

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.

*Law.* 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.

*Law.* Unhappy fortune! by my brotherhood,  
 The letter was not nice<sup>7</sup>, 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.]

*Law.* Now must I to the monument alone;  
 Within this three hours will fair Juliet wake<sup>8</sup>;  
 She will beshrew me much, that Romeo  
 Hath had no notice of these accidents:  
 But I will write again to Mantua,

the words therefore, *to associate me*, must be considered as parenthetical, and *Here in this city*, &c. must refer to the bare-foot brother.

I formerly conjectured that the passage ought to be regulated thus:

Going to find a bare-foot brother out,  
 One of our order, to associate me,  
 And finding him, the searchers of the town  
 Here in this city visiting the sick, &c.

But the text is certainly right. The searchers would have had no ground of suspicion, if neither of the friars had been in an infected house. MALONE.

<sup>7</sup> —was not nice,—] i. e. was not written on a trivial or idle subject.

*Nice* signifies *foolish* in many parts of Gower, and Chaucer. The learned editor of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, 1775,\* observes, that H. Stephens informs us, that *nice* was the old French word for *niais*, one of the synonymes of *fool*. Apol. Herod. l. i. c. 4. STEEVENS.

See Vol. VI. p. 552, n. 9, and Vol. VII. p. 386, n. 9. MALONE.

<sup>8</sup> *Within this three hours will fair Juliet wake;*] Instead of this line, and the concluding part of the speech, the quarto, 1597, reads only:

“Left that the lady should before I come

“Be wak'd from sleep, I will hie

“To free her from that tombe of miserie.” STEEVENS.

And

And keep her at my cell till Romeo come ;  
Poor living corse, clos'd in a dead man' tomb ! [Exit.

SCENE III.

*A Church-yard ; 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 ;—

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 church-yard 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 church-yard ; 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<sup>9</sup>,  
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.*

<sup>9</sup> *Fair Juliet, that with angels, &c.*] These four lines from the old edition. POPE.

The folio has these lines :

“ Sweet flow'rs, with flow'rs thy bridal bed I strew ;  
“ O woe ! thy canopy is dust and stones,  
“ Which with sweet water nightly I will dew,  
“ Or, wanting that, with tears distill'd by moans.  
“ The obsequies that I for thee will keep,  
“ Nightly shall be, to strew thy grave, and weep.” JOHNSON.

Mr. Pope has followed no copy with exactness ; but took the first and fourth lines from the elder quarto, omitting the two intermediate verses, which I have restored. STEEVENS.

The folio follows the quarto of 1599. In the text the seven lines are printed as they appear in the quarto, 1597. MALONE.

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, a while. [*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 see'st, 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 employment<sup>1</sup>: 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 church-yard with thy limbs:  
 The time and my intents are savage-wild<sup>2</sup>;  
 More fierce, and more inexorable far,  
 Than empty tygers, or the roaring sea.

*Bal.* I will be gone, sir, and not trouble you.

*Rom.* So shalt thou shew 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 detestable<sup>3</sup> maw, thou womb of death,  
 Gorg'd

<sup>1</sup> —*dear employment*:] That is, *action of importance*. Gems were supposed to have great powers and virtues. JOHNSON.

See Vol. VIII. p. 130, n. 6. MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> —*savage-wild*:] Here the speech concludes in the old copy.

STEEVENS.

<sup>3</sup> —*detestable*:—] This word, which is now accented on the second syllable, was once accented on the first; therefore this line did not originally

Gorg'd with the dearest morsel of the earth,  
Thus I enforce thy rotten jaws to open,

[*breaking up 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 dy'd,—  
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?  
Condemned 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<sup>4</sup> upon my head,  
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<sup>5</sup>,

And

originally seem to be inharmonious. So, in the *Tragedie of Cræsus*, 1604:

“Court with vain words and detestable lyes.”

Again, in Shakspeare's *K. John*, Act III. Sc. iii:

“And I will kiss thy detestable bones.” STEEVENS.

Again, in Daniel's *Civil Warres*, 1595:

“Such detestable vile impiety.” MALONE.

<sup>4</sup> Heap not another sin—] Thus the quarto 1597. So, in the poem of *Romeus and Juliet*:

“With sighs and salted tears her striving doth begin,

“For she of heaped sorrows hath to speak, and not of sin.”

The quarto 1599 and folio have—*Put not.* MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> I do defy thy conjurations,] So the quarto 1597. Instead of this, in that of 1599, we find—*commiration*. In the next quarto of 1609 this was altered to *commiseration*, and the folio being probably printed from thence, the same word is exhibited there. The obvious interpretation



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 marry'd 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 lantern, slaughter'd youth,  
For here lies Juliet, and her beauty makes  
This vault a feasting presence<sup>6</sup> full of light.

Death,

tation of these words, "*I refuse to doas thou conjurest me to do, i. e. to depart,*" is in my apprehension the true one. MALONE.

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 magic arts which he suspects he is preparing to use. So, in Painter's translation of the novel, tom. ii. p. 244. "—the watch of the city by chance passed by, and seeing light within the grave, suspected straight that they were necromancers which had opened the tombs to abuse the dead bodies for aide of their arte."

To *defy*, anciently meant to *refuse* or *deny*. So, in the *Death of Robert Earl of Huntingdon*, 1601:

"Or, as I said, for ever I *defy* your company."

Again, in the *Miseries of Queen Margaret*, by Drayton:

"My liege, quoth he, all mercy now *defye*."

Again, in Spenser's *Faery Queen*, b. ii. c. 8:

"Foole, (said the Pagan) I thy gift *defye*."

Paris may, however, mean—I refuse to do as thou conjurest me to do, i. e. to depart. STEEVENS.

<sup>6</sup> —*presence*—] A presence means a publick room, which is at times the *presence-chamber* of the sovereign. So, in the *Noble Gentleman*, by Beaumont and Fletcher, Jacques says, his master is a duke,

"His chamber hung with nobles, like a presence." MASON.  
Again,

Death, lie thou there, by a dead man interr'd<sup>7</sup>.

[*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 lightning<sup>8</sup>?—O, my love! my wife!  
Death, that hath suck'd the honey of thy breath,  
Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty<sup>9</sup>:  
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<sup>1</sup>.—

Tybalt,

Again, in *Westward for Smelts*, 1620: "—the king sent for the wounded man into the presence." MALONE.

This thought, extravagant as it is, is borrowed by Middleton in his comedy of *Blunt Master Constable*, 1602:

"The darkeſt dungeon which ſpite can deviſe

"To throw this carcaſe in, her glorious eyes

"Can make as lightſome as the faireſt chamber

"In Paris Louvre." STEEVENS.

<sup>7</sup> —by a dead man interr'd.] Romeo being now determined to put an end to his life, conſiders himſelf as already dead. MALONE.

<sup>8</sup> —O, how may I

Call this a lightning?—] I think we ſhould read,

—O, now may I

Call this a lightning.— JOHNSON.

The reading of the text is that of the quarto, 1599. The firſt copy reads: *But how, &c.* which ſhews that Dr. Johnson's emendation cannot be right. MALONE.

This idea occurs frequently in the old dramatic pieces. So, in the ſecond part of *The Downfall of Robert Earl of Huntingdon*, 1601:

"I thought it was a lightning before death,

"Too ſudden to be certain."

Again, in Chapman's tranſlation of the 15th Iliad:

"—ſince after this he had not long to live,

"This lightning ſlew before his death."

Again, in his tranſlation of the 18th Odyſſey:

"—extend their cheer

"To th' utmoſt lightning that ſtill uſhers death." STEEVENS.

<sup>9</sup> Death, that hath ſuck'd the honey of thy breath,  
Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty:] So, in Daniel's *Complaint of Roſamond*, 1594:

"Decay'd roſes of diſcolour'd cheeks

"Do yet retain ſome notes of former grace,

"And ugly death ſits faire within her face." MALONE.

<sup>1</sup> —beauty's ensign yet

Is crimson in thy lips, and in thy cheeks,

Tybalt, ly'st thou there in thy bloody sheet<sup>2</sup>?  
 O, what more favour can I do to thee,  
 Than with that hand that cut thy youth in twain,  
 To funder 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<sup>3</sup>;

And

*And death's pale flag, &c.] So, in Daniel's Complaint of Rosamond, 1594:*

“And nought-respecting death (the last of paines)

“Plac'd his *pale colours* (th' *ensign* of his might)

“Upon his new. got spoil;” &c.

In the first edition of *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakspeare is less florid in his account of the lady's beauty; and only says:

“—ah, dear Juliet,

“How well thy beauty doth become the grave!”

The speech, as it now stands, is first found in the quarto, 1599. STEEV. *And death's pale flag is not advanced there.]* An ingenious friend some time ago pointed out to me a passage of *Marini*, which bears a very strong resemblance to this:

*Morte la'nfegna sua pallida e bianca*

*Vincitrice spiegò su'l volto mio.*

Rime lugubri, p. 149. ed. Venet. 1605. TYRWHITT.

<sup>2</sup> *Tybalt, ly'st thou there in thy bloody sheet? &c.]* So, in Painter's translation, tom. ii. p. 242: “—what greater or more cruel satisfaction canst thou desire to have, or henceforth hope for, than to see hym which murdered thee, to be empoysoned wyth hys owne handes, and buried by thy fyde?” STEEVENS.

<sup>3</sup> ——— *Ah, dear Juliet,*

*Why art thou yet so fair? shall I believe*

*That unsubstantial death is amorous; &c.]* So, in Daniel's *Complaint of Rosamond, 1594:*

“Ah, now, methinks, I see *death dallying seeks*

“*To entertain itselfe in love's sweete place.*”

Instead of the very long notes which have been written on this controverted passage, I shall lay before the reader the lines as they are exhibited in the original quarto of 1597, and that of 1599, with which the folio corresponds.

In the quarto 1597, the passage appears thus:

——— Ah dear Juliet,

How well thy beauty doth become this grave!

O, I believe that unsubstantial death

Is amorous, and doth court my love.

Therefore will I, O here, O ever here,

Set up my everlasting rest

With worms that are thy *chamber-maids*.

Come,

And that the lean abhorred monster keeps  
Thee here in dark to be his paramour?

For

Come, desperate pilot, now at once run on  
The dashing rocks thy sea-sick weary barge:  
Here's to my love. — O, true apothecary,  
Thy drugs are swift: thus with a kiss I die.

[falls

In the quarto 1599, and the folio, (except that the folio has *arms* instead of *arms*;) the lines stand thus:

— Ah dear Juliet,  
Why art thou yet so fair? *I will believe*  
*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 still will stay with thee,  
And never from this palace [*palat 4<sup>o</sup>*] of dim night  
[Depart again. Come, lie thou in my arms:  
*Here's to thy health where e'er thou tumblest in.*  
O true apothecary!  
Thy drugs are quick: thus with a kiss I die.]  
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, &c.  
Come, bitter conduct, come, unfavoury guide!  
Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on  
The dashing rocks thy sea-sick weary bark!  
Here's to my love. O, true apothecary,  
Thy drugs are quick: thus with a kiss I die.

There cannot, I think, be the smallest doubt that the words included within crotchets, which are not found in the undated quarto, were repeated by the carelessness or ignorance of the transcriber or compositor. In like manner, in a former scene we have two lines evidently of the same import, one of which only the poet could have intended to retain. See p. 135, n. 26.

In a preceding part of this passage Shakspeare was probably in doubt whether he should write:—

— *I will believe*

That unsubstantial death is amorous;

Or,

— *Shall I believe*

That unsubstantial death is amorous;

and having probably erased the words *I will believe* imperfectly, the wise compositor printed the rejected words as well as those intended to be retained.

With respect to the line,

Here's to thy health, where'er thou tumblest in,  
it is unnecessary to inquire what was intended by it, the passage in which

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;<sup>4</sup>  
 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  
 A dateless bargain to engrossing death!<sup>5</sup>—  
 Come, bitter conduct,<sup>6</sup> come, unfavoury guide!

Thou

this line is found, being afterwards exhibited in another form; and being much more accurately expressed in its second than its first exhibition, we have a right to presume that the poet intended it to appear in its second form, that is, as it now appears in the text. MALONE.

<sup>4</sup> —*my everlasting rest*;] See a note on scene 5th of the preceding Act. So, in the *Spanish Gipsie*, by Middleton and Rowley, 1653:

“ ——— could I set up my rest

“ That he were lost or taken prisoner,

“ I could hold truce with sorrow.”

To set up one's rest is to be determined to any certain purpose, to rest in perfect confidence and resolution, to make up one's mind. Again, in the same play:

“ Set up thy rest; her marriest thou, or none.” STEEVENS.

<sup>5</sup> ——— *Eyes, look your last!*

*Arms, take your last embrace! and lips, O you*

*The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss*

*A dateless bargain to engrossing death!*] So, in *Daniel's Complaint of Rosamond*, 1594:

“ Pitiful mouth, said he, that living gavest

“ The sweetest comfort that my soul could wish,

“ O be it lawful now, that dead, thou havest

“ The forrowing farewell of a dying kiss!

“ And you, fair eyes, containers of my bliss,

“ Motives of love, born to be matched never,

“ Entomb'd in your sweet circles, sleep for ever!”

I think there can be little doubt, from the foregoing lines and the other passages already quoted from this poem, that our authour had read it recently before he wrote the last act of the present tragedy. MALONE.

—*to engrossing death*!] *Engrossing* seems to be here used in its clerical sense. MALONE.

<sup>6</sup> *Come, bitter conduct*,] Marston also in his satires, 1599, uses *conduct* for *conductor*:

“ Be thou my *conduct* and my genius.”

So,

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 church-yard, Friar LAWRENCE, with a lantern, crow, and spade.*

*Fri.* Saint Francis be my speed! how oft to-night  
Have my old feet stumbled at graves?—Who's there?

*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.

*Bal.* As I did sleep under this yew-tree here,

So, in a former scene in this play:

“And fire-ey'd fury be my conduct now.”

See also Vol. I. p. 98, n. 7. *MALONE.*

7 —*how oft to-night*

*Have my old feet stumbled at graves?*] This accident was reckoned  
ominous. So, in *K. Henry VI.*

“For many men that *stumble* at the threshold,

“Are well foretold, that danger lurks within.”

Again, in *K. Richard III.* Hastings, going to execution, says:

“Three times to-day my footcloth horse did *stumble*.”

*STEEVENS.*

I dreamt

I dreamt my master and another fought<sup>s</sup>,  
And that my master slew him.

*Fri.* Romeo?—

[*advances,*

Alack, alack, what blood is this, which stains  
The stony entrance of this sepulcher?—  
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 sleep'd in blood?—Ah, what an unkind hour  
Is guilty of this lamentable chance!—

The lady stirs<sup>9</sup>.

[*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<sup>a</sup>;  
A greater Power than we can contradict

<sup>s</sup> *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 Pope, awakes no further than to see confusedly what environs him, and to think it not a reality, but a vision. STEEVENS.

<sup>9</sup> *The lady stirs.*] In the alteration of this play now exhibited on the stage, Mr. Garrick appears to have been indebted to Otway, who, perhaps without any knowledge of the story as told by Da Porto and Bandello, does not permit his hero to die before his wife awakes:

*Mar. Jun.* She breathes, and stirs.

*Lav.* [*in the tomb.*] Where am I? blest me! Heaven!

<sup>a</sup> *'Tis very cold, and yet here's something warm.*

*Mar. Jun.* She lives, and we shall both be made immortal.

Speak, my Lavinia, speak some heavenly news,

And tell me how the gods design to treat us.

*Lav.* O, I have slept a long ten thousand years.—

What have they done with me? I'll not be us'd thus:

I'll not wed Sylla; *Marius is my husband.* MALONE.

<sup>a</sup> —and unnatural sleep;] Shakspeare alludes to the sleep of Juliet, which was unnatural, being brought on by drugs. STEEVENS.

Hath

Hath thwarted our intents ; come, come away ;  
Thy husband in thy bosom there lies dead<sup>2</sup> ;  
And Paris too ; come, I'll dispose of thee  
Among a sisterhood of holy nuns :  
Stay not to question, for the watch is coming<sup>3</sup> ;  
Come, go, good Juliet,—[*Noise again.*] I dare no longer  
stay. [Exit,

*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<sup>4</sup>,  
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 ?

<sup>2</sup> *Thy husband in thy bosom there lies dead ;*] Shakspeare has been arraigned for departing from the Italian novel, in making Romeo die before Juliet awakes from her trance ; and thus losing a happy opportunity of introducing an affecting scene between these unfortunate lovers. But he undoubtedly had never read the Italian novel, or any literal translation of it, and was misled by the poem of *Romeus and Juliet*, the authour of which departed from the Italian story, making the poison take effect on Romeo before Juliet awakes. See a translation of the original pathetick narrative in Vol. X. in a note on the poem near the end. MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> *Stay not to question, for the watch is coming ;*] It has been objected that there is no such establishment in any of the cities of Italy. Shakspeare seldom scrupled to give the manners and usages of his own country to others. In this particular instance the old poem was his guide :

“ The weary watch discharg'd did hie them home to sleep.”

Again :

“ The watchmen of the town the whilst are passed by,

“ And through the gates the candlelight within the tomb they  
spy.” MALONE.

<sup>4</sup> *O churl ! drink all ; and leave no friendly drop,*] The text is here made out from the quarto of 1597 and that of 1599. The first has—  
*Ab churl ! drink all, and leave no drop for me !*

The other :

*O churl ! drunk all, and left no friendly drop,  
To help me after ?* MALONE.

*Jul.*



*Jul.* Yea, noise?—then I'll be brief.—O happy dagger!  
 [snatching Romeo's dagger<sup>5</sup>.]  
 This is thy sheath; [stabs herself.] there rust, and let  
 me die<sup>6</sup>. [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  
 church-yard;

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<sup>7</sup>;—  
 [*Exeunt other watchmen.*

<sup>5</sup> *Snatching Romeo's dagger.*] So, in Painter's translation of *Pierre Boistean*, tom. ii. p. 244.—Drawing out the dagger which Romeo ware by his side, she pricked herself with many blows against the heart." STEEVENS.

It is clear that in this and most other places Shakspeare followed the poem, and not Painter, for Painter describes Romeo's dagger as hanging at *his side*; whereas the poem is silent as to the place where it hung, and our authour, governed by the fashion of his own time, supposes it to have hung at Romeo's back:

"And then past deadly fear, (for life he had the care,)

"With hasty hand she did draw out the dagger that he ware."

MALONE.

<sup>6</sup> —*there rust, and let me die.*] is the reading of the quarto, 1599. That of 1597 gives the passage thus:

"I, noise? then must I be resolute.

"Oh, happy dagger! thou shalt end my fear;

"Rest in my bosom: thus I come to thee."

The alteration was probably made by the poet, when he introduced the words,

"This is thy sheath." STEEVENS.

<sup>7</sup> *Raise up the Montagues,—some others search;*—] Here seems to be a rhyme intended, which may be easily restored;

"Raise up the Montagues. Some others, go.

"We see the ground whereon these woes do lie,

"But the true ground of all *this* piteous woe

"We cannot without circumstance descry." JOHNSON.

It was often thought sufficient, in the time of Shakspeare, for the second and fourth lines in a stanza, to rhyme with each other. STEEV.

We

# ROMEO AND JULIET.

173

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 church-yard.

1. *Watch.* Hold him in safety, till the prince come hither.

*Enter another Watchman, with Friar Lawrence.*

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 church-yard 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 out-cry, 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

<sup>8</sup> —that they so shriek abroad ?] Thus the folio and the undated quarto. The quarto of 1599 has—that is so shriek abroad. MALONE.

<sup>9</sup> What fear is this, which startles in our ears ?] The old copies read—in your ears. The emendation was made by Dr. Johnson.

Is empty on the back of Montague, —  
And is mis-sheathed in my daughter's bosom<sup>1</sup>.

*La. Cap.* O me! this sight of death is as a bell,  
That warns my old age to a sepulcher.

*Enter MONTAGUE, and Others.*

*Prince.* Come, Montague; for thou art early up<sup>2</sup>,  
To see thy son and heir more early down.

*Mon.* Alas, my liege, my wife is dead to-night<sup>3</sup>;  
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<sup>4</sup>,  
To

<sup>1</sup> *This dagger hath mista'en, for lo! his house  
Is empty on the back of Montague,  
And is mis-sheathed in my daughter's bosom.* The words, "for, lo!  
his house is empty on the back of Montague," are to be considered as  
parenthetical. In p. 163, l. 7, we have a similar construction.

The reading of the text is that of the undated quarto, that of 1609,  
and the folio. The quarto of 1599 reads—And it mis-sheathed. In  
the original copy of 1597 the line stands thus:

—This dagger has mistook,

For lo! the backe is empty of yong Montague,

And it is sheathed in our daughter's breast. MALONE.

It appears that the dagger was anciently worn behind the back. So,  
in *The longer thou livest the more fool thou art*, 1570:

"Thou must weare thy sword by thy side,

"And thy dagger handsomely at thy backe."

Again, in *Humor's Ordinarie*, &c. an ancient collection of satires, no date:

"See you the huge bum dagger at his backe?" STEEVENS.

<sup>2</sup> —for thou art early up, &c.] This speech (as appears from the  
following passage in *The Second Part of the Downfall of Robert Earl  
of Huntingdon*, 1601) has something proverbial in it:

"In you it faith the proverb's verified,

"You are early up, and yet are ne'er the near." STEEVENS.

<sup>3</sup> *Alas, my liege, my wife is dead to-night;*] After this line the  
quarto 1597 adds,

"And young Benvolio is deceased too."

But this I suppose the poet rejected on his revision of the play, as un-  
necessary slaughter. STEEVENS.

<sup>4</sup> *O thou untaught! &c.*] So, in *The Tragedy of Darius*, 1603:

"Ah me! malicious fates have done me wrong:

"Who came first to the world, should first depart.

"It not becomes the old t'o'er-live the young;

"This dealing is prepos't'rous and o'er-thwart." STEEVENS.

Again,

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 brief, 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:  
I married them; and their stolen marriage-day  
Was Tybalt's dooms-day, 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.

Again, in our poet's *Rape of Lucrece*:

"If children pre-decease progenitors,

"We are their offspring, and they none of ours." MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> *Friar.*] 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.

Shakspeare was led into this uninteresting narrative by following too closely *The Tragical History of Romeo and Juliet*. MALONE.

<sup>6</sup> —my short date of breath

*Is not so long as is a tedious tale.*] So, in the 91st Psalm:—"when thou art angry, all our days are gone; we bring our years to an end, as it were a tale that is told." MALONE.

Then

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 : mean time 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  
 Miscarry'd 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,

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<sup>7</sup>:—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,  
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<sup>8</sup> this morning with it brings;  
The sun, for sorrow, will not shew his head:

7 *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 the following passages. Capulet, speaking of the count in the fourth act, describes him as "a gentleman of princely parentage," and, after he is killed, Romeo says,

"—Let me peruse this face;

"*Mercutio's kinsman*, noble county Paris." MALONE.

8 *A glooming peace, &c.*] The modern editions read—*gloomy*; but *glooming*, which is the old reading, may be the true one. So, in the *Spanish Tragedy*, 1605:

"Through dreadful shades of ever-glooming night."

To *gloom* is an ancient verb used by Spenser; I meet with it likewise in the play of *Tom Tyler and his wife*, 1661:

"If either he gaspeth or *gloometh*." STEEVENS.

*Gloomy* is the reading of the old copy in 1597; for which *glooming* was substituted in that of 1599. MALONE.

Go hence, to have more talk of these sad things;  
 Some shall be pardon'd, and some punished:<sup>9</sup>  
 For never was a story of more woe,  
 Than this of Juliet and her Romeo<sup>1</sup>.

[*Exeunt.*]

<sup>9</sup> *Some shall be pardon'd, and some punished:*] This seems to be not a resolution in the *prince*, but a reflection on the various dispensations of providence; for who was there that could justly be punished by any human law? EDWARDS'S MSS.

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 Lawrence was permitted to retire to a hermitage in the neighbourhood of Verona, where he ended his life in penitence and peace. STEEVENS.

<sup>1</sup> — *Juliet and her Romeo.*] Shakspeare has not effected the alteration of this play by introducing any new incidents, but merely by adding to the length of the scenes.

The piece appears to have been always a very popular one. Marston, in his satires, 1598, says:

"Luscus, what's play'd to-day?—faith, now I know

"I set thy lips abroad, from whence doth flow

"Nought but pure Juliet and Romeo." STEEVENS.

*For never was a story of more woe,*

*Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.*] These lines seem to have been formed on the concluding couplet of the poem of *Romeus and Juliet*:

"—among the monuments that in Verona been,

"There is no monument more worthy of the fight,

"Than is the tomb of Juliet, and Romeus her knight."

MALONE.

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 a poet.* Dryden well knew, had he been in quest of truth, that, in a pointed sentence, more regard is commonly had to the words than the thought, and that it is very seldom to be rigorously understood. Mercutio's

utio'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 fallies 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 subtilty 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.



H A M L E T.

## Persons Represented.

Claudius, *King of Denmark.*

Hamlet, *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.*

Osrick, *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.*

S C E N E, *Elfinore.*

# H A M L E T.

## A C T I. S C E N E I.

Elfinore. *A Platform before the Castle.*

FRANCISCO on his post. Enter to him BERNARDO.

Ber. Who's there?

Fran. Nay, answer me<sup>2</sup>: stand, and unfold yourself.

<sup>1</sup> 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. 1. 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 the play, as a performance with which he was well acquainted, in the year 1598. His words are these: "The younger sort take much delight in Shakespeare's Venus and Adonis; but his Lucrece, and his tragedy of "Hamlet Prince of Denmark, 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 servants."

In *Eastward Hoe* by G. Chapman, B. Jonson, and J. 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?" STEEVENS.

Surely no satire was here intended. *Eastward Hoe* was acted at Shakspeare's own playhouse, (Blackfriars,) by the children of the revels, in 1605.

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 authour. On that play, and on the bl. letter *Hystorie of Hamblett*, 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 1596. See *An Attempt to ascertain the order of his plays*, Vol. I.

MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> —me:] i. e. *me*, who am already on the watch, and have a right to demand the watch-word, STEEVENS.

*Ber.* Long live the king<sup>3</sup>!

*Fran.* Bernardo?

*Ber.* He.

*Fran.* You come most carefully upon your hour.

*Ber.* 'Tis now struck twelve; get thee to bed, Francisco.

*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.

If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,  
The rivals of my watch<sup>4</sup>, bid them make haste.

<sup>3</sup> *Long live the king!*] This sentence appears to have been the watch-word. MALONE.

<sup>4</sup> *The rivals of my watch,*] *Rivals*, for partners. WARBURTON. So, in *Antony and Cleopatra* (the quotation is Mr. Steevens's) : "Caesar having made use of him in the wars against Pompey, presently denied him *rivalry*."

*Rival* is constantly used by Shakspeare for a partner or associate. In Bullokar's *English Expositor*, 8vo. 1616, it is defined, "*One that sueth for the same thing with another*;" and hence Shakspeare, with his usual licence, always uses it in the sense of *one engaged in the same employment or office with another*. *Competitor*, which is explained by Bullokar by the very same words which he has employed in the definition of *rival*, is in like manner (as Mr. Mason has observed,) always used by Shakspeare for *associate*. See Vol. I. p. 140, n. 7. Vol. II. p. 330, n. 7, Vol. IV. p. 90, n. 3, Vol. VI. p. 589, n. \*, and Vol. VII. p. 455, n. 7.

Mr. Warner would read and point thus:

If you do meet Horatio, and Marcellus

The *rival* of my watch,—

because Horatio is a gentleman of no profession, and because, as he conceived, there was but one person on each watch. But there is no need of change. Horatio is certainly not an officer, but Hamlet's fellow-student at Wittenberg: but as he accompanied Marcellus and Bernardo on the watch from a motive of curiosity, our poet considers him very properly as an *associate* with them. Horatio himself says to Hamlet in a subsequent scene,

"—This to me

"In dreadful secrecy impart they did,

"And I with them the third night kept the watch." MALONE.

*Enter*

*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<sup>5</sup>.

*Ber.* Welcome, Horatio; welcome, good Marcellus.

*Hor.* What, has this thing appear'd again to-night<sup>6</sup>?

*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<sup>7</sup>;

That, if again this apparition come,

He may approve our eyes<sup>8</sup>, and speak to it.

*Hor.*

<sup>5</sup> A piece of him.] But why a piece? He says this as he gives his hand. Which direction should be marked. WARBURTON.

A piece of him, is, I believe, no more than a cant expression,

STEEVENS.

<sup>6</sup> *Hor. What, &c.*] Thus the quarto, 1604. These words in the folio are given to Marcellus. MALONE.

<sup>7</sup> —the minutes of this night;] This seems to have been an expression common in Shakspeare's time. I find it in one of Ford's plays, *The Fancies*, Act V.

"I promise ere the minutes of the night,—" STEEVENS.

<sup>8</sup> He may 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, and is so defined in Cawdrey's *Alphabetical Table of hard English words*, 8vo. 1604. So, in *King Lear*:

"Good

*Hor.* Tush! tush! 'twill not appear.

*Ber.* Sit down a while;  
And let us once again assail your ears,  
That are so fortified against our story,  
What we two nights have seen<sup>o</sup>.

*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 illumine 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.

*Ber.* Looks it not like the king? mark it, Horatio.

*Hor.* Most like:—it harrows me<sup>a</sup> 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 bury'd 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.

<sup>a</sup> "Good king, that must approve the common law!"

"Thou out of heaven's benediction com'st"

"To the warm sun." MALONE.

<sup>o</sup> *What we two nights have seen.*] This line is by Hamner given to Marcellus, but without necessity. JOHNSON.

<sup>a</sup> *It harrows me, &c.*] To *barrow* is to conquer, to subdue. The word is of Saxon origin. So, in the old bl. l. romance of *Syr Eglamour of Artoys*:

"He swore by him that *barrowed* hell." STEEVENS.

*Ber.*

*Ber.* How now, Horatio? you tremble, and look pale:  
Is not this something more than fantasy?  
What think you of it?

*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<sup>2</sup>,  
He smote the fledged Polacks on the ice<sup>3</sup>.  
'Tis strange.

*Mar.* Thus, twice before, and jump at this dead hour<sup>4</sup>,

<sup>2</sup> —an angry parle,] This is one of the affected words introduced by Lilly. So, in *Two Wise Men and all the Rest Fools*, 1619:

"—that you told me at our last *parle*." STEEVENS.

<sup>3</sup> He smote the fledged Polacks on the ice.] *Polack* was, in that age, the term for an inhabitant of Poland: *Polaque*, French. As in F. Davison's translation of Passeratius's epitaph on Henry III. of France, published by Camden:

"Whether thy chance or choice thee hither brings,

"Stay, passenger, and wail the hap of kings.

"This little stone a great king's heart doth hold,

"That rul'd the fickle French and *Polacks* bold:

"Whom, with a mighty warlike host attended,

"With trait'rous knife a cowed monster ended.

"So frail are even the highest earthly things!

"Go, passenger, and wail the hap of kings." JOHNSON.

A *sled* or *sledge* is a carriage without wheels, made use of in the cold countries. So, in *Tamburlaine* or the *Scythian Shepherd*, 1590:

"———upon an ivory *sled*

"Thou shalt be drawn among the frozen poles." STEEVENS.

All the old copies have *Polax*.—Mr. Pope and the subsequent editors read—*Polack*; but the corrupted word shews, I think, that Shakspeare wrote—*Polacks*. MALONE.

<sup>4</sup> —jump at this dead hour—] Thus the quarto, 1604. The folio, where we sometimes find a familiar word substituted for one more ancient, reads—*just* at this dead hour. MALONE.

*Jump* and *just* were synonymous in the time of Shakspeare. So, in Chapman's *May Day*, 1611:

"Your appointment was *jump* at three, with me."

Again, in M. Kyffin's translation of the *Andria* of Terence, 1588:

"Comes he this day so *jump* in the very time of this marriage?" STEEVENS.

With

With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.

*Hor.* In what particular thought to work<sup>5</sup>, I know not ;  
But, in the gross and scope<sup>6</sup> of mine opinion,  
This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

*Mar.* Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that knows,  
Why this fame strict and most observant watch  
So nightly toils the subject of the land?  
And why such daily cast<sup>7</sup> of brazen cannon,  
And foreign mart for implements of war!  
Why such impress of ship-wrights, whose sore task  
Does not divide the Sunday from the week?  
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 compact,  
Well ratify'd by law, and heraldry<sup>8</sup>,  
Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands,  
Which he stood seiz'd of, to the conqueror:

<sup>5</sup> *In what particular thought to work,*] i. e. What particular train of thinking to follow. STEEVENS.

<sup>6</sup> — *gross and scope* —] General thoughts, and tendency at large.

JOHNSON.

<sup>7</sup> — *daily cast* —] The quartos read *cost*. STEEVENS.

<sup>8</sup> — *by law and heraldry*,] i. e. well ratified by the rules of law, and the forms prescribed *jure feodali*; such as proclamation, &c.

MALONE.

Mr. Upton says, that Shakspeare sometimes expresses one thing by two substantives, and that *law and heraldry* means, by the *herald law*. So *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act IV.

"Where rather I expect victorious life,

"Than death and honour," i. e. honourable death. STEEV.

Puttenham, in his *Art of Poesie*, speaks of the *Figure of Twinners*, "*horses and barbes*, for *barbed horses*; *winim & dartes*, for *venimous darts*," &c. FARMER.



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<sup>9</sup>,  
 And carriage of the article design'd<sup>1</sup>,  
 His fell to Hamlet: Now, fir, young Fortinbras,  
 Of unimproved mettle<sup>2</sup> hot and full,  
 Hath in the skirts of Norway, here and there,  
 Shark'd up a list of landless resolute<sup>3</sup>,  
 For food and diet, to some enterprize  
 That hath a stomach in't<sup>4</sup>: which is no other  
 (As it doth well appear unto our state)  
 But to recover of us, by strong hand,  
 And terms compulsory<sup>5</sup>, those foresaid lands  
 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 romage<sup>6</sup> in the land.

*Ber.* I think<sup>7</sup>, it be no other, but even so:

Well

<sup>9</sup> — as by the same co-mart,] Thus the quarto, 1604. The folio reads—as by the same covenant: for which the late editions have given us—as by that covenant.

*Co-mart* is, I suppose, a joint bargain, a word perhaps of our poet's coinage. A *mart* signifying a great fair or market, he would not have scrupled to have written *to mart*, in the sense of *to make a bargain*. In the preceding speech we find *mart* used for bargain or purchase. MALONE.

<sup>1</sup> And carriage of the article design'd,] Carriage, is import: design'd, is formed, drawn up between them. JOHNSON.

Cawdrey in his *Alphabetical Table*, 1604, defines the verb *design* thus. "To marke out or appoint for any purpose." See also Minshew's Dict. 1617. "To *design* or shew by a token." *Designed* is yet used in this sense in Scotland. The old copies have *designe*. The correction was made by the editor of the second folio. MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> Of unimproved mettle —] Full of unimproved mettle, is full of spirit not regulated or guided by knowledge or experience. JOHNSON.

<sup>3</sup> Shark'd up a list, &c.] I believe to *shark up* means to pick up without distinction, as the shark fish collects his prey. The quartos read *lawless* instead of *landless*. STEVENS.

<sup>4</sup> That hath a stomach in't: —] *Stomach*, in the time of our author, was used for constancy, resolution. JOHNSON.

<sup>5</sup> — compulsory,] So the quarto. Folio—*compulsive*. MALONE.

<sup>6</sup> — romage —] Tumultuous hurry. JOHNSON.

<sup>7</sup> I think, &c.] These, and all other lines confin'd within crotchets throughout this play, are omitted in the folio edition of 1623. The omissions

Well may it fort<sup>8</sup>, that this portentous figure  
Comes armed through our watch; so like the king  
That was, and is, the question of these wars<sup>9</sup>.

*Hor.* A mote it is<sup>1</sup>, to trouble the mind's eye.  
In the most high and palmy state of Rome<sup>2</sup>,  
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 dimm'd the sun<sup>3</sup>; and the moist star<sup>4</sup>,

Upon

omissions leave the play sometimes better and sometimes worse, and seem made only for the sake of abbreviation. JOHNSON.

It may be worth while to observe, that the title-pages of the first quartos in 1604 and 1605, declare this play to be *enlarged to almost as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect copy.* STEEV.

This and the following seventeen lines are omitted in the folio. As I shall throughout this play always mention what lines are omitted in that copy, I have not thought it necessary to follow Dr. Johnson in distinguishing the omitted lines by inclosing them within crotchets.

MALONE.

<sup>8</sup> *Well may it fort, —*] The cause and the effect are proportionate and suitable. JOHNSON.

<sup>9</sup> *— the question of these wars.]* The theme or subject. So, in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

“—You were the word of war.” MALONE.

<sup>1</sup> *A mote it is, —*] The first quarto reads, *a moth*. STEEVENS.

A *moth* was only the old spelling of *mote*, as I suspected in revising a passage in *K. John*, Vol. IV. p. 526, where we certainly should read *mote*. See a note on the passage referred to, in the *Appendix*, Vol. X.

MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> *— palmy state of Rome,]* *Palmy*, for *victorious*. POPE.

<sup>3</sup> *As stars with trains of fire, and dews of blood; —*

*Disasters dimm'd the sun;]* The quarto, 1604, reads

*Disasters in the sun.*

For the emendation I am responsible. It is strongly supported not only by Plutarch's account in the life of Cæsar, [*“also the brightness of the sunne was darkened, the which, all that yeare through, rose very pale, and shined not out,”*] but by various passages in our authour's works. So, in the *Tempest*:

“—— I have be-dimm'd

“The noon-tide sun.”

Again, in *King Richard III*:

“As doth the blushing discontented sun,—

“When he perceives the envious clouds are bent

“To dim his glory.”

Again,

Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands,  
Was sick almost to dooms-day with eclipse.

And

Again, in our authour's 18th Sonnet:

" Sometimes too hot the eye of heaven shines,

" And often is his gold complexion dimm'd."

I suspect that the words *As stars* are a corruption, and have no doubt that either a line preceding or following the first of those quoted at the head of this note, has been lost; or that the beginning of one line has been joined to the end of another, the intervening words being omitted. That such conjectures are not merely chimerical, I have already proved. See Vol. V. p. 228, n. 8. and Vol. VI. p. 507, n. 3.

The following lines in *Julius Cæsar*, in which the prodigies that are said to have preceded his death, are recounted, may throw some light on the passage before us:

" — There is one within,

" Besides the things that we have heard and seen,

" Recounts most horrid sights seen by the watch.

" A lioness hath whelped in the streets;

" And graves have yawn'd and yielded up their dead;

" Fierce fiery warriors fight upon the clouds,

" In ranks, and squadrons, and right form of war,

" Which drizzel'd blood upon the capitol:

" The noise of battle hurl'd in the air,

" Horses do neigh, and dying men did groan;

" And ghosts did shriek and squeal about the streets."

The lost words perhaps contained a description of *fiery warriors fighting on the clouds*, or of *brands burning bright beneath the stars*.

The 15th book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, translated by Golding, in which an account is given of the prodigies that preceded Cæsar's death, furnished Shakspeare with some of the images in both these passages:

" —battels fighting in the clouds with crashing armour flew,

" And dreadful trumpets sounded in the ayre, and hornes eke blew,

" As warning men beforehand of the mischief that did brew;

" And Phœbus also looking dim did cast a drowsie light,

" Uppon the earth, which seemde likewise to be in fory plights:

" From underneath beneath the starres brandes oft seemde burning bright,

" It often rain'd drops of blood. The morning star look'd blew,

" And was besotted here and there with specks of rustie hew.

" The moone had also spots of blood,—

" Salt teares from ivorie—images in sundry places fell;—

" The dogges did howle, and every where appeared ghastly sprites,

" And with an earthquake shaken was the towne."

Plutarch only says, that "the sunne was darkened," that "diverse men were seen going up and down in fire"; there were "fires in the element; spirites were scene running up and downe in the night, and olitarie birds sitting in the great market-place."

The

And even<sup>5</sup> the like precursor of fierce events<sup>6</sup>,—  
 As harbingers preceding still the fates,  
 And prologue to the omen coming on<sup>7</sup>,—  
 Have heaven and earth together demonstrated  
 Unto our climatures and countrymen.—

The disagreeable recurrence of the word *stars* in the second line induces me to believe that *As stars* in that which precedes, is a corruption. Perhaps Shakspere wrote:

*Astres* with trains of fire,—  
 ——— and dews of blood  
*Disastrous* dimm'd the sun.

The word *astre* is used in an old collection of poems entitled *Diana*, addressed to the Earl of Oxenforde, a book of which I know not the date, but believe it was printed about 1580. In *Oribello* we have *aneres*, a word exactly of a similar formation. MALONE.

4 *And the moist star*, &c.] i. e. the moon, So in Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, 1598:

"Not that night-wand'ring, pale, and wat'ry star," &c. MALONE.

5 *And even*, &c.] Not only such prodigies have been seen in Rome, but the elements have shewn our countrymen like forerunners and foretokens of violent events. JOHNSON.

6 —precursor of fierce events,] *Fierce* for terrible. WARBURTON.

I rather believe that *fierce* signifies conspicuous, glaring. It is used in a somewhat similar sense in *Timon*.

"O the fierce wretchedness that glory brings!" STEEVENS.

7 *And even the like precursor of fierce events*,

*As harbingers preceding still the fates*

*And prologue to the omen coming on*,] So, in one of our author's poems, Vol. X. p. 341:

"But thou shrieking harbinger,

"Foul precursor of the fiend,

"Augur of the fever's end," &c.

*The omen coming on* is, the approaching dreadful and portentous event. So in *K. Richard III.*

"Thy name is ominous to children."

i. e. (not boding ill fortune, but) *destructive* to children.

Again, *ibidem*:

"O Pomfret, Pomfret, O, thou bloody prison,

"Fatal and ominous to noble peers."

Theobald reads—the omen'd coming-on. MALONE.

A distich from the life of Merlin, by Heywood, will shew that there is no occasion for correction:

"Merlin, well vers'd in many an hidden spell,

"His countries omen did long since foretell." FARMER.

Again, in the *Vowbreaker*:

"And much I fear the weakness of her brains

"Should draw her to some ominous exigent." STEEVENS.

*Re-ente*

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 sound<sup>2</sup>, 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, hapily, 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,  
 To offer it the shew of violence;  
 For it is, as the air, invulnerable<sup>3</sup>,  
 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<sup>4</sup>,

Doth

<sup>2</sup> *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.

<sup>3</sup> *—it is, as the air, invulnerable,*] So in *Macbeth*:

“As easy may'st thou the intrenchant air,

“With thy keen blade impress.”

Again, in *King John*:

“Against the invulnerable clouds of heaven.” MALONE.

<sup>4</sup> *The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,*] So the quarto, 1604. Folio:—to the day.

In *England's Parnassus*, 8vo, 1600, I find the two following lines ascribed to Drayton, but know not in which of his poems they are found.

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<sup>2</sup>,  
 The extravagant<sup>3</sup> and erring spirit hies  
 To his confine: and of the truth herein  
 This present object made probation.

*Mar.* It faded on the crowing of the cock<sup>4</sup>.

Some

"And now the cocke, the morning's trumpeter,

"Play'd huntup for the day-star to appear."

*Mr. Gray* has imitated our poet:

"The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,

"No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed." MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> *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. We might read,

"——— and at his warning

"Th' extravagant and erring spirit hies

"To his confine, whether in sea or air,

"Or earth, or fire. And of," &c.

But this change, though it would smooth the construction, is not necessary, and, being unnecessary, should not be made against authority.

JOHNSON.

*Bourne of Newcastle*, in his *Antiquities of the common People*, informs us, "It is a received tradition among the vulgar, that at the time of cock-crowing, the midnight spirits forsake these lower regions, and go to their proper places.—Hence it is, says he, that in country places, where the way of life requires more early labour, they always go cheerfully to work at that time; whereas if they are called abroad sooner, they imagine every thing they see a wandering ghost." And he quotes on this occasion, as all his predecessors had done, the well-known lines from the first hymn of *Prudentius*. I know not whose translation he gives us, but there is an old one by Heywood. The pious chansons, the hymns and carols, which Shakspeare mentions presently, were usually copied from the elder Christian poets. FARMER.

<sup>3</sup> *The extravagant*—] i. e. got out of its bounds. WARBURTON. So, in *Nobody and Somebody*, 1598: "—they took me up for a extravagant." STEVENS.

<sup>4</sup> *It faded on the crowing of the cock.*] This is a very ancient superstition. Philostratus giving an account of the apparition of Achilles' shade to Apollonius Tyaneus, says that it vanished with a little glimmer as soon as the cock crowed. *Vit. Apol. ii. 26.* STEVENS.

*Faded*

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 takes <sup>6</sup>, 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 <sup>7</sup> :  
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,  
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

*Faded* has here its original sense ; it *vanished*. *Vado*, Lat. So, in  
Spenser's *Fairy Queen*, B. I. C. V. St. 15 :

" He stands amazed how he thence should *fade*."

That our authour uses the word in this sense, appears from some  
subsequent lines :

" ——— The morning cock crew loud ;

" And at the sound it thrunk in haste away,

" And *vanish'd* from our sight." MALONE.

<sup>5</sup>—dare's stir abroad ;] Quarto. The folio reads—*can walk*—. STEEV.  
*Spirit* was formerly used as a monosyllable : *sprite*. The quarto,  
1604, has—*dare's* stir abroad. Perhaps Shakspeare wrote—no *spirits* dare  
stir abroad. The necessary correction was made in a late quarto of no  
authority, printed in 1637. MALONE.

<sup>6</sup> No fairy takes ;] No fairy strikes with lameness or diseases. This  
sense of *take* is frequent in this authour. JOHNSON.

<sup>7</sup>—high eastern hill ;] The old quarto has it better *eastward*. WARB.  
The superiority of the latter of these readings is not, to me at least,  
very apparent. I find the former used in *Lingua*, &c. 1607 :

" —and overclimbs

" Yonder gilt eastern hills."

*Eastern* and *eastward* alike signify toward the east. STEEVENS.

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<sup>s</sup>;  
 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,—  
 Colleague'd with this dream of his advantage<sup>2</sup>,  
 He hath not fail'd to pester us with message,

Importing

<sup>s</sup> *With one auspicious, and one dropping eye;*] Thus the folio. The quarto, with somewhat less of quaintness:

With an auspicious, and a dropping eye.

The same thought, however, occurs in the *Winter's Tale*: "She had one eye declined for the loss of her husband; another elevated that the oracle was fulfilled." STEEVENS.

<sup>2</sup> *Dropping* in this line probably means *depressed* or cast downwards; an interpretation which is strongly supported by the passage already quoted from the *Winter's Tale*. It may, however, signify *weeping*. "*Dropping of the eyes*" was a technical expression in our author's time.—"If the spring be wet with much south wind,—the next summer will happen aguer and blearness, *dropping of the eyes*, and pains of the bowels." Hopton's *Concordance of years*, 8vo. 1616.

Again, in Montaigne's *Essais*, 1603:—"they never saw any man there—with eyes *dropping*, or crooked and stooping through age."

MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> *Colleague'd with this dream of his advantage,*] The meaning is, He goes to war so indiscreetly, and unprepared, that he has no allies to support him but a *dream*, with which he is *colleague'd* or confederated.

WARBURTON.

Mr. Theobald, in his *Shakspeare Restored*, proposed to read—*colleague'd*, but in his edition very properly adhered to the ancient copies.

MALONE.



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 herein<sup>1</sup>; in that the levies,  
 The lists, and full proportions, are all made  
 Out of his subject:—and we here dispatch  
 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 scope<sup>2</sup>  
 Of these dilated articles allow<sup>3</sup>.

Farewel; and let your haste commend your duty.

*Cor. Vol.* In that, and all things, will we shew our duty.

*King.* We doubt it nothing; heartily farewel.

[*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,  
 Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father<sup>4</sup>.

What

<sup>1</sup> *His further gait herein;*] *Gait* or *gait* is here used in the northern sense, for *proceeding, passage*; from the A. S. verb *gae*. A *gate* for a path, passage, or street, is still current in the north. PERCY.

<sup>2</sup> — *more than the scope*—] More than is comprised in the general design of these articles, which you may explain in a more diffuse and dilated stile. JOHNSON.

<sup>3</sup> — *these dilated articles, &c.*] i. e. the articles when dilated. MUSE.  
 The poet should have written *allows*. Many writers fall into this error, when a plural noun immediately precedes the verb; as I have had occasion to observe in a note on a controverted passage in *Love's Labours Lost*. MALONE.

<sup>4</sup> *The head is not more native to the heart,  
 The hand more instrumental to the mouth,  
 Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.*] The sense seems to be this: the head is not formed to be more useful to the heart, the hand

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 shew 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<sup>5</sup>,  
By labour some 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<sup>6</sup>.—  
But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son,—

*Ham.* A little more than kin, and less than kind<sup>7</sup>.

[*Aside.*  
*King.*

hand is not more at the service of the mouth, than my power is at your father's service. That is, he may command me to the utmost, he may do what he pleases with my kingly authority. STEEVENS.

By *native to the heart* Dr. Johnson understands, "natural and congenial to it, born with it, and co-operating with it."

Formerly the heart was supposed the seat of wisdom; and hence the poet speaks of the close connexion between the heart and head. See Vol. VII. p. 150, n. 4. MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> — *wrung from me my slow leave,*] These words and the two following lines are omitted in the folio. MALONE.

<sup>6</sup> *Take thy fair hour, Laertes; time be thine,*

*And thy best graces: spend it at thy will.*] The sense, is: "You have my leave to go, Laertes; make the fairest use you please of your time, and spend it at your will with the fairest graces you are master of." THEOBALD.

I rather think this line is in want of emendation. I read,

— *Time is thine,*

*And my best graces: spend it at thy will.* JOHNSON.

<sup>7</sup> *Ham.* *A little more than kin, and less than kind.*] *Kind* is the Teutonic word for *child*. Hamlet therefore answers with propriety, to the titles of *cousin* and *son*, which the king had given him, that he was somewhat more than *cousin*, and less than *son*. JOHNSON.

In this line, with which Shakspeare introduces Hamlet, Dr. Johnson has perhaps pointed out a nicer distinction than it can justly boast of. To establish the sense contended for, it should have been proved that

*kind*

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

*Ham.* Not so, my lord, I am too much i' the sun<sup>8</sup>.

*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 lids<sup>9</sup>

*kind* was ever used by any English writer for *child*. *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. In the 5th Act, the Prince accuses his uncle of having *popt in between the election and his hopes*; which obviates Dr. Warburton's objection to the old reading, viz. that "the king had given no occasion for such a reflection."

A jingle of the same sort is found in *Mother Bombie*, 1594, and seems to have been proverbial, as I have met with it more than once:—"the nearer we are in blood, the further we must be from love; the greater the *kindred* is, the less the *kindness* must be." Again, in *Corobodus*, a tragedy, 1565:

"In *kinde* a father, but not in *kindelyness*."

As *kind*, however, signifies *nature*, Hamlet may mean that his relationship was become an *unnatural* one, as it was partly founded upon incest. Our author's *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *King Richard II.*, and *Titus Andronicus*, exhibit instances of *kind* being used for *nature*, and so too in this play of *Hamlet*, Act II, Sc. the last:

Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, *kindless* villain.

Dr. Farmer, however, observes that *kin* is still used for *cousin* in the midland counties. STEEVENS.

Hamlet does not, I think, mean to say, as Mr. Steevens supposes, that *his uncle* is a little more than *kin*, &c. The king had called the prince—"My cousin Hamlet, and my son."—His reply, therefore, is,—"I am a little more than thy kinsman, [for I am thy step-son:] and somewhat less than *kind* to thee [for I hate thee, as being the person who has entered into an incestuous marriage with my mother]. Or, if we understand *kind* in its ancient sense, then the meaning will be,—*I am more than thy kinsman, for I am thy step-son*; being such, I am less near to thee than thy natural offspring, and therefore not entitled to the appellation of *son*, which you have now given me. MALONE.

<sup>8</sup> —*too much i' the sun*.] He perhaps alludes to the proverb, *Out of heaven's blessing into the warm sun*. JOHNSON.

—*too much i' the sun*.

Meaning probably his being sent for from his studies to be exposed at his uncle's marriage as his *chiefest courtier*, &c. STEEVENS.

I question whether a quibble between *sun* and *son* be not here intended. FARMER.

<sup>9</sup> —*veiled lids*.] With lowering eyes, cast down eyes. JOHNSON.

See Vol. V. p. 286, n. 9. MALONE.

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,  
'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, shews of grief<sup>1</sup>,  
That can denote me truly : These, indeed, seem,  
For they are actions that a man might play :  
But I have that within, which passeth shew ;  
These, but the trappings and the suits of woe<sup>2</sup>.

*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<sup>3</sup> ; and the survivor bound  
In filial obligation, for some term  
To do obsequious sorrow<sup>4</sup> : But to persevere

<sup>1</sup> — shews of grief.] Thus the folio. The first quarto reads—*shapes*,—I suppose for *shapes*. STEEVENS.

<sup>2</sup> But I have that within, which passeth shew ;  
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.] So, in *K. Rich. II.*:

“ —my grief lies all within ;

“ And these external manners of lament

“ Are merely shadows to the unseen grief

“ That swells with silence to the tortured soul.” MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> — your father lost a father ;

That father lost, lost his ;] The meaning of the passage is no more than this. *Your father lost a father*, i. e. your grandfather, which lost grandfather also lost his father. STEEVENS.

<sup>4</sup> — obsequious sorrow :] *Obsequious* is here from *obsequies* or funeral ceremonies. JOHNSON.

So, in *Titus Andronicus* :

“ To shed obsequious tears upon his trunk.” STEEVENS.

See Vol. VI. p. 461, n. 5. MALONE.

In obstinate condolment<sup>5</sup>, is a course  
 Of impious stubbornness; 'tis unmanly grief:  
 It shews a will most incorrect to heaven<sup>6</sup>;  
 A heart unfortify'd, 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? Fie! 'tis a fault to heaven,  
 A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,  
 To reason most absurd<sup>7</sup>; whose common theme  
 Is death of fathers, and who still hath cry'd,  
 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<sup>8</sup>,  
 Than that which dearest father bears his son,  
 Do I impart toward you<sup>9</sup>. For your intent

In

<sup>5</sup> In obstinate condolment,] Condolment, for sorrow. WARBURTON.

<sup>6</sup> — a will most incorrect to heaven;] Not sufficiently regulated by a sense of duty and submission to the dispensations of providence.

MALONE.

<sup>7</sup> To reason most absurd;] Reason is here used in its common sense, for the faculty by which we form conclusions from arguments.

JOHNSON.

<sup>8</sup> And with no less nobility of love,] Nobility, for magnitude.

WARBURTON.

Nobility is rather generosity. JOHNSON.

By nobility of love Mr. Heath understands, eminence and distinction of love. MALONE.

<sup>9</sup> Do I impart toward you.] I believe impart is, impart myself, communicate whatever I can bestow. JOHNSON.

The crown of Denmark was elective. So, in *Sir Clyomon Knight of the Golden Shield*, &c. 1599:

“And me possess for spoused wife, who in election am

“To have the crown of Denmark here, as heir unto the same.”

The king means, that as Hamlet stands the fairest chance to be next elected, he will strive with as much love to ensure the crown to him, as a father would shew in the continuance of heirdom to a son. STEEV.

I agree with Mr. Steevens, that the crown of Denmark (as in most of the Gothick kingdoms) was elective, and not hereditary; though

it

In going back to school in Wittenberg<sup>1</sup>,  
It is most retrograde to our desire:  
And, we beseech you, bend you to remain<sup>2</sup>  
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 health<sup>3</sup>, that Denmark drinks to-day,

it might be customary, in elections, to pay some attention to the royal blood, which by degrees produced hereditary succession. Why then do the rest of the commentators so often treat Claudius as an *usurper*, who had deprived young Hamlet of his *right* by *beirship* to his father's crown? Hamlet calls him drunkard, murderer, and villain; one who had carried the election by low and mean practices; had

“ Popt in between the election and my hopes—”

had

“ From a shelf the precious diadem stole,

“ And put it in his pocket.”

but never hints at his being an *usurper*. His discontent arose from his uncle's being preferred before him, not from any legal right which he pretended to set up to the crown. Some regard was probably had to the recommendation of the preceding prince, in electing the successor. And therefore young Hamlet had “ the voice of the king himself for his succession in Denmark;” and he at his own death prophesies that “ the election would light on Fortinbras, who had his dying voice,” conceiving that by the death of his uncle, he himself had been king for an instant, and had therefore a right to recommend. When, in the fourth act, the rabble wished to choose Laertes king, I understand that antiquity was forgot, and custom violated, by electing a new king in the lifetime of the old one, and perhaps also by the calling in a stranger to the royal blood. BLACKSTONE.

<sup>1</sup> — to school in Wittenberg,] In Shakspeare's time there was an university at Wittenberg, to which he has made Hamlet propose to return.

The university of Wittenberg was not founded till 1502, consequently did not exist in the time to which this play is referred. MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> — bend you to remain—] i. e. subdue your inclination to go from hence, and remain, &c. STEEVENS.

<sup>3</sup> No jocund health, —] The king's intemperance is very strongly impressed; every thing that happens to him gives him occasion to drink. JOHNSON.

But

But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell;  
And the king's rouse the heaven shall bruit again,  
Re-speaking earthly thunder. Come away.

[*Exeunt King, Queen, Lords, &c. POL. and LAERT.*]

*Ham.* O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,  
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!<sup>4</sup>  
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd  
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter!<sup>5</sup> O God! O God!  
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable  
Seem to me all the uses of this world!  
Fie on't! O fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,  
That grows to seed; things rank, and gross in nature,  
Possess it merely<sup>6</sup>. That it should come to this!  
But two months dead!—nay, not so much, not two:  
So excellent a king; that was, to this,  
Hyperion to a satyr<sup>7</sup>: so loving to my mother,

That

<sup>4</sup> —resolve itself into a dew!] *Resolve* means the same as *dissolve*. Ben Jonson uses the word in his *Volpone*, and in the same sense:

"Forth the resolved corners of his eyes."

Again, in the *Country Girl*, 1647:

"—my swollen grief, resolved in these tears." STEEVENS.

<sup>5</sup> Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd

*His canon 'gainst self-slaughter!*] The generality of the editions read *cannon*, as if the poet's thought were, *Or that the Almighty had not planted his artillery, or arms of vengeance, against self-murder*. But the word which I restored (and which was espoused by the accurate Mr. Hughes, who gave an edition of this play) is the true reading, i. e. *that he had not refrained suicide by his express law and peremptory prohibition*. THEOBALD.

There are yet those who suppose the old reading to be the true one, as they say the word *fixed* seems to decide very strongly in its favour. I would advise such to recollect Virgil's expression:

—fixit leges pretio, atque refixit. STEEVENS.

If the true reading wanted any support, it might be found in *Cymbeline*:

"—'gainst self-slaughter

"There is a prohibition so divine,

"That cravens my weak hand."

In Shakespeare's time *canon*, (*norma*) was commonly spelt *cannon*.

MALONE.

<sup>6</sup> —merely] is entirely. See Vol. VII. p. 233, n. 4. MALONE.

<sup>7</sup> So excellent a king; that was, to this,

*Hyperion to a satyr:*] *Hyperion* or *Apollo* is represented in all the ancient statues, &c. as exquisitely beautiful, the satyr hideously ugly.—Shakespeare may surely be pardoned for not attending to the quantity of Latin names, here and in *Cymbeline*; when we find Henry

Parrot,

That he might not beteem the winds of heaven  
Visit her face too roughly<sup>b</sup>. Heaven and earth!

Parrot, the author of a collection of epigrams printed in 1613, to which a *Latin* preface is prefixed, writing thus:

"*Posthūmus*, not the last of many more,

"*Alks* why I write in such an idle vaine," &c.

*Lagui ridiculosi, or Springes for Woodcocks*, 16mo. sign. c. 3. MALONE.

All our English poets are guilty of the same false quantity, and call Hyperion Hyperion; at least the only instance I have met with to the contrary, is in the old play of *Fūmus Træes*, 1633:

" ————— Blow, gentle Africus,

" Play on our poops, when Hyperion's son

" Shall couch in west." STEEVENS.

<sup>b</sup> *That he might not beteem the winds of heaven*

*Visit her face too roughly.*] This passage ought to be a perpetual memento to all future editors and commentators to proceed with the utmost caution in emendation, and never to discard a word from the text, merely because it is not the language of the present day.

Mr. Hughes or Mr. Rowe, supposing the text to be unintelligible, for *beteem* boldly substituted *permitted*. Mr. Theobald, in order to favour his own emendation, stated untruly that all the old copies which he had seen, read *beteene*, and with great plausibility proposed to read,

That he might not *let e'en* the winds of heaven, &c.

This emendation appearing uncommonly happy, was adopted by all the subsequent editors. But without necessity; for the reading of the first quarto, 1604, and indeed of all the subsequent quartos, *beteeme*, is no corruption, but a word of Shakspeare's age; and accordingly it is now once more restored to the text. It is used by Golding in his translation of the tenth book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, 4to, 1587:

"The king of Gods did burne ere while in love of Ganymede,

"The Phrygian; and the thing was found which Jupiter, that fled,

"Had rather be than what he was; yet could he not *beteeme*

"The shape of any other bird than eagle for to seeme."

Rex superum Phrygii quondam Ganymedis amore

Arsit; et inventum est aliquid quod Jupiter esse,

Quam quod erat, mallet; nulla tamen alio verti

Dignatur, nisi quæ possit sua fulmina ferre.

In the folio the word is corruptly printed *beteene*. The rhyme in Golding's verses proves that the reading of the original quarto is the true one. Golding manifestly uses the word in the sense of *endure*.

We find a sentiment similar to that before us, in Marston's *Insatiate Countesse*, 1603:

" ————— she had a lord,

" Jealous that air should ravish her chaste looks." MALONE.

So, in the Entlude of the *Lyfe and Repentaunce of Marie Magdalaine*, &c. by Lewis Wager, 1567:

"But evermore they were unto me very tender,

"They would not suffer the wynde on me to blowe." STEEV.



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<sup>9</sup>;—why she, even she,—  
 O heaven! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,  
 Would have mourn'd longer,—marry'd 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 marry'd:—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?

*Hor.* The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.

*Ham.* Sir, my good friend; I'll change that name with you<sup>1</sup>.

And what make you<sup>2</sup> from Wittenberg, Horatio?—  
 Marcellus?

*Mar.* My good lord,—

*Ham.* I am very glad to see you; good even, sir<sup>3</sup>.—

But

<sup>9</sup> *Like Niobe, all tears;*] Shakspeare might have caught this idea from an ancient ballad entitled “The falling out of lovers is the renewing of love:”

“Now I, like weeping *Niobe*,

“May wash my hands in tears.”

Of this ballad *Amantium ira*, &c. is the burden. STEEVENS.

<sup>1</sup> — *I'll change that name*—] I'll be your servant, you shall be my friend. JOHNSON.

<sup>2</sup> — *what make you* —] A familiar phrase for *what are you doing*. JOHNSON.

<sup>3</sup> — *good even, sir.*] So the copies. Sir Th. Hanmer and Dr. Warburton put it, *good morning*. The alteration is of no importance, but

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 trust 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 followed hard upon.

*Ham.* Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral bak'd  
meats<sup>4</sup>

Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.

'Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven!

Or

but all licence is dangerous. There is no need of any change. Between the first and eighth scene of this act it is apparent, that a natural day must pass, and how much of it is already over, there is nothing that can determine. The king has held a council. It may now as well be evening as morning. JOHNSON.

<sup>4</sup> —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. See *The Tragique Historie of the Faire Valeria of London*, 1598. "His corpes was with funerall pompe conveyed to the church, and there sollemnly enterred, nothing omitted which necessitie or custom could claime; a sermon, a banquet, and like observations. Again, in the old romance of *Syr Degore*, bl. l. no date:

"A great feaste would he holde

"Upon his quenes mornyng day,

"That was buried in an abbay." COLLINS.

See also Hayward's *Life and Raigne of King Henrie the Fourth*, 4to 1599, p. 135: "Then hee [King Richard II.] was conveyed to Langley Abby in Buckinghamshire,—and there obscurely interred,—without the charge of a dinner for celebrating the funeral." MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> —my dearest foe:—] *Dearest*, for *direst*, most dreadful, most dangerous. JOHNSON.

*Dearest* is most immediate, consequential, important; So, in *Romeo and Juliet*:

"—— a ring that I must use

"In *dear* employment."

Again,

Or ever <sup>6</sup> I had seen that day, Horatio!—  
My father,—Methinks, I see my father.

*Hor.* Where, my lord?

*Ham.* In my mind's eye <sup>7</sup>, 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 <sup>8</sup>.

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

*Ham.* Saw! who?

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

*Ham.* The king my father!

*Hor.* Season your admiration <sup>9</sup> for a while  
With an attent ear <sup>10</sup>; till I may deliver,  
Upon the witness of these gentlemen,  
This marvel to you.

Again, in B. and Fletcher's *Maid in the Mill*:

"You meet your *dearest* enemy in love,

"With all his hate about him." STEEVENS.

See Vol. VIII. p. 150, n. 6. MALONE.

<sup>6</sup> Or ever—] Thus the quarto, 1604. The folio reads—*ere* ever.  
This is not the only instance in which a familiar phraseology has  
been substituted for one more ancient, in that valuable copy. MALONE.

<sup>7</sup> In my mind's eye,] This expression occurs again in our author's  
*Rape of Lucrece*:

"——— himself behind

"Was left unseen, save to the eye of mind."

Ben Jonson has borrowed it in his Masque called *Love's Triumph  
through Callipolis*:

"As only by the mind's eye may be seen."

Telemachus lamenting the absence of Ulysses, is represented in like  
manner:

"*Οραμένην εἶπεν*" &c. in *περὶ* &c.—

STEEVENS.

This expression occurs again in our author's *113th* Sonnet:

"Since I left you, mine eye is in my mind." MALONE.

<sup>8</sup> I shall not look upon his like again.] Mr. Holt proposes to read  
from Sir Thomas Stamwell, Bart. of Upton, near Northampton:

"Eye shall not look upon his like again;"

and thinks it is more in the true spirit of Shakspeare than the other.  
So, in *Stowe's Chronicle*, p. 746: "In the greatest pomp that ever eye  
beheld." Again, in *Sandys's Travels*, p. 150: "We went this day  
through the most pregnant and pleasant valley that ever eye beheld."

STEEVENS.

<sup>9</sup> Season your admiration—] That is, *temper* it. JOHNSON.

<sup>10</sup> With an attent ear,] *Spenser*, as well as our poet, uses *attent* for  
*attentive*. MALONE.

*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<sup>2</sup>, Been thus encounter'd. A figure like your father, Armed at point<sup>3</sup>, 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<sup>4</sup>, 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?

<sup>2</sup> 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*; and hence the epithet *dead* did not appear incongruous to our poet. So in Marston's *Malecontent*, 1604: "'Tis now about the immodest *waist* of night." i. e. midnight.

Again, in *The Puritan*, a comedy, 1607:—"ere the day be spent to the *girdle*,"—

In the old copies the word is spelt *waist*, as it is in the second act, sc. ii. "then you live about her *waist*, or in the middle of her favours." The same spelling is found in *K. Lear*, Act IV. sc. vi. "Down from the *waist*, they are centaurs." See also Minshew's Dict. 1617: "*Waist*, middle, or girdle-steel." We have the same pleonasm in another line in this play:

"And given my heart a working *mute* and *dumb*."

All the modern editors read—In the dead *waste*, &c. MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> Armed at point,] Thus the quarto, 1604. Folio: Arm'd at all points. MALONE.

<sup>4</sup> —with the act of fear,] Fear was the cause, the active cause, that *distill'd* them by that force of operation which we strictly call *act* in voluntary, and *power* in involuntary, agents, but popularly call *act* in both. JOHNSON.

The folio reads—*bestil'd*. STEEVENS.

*Hor.*

*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<sup>5</sup>.

*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?

*Hor.* While one with moderate haste

<sup>5</sup> —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. In Bullokar's *English Expositor*, 8vo. 1616, *beaver* is defined thus: "In armour it signifies that part of the helmet which may be *lifted up*, to take breath the more freely." MALONE.

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 fable silver'd<sup>6</sup>.

*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 fight,

Let it be tenable<sup>7</sup> 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: Farewel.

[*Exeunt HOR. MAR. and BER.*]

My father's spirit in arms!<sup>8</sup> 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.*]

### S C E N E III.

*A Room in Polonius' House.*

*Enter LAERTES, and OPHELIA.*

*Laer.* My necessities are embark'd; farewell:  
And, sister, as the winds give benefit,

<sup>6</sup> *A fable silver'd.*] So in our poet's 12th sonnet:

"And fable curls, all silver'd o'er with white." MALONE.

<sup>7</sup> *Let it be tenable.*—] So the quarto, 1604. Folio:—*treble.* MALONE.

<sup>8</sup> *My father's spirit in arms!*] From what went before, I once hinted to Mr. Garrick, that these words might be spoken in this manner:

My father's spirit! in arms! all is not well, WHALLEY.

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<sup>9</sup>;  
No more.

*Oph.* No more but so?

*Laer.* Think it no more:

For nature, crescent, does not grow alone  
In thews<sup>1</sup>, 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<sup>2</sup>  
The virtue of his will: but, you must fear,  
His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own;  
For he himself is subject to his birth<sup>3</sup>:  
He may not, as unvalued persons do,  
Carve for himself; for on his choice depends  
The safety and the health of the whole state<sup>3</sup>;

And

<sup>9</sup> *The perfume and suppliance of a minute;*] The words *perfume and*, which are found in the quarto, 1604, were omitted in the folio.

MALONE.

The perfume and *suppliance* of a minute; i. e. what is supplied to us for a minute. The idea seems to be taken from the short duration of vegetable perfumes. STEEVENS.

<sup>1</sup> *In thews,*] i. e. in sinews, muscular strength. STEEVENS.

<sup>2</sup> *And now no soil, nor cautel, &c.*] *Cautel* is subtlety, or deceit. Minshew in his Dictionary, 1617, defines it, "A crafty way to deceive." The word is again used by Shakespeare in *A Lover's Complaint*:

"In him a plenitude of subtle matter,

"Applied to *cautels*, all strange forms receives." MALONE.

So, in the second part of Greene's *Art of Cony-catching*, 1592:  
"—and their subtil *cautels* to amend the statute." *To amend the statute* was the cant phrase for evading the law. STEEVENS.

*Virtue* seems here to comprise both *excellence* and *power*, and may be explained the *pure effect*. JOHNSON.

<sup>3</sup> *For he himself, &c.*] This line is not in the quarto. MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> *The safety and the health of the whole state;*] Thus the quarto, 1604, except that it has—*this* whole state, and the second *the* is inadvertently omitted. The folio reads:

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<sup>4</sup>; which is no further,  
 Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.  
 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'd<sup>5</sup> importunity.  
 Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister;  
 And keep you in the rear of your affection<sup>6</sup>,  
 Out of the shot and danger of desire.  
 The chariest maid<sup>7</sup> 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,

The sanctity and health of the whole state.

This is another proof of arbitrary alterations being sometimes made in the folio. The editor, finding the metre defective, in consequence of the article being omitted before *bealtb*, instead of supplying it, for *safety* substituted a word of three syllables. MALONE.

<sup>4</sup> *May give his saying deed*;] So, in *Timon of Athens*:—"the deed of saying is quite out of use." Again, in *Troilus and Cressida*:

"Speaking in deeds, and deedless in his tongue." MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> —unmaster'd—] i. e. licentious. JOHNSON.

<sup>6</sup> —keep you in the rear, &c.] That is, do not advance so far as your affection would lead you. JOHNSON.

<sup>7</sup> *The chariest maid*—] *Chary* is cautious. So, in Greene's *Never too late*, 1616: "Love requires not chastity, but that her soldiers be *chary*," Again: "She liveth chafly enough, that liveth *charily*."

STEEVENS.

Shew



Shew me the steep and thorny way to heaven;  
 Whilst, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,  
 Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,  
 And reck's not his own read<sup>8</sup>.

*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<sup>9</sup>,

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 charácter<sup>1</sup>. 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 try'd,

Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel<sup>2</sup>;

But

<sup>8</sup> —reck's not his own read.] That is, heeds not his own lessons.

PORE.

So, in *Hycke Scorne*;

“—I reck not a feder.” STEEVENS.

*Read* is counsel. MALONE.

So the *Old Proverb* in the *Two Angry Women of Abington*, 1599 :

“Take heed, is a good reed.” STEEVENS.

So Sternhold, Psalm i.

“—that hath not lent

“To wicked reeds his ear.” BLACKSTONE.

<sup>9</sup> —the shoulder of your sail,] This is a common sea phrase, STEEV.

<sup>1</sup> And these few precepts in thy memory

*Look thou charácter.*] i. e. write; strongly infix. The same phrase is again used by our authour in his 122d Sonnet:

“—thy tables are within my brain

“Full charácter'd with lasting memory.”

Again, in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* :

“——— I do conjure thee,

“Who art the table wherein all my thoughts

“Are visibly charácter'd and engrav'd.” MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel;] The old copies read —with boops of steel. I have no doubt that this was a corruption in the original quarto of 1604, arising, like many others, from similitude

But do not dull thy palm with entertainment  
 Of each new-hatch'd unsledg'd comrade<sup>3</sup>. 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 censure<sup>4</sup>, but reserve thy judgment.  
 Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,  
 But not exprest'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy:  
 For the apparel oft proclaims the man;  
 And they in France, of the best rank and station,  
 Are of a most select and generous chief, in that<sup>5</sup>.

Neither

of sounds. The emendation, which was made by Mr. Pope, and adopted by three subsequent editors, is strongly supported by the word *grapple*. See Minsheu's *Dictionary*, 1617: "To *hook* or *grapple*, viz. to grapple and to board a ship."

A *grapple* is an instrument with several *books* to lay hold of a ship, in order to board it.

This correction is also justified by our poet's 137th sonnet:

"Why of eyes' fallhood hast thou forged *books*,

"Whereto the judgment of my heart is ry'd?"

It may be also observed, that *books* are sometimes made of steel, but *books* never. MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> But do not dull thy palm with entertainment

[Of each new-hatch'd, unsledg'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.

<sup>4</sup> — each man's censure,] *Censure* is opinion. STEEVENS.

See Vol. IV. p. 149, n. 8. MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> Are of a most select and generous chief, in that.] Thus the quarto, 1604, and the folio, except that in that copy the word *chief* is spelt *cheff*. The substantive *chief*, which signifies in heraldry the upper part of the shield, appears to have been in common use in Shakspeare's time, being found in Minsheu's *Dictionary*, 1617. He defines it thus: "*Est superior et scuti nobilior pars; tertiam partem ejus obtinet; ante Christi adventum dabatur in maximi honoris signum senatoribus et honoratis viris.*" B. Jonson has used the word in his *Postaster*.

The meaning then seems to be, *They in France approve themselves of a most select and generous escutcheon by their dress*. *Generous* is used with the signification of *generous*. So, in *Othello*: "The generous illanders," &c.

If *chief* in this sense had not been familiarly understood, the editor of the folio must have considered the line as unintelligible, and would have probably omitted the words—*of a* in the beginning of it, or attempted

Neither a borrower, nor a lender be;  
 For loan oft loses both itself and friend;  
 And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry<sup>6</sup>.  
 This above all,—To thine ownself be true;  
 And it must follow, as the night the day<sup>7</sup>,  
 Thou canst not then be false to any man.  
 Farewell; my blessing season this in thee<sup>8</sup>!

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

*Pol.* The time invites you<sup>9</sup>; go, your servants tend<sup>1</sup>.

*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<sup>2</sup>.

*Laer.* Farewel.

[*Exit LAERTES.*]

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

tempted some other correction. That not having been done, I have adhered to the old copies.

Our poet from various passages in his works, appears to have been accurately acquainted with all the terms of heraldry. MALONE.

<sup>6</sup> — *of husbandry.*] i. e. of thrift; economical prudence. See Vol. IV. p. 315, n. 8. MALONE.

<sup>7</sup> *And it must follow, as the night the day,*] So, in the 145th Sonnet of Shakspeare:

"That follow'd it as gentle day

"*Doth follow night,*" &c. STEEVENS.

<sup>8</sup> — *my blessing season this in thee!*] Infix it in such a manner as that it may never wear out. JOHNSON.

So, in the mock tragedy represented before the king:

"—who in want a hollow friend doth try,

"*Directly seasons him his enemy.*" STEEVENS.

<sup>9</sup> *The time invites you;*—] Thus the folio. The quarto, 1604, reads—*The time invests you*: which Mr. Theobald preferred, supposing that it meant, "*the time besieges, presses upon you on every side.*" But to *invest*, in Shakspeare's time, only signified, to clothe, or to give possession. MALONE.

Either reading may serve. Macbeth says,

"I go, and it is done; the bell *invites* me." STEEVENS.

<sup>1</sup> — *your servants tend.*] i. e. your servants are waiting for you.

JOHNSON.

<sup>2</sup> — *yourself shall keep the key of it.*] The meaning is, that your counsels are as sure of remaining locked up in my memory, as if you yourself carried the key of it. So, in *Northward Ho*, by Decker and Webster, 1607: "You shall close it up like treasure of your own, and yourself shall keep the key of it." STEEVENS.

*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,  
Unfisted in such perilous circumstance<sup>3</sup>.  
Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?

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

*Pol.* Marry, I'll teach you: think yourself a baby;  
That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,  
Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly;  
Or (not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,  
Wrangling it thus,) you'll tender me a fool<sup>4</sup>.

*Oph.*

<sup>3</sup> Unfisted in such perilous circumstance.] Unfisted, for untried. Untried signifies either not tempted, or not refined; unfisted signifies the latter only, though the sense requires the former. WARBURTON.

I do not think that the sense requires us to understand *untried*. "Unfisted in," &c. means, I think, one who has not nicely canvassed and examined the peril of her situation. MALONE.

<sup>4</sup> —Tender yourself more dearly;

Or (not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,  
Wrangling it thus,) you'll tender me a fool.] I have followed the punctuation of the first quarto, 1604, where the parenthesis is extended to the word *thus*, to which word the context in my apprehension clearly shews it should be carried. "Or (not to crack the wind of the poor phrase, playing upon it, and abusing it thus,)" &c. So, in *The Rape of Lucretia*:

"To wrong the wronger, till he render right."

The quarto, by the mistake of the compositor, reads—*Wrong* it thus. The folio, *Roaming* it thus. The correction was made by Mr. Pope. MALONE.

I believe the word *wronging* has reference, not to the phrase, but to Ophelia: if you go on *wronging it thus*, that is, if you continue to

*Oph.* My lord, he hath importun'd me with love,  
In honourable fashion.

*Pol.* Ay, fashion you may call it; go to, go to<sup>5</sup>.

*Oph.* And hath given countenance to his speech, my  
lord,

With almost all the holy vows of heaven.

*Pol.* Ay, springes to catch woodcocks<sup>6</sup>. I do know,  
When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul  
Lends the tongue vows: these blazes, daughter<sup>7</sup>,  
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 scantier of your maiden presence;  
Set your entreatments<sup>8</sup> at a higher rate,  
Than a command to parley. For lord Hamlet,  
Believe so much in him, That he is young;

*go on thus wrong.* This is a mode of speaking perhaps not very gram-  
matical, but very common; nor have the best writers refused it.

*To sinner it or saint it,*  
is in Pope. And Rowe,

— Thus to coy it,

*With one who knows you too.*

The folio has it,—roaming it thus,—That is, *letting yourself loose, to  
such improper liberty.* But *wronging* seems to be more proper.

JOHNSON.  
— Tender yourself more dearly; ] To tender is to regard with affec-  
tion. So in *King Richard III.*

“ ——— And so betide me,

“ As well I tender you and all of yours.”

Again, in *The Maydes Metamorphosis* by Lily, 1601:

“ ——— if you account us for the same

“ That tender thee, and love Apollo's name.” MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> — fashion you may call it;—] She uses *fashion* for manner, and  
he for a transient practice. JOHNSON.

<sup>6</sup> — springes to catch woodcocks. ] A proverbial saying.

“ Every woman has a springe to catch a woodcock.” STEEV.

<sup>7</sup> These blazes, daughter, ] Some epithet to blazes was probably  
omitted, by the carelessness of the transcriber or compositor, in the first  
quarto, in consequence of which the metre is defective. MALONE.

<sup>8</sup> Set your entreatments—] Entreatments here means company, conver-  
sation, from the French *entretien*. JOHNSON.

Entreatments, I rather think, means the objects of entreaty; the fa-  
vours for which lovers sue. In the next scene we have a word of a  
similar formation:

“ As if it some impartment did desire,” &c. MALONE.

And

And with a larger tether<sup>9</sup> may he walk,  
 Than may be given you: In few, Ophelia,  
 Do not believe his vows: for they are brokers<sup>1</sup>  
 Not of that dye which their investments shew,  
 But mere implorators of unholy suits,  
 Breathing like sanctified and pious bonds<sup>2</sup>,  
 The better to beguile. This is for all, —

<sup>9</sup> — *larger tether*.—] *Tether* is that string by which an animal, set to graze in grounds uninclosed, is confined within the proper limits.

JOHNSON.

So, in *Green's Card of Fancy*, 1601: "To tye the ape and the bear in one *tedder*." *Tether* is a string by which any animal is fastened, whether for the sake of feeding or the air. STEEVENS.

<sup>1</sup> *Do not believe his vows, for they are brokers*,] A *broker* in old English meant a *bawd* or *pimp*. See the Glossary to Gawin Douglas's translation of Virgil. So, in *King John*:

"This *bawd*, this *broker*," &c.

See also Vol. VIII. p. 304, n. 9. In our authour's *Lovers Complaint* we again meet with the same expression, applied in the same manner:

"Know, *vows* are ever *brokers* to defiling." MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> *Breathing, like sanctified and pious bonds*,] For *bonds* Mr. Theobald substituted *bawds*; but the old reading is undoubtedly the true one. Do not, says Polonius, believe his vows, for they are merely uttered for the purpose of persuading you to yield to a criminal passion, though they appear only the genuine effusions of a pure and lawful affection, and assume the semblance of those sacred engagements entered into at the altar of wedlock. The *bonds* here in our poet's thoughts were *bonds of love*. So, in his 142d Sonnet:

"—— those lips of thine,

"That have profan'd their scarlet ornaments,

"And seal'd false *bonds of love*, as oft as mine."

Again, in *The Merchant of Venice*:

"O, ten times faster *Venus* pigeons fly,

"To seal *love's bonds* new made, than they are wont

"To keep obliged faith unforfeited."

"Sanctified and pious bonds," are the *true bonds of love*, or, as our poet has elsewhere expressed it,

"A contract and *eternal bond of love*."

Dr. Warburton certainly misunderstood this passage. His comment, which has been received in all the late editions is this: "Do not believe, (says Polonius,) Hamlet's amorous vows made to you; which pretend religion in them, (*the better to beguile*,) like those sanctified and pious vows made to *beaven*." And why, he triumphantly asks, "may not this pass without suspicion?" If he means his own comment, the answer is, because it is not perfectly accurate. MALONE.

I would

I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,  
Have you so slander any moment's leisure<sup>3</sup>,  
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.*]

## 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<sup>4</sup>.

*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<sup>5</sup>,

Keeps wassel<sup>6</sup>, and the swaggering up-spring<sup>7</sup> reels;

And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,

The

<sup>3</sup> *I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,*

*Have you so slander any moment's leisure,*] Polonius says, in plain terms, that is, not in language less elevated or embellished than before, but in terms that cannot be misunderstood: *I would not have you so disgrace your most idle moments, as not to find better employment for them than lord Hamlet's conversation.* JOHNSON.

<sup>4</sup> — *an eager air.*] That is, a sharp air, *aigre*, Fr. So, in a subsequent scene:

"And curd, like eager droppings into milk." MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> — *takes his rouse,*] A rouse is a large dose of liquor, a debauch. So, in *Othello*: "— they have given me a rouse already."

It should seem from the following passage in Decker's *Gul's Horn-book*, 1609, that the word *rouse* was of Danish extraction. "Teach me, thou sovereign skinker, how to take the German's uply freeze, the Danish rouser, the Switzer's stoop of rhenish," &c. STEEVENS.

<sup>6</sup> *Keeps wassel,*—] Devotes the night to intemperance. See Vol. II. p. 411, n. 9, and Vol. IV. p. 311, n. 2. MALONE.

<sup>7</sup> — *the swaggering up-spring*—] The blustering upstart. JOHNSON.

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<sup>1</sup>,  
Makes us traduc'd, and tax'd of other nations:  
They clepe us, drunkards, and with swinish phrase  
Soil our addition; and, indeed it takes  
From our achievements, though perform'd at height,  
The pith and marrow of our attribute<sup>2</sup>.  
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<sup>3</sup>;) )  
By the o'er-growth of some complexion<sup>4</sup>,

Oft

It appears from the following passage in *Alphonsus Emperor of Germany*, by Chapman, that the *up-spring* was a German dance:

"We Germans have no changes in our dances;

"An *olmain* and an *up-spring*, that is all."

*Spring* was anciently the name of a tune. STEEVENS.

<sup>1</sup> *This heavy-headed revel, east and west, &c.*] *This heavy-headed revel makes us traduced east and west, and taxed of other nations.* JOHNSON.

By *east and west*, as Mr. Edwards has observed, is meant, throughout the world; *from one end of it to the other*.—This and the following twenty one lines have been restored from the quarto. MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> *The pith and marrow of our attribute.*] The best and most valuable part of the praise that would be otherwise attributed to us. JOHNS.

<sup>3</sup> *That, for some vicious mole of nature in them, As in their birth, (wherein they are not guilty, Since nature cannot choose his origin,)]* We have the same sentiment in *The Rape of Lucrece*:

"For marks descried in men's nativity

"Are nature's fault, not their own infamy."

Mr. Theobald, without necessity, altered *mole* to *mould*. The reading of the old copies is fully supported by a passage in *King John*:

"Patch'd with foul moles and eye-offending marks." MALONE.

<sup>4</sup> — complexion.] *i. e.* humour; as sanguine, melancholy, phlegmatic, &c. WARBURTON.

The quarto 1604 for *the* has *their*; as a few lines lower it has *his* virtues, instead of *their* virtues. The correction was made by Mr Theobald. MALONE.



Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason;  
 Or by some habit, that too much o'er-leavens  
 The form of plausible manners<sup>3</sup>;—that these men,—  
 Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect;  
 Being nature's livery, or fortune's star<sup>4</sup>,—  
 Their virtues else (be they as pure as grace,  
 As infinite as man may undergo<sup>5</sup>,)  
 Shall in the general censure take corruption  
 From that particular fault: The dram of base  
 Doth all the noble substance of worth dout,  
 To his own scandal<sup>6</sup>.

*Enter*

3 — *that too much o'er-leavens*

*The form of plausible manners:*] That intermingles too much with their manners; infects and corrupts them. See Vol. VIII. p. 392, n. 2. *Plausible* in our poet's age signified gracious, pleasing, popular. So, in another play:

“—his *plausible* words

“He scatter'd not in ears, but grafted them,

“To grow there, and to bear.”

*Plausible*, in which sense *Plausible* is here used, is defined by Cawdrey in his *Alphabetical Table*, &c. 1604, “*Pleasing*, or received joyfully and willingly.” MALONE.

4 — *or fortune's star,*] Some accidental blemish, the consequence of the overgrowth of some complexion or humour allotted to us by fortune at our birth, or some vicious habit accidentally acquired afterwards.

Theobald, plausibly enough, would read—fortune's *scar*. The emendation may be supported by a passage in *Anthony and Cleopatra*:

“The *scars* upon your honour therefore he

“Does pity as constrained *blemishes*,

“Not as *deserv'd*.” MALONE.

5 *As infinite as man may undergo,*] As large as can be accumulated upon man. JOHNSON.

6 — *The dram of base*

*Doth all the noble substance of worth dout,*

*To his own scandal.*] The quarto, where alone this passage is found, exhibits it thus:

— the dram of *eale*

Doth all the noble substance of a *doubt*,

To his own scandal.

To *dout*, as I have already observed in a note on *King Henry V.* Vol. V. p. 552, n. 8, signified in Shakspere's time, and yet signifies in Devonshire and other western counties, to *do out*, to efface, to extinguish. Thus they say, “*dout* the candle, *dout* the fire,” &c. It

*Enter Ghost.**Hor.* Look, my lord, it comes !*Ham.* Angels and ministers of grace defend us ! —

Be

is exactly formed in the same manner as to *don*, (or *do on*,) which occurs so often in the writings of our poet and his contemporaries.

I have no doubt that the corruption of the text arose in the following manner. *Dout*, which I have now printed in the text, having been written by the mistake of the transcriber, *doubt*, and the word *worth* having been inadvertently omitted, the line, in the copy that went to the press, stood,

Doth all the noble substance of *doubt*,—

The editor or printer of the quarto copy, finding the line too short, and thinking *doubt* must want an article, inserted it, without attending to the context ; and instead of correcting the erroneous, and supplying the true word, printed—

Doth all the noble substance of a *doubt*, &c.

The very same error has happened in *K. Henry V.*

“ That their hot blood may spin in English eyes,

“ And *doubt* them with superfluous courage :”

where *doubt* is again printed instead of *dout*.

That *worth* (which was supplied first by Mr. Theobald,) was the word omitted originally in the hurry of transcription, may be fairly collected from a passage in *Cymbeline*, which fully justifies the correction made :

“ —Is she with Posthumus ?

“ From whose so many weights of *baseness* cannot

“ A *drum* of *worth* be drawn.”

This passage also adds support to the correction of the word *eale* in the first of these lines, which was likewise made by Mr. Theobald.—*Bafe* is used substantively for *baseness* : a practice not uncommon in Shakspeare. So, in *Measure for Measure* :

“ Say what thou canst, my *false* outweighs your *true*.”

Shakspeare, however, might have written—The *drum* of *ill*. This is nearer the corrupted word *eale*, but the passage in *Cymbeline* is in favour of the other emendation.

The meaning of the passage thus corrected is, The smallest particle of vice so blemishes the whole mass of virtue, as to erase from the minds of mankind the recollection of the numerous good qualities possessed by him who is thus blemished by a single stain, and taints his general character.

*To his own scandal*, means, so as to reduce the whole mass of *worth* to its own vicious and unsightly appearance ; to translate his virtue to the likeness of vice.

*His for its*, is so common in Shakspeare, that every play furnishes us with examples. So, in a subsequent scene in this play :—“ than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness.”

Again,

Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damn'd<sup>8</sup>,  
 Bring with thee airs from heaven, or blasts from hell,  
 Be thy intents wicked, or charitable,  
 Thou com'st in such a questionable shape<sup>9</sup>,

That

Again, in another play:

"When every feather sticks in his own wing,—"

Again, in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*:

"Whose liquor hath this virtuous property,

"To take from thence all error with his might."

Again, in *K. Richard II.*

"That it may shew me what a face I have,

"Since it is bankrupt of his majesty."

So, in *Grim, the Collier of Croyden*:

"Contented life, that gives the heart his ease,—"

We meet with a sentiment somewhat similar to that before us, in *K. Henry IV. P. I.*

"—oftentimes it doth present harsh rage,

"Defect of manners, want of government,

"Pride, haughtiness, opinion, and disdain;

"The least of which, haunting a nobleman,

"Loseth men's hearts, and leaves behind a stain

"Upon the beauty of all parts besides,

"Beguiling them of commendation." MALONE.

*7 Angels and ministers of grace defend us!*] Hamlet's speech to the apparition of his father seems to me to consist of three parts. When first he sees the spectre, he fortifies himself with an invocation:

*Angels and ministers of grace defend us!*

As the spectre approaches, he deliberates with himself, and determines, that whatever it be he will venture to address it.

*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,*

*That I will speak to thee. I'll call thee," &c.*

This he says while his father is advancing; he then, as he had determined, speaks to him, and calls him—*Hamlet, King, Father, Royal Dane: oh! answer me.* JOHNSON.

<sup>8</sup> *Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damn'd, &c.*] So, in *Acolastus* his *After-wit*, 1600:

"Art thou a god, a man, or else a ghost?

"Com'st thou from heaven, where bliss and solace dwell?

"Or from the airie cold-engendering coast?

"Or from the darksome dungeon-hold of hell?"

The first known edition of this play is in 1604. STEEVENS.

<sup>9</sup> — *questionable shape,*] By *questionable* is meant provoking question.

HANMER.

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, hearf'd in death,  
Have burst their cerements! why the sepulchre,  
Wherein

So, in *Macbeth*:

*Live you, or are you aught  
That man may question?* JOHNSON.

*Questionable*, I believe means only *propitious to conversation, easy and willing to be conversed with*. So, in *As you like it*: "An *unquestionable* spirit, which you have not." *Unquestionable* in this last instance certainly signifies *unwilling to be talked to*. STEVENS.

*Questionable* perhaps only means *capable of being conversed with*. To *question*, certainly in our authour's time signified *to converse*. So, in his *Rape of Lucrece*, 1594:

"For after supper long he *questioned*  
"With modest Lucrece—"

Again, in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

"Out of our *question* wipe him."

See also Vol. VIII. p. 667, n. 1. MALONE.

1 ——— tell,

*Why thy canoniz'd bones, hearf'd 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 intombed *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.

By *bearf'd in death*, the poet seems to mean, *reposed and confined in the place of the dead*. In his *Rape of Lucrece* he has again used this uncommon participle in nearly the same sense:

"Thy sea within a puddle's womb is *bearf'd*,

"And not the puddle in thy sea dispersed." MALONE.

By the expression *bearf'd in death* is meant, shut up and secured with all those precautions which are usually practised in preparing dead bodies for sepulture, such as the winding-sheet, shroud, coffin, &c. perhaps embalming into the bargain. So that *death* is here used, by a metonymy of the antecedent for the consequents, for the *rites of death*,

Wherein we saw thee quietly in-urn'd<sup>2</sup>,  
 Hath op'd his ponderous and marble jaws,  
 To cast thee up again? What may this mean,  
 'That thou, dead corse, again, in complete steel<sup>3</sup>,  
 Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,  
 Making night hideous; and we fools of nature<sup>4</sup>  
 So horribly to shake our disposition<sup>5</sup>,  
 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:  
 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<sup>6</sup>;  
 And, for my soul, what can it do to that,

death, such as are generally esteemed due, and practised with regard to dead bodies. Consequently, I understand by *cerements*, the waxed winding-sheet or winding-sheets, in which the corpse was enclosed and fown up, in order to preserve it the longer from external impressions from the humidity of the sepulchre, as embalming was intended to preserve it from internal corruption. HEATH.

<sup>2</sup> — quietly in-urn'd,] The quartos read *interr'd*. STEEVENS.

<sup>3</sup> *That thou, dead corse, again, in complete 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. Vide *Olavi Wormius*, cap. 7.

<sup>4</sup> *Struem regi nec vestibus, nec odoribus cumulant, sua cuique arma, quorundam igni et equis adjicitur.*

<sup>5</sup> — sed postquam magnanimus ille Danorum rex collem sibi magnitudinis conspicue extruxisset, (cui post obitum regio diademate exornatum, *armis indutum*, inferendum esset cadaver,) &c. STEEV.

<sup>6</sup> — *we fools of nature*—] i. e. making us, who are the sport of nature, whose mysterious operations are beyond the reaches of our souls, &c. So, in *Romeo and Juliet*: "O, I am fortune's fool." MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> — *to shake our disposition,*] *Disposition*, for *frame*. WARBURTON.

<sup>6</sup> — *pin's fee;*] The value of a pin. JOHNSON.

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 base<sup>7</sup> into the sea?  
And there assume some other horrible form,  
Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason<sup>8</sup>,  
And draw you into madness? think of it:  
The very place puts toys of desperation<sup>9</sup>,  
Without more motive, into every brain,  
That looks so many fathoms to the sea,  
And hears it roar beneath.

*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<sup>1</sup>.—[*Ghost beckons.*  
Still am I call'd;—unhand me, gentlemen;—

[*Breaking from them.*

<sup>7</sup> *That beetles o'er his base*—] That *hangs* o'er his base, like what is called a *beetle-brow*. This verb is, I believe, of our authour's coinage. MALONE.

<sup>8</sup> —*deprive* your sovereignty, &c.] Dr. Warburton would read *deprave*; but several proofs are given in the notes to *King Lear* of Shakspeare's use of the word *deprive*, which is the true reading.

STEEVENS.

I believe, *deprive* in this place signifies simply to *take away*. JOHNS.

<sup>9</sup> —*puts toys of desperation*,] *Toys*, for *whims*. WARBURTON.

This and the three following lines are omitted in the folio.

MALONE.

<sup>1</sup> *As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve*.—] Shakspeare has again accented the word *Nemean* in this manner, in *Love's Labour's Lost*:

“Thus dost thou hear the Nemean lion roar.”

Spenser, however, wrote *Neméan*, *Fairy Queen*, B. V. c. i.:

“Into the great Neméan lion's grove.”

Our poet's conforming in this instance to Latin prosody was certainly accidental, for he and almost all the poets of his time disregarded the quantity of Latin names. So, in *Lucretius*, 1505, (though undoubtedly the production of a scholar,) we have *Amphion* instead of *Amphion*, &c. See also p. 204, n. 7. MALONE.

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By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me<sup>2</sup>:—  
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<sup>3</sup>.

*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,  
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<sup>4</sup>,

Till

<sup>2</sup> — *that lets me:*] To let among our old authors signifies to prevent, to hinder. STEEVENS.

So, in *No Wit like a Woman's*, a comedy by Middleton, 1657 :

"That lets her not to be your daughter now." MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> *Heaven will direct it.*] Marcellus answers Horatio's question, "To what issue will this come?" and Horatio also answers it himself, with a pious resignation, "Heaven will direct it." BLACKSTONE.

<sup>4</sup> *Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,*

*And for the day confin'd to fast in fires,*] Chaucer has a similar passage with regard to the punishments of hell. *Parson's Tale*, p.

Till the foul crimes, done in my days of nature,  
 Are burnt and purg'd away<sup>5</sup>. 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<sup>6</sup>;

193, Mr. Urry's edition: "And moreover the misere of hell shall be in default of mete and drinke." SMITH.

Nash, in his *Pierce Penniless's Supplication to the Devil*, 1595, has the same idea: "Whether it be a place of horror, stench, and darkness, where men see meat, but can get none, and are ever thirsty," &c. Before I had read the *Persones Tale* of Chaucer, I supposed that he meant rather to drop a stroke of satire on sacerdotal luxury, than to give a serious account of the place of future torment. Chaucer, however, is as grave as Shakspeare. So likewise at the conclusion of an ancient pamphlet called *The Wyll of the Devyll*, bl. l. no date:

"Thou shalt lye in frost and fire

"With sicknesse and hunger;" &c. STEEVENS.

<sup>5</sup> *Are burnt and purg'd away*.] Gawin Douglas really changes the Platonic hell into the "punition of saulis in purgatory;" and it is observable, that when the ghost informs Hamlet of his doom there,

"Till the foul crimes, done in his days of nature,

"*Are burnt and purg'd away*,—

the expression is very similar to the bishop's. I will give you his version as concisely as I can: "It is a nedeful thyng to suffer panis and  
 "torment;—Sum in the wyndis, sum under the watter, and in the fire  
 "uthir sum: thus the mony vices—

"Contrakkit in the corpis be done away

"*And purgitt*."—*Sixte Book of Eneados*, fol. p. 191. FARMER.

Shakspeare might have found this expression in the *Hy storie of Hamlet*, bl. let. F. 2. edit. 1608: "He set fire in the four corners of the hal, in such sort, that of all that were as then therein not one escaped away, but were forced to *purge their sinnes by fire*." MALONE.

Shakspeare talks more like a papist than a platonist; but the language of bishop Douglas is that of a good protestant:

"—— Thus the many vices

"Contrackit in the corpis be done away

"*And purgit*."

These are the very words of our liturgy in the commendatory prayer for a sick person at the point of departure, in the office for the visitation of the sick: "—*whatsewer deflements it may have contracted— being purged and done away*." WHALLEY.

<sup>6</sup> *Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres*;] So, in our poet's 108th sonnet:

"How have mine eyes out of their spheres been fited,

"In the distraction of this madding fever!" MALONE.



Thy knotted and combined locks to part,  
 And each particular hair to stand on end,  
 Like quills upon the fretful porcupine<sup>7</sup>:  
 But this eternal blazon must not be  
 To cars of flesh and blood:—Lift, lift, O lift!—  
 If thou did'st ever thy dear father love,—

*Ham.* O heaven!

*Ghost.* Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder<sup>8</sup>.

*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<sup>9</sup>,

<sup>7</sup> — *fretful porcupine*:] The quartos read *scarful* porcupine. Either may serve. This animal is at once irascible and timid. The same image occurs in the *Romant of the Rose*, where *Chaucer* is describing the personage of *danger*:

“Like sharpe urchons his beere was grow.”

An *urchin* is a hedge-hog. STEEVENS.

<sup>8</sup> *Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.*] As a proof that this play was written before 1597, of which the contrary has been asserted by Mr. Holt in Dr. Johnson's appendix, I must borrow, as usual, from Dr. Farmer. “Shakspeare is said to have been no extraordinary actor; and that the top of his performance was the *Ghost* in his own *Hamlet*. Yet this *chef d'oeuvre* did not please: I will give you an original stroke at it. Dr. Lodge published in the year 1596 a pamphlet called *Wit's Miserie, or the World's Madnesse, discovering the incarnate devils of the age*, quarto. One of these devils is, *Hate-virtue, or sorrow for another man's good successe*, who, says the doctor, “is a foule lubber, and looks as pale as the vizard of the *Ghost*, which cried so miserably at the theatre, *Hamlet revenge*.” STEEVENS.

I suspect that this stroke was levelled, not at Shakspeare, but at the performer of the *Ghost* in an older play on this subject, exhibited before 1589. See *An Attempt to ascertain the order of Shakspeare's plays*, Vol. I. MALONE.

<sup>9</sup> *As meditation, or the thoughts of love.*] This similitude is extremely beautiful. The word *meditation* is consecrated, by the mystics, to signify that stretch and flight of mind which aspires to the enjoyment of the supreme good. So that Hamlet, considering with what to compare the swiftness of his revenge, chooses two of the most rapid things in nature, the ardency of divine and human passion, in an *enthusiast* and a *lover*. WARBURTON.

The comment on the word *meditation* is so ingenious, that I hope it is just. JOHNSON.

May sweep to my revenge.

*Ghost.* I find thee apt;  
And duller should'st thou be than the fat weed  
That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf<sup>2</sup>,  
Would'st thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear:  
'Tis given out, that, sleeping in my orchard,  
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 traiterous gifts,

<sup>2</sup> *And duller should'st thou be than the fat weed*

*That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf, &c.*] Shakspeare, apparently through ignorance, makes Roman Catholics of these Pagan Dances; and here gives a description of purgatory; but yet mixes it with the Pagan fable of Lethe's wharf. Whether he did it to insinuate to the zealous Protestants of his time, that the Pagan and Popish purgatory stood both upon the same footing of credibility, or whether it was by the same kind of licentious inadvertence that Michael Angelo brought Charon's bark into his picture of the Last Judgment, is not easy to decide. WARBURTON.

*That roots itself in ease, &c.*] Thus the quarto, 1604. The folio reads—"That *rots* itself," &c. I have preferred the reading of the original copy, because to *root itself* is a natural and easy phrase, but "to *rot* itself," not English. Indeed in general the readings of the original copies, when not corrupt, ought in my opinion not to be departed from, without very strong reason. *That roots itself in ease*, means, whole sluggish root is idly extended.

The modern editors read—*Lethe's wharf*; but the reading of the old copy is right. So, in Sir Aston Cockain's poems, 1658, p. 177:

"—fearing these great actions might die,

"Neglected cast all into *Lethe lake*." MALONE.

Otway has the same thought:

"—like a coarse and useless dunghill weed,

"Fix'd to one spot, and *rot* just as I grow."

The superiority of the reading of the folio is to me apparent: to be in a crescent state (i. e. to *root itself*) affords an idea of activity; to *rot* better suits with the dullness and inaction to which the Ghost refers. Nevertheless, the accusative case (*itself*) may seem to demand the verb *roots*. STEEVENS.

\*—*his wit*,—] The old copies have *wits*. The subsequent line shews that it was a misprint. MALONE.

(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 fate 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<sup>3</sup>,  
My custom always of the afternoon,  
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,  
With juice of curd hebenon in a vial<sup>4</sup>,  
And in the porches of mine ears did pour

<sup>3</sup> —mine orchard,] Orchard for garden. So, in *Romeo and Juliet*:

“The orchard walls are high, and hard to climb.” STEEV.

<sup>4</sup> With juice of curd hebenon in a vial,] The word here used was more probably designed by a *metathesis*, either of the poet or transcriber, for *benebon*, that is, *henbane*; of which the most common kind (*hyoscyamus niger*) is certainly *narcotic*, and perhaps, if taken in a considerable quantity, might prove poisonous. Galen calls it cold in the third degree; by which in this, as well as *opium*, he seems not to mean an actual coldness, but the power it has of benumbing the faculties. Dioscorides ascribes to it the property of producing madness (*ὑποκυμαίνουσιν μανίᾳ*). These qualities have been confirmed by several cases related in modern observations. In Wepfer we have a good account of the various effects of this root upon most of the members of a convent in Germany, who eat of it for supper by mistake, mixed with succory;—heat in the throat, giddiness, dimness of sight and delirium. *Cicut. Aquatic. c. 18. GAZ.*

So, in Drayton's *Barons' Wars*, p. 51.

“The pois'ning *benbane*, and the mandrake drad.”

In Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*, 1633, the word is written in a different manner:

“—the blood of Hydra, Lerna's bane,

“The juice of *Hebon*, and Cocyus' breath.” STEEVENS.

The leperous distilment<sup>5</sup>; whose effect  
 Holds such an enmity with blood of man,  
 That, swift as quick-silver, 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 dispatch'd<sup>6</sup>:  
 Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,<sup>7</sup>  
 Unhousel'd<sup>8</sup>, disappointed<sup>9</sup>, unanel'd<sup>1</sup>;

No

<sup>5</sup> *The leperous distilment*;] So, in *Painter's Palace of Pleasure*, Vol. II, p. 142: "—which being once possessed, never leaveth the patient till it hath enfeebled his state, like the qualitie of *poison distilling* through the veins even to the heart." MALONE.

<sup>6</sup> —at once dispatch'd;] *Dispatch'd*, for *bereft*. WARRURTON.

<sup>7</sup> *Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin*, &c.] The very words of this part of the speech are taken (as I have been informed by a gentleman of undoubted veracity) from an old *Legend of Saints*, where a man, who was accidentally drowned, is introduced as making the same complaint. STEEVENS.

<sup>8</sup> *Unhousel'd*,—] *Housel* is the old word for the holy eucharist. To *housel*, says Bullokar in his *Expositor*, 8vo, 1616, is "to minister sacraments to a sick man in danger of death." *Unhousel'd* therefore is, without having received the sacrament in the hour of death. So, in *Hoffman's Tragedy*, 1631:

"None sung thy requiem, no friend clos'd thine eyes,

"Nor lay'd the hallow'd earth upon thy lips:

"Thou wert not *housel'd*."

Again, in Holinshed's *Chronicle*: "Also children were christened, and men *bouseled* and *anoyled*, thorough all the land, except such as were in the bill of excommunication by name expressed." MALONE.

<sup>9</sup> —*disappointed*,] 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*. JOHNSON.

So, in Holinshed's *Chronicle*: "He had not past a fifteen lances, as they termed them in those days, that is, to wit, men of arms, furnished and *appointed*."

Mr. Upton is of opinion, that the particular preparation of which the Ghost laments the want, was *confession* and *absolution*. *Appointment*,

No reckoning made, but sent to my account  
 With all my imperfections on my head;  
 O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!<sup>2</sup>  
 If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not;  
 Let not the royal bed of Denmark be  
 A couch for luxury<sup>3</sup> 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 glow-worm shows the matin to be near,  
 And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire<sup>4</sup>:

Adieu,

ment, he adds, is again used in *Measure for Measure*, in the same sense as here:

"Therefore your best *appointment* make with speed."

Isabella is the speaker, and her brother, who was condemned to die, is the person addressed. MALONE.

<sup>1</sup> —*unanel'd*;] Without extreme unction. So, in Sir Thomas More's Works, p. 345: "The extreme unction or *anelynge*, and confirmation, he sayd, be no sacraments of the church." See also the quotation from Holinshed in n. 8, where the word is spelt *anoyled*.

MALONE.

The Anglo-saxon noun-substantives, *boufel*, (the eucharist,) and *ele*, oil, are plainly the roots of the compound adjectives, *boufeled* and *aneled*. For the meaning of the affix *an* to the last, I quote Spelman's *Glossary* in loco. "Quin et dictionibus (an) adjungitur, siquidem vel majoris notationis gratia, vel ad *singulare aliquid* vel *unicum* demonstrandum." Hence *aneled* should seem to signify *ciled*, or *anointed*, by way of eminence, i. e. having received extreme unction. BRAND.

<sup>2</sup> O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!] It was ingeniously hinted to me by a very learned lady, that this line seems to belong to Hamlet, in whose mouth it is a proper and natural exclamation; and who, according to the practice of the stage, may be supposed to interrupt so long a speech. JOHNSON.

<sup>3</sup> A couch for luxury—] i. e. for *lewdness*. So, in *K. Lear*:

"To't luxury pell-mell, for," &c. STEEVENS.

See Vol. VIII. p. 278, n. 2. MALONE.

<sup>4</sup> —*uneffectual fire*.] i. e. shining without heat. WARBURTON.

To pale is a verb used by Lady Elizabeth Carew, in her *Tragedy of Mariam*, 1613:

— Death

Adieu, adieu, adieu! remember me<sup>5</sup>. [Exit.

Ham. O all you host of heaven! O earth! What else?  
And shall I couple hell?—O fie!—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<sup>6</sup>. Remember thee?  
Yea, from the table of my memory<sup>7</sup>  
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,—meet it is, I set it down<sup>8</sup>,

That

“ ——— Death can pale as well

“ A cheek of roses as a cheek less bright.”

Again, in Urry's Chaucer, p. 368: “The sterre paleth her white  
cheres by the flambes of the sonne,” &c.

Unsuccessful fire, I believe, rather means, fire that is no longer seen  
when the light of morning approaches. So, in *Pericles Prince of Tyre*,  
1609:

“ ——— like a glow worm,—

“ The which hath fire in darkness, none in light.” STEEVENS.

<sup>5</sup> Adieu, adieu, adieu! &c.] The folio reads:

Adieu, adieu, Hamlet: remember me. STEEVENS.

<sup>6</sup> — Remember thee!

Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat

In this distracted globe.] So in our poet's 122d sonnet:

“ Which shall above that idle rank remain,

“ Beyond all dates, even to eternity;

“ Or at the least, so long as brain and heart

“ Have faculty by nature to subsist.” MALONE.

<sup>7</sup> — this distracted globe.] i. e. in this head confused with thought.

STEEVENS.

<sup>8</sup> Yea, from the table of my memory—] This expression is used by  
Sir Philip Sydney in his *Defence of Poesie*. MALONE.

<sup>8</sup> My tables,—meet it is, I set it down.] Hamlet avails himself of  
the same caution observed by the doctor in the fifth act of *Macbeth*:

“ I will

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<sup>2</sup>;  
It is, *Adieu, adieu ! remember me.*  
I have sworn it.

*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 !

*Ham.* Hillo, ho, ho, boy ! come, bird, come<sup>1</sup>,

*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.*

“ I will set down what comes from her, to satisfy my remembrance the more strongly.” STEEVENS.

See also *The Second Part of K. Henry IV.*

“ And therefore will he wipe his *tables* clean,

“ And keep no *tell-tale* to his memory.”

York is here speaking of the king. *Table-books* in the time of our authour 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. MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> — *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.* So, in *The Devil's Charter*, a Tragedy, 1607 :

“ Now to my *watch-word.*” STEEVENS.

<sup>1</sup> — *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.

HANMER.

This expression is used in *Marston's Dutch Courtesan*, and by many others among the old dramatic writers.

*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<sup>2</sup>, but there is, Horatio,  
And much offence too. Touching this vision here,—  
It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you:  
For your desire to know what is between us,  
O'er-master it is as you may. And now, good friends,  
As you are friends, scholars, and soldiers,  
Give me one poor request.

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

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

*Hor. Mar.* My lord, we will not.

*Ham.* Nay, but swear it.

*Hor.* In faith, my lord, not I.

*Mar.* Nor I, my lord, in faith.

It appears from all these passages, that it was the falconer's call, as  
*Hammer* has observed. STEEVENS.

<sup>2</sup> — by St. Patrick,—] How the poet comes to make Hamlet  
swear by St. Patrick, I know not. However, at this time all the  
whole northern world had their learning from Ireland; to which  
place it had retired, and there flourished under the auspices of this  
Saint. But it was, I suppose, only said at random; for he makes  
Hamlet a student of Wittenberg. WARRINGTON.

Dean Swift's "Verses on the sudden drying up of St. Patrick's  
Well, 1726," contain many learned allusions to the early cultiva-  
tion of literature in Ireland. NICHOLS.

*Ham.*



*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<sup>3</sup>?

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<sup>4</sup>.

*Ghost.*

3 — true-penny? This word as well as some of Hamlet's former exclamations, we find in the *Malecontent*, 1604:

"Illo, ho, ho, ho; art there old True-penny?" STEEVENS.

4 *Swear by my sword.*] Here the poet has preserved the manners of the ancient Danes, with whom it was religion to swear upon their swords. See *Barbolinus, De causis contempt. mort. apud. Dan.* WARR.

I was once inclinable to this opinion, which is likewise well defended by Mr. Upton; but Mr. Garrick produced me a passage, I think, in *Brantôme*, from which it appeared, that it was common to swear upon the sword, that is, upon the cross which the old swords always had upon the hilt. JOHNSON.

Shakspeare, it is more than probable, knew nothing of the ancient Danes, or their manners. Every extract from Dr. Farmer's pamphlet must prove as instructive to the reader as the following:

"In the *Passus Primus* of *Pierce Plowman*,

"David in his dales dubbed knightes,

"And did them *swere on her sword* to serve truth ever."

"And in *Hieronimo*, the common butt of our author, and the wits of the time, says Lorenzo to Pedringano:—

"Swear on this *cross*, that what thou say'st is true,

"But if I prove thee perjurd and unjust,

"This very *sword*, whereon thou took'st thine oath,

"Shall be a worker of thy tragedy."

To the authorities produced by Dr. Farmer, the following may be added from *Holinshed*, p. 664: "Warwick kissed the cross of K. Edward's sword, as it were a vow to his promise."

Again, p. 1038, it is said, "that Warwick drew out his sword, which other of the honourable and worshipful that were then present likewise did, whom he commanded, that each one should kiss other's sword, according to an ancient custom amongst men of war in time of great danger; and herewith they made a solemn vow," &c.

*Ghost.* [*beneath*] Swear.

*Ham.* *Hic & 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.<sup>5</sup>  
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 so'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, an if we would*;—or, *If we list to speak*;—or, *There be, an if they might*\*;—

Or such ambiguous giving out to note

—Again, in Decker's comedy of *Old Fortunatus*, 1600:

“He has sworn to me on the *cross* of his pure Toledo.”

In the soliloquy of *Roland* addressed to his sword, the *cross* on it is not forgotten: “—capulo eburneo candidissime, *cruce aureâ splendissime*,” &c. Turpin's Hist. de Gestis Caroli Mag. cap. 22. STEEV.

Spenser observes that the Irish in his time used commonly to swear by their sword. See his *View of the State of Ireland*, written in 1595. This custom, indeed, is of the highest antiquity; having prevailed, as we learn from Lucian, among the Scythians. MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.] i. e. receive it to yourself; take it under your own roof; as much as to say, *Keep it secret*. Alluding to the laws of hospitality. WARBURTON.

\*—an if they might;] Thus the quarto. The folio reads—*an if there might*. MALONE.

That

That you know aught of me<sup>6</sup>: This do swear<sup>7</sup>,  
So grace and mercy at your most need help you!

*Ghost.* [*beneath*] Swear.

*Ham.* Rest, rest, perturbed spirit<sup>8</sup>!—So, gentlemen,  
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 spight!  
That ever I was born to set it right!—  
Nay, come, let's go together.

[*Exeunt.*]

<sup>6</sup> Or such ambiguous giving out to note

[*That you know aught of me:—*] The construction is irregular and elliptical. Swear as before, says Hamlet, that you never shall by folded arms or shaking of your head intimate that a secret is lodged in your breasts; and by no ambiguous phrases to note that you know aught of me.

Shakspeare has in many other places begun to construct a sentence in one form, and ended it in another. So, in *All's Well that ends Well*: “I would the cutting of my garments would serve the turn, or the baring of my beard; and to say it was in stratagem.”

Again, in the same play: “No more of this, Helena;—lest it be rather thought you affect a sorrow than to have it:” where he ought to have written *than that you have it*: or, *lest you rather be thought to affect a sorrow, than to have.*

Again, *ibidem*:

“I bade her—if her fortunes ever stood

“Necessity’d to help, *that* by this token

“I would relieve her.”

Again, in *The Tempest*:

“I have with such provision in mine art

“So safely order’d, that there is *no* soul—

“No, not so much perdition as an hair

“Betid to any creature in the vessel.”

See also Vol. IV. p. 156, n. 8, and p. 240, n. 8.

Having used the word *never* in the preceding part of the sentence, [*that you never shall—*] the poet considered the *negative* implied in what follows; and hence he wrote—“*or—to note,*” instead of *nor*. MALONE.

<sup>7</sup> — *this do swear, &c.*] The folio reads, *this not to do, swear, &c.*

STEEVENS.

*Swear* is used here as in many other places, as a dissyllable.

MALONE.

<sup>8</sup> — *perturbed spirit!*] The verb *perturb* is used by Holinshed, and by Bacon in his *Essay on Superstition*; “—therefore atheism did never *perturb* states.” MALONE.

ACT II.

## A C T II. S C E N E I.

*A Room in Polonius's 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, fir,  
Inquire me first what Danskers<sup>1</sup> 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<sup>2</sup>:  
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, fir, such wanton, wild, and usual slips,

<sup>1</sup> The quartos read, *Enter old Polonius with his man or two.* STEEV.

<sup>1</sup> —*Danskens*—] *Danske* (in Warner's *Albions England*) is the ancient name of Denmark. STEEVENS.

<sup>2</sup> —*come you more nearer*

*Than your particular demands will touch it:*] The late editions read, and point, thus:

—*come you more nearer;*

*Then your particular demands will touch it:*

Throughout the old copies the word which we now write—*then*, is constantly written *then*. I have therefore here printed *then*, which the context seems to me to require, though the old copies have *then*. There is no point after the word *nearer*, either in the original quarto, 1604, or the folio. MALONE.

As are companions noted and most known  
To youth and liberty.

*Rey.* As gaming, my lord.

*Pol.* Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing<sup>3</sup>, 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<sup>4</sup>.  
You must not put another scandal on him<sup>5</sup>,  
That he is open to incontinency;  
That's not my meaning: but breathe his faults so quaintly,  
That they may seem the taints of liberty:  
The flash and out-break of a fiery mind;  
A savageness<sup>6</sup> in unreclaimed blood,  
Of general assault<sup>7</sup>.

*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<sup>8</sup>:  
You laying these flight fullies on my son,  
As 'twere a thing a little soil'd i' the working,

<sup>3</sup> —*drinking, fencing, swearing,*] I suppose by *fencing* is meant a too diligent frequentation of the fencing-school, a resort of violent and lawless young men. JOHNSON.

*Fencing*, I suppose, means, piquing himself on his skill in the use of the sword, and quarrelling and brawling, in consequence of that skill. "The cunning of *fencers*, says Gossion in his *Schools of Abuses*, 1579, is now applied to *quarrelling*: they thinke themselves no men, if, for stirring of a straw, they prove not their valure uppon some bodies fleshe." MALONE.

<sup>4</sup> *Faith, no; as you may season it, &c.*] The quarto reads—Faith, as you may season it in the charge. MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> *You must not put another scandal on him,*] i. e. a very different and more scandalous failing, namely habitual incontinency, Mr. Theobald in his *Shakspeare Restored* proposed to read—an utter scandal on him; but did not admit the emendation into his edition.

MALONE.

<sup>6</sup> *A savageness*—] *Savageness*, for *wildness*. WARBURTON.

<sup>7</sup> *Of general assault.*] i. e. such as youth in general is liable to.

WARBURTON.

<sup>8</sup> *And, I believe, it is a fetch of warrant:*] So the folio. The quarto reads,—a fetch of wit. STEEVENS.

Mark you,

Your party in converse, him you would sound,  
Having ever seen, in the prenominate crimes<sup>9</sup>,  
The youth, you breathe of, guilty, be assur'd,  
He closes with you in this consequence;  
*Good sir*, or *so*<sup>1</sup>; 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 some-  
thing:—Where did I leave?

*Rey.* At, closes in the consequence<sup>2</sup>.

*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 windlances, 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<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> —*prenominate crimes*,] i. e. crimes already named. STEEVENS.

<sup>1</sup> *Good sir, or so*;] I suspect, (with Mr. Tyrwhitt,) that the poet wrote—*Good sir, or sir, or friend*, &c. In the last act of this play, *so* is used for *so forth*: “—six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hanger, and *so*.” MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> *At, closes in the consequence.*] Thus the quarto. The folio adds—*At friend, or so, or gentleman.* MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> —*in yourself.*] Hammer reads, *in yourself*, and is followed by Dr. Warburton; but perhaps *in yourself* means, *in your own person*, not by spies. JOHNSON.

*Rey.*

*Rey.* I shall, my lord.

*Pol.* And let him ply his musick.

*Rey.* Well, my lord.

[*Exit.*]

*Enter OPHELIA.*

*Pol.* Farewel!—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<sup>4</sup>;  
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<sup>5</sup>,  
And end his being: That done, he lets me go;  
And, with his head over his shoulder turn'd,

<sup>4</sup> *Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ancle;*] *Down-gyved* means hanging down like the loose cincture which confines the letters round the ancles. STEVENS.

Thus the quartos 1604, and 1605, and the folio. In the quarto of 1611, the word *gyved* was changed to *gyred*. MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> — *all his bulk,*] i. e. all his body. So, in *The Rape of Lucrece* :

“ — her heart

“ Beating her *bulk*, that his hand shakes withal.”

See Vol. VI. p. 438, n. 3. MALONE.

He seem'd to find his way without his eyes ;  
For out o'doors he went without their helps,  
And, to the last, bended their light on me.

*Pol.* Come, go with me ; I will go seek the king ;  
This is the very ecstasy of love ;  
Whose violent property foredoes itself<sup>6</sup>,  
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 deny'd  
His access to me.

*Pol.* That hath made him mad.  
I am sorry, that with better heed, and judgment,  
I had not quoted him<sup>7</sup> : I fear'd he did but trifle,  
And meant to wreck thee ; but, belshrew 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<sup>8</sup>. Come, go we to the king :

This

<sup>6</sup> — foredoes itself,] To foredo is to destroy. So, in *Othello* :

“ That either makes me, or foredoes me quite.” STEEVENS.

<sup>7</sup> I had not quoted him:] I had not marked or observed him. So, in *The Rape of Lucrece* :

“ Yea, the illiterate —

“ Will quote my loathed trespass in my looks.”

In this passage, in the original edition of 1594, the word is written *cote*, as it is in the quarto copy of this play. It is merely the old or corrupt spelling of the word. See Vol. II. p. 378, n. 6, and p. 431, n. 6 ; Vol. III. p. 471, n. 6, and Vol. IV. p. 537, n. 6. In Minshew's Dict. 1617, we find, “ To quote, mark, or note, à quotus. Numeris enim scribentes sententias suas notant et distinguunt.” See also Cotgrave's Dict. 1611 : “ Quoter. To quote or marke in the margin ; to note by the way.” MALONE.

<sup>8</sup> — 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.] 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



This must be known; which, being kept close, might  
move<sup>9</sup>

More grief to hide, than hate to utter love.  
Come.

[*Exeunt.*]

# 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 nor 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',—

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.

The quartos read—*By heaven, it is as proper, &c.* STEEVENS.

In Decker's *Wonderful Yeare*, 4to. 1603, we find an expression  
similar to that in the text. "Now the thirstie citizen casts beyond  
the moone." MALONE.

<sup>9</sup> *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. The poet's ill and obscure expression seems to have been  
caused by his affectation of concluding the scene with a couplet.

Hammer reads,

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

<sup>8</sup> —and *humour*,] Thus the folio. The quartos read, *bauiour*.

STEEVENS.

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<sup>2</sup>,  
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 shew us so much gentry<sup>3</sup>, and good will,  
As to expend your time with us a while,  
For the supply and profit of our hope<sup>4</sup>,  
Your visitation shall receive such thanks  
As fits a king's remembrance.

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

*Guil.* But we both obey;  
And here give up ourselves, in the full bent<sup>5</sup>,  
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 ROS. GUIL. and some Attendants.*]

<sup>2</sup> *Whether aught, &c.*] This line is omitted in the folio. STEEV.

<sup>3</sup> *To shew us so much gentry—*] *Gentry*, for complaisance. WARB.

<sup>4</sup> *For the supply, &c.*] That the hope which your arrival has raised may be completed by the desired effect. JOHNSON.

<sup>5</sup> — *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. So afterwards in this play:

“They fool me to the top of my bent.” MALONE.

*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 policy so sure<sup>6</sup>  
As it hath us'd to do,) that I have found  
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

*King.* O, speak of that; that do I long to hear.

*Pol.* Give first admittance to the ambassadors;  
My news shall be the fruit to that great feast<sup>7</sup>.

*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'er-hasty 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 hand<sup>8</sup>,—sends out arrests

<sup>6</sup> — *the trail of policy*—] The trail is the course of an animal pursued by the scent. JOHNSON.

<sup>7</sup> — *the fruit*—] The desert after the meat. JOHNSON.

<sup>8</sup> — *borne in hand*,—] i. e. deceived, imposed on. STEEVENS.

See Vol. IV. p. 357, n. 6. MALONE.

On Fortinbras; which he, in brief, obeys;  
 Receives rebuke from Norway; and, in fine,  
 Makes vow before his uncle, never more  
 To give the assay<sup>9</sup> of arms against your majesty.  
 Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,  
 Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee<sup>1</sup>;  
 And his commission, to employ those soldiers,  
 So levied as before, against the Polack:  
 With an entreaty, herein further shewn, [*gives a paper*;  
 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<sup>2</sup>:  
 Most welcome home! [*Exeunt VOL. and COR.*  
*Pol.* This business is well ended.  
 My liege, and madam, to expostulate<sup>3</sup>

What

<sup>9</sup> *To give the assay*—] *To take the assay* was a technical expression, originally applied to those who tasted wine for princes and great men. See Vol. VIII. p. 673, n. 5. MALONE.

<sup>1</sup> *Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee*;] Thus the folio. The quarto has—three score thousand. MALONE.

*Fee* in this place signifies *reward, recompence*. So in *All's well that ends well*:

“—Not helping, death's my fee;

“But if I help, what do you promise me?”

The word is commonly used in Scotland, for *wages*, as we say *lawyer's fee, physician's fee*. STEVENS.

*Fee* is defined by Minshew in his Dict. 1617, a reward. MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> — *at night we'll feast*—] The king's intemperance is never suffered to be forgotten. JOHNSON.

<sup>3</sup> *My liege, and madam, to expostulate*—] *To expostulate*, for *to enquire or discuss*.

The strokes of humour in this speech are admirable. Polonius's character is that of a weak, pedant, minister of state. His declamation is a fine satire on the impertinent oratory then in vogue, which placed reason in the formality of method, and wit in the jingle and play of words. With what art is he made to pride himself in his wit.

*That*

What majesty should be, what duty is,  
Why day is day, night, night, and time is time,

Were

*That he is mad, 'tis true: 'tis true, 'tis pity:  
And pity 'tis, 'tis true: A foolish figure,  
But farewell it,—*

And how exquisitely does the poet ridicule the *reason in fashion*, where he makes Polonius remark on Hamlet's madness:

*Though this be madness, yet there's method in't:*

As if method, which the wits of that age thought the most essential quality of a good discourse, would make amends for the madness. It was *madness* indeed, yet Polonius could comfort himself with this reflection, that at least it was *method*. It is certain Shakspeare excels in nothing more than in the preservation of his characters; *To this life and variety of character* (says our great poet in his admirable preface to Shakspeare,) *we must add the wonderful preservation of it*. We have said what is the character of Polonius; and it is allowed on all hands to be drawn with wonderful life and spirit, yet the *unity* of it has been thought by some to be grossly violated in the excellent *precepts and instructions* which Shakspeare makes his statesman give to his son and servant in the middle of the *first*, and beginning of the *second act*. But I will venture to say, these critics have not entered into the poet's art and address in this particular. He had a mind to ornament his scenes with those fine lessons of social life; but his Polonius was too weak to be author of them, though he was pedant enough to have met with them in his reading, and sop enough to get them by heart, and retail them for his own. And this the poet has finely shewn us was the case, where, in the middle of Polonius's instructions to his servant, he makes him, though without having received any interruption, forget his lesson, and say,

*And then, sir, does he this;*

*He does—What was I about to say?*

*I was about to say something—where did I leave?*

The servant replies,

*At*, closes in the consequence. This sets Polonius right, and he goes on,

*At*, closes in the consequence.

*—Ay marry,*

*He closes thus:—I know the gentleman, &c.*

which shews the very words got by heart which he was repeating. Otherwise *closes in the consequence*, which conveys no particular idea of the subject he was upon, could never have made him recollect where he broke off. This is an extraordinary instance of the poet's art, and attention to the preservation of character. WARBURTON.

This account of the character of Polonius, though it sufficiently reconciles the seeming inconsistency of so much wisdom with so much folly, does not perhaps correspond exactly to the ideas of our author.

The

Were nothing but to waste night, day, and time.  
 Therefore,—since brevity is the soul of wit,  
 And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,—  
 I will be brief: Your noble son is mad:  
 Mad call I it; for, to define true madness,  
 What is't, but to be nothing else but mad:  
 But let that go.

*Queen.* More matter, with less art.

*Pol.* Madam, I swear, I use no art 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.

The commentator 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 of 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.

—To the celestial, and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia,—<sup>4</sup>

That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase; beautify'd is a vile phrase; but you shall hear.—Thus:

In her excellent white bosom, these<sup>5</sup>, &c.—

Queen. Came this from Hamlet to her?

Pol. Good madam, stay a while; I will be faithful.—

Doubt thou, the stars are fire; [reads.

Doubt, that the sun doth move;

Doubt truth to be a liar;

But newer 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<sup>6</sup>, believe it. Adieu.

Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst this machine is to him, Hamlet.

This

<sup>4</sup> To the celestial, and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia—] Mr. Theobald for beautified substituted *beatified*. MALONE.

Dr. Warburton has followed Theobald; but I am in doubt whether *beatified*, though, as Polonius calls it, a *vile phrase*, be not the proper word. *Beautified* seems to be a *vile phrase*, for the ambiguity of its meaning. JOHNSON.

Hayward, in his *History of Edward VI.* says, “*Katherine Parre*, queen dowager to king Henry VIII. was a woman *beautified* with many excellent virtues.” FARMER.

Again, Nash dedicates his *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem*, 1594, “to the most *beautified* lady, the lady Elizabeth Carey.”

Again, in Green's *Mamilia*, 1593: “—although thy person is so bravely *beautified* with the dowries of nature.”

*Ill and vile* as the phrase may be, our author has used it again in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*:

“—seeing you are *beautified*.”

“With goodly shape,” &c. STEEVENS.

<sup>5</sup> In her excellent white bosom,—] So, in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*:

“Thy letters——

“Which, being writ to me, shall be deliver'd

“Even in the *milk-white bosom of thy love*.”

See a note on this passage.” STEEVENS.

I have here followed the quarto. The folio reads:

*These* in her excellent white bosom, *these*, &c.

This, in obedience, hath my daughter shewn me;  
And more above<sup>7</sup>, 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 think<sup>8</sup>? no, I went round to work,  
And my young mistress thus I did bespeak;

In our poet's time the word *These* was usually added at the end of the superscription of letters, but I have never met with it both at the beginning and end. MALONE.

<sup>6</sup> *O most best*] So, in *Acolastus*, a comedy, 1540: "—that same most best redresser or reformer, is God." STEEVENS.

<sup>7</sup> —more above,—] is, moreover, besides. JOHNSON.

<sup>8</sup> *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 confident 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 [*given my heart a mute and dumb working*]; or lastly, had been negligent in observing the intrigue, and overlooked it [*looked upon this love with idle sight*]; what would you have thought of me? WARBURTON.

I doubt whether the first line is rightly explained. It may mean, if I had lock'd up this secret in my own breast, as closely as if it were confined in a desk or table-book. MALONE.

*Or given my heart a working mute and dumb;*] The same pleonasm is found in our authour's *Rape of Lucretia*:

"And in my hearing be you mute and dumb." MALONE.

The folio reads—*a winking*. STEEVENS.



*Lord Hamlet is a prince out of thy sphere*<sup>9</sup>;  
*This must not be:* and then I prescripts gave her<sup>1</sup>,  
 That she should lock herself from his resort,  
 Admit no messengers, receive no tokens.  
 Which done, she took the fruits of my advice<sup>2</sup>;  
 And he, repulsed, (a short tale to make,)  
 Fell into a sadness; then into a fast<sup>3</sup>;  
 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.*

<sup>9</sup> *Lord Hamlet is a prince out of thy sphere;*] The quarto 1604, and the first folio, for *sphere*, have *star*. The correction was made by the editor of the second folio. Mr. Stevens observes, that "all princes were alike out of her sphere," and therefore points thus:

Lord Hamlet is a prince:—out of thy sphere;"]

I see no need of departing from the ancient punctuation. The poet clearly means that lord Hamlet is a prince, and, being a prince, is out of Ophelia's sphere. MALONE.

<sup>1</sup> — *prescripts gave her,*] Thus the quarto. The folio reads—*precepts*. The original copy in my opinion is right. Polonius had ordered his daughter to lock herself from Hamlet's resort, &c. See p. 219.

"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." MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> *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. JOHNSON.

<sup>3</sup> — *a short tale to make,*

*Fell into a sadness; then into a fast, &c.*] The ridicule of this character is here admirably sustained. He would not only be thought to have discovered this intrigue by his own sagacity, but to have remarked all the stages of Hamlet's disorder, from his sadness to his raving, as regularly as his physician could have done; when all the while the madness was only feigned. The humour of this is exquisite from a man who tells us, with a confidence peculiar to small politicians, that he could find—

*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 together<sup>4</sup>,

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 assisstant for a state,  
But keep a farm, and carters<sup>5</sup>.

*King.*

*Where truth was hid, though it were hid indeed  
Within the centre.* WARBURTON.

<sup>4</sup> — four hours together,] Perhaps it would be better were we to read indefinitely,—for hours together. TYRWHITT.

I formerly was inclined to adopt Mr. Tyrwhitt's proposed emendation; but have now no doubt that the text is right. The expression, *four hours together*, *two hours together*, &c. appears to have been common: So, in *King Lear*, ACT I.

"Edm. Spake you with him?"

"Edg. Ay, two hours together."

Again, in *The Winter's Tale*:

"—ay, and have been, any time these four hours."

Again, in Webster's *Dutchess of Malfy*, 1623:

"She will muse four hours together, and her silence

"Methinks expresseth more than if she spake." MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> 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 assisstant for a state,

But keep a farm, and carters.] The scheme of throwing Ophelia in Hamlet's way, in order to try his sanity, as well as the address of the king in a former scene to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern,

"—— I entreat you both——

"That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court

"Some

*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 him presently :—O, give me leave.—

*[Exeunt King, Queen, and Attendants.]*

How

- “ 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 ;—”

seem to have been formed on the following slight hints in *The History of Hamlet*, bl. let. fig. C. 3 : “ They counselled to try and know if possible, how to discover the intent and meaning of the young prince ; and they could find no better nor more fit invention to intrap him, then to set some faire and beautiful woman in a secret place, that with flattering speeches and all the craftiest meanes she could, should purposely seek to allure his mind to have his pleasure of her.—To this end, *certain courtiers* were appointed to lead Hamlet into a solitary place, within the woods, where they brought the woman, inciting him to take their pleasures together. And surely the poore prince at this assault had beene in great danger, if a gentleman that in Horvendille's time had been nourished with him, had not showne himselfe more affectioned to the bringing up he had received with Hamlet, than desirous to please the tyrant.—This gentleman bare the courtiers company, making full account that the least shewe of perfect sence and wisdom that Hamlet should make, would be sufficient to cause him to loose his life ; and therefore by certain signes he gave Hamlet intelligence in what danger he was like to fall, if by any means he seemed to obaye, or once like the wanton toyes and vicious provocations of the gentlewoman sent thither by his uncle : which much abashed the prince, as then wholly being in affection to the lady. But by her he was likewise informed of the reason, as one that from her infancy loved and favoured him.—The prince in this sort having deceived the courtiers and the ladys expectation, that affirmed and swore hee never once offered to have his pleasure of the woman, although in subtilty he affirmed the contrary, every man thereupon assured themselves that without doubt he was disfraught of his senses ;—so that as then Fensons practice took no effect.”

Here we find the rude outlines of the characters of Ophelia, and Horatio,—*the gentleman that in the time of Horvendille (the father of Hamlet) had been nourished with him.* But in this piece there are no traits of the character of Polonius. There is indeed a counsellor, and he

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 pick'd 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<sup>c</sup>,—Have you a daughter?

*Pol.*

he places himself in the queen's chamber behind the arras;—but this is the whole. MALONE.

<sup>c</sup> For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a god, kissing carrion,—&c.] The old copies read—a good kissing carrion. The emendation was made by Dr. Warburton, who yet in my apprehension did not understand the passage. I have therefore omitted his laboured comment on it, in which he endeavours to prove that Shakspeare intended it as a vindication of the ways of Providence in permitting evil to abound in the world. He does not indeed pretend that this profound meaning can be drawn from what Hamlet says; but this is what he was *thinking of*; for “this wonderful man (Shakspeare) had an art not only of acquainting the audience with what his actors say, but with what they *think*!”

Hamlet's observation is, I think, simply this. He has just remarked that honesty is very rare in the world. To this Polonius assents. The prince then adds, that since there is so little virtue in the world, since corruption abounds every where, and maggots are *bred* by the sun, even in a dead dog, Polonius ought to take care to prevent his daughter from walking in the sun, lest she should prove “a breeder of sinners;” for though *conception* in general be a blessing, yet as Ophelia (whom Hamlet supposes to be as frail as the rest of the world,) might chance to *conceive*, it might be a calamity. The maggots *breeding* in a dead dog, seem to have been mentioned merely to introduce the word *conception*; on which word, as Mr. Steevens has observed, Shakspeare has play'd in *King Lear*: and probably a similar quibble was intended here. The word, however, may have been used in its ordinary sense, for *pregnancy*, without any double meaning.

The slight connection between this and the preceding passage, and Hamlet's abrupt question, *have you a daughter?* were manifestly intended more strongly to impress Polonius with the belief of the prince's madness.

Perhaps

*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.

Perhaps this passage ought rather to be regulated thus:—"being a *god-kissing carrion*; i. e. a carrion that kisses the sun. The participle *being* naturally refers to the last antecedent, *dog*. Had Shakspeare intended that it should be referred to *sun*, he would probably have written—"be, being a god," &c. We have many similar compound epithets in these plays. Thus in *K. Lear*, Act II, Sc. i. Kent speaks of "*ear-kissing arguments*." Again, more appositely in the play before us: "New lighted on a *heaven-kissing hill*."

Again, in *The Rape of Lucrece*:

"Threatning *cloud-kissing* Ilion with annoy."

However, the instance quoted from *Cymbeline* by Dr. Warburton, "*—common-kissing Titan*," seems in favour of the regulation that has been hitherto made; for here we find the poet considered the sun as kissing the carrion, not the carrion as kissing the sun. So also in *K. Henry IV.* P. I. "Did'st thou never see *Titan kiss* a dish of butter?" The following lines also in the historical play of *King Edward III.* 1596, which Shakspeare had certainly seen, are, it must be acknowledged, adverse to the regulation which I have suggested:

"The freshest *summer's day* doth soonest *raine*

"The loathed *carrion*, that it seems to *kiss*."

In justice to Dr. Johnson, I should add, that the high eulogium which he has pronounced on Dr. Warburton's emendation, was founded on the comment which accompanied it; of which however, I think, his judgment must have condemned the reasoning, though his goodness and piety approved its moral tendency. MALONE.

This is a noble emendation, which almost sets the critick on a level with the author. JOHNSON.

[—*conception is a blessing*; &c.] Thus the quarto. The folio reads: "Conception is a blessing, but *not* as your daughter may conceive. Friend, look to't." The word *not*, I have no doubt, was inserted by the editor of the folio, in consequence of his not understanding the passage. A little lower we find a similar interpolation in some of the copies, probably from the same cause: "You cannot, sir, take from me any thing that I will *not* more willingly part withal, except my life." MALONE.

The meaning seems to be, *conception* (i. e. understanding) is a blessing; but as your daughter may *conceive* (i. e. be pregnant), friend, look to't, i. e. have a care of that. The same quibble occurs in the first scene of *K. Lear*:

"*Kent*. I cannot *conceive* you, sir.

"*Glo.* Sir, this young fellow's mother *could*." STEEVENS.

*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 suffer'd 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<sup>b</sup>; 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 which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down; for yourself, sir, shall

<sup>b</sup> *Slanders, sir: for the satirical rogue says here, that old men, &c.]*  
By the *satirical rogue* he means Juvenal in his tenth satire:

*Da spatium vitæ, multos da Jupiter annos:*

*Hoc resgo vultu, solum hoc et pallidus optas.*

*Sed quàm continuus et quantis longa senectus.*

*Plena malis! deformem, et tetrum ante omnia vultum,*

*Disimilemque sui, &c.*

Nothing could be finer imagined for Hamlet, in his circumstances, than the bringing him in reading a description of the evils of long life.

WARBURTON.

Had Shakspeare read *Juvenal* in the original, he had met with "*De temone Britanno, Excidet Arviragus.*"—and —"*Uxorem, Posthume, ducis?*" We should not then have had continually in *Cymbeline*, *Arviragus* and *Posthūmus*. Should it be said that the *quantity* in the former word might be forgotten, it is clear from the mistake in the latter, that Shakspeare could not possibly have read any one of the Roman poets.

There was a translation of the 10th satire of *Juvenal* by Sir John Beaumont, the elder brother of the famous Francis: but I cannot tell whether it was printed in Shakspeare's time. In that age of quotation, every classic might be picked up by *piece-meal*.

I forgot to mention in its proper place, that another description of *Old Age* in *As you like it*, has been called a parody on a passage in a French poem of Garnier. It is trifling to lay any thing about this, after the observation I made in *Macbeth*: but one may remark once for all, that Shakspeare wrote for the *people*; and could not have been so absurd as to bring forward any allusion, which had not been familiarized by some accident or other. FARMER,

GROW

grow as old as I am, if, like a crab, you could go backward.

*Pol.* Though this be madness, yet there's method in't.  
[*Aside.*]

Will you walk out of the air, my lord?

*Ham.* Into my grave?

*Pol.* Indeed, that is out o' the air.—How pregnant<sup>9</sup> sometimes his replies are! a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be deliver'd of. I will leave him, and suddenly contrive<sup>1</sup> 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 ROSENCRANTZ<sup>2</sup>, and GUILDENSTERN.*

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

*Ref.* God save you, sir! [to *Pol.* Exit *Pol.*

*Guil.* My honour'd lord!—

*Ref.* My most dear lord!—

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

*Ref.* As the indifferent children of the earth.

*Guil.* Happy, in that we are not over-happy;

On fortune's cap we are not the very button.

*Ham.* Nor the foals of her shoe?

*Ref.* Neither, my lord.

*Ham.* Then you live about her waist, or in the middle of her favours?

*Guil.* 'Faith, her privates we.

<sup>9</sup> *How pregnant, &c.*] *Pregnant* is ready, dexterous, apt. STEEV.

<sup>1</sup> *—and suddenly, &c.*] This, and the greatest part of the two following lines, are omitted in the quartos. STEEVENS.

<sup>2</sup> *Rosencrantz,*] There was an ambassador of that name in England about the time when this play was written. STEEVENS.

*Ham.* In the secret parts of fortune? O, most true; she is a strumpet. What news?

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

*Ham.* Then is dooms-day near: But your news is not true. Let me<sup>3</sup> 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.

*Ref.* Then is the world one.

*Ham.* A goodly one; in which there are many confines, wards, and dungeons; Denmark being one of the worst.

*Ref.* 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.

*Ref.* Why, then your ambition makes it one; 'tis too narrow for your mind.

*Ham.* O God! I could be bounded in a nutshell, and count myself a king of infinite space; were it not that I have had dreams.

*Guil.* Which dreams, indeed, are ambition; for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream<sup>4</sup>.

*Ham.* A dream itself is but a shadow.

*Ref.* 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, bodies<sup>5</sup>; and our mo-

<sup>3</sup> *Let me, &c.*] From here to the word *attended* in p. 261, l. 7, (as Mr. Steevens has observed,) is wanting in the quarto. MALONE.

<sup>4</sup> — *the shadow of a dream.*] Shakspeare has accidentally inverted an expression of Pindar, that the state of humanity is *ονία; βία;* the dream of a shadow. JOHNSON.

So Davies:

“Man's life is but a dreame, nay, less than so,

“*A shadow of a dreame.*” FARMER.

So, in the tragedy of *Darius*, 1603, by Lord Sterling:

“*Whose best was but the shadow of a dream.*” STEEVENS.

<sup>5</sup> *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. JOHNSON.



marches, and out-stretch'd heroes, the beggars' shadows :  
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 fort 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 half-penny \*. 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, whe-  
ther you were sent for, or no?

*Ros.* What say you? [*to Guil.*]

*Ham.* Nay, then I have an eye of you<sup>6</sup>;—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<sup>7</sup>, (but, where-  
fore

\* — too dear, a half-penny.] i. e. a half-penny too dear: they are  
worth nothing. The modern editors read—at a half-penny.

MALONE.

<sup>6</sup> Nay, then I have an eye of you;—] An eye of you means, I have  
a glimpse of your meaning. STEEVENS.

<sup>7</sup> I have of late, &c.] This is an admirable description of a rooted  
melancholy sprung from thickness of blood; and artfully imagined to

fore, I know not,) lost all my mirth, forgone 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'er-hanging firmament<sup>8</sup>, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire<sup>9</sup>, 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.

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

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

*Ref.* To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what *lenten entertainment*<sup>1</sup> the players shall receive from you: we coted them on the way<sup>2</sup>; and hither are they coming, to offer you service.

*Ham.* <sup>3</sup>

hide the true cause of his disorder from the penetration of these two friends, who were set over him as spies. *WARBURTON.*

<sup>8</sup> — *this brave o'er-hanging firmament,*] Thus the quarto. The folio reads,—*this brave o'er-hanging, this, &c.* *STEEVENS.*

<sup>9</sup> — *this most excellent canopy, the air,—this majestical roof fretted with golden fire,*] So, in our author's 21st sonnet:

“As those gold candles, fix'd in heaven's air.”

Again, in the *Merchant of Venice*:

“—Look, how the floor of heaven

“Is thick inlaid with patins of bright gold!” *MALONE.*

<sup>1</sup> — *lenten entertainment*—] i. e. sparing, like the entertainments given in *Lent*. So, in the *Duke's Mistress*, by Shirley, 1638:

“—to maintain you with biscuit,

“Poor John, and half a livery, to read moral virtue

“And *lenten lectures*.” *STEEVENS.*

<sup>2</sup> *We coted them on the way*;—] To cote is to overtake. I meet with this word in *The Return from Parnassus*, a comedy, 1606:

“—marry we presently coted and outstript them.”

Again, in Warner's *Albions England*, 1602, book 6, chap. 301

“Gods and goddeesses for wantonnes out-coted.”

Again,

*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 fight gratis; the humorous man shall end his part in peace: the clown shall make those laugh, whose lungs are tickled o' the fere<sup>2</sup>; and the lady shall say her mind freely<sup>3</sup>, or

Again, in Drant's translation of Horace's satires, 1567:

"For he that thinks to *coat* all men, and all to overgoe."

Chapman has more than once used the word in his version of the 23d Iliad.

In the laws of coursing, says Mr. Tollet, "a *cote* is when a greyhound goes endways by the side of his fellow, and gives the hare a turn." This quotation seems to point out the etymology of the verb to be from the French *coté*, the side. STEEVENS.

<sup>2</sup>—*the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickled o' the fere;* ] i. e. those who are asthmatical, and to whom laughter is most uneasy. This is the case (as I am told) with those whose lungs are tickled by the *fere* or *serum*: but about this passage I am neither very confident, nor very solicitous.

The word *fere* occurs as unintelligibly in an ancient *Dialogue between the Comen Secretary and Jealousy, touchyng the unstableness of harlots*, bl. l. no date:

"And wyll byde whysperynge in the eare,

"Thynke ye her tayle is not lyght of the *fere*."

The *fere* is likewise a part about a hawk. STEEVENS.

These words are not in the quarto. I am by no means satisfied with the explanation given, though I have nothing satisfactory to propose. I believe Hamlet only means, that the clown shall make those laugh who have a disposition to laugh; who are pleased with their entertainment. That no asthmatick disease was in contemplation, may be inferred from both the words used, *tickled* and *lungs*; each of which seems to have a relation to laughter, and the latter to have been considered by Shakspeare, as (if I may so express myself,) its natural seat. So, in *Coriolanus*:

"—with a kind of *smile*,

"Which ne'er came from the *lungs*,—"

Again, in *As you Like it*:

"—When I did hear

"The motley fool thus moral on the time,

"My *lungs* began to crow like chanticleer."

O' the *fere*, or of the *fere*, means, I think, by the *fere*; but the word *fere* I am unable to explain, and suspect it to be corrupt. Perhaps we should read—the clown shall make those laugh, whose lungs are tickled o' the *scene*, i. e. by the scene. A similar corruption has happened in another place, where we find *scare* for *scene*. See Vol. I. p. 291, n. 3.

MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> — *the lady shall say her mind, &c.* ] *The lady shall have no objection, unless for the lameness of the verse.* JOHNSON.

the blank verse shall halt for't.—What players are they?

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

*Ham.* How chanceth it, they travel<sup>4</sup>? their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways.

*Rof.* I think, their inhibition<sup>5</sup> comes by the means of the late innovation.

*Ham.*

<sup>4</sup> *How chanceth it, they travel?*] To *travel*, in Shakspeare's time was the technical word, for which we have substituted to *stroll*. So, in the Office-book of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels to king Charles the First, a manuscript of which an account is given in Vol. I. Part the second: "1622. Feb. 27, for a certificate for the Palsgrave's servants to *travel* into the country for six weeks, 10s." Again, in Ben Jonson's *Poetaster*, 1601: "If he pen for thee once, thou shalt not need to *travel*, with thy pumps full of gravell, any more, after a blinde jade and a hamper, and stalk upon boords and barrel-heads to an old crackt trumpet." These words are addressed to a player. MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> *I think, their inhibition, &c.*] I fancy this is transposed: Hamlet enquires not about an *inhibition*, but an *innovation*; the answer therefore probably was, *I think, their innovation, that is, their new practice of strolling, comes by means of the late inhibition.* JOHNSON.

The drift of Hamlet's question appears to be this.—How chanceth it they travel?—i. e. *How happens it they are become strollers?*—Their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways.—i. e. *so have remained in a settled theatre, was the more honourable as well as the more lucrative situation.* To this, Rosencrantz replies—Their *inhibition* comes by means of the late *innovation*.—i. e. *their permission to act any longer at an established house is taken away, in consequence of the NEW CUSTOM of introducing personal abuse into their comedies.* Several companies of actors in the time of our author were silenced on account of this licentious practice. See a dialogue between Comedy and Envy at the conclusion of *Mucedorus* 1598, as well as the Preludium to *Aristippus, or the Jovial Philosopher*, 1630, from whence the following passage is taken: "*Shew* having been long intermitted and forbidden by authority, for their *abuses*, could not be raised but by conjuring." *Shew* enters, whipped by two furies, and the prologue says to her:

"—with tears wash off that guilty sin,  
 "Purge out those ill-digested dregs of wit,  
 "That use their ink to blot a spotless name:  
 "Let's have no one particular man traduc'd,—  
 "—spare the *persons*," &c.

Alteration therefore in the order of the words seems to be quite unnecessary. STEVENS.

There

*Ham.* Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city? Are they so follow'd?

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

*Ham.* How comes it? Do they grow rusty?

*Ref.* Nay, their endeavour keeps in the wonted pace: But there is, fir, an airy of children<sup>7</sup>, little cyases, that cry

There will still, however, remain some difficulty. The statute 39 Eliz. ch. 4. which seems to be alluded to by the words—*their inhibition*, was not made to inhibit the players from acting any longer at an *established theatre*, but to prohibit them from *strolling*. “All fencers (says the act) bearwards, common players of enterludes, and minstrels, wandering abroad, (other than players of enterludes, belonging to any baron of this realm or any other honourable personage of greater degree, to be authorized to play under the hand and seal of arms of such baron or personage,) shall be taken, adjudged and deemed, rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars, and shall sustain such pain and punishments as by this act is in that behalf appointed.”

This statute, if alluded to, is repugnant to Dr. Johnson's transposition of the text, and to Mr. Steevens's explanation of it as it now stands. Yet Mr. Steevens's explanation may be right: Shakspeare might not have thought of the act of Elizabeth. He could not however, mean to charge his friends the *old tragedians* with the *new custom* of introducing personal abuse; but must rather have meant, that the old tragedians were inhibited from performing in the city, and obliged to travel, on account of the misconduct of the younger company. See n. 7. MALONE.

<sup>6</sup> *How comes it? &c.*] From here to *Hercules and his load too*, inclusively, is only found in the folio. MALONE.

<sup>7</sup> — *an airy of children, &c.*] Relating to the play houses then contending, the *Dashside*, the *Fortune*, &c. played by the children of his majesty's chapel. POPE.

It relates to the young singing men of St. Paul's, concerning whose performances and success in attracting the best company, I find the following passage in *Jack Drum's Entertainment*, or *Posquil and Katherine*, 1601:

“I saw the children of *Powles* last night;  
 “And troth they pleas'd me pretty, pretty well,  
 “The apes, in time, will do it handsomely.  
 —“I like the audience that frequenteth there  
 “With much applause: a man shall not be choak'd  
 “With the stench of garlick, nor be pasted  
 “To the barmy jacket of a beer-brewer;  
 —“'Tis a good gentle audience, &c.”

It is said in Richard Flecknoe's *Short Discourse of the English Stage*, 1664, that “both the children of the chapel and St. Paul's, acted plays, the one in White-Friers, the other behinde the Con-vocation-house in Paul's; till people growing more precise, and playes more

cry out on the top of question<sup>s</sup>, and are most tyrannically clapp'd for't: these are now the fashion; and so  
berattle

more licentious, the theatre of Paul's was quite suppressed, and that of the children of the chapel converted to the use of the children of the revels." STEEVENS.

The suppression to which Fleckno alludes took place in the year 1583-4; but afterwards both the children of the chapel and of the Revels played at our author's playhouse in Blackfriars, and elsewhere; and the choir-boys of St. Paul's at their own house. See *the Account of our old theatres* in Vol. I. Part II. A certain number of the children of the Revels, I believe, belonged to each of the principal theatres.

Our author cannot be supposed to direct any satire at those young men who played occasionally at his own theatre. Ben Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels*, and his *Poetaster*, were performed there by the children of Queen Elizabeth's chapel, in 1600 and 1601; and *Eastward Ho* by the children of the revels, in 1604 or 1605. I have no doubt therefore that the dialogue before us was pointed at the choir-boys of St. Paul's, who in 1601 acted two of Marston's plays, *Antonio and Mellida*, and *Antonio's Revenge*. Many of Lily's plays were represented by them about the same time; and in 1607 Chapman's *Buffy Ambros* was performed by them with great applause. It was probably in this and some other noisy tragedies of the same kind, that they cry'd out on the top of question, and were most tyrannically clapp'd for't.

At a later period indeed, after our poet's death, the Children of the Revels had an established theatre of their own, and some dispute seems to have arisen between them and the king's company. They performed regularly in 1623, and for eight years afterwards, at the Red Bull in St. John's Street; and in 1627, Shakspeare's company obtained an inhibition from the Master of the Revels to prevent their performing any of his plays at their house: as appears from the following entry in Sir Henry Herbert's Office-book, already mentioned: "From Mr. Heminge, in their company's name, to forbid the playinge of any of Shakspeare's playes to the Red-Bull company, this 11th of Aprill, 1627, — 5 0 0." From other passages in the same book, it appears that the Children of the Revels composed the Red-Bull company.

We learn from Heywood's *Apology for Actors*, that the little *ryafes* here mentioned were the persons who were guilty of the late innovation, or practice of introducing personal abuse on the stage, and perhaps for their particular fault the players in general suffered; and the older and more decent comedians, as well as the children, had on some recent occasion been inhibited from acting in London, and compelled to turn strollers. This supposition will make the words, concerning which a difficulty has been stated, (see n. 6.) perfectly clear. Heywood's *Apology for Actors* was published in 1612; the passage therefore which is found in the folio, and not in the quarto, was probably added not very long before that time.

"Now to speake (says Heywood,) of some abuse lately crept into the quality, as an inuigbing against the state, the court, the law, the city,

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? Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing? will they not say afterwards,

*citty, and their governments, with the particularizing of private mens humours, yet alive, noblemen and others, I know it distastes many; neither do I any way approve it, nor dare I by any means excuse it. The liberty which some arrogate to themselves, committing their bitterness and liberal invectives against all estates to the mouths of children, supposing their juniority to be a priviledge for any rayling, be it never so violent, I could advise all such to curbe, and limit this presumed liberty within the bands of discretion and government. But wise and judicial censurers before whom such complaints shall at any time hereafter come, will not, I hope, impute these abuses to any transgression in us, who have ever been carefull and provident to shun the like."*

Prynne in his *Histriomastix*, speaking of the state of the stage, about the year 1620, has this passage: "Not to particularise those late new scandalous invective plays, wherein sundry persons of place and eminence [Gundemore, the late lord admiral, lord treasurer, and others,] have been particularly personated, jeared, abused in a gross and scurrilous manner," &c.

The folio, 1623, has—*berattled*. The correction was made by the editor of the second folio. MALONE.

<sup>8</sup> — *little eyases, that cry out on the top of question,*] Little eyases; i. e. young nestlings, creatures just out of the egg. THEOBALD.

From *ey*, Teut. ovum, q. d. qui recens ex ovo emergit. Skinneri *Etymol.* An *aiery* or *eyerie*, as it ought rather to be written, is derived from the same root, and signifies both a young brood of hawks, and the nest itself in which they are produced.

An *eyas* hawk is sometimes written a *nyas* hawk, perhaps from a corruption that has happened in many words in our language, from the letter *n* passing from the end of one word to the beginning of another. However, some etymologists think *nyas* a legitimate word.

MALONE.

The meaning seems to be, they ask a common question in the highest notes of the voice. JOHNSON.

I believe *question*, in this place, as in many others, signifies *conversation, dialogue*. So, in *The Merchant of Venice*: "— think, you *question* with the Jew." The meaning of the passage may therefore be—*Children that perpetually recite in the highest notes of voice that can be uttered*. STEEVENS.

<sup>9</sup> — *escoted?*] Paid, from the French *escot*, a shot or reckoning. JOHNS.

<sup>1</sup> *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

afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players, (as it is most like<sup>2</sup>, if their means are no better,) their writers do them wrong, to make them exclaim against their own succession<sup>3</sup>?

*Ref.* 'Faith, there has been much to do on both sides; and the nation holds it no sin, to tarre them on to controversy<sup>4</sup>: 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?

*Ref.* Ay, that they do, my lord; Hercules and his load too<sup>5</sup>.

*Ham.* It is not very strange: for my uncle<sup>6</sup> is king of Denmark;

of boys? So afterwards he says to the player, *Come, give us a taste of your quality; come, a passionate speech.* JOHNSON.

So, in the players' *Dedication*, prefixed to the first edition of Fletcher's plays in folio, 1647: "—directed by the example of some who once steered in our *quality*, and so fortunately aspired to chuse your honour, joined with your now glorified brother, patrons to the flowing compositions of the then expired sweet swan of Avon, Shakspeare." Again, in Goston's *School of Abuse*, 1579: "I speak not of this, as though every one [of the players] that professeth the *qualitie*, so abused himself,—"

"Than they can *sing*", does not merely mean, "than they keep the voices of boys," but is to be understood literally. He is speaking of the choir-boys of St. Paul's. MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> — *most like*,— The old copy reads, — *like most*. STEEVENS.

The correction was made by Mr. Pope. MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> — *their writers do them wrong, &c.*] I should have been very much surprized if I had not found Ben Jonson among the writers here alluded to. STEEVENS.

<sup>4</sup> — *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 *ταρσσω*. JOHNSON.

<sup>5</sup> — *Hercules and his load too*.] i. e. they not only carry away the world, but the world-bearer too: alluding to the story of Hercules's relieving Atlas. This is humorous. WARBURTON.

The allusion may be to the *Globe* playhouse on the Bankside, the sign of which was *Hercules carrying the Globe*. STEEVENS.

I suppose Shakspeare meant, that the boys drew greater audiences than the elder players of the *Globe* theatre. MALONE.

<sup>6</sup> *It is not very strange: for my uncle*—] I do not wonder that the new players have so suddenly risen to reputation; my uncle supplieth another.



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<sup>7</sup>. '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 comply<sup>8</sup> with you in this garb; lest my extent to the players, which, I tell you, must shew fairly outward, should more appear like entertainment than yours. You are welcome: but my uncle-father, and aunt-mother, are deceived.

*Guil.* In what, my dear lord?

*Ham.* I am but mad north-north west: when the wind is southerly<sup>9</sup>, I know a hawk from a hand-saw<sup>10</sup>.

*Enter*

another example of the facility with which honour is conferred upon new claimants. JOHNSON.

*It is not very strange, &c.* was originally Hamlet's observation, on being informed that the old tragedians of the city were not so followed as they used to be: [see p. 265, n. 6.] but Dr. Johnson's explanation is certainly just, and this passage connects sufficiently well with that which now immediately precedes it. MALONE.

7 — *in little.*] i. e. in miniature. So, in Drayton's *Shepherd's Sirenas* "Paradise in little done."

Again, in Massinger's *New way to pay old debts*:

"His father's picture in little." STEEVENS.

8 — *let me comply*—] Hammer reads, *Let me compliment with you.* JOHNSON.

9 *When the wind is southerly, &c.*] So, in *Damon and Pythias*, 1582:

"But I perceive now, either the winde is at the south,

"Or else your tunge cleaveth to the rooffe of your mouth."

STEEVENS.

10 — *I know a hawk from a hand-saw.*] This was a common proverbial speech. The *Oxford Editor* alters it to, *I know a hawk from an bersaw*, as if the other had been a corruption of the players; whereas the poet found the proverb thus corrupted in the mouths of the people: so that this critic's alteration only serves to shew us the original of the expression. WARBURTON.

Similarity of sound is the source of many literary corruptions. In Holborn we have still the sign of the *Bull and Gate*, which exhibits but an odd combination of images. It was originally (as I learn from the

*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 swadling-clouts.

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

*Ham.* I will prophesy, he comes to tell me of the players; mark it.—You say right, fir: 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<sup>2</sup>!

*Pol.* Upon my honour,—

*Ham.* Then came<sup>3</sup> each actor on his ass,—

the title-page of an old play) the *Boulogne Gate*, i. e. one of the gates of *Boulogne*; designed perhaps as a compliment to Henry VIII. who took that place in 1544.

The *Boulogne mouth*, now the *Bull and Mouth*, had probably the same origin, i. e. the mouth of the harbour of *Boulogne*. STEEVENS.

<sup>2</sup> *Buz, buz!*—] Mere idle talk, the *buz* of the vulgar. JOHNSON.

*Buz, buz!* are, I believe, only interjections employed to interrupt Polonius. B. Jonson uses them often for the same purpose, as well as Middleton in *A mad World my masters*, 1608. STEEVENS.

*Buz* used to be an interjection at Oxford, when any one began a story that was generally known before. BLACKSTONE.

*Buzzer*, in a subsequent scene in this play, is used for a busy talker:

“And wants not buzzers, to insect his ear

“With pestilent speeches.”

Again, in *King Lear*:

—on every dream,

“Each *buz*, each fancy.”

Again, in Trussel's *History of England*, 1635: “—who, instead of giving redress, suspecting now the truth of the duke of Gloucester's *buz*,” &c.

It is, therefore, probable from the answer of Polonius, that *buz* was used, as Dr. Johnson supposes, for an idle rumour without any foundation.

In B. Jonson's *Staple of News*, the collector of mercantile intelligence is called *Emissary Buz*. MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> *Then came, &c.*] This seems to be a line of a ballad. JOHNSON.

*Pol.*

*Pol.* The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, [tragical-historical]<sup>4</sup>, tragical-comical, historical-pastoral,] scene individable, or poem unlimited: Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light<sup>5</sup>. For the law of writ, and the liberty<sup>6</sup>, these are the only men.

*Ham.* O *Jephtha, 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 Jephtha?

4 — *tragical, &c.*] The words within the crotchets I have recovered from the folio, and see no reason why they were hitherto omitted. There are many plays of the age, if not of Shakspeare, that answer to these descriptions. STEEVENS.

5 *Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light.*] The tragedies of Seneca were translated into English by Thomas Newton, and others, and published in 1581. One comedy of Plautus, *viz.* the *Menæchmi*, was likewise translated and published in 1595. STEEVENS.

I believe the frequency of plays performed at publick schools, suggested to Shakspeare the names of *Seneca* and *Plautus* as dramattick authors. T. WARTON.

6 *For the law of writ, and the liberty,*—] All the modern editions have, *the law of wit, and the liberty*; but both my old copies have, *the law of writ*, I believe rightly. *Writ*, for *writing, composition*. *Wit* was not, in our authour's time, taken either for *imagination*, or *acuteness*, or *both together*, but for *understanding*, for the faculty by which we apprehend and judge. Those who wrote of the human mind, distinguished its primary powers into *wit* and *will*. Ascham distinguishes *boys* of tardy and of active faculties into *quick wits* and *slow wits*. JOHNSON.

The old copies are certainly right. *Writ* is used for *writing* by authours contemporary with Shakspeare. Thus, in *The Apologie of Pierce Pennileffe*, by Thomas Nashe, 1593: "For the lowlie circumstance of his poverty before his death, and sending that miserable writte to his wife, it cannot be but thou liest, learned Gabriel." Again, in bishop Earle's *Character of a mere dull Physician*, 1638: "Then follows a writ to his druggier, in a strange tongue, which he understands, though he cannot confer."

Again, in *K. Henry VI.* P. II.

"Now, good my lord, let's see the devil's writ." MALONE.

*Pol.*

*Pol.* If you call me Jephtha, 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*<sup>7</sup>, and then, you know, *It came to pass, As most like it was*.—The first row of the pious chançon<sup>8</sup> will shew you more; for look, my abridgment<sup>9</sup> 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 valanced<sup>1</sup> since I saw thee

[<sup>7</sup> *Why, As by lot, God wot,—&c.*] The old song from which these quotations are taken, I communicated to Dr. Percy, who has honoured it with a place in the second and third editions of his *Reliques of ancient English Poetry*. In the books belonging to the Stationers' Company, there is a late entry of this ballad among others. "*Jeffa Judge of Israel*," p. 93. vol. iii. Dec. 14, 1624. STEEVENS.

There is a Latin tragedy on the subject of *Jephtha*, by John Christopherson in 1546, and another by Buchanan, in 1554. A third by Du Pleffis Mornay is mentioned by Prynne in his *Histriomastix*. The same subject had probably been introduced on the English stage.

MALONE.

[<sup>8</sup> — *the pious chançon* —] It is *pious chansons* in the first folio edition. The old ballads sung on bridges, and from thence called *pious chansons*. Hamlet is here repeating ends of old songs. POPE.

The old quartos in 1604, 1605, and 1611, read *pious chançon*, which gives the sense wanted, and I have accordingly inserted it in the text.

The *pious chansons* were a kind of *Christmas carols*, containing some scriptural history thrown into loose rhimes, 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. STEEVENS.

[<sup>9</sup> — *my abridgment* —] He calls the players afterwards, *the brief chronicles of the time*; but I think he now means only *those who will shorten my talk*. JOHNSON.

An *abridgement* is used for a dramattick piece in the *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, Act V. Sc. i.

"Say what *abridgment* have you for this evening?"

but it does not commodiously apply to this passage. STEEVENS.

[<sup>1</sup> — *thy face is valanced* —] i. e. fringed with a beard. The valance is the fringes or drapery hanging round the tester of a bed.

MALONE.

last;

last; Com'st thou to beard me in Denmark?—What! my young lady and mistress! By-'r-lady, your ladyship is nearer to heaven, than when I saw you last, by the altitude of a chopine<sup>2</sup>. Pray God, your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not crack'd within the ring<sup>3</sup>.—Masters, you are all welcome. We'll e'en to't like French falconers<sup>4</sup>, fly at any thing we see:

<sup>2</sup> — by the altitude of a chopine.] A *chioppine* is a high shoe worn by the Italians, as in Tho. Heywood's *Challenge of Beauty*, Act 5. Song.

“ The Italian in her high *chioppene*,  
 “ Scotch lass, and lovely free too;  
 “ The Spanish Donna, French Madame,  
 “ He doth not feare to go to.” STEEVENS.

Again, in Marston's *Dutch Courtesan*, 1605: “Dost not weare high corked shoes, *chopines*?”

The word ought rather to be written *chapine*, from *chapin*, Span. which is defined by Minshew in his Spanish Dictionary, “a high cork shoe.” There is no synonymous word in the Italian language, though the *Venetian* ladies, as we are told by Laffels, “wear high-heel'd shoes, like stilts, which being very inconvenient for walking, they commonly rest their hands or arms upon the shoulders of two grave matrons.”

MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> — be not crack'd within the ring.] That is, crack'd too much for use. This is said to a young player who acted the parts of women.

JOHNSON.

I find the same phrase in *The Captain*, by B. and Fletcher:

“ Come to be married to my lady's woman,  
 “ After she's crack'd in the ring.”

Again, in Ben Jonson's *Magnetic Lady*:

“ Light gold, and crack'd within the ring.” STEEVENS.

The following passage in Lily's *Woman in the Moon*, 1597, as well as that in Fletcher's *Captain*, might lead us to suppose that this phrase sometimes conveyed a wanton allusion: “Well, if she were twenty grains lighter, refuse her, provided always she be not *clipt within the ring*.” T. C.

<sup>4</sup> — like French falconers.] Thus the folio. Quarto:—like friendly falconers. MALONE.

The amusement of falconry was much cultivated in France. In *All's well that ends well*, Shakspeare has introduced an *astringer* or falconer at the French court. Mr. Tollet, who has mentioned the same circumstance, likewise adds, that it is said in *Sir Tho. Browne's Tracts*, p. 116, that “the French seem to have been the first and noblest falconers in the western part of Europe: and that the French king sent over his falconers to shew that sport to King James the first.” See Weldon's *Court of King James*. STEEVENS.

We'll have a speech straight; Come, give us a taste of your quality; come, a passionate speech.

1. *Play.* What speech, my good lord?

*Ham.* I heard thee speak me a speech once,—but it was never acted; or, if it was, not above once: for the play, I remember, pleased not the million; 'twas caviare to the general<sup>5</sup>: but it was (as I received it, and others, whose judgments, in such matters, cried in the top of mine<sup>6</sup>;) an excellent play; well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty<sup>7</sup> as cunning. I remember, one said, there were no fallets<sup>8</sup> in the lines,

<sup>5</sup> —*caviare to the general*:] *Caviare* or *Cawtare* is a kind of pickle, greatly esteemed in Muscovy, made of the roe of the sturgeon and Belluga, taken out, salted, and dried by the fire, or in the sun. The fish is caught in great quantities at the mouth of the Volga.

Florio in his Italian Dictionary, 1598, defines, *Caviaro*, “a kinde of salt meat, used in Italie, like black sope; it is made of the roes of fishes.”

Lord Clarendon uses *the general for the people*, in the same manner as it is used here. “And so by undervaluing many particulars, (which they truly esteemed,) as rather to be consented to than that *the general* should suffer,” B. V. p. 530. MALONE.

B. Jonson has ridiculed the introduction of these foreign delicacies in his *Cinebia's Revels*, 1602:—“He doth learn to eat anchovies, Macaroni, Bovoli, Fagioli, and *Caviare*,” &c.

Again, in Marston's *What you will*, 1607:

“—a man can scarce eat good meat,

“Anchovies, *caviare*, but he's satired.” STEEVENS.

<sup>6</sup> —*cried in the top of mine*,] i. e. that *were bigger than mine*.

JOHNSON.

Whose judgment, in such matters, was in much higher vogue than mine. HEATH.

Perhaps it means only—whose judgment was more clamorously delivered than mine. We still say of a bawling actor, that he speaks *on the top of his voice*. STEEVENS.

<sup>7</sup> —*set down with as much modesty*—] *Modesty for simplicity*.

WARRURTON.

<sup>8</sup> —*there were no fallets, &c.*] Such is the reading of the old copies. I know not why the later editors continued to adopt the alteration of Mr. Pope, and read, *no salt, &c.*

Mr. Pope's alteration may indeed be in some degree supported by the following passage in Decker's *Satiricall Maske*, 1602:—“—a prepared troop of gallants, who shall distaste every *unsalted* line in their fly-blown comedies.” Though the other phrase was used as late as in the year 1665, in a *Banquet of Jest*, &c. “—for junkets, joci; and for curious *fallet*, sales.” STEEVENS.

to make the matter savoury; nor no matter in the phrase, that might indite the author of affection<sup>2</sup>: but call'd it, an honest method<sup>3</sup>, as wholesome as sweet, and by very much more handsome than fine<sup>2</sup>. 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 fo; it begins with Pyrrhus.*

*The rugged Pyrrhus,—be, 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 gules<sup>3</sup>; horridly trick'd<sup>4</sup>  
With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons;  
Bak'd and impasted with the parching streets,  
That lend a tyrannous and a damned light*

2 — that might indite the author—] Indite, for convict. WARB.  
— indite the author of affection;] i. e. convict the author of being a fantastical affected writer. Maria calls Malvolio an affection'd ass, i. e. an affected ass; and in *Love's Labour's Lost*, Nathaniel tells the Pedant, that his reasons "have been witty without affection."

Again, in the translation of *Castiglione's Courtier*, by Hobby, 1556: "Among the chiefe conditions and qualities in a waiting-gentlewoman," is, "to flee affection or curiosity." STEEVENS.

1 — but call'd it, an honest method,—] Hamlet is telling how much his judgment differed from that of others. One said, there was no salt in the lines, &c. but called it an honest method. The author probably gave it, but I called it an honest method, &c. JOHNSON.

— an honest method,—] Honest for chaste. WARBURTON.

2 — as wholesome, &c.] This passage was recovered from the quartos by Dr. Johnson. STEEVENS.

3 Now is he total gules;] Gules is a term in the barbarous jargon peculiar to heraldry, and signifies red. Shakspeare has it again in *Timon*:

"With man's blood paint the ground; gules, gules."

Heywood, in the second part of the *Iron Age*, has made a verb from it:

"— old Hecuba's reverend locks

"Be gul'd in slaughter."— STEEVENS.

4 — trick'd—] i. e. smeared, painted. An heraldick term. See Vol. III. p. 358, n. 8. MALONE.

To their lord's murder : Roasted in wrath, and fire,  
And thus o'er-fiz'd with coagulate gore,  
With eyes like carbuncles, the bellish Pyrrhus  
Old grandfire Priam seeks :—So proceed you<sup>3</sup>.

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 unnerv'd father falls<sup>4</sup>. 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<sup>5</sup>, 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<sup>6</sup> : anon, the dreadful thunder

<sup>3</sup> So proceed you.] These words are not in the folio. MALONE.

<sup>4</sup> But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword

The unnerv'd father falls.] So, as Mr. Stevens has observed, in *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, a tragedy, by Marlowe and Nashe, 1594 :

"Which he disdainingly, whiff'd his sword about,

"And with the wind thereof the king fell down."

The king here spoken of is Priam. MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> —as a painted tyrant—] Shakspeare was probably here thinking of the tremendous personages often represented in old tapestry, whose uplifted swords stick in the air, and do nothing. MALONE.

<sup>6</sup> —as we often see, against some storm,

The bold winds speechless, and the orb below

As hush as death:] So, in *Venus and Adonis* :

"Even as the wind is hush'd before it raineth."

This line leads me to suspect that Shakspeare wrote—the bold wind speechless. Many similar mistakes have happened in these plays, where one word ends with the same letter with which the next begins. MALONE.



*Doth rend the region: So, after Pyrrhus' pause,  
A roused vengeance sets him new a work;  
And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall  
On Marses 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 bow 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<sup>7</sup>,  
or he sleeps:—say on: come to Hecuba.*

*1. Play.* *But who, ah woe<sup>8</sup>! had seen the mabled queen—<sup>9</sup>*

<sup>7</sup> — *he's for a jig, or a tale of bawdry*] A jig, in our poet's time signified a ludicrous metrical composition, as well as a dance. Here it is used in the former sense. So, in Florio's Italian Dictionary, 1598: "*Prottola*, a countrie jig, or round, or countrie song, or wanton verses. See Vol. X. p. 334, n. 3, and the *Historical Account of the English Stage*, &c. in Vol. I. Part II. MALONE.

<sup>8</sup> *But who, ah woe!*] Thus the quarto, except that it has—*a woe*. *A* is printed instead of *ab* in various places in the old copies. *Woe* was formerly used adjectively for *woeful*. So, in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

"Woe, woe are we, fir, you may not live to wear

"All your true followers out."

The folio reads—*But who, O who, &c.* MALONE.

<sup>9</sup> — *the mabled queen—*] The *mabled* queen, (or *mabled* queen, as it is spelt in the quarto,) means, the queen attired in a large, coarse, and careless head-dress. A few lines lower we are told she had "*a clout upon that head, where late the diadem stood.*" The word is used (as Dr. Warburton has observed) by Sandys in his travels. Speaking of the Turkish women, he says, "*their heads and faces are mabled in fine linen, that no more is to be seen of them than their eyes.*"

To *mab*, (which in the North is pronounced *mob*, and hence the spelling of the old copy in the present instance,) says Ray in his Dict. of North Country words, is "*to dress carelessly. Mabs are flatterns.*"

The ordinary morning head-dress of ladies continued to be distinguished by the name of a *mab*, to almost the end of the reign of George the second. The folio reads—*the inobled* queen. MALONE.

*Mobled* signifies *buddled, grossly covered.* JOHNSON.

I meet with this word in Shirley's *Gentleman of Venice*:

"The moon does *mobble* up herself." FARMER.

*Ham.* The mabled queen?

*Pol.* That's good; mabled queen is good.

1. *Play.* Run barefoot up and down, threat'ning the flames  
With *bisson* rheum<sup>1</sup>; 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<sup>2</sup> the burning eyes 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 bestow'd? Do you hear, let them be well used; for they are the abstract, and brief chronicles, of the time: After your death you were better have a bad epitaph, than their ill report while you live.

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

*Ham.* 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, firs.

<sup>1</sup> *With bisson rheum*;—] *Bisson* or *beesen*, i. e. blind. A word still in use in some parts of the north of England.

So in *Coriolanus*: "What harm can your *bisson* conspectuities glean out of this character?" STEEVENS.

<sup>2</sup> —*made milch*—] Drayton in the 13th Song of his *Polyolbion* gives this epithet to dew: "Exhaling the *milch* dew," &c. STEEVENS.

*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. [*Exeunt POLONIUS and Players.*] My good friends, [*to Ros. and Guil.*] I'll leave you till night: you are welcome to Elsinore.

*Ros.* Good my lord! [*Exeunt Ros. and Guil.*]

*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<sup>3</sup>,  
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<sup>4</sup>;  
Tears in his eyes, distraction in 's aspect<sup>5</sup>,

A broken

<sup>3</sup> *Is it not monstrous, that this player here,*] It should seem from the complicated nature of such parts as Hamlet, Lear, &c. that the time of Shakspeare had produced many excellent performers. He would scarce have taken the pains to form characters which he had no prospect of seeing represented with force and propriety on the stage. STEEV.

<sup>4</sup> *That, from her working, all his visage wann'd,*  
Tears in his eyes, distraction in 's aspect,] *Wan'd* (*wann'd* it should have been spelt,) is the reading of the quarto, which Dr. Warburton, I think rightly, restored. The folio reads *warm'd*, for which Mr. Steevens contends in the following note.

"The working of the soul, and the effort to shed tears, will give a colour to the actor's face, instead of taking it away. The visage is always *warm'd* and flush'd by any unusual exertion in a passionate speech; but no performer was ever yet found, I believe, whose feelings were of such exquisite sensibility as to produce paleness in any situation in which the drama could place him. But if players were indeed possessed of that power, there is no such circumstance in the speech uttered before Hamlet, as could introduce the *wanness* for which Dr. Warburton contends."

Whether an actor can produce paleness, it is, I think, unnecessary to inquire. That Shakspeare thought he could, and considered the speech in question as likely to produce *wanness*, is proved decisively

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<sup>6</sup>,

by the words which he has put into the mouth of Polonius in this scene; which add such support to the original reading, that I have without hesitation restored it. Immediately after the player has finished his speech, Polonius exclaims,

"Look, whether he has not *turn'd his colour*, and has *tears in his eyes*." Here we find the effort to shed tears, *taking away*, not *giving* a colour. If it be objected, that by *turn'd his colour*, Shakspeare meant that the player *grew red*, a passage in *King Richard III.* in which the poet is again describing an actor, who is master of his art, will at once answer the objection.

*Rich.* Come, cousin, can'st thou *quake*, and *change thy colour*?

Murther thy breath in middle of a word;

And then again begin, and stop again,

As if thou wert *disfrught* and *mad with terror*?

*Buck.* Tut, I can counterfeit the *deep tragedian*;

*Tremble* and start at wagging of a straw, &c.

The words, *quake*, and *terror*, and *tremble*, as well as the whole context, shew, that by "*change thy colour*," Shakspeare meant *grew pale*.

MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> *Tears in his eyes*, *distraction in 's aspect*,] The word *aspect* (as Dr. Farmer very properly observes) was in Shakspeare's time accented on the second syllable. The folio exhibits the passage as I have printed it.

STEEVENS.

<sup>6</sup> *What's Hecuba to him*, &c.] The expression of Hamlet, *What's Hecuba to him*, or *he to Hecuba*, is plainly an allusion to a passage in *Plutarch's Life of Pelopidas*, so exquisitely beautiful, and so pertinent, that I wonder it has never yet been taken notice of.

"And another time, being in a theatre where the tragedy of *Troades* of *Euripides* was played, he [Alexander Phærus] went out of the theatre, and sent word to the players notwithstanding, that they should go on with their play, as if he had been still among them; saying, that he came not away for any misliking he had of them or of the play, but because he was ashamed his people should see him weep, to see the miseries of *Hecuba* and *Andromache* played, and that they never saw him pity the death of any one man, of so many of his citizens as he had caused to be slain."

Sir JOHN HAWKINS.

This observation had been already made by Mr. Upton. STEEVENS. Shakspeare, it is highly probable, had read the life of *Pelopidas*, but I see no ground for supposing there is here an allusion to it. Hamlet is not ashamed of being seen to weep at a theatrical exhibition, but mortified that a player, in a *dream of passion*, should appear more agitated by fictitious sorrow, than the prince was by a real calamity. MALONE.

That

That he should weep for her? What would he do,  
 Had he the motive and the cue for passion?<sup>7</sup>  
 That I have? He would drown the stage with tears,  
 And cleave the general ear<sup>8</sup> with horrid speech;  
 Make mad the guilty, and appall the free,  
 Confound the ignorant; and amaze, indeed,  
 The very faculties of eyes and ears.

Yet I,  
 A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,  
 Like John a-dreams<sup>9</sup>, unpregnant of my cause<sup>10</sup>,  
 And can say nothing; no, not for a king,  
 Upon whose property, and most dear life,  
 A damn'd defeat was made<sup>11</sup>. Am I a coward?

Who

<sup>7</sup> — the cue for passion,] The hint, the direction. JOHNSON.

<sup>8</sup> — the general ear—] The ears of all mankind. So before, *covariate* to the general, that is, to the multitude. JOHNSON.

<sup>9</sup> Like John-a-dreams,—] John-a-dreams, i. e. of dreams, means only *John* the dreamer; a nick-name, I suppose, for any ignorant silly fellow. Thus the puppet formerly thrown at during the season of Lent, was called *Jack-a-lent*, and the ignis fatuus *Jack-a-lantern*. *John-a-droynes*, however, if not a corruption of this nick-name, seems to have been some well known character, as I have met with more than one allusion to him. So, in *Have with you to Saffron Walden*, or *Gabriel Harvey's Hunt is up*, by Nashe, 1596: "The description of that poor *John-a-droynes* his man, whom he had hired," &c. *John-a-droynes* is likewise a foolish character in *Whetstone's Promes and Cassandra*, 1578, who is seized by informers, has not much to say in his defence, and is cheated out of his money. STEEV.

<sup>10</sup> — unpregnant of my cause,] Unpregnant, for having no due sense of. WARBURTON.

Rather, not quickened with a new desire of vengeance; not teeming with revenge. JOHNSON.

<sup>11</sup> A damn'd defeat was made.—] Defeat, for destruction. WARB.

Rather, dispossessing. JOHNSON.

The word *defeat* is very licentiously used by the old writers. Shakspeare in *Othello* employs it yet more quaintly:—"Defeat thy favour with an usurped beard;" and Middleton, in his comedy called *Any Tbing for a Quiet Life*, says—"I have heard of your defeat made upon a mercer."

Again, in *Revenge for Honour*, by Chapman:

"That he might meantime make a sure defeat

"On our good aged father's life." STEEVENS.

In the passage quoted from *Othello*, to *defeat* is used for *undo* or *alter*; *defaire*, Fr. See *Minshew* in v. *Minshew* considers the substantives

Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?  
 Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face?  
 Tweak 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, kindless villain!<sup>3</sup>  
 Why, what an ass am I? This is most brave<sup>4</sup>;  
 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<sup>5</sup>!  
 Fie upon't! foh! About my brains<sup>6</sup>! Humph! I have heard,  
 That guilty creatures, sitting at a play<sup>7</sup>,

Have

stantives *defeat* and *defeature* as synonymous. The former he defines an *overthrow*; the latter, *execution or slaughter of men*. In *K. Henry V.* we have a similar phraseology:

"*Making defeat upon the powers of France.*"

And the word is again used in the same sense in the last act of this play:

" ——— Their *defeat*

" Doth by their own insinuation grow." MALONE.

5 — *kindless*—] *Unnatural*. JOHNSON.

4 *Why, what an ass am I? This is most brave;*] The folio reads,  
*O vengeance!*

Who? what an ass am I? Sure this is most brave.

STEEVENS.

5 *A scullion!*] Thus the folio. The quartos read,—*a stallion*.

STEEVENS.

6 *About, my brains!*] *Wits, to your work. Brain, go about the present business.* JOHNSON.

This expression occurs in the Second Part of the *Iron Age*, by Heywood, 1632:

"*My brain, about again!* for thou hast found

"*New projects now to work on.*" STEEVENS.

7 ——— *I have heard,*

*That guilty creatures, sitting at a play,*] A number of these stories

are

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 him<sup>s</sup> to the quick; if he do blench<sup>o</sup>,  
 I know my course. The spirit, that I have seen,  
 May be a devil: and the devil hath power  
 To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and, perhaps,  
 Out of my weakness, and my melancholy,  
 (As he is very potent with such spirits,)  
 Abuses me to damn me: I'll have grounds  
 More relative than this<sup>1</sup>; 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<sup>2</sup>  
 Get from him, why he puts on this confusion;  
 Grating so harshly all his days of quiet  
 With turbulent and dangerous lunacy?

are collected together by Thomas Heywood, in his *Actor's Vindication*. STEEVENS.

<sup>s</sup> — tent him—] Search his wounds. JOHNSON.

<sup>o</sup> — if he do blench,] If he shrink, or start. The word is used by Fletcher, in *The Night-walker*:

"Blench at no danger, though it be a gallows."

Again in Gower, *De Confessione Amantis*, lib. vi. fol. 128:

"Without blenchinge of mine eie." STEEVENS.

See Vol. IV. p. 142, n. 3. MALONE.

<sup>1</sup> More relative than this;—] *Relative*, for *convictive*. WARB.

*Convictive* is only the consequential sense. *Relative* is, nearly related, closely connected. JOHNSON.

<sup>2</sup> — conference—] The folio reads, *circumstance*. STEEVENS.

*Ref.*

*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<sup>3</sup>.

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

*Ros.* Madam, it so fell out, that certain players  
We o'er-raught on the way<sup>4</sup>: 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 Ros. and Guil.*]

*King.* Sweet Gertrude, leave us too:

<sup>3</sup> *Niggard of question; but, of our demands,*

*Most free in his reply.*] Slow to begin conversation, but free enough in his answers to our demands. Guildenstern has just said that Hamlet kept aloof when they wished to bring him to confess the cause of his distraction: Rosencrantz therefore here must mean, that up to that point, till they touch'd on that, he was free enough in his answers. MALONE.

<sup>4</sup> — o'er-raught on the way:—] *Over-raught* is *over-reached*, that is, *over-took*. JOHNSON.

So, in Spenser's *Faery Queen*, b. 6. c. 3:

"Having by chance a close advantage view'd,

"He over-raught him," &c. STEEVENS.



For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither;  
That he, as 'twere by accident, may here  
Affront Ophelia<sup>5</sup>: Her father, and myself<sup>6</sup>  
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<sup>7</sup>, 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<sup>8</sup>.—We are oft to blame in this,—  
'Tis too much prov'd<sup>9</sup>,—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! [*Aside.*]  
The harlot's cheek, beauty'd with plastring art,

<sup>5</sup> *Affront Ophelia:*] To *affront*, is only to meet directly. JOHNSON.  
*Affrontare, Ital.* So, in the *Devil's Charter*, 1607:

"*Affronting that port where proud Charles should enter.*"

STEEVENS.

<sup>6</sup> *Her father, and myself—*] Thus the quarto. The folio after these words adds—*lawful spies*, i. e. spies. MALONE.

<sup>7</sup> *And, for your part,*] Thus the quarto 1604, and the folio. The modern editors, following a quarto of no authority, read—for my part. MALONE.

<sup>8</sup> *Your loneliness.*] Thus the folio. The first and second quartos read *loneliness*. STEEVENS.

<sup>9</sup> *'Tis too much prov'd,*—] It is found by too frequent experience.

JOHNSON.

Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it<sup>1</sup>,  
Than is my deed to my most painted word:  
O heavy burden!

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

[*Exeunt King, and POLONIUS.*]

*Enter HAMLET.*

*Ham.* To be, or not to be<sup>2</sup>, that is the question:—  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind, to suffer

The

<sup>1</sup> — *more ugly to the thing that helps it,*] That is, compared with the thing that helps it. JOHNSON.

<sup>2</sup> *To be, or not to be,*—] Of this celebrated soliloquy, which bursting from a man distracted with contrariety of desires, and overwhelmed with the magnitude of his own purposes, is connected rather in the speaker's mind, than on his tongue, I shall endeavour to discover the train, and to shew how one sentiment produces another.

Hamlet, knowing himself injured in the most enormous and atrocious degree, and seeing no means of redress, but such as must expose him to the extremity of hazard, meditates on his situation in this manner: *Before I can form any rational scheme of action under this pressure of distress,* it is necessary to decide, whether, *after our present state,* we are to be, or not to be. That is the question, which, as it shall be answered, will determine, *whether 'tis nobler,* and more suitable to the dignity of reason, *to suffer the outrages of fortune* patiently, or to take arms against them, and by opposing end them, *though perhaps* with the loss of life. *If to die,* were *to sleep,* no more, and by a sleep to end the miseries of our nature, such a sleep were *devoutly to be wished;* but if to sleep in death, be to dream, to retain our powers of sensibility, we must pause to consider, *in that sleep of death what dreams may come.* This consideration makes calamity so long endured; *for who would bear the vexations of life,* which might be ended by a bare bodkin, but that he is afraid of something in unknown futurity? This fear it is that gives efficacy to conscience, which, by turning the mind upon *this regard,* chills the ardour of resolution, checks the vigour of enterprise, and makes the current of desire stagnate in inactivity.

We may suppose that he would have applied these general observations to his own case, but that he discovered Ophelia. JOHNSON.

Dr. Johnson's explication of the first five lines of this passage is surely wrong. Hamlet is not deliberating whether after our present state we are to exist or not, but whether he should continue to live or put an end to his life: as is pointed out by the second and the three following lines, which are manifestly a paraphrase on the first; "whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer, &c. or to take arms." The question concerning our existence in a future state is not considered till the tenth line:—"to sleep! perchance, to dream," &c. The train of

Hamlet's

The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune<sup>3</sup>;  
 Or to take arms against a sea of troubles<sup>4</sup>,  
 And, by opposing, end them?—To die,—to sleep,—<sup>5</sup>  
 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;

Hamlet's reasoning from the middle of the fifth line, "If to die, were to sleep," &c. Dr. Johnson has marked out with his usual accuracy.

In our poet's *Rape of Lucretia* we find the same question stated, which is proposed in the beginning of the present soliloquy:

"—with herself she is in mutiny,

"To live or die, which of the twain were better." MALONE.

3 — arrows of outrageous fortune;] "Homines nos ut esse meminerimus, eâ lege natos, ut omnibus telis fortune proposita sit vita nostra." Cic. Epist. Fam. v. 16. STEEVENS.

4 Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,] One cannot but wonder that the smallest doubt should be entertained concerning an expression which is so much in Shakspeare's manner; yet, to preserve the integrity of the metaphor, Dr. Warburton reads *assail* of troubles, and Mr. Pope proposed *siege*. In the *Prometheus Vinculus* of Æschylus a similar imagery is found:

Δυσχαιμερον γὰρ πηλαγος ἀπὸρας ὄντος,

The stormy sea of dire calamity.

and in the same play, as an anonymous writer has observed, (*Gent. Magazine*, Aug. 1772,) we have a metaphor no less harsh than that of the text:

Θάλασσαι δὲ λόγοι παύουσ' ἐμὴν

Στυγίης πρὸς κυμάτων ὕλης

"My plaintive words in vain confusedly beat

"Against the waves of hateful misery."

Shakspeare might have found the very phrase that he has employed, in *The Tragedy of Queen Cordila*, MIRROR FOR MAGISTRATES, 1575, which undoubtedly he read:

"For lacke of frendes to tell my seas of gilltlesse smart." MALONE.

A sea of troubles among the Greeks grew into a proverbial usage; κακῶν θάλασσα, κακῶν τρικυμία. So that the expression figuratively means, the troubles of human life, which flow in upon us, and encompass us round, like a sea. THEOBALD.

I know not why there should be so much solicitude about this metaphor. Shakspeare breaks his metaphors often, and in this desultory speech there was less need of preserving them. JOHNSON.

5 — To die,—to sleep,—] This passage is ridiculed in the *Scornful Lady* of B. and Fletcher, as follows:

"—be deceas'd, that is, asleep, for so the word is taken.

"To sleep, to die; to die, to sleep; a very figure, sir." &c. &c. STEEV.

For

For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,  
 When we have shuffled off this mortal coil<sup>6</sup>,  
 Must give us pause: There's the respect<sup>7</sup>,  
 That makes calamity of so long life:  
 For who would bear the whips and scorns of time<sup>8</sup>,  
 The

<sup>6</sup> — *mortal coil*,] i. e. turmoil, bustle. WARBURTON.

<sup>7</sup> *There's the respect*,] i. e. the consideration. See Vol. X. p. 102, n. 3. MALONE.

<sup>8</sup> — *the whips and scorns of time*,] The evils here complained of are not the product of time or duration simply, but of a corrupted age or manners. We may be sure, then, that Shakspeare wrote

— *the whips and scorns of th' time*.

And the description of the evils of a corrupt age, which follows, confirms this emendation. WARBURTON.

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 are exposed. JOHNSON.

I think we might venture to read the *whips and scorns o'th' times*, i. e. of times satirical as the age of Shakspeare, which probably furnished him with the idea.

In the reigns of Elizabeth and James (particularly in the former) there was more illiberal private abuse and peevish satire published, than in any others I ever knew of, except the present one. I have many of these publications, which were almost all pointed at individuals.

*Daniel*, in his *Musophilus*, 1599, has the same complaint:

“Do you not see these pamphlets, libels, rhimes,

“These strange confused tumults of the mind,

“Are grown to be the sickness of these times,

“The great disease inflicted on mankind?”

*Whips and scorns* are surely as inseparable companions, as public punishment and infamy.

*Quips*, the word which Dr. Johnson would introduce, is derived, by all etymologists, from *whips*.

Hamlet is introduced as reasoning on a question of general concernment. He therefore takes in all such evils as could befall mankind in general, without considering himself at present as a prince, or wishing to avail himself of the few exemptions which high place might once have claimed.

In part of K. James Ist's *Entertainment passing to his Coronation*, by Ben Jonson and Decker, is the following line, and note on that line:

“*And first account of years, of months, OF TIME.*”

“By time we understand the present.” This explanation affords the sense for which I have contended, and without alteration. STEEV.

The

The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely<sup>9</sup>,  
 The pangs of despis'd love<sup>1</sup>, 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<sup>2</sup>? who would fardels bear,

To

The word *wbips* is used by Marston in his *Satires*, 1599, in the sense required here:

"Ingenuous melancholy,—

"Inthroned thee in my blood; let me entreat,

"Stay his quick jocund skips, and force him run

"A sad-pac'd course, untill my *wbips* be done." MALONE.

<sup>9</sup> — the proud man's contumely,] Thus the quarto. The folio reads — the poor man's contumely; the contumely which the poor man is obliged to endure.

"Nil habet infelix paupertas durius in se,

"Quam quod ridiculos homines facit." MALONE.

<sup>1</sup> — of despis'd love,] The folio reads — of *dispriz'd* love. STEEV.

<sup>2</sup> — 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. This discharge was called a *quietus*.

It is at this time the term for the acquittance which every sheriff receives on settling his accounts at the exchequer.

The word is used for the discharge of an account, by Webster, in his *Dutchess of Malfy*, 1623:

"You had the trick in audit-time to be sick,

"Till I had sign'd your *quietus*."

A *bodkin* was, the ancient term for a *small dagger*. So, in the Second Part of *The Mirror of Knighthood*, 4to. bl. let. 1598: "Not having any more weapons but a poor poynado, which usually he did weare about him, and taking it in his hand, delivered these speeches unto us: Thou, silly *bodkin*, shalt finish the piece of worke," &c.

In the margin of *Stowe's Chronicle*, edit. 1614, it is said, that Cæsar was slain with *bodkins*.

Again, in *Chaucer*, as he is quoted at the end of a pamphlet called *The Serpent of Division*, &c. *whereunto is annexed the Tragedy of Gorboduc*, &c. 1591:

"With *bodkins* was Cæsar Julius

"Murder'd at Rome, of Brutus Crassus." STEEVENS.

Lydgate in his *Fall of Princes*, says that Julius Cæsar was slain in the Capitol with *bodkins*.

The first Lord Lyttelton, it seems, was of opinion that Pope's edition of Shakspeare was better than that of Theobald's, because

To grunt and sweat<sup>3</sup> under a weary life;  
 But that the dread of something after death,—  
 The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn

"Theobald was continually making alterations." "For *bodkin*," says the noble lord, "he would read *dodkin*, which he has found out to be an old word for *dagger*; whereas the beauty of the thought depends on the insignificance of the instrument." Graves's *Recollections of some particulars in the life of William Shenstone, Esq.*—His lordship's meaning, as Fluellen says, was goot, "save the phrase is a little variations." Theobald never did propose to read *dodkin*, though he gave the ancient signification of the word *bodkin*, which, as we have seen was *dagger*.

By a *bare bodkin*, does not perhaps mean, "by so little an instrument as a dagger," but "by an *unsheathed dagger*."

In the account which Mr. Steevens has given of the original meaning of the term *quietus*, after the words, "who personally attended the king on any foreign expedition," should have been added,—and were therefore exempted from the claim of *scutage*, or a tax on every knight's fee. MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> To grunt and sweat—] All the old copies have, to grunt and sweat. It is undoubtedly the true reading, but can scarcely be borne by modern ears. JOHNSON.

This word occurs in the *Death of Zoroas*, a fragment in blank verse, printed at the end of Lord Surry's Poems:

"—— none the charge could give:

"Here grunts, here groans, echwhere strong youth is spent."

And Stanyburff in his translation of Virgil, 1582, for *supremum conpennit* gives us: "—for sighing it grunts."

The change made by the editors [*to groan*] is however supported by the following lines in *Julius Cæsar*, Act IV. sc. i.

"To groan and sweat under the business." STEEVENS.

I apprehend that it is the duty of an editor to exhibit what his authour wrote, and not to substitute what may appear to the present age preferable: and Dr. Johnson was of the same opinion. See his note on the word *bugger-mugger*, Act IV. sc. v. I have therefore, though with some reluctance, adhered to the old copies, however unpleasing this word may be to the ear. On the stage, without doubt, an actor is at liberty to substitute a less offensive word. To the ears of our ancestors it probably conveyed no unpleasing sound; for we find it used by Chaucer and others:

"But never *gront* he at no stroke but on,

"Or elles at two, but if his storie lie."

*The Monkes Tale*, v. 14627, Tyrwhitt's edit.

Again, in *Wily Beguil'd*, written before 1596:

"She's never well, but *grunting* in a corner." MALONE.

No traveller returns<sup>4</sup>,—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

4 *The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn*

*No traveller returns*,—] This has been cavilled at by Lord Orrery and others, but without reason. The idea of a traveller in Shakespeare's time, was of a person who gave an account of his adventures. Every voyage was a *Discovery*. John Taylor has "*A Discovery by sea from London to Salisbury*." FARMER.

Again, Marston's *Insatiate Countess*, 1603:

"———wrestled with death,

"From whose stern cave none tracks a backward path."

Qui nunc it per iter tenebricosum

Illuc unde negant redire quenquam. Catullus. STEEVENS.

This passage has been objected to by others on a ground which, at the first view of it, seems more plausible. Hamlet himself, it is objected, has had ocular demonstration that travellers do sometimes return from this strange country.

I formerly thought this an inconsistency. But this objection also is founded on a mistake. Our poet without doubt in the passage before us intended to say, that from the *unknown* regions of the dead no traveller returns, with all his *corporal powers*; such as he who goes on a voyage of *discovery* brings back, when he returns to the port from which he sailed. The traveller whom Hamlet had seen, though he appeared in the same habit which he had worn in his life time, was nothing but a shadow; "*invulnerable as the air*," and consequently *incorporeal*.

If, says the objector, the traveller has once reached this coast, it is not an undiscovered country. But by *undiscovered* Shakespeare meant not, undiscovered by departed spirits, but, undiscovered, or unknown to "*such fellows as us, who crawl between earth and heaven*;" *superis incognita tellus*. In this sense every country, of which the traveller does not return *alive* to give an account, may be said to be *undiscovered*. The ghost has given no account of the region from whence he came, being, as he has himself informed us, "*forbid to tell the secrets of his prison-house*."

Marlowe, before our poet, had compared death to a journey to an undiscovered country:

"———weep not for Mortimer,

"That scorns the world, and, as a traveller,

"Goes to discover countries yet unknown."

King Edward II. 1598 (written before 1593).

MALONE.

Is sickly'd o'er with the pale cast of thought;  
 And enterprizes of great pith<sup>5</sup> and moment,  
 With this regard, their currents turn awry<sup>6</sup>,  
 And lose the name of action.—Soft you, now!  
 The fair Ophelia:—Nymph, in thy orisons<sup>7</sup>  
 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<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> — *great pith*—] Thus the folio. The quartos read, of *great pitch*.  
 STEEVENS.

<sup>6</sup> — *turn awry*,] Thus the quartos. The folio—*turn away*.  
 STEEVENS.

<sup>7</sup> — *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.

<sup>8</sup> *That, if you be honest, and fair, you should admit no discourse to your beauty.*] This is the reading of all the modern editions, and is copied from the quarto. The folio reads,—*your honesty should admit no discourse to your beauty.* The true reading seems to be this: *If you be honest and fair, you should admit your honesty to no discourse with your beauty.* This is the sense evidently required by the process of the conversation. JOHNSON.



*Opb.* 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 likeness<sup>9</sup>; this was some time a paradox, but now the time gives it proof. I did love you once.

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

*Ham.* You should not have believed me: for virtue cannot so inoculate<sup>1</sup> our old stock, but we shall relish of it: I loved you not.

*Opb.* 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<sup>2</sup>: I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious; with more offences at my beck, than I have thoughts to put them in<sup>3</sup>, 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?

*Opb.* 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. Farewel.

<sup>9</sup> —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. So Spenser, *Faery Queen*, B. III. c. ix.

"Then forth it breaks; and with his furious blast,

"Confounds both land and seas, and skies doth overcast."

See p. 221, n. 6. MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> —inoculate—] This is the reading of the first folio. The first quarto reads *euocuat*; the second, *euacuat*; and the third *evacuate*.

STEEVENS.

<sup>3</sup> I could accuse me of such things, that it were better, my mother had not borne me:] So, in our poet's 88th Sonnet:

"—— I can set down a story

"Of faults conceal'd, wherein I am attained." MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> —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. JOHNSON.

—at my beck,—] That is, always ready to come about me.

STEEVENS.

*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 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<sup>5</sup>; 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 ignorance<sup>6</sup>: 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<sup>7</sup>; 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<sup>7</sup>;

<sup>5</sup> *I have heard of your paintings too, well enough, &c.*] This is according to the quarto; the folio, for *paintings*, has *prattlings*, and for *face*, has *pace*, which agrees with what follows, *you jig, you amble*. Probably the authour wrote both. I think the common reading best.

JOHNSON.

I would continue to read, *paintings*, because these destructive aids of beauty seem, in the time of Shakspeare, to have been general objects of satire. STEVENS.

<sup>6</sup> — *make your wantonness your ignorance*:] You mistake by wanton affection, and pretend to mistake by ignorance. JOHNSON.

<sup>7</sup> — *all but one shall live*:] By the one who shall not live, he means, his step-father. MALONE.

<sup>7</sup> *The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword*:] The poet certainly meant to have placed his words thus:

*The courtier's, scholar's, soldier's, eye, tongue, sword*;  
otherwise the excellence of *tongue* is appropriated to the *soldier*, and the *scholar* wears the *sword*. WARNER.

This regulation is needless. So, in *Tarquin and Lucrece*:

“ — princes are the *glass*, the *school*, the *book*,

“ Where subjects eyes do learn, do read, do look.”

And in *Quintilian*: “ *Multum agit sexus, ætas, conditio; ut in feminis, senibus, pupillis, liberis, parentes, conjuges, alligantibus.*”

FARMER.

The

The expectancy and rose of the fair state,  
 The glass of fashion, and the mould of form<sup>8</sup>,  
 The observ'd of all observers! quite, quite down!  
 And I, of ladies most deject<sup>9</sup> 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<sup>1</sup> and harsh;  
 That unmatch'd form and feature<sup>2</sup> of blown youth,  
 Blasted with ecstasy<sup>3</sup>: 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<sup>4</sup>,  
 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;

<sup>8</sup> — *the mould of form,*] The model by whom all endeavoured to form themselves. JOHNSON.

<sup>9</sup> — *most deject*—] So, in Heywood's *Silver Age*, 1613:

“—What knight is that

“So passionately deject?” STEEVENS.

<sup>1</sup> — *out of tune*—] Thus the folio. The quarto—*out of time*. STEEV.  
 These two words in the hand-writing of Shakspeare's age are almost indistinguishable, and hence are frequently confounded in the old copies. See Vol. IV. p. 40, n. 1. MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> — *and feature*—] Thus the folio. The quartos read *stature*. STEEV.

<sup>3</sup> — *with ecstasy*:] The word *ecstasy* was anciently used to signify some degree of alienation of mind.

So G. Douglas, translating—*stetit acris fixa dolore*:

“In *ecstasy* she stood, and mad almost.” STEEVENS.

See Vol. IV. p. 361, n. 9. MALONE.

<sup>4</sup> — *the disclose*,] This was the technical term. So, in the *Maid of Honour*, by Massinger;

“One aerie with proportion ne'er discloses

“The eagle and the wren.” MALONE.

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

*Pol.* It shall do well : But yet do I 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 shew his grief ; let her be round with him<sup>5</sup> ;  
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 lieve the town-crier  
spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with  
your hand, thus ; but use all gently : for in the very  
torrent, tempest, and (as I may say) whirlwind of your  
passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance, that  
may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul, to  
hear a robustious perriwig-pated<sup>6</sup> fellow tear a passion  
to

<sup>5</sup> — *be round with him ;*] To be round with a person, is to reprimand him with freedom. So, in *A Mad World my Masters*, by Middleton, 1640 ; “ She’s round with her i’ faith.” MALONE.

<sup>6</sup> — *perriwig-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. In the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Julia says—  
“ I’ll get me such a colour’d perriwig.”

*Goff*, who wrote several plays in the reign of James I. and was no mean scholar, has the following lines in his tragedy of the *Courageous Turk*, 1632 :

“ — How

to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings<sup>7</sup>; who, for the most part, are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shews, and noise<sup>8</sup>: I would have such

" — How now, you heavens,

" Grow you so proud you must needs put on curl'd locks,

" And clothe yourselves in *perruigs* of fire?"

Players, however, seem to have worn them most generally. So, in *Every Woman in her Humour*, 1609: " — as none wear hoods but monks and ladies; and feathers but fore-horses, &c; — none *perruigs* but *players* and pictures." STEEVENS.

7 — *the groundlings*; —] The meaner people then seem to have sat below, as they now sit in the upper gallery, who, not well understanding poetical language, were sometimes gratified by a mimical and mute representation of the drama, previous to the dialogue. JOHNSON.

Before each act of the tragedy of *Jocasta*, translated from *Euripides*, by Geo. Gascoigne and Fra. Kinwelmerth, the order of these dumb shews is very minutely described. This play was presented at Gray's Inn by them in 1566. The mute exhibitions included in it are chiefly emblematical, nor do they display a picture of one single scene which is afterwards performed on the stage. In some other pieces I have observed, that they serve to introduce such circumstances as the limits of a play would not admit to be represented.

Thus in *Herod and Antipater*, 1622:

" ——— Let me now

" Intreat your worthy patience to contain

" Much in imagination; and, what words

" Cannot have time to utter, let your eyes,

" Out of this DUMB SHOW, tell your memories."

In short, dumb shews sometimes supplied deficiencies, and, at others, filled up the space of time which was necessary to pass while business was supposed to be transacted in foreign parts. With this method of preserving one of the unities, our ancestors appear to have been satisfied.

Ben Jonson mentions the *groundlings* with equal contempt. "The understanding gentlemen of the ground here."

Again, in *The Case is Alter'd*, 1609: — "a rude barbarous crew, that have no brains, and yet *grounded* judgments; they will hiss any thing that mounts above their *grounded* capacities."

In our early play-houses the pit had neither floor nor benches. Hence the term of *groundlings* for those who frequented it.

The *groundling*, in its primitive signification, means a fish which always keeps at the bottom of the water. STEEVENS.

" — are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shews, and noise:] i. e. have a capacity for nothing but dumb shews; understand nothing else. So, in Heywood's *History of Women*, 1624: "I have therein imitated

such a fellow whipp'd for o'er-doing Termagant<sup>9</sup>; it out-herods Herod<sup>1</sup>: Pray you, avoid it.

1. *Play*. I warrant your honour.

*Ham.*

imitated our *historical* and comical poets, that write to the stage; who, lest the auditory should be dulled with serious discourses, in every act present some zany, with his mimick gesture to breed in the less *capable* mirth and laughter.<sup>v</sup> See Vol. VI. p. 525, n. 7. MALONE.

— *inexplicable dumb shews*,] I believe the meaning is, *shews, without words to explain them*. JOHNSON.

Rather, I believe, shews which are too confusedly conducted to explain themselves.

I meet with one of these in Heywood's play of the *Four Prentices of London*, 1632, where the *Presenter* says,

"I must entreat your patience to forbear

"While we do feast your eye, and starve your ear.

"For in *dumb shews*, which were they writ at large

"Would ask a long and tedious circumstance,

"Their infant fortunes I will soon express:" &c.

Then follow the *dumb shews*, which well deserve the character Hamlet has already given of this species of entertainment, as may be seen from the following passage: "Enter Tancred, with Bella Franca richly attired: she *somewhat affecting him*, though she *makes no show of it*." Surely this may be called an *inexplicable dumb shew*." STEEVENS.

<sup>9</sup> *Termagant*;] *Termagant* was a Saracen deity, very clamorous and violent in the old moralities. PERCY.

*Termagant* is mentioned by Spenser in his *Fairy Queen*, and by Chaucer in *The Tale of Sir Topas*; and by B. and Fletcher in *A King and no King*, as follows:

"This would make a faint-swear like a soldier, and a soldier like *Termagant*."

Again, in *Ram-Alley, or Merry Tricks*, 1611:

"—swears, God blefs us,

"Like a very *Termagant*."

Again, in *The Picture*, by Massinger:

"—— a hundred thousand Turks

"Assail'd him, every one a *Termagaunt*." STEEVENS.

<sup>1</sup> — *out-herods Herod*:] The character of *Herod* in the ancient mysteries was always a violent one:

See the *Conventiue Ludus* among the Cotton Mss. Vespasian D. vii: 2.

"Now I regne lyk a kyng arayd ful rych,

"Rollyd in rynggs and robys of array,

"Dukys with dentys I dryve into the dych;

"My dedys be ful dowty demyd be day,"

*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,

Again, in the *Chester Whitson Plays*, Mss. Harl. 2013:

- " I kynge of kynges, non foe keene,
- " I soveraigne fir, as well is seene,
- " I tyrant that maye bouth take and teene
- " Castell tower, and towne;
- " I welde this worlde withouten wene,
- " I beate all those unbuxome beene;
- " I drive the devills alby dene
- " Deepe in hell adowne.
- " For I am kynge of all mankinde,
- " I byd, I beate, I lole, I bynde;
- " I master the moone; take this in mynde
- " That I am most of mighte.
- " I ame the greatest above degree,
- " That is, that was, or ever shall be;
- " The sonne it dare not shine on me,
- " And I byd him goe downe.
- " No raine to fall shall now be free,
- " Nor no lorde shall have that liberty
- " That dare abyde and I byd sleey,
- " But I shall crake his crowne."

See the *Vintner's Play*, p. 67.

Chaucer describing a parish clerk, in his *Miller's Tale*, says,

" He playeth *Herode* on a scaffold high."

The parish clerks and other subordinate ecclesiasticks appear to have been our first actors, and to have represented their characters on distinct pulpits or scaffolds. Thus, in one of the stage-directions to the 27th pageant in the Coventry collection already mentioned; "What tyme that procession is entered into y<sup>e</sup> place, and the Herowdys takyn his *secaffalde*, and Annas and Cayphas their *secaffaldys*;" &c. STEEV.

To the instances given by Mr. Steevens of Herod's lofty language, may be added these lines from the Coventry plays among the Cotton Mss. p. 92.

- " Of bewte and of boldnes I ber evermor the belle,
- " Of mayn and of myght I master every man;
- " I dyng with my dwtyness the devyl down to helle,
- " For bothe of hevyn and of earth I am kynge certayn."

MALONE.

both at the first, and now, was, and is, to hold as 'twere the mirrour up to nature; to shew virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time<sup>2</sup>, his form and preasure<sup>3</sup>. Now this, over-done, or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of which one<sup>4</sup>, must, in your allowance<sup>5</sup>, o'er-weigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be players<sup>6</sup>, that I have seen play,—and heard others praise,

<sup>2</sup> — age and body of the time,—] To exhibit the form and preasure of the age of the time, is, to represent the manners of the time suitable to the period that is treated of, according as it may be ancient, or modern. STEEVENS.

Dr. Johnson says, "*the age of the time* can hardly pass." Mr. Steevens has endeavoured to explain it. But perhaps Shakspeare did not mean to connect these words. It is the end of playing, says Hamlet, to shew the age in which we live, and the body of the time, its form and preasure: to delineate exactly the manners of the age, and the particular humour of the day. MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> — preasure—] Resemblance, as in a print. JOHNSON.

<sup>4</sup> — the censure of which one, &c.] Ben Jonson seems to have imitated this passage in his *Postaster*, 1603;

" — I will try

" If tragedy have a more kind aspect;

" Her favours in my next I will pursue;

" Where if I prove the pleasure but of one,

" If be judicious be, he shall be alone

" A theatre unto me." MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> — in your allowance,] In your approbation. See Vol. VIII. p. 570, n. 8. MALONE.

<sup>6</sup> — O, there be players, &c.] I would read thus: "There be players, that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly (not to speak profanely) that neither having the accent nor the gait of christian, pagan, nor Mussulman, have so strutted and bellowed, that I thought some of nature's journeymen had made *the men*, and not made them well," &c. FARMER.

I have no doubt that our authour wrote—"that I thought some of nature's journeymen had made *them*, and not made them well," &c. *Them* and *men* are frequently confounded in the old copies. See the *Comedy of Errors*, Act. II. sc. ii. folio, 1623:—"because it is a blessing that he bestows on beasts, and what he hath scantied *them* [r. *mea*] in hair, he hath given them in wit."—In the present instance the compositor probably caught the word *men* from the last syllable of *journeymen*. Shakspeare could not mean to assert as a general truth, that nature's journeymen had made *men*, i. e. all mankind;

for,



praise, and that highly,—not to speak it profanely<sup>7</sup>, that, neither having the accent of christians, nor the gait of christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted, and bellow'd, 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 reform'd that indifferently with us.

*Ham*. O, reform it altogether. And let those, that play your clowns, speak no more than is set down for them<sup>8</sup>: for there be of them, that will themselves laugh,

for, if that were the case, these strutting players would have been on a footing with the rest of the species. Nature herself, the poet means to say, made all mankind except these strutting players, and they were made by Nature's journeymen.

A passage in *King Lear*, in which we meet with the same sentiment, in my opinion, fully supports the emendation now proposed:

"*Kent*. Nature disclaims in *THEE*, a tailor made *THEE*."

"*Corn*. Thou art a strange fellow: A tailor make a man!"

"*Kent*. Ay, a tailor, sir; a stone-cutter or a painter [*Nature's journeymen*] could not have made *him* so ill, though he had been but two hours at the trade." MALONE.

<sup>7</sup> — not to speak it profanely—] *Profanely* seems to relate, not to the praise which he has mentioned, but to the censure which he is about to utter. Any gross or indelicate language was called *profane*.

So, in *Otello*:—"he is a most *profane* and liberal counsellor." JOHNSON.

<sup>8</sup> — speak no more than is set down for them:] So, in *The Antipodes*, by Brome, 1638:

"—you, sir, are incorrigible, and

"Take licence to yourself to add unto

"Your parts, your own free fancy," &c.

"—That is a way, my lord, has been allow'd

"On elder stages, to move mirth and laughter."

"—Yes, in the days of *Tarlton*, and of *Kempe*,

"Before the stage was purg'd from barbarism," &c.

Stowe informs us, (p. 697, edit. 1615,) that among the twelve players who were sworn the queen's servants in 1583, "were two rare men, viz. Thomas Wilson, for a quicke delicate refined *extemporall witt*; and Richard Tarleton, for a wondrous plentiful, pleasant *extemporall witt*," &c.

Again, in *Tarlton's Newes from Purgatory*: "—I absented myself from all plaies, as wanting that merry Roscius of plaies that famosed all comedies so with his pleasant and *extemporall invention*." STEEVENS.

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 shews 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* ROS. and GUIL.

*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,—

*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 cloath thee? Why should the poor be flatter'd?

No, let the candy'd tongue lick absurd pomp;  
And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee<sup>9</sup>,  
Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou hear?  
Since my dear soul<sup>1</sup> was mistress of her choice,  
And could of men distinguish her election,

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 Shakspeare alludes. See the *Historical Account of our old English Theatres*. Vol. I. Part II. MALONE.

<sup>9</sup> — the pregnant hinges of the knee,] I believe the sense of pregnant in this place is, quick, ready, prompt. JOHNSON.

<sup>1</sup> — my dear soul —] Dear soul is an expression equivalent to the φίλα γυναικα, φίλον ἄνδρα, of Homer. STEEVENS.

She hath seal'd thee for herself<sup>2</sup>: for thou hast been  
 As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing;  
 A man, that fortune's buffets and rewards  
 Hast ta'n with equal thanks: and blest are those,  
 Whose blood and judgment<sup>3</sup> are so well co-mingled<sup>4</sup>,  
 That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger  
 To sound what stop she please: Give me that man  
 That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him  
 In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,  
 As I do thee.—Something too much of this.—  
 There is a play to-night before the king;  
 One scene of it comes near the circumstance,  
 Which I have told thee of my father's death.  
 I pr'ythee, when thou see'st that act a-foot,  
 Even with the very comment of thy soul  
 Observe my uncle: if his occulted guilt  
 Do not itself unkennel in one speech,  
 It is a damned ghost that we have seen;  
 And my imaginations are as foul  
 As Vulcan's stithy<sup>5</sup>. Give him heedful note:  
 For I mine eyes will rivet to his face;  
 And, after, we will both our judgments join  
 In censure of his seeming.

*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.

<sup>2</sup> She hath seal'd thee for herself.] Thus the quarto. The folio reads:  
 And could of men distinguish, her election  
 Hath seal'd thee for herself. MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> — co-mingled,] Thus the folio. The quarto reads—*comedled*;  
 which had formerly the same meaning. MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> — Vulcan's stithy.] *Stithy* is a smith's anvil. JOHNSON.  
 So, in *Troilus and Cressida*:

“Now by the forge that stithied Mars's helm.”

So, in Greene's *Card of Fancy*, 1608:—“determined to strike on  
 the fish while the iron was hot.” STEEVENS,

*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-cramm'd: You cannot feed capons so.

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

*Ham.* No, nor mine now<sup>6</sup>. My lord,—you play'd once in the university<sup>7</sup>, you say?

[*to Polonius.*

*Pol.*

<sup>6</sup> — *nor mine now.*] A man's words, says the proverb, are his own no longer than he keeps them unspoken. JOHNSON.

<sup>7</sup> — *you play'd once in the university.*] The practice of acting Latin plays in the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, is very ancient, and continued to near the middle of the last century. They were performed occasionally for the entertainment of princes and other great personages; and regularly at Christmas, at which time a *Lord of misrule* was appointed at Oxford, to regulate the exhibitions, and a similar officer with the title of *Imperator*, at Cambridge. The most celebrated actors at Cambridge were the students of St. John's and King's colleges: at Oxford, those of Christ-Church. In the hall of that college a Latin comedy called *Marcus Geminus*, and the Latin tragedy of *Progne*, were performed before Queen Elizabeth in the year 1566; and in 1564, the Latin tragedy of *Dido* was played before her majesty, when she visited the university of Cambridge. The exhibition was in the body or nave of the chapel of King's college, which was lighted by the royal guards, each of whom bore a staff-torch in his hand. See Peck's *Desider. Cur.* p. 36. n. x. The actors in this piece were all of that college. The authour of the tragedy, who in the Latin account of this royal visit, in the Museum, [MSS. Baker, 7037, p. 203,] is said to have been *Regalis Collegii olim socius*, was, I believe, John Rightwile, who was elected a fellow of King's college, in 1507, and according to Anthony Wood, "made the tragedy of *Dido* out of Virgil, and acted the same with the scholars of his school, [St. Paul's, of which he was appointed master in 1522,] before Cardinal Wolsey with great applause." In 1583, the same play was performed at Oxford, in Christ-Church hall, before Albertus de Alasco, a Polish prince Palatine, as was William Gager's Latin comedy, entitled *Rivales*. On Elizabeth's second visit to Oxford, in 1592, a few years before the writing of the present play, she was entertained on the 24th and 26th of September, with the representation

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

*Ham.* And what did you enact?

*Pol.* I did enact Julius Cæsar<sup>2</sup>: I was kill'd i' the Capitol; Brutus kill'd me.

*Ham.* It was a brute part of him<sup>3</sup>, to kill so capital a calf there.—Be the players ready?

*Ref.* Ay, my lord; they stay upon your patience<sup>4</sup>.

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

*Ham.* No, good mother, here's metal more attractive.

*Pol.* O ho! do you mark that? [to the king.]

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

[lying down at Ophelia's feet<sup>5</sup>.

*Oph.*

tion of the last mentioned play, and another Latin comedy, called *Bellum Grammaticale*. MALONE.

It should seem from the following passage in Vice Chancellor Hatcher's letter to Lord Burghley, on June 21, 1580, that the common players were likewise permitted to perform in the universities. "Whereas it hath pleased your honour to recommend my lord of Oxenford his players, that they might shew their cunning in several plays already practised by 'em before the Queen's Majesty;—(denied on account of the pestilence and commencement:)—"of late we denied the like to the right honourable the Lord of Leicester his servants." FARMER.

<sup>2</sup> *I did enact Julius Cæsar:—*] A Latin play on the subject of Cæsar's death was performed at Christ-Church in Oxford, in 1582; and several years before a Latin play on the same subject, written by Jaques Grevin, was acted in the college of Beauvais, at Paris. I suspect that there was likewise an English play on the story of Cæsar before the time of Shakspeare. See Vol. VII. p. 307, n. 1. and the *Essay on the order of Shakspeare's plays*, Vol. I. MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> *—It was a brute part of him, —*] Sir John Harrington, in his *Metamorphosis of Ajax*, 1596, has the same quibble: "O brave-minded Brutus! but this I must truly say, they were two brutish parts both of him and you; one to kill his sons for treason, the other to kill his father in treason." STEEVENS.

<sup>4</sup> *—they stay upon your patience.]* May it not be read more intelligibly, *They stay upon your pleasure*. In *Macbeth* it is:

"Noble Macbeth, we stay upon your leisure." JOHNSON.

<sup>5</sup> *—at Ophelia's feet.]* To lie at the feet of a mistress during any dramatic representation, seems to have been a common act of gallantry. So, in the *Queen of Corinth*, by B. and Fletcher:

"Ushers her to her coach, lies at her feet

"At solemn masques, applauding what she laughs at."

*Oph.* No, my lord.

*Ham.* I mean, my head upon your lap<sup>3</sup>?

*Oph.* Ay, my lord.

*Ham.* Do you think, I meant country matters<sup>4</sup>?

*Oph.* I think nothing, my lord.

*Ham.* That's a fair thought to lie between maids' 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<sup>5</sup>. What should a man do, but be merry? for, look you, how cheerfully

Again, in Gascoigne's *Greene Knight's farewell to Fancies*:

"To lie along in ladies lapses," &c.

This fashion, which Shakspeare probably designed to ridicule by appropriating it to Hamlet during his dissembled madness, is likewise exposed by Decker, in his *Guls Hornbook*, 1609.

See an extract from it among the prefaces. STEEVENS.

I do not conceive that this fashion was intended to be ridiculed by Shakspeare. Decker, in his *Guls Hornebooke*, inveighs in general against the custom of sitting on the stage, but makes no mention of lying in ladies' laps, nor did any woman, I believe, sit on the publick stage, in our poet's time. MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> *I mean, &c.*] This speech, and *Ophelia's* reply to it, are omitted in the quartos. STEEVENS.

<sup>4</sup> *Do you think, I meant country matters?*] Dr. Johnson, from a casual inadvertence, proposed to read—country manners. The old reading is certainly right. What Shakspeare meant to allude to, must be too obvious to every reader, to require any explanation. MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> — your only jig-maker.] A jig, as has been already observed, signified not only a dance, but also a ludicrous prose or metrical composition, which in our authour's time was sometimes represented or sung after a play. So, in the prologue to Fletcher's *Fair Maid of the Inn*:

"— when for approbation

"A jig shall be clapp'd at, and every rhyme

"Prais'd and applauded by a clamorous chime."

See also p. 277, n. 7. and *The Historical Account of the old English sheares*, Vol. I. P. II. MALONE.

Many of these jiggs are entered in the books of the Stationers' Company:—"Philips his Jigg of the slyppers, 1595; Kempe's Jigg of the Kitchen-stuff-woman, 1595." STEEVENS.

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 fables<sup>6</sup>. O heavens! die two months ago, and not forgotten yet; Then there's hope, a great man's memory may out-live 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-horse<sup>7</sup>; whose epitaph, is, *For, O, for, O, the hobby-horse is forgot*<sup>8</sup>.

*Trumpets*

<sup>6</sup> *Nay, then let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of fables.* ] 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 fables.

Our poet furnished Hamlet with a suit of fables on the present occasion, not, as I conceive, because such a dress was suited to "a country where it was bitter cold, and the air was nipping and eager," (as Dr. Johnson supposed,) nor because "a suit of fables was the richest dress that could be worn in Denmark," (as Mr. Steevens has suggested,) of which probably he had no knowledge, but because a suit trimmed with fables was in Shakspeare's time the richest dress worn by men in England. We have had again and again occasion to observe, that, wherever his scene might happen to be, the customs of his own country were still in his thoughts.

By the statute of apparel, 24 Henry VIII. c. 13, (article *furres*;) it is ordained, that none under the degree of an earl may use fables.

Bishop says in his *Blossoms*, 1577, speaking of the extravagance of those times, that a thousand ducates were sometimes given for "a face of fables."

That a suit of fables was the magnificent dress of our author's time, appears from a passage in B. Jonson's *Discoveries*: "Would you not laugh to meet a great counsellor of state, in a flat cap, with his trunk-hose, and a hobby-horse cloak, and yond haberdasher in a velvet gown trimm'd with fables?" MALONE.

7 — *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 the ridiculous zeal of the sectaries: from these ballads Hamlet quotes a line or two. WARBURTON.

8 — *O, the hobby-horse is forgot.* ] In *Love's Labour's Lost*, this line is also introduced.

*Trumpets sound. The dumb shew follows.*

*Enter a king and a queen, very lovingly; the queen embracing him, and he her. She kneels, and makes shew 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 a while, but in the end, accepts his love.* [Exeunt.

*Opb.* What means this, my lord?

*Ham.* Marry, this is miching mallecho<sup>9</sup>; it means mischief.

*Opb.*

In *TEXNOGAMIA*, or *the Marriage of the Arts*, 1618, is the following stage-direction.

"Enter a *bobby-horse*, dancing the morrice," &c.

Again, in B. and Fletcher's *Woman Pleas'd*:

*Scot.* "Shall the *bobby-horse* be forgot then,

"The hopeful *bobby-horse*, shall he lie founderd?"

The scene in which this passage is, will very amply confirm all that

Dr. Warburton has said concerning the *bobby-horse*.

Again, in Ben Jonson's *Entertainment for the Queen and Prince at Aliborpe*:

"But see, the *bobby-horse* is forgot,

"Fool, it must be your lot,

"To supply his want with faces,

"And some other buffoon graces."

See figure 5 in the plate at the end of the First Part of *K. Henry IV.* with Mr. Tollet's observations on it. STEEVENS.

<sup>9</sup> — *miching mallecho*;] A secret and wicked contrivance; a concealed wickedness. To *mich* is a provincial word, and was probably once general, signifying to lie hid, or play the truant. In Norfolk *michers* signify *pilferers*. The signification of *miching* in the present passage may be ascertained by a passage in Decker's *Wonderful Years*, 4to, 1603: "Those that could shift for a time,—went most bitterly *miching* and muffled, up and downe, with rue and wormwood stuff into their ears and nostrills."

See



*Oph.* Belike, this shew 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 shew meant?

*Ham.* Ay, or any shew that you'll shew him: Be not you ashamed to shew<sup>1</sup>, 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 cart<sup>2</sup> gone round

Neptune's salt wash, and Tellus' orb'd ground;  
And thirty dozen moons, with borrow'd sheen<sup>3</sup>,  
About the world have times twelve thirties been;

See also Florio's Italian Dictionary, 1598, in v. *Acciapinare*. "To micke, to shrug or sneak in some corner, and with pouting and lips to shew some anger." In a subsequent passage we find that the murderer before he poisons the king makes *damnable faces*.

Where our poet met with the word *mallecho*, which in Minshew's Spanish Dictionary, 1617, is defined *malefactum*, I am unable to ascertain. In the folio, the word is spelt *malicho*. The quarto reads — *manching Mallico*. *Mallico* is printed in a distinct character, as a proper name. MALONE.

<sup>1</sup> — *Be not you asham'd to shew, &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, an age of delicacy. The poet is, however, blameable; for extravagance of thought, not indecency of expression, is the characteristic of madness, at least of such madness as should be represented on the scene. STEEVENS.

<sup>2</sup> — *cart*.] A chariot was anciently so called. Thus Chaucer in the *Knight's Tale*, late edit. ver. 2024:

"The carter overridden with his cart." STEEVENS.

<sup>3</sup> — *sheen*.] Splendour, lustre. JOHNSON.

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:

For women fear too much, even as they love<sup>4</sup>;

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<sup>5</sup>, 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 powers<sup>6</sup> 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—

4 — *even as they love*;] Here seems to be a line lost, which should have rhymed to *love*. JOHNSON.

This line is omitted in the folios. Perhaps a triplet was designed, and then instead of love, we should read, *lust*. The folio gives the next line thus:

“For women's fear and love holds quantity.” STEEVENS.

Some trace of the lost line is found in the quarto, which reads:

*Either none in neither aught, &c.*

Perhaps the words omitted might have been of this import:

*Either none they feel, or an excess approve;*

*In neither aught, or in extremity.*

In two preceding passages in the quarto, half a line was inadvertently omitted by the compositor. See p. 276, “*then senseless Ilium, seeming,*” &c. and p. 291, “thus conscience does make cowards of us all:—the words in Italick characters are not found in the quarto.

MALONE.

5 *Where love, &c.*] These two lines are omitted in the folio.

STEEVENS:

6 — *operant powers*—] *Operant* is active. Shakspeare gives it in *Timon* as an epithet to *poison*. Heywood has likewise used it in his *Royal King and Loyal Subject*, 1637:

“—— may my *operant* parts

“Each one forget their office!”

The word is now obsolete. STEEVENS.

*P. Queen.*

*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 instances<sup>7</sup>, 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<sup>8</sup>;  
What to ourselves in passion we propose,  
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.  
The violence of either grief or joy  
Their own enactures with themselves destroy<sup>9</sup>:  
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.

<sup>7</sup> *The instances,—*] *The motives.* JOHNSON.

<sup>8</sup> *— 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. JOHNSON.

<sup>9</sup> *The violence of either grief or joy*

*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 editors have *enacters*. JOHNSON.

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<sup>1</sup>, nor heaven light!  
 Sport and repose lock from me, day, and night!  
 To desperation<sup>2</sup> turn my trust and hope!  
 An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope<sup>3</sup>!  
 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 Oph.

*P. King.* 'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here a while;

My spirits grow dall, 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.

<sup>1</sup> *Nor earth to me give food,—*] Thus the quarto, 1604. The folio and the late editors read:

*Nor earth to give me food,—.*

An imperative or optative verb was evidently intended here, as in the following line: "Sport and repose lock from me," &c. MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> *To desperation, &c.*] This and the following line are omitted in the folio. STEEVENS.

<sup>3</sup> *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.

This abbreviation of the word *anchoret* is very ancient. I find it in the Romance of *Robert the Devil*, printed by *Wynkin de Worde*: "We have robbed and killed nonnes, holy *aunkers*, preestes, clerkes," &c.

Again, in *The Vision of Pierce Plowman*:

"As *ankers* and hermits that hold them in her felles."

This and the foregoing line are not in the folio. I believe we should read—*anchor's chair*. So, in the second Satire of Hall's fourth book, edit. 1602, p. 18:

"Sit seven yeares pining in an *anchore's cheyre*,"

"To win some parched shreds of minevere." STEEVENS.

The old copies read—*And anchor's cheer*. The correction was made by Mr. Theobald. MALONE.

*Ham.*

*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<sup>4</sup>. Marry, how? Tropically. This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna: Gonzago is the duke's name<sup>5</sup>; his wife, Baptista<sup>6</sup>: 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 gall'd jade wince<sup>7</sup>, our withers are unwrung.—

*Enter* LUCIANUS.

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king<sup>8</sup>.

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

<sup>4</sup> *The mouse-trap.*] He calls it the *mouse-trap*, because it is  
—— the thing

In which he'll catch the conscience of the king. STEEVENS.

<sup>5</sup> *Gonzago is the duke's name;*] Thus all the old copies: yet in the stage-direction for the dumb shew, and the subsequent entrance, we have "Enter a king and queen," &c. and in the latter part of this speech both the quarto and folio read—Lucianus, nephew to the king.

This seeming inconsistency however may be reconciled. Though the interlude is the image of the murder of a duke of Vienna, or in other words founded upon that story, the poet might make the principal person of his fable a king. MALONE.

<sup>6</sup> *Baptista*—] is, I think, in Italian, the name always of a man.

JOHNSON.

<sup>7</sup> *Let the gall'd jade wince, &c.*] This is a proverbial saying. So, in *Damon and Pythias*, 1582:

"I know the gall'd horse will soonest wince." STEEVENS.

<sup>8</sup> — *nephew to the king.*]—i. e. to the king in the play then represented. The modern editors, following Mr. Theobald, read—"nephew to the duke," though they have not followed that editor in substituting *duke and duchess*, for *king and queen*, in the dumb shew and subsequent entrance. There is no need of departing from the old copies. See n. 5. MALONE.

*Ham.*

*Ham.* I could interpret between you and your love, if I could see the puppets dallying<sup>2</sup>.

*Opb.* You are keen, my lord, you are keen.

*Ham.* It would cost you a groaning, to take off my edge.

*Opb.* Still better, and worse<sup>1</sup>.

*Ham.* So you mistake your husbands<sup>2</sup>.—Begin, murderer;—leave thy damnable faces, and begin. Come:—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 Hecat'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.*

<sup>2</sup> *I could interpret, &c.*] This refers to the interpreter, who formerly sat on the stage at all motions or puppet-shows, and interpreted to the audience. So, in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*:

"Oh excellent motion! oh exceeding puppet!"

"Now will he interpret for her."

Again, in Greene's *Groatfworth of Wit*, 1621: "—It was I that penn'd the Moral of man's wit, the Dialogue of Dives, and for seven years' space was absolute interpreter of the puppets." STEEVENS.

<sup>1</sup> *Still better, and worse.*] i. e. better in regard to the wit of your double entendre, but worse in respect of the grossness of your meaning.

STEEVENS.

<sup>2</sup> *So you mistake your husbands.*] Read, *So you must take your husbands*; that is, *for better, for worse*. JOHNSON.

Theobald proposed the same reading in his *Shakspeare Restored*, however he lost it afterwards. STEEVENS.

"So you mistake your husbands."

I believe this to be right: the word is sometimes used in this ludicrous manner. "Your true trick rascal (says Ursula in *Bartholomew Fair*) must be ever buſie, and mistake away the bottles and cans, before they be half drunk off." FARMER.

Again, in Ben Jonson's *Masque of Augurs*: "—To mistake six torches from the chandry, and give them one."

*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.

*Opb.* The king rises.

*Ham.* What! frightened with false fire?<sup>3</sup>

*Queen.* How fares my lord?

*Pol.* Give o'er the play.

*King.* Give me some light:—away!

*Pol.* Lights, lights, lights!<sup>4</sup>

[*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, fir, and a forest of feathers<sup>5</sup>, (if the rest  
of my fortanes turn Turk with me<sup>6</sup>;) with two proven-

Again, in the *Elder Brother* of Fletcher:

"I fear he will persuade me to *mistake* him." STEEVENS.

I believe the meaning is—you do amiss for yourselves to take husbands for the worse. You should take them only for the better.

TOLLET.

<sup>3</sup> *What! frightened with false fire!*] This speech is omitted in the quartos. STEEVENS.

<sup>4</sup> *Pol. Lights, &c.*] Thus the quarto. In the folio *All* is prefixed to this speech. MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> *Would not this, fir, and a forest of feathers, &c.*] It appears from Decker's *Guls Hornebooke*, that feathers were much worn on the stage in Shakspeare's time. MALONE.

<sup>6</sup> — turn Turk with me,] This expression has occurred already in *Much Ado about Nothing*, and I have met with it in several old comedies. So, in Greene's *Tu Quoque*, 1599: "This it is to *turn Turk*, from an absolute and most compleat gentleman, to a most absurd, ridiculous, and fond lover." It means, I believe, no more than to change condition fantastically. Again, in Decker's *Honest Whore*, 1635:

"—— 'tis damnation,

"If you *turn Turk* again."

Perhaps the phrase had its rise from some popular story like that of *Ward and Danfiker*, the two famous pirates; an account of whose overthrow was published by A. Barker 1609; and, in 1612, a play was written on the same subject called *A Christian turn'd Turk*.

STEEVENS.

cial roses<sup>7</sup> on my razed shoes<sup>8</sup>, get me a fellowship in a cry of players<sup>9</sup>, sir?

*Hor.* Half a share.

*Ham.* A whole one, I<sup>1</sup>.

For thou dost know, O Damon dear<sup>2</sup>,

This realm dismanted was

Of Jove himself; and now reigns here

A very, very—peacock<sup>3</sup>.

*Hor.* You might have rhymed.

*Ham.*

7 — *with two Provencial roses*, —] The old copies have *provincial*, which as Mr. Warton has observed, was undoubtedly a misspelling for *Provencial*, or *Provençal*, i. e. roses of Provence, “a beautiful species of rose formerly much cultivated.” Here, roses of ribbands must be understood. MALONE.

When shoe-strings were worn, they were covered where they met in the middle by a ribband, gathered in the form of a rose. So, in an old song:

“Gilderoy was a bonny boy,

“Had roses tull his shoon.” JOHNSON.

8 — *on my razed shoes*,] The quartos has *raz’d*; the folio—*rac’d*. It is the same word differently spelt. *Razed shoes* are shoes *freaked*. See Minshew’s *Dict.* in v. To *rase*. “To these their nether-stockes, (says Stubbes in his *Anatomic of Abuses*, 1583,) they [the people of England] have corked *shoes*, pinnetts, and pantoffles, which beare them up a finger or two from the ground; whereof some be of white leather, some of blacke, and some of red; some of black velvet, some of white, some of red, some of Greene,—*rac’d*, carved, cut, and stiched all over *with filke*, and laied on with gold, silver, and such like.” MALONE.

9 — *a cry of players*—] A troop or company of players. So, in *Coriolanus*:

“—You have made good work,

“You, and your cry.”

Again, in *A strange Horse-race*, by Thomas Decker, 1613: “The last race they ran, (for you must know they had many,) was from a *cry* of serjeants.” MALONE.

<sup>1</sup> *Hor.* Half a share.

*Ham.* A whole one, I.] It should be, I think,

A whole one;—*ay*,—

For &c.

The actors in our authour’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. See *The Account of the Ancient Theatres*, Vol. I. Part II.

MALONE.

2 — *O Damon dear*,] Hamlet calls Horatio by this name, in allusion to the celebrated friendship between *Damon* and *Pythias*. A play on



*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.

on this subject was written by Rich. Edwards, and published in 1582.

STEEVENS.

The friendship of Damon and Pythias is also enlarged upon in a book that was probably very popular in Shakspeare's youth, Sir Thomas Elliot's *Governour*, 1513. MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> *A very, very—peacock.*] This alludes to a fable of the birds choosing a king; instead of the eagle, a peacock. POPE.

The old copies have it *paiock*, *paicocke*, and *pajocke*. I substitute *paddock*, as nearest to the traces of the corrupted reading. I have, as Mr. Pope says, been willing to substitute any thing in the place of his *peacock*. He thinks a fable alluded to, of the birds choosing a king; instead of the eagle, a *peacock*. I suppose, he must mean the fable of Barlandus, in which it is said, the birds, being weary of their state of anarchy, moved for the setting up of a king; and the *peacock* was elected on account of his gay feathers. But, with submission, in this passage of our Shakspeare, there is not the least mention made of the eagle in antithesis to the *peacock*; and it must be by a very uncommon figure, that Jove himself stands in the place of his *bird*. I think, Hamlet is setting his father's and uncle's characters in contrast to each other: and means to say, that by his father's death the state was stripp'd of a godlike monarch, and that now in his stead reign'd the most despicable poisonous animal that could be; a mere *paddock*, or toad. *PAD*, *buso*, *rubeta major*; a toad. This word, I take to be of Hamlet's own substituting. The verses, repeated, seem to be from some old ballad; in which, rhyme being necessary, I doubt not but the last verse ran thus:

*A very, very—afs.* THEOBALD.

*A peacock* seems proverbial for a fool. Thus *Gascoigne* in his *Weeds*:

"A thefe, a cowarde, and a *peacocke* foole." FARMER.

In the last scene of this act, Hamlet, speaking of the king, uses the expression which Theobald would introduce:

"Would from a *paddock*, from a bat, a gib,

"Such dear concernments hide?"

The reading, *peacock*, which I believe to be the true one, was first introduced by Mr. Pope.

Mr. Theobald is unfaithful in his account of the old copies. No copy of authority reads—*paicocke*. The quarto, 1604, has *paiock*; the folio, 1623, *paicocke*.

Shakspeare, I suppose, means, that the king struts about with a false pomp, to which he has no right. See Florio's Italian Dictionary, 1598: "*Pavonneggiare*. To jet up and down, fondly gazing upon himself, as a peacock doth." MALONE.

*Ham.*

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

For if the king like not the comedy,  
Why then, belike <sup>4</sup>,—he likes it not, perdy <sup>5</sup>.—

*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 distemper'd.

*Ham.* With drink, sir <sup>6</sup>?

*Guil.* No, my lord, with choler.

*Ham.* Your wisdom should shew 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

<sup>4</sup> *Why, then, belike,—*] Hamlet was going on to draw the consequence, when the courtiers entered. JOHNSON.

<sup>5</sup> *—he likes it not, perdy.*] *Perdy* is a corruption of *par Dieu*, and is not uncommon in the old plays. So, in *The Play of the Four P's*, 1569:

“In that, you Palmer, as deputie,

“May cleerly discharge him *pardie*.” STEEVENS.

<sup>6</sup> *With drink, sir?*] Hamlet takes particular care that his uncle's love of drink shall not be forgotten. JOHNSON.

command; or, rather, as you say, my mother: therefore no more, but to the matter: My mother, you say,—

*Ref.* Then thus she says; Your behaviour hath struck her into amazement and admiration.

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

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

*Ham.* We shall obey, where she ten times our mother. Have you any further trade<sup>7</sup> with us?

*Ref.* My lord, you once did love me.

*Ham.* And do still, by these pickers and stealers<sup>8</sup>.

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

*Ham.* Sir, I lack advancement.

*Ref.* How can that be, when you have the voice of the king himself for your succession in Denmark?<sup>9</sup>

*Ham.* Ay, sir, but, *While the grass grows*,—the proverb is something musty<sup>1</sup>.

*Enter the Players, with Recorders<sup>2</sup>.*

O, the recorders:—let me see one.—To withdraw with

<sup>7</sup> — *further trade*.—] Further business; further dealing. JOHNSON.

<sup>8</sup> — *by these pickers, &c.*] By these hands. JOHNSON.

Alluding to the *Church Catechism*:—"to keep my hands from picking and stealing," &c. MALONE.

<sup>9</sup> — *when you have the voice of the king himself for your succession in Denmark.*] See p. 201, n. 9. MALONE.

<sup>1</sup> *Ay, sir, but, While the grass grows,—the proverb is something musty.*] The remainder of this old proverb is preserved in Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra*, 1578:

"Whylist grass doth growe, oft sterwes the seely sheede."

Again, in *The Paradise of Daintie Devises*, 1578:

"To whom of old this proverbe well it serves,

"*While grass doth growe, the silly horse be sterwes.*"

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. MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> — *Recorders.*] i. e. a kind of large flute.

To record anciently signified to sing or modulate. STEEVENS.

See Vol. I. p. 180, n. 5. MALONE.

you:—[*taking Guil. aside.*] Why do you go about to recover the wind of me<sup>3</sup>, as if you would drive me into a toil?

*Guil.* O, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly<sup>4</sup>.

*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.

*Ham.* 'Tis as easy as lying: govern these ventages<sup>5</sup> with your fingers and thumb<sup>6</sup>, give it breath with your mouth,

<sup>3</sup> — to recover the wind of me,] So, in an ancient Ms. play entitled *The second Maidens Tragedy*:

“ ———— Is that next?

“ Why then I have your ladyship in the wind.” STEEVENS.

<sup>4</sup> O, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly.] i. e. if my duty to the king makes me press you a little, my love to you makes me still more importunate. If that makes me bold, this makes me even unmannerly. WARBURTON.

I believe we should read—my love is not unmannerly. My conception of this passage is, that, in consequence of Hamlet's moving to take the recorder, Guildenstern also shifts his ground, in order to place himself beneath the prince in his new position. This Hamlet ludicrously calls “going about to recover the wind,” &c. and Guildenstern may answer properly enough, I think, and like a courtier; “if my duty to the king makes me too bold in pressing you upon a disagreeable subject, my love to you will make me not unmannerly, in shewing you all possible marks of respect and attention.” TYRWHITT.

<sup>5</sup> — ventages —] The holes of a flute. JOHNSON.

<sup>6</sup> — and thumb,] The first quarto reads—with your fingers and the umber. This may probably be the ancient name for that piece of moveable brass at the end of a flute, which is either raised or depressed by the finger. The word umber is used by Stowe the chronicler, who, describing a single combat between two knights—says, “he brast up his umber three times.” Here, the umber means the visor of the helmet. So, in Spenser's *Faery Queene*, b. 3. c. 1. st. 42:

“ But the brave maid would not disarmed be,

“ But only vented up her umbriere,

“ And so did let her goodly visage to appere.” STEEVENS.

If a recorder had a brass key like the German Flute, we are to follow the reading of the quarto; for then the thumb is not concerned in the government of the ventages or stops. If a recorder was like a labourer's pipe,