friar LAURENCE *and* ROMEO.

Fri. So smile the heavens upon this holy act,
 That after-hours with sorrow chide us not!

Rom. Amen, amen! but come what sorrow can,
 It cannot countervail the exchange of joy
 That one short minute gives me in her sight:
 Do thou but close our hands with holy words,
 Then love-devouring death do what he dare,
 It is enough I may but call her mine.

Fri. These violent delights have violent ends,
 And in their triumph die; like fire and powder,
 Which, as they kiss, consume: The sweetest honey
 Is loathsome in his own deliciousness,
 And in the taste confounds the appetite:
 Therefore, love moderately; long love doth so;
 Too swift arrives⁷ as tardy as too slow.

Enter JULIET.

Here comes the lady; — O, so light a foot
 Will ne'er wear out the everlasting flint;

⁷ *Too swift arrives* —] He that travels too fast is as long before he comes to the end of his journey, as he that travels slow. Precipitation produces mishap.

A lover may bestride the gossomers⁸
That idle in the wanton summer air,
And yet not fall; so light is vanity.

Jul. Good even to my ghostly confessor.

Fri. Romeo shall thank thee, daughter, for us both.

Jul. As much to him, else are his thanks too much.

Rom. Ah, Juliet, if the measure of thy joy
Be heap'd like mine, and that thy skill be more
To blazon it, then sweeten with thy breath
This neighbour air, and let rich musick's tongue
Unfold the imagin'd happiness that both
Receive in either by this dear encounter.

Jul. Conceit⁹, more rich in matter than in words,
Braggs of his substance, not of ornament:
They are but beggars that can count their worth;
But my true love is grown to such excess,
I cannot sum up half my sum of wealth.

Fri. Come, come with me, and we will make short
work;
For, by your leaves, you shall not stay alone,
Till holy church incorporate two in one. [Exeunt.

ACT III.

SCENE I.— *A publick Place.*

Enter MERCUTIO, BENVOLIO, Page, and Servants.

Ben. I pray thee, good Mercutio, let's retire;
The day is hot¹, the Capulets abroad,

⁸ *A lover may bestride the gossomers* —] The *gossomer* is the long white filament which flies in the air in summer.

⁹ *Conceit* —] *Conceit* here means imagination.

¹ *The day is hot*, —] It is observed, that, in Italy, almost all assassinations are committed during the heat of summer.

And, if we meet, we shall not 'scape a brawl;
For now, these hot days, is the mad blood stirring.

Mer. Thou art like one of those fellows, that, when he enters the confines of a tavern, claps me his sword upon the table, and says, *God send me no need of thee!* and, by the operation of the second cup, draws it on the drawer, when, indeed, there is no need.

Ben. Am I like such a fellow?

Mer. Come, come, thou art as hot a Jack in thy mood as any in Italy; and as soon moved to be moody, and as soon moody to be moved.

Ben. And what to?

Mer. Nay, an there were two such, we should have none shortly, for one would kill the other. Thou! why thou wilt quarrel with a man that hath a hair more, or a hair less, in his beard, than thou hast. Thou wilt quarrel with a man for cracking nuts, having no other reason but because thou hast hazel eyes; What eye, but such an eye, would spy out such a quarrel? Thy head is as full of quarrels, as an egg is full of meat; and yet thy head hath been beaten as addle as an egg, for quarrelling. Thou hast quarrelled with a man for coughing in the street, because he hath wakened thy dog that hath lain asleep in the sun. Didst thou not fall out with a tailor for wearing his new doublet before Easter? with another, for tying his new shoes with old ribband? and yet thou wilt tutor me from quarrelling!

Ben. An I were so apt to quarrel as thou art, any man should buy the fee-simple of my life for an hour and a quarter.

Mer. The fee-simple? O simple!

Enter TYBALT, and Others.

Ben. By my head, here come the Capulets.

Mer. By my heel, I care not.

Tyb. Follow me close, for I will speak to them. —
Gentlemen, good den: a word with one of you.

Mer. And but one word with one of us? Couple it
with something; make it a word and a blow.

Tyb. You will find me apt enough to that, sir, if you
will give me occasion.

Mer. Could you not take some occasion without
giving?

Tyb. Mercutio, thou consort'st with Romeo, —

Mer. Consort! what, dost thou make us minstrels!
an thou make minstrels of us, look to hear nothing but
discords: here's my fiddlestick; here's that shall make
you dance. 'Zounds, consort!

Ben. We talk here in the publick haunt of men:
Either withdraw into some private place,
Or reason coldly of your grievances,
Or else depart; here all eyes gaze on us.

Mer. Men's eyes were made to look, and let them
gaze;
I will not budge for no man's pleasure, I.

Enter ROMEO.

Tyb. Well, peace be with you, sir! here comes my
man.

Mer. But I'll be hanged, sir, if he wear your livery:
Marry, go before to field, he'll be your follower;
Your worship, in that sense, may call him — man.

Tyb. Romeo, the hate I bear thee, can afford
No better term than this — Thou art a villain.

Rom. Tybalt, the reason that I have to love thee
Doth much excuse the appertaining rage
To such a greeting: — Villain am I none;
Therefore farewell; I see, thou know'st me not.

Tyb. Boy, this shall not excuse the injuries
That thou hast done me; therefore turn, and draw.

Rom. I do protest, I never injur'd thee;

But love thee better than thou canst devise,
Till thou shalt know the reason of my love :
And so, good Capulet, — which name I tender
As dearly as mine own, — be satisfied.

Mer. O calm, dishonourable, vile submission !

*A la stoccata*² carries it away. [Draws.]

Tybalt, you rat-catcher, will you walk ?

Tyb. What would'st thou have with me ?

Mer. Good king of cats, nothing, but one of your
nine lives ; that I mean to make bold withal, and as
you shall use me hereafter, dry-beat the rest of the
eight. Will you pluck your sword out of his pilcher
by the ears³? make haste, lest mine be about your ears
ere it be out.

Tyb. I am for you. [Drawing.]

Rom. Gentle Mercutio, put thy rapier up.

Mer. Come, sir, your passado. [They fight.]

Rom. Draw, Benvolio ;

Beat down their weapons : — Gentlemen, for shame
Forbear this outrage ; — Tybalt — Mercutio —
The prince expressly hath forbid this bandying
In Verona streets : — hold, Tybalt ; — good Mercutio.

[Exeunt TYBALT and his Partizans.]

Mer. I am hurt ; —

A plague o' both the houses ! — I am sped :
Is he gone, and hath nothing ?

Ben. What, art thou hurt ?

Mer. Ay, ay, a scratch, a scratch ; marry, 'tis
enough. —

Where is my page ? — go, villain, fetch a surgeon.

[Exit Page.]

Rom. Courage, man ; the hurt cannot be much.

² *A la stoccata* —] *Stoccata* is the Italian term for a thrust or stab with a rapier.

³ *Will you pluck your sword out of his pilcher by the ears ?*] We should read *pilche*, which signifies a cloke or coat of skins, meaning the scabbard.

Mer. No, 'tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church-door; but 'tis enough, 'twill serve: ask for me to-morrow, and you shall find me a grave man. I am peppered, I warrant, for this world: — A plague o'both your houses! — 'Zounds, a dog, a rat, a mouse, a cat, to scratch a man to death! a braggart, a rogue, a villain, that fights by the book of arithmetick! — Why, the devil, came you between us? I was hurt under your arm.

Rom. I thought all for the best.

Mer. Help me into some house, Benvolio,
Or I shall faint. — A plague o'both your houses!
They have made worm's meat of me:
I have it, and soundly too: — Your houses!

[*Exeunt* MERCUTIO and BENVOLIO.]

Rom. This gentleman, the prince's near ally,
My very friend, hath got his mortal hurt
In my behalf; my reputation stain'd
With Tybalt's slander, Tybalt, that an hour
Hath been my kinsman: — O sweet Juliet,
Thy beauty hath made me effeminate,
And in my temper soften'd valour's steel.

Re-enter BENVOLIO.

Ben. O Romeo, Romeo, brave Mercutio's dead;
That gallant spirit hath aspir'd the clouds,
Which too untimely here did scorn the earth.

Rom. This day's black fate on more days doth depend;⁴
This but begins the woe, others must end.

Re-enter TYBALT.

Ben. Here comes the furious Tybalt back again.

⁴ *This day's black fate on more days doth depend;*] This day's unhappy destiny hangs over the days yet to come. There will yet be more mischief.

Rom. Alive ! in triumph ! and Mercutio slain !
 Away to heaven, respective lenity,⁵
 And fire-ey'd fury be my conduct now !⁶ —
 Now, Tybalt, take the *villain* back again,
 That late thou gav'st me ; for Mercutio's soul
 Is but a little way above our heads,
 Staying for thine to keep him company ;
 Either thou, or I, or both, must go with him.

Tyb. Thou, wretched boy, that didst consort him here,
 Shalt with him hence.

Rom. This shall determine that.
 [*They fight ; TYBALT falls.*]

Ben. Romeo, away, be gone !
 The citizens are up, and Tybalt slain : —
 Stand not amaz'd : — the prince will doom thee death,
 If thou art taken : — hence ! — be gone ! — away !

Rom. O ! I am fortune's fool !

Ben. Why dost thou stay ?
 [*Exit ROMEO.*]

Enter Citizens, &c.

1 *Cit.* Which way ran he, that kill'd Mercutio ?
 Tybalt, that murderer, which way ran he ?

Ben. There lies that Tybalt.

1 *Cit.* Up, sir, go with me ;
 I charge thee in the prince's name, obey.

*Enter Prince, attended ; MONTAGUE, CAPULET, their
 Wives, and Others.*

Prin. Where are the vile beginners of this fray ?

Ben. O noble prince, I can discover all
 The unlucky manage of this fatal brawl :
 There lies the man, slain by young Romeo,
 That slew thy kinsman, brave Mercutio.

⁵ — respective *lenity*,] Cool, considerate gentleness.

⁶ *be my conduct now !*] *Conduct* for *conductor*.

La. Cap. Tybalt, my cousin!—O my brother's child!
 Unhappy sight! ah me, the blood is spill'd
 Of my dear kinsman!—Prince, as thou art true,⁷
 For blood of ours, shed blood of Montague.—
 O cousin, cousin!

Prin. Benvolio, who began this bloody fray?

Ben. Tybalt, here slain, whom Romeo's hand did
 slay;

Romeo that spoke him fair, bade him bethink
 How nice⁸ the quarrel was, and urg'd withal
 Your high displeasure:—All this—uttered
 With gentle breath, calm look, knees humbly bow'd,—
 Could not take truce with the unruly spleen
 Of Tybalt deaf to peace, but that he tilts
 With piercing steel at bold Mercutio's breast;
 Who, all as hot, turns deadly point to point,
 And, with a martial scorn, with one hand beats
 Cold death aside, and with the other sends
 It back to Tybalt, whose dexterity
 Retorts it: Romeo he cries aloud,
Hold, friends! friends, part! and swifter than his tongue,
 His agile arm beats down their fatal points,
 And 'twixt them rushes; underneath whose arm
 An envious thrust from Tybalt hit the life
 Of stout Mercutio, and then Tybalt fled:
 But by and by comes back to Romeo,
 Who had but newly entertain'd revenge,
 And to't they go like light'ning; for, ere I
 Could draw to part them, was stout Tybalt slain;
 And, as he fell, did Romeo turn and fly;
 This is the truth, or let Benvolio die.

La. Cap. He is a kinsman to the Montague,
 Affection makes him false⁹, he speaks not true:

⁷ — *as thou art true,*] as thou art *just* and *upright*.

⁸ *How nice* —] How *slight*, how *unimportant*, how *petty*.

⁹ *Affection makes him false,*] The charge of falsehood on Benvolio, though produced at hazard, is very just. The author, who seems

Some twenty of them fought in this black strife,
 And all those twenty could but kill one life :
 I beg for justice, which thou, prince, must give ;
 Romeo slew Tybalt, Romeo must not live.

Prin. Romeo slew him, he slew Mercutio ;
 Who now the price of his dear blood doth owe ?

Mon. Not Romeo, prince, he was Mercutio's friend ;
 His fault concludes but, what the law should end,
 The life of Tybalt.

Prin. And, for that offence,
 Immediately we do exile him hence :
 I have an interest in your hates' proceeding,
 My blood for your rude brawls doth lie a bleeding ;
 But I'll amerce you with so strong a fine,
 That you shall all repent the loss of mine :
 I will be deaf to pleading and excuses ;
 Nor tears, nor prayers, shall purchase out abuses,
 Therefore use none : let Romeo hence in haste,
 Else, when he's found, that hour is his last.
 Bear hence this body, and attend our will :
 Mercy but murders, pardoning those that kill. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A Room in Capulet's House.

Enter JULIET.

Jul. Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds,
 Towards Phœbus' mansion ; such a waggoner
 As Phaeton would whip you to the west,
 And bring in cloudy night immediately. —
 Spread thy close curtain, love-performing night !

to intend the character of Benvolio as good, meant perhaps to show,
 how the best minds, in a state of faction and discord, are detorted
 to criminal partiality. JOHNSON.

That run-away's eyes may wink¹; and Romeo
 Leap to these arms, untalk'd of, and unseen! —
 Lovers can see to do their amorous rites
 By their own beauties: or, if love be blind,
 It best agrees with night. — Come, civil night,²
 Thou sober-suited matron, all in black,
 And learn me how to lose a winning match,
 Play'd for a pair of stainless maidenhoods:
 Hood my unmann'd blood bating in my cheeks,³
 With thy black mantle; till strange love, grown bold,
 Think true love acted, simple modesty.
 Come, night! — Come, Romeo! come, thou day in night!
 For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night
 Whiter than new snow on † a raven's back. —
 Come, gentle night; come, loving, black-brow'd night,
 Give me my Romeo: and, when he shall die,
 Take him and cut him out in little stars,
 And he will make the face of heaven so fine,
 That all the world will be in love with night,
 And pay no worship to the garish sun.⁴
 O, I have bought the mansion of a love,
 But not possess'd it; and, though I am sold,
 Not yet enjoy'd: So tedious is this day,

¹ *Spread thy close curtain, love-performing night!*

That run-away's eyes may wink; &c.] Juliet first wishes for the absence of the sun, and then invokes the night to spread its curtain close around the world:

Spread thy close curtain, love-performing night!

Next, recollecting that the night would seem short to her, she speaks of it as of a *run-away*, whose flight she would wish to retard, and whose eyes she would blind, lest they should make discoveries.

² *Come, civil night,] Civil is grave, decently solemn.*

³ *Hood my unmann'd blood bating in my cheeks,] These are terms of falconry. An unmann'd hawk is one that is not brought to endure company. Bating, (not baiting, as it has hitherto been printed,) is fluttering with the wings as striving to fly away.*

† "upon" — MALONE.

⁴ — *the garish sun.] Garish is gaudy, showy.*

As is the night before some festival
 To an impatient child, that hath new robes,
 And may not wear them. O, here comes my nurse,

Enter Nurse, with Cords.

And she brings news; and every tongue, that speaks
 But Romeo's name, speaks heavenly eloquence. —
 Now, nurse, what news? What hast thou there? the
 cords,

That Romeo bade thee fetch?

Nurse. Ay, ay, the cords.

[*Throws them down.*]

Jul. Ah me! what news! why dost thou wring thy
 hands?

Nurse. Ah well-a-day! he's dead, he's dead, he's
 dead!

We are undone, lady, we are undone! —

Alack the day! — he's gone, he's kill'd, he's dead!

Jul. Can heaven be so envious?

Nurse. Romeo can,

Though heaven cannot: — O Romeo, Romeo! —

Who ever would have thought it? — Romeo!

Jul. What devil art thou, that dost torment me thus?

This torture should be roar'd in dismal hell.

Hath Romeo slain himself? say thou but *I*,⁵

And that bare vowel *I* shall poison more

Than the death-darting eye of cockatrice:

I am not *I*, if there be such an *I*;

Or those eyes shut, that make thee answer, *I*.

If he be slain, say — *I*; or if not, no:

Brief sounds determine of my weal, or woe.

Nurse. I saw the wound, I saw it with mine eyes, —

⁵ — *say thou but I*.] In Shakspeare's time the affirmative particle *ay* was usually written *I*, and here it is necessary to retain the old spelling.

God save the mark ⁶! — here on his manly breast :
 A piteous corse, a bloody piteous corse ;
 Pale, pale as ashes, all bedawb'd in blood,
 All in gore blood ; — I swooned at the sight.

Jul. O break, my heart ! — poor bankrupt, break at
 once !

To prison, eyes ! ne'er look on liberty !
 Vile earth, to earth resign ; end motion here ;
 And thou, and Romeo, press one heavy bier !

Nurse. O Tybalt, Tybalt, the best friend I had !
 O courteous Tybalt ! honest gentleman !
 That ever I should live to see thee dead !

Jul. What storm is this, that blows so contrary ?
 Is Romeo slaughter'd ; and is Tybalt dead ?
 My dear-lov'd cousin, and my dearer lord ? —
 Then, dreadful trumpet, sound the general doom !
 For who is living, if those two are gone ?

Nurse. Tybalt is gone, and Romeo banished ;
 Romeo, that kill'd him, he is banished.

Jul. O God ! — did Romeo's hand shed Tybalt's
 blood ?

Nurse. It did, it did ; alas the day ! it did.

Jul. O serpent heart, hid with a flow'ring face !
 Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave ?
 Beautiful tyrant ! fiend angelical !
 Dove-feather'd raven ! wolvish-ravens lamb !
 Despised substance of divinest show !
 Just opposite to what thou justly seem'st,
 A damned saint, an honourable villain !
 O, nature ! what hadst thou to do in hell,
 When thou did'st bower the spirit of a fiend
 In mortal paradise of such sweet flesh ? —
 Was ever book, containing such vile matter,
 So fairly bound ? O, that deceit should dwell
 In such a gorgeous palace !

⁶ *God save the mark !*] This proverbial exclamation occurs again,
 with equal obscurity, in *Othello*, Act I. sc. i.

Nurse. There's no trust,
No faith, no honesty in men; all perjur'd,
All forsworn, all naught, all dissemblers. —
Ah, where's my man? give me some *aqua vitæ*: —
These griefs, these woes, these sorrows make me old.
Shame come to Romeo!

Jul. Blister'd be thy tongue,
For such a wish! he was not born to shame:
Upon his brow shame is asham'd to sit;
For 'tis a throne where honour may be crown'd
Sole monarch of the universal earth.
O, what a beast was I to chide at him!

Nurse. Will you speak well of him that kill'd your
cousin?

Jul. Shall I speak ill of him that is my husband?
Ah, poor my lord, what tongue shall smooth thy name,⁷
When I, thy three-hours wife, have mangled it? —
But, wherefore, villain, didst thou kill my cousin?
That villain cousin would have kill'd my husband:
Back, foolish tears, back to your native spring;
Your tributary drops belong to woe,
Which you, mistaking, offer up to joy.
My husband lives, that Tybalt would have slain;
And Tybalt's dead, that would have slain my husband:
All this is comfort; Wherefore weep I then?
Some word there was, worsser than Tybalt's death,
That murder'd me: I would forget it fain;
But, O! it presses to my memory,
Like damned guilty deeds to sinners' minds:
Tybalt is dead, and Romeo — banished;
That — *banished*, that one word — *banished*,
Hath slain ten thousand Tybalts.⁸ Tybalt's death,
Was woe enough, if it had ended there:

⁷ — *What tongue shall smooth thy name,]* To *smooth*, in ancient language, is to *stroke*, to *caress*, to *fondle*.

⁸ *Hath slain ten thousand Tybalts.]* That is, is worse than the loss of ten thousand Tybalts.

Or, — if sour woe delights in fellowship,
 And needly will be rank'd with other griefs, —
 Why follow'd not, when she said — Tybalt's dead,
 Thy father, or thy mother, nay, or both,
 Which modern lamentation⁹ might have mov'd?
 But, with a rear-ward following Tybalt's death,
Romeo is banished, — to speak that word,
 Is father, mother, Tybalt, Romeo, Juliet,
 All slain, all dead : — *Romeo is banished*, —
 There is no end, no limit, measure, bound,
 In that word's death; no words can that woe sound. —

Where is my father, and my mother, nurse?
Nurse. Weeping and wailing over Tybalt's corse:
 Will you go to them? I will bring you thither.

Jul. Wash they his wounds with tears? mine shall
 be spent,

When theirs are dry, for Romeo's banishment.
 Take up those cords : — Poor ropes, you are beguil'd,
 Both you and I; for Romeo is exil'd :
 He made you for a highway to my bed ;
 But I, a maid, die maiden-widowed.
 Come, cords; come, nurse; I'll to my wedding bed ;
 And death, not Romeo, take my maidenhead !

Nurse. Hie to your chamber : I'll find Romeo
 To comfort you : — I wot well where he is.
 Hark ye, your Romeo will be here at night ;
 I'll to him; he is hid at Laurence' cell.

Jul. O find him ! give this ring to my true knight,
 And bid him come to take his last farewell. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

Friar Laurence's Cell.

Enter Friar LAURENCE and ROMEO.

Fri. Romeo, come forth; come forth, thou fearful man;

⁹ Which modern lamentation, &c.] i. e. trite, common.



Affliction is enamour'd of thy parts,
And thou art wedded to calamity.

Rom. Father, what news? what is the prince's doom?
What sorrow craves acquaintance at my hand,
That I yet know not?

Fri. Too familiar
Is my dear son with such sour company:
I bring thee tidings of the prince's doom.

Rom. What less than dooms-day is the prince's doom?

Fri. A gentler judgment vanish'd from his lips,
Not body's death, but body's banishment.

Rom. Ha! banishment? be merciful, say — death:
For exile hath more terror in his look,
Much more than death: do not say — banishment.

Fri. Hence from Verona art thou banished:
Be patient, for the world is broad and wide.

Rom. There is no world without Verona walls,
But purgatory, torture, hell itself.
Hence-banished is banish'd from the world,
And world's exile is death; — then banishment †
Is death mis-term'd: calling death — banishment,
Thou cut'st my head off with a golden axe,
And smil'st upon the stroke that murders me.

Fri. O deadly sin! O rude unthankfulness!
Thy fault our law calls death; but the kind prince,
Taking thy part, hath rush'd aside the law,
And turn'd that black word death to banishment:
This is dear mercy¹, and thou seest it not.

Rom. 'Tis torture, and not mercy: heaven is here,
Where Juliet lives; and every cat, and dog,
And little mouse, every unworthy thing,
Live here in heaven, and may look on her,
But Romeo may not. — More validity,
More honourable state, more courtship lives

† "then banished" — MALONE.

¹ *This is dear mercy,*] The old copies read *mere* mercy, which, in ancient language, signifies *absolute* mercy.

In carrion flies, than Romeo ²: they may seize
 On the white wonder of dear Juliet's hand,
 And steal immortal blessing from her lips;
 Who, even in pure and vestal modesty,
 Still blush, as thinking their own kisses sin;
 But Romeo may not; he is banished:
 Flies may do this, when I from this must fly;
 They are free men, but I am banished.
 And say'st thou yet, that exile is not death?
 Hadst thou no poison mix'd, no sharp-ground knife,
 No sudden mean of death, though ne'er so mean,
 But — banished — to kill me; banished?
 O friar, the damned use that word in hell;
 Howlings attend it: How hast thou the heart,
 Being a divine, a ghostly confessor,
 A sin-absolver, and my friend profess'd,
 To mangle me with that word — banishment?

Fri. Thou fond mad man, hear me but speak a word.

Rom. O, thou wilt speak again of banishment.

Fri. I'll give thee armour to keep off that word;
 Adversity's sweet milk, philosophy,
 To comfort thee, though thou art banished.

Rom. Yet banished? — Hang up philosophy!
 Unless philosophy can make a Juliet,
 Displant a town, reverse a prince's doom;
 It helps not, it prevails not, talk no more.

Fri. O, then I see that madmen have no ears.

Rom. How should they, when that wise men have no
 eyes?

Fri. Let me dispute with thee of thy estate.³

² — *More validity,*

More honourable state, more courtship lives

In carrion flies, than Romeo:] Validity seems here to mean worth or dignity. By courtship, the author seems to mean, the state of a lover; that dalliance, in which he who courts or woos a lady is sometimes indulged.

³ *Let me dispute with thee of thy estate.] i. e. talk over thy affairs.*

Rom. Thou canst not speak of what thou dost not feel :

Wert thou as young as I, Juliet thy love,
An hour but married, Tybalt murdered,
Doting like me, and like me banished,
Then might'st thou speak, then might'st thou tear thy
hair,

And fall upon the ground, as I do now,
Taking the measure of an unmade grave.

Fri. Arise ; one knocks ; good Romeo, hide thyself.

[*Knocking within.*]

Rom. Not I ; unless the breath of heart-sick groans,
Mist-like, infold me from the search of eyes. [*Knocking.*]

Fri. Hark, how they knock ! — Who's there ? —
Romeo, arise ;

Thou wilt be taken : — Stay a while : — stand up ;

[*Knocking.*]

Run to my study : — By and by : — God's will !

What wilfulness is this ? — I come, I come. [*Knocking.*]
Who knocks so hard ? whence come you ? what's your
will ?

Nurse [*within.*] Let me come in, and you shall know
my errand ;

I come from lady Juliet.

Fri.

Welcome then.

Enter Nurse.

Nurse. O holy friar, O, tell me, holy friar,
Where is my lady's lord, where's Romeo ?

Fri. There on the ground, with his own tears made
drunk.

Nurse. O, he is even in my mistress' case,
Just in her case !

Fri. O woeful sympathy !

Piteous predicament !

Nurse. Even so lies she,
Blubbering and weeping, weeping and blubbering : —
Stand up, stand up ; stand, an you be a man :

For Juliet's sake, for her sake, rise and stand ;
Why should you fall into so deep an O ?

Rom. Nurse !

Nurse. Ah sir ! ah sir ! — Well, death's the end of all.

Rom. Spak'st thou of Juliet ? how is it with her ?

Doth she not think me an old murderer,
Now I have stain'd the childhood of our joy
With blood remov'd but little from her own ?
Where is she ? and how doth she ? and what says
My conceal'd lady to our cancell'd love ?

Nurse. O, she says nothing, sir, but weeps and weeps ;
And now falls on her bed ; and then starts up,
And Tybalt calls ; and then on Romeo cries,
And then down falls again.

Rom. As if that name,

Shot from the deadly level of a gun,
Did murder her ; as that name's cursed hand
Murder'd her kinsman. — O tell me, friar, tell me,
In what vile part of this anatomy
Doth my name lodge ? tell me, that I may sack
The hateful mansion. [Drawing his Sword.]

Fri. Hold thy desperate hand :

Art thou a man ? thy form cries out, thou art ;
Thy tears are womanish ; thy wild acts denote
The unreasonable fury of a beast :
Unseemly woman, in a seeming man !
Or ill-beseeming beast, in seeming both !
Thou hast amaz'd me : by my holy order,
I thought thy disposition better temper'd.
Hast thou slain Tybalt ? wilt thou slay thyself ?
And slay thy lady too that lives in thee,
By doing damned hate upon thyself ?
Why rail'st thou on thy birth, the heaven, and earth ?
Since birth, and heaven, and earth, all three do meet
In thee at once ; which thou at once would'st lose.
Fye, fye ! thou sham'st thy shape, thy love, thy wit ;
Which, like an usurer, abound'st in all,
And usest none in that true use indeed

Which should bedeck thy shape, thy love, thy wit.
 Thy noble shape is but a form of wax,
 Digressing from the valour of a man :
 Thy dear love, sworn, but hollow perjury,
 Killing that love which thou hast vow'd to cherish :
 Thy wit, that ornament to shape and love,
 Mis-shapen in the conduct of them both,
 Like powder in a skill-less soldier's flask,⁴
 Is set on fire by thine own ignorance,
 And thou dismember'd with thine own defence.⁵
 What, rouse thee, man ! thy Juliet is alive,
 For whose dear sake thou wast but lately dead ;
 There art thou happy : Tybalt would kill thee,
 But thou slew'st Tybalt ; there art thou happy too :
 The law, that threaten'd death, becomes thy friend,
 And turns it to exile ; there art thou happy :
 A pack of blessings lights upon thy back ;
 Happiness courts thee in her best array ;
 But, like a mis-behav'd and sullen wench,
 Thou pout'st upon thy fortune and thy love :
 Take heed, take heed, for such die miserable.
 Go, get thee to thy love, as was decreed,
 Ascend her chamber, hence and comfort her ;
 But, look, thou stay not till the watch be set,
 For then thou canst not pass to Mantua ;
 Where thou shalt live, till we can find a time
 To blaze your marriage, reconcile your friends,
 Beg pardon of the prince, and call thee back
 With twenty hundred thousand times more joy
 Than thou went'st forth in lamentation.—
 Go before, nurse : commend me to thy lady ;
 And bid her hasten all the house to bed,

⁴ Like powder in a skill-less soldier's flask, &c.] To understand the force of this allusion, it should be remembered that the ancient English soldiers, using *match*-locks, instead of locks with flints as at present, were obliged to carry a lighted *match* hanging at their belts, very near to the wooden *flask* in which they kept their powder.

⁵ And thou dismember'd with thine own defence.] And thou torn to pieces with thine own weapons.

Which heavy sorrow makes them apt unto :
Romeo is coming.

Nurse. O Lord, I could have staid here all the night,
To hear good counsel : O, what learning is !—
My lord, I'll tell my lady you will come.

Rom. Do so, and bid my sweet prepare to chide.

Nurse. Here, sir, a ring she bid me give you, sir :
Hie you, make haste, for it grows very late.

[*Exit Nurse.*]

Rom. How well my comfort is reviv'd by this !

Fri. Go hence : Good night ; and here stands all
your state ;⁶

Either be gone before the watch be set,
Or by the break of day disguis'd from hence :
Sojourn in Mantua ; I'll find out your man,
And he shall signify from time to time
Every good hap to you, that chances here :
Give me thy hand ; 'tis late : farewell ; good night.

Rom. But that a joy past joy calls out on me,
It were a grief, so brief to part with thee :
Farewell.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

A Room in Capulet's House.

Enter CAPULET, Lady CAPULET, and PARIS.

Cap. Things have fallen out, sir, so unluckily,
That we have had no time to move our daughter :
Look you, she lov'd her kinsman Tybalt dearly,
And so did I ; — Well ; we were born to die. —
'Tis very late, she'll not come down to-night :
I promise you, but for your company,
I would have been a-bed an hour ago.

Par. These times of woe afford no time to woo :
Madam, good night : commend me to your daughter.

⁶ — here stands all your state ;] The whole of your fortune depends on this.

La. Cap. I will, and know her mind early to-morrow;
To-night she's mew'd up⁷ to her heaviness.

Cap. Sir Paris, I will make a desperate tender⁸
Of my child's love: I think, she will be rul'd
In all respects by me; nay more, I doubt it not.
Wife, go you to her ere you go to bed;
Acquaint her here of my son Paris' love;
And bid her, mark you me, on Wednesday next—
But, soft; What day is this?

Par. Monday, my lord.

Cap. Monday? ha! ha! Well, Wednesday is too
soon,

O' Thursday let it be:—o' Thursday, tell her,
She shall be married to this noble earl:—
Will you be ready? do you like this haste?
We'll keep no great ado:—a friend, or two:—
For hark you, Tybalt being slain so late,
It may be thought we held him carelessly,
Being our kinsman, if we revel much:
Therefore we'll have some half-a-dozen friends,
And there an end. But what say you to Thursday?

Par. My lord, I would that Thursday were to-mor-
row.

Cap. Well, get you gone:—O' Thursday be it
then:—

Go you to Juliet ere you go to bed,
Prepare her, wife, against this wedding-day.—
Farewell, my lord.—Light to my chamber, ho!
Afore me, it is so very late, that we
May call it early by and by:—Good night.

[*Exeunt.*]

⁷ — mew'd up —] This is a phrase from falconry. A *mew* was a place of confinement for hawks.

⁸ *Sir Paris, I will make a desperate tender* —] *Desperate* means only *bold, adventurous*, as if he had said in the vulgar phrase, *I will speak a bold word, and venture to promise you my daughter.*

SCENE V.

*Juliet's Chamber.**Enter ROMEO and JULIET.*

Jul. Wilt thou be gone? it is not yet near day:
It was the nightingale, and not the lark,
That pierc'd the fearful hollow of thine ear;
Nightly she sings on yon pomegranate tree:⁹
Believe me, love, it was the nightingale.

Rom. It was the lark, the herald of the morn,
No nightingale: look, love, what envious streaks
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east:
Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops;
I must be gone and live, or stay and die.

Jul. Yon light is not day-light, I know it, I:
It is some meteor that the sun exhales,
To be to thee this night a torch-bearer,
And light thee on thy way to Mantua:
Therefore stay yet, thou need'st not to be gone.

Rom. Let me be ta'en, let me be put to death;
I am content, so thou wilt have it so.
I'll say, yon grey is not the morning's eye,
'Tis but the pale reflex¹ of Cynthia's brow;
Nor that is not the lark, whose notes do beat
The vaulty heaven so high above our heads:
I have more care to stay² than will to go;—
Come, death, and welcome! Juliet wills it so.—
How is't, my soul? let's talk, it is not day.

⁹ Nightly *she sings on yon pomegranate tree*:] This is not merely a poetical supposition. It is observed of the nightingale, that, if undisturbed, she sits and sings upon the same tree for many weeks together.

¹ — *the pale reflex* —] The appearance of a cloud opposed to the moon.

² *I have more care to stay* —] *Care for inclination.*

Jul. It is, it is, hie hence, be gone, away ;
 It is the lark that sings so out of tune,
 Straining harsh discords, and unpleasing sharps.
 Some say, the lark makes sweet division ;³
 This doth not so, for she divideth us :
 Some say, the lark and loathed toad change eyes ;
 O, now I would they had chang'd voices too !
 Since arm from arm that voice doth us affray,
 Hunting thee hence with hunts-up to the day.⁴
 O, now be gone ; more light and light it grows.

Rom. More light and light ?—more dark and dark
 our woes.

Enter Nurse.

Nurse. Madam !

Jul. Nurse ?

Nurse. Your lady mother's coming to your chamber :
 The day is broke ; be wary, look about. [*Exit Nurse.*

Jul. Then, window, let day in, and let life out.

Rom. Farewell, farewell ! one kiss, and I'll descend.

[*ROMEO descends.*

Jul. Art thou gone so ? my love ! my lord ! my
 friend !

I must hear from thee every day i'the hour,
 For in a minute there are many days :
 O ! by this count I shall be much in years,
 Ere I again behold my Romeo.

Rom. Farewell ! I will omit no opportunity
 That may convey my greetings, love, to thee.

Jul. O, think'st thou, we shall ever meet again ?

³ — *sweet division* ;] *Division* seems to have been the technical phrase for the pauses or parts of a musical composition.

⁴ *Hunting thee hence with hunts-up to the day.*] The *hunts-up* was the name of the tune anciently played to wake the hunters, and collect them together. But a *huntsup* also signified a morning *song* to a new-married woman, the day after her marriage, and is used here in that sense.

Rom. I doubt it not; and all these woes shall serve
For sweet discourses in our time to come.

Jul. O God! I have an ill-divining soul;
Methinks, I see thee, now thou art below,
As one dead in the bottom of a tomb:
Either my eyesight fails, or thou look'st pale.

Rom. And trust me, love, in my eye so do you:
Dry sorrow drinks our blood. Adieu! adieu!

[*Exit* ROMEO.]

Jul. O fortune, fortune! all men call thee fickle:
If thou art fickle, what dost thou with him
That is renown'd for faith⁵? Be fickle, fortune;
For then, I hope, thou wilt not keep him long,
But send him back.

La. Cap. [*within.*] Ho, daughter! are you up?

Jul. Who is't that calls? is it my lady mother?
Is she not down so late, or up so early?
What unaccustom'd cause procures her hither?⁶

Enter Lady CAPULET.

La. Cap. Why, how now, Juliet?

Jul. Madam, I am not well.

La. Cap. Evermore weeping for your cousin's death?
What, wilt thou wash him from his grave with tears?
An if thou could'st, thou could'st not make him live;
Therefore, have done: Some grief shows much of love;
But much of grief shows still some want of wit.

Jul. Yet let me weep for such a feeling loss.

La. Cap. So shall you feel the loss, but not the friend
Which you weep for.

Jul. Feeling so the loss,
I cannot choose but ever weep the friend.

⁵ *That is renown'd for faith?*] This Romeo, so *renown'd for faith*, was but the day before dying for love of another woman: yet this is natural. Romeo was the darling object of Juliet's love, and Romeo was, of course, to have every excellence.

⁶ — *procures her hither?*] *Procures for brings.*

La. Cap. Well, girl, thou weep'st not so much for
his death,
As that the villain lives which slaughter'd him.

Jul. What villain, madam?

La. Cap. That same villain, Romeo.

Jul. Villain and he are many miles asunder.
God pardon him! I do, with all my heart;
And yet no man, like he, doth grieve my heart.

La. Cap. That is, because the traitor murderer lives.

Jul. Ay, madam, from⁷ the reach of these my hands.
'Would, none but I might venge my cousin's death!

La. Cap. We will have vengeance for it, fear thou
not:

Then weep no more. I'll send to one in Mantua, —
Where that same banish'd runagate doth live, —
That shall bestow on him so sure a draught,
That he shall soon keep Tybalt company:
And then, I hope, thou wilt be satisfied.

Jul. Indeed, I never shall be satisfied
With Romeo, till I behold him — dead —
Is my poor heart so for a kinsman vex'd: —
Madam, if you could find out but a man
To bear a poison, I would temper it;
That Romeo should, upon receipt thereof,
Soon sleep in quiet — O, how my heart abhors
To hear him nam'd, — and cannot come to him, —
To wreak the love I bore my cousin Tybalt
Upon his body that hath slaughter'd him!

La. Cap. Find thou the means, and I'll find such a
man.

But now I'll tell thee joyful tidings, girl.

Jul. And joy comes well in such a needful time:
What are they, I beseech your ladyship?

La. Cap. Well, well, thou hast a careful father, child;
One, who, to put thee from thy heaviness,

⁷ *Ay, madam, from, &c.*] Juliet's equivocations are rather too artful for a mind disturbed by the loss of a new lover. JOHNSON.

Hath sorted out a sudden day of joy,
That thou expect'st not, nor I look'd not for.

Jul. Madam, in happy time⁸, what day is that?

La. Cap. Marry, my child, early next Thursday
morn,

The gallant, young, and noble gentleman,
The county Paris⁹, at St. Peter's church,
Shall happily make thee there a joyful bride.

Jul. Now, by St. Peter's church, and Peter too,
He shall not make me there a joyful bride.

I wonder at this haste; that I must wed
Ere he, that should be husband, comes to woo.

I pray you, tell my lord and father, madam,
I will not marry yet; and, when I do, I swear,
It shall be Romeo, whom you know I hate,
Rather than Paris: — These are news indeed!

La. Cap. Here comes your father; tell him so your-
self,

And see how he will take it at your hands.

Enter CAPULET and Nurse.

Cap. When the sun sets, the air doth drizzle dew;
But for the sunset of my brother's son,
It rains downright. —

How now? a conduit, girl? what, still in tears?
Evermore showering? In one little body
Thou counterfeit'st a bark, a sea, a wind:
For still thy eyes, which I may call the sea,

⁸ — *in happy time,*] *A la bonne heure.* This phrase was interjected, when the hearer was not quite so well pleased as the speaker.

⁹ *The county Paris,*] Paris, though in one place called *earl*, is most commonly stiled the *countie* in this play. Shakspeare seems to have preferred, for some reason or other, the *Italian comte* to our *count*: perhaps he took it from the old English novel, from which he is said to have taken his plot: and in which Paris is first stiled *a young earle*, and afterwards *counte*, *countee*, *county*; according to the unsettled orthography of the time.

Do ebb and flow with tears ; the bark thy body is,
Sailing in this salt flood ; the winds, thy sighs ;
Who, — raging with thy tears, and they with them, —
Without a sudden calm, will overset
Thy tempest-tossed body. — How now, wife ?
Have you deliver'd to her our decree ?

La. Cap. Ay, sir ; but she will none, she gives you
thanks.

I would, the fool were married to her grave !

Cap. Soft, take me with you, take me with you, wife.
How ! will she none ? doth she not give us thanks ?
Is she not proud ? doth she not count her bless'd,
Unworthy as she is, that we have wrought
So worthy a gentleman to be her bridegroom ?

Jul. Not proud, you have ; but thankful, that you have :
Proud can I never be of what I hate ;
But thankful even for hate, that is meant love.

Cap. How now ! how now, chop-logick ! What is
this ?

Proud, — and, I thank you, — and, I thank you not ; —
And yet not proud ; — Mistress minion, you,
Thank me no thankings, nor proud me no prouds,
But settle your fine joints 'gainst Thursday next,
To go with Paris to Saint Peter's church,
Or I will drag thee on a hurdle thither.
Out, you green-sickness carrion ! out, you baggage !
You tallow face.

La. Cap. Fye, fye ! what are you mad ?

Jul. Good father, I beseech you on my knees,
Hear me with patience but to speak a word.

Cap. Hang thee, young baggage ! disobedient wretch !
I tell thee what, — get thee to church o' Thursday,
Or never after look me in the face :
Speak not, reply not, do not answer me ;
My fingers itch. — Wife, we scarce thought us bless'd,
That God had sent us but this only child ;
But now I see this one is one too much,

And that we have a curse in having her ;
Out on her, hilding !

Nurse. God in heaven bless her ! —

You are to blame, my lord, to rate her so.

Cap. And why, my lady wisdom ? hold your tongue,
Good prudence ; smatter with your gossips, go.

Nurse. I speak no treason.

Cap. O, God ye good den !

Nurse. May not one speak ?

Cap. Peace, you mumbling fool !

Utter your gravity o'er a gossip's bowl,
For here we need it not.

La. Cap. You are too hot.

Cap. God's bread ! it makes me mad : Day, night,
late, early,

At home, abroad, alone, in company,

Waking, or sleeping, still my care hath been

To have her match'd : and having now provided

A gentleman of princely parentage,

Of fair demesnes, youthful, and nobly train'd,

Stuff'd (as they say) with honourable parts,

Proportion'd as one's heart could wish a man, —

And then to have a wretched puling fool,

A whining mammet, in her fortune's tender,

To answer — *I'll not wed — I cannot love,*

I am too young, — I pray you, pardon me ; —

But, an you will not wed, I'll pardon you :

Graze where you will, you shall not house with me ;

Look to't, think on't, I do not use to jest.

Thursday is near ; lay hand on heart, advise :

An you be mine, I'll give you to my friend ;

An you be not, hang, beg, starve, die i'the streets,

For, by my soul, I'll ne'er acknowledge thee,

Nor what is mine shall never do thee good :

Trust to't, bethink you, I'll not be forsworn.

[*Exit.*

Jul. Is there no pity sitting in the clouds,
That sees into the bottom of my grief ?

O, sweet my mother, cast me not away !
 Delay this marriage for a month, a week ;
 Or, if you do not, make the bridal bed
 In that dim monument where Tybalt lies.

La. Cap. Talk not to me, for I'll not speak a word ;
 Do as thou wilt, for I have done with thee. [*Exit.*]

Jul. O God ! — O nurse ! how shall this be prevented ?

My husband is on earth, my faith in heaven ;
 How shall that faith return again to earth,
 Unless that husband send it me from heaven
 By leaving earth ? — Comfort me, counsel me. —
 Alack, alack, that heaven should practise stratagems
 Upon so soft a subject as myself ! —
 What say'st thou ? hast thou not a word of joy ?
 Some comfort, nurse.

Nurse. 'Faith, here 'tis: Romeo
 Is banished ; and all the world to nothing,
 That he dares ne'er come back to challenge you ;
 Or, if he do, it needs must be by stealth.
 Then, since the case so stands as now it doth,
 I think it best you married with the county.¹
 O, he's a lovely gentleman !
 Romeo's a dishclout to him ; an eagle, madam,
 Hath not so green, so quick, so fair an eye,
 As Paris hath. Beshrew my very heart,
 I think you are happy in this second match,
 For it excels your first : or if it did not,
 Your first is dead ; or 'twere as good he were,
 As living here and you no use of him.

Jul. Speakest thou from thy heart ?

¹ *I think it best you married with the county.*] The character of the nurse exhibits a just picture of those whose actions have no principles for their foundation. She has been unfaithful to the trust reposed in her by Capulet, and is ready to embrace any expedient that offers, to avert the consequences of her first infidelity. STEEVENS.

Nurse. From my soul too;
Or else beshrew them both.

Jul. Amen!

Nurse. To what?

Jul. Well, thou hast comforted me marvellous much.
Go in; and tell my lady I am gone,
Having displeas'd my father, to Laurence' cell,
To make confession, and to be absolv'd.

Nurse. Marry, I will; and this is wisely done. [*Exit.*]

Jul. Ancient damnation! O most wicked fiend!
Is it more sin — to wish me thus forsworn,
Or to dispraise my lord with that same tongue
Which she hath prais'd him with above compare
So many thousand times? — Go, counsellor;
Thou and my bosom henceforth shall be twain. —
I'll to the friar, to know his remedy;
If all else fail, myself have power to die. [*Exit.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I. — *Friar Laurence's Cell.*

Enter Friar LAURENCE and PARIS.

Fri. On Thursday, sir? the time is very short.

Par. My father Capulet will have it so;
And I am nothing slow, to slack his haste.²

Fri. You say, you do not know the lady's mind;
Uneven is the course, I like it not.

Par. Immoderately she weeps for Tybalt's death,
And therefore have I little talk'd of love;
For Venus smiles not in a house of tears.

² *And I am nothing slow, &c.] His haste shall not be abated by my slowness*

Now, sir, her father counts it dangerous,
That she doth give her sorrow so much sway ;
And, in his wisdom, hastes our marriage,
To stop the inundation of her tears ;
Which, too much minded by herself alone,
May be put from her by society ;
Now do you know the reason of this haste.

Fri. I would I knew not why it should be slow'd.

[*Aside.*

Look, sir, here comes the lady towards my cell.

Enter JULIET.

Par. Happily met, my lady, and my wife !

Jul. That may be, sir, when I may be a wife.

Par. They may be, must be, love, on Thursday next.

Jul. What must be, shall be.

Fri. That's a certain text.

Par. Come you to make confession to this father ?

Jul. To answer that, were to confess to you.

Par. Do not deny to him, that you love me.

Jul. I will confess to you, that I love him.

Par. So will you, I am sure, that you love me.

Jul. If I do so, it will be of more price,

Being spoke behind your back, than to your face.

Par. Poor soul, thy face is much abus'd with tears.

Jul. The tears have got small victory by that ;

For it was bad enough, before their spite.

Par. Thou wrong'st it, more than tears, with that
report.

Jul. That is no slander, sir, that is a truth ;

And what I spake, I spake it to my face.

Par. Thy face is mine, and thou hast slander'd it.

Jul. It may be so, for it is not mine own. —

Are you at leisure, holy father, now ;

Or shall I come to you at evening mass ?³

³ Or shall I come to you at evening mass ?] Juliet means *vespers*.
There is no such thing as *evening mass*.

Fri. My leisure serves me, pensive daughter, now : —
My lord, we must entreat the time alone.

Par. God shield, I should disturb devotion ! —
Juliet, on Thursday early will I rouse you :
Till then, adieu ! and keep this holy kiss.

[*Exit PARIS.*

Jul. O, shut the door ! and when thou hast done so,
Come weep with me : Past hope, past cure, past help !

Fri. Ah, Juliet, I already know thy grief ;
It strains me past the compass of my wits :
I hear thou must, and nothing must prorogue it,
On Thursday next be married to this county.

Jul. Tell me not, friar, that thou hear'st of this,
Unless thou tell me how I may prevent it :
If, in thy wisdom, thou canst give no help,
Do thou but call my resolution wise,
And with this knife I'll help it presently.
God join'd my heart and Romeo's, thou our hands ;
And ere this hand, by thee to Romeo seal'd,
Shall be the label to another deed, ⁴
Or my true heart with treacherous revolt
Turn to another, this shall slay them both :
Therefore, out of thy long-experienc'd time,
Give me some present counsel ; or, behold,
'Twixt my extremes and me this bloody knife
Shall play the umpire ⁵ ; arbitrating that
Which the commission of thy years and art ⁶
Could to no issue of true honour bring.
Be not so long to speak ; I long to die,
If what thou speak'st speak not of remedy.

⁴ *Shall be the label to another deed,*] The seals of deeds in our author's time were not impressed on the parchment itself on which the deed was written, but were appended on distinct slips or labels affixed to the deed.

⁵ *Shall play the umpire ;*] That is, this knife shall decide the struggle between me and my distresses.

⁶ — *commission of thy years and art* —] *Commission* is for *authority* or *power*.

Fri. Hold, daughter ; I do spy a kind of hope,
Which craves as desperate an execution
As that is desperate which we would prevent.
If, rather than to marry county Paris,
Thou hast the strength of will to slay thyself ;
Then is it likely, thou wilt undertake
A thing like death to chide away this shame,
That cop'st with death himself to scape from it ;
And, if thou dar'st, I'll give thee remedy.

Jul. O, bid me leap, rather than marry Paris,
From off the battlements of yonder tower ;
Or walk in thievish ways ; or bid me lurk
Where serpents are ; chain me with roaring bears ;
Or shut me nightly in a charnel-house,
O'er-cover'd quite with dead men's rattling bones,
With reeky shanks, and yellow chapless skulls ;
Or bid me go into a new-made grave,
And hide me with a dead man in his shroud ;
Things that, to hear them told, have made me tremble ;
And I will do it without fear or doubt,
To live an unstain'd wife to my sweet love.

Fri. Hold, then ; go home, be merry, give consent
To marry Paris : Wednesday is to-morrow ;
To-morrow night look that thou lie alone,
Let not thy nurse lie with thee in thy chamber :
Take thou this phial, being then in bed,
And this distilled liquor drink thou off :
When, presently, through all thy veins shall run
A cold and drowsy humour, which shall seize
Each vital spirit ; for no pulse shall keep
His natural progress, but surcease to beat :
No warmth, no breath, shall testify thou liv'st ;
The roses in thy lips and cheeks shall fade
To paly ashes ; thy eyes' windows fall,
Like death, when he shuts up the day of life ;
Each part, depriv'd of supple government,
Shall stiff, and stark, and cold, appear like death :
And in this borrow'd likeness of shrunk death

Thou shalt remain full two and forty hours,
 And then awake as from a pleasant sleep.
 Now when the bridegroom in the morning comes
 To rouse thee from thy bed, there art thou dead:
 Then (as the manner of our country is,)
 In thy best robes uncover'd on the bier,
 Thou shalt be borne to that same ancient vault,
 Where all the kindred of the Capulets lie.
 In the mean time, against thou shalt awake,
 Shall Romeo by my letters know our drift;
 And hither shall he come; and he and I
 Will watch thy waking, and that very night
 Shall Romeo bear thee hence to Mantua.
 And this shall free thee from this present shame;
 If no unconstant toy⁷, nor womanish fear,
 Abate thy valour in the acting it.

Jul. Give me, O give me! tell me not of fear. †

Fri. Hold; get you gone, be strong and prosperous
 In this resolve: I'll send a friar with speed
 To Mantua, with my letters to thy lord.

Jul. Love, give me strength! and strength shall help
 afford.

Farewell, dear father!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Room in Capulet's House.

Enter CAPULET, Lady CAPULET, Nurse, and Servant.

Cap. So many guests invite as here are writ. —

[*Exit* Servant.]

Sirrah, go hire me twenty cunning cooks.⁸

⁷ *If no unconstant toy, &c.] If no fickle freak, no light caprice, no change of fancy, hinder the performance.*

† "Give me, give me! O tell me not of fear." — MALONE.

⁸ — go hire me twenty cunning cooks.] *Twenty cooks for half*

2 *Serv.* You shall have none ill, sir; for I'll try if they can lick their fingers.

Cap. How canst thou try them so?

2 *Serv.* Marry, sir, 'tis an ill cook that cannot lick his own fingers: therefore he, that cannot lick his fingers, goes not with me.

Cap. Go, begone. —

[*Exit Servant.*

We shall be much unfurnish'd for this time. —

What, is my daughter gone to friar Laurence?

Nurse. Ay, forsooth.

Cap. Well, he may chance to do some good on her: A peevish self-will'd harlotry it is.

Enter JULIET.

Nurse. See, where she comes from shrift⁹ with merry look.

Cap. How now, my headstrong? where have you been gadding?¹

Jul. Where I have learn'd me to repent the sin
Of disobedient opposition
To you, and your behests; and am enjoin'd
By holy Laurence to fall prostrate here,
And beg your pardon: — Pardon, I beseech you!
Henceforward I am ever rul'd by you.

Cap. Send for the county; go tell him of this;
I'll have this knot knit up to-morrow morning.

Jul. I met the youthful lord at Laurence' cell;
And gave him what becomed love² I might,
Not stepping o'er the bounds of modesty.

a dozen guests! Either Capulet has altered his mind strangely, or our author forgot what he had just made him tell us. See p. 209.

⁹ — *from shrift* —] i. e. from confession.

¹ — *gadding* ?] The primitive sense of this word was to straggle from house to house, and collect money, under pretence of singing carols to the Blessed Virgin.

² — *becomed love* —] *Becomed* for *becoming*: one participle for the other; a frequent practice with our author.

Cap. Why, I am glad on't; this is well, — stand up:
This is as't should be. — Let me see the county;
Ay, marry, go, I say, and fetch him hither. —
Now, afore God, this reverend holy friar,
All our whole city is much bound to him.

Jul. Nurse, will you go with me into my closet,
To help me sort such needful ornaments
As you think fit to furnish me to-morrow?

La. Cap. No, not till Thursday; there is time enough.

Cap. Go, nurse, go with her: — we'll to church to-morrow. [Exeunt JULIET and Nurse.]

La. Cap. We shall be short in our provision;
'Tis now near night.

Cap. Tush! I will stir about,
And all things shall be well, I warrant thee, wife:
Go thou to Juliet, help to deck up her;
I'll not to bed to-night; — let me alone;
I'll play the housewife for this once. — What, ho! —
They are all forth: Well, I will walk myself
To county Paris, to prepare him up
Against to-morrow: my heart is wond'rous light,
Since this same wayward girl is so reclaim'd. [Exeunt.]

SCENE III.

Juliet's Chamber.

Enter JULIET and Nurse.

Jul. Ay, those attires are best: — But, gentle nurse,
I pray thee, leave me to myself to-night;
For I have need of many orisons³
To move the heavens to smile upon my state,
Which, well thou know'st, is cross and full of sin.

³ For I have need, &c.] Juliet plays most of her pranks under the appearance of religion: perhaps Shakspeare meant to punish her hypocrisy. JOHNSON.

Enter Lady CAPULET.

La. Cap. What, are you busy? do you need my help?

Jul. No, madam; we have cull'd such necessaries
As are behoveful for our state to-morrow:
So please you, let me now be left alone,
And let the nurse this night sit up with you;
For, I am sure, you have your hands full all,
In this so sudden business.

La. Cap. Good night!
Get thee to bed, and rest; for thou hast need.

[Exeunt Lady CAPULET and Nurse.]

Jul. Farewell! — God knows, when we shall meet
again.

I have a faint cold fear-thrills through my veins,
That almost freezes up the heat of life:
I'll call them back again to comfort me; —
Nurse! — What should she do here?
My dismal scene I needs must act alone. —
Come, phial. —
What if this mixture do not work at all?
Must I of force be married to the county? —
No, no; — this shall forbid it: — lie thou there. —

[Laying down a Dagger.]

What if it be a poison, which the friar
Subtly hath minister'd to have me dead;
Lest in this marriage he should be dishonour'd,
Because he married me before to Romeo?
I fear, it is: and yet, methinks, it should not,
For he hath still been tried a holy man:
I will not entertain so bad a thought. —
How if, when I am laid into the tomb,
I wake before the time that Romeo
Come to redeem me? there's a fearful point!
Shall I not then be stifled in the vault,
To whose foul mouth no healthsome air breathes in,
And there die strangled ere my Romeo comes?

Or, if I live, is it not very like,
 The horrible conceit of death and night,
 Together with the terror of the place, —
 As in a vault, an ancient receptacle,
 Where, for these many hundred years, the bones
 Of all my buried ancestors are pack'd;
 Where bloody Tybalt, yet but green in earth,⁴
 Lies fest'ring⁵ in his shroud; where, as they say,
 At some hours in the night spirits resort; —
 Alack, alack! is it not like, that I,⁶
 So early waking, — what with loathsome smells;
 And shrieks like mandrakes' torn out of the earth,
 That living mortals, hearing them, run mad; —
 O! if I wake, shall I not be distraught,⁷
 Environed with all these hideous fears?
 And madly play with my forefathers' joints?
 And pluck the mangled Tybalt from his shroud?
 And, in this rage, with some great kinsman's bone,
 As with a club, dash out my desperate brains?
 O, look! methinks, I see my cousin's ghost
 Seeking out Romeo, that did spit his body
 Upon a rapier's point: — Stay, Tybalt, stay! —
 Romeo, I come! this do I drink to thee.

[*She throws herself on the Bed.*]

SCENE IV.

Capulet's *Hall*.

Enter Lady CAPULET and Nurse.

La. Cap. Hold, take these keys, and fetch more
 spices, nurse.

⁴ — *green in earth,*] i. e. fresh in earth, newly buried.

⁵ *Lies fest'ring* —] To *fester* is to corrupt.

⁶ — *is it not like, that I,*] This speech is confused, and inconsequential, according to the disorder of Juliet's mind.

⁷ — *be distraught,*] *Distraught* is distracted.

Nurse. They call for dates and quinces in the pastry.⁸

Enter CAPULET.

Cap. Come, stir, stir, stir! the second cock hath
crow'd,
The curfeu bell⁹ hath rung, 'tis three o'clock: —
Look to the bak'd meats, good Angelica:
Spare not for cost.

Nurse. Go, go, you cot-quean, go,
Get you to bed; 'faith, you'll be sick to-morrow
For this night's watching.

Cap. No, not a whit; What! I have watch'd ere
now
All night for lesser cause, and ne'er been sick.

La. Cap. Ay, you have been a mouse-hunt in your
time;¹

But I will watch you from such watching now.

[*Exeunt Lady CAPULET and Nurse.*]

Cap. A jealous-hood, a jealous-hood! — Now, fellow,
What's there?

⁸ *They call for dates and quinces in the pastry.*] i. e. in the room where paste was made. So *laundry, spicery, &c.*

⁹ *The curfeu bell* —] The *curfew bell* is universally rung at *eight or nine* o'clock at night; generally according to the season. The term is here used with peculiar impropriety, as it is not believed that *any* bell was ever rung so early as *three* in the morning. The derivation of *curfeu* is well known, but it is a mere vulgar error that the institution was a badge of slavery imposed by the Norman Conqueror. To *put out the fire* became necessary only because it was time to go to bed: And if the *curfeu* commanded all fires to be extinguished, the morning bell ordered them to be lighted again. In short, the ringing of those two bells was a manifest and essential service to people who had scarcely any other means of measuring their time.

RITSON.

¹ — a mouse-hunt in your time;] In Norfolk, and many other parts of England, the cant term for a weasel is — a *mouse-hunt*. The intrigues of this animal, like those of the cat kind, are usually carried on during the night. This circumstance will account for the appellation which Lady Capulet allows her husband to have *formerly* deserved.

Enter Servants, with Spits, Logs, and Baskets.

1 *Serv.* Things for the cook, sir; but I know not what.

Cap. Make haste, make haste. [*Exit* 1 *Serv.*]—
Sirrah, fetch drier logs;

Call Peter, he will show thee where they are.

2 *Ser.* I have a head, sir, that will find out logs,
And never trouble Peter for the matter. [*Exit.*]

Cap. 'Mass, and well said; A merry whoreson! ha,
Thou shalt be logger-head. — Good faith, 'tis day:
The county will be here with musick straight,
[*Musick within.*]

For so he said he would. I hear him near: —

Nurse! — Wife! — what, ho! — what, nurse, I say!

Enter Nurse.

Go, waken Juliet, go, and trim her up;
I'll go and chat with Paris: — Hie, make haste,
Make haste! the bridegroom he is come already:
Make haste, I say! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.

Juliet's Chamber; JULIET on the Bed.

Enter Nurse.

Nurse. Mistress! — what, mistress! — Juliet! — fast,
I warrant her, she: —

Why, lamb! — why lady! — fye, you slug-a-bed! —
Why, love, I say! — madam! sweet-heart! — why,
bride! —

What, not a word? — you take your pennyworths now;
Sleep for a week; for the next night, I warrant,
The county Paris hath set up his rest,
That you shall rest but little. — God forgive me,
(Marry, and amen!) how sound is she asleep!

I needs must wake her: — Madam, madam, madam !
 Ay, let the county take you in your bed ;
 He'll fright you up, i'faith. — Will it not be ?
 What, drest ! and in your clothes ! and down again !
 I must needs wake you : — Lady ! lady ! lady !
 Alas ! alas ! — Help ! help ! my lady's dead ! —
 O, well-a-day, that ever I was born ! —
 Some aqua-vitæ, ho ! — my lord ! my lady !

Enter Lady CAPULET.

La. Cap. What noise is here ?

Nurse. O lamentable day !

La. Cap. What is the matter ?

Nurse. Look, look ! O heavy day !

La. Cap. O me, O me ! — my child, my only life,
 Revive, look up, or I will die with thee ! —
 Help, help ! — call help.

Enter CAPULET.

Cap. For shame, bring Juliet forth ; her lord is come.

Nurse. She's dead, deceas'd, she's dead ; alack the
 day !

La. Cap. Alack the day ! she's dead, she's dead, she's
 dead.

Cap. Ha ! let me see her : — Out, alas ! she's cold ;
 Her blood is settled, and her joints are stiff ;
 Life and these lips have long been separated :
 Death lies on her, like an untimely frost
 Upon the sweetest flower of all the field.
 Accursed time ! unfortunate old man !

Nurse. O lamentable day !

La. Cap. O woful time !

Cap. Death, that hath ta'en her hence to make me
 wail,
 Ties up my tongue, and will not let me speak.

Enter Friar LAURENCE and PARIS, with Musicians.

Fri. Come, is the bride ready to go to church?

Cap. Ready to go, but never to return:

O son, the night before thy wedding day
Hath death lain with thy bride: — See, there she lies:
Flower as she was, deflowered by him.
Death is my son-in-law, death is my heir;
My daughter he hath wedded! I will die,
And leave him all; life leaving, all is death's.

Par. Have I thought long to see this morning's face,
And doth it give me such a sight as this?

La. Cap. Accurs'd, unhappy, wretched, hateful day!
Most miserable hour, that e'er time saw
In lasting labour of his pilgrimage!
But one, poor one, one poor and loving child,
But one thing to rejoice and solace in,
And cruel death hath catch'd it from my sight.

Nurse. O woe! O woful, woful, woful day!
Most lamentable day! most woful day,
That ever, ever, I did yet behold!
O day! O day! O day! O hateful day!
Never was seen so black a day as this:
O woful day, O woful day!

Par. Beguil'd, divorced, wronged, spited, slain!
Most détestable death, by thee beguil'd,
By cruel cruel thee quite overthrown! —
O love! O life! — not life, but love in death!

Cap. Despis'd, distressed, hated, martyr'd, kill'd! —
Uncomfortable time! why cam'st thou now
To murder murder our solemnity? —
O child! O child! — my soul, and not my child! —
Dead art thou, dead †! alack! my child is dead;
And, with my child, my joys are buried!

Fri. Peace, ho, for shame! confusion's cure lives not
In these confusions. Heaven and yourself

† Mr. Malone omits this second *dead!*

Had part in this fair maid; now heaven hath all,
And all the better is it for the maid:
Your part in her you could not keep from death;
But heaven keeps his part in eternal life.
The most you sought was — her promotion;
For 'twas your heaven, she should be advanc'd:
And weep ye now, seeing she is advanc'd,
Above the clouds, as high as heaven itself?
O, in this love, you love your child so ill,
That you run mad, seeing that she is well:
She's not well married, that lives married long;
But she's best married, that dies married young.
Dry up your tears, and stick your rosemary
On this fair corse; and, as the custom is,
In all her best array bear her to church:
For though fond nature bids us all lament,
Yet nature's tears are reason's merriment.

Cap. All things, that we ordained festival,
Turn from their office to black funeral:
Our instruments, to melancholy bells;
Our wedding cheer, to a sad burial feast;
Our solemn hymns to sullen dirges change;
Our bridal flowers serve for a buried corse,
And all things change them to the contrary.

Fri. Sir, go you in, — and, madam, go with him; —
And go, sir Paris; — every one prepare
To follow this fair corse unto her grave:
The heavens do low'r upon you, for some ill;
Move them no more, by crossing their high will.

[*Exeunt* CAPULET, Lady CAPULET, PARIS,
and Friar.

1 *Mus.* 'Faith, we may put up our pipes, and be
gone.

Nurse. Honest good fellows, ah, put up, put up;
For, well you know, this is a pitiful case.

[*Exit* Nurse.

1 *Mus.* Ay, by my troth, the case may be amended.

Enter PETER.

Pet. Musicians, O, musicians, *Heart's ease, heart's ease*; O, an you will have me live, play — *heart's ease*.

1 *Mus.* Why *heart's ease*?

Pet. O, musicians, because my heart itself plays — *My heart is full of woe*: O, play me some merry dump², to comfort me.

2 *Mus.* Not a dump we; 'tis no time to play now.

Pet. You will not then?

Mus. No.

Pet. I will then give it you soundly.

1 *Mus.* What will you give us?

Pet. No money, on my faith; but the gleek: I will give you the minstrel.³

1 *Mus.* Then will I give you the serving-creature.

Pet. Then will I lay the serving-creature's dagger on your pate. I will carry no crotchets: I'll *re* you, I'll *fa* you; Do you note me?

1 *Mus.* An you *re* us, and *fa* us, you note us.

2 *Mus.* Pray you, put up your dagger, and put out your wit.

Pet. Then have at you with my wit; I will dry-beat you with an iron wit, and put up my iron dagger: — Answer me like men:

*When griping grief the heart doth wound,
And doleful dumps the mind oppress,
Then musick, with her silver sound; —*

² — O, play me some merry dump,] A *dump* anciently signified some kind of dance, as well as sorrow. But on this occasion it means a mournful song. *Dumps* were heavy mournful tunes; possibly indeed any sort of movements were once so called, as we sometimes meet with a *merry dump*. Hence *doleful dumps*, deep sorrow, or grievous affliction, as in the verses above, and in the less ancient ballad of *Chevy Chase*. It is still said of a person uncommonly sad, that he is in the *dumps*.

³ No money, on my faith; but the gleek: I will give you the min-

Why, *silver sound*? why, *musick with her silver sound*?

What say you, Simon Catling?⁴

1 *Mus.* Marry, sir, because silver hath a sweet sound.

Pet. Pretty! What say you, Hugh Rebeck?⁵

2 *Mus.* I say — *silver sound*, because musicians sound for silver.

Pet. Pretty too! What say you, James Soundpost?

3 *Mus.* 'Faith, I know not what to say.

Pet. O, I cry you mercy! you are the singer: I will say for you. It is — *musick with her silver sound*, because such fellows as you have seldom gold for sounding: —

*Then musick with her silver sound,
With speedy help doth lend redress.*

[*Exit, singing.*]

1 *Mus.* What a pestilent knave is this same?

2 *Mus.* Hang him, Jack! Come, we'll in here; tarry for the mourners, and stay dinner. [*Exeunt.*]

strel.] Shakspeare's pun has here remained unnoticed. A *Gleekman* or *Gligman*, as Dr. Percy has shown, signified a *minstrel*. The word *gleek* here signifies *scorn*; and is borrowed from the old game so called.

⁴ — [*Simon Catling?*] A *catling* was a small lute-string made of *catgut*.

⁵ — [*Hugh Rebeck?*] The fiddler is so called from an instrument with three strings, which is mentioned by several of the old writers. *Rebec, rebecquin.*

ACT V.⁶SCENE I. — Mantua. *A Street.**Enter* ROMEO.

Rom. If I may trust the flattering eye of sleep,⁷
 My dreams presage some joyful news at hand :
 My bosom's lord⁸ sits lightly in his throne ;
 And, all this day, an unaccustom'd spirit
 Lifts me above the ground with cheerful thoughts.
 I dreamt, my lady came and found me dead ;
 (Strange dream ! that gives a dead man leave to think,)
 And breath'd such life with kisses in my lips,
 That I reviv'd, and was an emperor.
 Ah me ! how sweet is love itself possess'd,
 When but love's shadows are so rich in joy ?

Enter BALTHASAR.

News from Verona !—How now, Balthasar ?

⁶ *Act V.*] The Acts are here properly enough divided, nor did any better distribution than the editors have already made, occur to me in the perusal of this play ; yet it may not be improper to remark, that in the first folio, and I suppose the foregoing editions are in the same state, there is no division of the Acts, and therefore some future editor may try, whether any improvement can be made, by reducing them to a length more equal, or interrupting the action at more proper intervals. JOHNSON.

⁷ *If I may trust the flattering eye of sleep,*] By the eye of sleep Shakspeare perhaps means the visual power, which a man asleep is enabled, by the aid of imagination, to exercise ; or perhaps the eye of the god of sleep.

⁸ *My bosom's lord* —] These three lines are very gay and pleasing. But why does Shakspeare give Romeo this involuntary cheerfulness just before the extremity of unhappiness ? Perhaps to show the vanity of trusting to those uncertain and casual exaltations or depressions, which many consider as certain foretokens of good and evil. JOHNSON.

Dost thou not bring me letters from the friar?
 How doth my lady? Is my father well?
 How fares my Juliet? That I ask again;
 For nothing can be ill, if she be well.

Bal. Then she is well, and nothing can be ill;
 Her body sleeps in Capels' monument,
 And her immortal part with angels lives;
 I saw her laid low in her kindred's vault,
 And presently took post to tell it to you:
 O pardon me for bringing these ill news,
 Since you did leave it for my office, sir.

Rom. Is it even so? then I defy you, stars!—
 Thou know'st my lodging: get me ink and paper,
 And hire post-horses; I will hence to-night.

Bal. Pardon me, sir, I will not leave you thus:
 Your looks are pale and wild, and do import
 Some misadventure.

Rom. Tush, thou art deceiv'd;
 Leave me, and do the thing I bid thee do:
 Hast thou no letters to me from the friar?

Bal. No, my good lord.

Rom. No matter: Get thee gone,
 And hire those horses; I'll be with thee straight.

[*Exit* BALTHASAR.]

Well, Juliet, I will lie with thee to-night.
 Let's see for means:—O, mischief! thou art swift
 To enter in the thoughts of desperate men!
 I do remember an apothecary,—
 And hereabouts he dwells,—whom late I noted
 In tatter'd weeds, with overwhelming brows,
 Culling of simples; meager were his looks,
 Sharp misery had worn him to the bones:
 And in his needy shop a tortoise hung,
 An alligator stuff'd⁹, and other skins

⁹ *An alligator stuff'd,*] I was many years ago assured, that formerly, when an apothecary first engaged with his druggist, he was gratuitously furnished by him with these articles of show, which were then

Of ill-shap'd fishes ; and about his shelves
 A beggarly account of empty boxes,
 Green earthen pots, bladders, and musty seeds,
 Remnants of packthread, and old cakes of roses,
 Were thinly scatter'd to make up a show.
 Noting this penury, to myself I said —
 An if a man¹ did need a poison now,
 Whose sale is present death in Mantua,
 Here lives a caitiff wretch would sell it him.
 O, this same thought did but fore-run my need ;
 And this same needy man must sell it me.
 As I remember, this should be the house :
 Being holiday, the beggar's shop is shut.—
 What, ho ! apothecary !

Enter Apothecary.

Ap. Who calls so loud ?

Rom. Come hither, man.—I see, that thou art poor ;
 Hold, there is forty ducats : let me have
 A dram of poison ; such soon-speeding geer
 As will disperse itself through all the veins,
 That the life-weary taker may fall dead ;
 And that the trunk may be discharg'd of breath
 As violently, as hasty powder fir'd
 Doth hurry from the fatal cannon's womb.

Ap. Such mortal drugs I have ; but Mantua's law
 Is death, to any he that utters them.

imported for that use only. I have met with the alligator, tortoise, &c. hanging up in the shop of an ancient apothecary at Limehouse, as well as in places more remote from our metropolis. See Hogarth's *Marriage Alamode*, Plate III.—It may be remarked, however, that the apothecaries dismissed their alligators, &c. some time before the physicians were willing to part with their amber-headed canes and solemn periwigs. STEEVENS.

¹ An if *a man*, &c.] This phraseology, which means simply — *If*, was not unfrequent in Shakspeare's time and before.

Rom. Art thou so bare, and full of wretchedness,
And fear'st to die? famine is in thy cheeks,
Need and oppression starveth in thy eyes,
Upon thy back hangs ragged misery,
The world is not thy friend, nor the world's law:
The world affords no law to make thee rich;
Then be not poor, but break it, and take this.

Ap. My poverty, but not my will, consents.

Rom. I pay thy poverty, and not thy will.

Ap. Put this in any liquid thing you will,
And drink it off; and, if you had the strength
Of twenty men, it would despatch you straight.

Rom. There is thy gold; worse poison to men's souls,
Doing more murders in this loathsome world,
Than these poor compounds that thou may'st not sell:
I sell thee poison, thou hast sold me none.
Farewell; buy food, and get thyself in flesh.—
Come, cordial, and not poison; go with me
To Juliet's grave, for there must I use thee. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

Friar Laurence's Cell.

Enter Friar JOHN.

John. Holy Franciscan friar! brother, ho!

Enter Friar LAURENCE.

Lau. This same should be the voice of friar John.—
Welcome from Mantua: What says Romeo?
Or, if his mind be writ, give me his letter.

John. Going to find a bare-foot brother out,
One of our order, to associate me,²

² *One of our order, to associate me,]* Each friar has always a companion assigned him by the superior when he asks leave to go out; and thus they are a check upon each other.

Here in this city visiting the sick,
 And finding him, the searchers of the town,
 Suspecting, that we both were in a house
 Where the infectious pestilence did reign,
 Seal'd up the doors, and would not let us forth;
 So that my speed to Mantua there was stay'd.

Lau. Who bare my letter then to Romeo?

John. I could not send it, — here it is again, —
 Nor get a messenger to bring it thee,
 So fearful were they of infection.

Lau. Unhappy fortune! by my brotherhood,
 The letter was not nice³, but full of charge,
 Of dear import; and the neglecting it
 May do much danger: Friar John, go hence;
 Get me an iron crow, and bring it straight
 Unto my cell.

John. Brother, I'll go and bring it thee. [*Exit.*

Lau. Now must I to the monument alone;
 Within this three hours will fair Juliet wake;
 She will beshrew me much, that Romeo
 Hath had no notice of these accidents;
 But I will write again to Mantua,
 And keep her at my cell till Romeo come;
 Poor living corse, clos'd in a dead man's tomb! [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

*A Churchyard; in it, a Monument belonging to the
 Capulets.*

Enter PARIS, and his Page, bearing Flowers and a Torch.

Par. Give me thy torch, boy: Hence, and stand
 aloof; —

³ — *was not nice,*] i. e. was not written on a trivial or idle subject.

Yet put it out, for I would not be seen.
 Under yon yew-trees lay thee all along,
 Holding thine ear close to the hollow ground ;
 So shall no foot upon the churchyard tread,
 (Being loose, unfirm, with digging up of graves,)
 But thou shalt hear it : whistle then to me,
 As signal that thou hear'st something approach.
 Give me those flowers. Do as I bid thee, go.

Page. I am almost afraid to stand alone
 Here in the churchyard ; yet I will adventure.

[Retires.

Par. Sweet flower, with flowers I strew thy bridal bed :
 Sweet tomb, that in thy circuit dost contain
 The perfect model of eternity ;
 Fair Juliet, that with angels dost remain,
 Accept this latest favour at my hands ;
 That living honour'd thee, and, being dead,
 With funeral praises do adorn thy tomb !

[The Boy whistles.

The boy gives warning, something doth approach.
 What cursed foot wanders this way to-night,
 To cross my obsequies, and true love's rites ?
 What, with a torch ! — muffle me, night, awhile.

[Retires.

*Enter ROMEO and BALTHASAR, with a Torch, Mattock,
 &c.*

Rom. Give me that mattock, and the wrenching-iron.
 Hold, take this letter ; early in the morning
 See thou deliver it to my lord and father.
 Give me the light : Upon thy life I charge thee,
 Whate'er thou hear'st or seest, stand all aloof,
 And do not interrupt me in my course.
 Why I descend into this bed of death,
 Is, partly, to behold my lady's face :
 But, chiefly, to take thence from her dead finger

A precious ring ; a ring, that I must use
 In dear employment⁴ : therefore hence, be gone : —
 But if thou, jealous, dost return to pry
 In what I further shall intend to do,
 By heaven, I will tear thee joint by joint,
 And strew this hungry churchyard with thy limbs :
 The time and my intents are savage-wild ;
 More fierce, and more inexorable far,
 Than empty tigers, or the roaring sea.

Bal. I will begone, sir, and not trouble you.

Rom. So shalt thou show me friendship. — Take thou that :

Live, and be prosperous ; and farewell, good fellow.

Bal. For all this same, I'll hide me hereabout ;
 His looks I fear, and his intents I doubt. [*Retires.*]

Rom. Thou détestable maw, thou womb of death,
 Gorg'd with the dearest morsel of the earth,
 Thus I enforce thy rotten jaws to open,
 [*Breaking open the Door of the Monument.*]

And, in despite, I'll cram thee with more food !

Par. This is that banish'd haughty Montague,
 That murder'd my love's cousin ; — with which grief,
 It is supposed, the fair creature died, —
 And here is come to do some villainous shame
 To the dead bodies: I will apprehend him. — [*Advances.*]
 Stop thy unhallow'd toil, vile Montague ;
 Can vengeance be pursu'd further than death ?
 Condemn'd villain, I do apprehend thee :
 Obey, and go with me ; for thou must die.

Rom. I must, indeed ; and therefore came I hither. —
 Good gentle youth, tempt not a desperate man,
 Fly hence and leave me ; — think upon these gone ;
 Let them affright thee. — I beseech thee, youth,
 Heap not another sin upon my head,

⁴ — *dear employment :*] That is, *action of importance.* Gems were supposed to have great powers and virtues.

By urging me to fury : — O, be gone !
 By heaven, I love thee better than myself :
 For I come hither arm'd against myself ;
 Stay not, be gone ; — live, and hereafter say, —
 A madman's mercy bade thee run away.

Par. I do defy thy conjurations,⁵
 And do attach thee as a felon here.

Rom. Wilt thou provoke me ? then have at thee, boy.
 [They fight.]

Page. O Lord ! they fight : I will go call the watch.
 [Exit Page.]

Par. O, I am slain ! [falls.] — If thou be merciful,
 Open the tomb, lay me with Juliet. [Dies.]

Rom. In faith, I will : — Let me peruse this face ; —
 Mercutio's kinsman, noble county Paris : —
 What said my man, when my betossed soul
 Did not attend him as we rode ? I think,
 He told me, Paris should have married Juliet :
 Said he not so ? or did I dream it so ?
 Or am I mad, hearing him talk of Juliet,
 To think it was so ? — O, give me thy hand,
 One writ with me in sour misfortune's book !
 I'll bury thee in a triumphant grave, —
 A grave ? O, no ; a lantern⁶, slaughter'd youth,
 For here lies Juliet, and her beauty makes
 This vault a feasting presence⁷ full of light.

⁵ *I do defy thy conjurations,*] Paris conceived Romeo to have burst open the monument for no other purpose than to do some villainous shame on the dead bodies, such as witches are reported to have practised ; and therefore tells him he defies him, and the magick arts which he suspects he is preparing to use. But perhaps the true meaning here is, “ *I refuse to do as thou conjurest me to do, i. e. to depart.*”

⁶ *A grave ? O, no ; a lantern,*] A lantern may not, in this instance, signify an enclosure for a lighted candle, but a *louvre*, or what in ancient records is styled *lanternium*, i. e. a spacious round or octagonal turret full of windows, by means of which cathedrals, and sometimes halls, are illuminated.

⁷ — *presence* —] A *presence* is a publick room.

Death, lie thou there, by a dead man interr'd.⁸

[*Laying PARIS in the Monument.*

How oft when men are at the point of death,
 Have they been merry? which their keepers call
 A lightning before death: O, how may I
 Call this a lightning⁹? — O, my love! my wife!
 Death, that hath suck'd the honey of thy breath,
 Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty:
 Thou art not conquer'd; beauty's ensign yet
 Is crimson in thy lips, and in thy cheeks,
 And death's pale flag is not advanced there. —
 Tybalt, liest thou there in thy bloody sheet?
 O, what more favour can I do to thee,
 Than with that hand that cut thy youth in twain,
 To sunder his that was thine enemy?
 Forgive me, cousin! — Ah, dear Juliet,
 Why art thou yet so fair? Shall I believe
 That unsubstantial death is amorous;
 And that the lean abhorred monster keeps
 Thee here in dark to be his paramour?
 For fear of that, I will still stay with thee;
 And never from this palace of dim night
 Depart again; here, here will I remain
 With worms that are thy chamber-maids; O, here
 Will I set up my everlasting rest;
 And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars
 From this world-wearied flesh. — Eyes, look your last!
 Arms, take your last embrace! and, lips, O you
 The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss,

⁸ — *by a dead man interr'd.*] Romeo being now determined to put an end to his life, considers himself as already dead.

⁹ — *O, how may I*

Call this a lightning?] Romeo had, just before, been in high spirits, a symptom, which he observes, was sometimes called a *lightning* before death: but how, says he, (for no situation can exempt Shakspeare's characters from the vice of punning) can I term this *sad* and *gloomy* prospect a *lightning*?

A dateless bargain to engrossing death! ¹ —
 Come, bitter conduct ², come, unsavoury guide!
 Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on
 The dashing rocks thy sea-sick weary bark!
 Here's to my love! — [*Drinks.*] O, true apothecary!
 Thy drugs are quick. — Thus with a kiss I die. [*Dies.*]

Enter, at the other end of the Churchyard, Friar LAURENCE, with a Lantern, Crow, and Spade.

Fri. Saint Francis be my speed! how oft to-night
 Have my old feet stumbled at graves? ³ — Who's there?
 Who is it that consorts, so late, the dead? ⁴

Bal. Here's one, a friend, and one that knows you
 well.

Fri. Bliss be upon you! Tell me, good my friend,
 What torch is yond', that vainly lends his light
 To grubs and eyeless skulls? as I discern,
 It burneth in the Capels' monument.

Bal. It doth so, holy sir; and there's my master,
 One that you love.

Fri. Who is it?

Bal. Romeo.

Fri. How long hath he been there?

Bal. Full half an hour.

Fri. Go with me to the vault.

Bal. I dare not, sir:

My master knows not, but I am gone hence;
 And fearfully did menace me with death,
 If I did stay to look on his intents.

Fri. Stay then, I'll go alone: — Fear comes upon me;
 O, much I fear some ill unlucky thing.

¹ — *A dateless bargain to engrossing death!*] *Engrossing* seems to be used here in its clerical sense.

² *Come, bitter conduct,*] *Conduct* for *conductor*.

³ *Have my old feet stumbled at graves?*] This accident was reckoned ominous.

⁴ *Who is it, &c.*] *To consort*, is to keep company with.

Bal. As I did sleep under this yew-tree here,
I dreamt my master and another fought,⁵
And that my master slew him.

Fri. Romeo? — [*Advances.*
Alack, alack, what blood is this, which stains
The stony entrance of this sepulchre? —
What mean these masterless and gory swords
To lie discolour'd by this place of peace?

[*Enters the Monument.*
Romeo! O, pale! — Who else? what, Paris too?
And steep'd in blood? — Ah, what an unkind hour
Is guilty of this lamentable chance! —

The lady stirs. [*JULIET wakes and stirs.*
Jul. O, comfortable friar! where is my lord?
I do remember well where I should be,
And there I am: — Where is my Romeo?

[*Noise within.*
Fri. I hear some noise. — Lady, come from that nest
Of death, contagion, and unnatural sleep;
A greater Power than we can contradict
Hath thwarted our intents; come, come away:
Thy husband in thy bosom there lies dead;
And Paris too; come, I'll dispose of thee
Among a sisterhood of holy nuns;
Stay not to question, for the watch is coming;
Come, go, good Juliet, — [*Noise again.*] I dare stay no
longer.

[*Exit.*

⁵ *I dreamt my master and another fought,*] This is one of the touches of nature that would have escaped the hand of any painter less attentive to it than Shakspeare. What happens to a person while he is under the manifest influence of fear, will seem to him, when he is recovered from it, like a dream. Homer, book 8th, represents Rhesus dying fast asleep, and as it were beholding his enemy in a dream plunging a sword into his bosom. Eustathius and Dacier both applaud this image as very natural; for a man in such a condition, says Mr. Pope, awakes no further than to see confusedly what environs him, and to think it not a reality, but a vision.

Jul. Go, get thee hence, for I will not away. —
 What's here? a cup, clos'd in my true love's hand?
 Poison, I see, hath been his timeless end: —
 O churl! drink all; and leave no friendly drop,
 To help me after? — I will kiss thy lips;
 Haply, some poison yet doth hang on them,
 To make me die with a restorative. [*Kisses him.*
 Thy lips are warm!

1 Watch. [*within.*] Lead, boy: — Which way?

Jul. Yea, noise? — then I'll be brief. — O happy
 dagger! [*Snatching ROMEO's Dagger.*
 This is thy sheath; [*stabs herself.*] there rust, and let
 me die.

[*Falls on ROMEO's Body, and dies.*

Enter Watch, with the Page of PARIS.

Page. This is the place; there, where the torch doth
 burn.

1 Watch. The ground is bloody; Search about the
 churchyard:

Go, some of you, who e'er you find, attach.

[*Exeunt some.*

Pitiful sight! here lies the county slain; —
 And Juliet bleeding; warm, and newly dead,
 Who here hath lain these two days buried. —
 Go, tell the prince, — run to the Capulets, —
 Raise up the Montagues, — some others search; —

[*Exeunt other Watchmen.*

We see the ground whereon these woes do lie;
 But the true ground of all these piteous woes,
 We cannot without circumstance descry.

Enter some of the Watch, with BALTHASAR.

2 Watch. Here's Romeo's man, we found him in the
 churchyard.

1 Watch. Hold him in safety, till the prince come
 hither.

Enter another Watchman, with Friar LAURENCE.

3 *Watch.* Here is a friar, that trembles, sighs, and weeps :

We took this mattock and this spade from him,
As he was coming from this churchyard side.

1 *Watch.* A great suspicion ; Stay the friar too.

Enter the Prince and Attendants.

Prince. What misadventure is so early up,
That calls our person from our morning's rest ?

Enter CAPULET, Lady CAPULET, and Others.

Cap. What should it be, that they so shriek abroad ?

La. Cap. The people in the street cry — Romeo,
Some — Juliet, and some — Paris ; and all run,
With open outcry, toward our monument.

Prince. What fear is this, which startles in our ears ?

1 *Watch.* Sovereign, here lies the county Paris slain ;
And Romeo dead ; and Juliet, dead before,
Warm and new kill'd.

Prince. Search, seek, and know how this foul murder
comes.

1 *Watch.* Here is a friar, and slaughter'd Romeo's
man ;
With instruments upon them, fit to open
These dead men's tombs.

Cap. O, heavens ! — O, wife ! look how our daughter
bleeds !

This dagger hath mista'en, — for, lo ! his house
Is empty on the back of Montague, —
And it mis-sheathed in my daughter's bosom.⁶

⁶ *This dagger hath mista'en, — for, lo ! his house
Is empty on the back of Montague, —
And it mis-sheathed in my daughter's bosom.] Shakspeare quaintly*

La. Cap. O me! this sight of death is as a bell,
That warns my old age to a sepulchre.

Enter MONTAGUE and Others.

Prince. Come, Montague; for thou art early up,
To see thy son and heir more early down.

Mon. Alas, my liege, my wife is dead to-night;
Grief of my son's exile hath stopp'd her breath;
What further woe conspires against mine age?

Prince. Look, and thou shalt see.

Mon. O thou untaught! what manners is in this,
To press before thy father to a grave?

Prince. Seal up the mouth of outrage for a while,
Till we can clear these ambiguities,
And know their spring, their head, their true descent;
And then will I be general of your woes,
And lead you even to death: Mean time forbear,
And let mischance be slave to patience. —
Bring forth the parties of suspicion.

Fri. I am the greatest, able to do least,
Yet most suspected, as the time and place
Doth make against me, of this direful murder;
And here I stand, both to impeach and purge
Myself condemned and myself excus'd.

Prince. Then say at once what thou dost know in
this.

Fri. I will be brief⁷, for my short date of breath
Is not so long as is a tedious tale.
Romeo, there dead, was husband to that Juliet;
And she, there dead, that Romeo's faithful wife:

represents the dagger as having mistaken its place, and "it mis-sheathed," i. e. "mis-sheathed *itself*" in the bosom of Juliet. It appears that the *dagger* was anciently worn *behind the back*.

⁷ *I will be brief.*] It is much to be lamented, that the poet did not conclude the dialogue with the action, and avoid a narrative of events which the audience already knew. JOHNSON.

I married them ; and their stolen marriage-day
Was Tybalt's doomsday, whose untimely death
Banish'd the new-made bridegroom from this city ;
For whom, and not for Tybalt, Juliet pin'd.
You — to remove that siege of grief from her, —
Betroth'd, and would have married her perforce,
To county Paris : — Then comes she to me ;
And, with wild looks, bid me devise some means
To rid her from this second marriage,
Or, in my cell there would she kill herself.
Then gave I her, so tutor'd by my art,
A sleeping potion ; which so took effect
As I intended, for it wrought on her
The form of death : meantime I writ to Romeo,
That he should hither come as this dire night,
To help to take her from her borrow'd grave,
Being the time the potion's force should cease :
But he which bore my letter, friar John,
Was staid by accident ; and yesternight
Return'd my letter back : Then all alone,
At the prefixed hour of her waking,
Came I to take her from her kindred's vault ;
Meaning to keep her closely at my cell,
Till I conveniently could send to Romeo :
But, when I came, (some minute ere the time
Of her awakening,) here untimely lay
The noble Paris, and true Romeo, dead.
She wakes ; and I entreated her come forth,
And bear this work of heaven with patience :
But then a noise did scare me from the tomb ;
And she, too desperate, would not go with me,
But (as it seems) did violence on herself.
All this I know ; and to the marriage
Her nurse is privy : And, if aught in this
Miscarried by my fault, let my old life
Be sacrific'd, some hour before his time,
Unto the rigour of severest law.

Prince. We still have known thee for a holy man. —
Where's Romeo's man! what can he say in this?

Bal. I brought my master news of Juliet's death;
And then in post he came from Mantua,
To this same place, to this same monument.
This letter he early bid me give his father;
And threaten'd me with death, going in the vault,
If I departed not, and left him there.

Prince. Give me the letter, I will look on it.
Where is the county's page, that rais'd the watch?
Sirrah, what made your master in this place? —

Page. He came with flowers to strew his lady's
grave;
And bid me stand aloof, and so I did:
Anon, comes one with light to ope the tomb;
And, by and by, my master drew on him;
And then I ran away to call the watch.

Prince. This letter doth make good the friar's words,
Their course of love, the tidings of her death:
And here he writes — that he did buy a poison
Of a poor 'pothecary, and therewithal
Came to this vault to die, and lie with Juliet. —
Where be these enemies? Capulet! Montague!
See, what a scourge is laid upon your hate,
That heaven finds means to kill your joys with love!
And I, for winking at your discords too,
Have lost a brace of kinsmen^a: — all are punish'd.

Cap. O, brother Montague, give me thy hand:
This is my daughter's jointure, for no more
Can I demand.

Mon. But I can give thee more:
For I will raise her statue in pure gold;
That, while Verona by that name is known,

^a *Have lost a brace of kinsmen.*] Mercutio and Paris: Mercutio is expressly called the prince's kinsman in Act III. sc. iv.; and that Paris also was the prince's kinsman, may be inferred from other passages.

There shall no figure at such rate be set,
As that of true and faithful Juliet.

Cap. As rich shall Romeo by his lady lie ;
Poor sacrifices of our enmity !

Prince. A glooming peace this morning with it
brings ;

The sun, for sorrow, will not show his head :
Go hence, to have more talk of these sad things ;

Some shall be pardon'd, and some punished :⁹

For never was a story of more woe
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.

[*Exeunt.*¹

⁹ *Some shall be pardon'd, and some punished:]* This line has reference to the novel from which the fable is taken. Here we read that Juliet's female attendant was banished for concealing the marriage; Romeo's servant set at liberty because he had only acted in obedience to his master's orders; the apothecary taken, tortured, condemned, and hanged; while friar Laurence was permitted to retire to a hermitage in the neighbourhood of Verona, where he ended his life in penitence and tranquillity. STEEVENS.

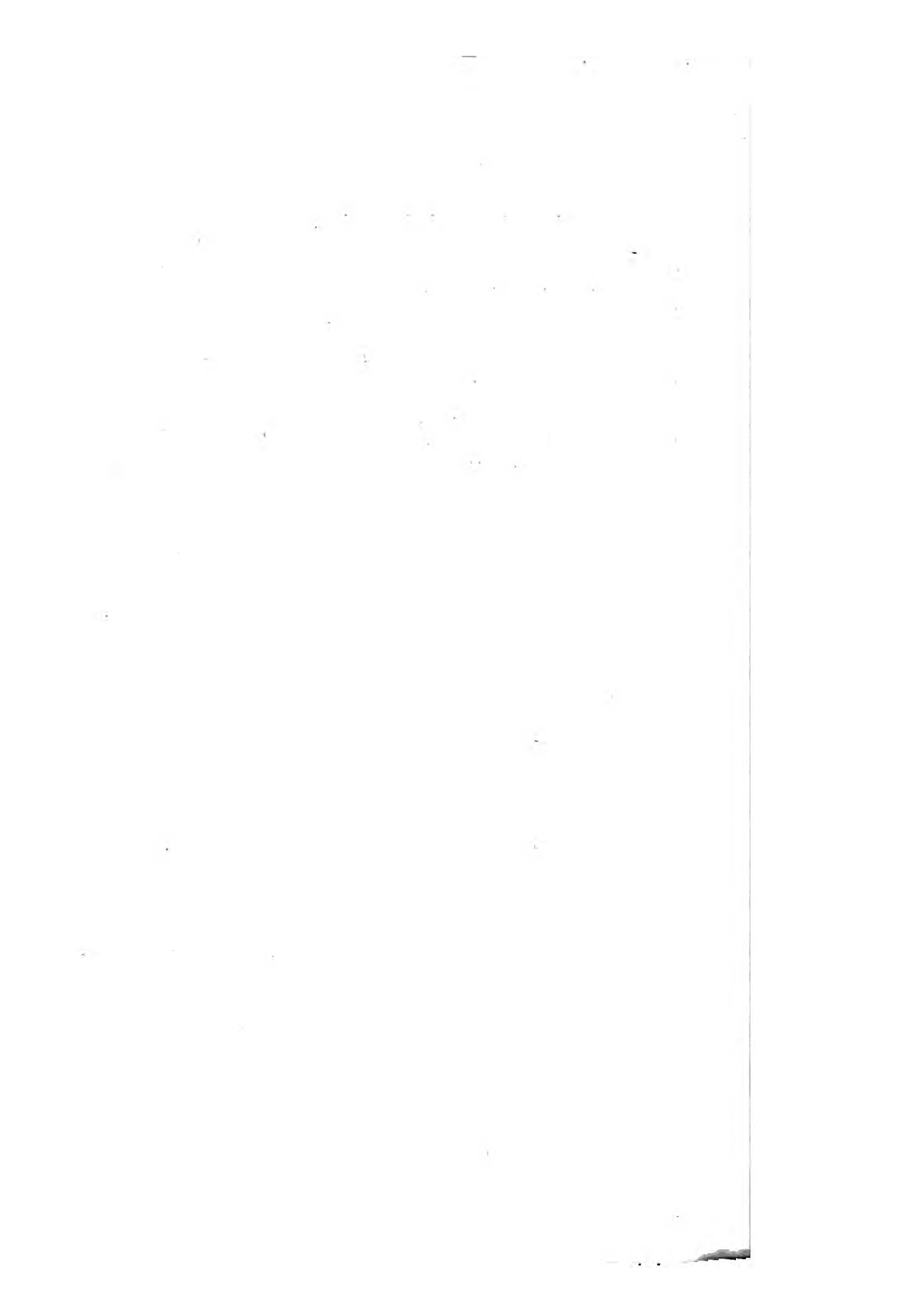
¹ This play is one of the most pleasing of our author's performances. The scenes are busy and various, the incidents numerous and important, the catastrophe irresistibly affecting, and the process of the action carried on with such probability, at least with such congruity to popular opinions, as tragedy requires.

Here is one of the few attempts of Shakspeare to exhibit the conversation of gentlemen, to represent the airy sprightliness of juvenile elegance. Mr. Dryden mentions a tradition, which might easily reach his time, of a declaration made by Shakspeare, that *he was obliged to kill Mercutio in the third Act, lest he should have been killed by him.* Yet he thinks him *no such formidable person, but that he might have lived through the play, and died in his bed,* without danger to the poet. Dryden well knew, had he been in quest of truth, in a pointed sentence, that more regard is commonly had to the words than the thought, and that it is very seldom to be rigorously understood. Mercutio's wit, gaiety, and courage, will always procure him friends that wish him a longer life; but his death is not precipitated, he has lived out the time allotted him in the construction of the play; nor do I doubt the ability of Shakspeare to have continued his existence, though some of his sallies are perhaps out of the reach of Dryden; whose genius was not very fertile of merriment, nor ductile to humour, but acute, argumentative, comprehensive, and sublime.

The Nurse is one of the characters in which the author delighted: he has, with great subtlety of distinction, drawn her at once loquacious and secret, obsequious and insolent, trusty and dishonest.

His comick scenes are happily wrought, but his pathetick strains are always polluted with some unexpected depravations. His persons, however distressed, *have a conceit left them in their misery, a miserable conceit.** JOHNSON.

* This quotation is also found in the Preface to Dryden's Fables: "Just *John Littlewit* in *Bartholomew Fair*, who had a conceit (as he tells you) left him in his misery; a miserable conceit." STEEVENS.



H A M L E T.

THE original story on which this play is built, may be found in Saxo Grammaticus, the Danish historian. From thence Belleforest adopted it in his collection of novels, in seven volumes, which he began in 1564, and continued to publish through succeeding years. From this work, *The Hystorie of Hamblett*, quarto, bl. l. was translated. I have hitherto met with no earlier edition of the play than one in the year 1604, though it must have been performed before that time, as I have seen a copy of Speght's edition of Chaucer, which formerly belonged to Dr. Gabriel Harvey, (the antagonist of Nash,) who, in his own hand-writing, has set down *Hamlet*, as a performance with which he was well acquainted, in the year 1598. His words are these: "The younger sort take much delight in Shakspeare's Venus and Adonis; but his Lucrece, and his tragedy of Hamlet Prince of Denmarke, have it in them to please the wiser sort, 1598."

In the books of the Stationers' Company, this play was entered by James Roberts, July 26, 1602, under the title of "A booke called *The Revenge of Hamlett, Prince of Denmarke*, as it was lately acted by the Lord Chamberlain his servantes."

In *Eastward Hoe*, by George Chapman, Ben Jonson, and John Marston, 1605, is a fling at the hero of this tragedy. A footman named *Hamlet* enters, and a tankard-bearer asks him — "'Sfoote, *Hamlet*, are you mad?"

The frequent allusions of contemporary authors to this play sufficiently show its popularity. Thus, in Decker's *Bel-man's Night-walkes*, 4to. 1612, we have — "But if any mad *Hamlet*, hearing this, smell villainie, and rush in by violence to see what the tawny diuels [gypsies] are dooing, then they excuse the fact," &c. Again, in an old collection of satirical poems, called the *The Night-Raven*, is this couplet:

" I will not cry *Hamlet Revenge* my greeves,
" But I will call Hangman, Revenge on thieves."

STEEVENS.

Surely no satire was intended in *Eastward Hoe*, which was acted at Shakspeare's own playhouse, (Blackfriars,) by the children of the revels, in 1605. MALONE.

The following particulars relative to the date of this piece, are borrowed from Dr. Farmer's *Essay on the Learning of Shakspeare*, p. 85, 86, second edition:

" Greene, in the Epistle prefixed to his *Arcadia*, hath a lash at some 'vaine glorious tragedians,' and very plainly at Shakspeare in particular. — 'I leave all these to the mercy of their *mother-tongue*, that feed on nought but the crumbs that fall from the *translators* trencher. — That could scarcely *latinize* their neck verse if they should have neede, yet *English Seneca*, read by candlelight, yields many good sentences — hee will afford you whole *Hamlets*, I

should say, *handfuls* of tragical speeches.' — I cannot determine exactly when this *Epistle* was first published; but, I fancy, it will carry the original *Hamlet* somewhat further back than we have hitherto done: and it may be observed, that the oldest copy now extant, is said to be 'enlarged to almost as much againe as it was.' *Gabriel Harvey* printed at the end of the year 1592, 'Foure Letters and certaine Sonnetts, especially touching *Robert Greene*.' in one of which his *Arcadia* is mentioned. Now *Nash's* *Epistle* must have been previous to these, as *Gabriel* is quoted in it with applause; and the *Foure Letters* were the beginning of a quarrel. *Nash* replied in 'Strange News of the intercepting certaine Letters, and a Convoy of Verses, as they were going *privilie* to victual the *Low Countries*, 1595.' *Harvey* rejoined the same year in '*Pierce's* Supererogation, or a new Praise of the old Asse.' And *Nash* again, in 'Have with you to *Saffron Walden*, or *Gabriell Harvey's* Hunt is up;' containing a full answer to the eldest sonne of the halter-maker, 1596." — *Nash* died before 1606, as appears from an old comedy called *The Return from Parnassus*. STEEVENS.

A play on the subject of *Hamlet* had been exhibited on the stage before the year 1589, of which Thomas Kyd was, I believe, the author. On that play, and on the bl. l. *Historie of Hamlet*, our poet, I conjecture, constructed the tragedy before us. The earliest edition of the prose-narrative which I have seen, was printed in 1608, but it undoubtedly was a republication.

Shakspeare's *Hamlet* was written, if my conjecture be well founded, in 1600. MALONE.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

CLAUDIUS, *King of Denmark.*

HAMLET¹, *Son to the former, and Nephew to the present King.*

POLONIUS, *Lord Chamberlain.*

HORATIO, *Friend to Hamlet.*

LAERTES, *Son to Polonius.*

VOLTIMAND,
CORNELIUS,
ROSENCRANTZ,
GUILDENSTERN,

} *Courtiers.*

OSRIC, *a Courtier.*

Another Courtier.

A Priest.

MARCELLUS,
BERNARDO,

} *Officers.*

FRANCISCO, *a Soldier.*

REYNALDO, *Servant to Polonius.*

A Captain. An Ambassador.

Ghost of Hamlet's Father.

FORTINBRAS, *Prince of Norway.*

GERTRUDE, *Queen of Denmark, and Mother of Hamlet.*

OPHELIA, *Daughter of Polonius.*

*Lords, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Players, Grave-diggers,
Sailors, Messengers, and other Attendants.*

SCENE, EL SINORE.

¹ *Hamlet,*] i. e. *Amleth.* The *h* transferred from the end to the beginning of the name. STEEVENS.

H A M L E T,
PRINCE OF DENMARK.

ACT I.

SCENE I. — Elsinore. *A Platform before the Castle.*

FRANCISCO *on his Post.* Enter to him BERNARDO.

Bernardo.

WHO's there?

Fran. Nay, answer me¹: stand, and unfold
Yourself.

Ber. Long live the king!

Fran. Bernardo?

Ber. He.

Fran. You come most carefully upon your hour.

Ber. 'Tis now struck twelve; get thee to bed, Fran-
cisco.

Fran. For this relief, much thanks: 'tis bitter cold,
And I am sick at heart.

Ber. Have you had quiet guard?

Fran. Not a mouse stirring.

Ber. Well, good night.

¹ — *me:*] i. e. *me* who am already on the watch, and have a right to demand the watch-word.

If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,
The rivals of my watch²; bid them make haste.

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.

Fran. I think, I hear them. — Stand, ho! Who is there?

Hor. Friends to this ground.

Mar. And liegemen to the Dane.

Fran. Give you good night.

Mar. O, farewell, honest soldier:

Who hath reliev'd you?

Fran. Bernardo hath my place.

Give you good night. [*Exit FRANCISCO.*]

Mar. Holla! Bernardo!

Ber. Say.

What, is Horatio there?

Hor. A piece of him.

Ber. Welcome, Horatio; welcome, good Marcellus.

Hor. What, has this thing appear'd 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 eyes³, and speak to it.

Hor. Tush! tush! 'twill not appear.

Ber. Sit down awhile;

And let us once again assail your ears,

² *The rivals of my watch,*] *Rivals* for partners.

³ — approve our eyes,] He may make good the testimony of our eyes; be assured by his own experience of the truth of that which we have related, in consequence of having been eye-witnesses to it. To approve, in Shakspeare's age, signified to make good, or establish.

That are so fortified against our story,
What we two nights have seen.

Hor. Well, sit we down,
And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.

Ber. Last night of all,
When yon same star, that's westward from the pole,
Had made his course to illume that part of heaven
Where now it burns, Marcellus, and myself,
The bell then beating one, —

Mar. Peace, break thee off; look, where it comes
again!

Enter Ghost.

Ber. In the same figure, like the king that's dead.

Mar. Thou art a scholar, speak to it, Horatio.⁴

Ber. Looks it not like the king? mark it, Horatio.

Hor. Most like: — it harrows me⁵ 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.

Mar. It is offended.

Ber. See! it stalks away.

Hor. Stay; speak: speak I charge thee, speak.

[*Exit Ghost.*]

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?

⁴ *Thou art a scholar, speak to it, Horatio.*] It has always been a vulgar notion that spirits and supernatural beings can only be spoken to with propriety or effect by persons of learning.

⁵ — *it harrows me, &c.*] To *harrow* is to conquer, to subdue. The word is of Saxon origin.

Hor. Before my God, I might not this believe,
Without the sensible and true avouch
Of mine own eyes.

Mar. 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;
So frown'd he once, when, in an angry parle,
He smote the sledded⁶ Polack on the ice.⁷
'Tis strange.

Mar. Thus, twice before, and jump at this dead
hour,⁸

With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.

Hor. In what particular thought to work⁹, I know not;
But, in the gross and scope¹ of mine opinion,
This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

Mar. Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that
knows,

Why this same strict and most observant watch
So nightly toils the subject of the land?
And why such daily cast of brazen cannon,
And foreign mart for implements of war:
Why such impress of shipwrights², whose sore task
Does not divide the Sunday from the week:

⁶ — *sledded* —] A *sled*, or *sledge*, is a carriage without wheels, made use of in the cold countries.

⁷ *He smote the sledded Polack on the ice.*] He speaks of a prince of Poland whom he slew in battle. *Polack* was, in that age, the term for an inhabitant of Poland. Mr. Malone reads *Polacks*.

⁸ — *jump at this dead hour,*] *Jump* and *just* were synonymous in the time of Shakspeare.

⁹ *In what particular thought to work,*] i. e. what particular train of thinking to follow.

¹ — *gross and scope* —] General thoughts, and tendency at large.

² *Why such impress of shipwrights,*] *Impress* signifies here the act of retaining shipwrights by giving them what was called *prest* money (from *prêt*, Fr.) for holding themselves in *readiness* to be employed.

What might be toward, that this sweaty haste
Doth make the night joint-labourer with the day ;
Who is't, that can inform me ?

Hor. That can I ;
At least, the whisper goes so. Our last king,
Whose image even but now appear'd to us,
Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,
Thereto prick'd on by a most emulate pride,
Dar'd to the combat ; in which our valiant Hamlet
(For so this side of our known world esteem'd him,)
Did slay this Fortinbras ; who, by a seal'd compáct,
Well ratified by law, and heraldry,
Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands,
Which he stood seiz'd of, to the conqueror :
Against the which, a moiety competent
Was gaged by our king ; which had return'd
To the inheritance of Fortinbras,
Had he been vanquisher ; as, by the same co-mart,
And carriage of the article design'd,³
His fell to Hamlet : Now, sir, young Fortinbras,
Of unimproved mettle hot and full,⁴
Hath in the skirts of Norway, here and there,
Shark'd up a list⁵ of landless resolute,
For food and diet, to some enterprize
That hath a stomach in't⁶ : which is no other
(As it doth well appear unto our state,)
But to recover of us, by strong hand,
And terms compulsory, those 'foresaid lands

³ — as, by the same co-mart,

And carriage of the article design'd,] Co-mart is supposed to mean a *joint bargain*, a word perhaps of our poet's coinage. *Carriage* is *import* : *design'd*, is *formed, drawn up between them*.

⁴ *Of unimproved, &c.]* *Full of unimproved mettle*, is full of spirit not regulated or guided by knowledge or experience.

⁵ *Shark'd up a list, &c.]* Picked up without distinction, as the *shark-fish* collects his prey.

⁶ *That hath a stomach in't :]* *Stomach*, in the time of our author, was used for *constancy, resolution*.

So by his father lost : And this, I take it,
Is the main motive of our preparations ;
The source of this our watch ; and the chief head
Of this post-haste and romage⁷ in the land.

[*Ber.* I think⁸, it be no other, but even so :
Well may it sort⁹, that this portentous figure
Comes armed through our watch ; so like the king
That was, and is, the question of these wars.¹

Hor. A mote it is, to trouble the mind's eye.
In the most high and palmy state of Rome,²
A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,
The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets.

As, stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,
Disasters in the sun³ ; and the moist star,⁴
Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands,

⁷ — *romage* —] Commonly written — *rummage*. It is not, however, certain that the word *romage* has been properly explained. *Romage*, on shipboard, must have signified a scrupulous examination into the state of the vessel and its stores. Respecting land-service, the same term implied a strict inquiry into the kingdom, that means of defence might be supplied where they were wanted. *Rummage*, is properly explained by Johnson in his dictionary, as it is at present daily used, — to search for any thing.

⁸ [*I think, &c.*] These lines, confined within crotchets, throughout this play, and some others which we have not noticed, are omitted in the folio edition of 1623. The omissions leave the play sometimes better and sometimes worse, and seem made only for the sake of abbreviation. JOHNSON.

⁹ *Well may it sort,*] The cause and effect are proportionate and suitable.

¹ — *the question of these wars.*] The theme or subject.

² — *palmy state of Rome,*] *Palmy*, for *victorious*.

³ *As, stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,*

Disasters in the sun ;] This passage is not in the folio. By the quartos therefore our imperfect text is supplied ; for an intermediate verse being evidently lost, it were idle to attempt a union that never was intended. I have therefore signified the supposed deficiency by a vacant space. MALONE.

⁴ — *and the moist star, &c.*] i. e. the moon.

Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse.
 And even⁵ the like precurse of fierce events, —
 As harbingers preceding still the fates,
 And prologue to the omen coming on, —⁶
 Have heaven and earth together démonstrated
 Unto our climatures and countrymen. —]

Re-enter Ghost.

But, soft; behold! lo, where it comes again!
 I'll cross it, though it blast me. — Stay, illusion!
 If thou hast any sound⁷, or use of voice,
 Speak to me:
 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, foreknowing may avoid,
 O, speak!
 Or, if thou hast uphoarded in thy life
 Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,
 For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death,
 [Cock crows.
 Speak of it: — stay, and speak. — Stop it, Marcellus.
Mar. Shall I strike at it with my partizan?
Hor. Do, if it will not stand.
Ber. 'Tis here!
Hor. 'Tis here!
Mar. 'Tis gone! [Exit Ghost.
 We do it wrong, being so majestic,

⁵ *And even* —] Not only such prodigies have been seen in Rome, but the elements have shown our countrymen like forerunners and foretokens of violent events.

⁶ *And prologue to the omen coming on,*] i. e. the approaching dreadful and portentous event.

⁷ *If thou hast any sound,*] The speech of Horatio to the spectre is very elegant and noble, and congruous to the common traditions of the causes of apparitions. JOHNSON.

To offer it the show of violence ;
For it is, as the air, invulnerable,
And our vain blows malicious mockery.

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 to 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,⁸
The extravagant and erring spirit⁹ hies
To his confine : and of the truth herein
This present object made probation.

Mar. It faded on the crowing of the cock.
Some say, that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
This bird of dawning singeth all night long :
And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad ;
The nights are wholesome ; then no planets strike,
No fairy takes¹, nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.

Hor. So have I heard, and do in part believe it.
But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill :
Break we our watch up ; and, by my advice,
Let us impart what we have seen to-night
Unto young Hamlet : for, upon my life,

⁸ *Whether in sea, &c.*] According to the pneumatology of that time, every element was inhabited by its peculiar order of spirits, who had dispositions different, according to their various places of abode. The meaning therefore is, that all *spirits extravagant*, wandering out of their element, whether aerial spirits visiting earth, or earthly spirits ranging the air, return to their station, to their proper limits in which they are *confined*.

⁹ — *erring spirit,*] *Erring* is here used in the sense of *wandering*.

¹ *No fairy takes,*] No fairy *strikes* with lameness or diseases. This sense of *take* is frequent in this author.

This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him :
Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,
As needful in our loves, fitting our duty ?

Mar. Let's do't, I pray ; and I this morning know
Where we shall find him most convenient. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

The same. A Room of State in the same.

*Enter the King, Queen, HAMLET, POLONIUS, LAERTES,
VOLTIMAND, CORNELIUS, Lords, and Attendants.*

King. 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, —
With one auspicious, and one dropping eye ;
With mirth in funeral, and with dirge in marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight and dole, —
Taken to wife : nor have we herein barr'd
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone
With this affair along : — For all, our thanks.

Now follows, that you know, young Fortinbras, —
Holding a weak supposal of our worth ;
Or thinking, by our late dear brother's death,
Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,
Colleagu'd with this dream of his advantage,²

² Colleagu'd *with this dream of his advantage,*] This imaginary advantage, which Fortinbras hoped to derive from the unsettled state of the kingdom.

He hath not fail'd to pester us with message,
 Importing the surrender of those lands
 Lost by his father, with all bands of law,
 To our most valiant brother. — So much for him.
 Now for ourself, and for this time of meeting.
 Thus much the business is: We have here writ
 To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras, —
 Who, impotent and bed-rid, scarcely hears
 Of this his nephew's purpose, — to suppress
 His further gait herein³; in that the levies,
 The lists, and full proportions, are all made
 Out of his subject: — and we here despatch
 You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltimand,
 For bearers of this greeting to old Norway;
 Giving to you no further personal power
 To business with the king, more than the scope⁴
 Of these dilated articles⁵ allow.
 Farewell; and let your haste commend your duty.

Cor. Vol. In that, and all things, will we show our
 duty.

King. We doubt it nothing; heartily farewell.

[*Exeunt* VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.]

And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?
 You told us of some suit; What is't, Laertes?
 You cannot speak of reason to the Dane,
 And lose your voice: What would'st thou beg,
 Laertes,
 That shall not be my offer, not thy asking?
 The head is not more native to the heart,
 The hand more instrumental to the mouth,

³ — to suppress

His further gait herein,] *Gate* or *gait* is here used in the northern sense, for *proceeding*, *passage*; from the A. S. verb *gac*. A *gate* for a path, passage, or street, is still current in the north.

⁴ — *more than the scope* —] More is comprized in the general design of these articles, which you may explain in a more diffused and dilated style.

⁵ — dilated *articles*, &c.] i. e. the articles when dilated.

Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.
What would'st thou have, Laertes?

Laer. My dread lord,
Your leave and favour 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, wrung from me my slow leave,
By laboursome petition; and, at last,
Upon his will I seal'd my hard consent;
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, —

Ham. A little more than kin, and less than kind.⁶

[*Aside.*

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

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

Queen. Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.
Do not, for ever, with thy veiled lids⁷
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,

Why seems it so particular with thee?

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

⁶ *Ham.* *A little more than kin, and less than kind.*] *A little more than kin*, is a little more than a common relation. The king was certainly something *less than kind*, by having betrayed the mother of Hamlet into an indecent and incestuous marriage, and obtained the crown by means which he suspects to be unjustifiable.

⁷ — *veiled lids* —] With lowering eyes, cast down eyes.

'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
 Nor customary suits of solemn black,
 Nor windy suspiration of forc'd breath,
 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 sorrow⁸ : But to perséver
 In obstinate condolément⁹, is a course
 Of impious stubbornness ; 'tis unmanly grief :
 It shows a will most incorrect¹ to heaven ;
 A heart unfortified, or mind impatient :
 An understanding simple and unschool'd :
 For what, we know, must be, and is as common
 As any the most vulgar thing to sense,
 Why should we, in our peevish opposition,
 Take it to heart ? Fye ! 'tis a fault to heaven,
 A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
 To reason most absurd² ; whose common theme
 Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,

⁸ — obsequious sorrow :] *Obsequious* is here from *obsequies*, or *funeral ceremonies*.

⁹ *In obstinate condolément,*] *Condolément*, for *sorrow*.

¹ — *a will most incorrect* —] i. e. *ill-regulated*, not sufficiently regulated by a sense of duty and submission to the dispensations of Providence.

² *To reason most absurd ;*] *Reason* is here used in its common sense, for the *faculty* by which we form conclusions from arguments.

From the first corse, till he that died to-day,
This must be so. 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;
 And, with no less nobility of love,³
 Than that which dearest father bears his son,
 Do I impart toward you. For your intent
 In going back to school in Wittenberg,
 It is most retrograde to our desire:
 And, we beseech you, bend you to remain⁴
 Here, in the cheer and comfort of our eye,
 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 unforc'd accord of Hamlet
 Sits smiling to my heart: in grace whereof,
 No jocund health⁵, that Denmark drinks to-day,
 But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell;
 And the king's rouse⁶ the heaven shall bruit again,
 Re-speaking earthly thunder. Come away.

[*Exeunt King, Queen, Lords, &c.* POLONIUS,
 and LAERTES.]

Ham. O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,
 Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!⁷
 Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
 His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! O God!

³ *And, with no less nobility of love,*] Eminence and distinction of love.

⁴ — *bend you to remain* —] i. e. subdue your inclination to go from hence, and remain, &c.

⁵ *No jocund health,*] The king's intemperance is very strongly impressed; every thing that happens to him gives him occasion to drink.

⁶ — *the king's rouse* —] i. e. the king's draught of jollity.

⁷ — *resolve itself into a dew!*] *Resolve* means the same as *dissolve*.

How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
 Seem to me all the uses of this world !
 Fye on't ! O fye ! 'tis an unweeded garden,
 That grows to seed ; things rank, and gross in nature,
 Possess it merely.⁸ 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 satyr⁹ : so loving to my mother,
 That he might not betem¹ 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 woman ! —
 A little month ; or ere those shoes were old,
 With which she follow'd my poor father's body,
 Like Niobe, all tears ; — why she, even she, —
 O heaven ! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,
 Would have mourn'd longer, — married with my uncle,
 My father's brother ; but no more like my father,
 Than I to Hercules : Within a month ;
 Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
 Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
 She married : — O most wicked speed, to post
 With such dexterity to incestuous sheets !
 It is not, nor it cannot come to, good ;
 But break, my heart ; for I must hold my tongue !

Enter HORATIO, BERNARDO, and MARCELLUS.

Hor. Hail to your lordship !

Ham. I am glad to see you well :
 Horatio, — or I do forget myself.

⁸ — *merely.*] Is *entirely, absolutely.*

⁹ Hyperion to a satyr:] Hyperion or Apollo is represented in all the ancient statues, &c. as exquisitely beautiful, the satyrs hideously ugly.

¹ That he might not betem —] i. e. *permit, or suffer.*

Hor. The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.

Ham. Sir, my good friend; I'll change that name² with you.

And what make you³ from Wittenberg, Horatio? —
Marcellus?

Mar. My good lord, —

Ham. I am very glad to see you; good even, sir, —
But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?

Hor. A truant disposition, good my lord.

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. My lord, 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 follow'd hard upon.

Ham. Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral bak'd meats⁴
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.

Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven⁵

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.

² — *I'll change that name* —] I'll be your servant, you shall be my friend.

³ — *what make you* —] A familiar phrase for *what are you doing*.

⁴ — *the funeral bak'd meats* —] It was anciently the general custom to give a cold entertainment to mourners at a funeral. In distant counties this practice is continued among the yeomanry.

⁵ — *dearest foe in heaven* —] *Dearest* is *most immediate, consequential, important*.

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 admiration⁶ for a while
With an attent ear⁷ ; till I may deliver,
Upon the witness of these gentlemen,
This marvel to you.

Ham. For God's love, let me hear.

Hor. Two nights together had these gentlemen,
Marcellus and Bernardo, on their watch,
In the dead waist and middle of the night,⁸
Been thus encounter'd. A figure like your father,
Arm'd at point, exactly, cap-à-pé,
Appears before them, and, with solemn march,
Goes slow and stately by them : thrice he walk'd,
By their oppress'd and fear-surprized eyes,
Within his truncheon's length ; whilst they, distill'd
Almost to jelly with the act of fear,⁹
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 deliver'd, both in time,
Form of the thing, each word made true and good,
The apparition comes : I knew your father ;
These hands are not more like.

Ham. But where was this ?

Mar. My lord, upon the platform where we watch'd.

Ham. Did you not speak to it ?

⁶ Season your admiration—] That is, temper it.

⁷ With an attent ear ;] *Attent* for *attentive*.

⁸ In the dead waist and middle of the night,] This strange phraseology seems to have been common in the time of Shakspeare. By *waist* is meant nothing more than *middle*.

⁹ — with the act of fear,] *Fear* was the cause, the active cause that *distill'd* them by the force of operation which we strictly call *act* in voluntary, and *power* in involuntary *agents*, but popularly call *act* in both. JOHNSON.

Hor. 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 vanish'd from our sight.

Ham. 'Tis very strange.

Hor. As I do live, my honour'd 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 ?

All. We do, my lord.

Ham. Arm'd say you ?

All. Arm'd, my lord.

Ham. From top to toe ?

All. My lord, from head to foot.

Ham. Then saw you not
 His face ?

Hor. O, yes, my lord ; he wore his beaver up.⁹

Ham. What, look'd he frowningly ?

Hor. A countenance more
 In sorrow than in anger.

Ham. Pale, or red ?

Hor. Nay, very pale.

Ham. And fix'd his eyes upon you ?

Hor. Most constantly.

Ham. I would I had been there.

Hor. It would have much amaz'd you.

Ham. Very like,
 Very like : Stay'd it long ?

⁹ — wore his beaver up.] Though *beaver* properly signified that part of the helmet which was *let down*, to enable the wearer to drink, Shakspeare always uses the word as denoting that part of the helmet, which, when raised up, exposed the face of the wearer : and such was the popular signification of the word in his time.

Hor. While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.

Mar. Ber. Longer, longer.

Hor. Not when I saw it.

Ham. His beard was grizzl'd? no?

Hor. It was, as I have seen it in his life,
A sable silver'd.

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

Hor. I warrant, it will.

Ham. If it assume 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 conceal'd 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.

All. Our duty to your honour.

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

[*Exeunt* HORATIO, MARCELLUS, and BERNARDO.]

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.
[*Exit.*]

SCENE III.

A Room in Polonius' House.

Enter LAERTES and OPHELIA.

Laer. My necessaries are embark'd; farewell:
And, sister, as the winds give benefit,

And convoy is assistant, do not sleep,
But let me hear from you.

Oph. Do you doubt that?

Laer. For Hamlet, and the trifling of his favour,
Hold it a fashion, and a toy in blood;
A violet in the youth of primy nature,
Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,
The perfume and suppliance of a minute;¹
No more.

Oph. No more but so?

Laer. Think it no more:
For nature, crescent, does not grow alone
In thews², and bulk; but, as this temple waxes,
The inward service of the mind and soul
Grows wide withal. Perhaps, he loves you now;
And now no soil, nor cautel, doth besmirch
The virtue of his will:³ but, you must fear,
His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own;
For he himself is subject to his birth;
He may not, as unvalued persons do,
Carve for himself; for on his choice depends
The safety and the health of the whole state;
And therefore must his choice be circumscrib'd
Unto the voice and yielding of that body,
Whereof he is the head: Then if he says, he loves you,
It fits your wisdom so far to believe it,
As he in his particular act and place
May give his saying deed; which is no further,
Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.

¹ *The perfume and suppliance of a minute;*] i. e. what was supplied to us for a minute; or, perhaps, an amusement to fill up a vacant moment, and render it agreeable.

² *In thews,*] i. e. in sinews, muscular strength.

³ *And now no soil, nor cautel, doth besmirch
The virtue of his will:*] From *cautela*, which signifies only a *prudent foresight*, or caution; but, passing through French hands, it lost its innocence, and now signifies *fraud, deceit*. *The virtue of his will* means, his *virtuous intentions*.

Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain,
 If with too credent ear you list his songs;
 Or lose your heart; or your chaste treasure open
 To his unmaster'd⁴ importunity.
 Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister;
 And keep you in the rear of your affection,⁵
 Out of the shot and danger of desire.
 The chariest maid⁶ is prodigal enough,
 If she unmask her beauty to the moon:
 Virtue itself scapes not calumnious strokes:
 The canker galls the infants of the spring,
 Too oft before their buttons be disclos'd;
 And in the morn and liquid dew of youth
 Contagious blastments are most imminent.
 Be wary then: best safety lies in fear;
 Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

Oph. I shall the effect of this good lesson 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 puff'd and reckless libertine,
 Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
 And recks not his own read.⁷

Laer. O fear me not.
 I stay too long; — But here my father comes.

Enter POLONIUS.

A double blessing is a double grace;
 Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

Pol. Yet here, Laertes! aboard, aboard, for shame;
 The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,⁸

⁴ — unmaster'd —] i. e. licentious.

⁵ — keep you in the rear, &c.] That is, do not advance so far as your affection would lead you.

⁶ The chariest maid —] Chary is cautious.

⁷ — recks not his own read.] That is, heeds not his own lessons.

⁸ — the shoulder of your sail,] This is a common sea phrase.

And you are staid for : There, my blessing with you ;
 [*Laying his Hand on LAERTES' Head.*]
 And these few precepts in thy memory
 Look thou charáctér⁹. Give thy thoughts no tongue,
 Nor any 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 hooks of steel ;
 But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
 Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd comrade¹. Beware
 Of entrance to a quarrel : but, being in,
 Bear it that the opposer may beware of thee.
 Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice :
 Take each man's censure², but reserve thy judgement.
 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 most select and generous, chief in that.³
 Neither a borrower, nor a lender be :
 For loan oft loses both itself and friend ;
 And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.⁴
 This above all, — To thine ownself be true ;
 And it must follow, as the night the day,
 Thou canst not then be false to any man.
 Farewell ; my blessing season this in thee !⁵

⁹ — *Look thou charáctér.*] i. e. write, strongly infix.

¹ *But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
 Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd comrade.*] The literal sense is, *Do not make thy palm callous by shaking every man by the hand.* The figurative meaning may be, *Do not by promiscuous conversation make thy mind insensible to the difference of characters.* JOHNSON.

² — *each man's censure,*] *Censure* is opinion.

³ *Are most select and generous, chief in that.*] i. e. The nobility of France are select and generous above all other nations, and chiefly in the point of apparel ; the richness and elegance of their dress. Mr. Malone reads, "Are of a most select and generous chief, in that."

⁴ — *of husbandry.*] i. e. of thrift ; æconomical prudence.

⁵ — *my blessing season this in thee !*] Infix it in such a manner as that it never may wear out.

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

Pol. The time invites you; go, your servants tend.⁶

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.⁷

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 bounteous:
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 behoves my daughter, and your honour:
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,
Unsifted⁸ 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;⁹

⁶ — *servants tend.*] i. e. your servants are waiting for you.

⁷ — *yourself shall keep the key of it.*] i. e. your counsels are as sure of remaining locked up in my memory, as if yourself carried the key of it.

⁸ — Unsifted —] *Unsifted* for *untried*. *Untried* signifies either not *tempted*, or not *refined*; *unsifted* signifies the *latter* only, though the sense requires the *former*.

⁹ — *Tender yourself more dearly;*] To *tender* is to regard with affection.

Or, (not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,
Wronging it thus,) you'll tender me a fool.

Oph. My lord, he hath impórtun'd me with love,
In honourable fashion.

Pol. Ay, fashion you may call it¹; go to, go to.

Oph. And hath given countenance to his speech, my
lord,

With almost all the holy vows of heaven.

Pol. Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do know,
When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul
Lends the tongue vows: these blazes, daughter,
Giving more light than heat, — extinct in both,
Even in their promise, as it is a making, —
You must not take for fire. From this time,
Be somewhat scancer of your maiden presence;
Set your entreatments² at a higher rate,
Than a command to parley. For lord Hamlet,
Believe so much in him, That he is young;
And with a larger tether may he walk,
Than may be given you: In few, Ophelia,
Do not believe his vows: for they are brokers³
Not of that die which their investments show,
But mere implorators of unholy suits,
Breathing like sanctified and pious bonds,⁴
The better to beguile. 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.]

¹ — fashion you may call it;] She uses *fashion* for *manner*, and he for a *transient practice*.

² Set your entreatments —] i. e. the objects of *entreaty*; the favours for which lovers sue.

³ Do not believe his vows: for they are brokers —] A *broker* in old English meant a *bawd* or *pimp*.

⁴ Breathing like sanctified and pious bonds,] i. e. bonds or engagements of love.

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.⁵

Ham. What hour now?

Hor. I think, it lacks of twelve.

Mar. No, it is struck.

Hor. Indeed? I heard it not; it then draws near the season,

Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

[*A Flourish of Trumpets, and Ordnance shot off, within.*]

What does this mean, my lord?

Ham. The king doth wake to-night, and takes his rouse,⁶

Keeps wassel⁷, and the swaggering up-spring⁸ reels;
And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish 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 native here,
And to the manner born, — it is a custom
More honour'd in the breach, than the observance.
This heavy-headed revel, east and west,⁹
Makes us traduc'd, and tax'd of other nations:
They clepe us, drunkards, and with swinish phrase

⁵ — *an eager air.*] That is, a sharp air, *aigre*, Fr.

⁶ — *takes his rouse,*] A *rouse* is a large dose of liquor, a debauch.

⁷ *Keeps wassel,*] i. e. devotes the night to jollity.

⁸ — *the swaggering up-spring* —] The blustering upstart.

⁹ *This heavy-headed revel, east and west,*] This heavy-headed revel makes us traduced east and west, and taxed of other nations.

Soil our addition; and, indeed it takes
 From our achievements, though perform'd at height,
 The pith and marrow of our attribute.¹
 So, oft it chances in particular men,
 That, for some vicious mole of nature in them,
 As, in their birth, (wherein they are not guilty,
 Since nature cannot choose his origin,)
 By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,²
 Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason;
 Or by some habit, that too much o'er-leavens
 The form of plausible manners³; — that these men, —
 Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect;
 Being nature's livery, or fortune's star,⁴ —
 Their virtues else (be they as pure as grace,
 As infinite as man may undergo,)⁵
 Shall in the general censure take corruption
 From that particular fault: The dram of base
 Doth all the noble substance often dout,⁶
 To his own scandal.

¹ *The pith and marrow of our attribute.*] The most valuable part of the praise that would be otherwise attributed to us.

² — *complexion.*] i. e. humour; as sanguine, melancholy, phlegmatick, &c.

³ — *that too much o'er-leavens*

The form of plausible manners;] That intermingles too much with their manners; infects and *corrupts* them. *Plausible*, in our poet's age, signified gracious, pleasing, popular.

⁴ — *fortune's star.*] The word *star* in the text signifies a *scar* of that appearance. It is a term of *farriery*: the *white star* or mark so common on the forehead of a dark coloured horse, is usually produced by making a *scar* on the place. RITSON.

⁵ *As infinite as man may undergo,)]* As large as can be accumulated upon man.

⁶ — *often dout,)]* To *dout*, signified in Shakspeare's time, and yet signifies in Devonshire and other western counties, to *do out*, to efface, to extinguish. The commentators, however, have not made sense of this passage, which Malone gives thus, equally unintelligibly:

———— “ The dram of eale
 Doth all the noble substance of a doubt,
 To his own scandal.”

Enter Ghost.

Hor. Look, my lord, it comes !

Ham. Angels and ministers of grace defend us ! —
 Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damn'd,
 Bring with thee airs from heaven, or blasts from hell,
 Be thy intents wicked, or charitable,
 Thou com'st in such a questionable shape,⁷
 That I will speak to thee ; I'll call thee, Hamlet,
 King, father, royal Dane : O, answer me :
 Let me not burst in ignorance ! but tell,
 Why thy canoniz'd bones, hearsed in death,
 Have burst their cerements⁸ ! why the sepulchre,
 Wherein we saw thee quietly in-urn'd,
 Hath op'd his ponderous and marble jaws,
 To cast thee up again ! What may this mean,
 That thou, dead corse, again, in cômplete steel,⁹
 Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,
 Making night hideous ; and we fools of nature,

⁷ — questionable *shape*,] *Questionable* means here *propitious to conversation, easy and willing to be conversed with.*

⁸ ————— *tell,*

Why thy canoniz'd bones, hearsed in death,

Have burst their cerements !] Hamlet, amazed at an apparition, which, though in all ages credited, has in all ages been considered as the most wonderful and most dreadful operation of supernatural agency, enquires of the spectre, in the most emphatick terms, why he breaks the order of nature, by returning from the dead ; this he asks in a very confused circumlocution, confounding in his fright the soul and body. Why, says he, have *thy bones*, which with due ceremonies have been entombed *in death*, in the common state of departed mortals, *burst* the folds in which they were embalmed ? Why has the tomb, in which we saw thee quietly laid, opened his mouth, that mouth which, by its weight and stability, seemed closed for ever ? The whole sentence is this : *Why dost thou appear, whom we know to be dead ?* JOHNSON.

⁹ — *in cômplete steel*,] It is probable, that Shakspeare introduced his ghost in armour, that it might appear more solemn by such a discrimination from the other characters ; though it was really the custom of the Danish kings to be buried in that manner.

So horridly to shake our disposition,¹
 With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?
 Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we do?

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:²
 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;³
 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,
 That beetles o'er his base⁴ into the sea?
 And there assume some other horrible form,
 Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason,⁵
 And draw you into madness? think of it:
 The very place puts toys of desperation,⁶
 Without more motive, into every brain,
 That looks so many fathoms to the sea,
 And hears it roar beneath.

¹ — to shake our disposition,] *Disposition*, for *frame*.

² — a more removed ground:] i. e. *remote*.

³ — pin's fee;] The value of a pin.

⁴ That beetles o'er his base —] That *hangs* o'er his base, like what is called a *beetle brow*. A verb probably of our author's coinage.

⁵ — deprive your sovereignty of reason,] i. e. your ruling power of reason. When poets wish to invest any quality or virtue with uncommon splendour, they do it by some allusion to regal eminence.

⁶ — puts toys of desperation,] *Toys*, for *whims*.

Ham. It waves me still : —
 Go on, I'll follow thee.
Mar. You shall not go, my lord.
Ham. Hold off your hands.
Hor. Be rul'd, 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 call'd; — unhand me, gentlemen; —
 [Breaking from them.
 By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me : —⁷
 I say, away : — Go on, I'll follow thee.
 [Exeunt Ghost and HAMLET.
Hor. He waxes desperate with imagination.
Mar. Let's follow; 'tis not fit thus to obey him.
Hor. Have after : — To what issue will this come?
Mar. Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.
Hor. Heaven will direct it.
Mar. Nay, let's follow him.
 [Exeunt.

SCENE V.

A more remote Part of the Platform.

Re-enter 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,

⁷ — *that lets me;*] To *let* among our old authors signifies to prevent, to hinder. It is still a word current in the law, and to be found in almost all leases.

When I to sulphurous 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 ;

Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night ;
And, for the day, confin'd to fast in fires,
Till the foul crimes, done in my days of nature,
Are burnt and purg'd away. But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,
I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word
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, O list ! —
If thou didst ever thy dear father love, —

Ham. O 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 ;

And duller should'st thou be than the fat weed
That rots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,⁸

⁸ *And duller should'st thou be than the fat weed
That rots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,]* Shakspeare, apparently

Would'st thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear :
 'Tis given out, that sleeping in mine orchard,⁹
 A serpent stung me ; so the whole ear of Denmark
 Is by a forged process of my death
 Rankly abus'd : but know, thou noble youth,
 The serpent that did sting thy father's life,
 Now wears his crown.

Ham. O, my prophetick soul ! my uncle !

Ghost. Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
 With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts,
 (O wicked wit, and gifts, that have the power
 So to seduce !) won to his shameful lust
 The will of my most seeming virtuous queen :
 O, 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 virtue, as it never will be mov'd,
 Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven ;
 So lust, though to a radiant angel link'd,
 Will sate itself in a celestial bed,
 And prey on garbage.
 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 cursed hebenon in a vial,¹

through ignorance, makes Roman Catholicks of these Pagan Danes ; and here gives a description of purgatory ; but yet mixes it with the Pagan fable of Lethe's wharf. Mr. Malone reads " roots itself."

⁹ — mine orchard,] Orchard for garden.

¹ With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,] The word here used was more probably designed by a *metathesis*, either of the poet or transcriber, for *henebon*, that is, *henbane* ; of which the most common kind (*hyoscyamus niger*) is certainly *narcotick*, and perhaps, if taken in a considerable quantity, might prove poisonous.

And in the porches of mine ears did pour
 The leperous distilment; 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;
 And, with a sudden vigour, it doth posset
 And curd, like eager droppings into milk,
 The thin and wholesome blood: so did it mine;
 And a most instant tetter bark'd about,
 Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust,
 All my smooth body.
 Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand,
 Of life, of crown, of queen, at once despatch'd:²
 Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
 Unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd;³
 No reckoning made, but sent to my account
 With all my imperfections on my head:
 O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!
 If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not;
 Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
 A couch for luxury and damned 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 prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once!
 The glowworm shows the matin to be near,
 And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire:⁴
 Adieu, adieu, adieu! remember me.

[*Exit.*]

² — at once despatch'd:] *Despatch'd*, for *bereft*.

³ *Unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd*;) *Unhousel'd* is without having received the sacrament. *Disappointed*, as Dr. Johnson observes, "is the same as *unappointed*, and may be properly explained *unprepared*. A man well furnished with things necessary for an enterprise, was said to be well *appointed*." *Unanel'd* is without extreme unction.

⁴ — pale his uneffectual fire:] Fire that is no longer seen when the light of morning approaches.

Ham. O all you host of heaven! O earth! What else?
 And shall I couple hell? — O fye! — 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.⁵ Remember thee?
 Yea, from the table of my memory
 I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
 All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,
 That youth and observation copied there;
 And thy commandment all alone shall live
 Within the book and volume of my brain,
 Unmix'd with baser matter: yes, by heaven.
 O most pernicious woman!
 O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!
 My tables,⁶ — meet it is, I set it down,
 That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;
 At least, I am sure, it may be so in Denmark:

[*Writing.*

So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word;⁷
 It is, *Adieu, adieu! remember me.*
 I have sworn't.

Hor. [*within.*] My lord, my lord, ——

Mar. [*within.*] Lord Hamlet, ——

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

Ham. So be it!

Mar. [*within.*] Illo, ho, ho, my lord!

⁵ —— *this distracted globe.*] i. e. in this head confused with thought.

⁶ *My tables, —*] *Table-books* in the time of our author appear to have been used by all ranks of people. In the church they were filled with short notes of the sermon, and at the theatre with the sparkling sentences of the play.

⁷ —— *Now to my word;*] Hamlet alludes to the *watch-word* given every day in military service, which at this time he says is, *Adieu, adieu! remember me.*

Ham. Hillo, ho, ho, boy ! come, bird, come.⁴

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.

Mar. How is't, my noble lord ?

Hor. What news, my lord ?

Ham. O, wonderful !

Hor. Good my lord, tell it.

Ham. No ;

You will reveal it.

Hor. Not I, my lord, by heaven.

Mar. Nor I, my lord.

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

But you'll be secret, —

Hor. Mar. 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,
Look you, I will go pray.

Hor. These are but wild and whirling words, my
lord.

Ham. I am sorry they offend you, heartily ; yes,
'Faith, 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, —

⁴ — *come, bird, come.*] This is the call which falconers use to their hawk in the air, when they would have him come down to them.

It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you ;
 For your desire to know what is between us,
 O'er-master 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't.

Hor. In faith,

My lord, not I.

Mar. Nor I, my lord, in faith.

Ham. Upon my sword.

Mar. We have sworn, my lord, already.

Ham. Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.

Ghost. [*beneath.*] Swear.

Ham. Ha, ha, boy ! say'st thou so ? art thou there,
 true-penny ?

Come on, — you hear this fellow in the cellarage, —
 Consent to swear.

Hor. Propose the oath, my lord.

Ham. Never to speak of this that you have seen,
 Swear by my sword.

Ghost. [*beneath.*] Swear.

Ham. *Hic et ubique?* then we'll shift our ground:—

Come hither, gentlemen,

And lay your hands again upon my sword :

Swear by my sword,

Never to speak of this that you have heard.

Ghost. [*beneath.*] Swear by his sword.

Ham. Well said, old mole ! can'st work i'the earth
 so fast ?

A worthy pioneer ! — Once more remove, good friends.

Hor. O day and night, but this is wondrous strange !

Ham. And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.
 There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
 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 antick disposition on, —
 That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,
 With arms encumber'd thus, or this head-shake,
 Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,
 As, *Well, well, we know*; — or, *We could, and 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 ought of me: — This do you swear, †
 So grace and mercy at your most need help you!
Ghost. [*beneath.*] Swear.
Ham. Rest, rest, perturbed spirit⁹! So, gentlemen,

† — “This not to do, swear;” — MALONE.

⁹ *Rest, rest, perturbed spirit!*] The skill displayed in Shakspeare's management of his ghost, is too considerable to be overlooked. He has rivetted our attention to it by a succession of forcible circumstances: — by the previous report of the terrified centinels, — by the solemnity of the hour at which the phantom walks, — by its martial stride and discriminating armour, visible only *per incertam lunam*, by the glimpses of the moon, — by its long taciturnity, — by its preparation to speak, when interrupted by the morning cock, — by its mysterious reserve throughout its first scene with Hamlet, — by his resolute departure with it, and the subsequent anxiety of his attendants, — by its conducting him to a solitary angle of the platform, — by its voice from beneath the earth, — and by its unexpected burst on us in the closet.

Hamlet's late interview with the spectre, must in particular be regarded as a stroke of dramattick artifice. The phantom might have told his story in the presence of the officers and Horatio, and yet have rendered itself as inaudible to them, as afterwards to the queen. But suspense was our poet's object; and never was it more effectually created, than in the present instance. Six times has the royal semblance appeared, but till now has been withheld from speaking. For this event we have waited with impatient curiosity, unaccompanied by lassitude, or remitted attention.

The ghost in this tragedy, is allowed to be the genuine product of Shakspeare's strong imagination. When he afterwards avails himself of traditional phantoms, as in *Julius Cæsar* and *King Richard III.*,

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,
 God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together ;
 And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.
 The time is out of joint ; — O cursed spite !
 That ever I was born to set it right !
 Nay, come, let's go together. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I. — *A Room in Polonius' House.*

Enter POLONIUS *and* REYNALDO.

Pol. Give him this money, and these notes, Reynaldo.

Rey. I will, my lord.

Pol. You shall do marvellous wisely, good Reynaldo,
 Before you visit him, to make inquiry
 Of his behaviour.

Rey. My lord, I did intend it.

Pol. Marry, well said : very well said. Look you, sir,
 Inquire me first what Danskers¹ are in Paris ;
 And how, and who, what means, and where they keep,
 What company, at what expence ; and finding,
 By this encompassment and drift of question,
 That they do know my son, come you more nearer
 Than your particular demands will touch it :

civ

they are but inefficacious pageants ; nay, the apparition of Banquo is a mute exhibitor. Perhaps our poet despaired to equal the vigour of his early conceptions on the subject of preternatural beings, and therefore allotted them no further eminence in his dramas ; or was unwilling to diminish the power of his principal shade, by an injudicious repetition of congenial images. STEEVENS.

¹ — *Danskers* —] *Danske* is the ancient name of Denmark.

Take you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of him ;
 As thus, — *I know his father, and his friends,*
And, in part, him ; — Do you mark this, Reynaldo ?

Rey. Ay, very well, my lord.

Pol. *And, in part, him ;* — *but, you may say, not well :*
But, if't be he I mean, he's very wild ;
Addicted so and so ; — and there put on him
 What forgeries you please ; marry, none so rank
 As may dishonour him ; take heed of that ;
 But, sir, such wanton, wild, and usual slips,
 As are companions noted and most known
 To youth and liberty.

Rey. As gaming, my lord.

Pol. Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing, quarrelling,
 Drabbing : — You may go so far.

Rey. My lord, that would dishonour him.

Pol. 'Faith, no ; as you may season it in the charge.
 You must not put another scandal on him,²
 That he is open to incontinency ;
 That's not my meaning³ : but breathe his faults so
 quaintly,

That they may seem the taints of liberty :
 The flash and out-break of a fiery mind ;
 A savageness⁴ in unreclaimed blood,
 Of general assault.⁵

Rey. But, my good lord, —

Pol. Wherefore should you do this ?

Rey. Ay, my lord,
 I would know that.

Pol. Marry, sir, here's my drift ;
 And, I believe, it is a fetch of warrant :

² — another *scandal* —] i. e. a very different and more scandalous failing, namely, habitual incontinency.

³ *That's not my meaning :*] That is not what I mean when I permit you to accuse him of drabbing.

⁴ *A savageness* —] *Savageness* for *wildness*.

⁵ *Of general assault.*] i. e. such as youth in general is liable to.

You laying these slight sullies on my son,
 As 'twere a thing a little soil'd i'the working,
 Mark you,
 Your party in converse, him you would sound,
 Having ever seen, in the prenominate crimes,⁶
 The youth you breathe of, guilty, be assur'd,
 He closes with you in this consequence ;
Good sir, or so ; or *friend*, or *gentleman*, —
 According to the phrase, or the addition,
 Of man, and country.

Rey. Very good, my lord.

Pol. And then, sir, does he this, — He does —
 What was I about to say ? By the mass, I was about to
 say something : — Where did I leave ?

Rey. At, closes in the consequence.

Pol. At, closes in the consequence, — *Ay, marry ;*
 He closes with you thus : — *I know the gentleman ;*
I saw him yesterday, or, t'other day,
Or then, or then ; with such, or such ; and, as you say,
There was he gaming ; there o'ertook in his rouse :
There falling out at tennis ; or, perchance,
I saw him enter such a house of sale,
(Videlicet, a brothel,) or so forth. —

See you now ;
 Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth :
 And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,
 With windlaces, and with assays of bias,
 By indirections find directions out ;
 So, by my former lecture and advice,
 Shall you my son : You have me, have you not ?

Rey. My lord, I have.

Pol. God be wi' you ; fare you well.

Rey. Good my lord, —

Pol. Observe his inclination in yourself.⁷

Rey. I shall, my lord.

⁶ — prenominate *crimes*,] i. e. crimes already named.

⁷ — in *yourself*.] *In your own person*, not by spies.

Pol. And let him ply his musick.

Rey.

Well, my lord.

[*Exit.*

Enter OPHELIA.

Pol. Farewell! — How now, Ophelia? what's the matter?

Oph. O, 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 unbrac'd;
No hat upon his head; his stockings foul'd,
Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ancle;⁸
Pale as his shirt; his knees knocking each other;
And with a look so piteous in purport,
As if he had been loosed out of hell,
To speak of horrors, — 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 stay'd he so;
At last, — a little shaking of mine arm,
And thrice his head thus waving up and down, —
He rais'd a sigh so piteous and profound,
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk,⁹
And end his being: That done, he lets me go:
And, with his head over his shoulder turn'd,
He seem'd to find his way without his eyes;

⁸ *Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ancle;*] *Down-gyved* means, hanging down like the loose cincture which confines the fetters round the ancles.

⁹ — *all his bulk,*] i. e. all his body.

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;
Whose violent property foredoes itself,¹
And leads the will to desperate undertakings,
As oft as any passion under heaven,
That does afflict our natures. I am sorry, —
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.
I am sorry, that with better heed, and judgment,
I had not quoted him:² I fear'd, he did but trifle,
And meant to wreck thee; but, beshrew my jealousy!
It seems, it is as proper to our age
To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions,
As it is common for the younger sort
To lack discretion.³ 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.⁴
Come. [*Exeunt.*

† "help," — MALONE.

¹ — foredoes *itself*.] To *foredo* is to destroy.

² *I had not quoted him* :] i. e. observed him.

³ — *it is as proper to our age, &c.* This is not the remark of a weak man. The vice of age is too much suspicion. Men long accustomed to the wiles of life *cast* commonly *beyond themselves*, let their cunning go farther than reason can attend it. This is always the fault of a little mind, made artful by long commerce with the world. JOHNSON.

⁴ *This must be known; which, being kept close, might move*

More grief to hide, than hate to utter love.] i. e. This must be made known to the king, for (being kept secret) the hiding Hamlet's love might occasion more mischief to us from him and the queen, than the uttering or revealing of it will occasion hate and resentment from Hamlet.

SCENE II.

A Room in the Castle.

*Enter King, Queen, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN,
and Attendants.*

King. Welcome, dear Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern!
Moreover that we much did long to see you,
The need, we have to use you, did provoke
Our hasty sending. Something have you heard
Of Hamlet's transformation; so I call it,
Since not the exterior nor the inward man
Resembles that it was: 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, — being of so young days brought up with him;
And, since, so neighbour'd to his youth and humour, —
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,
So much as from occasion you may glean,
Whether aught, to us unknown, afflicts him thus,
That, open'd, lies within our remedy.

Queen. Good gentlemen, he hath much talk'd of you;
And, sure I am, two men there are not living,
To whom he more adheres. If it will please you
To show us so much gentry⁵, and good will,
As to expend your time with us a while,
For the supply and profit of our hope,⁶
Your visitation shall receive such thanks
As fits a king's remembrance.

⁵ *To show us so much gentry,] Gentry, for complaisance.*

⁶ *For the supply, &c.] That the hope which your arrival has raised may be completed by the desired effect. JOHNSON.*

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

Guil. But we both obey;
And here give up ourselves, in the full bent,⁷
To lay our service freely at your feet,
To be commanded.

King. Thanks, Rosencrantz, and gentle Guildenstern.

Queen. Thanks, Guildenstern, and gentle Rosencrantz:

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

Guil. Heavens make our presence, and our practices,
Pleasant and helpful to him!

Queen. Ay, amen!

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN,
and some Attendants.]

Enter POLONIUS.

Pol. The ambassadors from Norway, my good lord,
Are joyfully return'd.

King. Thou still hast been the father of good news.

Pol. Have I, my lord? Assure you, my good liege,
I hold my duty, as I hold my soul,
Both to my God, and to my gracious king:
And I do think, (or else this brain of mine
Hunts not the trail of policy⁸ so sure
As it hath us'd to do,) that I have found
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

⁷ — *in the full bent,*] *The full bent,* is the utmost extremity of exertion. The allusion is to a bow bent as far as it will go.

⁸ — *the trail of policy* —] *The trail* is the course of an animal pursued by the scent.

King. O, speak of that; that do I long to hear.

Pol. Give first admittance to the ambassadors;
My news shall be the fruit⁹ to that great feast.

King. Thyself do grace to them, and bring them in.

[*Exit* POLONIUS.]

He tells me, my dear Gertrude, he hath found
The head and source of all your son's distemper.

Queen. I doubt, it is no other but the main;
His father's death, and our o'erhasty marriage.

Re-enter POLONIUS, with VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.

King. Well, we shall sift him. — Welcome, my good
friends!

Say, Voltimand, what from our brother Norway?

Volt. Most fair return of greetings, and desires.

Upon our first, he sent out to suppress
His nephew's levies; which to him appear'd
To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack;
But, better look'd into, he truly found
It was against your highness: Whereat griev'd, —
That so his sickness, age, and impotence,
Was falsely borne in hand¹, — sends out arrests
On Fortinbras; which he, in brief, obeys;
Receives rebuke from Norway; and, in fine,
Makes vow before his uncle, never more
To give the assay² of arms against your majesty.
Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,
Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee;
And his commission, to employ those soldiers,
So levied as before, against the Polack:
With an entreaty, herein further shown,

[*Gives a Paper.*]

⁹ — *the fruit* —] The *desert* after the meat.

¹ — *borne in hand*,] i. e. deceived, imposed on.

² *To give the assay* —] *To take the assay* was a technical expression, originally applied to those who tasted wine for princes and great men.

That it might please you to give quiet pass
Through your dominions for this enterprize;
On such regards of safety, and allowance,
As therein are set down.

King. It likes us well;
And, at our more consider'd time, we'll read,
Answer, and think upon this business.
Mean time, we thank you for your well-took labour:
Go to your rest; at night we'll feast together:
Most welcome home!

[*Exeunt* VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.]

Pol. This business is well ended.
My liege, and madam, to expostulate³
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.

³ *My liege, and madam, to expostulate*—] To *expostulate*, for to enquire or discuss.

WARBURTON makes the character of Polonius, a character only of manners, discriminated by properties superficial, accidental, and acquired. The poet intended a nobler delineation of a mixed character of manners and of nature. Polonius is a man bred in courts, exercised in business, stored with observation, confident in his knowledge, proud of his eloquence, and declining into dotage. His mode of oratory is truly represented as designed to ridicule the practice of those times, of prefaces that made no introduction, and of method that embarrassed rather than explained. This part of his character is accidental, the rest is natural. Such a man is positive and confident, because he knows that his mind was once strong, and knows not that it is become weak. Such a man excels in general principles, but fails in the particular application. He is knowing in retrospect, and ignorant in foresight. While he depends upon his memory, and can draw from his repositories of knowledge, he utters weighty sentences, and gives useful counsel; but as the mind in its enfeebled state cannot be kept long busy and intent, the old man is subject to sudden dereliction of his faculties, he loses the order of his ideas, and entangles himself in his own thoughts, till he recovers the leading principle, and falls again into his former train. This idea of dotage encroaching upon wisdom, will solve all the phenomena of the character of Polonius. JOHNSON.

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,
 Hath given me this: Now gather, and surmise.
 — *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. — Thus: —

In her excellent white bosom, these, &c. —

Queen. Came this from Hamlet to her?

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

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

*O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers; I have not
 art to reckon my groans: but that I love thee best, O 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 above⁴, hath his solicitings,
As they fell out by time, by means, and place,
All given to mine ear.

King. But how hath she
Receiv'd 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 perceiv'd 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 play'd the desk, or table-book ;
Or given my heart a working, mute and dumb ;
Or look'd upon this love with idle sight ;
What might you think⁵ ? 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 ;⁶

⁴ — more above,] is, moreover, besides.

⁵ *If I had play'd the desk, or table-book ;*
Or given my heart a working, mute and dumb ;
Or look'd upon this love with idle sight ;

What might you think?] i. e. If either I had conveyed intelligence between them, and been the confidant of their amours [*play'd the desk or table-book,*] or had connived at it, only observed them in secret, without acquainting my daughter with my discovery [*giving my heart a mute and dumb working ;*] or lastly, been negligent in observing the intrigue, and overlooked it [*look'd upon this love with idle sight ;*] or concealed it, what would you have thought of me ?

† “ precepts gave her,” — MALONE.

⁶ *Which done, she took the fruits of my advice ;*] She took the fruits of advice when she obeyed advice, the advice was then made fruitful.



And he, repulsed, (a short tale to make,)
Fell into a sadness ; then into a fast ;
Thence to a watch ; 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 prov'd otherwise ?

King. Not that I know.

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

[*Pointing to his head and shoulder.*

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 four hours to-
gether,
Here in the lobby.

Queen. So he does, indeed.

Pol. At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him :
Be you and I behind an arras then ;
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.

Enter HAMLET, reading.

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

Pol. Away, I do beseech you, both away ;

I'll board him⁷ presently : — O, give me leave. —

[*Exeunt King, Queen, and Attendants.*]

How does my good lord Hamlet ?

Ham. Well, God-'a-mercy.

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. How say you by that ? [*Aside.*] Still harping on my daughter : — yet he knew me not at first ; he said, I was a fishmonger : He is far gone, far gone : and truly in my youth I suffered much extremity for love ; very near this. I'll speak to him again. — 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 a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams : All of which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not

⁷ *I'll board him* —] i. e. accost, address him.

honesty to have it thus set down; for yourself, sir, shall be † as old as I am, if, like a crab, you could go backward.

Pol. Though this be madness, yet there's method in it. [*Aside.*] Will you walk out of the air, my lord?

Ham. Into my grave?

Pol. Indeed, that is out o'the air. — How pregnant sometimes his replies are⁸! 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 meeting between him and my daughter. — My honourable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.

Ham. You cannot, sir, take from me any thing 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!

Enter ROSENCRANTZ⁹ and GUILDENSTERN.

Pol. You go to seek the lord Hamlet; there he is.

Ros. God save you, sir! [*To POLONIUS.*

[*Exit POLONIUS.*

Guil. My honour'd lord! —

Ros. My most dear lord! —

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

Ros. As the indifferent children of the earth.

Guil. Happy, in that we are not overhappy; On fortune's cap we are not the very button.

Ham. Nor the soles of her shoe?

Ros. Neither, my lord.

† "should be" — MALONE.

⁸ *How pregnant, &c.*] *Pregnant* is ready, dexterous, apt.

⁹ *Rosencrantz* —] There was an ambassador of that name in England about the time when this play was written.

Ham. Then you live about her waist, or in the middle of her favours?

Guil. 'Faith, her privates we.

Ham. In the secret parts of fortune? 'O, most true; she is a strumpet. What news?

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

Ham. Then is doomsday near: But your news is not true. Let me question more in particular: What have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of fortune, that she sends you to prison hither?

Guil. Prison, my lord!

Ham. Denmark's a prison.

Ros. Then is the world one.

Ham. A goodly one; in which there are many confines, wards, and dungeons; Denmark being one of the worst.

Ros. We think not so, my lord.

Ham. Why, then 'tis none to you: for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so: to me it is a prison.

Ros. Why, then your ambition makes it one; 'tis too narrow for your mind.

Ham. O God! I could be bounded in a nut-shell, and count myself a king of infinite space; were it not that I have bad dreams.

Guil. Which dreams, indeed, are ambition; for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream.

Ham. A dream itself is but a shadow.

Ros. Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality, that it is but a shadow's shadow.

Ham. Then are our beggars, bodies¹; and our monarchs, and outstretch'd heroes, the beggars' sha-

¹ *Then are our beggars, bodies;*] Shakspeare seems here to design a ridicule of those declamations against wealth and greatness, that seem to make happiness consist in poverty.

dows: Shall we to the court? for, by my fay, I cannot reason.

Ros. Guil. We'll wait upon you.

Ham. No such matter: I will not sort you with the rest of my servants; for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended. But, 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: and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear, a halfpenny². Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, come; deal justly with me: come, come; nay, speak.

Guil. What should we say, my lord?

Ham. Any thing — 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? [To GUILDENSTERN.]

Ham. Nay, then I have an eye of you³; [*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,

² — too dear, a halfpenny.] i.e. a halfpenny too dear: they are worth nothing.

³ Nay, then I have an eye of you;] An eye of you means, I have a glimpse of your meaning.

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 is no such stuff in my thoughts.

Ham. 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 entertainment⁴ the players shall receive from you: we coted them on the way⁵; 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 humorous man shall end his part in peace: the clown shall make those laugh, whose lungs are tickled o'the sere; and the lady shall say her mind freely⁶, or the blank verse shall halt for't. — What players are they?

† "faculty!" — MALONE.

⁴ — lenten *entertainment* —] i. e. sparing, like the entertainments given in *Lent*.

⁵ — *we coted them on the way;*] To *cote* is to *overtake*.

⁶ — *the lady shall say her mind, &c.*] The lady shall mar the measure of the verse, rather than not express herself freely or fully.

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

Ham. How chanceth it, they travel ⁷? their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways.

Ros. I think, their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation.

Ham. 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. How comes it? Do they grow rusty?

Ros. Nay, their endeavour keeps in the wonted pace: But there is, sir, an aiery of children ⁸, little eyases, that cry out on the top of question ⁹, and are most tyrannically clapped for't: these are now the fashion; and so berattle the common stages, (so they call them,) that many, wearing rapiers, are afraid of goose quills, and dare scarce come thither.

Ham. What, are they children? who maintains them? how are they escoted ¹? Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing ²? will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players, (as it is most like, if their means are no better,) their writers do them wrong ³, to make them exclaim against their own succession?

⁷ *How chanceth it, they travel?*] To *travel* in Shakspeare's time was the technical word, for which we have substituted to *stroll*.

⁸ — *an aiery of children, &c.*] Relating to the playhouses then contending, the *Bankside*, the *Fortune*, &c. played by the children of his majesty's chapel.

⁹ — *little eyases, that cry out on the top of question,*] Little *eyases*; i. e. young nestlings, creatures just out of the egg. The meaning seems to allude to boys who ask a common question in the highest note of the voice, and declaim in common conversation.

¹ — *escoted?*] Paid. From the French *escot*, a shot or reckoning.

² *Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing?*] Will they follow the *profession* of players no longer than they keep the voices of boys, and sing in the choir?

³ — *their writers do them wrong, &c.*] I should have been very much surprised if I had *not* found Ben Jonson among the writers here alluded to. STEEVENS.

Ros. 'Faith, there has been much to do on both sides; and the nation holds it no sin, to tarre them on to controversy⁴: there was, for a while, no money bid for argument, unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question.

Ham. Is it possible?

Guil. O, there has been much throwing about of brains.

Ham. Do the boys carry it away?

Ros. Ay, that they do, my lord; Hercules and his load too.⁵

Ham. It is not very strange: for my uncle⁶ is king of Denmark; and those, that would make mouths at him while my father lived, give twenty, forty, fifty, an hundred ducats a-piece, for his picture in little.⁷ 'Sblood, there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out.

[*Flourish of Trumpets within.*]

Guil. There are the players.

Ham. Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. Your hands. Come then: the appurtenance of welcome is fashion and ceremony: let me comply⁸ with you in this garb; lest my extent to the players, which, I tell you, must show fairly outward, should more appear like entertainment than yours. You are welcome: but my uncle-father, and aunt-mother, are deceived.

⁴ —to tarre them on to controversy:] To provoke any animal to rage, is to tarre him. The word is said to come from the Greek word *ταρασσω*.

⁵ — Hercules and his load too.] The allusion may be to the *Globe* playhouse on the Bankside, the sign of which was *Hercules carrying the globe*.

⁶ *It is not very strange: for my uncle—*] I do not wonder that the new players have so suddenly risen to reputation, my uncle supplies another example of the facility with which honour is conferred upon new claimants. JOHNSON.

⁷ — in little.] i. e. in miniature.

⁸ — let me comply, &c.] To comply is apparently used in the sense of—to compliment.

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 hand-saw.⁹

Enter POLONIUS.

Pol. Well be with you, gentlemen!

Ham. Hark you, Guildenstern, — and you too; — at each ear a hearer; 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 prophecy, he comes to tell me of the players; mark it. — You say right, sir: o'Monday morning; 'twas then, indeed.

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 came each actor on his ass,* —

Pol. The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical, historical-pastoral, scene individable, or poem unlimited: Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light. For the law of writ¹, and the liberty, these are the only men.

Ham. O *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 loved passing well.*

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

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

⁹ — *I know a hawk from a hand-saw.*] A proverbial speech.

¹ *For the law of writ,*] *Writ*, for *writing*, *composition*.

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*², and then, you know, *It came to pass, As most like it was*, — The first row of the pious chanson³ will show you more: for look, my abridgment⁴ comes.

Enter Four or Five Players.

You are welcome, masters; welcome, all: — I am glad to see thee well: — welcome, good friends. — O, old friend! why, thy face is valanced⁵ since I saw thee last; Com'st thou to beard me⁶ 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.⁷ Pray God, your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not cracked within the ring.⁸ — Mas-

² Why, *As by lot, God wot*, — &c. The old song from which these quotations are taken, has a place in Dr. Percy's *Reliques of ancient English Poetry*.

³ — *the pious chanson* —] The *pious chansons* were a kind of *Christmas carols*, containing some scriptural history thrown into loose rhymes, and sung about the streets by the common people when they went at that season to solicit alms. Hamlet is here repeating some scraps from a song of this kind, and when Polonius enquires what follows them, he refers him to the *first row* (i. e. division) of one of these, to obtain the information he wanted.

⁴ — *my abridgment* —] He calls the players afterwards *the brief chronicles of the times*; but I think he now means only *those who will shorten my talk*. JOHNSON.

⁵ — *thy face is valanced* —] i. e. fringed with a beard. The valance is the fringes or drapery hanging round the tester of a bed.

⁶ — *to beard me* —] To *beard*, anciently signified to *set at defiance*.

⁷ — *by the altitude of a chopine*.] A *chioppine* is a high shoe, or rather, a clog, worn by the Italians.

⁸ — *be not cracked within the ring*.] That is, *cracked too much for use*. This is said to a young player who acted the parts of women.

ters, you are all welcome. We'll e'en to't like French falconers, fly at any thing we see : We'll have a speech straight : Come, give us a taste of your quality ; come, a passionate speech.

1 *Play.* 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 general⁹ : but it was (as I received it, and others, whose judgments, in such matters, cried in the top of mine¹,) an excellent play ; well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning. I remember, one said, there were no sallets in the lines, to make the matter savoury ; nor no matter in the phrase, that might indite the author of affection² ; but called it, an honest method³, as wholesome as sweet, and by very much more handsome than fine. One speech in it I chiefly loved : 'twas Æneas' tale to Dido ; and thereabout of it especially, where he speaks of Priam's slaughter : If it live in your memory, begin at this line ; let me see, let me see ; —

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
When he lay couched in the ominous horse,
Hath now this dread and black complexion smear'd
With heraldry more dismal ; head to foot
Now is he total gules⁴ ; horridly trick'd⁵*

⁹ — caviare to the general :] *Caviare* is a Russian delicacy made of the roe of the sturgeon. The *general*, the common people.

¹ — *cried in the top of mine,*] *Were higher than mine.*

² — *indite the author of affection :*] i. e. convict the author of being a fantastical *affected* writer.

³ — *an honest method,*] *Honest*, for *chaste*.

⁴ *Now is he total gules ;*] *Gules* is a term in the barbarous jargon peculiar to heraldry, and signifies *red*.

⁵ — *trick'd —*] i. e. smeared, painted. An heraldick term.

*With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons;
 Bak'd and impasted with the parching streets,
 That lend a tyrannous and a damned light
 To their lord's murder: Roasted in wrath, and fire,
 And thus o'er-sized with coagulate gore,
 With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus
 Old grandsire Priam seeks; — So proceed you.*

Pol. 'Fore God, my lord, well spoken; with good accent, and good discretion.

1 Play. *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. Then senseless Ilium,
 Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top
 Stoops to his base; and with a hideous crash
 Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear: for, lo! his sword
 Which was declining on the milky head
 Of reverend Priam, seem'd i'the air to stick:
 So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood;
 And, like a neutral to his will and matter,
 Did nothing.*

*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
 As hush as death: anon the dreadful thunder
 Doth rend the region: So, after Pyrrhus' pause,
 A roused vengeance sets him new a work;
 And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall
 On Mars's armour, forg'd for proof eterne,
 With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword
 Now falls on Priam. —*

*Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune! All you gods,
 In general synod, take away her power;
 Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel,*

*And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven,
As low as to the fiends!*

Pol. This is too long.

Ham. It shall to the barber's, with your beard. — Pr'ythee, say on: — He's for a jig, or a tale of bawdry, or he sleeps: — say on: come to Hecuba.

1 *Play.* *But who, ah woe! had seen the mobled queen*⁶ —

Ham. The mobled queen?

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

1 *Play.* *Run barefoot up and down, threat'ning the flames*

*With bisson rheum*⁷; *a clout upon that head,
Where late the diadem stood; and, for a robe,
About her lank and all o'er-teemed loins,
A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up;
Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd,
'Gainst fortune's state would treason have pronounc'd:
But if the gods themselves did see her then,
When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport
In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs;
The instant burst of clamour that she made,
(Unless things mortal move them not at all,)
Would have made milch the burning eye of heaven,
And passion in the gods.*

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

Ham. '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.

⁶ — *the mobled queen* —] *Mobled* or *mabled* signifies *veiled*; or according to Johnson, *huddled*, *grossly covered*.

⁷ *With bisson rheum*;] *Bisson* or *becsen*, i. e. blind. A word still in use in some parts of the north of England.

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

Ham. Odd's bodikin, man, 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.

[*Exit* POLONIUS, with some of the Players.]

Ham. Follow him, friends : we'll hear a play to-morrow. — Dost thou hear me, old friend ; can you play the murder of Gonzago ?

1 *Play.* 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 *Play.* Ay, my lord.

Ham. Very well. — Follow that lord ; and look you mock him not. [*Exit* Player.] My good friends, [*to* Ros. and GUIL.] I'll leave you till night : you are welcome to Elsinore.

Ros. Good my lord !

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.]

Ham. Ay, so, God be wi' you : — Now I am alone. O, 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,⁸
 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-dreams⁹, unpregnant of my cause,¹
 And can say nothing; no, not for a king,
 Upon whose property, and most dear life,
 A damn'd defeat was made.² Am I a coward?
 Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?
 Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face?
 Tweaks me by the nose? 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-liver'd, 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, kindless³ villain!
 Why, what an ass am I? This is most brave;
 That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,
 Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
 Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,
 And fall a cursing, like a very drab,
 A scullion!

⁸ — *the cue for passion,*] The *hint*, the *direction*. This phrase is theatrical, and occurs at least a dozen times in our author's plays.

⁹ *Like John a-dreams,*] *John a-dreams*, i. e. of *dreams*, means only *John the dreamer*; a nickname for any ignorant silly fellow.

¹ — *unpregnant of my cause,*] *Not quickened with a new desire of vengeance*; *not teeming with revenge*.

² *A damn'd defeat was made,*] *Defeat*, for *destruction*.

³ — *kindless* —] *Unnatural*.

Eye upon't! foh! About my brains!⁴ 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 proclaim'd 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 him⁵ to the quick; if he do blench,⁶
 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 this⁷: The play's the thing,
 Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king. [*Exit.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Room in the Castle.*

Enter King, Queen, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSEN-
 CRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

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

⁴ — *About my brains!*] *Wits, to your work. Brain, go about the present business.*

⁵ — *tent him—*] Search his wounds.

⁶ — *if he do blench,*] If he *shrink*, or start.

⁷ *More relative than this:*] *More nearly related, closely connected.*

Grating so harshly all his days of quiet
With turbulent and dangerous lunacy?

Ros. He does confess, he feels himself distracted;
But from what cause he will by no means speak.

Guil. 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 he receive you well?

Ros. Most like a gentleman.

Guil. But with much forcing of his disposition.

Ros. Niggard of question; but, of our demands,
Most free in his reply.

Queen. Did you assay him
To any pastime?

Ros. Madam, it so fell out, that certain players
We o'er-raught on the way⁸: 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 inclin'd.
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

⁸ — o'er-raught on the way:] O'er-raught, is over-reached, that is, over-took.

Affront Ophelia :⁹

Her father, and myself (lawful espials,)¹
Will so bestow ourselves, that, seeing, unseen,
We may of their encounter frankly judge ;
And gather by him, as he is behav'd,
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 way again,
To both your honours.

Oph. Madam, I wish it may.

[*Exit Queen.*

Pol. Ophelia, walk you here : — Gracious, so please
you,

We will bestow ourselves : — Read on this book ;

[*To OPHELIA.*

That show of such an exercise may colour
Your loneliness. — We are oft to blame in this, —
'Tis too much prov'd², that, with devotion's visage,
And pious action, we do sugar o'er
The devil himself.

King. O, 'tis too true ! how smart
A lash that speech doth give my conscience !
The harlot's cheek, beautied with plast'ring art,
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it,³
Than is my deed to my most painted word :

O heavy burden ! [Aside.

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

[*Exeunt King and POLONIUS.*

⁹ Affront *Ophelia* :] To *affront*, is only to meet directly.

¹ — *espials*,] i. e. spies.

² 'Tis too much prov'd,] It is found by too frequent experience.

³ — *more ugly to the thing that helps it*,] That is, compared with the thing that helps it.

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 arms against a sea of troubles,
 And, by opposing, end them ? — To die, — to sleep, —
 No more ; — and, by a sleep, to say we end
 The heart-ach, and the thousand natural shocks
 That flesh is heir to, — 'tis a consummation
 Devoutly to be wish'd. 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, ⁴
 Must give us pause : There's the respect, ⁵
 That makes calamity of so long life :
 For who would bear the whips and scorns of time, ⁶
 The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
 The pangs of despis'd 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 ? ⁷ who would fardels bear,
 To grunt and sweat under a weary life ;
 But that the dread of something after death, —

⁴ — *shuffled off this mortal coil,*] i. e. turmoil, bustle.

⁵ — *There's the respect,*] i. e. the consideration.

⁶ — *the whips and scorns of time,*] It may be remarked, that Hamlet, in his enumeration of miseries, forgets, whether properly or not, that he is a prince, and mentions many evils to which inferior stations only are exposed. JOHNSON.

⁷ — *might his quietus make*

With a bare bodkin ?] The first expression probably alluded to the writ of discharge, which was formerly granted to those barons and knights who personally attended the king on any foreign expedition ; and were therefore exempted from the claims of scutage, or a tax on every knight's fee. This discharge was called a *quietus*. A *bodkin* was the ancient term for a *small dagger*.

The undiscover'd 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 enterprizes of great pith and moment,
 With this regard, their currents turn awry,
 And lose the name of action. — Soft you, now!
 The fair Ophelia: — Nymph, in thy orisons⁸
 Be all my sins remember'd.

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 honour'd lord, you know right well, you did;
 And, with them, words of so sweet breath compos'd
 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.

⁸ — *Nymph, in thy orisons, &c.*] This is a touch of nature. Hamlet, at the sight of Ophelia, does not immediately recollect that he is to personate madness, but makes her an address grave and solemn, such as the foregoing meditation excited in his thoughts.

JOHNSON.

† “your honesty should” — MALONE.

Oph. Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce 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 likeness⁹ ; 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 indifferent 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, ambitious ; with more offences at my beck, than I have thoughts to put them in¹, 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.

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

Oph. O, help him, you sweet heavens !

Ham. 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 ; farewell : Or, if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool ; for wise men know well enough, what monsters

⁹ — into his likeness ;] The modern editors read *its* likeness ; but the text is right. Shakspeare and his contemporaries frequently use the personal for the neutral pronoun.

¹ — with more offences at my beck, than I have thoughts to put them in,] To put a thing into thought, is to think on it.

you make of them. To a nunnery, go; and quickly too. Farewell.

Oph. Heavenly powers, restore him!

Ham. I have heard of your paintings too, well enough; God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another: you jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nick-name God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance²: 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* HAMLET.]

Oph. O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword:
The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion, and the mould of form,³
The observ'd of all observers! quite, quite down!
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
That suck'd the honey of his musick vows,
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh;
That unmatch'd form and feature of blown youth,
Blasted with ecstasy⁴: O, woe is me!
To have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

Re-enter King and POLONIUS.

King. Love! his affections do not that way tend;
Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a little,
Was not like madness. There's something in his soul,
O'er which his melancholy sits on brood;
And, I do doubt, the hatch, and the disclose,

² — *make your wantonness your ignorance*:] You mistake by *wanton* affectation, and pretend to mistake by *ignorance*.

³ — *the mould of form*,] The model by whom all endeavoured to form themselves. JOHNSON.

⁴ — *with ecstasy*:] The word *ecstasy* was anciently used to signify some degree of alienation of mind.

Will be some danger : Which for to prevent,
 I have, in quick determination,
 Thus set it down ; 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 brains 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. — How now, Ophelia ?
 You need not tell us what lord Hamlet said ;
 We heard it all. — 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 ;⁵
 And I'll be plac'd, 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 unwatch'd go.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Hall in the same.

Enter HAMLET, and certain Players.

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

⁵ — *be round with him ;*] Reprimand him with freedom.

your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance, that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul, to hear a robustious periwig-pated⁶ fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings⁷; who, for the most part, are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows, and noise; I would have such a fellow whipped for o'er-doing Termagant⁸; it out-herods Herod⁹: Pray you, avoid it.

1 *Play*. 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'er-step not the modesty of nature; for any thing so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first, and now, was, and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirrour 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.¹ Now this, overdone, or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of which one², must, in your allowance³, o'er-weigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be players, that I have seen play, — and heard others praise, and that highly, — not to speak it profanely,

⁶ — periwig-pated —] This is a ridicule on the quantity of false hair worn in Shakspeare's time; for wigs were not in common use till the reign of Charles II.

⁷ — the groundlings;] In our early play-houses the pit had neither floor nor benches. Hence the term of *groundlings* for those who frequented it.

⁸ — Termagant;] *Termagaunt* (says Dr. Percy) is the name given in the old romances to the god of the *Sarazens*; in which he is constantly linked with *Mahound*, or *Mohammed*.

⁹ — out-herods Herod:] The character of *Herod*, in the ancient mysteries, was always a violent one.

¹ — pressure.] Resemblance as in a *print*.

² — the censure of which one.] The meaning is, "the censure of one of which."

³ — in your allowance,] In your approbation.

that, neither having the accent of christians, nor the gait of christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted, and bel-
lowed, that I have thought some of nature's journeymen
had made men, and not made them well, they imitated
humanity so abominably.

1 Play. I hope, we have reformed that indifferently
with us.

Ham. O, reform it altogether. And let those, that
play your clowns, speak no more than is set down for
them⁴: 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. [*Exeunt* Players.]

Enter POLONIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

How now, my lord? will the king hear this piece of
work?

Pol. And the queen too, and that presently.

Ham. Bid the players make haste. — [*Exit* POLONIUS.
Will you two help to hasten them?

Both. Ay, my lord.

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.]

Ham. What, ho; Horatio!

Enter HORATIO.

Hor. Here, sweet lord, at your service.

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

Hor. O, my dear lord, —

⁴ — *— speak no more than is set down for them.:*] The clown very
often addressed the audience, in the middle of the play, and entered
into a contest of raillery and sarcasm with such of the audience as
chose to engage with him. It is to this absurd practice that Shak-
speare alludes.

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
 flatter'd?

No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp ;
 And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee,⁵
 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 seal'd 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 bless'd are those,
 Whose blood and judgment⁶ are so well co-mingled,
 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 seest 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 damned ghost that we have seen ;
 And my imaginations are as foul
 As Vulcan's stithy.⁷ Give him heedful note :

⁵ — *the pregnant hinges of the knee,*] I believe the sense of *pregnant* in this place, is, *quick, ready, prompt*. JOHNSON.

⁶ *Whose blood and judgment* —] According to the doctrine of the four humours, *desire* and *confidence* were seated in the blood, and *judgment* in the phlegm, and the due mixture of the humours made a perfect character. JOHNSON.

⁷ — *Vulcan's stithy,*] *Stithy* is a smith's anvil.

For I mine eyes will rivet to his face ;
And, after, we will both our judgments join
In censure of his seeming.

Hor. Well, my lord :
If he steal aught, the whilst this play is playing,
And scape detecting, I will pay the theft.

Ham. They are coming to the play ; I must be idle :
Get you a place.

Danish March. A Flourish. Enter King, Queen, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and Others.

King. How fares our cousin Hamlet ?

Ham. Excellent, i'faith ; of the camelion's dish : I
eat the air, promise-crammed : You cannot feed cap-
pons so.

King. I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet ; these
words are not mine.

Ham. No, nor mine now.^s 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 i'the
Capitol ; Brutus killed me.

Ham. It was a brute part of him, to kill so capital a
calf there. — Be the players ready ?

Ros. Ay, my lord ; they stay upon your patience.

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

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

Pol. O ho ! do you mark that ? [*To the King.*]

^s — *nor mine now.*] A man's words, says the proverb, are his
own no longer than he keeps them unspoken.

Ham. Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

[*Lying down at OPHELIA'S Feet.*⁹

Oph. No, my lord.

Ham. I mean, my head upon your lap?

Oph. Ay, my lord.

Ham. Do you think, I meant country matters?

Oph. I think nothing, my lord.

Ham. That's a fair thought to lie between maid's legs.

Oph. What is, my lord?

Ham. Nothing.

Oph. You are merry, my lord.

Ham. Who, I?

Oph. Ay, my lord.

Ham. O! your 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.

Oph. Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

Ham. So long? Nay, then let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of sables.¹ O heavens! 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: or else shall he suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-horse²:

⁹ — at Ophelia's feet.] To lie at the feet of a mistress during any dramattick representation, seems to have been a common act of gallantry.

¹ *Nay, then let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of sables.*] Nay then, says Hamlet, if my father be so long dead as you say, let the devil wear black; as for me, so far from wearing a mourning dress, I'll wear the most costly and magnificent suit that can be procured: *a suit trimmed with sables*; which in our poet's time was the richest dress worn in England.

² — *suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-horse.*] Amongst the country May-games, there was an hobby-horse, which, when the puritanical humour of those times opposed and discredited these games, was brought by the poets and ballad-makers as an instance of

whose epitaph is, *For, O, for, O, the hobby-horse is forgot.*

*Trumpets sound. The dumb Show follows.*³

Enter a King and a Queen, very lovingly; the Queen embracing him, and he her. She kneels, and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up, and declines his head upon her neck: lays him down upon a bank of flowers; she, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the King's ears, and exit. The Queen returns; finds the King dead, and makes passionate action. The poisoner, with some two or three Mutes, comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away. The poisoner wooes the Queen with gifts; she seems loath and unwilling awhile, but, in the end, accepts his love. [Exeunt.

Oph. What means this, my lord?

Ham. Marry, this is miching mallecho; it means mischief.⁴

Oph. Belike, this show imports the argument of the play.

Enter Prologue.

Ham. We shall know by this fellow: the players cannot keep counsel; they'll tell all.

Oph. Will he tell us what this show meant?

the ridiculous zeal of the sectaries; from these ballads Hamlet quotes a line or two. WARBURTON.

³ — *The dumb Show follows.*] And appears to contain every circumstance of the murder of Hamlet's father. Now there is no apparent reason why the usurper should not be as much affected by this mute representation of his crimes, as he is afterwards when the same action is accompanied by words.

⁴ *Marry, this is miching mallecho; it means mischief.*] The word *miching* is daily used in the west of England for *playing truant*, or skulking about in private for some *sinister purpose*; and *malicho*, in-

Ham. Ay, or any show that you'll show him : Be not you ashamed to show⁵, he'll not shame to tell you what it means.

Oph. You are naught, you are naught ; I'll mark the play.

Pro. *For us, and for our tragedy,
Here stooping to your clemency,
We beg your hearing patiently.*

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

Oph. 'Tis brief, my lord.

Ham. As woman's love.

Enter a King and a Queen.

P. King. Full thirty times hath Phœbus' cart⁶ gone round

Neptune's salt wash, and Tellus' orb'd ground ;
And thirty dozen moons, with borrow'd sheen,⁷
About the world have times twelve thirties been ;
Since love our hearts, and Hymen did our hands,
Unite commutual in most sacred bands.

P. Queen. So many journeys may the sun and moon
Make us again count o'er, ere love be done !
But, woe 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 :

accurately written for *malheco*, signifies *mischief* ! so that *niching malicho* is *mischief on the watch for opportunity*.

⁵ — *Be not you ashamed to show, &c.*] The conversation of Hamlet with Ophelia, which cannot fail to disgust every modern reader, is probably such as was peculiar to the young and fashionable of the age of Shakspeare, which was, by no means, the age of delicacy. The poet is, however, blameable: for extravagance of thought, not indecency of expression, is the characteristick of madness, at least of such madness as should be represented on the scene.

STEEVENS.

⁶ — *cart* —] A chariot was anciently so called.

⁷ — *sheen*,] Splendor, lustre. JOHNSON.

For women fear too much, even as they love ;
 And women's fear and love hold quantity ;
 In neither aught, or in extremity.
 Now, what my love is, proof hath made you know ;
 And as my love is siz'd, my fear is so.
 Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear ;
 Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.

P. King. 'Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly
 too ;

My operant powers⁸ their functions leave to do :
 And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,
 Honour'd, belov'd ; and, haply, one as kind
 For husband shalt thou——

P. Queen. O, 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 kill'd the first.

Ham. That's wormwood.

P. Queen. The instances⁹, that second marriage move,
 Are base respects of thrift, but none of love ;
 A second time I kill my husband dead,
 When second husband kisses me in bed.

P. King. I do believe, you think what now you speak ;
 But, what we do determine, oft we break.
 Purpose is but the slave to memory ;
 Of violent birth, but poor validity :
 Which now, like fruit unripe, sticks on the tree ;
 But fall, unshaken, when they mellow be.
 Most necessary 'tis, that we forget
 To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt :¹
 What to ourselves in passion we propose,
 The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.

⁸ —— operant *powers* ——] *Operant* is active.

⁹ *The instances,*] *The motives.*

¹ —— *what to ourselves is debt :*] The performance of a resolution, in which only the *resolver* is interested, is a debt only to himself which he may therefore remit at pleasure.

The violence of either grief or joy
 Their own enactures with themselves destroy :²
 Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament ;
 Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.
 This world is not for aye ; nor 'tis not strange
 That even our loves should with our fortunes change ;
 For 'tis a question left us yet to prove,
 Whether love lead fortune, or else fortune love.
 The great man down, you mark, his favourite flies ;
 The poor advanc'd makes friends of enemies.
 And hitherto doth love on fortune tend :
 For who not needs, shall never lack a friend ;
 And who in want a hollow friend doth try,
 Directly seasons him his enemy.
 But, orderly to end where I begun, —
 Our wills, and fates, do so contráry run,
 That our devices still are overthrown ;
 Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own :
 So think thou wilt no second husband wed ;
 But die thy thoughts, when thy first lord is dead.

P. Queen. Nor earth to me give food, nor heaven
 light !

Sport and repose lock from me, day, and night !
 To desperation turn my trust and hope !
 An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope !³
 Each opposite, that blanks the face of joy,
 Meet what I would have well, and it destroy !
 Both here, and hence, pursue me lasting strife,
 If, once a widow, ever I be wife !

Ham. If she should break it now, —

[*To OPHELIA.*

² *Their own enactures with themselves destroy :*] What grief or joy enact or determine in their violence, is revoked in their abatement. *Enactures* is the word in the quarto ; all the modern editions have *enactors*. JOHNSON.

³ *An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope !*] May my whole liberty and enjoyment be to live on hermit's fare in a prison. *Anchor* is for *anchoret*. JOHNSON.

P. King. 'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here a while ;
My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile
The tedious day with sleep. [*Sleeps.*]

P. Queen. 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. O, 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.⁴ 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 LUCIANUS.

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.

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.

Oph. You are keen, my lord, you are keen.

Ham. It would cost you a groaning, to take off my edge.

Oph. Still better, and worse.

Ham. So you mistake your husbands. — Begin, murderer ; — leave thy damnable faces, and begin. Come ; —

⁴ *The mouse-trap.*] He calls it the *mouse-trap*, because it is —
“ _____ the thing
In which he'll *catch* the conscience of the king.”

— The croaking raven

Doth bellow for revenge.

Luc. 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 magick and dire property,
On wholesome life usurp immediately.

[*Pours the Poison into the Sleeper's Ears.*]

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.

Oph. The king rises.

Ham. What ! frightened with false fire !

Queen. How fares my lord ?

Pol. Give o'er the play.

King. Give me some light : — away !

Pol. Lights, lights, lights !

[*Exeunt all but HAMLET and HORATIO.*]

Ham. Why, let the stricken deer go weep,
The hart ungalled play :

For some must watch, while some must sleep ;

Thus runs the world away. —

Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers⁵, (if the
rest of my fortunes turn Turk⁶ with me,) with two Pro-
vencial roses on my razed⁷ shoes, get me a fellowship
in a cry of players⁸, sir ?

⁵ *Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers, &c.*] It appears from Decker's *Gul's Hornbooke*, that feathers were much worn on the stage in Shakspeare's time.

⁶ — turn Turk *with me*,]) This means to change condition fantastically.

⁷ — *Provencial roses on my razed shoes*,] *Provencial*, or (with the French *ç*) *Provençal*. He means roses of *Provence*, a beautiful species of rose, much cultivated ; but Mr. Malone reads *Provincial*, from *Provins* in France. *Razed shoes* may mean *slashed shoes*, i. e. with cuts or openings in them. The poet might have written *raised shoes*, i. e.

Hor. Half a share.

Ham. A whole one, I.⁹

For thou dost know, O Damon dear,¹
This realm dismantled was
Of Jove himself; and now reigns here
A very, very — peacock.

Hor. You might have rhymed.

Ham. O 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 musick; come, the
recorders. —

For if the king like not the comedy,
Why then, belike², — he likes it not, perdy.³

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Come, some musick.

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, marvellous distempered.

shoes with *high heels*; such as by adding to the stature, are supposed to increase the dignity of a player.

⁸ — *a cry of players*.] Allusion to a pack of hounds, which was once called a *cry* of hounds.

⁹ *Ham.* *A whole one, I.*] The actors in our author's time had not annual salaries as at present. The whole receipts of each theatre were divided into shares, of which the proprietors of the theatre, or *house-keepers*, as they were called, had some; and each actor had one or more shares, or part of a share, according to his merit.

¹ — *O Damon dear*.] Hamlet calls Horatio by this name, in allusion to the celebrated friendship between *Damon* and *Pythias*.

² *Why then, belike*.] Hamlet was going on to draw the consequence, when the courtiers entered. JOHNSON.

³ — *he likes it not, perdy*.] *Perdy* is the corruption of *par Dieu*, and is not uncommon in the old plays.

Ham. With drink, sir?⁴

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, hath 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. O 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 trade⁵ with us?

Ros. My lord, you once did love me.

⁴ *With drink, sir?*] Hamlet takes particular care that his uncle's love of drink shall not be forgotten.

⁵ — *further trade* —] Further business; further dealing.

Ham. And do still, by these pickers and stealers.⁶

Ros. Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper? you do, surely, but 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.⁷

*Enter the Players, with Recorders.*⁸

O, the recorders: — let me see one. — To withdraw with you⁹: — Why do you go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would drive me into a toil?

Guil. O, 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.

Guil. I know no touch of it, my lord.

⁶ — *by these pickers, &c.*] By these hands.

⁷ — *the proverb is something musty.*] The remainder of this old proverb is —

“*While grass doth growe, the silly horse he starves.*”

Hamlet means to intimate, that whilst he is waiting for the succession to the throne of Denmark, he may himself be taken off by death.

⁸ — *Recorders.*] i. e. a kind of flute, or flagelet.

⁹ *To withdraw with you.*] Here Mr. Malone adds the following stage direction: [*Taking Guildenstern aside.*] But these obscure words may refer to some gesture which Guildenstern had used, and which, at first, was interpreted by Hamlet into a signal for him to attend the speaker into another room. “To withdraw with you?” (says he) Is that your meaning? But finding his friends continue to move mysteriously about him, he adds, with some resentment, a question more easily intelligible. STEEVENS.

Ham. 'Tis as easy as lying : govern these ventages¹ with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent musick. Look you, these are the stops.

Guil. But these cannot I command to any utterance 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 musick, excellent voice, in this little organ ; yet cannot you make it speak. S'blood, do you think, I am easier to be played on than a pipe ? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, you cannot play upon me.

Enter POLONIUS.

God bless you, sir !

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 will I come to my mother by and by. — They fool me to the top of my bent². — I will come by and by.

Pol. I will say so.

[*Exit* POLONIUS.]

Ham. By and by is easily said. — Leave me, friends.

[*Exeunt* ROS. GUIL. HOR. &c.]

¹ — *ventages* —] The holes of a flute.

² *They fool me to the top of my bent.*] They compel me to play the fool, till I can endure it no longer.

'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 business as the bitter day
 Would quake to look on. Soft ; now to my mother. —
 O, heart, lose not thy nature ; let not ever
 The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom :
 Let me be cruel, not unnatural :
 I will speak daggers to her, but use none ;
 My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites :
 How in my words soever she be shent,³
 To give them seals⁴ never, my soul, consent ! *[Exit.*

SCENE III.

A Room in the same.

Enter King, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

King. I like him not ; nor stands it safe with us,
 To let his madness range. Therefore, prepare you ;
 I your commission will forthwith despatch,
 And he to England shall along with you :
 The terms of our estate may not endure
 Hazard so near us, as doth hourly grow
 Out of his lunes.⁵

Guil. We will ourselves provide :
 Most holy and religious fear it is,
 To keep those many many bodies safe,
 That live, and feed, upon your majesty.

Ros. The single and peculiar life is bound,
 With all the strength and armour of the mind,

³ — *be shent,*] To *shend*, is to reprove harshly, to treat with rough language.

⁴ *To give them seals* —] i. e. put them in execution.

⁵ *Out of his lunes,*] i. e. his *madness, frenzy.* Mr. Malone reads *lunacies.*

To keep itself from 'noyance ; but much more
 That spirit, upon whose weal depend and rest
 The lives of many. The cease of majesty
 Dies not alone ; but, like a gulf, doth draw
 What's near it, with it : it is a massy wheel,
 Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,
 To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things
 Are mortis'd and adjoin'd ; which, when it falls,
 Each small annexment, petty consequence,
 Attends the boist'rous ruin. Never alone
 Did the king sigh, but with a general groan.

King. Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage ;
 For we will fetters put upon this fear,
 Which now goes too free-footed.

Ros. Guil.

We will haste us.

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.]

Enter POLONIUS.

Pol. My lord, he's going to his mother's closet :
 Behind the arras I'll convey myself,⁶
 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 mother,
 Since nature makes them partial, should o'erhear
 The speech, of vantage⁷. Fare you well, my liege :
 I'll call upon you ere you go to bed,
 And tell you what I know.

King.

Thanks, dear my lord.

[*Exit* POLONIUS.]

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,

⁶ *Behind the arras I'll convey myself,*] The arras hangings in Shakespeare's time, were hung at such a distance from the walls, that a person might easily stand behind them unperceived.

⁷ — *of vantage.*] By some opportunity of secret observation.

Though inclination be as sharp as will ;⁸
 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 murder ! —
 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 ?⁹
 In the corrupted currents of this world,
 Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice ;
 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 can not repent ?¹

⁸ *Though inclination be as sharp as will ;*] What the king means to say, is, " That though he was not only *willing* to pray, but strongly *inclined* to it, yet his intention was defeated by his guilt.

⁹ *May one be pardon'd, and retain the offence ?*] He that does not amend what can be amended, *retains* his offence. The king kept the crown from the right heir. JOHNSON.

¹ *Yet what can it, when one can not repent ?*] *What can repentance do for a man that cannot be penitent*, for a man who has only part of penitence, distress of conscience, without the other part, resolution of amendment ? JOHNSON.

O wretched state! O bosom, black as death!
 O limed soul²; 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:³
 A villain kills my father; and, for that,
 I, his sole son, do this same villain send
 To heaven.
 Why, this is hire and salary, not revenge.
 He took my father grossly, full of bread;
 With all his crimes broad blown, as flush 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:⁴
 When he is drunk, asleep, or in his rage;
 Or in the incestuous pleasures of his bed;
 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,

² *O limed soul;*] This alludes to *bird-lime*.

³ — *That would be scann'd:*] i. e. that should be considered estimated.

⁴ *Up, sword; and know thou a more horrid hent:*] To *hent* is used by Shakspeare for to *seize*, to *catch*, to *lay hold on*. *Hent* is, therefore, *hold*, or *seizure*. *Lay hold on him, sword, at a more horrid time*,

SCENE IV. PRINCE OF DENMARK. 345

As hell, whereto it goes.⁵ My mother stays :
This physick 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 IV.

Another Room in the same.

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 ;
And that your grace hath screen'd and stood between
Much heat and him. I'll silence me e'en here.⁶
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 offended.

Queen. Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

Ham. Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

⁵ *As hell, whereto it goes.*] This speech, in which Hamlet, represented as a virtuous character, is not content with taking blood for blood, but contrives damnation for the man that he would punish, is too horrible to be read or to be uttered. JOHNSON.

This speech of Hamlet's, as Johnson observes, is horrible indeed ; yet some moral may be extracted from it, as all his subsequent calamities were owing to this savage refinement of revenge.

M. MASON.

⁶ — *I'll silence me e'en here.*] i. e. *I'll use no more words.*

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?

[*Draws.*]

Dead, for a ducat, dead.

[*HAMLET makes a pass through the Arras.*]

Pol. [*behind.*] O, I am slain.

[*Falls, and dies.*]

Queen. O me, what hast thou done?

Ham. Nay, I know not:

Is it the king?

[*Lifts up the Arras, and draws forth POLONIUS.*]

Queen. O, 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!⁷

Ham. Ay, lady, 'twas my word. —
Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!

[*To POLONIUS.*]

I took thee for thy better; take thy fortune:

Thou find'st, to be too busy, is some danger. —

Leave wringing of your hands: Peace; sit you down,

⁷ *Queen.* *As kill a king!*] This exclamation may be considered as some hint that the queen had no hand in the murder of Hamlet's father.

And let me wring your heart: for so I shall,
 If it be made of penetrable stuff;
 If damned custom have not braz'd 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 grace and blush 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: O, such a deed
 As from the body of contraction⁸ 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,
 That roars so loud, and thunders in the index?⁹

Ham. Look here, upon this picture, and on this;¹
 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;

⁸ — from the body of contraction —] *Contraction* for *marriage contract*.

⁹ — and thunders in the index?] Bullokar in his *Expositor*, 8vo. 1616, defines an *Index* by "A table in a booke." The *table* was almost always *prefixed* to the books of our poet's age. *Indexes*, in the sense in which we now understand the word, were very uncommon.

¹ *Look here, upon this picture, and on this;*] It is evident from the following words,

"A station, like the herald Mercury," &c.
 that these pictures which are introduced as miniatures on the stage, were meant for whole-lengths, being part of the furniture of the queen's closet.

A station like the herald Mercury,²
 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 batten³ 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 judgment
 Would step from this to this ? Sense, sure, you have,
 Else, could you not have motion⁴ : But, sure, that sense
 Is apoplex'd : for madness would not err ;
 Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd,
 But it reserv'd some quantity of choice,
 To serve in such a difference. What devil was't,
 That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind ?⁵
 Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,
 Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,
 Or but a sickly part of one true sense
 Could not so mope.⁶
 O shame ! where is thy blush ? Rebellious hell,
 If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,⁷

² *A station like the herald Mercury, &c.] Station, in this instance, does not mean the spot where any one is placed, but the act of standing.*

³ — *batten* —] i. e. to grow fat. *Bat* is an ancient word for *increase*.

⁴ — *Sense, sure, you have,*

Else could you not have motion:] Sense is sometimes used by Shakspeare for sensation or sensual appetite: as motion is the effect produced by the impulse of nature.

⁵ — *at hoodman-blind?] Probably the same as blindman's-buff.*

⁶ *Could not so mope.] i. e. could not exhibit such marks of stupidity.*

⁷ *If thou canst mutine, &c.] To mutine, was the ancient term, signifying to rise in mutiny.*

To flaming youth let virtue be as wax,
 And melt in her own fire : proclaim no shame,
 When the compulsive ardour gives the charge ;
 Since frost itself as actively doth burn,
 And reason panders will.

Queen. O Hamlet, speak no more :
 Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul ;
 And there I see such black and grained ⁸ spots,
 As will not leave their tinct. ⁹

Ham. Nay, but to live
 In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed ;¹
 Stew'd in corruption ; honeying, and making love
 Over the nasty stye ; —

Queen. O, speak to me no more ;
 These words, like daggers, enter in mine ears ;
 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 :²
 A cutpurse of the empire and the rule ;
 That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,
 And put it in his pocket !

Queen. No more.

Enter Ghost.

Ham. A king
 Of shreds and patches : —³
 Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,

⁸ — *grained* —] Died in grain, or perhaps, indented.

⁹ *As will not leave their tinct.*] To leave is to part with, give up, resign.

¹ — *enseamed bed* ;] i. e. *greasy* bed.

² — *vice of kings* :] A low mimick of kings. The vice is the fool of a farce ; from whence the modern *punch* is descended.

³ *A king*

Of shreds and patches :] This is said, pursuing the idea of the *vice of kings*. The *vice* was dressed as a fool, in a coat of party-coloured patches.

You heavenly guards! — What would your gracious figure?

Queen. Alas, he's mad.

Ham. Do you not come your tardy son to chide,
That, laps'd in time and passion⁴, let's go by
The important acting of your dread command?
O, say!

Ghost. Do not forget: This visitation
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.
But, look! amazement on thy mother sits:
O, step between her and her fighting soul;
Conceit in weakest bodies⁵ strongest works:
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?
Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep;
And as the sleeping soldiers in the alarm,
Your bedded hair, like life in excrements,⁶
Starts up, and stands on end. O 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 conjoin'd, preaching to stones,
Would make them capable.⁷ — Do not look upon me;
Lest, with this piteous action, you convert
My stern effects⁸: then what I have to do
Will want true colour; tears, perchance, for blood.

⁴ — *laps'd in time and passion,*] That, having suffer'd *time* to *slip*, and *passion* to *cool*, *let's go*, &c.

⁵ *Conceit in weakest bodies* —] *Conceit* for *imagination*.

⁶ — *like life in excrements,*] Not only the hair of animals having neither life nor sensation was called an *excrement*, but the feathers of birds had the same appellation.

⁷ *Would make them capable.*] *Capable* here signifies *intelligent*; endued with understanding.

⁸ *My stern effects*:] *Effects* for actions; deeds *effected*.

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 liv'd !

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 musick : It is not madness,
That I have utter'd : 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 ;
And do not spread the compost⁹ on the weeds,
To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue :
For in the fatness of these pursy times,
Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg ;
Yea, curb¹ and woo, for leave to do him good.

Queen. O Hamlet ! thou hast cleft my heart in twain.

Ham. O throw away the worser 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.

⁹ — do not spread the compost, &c.] Do not, by any new indulgence, heighten your former offences.

¹ — curb —] That is, bend and truckle ; Fr. courber.

That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat
 Of habit's devil, is angel yet in this;
 That to the use of actions fair and good
 He likewise gives a frock, or livery,
 That aptly is put on: Refrain to-night:
 And that shall lend a kind of easiness
 To the next abstinence: the next more easy:
 For use almost can change the stamp of nature,
 And either curb the devil, or throw him out
 With wond'rous potency. Once more, good night;
 And when you are desirous to be bless'd,
 I'll blessing beg of you. — For this same lord,

[*Pointing to* POLONIUS.]

I do repent: but heaven hath pleas'd it so, —
 To punish me with this, and this with me,²
 That I must be their scourge and minister.
 I will bestow him, and will answer well
 The death I gave him. So, again, good night!
 I must be cruel, only to be kind:
 Thus bad begins, and worse remains behind. —
 But one word more, good lady.

Queen. What shall I do?

Ham. Not this, by no means, that I bid you do:
 Let the bloat king³ tempt you again to bed;
 Pinch wanton on your cheek; call you, his mouse;⁴
 And let him, for a pair of reechy kisses,⁵
 Or paddling in your neck with his damn'd fingers,
 Make you to ravel all this matter out,
 That I essentially am not in madness,

² — *To punish me with this, and this with me,*] To punish me by making me the instrument of this man's death, and to punish this man by my hand.

³ *Let the bloat king* —] This again hints at his intemperance. He had already drank himself into a dropsy. BLACKSTONE.

⁴ — *his mouse:*] *Mouse* was once a term of endearment.

⁵ — *reechy kisses,*] *Reechy* is smoky. The author meant to convey a coarse idea, and was not very scrupulous in his choice of an epithet.

But mad in craft. 'Twere good, you let him know :
 For who, that's but a queen, fair, sober, wise,
 Would from a paddock, from a bat, a gib,⁶
 Such dear concernings hide ? who would do so ?
 No, in despite of sense, and secrecy,
 Unpeg the basket on the house's top,
 Let the birds fly ; and, like the famous ape,
 To try conclusions⁷, in the basket creep,
 And break your own neck down.

Queen. Be thou assur'd, if words be made of breath,
 And breath of life, I have no life to breathe
 What thou hast said to me.

Ham. I must to England⁸ ; you know that ?

Queen. Alack,
 I had forgot ; 'tis so concluded on.

Ham. There's letters seal'd : and my two school-fel-
 lows, —

Whom I will trust, as I will adders fang'd, —⁹
 They bear the mandate ; they must sweep my way,
 And marshal me to knavery : Let it work ;
 For 'tis the sport, to have the engineer
 Hoist¹ with his own petar : and it shall go hard,
 But I will delve one yard below their mines,
 And blow them at the moon : O, 'tis most sweet,
 When in one line two crafts directly meet.²—
 This man shall set me packing.
 I'll lug the guts into the neighbour room : —

⁶ — a gib,] *Gib* was a common name for a cat.

⁷ *To try conclusions,*] i. e. experiments.

⁸ *I must to England ;*] Shakspeare does not inform us how Hamlet came to know that he was to be sent to England. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern were made acquainted with the king's intentions for the first time in the very last scene ; and they do not appear to have had any communication with the prince since that time.

⁹ — *adders fang'd,*] That is, adders with their *fangs* or *poisonous teeth*, undrawn.

¹ *Hoist, &c.*] *Hoist* for *hoised* ; as *past* for *passed*.

² *When in one line two crafts directly meet.*] Still alluding to a *countermine*.

Mother, good night. — Indeed, this counsellor
Is now most still, most secret, and most grave,
Who was in life a foolish prating knave.
Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you :³
Good night, mother.

[*Exeunt severally; HAMLET dragging in POLONIUS.*

ACT IV.⁴

SCENE I. — *The same.*

Enter King, Queen, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

King. There's matter in these sighs ; these profound
heaves ;
You must translate : 'tis fit we understand them :
Where is your son ?

Queen. Bestow this place on us a little while. —

[*To ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN,
who go out.*

Ah, my good lord, what have I seen to-night !

King. What, Gertrude ? How does Hamlet ?

Queen. Mad as the sea, and wind, when both contend
Which is the mightier : In his lawless fit,
Behind the arras hearing something stir,

³ *Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you :*] Shakspeare has been unfortunate in his management of the story of this play, the most striking circumstances of which arise so early in its formation, as not to leave him room for a conclusion suitable to the importance of its beginning. After this last interview with the ghost, the character of Hamlet has lost all its consequence. STEEVENS.

⁴ *Act IV.*] This play is printed in the old editions without any separation of the Acts. The division is modern and arbitrary ; and is here not very happy, for the pause is made at a time when there is more continuity of action than in almost any other of the scenes.

Whips out his rapier, cries †, *A rat! a rat!*
And, in this brainish apprehension, kills
The unseen good old man.

King. O heavy deed!
It had been so with us, had we been there:
His liberty is full of threats to all;
To you yourself, to us, to every one.
Alas! how shall this bloody deed be answer'd?
It will be laid to us, whose providence
Should have kept short, restrain'd, and out of haunt,⁵
This mad young man: but, so much was our love,
We would not understand what was most fit;
But, like the owner of a foul disease,
To keep it from divulging, let it feed
Even on the pith of life. Where is he gone?

Queen. To draw apart the body he hath kill'd:
O'er whom his very madness, like some ore,
Among a mineral⁶ of metals base,
Shows itself pure; he weeps for what is done.

King. O, Gertrude, come away!
The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch,
But we will ship him hence: and this vile deed
We must, with all our majesty and skill,
Both countenance and excuse. — Ho! Guildenstern!

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Friends both, go join you with some further aid:
Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,
And from his mother's closet hath he dragg'd him:
Go, seek him out; speak fair, and bring the body
Into the chapel. I pray you, haste in this.

[*Exeunt Ros. and GUIL.*

Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends;
And let them know, both what we mean to do,

† "and cries," — MALONE.

⁵ — out of haunt,] i. e. out of company.

⁶ Among a mineral —] *Minerals are mines.*

And what's untimely done: so, haply, slander, —
 Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter,
 As level as the cannon to his blank,⁷
 Transports his poison'd shot, — may miss our name,
 And hit the woundless air. — O come away!
 My soul is full of discord, and dismay. [Exeunt.]

SCENE II.

Another Room in the same.

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. — Safely stowed, — [ROSEN. &c. *within.*
 Hamlet! lord Hamlet!] But soft, — what noise? who
 calls on Hamlet? O, here they come.

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Ros. What have you done, my lord, with the dead
 body?

Ham. Compounded it with dust, whereto 'tis kin.

Ros. Tell us where 'tis; that we may take it thence,
 And bear it to the chapel.

Ham. Do not believe it.

Ros. Believe what?

Ham. That I can keep your counsel, and not mine
 own. Besides, to be demanded of a sponge! — what re-
 plication should be made by the son of a king?

Ros. Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

Ham. Ay, sir; that soaks up the king's countenance,
 his rewards, his authorities. But such officers do the
 king best service in the end: He keeps them, like an
 ape⁸, in the corner of his jaw; first mouthed, to be last
 swallowed: When he needs what you have gleaned; it

⁷ — *cannon to his blank,*] The *blank* was the white mark at
 which shot or arrows were directed.

⁸ — *like an ape,*] i. e. as an ape does an apple.

SCENE III. PRINCE OF DENMARK. 357

is but squeezing you, and, sponge, you shall be dry again.

Ros. I understand you not, my lord.

Ham. I am glad of it: A knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear.

Ros. My lord, you must tell us where the body is, and go with us to the king.

Ham. The body is with the king, but the king is not with the body. The king is a thing —

Guil. A thing, my lord?

Ham. Of nothing: bring me to him. Hide fox, and all after.⁹ [Exeunt.

SCENE III.

Another Room in the same.

Enter King, attended.

King. I have sent to seek him, and to find the body. How dangerous is it, that this man goes loose? Yet must not we put the strong law on him: He's lov'd of the distracted multitude, Who like not in their judgment, but their eyes; And, where 'tis so, the offender's scourge is weigh'd, But never the offence. To bear all smooth and even, This sudden sending him away must seem Deliberate pause: Diseases, desperate grown, By desperate appliance are reliev'd.

Enter ROSENCRANTZ.

Or not at all. — How now? what hath befallen?

Ros. Where the dead body is bestow'd, my lord, We cannot get from him.

King. But where is he?

⁹ — [Hide fox, &c.] There is a play among children, called *Hide fox, and all after.*

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

King. Bring him before us.

Ros. Ho, Guildenstern! bring in my lord.

Enter HAMLET and GUILDENSTERN.

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 politick worms are e'en at him. Your worm is your only emperor for diet: we fat all creatures else, to fat us; and we fat ourselves for maggots: Your fat king, and your lean beggar, is but variable service; two dishes, but to one table; that's the end.

King. Alas, alas!

Ham. A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king; and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm.

King. What dost thou mean by this?

Ham. Nothing, but to show you how a king may go a progress¹ through the guts of a beggar.

King. Where is Polonius?

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

King. Go seek him there. [*To some Attendants.*]

Ham. He will stay till you come.

[*Exeunt Attendants.*]

King. Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety, —
Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve
For that which thou hast done, — must send thee hence
With fiery quickness: Therefore, prepare thyself;

¹ — go a progress —] Alluding to the royal journeys of state, always styled *progresses*; a familiar idea to those who, like our author, lived during the reigns of queen Elizabeth and king James I.

The bark is ready, and the wind at help²,
The associates tend, and every thing is bent
For England.

Ham. For England?

King. Ay, Hamlet.

Ham. Good.

King. So is it, if thou knew'st 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 ;

Delay it not, I'll have him hence to-night :

Away ; for every thing is seal'd and done

That else leans on the affair : Pray you, make haste.

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ and GUIL-
DENSTERN.

And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught,
(As my great power thereof may give thee sense ;
Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red
After the Danish sword, and thy free awe
Pays homage to us,) thou may'st not coldly set³
Our sovereign process ; which imports at full,
By letters conjuring to that effect,
The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England ;
For like the hectick in my blood he rages,
And thou must cure me : Till I know 'tis done,
Howe'er my haps⁴, my joys will ne'er begin.

[*Exit.*

² — *the wind at help,*] i. e. at hand, ready.

³ — *thou may'st not coldly set —*] i. e. set at nought.

⁴ *Howe'er my haps,*] i. e. whatever befall me.

SCENE IV.

A Plain in Denmark.

Enter FORTINBRAS, and Forces, marching.

For. Go, captain, from me greet the Danish king;
Tell him, that, by his licence, Fortinbras
Craves the conveyance of a promis'd march
Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.
If that his majesty would aught with us,
We shall express our duty in his eye,⁵
And let him know so.

Cap. I will do't, my lord.

For. Go softly on.

[*Exeunt FORTINBRAS and Forces.*]

Enter HAMLET, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, &c.

Ham. Good sir, whose powers are these?

Cap. They are of Norway, sir.

Ham. How purpos'd, sir,
I pray you?

Cap. Against some part of Poland.

Ham. Who
Commands them, sir?

Cap. The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.

Ham. Goes it against the main of Poland, sir,
Or for some frontier?

Cap. Truly to speak, sir, and with no addition,
We go to gain a little patch of ground,
That hath in it no profit but the name.
To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it;
Nor will it yield to Norway, or the Pole,
A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee.

⁵ — *in his eye,*] i. e. in his presence. The phrase appears to have been formularly.

Ham. Why, then the Polack never will defend it.

Cap. Yes, 'tis already garrison'd.

Ham. Two thousand souls, and twenty thousand ducats,

Will not debate the question of this straw :
This is the imposthume of much wealth and peace ;
That inward breaks, and shows no cause without
Why the man dies. — I humbly thank you, sir.

Cap. God be wi'you, sir. [*Exit* Captain.

Ros. Will't please you go, my lord ?

Ham. I will be with you straight. Go a little before.

[*Exeunt* Ros. and GUIL.

How all occasions do inform against me,
And spur my dull revenge ! What is a man,
If his chief good, and market of his time,⁶
Be but to sleep and feed ? a beast, no more.
Sure, he, that made us with such large discourse,⁷
Looking before, and after, gave us not
That capability and godlike reason
To fust in us unus'd. Now, whether it be
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple⁸
Of thinking too precisely on the event, —
A thought, which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom,
And, ever, three parts coward, — I do not know
Why yet I live to say, *This thing's to do* ;
Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means,
To do't. Examples, gross as earth, exhort me :
Witness, this army of such mass, and charge,
Led by a delicate and tender prince ;
Whose spirit, with divine ambition puff'd,
Makes mouths at the invisible event ;
Exposing what is mortal, and unsure,
To all that fortune, death, and danger, dare,

⁶ — *chief good, and market of his time, &c.*] If his highest good, and that for which he sells his time, be to sleep and feed.

⁷ *large discourse,*] Such latitude of comprehension, such power of reviewing the past, and anticipating the future.

⁸ — *some craven scruple* —] Some cowardly scruple.

Even for an egg-shell. Rightly to be great,
 Is, not to stir without great argument;⁹
 But greatly to find quarrel in a straw,
 When honour's at the stake. How stand I then,
 That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,
 Excitements of my reason, and my blood,
 And let all sleep? while, to my shame, I see
 The imminent death of twenty thousand men,
 That, for a fantasy, and trick of fame,
 Go to their graves like beds; fight for a plot¹
 Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
 Which is not tomb enough, and continent,²
 To hide the slain? — O, from this time forth,
 My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth! [Exit.

SCENE V.

Elsinore. *A Room in the Castle.*

Enter Queen and HORATIO.

Queen. — I will not speak with her.

Hor. She is importunate; indeed, distract;
 Her mood will needs be pitied.

Queen. What would she have?

Hor. She speaks much of her father; says, she hears,
 There's tricks i'the world; and hems, and beats her
 heart;

Spurns enviously at straws³; speaks things in doubt,
 That carry but half sense: her speech is nothing,

⁹ — *Rightly to be great,*

Is, not to stir without, &c.] But then, honour is an argument, or subject of debate, sufficiently great, and when honour is at stake, we must find cause of quarrel in a straw.

¹ *a plot]* — A piece, or portion.

² — *continent,]* *Continent,* in our author, means that which comprehends or encloses.

³ *Spurns enviously at straws;]* *Envy* is much oftener put by our poet (and those of his time) for direct *aversion*, than for *malignity conceived at the sight of another's excellence or happiness.*

Yet the unshaped use of it doth move
 The hearers to collection⁴; they aim at it,⁵
 And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts;
 Which, as her winks, and nods, and gestures yield them,
 Indeed would make one think, there might be thought,
 Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.⁶

Queen. 'Twere good, she were spoken with; for she
 may strew

Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds:

Let her come in.

[*Exit* HORATIO.]

To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,
 Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss:⁷
 So full of artless jealousy is guilt,
 It spills itself, in fearing to be spilt.

Re-enter HORATIO, *with* OPHELIA.

Oph. Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?

Queen. How now, Ophelia?

Oph. *How should I your true love know*⁸

From another one?

By his cockle hat and staff,

*And his sandal shoon.*⁹

[*Singing.*]

⁴ — to collection;] i. e. to deduce consequences from such premises; or, as Mr. M. Mason observes, "endeavour to collect some meaning from them."

⁵ — *they aim at it,*] To aim is to guess.

⁶ *Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.*] i. e. though her meaning cannot be certainly collected, yet there is enough to put a mischievous interpretation to it.

⁷ — *to some great amiss:*] Shakspeare is not singular in his use of this word as a substantive. Each toy is, each trifle.

⁸ *How should I your true love, &c.*] There is no part of this play in its representation on the stage, more pathetick 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 J. REYNOLDS.

⁹ *By his cockle hat and staff,*

And his sandal shoon.] This is the description of a pilgrim.

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

Oph. Say you? nay, pray you, mark.

He is dead and gone, lady, [Sings.
He is dead and gone;
At his head a grass-green turf,
At his heels a stone.

O, ho!

Queen. Nay, but Ophelia, ——

Oph. Pray you, mark.

White his shroud as the mountain snow,
 [Sings.

Enter King.

Queen. Alas, look here, my lord.

Oph. *Larded*¹ *all with sweet flowers;*
Which bewept to the grave did go,
With true-love showers.

King. How do you, pretty lady?

Oph. Well, God'ield you²! They say, the owl was a baker's daughter.³ Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be. God be at your table!

King. Conceit upon her father.

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

While this kind of devotion was in favour, love-intrigues were carried on under that mask. Hence the old ballads and novels made pilgrimages the subjects of their plots. The cockle-shell hat was one of the essential badges of this vocation: for the chief places of devotion being beyond sea, or on the coasts, the pilgrims were accustomed to put cockle-shells upon their hats, to denote the intention or performance of their devotion.

¹ Larded ——;] The expression is taken from cookery.

² *Well, God'ield you!*] i. e. Heaven reward you!

³ —— *the owl was a baker's daughter.*] This was a legendary story.— Our Saviour being refused bread by the *daughter of a baker*, is described as punishing her by turning her into an owl.

*Good morrow, 'tis Saint Valentine's day,
All in the morning betime,
And I a maid at your window,
To be your Valentine: **

*Then up he rose, and don'd his clothes,⁴
And dupp'd the chamber door;⁵
Let in the maid, that out a maid
Never departed more.*

King. Pretty Ophelia!

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

*By Gis⁶, and by Saint Charity,⁷
Alack, and fye for shame!
Young men will do't, if they come to't;
By cock⁸, they are to blame.*

*Quoth she, before you tumbled me,
You promis'd me to wed:*

[He answers.]

*So would I ha' done, by yonder sun,
An thou hadst not come to my bed.*

King. How long hath she been thus?

Oph. I hope, all will be well. We must be patient: but I cannot choose but weep, to think, they should lay him i'the cold ground: My brother shall know of it,

⁴ — don'd his clothes,] To *don* is to *do on*, to put on; as *doff* is to *do off*, put off.

⁵ And dupp'd the chamber door;] To *dup* is to *do up*; to lift the latch.

⁶ By Gis,] Probably the contraction of some saint's name.

⁷ — by Saint Charity,] *Saint Charity* is a saint among the Roman Catholicks.

By cock,] This is a corruption of the sacred name.

and so I thank you for your good counsel. Come, my coach! Good night, ladies; good night, sweet ladies; good night, good night. [Exit.

King. Follow her close; give her good watch, I pray you. [Exit HORATIO.

O! this is the poison of deep grief; it springs
All from her father's death: and now behold,
O Gertrude, Gertrude,
When sorrows come, they come not single spies,
But in battalions! First, her father slain;
Next, your son gone; and he most violent author
Of his own just remove: The people muddied,
Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts and whispers,
For good Polonius' death; and we have done but
greenly,⁹

In hugger-mugger to inter him¹: Poor Ophelia
Divided from herself, and her fair judgment;
Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts.
Last, and as much containing as all these,
Her brother is in secret come from France:
Feeds on his wonder, keeps himself in clouds,
And wants not buzzers to infect his ear
With pestilent speeches of his father's death;
Wherein necessity, of matter beggar'd,
Will nothing stick our person to arraign
In ear and ear. O my dear Gertrude, this,

⁹ — *but greenly,*] But *unskilfully*; with *greenness*; that is, without *maturity* of judgment.

¹ *In hugger-mugger to inter him:*] All the modern editions that I have consulted, give it:

In private to inter him; —

That the words now replaced are better, I do not undertake to prove; it is sufficient that they are Shakspeare's: if phraseology is to be changed as words grow uncouth by disuse, or gross by vulgarity, the history of every language will be lost; we shall no longer have the words of any author; and, as these alterations will be often unskilfully made, we shall in time have very little of his meaning.
JOHNSON.

Like to a murdering piece², in many places
 Gives me superfluous death. [A Noise within.
Queen. Alack! what noise is this?

Enter a Gentleman.

King. Attend.
 Where are my Switzers³? Let them guard the door:
 What is the matter?

Gent. Save yourself, my lord;
 The ocean, overpeering of his list,⁴
 Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste,
 Than young Laertes, in a riotous head,
 O'erbears your officers! The rabble call him, lord;
 And, as the world were now but to begin,
 Antiquity forgot, custom not known,
 The ratifiers and props of every word,
 They cry, *Choose we; Laertes shall be king!*
 Caps, hands, and tongues, applaud it to the clouds,
Laertes shall be king, Laertes king!

Queen. How cheerfully on the false trail they cry!
 O, this is counter⁵, you false Danish dogs.

King. The doors are broke. [Noise within.

² *Like to a murdering piece,*] The small cannon, which are, or were used in the fore-castle, half-deck, or steerage of a ship of war, were within the last century called *murdering-pieces*.

³ — *my Switzers?*] In many of our old plays, the guards attendant on kings are called *Switzers*, and that without any regard to the country where the scene lies, because the Swiss in the time of our poet, as at present, were hired to fight the battles of other nations.

⁴ *The ocean, overpeering of his list,*] The lists are the barriers which the spectators of a tournament must not pass. In this place, it signifies *boundary*, i. e. the shore.

⁵ *O, this is counter,* —] Hounds run *counter* when they trace the trail backwards.

Enter LAERTES, armed; Danes following.

Laer. Where is this king?—Sirs, stand you all without.

Dan. No, let's come in.

Laer. I pray you, give me leave.

Dan. We will, we will. [*They retire without the Door.*]

Laer. I thank you:—keep the door.—O thou vile king,

Give me my father.

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 brow⁶
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,
Acts little of his will.—Tell me, Laertes,
Why thou art thus incens'd;—Let him go, Gertrude;—
Speak, man.

Laer. Where is my father?

King. Dead.

Queen. But not by him.

King. Let him demand his fill.

Laer. How came he dead? I'll not be juggled with:
To hell, allegiance! vows, to the blackest devil!
Conscience, and grace, to the profoundest pit!
I dare damnation: To this point I stand,—
That both the worlds I give to negligence,
Let come what comes; only I'll be reveng'd
Most throughly for my father.

⁶ — unsmirched brow,] i. e. clean, not defiled.

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,
If you desire to know the certainty
Of your dear father's death, is't writ in your revenge,
That, sweepstake, you will draw both friend and foe,
Winner and loser?

Laer. None but his enemies.

King. Will you know them then?

Laer. To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms;
And, like the kind life-rend'ring pelican,
Repast them with my blood.

King. Why, now you speak
Like a good child, and a true gentleman.
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,⁷
As day does to your eye.

Danes [*within.*] Let her come in.

Laer. How now! what noise is that?

*Enter OPHELIA, fantastically dressed with Straws and
Flowers.*

O heat, dry up my brains! tears, seven times salt,
Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye! —
By heaven, thy madness shall be paid with weight,
Till our scale turn the beam. O rose of May!
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia! —
O heavens! is't possible, a young maid's wits
Should be as mortal as an old man's life?
Nature is fine in love: and, where 'tis fine,

⁷ — to your judgment 'pear,] For appear.

It sends some precious instance of itself
After the thing it loves.⁸

Oph. *They bore him barefac'd on the bier;
Hey no nonny, nonny hey nonny:
And in his grave rain'd 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, *Down a-down, an you call him
a-down-a.* O, how the wheel becomes it⁹! It is the false
steward, that stole his master's daughter.

Laer. This nothing's more than matter.

Oph. There's rosemary, that's for remembrance;¹
pray you, love, remember: and there is pansies, that's
for thoughts.

Laer. A document in madness; thoughts and remem-
brance fitted.

Oph. There's fennel for you, and columbines:—
there's rue for you; and here's some for me:— we may
call it, herb of grace o'Sundays:— you may wear your
rue with a difference.²— There's a daisy:— I would

⁸ *Nature is fine in love: and, where 'tis fine,
It sends some precious instance of itself*

*After the thing it loves.] Love (says Laertes) is the passion by
which nature is most exalted and refined; and as substances, refined
and subtilised, easily obey any impulse, or follow any attraction,
some part of nature, so purified and refined, flies off after the attract-
ing object, after the thing it loves.*

⁹ *O, how the wheel becomes it! &c.] The wheel means the burthen
of the song, which she had just repeated, and as such was formerly
used. But Mr. Malone thinks that wheel is here used in its ordinary
sense, and that these words allude to the occupation of the girl who
is supposed to sing the song alluded to by Ophelia.*

¹ *There's rosemary, that's for remembrance;] Rosemary was an-
ciently supposed to strengthen the memory, and was not only car-
ried at funerals, but worn at weddings.*

² — *you may wear your rue with a difference.] This seems to*

give you some violets; but they withered all, when my father died: — They say, he made a good end, —

For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy, — [Sings.

Laer. Thought and affliction³, passion, hell itself,
She turns to favour, and to prettiness.

Oph. *And will he not come again?* [Sings.
And will he not come again?
No, no, he is dead,
Go to thy death-bed,
He never will come again.

His beard was as white as snow,
All flaxen was his poll:
He is gone, he is gone,
And we cast away moan;
God 'a mercy on his soul!

And of all christian souls⁴! I pray God. God be wi'
you! [Exit OPHELIA.

Laer. Do you see this, O God?

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:

refer to the rules of heraldry, where the younger brothers of a family bear the same arms *with a difference*, or mark of distinction. There may, however, be somewhat more implied here than is expressed. *You, madam*, (says Ophelia to the queen,) *may call your RUE by its Sunday name, HERB OF GRACE, and so wear it with a difference to distinguish it from mine, which can never be any thing but merely RUE, i. e. sorrow.* STEEVENS.

³ Thought and affliction.] Thought here, as in many other places, signifies melancholy.

⁴ God 'a mercy on his soul!

And of all christian souls!] This is the common conclusion to many of the ancient monumental inscriptions.

If by direct or by collateral hand
 They find us touch'd, 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 labour with your soul
 To give it due content.

Laer. Let this be so;
 His means of death, his obscure funeral, —
 No trophy, sword, nor hatchment, o'er his bones,⁵
 No noble rite, 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.
 I pray you, go with me. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.

Another Room in the same.

Enter HORATIO, and a Servant.

Hor. What are they, that would speak with me?

Serv. Sailors, sir;

They say, they have letters for you.

Hor. Let them come in. —

[*Exit Servant.*

I do not know from what part of the world
 I should be greeted, if not from lord Hamlet.

⁵ *No trophy, sword, nor hatchment, o'er his bones.*] It was the custom, in the times of our author, to hang a sword over the grave of a knight, and it is uniformly kept up to this day. Not only the sword, but the helmet, gauntlet, spurs, and tabard (i. e. a coat whereon the armorial ensigns were anciently depicted, from whence the term *coat of armour*.) are hung over the grave of every knight.

Enter Sailors.

1 *Sail.* God bless you, sir.

Hor. Let him bless thee too.

1 *Sail.* He shall, sir, an't please him. There's a letter for you, sir; it comes from the ambassador that was bound for England; if your name be Horatio, as I am let to know it is.

Hor. [*reads.*] Horatio, *when thou shalt have overlooked this, give these fellows some means to the king; they have letters for him. Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us chase: Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put on a compelled valour; and in the grapple I boarded them: on the instant, they got clear of our ship; so I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me, like thieves of mercy; but they knew what they did; I am to do a good turn for them. Let the king have the letters I have sent; and repair thou to me with as much haste as thou would'st fly death. I have words to speak in thine ear, will make thee dumb; yet are they much too light for the bore of the matter.*⁶ *These good fellows will bring thee where I am. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England; of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell. He that thou knowest thine, Hamlet.*

Come, I will give you way for these your letters;
And do't the speedier, that you may direct me
To him from whom you brought them. [*Exeunt.*]

⁶ — for the bore of the matter.] The bore is the caliber of a gun, or the capacity of the barrel. The matter (says Hamlet) would carry heavier words.

SCENE VII.

Another Room in the same.

Enter King and LAERTES.

King. Now must your conscience my acquittance seal,
And you must put me in your heart for friend ;
Sith you have heard, and with a knowing ear,
That he, which hath your noble father slain,
Pursu'd my life.

Laer. It well appears : — But tell me,
Why you proceeded not against these feats,
So crimeful and so capital in nature,
As by your safety, greatness, wisdom, all things else,
You mainly were stirr'd up.

King. O, for two special reasons ;
Which may to you, perhaps, seem much unsew'd,
But yet to me they are strong. The queen, his mother,
Lives almost by his looks ; and for myself,
(My virtue, or my plague, be it either which,)
She is so conjunctive to my life and soul,
That, as the star moves not but in his sphere,
I could not but by her. The other motive,
Why to a publick count I might not go,
Is, the great love the general gender⁷ bear him :
Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,
Work like the spring⁸ that turneth wood to stone,
Convert his gyves to graces ; so that my arrows,
Too slightly timber'd for so loud a wind,
Would have reverted to my bow again,
And not where I had aim'd them.

⁷ — *the general gender* —] The *common race* of the people.

⁸ *Work like the spring, &c.*] The allusion here is to the quality still ascribed to the dropping-well at Knaresborough in Yorkshire.

Laer. And so have I a noble father lost ;
A sister driven into desperate terms ;
Whose worth, if praises may go back again,⁹
Stood challenger on mount of all the age
For her perfections : — But my revenge will come.

King. Break not your sleeps for that : you must not
think,
That we are made of stuff so flat and dull,
That we can let our beard be shook with danger,
And think it pastime. You shortly shall hear more :
I loved your father, and we love ourself ;
And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine, —
How now ? what news ?

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. Letters, my lord, from Hamlet :
This to your majesty ; this to the queen.

King. From Hamlet ! Who brought them ?

Mess. Sailors, my lord, they say : I saw them not ;
They were given me by Claudio, he receiv'd them
Of him that brought them.

King. Laertes, you shall hear them : —
Leave us. [*Exit Messenger.*

[*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 return.* 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 ?

⁹ — *if praises may go back again,*] If I may praise what has
been, but is now to be found no more.

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,
As how should it be so? how otherwise? —
Will you be rul'd by me?

Laer. Ay, my lord;
So you will not o'er-rule me to a peace.

King. To thine own peace. If he be now return'd, —
As checking at his voyage¹, 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 rul'd;
The rather, if you could devise it so,
That I might be the organ.

King. It falls right.
You have been talk'd of since your travel much,
And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality
Wherein, they say, you shine: your sum of parts
Did not together pluck such envy from him,
As did that one; and that, in my regard,
Of the unworthiest siege.²

Laer. What part is that, my lord?

King. A very ribband in the cap of youth,
Yet needful too; for youth no less becomes
The light and careless livery that it wears,
Than settled age his sables, and his weeds,
Importing health and graveness.³ — Two months since,

¹ *As checking at his voyage,*] i. e. objecting to. The phrase is from falconry.

² *Of the unworthiest siege.*] Of the lowest rank. *Siege*, for *seat*, *place*.

³ *Importing health and graveness.*] i. e. *implying, denoting*.

Here was a gentleman of Normandy, —
 I have seen myself, and serv'd against, the French,
 And they can well on horseback: but this gallant
 Had witchcraft in't; he grew unto his seat;
 And to such wond'rous doing brought his horse,
 As he had been incorps'd and demi-natur'd
 With the brave beast: so far he topp'd my thought,
 That I, in forgery of shapes and tricks,
 Come short of what he did.

Laer. A Norman, was't?

King. A Norman.

Laer. Upon my life, Lamord.

King. The very same.

Laer. I know him well: he is the brooch, indeed,
 And gem of all the nation.

King. He made confession of you;
 And gave you such a masterly report,
 For art and exercise in your defence,⁴
 And for your rapier most especial,
 That he cried out, 'twould be a sight indeed,
 If one could match you: the scrimers⁵ of their nation,
 He swore, had neither motion, guard, nor eye,
 If you oppos'd them: Sir, this report of his
 Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy,
 That he could nothing do, but wish and beg
 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. Not that I think, you did not love your father;

⁴ — in your defence,] That is, in the science of defence.

⁵ — the scrimers —] The fencers. From *escrimeur*, Fr.; a fencer.

But that I know, love is begun by time ;⁶
 And that I see, in passages of proof,⁷
 Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.
 There lives within the very flame of love
 A kind of wick, or snuff, that will abate it ;
 And nothing is at a like goodness still ;
 For goodness, growing to a plurisy,
 Dies in his own too-much : That we would do,
 We should do when we would ; for this *would* changes,
 And hath abatements and delays as many
 As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents ;
 And then this *should* is like a spendthrift sigh,
 That hurts by easing.⁸ But, to the quick o'the ulcer :
 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'the church.

King. No place, indeed, should murder sanctuarize ;
 Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,
 Will you do this, keep close within your chamber :
 Hamlet, return'd, 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,

⁶ — *love is begun by time ;*] This is obscure. The meaning may be, *love* is not innate in us, and co-essential to our nature, but begins at a certain time from some external cause, and being always subject to the operations of time, suffers change and diminution. JOHNSON.

⁷ — *passages of proof,*] In transactions of daily experience.

⁸ *And then this should is like a spendthrift sigh,*

That hurts by easing.] A *spendthrift sigh* is a *sigh* that makes an unnecessary waste of the vital flame. It is a notion very prevalent, that *sighs* impair the strength, and wear out the animal powers. JOHNSON.

Or with a little shuffling, you may choose
A sword unbated⁹, 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 scratch'd withal : I'll touch my point
With this contagion ; that, if I gall him slightly,
It may be death.²

King. Let's further think of this ;
Weigh, what convenience, both of time and means,
May fit us to our shape³ : if this should fail,
And that our drift look through our bad performance,
'Twere better not assay'd : therefore this project
Should have a back, or second, that might hold,
If this should blast in proof.⁴ Soft ; — let me see : —
We'll make a solemn wager on your cunnings, —
I ha't :

⁹ *A sword unbated,*] i. e. not blunted as foils are.

¹ — *a pass of practice,*] *Practice* is often by Shakspeare, and other writers, taken for an *insidious stratagem*, or *privy treason*, a sense not incongruous to this passage, where yet it may mean a *thrust for exercise* ; or perhaps, a favourite pass, one he has well practised in.

² *It may be death.*] It is a matter of surprise, that no one of Shakspeare's numerous and able commentators has remarked, with proper warmth and detestation, the villainous assassin-like treachery of Laertes in this horrid plot. There is the more occasion that he should be here pointed out an object of abhorrence, as he is a character we are, in some preceding parts of the play, led to respect and admire. RITSON.

³ *May fit us to our shape ;*] *May enable us to assume proper characters*, and to act our part.

⁴ — *blast in proof.*] A metaphor taken from the trying or proving fire-arms or cannon, which often *blast* or *burst* in the *proof*.

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 preferr'd him ⁵
 A chalice for the nonce; whereon but sipping,
 If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck, ⁶
 Our purpose may hold there. But stay, what noise?!

Enter Queen.

How now, sweet queen?

Queen. One woe doth tread upon another's heel,
 So fast they follow: — Your sister's drown'd, Laertes.

Laer. Drown'd! O, where?

Queen. There is a willow grows ascaunt the brook,
 That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream;
 Therewith fantastick garlands did she make
 Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples,
 That liberal ⁷ shepherds give a grosser name,
 But our cold maids do dead-men's-fingers call them;
 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. Her clothes spread wide;
 And, mermaid like, a while they bore her up:
 Which time, she chanted snatches of old tunes;
 As one incapable of her own distress, ⁸
 Or like a creature native and indu'd
 Unto that element: but long it could not be,
 Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
 Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay
 To muddy death.

Laer. Alas then, she is drown'd?

⁵ — *I'll have preferr'd him* —] i. e. presented to him.

⁶ *If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,*] i. e. your venom'd thrust. *Stuck* was a term of the fencing-school.

⁷ — *liberal* —] *Liberal* is free-spoken, licentious in language.

⁸ *As one incapable of her own distress,*] As one having no *understanding* or knowledge of her danger.

Queen. Drown'd, drown'd.

Laer. Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,
And therefore I forbid my tears: But yet
It is our trick; nature her custom holds,
Let shame say what it will: when these are gone,
The woman will be out.⁹ — Adieu, my lord!
I have a speech of fire, that fain would blaze,
But that this folly drowns it. [*Exit.*

King. Let's follow, Gertrude;
How much I had to do to calm his rage!
Now fear I, this will give it start again;
Therefore, let's follow. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Church-yard.*

Enter Two Clowns, with Spades, &c.

1 *Clo.* Is she to be buried in christian burial, that wilfully seeks her own salvation?

2 *Clo.* I tell thee, she is; therefore make her grave straight¹: the crowner hath set on her, and finds it christian burial.

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

2 *Clo.* Why, 'tis found so.

1 *Clo.* 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, to do, and to perform²: Argal, she drowned herself wittingly.

⁹ *The woman will be out.*] i. e. tears will flow.

¹ — *make her grave straight:*] i. e. immediately.

² — *an act hath three branches; it is, to act, to do, and to perform:*] Ridicule on scholastick divisions, without distinction; and of distinctions without difference. WARBURTON.

2 *Clo.* Nay, but hear you, goodman delver.

1 *Clo.* Give me leave. Here lies the water; good: here stands the man; good: If the man go to this 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.

2 *Clo.* But is this law?

1 *Clo.* Ay, marry is't; crowner's-quest law.

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

1 *Clo.* Why, there thou say'st: And the more pity; that great folks shall have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves, more than their even christian.³ Come, my spade. There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers; they hold up Adam's profession.

2 *Clo.* Was he a gentleman?

1 *Clo.* He was the first that ever bore arms.

2 *Clo.* Why, he had none.

1 *Clo.* What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the scripture? The scripture says, Adam digged; Could he dig without arms? I'll put another question to thee: if thou answerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself ——

2 *Clo.* Go to.

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

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

1 *Clo.* 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

³ —— *their even christian.*] An old English expression for fellow-christian.

stronger than the church; argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To't again; come.

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

1 *Clo.* Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.

2 *Clo.* Marry, now I can tell.

1 *Clo.* To't.

2 *Clo.* Mass, I cannot tell.

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO, at a distance.

1 *Clo.* 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 2 Clown.*]

1 Clown digs, and sings.

*In youth, when I did love, did love,⁴
Methought, it was very sweet,
To contract, O, the time, for, ah, my behove
O, methought, there was nothing meet.*

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

Hor. Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.

Ham. Tis e'en so: the hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.

⁴ *In youth, when I did love, &c*] The three stanzas, sung here by the grave-digger, are extracted, with a slight variation, from a little poem, called *The aged Lover renounceth Love*, written by Henry Howard, earl of Surrey, but it has been since attributed to lord Vaux; and Mr. T. Warton says, that there is in the British Museum, a copy of Vaux's poem, beginning, *I lothe that I did love*, with the title, "A dyttie or sonet made by the lord Vaus, in the time of the noble quene Marye, representing the image of death."

The entire song is published by Dr. Percy, in the first volume of his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*.

1 Clo. *But age, with his stealing steps,
Hath claw'd me in his clutch,
And hath shipped me into the land,
As if I had never been such.*

[Throws up a Scull.

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

Hor. It might, my lord.

Ham. Or of a courtier; which could say, *Good-morrow, sweet lord! How dost thou, good lord?* This might be my lord Such-a-one, that praised my lord Such-a-one's horse, when he meant to beg it; might it not?

Hor. Ay, my lord.

Ham. Why, e'en so: and now my lady Worm's; chapless, and knocked about the mazzard with a sexton's spade: Here's fine revolution, an we had the trick to see't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding, but to play at loggats with them⁵? mine ache to think on't.

1 Clo. *A pick-axe, and a spade, a spade, [Sings.
For—and a shrouding sheet:
O, a pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet.*

[Throws up a Scull.

Ham. There's another: Why may not that be the scull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddits⁶ now, his quil-

⁵ — to play at loggats with them? This is a game played in several parts of England even at this time. A stake is fixed into the ground; those who play, throw *loggats* or pins of wood at it, and he that is nearest the stake wins.

⁶ — *quiddits*, &c.] i. e. subtilties.

lets⁷, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce⁸ with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery? Humph! This fellow might be in's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers⁹, his recoveries: Is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures? The very conveyances of his lands will hardly lie in this box; and must the inheritor himself have no more? ha?

Hor. Not a jot more, my lord.

Ham. Is not parchment made of sheep-skins?

Hor. Ay, my lord, and of calves-skins too.

Ham. They are sheep, and calves, which seek out assurance in that.¹ I will speak to this fellow: — Whose grave's this, sirrah?

1 Clo. Mine, sir. —

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

⁷ — *his quilllets,*] *Quilllets* are nice and frivolous distinctions.
⁸ — *the sconce—*] i. e. the head.
⁹ — *his double vouchers, &c.*] A recovery with *double voucher* is the one usually suffered, and is so denominated from *two* persons (the latter of whom is always the common cryer, or some such inferior person,) being successively *voucher*, or called upon, to warrant the tenant's title. Both *fines* and *recoveries* are fictions of law, used to convert an estate tail into a fee simple. *Statutes* are (not acts of parliament, but) *statutes-merchant* and *staple*, particular modes of *recognizance* or acknowledgment for securing *debts*, which thereby become a charge upon the party's land. *Statutes* and *recognizances* are constantly mentioned together in the covenants of a purchase deed.

¹ — *assurance in that.*] A quibble is intended. Deeds, which are usually written on parchment, are called the common *assurances* of the kingdom.

Ham. I think it be thine, indeed; for thou liest in't.

1 Clo. You lie out on't, sir, and therefore it is not yours: for my part, I do not lie in't, 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.

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

Ham. What man dost thou dig it for?

1 Clo. For no man, sir.

Ham. What woman then?

1 Clo. For none neither.

Ham. Who is to be buried in't?

1 Clo. One, that was a woman, sir; but, rest her soul, she's dead.

Ham. How absolute the knave is! we must speak by the card², or equivocation will undo us. By the lord, Horatio, these three years I have taken note of it; the age is grown so picked³, that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibe. — How long hast thou been a grave maker?

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

Ham. How long's that since?

1 Clo. Cannot you tell that? every fool can tell that: It was that very day that young Hamlet was born⁴: he that is mad, and sent into England.

² — *by the card,*] i. e. we must speak with the same precision and accuracy as is observed in marking the true distances of coasts, the heights, courses, &c. in a *sea-chart*, which in our poet's time was called a *card*.

³ — *the age is grown so picked,*] So *smart*, so *sharp*, says Sir T. Hanmer, very properly; but there was, I think, about that time, a *picked shoe*, that is, *a shoe with a long pointed toe*, in fashion, to which the allusion seems likewise to be made. *Every man now is smart; and every man now is a man of fashion.* JOHNSON.

⁴ — *that young Hamlet was born:*] By this scene it appears that Hamlet was then thirty years old, and knew Yorick well, who had

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

1 Clo. Why, because he was mad: he shall recover his wits there; or, if he do not, 'tis no great matter there.

Ham. Why?

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

Ham. How came he mad?

1 Clo. Very strangely, they say.

Ham. How strangely?

1 Clo. 'Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

Ham. Upon what ground?

1 Clo. 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?

1 Clo. 'Faith, if he be not rotten before he die, (as we have many pocky corsers now-a-days, that will scarce hold the laying in,) he will last you some eight year, or nine year: a tanner will last you nine year.

Ham. Why he more than another?

1 Clo. 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 whoreson dead body. Here's a scull now hath lain you i'the earth three-and-twenty years.

Ham. Whose was it?

1 Clo. A whoreson mad fellow's it was; Whose do you think it was?

Ham. Nay, I know not.

1 Clo. A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! he

been dead twenty-two years. And yet in the beginning of the play he is spoken of as a *very young* man, one that designed to go back to school, i. e. to the university of Wittenberg. The poet in the fifth Act had forgot what he wrote in the first. BLACKSTONE.

poured a flagon of Rhenish on my head once: This same scull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the king's jester.

Ham. This? [Takes the Scull.]

1 Clo. 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; and now how abhorred in my imagination it is! my gorge rises at it. 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 on 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 favour⁵ she must come; make her laugh at that. — Pr'ythee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

Hor. What's that, my lord?

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

Hor. E'en so.

Ham. And smelt so? pah! [Throws down the Scull.]

Hor. E'en so, my lord.

Ham. To what base uses we may 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 returneth 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 Cæsar, dead, and turn'd to clay,

Might stop a hole to keep the wind away:

⁵ — to this favour —] i. e. to this countenance or complexion.

O, that the earth, which kept the world in awe,
Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw!⁶
But soft! but soft! aside; — Here comes the king,

*Enter Priests, &c. in Procession; the Corpse of OPHELIA,
LAERTES, and Mourners following; King, Queen,
their Trains, &c.*

The queen, the courtiers: Who is this they follow?
And with such maimed rites⁷! This doth betoken,
The corse, they follow, did with desperate hand
Fordo its own life.⁸ 'Twas of some estate:⁹
Couch we a while, and mark.

[Retiring with HORATIO.]

Laer. What ceremony else?

Ham. That is Laertes,

A very noble youth: Mark.

Laer. What ceremony else?

1 Priest. Her obsequies have been as far enlarg'd
As we have warranty: Her death was doubtful;
And, but that great command o'ersways the order,
She should in ground unsanctified have lodg'd
Till the last trumpet; for charitable prayers,
Shards¹, flints, and pebbles, should be thrown on her,
Yet here she is allow'd her virgin crants,²
Her maiden strewments, and the bringing home
Of bell and burial.

Laer. Must there no more be done?

1 Priest. No more be done!
We should profane the service of the dead,

⁶ — *winter's flaw!*] *Winter's blast.*

⁷ — *maimed rites!*] Imperfect obsequies.

⁸ *Fordo its own life.*] To *fordo* is to undo, to destroy.

⁹ — *some estate:*] Some person of high rank.

¹ *Shards,*] i. e. broken pots or tiles, called *pot-sherds*, *tile-sherds*.

² — *allow'd her virgin crants,*] Evidently corrupted from *chants*, which is the true word.

To sing a *requiem*³, 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 minist'ring angel shall my sister be,
When thou liest howling.

Ham. What, the fair Ophelia !

Queen. Sweets to the sweet : Farewell !

[*Scattering Flowers.*]

I hop'd, thou should'st have been my Hamlet's wife ;
I thought, thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,
And not have strew'd thy grave.

Laer. O, treble woe
Fall ten times treble on that cursed head,
Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense
Depriv'd 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 ;
Till of this flat a mountain you have made,
To o'er-top old Pelion, or the skyish head
Of blue Olympus.

Ham. [*advancing.*] What is he, whose grief
Bears such an emphasis ? whose phrase of sorrow
Conjures the wand'ring stars, and makes them stand
Like wonder-wounded hearers ? this is I,
Hamlet the Dane.

[*Leaps into the Grave.*]

Laer. The devil take thy soul !

[*Grappling with him.*]

Ham. Thou pray'st 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.

³ To sing a *requiem*,] A *requiem*, is a mass performed in Popish churches for the rest of the soul of a person deceased.

King. Pluck them asunder.

Queen. Hamlet, Hamlet!

All. Gentlemen, —

Hor. Good my lord, be quiet.

[*The Attendants part them, and they come out of the Grave.*]

Ham. Why, I will fight with him upon this theme,
Until my eyelids will no longer wag.

Queen. O my son! what theme?

Ham. I lov'd Ophelia; forty thousand brothers
Could not, with all their quantity of love
Make up my sum. — What wilt thou do for her?

King. O, he is mad, Laertes.

Queen. For love of God, forbear him.

Ham. 'Zounds, show me what thou'lt do:
Woul't weep? woul't fight? woul't fast? woul't tear
thyself?

Woul't drink up Esil?⁴ eat a crocodile?

I'll do't. — Dost thou come here 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,

Singeing his pate against the burning zone,

Make Ossa like a wart! Nay, an thou'lt mouth,

I'll rant as well as thou.

Queen. This is mere madness:
And thus a while the fit will work on him;

Anon, as patient as the female dove,

When that her golden couplets are disclos'd,⁵

His silence will sit drooping.

Ham. Hear you, sir;
What is the reason that you use me thus?

⁴ *Woul't drink up Esil?*] This is understood by some of the commentators to mean a river so called, or to mean only *vinegar*.

⁵ *When that her golden couplets are disclos'd,*] To *disclose* was anciently used for to *hatch*.

I lov'd 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 :
 An hour of quiet shortly shall we see ;
 Till then, in patience our proceeding be. *[Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Hall in the Castle.

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO.

Ham. So much for this, sir : now shall you see the
 other ; —

You do remember all the circumstance ?

Hor. Remember it, my lord !

Ham. Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting,
 That would not let me sleep : methought, I lay
 Worse than the mutines in the bilboes. ⁶ Rashly,

⁶ — mutines *in the bilboes*] *Mutines*, the French word for seditious or disobedient fellows in the army or fleet.

The *bilboes* is a bar of iron with fetters annexed to it, by which mutinous or disorderly sailors were anciently linked together. The word is derived from *Bilboa*, a place in Spain where instruments of steel were fabricated in the utmost perfection. To understand Shakespeare's allusion completely, it should be known, that as these fetters connect the legs of the offenders very close together, their attempts to rest must be as fruitless as those of Hamlet, in whose mind *there was a kind of fighting that would not let him sleep*. Every motion of one must disturb his partner in confinement. The *bilboes* are still shown in the Tower of London, among the other spoils of the Spanish armada.

And prais'd be rashness for it, — Let us know,
Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,
When our deep plots do pall⁷; and that should
teach us,

There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will.

Hor. That is most certain.

Ham. Up from my cabin,
My sea-gown scarf'd about me, in the dark
Grop'd I to find out them: had my desire;
Finger'd their packet; and, in fine, withdrew
To mine own room again: making so bold,
My fears forgetting manners, to unseal
Their grand commission; where I found, Horatio,
A royal knavery; an exact command, —
Larded with many several sorts of reasons,
Importing Denmark's health, and England's too,
With, ho! such bugs and goblins in my life, —⁸
That, on the supervise, no leisure bated,⁹
No, not to stay the grinding of the axe,
My head should be struck off.

Hor. Is't possible?

⁷ ——— *Rashly,*

*And prais'd be rashness for it, — Let us know,
Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,*

When, &c.] Hamlet, delivering an account of his escape, begins with saying — That he *rashly* — and then is carried into a reflection upon the weakness of human wisdom. I *rashly* — praised be rashness for it — *Let us* not think these events casual, but *let us know*, that is, *take notice and remember*, that we sometimes succeed by *indiscretion* when we *fail* by *deep plots*, and infer the perpetual superintendance and *agency* of the *Divinity*. The observation is just, and will be allowed by every human being, who shall reflect on the course of his own life. JOHNSON.

⁸ *With, ho! such bugs and goblins in my life,]* With *such causes of terror*, rising from my character and designs.

⁹ ——— *no leisure bated,]* Without any *abatement* or intermission of time.

Ham. Here's the commission; read it at more leisure.
But wilt thou hear now how I did proceed?

Hor. Ay, 'beseech you.

Ham. Being thus benetted round with villainies,
Or I could make ¹ a prologue to my brains,
They had begun the play; — I sat me down;
Devis'd a new commission; wrote it fair:
I once did hold it, as our statist^s do, ²
A baseness to write fair, and labour'd much
How to forget that learning; but, sir, now
It did me yeoman's service³: Wilt thou know
The effect of what I wrote?

Hor. Ay, good my lord.

Ham. An earnest conjuration from the king, —
As England was his faithful tributary;
As love between them like the palm might flourish;
As peace should still her wheaten garland wear,
And stand a comma 'tween their amities;⁴
And many such like as's of great charge, —
That on the view and knowing of these contents,

¹ Or *I could make* —] Or in old English signified *before*.

² — as our statist^s do,] A *statist* is a *statesman*. Most of the great men of Shakspeare's times, whose autographs have been preserved, wrote very bad hands; their secretaries very neat ones.

³ — *yeoman's service*:] The meaning is, *this yeomanly qualification was a most useful servant, or yeoman, to me*; i. e. did me eminent service. The ancient *yeomen* were famous for their military valour.

⁴ *As peace should still her wheaten garland wear,*

And stand a comma 'tween their amities;] The expression of our author is, like many of his phrases, sufficiently constrained and affected, but it is not incapable of explanation. The *comma* is the note of *connection* and continuity of sentences; the *period* is the note of *abruption* and disjunction. Shakspeare had it perhaps in his mind to write, — That unless England complied with the mandate, *war should put a period to their amity*; he altered his mode of diction, and thought that, in an opposite sense, he might put, that *peace should stand a comma between their amities*. This is not an easy style; but is it not the style of Shakspeare? JOHNSON.

Without debatement further, more, or less,
He should the bearers put to sudden death,
Not shriving-time allow'd.⁵

Hor. How was this seal'd?

Ham. Why, even in that was heaven ordinant;
I had my father's signet in my purse,
Which was the model of that Danish seal:⁶
Folded the writ up in form of the other;
Subscrib'd it; gave't the impression; plac'd it safely,
The changeling never known: Now, the next day
Was our sea-fight: and what to this was sequent
Thou know'st already.

Hor. So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't.

Ham. Why, man, they did make love to this employment;
They are not near my conscience; their defeat
Does by their own insinuation⁷ grow:
'Tis dangerous, when the baser nature comes
Between the pass and fell incensed points
Of mighty opposites.

Hor. Why, what a king is this!

Ham. Does it not, think thee, stand me now upon?
He that hath kill'd my king, and whor'd my mother;
Popp'd in between the election and my hopes:
Thrown out his angle for my proper life,
And with such cozenage; is't not perfect conscience,
To quit him⁸ with this arm? and is't not to be damn'd,
To let this canker of our nature come
In further evil?

Hor. It must be shortly known to him from England,
What is the issue of the business there.

⁵ *Not shriving-time allow'd.*] i. e. without time for confession of their sins: another proof of Hamlet's christian-like disposition.

⁶ — *the model of that Danish seal;*] The *model* is in old language the *copy*.

⁷ — *by their own insinuation* —] By their having insinuated or thrust themselves into the employment.

⁸ *To quit him* —] To requite him; to pay him his due.

Ham. It will be short: the interim is mine;
And a man's life's no more than to say, one.
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: I'll count his favours:⁹
But, sure, the bravery of his grief did put me
Into a towering passion.

Hor. Peace; who comes here?

Enter OSRIC.

Osr. Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

Ham. I humbly thank you, sir. — Dost know this water-fly?¹

Hor. No, my good lord.

Ham. Thy state is the more gracious; for 'tis a vice to know him: He hath much land, and fertile: let a beast be lord of beasts, and his crib shall stand at the king's mess: 'Tis a chough²; but, as I say, spacious in the possession of dirt.

Osr. 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 his right use; 'tis for the head.

Osr. I thank your lordship, 'tis very hot.

Ham. No, believe me, 'tis very cold; the wind is northerly.

Osr. It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed.

Ham. But yet, methinks, it is very sultry and hot; or my complexion —

Osr. Exceedingly, my lord; it is very sultry, — as

⁹ — *I'll count his favours:*] *I will make account of them, i. e. reckon upon them, value them.*

¹ — *Dost know this water-fly?*] A *water-fly* skips up and down upon the surface of the water, without any apparent purpose or reason, and is thence the proper emblem of a busy trifler.

² — *'Tis a chough;*] A kind of jackdaw.

'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 —

[HAMLET moves him to put on his Hat.

Os. Nay, good my lord; for my ease, in good faith.³ Sir, here is newly come to court, Laertes: believe me, an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences,⁴ of very soft society, and great showing: Indeed, to speak feelingly of him, he is the card or calendar of gentry,⁵ for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see.⁶

Ham. Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you;⁷ — though, I know, to divide him inventorially, would dizzy the arithmetick of memory; and yet but raw neither, in respect of his quick sail. But, in the verity of extolment, I take him to be a soul of great article; and his infusion of such dearth and rareness, as, to make true diction of him, his semblable is his mirrour; and, who else would trace him, his umbrage, nothing more.

³ *Nay, good my lord; for my ease, in good faith.*] This seems to have been the affected phrase of the time.

⁴ — *full of most excellent differences.*] Full of distinguishing excellencies.

⁵ — *the card or calendar of gentry.*] The general preceptor of elegance; the *card* by which a gentleman is to direct his course; the *calendar* by which he is to choose his time, that what he does may be both excellent and seasonable. JOHNSON.

⁶ — *for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see.*] *You shall find him containing* and comprising every quality which a gentleman would desire to *contemplate* for imitation.

⁷ *Sir, his definement, &c.*] This is designed as a specimen, and ridicule of the court jargon amongst the *precieux* of that time. The sense in English is, "Sir, he suffers nothing in your account of him, though to enumerate his good qualities particularly would be endless; yet when we had done our best, it would still come short of him. However, in strictness of truth, he is a great genius, and of a character so rarely to be met with, that to find any thing like him we must look into his mirrour, and his imitators will appear no more than his shadows."

Osr. Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him.

Ham. The concernancy, sir? why do we wrap the gentleman in our more rawer breath?

Osr. Sir?

Hor. Is't not possible to understand in another tongue? You will do't, sir, really.

Ham. What imports the nomination of this gentleman?

Osr. Of Laertes?

Hor. His purse is empty already; all his golden words are spent.

Ham. Of him, sir.

Osr. I know, you are not ignorant —

Ham. I would, you did, sir; yet, in faith, if you did, it would not much approve me⁸; — Well, sir.

Osr. 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.

Osr. I mean, sir, for his weapon; but in the imputation laid on him by them, in his meed⁹ he's unfellowed.

Ham. What's his weapon?

Osr. Rapier and dagger.

Ham. That's two of his weapons: but, well.

Osr. The king, sir, hath wagered with him six Barbary horses: against the which he has impawned¹, as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hangers², and so: Three of the car-

⁸ — *if you did, it would not much approve me*;] If you knew I was not ignorant, your esteem would not much advance my reputation. To *approve*, is to *recommend to approbation*.

⁹ — *in his meed* —] In his excellence.

¹ — *impawned*,] Wagered and staked.

² — *hangers*,] Under this term were comprehended four graduated straps, &c. that hung down in a belt on each side of its receptacle for the sword.

riages, 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?

Hor. I knew, you must be edified by the margent,³ ere you had done.

Osr. The carriages, sir, are the hangers.

Ham. The phrase would be more german⁴ to the matter, if we could carry a cannon by our sides; I would, it might be hangers till then. But, on: Six Barbary horses against six French swords, their assigns, and three liberal-conceited carriages; that's the French bet against the Danish: Why is this impawned, as you call it?

Osr. The king, sir, hath laid⁵, that in a dozen passes between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you three hits; he hath laid, on twelve for nine; and it would come to immediate trial, if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer.

Ham. How, if I answer, no?

Osr. I mean, my lord, the opposition of your person in trial.

Ham. Sir, I will walk here in the hall; If it please his majesty, 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;

³ — you must be edified by the margent,] Dr. Warburton very properly observes, that in the old books the gloss or comment was usually printed on the margent of the leaf.

⁴ — more german —] More *a-kin*.

⁵ *The king, sir, hath laid,*] As three or four complete pages would scarcely hold the remarks already printed, together with those which have lately been communicated to me in MS. on this very unimportant passage, I shall avoid both partiality and tediousness, by the omission of them all. I therefore leave the conditions of this wager to be adjusted by the members of Brookes's or the Jockey-Club at Newmarket, who on such subjects may prove the most enlightened commentators, and most successfully bestir themselves in the cold unpoetick dabble of calculation. STEEVENS.

if not, I will gain nothing but my shame, and the odd hits.

Osr. Shall I deliver you so?

Ham. To this effect, sir; after what flourish your nature will.

Osr. I commend my duty to your lordship. [*Exit.*]

Ham. Yours, yours. — He does well, to commend it himself; there are no tongues else for's turn.

Hor. This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head.

Ham. He did comply⁶ with his dug, before he sucked it. Thus has he (and many more of the same breed, that, I know, the drossy age dotes on,) only got the tune of the time, and outward habit of encounter⁷; a kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through the most fond and winnowed opinions⁸; and do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out.

Enter a Lord.

Lord. My lord, his majesty commended him to you by young Osric, who brings back to him, that you attend him in the hall: He sends to know, if your pleasure hold to play with Laertes, or that you will take longer time.

Ham. I am constant to my purposes, they follow the king's pleasure: if his fitness speaks, mine is ready; now, or whensoever, provided I be so able as now.

⁶ *He did comply* —] For compliment.

⁷ — outward *habit of encounter* ;] i. e. exterior politeness of address; in allusion to Osric's last speech.

⁸ — a kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through the most fond and winnowed opinions ;] The meaning is, "these men have got the cant of the day, a superficial readiness of slight and cursory conversation, a kind of frothy collection of fashionable prattle, which yet carries them through the most select and approving judgments. This airy facility of talk sometimes imposes upon wise men."

Lord. The king, and queen, and all are coming down.

Ham. In happy time.

Lord. The queen desires you, to use some gentle entertainment⁹ to Laertes, before you fall to play.

Ham. She well instructs me. [Exit Lord.

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.¹ But thou would'st not think, how ill all's here about my heart: but it is no matter.

Hor. Nay, good my lord, —

Ham. It is but foolery; but it is such a kind of gain-giving², as would, perhaps, trouble a woman.

Hor. If your mind dislike any thing, obey it³: I will forestal 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: Since no man, of aught he leaves, knows, what is't to leave betimes⁴? Let be.

⁹ — *gentle entertainment* —] Mild and temperate conversation.

¹ *I shall win at the odds.*] I shall succeed with the advantage that I am allowed.

² — *a kind of gain-giving,*] the same as *misgiving*.

³ *If your mind dislike any thing, obey it:*] With these presages of future evils arising in the mind, the poet has fore-run many events which are to happen at the conclusions of his plays; and sometimes so particularly, that even the circumstances of calamity are minutely hinted at, as in the instance of Juliet, who tells her lover from the window, that he appears *like one dead in the bottom of a tomb*. The supposition that the genius of the mind gave an alarm before approaching dissolution, is a very ancient one, and perhaps can never be totally driven out: yet it must be allowed the merit of adding beauty to poetry, however injurious it may sometimes prove to the weak and superstitious. STEEVENS.

⁴ *Since no man, of aught he leaves, knows, what is't to leave betimes?*] The meaning may be, "It is true, that, by death, we lose all the goods of life; yet seeing this loss is no otherwise an evil

Enter King, Queen, LAERTES, Lords, OSRIC, and Attendants with Foils, &c.

King. Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.

[*The King puts the Hand of LAERTES into that of HAMLET.*]

Ham. Give me your pardon, sir⁵: I have done you wrong;

But pardon it, as you are a gentleman.

This presence knows, and you must needs have heard,
How I am punish'd with a sore distraction.†

What I have done,

That might your nature, honour, and exception,
Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.

Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never, Hamlet:

If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,

And, when he's not himself, does wrong Laertes,

Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.

Who does it then? His madness: If't be so,

Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd;

His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.

Sir, in this audience,

Let my disclaiming from a purpos'd 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,⁶

than as we are sensible of it, and since death removes all sense of it, what matters it how soon we lose them? Therefore come what will, I am prepared."

⁵ *Give me your pardon, sir :*] I wish Hamlet had made some other defence; it is unsuitable to the character of a good or a brave man, to shelter himself in falsehood. JOHNSON.

† "with sore distraction." MALONE.

⁶ *I am satisfied in nature, &c.*] This was a piece of satire on fantastical honour. Though *nature* is satisfied, yet he will ask advice of older men of the sword, whether *artificial honour* ought to be contented with Hamlet's submission.

Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most
To my revenge : but in my terms of honour,
I stand aloof ; and will no reconciliation,
Till by some elder masters, of known honour,
I have a voice and precedent of peace,
To keep my name ungor'd : But till that time,
I do receive your offer'd 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 ; come on.

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 Osric. — 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 better'd, we have therefore odds.⁷

Laer. This is too heavy, let me see another.

Ham. This likes me well : These foils have all a
length ? [They prepare to play.

Os. Ay, my good lord.

King. Set me the stoups of wine⁸ upon that table : —
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 ;

⁷ But since he's better'd, we have therefore odds.] These odds were twelve to nine in favour of Hamlet, by Laertes giving him three.

⁸ — the stoups of wine —] A stoup is a kind of flagon.

And in the cup an union⁹ shall he throw,
 Richer than that which four successive kings
 In Denmark's crown have worn; Give me the cups;
 And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,
 The trumpet to the cannoneer without,
 The cannons to the heavens, the heaven to earth,
Now the king drinks to Hamlet. — 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.

Osr. A hit, a very palpable hit.

Laer. Well, — again.

King. Stay, give me drink: Hamlet, this pearl is thine;¹
 Here's to thy health. — Give him the cup.

[*Trumpets sound; and Cannon shot off within.*]

Ham. I'll play this bout first, set it by awhile.

Come. — Another hit; What say you? [*They play.*]

Laer. A touch, a touch, I do confess.

King. Our son shall win.

Queen. He's fat, and scant of breath. —

Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows:

The queen carouses² to thy fortune, Hamlet.

Ham. Good madam, —

King. Gertrude, do not drink.

Queen. I will, my lord; — I pray you, pardon me.

King. It is the poison'd cup; it is too late. [*Aside.*]

Ham. I dare not drink yet, madam; by and by.

⁹ *And in the cup an union* —] A species of pearl.

¹ — *this pearl is thine*;] Under pretence of throwing a pearl into the cup, the king may be supposed to drop some poisonous drug into the wine. Hamlet seems to suspect this, when he afterwards discovers the effects of the poison, and tauntingly asks him, — “Is the union here?”

² *The queen carouses* —] i. e. (in humbler language) drinks good luck to you.

Queen. Come, let me wipe thy face.

Laer. My lord, I'll hit him now.

King. I do not think it.

Laer. And yet it is almost against my conscience.

[*Aside.*

Ham. Come, for the third, Laertes: You do but dally;
I pray you, pass with your best violence;
I am afraid, you make a wanton of me.⁹

Laer. Say you so? come on. [They play.

Osr. Nothing neither way.

Laer. Have at you now.

[LAERTES wounds HAMLET; then, in scuffling,
they change Rapiers, and HAMLET wounds
LAERTES.

King. Part them, they are incens'd.

Ham. Nay, come again. [The Queen falls.

Osr. Look to the queen there, ho!

Hor. They bleed on both sides:— How is it, my lord?

Osr. How is't, Laertes?

Laer. Why, as a woodcock to my own † springe, Osrice;
I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.

Ham. How does the queen?

King. She swoons to see them bleed.

Queen. No, no, the drink, the drink, — O my dear Hamlet! —

The drink, the drink; — I am poison'd! [Dies.

Ham. O villainy! — Ho! let the door be lock'd:

Treachery! seek it out. [LAERTES falls.

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 envenom'd: the foul practice

⁹ — you make a wanton of me.] You trifle with me as if you were playing with a child.

† "mine own" — MALONE.

Hath turn'd itself on me; lo, here I lie,
Never to rise again: Thy mother's poison'd;
I can no more; the king, the king's to blame.

Ham. The point
Envenom'd too! — Then, venom, to thy work.

[*Stabs the King.*

Osr. & Lords. Treason! treason!

King. O, yet defend me, friends, I am but hurt.

Ham. Here, thou incestuous, murd'rous, damned
Dane,

Drink off this potion: — Is the union here? ⁴

Follow my mother.

[*King dies.*

Laer. He is justly serv'd;

It is a poison temper'd by himself. —

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.

I am dead, Horatio: — Wretched queen, adieu! —

You that look pale and tremble at this chance,

That are but mutes or audience to this act. ⁵

Had I but time, (as this fell sergeant ⁶, death,

Is strict in his arrest,) O, I could tell you, —

But let it be: — Horatio, I am dead;

Thou liv'st; 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.

⁴ — *Is the union here?*] It should seem from this line, and Laertes' next speech, that Hamlet here forces the expiring king to drink some of the poisoned cup, and that he dies while it is at his lips.

⁵ *That are but mutes or audience to this act,*] That are either auditors of this catastrophe, or at most only mute performers, that fill the stage without any part in the action.

⁶ — *(as this fell sergeant,*] A sergeant is a bailiff, or sheriff's officer.

Ham. As thou'rt a man, —
 Give me the cup ; let go ; by heaven, I'll have it. —
 O God ! — 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. — [*March afar off, and Shot within.*

What warlike noise is this ?

Osr. Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from
 Poland,
 To the ambassadors of England gives
 This warlike volley.

Ham. O, I die, Horatio ;
 The potent poison quite o'er-crows⁷ my spirit ;
 I cannot live to hear the news from England :
 But I do prophecy, the election lights
 On Fortinbras ; he has my dying voice ;
 So tell him, with the occurrents⁸, more or less,
 Which have solicited⁹, — The rest is silence. [*Dies.*

Hor. Now cracks a noble heart ; — Good night,
 sweet prince ;
 And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest !
 Why does the drum come hither ? [*March within.*

Enter FORTINBRAS, the English Ambassadors, and Others.

Fort. Where is this sight ?

Hor. What is it, you would see ?
 If aught of woe, or wonder, cease your search.

Fort. This quarry cries on havock¹ ! — O proud death !

⁷ *The potent poison quite o'er-crows —*] Alluding to a victorious cock exulting over his conquered antagonist.

⁸ — *the occurrents,*] i. e. incidents.

⁹ *Which have solicited,*] *Solicited* for *excited*.

¹ *This quarry cries on havock !*] To *cry on*, was to *exclaim against*. I suppose, when unfair sportsmen destroyed more *quarry* or *game* than was reasonable, the censure was to *cry, havock*. JOHNSON.

What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,²
That thou so many princes, at a shot,
So bloodily hast struck?

1 *Amb.* The sight is dismal;
And our affairs from England come too late:
The ears are senseless, that should give us hearing,
To tell him, his commandment is fulfill'd,
That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead:
Where should we have our thanks?

Hor. Not from his mouth,³
Had it the ability of life to thank you;
He never gave commandment for their death.
But since, so jump upon this bloody question,
You from the Polack wars, and you from England,
Are here arriv'd; give order, that these bodies
High on a stage be placed to the view;
And let me speak, to the yet unknowing world,
How these things came about: So shall you hear
Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts;⁴
Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters;
Of deaths put on⁵ by cunning, and forc'd cause;
And, in this upshot, purposes mistook
Fall'n on the inventors' heads: all this can I
Truly deliver.

Fort. Let us haste to hear it,
And call the noblest to the audience.
For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune;

What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,] An allusion to the *choæ*, or *feasts of the dead*, which were anciently celebrated at Athens, and are mentioned by Plutarch in *The Life of Antonius*.
— *his mouth,*] i. e. the king's.

⁴ *Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts;*] Of sanguinary and unnatural acts, to which the perpetrator was instigated by concupiscence, or, to use our poet's own words, by "*carnal stings*." The speaker alludes to the murder of old Hamlet by his brother, previous to his incestuous union with Gertrude.

⁵ *Of deaths put on—*] i. e. instigated, produced.

I have some rights of memory in this kingdom⁶,
Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me.

Hor. Of that I shall have also cause to speak,
And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more:
But let this same be presently perform'd,
Even while men's minds are wild: lest more mischance,
On plots, and errors, happen.

Fort. Let four captains
Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage;
For he was likely, had he been put on,
To have prov'd most royally: and, for his passage,
The soldier's musick, and the rites of war,
Speak loudly for him.—

Take up the bodies:— Such a sight as this
Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.

Go, bid the soldiers shoot. [*A Dead March.*

[*Exeunt, bearing off the dead Bodies; after
which a Peal of Ordnance is shot off.*⁷

⁶ — some rights of memory in this kingdom,] Some rights, which are remembered in this kingdom.

⁷ If the dramas of Shakspeare were to be characterised, each by the particular excellence which distinguishes it from the rest, we must allow to the tragedy of Hamlet the praise of variety. The incidents are so numerous, that the argument of the play would make a long tale. The scenes are interchangeably diversified with merriment and solemnity: with merriment that includes judicious and instructive observations; and solemnity not strained by poetical violence above the natural sentiments of man. New characters appear from time to time in continual succession, exhibiting various forms of life and particular modes of conversation. The pretended madness of Hamlet causes much mirth, the mournful distraction of Ophelia fills the heart with tenderness, and every personage produces the effect intended, from the apparition that in the first Act chills the blood with horror, to the fop in the last, that exposes affectation to just contempt.

The conduct is perhaps not wholly secure against objections. The action is indeed for the most part in continual progression, but there are some scenes which neither forward nor retard it. Of the feigned madness of Hamlet there appears no adequate cause, for he does nothing which he might not have done with the reputation of sanity.

He plays the madman most, when he treats Ophelia with so much rudeness, which seems to be useless and wanton cruelty.

Hamlet is, through the whole piece, rather an instrument than an agent. After he has, by the stratagem of the play, convicted the King, he makes no attempt to punish him; and his death is at last effected by an incident which Hamlet had no part in producing.

The catastrophe is not very happily produced; the exchange of weapons is rather an expedient of necessity, than a stroke of art. A scheme might easily be formed to kill Hamlet with the dagger, and Laertes with the bowl.

The poet is accused of having shown little regard to poetical justice, and may be charged with equal neglect of poetical probability. The apparition left the regions of the dead to little purpose; the revenge which he demands is not obtained, but by the death of him that was required to take it; and the gratification, which would arise from the destruction of an usurper and a murderer, is abated by the untimely death of Ophelia, the young, the beautiful, the harmless, and the pious. JOHNSON.

OTHELLO.

THE story of Othello is taken from *Cynthio's Novels*. POPE.

I have not hitherto met with any translation of this novel (the seventh in the third decad) of so early a date as the age of Shakspeare; but undoubtedly many of those little pamphlets have perished between his time and ours.

It is highly probable that our author met with the name of *Othello* in some tale that has escaped our researches; as I likewise find it in Reynolds's *God's Revenge against Adultery*, standing in one of his Arguments as follows: "She marries *Othello*, an old German soldier." This History (the eighth) is professed to be an *Italian* one. Here also occurs the name of *Iago*.

It is likewise found, as Dr. Farmer observes, in "The History of the famous Euordanus Prince of Denmark, with the strange Adventures of IAGO Prince of Saxonie; bl. l. 4to. London, 1605."

It may indeed be urged that these names were adopted from the tragedy before us: but I trust that every reader who is conversant with the peculiar style and method in which the work of honest John Reynolds is composed, will acquit him of the slightest familiarity with the scenes of Shakspeare.

This play was first entered at Stationers' Hall, Oct. 6, 1621, by Thomas Walkely. STEEVENS.

I have seen a French translation of *Cynthio*, by Gabriel Chappuys, Par. 1584. This is not a faithful one; and I suspect, through this medium the work came into English. FARMER.

This tragedy I have ascribed to the year 1604. MALONE.

The time of this play may be ascertained from the following circumstances; Selymus the Second formed his design against Cyprus in 1569, and took it in 1571. This was the only attempt the Turks ever made upon that island after it came into the hands of the Venetians, (which was in the year 1473,) wherefore the time must fall in with some part of that interval. We learn from the play that there was a junction of the Turkish fleet at Rhodes, in order for the invasion of Cyprus, that it first came sailing towards Cyprus, then went to Rhodes, there met another squadron, and then resumed its way to Cyprus. These are real historical facts which happened when Mustapha, Selymus's general, attacked Cyprus in May, 1570, which therefore is the true period of this performance. See Knolles's *History of the Turks*, p. 838, 846, 867. REED.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

Duke of VENICE.

BRABANTIO, *a Senator.*

Two other Senators.

GRATIANO, *Brother to Brabantio.*

LODOVICO, *Kinsman to Brabantio.*

OTHELLO, *the Moor :*

CASSIO, *his Lieutenant ;*

IAGO, *his Ancient.*

RODERIGO, *a Venetian Gentleman.*

MONTANO, *Othello's Predecessor in the Government of Cyprus.*¹

Clown, Servant to Othello.

Herald.

DESDEMONA, *Daughter to Brabantio, and Wife to Othello.*

EMILIA, *Wife to Iago.*

BIANCA, *a Courtesan, Mistress to Cassio.*

Officers, Gentlemen, Messengers, Musicians, Sailors, Attendants, &c.

SCENE, for the first Act, in VENICE; during the rest of the Play, at a Sea-Port in CYPRUS.

¹ Though the rank which Montano held in Cyprus cannot be exactly ascertained, yet from many circumstances, we are sure he had not the powers with which Othello was subsequently invested.

Perhaps we do not receive any one of the *Personæ Dramatis* to Shakspeare's plays, as it was originally drawn up by himself. These appendages are wanting to all the quartos, and are very rarely given in the folio. At the end of this play, however, the following enumeration of persons occurs :

" The names of the actors. — Othello, *the Moore.* — Brabantio, *Father to Desdemona.* — Cassio, *an Honourable Lieutenant.* — Iago, *a Villaine.* — Roderigo, *a gull'd Gentleman.* — *Duke of Venice.* — *Senators.* — Montano, *Governour of Cyprus.* — *Gentlemen of Cyprus.* — Lodovico, *and Gratiano, two noble Venetians.* — *Saylors.* — *Clowne.* — Desdemona, *Wife to Othello.* — *Æmilia, Wife to Iago.* — Bianca, *a Curtesan.*" STEEVENS.

OTHELLO,
THE MOOR OF VENICE.

ACT I.

SCENE I. — Venice. *A Street.*

Enter RODERIGO and IAGO.

Roderigo.

TUSH, never tell me, I take it much unkindly,
That thou, Iago, — who hast had my purse,
As if the strings were thine, — should'st know of this.

Iago. 'Sblood, but you will not hear me: —
If ever I did dream of such a matter,
Abhor me.

Rod. Thou told'st me, thou didst hold him in thy hate.

Iago. Despise me, if I do not. Three great ones of
the city,

In personal suit to make me his lieutenant,
Oft capp'd to him¹: — and, by the faith of man,
I know my price, I am worth no worse a place:
But he, as loving his own pride and purposes,
Evades them, with a bombast circumstance,²

¹ *Oft capp'd to him:]* To *cap* is to salute by taking off the cap.
It is still an academick phrase. M. MASON.

² — *a bombast circumstance,]* *Circumstance* signifies *circumlocution*.

Horribly stuff'd with epithets of war ;
 And, in conclusion, nonsuits
 My mediators ; *for, certes*³, says he,
I have already chose my officer.
 And what was he ?
 Forsooth, a great arithmetician,
 One Michael Cassio, a Florentine,
 A fellow almost damn'd in a fair wife ;⁴
 That never set a squadron in the field,
 Nor the division of a battle knows,
 More than a spinster ; unless the bookish theorick,⁵
 Wherein the toged consuls⁶ can propose
 As masterly as he : mere prattle, without practice,
 Is all his soldiership. But, he, sir, had the election :
 And I, — of whom his eyes had seen the proof
 At Rhodes, at Cyprus ; and on other grounds
 Christian and heathen, — must be be-lee'd and calm'd⁷
 By debtor and creditor, this counter-caster ;⁸
 He, in good time, must his lieutenant be,
 And I, (God bless the mark⁹ !) his Moor-ship's ancient.

³ — *certes*,] i. e. certainly, in truth. Obsolete.

⁴ *A fellow almost damn'd in a fair wife ;*] This passage has been much contested. We adopt Mr. Steevens' explanation. That Cassio was *married* is not sufficiently implied in the words, *a fellow almost damn'd in a fair wife*, since they mean, according to Iago's licentious manner of expressing himself, no more than a man *very near being married*. This seems to have been the case in respect of Cassio.

⁵ — *theorick*,] *Theorick*, for *theory*.

⁶ *Wherein the toged consuls* —] The *rulers of the state*, or civil governours. By *toged* perhaps is meant *peaceable*, in opposition to the *warlike* qualifications of which he had been speaking. He might have formed the word in allusion to the Latin adage, — *Cedant arma togæ*.

⁷ — *must be be-lee'd and calm'd* —] Terms of navigation.

⁸ — *this counter-caster* ;] It was anciently the practice to reckon up sums with *counters*.

⁹ — *bless the mark !*] Kelly, in his comments on Scots proverbs, observes, that the Scots, when they compare person to person, use this exclamation.

Rod. By heaven, I rather would have been his hangman.

Iago. But there's no remedy, 'tis the curse of service; Preferment goes by letter¹, and affection, Not by the old gradation, where each second Stood heir to the first. Now, sir, be judge yourself, Whether I in any just term am affin'd² To love the Moor.

Rod. I would not follow him then.

Iago. O, sir, content you;
I follow him to serve my turn upon him:
We cannot all be masters, nor all masters
Cannot be truly follow'd. You shall mark
Many a duteous and knee-crooking knave,
That, doting on his own obsequious bondage,
Wears out his time, much like his master's ass,
For nought but provender; and, when he's old, cashier'd:
Whip me such honest knaves³: Others there are,
Who, trimm'd in forms and visages of duty,
Keep yet their hearts attending on themselves;
And, throwing but shows of service on their lords,
Do well thrive by them, and, when they have lin'd their
coats,
Do themselves homage: these fellows have some soul;
And such a one do I profess myself.
For, sir,
It is as sure as you are Roderigo,
Were I the Moor, I would not be Iago:
In following him, I follow but myself;
Heaven is my judge, not I for love and duty,
But seeming so, for my peculiar end:

¹ — by letter,] *By recommendation* from powerful friends.

² *Whether I in any just term am affin'd* —] *Do I stand within any such terms of propinquity, or relation to the Moor, as that it is my duty to love him?*

³ — honest knaves:] *Knave* is here for *servant*, but with a sly mixture of contempt.

For when my outward action doth demonstrate
 The native act and figure of my heart
 In compliment extern⁴, 'tis not long after
 But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve
 † For daws to peck at: I am not what I am.

Rod. What a full fortune does the thick-lips owe,⁵
 If he can carry't thus!

Iago. Call up her father,
 Rouse him: make after him, poison his delight,
 Proclaim him in the streets; incense her kinsmen,
 And, though he in a fertile climate dwell,
 Plague him with flies: though that his joy be joy,
 Yet throw such changes of vexation on't,
 As it may lose some colour.

Rod. Here is her father's house; I'll call aloud,

Iago. Do; with like timorous accent, and dire yell,
 As when, by night and negligence, the fire
 Is spied in populous cities.

Rod. What ho! Brabantio! signior Brabantio, ho!

Iago. Awake! what, ho! Brabantio! thieves! thieves!
 thieves!

Look to your house, your daughter, and your bags!
 Thieves! thieves!

BRABANTIO, *above, at a Window.*

Bra. What is the reason of this terrible summons?
 What is the matter there?

Rod. Signior, is all your family within?

Iago. Are your doors lock'd?

Bra. Why? wherefore ask you this?

Iago. 'Zounds, sir, you are robb'd; for shame, put on
 your gown;

⁴ *In compliment extern,*] In that which I do only for an outward show of civility.

† "For doves" — MALONE.

⁵ *What a full fortune does the thick-lips owe,*] *Full fortune,* is, a complete piece of good fortune. To *owe,* is to *possess.*

Your heart is burst⁶, you have lost half your soul ;
 Even now, very now, an old black ram
 Is tugging your white ewe. Arise, arise ;
 Awake the snorting citizens with the bell,
 Or else the devil will make a grandsire of you :
 Arise, I say.

Bra. What, have you lost your wits ?

Rod. Most reverend signior, do you know my voice ?

Bra. Not I ; what are you ?

Rod. My name is — Roderigo.

Bra. The worse welcome :

I have charg'd thee, not to haunt about my doors :
 In honest plainness thou hast heard me say,
 My daughter is not for thee ; and now, in madness,
 Being full of supper, and distempering draughts,⁷
 Upon malicious bravery, dost thou come
 To start my quiet.

Rod. Sir, sir, sir, sir, —

Bra. But thou must needs be sure,
 My spirit, and my place, have in them power
 To make this bitter to thee.

Rod. Patience, good sir.

Bra. What tell'st thou me of robbing ? this is Venice ;
 My house is not a grange.⁸

Rod. Most grave Brabantio,
 In simple, and pure soul I come to you.

Iago. 'Zounds, sir, you are one of those, that will not
 serve God, if the devil bid you. Because we come to

⁶ — is burst,] i. e. broken.

⁷ — distempering draughts,] To be distempered with liquor,
 was, in Shakspeare's age, the phrase for intoxication.

⁸ ——— this is Venice ;

My house is not a grange.] That is, " you are in a populous city,
 not in a lone house, where a robbery might easily be committed."
Grange is strictly and properly the farm of a monastery, where the
 religious reposed their corn. *Grangia*, Lat. from *granum*. But
 in Lincolnshire, and in other northern counties, they call every lone
 house, or farm which stands solitary, a *grange*.

do you service, you think we are ruffians : You'll have your daughter covered with a Barbary horse : you'll have your nephews neigh to you⁹ : you'll have coursers for cousins, and gennets for germans.¹

Bra. What profane wretch art thou ?

Iago. I am one, sir, that comes to tell you, your daughter and the Moor are now making the beast with two backs.

Bra. Thou art a villain.

Iago. You are — a senator.

Bra. This thou shalt answer ; I know thee, Roderigo.

Rod. Sir, I will answer any thing. But I beseech you, If't be your pleasure, and most wise consent, (As partly, I find, it is,) that your fair daughter, At this odd-even and dull watch o'the night,² Transported — with no worse nor better guard, But with a knave of common hire, a gondolier, To the gross clasps of a lascivious Moor, — If this be known to you, and your allowance,³ We then have done you bold and saucy wrongs ; But, if you know not this, my manners tell me, We have your wrong rebuke. Do not believe, That, from the sense of all civility,⁴ I thus would play and trifle with your reverence : Your daughter, — if you have not given her leave, I say again, hath made a gross revolt ;

⁹ — *your nephews neigh to you :*] *Nephew*, in this instance, has the power of the Latin word *nepos*, and signifies a grandson, or any lineal descendant, however remote.

¹ — *gennets for germans.*] A *jennet* is a Spanish horse.

² *At this odd-even and dull watch o'the night,*] By this singular expression, — “this *odd-even* of the night,” our poet appears to have meant, that it was just approaching to, or just past, that it was doubtful whether at that moment it stood at the point of midnight, or at some other less equal division of the twenty-four hours ; which a few minutes either before or after midnight would be.

³ — *and your allowance,*] i. e. done with your *approbation*.

⁴ *That, from the sense of all civility,*] That is, *in opposition to, or departing from,* the sense of all civility.

Tying her duty, beauty, wit, and fortunes,
 In an extravagant⁵ and wheeling stranger,
 Of here and every where : Straight satisfy yourself :
 If she be in her chamber, or your house,
 Let loose on me the justice of the state
 For thus deluding you.

Bra. Strike on the tinder, ho !
 Give me a taper : — call up all my people : —
 This accident is not unlike my dream ;
 Belief of it oppresses me already : —
 Light, I say ! light ! [*Exit, from above.*

Iago. Farewell ; for I must leave you :
 It seems not meet, nor wholesome to my place,
 To be produc'd (as, if I stay, I shall)
 Against the Moor : For, I do know, the state, —
 However this may gall him with some check,⁶ —
 Cannot with safety cast him⁷ ; for he's embark'd
 With such loud reason to the Cyprus' wars,
 (Which even now stand in act,) that, for their souls,
 Another of his fathom they have not,
 To lead their business : in which regard,
 Though I do hate him as I do hell pains,
 Yet, for necessity of present life,
 I must show out a flag and sign of love,
 Which is indeed but sign. That you shall surely find
 him,
 Lead to the sagittary † the rais'd search ;
 And there will I be with him. So, farewell. [*Exit.*

Enter, below, BRABANTIO, and Servants with Torches.

Bra. It is too true an evil : gone she is ;

⁵ *In an extravagant* —] For *wandering*.

⁶ — *some check,*] Some rebuke.

⁷ — *cast him ;*] That is, *dismiss* him ; *reject* him.

“ *sagittar the raised* ” — MALONE.

And what's to come of my despised time,^s
 Is nought but bitterness. — Now, Roderigo,
 Where didst thou see her? — O, unhappy girl! —
 With the Moor, say'st thou? — Who would be a fa-
 ther? —

How didst thou know 'twas she? — O, thou deceiv'st me
 Past thought! — What said she to you? — Get more
 tapers;

Raise all my kindred. — Are they married think you?

Rod. Truly, I think, they are.

Bra. O heaven! — How got she out! — O treason
 of the blood! —

Fathers, from hence trust not your daughters' minds
 By what you see them act. — Are there not charms, †
 By which the property of youth and maidhood
 May be abus'd? Have you not read, Roderigo,
 Of some such thing?

Rod. Yes, sir; I have indeed.

Bra. Call up my brother. — O, that you had had
 her! —

Some one way, some another. — Do you know
 Where we may apprehend her and the Moor?

Rod. I think, I can discover him; if you please
 To get good guard, and go along with me.

Bra. Pray you, lead on. At every house I'll call;
 I may command at most; — Get weapons, ho!
 And raise some special officers of night. —
 On, good Roderigo; — I'll deserve your pains.

[*Exeunt.*]

^s *And what's to come of my despised time,*] *Despised time*, is time
 of no value.

† "Is there not charms," — MALONE.

SCENE II.

*The same. Another Street.**Enter OTHELLO, IAGO, and Attendants.*

Iago. Though in the trade of war I have slain men,
 Yet do I hold it very stuff o'the conscience,⁹
 To do no contriv'd murder; I lack iniquity
 Sometimes, to do me service: Nine or ten times
 I had thought to have yerk'd him here under the ribs.

Oth. 'Tis better as it is.

Iago. Nay, but he prated,
 And spoke such scurvy and provoking terms
 Against your honour,
 That, with the little godliness I have,
 I did full hard forbear him. But, I pray, sir,
 Are you fast married? for, be sure of this, —
 That the magnifico¹ is much beloved;
 And hath, in his effect, a voice potential
 As double as the duke's; he will divorce you;
 Or put upon you what restraint and grievance
 The law (with all his might, to enforce it on,)
 Will give him cable.

Oth. Let him do his spite:
 My services, which I have done the signiory,
 Shall out-tongue his complaints. 'Tis yet to know,
 (Which, when I know that boasting is an honour,
 I shall promulgate,) I fetch my life and being

⁹ — stuff o'the conscience,] This expression to common readers appears harsh. *Stuff* of the conscience is, *substance* or *essence* of the conscience. *Stuff* is a word of great force in the Teutonick languages. The elements are called in Dutch, *hoefd stoffen*, or *head stuffs*.

JOHNSON.

¹ — the magnifico —] “The chief men of Venice are by a peculiar name called *magnifici*, i. e. *magnificoes*.”

From men of royal siege²; and my demerits³
 May speak, unbonneted⁴, to as proud a fortune
 As this that I have reach'd: For know, Iago,
 But that I love the gentle Desdemona,
 I would not my unhoused⁵ free condition
 Put into circumscription and confine
 For the sea's worth. But, look! what lights come
 yonder?

*Enter CASSIO, at a distance, and certain Officers with
 Torches.*

Iago. These are the raised father, and his friends:
 You were best go in.

Oth. Not I: I must be found;
 My parts, my title, and my perfect soul,
 Shall manifest me rightly. Is it they?

Iago. By Janus, I think no.

Oth. The servants of the duke, and my lieutenant.
 The goodness of the night upon you, friends!
 What is the news?

Cas. The duke does greet you, general;
 And he requires your haste-post-haste† appearance,
 Even on the instant.

Oth. What is the matter, think you?

Cas. Something from Cyprus, as I may divine;

² — *men of royal siege*;] Men who have sat upon royal thrones. *Siege* is used for *seat* by other authors.

³ — *and my demerits* —] *Demerits* has the same meaning in our author, and many others of that age, as *merits*.

⁴ *May speak, unbonneted*,] Mr. Fuseli (and who is better acquainted with the sense and spirit of our author?) explains this contested passage as follows:

“*I am his equal or superior in rank; and were it not so, such are my demerits, that, unbonneted, without the addition of patrician or senatorial dignity, they may speak to as proud a fortune, &c.*”

⁵ — *unhoused* —] Free from *domestick* cares. A thought natural to an adventurer.

† “*haste, post-haste*” — MALONE.

SCENE II. THE MOOR OF VENICE. 425

It is a business of some heat : the gallies
 Have sent a dozen sequent messengers
 This very night, at one another's heels ;
 And many of the consuls, rais'd, and met,
 Are at the duke's already : You have been hotly call'd
 for ;

When, being not at your lodging to be found,
 The senate hath sent about three several quests,⁶
 To search you out.

Oth. 'Tis well I am found by you.
 I will but spend a word here in the house,
 And go with you. [Exit.

Cas. Ancient, what makes he here ?

Iago. 'Faith, he to-night hath boarded a land carack;⁷
 If it prove lawful prize, he's made for ever.

Cas. I do not understand.

Iago. He's married.

Cas. To who ?

Re-enter OTHELLO.

Iago. Marry, to — Come, captain, will you go ?

Oth. Have with you.

Cas. Here comes another troop to seek for you.

*Enter BRABANTIO, RODERIGO, and Officers of night,
 with Torches and Weapons.*

Iago. It is Brabantio : — general, be advis'd ;⁸
 He comes to bad intent.

Oth. Hola ! stand there !

Rod. Signior, it is the Moor.

Bra. Down with him, thief !

[*They draw on both sides.*

— three several quests,] *Quests* are, on this occasion, searches.
⁷ — a land carack ;] A *carack* is a ship of great bulk, and commonly of great value ; perhaps what we now call a *galleon*.
⁸ — be advis'd ;] That is, be *cool* ; be *cautious* ; be *discreet*.

Iago. You, Roderigo! come, sir, I am for you.

Oth. Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them. —

Good signior, you shall more command with years,
Than with your weapons.

Bra. O thou foul thief, where hast thou stow'd my daughter?

Damn'd as thou art, thou hast enchanted her:

For I'll refer me to all things of sense,

If she in chains of magick were not bound,

Whether a maid — so tender, fair, and happy;

So opposite to marriage, that she shunn'd

The wealthy curled darlings of our nation,⁹

Would ever have, to incur a general mock,

Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom

Of such a thing as thou: to fear, not to delight.¹

Judge me the world, if 'tis not gross in sense,

That thou hast practis'd on her with foul charms;

Abus'd her delicate youth with drugs, or minerals,

That waken motion²: — I'll have it disputed on;

'Tis probable, and palpable to thinking.

I therefore apprehend and do attach thee,

For an abuser of the world, a practiser

Of arts inhibited and out of warrant: —

Lay hold upon him; if he do resist,

Subdue him at his peril.

Oth. Hold your hands,

Both you of my inclining, and the rest:

Were it my cue to fight, I should have known it

Without a prompter. — Where will you that I go

To answer this your charge?

Bra. To prison: till fit time

⁹ *The wealthy curled darlings of our nation,*] Curled is elegantly and ostentatiously dressed.

¹ *Of such a thing as thou; to fear, not to delight.*] To fear, in the present instance, may mean — to terrify.

² *That waken motion*] Excite desires.

SCENE III. THE MOOR OF VENICE. 427

Of law, and course of direct session,
Call thee to answer.

Oth. What if I do obey?
How may the duke be therewith satisfied;
Whose messengers are here about my side,
Upon some present business of the state,
To bring me to him?

Off. 'Tis true, most worthy signior,
The duke's in council; and your noble self,
I am sure, is sent for.

Bra. How! the duke in council!
In this time of the night! — Bring him away:
Mine's not an idle cause: the duke himself,
Or any of my brothers of the state,
Cannot but feel this wrong, as 'twere their own:
For if such actions may have passage free,
Bond-slaves, and pagans³, shall our statesmen be.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

The same. A Council-Chamber.

The Duke and Senators, sitting at a Table; Officers attending.

Duke. There is no composition⁴ in these news,
That gives them credit.

1 Sen. Indeed, they are disproportion'd;
My letters say, a hundred and seven gallies.

Duke. And mine, a hundred and forty.

2 Sen. And mine, two hundred:
But though they jump not on a just account,

³ *Bond-slaves and pagans,*] i. e. if this Moor is now suffered to escape with impunity, it will be such an encouragement to his black countrymen, that we may expect to see all the first offices of our state filled up by the *pagans* and *bond-slaves* of Africa.

⁴ *There is no composition —*] for *consistency, concordancy.*

(As in these cases, where the aim reports,⁵
'Tis oft with difference,) yet do they all confirm
A Turkish fleet, and bearing up to Cyprus.

Duke. Nay, it is possible enough to judgment ;
I do not so secure me in the error,
But the main article I do approve
In fearful sense.

Sailor [*within.*] What ho ! what ho ! what ho !

Enter an Officer, with a Sailor.

Off. A messenger from the gallies.

Duke. Now ? the business ?

Sail. The Turkish preparation makes for Rhodes ;
So was I bid report here to the state,
By signior Angelo.

Duke. How say you by this change ?

1 Sen. This cannot be,

By no assay of reason⁶ ; 'tis a pageant,
To keep us in false gaze : When we consider
The importancy of Cyprus to the Turk ;
And let ourselves again but understand,
That, as it more concerns the Turk than Rhodes,
So may he with more facile question⁷ bear it,
For that it stands not in such warlike brace,⁸
But altogether lacks the abilities
That Rhodes is dress'd in : if we make thought of this,
We must not think, the Turk is so unskilful,
To leave that latest which concerns him first ;

⁵ — *where the aim reports,*] Where conjecture or suspicion tells the tale.

⁶ *By no assay of reason ;*] Bring it to the *test*, examine it by reason as we examine metals by the *assay*, it will be found counterfeit by all trials.

⁷ — *with more facile question* —] That is, he may carry it with less dispute, with less opposition.

⁸ — *warlike brace,*] State of defence. To arm was called to *brace on* the armour.

Neglecting an attempt of ease, and gain,
To wake, and wage⁹, a danger profitless.

Duke. Nay, in all confidence, he's not for Rhodes.

Off. Here is more news.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. The Ottomites, reverend and gracious,
Steering with due course toward the isle of Rhodes,
Have there injointed them with an after fleet.

1 Sen. Ay, so I thought: — How many, as you
guess?

Mess. Of thirty sail: and now do they re-stem
Their backward course, bearing with frank appearance
Their purposes toward Cyprus. — Signior Montano,
Your trusty and most valiant servitor,
With his free duty, recommends you thus,
And prays you to believe him.

Duke. 'Tis certain then for Cyprus. —
Marcus Lucchesé, is he not in town?

1 Sen. He's now in Florence.

Duke. Write from us; wish him¹ post-post-haste:
despatch.

1 Sen. Here comes Brabantio, and the valiant Moor.

*Enter BRABANTIO, OTHELLO, IAGO, RODERIGO, and
Officers.*

Duke. Valiant Othello, we must straight employ you
Against the general enemy Ottoman.

I did not see you; welcome, gentle signior;

[*To BRABANTIO.*

We lack'd your counsel and your help to-night.

Bra. So did I yours: Good your grace, pardon me;
Neither my place, nor aught I heard of business,

⁹ *To wake, and wage,*] *To wage* here, as in many other places in
Shakspeare, signifies to fight, to combat.

¹ — *wish him* —] i. e. recommend, desire him.

Hath rais'd me from my bed ; nor doth the general care
 Take hold on me ; for my particular grief
 Is of so flood-gate and o'erbearing nature,
 That it engulfs and swallows other sorrows,
 And it is still itself.

Duke. Why, what's the matter ?

Bra. My daughter ! O, my daughter !

Sen. Dead ?

Bra. Ay, to me ;

She is abus'd, stol'n from me, and corrupted
 By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks :
 For nature so preposterously to err,
 Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense,
 Sans witchcraft could not —

Duke. Whoe'er he be, that, in this foul proceeding,
 Hath thus beguil'd your daughter of herself,
 And you of her, the bloody book of law
 You shall yourself read in the bitter letter,
 After your own sense ; yea, though our proper son
 Stood in your action.²

Bra. Humbly I thank your grace.
 Here is the man, this Moor ; whom now, it seems,
 Your special mandate, for the state affairs,
 Hath hither brought.

Duke & Sen. We are very sorry for it.

Duke. What, in your own part, can you say to this ?
 [*To OTHELLO.*

Bra. Nothing, but this is so.

Oth. Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors,
 My very noble and approv'd good masters, —
 That I have ta'en away this old man's daughter,
 It is most true ; true, I have married her ;
 The very head and front of my offending³

² *Stood in your action.*] Were the man exposed to your *charge* or *accusation*.

³ *The very head and front of my offending* —] The *main*, the *whole*, unextenuated.

Hath this extent, no more. Rude am I in my speech,
 And little bless'd with the set phrase of peace;
 For since these arms of mine had seven years' pith,
 Till now some nine moons wasted, they have us'd
 Their dearest action⁴ in the tented field;
 And little of this great world can I speak,
 More than pertains to feats of broil and battle;
 And therefore little shall I grace my cause,
 In speaking for myself: Yet, by your gracious patience,
 I will a round unvarnish'd tale deliver
 Of my whole course of love; what drugs, what charms,
 What conjuration, and what mighty magick,
 (For such proceeding I am charg'd withal,)
 I won his daughter with. †

Bra. A maiden never bold;
 Of spirit so still and quiet, that her motion
 Blush'd at herself; And she, — in spite of nature,
 Of years, of country, credit, every thing, —
 To fall in love with what she fear'd to look on?
 It is a judgment maim'd, and most imperfect,
 That will confess — perfection so could err
 Against all rules of nature; and must be driven
 To find out practices of cunning hell,
 Why this should be. I therefore vouch again,
 That with some mixtures powerful o'er the blood,
 Or with some dram conjur'd to this effect,
 He wrought upon her.

Duke. To vouch this, is no proof;
 Without more certain and more overt test,⁵
 Than these thin habits, and poor likelihoods
 Of modern seeming⁶, do prefer against him.

1 *Sen.* But, Othello, speak; —
 Did you by indirect and forced courses

⁴ *Their dearest action* —] i. e. their most important action.

† "I won his daughter." MALONE.

⁵ — *overt test*,] Open proofs, external evidence.

⁶ *Of modern seeming*,] Weak show of slight appearance.

Subdue and poison this young maid's affections ?
Or came it by request, and such fair question
As soul to soul affordeth ?

Oth. I do beseech you,
Send for the lady to the sagittary,⁷
And let her speak of me before her father :
If you do find me foul in her report,
The trust, the office, I do hold of you,
Not only take away, but let your sentence
Even fall upon my life.

Duke. Fetch Desdemona hither.

Oth. Ancient, conduct them : you best know the
place.— [*Exeunt IAGO and Attendants.*]

And, till she come, as truly as to heaven
I do confess the vices of my blood,
So justly to your grave ears I'll present
How I did thrive in this fair lady's love,
And she in mine.

Duke. Say it, Othello.

Oth. Her father lov'd me ; oft invited me ;
Still question'd me the story of my life,
From year to year ; the battles, sieges, fortunes,
That I have pass'd.
I ran it through, even from my boyish days,
To the very moment that he bade me tell it.
Wherein I spoke of most disastrous chances,
Of moving accidents by flood and field ;
Of hair-breadth scapes i'the imminent deadly breach ;
Of being taken by the insolent foe,
And sold to slavery ; of my redemption thence,
And portance⁸ in my travel's history :
Wherein of antres⁹ vast, and desarts idle,

⁷ — *the sagittary,*] The *sagittary* means the sign of the fictitious creature so called, i. e. an animal compounded of man and horse, and armed with a bow and quiver.

⁸ *And portance*] *And behaviour.*

⁹ — *antres* —] *Caves and dens.*

SCENE III. THE MOOR OF VENICE. 433

Rough quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads touch
heaven,

It was my hint to speak, such was the process ;
And of the cannibals that each other eat,
The anthropophagi, and men whose heads
Do grow beneath their shoulders.¹ These things to
hear,

Would Desdemona seriously incline :
But still the house affairs would draw her thence ;
Which ever as she could with haste despatch,
She'd come again, and with a greedy ear
Devour up my discourse : Which I observing,
Took once a pliant hour ; and found good means
To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart,
That I would all my pilgrimage dilate,
Whereof by parcels she had something heard,
But not intentively² : I did consent ;
And often did beguile her of her tears,
When I did speak of some distressful stroke,
That my youth suffer'd. My story being done,
She gave me for my pains a world of sighs :
She swore, — In faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing
strange ;

'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful :
She wish'd, she had not heard it ; yet she wish'd
That heaven had made her such a man : she thank'd me ;
And bade me, if I had a friend that lov'd her,
I should but teach him how to tell my story,
And that would woo her. Upon this hint, I spake :
She lov'd me for the dangers I had pass'd ;

¹ — *men whose heads*

Do grow beneath their shoulders,] Of these men there is an account in the interpolated travels of Mandeville, a book of that time. Raleigh also has given an account of men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders, in his *Description of Guiana*, published in 1596, a book that without doubt Shakspeare had read.

² *But not intentively*] i. e. with *attention to all its parts*.

And I lov'd her, that she did pity them.
 This only is the witchcraft I have us'd;
 Here comes the lady, let her witness it.

Enter DESDEMONA, IAGO, and Attendants.

Duke. I think, this tale would win my daughter too. —
 Good Brabantio,
 Take up this mangled matter at the best:
 Men do their broken weapons rather use,
 Than their bare hands.

Bra. I pray you, hear her speak;
 If she confess, that she was half the wooer,
 Destruction on my head, if my bad blame
 Light on the man! — Come hither, gentle mistress;
 Do you perceive in all this noble company,
 Where most you owe obedience?

Des. My noble father,
 I do perceive here a divided duty:
 To you, I am bound for life, and education;
 My life, and education, both do learn me
 How to respect you; you are the lord of duty,
 I am hitherto your daughter: But here's my husband;
 And so much duty as my mother show'd
 To you, preferring you before her father,
 So much I challenge that I may profess
 Due to the Moor, my lord.

Bra. God be with you! — I have done: —
 Please it your grace, on to the state affairs;
 I had rather to adopt a child, than get it. —
 Come hither, Moor:
 I here do give thee that with all my heart,
 Which, but thou hast already, with all my heart
 I would keep from thee. — For your sake, jewel,
 I am glad at soul I have no other child;
 For thy escape would teach me tyranny,
 To hang clogs on them. — I have done, my lord.

SCENE III. THE MOOR OF VENICE. 435

Duke. Let me speak like yourself³; and lay a sentence,
Which, as a grise⁴, or step, may help these lovers
Into your favour.

When remedies are past, the griefs are ended,
By seeing the worst, which late on hopes depended.
To mourn a mischief that is past and gone,
Is the next way to draw new mischief on.
What cannot be preserv'd when fortune takes,
Patience her injury a mockery makes.
The robb'd, that smiles, steals something from the thief;
He robs himself, that spends a bootless grief.

Bra. So let the Turk of Cyprus us beguile;
We lose it not, so long as we can smile.
He bears the sentence well, that nothing bears
But the free comfort which from thence he hears:⁵
But he bears both the sentence and the sorrow,
That, to pay grief, must of poor patience borrow.
These sentences, to sugar, or to gall,
Being strong on both sides, are equivocal:
But words are words; I never yet did hear,
That the bruis'd heart was pierced through the ear.⁶
I humbly beseech you, proceed to the affairs of state.

Duke. The Turk with a most mighty preparation
makes for Cyprus: — Othello, the fortitude of the place
is best known to you: And though we have there a
substitute of most allowed sufficiency, yet opinion, a

³ *Let me speak like yourself;*] i. e. let me speak as yourself would speak, were you not too much heated with passion.

⁴ — as a grise,] *Grize* from *degrees*. A *grize* is a step.

⁵ *But the free comfort which from thence he hears:*] But the moral precepts of consolation, which are liberally bestowed on occasion of the sentence. JOHNSON.

⁶ *But words are words; I never yet did hear,*

That the bruis'd heart was pierced through the ear.] These moral precepts, says Brabantio, may perhaps be founded in wisdom, but they are of no avail. Words after all are but words; and I never yet heard that consolatory speeches could *reach* and *penetrate* the afflicted heart, through the medium of the ear.

sovereign mistress of effects, throws a more safer voice on you : you must therefore be content to slubber the gloss of your new fortunes ⁷ with this more stubborn and boisterous expedition.

Oth. The tyrant custom, most grave senators,
Hath made the flinty and steel couch of war
My thrice-driven bed of down ⁸ : I do agnize ⁹
A natural and prompt alacrity,
I find in hardness ; and do undertake
These present wars against the Ottomites.
Most humbly therefore bending to your state,
I crave fit dispositon for my wife ;
Due reference of place, and exhibition ; ¹
With such accommodation, and besort,
As levels with her breeding.

Duke. If you please,
Be't at her father's.

Bra. I'll not have it so.

Oth. Nor I.

Des. Nor I ; I would not there reside,
To put my father in impatient thoughts,
By being in his eye. Most gracious duke,
To my unfolding lend a gracious ear ;
And let me find a charter in your voice, ²
To assist my simpleness.

Duke. What would you, Desdemona ?

⁷ — to slubber the gloss of your new fortunes —] To slubber, on this occasion, is to obscure.

⁸ — thrice-driven bed of down:] A driven bed, is a bed for which the feathers are selected, by driving with a fan, which separates the light from the heavy.

⁹ — I do agnize —] i. e. acknowledge, confess, avow.

¹ I crave fit disposition for my wife ;

Due reference of place, and exhibition ; &c.] I desire, that proper disposition be made for my wife, that she may have precedence and revenue, accommodation and company, suitable to her rank. *Exhibition* is allowance.

² — a charter in your voice,] Let your favour privilege me.

Des. That I did love the Moor to live with him,
 My downright violence and storm of fortunes ³
 May trumpet to the world; my heart's subdued
 Even to the very quality of my lord: ⁴
 I saw Othello's visage in his mind; ⁵
 And to his honours, and his valiant parts,
 Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate.
 So that, dear lords, if I be left behind,
 A moth of peace, and he go to the war,
 The rites, for which I love him, are bereft me,
 And I a heavy interim shall support
 By his dear absence: Let me go with him.

Oth. Your voices, lords: — 'beseech you, let her will
 Have a free way.
 Vouch with me, heaven; I therefore beg it not,
 To please the palate of my appetite;
 Nor to comply with heat, the young affects,
 In my distinct † and proper satisfaction;
 But to be free and bounteous to her mind:
 And heaven defend ⁶ your good souls, that you think
 I will your serious and great business scant,
 For she is with me: No, when light-wing'd toys
 Of feather'd Cupid seel with wanton dulness
 My speculative and active instruments, ⁷

³ *My downright violence and storm of fortunes* —] *Violence* is not *violence suffered*, but *violence acted*. Breach of common rules and obligations.

⁴ *Even to, &c.*] *Quality* here means *profession*. "I am so much enamoured of Othello, that I am even willing to endure all the inconveniencies incident to a *military life*, and to attend him to the wars."

⁵ *I saw Othello's visage in his 'mind*;] It must raise no wonder, that I loved a man of an appearance so little engaging; I saw his face only in his mind; the greatness of his character reconciled me to his form.

† "disjunct" — MALONE.

⁶ — *defend, &c.*] To *defend*, is to forbid.

⁷ *My speculative and active instruments*,] *Speculative instruments*, in Shakspeare's language, are the *eyes*; and *active instruments*, the *hands and feet*.

That my disports corrupt and taint my business,
 Let housewives make a skillet of my helm,
 And all indign and base adversities
 Make head against my estimation !

Duke. Be it as you shall privately determine,
 Either for her stay, or going : the affair cries — haste,
 And speed must answer it ; you must hence to-night.

Des. To-night, my lord ?

Duke. This night.

Oth. With all my heart.

Duke. At nine i'the morning here we'll meet again.
 Othello, leave some officer behind,
 And he shall our commission bring to you ;
 With such things else of quality and respect,
 As doth import you.

Oth. Please your grace, my ancient ;
 A man he is of honesty, and trust :
 To his conveyance I assign my wife,
 With what else needful your good grace shall think
 To be sent after me.

Duke. Let it be so. —
 Good night to every one. — And, noble signior,
[To BRABANTIO.]

If virtue no delighted beauty lack, ⁸
 Your son-in-law is far more fair than black.

1 Sen. Adieu, brave Moor ! use Desdemona well.

Bra. Look to her, Moor ; have a quick eye to see ;
 She has deceiv'd her father, and may thee.

[*Exeunt* Duke, Senators, Officers, &c.]

Oth. My life upon her faith. — Honest Iago,
 My Desdemona must I leave to thee ;
 I pry'thee, let thy wife attend on her ;
 And bring them after in the best advantage. — ⁹

* *If virtue no delighted beauty lack,*] The meaning probably is, if virtue comprehends every thing in itself, then your virtuous son-in-law of course is beautiful : he has that beauty which delights every one. *Delighted, for delighting.*

⁹ — *best advantage.*] Fairest opportunity.

Come, Desdemona, I have but an hour
Of love, of worldly matters and direction,
To spend with thee: we must obey the time.

[*Exeunt* OTHELLO and DESDEMONA.]

Rod. Iago.

Iago. What say'st thou, noble heart?

Rod. What will I do, thinkest thou?

Iago. Why, go to bed, and sleep.

Rod. I will incontinently drown myself.

Iago. Well, if thou dost, I shall never love thee after
it. Why, thou silly gentleman!

Rod. It is silliness to live, when to live is a torment:
and then have we a prescription to die, when death is
our physician.

Iago. O villainous! I have looked upon the world for
four times seven years! and since I could distinguish
between a benefit and an injury, I never found a man
that knew how to love himself. Ere I would say, I
would drown myself for the love of a Guinea-hen¹, I
would change my humanity with a baboon.

Rod. What should I do? I confess, it is my shame
to be so fond; but it is not in virtue to amend it.

Iago. Virtue? a fig! 'tis in ourselves, that we are
thus, or thus. Our bodies are our gardens; to the
which, our wills are gardeners: so that if we will plant
nettles, or sow lettuce; set hyssop, and weed up thyme;
supply it with one gender of herbs, or distract it with
many; either to have it steril with idleness, or manured
with industry; why, the power and corrigible authority
of this lies in our wills. If the balance of our lives had
not one scale of reason to poise another of sensuality,
the blood and baseness of our natures would conduct
us to most preposterous conclusions: But we have rea-

¹ — a Guinea-hen,] A Guinea-hen was anciently the cant term
for a prostitute.

son to cool our raging motions, our carnal stings, our unbitted lusts; whereof I take this, that you call — love, to be a sect², or scion.

Rod. It cannot be.

Iago. It is merely a lust of the blood, and a permission of the will. Come, be a man: Drown thyself? drown cats, and blind puppies. I have professed me thy friend, and I confess me knit to thy deserving with cables of perdurable toughness; I could never better stead thee than now. Put money in thy purse; follow these wars; defeat thy favour with an usurped beard³; I say, put money in thy purse. It cannot be, that Desdemona should long continue her love to the Moor, — put money in thy purse; — nor he his to her: it was a violent commencement, and thou shalt see an answerable sequestration⁴; — put but money in thy purse. — These Moors are changeable in their wills; — fill thy purse with money; the food that to him now is as luscious as locusts, shall be to him shortly as bitter as coliquintida. She must change for youth: when she is sated with his body, she will find the error of her choice. — She must have change, she must: therefore put money in thy purse. — If thou wilt needs damn thyself, do it a more delicate way than drowning. Make all the money thou canst: If sanctimony and a frail vow, betwixt an erring barbarian⁵ and a supersubtle Venetian, be not too hard for my wits, and all the tribe of hell, thou shalt enjoy her; therefore make money. A

² — a sect,] A *sect* is what the more modern gardeners call a *cutting*.

³ — defeat *thy* favour with an *usurped beard*;] *Favour* here means that combination of features which gives the face its distinguishing character. *Defeat*, from *defaire*, in French, signifies to unmake, decompose, or give a different appearance to, either by taking away something, or adding.

⁴ — an *answerable* sequestration;] for *separation*.

⁵ — *betwixt an erring barbarian* —] i. e. wandering.

SCENE III. THE MOOR OF VENICE. 441

pox of drowning thyself! it is clean out of the way: seek thou rather to be hanged in compassing thy joy, than to be drowned and go without her.

Rod. Wilt thou be fast to my hopes, if I depend on the issue?

Iago. Thou art sure of me; — Go, make money: — I have told thee often, and I re-tell thee again and again, I hate the Moor: My cause is hearted; thine hath no less reason: Let us be conjunctive in our revenge against him: if thou canst cuckold him, thou dost thyself a pleasure, and me a sport. There are many events in the womb of time, which will be delivered. Traverse⁶; go; provide thy money. We will have more of this to-morrow. Adieu.

Rod. Where shall we meet i'the morning?

Iago. At my lodging.

Rod. I'll be with thee betimes.

Iago. Go to; farewell. Do you hear, Roderigo?

Rod. What say you?

Iago. No more of drowning, do you hear.

Rod. I am changed. I'll sell all my land.

Iago. Go to; farewell: put money enough in your purse. [Exit RODERIGO.]

Thus do I ever make my fool my purse:
For I mine own gain'd knowledge should profane,
If I would time expend with such a snipe,
But for my sport and profit. I hate the Moor;
And it is thought abroad, that 'twixt my sheets
He has done my office: I know not if't be true;
But I, for mere suspicion in that kind,
Will do, as if for surety⁷. He holds me well;⁸
The better shall my purpose work on him.
Cassio's a proper man: Let me see now;

⁶ *Traverse*;] This was an ancient military word of command.

⁷ — *as if for surety*.] That is, "I will act as if I were certain of the fact."

⁸ — *He holds me well*;] i. e. esteems me

To get his place, and to plume up my will ;
 A double knavery, — How? how? — Let me see : —
 After some time, to abuse Othello's ear,
 That he is too familiar with his wife : —
 He hath a person, and a smooth dispose,
 To be suspected ; fram'd to make women false.
 The Moor is of a free and open nature,
 That thinks men honest, that but seem to be so ;
 And will as tenderly be led by the nose,
 As asses are.
 I have't ; — it is engender'd : — Hell and night
 Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light.

[*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I. — *A Sea-port Town in Cyprus. A Platform.*

Enter MONTANO and Two Gentlemen.

Mon. What from the cape can you discern at sea?

1 Gent. Nothing at all : it is a high-wrought flood ;
 I cannot, 'twixt the heaven† and the main,
 Descry a sail.

Mon. Methinks, the wind hath spoke aloud at land ;
 A fuller blast ne'er shook our battlements :
 If it hath ruffian'd so upon the sea,
 What ribs of oak, when mountains melt on them,
 Can hold the mortise ? what shall we hear of this ?

2 Gent. A segregation of the Turkish fleet :
 For do but stand upon the foaming shore,
 The chiding billow seems to pelt the clouds ;
 The wind-shak'd surge, with high and monstrous main,
 Seems to cast water on the burning bear,

† "haven" — MALONE.

And quench the guards of the ever-fixed pole:⁹
 I never did like molestation view
 On th' enchafed flood.

Mon. If that the Turkish fleet
 Be not inshelter'd and embay'd, they are drown'd;
 It is impossible they bear it out.

Enter a third Gentleman.

3 Gent. News, lords! our wars are done;
 The desperate tempest hath so bang'd the Turks,
 That their designment halts: A noble ship of Venice
 Hath seen a grievous wreck and sufferance
 On most part of their fleet.

Mon. How! is this true?

3 Gent. The ship is here put in,
 A Veronesé; Michael Cassio,
 Lieutenant to the warlike Moor, Othello,
 Is come on shore: the Moor himself's at sea,
 And is in full commission here for Cyprus.

Mon. I am glad on't; 'tis a worthy governor.

3 Gent. But this same Cassio, — though he speak of
 comfort,
 Touching the Turkish loss, — yet he looks sadly,
 And prays the Moor be safe; for they were parted
 With foul and violent tempest.

Mon. 'Pray heaven he be;
 For I have serv'd him, and the man commands
 Like a full soldier.¹ Let's to the sea-side, ho!
 As well to see the vessel that's come in,
 As to throw out our eyes for brave Othello;
 Even till we make the main, and the aërial blue,
 An indistinct regard.

3 Gent. Come, let's do so;
 For every minute is expectancy
 Of more arrivance.

⁹ *And quench the guards of the ever-fixed pole:]* Alluding to the star *Arctophylax*.

¹ *Like a full soldier.]* Like a complete soldier.

Enter CASSIO.

Cas. Thanks to the valiant of this warlike isle,
That so approve the Moor; O, let the heavens
Give him defence against the elements,
For I have lost him on a dangerous sea!

Mon. Is he well shipp'd?

Cas. His bark is stoutly timber'd, and his pilot
Of very expert and approv'd allowance;²
Therefore my hopes, not surfeited to death,
Stand in bold cure.³

[*Within.*] A sail, a sail, a sail!

Enter another Gentleman.

Cas. What noise?

4 Gent. The town is empty; on the brow o'the sea
Stand ranks of people, and they cry — a sail.

Cas. My hopes do shape him for the governour.

2 Gent. They do discharge their shot of courtesy:

[*Guns heard.*

Our friends, at least.

Cas. I pray you, sir, go forth,
And give us truth who 'tis that is arriv'd.

2 Gent. I shall. [*Exit.*

Mon. But, good lieutenant, is your general wiv'd?

Cas. Most fortunately: he hath achiev'd a maid
That paragons description, and wild fame;
One that excels the quirks of blazoning pens,
And in the essential vesture of creation,

² *Of very expert and approv'd allowance;*] *Expert and approv'd allowance* is put for *allow'd and approv'd expertness*. This mode of expression is not unfrequent in Shakspeare.

³ *Therefore my hopes, not surfeited to death,*

Stand in bold cure.] Presumptuous hopes, which have no foundation in probability, may poetically be said to surfeit themselves to death, or forward their own dissolution. To *stand in bold cure*, is to erect themselves in confidence of being fulfilled.

SCENE I. THE MOOR OF VENICE. 445

Does bear all excellency.⁴ How now? who has put in?

Re-enter second Gentleman.

2 *Gent.* 'Tis one Iago, ancient to the general.

Cas. He has had most favourable and happy speed: Tempests themselves, high seas, and howling winds, The gutter'd rocks, and congregated sands, — Traitors ensteep'd to clog the guiltless keel, As having sense of beauty, do omit Their mortal natures⁵, letting go safely by The divine Desdemona.

Mon. What is she?

Cas. She that I spake of, our great captain's captain, Left in the conduct of the bold Iago; Whose footing here anticipates our thoughts, A se'nnight's speed. — Great Jove, Othello guard, And swell his sail with thine own powerful breath; That he may bless this bay with his tall ship, Make love's quick pants in Desdemona's arms, Give renew'd fire to our extincted spirits, And bring all Cyprus comfort! — O, behold,

Enter DESDEMONA, EMILIA, IAGO, RODERIGO, and Attendants.

The riches of the ship is come on shore!
Ye men of Cyprus, let her have your knees: —
Hail to thee, lady! and the grace of heaven,
Before, behind thee, and on every hand,
Enwheel thee round!

Des. I thank you, valiant Cassio.
What tidings can you tell me of my lord?

⁴ *And in the essential vesture of creation, Does bear all excellency.*] The author seems to use *essential* for *existent, real*. She excels the praises of invention, says he, and in *real* qualities, with which *creation* has invested her, bears all excellency.

⁵ *Their mortal natures,*] i. e. their deadly, destructive natures.

Cas. He is not yet arriv'd; nor know I aught
But that he's well, and will be shortly here.

Des. O, but I fear; — How lost you company?

Cas. The great contention of the sea and skies
Parted our fellowship: But, hark! a sail.

[*Cry within, A sail, a sail! Then Guns heard.*

2 *Gent.* They give their greeting to the citadel;
This likewise is a friend.

Cas. See for the news. —

[*Exit Gentleman.*

Good ancient, you are welcome; — Welcome, mis-
tress: — [To EMILIA.

Let it not gall your patience, good Iago,
That I extend my manners; 'tis my breeding
That gives me this bold show of courtesy. [*Kissing her.*

Iago. Sir, would she give you so much of her lips,
As of her tongue she oft bestows on me,
You'd have enough.

Des. Alas, she has no speech.

Iago. In faith, too much;
I find it still, when I have list to sleep:
Marry, before your ladyship, I grant,
She puts her tongue a little in her heart,
And chides with thinking.

Emil. You have little cause to say so.

Iago. Come on, come on; you are pictures out of
doors,
Bells in your parlours, wild cats in your kitchens,
Saints in your injuries⁶, devils being offended,
Players in your housewifery, and housewives in your
beds.

Des. O, fye upon thee, slanderer!

Iago. Nay, it is true, or else I am a Turk;
You rise to play, and go to bed to work.

Emil. You shall not write my praise.

⁶ *Saints in your injuries, &c.*] When you have a mind to do injuries, you put on an air of sanctity.

SCENE I. THE MOOR OF VENICE. 447

Iago. No, let me not.

Des. What would'st thou write of me, if thou should'st praise me?

Iago. O gentle lady, do not put me to't; For I am nothing, if not critical.⁷

Des. Come on, assay:— There's one gone to the harbour?

Iago. Ay, madam.

Des. I am not merry; but I do beguile The thing I am, by seeming otherwise.— Come, how would'st thou praise me?

Iago. I am about it; but, indeed, my invention Comes from my pate, as birdlime does from frize, It plucks out brains and all: But my muse labours, And thus she is deliver'd.

If she be fair and wise, —fairness, and wit, The one's for use, the other useth it.

Des. Well prais'd! How if she be black and witty?

Iago. If she be black, and thereto have a wit, She'll find a white that shall her blackness fit.

Des. Worse and worse.

Emil. How, if fair and foolish?

Iago. She never yet was foolish that was fair; For even her folly help'd her to an heir.

Des. These are old fond paradoxes, to make fools laugh i'the alehouse. What miserable praise hast thou for her that's foul and foolish?

Iago. There's none so foul, and foolish thereunto, But does foul pranks which fair and wise ones do.

Des. O heavy ignorance! — thou praisest the worst best. But what praise could'st thou bestow on a deserving woman indeed? one, that, in the authority of her merit, did justly put on the vouch of very malice itself?⁸

⁷ — critical.] That is, censorious.

⁸ — one, that, in the authority of her merit, did justly put on the vouch of very malice itself?] The sense is this, one that was so conscious of her own merit, and of the authority her character had

Iago. She that was ever fair, and never proud;
 Had tongue at will, and yet was never loud;
 Never lack'd gold, and yet went never gay;
 Fled from her wish, and yet said, — *now I may*;
 She that, being anger'd, her revenge being nigh,
 Bade her wrong stay, and her displeasure fly:
 She that in wisdom never was so frail,
 To change the cod's head for the salmon's tail;
 She that could think, and ne'er disclose her mind,
 See suitors following, and not look behind;
 She was a wight, — if ever such wight were, —

Des. To do what?

Iago. To suckle fools, and chronicle small beer.

Des. O most lame and impotent conclusion! — Do not learn of him, Emilia, though he be thy husband. — How say you, Cassio? is he not a most profane⁹ and liberal counsellor?¹

Cas. He speaks home, madam; you may relish him more in the soldier, than in the scholar.

Iago. [*aside.*] He takes her by the palm: Ay, well said, whisper: with as little a web as this, will I ensnare as great a fly as Cassio. Ay, smile upon her, do; I will gyve² thee in thine own courtship. You say true; 'tis so, indeed: if such tricks as these strip you out of your lieutenantry, it had been better you had not kissed your three fingers so oft, which now again you are most apt to play the sir in.³ Very good; well kissed! an excellent courtesy⁴! 'tis so, indeed. Yet again your

with every one, that she durst venture to call upon malice itself to vouch for her.

⁹ — *profane* —] Gross of language, of expression broad and brutal.

¹ — liberal counsellor?] *Liberal* for licentious.

² — *I will gyve* —] i. e. catch, shackle.

³ — *to play the sir in.*] That is, to show your good breeding and gallantry.

⁴ — *well kissed! an excellent courtesy!*] Spoken when Cassio kisses his hand, and Desdemona courtsies.

SCENE I. THE MOOR OF VENICE. 449

fingers to your lips? would, they were clyster-pipes for your sake! — [Trumpet.] The Moor, I know his trumpet.

Cas. 'Tis truly so:

Des. Let's meet him, and receive him.

Cas. Lo, where he comes!

Enter OTHELLO, and Attendants.

Oth. O my fair warrior!

Des. My dear Othello?

Oth. It gives me wonder great as my content,
To see you here before me. O my soul's joy!
If after every tempest come such calms,
May the winds blow till they have waken'd death!
And let the labouring bark climb hills of seas,
Olympus-high; and duck again as low
As hell's from heaven! If it were now to die,
'Twere now to be most happy; for, I fear,
My soul hath her content so absolute,
That not another comfort like to this
Succeeds in unknown fate.

Des. The heavens forbid,
But that our loves and comforts should increase,
Even as our days do grow!

Oth. Amen to that, sweet powers! —
I cannot speak enough of this content,
It stops me here; it is too much of joy:
And this, and this, the greatest discords be,

[Kissing her.]

That e'er our hearts shall make!

Iago. O, you are well tun'd now!
But I'll set down the pegs that make this musick,
As honest as I am.

[Aside.]

Oth. Come, let's to the castle. —
News, friends; our wars are done, the Turks are
drown'd.

How do our old acquaintance of this isle?

Honey, you shall be well desir'd in Cyprus, ⁵
 I have found great love amongst them. O my sweet,
 I prattle out of fashion ⁶, and I dote
 In mine own comforts: — I pr'ythee, good Iago,
 Go to the bay, and disembark my coffers:
 Bring thou the master to the citadel;
 He is a good one, and his worthiness
 Does challenge much respect. — Come, Desdemona,
 Once more well met at Cyprus.

[*Exeunt* OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, and
Attendants.]

Iago. Do thou meet me presently at the harbour.
 Come hither. If thou be'st valiant as (they say) base
 men, being in love, have then a nobility in their natures
 more than is native to them, — list me. The lieutenant
 to-night watches on the court of guard⁷: — First,
 I must tell thee this — Desdemona is directly in love
 with him.

Rod. With him! why, 'tis not possible.

Iago. Lay thy finger — thus, and let thy soul be instructed.
 Mark me with what violence she first loved the Moor,
 but for bragging, and telling her fantastical lies:
 And will she love him still for prating? let not thy
 discreet heart think it. Her eye must be fed; and
 what delight shall she have to look on the devil? When
 the blood is made dull with the act of sport, there
 should be, — again to inflame it, and to give satiety a
 fresh appetite, — loveliness in favour; sympathy in
 years, manners, and beauties; all which the Moor is
 defective in: Now, for want of these required conveni-
 ences, her delicate tenderness will find itself abused,
 begin to heave the gorge, disrelish and abhor the Moor;

⁵ — well desir'd in Cyprus,] i. e. much solicited by invitation.

⁶ I prattle out of fashion,] Out of method, without any settled order of discourse.

⁷ — the court of guard:] i. e. the place where the guard musters.

very nature will instruct her in it, and compel her to some second choice. Now, sir, this granted, (as it is a most pregnant and unforced position,) who stands so eminently in the degree of this fortune, as Cassio does? a knave very voluble; no further conscionable, than in putting on the mere form of civil and humane seeming, for the better compassing of his salt and most hidden loose affection? why, none; why, none: A slippery and subtle knave; a finder out of occasions; that has an eye can stamp and counterfeit advantages, though true advantage never present itself: A devilish knave! besides, the knave is handsome, young; and hath all those requisites in him, that folly and green minds⁸ look after: A pestilent complete knave; and the woman hath found him already.

Rod. I cannot believe that in her; she is full of most blessed condition.⁹

Iago. Blessed fig's end! the wine she drinks is made of grapes: if she had been blessed, she would never have loved the Moor: Blessed pudding! Didst thou not see her paddle with the palm of his hand? didst not mark that?

Rod. Yes, that I did; but that was but courtesy.

Iago. Lechery, by this hand; an index, and obscure prologue to the history of lust and foul thoughts. They met so near with their lips, that their breaths embraced together. Villainous thoughts, Roderigo! when these mutualities so marshal the way, hard at hand comes the master and main exercise, the incorporate conclusion: Pish! — But, sir, be you ruled by me: I have brought you from Venice. Watch you to-night; for the command, I'll lay't upon you: Cassio knows you not; — I'll not be far from you: Do you find some occasion to anger Cassio, either by speaking too loud,

⁸ — *green minds* —] Minds unripe, minds not yet fully formed.

⁹ — *condition.*] Qualities, disposition of mind.

or tainting¹ his discipline ; or from what other course you please, which the time shall more favourably minister.

Rod. Well.

Iago. Sir, he is rash, and very sudden in choler²; and, haply, with his truncheon may strike at you : Provoke him, that he may: for, even out of that, will I cause these of Cyprus to mutiny ; whose qualification shall come into no true taste again³, but by the displanting of Cassio. So shall you have a shorter journey to your desires, by the means I shall then have to prefer them⁴; and the impediment most profitably removed, without the which there were no expectation of our prosperity.

Rod. I will do this, if I can bring it to any opportunity.

Iago. I warrant thee. Meet me by and by at the citadel : I must fetch his necessaries ashore. Farewell.

Rod. Adieu.

[*Exit.*

Iago. That Cassio loves her, I do well believe it ;
That she loves him, 'tis apt, and of great credit:
The Moor — howbeit that I endure him not, —
Is of a constant, loving, noble nature ;
And, I dare think, he'll prove to Desdemona
A most dear husband. Now I do love her too ;
Not out of absolute lust, (though, peradventure,
I stand accountant for as great a sin,)
But partly led to diet my revenge,
For that I do suspect the lusty Moor
Hath leap'd into my seat : the thought whereof
Doth, like a poisonous mineral, gnaw my inwards ;
And nothing can or shall content my soul,

¹ — *tainting* —] Throwing a slur upon his discipline.

² — sudden *in choler* ;] *Sudden*, is precipitately violent.

³ — *whose qualification shall come, &c.*] Whose resentment shall not be so *qualified* or *tempered*, as to be *well tasted*, as not to retain some *bitterness*. The phrase is harsh, at least to our ears.

⁴ — *to prefer them* ;] i. e. to *advance* them.

SCENE II. THE MOOR OF VENICE. 453

Till I am even with him, wife for wife;
 Or, failing so, yet that I put the Moor
 At least into a jealousy so strong
 That judgment cannot cure. Which thing to do, —
 If this poor trash of Venice, whom I trash⁵
 For his quick hunting, stand the putting on,
 I'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip;
 Abuse him to the Moor in the rank garb. —⁶
 For I fear Cassio with my night-cap too;
 Make the Moor thank me, love me, and reward me,
 For making him egregiously an ass,
 And practising upon his peace and quiet
 Even to madness. 'Tis here, but yet confus'd;
 Knavery's plain face is never seen⁷, till us'd. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

A Street.

Enter a Herald, with a Proclamation; People following.

Her. It is Othello's pleasure, our noble and valiant general, that, upon certain tidings now arrived, importing the mere⁸ perdition of the Turkish fleet, every man put himself into triumph: some to dance, some to make bonfires, each man to what sport and revels his addiction leads him; for, besides these beneficial news, it is the celebration of his nuptials: So much was his pleasure should be proclaimed. All offices are open⁹; and there

⁵ *If this poor trash of Venice, whom I trash —*] To *trash*, is still a hunter's phrase, and signifies to fasten a weight on the neck of a dog, when his speed is superior to that of his companions.

⁶ — *in the rank garb.*] i. e. *grossly, without mincing the matter.*

⁷ *Knavery's plain face is never seen,*] An honest man acts upon a plan, and forecasts his designs; but a knave depends upon temporary and local opportunities, and never knows his own purpose, but at the time of execution. JOHNSON.

⁸ — *mere*—] *Mere* in this place signifies *entire*.

⁹ *All offices are open;*] i. e. all rooms, or places, in the castle, at which refreshments are prepared, or served out.

is full liberty of feasting, from this present hour of five, till the bell hath told eleven. Heaven bless the isle of Cyprus, and our noble general, Othello ! [Exeunt.]

SCENE III.

A Hall in the Castle.

Enter OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, CASSIO, *and Attendants.*

Oth. Good Michael, look you to the guard to-night: Let's teach ourselves that honourable stop, Not to out-sport discretion.

Cas. Iago hath direction what to do; But, notwithstanding, with my personal eye Will I look to't.

Oth. Iago is most honest. Michael, good night: To-morrow, with our earliest, Let me have speech with you. — Come, my dear love, The purchase made, the fruits are to ensue;

[To DESDEMONA.]

That profit's yet to come 'twixt me and you. —

Good night. [Exeunt OTH. DES. and Attend.]

Enter IAGO.

Cas. Welcome, Iago: We must to the watch.

Iago. Not this hour, lieutenant; 'tis not yet ten o'clock: Our general cast us¹ thus early, for the love of his Desdemona; whom let us not therefore blame; he hath not yet made wanton the night with her: and she is sport for Jove.

Cas. She's a most exquisite lady.

Iago. And, I'll warrant her, full of game.

Cas. Indeed, she is a most fresh and delicate creature.

¹ *Our general cast us —*] *Cast us, means dismissed us, or got rid of our company.*

SCENE III. THE MOOR OF VENICE. 455

Iago. What an eye she has! methinks it sounds a parley of provocation.

Cas. An inviting eye; and yet methinks right modest.

Iago. And when she speaks, is it not an alarm to love?

Cas. She is, indeed, perfection.

Iago. Well, happiness to their sheets! Come, lieutenant, I have a stoop of wine: and here without are a brace of Cyprus gallants, that would fain have a measure to the health of the black Othello.

Cas. Not to-night, good Iago; I have very poor and unhappy brains for drinking: I could well wish courtesy would invent some other custom of entertainment.

Iago. O, they are our friends; but one cup: I'll drink for you.

Cas. I have drunk but one cup to-night, and that was craftily qualified² too, and, behold, what innovation it makes here: I am unfortunate in the infirmity, and dare not task my weakness with any more.

Iago. What, man! 'tis a night of revels; the gallants desire it.

Cas. Where are they?

Iago. Here at the door; I pray you call them in.

Cas. I'll do't; but it dislikes me. [*Exit CASSIO.*]

Iago. If I can fasten but one cup upon him,
With that which he hath drunk to-night already,
He'll be as full of quarrel and offence
As my young mistress' dog. Now, my sick fool, Roderigo,

Whom love has turn'd almost the wrong side outward,
To Desdemona hath to-night carous'd
Potations pottle deep; and he's to watch:
Three lads of Cyprus, — noble swelling spirits,
That hold their honours in a wary distance,
The very elements³ of this warlike isle, —

² — *craftily qualified* —] Sily mixed with water.

³ *The very elements* —] As quarrelsome as the *discordia semina rerum*; as quick in opposition as fire and water.

Have I to-night fluster'd with flowing cups,
And they watch too. Now, 'mongst this flock of
drunkards,

Am I to put our Cassio in some action
That may offend the isle:— But here they come:
If consequence do but approve my dream,⁴
My boat sails freely, both with wind and stream.

Re-enter CASSIO, with him MONTANO, and Gentlemen.

Cas. 'Fore heaven, they have given me a rouse already.⁵

Mon. Good faith, a little one; not past a pint, as I am a soldier.

Iago. Some wine, ho!

And let me the canakin clink, clink; [Sings.
And let me the canakin clink:
A soldier's a man;
A life's but a span;
Why then, let a soldier drink.

Some wine, boys! [*Wine brought in.*

Cas. 'Fore heaven, an excellent song.

Iago. I learned it in England, where (indeed) they are most potent in potting: your Dane, your German, and your swag-bellied Hollander, — Drink, ho! — are nothing to your English.

Cas. Is your Englishman so expert in his drinking?

Iago. Why, he drinks you, with facility, your Dane dead drunk: he sweats not to overthrow your Almain; he gives your Hollander a vomit, ere the next pottle can be filled.

Cas. To the health of our general.

⁴ *If consequence do but approve my dream,*] Every scheme subsisting only in the imagination may be termed a *dream*.

⁵ — *given me a rouse, &c.*] A *rouse* appears to be a quantity of liquor rather too large.

SCENE III. THE MOOR OF VENICE. 457

Mon. I am for it, lieutenant; and I'll do you justice.⁶

Iago. O sweet England!

*King Stephen*⁷ was a worthy peer,⁸
 His breeches cost him but a crown;
 He held them sixpence all too dear,
 With that he call'd the tailor — lown.⁹

He was a wight of high renown,
 And thou art but of low degree:
 'Tis pride that pulls the country down,
 Then take thine auld cloak about thee.

Some wine, ho!

Cas. Why, this is a more exquisite song than the other.

Iago. Will you hear it again?

Cas. No; for I hold him to be unworthy of his place, that does those things. — Well, — Heaven's above all; and there be souls that must be saved, and there be souls must not be saved.

Iago. It's true, good lieutenant.

Cas. For mine own part, — no offence to the general, nor any man of quality, — I hope to be saved.

Iago. And so do I too, lieutenant.

Cas. Ay, but, by your leave, not before me; the lieutenant is to be saved before the ancient. Let's have no more of this; let's to our affairs. — Forgive us our sins! — Gentlemen, let's look to our business. Do not think, gentlemen, I am drunk: this is my ancient; — this is my right hand, and this is my left hand: — I am

⁶ — I'll do you justice.] i. e. drink as much as you do.

⁷ *King Stephen, &c.*] These stanzas are taken from an old song, which the reader will find recovered and preserved in Percy's *Relicks of Ancient Poetry*.

⁸ — a worthy peer,] A *worthy peer* is a *worthy lord*, a title frequently bestowed upon *kings* in our old romances.

⁹ — lown.] Sorry fellow, paltry wretch.

not drunk now ; I can stand well enough, and speak well enough.

All. Excellent well.

Cas. Why, very well, then : you must not think then that I am drunk. [*Exit.*

Mon. To the platform, masters ; come, let's set the watch.

Iago. You see this fellow, that is gone before ; —
He is a soldier, fit to stand by Cæsar,
And give direction : and do but see his vice ;
'Tis to his virtue a just equinox,
The one as long as the other : 'tis pity of him.
I fear, the trust Othello puts him in,
On some odd time of his infirmity,
Will shake this island.

Mon. But is he often thus ?

Iago. 'Tis evermore the prologue to his sleep :
He'll watch the horologe a double set,¹
If drink rock not his cradle.

Mon. It were well,
The general were put in mind of it.
Perhaps, he sees it not ; or his good nature
Prizes the virtue that appears in Cassio,
And looks not on his evils ; Is not this true ?

Enter RODERIGO.

Iago. How now, Roderigo ? [*Aside.*
I pray you, after the lieutenant ; go. [*Exit* RODERIGO.

Mon. And 'tis great pity, that the noble Moor
Should hazard such a place, as his own second,
With one of an ingraft infirmity :²

¹ *He'll watch the horologe a double set, &c.*] If he have no drink, he'll keep awake while the clock strikes two rounds, or four-and-twenty hours.

² — *ingraft infirmity ;*] An infirmity *rooted, settled* in his constitution

SCENE III. THE MOOR OF VENICE. 459

It were an honest action, to say
So to the Moor.

Iago. Not I, for this fair island :
I do love Cassio well ; and would do much
To cure him of this evil. But hark ! what noise ?
[*Cry within, — Help ! help !*

Re-enter CASSIO, driving in RODERIGO.

Cas. You rogue ! you rascal !

Mon. What's the matter, lieutenant ?

Cas. A knave ! — teach me my duty !
I'll beat the knave into a twiggen bottle.³

Rod. Beat me !

Cas. Dost thou prate, rogue ?

[*Striking RODERIGO.*

Mon. Nay, good lieutenant ;
[*Staying him.*

I pray you, sir, hold your hand.

Cas. Let me go, sir,

Or I'll knock you o'er the mazzard.

Mon. Come, come, you're drunk.

Cas. Drunk ! [They fight.

Iago. Away, I say ! go out, and cry — a mutiny.
[*Aside to ROD. who goes out.*

Nay, good lieutenant, — alas, gentlemen, —

Help, ho ! — Lieutenant, — sir, — Montano, — sir ; —

Help, masters ! — Here's a goodly watch, indeed !

[*Bell rings.*

Who's that that rings the bell ? — Diablo, ho !

The town will rise : God's will, lieutenant ! hold ;

You will be sham'd for ever.

Enter OTHELLO, and Attendants.

Oth. What is the matter here ?

³ — into a twiggen bottle.] i. e. a wickered bottle.

Mon. I bleed still, I am hurt to the death; — he dies.⁴

Oth. Hold, for your lives.

Iago. Hold, hold, lieutenant, — sir, Montano, — gentlemen, —

Have you forgot all sense of place and duty?

Hold, hold! the general speaks to you; hold, for shame!

Oth. Why, how now, ho! from whence ariseth this?

Are we turn'd Turks; and to ourselves do that,

Which heaven hath forbid the Ottomites?

For christian shame, put by this barbarous brawl:

He that stirs next to carve for his own rage, †

Holds his soul light; he dies upon his motion. —

Silence that dreadful bell, it frights the isle

From her propriety.⁵ — What is the matter, masters? —

Honest Iago, that look'st dead with grieving,

Speak, who began this? on thy love, I charge thee.

Iago. I do not know; — friends all but now, even now,

In quarter⁶, and in terms like bride and groom

Devesting them for bed: and then, but now,

(As if some planet had unwitting men,)

Swords out, and tilting one at other's breast,

In opposition bloody. I cannot speak

Any beginning to this peevish odds;

And 'would in action glorious I had lost

These legs, that brought me to a part of it!

Oth. How comes it, Michael, you are thus forgot?⁷

Cas. I pray you, pardon me, I cannot speak.

Oth. Worthy Montano, you were wont be civil;
The gravity and stillness of your youth

⁴ *He dies.*] i. e. he shall die. But Mr. Malone reads thus: "Zounds, I bleed still, I am hurt to the death."

† "carve forth his," &c. MALONE.

⁵ *From her propriety.*] From her regular and proper state.

⁶ *In quarter,*] i. e. on our station.

⁷ — *you are thus forgot?*] i. e. you have thus forgot yourself.

The world hath noted, and your name is great
 In mouths of wisest censure; What's the matter,
 That you unlace your reputation thus,
 And spend your rich opinion, for the name
 Of a night-brawler? give me answer to it.

Mon. Worthy Othello, I am hurt to danger;
 Your officer, Iago, can inform you —
 While I spare speech, which something now offends
 me; —

Of all that I do know: nor know I aught
 By me that's said or done amiss this night;
 Unless self-charity⁸ be sometime a vice;
 And to defend ourselves it be a sin,
 When violence assails us.

Oth. Now, by heaven,
 My blood begins my safer guides to rule;
 And passion, having my best judgment collied,⁹
 Assays to lead the way: If I once stir,
 Or do but lift this arm, the best of you
 Shall sink in my rebuke. Give me to know
 How this foul rout began, who set it on;
 And he that is approv'd¹ in this offence,
 Though he had twinn'd with me, both at a birth,
 Shall lose me. — What! in a town of war,
 Yet wild, the people's hearts brimful of fear,
 To manage private and domestick quarrel,
 In night, and on the court and guard† of safety!
 'Tis monstrous. — Iago, who began it?

Mon. If partially affin'd², or leagu'd in office,

⁸ — *self-charity* —] Care of one's self.

⁹ *And passion, having my best judgment collied,*] Othello means, that passion has discoloured his judgment. To *colly*, anciently signified to *besmut*, to *blacken as with coal*.

¹ — *he that is approv'd* —] He that is convicted by proof, of having been engaged in this offence.

† “court of guard” — MALONE.

² *If partially affin'd,*] *Affin'd* is bound by proximity of relationship; but here it means related by nearness of office.

Thou dost deliver more or less than truth,
Thou art no soldier.

Iago. Touch me not so near :
I had rather have this tongue cut from my mouth,
Than it should do offence to Michael Cassio ;
Yet, I persuade myself, to speak the truth
Shall nothing wrong him. — Thus it is, general.
Montano and myself being in speech,
There comes a fellow, crying out for help ;
And Cassio following him with determin'd sword,
To execute upon him : Sir, this gentleman
Steps in to Cassio, and entreats his pause ;
Myself the crying fellow did pursue,
Lest, by his clamour, (as it so fell out,)
The town might fall in fright : he, swift of foot,
Outran my purpose ; and I return'd the rather
For that I heard the clink and fall of swords,
And Cassio high in oath ; which, till to-night,
I ne'er might say before : When I came back,
(For this was brief,) I found them close together,
At blow, and thrust ; even as again they were,
When you yourself did part them.
More of this matter can I not report : —
But men are men ; the best sometimes forget : —
Though Cassio did some little wrong to him, —
As men in rage strike those that wish them best, —
Yet, surely, Cassio, I believe, receiv'd,
From him that fled, some strange indignity,
Which patience could not pass.

Oth. I know, Iago,
Thy honesty and love doth mince this matter,
Making it light to Cassio : — Cassio, I love thee ;
But never more be officer of mine. —

Enter DESDEMONA, attended.

Look, if my gentle love be not rais'd up ; —
I'll make thee an example.

SCENE III. THE MOOR OF VENICE. 463

Des. What's the matter, dear?

Oth. All's well now, sweeting; Come away to bed.
Sir, for your hurts,
Myself will be your surgeon: Lead him off.

[*To MONTANO, who is led off.*

Iago, look with care about the town;
And silence those whom this vile brawl distracted. —
Come, Desdemona; 'tis the soldiers' life,
To have their balmy slumbers wak'd with strife.

[*Exeunt all but IAGO and CASSIO.*

Iago. What, are you hurt, lieutenant?

Cas. Ay, past all surgery.

Iago. Marry, heaven forbid!

Cas. Reputation, reputation, reputation! O, I have
lost my reputation! I have lost the immortal part, sir,
of myself, and what remains is bestial. — My reputation,
Iago, my reputation.

Iago. As I am an honest man, I thought you had
received some bodily wound; there is more offence in
that, than in reputation. Reputation is an idle and
most false imposition; oft got without merit, and lost
without deserving: You have lost no reputation at all,
unless you repute yourself such a loser. What, man!
there are ways to recover the general again: You are
but now cast in his mood³, a punishment more in
policy than in malice; even so as one would beat his
offenceless dog, to affright an imperious lion: sue to
him again, and he's yours.

Cas. I will rather sue to be despised, than to deceive
so good a commander, with so slight, so drunken, and
so indiscreet an officer. Drunk? and speak parrot?⁴
and squabble? swagger? swear? and discourse fustian
with one's own shadow? — O thou invisible spirit of

³ — *cast in his mood,*] Ejected in his anger.

⁴ — *and speak parrot?*] A phrase signifying to act foolishly and
childishly.

wine, if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee — devil !

Iago. What was he that you followed with your sword ? What had he done to you ?

Cas. I know not.

Iago. Is it possible ?

Cas. I remember a mass of things, but nothing distinctly ; a quarrel, but nothing wherefore. — O, that men should put an enemy in their mouths, to steal away their brains ! that we should, with joy, revel, pleasure, and applause, transform ourselves into beasts !

Iago. Why, but you are now well enough : How came you thus recovered ?

Cas. It hath pleased the devil, drunkenness, to give place to the devil, wrath : one unperfectness shows me another, to make me frankly despise myself.

Iago. Come, you are too severe a moraler : As the time, the place, and the condition of this country stands, I could heartily wish this had not befallen ; but, since it is as it is, mend it for your own good.

Cas. I will ask him for my place again ; he shall tell me, I am a drunkard ! Had I as many mouths as Hydra, such an answer would stop them all. To be now a sensible man, by and by a fool, and presently a beast ! O strange ! — Every inordinate cup is unblessed, and the ingredient is a devil.

Iago. Come, come, good wine is a good familiar creature, if it be well used ; exclaim no more against it. And, good lieutenant, I think, you think I love you.

Cas. I have well approv'd it, sir. — I drunk !

Iago. You, or any man living, may be drunk at some time, man. I'll tell you what you shall do. Our general's wife is now the general ; — I may say so in this respect, for that he hath devoted and given up himself to the contemplation, mark, and denotement of her parts and graces : — confess yourself freely to her ; importune her ; she'll help to put you in your place again : she is of

so free, so kind, so apt, so blessed a disposition, that she holds it a vice in her goodness, not to do more than she is requested: This broken joint, between you and her husband, entreat her to splinter; and, my fortunes against any lay⁵ worth naming, this crack of your love shall grow stronger than it was before.

Cas. You advise me well.

Iago. I protest, in the sincerity of love, and honest kindness.

Cas. I think it freely; and, betimes in the morning, I will beseech the virtuous Desdemona to undertake for me: I am desperate of my fortunes, if they check me here.

Iago. You are in the right. Good night, lieutenant; I must to the watch.

Cas. Good night, honest Iago. [Exit CASSIO.]

Iago. And what's he then, that says, — I play the villain?

When this advice is free, I give, and honest,
 Probal⁶ to thinking, and (indeed) the course
 To win the Moor again? For 'tis most easy
 The inclining Desdemona⁷ to subdue
 In any honest suit; she's fram'd as fruitful
 As the free elements.⁸ And then for her
 To win the Moor, — were't to renounce his baptism,
 All seals and symbols of redeemed sin, —
 His soul is so enfetted to her love,
 That she may make, unmake, do what she list,
 Even as her appetite shall play the god

⁵ — any lay —] i. e. any bet, any wager.

⁶ *Probal* —] There may be such a contraction of the word *probable*, but I have not met with it in any other book. Yet abbreviations as *violent* occur in our ancient writers, and especially in the works of Churchyard. STEEVENS.

⁷ *The inclining Desdemona* —] i. e. *compliant*.

⁸ — as fruitful

As the free elements.] Liberal, bountiful, as the elements, out of which all things are produced.

With his weak function. How am I then a villain,
 To counsel Cassio to this parallel course⁹,
 Directly to his good? Divinity of hell!
 When devils will their blackest sins put on,
 They do suggest¹ at first with heavenly shows,
 As I do now: For while this honest fool
 Plies Desdemona to repair his fortunes,
 And she for him pleads strongly to the Moor,
 I'll pour this pestilence into his ear, —
 That she repeals² him for her body's lust;
 And, by how much she strives to do him good,
 She shall undo her credit with the Moor.
 So will I turn her virtue into pitch;
 And out of her own goodness make the net,
 That shall enmesh them all. — How now, Roderigo?

Enter RODERIGO.

Rod. I do follow here in the chace, not like a hound
 that hunts, but one that fills up the cry. My money is
 almost spent; I have been to-night exceedingly well cud-
 gelled; and, I think, the issue will be — I shall have so
 much experience for my pains: and so, with no money
 at all, and a little more wit, return to Venice.

Iago. How poor are they, that have not patience! —
 What wound did ever heal, but by degrees?
 Thou know'st, we work by wit, and not by witchcraft;
 And wit depends on dilatory time.
 Does't not go well? Cassio hath beaten thee,
 And thou, by that small hurt, hast cashier'd Cassio:
 Though other things grow fair against the sun,
 Yet fruits, that blossom first, will first be ripe:

⁹ — parallel course,] i. e. course level and even with his design.

¹ *When devils will their blackest sins put on, They do suggest* —] When devils mean to *instigate* men to commit the most atrocious crimes.

² *That she repeals* —] That is, *recalls* him.

ACT III. Sc. I. THE MOOR OF VENICE. 467

Content thyself a while. — By the mass, 'tis morning;
Pleasure, and action, make the hours seem short. —
Retire thee: go where thou art billeted:
Away, I say, thou shalt know more hereafter:
Nay, get thee gone. [*Exit ROD.*] Two things are to be
done, —

My wife must move for Cassio to her mistress;
I'll set her on;
Myself, the while, to draw the Moor apart,
And bring him jump³ when he may Cassio find
Soliciting his wife: — Ay, that's the way;
Dull not device by coldness and delay. [*Exit.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I. — *Before the Castle.*

Enter CASSIO, and some Musicians.

Cas. Masters, play here, I will content your pains.
Something that's brief; and bid — good-morrow, ge-
neral.⁴ [*Musick.*]

Enter Clown.

Clo. Why, masters, have your instruments been at
Naples, that they speak i'the nose thus?

1 *Mus.* How, sir, how!

Clo. Are these, I pray you, called wind instruments

³ — *bring him jump —*] i. e. *just at the time when.*

⁴ — *and bid — good-morrow, general.*] It is the usual practice of the *waits*, or nocturnal minstrels, in several towns in the north of England, after playing a tune or two, to cry, "Good-morrow, maister Such-a-one, good-morrow, dame," adding the hour, and state of the weather. It should seem to have prevailed at Stratford-upon-Avon. They formerly used *hautboys*, which are the wind-instruments here meant. RITSON.

1 *Mus.* Ay, marry, are they, sir.

Clo. O, thereby hangs a tail.

1 *Mus.* Whereby hangs a tail, sir?

Clo. Marry, sir, by many a wind instrument that I know. But, masters, here's money for you: and the general so likes your musick, that he desires you, of all loves, to make no more noise with it.

1 *Mus.* Well, sir, we will not.

Clo. If you have any musick that may not be heard, to't again: but, as they say, to hear musick, the general does not greatly care.

1 *Mus.* We have none such, sir.

Clo. Then put up your pipes in your bag, for I'll away: Go; vanish into air; away. [*Exeunt Musicians.*]

Cas. Dost thou hear, my honest friend?

Clo. No, I hear not your honest friend; I hear you.

Cas. Pr'ythee, keep up thy quilllets. There's a poor piece of gold for thee: if the gentlewoman that attends the general's wife, be stirring, tell her, there's one Cassio entreats her a little favour of speech: Wilt thou do this?

Clo. She is stirring, sir; if she will stir hither, I shall seem to notify unto her. [*Exit.*]

Enter IAGO.

Cas. Do, good my friend. — In happy time, Iago.

Iago. You have not been a-bed then?

Cas. Why, no; the day had broke
Before we parted. I have made bold, Iago,
To send in to your wife: My suit to her
Is, that she will to virtuous Desdemona
Procure me some access.

Iago. I'll send her to you presently;
And I'll devise a mean to draw the Moor
Out of the way, that your converse and business
May be more free. [*Exit.*]

Cas. I humbly thank you for't. I never knew
A Florentine more kind and honest.

Enter EMILIA.

Emil. Good morrow, good lieutenant: I am sorry
For your displeasure⁵; but all will soon be well.
The general, and his wife, are talking of it;
And she speaks for you stoutly: The Moor replies,
That he, you hurt, is of great fame in Cyprus,
And great affinity; and that, in wholesome wisdom,
He might not but refuse you: but, he protests, he loves
you;

And needs no other suitor, but his likings,
To take the saf'st occasion by the front,
To bring you in again.

Cas. Yet, I beseech you, —
If you think fit, or that it may be done, —
Give me advantage of some brief discourse
With Desdemona alone.

Emil. Pray you, come in;
I will bestow you where you shall have time
To speak your bosom freely.

Cas. I am much bound to you.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A Room in the Castle.

Enter OTHELLO, IAGO, and Gentlemen.

Oth. These letters give, Iago, to the pilot;
And, by him, do my duties to the state:
That done, I will be walking on the works,
Repair there to me.

⁵ For your displeasure;] i. e. the displeasure you have incurred from Othello.

Iago. Well, my good lord, I'll do't.
Oth. This fortification, gentlemen, — shall we see't?
Gent. We'll wait upon your lordship. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

Before the Castle.

Enter DESDEMONA, CASSIO, and EMILIA.

Des. Be thou assur'd, good Cassio, I will do
 All my abilities in thy behalf.

Emil. Good madam, do; I know, it grieves my husband,
 As if the case were his.

Des. O, that's an honest fellow. — Do not doubt,
 Cassio,
 But I will have my lord and you again
 As friendly as you were.

Cas. Bounteous madam,
 Whatever shall become of Michael Cassio,
 He's never any thing but your true servant.

Des. O, sir, I thank you: You do love my lord:
 You have known him long; and be you well assur'd,
 He shall in strangeness stand no further off
 Than in a politick distance.

Cas. Ay, but, lady,
 That policy may either last so long,
 Or feed upon such nice and waterish diet,
 Or breed itself so out of circumstance,
 That, I being absent, and my place supplied,
 My general will forget my love and service.

Des. Do not doubt that; before Emilia here,
 I give thee warrant of thy place: assure thee,
 If I do vow a friendship, I'll perform it
 To the last article: my lord shall never rest;

SCENE III. THE MOOR OF VENICE. 471

I'll watch him tame⁶, and talk him out of patience;
 His bed shall seem a school, his board a shrift;
 I'll intermingle every thing he does
 With Cassio's suit: Therefore be merry, Cassio;
 For thy solicitor shall rather die,
 Than give thy cause away.

Enter OTHELLO and IAGO, at a distance.

Emil. Madam, here comes
 My lord.

Cas. Madam, I'll take my leave.

Des. Why, stay,
 And hear me speak.

Cas. Madam, not now; I am very ill at ease,
 Unfit for mine own purposes.

Des. Well, well,
 Do your discretion. [*Exit CASSIO.*]

Iago. Ha! I like not that.

Oth. What dost thou say?

Iago. Nothing, my lord: or if — I know not what.

Oth. Was not that Cassio, parted from my wife?

Iago. Cassio, my lord? No, sure, I cannot think it,
 That he would steal away so guilty-like,
 Seeing you coming.

Oth. I do believe 'twas he.

Des. How now, my lord?
 I have been talking with a suitor here,
 A man that languishes in your displeasure.

Oth. Who is't, you mean?

Des. Why, your lieutenant Cassio. Good my lord,
 If I have any grace, or power to move you,
 His present reconciliation take;⁷

⁶ *I'll watch him tame,*] Hawks and other birds are tamed by keeping them from sleep, to which management Shakspeare alludes.

⁷ *His present reconciliation take,*] To take his reconciliation, may be to accept the submission which he makes in order to be reconciled.

For, if he be not one that truly loves you,
That errs in ignorance, and not in cunning,⁸
I have no judgment in an honest face :
I pr'ythee, call him back.

Oth. Went he hence now ?

Des. Ay, sooth ; so humbled,
That he hath left part of his grief with me ;
I suffer with him. Good love, call him back.

Oth. Not now, sweet Desdemona ; some other time.

Des. But shall't be shortly ?

Oth. The sooner, sweet, for you.

Des. Shall't be to-night at supper ?

Oth. No, not to-night.

Des. To-morrow dinner then ?

Oth. I shall not dine at home ;
I meet the captains at the citadel.

Des. Why then, to-morrow night ; or Tuesday morn ;
Or Tuesday noon, or night ; or Wednesday morn ; —
I pray thee, name the time ; but let it not
Exceed three days : in faith, he's penitent ;
And yet his trespass, in our common reason,
(Save that, they say, the wars must make examples
Out of their best⁹,) is not almost a fault
To incur a private check : When shall he come ?
Tell me, Othello. I wonder in my soul,
What you could ask me, that I should deny,
Or stand so mammering on.¹ What ! Michael Cassio,
That came a wooing with you ; and many a time, †
When I have spoke of you dispraisingly,
Hath ta'en your part ; to have so much to do
To bring him in ! Trust me, I could do much, —

⁸ — and not in cunning,] *Cunning*, for *knowledge*.

⁹ — the wars must make examples

Out of their best,] The severity of military discipline must not spare the *best men* of their army, when their punishment may afford a wholesome *example*.

¹ — so mammering on.] To hesitate, to stand in suspense.

† “ and so many a time,” — MALONE.

Oth. Pr'ythee, no more : let him come when he will ;
I will deny thee nothing.

Des. Why, this is not a boon ;
'Tis as I should entreat you wear your gloves,
Or feed on nourishing dishes, or keep you warm ;
Or sue to you to do peculiar profit
To your own person : Nay, when I have a suit,
Wherein I mean to touch your love indeed,
It shall be full of poize² and difficulty,
And fearful to be granted.

Oth. I will deny thee nothing :
Whereon, I do beseech thee, grant me this,
To leave me but a little to myself.

Des. Shall I deny you ? no : Farewell, my lord.

Oth. Farewell, my Desdemona : I will come to thee
straight.

Des. Emilia, come : — Be it as your fancies teach you ;
Whate'er you be, I am obedient. [*Exit, with EMILIA.*]

Oth. Excellent wretch³ ! Perdition catch my soul,
But I do love thee ! and when I love thee not,
Chaos is come again.

Iago. My noble lord, —

Oth. What dost thou say, Iago ?

Iago. Did Michael Cassio, when you woo'd my lady,
Know of your love ?

Oth. He did, from first to last : Why dost thou ask ?

Iago. But for a satisfaction of my thought ;
No further harm.

Oth. Why of thy thought, Iago ?

Iago. I did not think, he had been acquainted with her.

Oth. O, yes ; and went between us very oft.

Iago. Indeed ?

² — full of poize —] i. e. of weight.

³ *Excellent wretch* !] The meaning of the word *wretch*, is not generally understood. It is now, in some parts of England, a term of the softest and fondest tenderness. It expresses the utmost degree of amiableness, joined with an idea which perhaps all tenderness includes, of feebleness, softness, and want of protection.

Oth. Indeed! ay, indeed: — Discern'st thou aught
in that?

Is he not honest?

Iago. Honest, my lord?

Oth. Ay, honest. †

Iago. My lord, for aught I know.

Oth. What dost thou think?

Iago. Think, my lord?

Oth. Think, my lord!

By heaven, he echoes me,
As if there were some monster in his thought
Too hideous to be shown. — Thou dost mean some-
thing:

I heard thee say but now, — Thou lik'dst not that,
When Cassio left my wife; What did'st not like?
And, when I told thee — he was of my counsel
In my whole course of wooing, thou cry'dst, *Indeed?*
And did'st contract and purse thy brow together,
As if thou then had'st shut up in thy brain
Some horrible conceit: If thou dost love me,
Show me thy thought.

Iago. My lord, you know I love you.

Oth. I think, thou dost;

And, — for I know thou art full of love and honesty,
And weigh'st thy words before thou giv'st them breath, —
Therefore these stops of thine fright me the more:
For such things, in a false disloyal knave,
Are tricks of custom; but, in a man that's just,
They are close denotements, working from the heart,
That passion cannot rule.⁴

Iago. For Michael Cassio, —
I dare be sworn, I think that he is honest.

† "Honest? aye, honest." — MALONE.

⁴ *They are close denotements, working from the heart, That passion cannot rule,*] i. e. indications, or discoveries, not openly revealed, but involuntarily working from the heart, which cannot rule and suppress its feelings.

Oth. I think so too.

Iago. Men should be what they seem ;
Or, those that be not, 'would they might seem none !

Oth. Certain, men should be what they seem.

Iago. Why then,
I think, that Cassio is an honest man.†

Oth. Nay, yet there's more in this :
I pray thee, speak to me as to thy thinkings,
As thou dost ruminate ; and give thy worst of thoughts
The worst of words.

Iago. Good my lord, pardon me ;
Though I am bound to every act of duty,
I am not bound to that all slaves are free to.⁵
Utter my thoughts ? Why, say, they are vile and false, —
As where's that palace, whereinto foul things
Sometimes intrude not ? who has a breast so pure,
But some uncleanly apprehensions
Keep leets, and law-days, and in session sit
With meditations lawful ?

Oth. Thou dost conspire against thy friend, *Iago*,
If thou but think'st him wrong'd, and mak'st his ear
A stranger to thy thoughts.

Iago. I do beseech you, —
Though I, perchance, am vicious in my guess,
As, I confess, it is my nature's plague
To spy into abuses ; and, oft, my jealousy
Shapes faults that are not, — I entreat you then,
From one that so imperfectly conjects,⁶
You'd take no notice ; nor build yourself a trouble
Out of his scattering and unsure observance : —
It were not for your quiet, nor your good,

† " Why, then, I think Cassio's an honest man." MALONE.

⁵ — to that all slaves are free to.] I am not bound to do that which even slaves are not bound to do.

⁶ — conjects.] To conject, i. e. to conjecture, is a word used by other writers.

Nor for my manhood, honesty, or wisdom,
To let you know my thoughts.

Oth. What dost thou mean ?

Iago. Good name, in man, and woman, dear my lord,
Is the immediate jewel of their souls :

Who steals my purse, steals trash ; 'tis something, no-
thing ;

'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands ;
But he, that filches from me my good name,
Robs me of that, which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed.

Oth. By heaven, I'll know thy thought.

Iago. You cannot, if my heart were in your hand ;
Nor shall not, whilst 'tis in my custody.

Oth. Ha !

Iago. O, beware, my lord, of jealousy ;
It is the green ey'd monster, which doth mock
The meat it feeds on :⁷ That cuckold lives in bliss,
Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger ;
But, O, what damned minutes tells he o'er,
Who dotes, yet doubts ; suspects, yet strongly loves !

Oth. O misery !

Iago. Poor, and content, is rich, and rich enough ;
But riches, fineless⁸, is as poor as winter,
To him that ever fears he shall be poor : —
Good heaven, the souls of all my tribe defend
From jealousy !

Oth. Why ! why is this ?
Think'st thou, I'd make a life of jealousy,
To follow still the changes of the moon,

⁷ ——— *which doth mock*

The meat it feeds on:] i. e. loaths that which nourishes and sus-
tains it. But Mr. Malone reads,

————— "*which doth make*

The meat it feeds on:."

Implying that its suspicions are unreal and groundless, which is the
very contrary to what he would here make his general think.

⁸ *But riches, fineless,]* Unbounded, endless, unnumbered.

With fresh suspicions? No : to be once in doubt,
 Is — once to be resolv'd: Exchange me for a goat,
 When I shall turn the business of my soul
 To such exsufflicate⁹ and blown surmises,
 Matching thy inference.¹ 'Tis not to make me jealous,
 To say — my wife is fair, feeds well, loves company,
 Is free of speech, sings, plays, and dances well ;
 Where virtue is, these are more virtuous :²
 Nor from mine own weak merits will I draw
 The smallest fear, or doubt of her revolt ;
 For she had eyes, and chose me : No, Iago ;
 I'll see, before I doubt ; when I doubt, prove ;
 And, on the proof, there is no more but this, —
 Away at once with love, or jealousy.

Iago. I am glad of this ; for now I shall have reason
 To show the love and duty that I bear you
 With franker spirit: therefore, as I am bound,
 Receive it from me : — I speak not yet of proof.
 Look to your wife ; observe her well with Cassio ;
 Wear your eye — thus, not jealous, nor secure :
 I would not have your free and noble nature,
 Out of self-bounty³ be abus'd ; look to't :
 I know our country disposition well ;
 In Venice they do let heaven see the pranks
 They dare not show their husbands ; their best con-
 science
 Is — not to leave undone, but keep unknown.

⁹ *To such exsufflicate* —] Whether our poet had any authority for the word *exsufflicate*, which I think is used in the sense of *swollen*, and appears to have been formed from *sufflatus*, I am unable to ascertain : but I have not thought it safe to substitute for it another word equally unauthorised. MALONE. Mr. Nares explains it by *contemptible*, *abominable*.

¹ ————— *blown surmises*,

Matching thy inference.] That is, — such as you have mentioned in describing the torments of jealousy.

² *Where virtue is, these are more virtuous :*] An action in itself indifferent, grows *virtuous* by its end and application.

³ *Out of self-bounty,*] *Self-bounty* for inherent generosity.

Oth. Dost thou say so?

Iago. She did deceive her father, marrying you;
And, when she seem'd⁴ to shake, and fear your looks,
She lov'd them most.

Oth. And so she did.

Iago. Why, go to, then;
She that, so young, could give out such a seeming,
To seel her father's eyes up, close as oak,⁵
He thought, 'twas witchcraft: — but I am much to
blame;
I humbly do beseech you of your pardon,
For too much loving you.

Oth. I am bound to thee for ever.

Iago. I see, this hath a little dash'd your spirits.

Oth. Not a jot, not a jot.

Iago. Trust me, I fear it has.

I hope, you will consider, what is spoke
Comes from my love; — But, I do see you are mov'd: —
I am to pray you, not to strain my speech
To grosser issues⁶, nor to larger reach,
Than to suspicion.

Oth. I will not.

⁴ *And, when she seem'd* —] This and the following argument of Iago ought to be deeply impressed on every reader. Deceit and falsehood, whatever conveniences they may for a time promise or produce, are, in the sum of life, obstacles to happiness. Those, who profit by the cheat, distrust the deceiver, and the act by which kindness is sought, puts an end to confidence.

The same objection may be made with a lower degree of strength against the imprudent generosity of disproportionate marriages. When the first heat of passion is over, it is easily succeeded by suspicion, that the same violence of inclination, which caused one irregularity, may stimulate to another; and those who have shewn, that their passions are too powerful for their prudence, will, with very slight appearances against them, be censured, as not very likely to restrain them by their virtue. JOHNSON.

⁵ *To seel her father's eyes up, close as oak,*] The oak is the most close-grained wood of general use in England. *Close as oak*, means close as the grain of oak. *To seel* is an expression from falconry.

⁶ *To grosser issues,*] *Issues*, for conclusions.

Iago. Should you do so, my lord,
My speech should fall into such vile success
As my thoughts aim not at. Cassio's my worthy friend : —
My lord, I see you are mov'd.

Oth. No, not much mov'd : —
I do not think but Desdemona's honest.

Iago. Long live she so ! and long live you to think so !

Oth. And yet, how nature erring from itself, —

Iago. Ay, there's the point : — As, — to be bold with
you, —

Not to affect many proposed matches,
Of her own clime, complexion, and degree ;
Whereto, we see, in all things nature tends :
Foh ! one may smell, in such, a will most rank,⁷
Foul disproportion, thoughts unnatural. —
But pardon me ; I do not, in position,
Distinctly speak of her : though I may fear,
Her will, recoiling to her better judgment,
May fall to match you with her country forms,
And (happily) repent.

Oth. Farewell, farewell :
If more thou dost perceive, let me know more ;
Set on thy wife to observe : Leave me, Iago.

Iago. My lord, I take my leave. [*Going.*]

Oth. Why did I marry ? — This honest creature,
doubtless,

Sees and knows more, much more, than he unfolds.

Iago. My lord, I would, I might entreat your honour
To scan this thing no further ; leave it to time :
And though it be fit that Cassio have his place,
(For, sure, he fills it up with great ability,)
Yet, if you please to hold him off a while,
You shall by that perceive him and his means : ⁸

⁷ — a will most rank,] *Will*, is for wilfulness. It is so used by Ascham. A *rank will*, is *self-will* overgrown and exuberant.

⁸ *You shall by that perceive him and his means :*] You shall discover whether he thinks his best *means*, his most powerful *interest*, is by the solicitation of your lady.

Note, if your lady strain his entertainment⁹
 With any strong or vehement importunity;
 Much will be seen in that. In the mean time,
 Let me be thought too busy in my fears,
 (As worthy cause I have, to fear — I am,)
 And hold her free, I do beseech your honour.

Oth. Fear not my government.¹

Iago. I once more take my leave. [Exit.]

Oth. This fellow's of exceeding honesty,
 And knows all qualities, with a learned spirit,²
 Of human dealings: If I do prove her haggard,³
 Though that her jesses were my dear heart-strings,⁴
 I'd whistle her off, and let her down the wind,
 To prey at fortune.⁵ Haply, for I am black,
 And have not those soft parts of conversation
 That chamberers⁶ have: Or, for I am declin'd
 Into the vale of years; — yet that's not much; —
 She's gone; I am abus'd; and my relief
 Must be — to loath her. O curse of marriage,
 That we can call these delicate creatures ours,
 And not their appetites! I had rather be a toad,

⁹ — *strain his entertainment* —] Press hard his re-admission to his pay and office. *Entertainment* was the military term for admission of soldiers.

¹ *Fear not my government.*] Do not distrust my ability to contain my passion.

² — *with a learned spirit,*] The construction is, He knows with a learned spirit all qualities of human dealings.

³ — *If I do prove her haggard,*] A *haggard hawk*, is a *wild hawk*, a *hawk unreclaimed or irreclaimable*.

⁴ *Though that her jesses were my dear heart-strings,*] *Jesses* are short straps of leather tied about the foot of a hawk, by which she is held on the fist.

⁵ *I'd whistle her off, and let her down the wind,*

To prey at fortune.] The falconers always let fly the hawk against the wind; if she flies with the wind behind her, she seldom returns. If therefore a hawk was for any reason to be dismissed, she was *let down the wind*, and from that time shifted for herself, and *preyed at fortune*.

⁶ — *chamberers* —] i. e. men of intrigue.

And live upon the vapour of a dungeon,
 Than keep a corner in the thing I love,
 For others' uses. Yet 'tis the plague of great ones ;
 Prerogativ'd are they less than the base ;
 'Tis destiny unshunnable, like death ;
 Even then this forked plague⁷ is fated to us,
 When we do quicken. Desdemona comes :

Enter DESDEMONA *and* EMILIA.

If she be false, O, then heaven mocks itself! —
 I'll not believe it.

Des. How now, my dear Othello?
 Your dinner, and the generous islanders
 By you invited, do attend your presence.

Oth. I am to blame.

Des. Why is your speech so faint? are you not well?

Oth. I have a pain upon my forehead here.

Des. Faith, that's with watching; 'twill away again:
 Let me but bind it hard, within this hour
 It will be well.

Oth. Your napkin is too little;

[He puts the Handkerchief from him, and it drops.]

Let it alone. Come, I'll go in with you.

Des. I am very sorry that you are not well.

[Exeunt OTH. *and* DES.

Emil. I am glad I have found this napkin;
 This was her first remembrance from the Moor:
 My wayward husband hath a hundred times
 Woo'd me to steal it: but she so loves the token,
 (For he conjur'd her, she would ever keep it,)
 That she reserves it evermore about her,

⁷ — *forked plague* —] In allusion to a *barbed* or *forked* arrow, which, once infix'd, cannot be extracted. But perhaps the *forked plague* is the cuckold's horns.

To kiss, and talk to. I'll have the work ta'en out,⁸
 And give it Iago :
 What he'll do with it, heaven knows, not I ;
 I nothing, but to please his fantasy.

Enter IAGO.

Iago. How now ! what do you here alone ?

Emil. Do not you chide ; I have a thing for you.

Iago. A thing for me ? — it is a common thing.

Emil. Ha !

Iago. To have a foolish wife.

Emil. O, is that all ? What will you give me now
 For that same handkerchief ?

Iago. What handkerchief ?

Emil. What handkerchief ?

Why, that the Moor first gave to Desdemona ;
 That which so often you did bid me steal.

Iago. Hast stolen it from her ?

Emil. No, faith ; she let it drop by negligence ;
 And, to the advantage, I, being here, took't up.⁹
 Look, here it is.

Iago. A good wench ; give it me.

Emil. What will you do with it, that you have been
 so earnest
 To have me filch it ?

Iago. Why, what's that to you ?

[*Snatching it.*]

Emil. If it be not for some purpose of import,
 Give it me again : Poor lady ! she'll run mad,
 When she shall lack it.

⁸ — *I'll have the work ta'en out,*] That is, copied. Her first thoughts are, to have a copy made of it for her husband, and restore the original to Desdemona. But the sudden coming in of Iago, in a surly humour, makes her alter her resolution, to please him.

⁹ — *to the advantage, &c.*] I being *opportunistically* here, took it up.

Iago. Be not you known of't¹; I have use for it.
 Go, leave me. [Exit EMILIA.
 I will in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin,
 And let him find it: Trifles, light as air,
 Are, to the jealous, confirmations strong
 As proofs of holy writ. This may do something.
 The Moor already changes with my poison: —
 Dangerous conceits are, in their natures, poisons,
 Which, at the first, are scarce found to distaste;
 But, with a little act upon the blood,
 Burn like the mines of sulphur. — I did say so: —

Enter OTHELLO.

Look, where he comes! Not poppy, nor mandragora,²
 Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
 Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
 Which thou ow'dst yesterday.³

Oth. Ha! ha! false to me?
 To me?

Iago. Why, how now, general? no more of that.

Oth. Avaunt! be gone! thou hast set me on the
 rack: —

I swear, 'tis better to be much abus'd,
 Than but to know't a little.

Iago. How now, my lord?

Oth. What sense had I of her stolen hours of lust?
 I saw it not, thought it not, it harm'd not me:
 I slept the next night well, was free and merry;
 I found not Cassio's kisses on her lips:

¹ *Be not you known of't;*] i. e. seem as if you knew nothing of the matter.

² — *nor mandragora,*] The *mandragoras* or *mandrake* has a soporific quality, and the ancients used it when they wanted an opiate of the most powerful kind.

³ *Which thou ow'dst yesterday.*] To *owe* is, in our author, oftener to *possess*, than to *be indebted*, and such is its meaning here.

He that is robb'd, not wanting what is stolen,
Let him not know it, and he's not robb'd at all.

Iago. I am sorry to hear this.

Oth. I had been happy, if the general camp,
Pioneers and all ⁴, had tasted her sweet body,
So I had nothing known: O now, for ever,
Farewell the tranquil mind! farewell content!
Farewell the plumed troop, and the big wars,
That make ambition virtue! O, farewell!
Farewell the neighing steed, and the shrill trump,
The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife,
The royal banner; and all quality,
Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!
And O you mortal engines, whose rude throats
The immortal Jove's dread clamours counterfeit,
Farewell! Othello's occupation's gone!

Iago. Is it possible? — My lord, —

Oth. Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore;
Be sure of it; give me the ocular proof;

[*Taking him by the Throat.*]

Or, by the worth of mine eternal soul,
Thou hadst been better have been born a dog,
Than answer my wak'd wrath.

Iago. Is it come to this?

Oth. Make me to see it; or (at the least) so prove it,
That the probation bear no hinge, nor loop,
To hang a doubt on: or, woe upon thy life!

Iago. My noble lord, —

Oth. If thou dost slander her, and torture me,
Never pray more: abandon all remorse;⁵
On horror's head horrors accumulate:
Do deeds to make heaven weep, all earth amaz'd,

⁴ *Pioneers and all,*] That is, the most abject and vilest of the camp. Pioneers were generally degraded soldiers, appointed to the office of pioneer, as a punishment for misbehaviour.

⁵ — *abandon all remorse;*] All tenderness of nature, all pity; in which sense the word was frequently used in Shakspeare's time.

For nothing canst thou to damnation add,
Greater than that.

Iago. O grace! O heaven defend me!
Are you a man? have you a soul, or sense?—
God be wi' you; take mine office. — O wretched fool,
That liv'st to make thine honesty a vice! —
O monstrous world! Take note, take note, O world,
To be direct and honest, is not safe. —
I thank you for this profit; and, from hence,
I'll love no friend; since love breeds such offence.

Oth. Nay, stay: — Thou should'st be honest.

Iago. I should be wise; for honesty's a fool,
And loses that it works for.

Oth. By the world,
I think my wife be honest, and think she is not;
I think that thou art just, and think thou art not;
I'll have some proof: Her name, that was as fresh
As Dian's visage, is now begrim'd and black
As mine own face. — If there be cords, or knives,
Poison, or fire, or suffocating streams,
I'll not endure it. — Would, I were satisfied!

Iago. I see, sir, you are eaten up with passion:
I do repent me, that I put it to you.
You would be satisfied?

Oth. Would! nay, I will.

Iago. And may: But, how? how satisfied, my lord?
Would you, the supervisor, grossly gape on?
Behold her tupp'd?

Oth. Death and damnation! O!

Iago. It were a tedious difficulty, I think,
To bring them to that prospect: Damn them then,
If ever mortal eyes do see them bolster,
More than their own! What then? how then?
What shall I say? Where's satisfaction?
It is impossible, you should see this,
Were they as prime as goats⁶, as hot as monkeys,

⁶ *Were they as prime as goats,] Prime is prompt.*

As salt as wolves in pride, and fools as gross
As ignorance made drunk. But yet, I say,
If imputation, and strong circumstances, —
Which lead directly to the door of truth, —
Will give you satisfaction, you may have it.

Oth. Give me a living reason⁷ she's disloyal.

Iago. I do not like the office :

But, sith I am enter'd in this cause so far, —
Prick'd to it by foolish honesty and love, —
I will go on. I lay with Cassio lately ;
And, being troubled with a raging tooth,
I could not sleep.

There are a kind of men so loose of soul,
That in their sleeps will mutter their affairs ;
One of this kind is Cassio :

In sleep I heard him say, — *Sweet Desdemona,*
Let us be wary, let us hide our loves !

And then, sir, would he gripe, and wring my hand,
Cry, — *O, sweet creature !* and then kiss me hard,
As if he pluck'd up kisses by the roots,
That grew upon my lips : then laid his leg
Over my thigh, and sigh'd, and kiss'd ; and then
Cry'd, — *Cursed fate ! that gave thee to the Moor !*

Oth. O monstrous ! monstrous !

Iago. Nay, this was but his dream.

Oth. But this denoted a foregone conclusion ;⁸
'Tis a shrewd doubt, though it be but a dream.

Iago. And this may help to thicken other proofs,
That do demonstrate thinly.

Oth. I'll tear her all to pieces.

Iago. Nay, but be wise : yet we see nothing done ;
She may be honest yet. Tell me but this, —

⁷ *Give me a living reason*—] *Living*, for speaking, manifest, actual proof. Mr. Malone reads "that she's disloyal."

⁸ — *a foregone conclusion* ;] A *conclusion* in Shakspeare's time meant an experiment or trial.

Have you not sometimes seen a handkerchief,
Spotted with strawberries, in your wife's hand?

Oth. I gave her such a one; 'twas my first gift.

Iago. I know not that: but such a handkerchief,
(I am sure it was your wife's,) did I to-day
See Cassio wipe his beard with.

Oth. If it be that, —

Iago. If it be that, or any that was her's,
It speaks against her, with the other proofs.

Oth. O, that the slave had forty thousand lives;
One is too poor, too weak for my revenge!
Now do I see 'tis true. — Look here, Iago;
All my fond love thus I do blow to heaven:
'Tis gone. —

Arise, black vengeance, from thy hollow cell!
Yield up, O love, thy crown, and hearted throne,⁹
To tyrannous hate! swell, bosom, with thy fraught,¹
For 'tis of aspicks' tongues!

Iago. Pray, be content.

Oth. O, blood, Iago, blood!

Iago. Patience, I say; your mind, perhaps, may
change.

Oth. Never, Iago. Like to the Pontick sea,
Whose icy current and compulsive course
Ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on
To the Propontick, and the Hellespont;
Even so my bloody thoughts, with violent pace,
Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love,
Till that a capable² and wide revenge
Swallow them up. — Now, by yond' marble heaven,
In the due reverence of a sacred vow [Kneels.
I here engage my words.

⁹ — hearted *throne*,] *Hearted throne*, is the heart on which thou
wast *enthroned*.

¹ — *swell, bosom, &c.*] i. e. *swell*, because the fraught is of
poison.

² — a capable —] *Capable* perhaps signifies ample, capacious.

Iago. Do not rise yet. — [*Kneels.*
 Witness, you ever-burning lights above !
 You elements that clip us round about !
 Witness, that here Iago doth give up
 The execution³ of his wit, hands, heart,
 To wrong'd Othello's service ! let him command,
 And to obey shall be in me remorse,
 What bloody work soever.⁴

Oth. I greet thy love,
 Not with vain thanks, but with acceptance bounteous,
 And will upon the instant put thee to't :
 Within these three days let me hear thee say,
 That Cassio's not alive.

Iago. My friend is dead ; 'tis done, at your request :
 But let her live.

Oth. Damn her, lewd minx ! O, damn her !
 Come, go with me apart ; I will withdraw,
 To furnish me with some swift means of death
 For the fair devil. Now art thou my lieutenant.

Iago. I am your own for ever. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

The same.

Enter DESDEMONA, EMILIA, and Clown.

Des. Do you know, sirrah, where lieutenant Cassio
 lies ?

Clo. I dare not say, he lies any where.

Des. Why, man ?

³ *The execution —*] i. e. *employment or exercise.*

⁴ ——— *let him command,*

And to obey shall be in me remorse,

What bloody work soever.] Iago devotes himself to wronged Othello, and says, Let him command whatever bloody business, and in me it shall be an act, not of cruelty, but of tenderness, to obey him : not of malice to others, but of tenderness for him.

Clo. He is a soldier ; and for me to say a soldier lies, is stabbing.

Des. Go to ; Where lodges he ?

Clo. To tell you where he lodges, is to tell you where I lie.

Des. Can any thing be made of this ?

Clo. I know not where he lodges ; and for me to devise a lodging, and say — he lies here, or he lies there, were to lie in my own throat.

Des. Can you enquire him out, and be edified by report ?

Clo. I will catechize the world for him ; that is, make questions, and by them answer.⁵

Des. Seek him, bid him come hither ; tell him, I have moved my lord in his behalf, and hope, all will be well.

Clo. To do this, is within the compass of man's wit ; and therefore I will attempt the doing it. [*Exit.*]

Des. Where should I lose that handkerchief, Emilia ?

Emil. I know not, madam.

Des. Believe me, I had rather have lost my purse Full of cruzadoes.⁶ And, but my noble Moor Is true of mind, and made of no such baseness As jealous creatures are, it were enough To put him to ill thinking.

Emil. Is he not jealous ?

Des. Who, he ? I think, the sun, where he was born, Drew all such humours from him.

Emil. Look, where he comes.

Des. I will not leave him now, till Cassio Be call'd to him. — How is't with you, my lord ?

⁵ — and *by* them answer.] i. e. and by them, *when answered*, form my own answer to you. The quaintness of the expression is in character.

⁶ — *cruzadoes.*] A Portuguese coin, in value three shillings sterling. So called from the cross stamped upon it.

Enter OTHELLO.

Oth. Well, my good lady: — [*aside.*] O, hardness to
dissemble! —

How do you, Desdemona?

Des. Well, my good lord.

Oth. Give me your hand: This hand is moist, my lady.

Des. It yet has felt no age, nor known no sorrow.

Oth. This argues fruitfulness, and liberal heart; —
Hot, hot, and moist: This hand of yours requires
A sequester from liberty, fasting and prayer,
Much castigation, exercise devout;⁷
For here's a young and sweating devil here,
That commonly rebels. 'Tis a good hand,
A frank one.

Des. You may, indeed, say so;
For 'twas that hand that gave away my heart.

Oth. A liberal hand: The hearts, of old, gave hands:
But our new heraldry is — hands, not hearts.

Des. I cannot speak of this. Come now your promise.

Oth. What promise, chuck?

Des. I have sent to bid Cassio come speak with you.

Oth. I have a salt and sullen rheum⁸ offends me;
Lend me thy handkerchief.

Des. Here, my lord.

Oth. That which I gave you.

Des. I have it not about me.

Oth. Not?

Des. No, indeed, my lord.

Oth. That is a fault:

That handkerchief
Did an Egyptian to my mother give;

⁷ exercise devout;] *Exercise* was the religious term.

⁸ — salt and sullen rheum —] *Sullen*, that is, a *rheum* obstinately
troublesome.

She was a charmer, and could almost read
 The thoughts of people: she told her, while she kept it,
 'Twould make her amiable, and subdue my father
 Entirely to her love; but if she lost it,
 Or made a gift of it, my father's eye
 Should hold her loathly, and his spirits should hunt
 After new fancies: She, dying, gave it me;
 And bid me, when my fate would have me wive,
 To give it her. I did so: and take heed of't,
 Make it a darling like your precious eye;
 To lose or giv't away, were such perdition,
 As nothing else could match.

Des. Is it possible?

Oth. 'Tis true: there's magick in the web of it;
 A sibyl, that had number'd in the world
 The sun to make two hundred compasses,
 In her prophetick fury sew'd the work:
 The worms were hallow'd, that did breed the silk;
 And it was died in mummy⁹, which the skilful
 Conserv'd of maidens' hearts.

Des. Indeed! is't true?

Oth. Most veritable; therefore look to't well.

Des. Then 'would to heaven, that I had never seen it.

Oth. Ha! wherefore?

Des. Why do you speak so startingly and rash?¹

Oth. Is't lost? is't gone? speak, is it out of the way?

Des. Heaven bless us!

Oth. Say you?

Des. It is not lost; But what an if it were?

Oth. Ha!

⁹ *And it was died in mummy, &c.]* The balsamick liquor running from *mummies* was formerly celebrated for its anti-epileptick virtues. We are now wise enough to know, that the qualities ascribed to it are all imaginary; and yet this fanciful medicine still holds a place in the principal shops where drugs are sold; and it is still much coveted by painters, as a transparent brown colour that throws a warmth into their shadows.

¹ — *rash?*] *Is vehement, violent.*

Des. I say, it is not lost.

Oth. Fetch't, let me see it.

Des. Why, so I can, sir, but I will not now;
This is a trick, to put me from my suit;
I pray, let Cassio be receiv'd again.

Oth. Fetch me that handkerchief: my mind misgives.

Des. Come, come;

You'll never meet a more sufficient man.

Oth. The handkerchief, ——

Des. I pray, talk me of Cassio.

Oth. The handkerchief, ——

Des. A man that, all his time,
Hath founded his good fortune on your love;
Shar'd dangers with you; ——

Oth. The handkerchief, ——

Des. In sooth,
You are to blame.

Oth. Away! [Exit OTHELLO.]

Emil. Is not this man jealous?

Des. I ne'er saw this before.

Sure, there's some wonder in this handkerchief:
I am most unhappy in the loss of it.

Emil. 'Tis not a year or two shows us a man:
They are all but stomachs, and we all but food;
They eat us hungerly, and when they are full,
They belch us. Look you! Cassio, and my husband.

Enter IAGO and CASSIO.

Iago. There is no other way; 'tis she must do't;
And, lo, the happiness! go, and impórtune her.

Des. How now, good Cassio? what's the news with
you?

Cas. Madam, my former suit: I do beseech you,
That, by your virtuous means, I may again
Exist, and be a member of his love,
Whom I, with all the duty of my heart,
Entirely honour; I would not be delay'd:

If my offence be of such mortal kind,
 That neither service past, nor present sorrows,
 Nor purpos'd merit in futurity,
 Can ransom me into his love again,
 But to know so must be my benefit;
 So shall I clothe me in a forc'd content,
 And shut myself up in some other course,
 To fortune's alms.²

Des. Alas! thrice-gentle Cassio,
 My advocacy is not now in tune;
 My lord is not my lord; nor should I know him,
 Were he in favour³, as in humour, alter'd.
 So help me, every spirit sanctified,
 As I have spoken for you all my best,
 And stood within the blank of his displeasure,⁴
 For my free speech! You must awhile be patient:
 What I can do, I will; and more I will,
 Than for myself I dare: let that suffice you.

Iago. Is my lord angry?

Emil. He went hence but now,
 And, certainly, in strange unquietness.

Iago. Can he be angry? I have seen the cannon,
 When it hath blown his ranks into the air;⁵
 And, like the devil, from his very arm
 Puff'd his own brother; — And can he be angry?
 Something of moment, then: I will go meet him;
 There's matter in't indeed, if he be angry.

² *And shut myself up in some other course,
 To fortune's alms.]* Being discarded from the military line, he
 purposes to *confine* or *shut himself up*, as he formerly had, within
 the limits of a new profession.

³ — *in favour,]* In *look*, in *countenance*.

⁴ — *within the blank of his displeasure,]* Within the *shot* of his
 anger.

⁵ *I have seen the cannon,
 When it hath blown, &c.]* In Iago's speech something is sup-
 pressed. He means to say, I have seen his ranks blown into the air,
 and his own brother puff'd from his side, — *and mean while have
 seen him cool and unruffled.* And can he now be angry?

Des. I pr'ythee, do so. — Something, sure, of state,—

[*Exit* IAGO.]

Either from Venice; or some unhatch'd practice,⁶
 Made démonstrable here in Cyprus to him, —
 Hath puddled his clear spirit: and, in such cases,
 Men's natures wrangle with inferior things,
 Though great ones are their object. 'Tis even so;
 For let our finger ache, and it indues⁷
 Our other healthful members ev'n to that sense
 Of pain: Nay, we must think, men are not gods;
 Nor of them look for such observances
 As fit the bridal.⁸ — Beshrew me much, Emilia,
 I was (unhandsome warrior as I am,)⁹
 Arraigning his unkindness with my soul;
 But now I find, I had suborn'd the witness,
 And he's indited falsely.

Emil. Pray heaven, it be state matters, as you think:
 And no conception, nor no jealous toy,
 Concerning you.

Des. Alas, the day! I never gave him cause.

Emil. But jealous souls will not be answer'd so;
 They are not ever jealous for the cause,
 But jealous for they are jealous: 'tis a monster,
 Begot upon itself, born on itself.

Des. Heaven keep that monster from Othello's
 mind!

Emil. Lady, amen.

Des. I will go seek him. — Cassio, walk hereabout:
 If I do find him fit, I'll move your suit,
 And seek to effect it to my uttermost.

⁶ — *some unhatch'd practice,*] Some treason that has not taken effect.

⁷ *For let our finger ache, and it indues* —] I believe it should be rather, subdues *our other healthful members to a sense of pain.*

JOHNSON.

⁸ — *the bridal,*] i. e. the nuptial feast: a Saxon word.

⁹ — *(unhandsome warrior as I am)*] *Unhandsome warrior,* is evidently *unfair assailant.*

Cas. I humbly thank your ladyship.

[*Exeunt* DESDEMONA and EMILIA.]

Enter BIANCA.

Bian. Save you, friend Cassio!

Cas. What make you from home?
How is it with you, my most fair Bianca?
P'faith, sweet love, I was coming to your house.

Bian. And I was going to your lodging, Cassio.
What! keep a week away? seven days and nights?
Eight score eight hours? and lovers' absent hours,
More tedious than the dial eight score times?
O weary reckoning!

Cas. Pardon me, Bianca;
I have this while with leaden thoughts been press'd;
But I shall, in a more continue time,¹
Strike off this score of absence. Sweet Bianca,
[*Giving her* DESDEMONA's *Handkerchief.*
Take me this work out.²

Bian. O, Cassio, whence came this?
This is some token from a newer friend.
To the felt absence now I feel a cause:
Is it come to this? Well, well.

Cas. Woman, go to! †
Throw your vile guesses in the devil's teeth,
From whence you have them. You are jealous now,
That this is from some mistress, some remembrance;
No, in good troth, Bianca.

Bian. Why, whose is it?

Cas. I know not, sweet: I found it in my chamber.
I like the work well; ere it be demanded,

¹ — *in a more continue time,*] A more *continue* time is time *less interrupted*, time which I can call more my own.

² *Take me this work out.*] The meaning is not, "Pick out the work, and leave the ground plain;" but, "Copy this work in another handkerchief."

† "Go to, woman." — MALONE.

(As like enough, it will,) I'd have it copied :
Take it, and do't; and leave me for this time.

Bian. Leave you ! wherefore ?

Cas. I do attend here on the general ;
And think it no addition, nor my wish,
To have him see me woman'd.

Bian. Why, I pray you ?

Cas. Not that I love you not.

Bian. But that you do not love me.
I pray you, bring me on the way a little ;
And say, if I shall see you soon at night.

Cas. 'Tis but a little way, that I can bring you,
For I attend here : but I'll see you soon.

Bian. 'Tis very good ; I must be circumstanc'd.³

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I. — *The same.*

Enter OTHELLO and IAGO.

Iago. Will you think so ?

Oth. Think so, Iago ?

Iago. What,
To kiss in private ?

Oth. An unauthoriz'd kiss.

Iago. Or to be naked with her friend abed,
An hour, or more, not meaning any harm ?

Oth. Naked abed, Iago, and not mean harm ?
It is hypocrisy against the devil :⁴

³ — *I must be circumstanc'd.*] Rather I must give way to circumstances.

⁴ *It is hypocrisy against the devil.*] *Hypocrisy against the devil* means hypocrisy to cheat the devil. As common hypocrites cheat men, by seeming good, and yet living wickedly, these men would cheat the devil, by giving him flattering hopes, and at last avoiding the crime which he thinks them ready to commit. JOHNSON.

They that mean virtuously, and yet do so,
The devil their virtue tempts, and they tempt heaven.

Iago. So they do nothing, 'tis a venial slip :
But if I give my wife a handkerchief, ——

Oth. What then ?

Iago. Why, then, 'tis hers, my lord ; and, being hers,
She may, I think, bestow't on any man.

Oth. She is protectress of her honour too ;
May she give that ?

Iago. Her honour is an essence that's not seen ;
They have it very oft, that have it not :
But, for the handkerchief, ——

Oth. By heaven, I would most gladly have forgot it : —
Thou said'st, — O, it comes o'er my memory,
As doth the raven o'er the infected house,
Boding to all⁵, — he had my handkerchief.

Iago. Ay, what of that ?

Oth. That's not so good, now.

Iago. What, if I had said, I had seen him do you
wrong ?

Or heard him say, — As knaves be such abroad,
Who having, by their own importunate suit,
Or voluntary dotage of some mistress,
Convinced or supplied them⁶, cannot choose
But they must blab ——

Oth. Hath he said any thing ?

Iago. He hath, my lord ; but be you well assur'd,
No more than he'll unswear.

Oth. What hath he said ?

Iago. 'Faith, that he did, — I know not what he did.

Oth. What ? what ?

Iago. Lie ——

⁵ —— *boding to all*, —] The raven was thought to be a constant attendant on a house, in which there was infection.

⁶ *Convinced or supplied them*,] Dr. Farmer is of opinion that *supplied* has here the same meaning as supplicated. But Mr. Steevens says, that *supplied* is the old spelling of *suppled*, i. e. softened.

Oth. With her?

Iago. With her, on her; what you will.

Oth. Lie with her! lie on her! — We say, lie on her, when they belie her: Lie with her! that's fulsome. — Handkerchief, — confessions, — handkerchief. — To confess, and be hanged⁷ for his labour. — First, to be hanged, and then to confess: — I tremble at it. Nature would not invest herself in such shadowing passion, without some instruction.⁸ It is not words that shake me thus: — Pish! — Noses, ears, and lips: — Is it possible? — Confess! — Handkerchief! — O devil! —

[*Falls in a Trance.*]

Iago. Work on,
My medicine, work! Thus credulous fools are caught;
And many worthy and chaste dames, even thus,
All guiltless meet reproach. — What, ho! my lord!

Enter CASSIO.

My lord, I say! Othello! — How, now, Cassio?

Cas. What is the matter?

Iago. My lord is fallen into an epilepsy;
This is his second fit; he had one yesterday.

Cas. Rub him about the temples.

Iago. No, forbear:

The lethargy must have his quiet course:
If not, he foams at mouth; and, by and by,
Breaks out to savage madness. Look, he stirs:
Do you withdraw yourself a little while,

⁷ — *To confess and be hanged* —] This is a proverbial saying.

⁸ — *without some instruction.*] Othello alludes to Cassio's dream, which had been invented and told him by Iago. When many confused and very interesting ideas pour in upon the mind all at once, and with such rapidity that it has not time to shape or digest them, if it does not relieve itself by tears, (which we know it often does, whether for joy or grief,) it produces stupefaction and fainting.

Othello, in broken sentences and single words, all of which have a reference to the cause of his jealousy, shows, that all the proofs are present at once to his mind, which so overpowers it, that he falls into a trance, the natural consequence. SIR J. REYNOLDS.

He will recover straight ; when he is gone,
I would on great occasion speak with you. —

[Exit CASSIO.

How is it, general ? have you not hurt your head ?

Oth. Dost thou mock me ?

Iago. I mock you ! no, by heaven :
'Would, you would bear your fortunes like a man.

Oth. A horned man's a monster, and a beast.

Iago. There's many a beast then in a populous city,
And many a civil monster.

Oth. Did he confess it ?

Iago. Good sir, be a man ;
Think, every bearded fellow, that's but yok'd,
May draw with you : there's millions now alive,
That nightly lie in those unproper beds,⁹
Which they dare swear peculiar ; your case is better.
O, 'tis the spite of hell, the fiend's arch-mock,
To lip a wanton in a secure couch,¹
And to suppose her chaste ! No, let me know ;
And, knowing what I am, I know what she shall be.

Oth. O, thou art wise ; 'tis certain.

Iago. Stand you awhile apart ;
Confine yourself but in a patient list.²
Whilst you were here, ere while mad with your grief,
(A passion most unsuited such a man,)
Cassio came hither : I shifted him away,
And laid good 'scuse upon your ecstasy ;
Bade him anon return, and here speak with me ;
The which he promis'd. Do but encave yourself,³
And mark the fleers, the gibes, and notable scorns,
That dwell in every region of his face ;

⁹ — *in those unproper beds,*] *Unproper*, for common.

¹ — *in a secure couch,*] In a couch in which he is lulled into a false security and confidence in his wife's virtue.

² — *list.*] *List*, or *lists*, is *barriers*, *bounds*. Keep your temper, says *Iago*, within the *bounds of patience*.

³ — *encave yourself,*] Hide yourself in a private place.

For I will make him tell the tale anew, —
 Where, how, how oft, how long ago, and when
 He hath, and is again to cope your wife;
 I say, but mark his gesture. Marry, patience;
 Or I shall say, you are all in all in spleen,
 And nothing of a man.

Oth. Dost thou hear, Iago?
 I will be found most cunning in my patience;
 But (dost thou hear?) most bloody.

Iago. That's not amiss;
 But yet keep time in all. Will you withdraw?

[OTHELLO *withdraws*.]

Now will I question Cassio of Bianca,
 A housewife, that, by selling her desires,
 Buys herself bread and clothes: it is a creature,
 That dotes on Cassio, — as 'tis the strumpet's plague,
 To beguile many, and be beguil'd by one; —
 He, when he hears of her, cannot refrain
 From the excess of laughter: — Here he comes: —

Re-enter CASSIO.

As he shall smile, Othello shall go mad;
 And his unbookish jealousy⁴ must construe
 Poor Cassio's smiles, gestures, and light behaviour,
 Quite in the wrong. — How do you now, lieutenant?

Cas. The worsser, that you give me the addition,
 Whose want even kills me.

Iago. Ply Desdemona well, and you are sure of't.
 Now, if this suit lay in Bianca's power, [*Speaking lower*.]
 How quickly should you speed?

Cas. Alas, poor caitiff!

Oth. Look, how he laughs already! [*Aside*.]

Iago. I never knew a woman love man so.

Cas. Alas, poor rogue! I think i'faith, she loves me.

⁴ *And his unbookish jealousy —* Unbookish, for ignorant.

Oth. Now he denies it faintly, and laughs it out.

[*Aside.*

Iago. Do you hear, Cassio?

Oth. Now he importunes him
To tell it o'er: Go to; well said, well said. [*Aside.*

Iago. She gives it out, that you shall marry her:
Do you intend it?

Cas. Ha, ha, ha!

Oth. Do you triumph, Roman? do you triumph?⁵

[*Aside.*

Cas. I marry her! — what? a customer!⁶ I pr'ythee,
bear some charity to my wit; do not think it so un-
wholesome. Ha, ha, ha!

Oth. So, so, so, so: They laugh that win. [*Aside.*

Iago. 'Faith, the cry goes, that you shall marry her.

Cas. Pr'ythee, say true.

Iago. I am a very villain else.

Oth. Have you scored me?⁷ Well. [*Aside.*

Cas. This is the monkey's own giving out: she is
persuaded I will marry her, out of her own love and
flattery, not out of my promise.

Oth. Iago beckons me; now he begins the story.

[*Aside.*

Cas. She was here even now; she haunts me in
every place. I was, the other day, talking on the
sea-bank with certain Venetians; and thither comes
this bauble; by this hand, she falls thus about my
neck; —

Oth. Crying, O dear Cassio! as it were: his gesture
imports it. [*Aside.*

⁵ *Do you triumph, Roman? do you triumph?*] Othello calls him
Roman ironically. *Triumph*, which was a Roman ceremony, brought
Roman into his thoughts. *What*, (says he,) *you are now triumphing*
as great as a Roman? JOHNSON.

⁶ — a customer!] A common woman, one that invites custom.

⁷ *Have you scored me?*] Have you made my reckoning? have
you settled the term of my life? The old quarto reads — *stored*
me? Have you disposed of me? have you laid me up?

Cas. So hangs, and lolls, and weeps upon me; so hales, and pulls me: ha, ha, ha! —

Oth. Now he tells, how she plucked him to my chamber: O, I see that nose of yours, but not that dog I shall throw it to. [*Aside.*]

Cas. Well, I must leave her company.

Iago. Before me! look, where she comes.

Enter BIANCA.

Cas. 'Tis such another fitchew!⁸ marry, a perfumed one. — What do you mean by this haunting of me?

Bian. Let the devil and his dam haunt you! What did you mean by that same handkerchief, you gave me even now? I was a fine fool to take it. I must take out the whole work? — A likely piece of work, that you should find it in your chamber, and not know who left it there! This is some minx's token, and I must take out the work? There, — give it your hobby horse: wheresoever you had it, I'll take out no work on't.

Cas. How now, my sweet Bianca? how now? how now?

Oth. By heaven, that should be my handkerchief!

[*Aside.*]

Bian. An you'll come to supper to-night, you may: an you will not, come when you are next prepared for.

[*Exit.*]

Iago. After her, after her.

Cas. 'Faith, I must, she'll rail in the street else.

Iago. Will you sup there?

Cas. 'Faith, I intend so.

Iago. Well, I may chance to see you; for I would very fain speak with you.

Cas. Pr'ythee, come; Will you?

Iago. Go to; say no more. [*Exit CASSIO.*]

Oth. How shall I murder him, Iago?

Iago. Did you perceive how he laughed at his vice?

⁸ — fitchew!] A pole-cat.

Oth. O, Iago!

Iago. And did you see the handkerchief?

Oth. Was that mine?

Iago. Yours, by this hand: and to see how he prizes the foolish woman, your wife! she gave it him, and he hath given it his whore.

Oth. I would have him nine years a killing: —
A fine woman! a fair woman! a sweet woman!

Iago. Nay, you must forget that.

Oth. Ay, let her rot, and perish, and be damned tonight; for she shall not live: No, my heart is turned to stone; I strike it, and it hurts my hand.⁹ O, the world hath not a sweeter creature: she might lie by an emperor's side, and command him tasks.

Iago. Nay, that's not your way.

Oth. Hang her! I do but say what she is: — So delicate with her needle! — An admirable musician! — O, she will sing the savageness out of a bear! — Of so high and plenteous wit and invention!

Iago. She's the worse for all this.

Oth. O, a thousand, a thousand times: — And then, of so gentle a condition!¹

Iago. Ay, too gentle.

Oth. Nay, that's certain: But yet the pity of it, Iago! — O, Iago, the pity of it, Iago!

Iago. If you are so fond over her iniquity, give her patent to offend; for if it touch not you, it comes near nobody.

Oth. I will chop her into messes: — Cuckold me!

Iago. O, 'tis foul in her.

Oth. With mine officer!

Iago. That's fouler.

Oth. Get me some poison, Iago; this night: — I'll

⁹ *No, my heart is turned to stone; I strike it, and it hurts my hand.*] This thought as often as it occurs to Shakspeare, is sure to be received, and as often counteracts his *pathos*.

¹ — *And then of so gentle a condition!*] i. e. of so sweet a disposition.

not expostulate with her, lest her body and beauty unprovide my mind again: — this night, Iago.

Iago. Do it not with poison, strangle her in her bed, even the bed she hath contaminated.

Oth. Good, good: the justice of it pleases; very good.

Iago. And, for Cassio, — let me be his undertaker: You shall hear more by midnight. [*A Trumpet within.*]

Oth. Excellent good. — What trumpet is that same?

Iago. Something from Venice, sure. 'Tis Lodovico, Come from the duke: and, see, your wife is with him.

Enter LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, *and Attendants.*

Lod. 'Save you, worthy general!

Oth. With all my heart, sir.

Lod. The duke and senators of Venice greet you.

[*Gives him a Packet.*]

Oth. I kiss the instrument of their pleasures.

[*Opens the Packet, and reads.*]

Des. And what's the news, good cousin Lodovico?

Iago. I am very glad to see you, signior;
Welcome to Cyprus.

Lod. I thank you: how does lieutenant Cassio?

Iago. Lives, sir.

Des. Cousin, there's fallen between him and my lord
An unkind breach: but you shall make all well.

Oth. Are you sure of that?

Des. My lord?

Oth. *This fail you not to do, as you will —*
[*Reads.*]

Lod. He did not call: he's busy in the paper.
Is there division 'twixt thy lord and Cassio?

Des. A most unhappy one; I would do much
To atone them², for the love I bear to Cassio.

Oth. Fire and brimstone!

Des. My lord?

Oth. Are you wise?

² — *atone them,*] Make them *one*; reconcile them.

Des. What, is he angry?

Lod. 'May be, the letter mov'd him ;
For, as I think, they do command him home,
Deputing Cassio in his government.

Des. By my troth, I am glad on't.

Oth. Indeed?

Des. My lord?

Oth. I am glad to see you mad.

Des. How, sweet Othello?

Oth. Devil ! *[Striking her.*

Des. I have not deserv'd this.

Lod. My lord, this would not be believ'd in Venice,
Though I should swear I saw it: 'Tis very much ;
Make her amends, she weeps.

Oth. O devil, devil !

If that the earth could teem with woman's tears,³
Each drop she falls⁴ would prove a crocodile: —
Out of my sight !

Des. I will not stay to offend you.

[Going.

Lod. Truly, an obedient lady: —
I do beseech your lordship, call her back.

Oth. Mistress —

Des. My lord?

Oth. What would you with her, sir?

Lod. Who, I, my lord?

Oth. Ay; you did wish, that I would make her turn:
Sir, she can turn, and turn, and yet go on,
And turn again; and she can weep, sir, weep;
And she's obedient, as you say, — obedient, —
Very obedient: — Proceed you in your tears. —
Concerning this, sir, — O well-painted passion !

³ *If that the earth could teem, &c.]* Shakspeare here alludes to the fabulous accounts of crocodiles. Each tear (says Othello) which falls from the false Desdemona, would generate a crocodile; the most deceitful of all animals, and whose own tears are proverbially fallacious.

⁴ *Each drop she falls—]* To *fall* is here a verb active.

I am commanded home : — Get you away :
I'll send for you anon. — Sir, I obey the mandate,
And will return to Venice ; — Hence, avaunt !

[*Exit* DESDEMONA.]

Cassio shall have my place. And, — sir, to-night,
I do entreat that we may sup together.
You are welcome, sir, to Cyprus. Goats and monkies !

[*Exit.*]

Lod. Is this the noble Moor whom our full senate
Call — all-in-all sufficient ? — This the noble nature
Whom passion could not shake ? whose solid virtue
The shot of accident, nor dart of chance,
Could neither graze, nor pierce ?

Iago. He is much chang'd.

Lod. Are his wits safe ? is he not light of brain ?

Iago. He is that he is ; I may not breathe my censure.
What he might be, — if, what he might, he is not, —
I would to heaven, he were.

Lod. What, strike his wife !

Iago. 'Faith, that was not so well ; Yet 'would I
knew,

That stroke would prove the worst.

Lod. Is it his use ?

Or did the letters work upon his blood,
And new-create this fault ?

Iago. Alas, alas !

It is not honesty in me, to speak
What I have seen and known. You shall observe him ;
And his own courses will denote him so,
That I may save my speech : Do but go after,
And mark how he continues.

Lod. I am sorry, that I am deceiv'd in him.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

*A Room in the Castle.**Enter OTHELLO and EMILIA.**Oth.* You have seen nothing then ?*Emil.* Nor ever heard ; nor ever did suspect.*Oth.* Yes, you have seen Cassio and she together.*Emil.* But then I saw no harm ; and then I heard
Each syllable, that breath made up between them.*Oth.* What, did they never whisper ?*Emil.* Never, my lord.*Oth.* Nor send you out o'the way ?*Emil.* Never.*Oth.* To fetch her fan, her gloves, her mask, nor
nothing ?*Emil.* Never, my lord.*Oth.* That's strange.*Emil.* I durst, my lord, to wager she is honest,
Lay down my soul at stake : if you think other,
Remove your thought ; it doth abuse your bosom.
If any wretch hath put this in your head,
Let heaven requite it with the serpent's curse !
For, if she be not honest, chaste, and true,
There's no man happy ; the purest of their wives
Is foul as slander.*Oth.* Bid her come hither : — go. —[*Exit EMILIA.*]She says enough ; — yet she's a simple bawd,
That cannot say as much. This is a subtle whore,
A closet-lock-and-key of villainous secrets :
And yet she'll kneel, and pray ; I have seen her do't.*Re-enter EMILIA, with DESDEMONA.**Des.* My lord, what is your will ?

Oth. Pray, chuck, come hither.

Des. What is your pleasure?

Oth. Let me see your eyes;
Look in my face.

Des. What horrible fancy's this?

Oth. Some of your function, mistress; [*To EMILIA.*
Leave procreants alone, and shut the door;
Cough, or cry — hem, if any body come:
Your mystery, your mystery; nay, despatch.

[*Exit EMILIA.*

Des. Upon my knees, what doth your speech import?
I understand a fury in your words,
But not the words.

Oth. Why, what art thou?

Des. Your wife, my lord; your true
And loyal wife.

Oth. Come, swear it, damn thyself;
Lest, being like one of heaven, the devils themselves
Should fear to seize thee: therefore be double-damn'd,
Swear — thou art honest.

Des. Heaven doth truly know it.

Oth. Heaven truly knows, that thou art false as hell.

Des. To whom, my lord? with whom? How am I
false?

Oth. O Desdemona! — away! away! away!

Des. Alas, the heavy day! — Why do you weep?
Am I the occasion of these tears, my lord?
If, haply, you my father do suspect,
An instrument of this your calling back,
Lay not your blame on me; if you have lost him,
Why, I have lost him too.

Oth. Had it pleas'd heaven
To try me with affliction; had he rain'd
All kinds of sores, and shames, on my bare head;
Steep'd me in poverty to the very lips;
Given to captivity me and my utmost hopes;
I should have found in some part of my soul
A drop of patience: but (alas!) to make me

A fixed figure, for the time of scorn
 To point his slow unmoving finger at, —
 O! O!
 Yet could I bear that too; well, very well:
 But there, where I have garner'd up my heart;⁴
 Where either I must live, or bear no life;
 The fountain from the which my current runs,
 Or else dries up; to be discarded thence!
 Or keep it as a cistern, for foul toads
 To knot and gender in! — turn thy complexion there!
 Patience, thou young and rose-lipp'd cherubin;
 Ay, there, look grim as hell!⁵

Des. I hope, my noble lord esteems me honest.

Oth. O, ay; as summer flies are in the shambles,
 That quicken even with blowing. O thou weed,
 Who art so lovely fair, and smell'st so sweet,
 That the sense aches at thee. — 'Would, thou had'st
 ne'er been born!

Des. Alas, what ignorant sin have I committed?

Oth. Was this fair paper, this most goodly book,
 Made to write whore upon? What committed!
 Committed! — O thou publick commoner!
 I should make very forges of my cheeks,
 That would to cinders burn up modesty,
 Did I but speak thy deeds. — What committed!
 Heaven stops the nose at it, and the moon winks;
 The bawdy wind, that kisses all it meets,
 Is hush'd within the hollow mine of earth,
 And will not hear it: What committed!
 Impudent strumpet!

Des. By heaven, you do me wrong.

⁴ — *garner'd up my heart* ;] That is, *treasured up* : the *garner* and the *fountain* are improperly conjoined.

⁵ — *turn thy complexion there!* &c.] At such an object do thou, *patience*, thyself *change colour* ; at this do thou, even thou, *rosy cherub* as thou art, *look as grim as hell*.

Oth. Are not you a strumpet ?

Des. No, as I am a christian :

If to preserve this vessel for my lord,
From any other foul unlawful touch,
Be — not to be a strumpet, I am none.

Oth. What, not a whore ?

Des. No, as I shall be saved.

Oth. Is it possible ?

Des. O, heaven forgive us !

Oth. I cry you mercy, then :

I took you for that cunning whore of Venice,
That married with Othello. — You, mistress,

Re-enter EMILIA.

That have the office opposite to Saint Peter,
And keep the gate of hell ; You ! you ! ay, you !
We have done our course ; there's money for your pains ;
I pray you, turn the key, and keep our counsel. [*Exit.*

Emil. Alas, what does this gentleman conceive ? —

How do you, madam ? how do you, my good lady ?

Des. 'Faith, half asleep.

Emil. Good madam, what's the matter with my lord ?

Des. With who ?

Emil. Why, with my lord, madam.

Des. Who is thy lord ?

Emil. He that is yours, sweet lady.

Des. I have none : Do not talk to me, Emilia ;

I cannot weep ; nor answer I have none,
But what should go by water. Pr'ythee, to-night
Lay on my bed my wedding sheets, — remember ; —
And call thy husband hither.

Emil. Here is a change, indeed
[*Exit.*

Des. 'Tis meet I should be us'd so, very meet.
How have I been behav'd, that he might stick
The small'st opinion on my great'st abuse ?

Re-enter EMILIA, with IAGO.

Iago. What is your pleasure, madam? How is it with you?

Des. I cannot tell. Those, that do teach young babes, Do it with gentle means, and easy tasks: He might have chid me so; for, in good faith, I am a child to chiding.

Iago. What's the matter, lady?

Emil. Alas, Iago, my lord hath so bewhor'd her, Thrown such despite and heavy terms upon her, As true hearts cannot bear.

Des. Am I that name, Iago?

Iago. What name, fair lady?

Des. Such as, she says, my lord did say I was.

Emil. He call'd her, whore; a beggar, in his drink, Could not have laid such terms upon his callet.⁶

Iago. Why did he so?

Des. I do not know; I am sure, I am none such.

Iago. Do not weep, do not weep; Alas, the day!

Emil. Has she forsook so many noble matches, Her father, and her country, and her friends, To be call'd — whore? would it not make one weep?

Des. It is my wretched fortune.

Iago. Beshrew him for it!

How comes this trick upon him?

Des. Nay, heaven doth know.

Emil. I will be hang'd, if some eternal villain, Some busy and insinuating rogue, Some cogging cozening slave, to get some office, Have not devis'd this slander; I'll be hang'd, else.

Iago. Fye, there is no such man; it is impossible.

Des. If any such there be, heaven pardon him!

⁶ — upon his callet.] *Callet* is a lewd woman; so called (says Dr. Grey) from the French *calote*, which was a sort of head-dress worn by country girls.

Emil. A halter pardon him ! and hell gnaw his bones !
Why should he call her, whore ? who keeps her com-
pany ?

What place ? what time ? what form ? what likelihood ?
The Moor's abus'd by some most villainous knave,
Some base notorious knave, some scurvy fellow : —
O, heaven, that such companions⁷ thou'dst unfold ;
And put in every honest hand a whip,
To lash the rascal naked through the world,
Even from the east to the west !

Iago. Speak within door.⁸

Emil. O, fye upon him ! some such squire he was,
That turn'd your wit the seamy side without,⁹
And made you to suspect me with the Moor.

Iago. You are a fool ; go to.

Des. O, good Iago,
What shall I do to win my lord again ?
Good friend, go to him ; for, by this light of heaven,
I know not how I lost him. Here I kneel : —
If e'er my will did trespass 'gainst his love,
Either in discourse of thought, or actual deed ;
Or that mine eyes, mine ears, or any sense,
Delighted them in any other form ;
Or that I do not yet, and ever did,
And ever will, — though he do shake me off
To beggarly divorcement, — love him dearly,
Comfort forswear me ! Unkindness may do much ;
And his unkindness may defeat my life,
But never taint my love. I cannot say, whore ;
It does abhor me, now I speak the word ;
To do the act that might the addition earn,
Not the world's mass of vanity could make me.

⁷ — *such companions* —] *Companion*, in the time of Shakspeare, was used as a word of contempt, in the same sense as *fellow* is at this day.

⁸ *Speak within door.*] Do not clamour so as to be heard beyond the house.

⁹ — *the seamy side without,*] That is, *inside out*.

Iago. I pray you, be content; 'tis but his humour;
The business of the state does him offence,
And he does chide with you.

Des. If 'twere no other, —

Iago. It is but so, I warrant you. [*Trumpets.*
Hark, how these instruments summon to supper!
And the great messengers of Venice stay:
Go in, and weep not: all things shall be well.

[*Exeunt* DESDEMONA and EMILIA.]

Enter RODERIGO.

How now, Roderigo?

Rod. I do not find, that thou deal'st justly with me.

Iago. What in the contrary?

Rod. Every day thou doff'st me with some device,
Iago; and rather (as it seems to me now,) keep'st from
me all conveniency, than suppliest me with the least ad-
vantage of hope. I will, indeed, no longer endure it:
Nor am I yet persuaded, to put up in peace what
already I have foolishly suffered.

Iago. Will you hear me, Roderigo?

Rod. 'Faith, I have heard too much; for your words,
and performances, are no kin together.

Iago. You charge me most unjustly.

Rod. With nought but truth. I have wasted myself
out of my means. The jewels you have had from me, to
deliver to Desdemona, would half have corrupted a vo-
tarist: You have told me—she has received them, and
returned me expectations and comforts of sudden respect
and acquittance¹; but I find none.

Iago. Well; go to; very well.

Rod. Very well! go to! I cannot go to, man; nor
'tis not very well: By this hand, I say, it is very scurvy;
and begin to find myself fobbed in it.

¹ — and acquittance;] *Acquittance* is requital.

Iago. Very well.

Rod. I tell you, 'tis not very well. I will make myself known to Desdemona: If she will return me my jewels, I will give over my suit, and repent my unlawful solicitation; if not, assure yourself, I will seek satisfaction of you.

Iago. You have said now.

Rod. Ay, and I have said nothing, but what I protest intendment of doing.

Iago. Why, now I see there's mettle in thee; and even, from this instant, do build on thee a better opinion than ever before. Give me thy hand, Roderigo: Thou hast taken against me a most just exception; but, yet, I protest, I have dealt most directly in thy affair.

Rod. It hath not appeared.

Iago. I grant, indeed, it hath not appeared; and your suspicion is not without wit and judgment. But, Roderigo, if thou hast that within thee indeed, which I have greater reason to believe now than ever, — I mean, purpose, courage, and valour, — this night show it: if thou the next night following enjoyest not Desdemona, take me from this world with treachery, and devise engines for my life.²

Rod. Well, what is it? is it within reason, and compass?

Iago. Sir, there is especial commission come from Venice, to depute Cassio in Othello's place.

Rod. Is that true? why, then Othello and Desdemona return again to Venice.

Iago. O, no; he goes into Mauritania, and takes away with him the fair Desdemona, unless his abode be lingered here by some accident; wherein none can be so determinate, as the removing of Cassio.

Rod. How do you mean — removing of him?

² — *devise engines for my life, &c.*] To *devise engines*, seems to mean, to contrive racks, tortures, &c.

SCENE III. THE MOOR OF VENICE. 515

Iago. Why, by making him incapable of Othello's place; knocking out his brains.

Rod. And that you would have me do?

Iago. Ay; if you dare do yourself a profit, and a right. He sups to-night with a harlot, and thither will I go to him;—he knows not yet of his honourable fortune; if you will watch his going thence, (which I will fashion to fall out between twelve and one,) you may take him at your pleasure; I will be near to second your attempt, and he shall fall between us. Come, stand not amazed at it, but go along with me; I will show you such a necessity in his death, that you shall think yourself bound to put it on him. It is now high supper-time, and the night grows to waste: about it.

Rod. I will hear further reason for this.

Iago. And you shall be satisfied. [Exeunt.]

SCENE III.

Another Room in the Castle.

Enter OTHELLO, LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, EMILIA, and Attendants.

Lod. I do beseech you, sir, trouble yourself no further.

Oth. O, pardon me; 'twill do me good to walk.

Lod. Madam, good night; I humbly thank your ladyship.

Des. Your honour is most welcome.

Oth. Will you walk, sir? —

O, — Desdemona, —

Des. My lord?

Oth. Get you to bed on the instant; I will be returned forthwith: dismiss your attendant there; look, it be done.

Des. I will, my lord.

[Exeunt OTHELLO, LODOVICO, and Attendants.]

Emil. How goes it now ? he looks gentler than he did.

Des. He says, he will return incontinent ;
He hath commanded me to go to bed,
And bade me to dismiss you.

Emil. Dismiss me !

Des. It was his bidding ; therefore, good Emilia,
Give me my nightly wearing, and adieu :
We must not now displease him.

Emil. I would, you had never seen him !

Des. So would not I ; my love doth so approve him,
That even his stubbornness, his checks, and frowns, —
Pr'ythee, unpin me, — have grace and favour in them.

Emil. I have laid those sheets you bade me on the bed.

Des. All's one : — Good father ! how foolish are our
minds ! —

If I do die before thee, pr'ythee, shroud me
In one of those same sheets.

Emil. Come, come, you talk.

Des. My mother had a maid call'd — Barbara ;
She was in love ; and he, she lov'd, prov'd mad,³
And did forsake her : she had a song of — willow,
An old thing 'twas, but it express'd her fortune,
And she died singing it : That song, to-night,
Will not go from my mind ; I have much to do,
But to go hang my head⁴ all at one side,
And sing it, like poor Barbara. Pr'ythee, despatch.

Emil. Shall I go fetch your night-gown ?

Des. No, unpin me here. —
This Lodovico is a proper man.

Emil. A very handsome man.

Des. And he speaks well.

Emil. I know a lady in Venice, who would have

³ — and he, she lov'd, prov'd mad,] *Mad*, in the present instance, ought to mean — *inconstant*.

⁴ — I have much to do,

But to go hang my head —] I have much *ado to do any thing* but hang my head.

walked barefoot to Palestine, for a touch of his nether lip.

I.

Des. *The poor soul*⁵ *sat sighing by a sycamore tree,*
Sing all a green willow; [Singing.
Her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee,
Sing willow, willow, willow :

The fresh streams ran by her, and murmur'd her moans;
Sing willow, &c.

Her salt tears fell from her, and soften'd the stones;

Lay by these :

Sing willow, willow, willow;

Pr'ythee, hie thee; he'll come anon. —

Sing all a green willow must be my garland.

II.

Let nobody blame him, his scorn I approve, —

Nay, that's not next. — Hark ! who is it that knocks ?

Emil. It is the wind.

Des. *I call'd my love, false love*⁶; *but what said he*
then ?

Sing willow, &c.

If I court no women, you'll couch with no men.

⁵ *The poor soul, &c.*] This song, in two parts, is printed in Dr. Percy's collection of old ballads; the lines preserved here differ somewhat from the copy discovered by the ingenious collector.

⁶ *I call'd my love, false love;*] This couplet is not in the ballad, which is the complaint, not of a woman forsaken, but of a man rejected. These lines were properly added when it was accommodated to a woman.

So, get thee gone; good night. Mine eyes do itch;
Doth that bode weeping?

Emil. 'Tis neither here nor there.

Des. I have heard it said so. — O, these men, these
men! —

Dost thou in conscience think, — tell me, Emilia, —
That there be women do abuse their husbands
In such gross kind?

Emil. There be some such, no question.

Des. Would'st thou do such a deed for all the world?

Emil. Why, would not you?

Des. No, by this heavenly light!

Emil. Nor I neither by this heavenly light;

I might do't as well i'the dark.

Des. Would'st thou do such a deed for all the world?

Emil. The world is a huge thing: 'Tis a great price
For a small vice.

Des. Good troth, I think thou would'st not.

Emil. By my troth, I think I should; and undo't,
when I had done. Marry, I would not do such a
thing for a joint-ring⁷; nor for measures of lawn; nor
for gowns, petticoats, nor caps, nor any petty exhibition:
but, for the whole world, — Why, who would not make
her husband a cuckold, to make him a monarch? I
should venture purgatory for't.

Des. Beshrew me, if I would do such a wrong for
the whole world.

Emil. Why, the wrong is but a wrong i'the world;
and, having the world for your labour, 'tis a wrong
in your own world, and you might quickly make it
right.

Des. I do not think there is any such woman.

Emil. Yes, a dozen; and as many
To the vantage⁸, as would store the world they play'd
for.

⁷ — for a joint-ring.] Anciently a common token among lovers.

⁸ To the vantage,] i. e. to boot, over and above.

But, I do think, it is their husbands' faults,
 If wives do fall: Say, that they slack their duties,
 And pour out treasures into foreign laps;
 Or else break out in peevish jealousies,
 Throwing restraint upon us; or, say, they strike us,
 Or scant our former having⁹ in despite;
 Why, we have galls; and, though we have some grace,
 Yet we have some revenge. Let husbands know,
 Their wives have sense like them: they see, and smell,
 And have their palates both for sweet and sour,
 As husbands have. What is it that they do,
 When they change us for others? Is it sport?
 I think, it is; And doth affection breed it?
 I think, it doth; Is't frailty, that thus errs?
 It is so too: And have not we affections?
 Desires for sport? and frailty, as men have?
 Then, let them use us well: else, let them know,
 The ills we do, their ills instruct us to. †

Des. Good night, good night: Heaven me such
 usage send,
 Not to pick bad from bad; but, by bad, mend!

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I. — *A Street.*

IAGO and RODERIGO.

Iago. H... behind this bulk; straight will he
 ear th... er bare, and put it home;
 ick, ... nothing; I'll be at thy elbow:

aving —] Our former allowance of expence.

NE.

It makes us, or it mars us; think on that,
And fix most firm thy resolution.

Rod. Be near at hand; I may miscarry in't.

Iago. Here, at thy hand; be bold, and take thy sword.
[Retires to a little distance.]

Rod. I have no great devotion to the deed;
And yet he has given me satisfying reasons: —
'Tis but a man gone: — forth, my sword; he dies.

[Goes to his stand.]

Iago. I have rubb'd this young quat almost to the
sense,

And he grows angry.¹ Now whether he kill Cassio,
Or Cassio him, or each do kill the other,
Every way makes my gain: Live Roderigo,
He calls me to a restitution large
Of gold, and jewels, that I bobb'd from him,²
As gifts to Desdemona;
It must not be: if Cassio do remain,
He hath a daily beauty in his life,
That makes me ugly; and, besides, the Moor
May unfold me to him; there stand I in much peril:
No, he must die: — But so, I hear him coming.

Enter CASSIO.

Rod. I know his gait, 'tis he; — Villain, thou diest.

[Rushes from his post, and makes a pass at

CASSIO.]

Cas. That thrust had been mine enemy indeed,

¹ *I have rubb'd this young quat almost to the sense,*

And he grows angry.] This is a passage much controverted among the editors. A *quat* in the midland counties is a *pimple*, which by rubbing is made to smart, or is *rubbed to sense*. Roderigo is called a *quat* by the same mode of speech, as a low fellow is now termed in low language a *scab*. *To rub to the sense, is to rub to the quick.* JOHNSON.

² — *that I bobb'd from him,*] That I *fool'd* him out of. A *bob* formerly signified a mock, or jeer.

But that my coat is better than thou think'st;
I will make proof of thine.

[*Draws, and wounds RODERIGO.*]

Rod. O, I am slain!

[*IAGO rushes from his post, cuts CASSIO behind in the leg³, and exit.*]

Cas. I am maim'd for ever: — Help, ho! murder!
murder! [*Falls.*]

Enter OTHELLO, at a distance.

Oth. The voice of Cassio: — Iago keeps his word.

Rod. O, villain that I am!

Oth. Hark! 'tis even so.

Cas. O, help! ho! light! a surgeon!

Oth. 'Tis he; — O brave Iago, honest, and just,
That hast such noble sense of thy friend's wrong!
Thou teachest me, — Minion, your dear lies dead,
And your fate hies apace: — Strumpet, I come:
Forth of my heart⁴ those charms, thine eyes, are
blotted;

Thy bed, lust-stain'd, shall with lust's blood be spotted.
[*Exit OTHELLO.*]

Enter LODOVICO and GRATIANO, at a distance.

Cas. What, ho! no watch? no passage⁵? murder!
murder!

Gra. 'Tis some mischance; the cry is very direful.

Cas. O, help!

Lod. Hark!

Rod. O wretched villain!

³ — *in the leg,*] Iago maims Cassio in the *leg*, in consequence of what he had just heard him say, from which he supposed that his body was defended by some secret armour.

⁴ *Forth of my heart, &c.*] *Forth* signifies both *out* and *from*.

⁵ — *no passage?*] No passengers? nobody going by?

Lod. Two or three groans ; — it is a heavy night :⁶
These may be counterfeits : let's think't unsafe
To come in to the cry, without more help.

Rod. No body come ? then shall I bleed to death.

Enter IAGO, with a Light.

Lod. Hark !

Gra. Here's one comes in his shirt, with light and
weapons.

Iago. Who's there ? whose noise is this, that cries on
murder ?⁷

Lod. We do not know.

Iago. Did you not hear a cry ?

Cas. Here, here ; for heaven's sake, help me.

Iago. What's the matter ?

Gra. This is Othello's ancient, as I take it.

Lod. The same, indeed ; a very valiant fellow.

Iago. What are you here, that cry so grievously ?

Cas. Iago ? O, I am spoil'd, undone by villains !

Give me some help.

Iago. O me, lieutenant ! what villains have done this ?

Cas. I think that one of them is hereabout,

And cannot make away.

Iago. O treacherous villains ! —

What are you there ? come in, and give some help.

[*To LODOVICO and GRATIANO.*

Rod. O, help me here !

Cas. That's one of them.

Iago. O murderous slave ! O villain !

[*IAGO stabs RODERIGO.*

Rod. O damn'd Iago ! O inhuman dog ! —

O ! O ! O !

⁶ — a heavy night :] A thick cloudy night, in which an ambush may be commodiously laid.

⁷ — whose noise is this, that cries on murder ?] Such was the phraseology of Shakspeare's age.

Iago. Kill men i'the dark! — Where be these bloody thieves? —

How silent is this town! Ho! murder! murder!

What may you be? are you of good, or evil?

Lod. As you shall prove us, praise us.

Iago. Signior Lodovico?

Lod. He, sir.

Iago. I cry you mercy; Here's Cassio hurt
By villains.

Gra. Cassio?

Iago. How is it, brother?

Cas. My leg is cut in two.

Iago. Marry, heaven forbid! —

Light, gentlemen; I'll bind it with my shirt.

Enter BIANCA.

Bian. What is the matter, ho? who is't that cry'd?

Iago. Who is't that cry'd?

Bian. O my dear Cassio! my sweet Cassio!

O Cassio! Cassio! Cassio!

Iago. O notable strumpet! — Cassio, may you suspect

Who they should be, that have thus mangled you?

Cas. No.

Gra. I am sorry to find you thus: I have been to seek you.

Iago. Lend me a garter: So. — O, for a chair,
To bear him easily hence!

Bian. Alas, he faints: — O Cassio! Cassio! Cassio!

Iago. Gentlemen all, I do suspect this trash
To be a party in this injury. —

Patience a while, good Cassio. — Come, come;

Lend me a light. — Know we this face, or no?

Alas! my friend, and my dear countryman,
Roderigo? no: — Yes, sure; O heaven! Roderigo

Gra. What, of Venice?

Iago. Even he, sir; did you know him?

Gra. Know him? ay.

Iago. Signior Gratiano? I cry you gentle pardon;
These bloody accidents must excuse my manners,
That so neglected you.

Gra. I am glad to see you.

Iago. How do you, Cassio? — O, a chair, a chair!

Gra. Roderigo!

Iago. He, he, 'tis he: — O, that's well said; — the
chair: — [A Chair brought in.]

Some good man bear him carefully from hence;

I'll fetch the general's surgeon. — For you, mistress,

[To BIANCA.]

Save you your labour. — He that lies slain here, Cassio,
Was my dear friend: What malice was between you?

Cas. None in the world; nor do I know the man.

Iago. [to BIAN.] What, look you pale? — O bear
him out o'the air. —

[CASSIO and ROD. are borne off.]

Stay you, good gentlemen. † — Look you pale, mistress?

Do you perceive the gastness of her eye? —

Nay, if you stare, we shall hear more anon: —

Behold her well; I pray you, look upon her;

Do you see, gentlemen? nay, guiltiness will speak,

Though tongues were out of use.

Enter EMILIA.

Emil. 'Las, what's the matter; what's the matter,
husband?

Iago. Cassio hath here been set on in the dark,
By Roderigo, and fellows that are scap'd;
He's almost slain, and Roderigo dead.

Emil. Alas, good gentleman! alas, good Cassio!

Iago. This is the fruit of whoring. — Pr'ythee, Emilia,
Go know of Cassio where he supp'd to-night: —
What, do you shake at that?

† "good gentlewoman." — MALONE.

SCENE II. THE MOOR OF VENICE. 525

Bian. He supp'd at my house; but I therefore shake not.

Iago. O, did he so? I charge you, go with me.

Emil. Fye, fye upon thee, strumpet!

Bian. I am no strumpet; but of life as honest,
As you that thus abuse me.

Emil. As I? foh! fye upon thee!

Iago. Kind gentlemen, let's go see poor Cassio
dress'd:—

Come, mistress, you must tell us another tale.—

Emilia, run you to the citadel,

And tell my lord and lady what has happ'd.—

Will you go on, I pray? This is the night, [*Aside.*

That either makes me, or fordoes me quite.⁸ [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

*A Bedchamber: DESDEMONA in bed, asleep. A Light
burning.*

Enter OTHELLO.

Oth. It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul,—
Let me not name it⁹ to you, you chaste stars!—
It is the cause.— Yet I'll not shed her blood;
Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,
And smooth as monumental alabaster.

[*Takes off his Sword.*

⁸ — or fordoes me quite.] To *fordo*, is to undo, to ruin, to destroy.

⁹ *It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul,—*

Let me not name it—] The abruptness of this soliloquy makes it obscure. The meaning, I think, is this:— I am here (says Othello in his mind) overwhelmed with horror. What is the reason of this perturbation? Is it want of resolution to do justice? Is it the dread of shedding blood? No; it is not the action that shocks me, but *it is the cause, it is the cause, my soul; let me not name it to you, ye chaste stars! it is the cause.* JOHNSON.

Unreconcil'd as yet to heaven and grace,
Solicit for it straight.

Des. Alas, my lord, what may you mean by that?

Oth. Well, do it, and be brief; I will walk by:
I would not kill thy unprepared spirit;
No, — Heaven forefend. — I would not kill thy soul.²

Des. Talk you of killing?

Oth. Ay, I do.

Des. Then, heaven

Have mercy on me!

Oth. Amen, with all my heart!

Des. If you say so, I hope you will not kill me.

Oth. Humph!

Des. And yet I fear you; for you are fatal then,
When your eyes roll so: Why I should fear, I know not,
Since guiltiness I know not; but yet, I feel, I fear.

Oth. Think on thy sins.

Des. They are loves I bear to you.

Oth. Ay, and for that thou diest.

Des. That death's unnatural, that kills for loving. —
Alas, why gnaw you so your nether lip?
Some bloody passion shakes your very frame:
These are portents; but yet, I hope, I hope,
They do not point on me.

Oth. Peace, and be still!

Des. I will so: What's the matter?

Oth. That handkerchief, which I so lov'd, and gave
thee,

Thou gav'st to Cassio.

Des. No, by my life and soul;

Send for the man, and ask him.

Oth. Sweet soul, take heed,

Take heed of perjury; thou'rt on thy death-bed.

Des. Ay, but not yet to die.

² — *I would not kill thy soul.*] *Othello* appears to have been a favourite of his author; for he has bestowed on him that piety which he had refused to *Hamlet*.

Oth. Yes, presently :
Therefore confess thee freely of thy sin ;
For to deny each article with oath,
Cannot remove, nor choke, the strong conception,
That I do groan withal. Thou art to die.

Des. Then, Lord have mercy on me !

Oth. I say, amen.

Des. And have you mercy too ! — I never did
Offend you in my life ; never lov'd Cassio,
But with such general warranty of heaven
As I might love : I never gave him token.

Oth. By heaven, I saw my handkerchief in his hand.
O perjur'd woman ! thou dost stone my heart,
And mak'st me call, what I intend to do, —
A murder, which I thought a sacrifice :³
I saw the handkerchief.

Des. He found it then ;
I never gave it him : — Send for him hither,
And let him confess a truth.

Oth. He hath confess'd.

Des. What, my lord ?

Oth. That he hath — us'd thee.

Des. How ? unlawfully ?

Oth. Ay.

Des. He'll not say so.

Oth. No, his mouth is stopp'd ;
Honest Iago hath ta'en order for't.⁴

Des. My fear interprets then, — What, is he dead ?

Oth. Had all his hairs been lives, my great revenge
Had stomach for them all.

Des. Alas ! he is betray'd, and I undone.

³ *A murder, which I thought a sacrifice:] This line is difficult. Thou hast hardened my heart, and makest me kill thee with the rage of a murderer, when I thought to have sacrificed thee to justice with the calmness of a priest striking a victim.*

I am glad that I have ended my revisal of this dreadful scene. It is not to be endured. JOHNSON.

⁴ — *hath ta'en order for't.] i. e. has taken measures.*

Oth. Out, strumpet! Weep'st thou for him to my face?

Des. O, banish me, my lord, but kill me not.

Oth. Down, strumpet!

Des. Kill me to-morrow, let me live to-night.

Oth. Nay, if you strive, —

Des. But half an hour.

Oth. Being done,

There is no pause.

Des. But while I say one prayer.

Oth. It is too late.⁵ [*He smothers her.*]

Emil. [*within.*] My lord, my lord! what ho! my lord! my lord!

Oth. What noise is this? — Not dead! not yet quite dead?

I, that am cruel, am yet merciful;

I would not have thee linger in thy pain. —

So, so.

Emil. [*within.*] What ho, my lord! my lord!

Oth. Who's there?

Emil. [*within.*] O, good my lord, I would speak a word with you.

Oth. Yes; — 'tis Emilia: — by and by. — She's dead.

'Tis like she comes to speak of Cassio's death;

The noise was high. — Ha! no more moving?

⁵ *It is too late.*] After this speech of Othello, the elder quarto adds an invocation from Desdemona, consisting only of the sacred name thrice repeated. As this must be supposed to have been uttered while she is yet struggling with death, an editor may be excused from inserting such a circumstance of supererogatory horror, especially as it is found in but one of the ancient copies. This alteration was probably made in consequence of the statute of the 3d of James I. c. 21. which lays a penalty for the profane use of the name of God, &c. in stage-plays, interludes, May-games, &c. Such a statute was necessary; for not only the ancient moralities, but the plays (those of Chapman in particular) abound with the most wanton and shocking repetitions of a name which never ought to be mentioned in such an irreverend manner on the stage.

Still as the grave. Shall she come in? Were't good?
 I think, she stirs again: — No. — What's the best?
 If she come in, she'll sure speak to my wife:
 My wife! my wife! what wife? — I have no wife;
 O, insupportable! O heavy hour!
 Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse
 Of sun and moon; and that the affrighted globe
 Should yawn at alteration.

Emil. [*within.*] I do beseech you I may speak
 with you,

O, good my lord!

Oth. I had forgot thee: O, come in, Emilia: —
 Soft, — by and by: — Let me the curtains draw. —
 Where art thou? What's the matter with thee now?

[*Unlocks the door.*]

Enter EMILIA.

Emil. O, good my lord, yonder's foul murder done.

Oth. What? now?

Emil. But now, my lord!

Oth. It is the very error of the moon;
 She comes more near the earth than she was wont;
 And makes men mad.

Emil. Cassio, my lord, has kill'd a young Venetian,
 Call'd — Roderigo.

Oth. Roderigo kill'd!
 And Cassio kill'd?

Emil. No, Cassio is not kill'd.

Oth. Not Cassio kill'd? Then murder's out of tune,
 And sweet revenge grows harsh.

Des. O, falsely, falsely murder'd!

Emil. Alas! what cry is that?

Oth. That! what?

Emil. Out, and alas! that was my lady's voice: —
 Help! help, ho! help! — O lady, speak again!
 Sweet Desdemona! O, sweet mistress, speak!

Des. A guiltless death I die.

SCENE II. THE MOOR OF VENICE. 531

Emil. O, who hath done
This deed?
Des. Nobody; I myself; farewell:
Commend me to my kind lord; O, farewell. [*Dies.*]
Oth. Why, how should she be murder'd?
Emil. Alas, who knows?
Oth. You heard her say herself, it was not I.
Emil. She said so; I must needs report the truth.
Oth. She's, like a liar, gone to burning hell;
'Twas I that kill'd her.
Emil. O, the more angel she,
And you the blacker devil!
Oth. She turn'd to folly, and she was a whore.⁶
Emil. Thou dost belie her, and thou art a devil.
Oth. She was false as water.⁷
Emil. Thou art rash as fire, to say
That she was false; O, she was heavenly true!
Oth. Cassio did tup her; ask thy husband else.
O, I were damn'd beneath all depth in hell,
But that I did proceed upon just grounds
To this extremity; Thy husband knew it all.
Emil. My husband?
Oth. Thy husband:
Emil. That she was false to wedlock?
Oth. Ay, with Cassio.
Nay, had she been true,
If heaven would make me such another world
Of one entire and perfect chrysolite,
I'd not have sold her for it.
Emil. My husband?
Oth. Ay, 'twas he that told me first;
An honest man he is, and hates the slime
That sticks on filthy deeds.

⁶ *She turn'd to folly, and she was a whore.*] *Folly* signifies here depravity of mind.

⁷ — *false as water.*] As water that will support no weight, nor keep any impression.

Emil. My husband?

Oth. What needs this iterance, woman? I say, thy husband.

Emil. O mistress, villainy hath made mocks with love! —⁸

My husband say, that she was false?

Oth. He, woman;

I say, thy husband; Dost understand the word?

My friend, thy husband, honest, honest Iago.

Emil. If he say so, may his pernicious soul
Rot half a grain a day! he lies to the heart;
She was too fond of her most filthy bargain.

Oth. Ha!

Emil. Do thy worst:

This deed of thine is no more worthy heaven,
Than thou wast worthy her.

Oth. Peace, you were best.

Emil. Thou hast not half the power to do me harm,
As I have to be hurt.⁹ O gull! O dolt!
As ignorant as dirt! thou hast done a deed, —
I care not for thy sword; I'll make thee known,
Though I lost twenty lives: — Help! help, ho! help!
The Moor has kill'd my mistress; Murder! murder!

Enter MONTANO, GRATIANO, and IAGO.

Mon. What is the matter! — How now, general?

Emil. O, are you come, Iago? you have done well,
That men must lay their murders on your neck.

Gra. What is the matter?

Emil. Disprove this villain, if thou be'st a man:
He says, thou told'st him that his wife was false:

⁸ — villainy hath made mocks with love!] Villainy hath taken advantage to play upon the weakness of a violent passion.

⁹ Thou hast not half the power to do me harm, As I have to be hurt.] She means to say, — I have in this cause power to endure more than thou hast power to inflict.

I know, thou didst not, thou'rt not such a villain;
 Speak, for my heart is full.

Iago. I told him what I thought; and told no more
 Than what he found himself was apt and true.

Emil. But did you ever tell him, she was false?

Iago. I did.

Emil. You told a lie; an odious, damned lie;
 Upon my soul, a lie; a wicked lie: —
 She false with Cassio! — Did you say with Cassio?

Iago. With Cassio, mistress; Go to, charm your
 tongue.

Emil. I will not charm my tongue; I am bound to
 speak;

My mistress here lies murder'd in her bed.

All. O heavens forbend!

Emil. And your reports have set the murder on.

Oth. Nay, stare not, masters; it is true, indeed.

Gra. 'Tis a strange truth.

Mon. O monstrous act!

Emil. Villainy, villainy, villainy! —
 I think upon't, — I think, — I smell't; — O villainy!
 I thought so then;¹ — I'll kill myself for grief. —
 O villainy, villainy!

Iago. What, are you mad? I charge you, get you
 home,

Emil. Good gentlemen, let me have eave to speak;
 'Tis proper I obey him, but not now:
 Perchance, Iago, I will ne'er go home.

Oth. O! O! O! [*Hanging over his Wife.*]

Emil. Nay, lay thee down, and roar:
 For thou hast kill'd the sweetest innocent,
 That e'er did lift up eye.

¹ *I thought so then:*] i. e. at the instant when she gave Desdemona's handkerchief to Iago; for even *then* Emilia appears to have suspected it was sought after for no honest purpose, and therefore asks her husband — "What will you do with it?" &c.

Oth. O, she was foul! — [*Rising.*
I scarce did know you, uncle: There lies your niece,
Whose breath, indeed, these hands have newly stopp'd;
I know, this act shows horrible and grim.

Gra. Poor Desdemona! I am glad thy father's dead:
Thy match was mortal to him, and pure grief
Shore his old thread in twain: did he live now,
This sight would make him do a desperate turn,
Yea, curse his better angel from his side,
And fall to reprobation.

Oth. 'Tis pitiful: but yet Iago knows,
That she with Cassio hath the act of shame
A thousand times committed; Cassio confess'd it:
And she did gratify his amorous works
With that recognizance and pledge of love
Which I first gave her; I saw it in his hand;
It was a handkerchief, an antique token
My father gave my mother.

Emil. O heaven! O heavenly powers!

Iago. Come, hold your peace.

Emil. 'Twill out, 'twill out; — I hold my peace,
— sir? no;

No, I will speak as liberal² as the air;
Let heaven, and men, and devils, let them all,
All, all, cry shame against me, yet I'll speak.

Iago. Be wise, and get you home.

Emil. I will not.

[*IAGO offers to stab his Wife.*

Gra. Fye!

Your sword upon a woman?

Emil. O thou dull Moor! that handkerchief thou
speak'st of,

I found by fortune, and did give my husband;
For often, with a solemn earnestness,

² No, I will speak as liberal —] *Liberal* is free, under no control.

(More than, indeed, belong'd to such a trifle,
He begg'd of me to steal it.

Iago. Villainous whore!

Emil. She give it Cassio! no, alas; I found it,
And I did give't my husband.

Iago. Filth, thou liest.

Emil. By heaven, I do not; I do not, gentlemen:
O murd'rous coxcomb! what should such a fool
Do with so good a wife?

[*IAGO stabs EMILIA, then runs out.*

Oth. Are there no stones in heaven,
But what serve for the thunder³? — Precious villain!

Gra. The woman falls; sure, he has kill'd his wife.

Emil. Ay, ay: O, lay me by my mistress' side!

Gra. He's gone, but his wife's kill'd.

Mon. 'Tis a notorious villain. Take you this weapon,
Which I have here recover'd from the Moor:
Come, guard the door without; let him not pass,
But kill him rather; I'll after that same villain,
For 'tis a damned slave.

[*Exeunt MONTANO and GRATIANO.*

Oth. I am not valiant neither,
But every puny whipster gets my sword: —
But why should honour outlive honesty?
Let it go all.

Emil. What did thy song bode, lady?
Hark, can'st thou hear me? I will play the swan,
And die in musick; — *Willow, willow, willow.* —
Moor, she was chaste; she lov'd thee, cruel Moor;
So come my soul to bliss, as I speak true;
So speaking as I think, I die, — I die. [*Dies.*

Oth. I have another weapon in this chamber,

³ *Are there no stones in heaven,*

But what serve for the thunder?] Shakspeare might mean, does heaven reserve its thunder only to make a noise? has it no implements of mischief to punish as well as terrify?

It is a sword of Spain, the ice-brook's temper ; —⁴
O, here it is : — Uncle, I must come forth.

Gra. [*within.*] If thou attempt it, it will cost thee
dear ;

Thou hast no weapon, and perforce must suffer.

Oth. Look in upon me then, and speak with me,
Or, naked as I am, I will assault thee.

Re-enter GRATIANO.

Gra. What is the matter ?

Oth. Behold ! I have a weapon ;
A better never did itself sustain
Upon a soldier's thigh : I have seen the day,
That, with this little arm, and this good sword,
I have made my way through more impediments
Than twenty times your stop : — But, O vain boast !
Who can control his fate ? 'tis not so now. —
Be not afraid, though you do see me weapon'd ;
Here is my journey's end, here is my butt,
And very sea-mark of my utmost sail.
Do you go back dismay'd ? 'tis a lost fear ;
Man but a rush against Othello's breast,
And he retires ; — Where should Othello go ? —
Now, how dost thou look now ? O ill-starr'd wench !
Pale as thy smock ! when we shall meet at compt,
This look of thine will hurl my soul from heaven,
And fiends will snatch at it. Cold, cold, my girl ?
Even like thy chastity. —
O cursed, cursed slave ! — Whip me, ye devils,
From the possession of this heavenly sight !
Blow me about in winds ! roast me in sulphur !

⁴ — *the ice-brook's temper ;*] This *ice-brook* was the *brook* or *rivulet* called *Salo* (now *Xalon*,) near *Bilbilis* in *Celtiberia*. In this the Spaniards plunged all their swords and other weapons while hot from the forge ; and to the *icy* qualities of the waters, they were indebted for their stubborn temper.

Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire! —
 O Desdemona! Desdemona! dead?
 Dead? O! O! O!

Enter LODOVICO, MONTANO, CASSIO, *carried in a Chair,*
and Officers, with IAGO, *prisoner.*

Lod. Where is this rash and most unfortunate man?

Oth. That's he, that was Othello; here I am.

Lod. Where is that viper? bring the villain forth.

Oth. I look down towards his feet⁵; — but that's a
 fable:

If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee.

[OTHELLO wounds IAGO.]

Lod. Wrench his sword from him.

Iago. I bleed, sir; but not kill'd.

Oth. I am not sorry neither; I'd have thee live;
 For, in my sense, 'tis happiness to die.

Lod. O thou Othello, that was once so good,
 Fall'n in the practice⁶ of a cursed slave,
 What shall be said to thee?

Oth. Why, any thing:
 An honourable murderer, if you will;
 For nought I did in hate, but all in honour.

Lod. This wretch hath part confess'd his villainy:
 Did you and he consent in Cassio's death?

Oth. Ay.

Cas. Dear general, I never gave you cause.

Oth. I do believe it, and I ask your pardon.
 Will you, I pray you, demand that demi-devil,
 Why he hath thus ensnar'd my soul and body?

Iago. Demand me nothing: What you know, you
 know:

From this time forth I never will speak word.

Lod. What? not to pray?

⁵ — towards his feet;] To see if, according to the common
 opinion, his feet be cloven.

⁶ — in the practice —] In the snare, by the stratagem.

Gra. -- Torments will ope your lips.

Oth. Well, thou dost best.

Lod. Sir, you shall understand what hath befall'n,
Which, as I think, you know not: Here is a letter,
Found in the pocket of the slain Roderigo;
And here, another: the one of them imports
The death of Cassio to be undertook
By Roderigo.

Oth. O villain!

Cas. Most heathenish, and most gross!

Lod. Now here's another discontented paper,
Found in his pocket too; and this, it seems,
Roderigo meant to have sent this damned villain:
But that, belike, Iago in the interim
Came in and satisfied him.

Oth. O the pernicious caitiff! —
How came you, Cassio, by that handkerchief
That was my wife's?

Cas. I found it in my chamber:
And he himself confess'd, but even now,
That there he dropp'd it, for a special purpose,
Which wrought to his desire.

Oth. O fool! fool! fool!

Cas. There is, besides, in Roderigo's letter, —
How he upbraids Iago, that he made him
Brave me upon the watch; whereon it came
That I was cast: And even but now he spake,
After long seeming dead, — Iago hurt him,
Iago set him on.

Lod. You must forsake this room, and go with us;
Your power and your command is taken off,
And Cassio rules in Cyprus. For this slave, —
If there be any cunning cruelty,
That can torment him much, and hold him long,
It shall be his: You shall close prisoner rest,
Till that the nature of your fault be known
To the Venetian state: — Come, bring him away.

Oth. Soft you; a word or two, before you go.

I have done the state some service, and they know it ;
 No more of that : — I pray you, in your letters,
 When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
 Speak of me as I am ; nothing extenuate,
 Nor set down aught in malice : then must you speak
 Of one, that lov'd not wisely, but too well ;
 Of one, not easily jealous, but, being wrought,
 Perplex'd in the extreme ; of one, whose hand,
 Like the base Júdean, threw a pearl away,
 Richer than all his tribe⁷ ; of one, whose subdu'd eyes,
 Albeit unused to the melting mood,
 Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees
 Their medicinal gum : Set you down this :
 And say, besides, — that in Aleppo once,
 Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk
 Beat a Venetian, and traduc'd the state,
 I took by the throat the circumcised dog,
 And smote him — thus. [Stabs himself.

⁷ — of one, whose hand,

Like the base Júdean, threw a pearl away,

Richer than all his tribe ;] The commentators are at variance on this passage, some considering it as an allusion to the story of Herod and Mariamne, and others to that of a Jew who threw away a pearl of great worth, because he could not get his price for it. We shall subjoin a remark of Mr. Steevens, which vindicates the propriety of an edition like the present.

Either we are partial to discoveries which we make for ourselves, or the spirit of controversy is contagious ; for it usually happens that each possessor of an ancient copy of our author is led to assert the superiority of all such readings as have not been exhibited in the notes, or received into the text of the last edition. On this account our present republication * (and more especially in the celebrated plays) affords a greater number of these diversities than were ever before obtruded on the publick. A time however may arrive, when a complete body of variations being printed, our readers may luxuriate in an ample feast of *thats* and *whiches* ; and thenceforward it may be prophesied, that *all will unite in a wish that the selection had been made by an editor, rather than submitted to their own labour and sagacity.*

* The edition of 1803 in 21 volumes.

Lod. O bloody period !

Gra. All, that's spoke, is marr'd.

Oth. I kiss'd thee, ere I kill'd thee ; — No way but
this, [*Falling upon* DESDEMONA.

Killing myself, to die upon a kiss. [*Dies.*

Cas. This did I fear, but thought he had no weapon ;
For he was great of heart.

Lod. O Spartan dog, ⁸

More fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea !

Look on the tragic loading of this bed ; [*To* IAGO.

This is thy work : the object poisons sight ; —

Let it be hid. — Gratiano, keep the house,

And seize upon the fortunes of the Moor,

For they succeed to you. — To you, lord governor,

Remains the censure⁹ of this hellish villain ;

The time, the place, the torture, — O enforce it !

Myself will straight aboard ; and, to the state,

This heavy act with heavy heart relate. [*Exeunt.*¹

⁸ *O Spartan dog,*] The dogs of Spartan race were reckoned among those of the most fierce and savage kind.

⁹ — *the censure* —] i e. the sentence.

¹ The beauties of this play impress themselves so strongly upon the attention of the reader, that they can draw no aid from critical illustration. The fiery openness of Othello, magnanimous, artless, and credulous, boundless in his confidence, ardent in his affection, inflexible in his resolution, and obdurate in his revenge ; the cool malignity of Iago, silent in his resentment, subtle in his designs, and studious at once of his interest and his vengeance ; the soft simplicity of Desdemona, confident of merit, and conscious of innocence, her artless perseverance in her suit, and her slowness to suspect that she can be suspected, are such proofs of Shakspeare's skill in human nature, as, I suppose, it is vain to seek in any modern writer. The gradual progress which Iago makes in the Moor's conviction, and the circumstances which he employs to enflame him, are so artfully natural, that, though it will perhaps not be said of him as he says of himself, that he is *a man not easily jealous*, yet we cannot but pity him, when at last we find him *perplexed in the extreme*.

There is always danger, lest wickedness, conjoined with abilities, should steal upon esteem, though it misses of approbation ; but the character of Iago is so conducted, that he is from the first scene to the last hated and despised.

Even the inferior characters of this play would be very conspicuous in any other piece, not only for their justness, but their strength. Cassio is brave, benevolent, and honest; ruined only by his want of stubbornness to resist an insidious invitation. Roderigo's suspicious credulity, and impatient submission to the cheats which he sees practised upon him, and which by persuasion he suffers to be repeated, exhibit a strong picture of a weak mind betrayed by unlawful desires to a false friend; and the virtue of Emilia is such as we often find, worn loosely, but not cast off, easy to commit small crimes, but quickened and alarmed at atrocious villainies.

The scenes from the beginning to the end are busy, varied by happy interchanges, and regularly promoting the progression of the story; and the narrative in the end, though it tells but what is known already, yet is necessary to produce the death of Othello.

Had the scene opened in Cyprus, and the preceding incidents been occasionally related, there had been little wanting to a drama of the most exact and scrupulous regularity. JOHNSON.

THE END.



LONDON :
Printed by A. & R. Spottiswoode,
New-Street-Square.

