

mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent musick. Look you, these are the stops?

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

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

*Enter POLONIUS.*

God blefs you, fir!

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

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

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

*Ham.* Methinks, it is like a weazel.

*Pol.* It is back'd like a weazel<sup>s</sup>.

*Ham.*

*pipe*, which has no brass key, but has a stop for the thumb, we are to read—Govern these ventages with your finger and thumb. In *Cotgrave's Dictionary*, *ombre*, *ombraire*, *ombriere*, and *ombrelle*, are all from the Latin *umbra*, and signify a shadow, an umbrella, or any thing that shades or hides the face from the sun; and hence they may have been applied to any thing that hides or covers another; as for example, they may have been applied to the brass key that covers the hole in the German flute. So Spenser used *umbriere* for the visor of the helmet, as Rous's history of the Kings of England uses *umbrella* in the same sense. TOLLET.

7—*the stops.*] The sounds formed by occasionally stopping the holes; while the instrument is played upon. So, in the Prologue to *K. Henry V.*

“Rumour is a pipe—

“And of so easy and so plain a stop,” &c. MALONE.

<sup>B</sup> *Methinks, it is like a weazel.*

*Pol.* *It is back'd like a weazel.*] Thus the quarto, 1604, and the folio. The weazel, Mr. Steevens observes, is remarkable for the length of its back. In a more modern quarto, that of 1611, *back'd*, the original reading, was corrupted into *black*.

*Ham.* Or, like a whale?

*Pol.* Very like a whale.

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

*Pol.* I will say so.

[*Exit* POLONIUS.

*Ham.* By and by is easily said.—Leave me, friends.

[*Exeunt* ROS. GUIL. HOR. &c.

'Tis now the very witching time of night;  
When church-yards yawn, and hell itself breathes out  
Contagion to this world: Now could I drink hot blood,  
And do such business as the bitter day<sup>1</sup>  
Would quake to look on. Soft; now to my mother.—  
O, heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever

Perhaps in the original edition the words *camel* and *weazel* were  
shuffled out of their places. The poet might have intended the dialogue  
to proceed thus:

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

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

*Ham.* Methinks, it is like a camel.

*Pol.* It is back'd like a camel.

The protuberant back of a camel seems more to resemble a cloud;  
than the back of a weazel does. MALONE.

Mr. Tollet observes, that we might read—"it is *beck'd* like a  
weasel," i. e. weasel-snouted. So, in Holinshed's *Description of Eng-  
land*, p. 172: "if he be *weasel-becked*." Quarles uses this term of  
reproach in his *Virgin Widow*: "Go, you *weazel-snouted*, addle-pated,"  
&c. Mr. Tollett adds, that Milton, in his *Lycidas*, calls a promontory  
*beaked*, i. e. prominent like the *beak* of a bird. STEEVENS.

<sup>2</sup> *They fool me to the top of my bent.*—] They compel me to play the  
fool, till I can endure it no longer. JOHNSON.

See p. 246, n. 5. MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> *And do such business as the bitter day.*—] Thus the quarto. The  
folio reads:

And do such *bitter business* as the day, &c. MALONE.

The expression *bitter-business* is still in use, and though at present a  
vulgar phrase, might not have been such in the age of Shakspeare.  
The *bitter day* is the day rendered hateful or *bitter* by the commission of  
some act of mischief.

Watts, in his *Logic*, says: "*Bitter* is an equivocal word: there is  
*bitter* wormwood, there are *bitter* words, there are *bitter* enemies, and  
a *bitter* cold morning." It is, in short, any thing unpleasing or hurtful.

STEEVENS.

The

The foul of Nero enter this firm bosom :  
 Let me be cruel, not unnatural :  
 I will speak daggers to her<sup>2</sup>, but use none ;  
 My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites :  
 How in my words soever she be shent<sup>3</sup>,  
 To give them seals<sup>4</sup> never, my soul, consent ! [Exit,

## SCENE III.

*A Room in the same.*

*Enter King, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.*

*King.* I like him not ; nor stands it safe with us,  
 To let his madness range. Therefore, prepare you ;  
 I your commission will forthwith dispatch,  
 And he to England shall along with you<sup>5</sup> :  
 The terms of our estate may not endure  
 Hazard so near us, as doth hourly grow

<sup>2</sup> *I will speak daggers to her,*] A similar expression occurs in *The Return from Parnassus* : " They are pestilent fellows, they speak nothing but *bodkins*." It has been already observed, that a *bodkin* anciently signified a *short dagger*. STEEVENS.

<sup>3</sup> — *be shent,*] To *shend*, is to reprove harshly, to treat with injurious language. So, in *The Coxcomb* of B. and Fletcher:

" — We shall be *shent* soundly." STEEVENS.

See Vol. VII. p. 286, n. 3. MALONE.

<sup>4</sup> *To give them seals—*] i. e. put them in execution. WARBURTON.

<sup>5</sup> *I like him not ; nor stands it safe with us,*

*To let his madness range. Therefore, prepare you ;*

*I your commission will forthwith dispatch,*

*And he to England shall along with you :*] In *The History of Hamblett*, bl. let. the king does not adopt this scheme of sending Hamlet to England till after the death of Polonius ; and though he is described as doubtful whether Polonius was slain by Hamlet, his apprehension lest he might himself meet the same fate as the old courier, is assigned as the motive for his wishing the prince out of the kingdom. This at first inclined me to think that this short scene, either from the negligence of the copyist or the printer, might have been misplaced ; but it is certainly printed as the authour intended, for in the next scene Hamlet says to his mother, " I must to England ; you know that ? " before the king could have heard of the death of Polonius.

MALONE.

Out of his lūnes<sup>6</sup>.

*Guil.* We will ourselves provide :

Most holy and religious fear it is,  
To keep those many many bodies safe,  
That live, and feed, upon your majesty.

*Ros.* The single and peculiar life is bound,  
With all the strength and armour of the mind,  
To keep itself from 'noyance ; but much more,  
That spirit upon whose weal<sup>7</sup> depend and rest  
The lives of many. The cease of majesty  
Dies not alone ; but, like a gulf, doth draw  
What's near it, with it : it is a massy wheel<sup>8</sup>,  
Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,  
To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things  
Are mortis'd and adjoin'd ; which, when it falls,  
Each small annexment, petty consequence,  
Attends the boist'rous ruin. Never alone

<sup>6</sup> *Out of his lūnes.*] The quarto reads—out of his *browns* ; the folio—out of his *lunacies*. *Lunes* was introduced by Mr. Theobald. Shakspeare probably had here the following passage in *The History of Hamlet*, bl. l. in his thoughts : “ *Fengon* could not content himselfe, but still his mind gave him that the *foole* [*Hamlet*] would play him *some trickes of legerdemains*. And in that conceit seeking to be rid of him, determined to find the meanes to doe it, by the aid of a stranger ; making the king of England minister of his massacrous resolution, to whom he purposed to send him.” MALONE.

I take *browns* to be, properly read, *frowns*, which, I think, is a provincial word for *perverse humours* ; which being, I suppose not understood, was changed to *lunacies*. But of this I am not confident. JOHNSON.

I would receive Theobald's emendation, because Shakspeare uses the word *lunes* in the same sense in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *The Winter's Tale*. From the redundancy of the measure nothing can be inferred.

Since this part of my note was written, I have met with an instance in support of Dr. Johnson's conjecture :

“ — were you but as favourable as you are *frowisb*, —.”

*Tully's Love*, by GREENE, 1616.

Perhaps, however, Shakspeare designed a metaphor from horned cattle, whose powers of being dangerous encrease with the growth of their *browns*. STEEVENS.

<sup>7</sup> *That spirit upon whose weal*—] So the quarto. The folio gives,

*That spirit, upon whose spirit*, —. STEEVENS.

<sup>8</sup> — *it is a massy wheel*,] Thus the folio. The quarto reads—*Or it is*, &c. MALONE.

Did the king sigh, but with a general groan.

*King.* Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage;  
For we will fetters put upon this fear,  
Which now goes too free-footed.

*Ref. Guil.* We will haste us. [*Exeunt Ros. and GUIL.*]

*Enter POLONIUS.*

*Pol.* My lord, he's going to his mother's closet;  
Behind the arras I'll convey myself,<sup>9</sup>  
To hear the process; I'll warrant, she'll tax him home;  
And, as you said, and wisely was it said,  
'Tis meet, that some more audience, than a mother,  
Since nature makes them partial<sup>1</sup>, should o'er-hear  
The speech of vantage<sup>2</sup>. Fare you well, my liege:  
I'll call upon you ere you go to bed,  
And tell you what I know.

*King.* Thanks, dear my lord. [*Exit POLONIUS.*]  
O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven;  
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,

<sup>9</sup> *Behind the arras I'll convey myself,*] The arras-hangings, in Shakspeare's time, were hung at such a distance from the walls, that a person might easily stand behind them unperceived. The principal witness against the Countess of Exeter, who was unjustly charged in the year 1616, with a design to poison lady Lake and lady Rosse, was Sarah Wharton, a chambermaid, who swore that she stood *behind the hangings* at the entrance of the great chamber at Wimbleton, and heard the countess confess her guilt. The plot against this innocent lady was discovered by king James, who went to Wimbleton, and found that the hangings, which had not been changed for thirty years, were two feet from the ground, so that the chambermaid must have been discovered, had she been there. His majesty observing a great distance between the window, near which the countess was supposed to have stood, and the lower end of the room, where the maid was said to have stood, placed himself behind the hangings, and finding that he could not hear the lords at the window, though they purposely spoke loud, obtained evidence of the falshood of this charge. MALONE.

<sup>1</sup> *Since nature makes them partial, &c.*]

" — Matres omnes filijs

" In peccato adjuvices, auxilium in paterna injuria

" Solent esse."

*Ter. Heaut. Act. 5. Sc. 3.*

STEEVENSON.

<sup>2</sup> *— of vantage.*] By some opportunity of secret observation.

JOHNSON.

A brother's murder!—Pray can I not,  
 Though inclination be as sharp as will<sup>3</sup>;  
 My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent;  
 And, like a man to double business bound,  
 I stand in pause where I shall first begin,  
 And both neglect. What if this curst hand  
 Were thicker than itself with brother's blood?  
 Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens,  
 To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy,  
 But to confront the visage of offence?  
 And what's in prayer, but this two-fold force,—  
 To be fore-stalled, ere we come to fall,  
 Or pardon'd, being down? Then I'll look up;  
 My fault is past. But O, what form of prayer  
 Can serve my turn? Forgive me my foul murder!—  
 That cannot be; since I am still possess'd  
 Of those effects for which I did the murder,  
 My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.  
 May one be pardon'd, and retain the offence<sup>4</sup>?  
 In the corrupted currents of this world,  
 Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice;  
 And oft 'tis seen, the wicked prize itself  
 Buys out the law: But 'tis not so above:  
 There is no shuffling, there the action lies  
 In his true nature; and we ourselves compell'd,  
 Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,  
 To give in evidence. What then? what rests?  
 Try what repentance can: What can it not?  
 Yet what can it, when one can not repent<sup>5</sup>?

<sup>3</sup> *Though inclination be as sharp as will;*] *Will is command, direction.* Thus, *Ecclesiasticus*, xliii. 16. “—and at his will the south wind bloweth.” The king says, his mind is in too great confusion to pray, even though his inclination were as strong as the command which requires that duty. STEVENS.

<sup>4</sup> *May one be pardon'd, and retain the offence?*] He that does not amend what can be amended, retains his offence. The king kept the crown from the right heir. JOHNSON.

<sup>5</sup> *Yet what can it, when one can not repent?*] *What can repentance do for a man that cannot be penitent?* for a man who has only a part of penitence, distress of conscience, without the other part, resolution of amendment? JOHNSON.

O wretched state! O bosom, black as death!  
 O limed soul<sup>6</sup>; that, struggling to be free,  
 Art more engag'd! Help, angels, make assay!  
 Bow, stubborn knees! and, heart, with strings of steel,  
 Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe;  
 All may be well!

[retires, and kneels.]

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. Now might I do it, pat, now he is praying<sup>7</sup>;  
 And now I'll do't;—And so he goes to heaven:  
 And so am I reveng'd? That would be scann'd<sup>8</sup>:  
 A villain kills my father; and, for that,  
 I, his sole son, do this same villain send<sup>9</sup>  
 To heaven.  
 Why, this is hire and salary<sup>1</sup>, not revenge.  
 He took my father grossly, full of bread;  
 With all his crimes broad blown<sup>2</sup>, as flush as May;  
 And, how his audit stands, who knows, save heaven?  
 But, in our circumstance and course of thought,  
 'Tis heavy with him: And am I then reveng'd,  
 To take him in the purging of his soul,  
 When he is fit and season'd for his passage?  
 No.

<sup>6</sup> O, limed soul;—] This alludes to *bird-lime*. Shakspeare uses the same word again, *K. Henry VI.* P. II.

"Madam, myself have *lim'd* a bush for her." STEEVENS.

<sup>7</sup> — pat, *now he is praying*;] Thus the folio. The quartos read — but now, &c. STEEVENS.

<sup>8</sup> — That would be scann'd:] I. e. That should be considered, estimated. STEEVENS.

<sup>9</sup> I, his sole son, do this same villain send—] The folio reads, *faule son*, a reading apparently corrupted from the quarto. The meaning is plain. I, his only son, who am bound to punish his murderer. JOHNSON.

<sup>1</sup> — hire and salary,] Thus the folio. The quartos read—*base* and *filly*. STEEVENS.

<sup>2</sup> He took my father grossly, full of bread;

With all his crimes broad blown,—] The uncommon expression, *full of bread*, our poet borrowed from the sacred writings: "Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom; pride, *fullness of bread*, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy." Ezekiel, xvi. 49.

MALONE.

Up, sword; and know thou a more horrid hent<sup>3</sup>:  
 When he is drunk, asleep, or in his rage;  
 Or in the incestuous pleasures of his bed<sup>4</sup>;  
 At gaming, swearing<sup>\*</sup>; or about some act  
 That has no relish of salvation in't:  
 Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven<sup>5</sup>;  
 And that his soul may be as damn'd, and black,  
 As hell, whereto it goes<sup>6</sup>. My mother stays:  
 This phyfick but prolongs thy sickly days. [Exit.

The

<sup>3</sup> *Up, sword, and know thou a more horrid hent:*] To *hent* is used by Shakspeare for, to seize, to catch, to lay bold on. *Hent* is, therefore, bold, or seizure. *Lay bold on him, sword, at a more horrid time.*

JOHNSON.

See Vol. II. p. 108, n. 2. MALONE.

<sup>4</sup> *When he is drunk, asleep, or in his rage;*

*Or in the incestuous pleasures of his bed;*] So, in Marston's *Insatiate Countess*, 1603:

"—Did'st thou not kill him drunk?

"Thou should'st, or in th' embraces of his lust." STEEVENS.

<sup>\*</sup> *At gaming, swearing;*—] Thus the folio. The quarto, 1604, reads—*At game, a swearing, &c.* MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> *—that his heels may kick at heaven;*] So, in Heywood's *Silver Age*, 1613:

"Whose heels tript up, kick'd 'gainst the firmament." STEEV.

<sup>6</sup> *As hell, whereto it goes.*—] This speech, in which Hamlet, represented as a virtuous character, is not content with taking blood for blood, but contrives damnation for the man that he would punish, is too horrible to be read or to be uttered. JOHNSON.

The same fiend-like disposition is shewn by Lodowick, in Webster's *Vittoria Corombona*, 1612:

"——— to have poison'd

"The handle of his racket. O, that, that!—

"That while he had been bandying at tennis,

"He might have sworn himself to hell, and struck

"His soul into the hazard!"

Again, in *The Honest Lawyer*, 1616:

"I then should strike his body with his soul,

"And sink them both together."

Again, in the third of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Four Plays in one*:

"No, take him dead drunk now without repentance." STEEV.

This horrid thought has been adopted by Lewis Machin, in the *Dumb Knight*, 1633:

"Nay, but be patient; smooth your brow a little,

"And you shall take them as they clip each other;

cc Even

*The King rises, and advances.*

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

# SCENE IV.

*Another Room in the same.*

*Enter Queen, and POLONIUS.*

*Pol.* He will come straight. Look, you lay home to him :

Tell him, his pranks have been too broad to bear with ;  
And that your grace hath screen'd and flood between  
Much heat and him. I'll silence me e'en here<sup>7</sup>.

Pray you, be round with him.

*Queen.* I'll warrant you ; fear me not.  
Withdraw, I hear him coming. [*Polonius hides himself*<sup>8</sup>.

*Enter*

" Even in the height of sin ; then damn them both,

" And let them stink before they ask God pardon,

" That your revenge may stretch unto their souls." MALONE.

I think it not improbable, that when Shakspeare put this horrid sentiment into the mouth of Hamlet, he might have recollected the following story : " One of these monsters meeting his enemy unarmed, threatened to kill him, if he denied not God, his power, and essential properties, viz. his mercy, sustenance, &c. the which when the other, desiring life, pronounced with great horror, kneeling upon his knees ; the bravo cried out, *nowe will I kill thy body and soule*, and at that instant thrust him through with his rapier." *Brief Discourse of the Spanish State, with a Dialogue annexed, intitled Philobasilis*, 4to, 1590, p. 21. REED.

A similar story is told in *The Turkish Spy*, Vol. III. p. 243.

MALONE.

7 — I'll silence me e'en here :] I'll silence me e'en here, is, I'll use no more words. JOHNSON.

<sup>8</sup> Polonius hides himself.] The concealment of Polonius in the queen's chamber, during the conversation between Hamlet and his mother, and the manner of his death, were suggested by the following passage in *The History of Hamlet*, bl. let. fig. D 1 : " The counsellour entered secretly into the queene's chamber, and there hid himselfe behind the arras, and long before the queene and Hamlet came thither ; who being craftie and pollitique, as soone as hee was within the chamber, doubting some treason, and fearing if he should speake severely and wisely to his mother, touching his secret practises, hee should be understood

*Enter HAMLET.*

*Ham.* Now, mother; what's the matter?

*Queen.* Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

*Ham.* Mother, you have my father much offended.

*Queen.* Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

*Ham.* Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

*Queen.* Why, how now, Hamlet?

*Ham.* What's the matter now?

*Queen.* Have you forgot me?

*Ham.* No, by the rood, not so:

You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife;

And,—'would it were not so!—you are my mother.

*Queen.* Nay, then I'll set those to you that can speak.

*Ham.* Come, come, and sit you down; you shall not budge;

You go not, till I set you up a glass

Where you may see the inmost part of you.

*Queen.* What wilt thou do? thou wilt not murder me?

Help, help, ho!

*Pol.* [*behind.*] What, ho! help!

*Ham.* How now! a rat?

[*draws.*]

Dead, for a ducat, dead.

[*Hamlet makes a pass through the arras.*]

*Pol.* [*behind.*] O, I am slain. [*falls, and dies.*]

*Queen.* O me, what hast thou done?

*Ham.* Nay, I know not;

Is it the king?

[*lifts up the arras, and draws forth Polonius.*]

*Queen.* O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

*Ham.* A bloody deed;—almost as bad, good mother,  
As kill a king, and marry with his brother.

understood, and by that means intercepted, used his ordinary manner of dissimulation, and began to come [*r. crow*] like a cocke, beating with his arms (in such manner as cockes use to strike with their wings) upon the hangings of the chamber; whereby feeling something stirring under them, he cried, *a rat, a rat*, and presently drawing his sworde, thrust it into the hangings; which done, pulled the counsellour (half-deade) out by the heeles, made an end of killing him; and, being slaine, cut his body in pieces, which he caused to be boyled, and then cast it into an open vault or privie." MALONE.

*Queen.*

*Queen.* As kill a king ? !

*Ham.* Ay, lady, 'twas my word.—

Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!

[to Polonius.

I took

9 *Queen.* *As kill a king !*] It has been doubted, whether Shakspeare intended to represent the queen as accessory to the murder of her husband. The surprize she here expresses at the charge seems to tend to her exculpation. Where the variation is not particularly marked, we may presume, I think, that the poet intended to tell his story as it had been told before. The following extract therefore from *The History of Hamlet*, bl. let. relative to this point, will probably not be unacceptable to the reader: “Fengon [the king in the present play] boldened and encouraged by such impunity, durst venture to couple himself in marriage with her, whom he used as his concubine during good Horvendille's life; in that sort spotting his name with a double vice, incestuous adulterie, and paricide murder.—This adulterer and infamous murderer slandered his dead brother, that he would have slain his wife, and that hee by chance finding him on the point ready to do it, in defence of the lady, had slain him.—The unfortunate and wicked woman that had received the honour to be the wife of one of the valiantest and wisest princes in the North, imbased herselfe in such vile sort as to falsifie her faith unto him, and, which is worse, to marrie him that had bin the tyrannous murderer of her lawful husband; *which made diverse men think that she had bene the causer of the murder*, thereby to live in her adulterie without controle.” *Hyf. of Hamb.* fig. C 1. 2.

In the conference however with her son, on which the present scene is founded, she strongly asserts her innocence with respect to this fact:

“I know well, my sonne, that I have done thee great wrong in marrying with Fengon, the cruel tyrant and murderer of thy father, and my loyal spouse; but when thou shalt consider the small meanes of resistance, and the treason of the palace, with the little cause of confidence we are to expect, or hope for, of the courtiers, all wrought to his will; as also the power he made ready if I should have refused to like him; thou wouldst rather excuse, than accuse mee of lasciviousness or inconstancy, much less offer me that wrong to *suspect that ever thy mother Geruth once consented to the death and murder of her husband*: swearing unto thee by the majestie of the gods, that if it had layne in me to have resisted the tyrant, although it had bene with the losse of my blood, yea and of my life, I would surely have saved the life of my lord and husband.” *Ibid.* fig. D 4.

It is observable, that in the drama neither the king or queen make so good a defence. Shakspeare wished to render them as odious as he could, and therefore has not in any part of the play furnished them with even the semblance of an excuse for their conduct.

Though the inference already mentioned may be drawn from the surprize

I took thee for thy better; take thy fortune:  
 Thou find'st, to be too busy, is some danger.—  
 Leave wringing of your hands: Peace; sit you down,  
 And let me wring your heart: for so I shall,  
 If it be made of penetrable stuff;  
 If damned custom have not braz'd it so,  
 That it be proof and bulwark against sense.

*Queen.* What have I done, that thou dar'st wag thy tongue  
 In noise so rude against me?

*Ham.* Such an act,  
 That blurs the grace and blush of modesty;  
 Calls virtue, hypocrite; takes off the rose<sup>2</sup>  
 From the fair forehead of an innocent love,

And

surprize which our poet has here made the queen express at being charged with the murder of her husband, it is observable that when the player-queen in the preceding scene says,

"In second husband let me be accus'd!

"None wed the second, *but who kill'd the first;*"

he has made Hamlet exclaim—"that's wormwood." The prince, therefore, both from that expression and the words addressed to his mother in the present scene, must be supposed to think her guilty.—Perhaps after all this investigation, the truth is, that Shakspeare himself meant to leave the matter in doubt. MALONE.

I know not in what part of this tragedy the king and queen could have been expected to enter into a vindication of their mutual conduct. The former indeed is rendered contemptible as well as guilty; but for the latter our poet seems to have felt all that tenderness which the ghost recommends to the imitation of her son. STEEVENS.

Had Shakspeare thought fit to have introduced the topics I have suggested, can there be a doubt concerning his ability to introduce them? The king's justification, if to justify him had been the poet's object, (which it certainly was not,) might have been made in a soliloquy; the queen's, in the present interview with her son. MALONE.

[—*takes off the rose, &c.*] Some have understood these words to be only a metaphorical enlargement of the sentiment contained in the preceding line:

—blurs the grace and blush of modesty:

but as the *forehead* is no proper situation for a *blush* to be displayed in, we may have recourse to another explanation.

It was once the custom for those who were betrothed, to wear some flower as an external and conspicuous mark of their mutual engagement. So, in *Spenser's Shepherd's Calendar for April*:

"Bring coronations and sops in wine,

"Worn of paramours."

Lyte, in his *Herbal*, 1578, enumerates *sops in wine* among the smaller kind of single gilliflowers or pinks,

Figure

And sets a blister there; makes marriage vows  
 As false as dicers' oaths: O, such a deed,  
 As from the body of contraction<sup>2</sup> plucks  
 The very soul; and sweet religion makes  
 A rhapsody of words: Heaven's face doth glow;  
 Yea, this solidity and compound mass,  
 With tristful visage, as against the doom,  
 Is thought-sick at the act<sup>3</sup>.

Queen. Ah me, what act,

That

Figure 4, in the *Morrice-dance*, (a plate of which is annexed to the First Part of *K. Henry IV.*) has a flower fixed on his *forehead*, and seems to be meant for the *paramour* of the female character. The flower might be designed for a *rose*, as the colour of it is red in the painted glass, though its form is expressed with as little adherence to nature as that of the *marygold* in the hand of the lady. It may, however, conduct us to affix a new meaning to the lines in question. This flower, as I have since discovered, is exactly shaped like the *fops in wine*, now called the *Deptford Pink*.

Set a blister there, has the same meaning as in *Measure for Measure*

"Who falling in the flaws of her own youth,

"Hath blister'd her report."

See a note on this passage, Act II. Sc. 3. STEEVENS.

I believe, by the *rose* was only meant the *roseate hue*. The forehead certainly appears to us an odd place for the hue of innocence to dwell on, but Shakspeare might place it there with as much propriety as a *smile*. In *Troilus and Cressida* we find these lines:

"So rich advantage of a promis'd glory,

"As smiles upon the forehead of this action."

That part of the forehead which is situated between the eye-brows, seems to have been considered by our poet as the seat of innocence and modesty. So, in a subsequent scene:

"—— brands the harlot,

"Even here, between the chaste unsmirched brow

"Of my true mother." MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> — from the body of contraction—] *Contraction* for marriage contract. WARBURTON.

<sup>3</sup> — Heaven's face doth glow;

Yea, this solidity and compound mass,

With tristful visage, as against the doom,

Is thought-sick at the act.] If any sense can be found here, it is this. The sun glows, [and does it not always?] and the very solid mass of earth has a tristful visage, and is thought-sick. All this is sad stuff. The old quarto reads much nearer to the poet's sense:

Heaven's face does glow,

O'er this solidity and compound mass,

With heated visage, as against the doom,

Is thought-sick at the act.

FROM

That roars so loud, and thunders in the index<sup>4</sup>?

*Ham.* Look here, upon this picture, and on this<sup>5</sup>; The

From whence it appears, that Shakspeare wrote:

*Heaven's face doth glow,  
O'er this solidity and compound mass,  
With tristful visage; and, as 'gainst the doom,  
Is thought-sick at the act.*

This makes a fine sense, and to this effect. The sun looks upon our globe, the scene of this murder, with an angry and mournful countenance, half hid in eclipse, as at the day of doom. WARBURTON.

The word *beated*, though it agrees well enough with *glow*, is, I think, not so striking as *tristful*, which was, I suppose, chosen at the revival. I believe the whole passage now stands as the author gave it. Dr. Warburton's reading restores two improprieties, which Shakspeare, by his alteration, had removed. In the first, and in the new reading, *Heaven's face glows with tristful visage*; and, *Heaven's face is thought-sick*. To the common reading there is no objection. JOHNS.

I am strongly inclined to think that the reading of the quarto, 1604, is the true one. In Shakspeare's licentious diction, the meaning may be, The face of heaven doth glow with heated visage, over the earth: *and heaven*, as against the day of judgment, is thought-sick at the act.

Had not our poet St. Luke's description of the last day in his thoughts?—"And there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring: men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking on those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken," &c. MALONE.

<sup>4</sup> *That roars so loud, &c.*] The meaning is, *What is this act, of which the discovery, or mention, cannot be made, but with this violence of clamour?* JOHNSON.

— *and thunders in the index?*] Mr. Edwards observes, that the *indexes* of many old books were at that time inserted at the beginning, instead of the end, as is now the custom. This observation I have often seen confirmed.

So, in *Orbello*, Act II. sc. vii.—"an *index* and obscure prologue to the history of lust and foul thoughts." STEEVENS.

See Vol. VIII. p. 180, n. 6. Bullokar in his *Expofitor*, 8vo. 1616, defines an *Index* by "A table in a booke." The *table* was almost always *prefixed* to the books of our poet's age. *Indexes*, in the sense in which we now understand the word, were very uncommon. MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> *Look here, upon this picture, and on this;*] It is evident from the following words,

*A station, like the herald Mercury, &c.*

that these pictures, which are introduced as miniatures on the stage, were meant for whole lengths, being part of the furniture of the queen's clofet,

— *like Maia's son he stood,*

*And shook his plumes.*—Milton, B. V. STEEVENS.

The

The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.  
 See, what a grace was seated on this brow:  
 Hyperion's curls<sup>6</sup>; the front of Jove himself;  
 An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;  
 A station like the herald Mercury,  
 New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill<sup>7</sup>;  
 A combination, and a form, indeed,  
 Where every god did seem to set his seal,

The introduction of miniatures in this place appears to be a modern innovation. A print prefixed to Rowe's edition of *Hamlet*, published in 1709, proves this. There, the two royal portraits are exhibited as half-lengths, hanging in the Queen's closet; and either thus, or as whole lengths, they probably were exhibited from the time of the original performance of this tragedy to the death of Betterton. To half-lengths, however, the same objection lies, as to miniatures. MALONE.

<sup>6</sup> *Hyperion's curls*;—] It is observable that *Hyperion* is used by Spenser with the same error in quantity. FARMER.

I have never met with an earlier edition of Marston's *Insatiate Countess* than that in 1603. In this the following lines occur, which bear a close resemblance to Hamlet's description of his father:

"A donative he hath of every god;

"*Apollo gave him locks, Jove his high front.*" STEEVENS.

<sup>7</sup> *A station like the herald Mercury,*

*New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill*;] I think it not improbable that Shakspeare caught this image from Phaer's translation of Virgil, (Fourth *Æneid*,) a book that without doubt he had read:

"And now approaching neere, the top he seeth and mighty lims

"*Of Atlas, mountain tough, that heaven on boystrous shoulders beares*;—

"*There first on ground with wings of might doth Mercury arrive,*

"*Then down from thence right over seas himselfe doth headlong drive.*"

In the margin are these words: "The description of *Mercury's* journey from *heaven*, along the *mountain Atlas* in *Afrike*, *biggest* on earth.

MALONE.

*Station* in this instance does not mean *the spot where any one is placed*, but *the act of standing*. So, in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act III. sc. iii.

"Her motion and her *station* are as one."

On turning to Theobald's first edition, I find that he had made the same remark, and supported it by the same instance. The observation is necessary, for otherwise the compliment designed to the attitude of the king, would be bestowed on the place where Mercury is represented as standing. STEEVENS.

In the first scene of *Timon of Athens*, the poet, admiring a picture, introduces the same image:

"——— How this grace

"*Speaks his own standing!*" MALONE.

To

To give the world assurance of a man :  
 This was your husband.—Look you now, what follows :  
 Here is your husband; like a mildew'd ear<sup>8</sup>,  
 Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?  
 Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,  
 And batten<sup>9</sup> on this moor? Ha! have you eyes?  
 You cannot call it, love: for, at your age,  
 The hey-day in the blood<sup>1</sup> is tame, it's humble,  
 And waits upon the judgment; And what judgment  
 Would step from this to this? Sense, sure, you have,  
 Else, could you not have motion<sup>2</sup>: But, sure, that sense  
 Is apoplex'd: for madness would not err;  
 Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd,  
 But it reserv'd some quantity of choice,

<sup>8</sup> — like a mildew'd ear,

Blasting his wholesome brother.] This alludes to Pharaoh's dream in the 41st chapter of *Genesis*. STEEVENS.

<sup>9</sup> — batten—] i. e. to grow fat. So, in *Claudius Tiberius Nero*, 1607.

“ — and for milk

“ I batten'd was with blood.”

*Bat* is an ancient word for *increase*. Hence the adjective *batful*, so often used by Drayton in his *Polyolbion*. STEEVENS.

<sup>1</sup> The hey-day in the blood—] This expression occurs in Ford's *The Pity she's a Whore*, 1633:

“ — — — — — must

“ The hey-day of your luxury be fed

“ Up to a surfeit?” STEEVENS.

<sup>2</sup> — Sense, sure, you have,

*Else, could you not have motion:*] These words, and the following lines to the word *difference*, are found in the quarto, but not in the folio. *Sense* is sometimes used by Shakspeare for sensation or sensual appetite; as *motion* is for the effect produced by the impulse of nature. Such, I think, is the signification of these words here. So, in *Measure for Measure*:

“ — she speaks, and 'tis

“ Such sense, that my *sense* breeds with it.”

Again, more appositely in the same play, where both the words occur:

“ — — — — — One who never feels

“ The wanton stings and motions of the *sense*.”

So, in Braithwaite's *Survey of Histories*, 1614: These *continent* relations will reduce the straggling *motions* to a more settled and retired harbour.”

*Sense* has already been used in this scene, for *sensation*:

“ That it be proof and bulwark against *sense*.”

Dr. Warburton for *motion* substituted *notion*, i. e. intellect. MALONE.

To serve in such a difference. What devil was't,  
That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind<sup>3</sup>?  
Eyes without feeling<sup>4</sup>, feeling without sight,  
Ears without hand or eyes, smelling fans all,  
Or but a sickly part of one true sense  
Could not so mope<sup>5</sup>.

O shame! where is thy blush? Rebellious hell,  
If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones<sup>6</sup>,  
To flaming youth let virtue be as wax,  
And melt in her own fire: proclaim no shame,  
When the compulsive ardour gives the charge;  
Since frost itself as actively doth burn,  
And reason panders will<sup>7</sup>.

*Queen.* O Hamlet, speak no more:  
Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul;

<sup>3</sup> — at hoodman-blind?] This is, I suppose, the same as *blindman's-buff*. So, in *Two lamentable Tragedies in One, the One a murder of Master Breech, &c.* 1601:

"Pick out men's eyes, and tell them that's the sport

"Of hood-man blind." STEEVENS.

<sup>4</sup> *Eyes without feeling, &c.*] This and the three following lines are omitted in the folio. STEEVENS.

<sup>5</sup> *Could not so mope.*] i. e. could not exhibit such marks of stupidity. The same word is used in the *Tempest*, Sc. ult.

"And were brought moping hither." STEEVENS.

<sup>6</sup> — Rebellious hell,

*If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,*] So, in *Othello's*

"This hand is moist, my lady;—

"Hot, hot, and moist: this hand of yours requires

"A sequester from liberty, fasting and prayer,

"Much castigation, exercise devout;

"For here's a young and sweating devil here,

"That commonly rebels."

To mutine, for which the modern editors have substituted *mutiny*, was the ancient term, signifying to rise in mutiny. So, in Knolles's *History of the Turks*, 1603: "The Janisaries—became wonderfully discontented, and began to mutine in diverse places of the citie."

MALONE.

<sup>7</sup> — *reason panders will.*] So the folio, I think rightly; but the reading of the quarto is defensible:

— *reason pardons will.* JOHNSON.

*Pander*: was certainly Shakspeare's word. So, in *Venus and Adonis*:

"When reason is the bayed to lust's abuse," MALONE.

And there I see such black and grained<sup>s</sup> spots,  
As will not leave their tinct<sup>9</sup>.

*Ham.* Nay, but to live  
In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed<sup>1</sup>;  
Stew'd in corruption; honeying, and making love  
Over the nasty sty;—

*Queen.* O, speak to me no more;  
These words like daggers enter in mine ears;  
No more, sweet Hamlet.

*Ham.* A murderer, and a villain:  
A slave, that is not twentieth part the tythe  
Of your precedent lord:—a vice of kings<sup>2</sup>:  
A cutpurse of the empire and the rule;  
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole<sup>3</sup>,  
And put it in his pocket!

*Queen.* No more.

*Enter Ghost.*

*Ham.* A king of shreds and patches<sup>4</sup>:—  
Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,  
You heavenly guards!—What would your gracious figure?

*Queen.* Alas, he's mad.

*Ham.* Do you not come your tardy son to chide,  
That, laps'd in time and passion<sup>5</sup>, lets go by

<sup>s</sup> — *grained*—] Dyed in grain. JOHNSON.

<sup>9</sup> *As will not leave their tinct.*] The quartos read:

"As will leave there their tinct." STEEVENS.

<sup>1</sup> — *an enseamed bed*;] Thus the quarto, 1604, and the folio. A later quarto of no authority reads—*incestuous bed*. *Enseamed bed*, as Dr. Johnson has observed, is *greasy bed*. *Seam* signifies *hogslard*. MALONE.  
In the *Book of Hawking*, &c. bl. l. no date, we are told that "*Ensayme of a hauke is the grece*." STEEVENS.

<sup>2</sup> — *vice of kings*:] A low mimick of kings. The *vice* is the fool of a farce; from whom the modern *punch* is descended. JOHNSON.

<sup>3</sup> *That from a shelf*, &c.] This is said not unmeaningly, but to shew, that the usurper came not to the crown by any glorious villainy that carried danger with it, but by the low cowardly theft of a common pilferer. WARBURTON.

<sup>4</sup> *A king of shreds and patches*:] This is said, pursuing the idea of the *vice of kings*. The *vice* was dressed as a fool, in a coat of party-coloured patches. JOHNSON.

<sup>5</sup> — *laps'd in time and passion*,—] That, having suffered *time to slip*, and *passion to cool*, lets go, &c. JOHNSON.

The important acting of your dread command?  
O, say!

*Ghost.* Do not forget: This visitation  
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.  
But, look! amazement on thy mother sits:  
O, step between her and her fighting soul;  
Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works<sup>6</sup>;  
Speak to her, Hamlet.

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

*Queen.* Alas, how is't with you?  
That you do bend your eye on vacancy,  
And with the incorporal air do hold discourse?  
Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep;  
And, as the sleeping soldiers in the alarm,  
Your bedded hair, like life in excrements<sup>7</sup>,  
Starts up, and stands on end. O gentle son,  
Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper  
Sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look?  
*Ham.* On him! on him!—Look you, how pale he glares!  
His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,  
Would make them capable<sup>8</sup>.—Do not look upon me;

<sup>6</sup> Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works;] Conceit for imagination.  
So, in the *Rape of Lucrece*:

“ And the conceited painter was so nice,—”

See also Vol. VI. p. 536, n. 8. MALONE.

<sup>7</sup> — like life in excrements,] The hairs are excrementitious, that  
is, without life or sensation; yet those very hairs, as if they had life,  
start up, &c. POPE.

So, in *Macbeth*:

“ The time has been——

“ ——— my fell of hair,

“ Would at a dismal treatise rouse and stir,

“ As life were in't.” MALONE.

<sup>8</sup> His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,  
Would make them capable.] Capable here signifies intelligent; en-  
dowed with understanding. So, in *King Richard III*:

“ ——— O, 'tis a parlous boy,

“ Bold, quick, ingenious, forward, capable.”

We yet use capacity in this sense. See Vol. VII. p. 122, n. 8.

MALONE.

Lest, with this piteous action, you convert  
My stern effects<sup>9</sup>: then what I have to do  
Will want true colour; tears, perchance, for blood:

*Queen.* To whom do you speak this?

*Ham.* Do you see nothing there?

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

*Ham.* Nor did you nothing hear?

*Queen.* No, nothing, but ourselves.

*Ham.* Why, look you there! look, how it steals away?  
My father, in his habit as he liv'd!<sup>1</sup>  
Look, where he goes, even now, out at the portal!

[*Exit Ghost.*]

*Queen.* This is the very coinage of your brain:  
This bodiless creation ecstasy  
Is very cunning in<sup>2</sup>.

*Ham.* Ecstasy!

My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time,  
And makes as healthful musick: It is not madness,  
That I have utter'd: bring me to the test,  
And I the matter will re-word; which madness  
Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace,  
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,  
That not your trespass, but my madness, speaks:  
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place;  
Whiles rank corruption, mining all within,  
Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven;

<sup>9</sup> *My stern effects:*] *Effects* for actions; deeds effected. MALONE.

<sup>1</sup> *My father, in his habit as he liv'd!*] If the poet means by this expression, that his father appeared in his own familiar habit, he has either forgot that he had originally introduced him in armour, or must have meant to vary his dress at this his last appearance. The difficulty might perhaps be a little obviated by pointing the line thus:

*My father—in his habit—as he liv'd.* STEEVENS.

<sup>2</sup> *This is the very coinage of your brain:*

*This bodiless creation ecstasy*

*Is very cunning in.*] So, in *The Rape of Lucrece*:

“Such shadowous are the weak brain's forgeries.” MALONE.

*Ecstasy* in this place, and many others, means a temporary alienation of mind, a fit. So, in *Eliosto Libidinoso*, a novel, by John Hinde, 1606: “—that bursting out of an *ecstasy* wherein she had long stood, like one beholding Medusa's head, lamenting,” &c. STEEVENS.

See Vol. IV. p. 361, n. 9. MALONE.

Repent what's past; avoid what is to come;  
 And do not spread the compost on the weeds<sup>3</sup>,  
 To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue:  
 For, in the fatness of these purfy times,  
 Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg;  
 Yea, curb<sup>4</sup> and woo, for leave to do him good.

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

*Ham.* O, throw away the worser part of it,  
 And live the purer with the other half.  
 Good night: but go not to my uncle's bed;  
 Assume a virtue, if you have it not.  
 That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat  
 Of habit's devil, is angel yet in this<sup>5</sup>;  
 That to the use of actions fair and good  
 He likewise gives a frock, or livery,  
 That aptly is put on: Refrain to-night;  
 And that shall lend a kind of easiness  
 To the next abstinence: the next more easy<sup>6</sup>;  
 For use almost can change the stamp of nature,  
 And either curb the devil<sup>7</sup>, or throw him out

<sup>3</sup> — *do not spread the compost, &c.*] Do not, by any new indulgence, heighten your former offences. JOHNSON.

<sup>4</sup> — *curb* —] That is, *bend and truckle*. Fr. *courber*. So, in *Pierce Plowman*:

"Then I *courbid* on my knees," &c. STEEVENS.

<sup>5</sup> *That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat*

*Of habit's devil, is angel yet in this* ;] Dr. Thirlby conjectured that Shakspeare wrote—*of habits evil*. I incline to think with him; though I have left the text undisturbed. From *That monster* to *put on*, is not in the folio. MALONE.

I think Thirlby's conjecture wrong, though the succeeding editors have followed it; *angel* and *devil* are evidently opposed. JOHNSON.

<sup>6</sup> — *the next more easy* : &c.] This passage, as far as *potency*, is omitted in the folio. STEEVENS.

<sup>7</sup> *And either curb the devil, &c.*] In the quarto, where alone this passage is found, some word was accidentally omitted at the press in the line before us. The quarto, 1604, reads:

*And either the devil, or throw him out, &c.*

For the insertion of the word *curb* I am answerable. The printer or corrector of a later quarto, finding the line nonsense, omitted the word *either*, and substituted *master* in its place. The modern editors have accepted the substituted word, and yet retain *either*; by which the metre is destroyed. The word omitted in the first copy was undoubtedly a monosyllable. MALONE.

With wondrous potency. Once more, good night!  
And when you are desirous to be blest,  
I'll blessing beg of you.—For this same lord,

[pointing to Polonius.

I do repent; But heaven hath pleas'd it so,—  
To punish me with this, and this with me,<sup>3</sup>—  
That I must be their scourge and minister.  
I will bestow him, and will answer well  
The death I gave him. So, again, good night!—  
I must be cruel, only to be kind:  
Thus bad begins, and worse remains behind.—  
One word more, good lady<sup>9</sup>.

Queen. What shall I do?

Ham. Not this, by no means, that I bid you do:  
Let the bloat king<sup>3</sup> tempt you again to bed;  
Pinch wanton on your cheek; call you, his mouse<sup>2</sup>;  
And let him, for a pair of reechy kisses<sup>3</sup>,

Or

<sup>3</sup> *To punish me with this, and this with me,*] To punish me by making me the instrument of this man's death, and to punish this man by my hand. For this, the reading of both the quarto and folio, Sir T. Hanmer and the subsequent editors have substituted,

To punish him with me, and me with this. MALONE.

<sup>9</sup> *One word more, &c.*] This passage I have restored from the quartos.

STEEVENS.

<sup>3</sup> *Let the bloat king*—] i. e. the swollen king. *Bloat* is the reading of the quarto, 1604. The folio reads—the *blunt* king. MALONE.

This again hints at his intemperance. He had drunk himself into a dropsy. BLACKSTONE.

<sup>2</sup> —his mouse;] *Mouse* was once a term of endearment. So, in Warner's *Albion's England*, 1602, b. 2. chap. 10:

"God bless thee, mouse, the bridegroom said," &c.

Again, in the *Menachmi*, 1595: "Shall I tell thee, sweet mouse? I never look upon thee, but I am quite out of love with my wife."

STEEVENS.

This term of endearment is very ancient, being found in *A new and merry Enterlude, called the Trial of Treasure*, 1567:

"My mouse, my nobs, my cony sweete;

"My hope and joye, my whole delight." MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> —reechy kisses,] *Reechy* is smoky. The author meant to convey a coarse idea, and was not very scrupulous in his choice of an epithet. The same, however, is applied with greater propriety to the

Or padding in your neck with his damp'd fingers,  
 Make you to ravel all this matter out,  
 That I essentially am not in madness,  
 But mad in craft<sup>4</sup>. 'Twere good, you let him know :

the neck of a cook-maid in *Coriolanus*. Again, in *Hans Beer-Pot's Invisibile Comedy*, 1618 :

" ————— bade him go

" And wash his face, he look'd so *reechily*,

" Like bacon hanging on the chimney's roof." STEEVENS.

*Reechy* includes, I believe, *heat* as well as *smoke*. The verb to *reech*, which was once common, was certainly a corruption of—to *reek*. In a former passage Hamlet has remonstrated with his mother, on her living

" In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed." MALONE.

4 *That I essentially am not in madness,*

*But mad in craft.*—] The reader will be pleased to see Dr. Farmer's extract from the old quarto *Historie of Hamlet*, of which he had a fragment only in his possession.—" It was not without cause, " and just occasion, that my gestures, countenances, and words, " seeme to proceed from a madman, and that I desire to haue all " men esteeme mee wholly depriued of sense and reasonable under- " standing, bycause I am well assured, that he that hath made no " conscience to kill his owne brother, (accustomed to murders, and " allured with desire of gouernement without controll in his treasons) " will not spare to saue himselfe with the like crueltie, in the blood " and flesh of the loyns of his brother, by him massacred : and there- " fore it is better for me to sayne madnesse, then to use my right " fences as nature hath bestowed them upon me. The bright shining " clearnes thereof I am forced to hide vnder this shadow of dissimu- " lation, as the sun doth hir beams under some great cloud, when " the wether in summer-time ouercasteth: the face of a madman " serueth to couer my gallant countenance, and the gestures of a fool " are fit for me, to the end that, guiding myself wisely therin, I " may preserue my life for the Danes and the memory of my late " deceased father; for that the desire of reuenging his death is so in- " graven in my heart, that if I dye not shortly, I hope to take such " and so great vengeance, that these countreyes shall for euer speake " thereof. Neuerthelesse I must stay the time, meanes, and occasion, " left by making ouer-great hast, I be now the cause of mine owa " sodaine ruine and ouerthrow, and by that meanes end, before I be- " ginne to effect my hearts desire : hee that hath to doe with a wicked, " disloyall, cruell, and discourteous man, must vse craft, and politike " inuentions, such as a fine witte can best imagine, not to discouer " his interprise; for seeing that by force I cannot effect my desire, " reason alloweth me by dissimulation, subtiltie, and secret practises " to proceed therein." STEEVENS.

For who, that's but a queen, fair, sober, wife,  
 Would from a paddock, from a bat, a gib<sup>5</sup>,  
 Such dear concernings hide? who would do so?  
 No, in despite of sense, and secrecy,  
 Unpeg the basket on the house's top,  
 Let the birds fly<sup>6</sup>; and, like the famous ape,  
 To try conclusions<sup>7</sup>, in the basket creep,  
 And break your own neck down.

*Queen.* Be thou assur'd, if words be made of breath,  
 And breath of life, I have no life to breathe  
 What thou hast said to me.

*Ham.* I must to England<sup>8</sup>; you know that?

*Queen.* Alack, I had forgot; 'tis so concluded on.

*Ham.* There's letters seal'd<sup>9</sup>: and my two school-fel-  
 lows,—

<sup>5</sup> — a gib,] So, in Drayton's Epistle from *Elinor Cobham* to *Duke Humphrey*:

"And call me beldam, gib, witch, night-mare, trot,"

*Gib* was a common name for a cat. STEEVENS.

See Vol. V. p. 123, n. 5. MALONE.

<sup>6</sup> *Unpeg the basket on the house's top,*

*Let the birds fly;*] Sir John Suckling, in one of his letters, may possibly allude to the same story: "It is the story of the *jacksnopes* and the partridges; thou starest after a beauty till it is lost to thee, and then let'st out another, and starest after that till it is gone too."

WARNER,

<sup>7</sup> *To try conclusions;*] i. e. experiments. STEEVENS.

See Vol. VIII. p. 334, n. 3. MALONE.

<sup>8</sup> *I must to England;*] Shakspeare does not inform us, how Hamlet came to know that he was to be sent to England. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern were made acquainted with the king's intentions for the first time in the very last scene; and they do not appear to have had any communication with the prince since that time. Add to this, that in a subsequent scene, when the king, after the death of Polonius, informs Hamlet he was to go to England, he expresses great surprise, as if he had not heard any thing of it before.—This last, however, may perhaps be accounted for, as contributing to his design of passing for a madman. MALONE.

<sup>9</sup> *There's letters seal'd: &c.*] The nine following verses are added out of the old edition. POPE.

Whom

Whom I will trust, as I will adders fang'd<sup>1</sup>,—  
 They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way,  
 And marshal me to knavery: Let it work;  
 For 'tis the sport, to have the engineer  
 Hoist<sup>2</sup> with his own petar: and it shall go hard,  
 But I will delve one yard below their mines,  
 And blow them at the moon: O, 'tis most sweet,  
 When in one line two crafts directly meet<sup>3</sup>.—  
 This man shall set me packing.  
 I'll lug the guts<sup>3</sup> into the neighbour room:—  
 Mother, good night.—Indeed, this counsellor  
 Is now most still, most secret, and most grave,  
 Who was in life a foolish prating knave.  
 Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you<sup>4</sup>:—  
 Good night, mother.

[*Exeunt severally; Hamlet dragging in Polonius.*]

<sup>1</sup> — *adders fang'd.*] That is, adders with their fangs, or *poisonous teeth*, undrawn. It has been the practice of mountebanks to boast the efficacy of their antidotes by playing with vipers, but they first disabled their fangs. JOHNSON.

<sup>2</sup> *Hoist, &c.*] *Hoist* for *hoisted*; as *pass* for *passed*. STEEVENS.

<sup>3</sup> *When in one line two crafts directly meet.*] Still alluding to a countermine. MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> — *the guts* —] The word *guts* was not anciently so offensive to delicacy as it is at present; but was used by *Lylly* (who made the first attempt to polish our language) in his serious compositions. So, in his *Mydas*, 1592: "Could not the treasure of Phrygia, nor the tributes of Greece, nor mountains in the East, whole *guts* are gold, satisfy thy mind?" In short, *guts* was used where we now use *entrails*. *Stanyburst* often has it in his translation of *Virgil*, 1582:

*Pectoribus inhians spirantia consulit exta.*

"She weens her fortune by *guts* hoate smoakye to conster."

STEEVENS.

<sup>4</sup> *Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you:*] Shakspeare has been unfortunate in his management of the story of this play, the most striking circumstances of which arise so early in its formation, as not to leave him room for a conclusion suitable to the importance of its beginning. After this last interview with the *Ghost*, the character of Hamlet has lost all its consequence. STEEVENS.

A C T IV<sup>s</sup>. S C E N E I.*The same.**Enter King, Queen, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.**King.* There's matter in these sighs; these profound heavesYou must translate: 'tis fit we understand them:  
Where is your son?*Queen.* Bestow this place on us a little while<sup>6</sup>.—*[to Ros. and Guil. who go out,*Ah, my good lord<sup>7</sup>, what have I seen to-night?*King.* What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?*Queen.* Mad as the sea, and wind, when both contend  
Which is the mightier<sup>\*</sup>: In his lawless fit,  
Behind the arras hearing something stir,  
He whips his rapier out, and cries, *A rat! a rat!*  
And, in this brainish apprehension, kills  
The unseen good old man.*King.* O heavy deed!

It had been so with us, had we been there:

His liberty is full of threats to all;

To you yourself, to us, to every one.

Alas! how shall this bloody deed be answer'd?

It will be laid to us; whose providence

Should have kept short, restrain'd, and out of haunt<sup>8</sup>,

This

<sup>5</sup> *As IV.*] This play is printed in the old editions without any separation of the acts. The division is modern and arbitrary; and is here not very happy, for the pause is made at a time when there is more continuity of action than in almost any other of the scenes. JONNS.

<sup>6</sup> *Bestow this place on us a little while.*] This line is wanting in the folio. STEEVENS.

<sup>7</sup> — *my good lord,*] The quartos read—*mine own lord.* STEEVENS.

<sup>\*</sup> *Mad as the sea, and wind, when both contend, &c.*] We have precisely the same image in *K. Lear*, expressed with more brevity:

“ ——— he was met even now,

“ *As mad as the vex'd sea.*” MALONE.

<sup>8</sup> — *out of haunt,*] *Out of haunt,* means *out of company.* So, in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

“ Dido and her Sichæus shall want troops,

“ And all the *haunt* be ours.”

This mad young man : but, so much was our love,  
We would not understand what was most fit ;  
But, like the owner of a foul disease,  
To keep it from divulging, let it feed  
Even on the pith of life. Where is he gone ?

*Queen.* To draw apart the body he hath kill'd ;  
O'er whom his very madness, like some ore <sup>9</sup>,  
Among a mineral of metals base,  
Shews itself pure ; he weeps for what is done.

*King.* O, Gertrude, come away !  
The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch,  
But we will ship him hence : and this vile deed  
We must, with all our majesty and skill,  
Both countenance and excuse.—Ho ! Guildenstern !

*Enter ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.*

Friends both, go join you with some further aid :  
Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,  
And from his mother's closet hath he dragg'd him :  
Go, seek him out ; speak fair, and bring the body  
Into the chapel. I pray you, haste in this.

[*Exeunt Ros. and Guil.*]

Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends ;

Again, in Warner's *Albion's England*, 1602, book v. chap. 26 :

" And from the smith of heaven's wife allure the amorous *baunt*."  
The place where men assemble, is often poetically called the *baunt* of men. So, in *Romeo and Juliet* :

" We talk here in the public *baunt* of men." STEEVENS.

<sup>9</sup> — like some ore,] Shakspeare seems to think *ore* to be *or*, that is, gold. Base metals have *ore* no less than precious. JOHNSON.

He has perhaps used *ore* in the same sense in his *Rape of Lucrece* :

" When beauty boasted blushes, in despite

" Virtue would stain that *ore* with silver white."

See Vol. X. p. 90, n. 6.

A mineral Minshew defines in his Dictionary, 1617, " Any thing that grows in mines, and contains metals." Shakspeare seems to have used the word in this sense,—for a *rude mass* of metals. In Bullokar's *English Expositor*, 8vo, 1616, Mineral is defined, " mettall, or any thing digged out of the earth." MALONE.

Minerals are mines. So, in *The Golden Remains* of Hales of Eton, 1693, p. 34. Controversies of the times, " like spirits in the minerals, with all their labour, nothing is done." STEEVENS.

And

And let them know, both what we mean to do,  
 And what's untimely done: so viperous slander<sup>1</sup>,—  
 Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter,  
 As level as the cannon to his blank,  
 Transports his poison'd shot,—may miss our name,  
 And hit the woundless air<sup>2</sup>.—O, come away!  
 My soul is full of discord, and dismay. [Exeunt.]

## S C E N E II.

*Another Room in the same.*

*Enter HAMLET.*

*Ham.*—Safely stow'd,—[*Ros. &c. within.* Hamlet!  
 lord Hamlet!] But soft<sup>3</sup>,—what noise? who calls on  
 Hamlet? O, here they come.

*Enter*

<sup>1</sup> — *so viperous slander, &c.*] Neither these words, nor the following three lines and an half, are in the folio. In the quarto, 1604, and all the subsequent quartos, the passage stands thus:

—And what's untimely done.

Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter, &c.

the compositor having omitted the latter part of the first line, as in a former scene; (see p. 310, n. 4.) a circumstance which gives additional strength to an observation made in Vol. VII. p. 575, n. 8. Mr. Theobald supplied the *lacuna* by reading—*For baply slander, &c.* So appears to me to suit the context better; for these lines are rather in apposition with those immediately preceding, than an illation from them. Mr. Mason, I find, has made the same observation.

Shakspeare, as Theobald has observed, again expatiates on the diffusive power of slander, in *Cymbeline*:

“ ——— No, 'tis slander;

“ Whose edge is sharper than the sword, whose tongue

“ Out-venoms all the worms of Nile, whose breath

“ Rides on the posting winds, and doth bely

“ All corners of the world.” MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> — *the woundless air.*] So, in a former scene:

“ It is as the air invulnerable.” MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> — *But soft,*] I have added these two words from the quartos.

STEEVENS.

The folio reads:

*Ham.* Safely stow'd.

*Ros. &c. within.* Hamlet! lord Hamlet.

*Ham.* What noise, &c.

*Enter ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.*

*Ros.* What have you done, my lord, with the dead body?

*Ham.* Compounded it with dust<sup>4</sup>, whereto 'tis kin.

*Ros.* Tell us where 'tis; that we may take it thence,  
And bear it to the chapel.

*Ham.* Do not believe it.

*Ros.* Believe what?

*Ham.* That I can keep your counsel, and not mine own.  
Besides, to be demanded of a sponge!—what replication should be made by the son of a king?

*Ros.* Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

*Ham.* Ay, sir; that soaks up the king's countenance,  
his rewards, his authorities. But such officers do the  
king best service in the end: He keeps them, like an  
ape<sup>5</sup>, in the corner of his jaw; first mouth'd, to be  
last

In the quarto, 1604, the speech stands thus:

*Ham.* Safely stow'd; but soft, what noise? who calls on Hamlet? &c.

I have therefore printed Hamlet's speech unbroken, and inserted that of Rosencrantz, &c. from the folio, before the words, *but soft*, &c. In the modern editions Hamlet is made to take notice of the noise made by the courtiers, before he has heard it. MALONE.

<sup>4</sup> *Compounded it with dust,—*] So in *K. Henry IV.* P. II.

"Only compound me with forgotten dust."

Again, in our poet's 71st Sonnet;

"When I perhaps compounded am with clay." MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> — *like an ape*,] The quarto has *apple*, which is generally followed. The folio has *ape*, which Hanmer has received, and illustrated with the following note.

"It is the way of monkeys in eating, to throw that part of their food, which they take up first, into a pouch they are provided with on the side of their jaw, and there they keep it, till they have done with the rest." JOHNSON.

Surely this should be "*like an ape an apple*." FARMER.

The reading of the folio, *like an ape*, I believe to be the true one, because Shakspeare has the same phraseology in many other places. The word *ape* refers to the king, not to his courtiers. *He keeps them, like an ape, in the corner of his jaw*, &c. means, he keeps them, as an ape keeps food, in the corner of his jaw, &c. So, in *K. Henry IV.* P. I. "*—your chamber-lie breeds fleas like a loach*;" i. e. as fast as a loach breeds loaches. Again, in *K. Lear*: "*They flatter'd me like a dog*;" i. e. as a dog fawns upon and flatters his master.

That the particular food in Shakspeare's contemplation was an *apple*, may be inferred from the following passage in *The Captain*, by Beaumont and Fletcher:

"And

last swallow'd: When he needs what you have glean'd, it is but squeezing you, and, spunge, you shall be dry again.

*Ref.* I understand you not, my lord.

*Ham.* I am glad of it: A knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear<sup>6</sup>.

*Ref.* My lord, you must tell us where the body is, and go with us to the king.

*Ham.* The body is with the king<sup>7</sup>, but the king is not with the body. The king is a thing—

*Guil.* A thing, my lord?

*Ham.* Of nothing<sup>8</sup>: bring me to him. Hide fox, and all after<sup>9</sup>.

[Exit.

# SCENE

"And lie, and kiss my hand unto my mistress,

"As often as an ape does for an apple."

I cannot approve of Dr. Farmer's reading. Had our poet meant to introduce both the ape and the apple, he would, I think, have written not *like*, but "*as an ape an apple*."

The two instances above quoted shew that any emendation is unnecessary. The reading of the quarto is, however, defensible.

MALONE.

<sup>6</sup> *A knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear.*] This, if I mistake not, is a proverbial sentence. MALONE.

<sup>7</sup> *The body is with the king,—*] This answer I do not comprehend. Perhaps it should be, *The body is not with the king, for the king is not with the body.* JOHNSON.

Perhaps it may mean this. The body is in the king's house, (*i. e.* the present king's,) yet the king (*i. e.* he who should have been king) is not with the body. Intimating that the usurper is here, the true king in a better place. Or it may mean,—*the guilt of the murder lies with the king*, but the king is *not where the body lies*. The affected obscurity of Hamlet must excuse so many attempts to procure something like a meaning. STEEVENS.

<sup>8</sup> *Of nothing:—*] So, in *The Spanish Tragedy*:

"In troth, my lord, it is a *thing of nothing*."

And, in one of *Harvey's* letters, "a silly bug-bear, a forry puffe of winde, a *thing of nothing*." FARMER.

So, in *Decker's Match me in London*, 1631:

"At what dost thou laugh?

"At a *thing of nothing*; at thee."

Again, in Ben Jonson's *Magnetic Lady*:

"A toy, a *thing of nothing*." STEEVENS.

Mr. Steevens has given here many parallelisms; but the origin of all is to be look'd for, I believe, in the 144th Psalm, ver. 5: "Man is like a *thing*

## S C E N E III.

*Another Room in the same.**Enter King, attended.*

*King.* I have sent to seek him, and to find the body.  
 How dangerous is it, that this man goes loose?  
 Yet must not we put the strong law on him:  
 He's lov'd of the distracted multitude,  
 Who like not in their judgment, but their eyes;  
 And, where 'tis so, the offender's scourge is weigh'd,  
 But never the offence. To bear all smooth and even,  
 This sudden sending him away must seem  
 Deliberate pause: Diseases, desperate grown,  
 By desperate appliance are reliev'd,

*Enter ROSENCRANTZ.*

Or not at all.—How now? what hath befallen?

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

*King.* But where is he?

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

*King.* Bring him before us.

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

*Enter HAMLET, and GUILDENSTERN.*

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

*Ham.* At supper.

*King.* At supper? Where?

*Ham.* Not where he eats, but where he is eaten: a

*“thing of nought.”* The book of Common Prayer, and the translation of the bible into English, furnished our old writers with many forms of expression, some of which are still in use. WHALLEY.

9 *Hide fox, &c.*] There is a play among children called, *Hide fox, and all after.* HANMER.

The same sport is alluded to in Decker's *Satiromastix*: “—our unhandsome-faced poet does play at bo-peep with your grace, and cries —*All bid, as boys do.*”

This passage is not in the quarto. STEEVENS,

certain

certain convocation of politick worms are e'en at him. Your worm is your only emperor for diet: we fat all creatures else, to fat us; and we fat ourselves for maggots: Your fat king, and your lean beggar, is but variable service; two dishes, but to one table; that's the end.

*King.* Alas, alas<sup>1</sup>!

*Ham.* A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king; and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm.

*King.* What dost thou mean by this?

*Ham.* Nothing, but to shew you how a king may go a progress through the guts of a beggar.

*King.* Where is Polonius?

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

*King.* Go seek him there. [to some Attendants.]

*Ham.* He will stay till you come. [Exeunt Attendants.]

*King.* Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety,—  
Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve  
For that which thou hast done,—must send thee hence  
With fiery quickness<sup>2</sup>: Therefore, prepare thyself;  
The bark is ready, and the wind at help<sup>3</sup>,  
The associates tend, and every thing is bent  
For England.

*Ham.* For England?

*King.* Ay, Hamlet.

*Ham.* Good.

*King.* So is it, if thou knew'st our purposes.

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

*King.* Thy loving father, Hamlet.

*Ham.* My mother: Father and mother is man and wife;

<sup>1</sup> *Alas, alas!* This speech, and the following, are omitted in the folio. STEEVENS.

<sup>2</sup> *With fiery quickness:* These words are not in the quartos.

STEEVENS.

<sup>3</sup> — *the wind at help,*] I suppose it should be read,

*The bark is ready, and the wind at helm.* JOHNSON.

man and wife is one flesh ; and so, my mother. Come, for England. [Exit.

*King.* Follow him at foot ; tempt him with speed aboard ; Delay it not, I'll have him hence to night : Away ; for every thing is seal'd and done That else leans on the affair : Pray you, make haste.

[*Exeunt Ros. and Guil.*

And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught,  
(As my great power thereof may give thee sense ;  
Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red  
After the Danish sword, and thy free awe  
Pays homage to us,) thou may'st not coldly set  
Our sovereign process<sup>4</sup> ; which imports at full,  
By letters conjuring to that effect<sup>5</sup>,

The

<sup>4</sup> — *thou may'st not coldly set*

*Our sovereign process* ;] Mr. Steevens says, he adheres to this reading, which is found both in the folio and quarto, because—to *set* is an expression used at the gaming-table. To *set* a sum of money at hazard, is to stake it, or to offer it as a *wager* ; but I do not see how that throws any light on the present passage.

To *set at nought* is a phrase yet in use, and occurs in one of our poet's plays :

“ To have a son *set* your decrees *at nought*.”

To *set* the king's process *coldly*, may therefore perhaps mean, to value or rate it low ; to *set it at nought*. MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> *By letters conjuring*—] Thus the folio. The quarto reads,

“ By letters *congruing*.” STEEVENS.

The reading of the folio may derive some support from the following passage in *The History of Hamlet*, bl. let. —“ making the king of England minister of his massacring resolution ; to whom he purposed to send him, [Hamlet,] and by letters *desire* him to put him to death.” So also, by a subsequent line :

“ *Ham.* Wilt thou know the effect of what I wrote ?

“ *Hor.* Ay, good my lord.

“ *Ham.* An earnest *conjunction* from the king,” &c.

The circumstances mentioned as inducing the king to send the prince to England, rather than elsewhere, are likewise found in *The History of Hamlet*.

*Effect* was formerly used for *act* or *deed*, simply, and is so used in the line before us. So, in Leo's *Historie of Africa*, translated by Pory, folio, 1600, p. 253 : “ Three daies after this *effect*, there came to us a Zuum, that is, a capitaine,” &c. See also *supra*, p. 340, n. 9.

The verb to *conjure* (in the sense of to *supplicate*,) was formerly accented on the first syllable. So, in *Macbeth* :

“ I conjure you, by that which you profess,

“ Howe'er you come to know it, answer me :”

The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England;  
 For like the hestick in my blood he rages<sup>6</sup>,  
 And thou must cure me: Till I know 'tis done,  
 Howe'er my haps, my joys will ne'er begin<sup>7</sup>.

## S C E N E IV.

*A Plain in Denmark.*

*Enter FORTINBRAS, and Forces, marching.*

*For.* Go, captain, from me greet the Danish king;  
 Tell him, that, by his licence, Fortinbras  
 Craves<sup>8</sup> the conveyance of a promis'd march  
 Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.  
 If that his majesty would aught with us,  
 We shall exprefs our duty in his eye,  
 And let him know so.

*Cap.* I will do't, my lord.

*For.* Go softly on. [*Exeunt FORTINBRAS and Forces.*]

*Enter HAMLET, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, &c.*

*Ham.* Good fir<sup>9</sup>, whose powers are these?

*Cap.* They are of Norway, fir.

Again, in *King John*:

"I conjure thee but slowly; run more fast."

Again, in *Romeo and Juliet*:

"I conjure thee, by Rosaline's bright eyes",—

Again, in *Measure for Measure*:

"O Prince, I conjure thee, as thou believ'st," &c. MALONE:

<sup>6</sup> — *like the hestick, in my blood he rages,*] So, in *Love's Labour's Lost*:

"I would forget her, but a fever, she,

"Reigns in my blood." MALONE.

<sup>7</sup> *Howe'er my haps, my joys will ne'er begin.*] i. e. (as Dr. Johnson observes,) "till I know 'tis done, I shall be miserable, whatever befall me."

This is the reading of the quarto. The folio, for the sake of rhyme, reads:

"Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun."

But this, I think, the poet could not have written. The king is speaking of the future time. To say, till I *shall* be informed that a certain act *has been* done, whatever may befall me, my joys never had a beginning, is surely nonsense. MALONE.

<sup>8</sup> *Craves*] Thus the quartos. The folio—*claims*. STEEVENS.

<sup>9</sup> *Good fir, &c.*] The remaining part of this scene is omitted in the folios. STEEVENS.

*Ham.*

*Ham.* How purpos'd, fir, I pray you?

*Cap.* Against some part of Poland.

*Ham.* Who commands them, fir?

*Cap.* The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.

*Ham.* Goes it against the main of Poland, fir,  
Or for some frontier?

*Cap.* Truly to speak, and with no addition,  
We go to gain a little patch of ground,  
That hath in it no profit but the name.  
To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it;  
Nor will it yield to Norway, or the Pole,  
A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee.

*Ham.* Why, then the Polack never will defend it.

*Cap.* Yes, 'tis already garrison'd.

*Ham.* Two thousand souls, and twenty thousand ducats,  
Will not debate the question of this straw:  
This is the imposthume of much wealth, and peace;  
That inward breaks, and shows no cause without  
Why the man dies.—I humbly thank you, fir.

*Cap.* God be wi'you, fir. [Exit Captain.

*Ros.* Will't please you go, my lord?

*Ham.* I will be with you straight. Go a little before.  
[Exeunt Ros. and the rest.

How all occasions do inform against me,  
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,  
If his chief good, and market of his time<sup>1</sup>,  
Be but to sleep, and feed? a beast, no more.  
Sure, he, that made us with such large discourse<sup>2</sup>,  
Looking before, and after, gave us not  
That capability and god-like reason  
To fust in us unus'd. Now, whether it be  
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple<sup>3</sup>  
Of thinking too precisely on the event,—  
A thought, which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom,

<sup>1</sup> — chief good, and market of his time, &c.] If his highest good, and that for which he sells his time, be to sleep and feed. JOHNSON.

Market, I think, here means profit. MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> — large discourse,] Such latitude of comprehension, such power of reviewing the past, and anticipating the future. JOHNSON.

<sup>3</sup> — some craven scruple—] Some cowardly scruple. See Vol.III. p. 287, n. 2. MALONE.

And, ever, three parts coward,—I do not know  
 Why yet I live to say, *This thing's to do*;  
 Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means,  
 To do't. Examples, grofs as earth, exhort me:  
 Witnefs, this army, of fuch mafs, and charge,  
 Led by a delicate and tender prince;  
 Whose fpirit, with divine ambition puff'd,  
 Makes mouths at the invifible event;  
 Exposing what is mortal, and unfure,  
 To all that fortune, death, and danger, dare,  
 Even for an egg-shell. Rightly to be great,  
 Is, not to ftir without great argument<sup>4</sup>;  
 But greatly to find quarrel in a ftraw,  
 When honour's at the ftake. How ftand I then,  
 That have a father kill'd, a mother ftain'd,  
 Excitements of my reafon, and my blood<sup>5</sup>,  
 And let all fleep? while, to my fhame, I fee  
 The imminent death of twenty thoufand men,  
 That, for a fantaſy, and trick of fame,  
 Go to their graves like beds; fight for a plot  
 Whereon the numbers cannot try the caufe,  
 Which is not tomb enough, and continent<sup>6</sup>,  
 To hide the flain?—O, from this time forth,  
 My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth! [Exit.

4 — *Rightly to be great,  
 Is, not to ftir without, &c.*] The ſentiment of Shakspeare is partly  
 juſt, and partly romantick.

— *Rightly to be great,  
 Is not to ftir without great argument;*  
 is exactly philoſophical.

*But greatly to find quarrel in a ftraw,  
 When honour's at the ftake,*  
 is the idea of a modern hero. But then, ſays he, honour is an argu-  
 ment, or ſubject of debate, ſufficiently great, and when honour is at  
 ftake, we muſt find cauſe of quarrel in a ftaw. JOHNSON.

<sup>5</sup> *Excitements of my reafon, and my blood,*] Provocations which ex-  
 cite both my reafon and my paſſions to vengeance. JOHNSON.

<sup>6</sup> — *continent,*] Continent, in our author, means that which com-  
 prehends or encloſes. So, in *King Lear*:

“ Rive your concealing continents.” STEEVENS.

## SCENE V.

Elfinore. *A Room in the Castle.**Enter Queen, and HORATIO.**Queen.* — I will not speak with her.*Hor.* She is importunate: indeed, distract;  
Her mood will needs be pity'd.*Queen.* What would she have?*Hor.* She speaks much of her father; says, she hears,  
There's tricks i' the world; and hems, and beats her  
heart;Spurns enviously at straws<sup>7</sup>; speaks things in doubt,  
That carry but half sense: her speech is nothing,  
Yet the unshaped use of it doth move  
The hearers to collection<sup>8</sup>; they aim at it<sup>9</sup>,  
And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts;  
Which, as her winks, and nods, and gestures yield them,  
Indeed would make one think, there might be thought,  
Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily<sup>1</sup>.*Queen.*

<sup>7</sup> *Spurns enviously at straws*;] *Envy* is much oftener put by our poet (and those of his time) for direct *aversion*, than for malignity conceived at the sight of another's excellence or happiness.

So, in *King Henry VIII.*

“ You turn the good we offer into *envy*.”

Again, in *God's Revenge against Murder*, 1621, *Hist.* VI.—“ She loves the memory of Syontus, and *envies* and detests that of her two husbands.” STEEVENS.

See Vol. VII. p. 42, n. 1, and Vol. VI. p. 75, n. 6. MALONE.

<sup>8</sup> — *to collection*;] i. e. to deduce consequences from such premises.  
So, in *Cymbeline*, Scene the last:

“ ——— whose containing

“ Is so from sense to hardness, that I can

“ Make no *collection* of it.”

See the note on this passage. STEEVENS.

<sup>9</sup> — *they aim at it*,] The quartos read—they *yawn* at it. To aim is to guess. STEEVENS.

<sup>1</sup> *Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.*] i. e. though her meaning cannot be certainly collected, yet there is enough to put a mischievous interpretation to it. WARBURTON.

See Vol. II. p. 234, n. 2; Vol. III. p. 456, n. 6; and Vol. VII. p. 37, n. 2. MALONE.

*Queen.* 'Twere good, she were spoken with<sup>2</sup>; for she  
may frew

Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds:

Let her come in.

[*Exit* Horatio,

To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,

Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss<sup>3</sup>:

So full of artless jealousy is guilt,

It spills itself, in fearing to be spilt.

*Re-enter* HORATIO, *with* OPHELIA.

*Oph.* Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?

*Queen.* How now, Ophelia?

*Oph.* How should I your true love know<sup>4</sup>

From another one?

*By his cockle hat, and staff,*

*And his sandal shoon<sup>5</sup>.*

[*Singing.*

*Queen.*

That *unhappy* once signified *mischievous*, may be known from P. Holland's translation of *Pliny's Nat. Hist.* b. 19. ch. 7. "— the shrewd and *unhappie* fowles, which lie upon the lands, and eat up the seed new-sowne." We still use *unlucky* in the same sense. STEEVENS.

<sup>2</sup> *'Twere good, she were spoken with;—*] These lines are given to the Queen in the folio, and to Horatio in the quarto. JOHNSON.

I think the two first lines of Horatio's speech, [*'Twere good, &c.*] belong to him; the rest to the queen. BLACKSTONE.

In the quarto, the Queen, Horatio, and a *Gentleman*, enter at the beginning of this scene. The two speeches, "She is importunate," &c. and "She speaks much of her father," &c. are there given to the *Gentleman*, and the line now before us, as well as the two following, to *Horatio*: the remainder of this speech to the queen. I think it probable that the regulation proposed by Sir W. Blackstone was that intended by Shakespeare. MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> *—to some great amiss;*] Shakespeare is not singular in his use of this word as a substantive. So, in the *Arraignment of Paris*, 1584:

"Gracious forbearers of this world's amiss."

Again, in Lilly's *Woman in the Moon*, 1597:

"Pale be my looks, to witness my amiss." STEEVENS.

See Vol. X. p. 315. Each toy is, each trifle. MALONE.

<sup>4</sup> *How should I your true love, &c.*] There is no part of this play, in its representation on the stage, more pathetick than this scene; which, I suppose, proceeds from the utter insensibility Ophelia has to her own misfortunes.

A great

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

*Oph.* Say you? nay, pray you, mark.

*He is dead and gone, lady,*

[sings,

*He is dead and gone;*

*At his head a grass-green turf,*

*At his heels a stone.*

O, ho!

*Queen.* Nay, but Ophelia,—

*Oph.* Pray you, mark.

*White his shroud as the mountain snow,*

[sings:

*Enter King.*

*Queen.* Alas, look here, my lord.

*Oph.* Larded all with sweet flowers<sup>6</sup>;

*Which bewept to the grave did not go,*

*With true-love showers.*

*King.* How do you, pretty lady?

*Oph.* Well, God 'ield you<sup>7</sup>! They say, the owl was a baker's

A great sensibility, or none at all, seems to produce the same effect. In the latter the audience supply what she wants, and with the former they sympathize. Sir J. REYNOLDS.

<sup>5</sup> *By his cockle hat, and staff,*

*And his sandal shoon.]* This is the description of a pilgrim.

While this kind of devotion was in favour, love-intrigues were carried on under that mask. Hence the old ballads and novels made pilgrimages the subjects of their plots. The cockle-shell hat was one of the essential badges of this vocation: for the chief places of devotion being beyond sea, or on the coasts, the pilgrims were accustomed to put cockle-shells upon their hats, to denote the intention or performance of their devotion. WARBURTON.

So, in *Greene's Never too late*, 1616:

"A hat of straw like to a swain,

"Shelter for the sun and rain,

"With a scallop-shell before," &c.

Again, in *The Old Wives Tale*, by George Peele, 1595: "I will give thee a Palmer's staffe of yvorie, and a scallop-shell of beaten gold." STEEVENS.

<sup>6</sup> *Larded all with sweet flowers;]* The expression is taken from cookery. JOHNSON.

<sup>7</sup> *Well, God'ield you!]* i. e. Heaven reward you! So, in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

"Tend me to-night two hours, I ask no more,

"And the Gods yield you for't!"

baker's daughter<sup>8</sup>. Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be. God be at your table!

*King.* Conceit upon her father.

*Oph.* Pray, let us have no words of this; but when they ask you, what it means, say you this:

*To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day<sup>9</sup>,*

*All in the morning betime,*

*And I a maid at your window,*

*To be your Valentine:*

*Then up he rose, and donn'd his cloaths<sup>1</sup>,*

*And dupp'd the chamber door<sup>2</sup>;*

*Let in the maid, that out a maid*

*Newer departed more.*

*King.*

So Sir John Grey, in a letter in Ashmole's Appendix to his Account of the Garter, Numb. 46: "The king of his gracious lordshipe, God yeld him, hafe chosen me to be owne of his breithrene of the knyghts of the garter." THEOBALD.

See Vol. IV. p. 302, n. 9. MALONE.

<sup>8</sup> — *the owl was a baker's daughter.*] This was a metamorphosis of the common people, arising from the mealy appearance of the owl's feathers, and her guarding the bread from mice. WARBURTON.

To guard the bread from mice, is rather the office of a cat than an owl. In barns and granaries, indeed, the services of the owl are still acknowledged. This was, however, no metamorphosis of the common people, but a legendary story, which both Dr. Johnson and myself have read, yet in what book at least I cannot recollect.—Our Saviour being refused bread by the daughter of a baker, is described as punishing her by turning her into an owl. STEEVENS.

<sup>9</sup> *Saint Valentine's day,*] There is a rural tradition that about this time of year birds choose their mates. Bourne in his *Antiquities of the Common People*, observes, that "it is a ceremony never omitted among the vulgar, to draw lots, which they term *Valentines*, on the eve before Valentine-day. The names of a select number of one sex are by an equal number of the other put into some vessel; and after that every one draws a name, which for the present is called their *Valentine*, and is also look'd upon as a good omen of their being man and wife afterwards." Mr. Brand adds, that he has "searched the Legend of St. Valentine, but thinks there is no occurrence in his life, that could have given rise to this ceremony." MALONE.

<sup>1</sup> — *donn'd his cloaths,*] To *don*, is to *do on*, to put on, as *doff* is to *do off*, put off. STEEVENS.

<sup>2</sup> *And dupp'd the chamber-door;*] To *dup*, is to *do up*; to lift the latch. It were easy to write, *And op'd* —. JOHNSON.

To *dup*, was a common contraction of to *do up*. So, in *Damon and Pythias*,

King. Pretty Ophelia!

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

By Gis, and by Saint Charity<sup>3</sup>,

Alack, and fie for shame!

Young men will do't, if they come to't;

By cock<sup>4</sup>, they are to blame.

Quoth she, before you tumbled me,

You promis'd me to wed:

[He answers<sup>5</sup>.]

So would I ha' done, by yonder sun,

An thou hadst not come to my bed.

King. How long hath she been thus?

Oph. I hope, all will be well. We must be patient:  
but I cannot choose but weep, to think, they should lay

Pytlas, 1582: "— the porters are drunk; will they not *dup* the gate to-day?"

Lord Surrey, in his translation of the second *Æneid*, renders *Panduntur portæ*, "The gates *cast up*, we issued out to play." The phrase seems to have been adopted either from *doing up* the latch, or drawing up the portcullis.

It appears from *Martin Mark-all's Apologie to the Bel-man of London*, 1610, that in the cant of gypsies, &c. *Dup the gigger*, signified to open the doore. STEEVENS.

<sup>3</sup> By Gis, and by Saint Charity,] *Saint Charity* is a known saint among the Roman Catholics. Spenser mentions her, *Eclg.* V. 255:

"Ah dear lord, and sweet *Saint Charity*!"

I find, by *Gisse*, used as an adjuration, both by Gascoigne in his Poems, by Preston in his *Cambyfes*, and in *K. Edward III.* 1599:

"By *Gis*, fair lords, ere many daies be past," &c. STEEVENS.

In the scene between the bastard Faulconbridge and the friers and nunne in the first part of *The troublesome Raigne of King John*, (edit. 1779, p. 256, &c.) the nunne swears by *Gis*, and the friers pray to *Saint Wibold*, (another obsolete saint mentioned in *K. Lear*, Act III.) and adjure him by *Saint Charitie* to hear them. BLACKSTONE.

By *Gis*—There is not the least mention of any saint whose name corresponds with this, either in the *Roman Calendar*, the service in *Usum Sarum*, or in the *Benedictionary* of Bishop Athelwold. I believe the word to be only a corrupted abbreviation of *Jesus*, the letters J. H. S. being anciently all that was set down to denote that sacred name, on altars, the covers of books, &c. RIDLEY.

<sup>4</sup> By cock,—] This is likewise a corruption of the sacred name. Many instances of it are given in a note at the beginning of the fifth Act of the Second Part of *K. Henry IV.* STEEVENS.

<sup>5</sup> He answers,] These words I have added from the quartos.

STEEVENS.

him

him i' the cold ground: My brother shall know of it, and so I thank you for your good counsel. Come, my coach! Good night, ladies<sup>6</sup>; good night, sweet ladies: good night, good night. [Exit.

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

O! this is the poison of deep grief; it springs  
All from her father's death: And now behold, O Gertrude, Gertrude,

When sorrows come, they come not single spies,  
But in battalions! First, her father slain;  
Next, your son gone; and he most violent author  
Of his own just remove: The people muddy'd,  
Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts, and whispers,  
For good Polonius' death; and we have done but greenly<sup>7</sup>,  
In hugger-mugger to enter him<sup>8</sup>: Poor Ophelia  
Divided from herself, and her fair judgment;  
Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts.  
Last, and as much containing as all these,

Her

<sup>6</sup> Come, my coach! *Good night, ladies;*] In Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, 1590, Zabina in her frenzy uses the same expression: "Hell, make ready my coach, my chair, my jewels. I come, I come." MALONE.

<sup>7</sup> — but greenly.] But *unskillfully*; with *greenness*; that is, without maturity of judgment. JOHNSON.

<sup>8</sup> In hugger-mugger to enter him:—] All the modern editions that I have consulted, give it,

*In private to enter him;—*

That the words now replaced are better, I do not undertake to prove; it is sufficient that they are Shakspeare's: if phraseology is to be changed as words grow uncouth by disuse, or gross by vulgarity, the history of every language will be lost; we shall no longer have the words of any author; and, as these alterations will be often unskillfully made, we shall in time have very little of his meaning. JOHNSON.

On this just observation I ground the restoration of a gross and unpleasant word in a preceding passage, for which Mr. Pope substituted *groan*. See p. 290, n. 3. The alteration in the present instance was made by the same editor. MALONE.

Shakspeare probably took the expression from the following passage in Sir T. North's translation of Plutarch.—"Antonius thinking that his body should be honourably buried, and not in *bugger-mugger*."

It is used in Harrington's *Asiosto*:

"So that it might be done in *bugger-mugger*."

It appears from Greene's *Groundwork of Cony-catching*, 1592, that *to bugger*, was to lurk about. STEEVENS.

The

Her brother is in secret come from France :  
 Feeds on his wonder<sup>9</sup>, keeps himself in clouds,  
 And wants not buzzers to infect his ear  
 With pestilent speeches of his father's death ;  
 Wherein necessity, of matter beggar'd<sup>1</sup>,  
 Will nothing stick our person to arraign.  
 In ear and ear. O my dear Gertrude, this,  
 Like to a murdering-piece<sup>2</sup>, in many places  
 Gives me superfluous death ! [A noise within.]

Queen. Alack ! what noise is this ?

*Enter a Gentleman.*

King. Attend. Where are my Switzers \* ? Let them  
 guard the door :  
 What is the matter ?

The meaning of the expression is ascertained by Florio's Italian Dictionary, 1598 : "*Dinascoso*, Secretly, hiddenly, in *bigger-mugger*."

MALONE

<sup>9</sup> Feeds on his wonder,—] The folio reads—Keeps on his wonder,—. The quarto,—Feeds on this wonder.—Thus the true reading is picked out from between them. Hammer reads unnecessarily,—Feeds on his anger. JOHNSON.

<sup>1</sup> Wherein necessity, &c.] Wherein, that is, in which pestilent speeches, necessity, or, the obligation of an accuser to support his charge, will nothing stick, &c. JOHNSON.

<sup>2</sup> Like to a murdering-piece, &c.] Dr. Warburton thought that by a murdering-piece was meant "such a piece as assassins use, with many barrels"; and Mr. Steevens conceived, that this explanation was justified by the following passage in *The Double Marriage* of B. and Fletchers:

"And, like a murdering piece, aims not at one,

"But all that stand within the dangerous level."

But Dr. Warburton was certainly mistaken. A murdering-piece was the specific term in Shakspeare's time, for a piece of ordnance, or small cannon. The word is found in Coles's Latin Dictionary, 1679, and rendered, "*tormentum murale*."

The small cannon; which are, or were, used in the fore-castle, half-deck, or steerage of a ship of war, were within this century called murdering-pieces. MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> Alack ! &c.] This speech of the Queen is omitted in the quartos.

STEEVENS.

\* Where are my Switzers ?] I have observed in many of our old plays, that the guards attendant on kings are called *Switzers*, and that without any regard to the country where the scene is laid. REED.

The reason is, because the Swiss in the time of our poet, as at present, were hired to fight the battles of other nations. So, in Nashe's *Christ's Teares over Jerusalem*, 4to, 1594: "Law, logicke, and the Switzers, may be hired to fight for any body." MALONE.

Gen.

*Gen.* Save yourself, my lord;  
 The ocean, over-peering of his list<sup>4</sup>,  
 Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste,  
 Than young Laertes, in a riotous head,  
 O'er-bears your officers! The rabble call him, lord;  
 And, as the world were now but to begin,  
 Antiquity forgot, custom not known,  
 The ratifiers and props of every word<sup>5</sup>,  
 They cry, *Choose we; Laertes shall be king!*  
 Caps, hands, and tongues, applaud it to the clouds,  
*Laertes shall be king, Laertes king!*

*Queen.* How cheerfully on the false trail they cry!  
 O, this is counter, you false Danish dogs<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> *The ocean over-peering of his list,*] *List*, in this place, signifies<sup>6</sup> boundary, i. e. the shore. So, in *K. Henry IV.* P. 1.:

"The very *list*, the very utmost bound

"Of all our fortunes."

The *selvage* of cloth was in both places, I believe, in our authour's thoughts. MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> *The ratifiers and props of every word,*] Sir T. Hanmer would transpose this line and the next. Dr. Warburton proposes to read, *ward*; and Dr. Johnson, *weal*, instead of *word*. I should be rather for reading, *work*. TYRWHITT.

In the first folio there is only a comma at the end of the above line; and will not the passage bear this construction?—The rabble call him lord; and, as if the world were now but to begin, and as if the ancient custom of hereditary succession were unknown, they, the ratifiers and props of every word *be utters*, cry, Let us make choice, that Laertes shall be king. TOLLET.

This *construction* might certainly be admitted, and *the ratifiers and props of every word* might be understood to be applied to the rabble mentioned in a preceding line, without Hanmer's transposition of this and the following line; but there is no authority for what Mr. Tollet adds, "of every word *be* [i. e. Laertes] *utters*," for the poet has not described Laertes as having uttered a word. If therefore the rabble are called *the ratifiers and props of every word*, we must understand, "of every word *uttered by themselves*;" which is so tame, that it would be unjust to our poet to suppose that to have been his meaning. *Ratifiers*, &c. refer not to the people, but to *custom* and *antiquity*, which the speaker says are the true ratifiers and props of every word. The last word however of the line may well be suspected to be corrupt; and Mr. Tyrwhitt has probably suggested the true reading. MALONE.

<sup>6</sup> *O, this is counter, you false Danish dogs.*] Hounds run counter when they trace the trail backwards. JOHNSON.

*King.*

*King.* The doors are broke.

[*Noise within.*]

*Enter LAERTES, arm'd ; Danes following.*

*Laer.* Where is this king?—Sirs, stand you all without.

*Dan.* No, let's come in.

*Laer.* I pray you, give me leave.

*Dan.* We will, we will. [*They retire without the door.*]

*Laer.* I thank you:—keep the door.—O thou vile king,  
Give me my father.

*Queen.* Calmly, good Laertes.

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

Cries, cuckold, to my father; brands the harlot  
Even here, between the chaste unsmirched brow<sup>7</sup>  
Of my true mother.

*King.* What is the cause, Laertes,  
That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?—  
Let him go, Gertrude; do not fear our person;  
There's such divinity doth hedge a king,  
That treason can but peep to what it would,  
Acts little of his will.—Tell me, Laertes,  
Why thou art thus incens'd;—Let him go, Gertrude;—  
Speak, man.

*Laer.* Where is my father?

*King.* Dead.

*Queen.* But not by him.

*King.* Let him demand his fill.

*Laer.* How came he dead? I'll not be juggled with:  
To hell, allegiance! vows, to the blackest devil!  
Conscience, and grace, to the profoundest pit!  
I dare damnation: To this point I stand,—  
That both the worlds I give to negligence,  
Let come what comes; only I'll be reveng'd  
Most thoroughly for my father.

*King.* Who shall stay you?

<sup>7</sup> — *unsmirched brow*—] i. e. clean, not defiled. To *besmirch*, our author uses *Act I. sc. v.*

This seems to be an allusion to a proverb often introduced in the old comedies. Thus, in the *London Prodigal*, 1605: “— as true as the skin between any man's brows.” STEEVENS.

*Laer.*

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

*King.* Good Laertes,  
If you desire to know the certainty  
Of your dear father's death, is't writ in your revenge,  
That, sweep-stake, you will draw both friend and foe,  
Winner and loser ?

*Laer.* None but his enemies.

*King.* Will you know them then ?

*Laer.* To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms ;  
And, like the kind life-rend'ring pelican<sup>3</sup>,  
Repast them with my blood.

*King.* Why, now you speak  
Like a good child, and a true gentleman.  
That I am guiltless of your father's death,  
And am most sensibly<sup>9</sup> in grief for it,  
It shall as level to your judgment 'pear<sup>1</sup>,  
As day does to your eye.

*Danes.* [*within.*] Let her come in.

*Laer.* How now ! what noise is that ?

*Enter OPHELIA, fantastically dress'd with straws and flowers.*

O heat, dry up my brains ! tears, seven times salt,

<sup>3</sup> — *life-rend'ring pelican,*] So, in the ancient *Interlude of Nature*,  
bl. l. no date :

“ Who taught the colk hys watche-howres to observe,

“ And syng of corage wyth shrill throte on hye ?

“ Who taught the pellycan her tender hart to carve ?—

“ For she nolde suffer her byrdys to dye ?”

It is almost needless to add that this account of the bird is entirely fabulous. STEEVENS.

<sup>9</sup> — *most sensibly*—] Thus the quarto, 1604. The folio, following the error of a later quarto, reads—*most sensible*. MALONE.

<sup>1</sup> — *to your judgment 'pear,*] So the quarto. The folio, and all the later editions, read,—*to your judgment pierce*, less intelligibly.

JOHNSON.

This elision of the verb to *appear*, is common to Beaumont and Fletcher. So, in *The Maid of the Mill* :

“ And where they 'pear so excellent in little,

“ They will but flame in great.” STEEVENS.

Burn

Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye!—  
 By heaven, thy madness shall be pay'd with weight,  
 Till our scale turn the beam. O rose of May!  
 Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!—  
 O heavens! is't possible, a young maid's wits  
 Should be as mortal as an old man's life?  
 Nature is fine in love: and, where 'tis fine,  
 It sends some precious instance of itself  
 After the thing it loves<sup>2</sup>.

Oph. *They bore him bare-fac'd on the bier<sup>3</sup>;  
 Hey no nonny, nonny hey nonny<sup>4</sup>;  
 And in his grave rain'd many a tear;—*

Fare you well, my dove!

Laer. Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade revenge;  
 It could not move thus.

Oph. You must sing, *Down a-down<sup>5</sup>, an you call him  
 a-down-a.*

<sup>2</sup> *Nature is fine in love: and, where 'tis fine,*

*It sends some precious instance of itself*

*After the thing it loves.*] These lines are not in the quarto, and might have been omitted in the folio without great loss, for they are obscure and affected; but, I think, they require no emendation. *Love* (says Laertes) is the passion by which *nature is most exalted and refined*; and as substances, *refined* and subtilised, easily obey any impulse, or follow any attraction, some part of nature, so purified and *refined*, flies off after the attracting object, after the thing it loves.

*As into air the purer spirits flow,  
 And separate from their kindred drops below,  
 So flew her soul.*— JOHNSON.

The meaning of the passage may be—that her wits, like the spirit of fine essences, flew off or evaporated. STEEVENS.

<sup>3</sup> *They bore him bare-fac'd on the bier, &c.*] So, in Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*, late edit. ver. 2879:

“He laid him bare the visage on the bere,

“Therwith he wept that pitee was to here.” STEEVENS.

<sup>4</sup> *Hey no nonny, &c.*] These words, which were the burthen of a song, are found only in the folio. See Vol. VIII. p. 592, n. 6.

MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> — *sing, Down a-down,*] Perhaps Shakspeare alludes to *Phæbe's Sonnet*, by Tho. Lodge, which the reader may find in *England's Helicon*, 1614:

“*Down a-down, &c.*

“Thus Phillis sung,

“By fancy once distressed: &c.

“And so sing I, with *downe a-downe,*” &c.

*Down a-down*

*a-down-a.* O, how the wheel becomes it<sup>6</sup>! It is the false steward, that stole his master's daughter.

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

*Oph.* There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray you,

*Down a-down* is likewise the burthen of a song in the *Three Ladies of London*, 1584, and perhaps common to many others. STEEVENS.

See Florio's Italian Dictionary, 1598: "*Filibustacchina*, The burthen of a countrie song; as we say *Hay doune a doune, doune*."

MALONE.

<sup>6</sup> O, how the wheel becomes it!] The story alluded to I do not know; but perhaps the lady stolen by the steward was reduced to *spin*.

JOHNSON.

The *wheel* may mean no more than *the burthen of the song*, which she had just repeated, and as such was formerly used. I met with the following observation in an old quarto black-letter book, published before the time of Shakspeare:

"The song was accounted a good one, though it was not moche graced by the *wheele*, which in no wise accorded with the subject matter thereof."

I quote this from memory, and from a book, of which I cannot recollect the exact title or date; but the passage was in a preface to some songs or sonnets. I well remember to have met with the word in the same sense in other old books.

The ballad, alluded to by Ophelia, is perhaps entered on the books of the Stationers' Company. "October 1580. Four ballades of the Lord of Lorn and the *Falſe Steward*," &c. STEEVENS.

I am inclined to think that *wheel* is here used in its ordinary sense, and that these words allude to the occupation of the girl who is supposed to sing the song alluded to by Ophelia.—The following lines in Hall's *Virgidemiarum*, 1597, appear to me to add some support to this interpretation:

"Some drunken rimer thinks his time well spent,

"If he can live to see his name in print;

"Who when he is once ſleſhed to the preſſe,

"And ſees his handſelle have ſuch faire ſucceſſe,

"*Sung to the wheele*, and ſung unto the payle,

"He ſends forth thraves of *ballads* to the ſale."

So, in Sir Thomas Overbury's *Characters*, 1614: "She makes her hands hard with labour, and her heart ſoft with pittie; and when winter evenings fall early, ſitting at her merry *wheele*, ſhe ſings a defiance to the giddy wheele of fortune."

Our authour likewiſe furniſhes an authority to the ſame purpoſe. *Twelfth Night*, Act II. ſc. iv.

"——Come, the ſong we had laſt night:

"The *ſpinſſers*, and the knitters in the ſun,

"Do uſe to chaunt it."

A muſical

you; love, remember : and there is pansies, that's for thoughts<sup>7</sup>.

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

*Opb.* There's fennel for you, and columbines<sup>8</sup> :—there's rue

A musical antiquary may perhaps contend, that the controverted words of the text allude to an ancient instrument mentioned by Chaucer, and called by him a *rote*, by others a *vielle*; which was played upon by the friction of a *wheel*. MALONE.

[*There's rosemary, that's for remembrance;—and there is pansies, that's for thoughts.*] There is probably some mythology in the choice of these herbs, but I cannot explain it. *Pansies* is for *thoughts*, because of its name, *Pensées*; but why *rosemary* indicates *remembrance*, except that it is an ever-green, and carried at funerals, I have not discovered. JOHNSON.

So, in *All Fools*, a comedy, by Chapman, 1605:

“What flowers are these?—

“The *Pansie* this.

“O, that's for lovers' *thoughts*!”

*Rosemary* was anciently supposed to strengthen the memory. It was not only carried at funerals, but worn at weddings, as appears from a passage in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Elder Brother*, Act III. sc. i.

So, in *A Dialogue between Nature and the Phoenix*, by R. Chester, 1601:

“There's *rosemarie*; the Arabians justifie

“(Physicians of exceeding perfect skill)

“It comforteth the braine and *memorie*,” &c. STEEVENS.

*Rosemary* being supposed to strengthen the memory, was the emblem of fidelity in lovers. So, in *A Handfull of Pleasant Delities*, containing sundrie new Sonnets, 16mo, 1584:

“*Rosemary* is for remembrance

“Betweene us daie and night;

“Wishing that I might alwaies have

“You present in my sight.”

The poem in which these lines are found, is entitled *A Nofogate alwaies sweet for Lovers to send for Tokens of love*, &c. MALONE.

[*There's fennel for you, and columbines*:] Greene, in his *Quip for an Upstart Courtier*, 1620, calls *fennel*, *women's weeds*: “fit generally for that sex, sith while they are maidens, they with wantonly.”

I know not of what *columbines* were supposed to be emblematical. They are again mentioned in *All Fools*, by Chapman, 1605:

“What's that?—a *columbine*?

“No: that *shankles* flower grows not in my garden.”

rue for you;—and here's some for me:—we may call it, herb of grace o' fundays<sup>9</sup>:—you may wear your rue with a difference<sup>1</sup>.—There's a daisy<sup>2</sup>:—I would give you some

Gerard, however, and other herbalists, impute few, if any, virtues to them; and they may therefore be stiled *thankless*, because they appear to make no grateful return for their creation.

Again, in the 15th Song of Drayton's *Polyolbion*:

"The columbine amongst, they sparingly do set."

From the *Caltha Poetarum*, 1599, it should seem as if this flower was the emblem of cuckoldom:

"—— the blew cornuted columbine,

"Like to the crooked horns of Acheloy." STEEVENS.

Columbine was an emblem of cuckoldom on account of the horns of its nectaria, which are remarkable in this plant. See *Aquilegia* in Linnaeus's *Genera*, 684. S. W.

Ophelia gives her fennel and columbines to the king. In the collection of Sonnets quoted above, the former is thus mentioned:

"Fennel is for flatterers,

"An evil thing 'tis sure;

"But I have alwaies meant truly,

"With constant heart most pure."

See also Florio's Italian Dictionary, 1598: "*Dare finocchio*, to give fennel,—to flatter, to dissemble." MALONE.

<sup>9</sup> *There's rue for you;—and here's some for me:—we may call it herb of grace o' fundays:*] I believe there is a quibble meant in this passage; *rue* anciently signifying the same as *rutb*, i. e. sorrow. Ophelia gives the queen some, and keeps a proportion of it for herself. There is the same kind of play with the same word in *King Richard the Second*.

*Herb of grace* is one of the titles which *Tucca* gives to *William Rufus*, in *Decker's Satiromastix*. I suppose the first syllable of the surname *Rufus* introduced the quibble. STEEVENS.

<sup>1</sup> *You may wear your rue with a difference.*] This seems to refer to the rules of heraldry, where the younger brothers of a family bear the same arms *with a difference*, or mark of distinction. So, in Holinshed's *Reign of King Richard II.* p. 443: "—because he was the youngest of the Spenfers, he bare a border gules for a difference."

There may, however, be somewhat more implied here, than is expressed. *You, madam*, (says Ophelia to the Queen,) *may call your RUE by its Sunday name, HERB OF GRACE, and so wear it with a difference to distinguish it from mine, which can never be any thing but merely RUE, i. e. sorrow.* STEEVENS.

*Herb of grace* was not the *Sunday name*, but the *every day name* of *rue*. In the common dictionaries of Shakspeare's time it is called *herb of grace*. See Florio's Italian Dictionary, 1598, in *v. ruta*, and Cotgrave's French Dictionary, 1611, in *v. rue*. There is no ground therefore for supposing, with Dr. Warburton, that *ue* was called herb

of

some violets; but they wither'd all, when my father died<sup>2</sup>:—They say, he made a good end,—

*For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy*<sup>4</sup>,— [sings.

*Laer.* Thought and affliction<sup>5</sup>, passion, hell itself,  
She turns to favour, and to prettiness.

*Oph.* *And will he not come again?* [sings.

*And will he not come again?*

*No, no, he is dead,*

*Go to thy death-bed,*

*He never will come again.*

of grace, from its being used in exorcisms performed in churches on Sundays.

Ophelia only means, I think, that the queen may with peculiar propriety on *Sundays*, when she solicits pardon for that crime which she has so much occasion to *rue* and repent of, call her *rue*, *herb of grace*. So, in *King Richard II.*

“Here did she drop a tear; here in this place

“I’ll set a bank of *rue*, four *herb of grace*.

“*Rue*, even for *ruth*, here shortly shall be seen,

“In the remembrance of a weeping queen.”

Ophelia, after having given the queen *rue*, to remind her of the sorrow and contrition she ought to feel for her incestuous marriage, tells her, she may wear it with a *difference*, to distinguish it from that worn by Ophelia herself; because her tears flowed from the loss of a father, those of the queen ought to flow for her guilt. MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> *There’s a daisy:*] Greene in his *Quip for an upstart Courtier*, has explained the significance of this flower: “—Next them grew the DISSEMBLING DAISIE, to warne such light-of-love wenches not to trust every faire promise that such amorous bachelors make them.”

HENLEY.

<sup>3</sup> *I would give you some violets, but they wither’d all, when my father died:*] The violet is thus characterized in the old collection of Sonnets above quoted, printed in 1584:

“Violet is for faithfulness,

“Which in me shall abide;

“Hoping likewise that from your heart

“You will not let it slide.” MALONE.

<sup>4</sup> *For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy,*—] This is part of an old song; mentioned likewise by Beaumont and Fletcher. *Two Noble Kinsmen*, Act IV. sc. i:

“— I can sing the broom,

“And Bonny Robin.”

In the books of the Stationers’ Company, 26 April, 1594, is entered “A ballad, intituled, A doleful adewe to the last Erie of Darbie, to the tune of *Bonny sweet Robin*.” STEEVENS.

*His beard was as white as snow*<sup>6</sup>,

*All flaxen was his poll:*

*He is gone, he is gone,*

*And we cast away moan;*

*God'a mercy on his soul!*

And of all christian souls<sup>7</sup>! I pray God. God be wi'you!

[Exit OPHELIA,

*Laer.* Do you see this, O God?

*King.* Laertes, I must commune with your grief,  
Or you deny me right. Go but apart,  
Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will,  
And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me:  
If by direct or by collateral hand  
They find us touch'd, we will our kingdom give,  
Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours,  
To you in satisfaction; but, if not,  
Be you content to lend your patience to us,  
And we shall jointly labour with your soul  
To give it due content.

*Laer.* Let this be so;

His means of death, his obscure funeral,—

<sup>5</sup> *Thought and affliction,—*] *Thought* here, as in many other places, signifies melancholy. See Vol. VII. p. 528, n. 2. MALONE.

<sup>6</sup> *His beard was as white as snow, &c.*] This, and several circumstances in the character of Ophelia, seem to have been ridiculed in *Eastward Hoe*, a comedy written by Ben Jonson, Chapman, and Marston, printed 1605, Act III.:

“ *His head as white as milk,*

“ *All flaxen was his hair;*

“ *But now he's dead,*

“ *And laid in his bed,*

“ *And never will come again.*

“ *God be at your labour!*” STEEVENS.

<sup>7</sup> *God'a mercy on his soul!*

*And of all christian souls!*] This is the common conclusion to many of the ancient monumental inscriptions. See *Weever's Funeral Monuments*, p. 657, 658. Barthelette, the publisher of *Gower's Confessio Amantis*, 1554, speaking first of the funeral of Chaucer, and then of Gower, says, “— he lieth buried in the monasterie of Scynt Peter's at Westminster, &c. on whose soules and all christen, Jesu have mercie.” STEEVENS.

No trophy, sword, nor hatchment, o'er his bones<sup>8</sup>,  
 No noble rite, nor formal ostentation,—  
 Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,  
 That I must call't in question.

*King.* So you shall;  
 And, where the offence is, let the great axe fall.  
 I pray you, go with me. [*Exeunt.*]

## S C E N E VI.

*Another Room in the same.*

*Enter HORATIO, and a Servant.*

*Hor.* What are they, that would speak with me?

*Serv.* Sailors, sir;

They say, they have letters for you.

*Hor.* Let them come in.— [*Exit Servant.*]

I do not know from what part of the world  
 I should be greeted, if not from lord Hamlet.

*Enter Sailors.*

1. *Sail.* God bless you, sir.

*Hor.* Let him bless thee too.

1. *Sail.* He shall, sir, an't please him. There's a letter  
 for you, sir; it comes from the ambassador that was  
 bound for England; if your name be Horatio, as I am  
 let to know it is.

*Hor.* [*reads.*] Horatio, *when thou shalt have overlook'd  
 this, give these fellows some means to the king; they have  
 letters for him. Ere we were two days old at sea, a pi-  
 rate of very warlike appointment gave us chase: Finding  
 ourselves too slow of sail, we put on a compell'd valour;  
 and in the grapple I boarded them: on the instant, they got  
 clear of our ship; so I alone became their prisoner. They*

<sup>8</sup> No trophy, sword, nor hatchment, o'er his bones,] It was the cus-  
 tom, in the times of our author, to hang a sword over the grave of a  
 knight. JOHNSON.

This practice is uniformly kept up to this day. Not only the sword,  
 but the helmet, gauntlet, spurs, and tabard, (*i. e.* a coat whereon the  
 armorial ensigns were anciently depicted, from whence the term *coat  
 of armour*) are hung over the grave of every knight.

Sir J. HAWKINS.

*have*

*have dealt with me, like thieves of mercy; but they knew what they did; I am to do a good turn for them. Let the king have the letters I have sent; and repair thou to me with as much haste as thou would'st fly death. I have words to speak in thine ear, will make thee dumb; yet are they much too light for the bore of the matter<sup>9</sup>. These good fellows will bring thee where I am. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England: of them I have much to tell thee. Farewel.*

*He that thou knowest thine, Hamlet.*

Come, I will give you way for these your letters;  
And do't the speedier, that you may direct me  
To him from whom you brought them. [Exeunt.

## S C E N E VII.

*Another Room in the same.*

*Enter KING, and LAERTES.*

*King.* Now must your conscience my acquittance seal,  
And you must put me in your heart for friend;  
Sith you have heard, and with a knowing ear,  
That he, which hath your noble father slain,  
Pursu'd my life.

*Laer.* It well appears:—But tell me,  
Why you proceeded not against these feats,  
So crimeful and so capital in nature,  
As by your safety, greatness, wisdom, all things else,  
You mainly were stirr'd up?

*King.* O, for two special reasons;  
Which may to you, perhaps, seem much unfinew'd,  
But yet to me they are strong. The queen, his mother,  
Lives almost by his looks; and for myself,  
(My virtue, or my plague, be it either which,)  
She is so conjunctive to my life and soul,  
That, as the star moves not but in his sphere,  
I could not but by her. The other motive,

<sup>9</sup> — *for the bore of the matter.*] The *bore* is the caliber of a gun, or the capacity of the barrel. The *matter* (says Hamlet) would carry heavier words. JOHNSON.

Why to a publick count I might not go,  
 Is, the great love the general gender<sup>1</sup> bear him :  
 Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,  
 Work like the spring<sup>2</sup> that turneth wood to stone,  
 Convert his gyves to graces ; so that my arrows,  
 Too slightly timber'd for so loud a wind<sup>3</sup>,  
 Would have reverted to my bow again,  
 And not where I had aim'd them.

*Laer.* And so have I a noble father lost ;  
 A sister driven into desperate terms ;  
 Whose worth, if praises may go back again<sup>4</sup>,  
 Stood challenger on mount of all the age  
 For her perfections :—But my revenge will come.

*King.* Break not your sleeps for that : you must not think,

That we are made of stuff so flat and dull,  
 That we can let our beard be shook with danger<sup>5</sup>,  
 And think it pastime. You shortly shall hear more :  
 I lov'd your father, and we love ourself ;  
 And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine,—  
 How now ? what news<sup>6</sup> ?

*Enter a Messenger.*

*Mess.* Letters, my lord, from Hamlet<sup>7</sup> :

<sup>1</sup> — the general gender—] The common race of the people. JOHNSON.

<sup>2</sup> Work like the spring—] This simile is neither very seasonable in the deep interest of this conversation, nor very accurately applied. If the spring had changed base metals to gold, the thought had been more proper. JOHNSON.

The folio, instead of—work, reads—would. STEEVENS.

<sup>3</sup> — for so loud a wind,] Thus the folio. The quarto 1604, has— for so loud arm'd : as extraordinary a corruption as any that is found in these plays. MALONE.

<sup>4</sup> — if praises may go back again,] If I may praise what has been, but is now to be found no more. JOHNSON.

<sup>5</sup> That we can let our beard be shook with danger,] It is wonderful that none of the advocates for the learning of Shakspeare have told us that this line is imitated from Persius, Sat. 2 :

*Idcirco solidam præbet tibi vellere barbam*

*Jupiter ?* STEEVENS.

<sup>6</sup> How now, &c.] Omitted in the quartos. THEOBALD.

<sup>7</sup> Letters, &c.] Omitted in the quartos. STEEVENS.

This to your majesty; this to the queen.

*King.* From Hamlet! Who brought them?

*Mess.* Sailors, my lord, they say: I saw them not; They were given me by Claudio, he received them Of him that brought them<sup>s</sup>.

*King.* Laertes, you shall hear them:—  
Leave us.

[*Exit Mess.*

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

Hamlet.

What should this mean? Are all the rest come back?  
Or is it some abuse, and no such thing?

*Laer.* Know you the hand?

*King.* 'Tis Hamlet's character. *Naked,*—  
And, in a postscript here, he says, *alone:*  
Can you advise me?

*Laer.* I am lost in it, my lord. But let him come;  
It warms the very sickness in my heart,  
That I shall live and tell him to his teeth,  
*Thus diddest thou.*

*King.* If it be so, Laertes,—  
As how should it be so?—how otherwise?—  
Will you be rul'd by me?

*Laer.* Ay, my lord;  
So you will not o'er-rule me to a peace.

*King.* To thine own peace. If he be now return'd,—  
As checking at his voyage<sup>2</sup>, and that he means

<sup>s</sup> *Of him that brought them.*] I have restored this hemistich from the quartos. STEEVENS.

<sup>2</sup> *As checking at his voyage,*] Thus the folio. The quarto, 1604, exhibits a corruption similar to that mentioned in n. 3. It reads: *As the king at his voyage.* MALONE.

The phrase is from falconry; and may be justified from the following passage in *Hinde's Elieſto Libidinoſo*, 1606: "— For who knows not, quoth ſhe, that this hawk, which comes now ſo fair to the fiſt, may to-morrow *check* at the lure?"

Again, in G. Whetstone's *Caſtle of Delight*, 1576:

"But as the hawke, to gad which knowes the way,

"Will hardly leave to *checke* at carren crowes," &c. STEEVENS.

No more to undertake it,—I will work him  
To an exploit, now ripe in my device,  
Under the which he shall not choofe but fall:  
And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe;  
But even his mother shall uncharge the practice,  
And call it, accident.

*Laer*<sup>1</sup>. My lord, I will be rul'd;  
The rather, if you could devise it so,  
That I might be the organ.

*King*. It falls right.  
You have been talk'd of since your travel much,  
And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality  
Wherein, they say, you shine: your sum of parts  
Did not together pluck such envy from him,  
As did that one; and that, in my regard,  
Of the unworthiest sieg<sup>2</sup>.

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

*King*. A very ribband in the cap of youth,  
Yet needful too; for youth no less becomes  
The light and careless livery that it wears,  
Than settled age his fables, and his weeds,  
Importing health, and graveness<sup>3</sup>.—Two months since,  
Here was a gentleman of Normandy,—  
I have seen myself, and serv'd against, the French,  
And they can well on horseback: but this gallant  
Had witchcraft in't; he grew unto his seat;  
And to such wond'rous doing brought his horse,  
As he had been incorp'd and demy-natur'd  
With the brave beast: so far he topp'd my thought,  
That I, in forgery of shapes and tricks<sup>4</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> *Laer*.] The next sixteen lines are omitted in the folio. STEEV.

<sup>2</sup> *Of the unworthiest sieg.*] Of the lowest rank. *Sieg*, for *seat*, place. JOHNSON.

So, in *Othello*:

“—I fetch my birth

“From men of royal *sieg*.” STEEVENS.

<sup>3</sup> *Importing health, and graveness.*—] *Importing* here may be, not inferring by logical consequence, but producing by physical effect. A young man regards show in his dress; an old man, *bealtb*. JOHNSON.

*Importing bealtb*, I apprehend, means, denoting an attention to *bealtb*. MALONE.

<sup>4</sup> — *in forgery of shapes and tricks.*] I could not contrive so many proofs of dexterity as he could perform. JOHNSON.

Come short of what he did.

*Laer.* A Norman, was't?

*King.* A Norman.

*Laer.* Upon my life, Lamord\*:

*King.* The very fame.

*Laer.* I know him well: he is the brooch, indeed,  
And gem of all the nation.

*King.* He made confession of you;  
And gave you such a masterly report,  
For art and exercise in your defence<sup>5</sup>,  
And for your rapier most especial,  
That he cried out, 'twould be a sight indeed,  
If one could match you: the scrimers<sup>6</sup> of their nation,  
He swore, had neither motion, guard, nor eye,  
If you oppos'd them: Sir, this report of his  
Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy,  
That he could nothing do, but wish and beg  
Your sudden coming o'er, to play with you.  
Now, out of this,—

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

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

*Laer.* Why ask you this?

*King.* Not that I think, you did not love your father;  
But that I know, love is begun by time<sup>7</sup>;  
And that I see, in passages of proof<sup>8</sup>,  
Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.

\* —*Lamord.*] Thus the quarto, 1604. Shakspeare, I suspect, wrote  
*Lamode.* See the next speech but one. The folio has—*Lamound.*

MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> —*in your defence,*] That is, in the science of defence. JOHNSON.

<sup>6</sup> —*the scrimers*—] The fencers. JOHNSON.

From *esfimeur*, Fr. a fencer. From here to the word *them* inclusively, is not in the folio. MALONE.

<sup>7</sup> —*love is begun by time;*] This is obscure. The meaning may be, love is not innate in us, and co-essential to our nature, but begins at a certain time from some external cause, and being always subject to the operations of time, suffers change and diminution. JOHNS.

<sup>8</sup> —*in passages of proof,*] In transactions of daily experience. JOHNS.

There lives within the very flame of love<sup>9</sup>  
 A kind of wick, or snuff, that will abate it;  
 And nothing is at a like goodnes still;  
 For goodnes, growing to a plurify<sup>1</sup>,  
 Dies in his own too-much: That we would do,  
 We should do when we would; for this *would* changes,  
 And hath abatements and delays as many,  
 As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents;  
 And then this *should* is like a spendthrift sigh,  
 That hurts by easing<sup>2</sup>. But, to the quick o' the ulcer:  
 Hamlet

<sup>9</sup> *There lives, &c.*] The next ten lines are not in the folio. STEEV.

<sup>1</sup> *For goodnes, growing to a plurify,*] I would believe, for the honour of Shakspeare, that he wrote *pletbory*. But I observe the dramatic writers of that time frequently call a fulness of blood a *pleurisy*, as if it came, not from *πλεῦρα*, but from *plus, pluris*. WARBURTON.

I think the word should be spelt—*plurisy*. This passage is fully explained by one in Mascall's treatise on cattle, 1662, p. 187. "Against the blood, or *plurisie* of blood. The disease of blood is, some young horses will feed, and being fat will *increase* blood, and so *grow to a plurisie*, and *die* thereof if he have not soon help." TOLLET.

Dr. Warburton is right. The word is spelt *plurisy* in the quarto, 1604, and is used in the same sense as here, in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* :

" ——— that heal't with blood

" The earth, when it is sick, and cur't the world

" Of the *plurisie* of people."

Again, in *'Tis Pity she's a Whore*, by Ford, 1633 :

" Must your hot itch and *plurisie* of lust,

" The hey-day of your luxury, be fed

" Up to a surfeit?" MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> *And then this should is like a spendthrift sigh,*

*That hurts by easing.*—] A *spendthrift sigh* is a *sigh* that makes an unnecessary waste of the vital flame. It is a notion very prevalent, that *sighs* impair the strength, and wear out the animal powers. JOHNS. Hence they are call'd, in *K. Henry VI.*—*blood-consuming sighs*.

Again, in *Pericles*, 1609 :

" Do not consume your blood with sorrowing."

The idea is enlarged upon in Fenton's *Tragical Discourses*, 1579 :

" Why staye you not in tyme the source of your scorching *sighes*, that have already drayned your body of his wholesome humoures, appointed by nature to gyve sucke to the entrals and inward parts of you?"

The original quarto, as well as the folio, reads—a *spendthrift's sigh*; but I have no doubt that it was a corruption, arising from the first letter of the following word *sigh*, being an *s*. I have therefore, with the other modern editors, printed—*spendthrift sigh*, following a late

Hamlet comes back ; What would you undertake,  
To shew yourself in deed your father's son  
More than in words ?

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

*King.* No place, indeed, should murder sanctuarize ;  
Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,  
Will you do this, keep close within your chamber :  
Hamlet, return'd, shall know you are come home :  
We'll put on those shall praise your excellence,  
And set a double varnish on the fame  
The Frenchman gave you ; bring you, in fine, together,  
And wager o'er your heads : he, being remiss<sup>3</sup>,  
Most generous, and free from all contriving,  
Will not peruse the foils ; so that, with ease,  
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose  
A sword unbated<sup>4</sup>, and, in a pass of practice<sup>5</sup>,

Requite

late quarto, (which however is of no authority,) printed in 1611. That a sigh, if it consumes the blood, *hurts us by easing*, or is prejudicial to us on the whole, though it affords a temporary relief, is sufficiently clear: but the former part of the line, *and then this should*, may require a little explanation. I suppose the king means to say, that if we do not promptly execute what we are convinced we *should* or ought to do, we shall afterwards in vain repent our not having seized the fortunate moment for action: and this opportunity which we have let go by us, and the reflection that we *should* have done that, which, from supervening accidents, it is no longer in our power to do, is as prejudicial and painful to us as a blood-consuming sigh, that at once hurts and eases us.

I apprehend the poet meant to compare such a conduct, and the consequent reflection, *only* to the *pernicious* quality which he supposed to be annexed to sighing, and not to the temporary ease which it affords. His similes, as I have frequently had occasion to observe, seldom run on four feet. MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> — *be being remiss*,] He being not vigilant or cautious. JOHNSON.

<sup>4</sup> *A sword unbated*,—] Not blunted, as foils are by a button fixed to the end. So in *Love's Labour's Lost*:

"That honour, which shall *bate* his scythe's keen edge."

MALONE.

In Sir Thomas North's Translation of Plutarch, it is said of one of the *Metelli*, that "he shewed the people the cruel fight of fencers at *unbated* swords." STEEVENS.

<sup>5</sup> — *a pass of practice*,] Practice is often by Shakspeare, and other writers, taken for an *insidious stratagem*, or *privy treason*, a sense not incongruous

Requite him for your father.

*Lær.* I will do't:

And, for the purpose, I'll anoint my sword.  
I bought an unction of a mountebank,  
So mortal, that, but dip a knife in it,  
Where it draws blood, no cataplasm so rare,  
Collected from all simples that have virtue  
Under the moon, can save the thing from death,  
That is but scratch'd withall: I'll touch my point  
With this contagion; that, if I gall him slightly,  
It may be death.

*King.* Let's further think of this;

Weigh, what convenience, both of time and means,  
May fit us to our shape<sup>6</sup>: if this should fail,  
And that our drift look through our bad performance,  
'Twere better not assay'd; therefore, this project  
Should have a back, or second, that might hold,  
If this should blast in proof<sup>7</sup>. Soft;—let me see:—  
We'll make a solemn wager on your cunnings,—  
I ha't:

When in your motion you are hot and dry,  
(As make your bouts more violent to that end,)  
And that he calls for drink, I'll have preferr'd him<sup>8</sup>  
A chalice for the nonce; whereon but sipping,

incongruous to this passage, where yet I rather believe, that nothing more is meant than a *thrust for exercise*. JOHNSON.

So, in *Look about you*, 1600:

"I pray God there be no *practise* in this change."

Again, more appositely in our author's *Twelfth Night*, Act V. Sc. ult.

"This *practise* hath most shrewdly pass'd upon thee." STEEV.

<sup>6</sup> *May fit us to our shape:—*] *May enable us to assume proper characters*, and to act our part. JOHNSON.

<sup>7</sup> — *blast in proof*.] This, I believe, is a metaphor taken from a mine, which, in the proof or execution, sometimes breaks out with an ineffectual *blast*. JOHNSON.

The word *proof* shews the metaphor to be taken from the trying or proving fire-arms or cannon, which often *blast* or *burst* in the *proof*.

STEEVENS.

<sup>8</sup> — *I'll have preferr'd him—*] i. e. presented to him. Thus the quarto, 1604. The word indeed is misspelt, *prefard*. The folio reads —I'll have *prepar'd* him. MALONE.

If he by chance escape your venom'd stucc<sup>2</sup>,  
Our purpose may hold there. But stay, what noise<sup>3</sup>?

*Enter Queen.*

How now, sweet queen<sup>4</sup>?

*Queen.* One woe doth tread upon another's heel<sup>2</sup>,  
So fast they follow:—Your sister's drown'd, Laertes.

*Laer.* Drown'd! O, where?

*Queen.* There is a willow grows ascaunt the brook<sup>3</sup>,  
That shews his hoar leaves in the glassy stream;  
Therewith fantastick garlands did she make  
Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples<sup>4</sup>,

That

<sup>2</sup> — *your venom'd stucc,*] Your venom'd thrust. *Stucc* was a term of the fencing-school. So, in *Twelfth Night*: “—and he gives me the *stucc* with such a mortal motion,—” Again, in *The Return from Parnassus*, 1606: “Here is a fellow, *Judicio*, that carried the deadly *stocke* in his pen.”—See Florio's Italian Dictionary, 1598: “*Stoccata*, a foyné, a thrust, a *stoccado* given in fence.” MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> — *But stay, what noise?*] I have recovered this from the quartos, STEEVENS.

<sup>4</sup> *How now sweet queen?*] These words are not in the quarto. The word *now*, which appears to have been omitted by the carelessness of the transcriber or compositor, was supplied by the editor of the second folio. MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> *One woe doth tread upon another's heel,*] A similar thought occurs in *Pericles Prince of Tyre*, 1609:

“One sorrow never comes, but brings an heir,

“That may succeed as his inheritor.” STEEVENS:

Again, in Drayton's *Mortimeriados*, 4to, 1596:

“—miseries, which seldom come alone,

“Thick on the neck one of another fell.”

Again, in Shakspeare's 131st sonnet:

“A thousand groans, but thinking on thy fall,

“One on another's neck,—” MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> — *ascaunt the brook,*] Thus the quartos. The folio reads, *aslant*. *Ascaunce* is interpreted in the Glossary to Chaucer—*askew, aside, sideways*. STEEVENS.

<sup>4</sup> — *and long purples,*] By *long purple* is meant a plant, the modern botanical name of which is *orchis morio mas*, anciently *testicular morionis*. The grosser name by which it passes, is sufficiently known in many parts of England, and particularly in the county where Shakspeare lived. Thus far Mr. Warner. Mr. Collins adds, that in Sussex it is still called *dead men's bands*; and that in Lyte's Herbal, 1578, its various names, too gross for repetition, are preserved. STEEVENS.

One of the grosser names of this plant Gertrude had a particular reason to avoid:—*the rampant widow*. *Liberal* is free-spoken, licentious

That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,  
 But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them :  
 There on the pendant boughs her coronet weeds  
 Clambering to hang, an envious fliver broke ;  
 When down her weedy trophies, and herself,  
 Fell in the weeping brook. Her cloaths spread wide ;  
 And, mermaid-like, a while they bore her up :  
 Which time, she chaunted snatches of old tunes<sup>5</sup> ;  
 As one incapable of her own distress<sup>6</sup>,  
 Or like a creature native and indu'd  
 Unto that element<sup>7</sup> : but long it could not be,  
 Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,  
 Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay  
 To muddy death<sup>8</sup>.

*Laer.*

tious in language. So, in *Othello* : "Is he not a most profane and liberal counsellor ? Again, in *A Woman's a Weathercock*, by N. Field, 1612 :

" ——— Next that, the same

" Of your neglect, and liberal-talking tongue,

" Which breeds my honour an eternal wrong." MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> Which time, she chaunted snatches of old tunes ;] Fletcher, in his *Scornful Lady*, very injudiciously ridicules this incident :

" I will run mad first, and if that get not pity,

" I'll drown myself to a most dismal ditty." WARBURTON.

The quartos read—"snatches of old lauds," i. e. hymns. STEEVENS.

<sup>6</sup> As one incapable of her own distress,] As one having no understanding or knowledge of her danger. See p. 339, n. 8. MALONE.

<sup>7</sup> — like a creature native and indu'd

Unto that element.] As we are indued with certain original dispositions and propensities at our birth, Shakspeare here uses *indued* with great licentiousness, for formed by nature ; clothed, endowed, or furnished, with properties suited to the element of water.

Our old writers used *indued* and *endowed* indiscriminately. "To indue," says Minshew in his Dictionary, "sepius refertur ad dotes animo infusas, quibus nimirum ingenium alicujus imbutum et initiatum est, unde et G. instruire est. L. imbuer. Imbuere proprie est inchoare et initiari."

In Cotgrave's French Dictionary, 1611, *instruire* is interpreted, "to fashion, to furnish with." MALONE.

<sup>8</sup> To muddy death.] In the first scene of the next act we find Ophelia buried with such rites as betoken the *soiled* her own life. Shakspeare, Mr. Mason has observed, "seems to have forgotten himself in the speech before us, for there is not a single circumstance in this relation of her death, that induces us to think she had drowned herself intentionally." But it should be remembered, that the account here given, is that of a friend ; and that the queen could not possibly know what

*Laer.* Alas then, she is drown'd?

*Queen.* Drown'd, drown'd.

*Laer.* Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,  
And therefore I forbid my tears: But yet  
It is our trick; nature her custom holds,  
Let shame say what it will: when these are gone,  
The woman will be out<sup>9</sup>.—Adieu, my lord!  
I have a speech of fire; that fain would blaze,  
But that this folly drowns it<sup>1</sup>. [Exit.

*King.* Let's follow, Gertrude:  
How much I had to do to calm his rage!  
Now fear I, this will give it start again;  
Therefore, let's follow. [Exeunt.

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

*A Church-yard.*

*Enter two Clowns, with spades, &c.*

1. *Clown.* Is she to be bury'd in christian burial, that wilfully seeks her own salvation?

2. *Clown.* I tell thee, she is; therefore, make her grave straight<sup>2</sup>: the crowner hath set on her, and finds it christian burial.

1. *Clown.*

what passed in the mind of Ophelia, when she placed herself in so perilous a situation. After the facts had been weighed and considered, the priest in the next act pronounces, that *her death was doubtful*. MALONE

<sup>9</sup> *The woman will be out.*] i. e. tears will flow. So, in *K. Henry V.*

“And all the woman came into my eyes.” MALONE.

<sup>1</sup> — *that fain would blaze,*

*But that this folly drowns it.*] Thus the quarto, 1604. The folio reads—But that this folly doubts it, i. e. doubts, or extinguishes it. See p. 221, n. 6. MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> — *make her grave straight:*] Make her grave from east to west in a direct line parallel to the church; not from north to south, athwart the regular line. This, I think, is meant. JOHNSON.

I cannot think that this means any more than *make her grave immediately*. She is to be buried in *christian burial*, and consequently the grave is to be made as usual. My interpretation may be justified from the following passages in *K. Henry V.* and the play before us: “—We cannot lodge and board a dozen or fourteen gentlewomen, who live by the prick of their needles, but it will be thought we keep a bawdy-house straight.”

Again,

1. *Clown*. How can that be, unless she drown'd herself in her own defence?

2. *Clown*. Why, 'tis found so.

1. *Clown*. It must be *se offendendo*; it cannot be else. For here lies the point: If I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act: and an act hath three branches; it is, to act, to do, and to perform<sup>3</sup>: Argal, she drown'd herself wittingly.

2. *Clown*. Nay, but hear you, goodman delver.

1. *Clown*. Give me leave. Here lies the water; good: here stands the man; good: If the man go to this water, and drown himself, it is, will he, nill he, he goes; mark you that: but if the water come to him, and drown him, he drowns not himself: Argal, he, that is not guilty of his own death, shortens not his own life.

2. *Clown*. But is this law?

1. *Clown*. Ay, marry is't; crowner's-quest law<sup>4</sup>.

2. *Clown*.

Again, in *Hamlet*, Act III. sc. iv. "*Pol*. He will come *straight*." Again, in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*: "— we'll come and dress you *straight*." Again, in *Othello*:

"Farewell, my Desdemona, I will come to thee *straight*." STEEV.

Again, in *Troilus and Cressida*: "Let us make ready *straight*."

MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> — an act hath three branches; it is to act, to do, and to perform:] Ridicule on scholastic divisions without distinction; and of distinctions without difference. WARBURTON.

<sup>4</sup> — crowner's quest-law.] I strongly suspect that this is a ridicule on the case of Dame Hales, reported by Plowden in his Commentaries, as determined in 3 Eliz.

It seems, her husband Sir James Hales had drowned himself in a river; and the question was, whether by this act a forfeiture of a lease from the dean and chapter of Canterbury, which he was possessed of, did not accrue to the crown: an inquisition was found before the coroner, which found him *felo de se*. The legal and logical subtleties, arising in the course of the argument of this case, gave a very fair opportunity for a sneer at crowner's quest-law. The expression, a little before, that an act hath three branches, &c. is so pointed an allusion to the case I mention, that I cannot doubt but that Shakspeare was acquainted with and meant to laugh at it.

It may be added, that on this occasion a great deal of subtilty was used, to ascertain whether Sir James was the agent or the patient; or, in other words, whether he went to the water, or the water came to him. The cause of Sir James's madness was the circumstance of his having been the judge who condemned lady Jane Gray. SIR J. HAWK.

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

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

2. *Clown*. Was he a gentleman?

1. *Clown*. He was the first that ever bore arms.

2. *Clown*<sup>6</sup>. Why, he had none.

1. *Clown*. What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the scripture? The scripture says, Adam digg'd; Could he dig without arms? I'll put another question to thee: if thou answer'st me not to the purpose, confests thyself—\*

2. *Clown*. Go to.

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

2. *Clown*. The gallows-maker; for that frame out-lives a thousand tenants.

If Shakspeare meant to allude to the case of Dame Hales, (which indeed seems not improbable,) he must have heard of that case in conversation; for it was determined before he was born, and Plowden's Commentaries, in which it is reported, were not translated into English till a few years ago. Our authour's study was probably not much encumbered with old French Reports. MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> — *their even christian*.] So all the old books, and rightly. An old English expression for fellow-christians. THIRLBY.

So, in Chaucer's *Jack Upland*: "If freres cannot or mow not excuse 'hem of these questions asked of 'hem, it semeth that they be horrible giltye against God, and *ther even christian*;" &c. STEEVENS.

So King Henry the Eighth in his answer to parliament in 1546: "—you might say that I, beyng put in so special a trust as I am in this case, were no trustie frende to you, nor charitable man to mine *even christian*,—." Hall's *Chronicle*, fol. 261. MALONE.

<sup>6</sup> 2. *Clown*.] This speech, and the next as far as—*without arms*, is not in the quartos. STEEVENS.

\* — *confests thyself*—] and be hang'd, the clown, I suppose, would have said, if he had not been interrupted. This was a common proverbial sentence. See *Othello*, Act IV. sc. 1.—He might, however, have intended to say, *confests thyself an ass*. MALONE.

1. *Clown*.

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

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

1. *Clown.* Ay, tell me that, and unyoke?

2. *Clown.* Marry, now I can tell.

1. *Clown.* To't.

2. *Clown.* Mals, I cannot tell.

*Enter HAMLET, and HORATIO, at a distance.*

1. *Clown.* Cudgel thy brains no more about it<sup>8</sup>; for your dull afs will not mend his pace with beating: and, when you are ask'd this question next, say, a grave-maker; the houses that he makes, last till doomsday. Go, get thee to Yaughan, and fetch me a stoup of liquor. [Exit 2. Clown.]

He digs, and sings.

*In youth when I did love, did love<sup>9</sup>,*

*Methought, it was very sweet,*

*To contract, O, the time, for, ah, my behove*

*O, methought, there was nothing meet<sup>1</sup>.*

7 *Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.*] If it be not sufficient to say, with Dr. Warburton, that the phrase might be taken from husbandry, without much depth of reading, we may produce it from a dittle of the workmen of Dover, preserved in the additions to Holinshed, p. 1546:

“ My bow is broke, I would unyoke,

“ My foot is sore, I can worke no more.” FARMER.

Again, in Drayton's *Polyolbion*, at the end of Song I.

“ Here I'll unyoke awhile and turne my steeds to meat.”

Again, in P. Holland's Translation of *Pliny's Nat. Hist.* p. 593:

“ —in the evening, and when thou dost unyoke.” STEEVENS.

<sup>8</sup> *Cudgel thy brains no more about it;*] So, in *The Maydes Metamorphosis*, by John Lilly, 1600:

“ In vain, I fear, I beate my brains about,

“ Proving by search to find my mistresse out.” MALONE.

<sup>9</sup> *In youth when I did love, &c.*] The three stanzas, sung here by the grave-digger, are extracted, with a slight variation, from a little poem, called *The Aged Lover renounceth love*, written by Henry Howard, earl of Surrey, who flourished in the reign of king Henry VIII. and who was beheaded in 1547, on a strained accusation of treason.

THEOBALD.

C c z

*Ham.*

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

*Hor.* Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.

*Ham.* Tis e'en so: the hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.

1. *Clown.* But age, with his stealing steps, [sings.  
Hath claw'd me in his clutch,  
And hath shipped me into the land,  
As if I had never been such.<sup>2</sup> [throws up a scull:

*Ham.* That scull had a tongue in it, and could sing once: How the knave jowls it to the ground, as if it were Cain's jaw-bone, that did the first murder! This might be the pate of a politician, which this ass now o'er-reaches<sup>3</sup>; one that would circumvent God, might it not?

*Hor.*

<sup>1</sup> — *nothing meet.*] Thus the folio. The quarto, 1604, reads:  
O me thought there a nothing a meet. MALONE.

The original poem from which this stanza is taken, like the other succeeding ones, is preserved among lord Surrey's poems; though, as Dr. Percy has observed, it is attributed to lord Vaux by George Gascoigne. See an epistle prefixed to one of his poems, printed with the rest of his works, 1575. By others it is supposed to have been written by Sir Thomas Wyatt.

*I lothe that I did love;  
In youth that I thought swete:  
As time requires for my bebowe,  
Methinks they are not mete.*

All these difficulties, however, (says the Rev. Thomas Warton, *Hist. of English Poetry*, Vol. III. p. 45.) are at once adjusted by Mss. Harl. in the British Museum, 1713—25, in which we have a copy of Vaux's poem, beginning, *I lothe that I did love*, with this title: "A dyttie or sonet made by the lord Vaus, in the time of the noble quene Marye, representing the image of death."

The entire song is published by Dr. Percy, in the first volume of his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. STEEVENS.

<sup>2</sup> *As if I had never been such.*] Thus, in the original:

*For age with stealing steps  
Hath claude me with his crotch;  
And lusty youths away he leapes,  
As there had bene none such.* STEEVENS.

<sup>3</sup> — *which this ass now o'er-reaches;*] Thus the quarto, 1604. The folio reads—*o'er-offices.* MALONE.

*Hor.* It might, my lord.

*Ham.* Or of a courtier; which could say, *Good-morrow, sweet lord! How dost thou, good lord?* This might be my lord such-a-one, that prais'd my lord such-a-one's horse, when he meant to beg it<sup>4</sup>; might it not?

*Hor.* Ay, my lord.

*Ham.* Why, e'en so: and now my lady Worm's<sup>5</sup>; chaplefs, and knock'd about the mazzard with a sexton's spade: Here's fine revolution, an we had the trick to fee't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding, but to play at loggats with them<sup>6</sup>? mine ache to think on't.

1. *Clown.*

*Over-reaches* agrees better with the sentence: It is a strong exaggeration to remark, that an *ass* can *over-reach* him who would once have tried to *circumvent*—, I believe both the words were Shakspeare's. An author in revising his work, when his original ideas have faded from his mind, and new observations have produced new sentiments, easily introduces images which have been more newly impressed upon him, without observing their want of congruity to the general texture of his original design. JOHNSON.

<sup>4</sup> *This might be my lord such-a-one, that prais'd my lord such-a-one's horse, when he meant to beg it;*] So, in *Timon of Athens*, Act I.:

" ——— my lord, you gave

" Good words the other day of a bay courser

" I rode on; it is yours, because you lik'd it." STEEVENS.

<sup>5</sup> — and now my lady Worm's;] The scull that was my lord Such-a-one's, is now my lady Worm's. JOHNSON.

<sup>6</sup> — to play at loggats with them?] So Ben Jonson, *Tale of a Tub*, Act IV. sc. vi.

" Now are they tossing of his legs and arms,

" Like loggats at a pear-tree."

So, in an old collection of epigrams, satires, &c.

" To play at loggats, nine holes, or ten pinnes."

It is one of the unlawful games enumerated in the statute of 33 of Henry VIII. STEEVENS.

*Loggating in the fields* is mentioned for the first time among other "new and crafty games and plays," in the statute 33 Henry VIII. c. 9. Not being mentioned in former acts against unlawful games, it was probably not practised long before the statute of Henry the Eighth was made. MALONE.

A *loggat-ground*, like a skittle-ground, is sired with ashes, but is more extensive. A bowl much larger than the jack of the game of bowls is thrown first. The pins, which I believe are called *loggats*, are much thinner and lighter at one extremity than the other. The bowl being first thrown, the players take the pins up by the thinner

1. *Clown. A pick-axe, and a spade, a spade, [sings.  
For—and a shrouding sheet:  
O, a pit of clay for to be made  
For such a guest is meet? [throws up a scull.*

*Ham.* There's another: Why may not that be the scull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddits<sup>8</sup> now, his quilllets<sup>9</sup>, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce<sup>1</sup> with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery? Humph! This fellow might be in's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes<sup>2</sup>, his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries: Is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries<sup>3</sup>, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures? The very conveyances of his lands

and lighter end, and fling them towards the bowl, and in such a manner that the pins may once turn round in the air, and slide with the thinner extremity foremost towards the bowl. The pins are about one or two and twenty inches long. *BLOUNT.*

- <sup>7</sup> *For such a guest is meet.] Thus in the original.*

*A pick-axe and a spade,  
And eke a shrouding sheet;  
A house of clay for to be made,*

*For such a guest must meet. STEEVENS.*

- <sup>8</sup> —quiddits, &c.] i. e. subtleties. So, in *Soliman and Perseda*;

“I am wise, but quiddits will not answer death.” *STEEVENS.*

Again, in *Drayton's Owle*, 4to, 1604:

“By some strange quiddit, or some wrested clause,

“To find him guiltie of the breach of lawes.” *MALONE.*

- <sup>9</sup> —his quilllets,] *Quilllets* are nice and frivolous distinctions. The word is rendered by *Coles* in his *Latin Dictionary*, 1679, *res frivola.*

*MALONE.*

- <sup>1</sup> —the sconce—] i. e. the head. *STEEVENS.*

See Vol. II. p. 143, n. 8. *MALONE.*

- <sup>2</sup> —his statutes,] By a statute is here meant, not an act of parliament, but a species of security for money, affecting real property; whereby the lands of the debtor are conveyed to the creditor, till out of the rents and profits of them his debt may be satisfied. *MALONE.*

- <sup>3</sup> *Is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries,]* Omitted in the quartos. *STEEVENS.*

will

will hardly lie in this box; and must the inheritor himself have no more? ha?

*Hor.* Not a jot more, my lord.

*Ham.* Is not parchment made of sheep-skins?

*Hor.* Ay, my lord, and of calves-skins too.

*Ham.* They are sheep, and calves, which seek out assurance in that<sup>4</sup>. I will speak to this fellow:—Whose grave's this, firrah?

1. *Clown.* Mine, fir.—

*O, a pit of clay for to be made  
For such a guest is meet.* [sings.

*Ham.* I think it be thine, indeed; for thou ly'st in't.

1. *Clown.* You lie out on't, fir, and therefore it is not yours: for my part, I do not lie in't, yet it is mine.

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

1. *Clown.* 'Tis a quick lie, fir; 'twill away again, from me to you.

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

1. *Clown.* For no man, fir.

*Ham.* What woman then?

1. *Clown.* For none neither.

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

1. *Clown.* One, that was a woman, fir; but, rest her soul, she's dead.

*Ham.* How absolute the knave is! we must speak by the card<sup>5</sup>, or equivocation will undo us. By the lord,

4 — assurance in that.] A quibble is intended. Deeds, which are usually written on parchment, are called the common assurances of the kingdom. MALONE.

5 — by the card,—] i. e. we must speak with the same precision and accuracy as is observed in marking the true distances of coasts, the heights, courses, &c. in a sea-chart, which in our poet's time was called a card. So in *The Commonwealth and Government of Venice*, 4to, 1599, p. 177: "Sebastian Munster in his *carde* of Venice—." Again, in Bacon's *Essays*, p. 326. edit. 1740: "Let him carry with him also some *card*, or book, describing the country where he travellethe." In 1589 was published in 4to, *A briefe Discourse of Mappes and Cardes, and of their Uses*.—The "shipman's card" in *Macbeth*, is the paper on which the different points of the compass are described.

MALONE.

Horatio, these three years I have taken note of it; the age is grown so picked<sup>6</sup>, that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibe. —How long hast thou been a grave-maker?

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

*Ham*. How long's that since?

1. *Clown*. Cannot you tell that? every fool can tell that: It was that very day that young Hamlet was born<sup>7</sup>; he that is mad, and sent into England.

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

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

*Ham*. Why?

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

*Ham*. How came he mad?

1. *Clown*. Very strangely, they say.

*Ham*. How strangely?

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

*Ham*. Upon what ground?

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

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

1. *Clown*. 'Faith, if he be not rotten before he die, (as we have many pocky corpes now-a-days<sup>8</sup>, that will scarce hold the laying in,) he will last you some eight year, or nine year: a tanner will last you nine year.

<sup>6</sup> — *the age is grown so picked*,—] i. e. so spruce, so quaint, so affected. See Vol. II. p. 393, n. 4, and Vol. IV. p. 546, n. 2.

There is, I think, no allusion to *picked* or pointed shoes, as has been supposed. *Picked* was a common word of Shakspeare's age, in the sense above given, and is found in Minshew's Dictionary, 1617, with its original signification: "*Trim'd or dress'd sprucely*." It is here used metaphorically. MALONE.

<sup>7</sup> — *that young Hamlet was born*;] By this scene it appears that Hamlet was then thirty years old, and knew Yorick well, who had been dead twenty-two years. And yet in the beginning of the play he is spoken of as a *very young man*, one that designed to go back to school, i. e. to the university of Wittenberg. The poet in the fifth act had forgot what he wrote in the first. BLACKSTONE.

<sup>8</sup> — *now-a-days*,] Omitted in the quarto, MALONE.

*Ham*.

*Ham.* Why he more than another?

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

*Ham.* Whose was it?

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

*Ham.* Nay, I know not.

1. *Clown.* A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! he pour'd a flaggon of Rhenish on my head once. This same scull, fir, was Yorick's scull<sup>o</sup>, the king's jester.

*Ham.* This?

[*takes the scull.*]

1. *Clown.* E'en that.

*Ham.* Alas, poor Yorick!—I knew him, Horatio; a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy: he hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now, how abhorr'd in my imagination it is! my gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips, that I have kiss'd I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning\*? quite chap-fallen? Now get you to my lady's chamber<sup>1</sup>, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour<sup>2</sup> she must come; make her laugh at that.—Pr'ythee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

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

*Ham.* Dost thou think, Alexander look'd o' this fashion i' the earth?

*Hor.* E'en so.

*Ham.* And smelt so? pah! [*throws down the scull.*]

<sup>o</sup> — *Yorick's scull,*—] Thus the folio.—The quarto reads—*Sir Yorick's scull.* MALONE.

\* — *your own grinning?*] Thus the quarto, 1604. The folio reads — *your own jeering.* In that copy, after this word, and *chap-fallen*, there is a note of interrogation, which all the editors have adopted. I doubt concerning its propriety. MALONE.

1 — *my lady's chamber,*] Thus the folio. The quartos read—*my lady's table*, meaning, I suppose, her *dressing-table.* STEEVENS.

<sup>2</sup> — *to this favour*—] i. e. to this countenance or complexion. See Vol. II, p. 499, n. 6, and Vol. VII. p. 328, n. 3. MALONE.

*Hor.*

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

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

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

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

Imperious Cæsar<sup>3</sup>, dead, and turn'd to clay,

Might stop a hole to keep the wind away:

O, that that earth, which kept the world in awe,

Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw<sup>4</sup>!

But soft! but soft! aside;—Here comes the king,

*Enter Priests, &c. in procession: the corpse of OPHELIA, LAERTES and Mourners following it; King, Queen, their Trains, &c.*

The queen, the courtiers: Who is this they follow?

And with such maimed rites<sup>5</sup>! This doth betoken,

The corse, they follow, did with desperate hand

Fordo its own life<sup>6</sup>. 'Twas of some estate<sup>7</sup>:

<sup>3</sup> Imperious Cæsar,] Thus the quarto, 1604. The editor of the folio substituted *imperial*, not knowing that *imperious* was used in the same sense. See Vol. VIII. p. 264, n. \*, and p. 412, n. \*. There are other instances in the folio of a familiar term being substituted in the room of a more ancient word. See p. 395, note 9. MALONE.

<sup>4</sup> — *winter's flaw*!] Winter's blast. JOHNSON.

The quartos read—to expel the *water's* flaw. STEEVENS.

See Vol. VI. p. 177. n. 8. A *flaw* meant a sudden gust of wind. So, in Florio's Italian Dictionary, 1598: "Gropo, a *flaw*, or berrie of wind." See also Cotgrave's Dictionary, 1611: "*Lis de vent*, a gust or *flaw* of wind." MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> — *maimed rites*!—] Imperfect obsequies. JOHNSON.

<sup>6</sup> *Fordo its own life*.] To *fordo*, is to undo, to destroy. So, in *Othello*:  
"—this is the night

"That either makes me, or *fordo*es me quite."

Again, in *Acolassius*, a comedy, 1540: "—wold to God it might be lesful for me to *fordo* myself, or to make an end of me!" STEEVENS.

<sup>7</sup> — *some estate*:] Some person of high rank. JOHNSON.

See Vol. VIII. p. 202, n. 8. MALONE.

Couch we a while, and mark. [*retiring with Horatio.*

*Laer.* What ceremony else?

*Ham.* That is Laertes,

A very noble youth: Mark.

*Laer.* What ceremony else?

1. *Priest*<sup>s</sup>. Her obsequies have been as far enlarg'd  
As we have warranty \*: Her death was doubtful;  
And, but that great command o'erflows the order,  
She should in ground unsanctify'd have lodg'd  
Till the last trumpet; for charitable prayers,  
Shards, flints, and pebbles, should be thrown on her;  
Yet here she is allow'd her virgin crants<sup>o</sup>,  
Her maiden strewments, and the bringing home  
Of bell and burial<sup>1</sup>.

*Laer.* Must there no more be done?

*Priest.* No more be done;

We should profane the service of the dead,

<sup>s</sup> *Priest.*] This *priest* in the old quarto is called *doctor*. STEEVENS.

\* — *as we have warranty* :] Is there any allusion here to the coroner's warrant, directed to the ministers and churchwardens of a parish, and permitting the body of a person who comes to an untimely end, to receive christian burial? WHALLEY.

9 — *allow'd her virgin crants*,] Thus the quarto, 1604. For this unusual word the editor of the first folio substituted *rites*. By a more attentive examination and comparison of the quarto copies and the folio, Dr. Johnson, I have no doubt, would have been convinced that this and many other changes in the folio were not made by Shakspeare, as is suggested in the following note. MALONE.

I have been informed by an anonymous correspondent, that *crants* is the German word for *garlands*, and I suppose it was retained by us from the Saxons. To carry *garlands* before the bier of a maiden, and to hang them over her grave, is still the practice in rural parishes.

*Crants* therefore was the original word, which the author, discovering it to be provincial, and perhaps not understood, changed to a term more intelligible, but less proper. *Maiden rites* give no certain or definitive image. He might have put *maiden wreaths*, or *maiden garlands*, but he perhaps bestowed no thought upon it; and neither genius nor practice will always supply a hasty writer with the most proper diction. JOHNSON.

In Minshew's *Dictionary*, see *Beades*, where *roosen krans* means *sertum rosaceum*; and such is the name of a character in this play.

TOILET.

<sup>1</sup> *Of bell and burial.*] *Burial*, here, signifies interment in consecrated ground. WARBURTON.

To sing a requiem<sup>2</sup>, and such rest to her  
As to peace-parted souls.

*Laer.* Lay her i' the earth;—  
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh  
May violets spring!—I tell thee, churlish priest,  
A ministr'ing angel shall my sister be,  
When thou lie'st howling.

*Ham.* What, the fair Ophelia!

*Queen.* Sweets to the sweet: Farewell!

[*scattering flowers.*]

I hop'd, thou should'st have been my Hamlet's wife;  
I thought, thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,  
And not have strew'd thy grave.

*Laer.* O, treble woe  
Fall ten times treble on that cursed head,  
Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense  
Depriv'd thee of!—Hold off the earth a while,  
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms:

[*leaps into the grave.*]

Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead;  
Till of this flat a mountain you have made,  
To o'er-top old Pelion, or the skyish head  
Of blue Olympus.

*Ham.* [*advancing*] What is he, whose grief  
Bears such an emphasis? whose phrase of sorrow  
Conjures the wand'ring stars, and makes them stand  
Like wonder-wounded hearers? this is I,  
Hamlet the Dane.

[*leaps into the grave.*]

*Laer.* The devil take thy soul! [*grappling with him.*]

*Ham.* Thou pray'st not well.

I pr'ythee, take thy fingers from my throat;  
For, though I am not splenetic and rash,  
Yet have I in me something dangerous,  
Which let thy wisdom fear: Hold off thy hand.

*King.* Pluck them afunder.

*Queen.* Hamlet, Hamlet!

*All*<sup>3</sup>. Gentlemen,—

<sup>2</sup> To sing a requiem,—] A *Requiem* is a mass performed in Popish churches for the rest of the soul of a person deceased. The folio reads—sing sage requiem. STEEVENS.

<sup>3</sup> *All, &c.*] This is restored from the quartos. STEEVENS.

*Hor.* Good my lord, be quiet.

[*The Attendants part them, and they come out of the grave.*]

*Ham.* Why, I will fight with him upon this theme,  
Until my eye-lids will no longer wag.

*Queen.* O my son! what theme?

*Ham.* I lov'd Ophelia; forty thousand brothers  
Could not with all their quantity of love  
Make up my sum.—What wilt thou do for her?

*King.* O, he is mad, Laertes.

*Queen.* For love of God, forbear him.

*Ham.* 'Zounds, shew me what thou'lt do:  
Woul't weep? woul't fight? woul't fast? woul't tear thy-  
self?

Woul't drink up eisel<sup>4</sup>? eat a crocodile?

I'll

<sup>4</sup> *Woul't drink up eisel?* *Woul't* is a contraction of *wouldest*, [wouldest thou] and perhaps ought rather to be written *woul'st*. The quarto, 1604, has *esil*. In the folio the word is spelt *esile*. *Eisil* or *eisel* is vinegar. The word is used by Chaucer, and Skelton, and by Sir Thomas More, *Works*, p. 21. edit. 1557:

“ — with fowre pocion

“ If thou paine thy tast, remember therewithal

“ How Christ for thee tasted *eisil* and gall.”

The word is also found in Minshew's Dictionary, 1617, and in Coles's Latin Dictionary, 1679.

Our poet, as Dr. Farmer has observed, has again employed the same word in his 111th sonnet:

“ — like a willing patient, I will drink

“ Potions of *eyfell* 'gainst my strong infection;

“ No bitterness that I will bitter think,

“ Nor double penance, to correct correction.”

Mr. Steevens supposes, that a river was meant, either the *Tissel*, or *Oesil*, or *Weisel*, a considerable river which falls into the Baltick ocean. The words, *drink up*, he considers as favourable to his notion. “Had Shakspeare,” he observes, “meant to make Hamlet say, *Wilt thou drink vinegar*, he probably would not have used the term *drink up*, which means, *totally to exhaust*. In *King Richard II.* Act II. sc. ii. (he adds) a thought in part the same occurs:

“ — the task he undertakes,

“ Is numb'ring sands, and drinking oceans dry.”

But I must remark, in that passage evidently *impossibilities* are pointed out. Hamlet is only talking of difficult or painful exertions. Every man can weep, fight, fast, tear himself, drink a potion of vinegar, and eat a piece of a dissected crocodile, however disagreeable; for I have no doubt that the

I'll do't.—Dost thou come here to whine?  
 To out-face me with leaping in her grave?  
 Be buried quick with her, and so will I:  
 And, if thou prate of mountains, let them throw  
 Millions of acres on us; till our ground,  
 Singeing his pate against the burning zone,  
 Make Ossa like a wart! Nay, an thou'lt mouth,  
 I'll rant as well as thou.

*Queen.* This is mere madness:  
 And thus a while the fit will work on him;  
 Anon, as patient as the female dove,  
 When that her golden couplets are disclos'd,  
 His silence will sit drooping.

*Ham.*

the poet uses the words *eat a crocodile*, for *eat of a crocodile*. We yet use the same phraseology in familiar language.

On the phrase *drink up* no stress can be laid, for our poet has employed the same expression in his 114th sonnet, without any idea of *entirely exhausting*, and merely as synonymous to *drink*:

“Or whether doth my mind, being crown'd with you,  
 “*Drink up* the monarch's plague, this flattery?”

Again, in the same sonnet:

“—'tis flattery in my seeing,  
 “And my great mind most kingly *drinks it up*.”

Again, in *Timon of Athens*:

“And how his silence *drinks up* his applause.”

In Shakspeare's time, as at present, to *drink up*, often meant no more than simply to drink. So, in Florio's Italian Dictionary, 1598: “*Sorbire*, to sip or *sup up* any drink.” In like manner we sometimes say, “when you have *swallow'd down* this potion,” though we mean no more than—“when you have *swallow'd* this potion.” MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> *This is mere madness: &c.*] This speech in the first folio is given to the king. MALONE.

<sup>6</sup> *When that her golden couplets are disclos'd,*] To *disclose* was anciently used for to *batch*. So, in the *Booke of Huntynge, Hawking, Fyshynge, &c.* bl. l. no date: “First they ben egges; and after they ben *disclosed* haukes; and commonly goshaukes ben *disclosed* as fone as the choughes.” To *exclude* is the technical term at present. During three days after the pigeon has *batched* her couplets, (for she lays no more than *two* eggs,) she never quits her nest, except for a few moments in quest of a little food for herself; as all her young require in that early state, is to be kept warm, an office which she never entrusts to the male. STEEVENS.

The young nestlings of the pigeon, when first disclosed, are callow, only covered with a yellow down: and for that reason stand in need of being cherished by the kindly warmth of the hen, to protect them from  
 the

*Ham.* Hear you, fir;  
 What is the reason that you use me thus?  
 I lov'd you ever: But it is no matter;  
 Let Hercules himself do what he may,  
 The cat will mew, and dog will have his day. [*Exit.*  
*King.* I pray thee, good Horatio, wait upon him.—  
 [*Exit HORATIO.*  
 Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech;  
 [*to Laertes.*  
 We'll put the matter to the present push.—  
 Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.—  
 This grave shall have a living monument:  
 An hour of quiet shortly shall we see;  
 Till then in patience our proceeding be. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE II.

*A Hall in the Castle.*

*Enter HAMLET, and HORATIO.*

*Ham.* So much for this, fir: now shall you see the  
 other;—  
 You do remember all the circumstance?  
*Hor.* Remember it, my lord!  
*Ham.* Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting,  
 That would not let me sleep<sup>7</sup>; methought, I lay  
 Worse

the chillness of the ambient air, for a considerable time after they are hatched. *HEATH.*

The word *disclose* has already occurred in a sense nearly allied to *hatch*; in this play:

“And I do doubt, the hatch and the *disclose*

“Will be some danger.” *MALONE.*

<sup>7</sup> *Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting,*

*That would not let me sleep; &c.]* So, in *Troilus and Cressida*:

“Within my soul there doth commence a fight,

“Of this strange nature,” &c.

*The Historie of Hamlet*, bl. let. furnished our authour with the scheme of sending the prince to England, and with most of the circumstances described in this scene:

[After the death of Polonius] “Fengon [the king in the present play] could not content himselfe, but still his mind gave him that the foole [Hamlet] would play him some trick of legerdemaine. And in that conceit, seeking to bee rid of him, determined to find the meanes  
 to

Worse than the mutines in the bilboes\*. Rashly,  
And prais'd be rashness for it—<sup>o</sup>, Let us know,

Our

to doe it by the aid of a stranger, making the king of England minister of his massacreous resolution; to whom he purposed to send him, and by letters desire him to put him to death.

"Now, to beare him company, were assigned two of Fensgon's faithful ministers, bearing letters ingraved in wood, that contained Hamlet's death, in such sort as he had advertised the king of England. But the subtil Danish prince, (being at sea,) whilst his companions slept, having read the letters, and knowing his uncle's great treason, with the wicked and villainous mindes of the two courtiers that led him to the slaughter, rased out the letters that concerned his death, and instead thereof graved others, with commission to the king of England to hang his two companions; and not content to turn the death they had devised against him, upon their own neckes, wrote further, that king Fensgon willed him to give his daughter to Hamlet in marriage." *Hyft. of Hamblet*, signat. G 2.

From this narrative it appears that the faithful ministers of Fensgon were not unacquainted with the import of the letters they bore. Shakspere, who has followed the story pretty closely, probably meant to describe their representatives, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, as equally guilty; as confederating with the king to deprive Hamlet of his life. So that his procuring their execution, though certainly not absolutely necessary to his own safety, does not appear to have been a wanton and unprovoked cruelty, as Mr. Steevens has supposed in his very ingenious observations on the general character and conduct of the prince throughout this piece.

In the conclusion of his drama the poet has entirely deviated from the fabulous history, which in other places he has frequently followed.

After Hamblet's arrival in England, (for no sea-fight is mentioned,) "the king, (says *The Hyftory of Hamblet*) admiring the young prince,—gave him his daughter in marriage, according to the counterfeited letters by him devised; and the next day caused the two servants of Fensgon to be executed, to satisfy, as he thought, the king's desire." *Hyft. of Hamb.* Ibid.

Hamlet, however, returned to Denmark, without marrying the king of England's daughter, who, it should seem, had only been betrothed to him. When he arrived in his native country, he made the courtiers drunk, and having burnt them to death, by setting fire to the banqueting-room wherein they sat, he went into Fensgon's chamber, and killed him, "giving him (says the relater) such a violent blowe upon the chine of the neck, that he cut his head clean from the shoulders." Ibid. signat. F 3.

He is afterwards said to have been crowned king of Denmark.

MALONE.

\* — mutines in the bilboes.] To mutine was formerly used for to mutiny.

Our indiscretion sometime serves us well,  
When our deep plots do pall: and that should teach us,  
There's

*mutiny.* See p. 337, n. 6. So *mutine*, for *mutiner*, or *mutineer*: "un homme *mutin*," Fr. a mutinous or seditious person. In *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, a tragedy, 1587, the adjective is used:

"Suppresseth *mutin* force, and practicke fraud." MALONE.

The *bilboes* is a bar of iron with fetters annexed to it, by which mutinous or disorderly sailors were anciently linked together. The word is derived from *Bilboa*, a place in Spain where instruments of steel were fabricated in the utmost perfection. To understand Shakspeare's allusion completely, it should be known, that as these fetters connect the legs of the offenders very close together, their attempts to resist must be as fruitless as those of Hamlet, in whose mind *there was a kind of fighting, that would not let him sleep*. Every motion of one must disturb his partner in confinement. The *bilboes* are still shewn in the Tower of London, among the other spoils of the Spanish Armada. The following is the figure of them. STEEVENS.



— *Rashly,*

And prais'd be rashness for it,—Let us know,  
Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,

*When, &c.*] Hamlet, delivering an account of his escape, begins with saying, That he *rashly*—and then is carried into a reflection upon the weakness of human wisdom. I *rashly*—praised be rashness for it,—Let us not think these events casual, but let us know, that is, take notice and remember, that we sometimes succeed by *indiscretion*, when we fail by deep plots, and infer the perpetual superintendence and agency of the Divinity. The observation is just, and will be allowed by every human being who shall reflect on the course of his own life. JOHNS.

This passage, I think, should be thus distributed.

— *Rashly*

(And prais'd be rashness, for it lets us know,  
Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,  
When our deep plots do fail; and that should teach us,  
There's a divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough-hew them how we will;—

*Hor.* That is most certain.)

*Ham.* Up from my cabin, &c. So that *rashly* may be joined in construction with *in the dark grop'd I to find out them*. TYRWHITT.

*When our deep plots do pall:*] Thus the first quarto, 1604. The editor  
Vol. IX. D d of

There's a divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough-hew them how we will<sup>2</sup>.

*Hor.* That is most certain.

*Ham.* Up from my cabin,  
My sea-gown scarf'd about me, in the dark  
Grop'd I to find out them: had my desire;  
Finger'd their packet; and, in fine, withdrew  
To mine own room again: making so bold,  
My fears forgetting manners, to unseal  
Their grand commission; where I found, Horatio,  
A royal knavery; an exact command,—  
Larded with many several sorts of reasons\*,  
Importing Denmark's health, and England's too,  
With, ho! such bugs and goblins in my life<sup>3</sup>,—  
That, on the supervise, no leisure bated<sup>4</sup>,

No,

of the next quarto, for *pall*, substituted *fall*. The folio reads—when our dear plots do *paule*.

*Mr. Pope* and the subsequent editors read—when our deep plots do *fail*: but *pall* and *fail* are by no means likely to have been confounded. I have therefore adhered to the old copies. In *Antony and Cleopatra* our poet has used the participle:

"I'll never follow thy *pall'd* fortunes more." MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> *There's a divinity that shapes our ends,*

Rough hew them how we will.] Dr. Farmer informs me, that these words are merely technical. A wool-man, butcher, and dealer in *sheepers*, lately observed to him, that his nephew (an idle lad) could only assist him in making them; "—he could rough-hew them, but I was obliged to shape their ends." Whoever recollects the profession of Shakespeare's father, will admit that his son might be no stranger to such a term. I have seen packages of wool pinn'd up with *sheepers*. STEEV.

\* Larded with many several sorts of reasons,] I am afraid here is a very poor conceit, founded on an equivocal between *reasons* and *raisins*, which in Shakespeare's time were undoubtedly pronounced alike. *Sorts* of *raisins*, sugars, &c. is the common phraseology of shops.—We have the same quibble in another play. MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> *With, ho! such bugs and goblins in my life;*] With such causes of terror, rising from my character and designs. JOHNSON.

A bug was no less a terrific being than a goblin. So, in Spenser's *Fairy Queen*, B. 2. c. 3:

"As ghastly bug does unto them affear."

We call it at present a *bugbear*. STEEVENS.

See Vol. VI. p. 373, n. 4. MALONE.

<sup>4</sup> — no leisure bated,] Bated, for allowed. To abate, signifies to deduct; this deduction, when applied to the person in whose favour it is made is called an allowance. Hence he takes the liberty of using bated for allowed. WARBURTON.

No

No, not to stay the grinding of the axe,  
My head should be struck off.

*Hor.* Is't possible?

*Ham.* Here's the commission; read it at more leisure.  
But wilt thou hear now how I did proceed?

*Hor.* Ay, 'beseech you.

*Ham.* Being thus benetted round with villanies,  
Or I could make \* a prologue to my brains,  
They had begun the play<sup>5</sup>;—I sat me down;  
Devis'd a new commission; wrote it fair:  
I once did hold it, as our statists do<sup>6</sup>,  
A baseness to write fair, and labour'd much  
How to forget that learning; but, sir, now  
It did me yeoman's service<sup>7</sup>: Wilt thou know  
The effect of what I wrote?

*Hor.* Ay, good my lord.

*Ham.* An earnest conjuration from the king,—  
As England was his faithful tributary;  
As love between them like the palm might flourish;

*No leisure bated*—means, without any abatement or intermission of time. MALONE.

\* Or I could make—] Or in old English signified before. See Vol. IV. p. 540, n. 9. MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> Being thus benetted round with villanies,

Or I could make a prologue to my brains,

*They had begun the play*:—] Hamlet is telling how luckily every thing fell out; he groped out their commission in the dark without waking them; he found himself doomed to immediate destruction. Something was to be done for his preservation. An expedient occurred, not produced by the comparison of one method with another, or by a regular deduction of consequences, but before he could make a prologue to his brains, they had begun the play. Before he could summon his faculties, and propose to himself what should be done, a complete scheme of action presented itself to him. His mind operated before he had excited it. This appears to me to be the meaning. JOHNSON.

<sup>6</sup>—as our statists do,] A *statist* is a *statesman*. So, in Ben Jonson's *Magnetic Lady*:

“Will screw you out a secret from a *statist*.” STEEVENS.

Most of the great men of Shakspeare's times, whose autographs have been preserved, wrote very bad hands; their secretaries very neat ones. BLACKSTONE.

<sup>7</sup>—yeoman's service:] The meaning, I believe is, *This yeomanly qualification was a most useful servant, or yeoman, to me; i. e. did me eminent service.* The ancient yeomen were famous for their military valour. “Thesewere the good archers in time past (says Sir Tho. Smith), and the stable troop of footmen that affraide all France.” STEEV.

As peace should still her wheaten garland wear,  
 And stand a comma 'tween their amities<sup>8</sup>;  
 And many such like ases of great charge<sup>9</sup>,—  
 That, on the view and knowing of these contents,  
 Without debatement further, more, or less,  
 He should the bearers put to sudden death,  
 Not thriving time allow'd.

*Hor.* How was this seal'd?

*Ham.* Why, even in that was heaven ordinant;

<sup>8</sup> *As peace should still her wheaten garland wear,*

*And stand a comma 'tween their amities;*] The expression of our author is, like many of his phrases, sufficiently constrained and affected, but it is not incapable of explanation. The *comma* is the note of *connection* and continuity of sentences; the *period* is the note of *abruption* and disjunction. Shakspeare had it perhaps in his mind to write, That unless England complied with the mandate, *war should put a period to their amity*; he altered his mode of diction, and thought that, in an opposite sense, he might put, that *peace should stand a comma between their amities*. This is not an easy stile; but is it not the stile of Shakspeare? JOHNSON.

<sup>9</sup> — *ases of great charge,*] *Affes* heavily loaded. A quibble is intended between *as* the conditional particle, and *ass* the beast of burthen. That *charg'd* anciently signified *loaded*, may be proved from the following passage in *The Widow's Tears*, by Chapman, 1612:

"Thou must be the *ass* charg'd with crowns to make way."

JOHNSON.

Shakspeare has so many quibbles of his own to answer for, that there are those who think it hard he should be charged with others which he never thought of. STEEVENS.

Though the first and obvious meaning of these words certainly is, "*many similar adjurations, or monitory injunctions, of great weight and importance,*" yet Dr. Johnson's notion of a quibble being also in the poet's thoughts is supported by two other passages of Shakspeare, in which *asses* are introduced as usually employed in the carriage of gold, a *charge* of no small weight:

"He shall but bear them, as the *ass* bears gold,

"To groan and sweat under the business."

*Julius Cæsar.*

Again, in *Measure for Measure*:

"—like an *ass*, whose back with *ingots* bows,

"Thou bear'st thy heavy riches but a journey,

"And death unloads thee."

In further support of his observation, it should be remembered, that the letter *s* in the particle *as* is in the midland counties usually pronounced hard, as in the pronoun *us*. Dr. Johnson himself always pronounced the particle *as* hard, and so I have no doubt did Shakspeare. It is so pronounced in Warwickshire at this day. The first folio accordingly has—*asss*. MALONE.

I had

I had my father's signet in my purse,  
Which was the model of that Danish seal \* :  
Folded the writ up in form of the other ;  
Subscrib'd it ; gave 't the impressiön ; plac'd it safely,  
'The changeling never known<sup>1</sup> : Now, the next day  
Was our sea-fight ; and what to this was sequent  
Thou know'st already.

*Hor.* So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't.

*Ham.* Why, man<sup>2</sup>, they did make love to this employment ;

They are not near my conscience ; their defeat  
Does by their own insinuation<sup>3</sup> grow :  
'Tis dangerous, when the baser nature comes  
Between the pass and fell incensed points  
Of mighty opposites.

*Hor.* Why, what a king is this !

*Ham.* Does it not, think thee<sup>4</sup>, stand me now upon ?  
He that hath kill'd my king, and whor'd my mother ;  
Popp'd in between the election and my hopes ;  
Thrown out his angle<sup>5</sup> for my proper life,  
And with such cozenage ; is't not perfect conscience,  
To quit him<sup>6</sup> with this arm ? and is't not to be damn'd,  
To let this canker of our nature come  
In further evil ?

*Hor.* It must be shortly known to him from England,  
What is the issue of the business there.

\* — *the model of that Danish seal :*] The model is in old language the copy. The signet was formed in imitation of the Danish seal. See Vol. V. p. 58, n. 4, and Vol. VI. p. 568, n. 5. MALONE.

<sup>1</sup> *The changeling never known :—*] A changeling is a child which the fairies are supposed to leave in the room of that which they steal.

JOHNSON.

<sup>2</sup> *Why, man, &c.*] This line is omitted in the quartos. STEEV.

<sup>3</sup> — *by their own insinuation—*] By their having insinuated or thrust themselves into the employment. MALONE.

<sup>4</sup> — *think thee,*] i. e. bethink thee. MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> *Thrown out his angle—*] An angle in Shakspeare's time signified a fishing-rod. So, in Lilly's *Sappho and Phao*, 1591:

"Phao. But he may bless fishing, that caught such a one in the sea.

"Venus. It was not with an angle, my boy, but with a net." MALONE.

<sup>6</sup> *To quit him, &c.*] To requite him ; to pay him his due. JOHNSON.

This passage, as well as the three following speeches, is not in the quartos. STEEVENS.

*Ham.* It will be short: the interim is mine;  
And a man's life's no more than to say, one.  
But I am very sorry, good Horatio,  
That to Laertes I forgot myself;  
For by the image of my cause, I see  
The portraiture of his: I'll count his favours<sup>5</sup>:  
But, sure, the bravery of his grief did put me  
Into a towering passion.

*Hor.* Peace; who comes here?

*Enter OSRICK.*

*Os.* Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

*Ham.* I humbly thank you, sir.—Dost know this water-fly<sup>6</sup>?

*Hor.* No, my good lord.

*Ham.* Thy state is the more gracious; for 'tis a vice to know him: He hath much land, and fertile: let a beast be lord of beasts, and his crib shall stand at the king's mess: 'Tis a chough<sup>7</sup>; but, as I say, spacious in the possession of dirt.

*Os.* Sweet lord, if your lordship were at leisure, I should impart a thing to you from his majesty.

*Ham.* I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit: Your bonnet to his right use; 'tis for the head.

*Os.* I thank your lordship, 'tis very hot.

*Ham.* No, believe me, 'tis very cold; the wind is northerly.

*Os.* It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed.

*Ham.* But yet, methinks, it is very sultry<sup>8</sup> and hot; or my complexion—<sup>9</sup>

*Os.* Exceedingly, my lord; it is very sultry<sup>1</sup>,—as

<sup>5</sup> *I'll count his favours:] I'll count his favours is—I will make a count of them, i. e. reckon upon them, value them. STEEVENS.*

*Mr. Rowe for count very plausibly reads court. MALONE.*

<sup>6</sup> — *Dost know this water-fly?* *A water-fly* skips up and down upon the surface of the water, without any apparent purpose or reason, and is thence the proper emblem of a busy trifler. JOHNSON.

<sup>7</sup> — *'Tis a chough;—* A kind of jackdaw. JOHNSON.

<sup>8</sup> *But yet, methinks, it is very sultry, &c.] Hamlet is here playing over the same farce with Osrick, which he had formerly done with Polonius. STEEVENS.*

<sup>9</sup> — *or my complexion—* The folios read—*for my complexion.* STEEV.

<sup>1</sup> *Exceedingly, my lord; it is very sultry,]*

— *igniculum brumæ si tempore poscas,*

*Accipit endromidem; si dixeris æstuo, sudat. Juv. MALONE.*

'twere,—I cannot tell how.—My lord, his majesty bade me signify to you, that he has laid a great wager on your head: Sir, this is the matter,—

Ham. I beseech you, remember—<sup>2</sup>

[Hamlet moves him to put on his hat.

Ofr. Nay, good my lord; for my ease, in good faith<sup>3</sup>. Sir<sup>4</sup>, here is newly come to court, Laertes: believe me, an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences<sup>5</sup>, of very soft society, and great shewing: Indeed, to speak feelingly<sup>6</sup> of him, he is the card or calendar of gentry<sup>7</sup>, for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> *I beseech you, remember—*] “Remember not your courtesy,” I believe, Hamlet would have said, if he had not been interrupted. “Remember thy courtesy,” he could not possibly have said, and therefore this abrupt sentence may serve to confirm an emendation which I proposed in *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, (Vol. II. p. 396, n. 8.) where Armado says—“I do beseech thee, remember thy courtesy;—I beseech thee, apparel thy head.” I have no doubt that Shakspeare there wrote, “—remember not thy courtesy,”—and that the negative was omitted by the negligence of the compositor. MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> *Nay, good my lord; for my ease, in good faith.*] This seems to have been the affected phrase of the time.—Thus in Marston’s *Male-content*, 1604: “I beseech you, sir, be covered.”—“No, in good faith, for my ease.” And in other places. FARMER.

It appears to have been the common language of ceremony in our poet’s time. “Why do you stand bare-headed?” (says one of the speakers in Florio’s *SECOND FRUTES*, 1591,) you do yourself wrong. Pardon me, good sir (replies his friend); I do it for my ease.” Again, in *A New Way to pay old Debts*, by Massinger, 1633:

“————— Is’t for your ease

“You keep your hat off?” MALONE.

<sup>4</sup> *Sir, &c.*] The folio omits this and the following fourteen speeches; and in their place substitutes only, “Sir, you are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is at his weapon.” STEEVENS.

<sup>5</sup> — *full of most excellent differences,*—] Full of distinguishing excellencies. JOHNSON.

<sup>6</sup> — *speak feelingly*—] The first quarto reads *feelingly*. STEEVENS.

<sup>7</sup> — *the card or calendar of gentry;*] The general preceptor of elegance; the card by which a gentleman is to direct his course; the calendar by which he is to choose his time, that what he does may be both excellent and seasonable. JOHNSON.

<sup>8</sup> — *for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see.*] You shall find him containing and comprising every quality which a gentleman would desire to contemplate for imitation. I know not but it should be read, *You shall find him the continent.* JOHNSON.

*Ham.* Sir, his definement<sup>9</sup> suffers no perdition in you; —though, I know, to divide him inventorially, would dizzy the arithmetick of memory; and yet but raw neither<sup>1</sup>, in respect of his quick fail. But, in the verity of extolment, I take him to be a soul of great article<sup>2</sup>; and his infusion of such dearth<sup>3</sup> and rareness, as, to make true diction of him, his semblable is his mirror; and, who else would trace him, his umbrage, nothing more.

*Ofr.* Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him.

*Ham.* The concernancy, sir? why do we wrap the gentleman in our more rawer breath?

*Ofr.* Sir?

*Hor.* Is't not possible to understand in another tongue? You will do't, sir, really<sup>4</sup>.

*Ham.*

<sup>9</sup> *Sir, his definement, &c.*] This is designed as a specimen, and ridicule of the court-jargon amongst the *precieux* of that time. The sense in English is, "Sir, he suffers nothing in your account of him, though to enumerate his good qualities particularly would be end-  
" less; yet when we had done our best, it would still come short of  
" him. However, in strictness of truth, he is a great genius, and of  
" a character so rarely to be met with, that to find any thing like him  
" we must look into his mirror, and his imitators will appear no  
" more than his shadows." WARBURTON.

<sup>1</sup> —and yet but raw neither, &c.] *Raw* is a word of great latitude; *raw* signifies unripe, immature, thence unformed, imperfect, unskilful. The best account of him would be imperfect, in respect of his quick fail. The phrase *quick fail* was, I suppose, a proverbial term for activity of mind. JOHNSON.

<sup>2</sup> —a soul of great article;—] This is obscure. I once thought it might have been, a soul of great altitude; but, I suppose, a soul of great article, means a soul of large comprehension, of many contents. The particulars of an inventory are called articles. JOHNSON.

<sup>3</sup> —of such dearth—] *Dearth* is *deariness*, value, price. And his internal qualities of such value and rarity. JOHNSON.

<sup>4</sup> *Is't not possible to understand in another tongue? you will do't, sir, really.*] Of this interrogatory remark the sense is very obscure. The question may mean, might not all this be understood in plainer language. But then, you will do it, sir, really, seems to have no use, for who could doubt but plain language would be intelligible? I would therefore read, *Is't possible not to be understood in another tongue.* You will do it, sir, really. JOHNSON.

Suppose we were to point the passage thus: *Is't not possible to understand? in another tongue you will do it, sir, really.*

The speech seems to be addressed to *Ofrick*, who is puzzled by Hamlet's imitation of his own affected language. STEEVENS.

Theobald

*Ham.* What imports the nomination of this gentleman?

*Ofr.* Of Laertes?

*Hor.* His purse is empty already; all his golden words are spent.

*Ham.* Of him, sir.

*Ofr.* I know, you are not ignorant—

*Ham.* I would, you did, sir; yet, in faith, if you did, it would not much approve me<sup>5</sup>;—Well, sir.

*Ofr.* You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is—

*Ham.* I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with him in excellence<sup>6</sup>; but, to know a man well, were to know himself.

*Ofr.* I mean, sir, for his weapon; but in the imputation laid on him by them, in his meed<sup>7</sup> he's unfellow'd.

*Ham.* What's his weapon?

*Ofr.* Rapier and dagger.

*Ham.* That's two of his weapons: but, well.

*Ofr.* The king, sir, hath wager'd with him six Barbary horses: against the which he has impawn'd<sup>8</sup>, as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns,

Theobald has silently substituted *rarely* for *really*. I think Horatio's speech is addressed to Hamlet. *Another tongue* does not mean, as I conceive, *plainer language*, (as Dr. Johnson supposed,) but "language so fantastical and affected as to have the appearance of a *foreign tongue*:" and in the following words Horatio, I think, means to praise Hamlet for imitating this kind of babble so happily. I suspect, however, that the poet wrote—*Is't possible not to understand in a mother tongue?* MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> — *if you did, it would not much approve me;* ] If you knew I was not ignorant, your esteem would not much advance my reputation. To *approve*, is to *recommend to approbation*. JOHNSON.

<sup>6</sup> *I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with him, &c.* ] I dare not pretend to know him, lest I should pretend to an equality: no man can completely know another, but by knowing himself, which is the utmost extent of human wisdom. JOHNSON.

<sup>7</sup> — *in his meed*— In his excellence. JOHNSON.

See Vol. VI. p. 356, n. 6. MALONE.

<sup>8</sup> — *impawn'd*,—] Thus the quarto 1604. The folio reads—*impon'd*. *Pignare* in Italian signifies both to *pawn*, and to lay a wager, MALONE.

Perhaps it should be, *depon'd*. So Hudibras:

"I would upon this cause *depose*

"As much as any I have known."

But perhaps *imponed* is pledged, *impawned*; so spelt to ridicule the affectation of uttering English words with French pronunciation. JOHNS.

as girdle, hangers<sup>9</sup>, and so: Three of the carriages, in faith, are very dear to fancy, very responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages, and of very liberal conceit.

*Ham.* What call you the carriages?

*Hor.* I knew, you must be edified by the margent<sup>1</sup>, ere you had done.

*Ofr.* The carriages, fir, are the hangers.

*Ham.* The phrase would be more german<sup>2</sup> to the matter, if we could carry a cannon by our sides; I would, it might be hangers till then. But, on: Six Barbary horses against six French swords, their assigns, and three liberal-conceited carriages; that's the French bet against the Danish: Why is this impawn'd, as you call it?

*Ofr.* The king, fir, hath lay'd<sup>3</sup>, that in a dozen passes

<sup>9</sup> — as girdle, hangers, and so:] i. e. and so forth. The word *bangers* has been misunderstood. That part of the girdle or belt by which the sword was suspended, was in our poet's time called *the bangers*. See Mintheu's Dictionary, 1617: "The *bangers* of a sword. G. Pendants d'espée, i. Subcingulum," &c. So, in an Inventory found among the papers of Hamlet Clarke, an attorney of a court of record in London in the year 1611, and printed in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, Vol. LVIII, p. 111:

"Item, One payre of girdle and *bangers*, of silver purple, and cullored silke.

Item, One payre of girdler and *bangers* upon white sattene."

*The bangers* ran in an oblique direction from the middle of the fore-part of the girdle across the left thigh, and were attached to the girdle behind. MALONE.

<sup>1</sup> — you must be edified by the margent,—] Dr. Warburton very properly observes, that in the old books the gloss or comment was usually printed on the margent of the leaf. So, in Decker's *Honest Whore*, part 2d, 1630:

" ————— I read

" Strange comments in those *margins* of your looks."

This speech is omitted in the folio. STEEVENS.

See Vol. X. p. 92, n. 6. MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> — more german—] More a-kin. JOHNSON.

<sup>3</sup> *The king, fir, hath lay'd*, &c.] This wager I do not understand. In a dozen passes one must exceed the other more or less than three hits. Nor can I comprehend, how, in a dozen, there can be twelve to nine. The passage is of no importance; it is sufficient that there was a wager. The quarto has the passage as it stands. The folio, *He hath one twelve for mine.* JOHNSON.

The meaning, I think, is, The king hath laid that in a game of a dozen passes, or in other words, in a trial of skill with foils, which is to be within, or at the utmost, not to go beyond, a dozen passes or bouts,

passes between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you three hits; he hath lay'd, on twelve for nine; and it would come to immediate trial, if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer.

*Ham.* How if I answer, no?

*Of.* I mean, my lord, the opposition of your person in trial.

*Ham.* Sir, I will walk here in the hall: If it please his majesty, it is the breathing time of day with me: let the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the king hold

bouts, Laertes does not exceed you three hits; *the king hath laid on the principle of him who makes a bet, with the chance of gaining twelve, for nine that he may lose: or, in the language of gamesters, the king (by the advantage allowed to the prince,) hath odds, tantamount to four to three.*

So, in *The Tempest*,

— each putter out, on three for one,"

means, each layer out of money on the terms of *gaining three pounds, &c.* if he returns from his travels, *for one* that he hath staked, and will lose, if he does not return.

If the words, "*he hath lay'd, &c.*" relate to *Laertes*, they must mean, I think, that "*Laertes hath laid on the principle of one who undertakes to make twelve passes for nine, that his adversary shall make; on the ratio of twelve to nine.*"

Dr. Johnson objects very plausibly to this wager, that in a dozen passes one must exceed the other more or less than three hits: nor can there, says he, in a dozen passes be *twelve to nine*. If my interpretation of the words—*he hath laid on twelve for nine*, be right, the latter objection is done away: for these words relate to the nature or principle of the bet, and not to the number of passes actually to be made.

Let us then consider the other objection.—In a dozen passes or bouts, *if they are play'd out*, one must certainly exceed the other more or less than three hits; for the victor must either gain eight to four, or seven to five. But Shakspeare by the words—*in a dozen passes*, meant, I believe,—*within a dozen passes, or in a game that at the utmost may be extended to a dozen passes*. In such a game it might be ascertained that Laertes could not exceed Hamlet by three hits, without the twelve passes being made: for if Hamlet obtained the first five hits, the king would win his wager, and it would be useless to play out the remaining passes, inasmuch as Laertes could not, in that case, exceed his adversary by three hits. So, if Laertes was successful in the first five, and Hamlet in the second five,—the game would be at an end, and Hamlet be victorious; for the remaining hits could avail Laertes nothing: and so in other cases that might be put.

A case, however, it must be acknowledged, might arise, in which it might be necessary to play out the whole twelve passes. Thus, if Hamlet had made four hits, and Laertes, seven, Hamlet would have

a right

hold his purpose, I will win for him, if I can; if not, I will gain nothing but my shame, and the odd hits.

*Ofr.* Shall I deliver you so?

*Ham.* To this effect, sir; after what flourish your nature will.

*Ofr.* I commend my duty to your lordship. [*Exit.*]

*Ham.* Yours, yours.—He does well; to commend it himself; there are no tongues else for's turn.

*Hor.* This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head<sup>4</sup>.

*Ham.*

a right to insist on the twelfth bout being played, because if he was successful in that, his antagonist would be defeated, and lose his wager.

Shakspeare probably did not advert to the circumstance, that if the whole twelve passes were made, one must exceed the other by more or less than three hits, because it is obvious that the wager *might* be determined without twelve passes being made.

*Three bits*, was, I suppose, the usual number by which superior skill in the use of the sword was ascertained in Shakspeare's time. In Master Slender's engagement with a master of defence, the victor on making *three venies*, i. e. *bits*, more than his antagonist, was to have a dish of stew'd prunes. How many bouts or passes were allowed, is not mentioned; but probably the game generally was limited, and not permitted to exceed twelve passes.—The passage alluded to, has been misunderstood. See the note on it in Vol. X. in the APPENDIX. MALONE.

[*This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head.*] I see no particular propriety in the image of the lapwing. *Ofrick* did not run till he had done his business. We may read, *This lapwing ran away*—That is, *this fellow was full of unimportant bustle from his birth.* JOHNS.

The same image occurs in Ben Jonson's *Staple of News*:

“ ——— and coachmen

“ To mount their boxes reverently, and drive,

“ Like lapwings with a shell upon their heads,

“ Thorough the streets.”

And I have since met with it in several other plays. The meaning, I believe, is,—This is a forward fellow. So, in *Vittoria Corombona*, or the *White Devil*, 1612:

“ ——— Forward lapwing,

“ He flies with the shell on's head.”

Again, in *Revenge of Honour*, by Chapman:

“ Boldness enforces youth to hard achievements

“ Before their time; makes them run forth like lapwings

“ From their warm nest, part of the shell yet sticking

“ Unto their downy heads.” STEEVENS.

I believe, Hamlet means to say that *Ofrick* is, bustling and impetuous, and yet “but raw in respect of his quick fail.” So, in *The Character of an Oxford Incendiary*, 1643: “This lapwing incendiary ran away half-batch'd from Oxford, to raise a combustion in Scotland.”

*Ham.* He did comply with his dug<sup>5</sup>, before he suck'd it. Thus has he (and many more of the same breed<sup>6</sup>, that, I know, the drossy age dotes on,) only got the tune of the time, and outward habit of encounter<sup>7</sup>; a kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through the most fond and winnow'd opinions<sup>8</sup>; and do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out<sup>9</sup>.

*Enter*

In *Meres's Wit's Treasury* 1598, we have the same image expressed exactly in our poet's words: "As the lapwing runneth away with the shell on her head, as soon as she is hatched," &c. MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> *He did comply with his dug, &c.*] Thus the folio. The quarto, 1604, reads—*A* [i. e. *he*] did, sit, with his dug, &c. For comply Dr. Warburton and the subsequent editors; read—*compliment*. The verb *to compliment* was not used, as I think, in the time of Shakspeare.

MALONE.

Shakspeare seems to have used *comply* in the sense in which we use the verb *compliment*. See before, Act II. sc. ii. *let me comply with you in this garb.* TYRWHITT.

<sup>6</sup> — *and many more of the same breed.*] The first folio has—*and mine more of the same beavy*. The second folio—*and nine more, &c.* Perhaps the last is the true reading. STEEVENS.

There may be a propriety in *beavy*, as he has just call'd him a *lapwing*. TOLLET.

"Many more of the same breed," is the reading of the quarto, 1604. MALONE.

<sup>7</sup> — *outward habit of encounter;*] Thus the folio. The quartos—*read—out of an habit of encounter.* STEEVENS.

We should, I think, read—*an outward habit, &c.* MALONE.

<sup>8</sup> — *a kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through the most fond and winnow'd opinions;*] This passage in the quarto stands thus: "They have got out of the habit of encounter, a kind of misty collection, which carries them through and through the most profane and trennowned opinions." If this printer preserved any traces of the original, our author wrote, "the most *sane* and *renowned* opinions," which is better than [the reading proposed by Dr. Warburton,] *fann'd* and *winnowed*.

The meaning is, "these men have got the cant of the day, a superficial readiness of slight and cursory conversation, a kind of frothy collection of fashionable prattle, which yet carries them through the most select and approved judgments. This airy facility of talk sometimes imposes upon wise men."

Who has not seen this observation verified? JOHNSON.

The quarto, 1604, reads, "—dotes on; only got the tune of the time, and out of an habit," &c. and—not *misy*, but *bisy*; the folio rightly, *ysty*: the same quarto has not *trennowned*, but *trennowed* (a corruption of *winnowed*,) for which (according to the usual process,) the next

quart

*Enter a Lord.*

*Lord.* My lord<sup>1</sup>, his majesty commended him to you by young Osrick, who brings back to him, that you attend him in the hall: He sends to know, if your pleasure hold to play with Laertes, or that you will take longer time.

*Ham.* I am constant to my purposes, they follow the king's pleasure: if his fitness speaks, mine is ready; now, or whensoever, provided I be so able as now.

*Lord.* The king, and queen, and all are coming down.

*Ham.* In happy time.

*Lord.* The queen desires you, to use some gentle entertainment<sup>2</sup> to Laertes, before you fall to play.

*Ham.* She well instructs me. [*Exit Lord.*]

*Hor.* You will lose this wager, my lord.

*Ham.* I do not think so; since he went into France, I have been in continual practice; I shall win at the odds<sup>3</sup>.

quarto gave *trenowned*. *Fond* and *winnowed* is the reading of the folio. MALONE.

*Fond* is evidently opposed to *winnowed*. *Fond*, in the language of Shakspeare's age, signified *foolish*. So, in the *Merchant of Venice*:

"Thou naughty jailer, why art thou so *fond*," &c.

*Winnowed* is *sifted*, *examined*. The sense is then, that their conversation was yet successful enough to make them passible not only with the weak, but with those of sounder judgment. The same opposition in terms is visible in the reading which the quartos offer. *Profane* or *vulgar*, is opposed to *trenowned*, or *trice renowned*. STEEVENS.

*Fann'd* and *winnow'd* seems right to me. Both words, *winnowed*, *fann'd* \* and *dress'd*, occur together in Markham's *English Husbandman*, p. 117. So do *fan'd* and *winnow'd*, *fann'd* and *winnowed*, in his *Husbandry*, p. 18, 76, and 77. So Shakspeare mentions together the *fan* and *wind* in *Troilus and Cressida*, Act V. sc. iii. TOLLET.

<sup>1</sup> — *do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out.*] These men of show, without solidity, are like bubbles raised from soap and water, which dance, and glitter, and please the eye, but if you extend them, by blowing hard, separate into a mist; so, if you oblige these specious talkers to extend their compass of conversation, they at once discover the tenuity of their intellects. JOHNSON.

<sup>2</sup> *My lord, &c.*] All that passes between *Hamlet* and this *Lord* is omitted in the folio. STEEVENS.

<sup>3</sup> — *gentle entertainment* —] Mild and temperate conversation. JOHNS.

<sup>3</sup> *I shall win at the odds.*] I shall succeed with the advantage that I am allowed. MALONE.

\* So written without the apostrophe, and easily might in MS. be mistaken for *fond*.

But

But thou would'st not think, how ill all's here about my heart: but it is no matter.

*Hor.* Nay, good my lord, —

*Ham.* It is but foolery; but it is such a kind of gain-giving<sup>4</sup>, as would, perhaps, trouble a woman.

*Hor.* If your mind dislike any thing, obey it<sup>5</sup>: I will forestall their repair hither, and say, you are not fit.

*Ham.* Not a whit, we defy augury; there is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come: the readiness is all: Since no man of aught he leaves, knows, what is't to leave betimes<sup>6</sup>? Let be.

*Enter*

<sup>4</sup> —of gain-giving,] *Gain-giving* is the same as *mis-giving*. STEEV.

<sup>5</sup> *If your mind dislike any thing, obey it:*] With these prefaces of future evils arising in the mind, the poet has forerun many events which are to happen at the conclusions of his plays; and sometimes so particularly, that even the circumstances of calamity are minutely hinted at, as in the instance of Juliet, who tells her lover from the window, that he appears *like one dead in the bottom of a tomb*. The supposition that the genius of the mind gave the alarm before approaching dissolution, is a very ancient one, and perhaps can never be totally driven out; yet it must be allowed the merit of adding beauty to poetry, however injurious it may sometimes prove to the weak and the superstitious. STEEVENS.

<sup>6</sup> *Since no man, of aught he leaves, knows, what is't to leave betimes?*] The old quarto reads, *Since no man, of aught he leaves, knows, what is't to leave betimes? Let be.* This is the true reading. Here the premises conclude right, and the argument drawn out at length is to this effect: "It is true, that, by death, we lose all the goods of life, yet seeing this loss is no otherwise an evil than as we are sensible of it; and since death removes all sense of it, what matters it how soon we lose them? Therefore come what will, I am prepared."

WARBURTON.

The reading of the quarto was right, but in some other copy the harshness of the transposition was softened, and the passage stood thus: *Since no man knows aught of what he leaves.* For *knows* was printed in the later copies *has*, by a slight blunder in such typographers.

I do not think Dr. Warburton's interpretation of the passage the best that it will admit. The meaning may be this: Since *no man knows aught* of the state of life which *he leaves*, since he cannot judge what other years may produce, why should he be afraid of leaving life betimes? Why should he dread an early death, of which he cannot tell whether it is an exclusion of happiness, or an interception of calamity. I despise the superstition of augury and omens, which has no ground

in

*Enter King, Queen, LAERTES, Lords, OSRICK, and Attendants with foils, &c.*

*King.* Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.

*[The King puts the hand of Laertes into that of Hamlet.]*

*Ham.* Give me your pardon, sir<sup>7</sup>: I have done you wrong; But pardon it, as you are a gentleman.

This presence knows, and you must needs have heard, How I am punish'd with a sore distraction.

What I have done,

That might your nature, honour, and exception,

Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.

Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never, Hamlet:

If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,

And, when he's not himself, does wrong Laertes,

Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.

Who does it then? His madness: If't be so,

Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd;

His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.

Sir, in this audience<sup>8</sup>,

Let my disclaiming from a purpos'd evil

Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,

That I have shot my arrow o'er the house,

And hurt my brother.

*Laer.* I am satisfy'd in nature<sup>9</sup>,

in reason or piety; my comfort is, that I cannot fall but by the direction of providence.

Hammer has, *Since no man owes aught*, a conjecture not very reprehensible. *Since no man can call any possession certain*, what is it to leave?

JOHNSON.

Dr. Warburton has truly stated the reading of the first quarto, 1604. The folio reads—*Since no man has ought of what he leaves*, what is't to leave betimes?

In the late editions neither copy has been followed. MALONE.

<sup>7</sup> *Give me your pardon, sir:*] I wish Hamlet had made some other defence; it is unsuitable to the character of a good or a brave man, to shelter himself in falsehood. JOHNSON.

<sup>8</sup> *Sir, &c.*] This passage I have restored from the folio. STEEV.

<sup>9</sup> *I am satisfied in nature, &c.*] This was a piece of satire on fantastical honour. Though *nature* is satisfied, yet he will ask advice of older men of the sword, whether *artificial honour* ought to be contented with Hamlet's submission.

There is a passage somewhat similar in the *Maid's Tragedy*:

“*Evad.* Will you forgive me then?

“*Mel.* Stay, I must ask mine honour first.” STEEVENS.

whose

Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most  
To my revenge: but in my terms of honour,  
I stand aloof; and will no reconciliation,  
Till by some elder masters, of known honour<sup>1</sup>,  
I have a voice and precedent of peace,  
To keep my name ungor'd: But till that time,  
I do receive your offer'd love like love,  
And will not wrong it.

*Ham.* I embrace it freely;  
And will this brother's wager frankly play.—  
Give us the foils; come on.

*Laer.* Come, one for me.

*Ham.* I'll be your foil, Laertes; in mine ignorance  
Your skill shall, like a star i' the darkest night,  
Stick fiery off indeed.

*Laer.* You mock me, sir.

*Ham.* No, by this hand.

*King.* Give them the foils, young Osrick,—Cousin  
Hamlet,

You know the wager?

*Ham.* Very well, my lord;  
Your grace hath laid the odds o' the weaker side<sup>2</sup>.

*King.* I do not fear it; I have seen you both;—  
But since he's better'd, we have therefore odds.

*Laer.* This is too heavy, let me see another.

*Ham.* This likes me well: These foils have all a  
length? *[They prepare to play.]*

<sup>1</sup> *Till by some elder masters, of known honour.* Mr. Steevens thinks that "this is said in allusion to the *ancient masters of defence*," of Shakspeare's time. See Vol. I. p. 204, n. 9. Our poet frequently alludes to English customs, and may have done so here, but I do not believe that gentlemen ever submitted points of honour to persons who exhibited themselves for money as prize-fighters on the publick stage; though they might appeal in certain cases to Raleigh, Essex, or Southampton, who from their high rank, their course of life, and established reputation, might with strict propriety be styled, "elder masters, of known honour." MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> *Your grace hath laid the odds o' the weaker side.* Hamlet either means, that what the king had laid was more valuable than what Laertes staked; or that *the king had made his bet, an advantage being given to the weaker party*. I believe the first is the true interpretation. In the next line but one the word *odds* certainly means *an advantage given to the party*, but here it may have a different sense. This is not an uncommon practice with our poet. MALONE.

*Ofr.* Ay, my good lord.

*King.* Set me the stoups of wine upon that table<sup>3</sup>:—  
If Hamlet give the first, or second hit,  
Or quit in answer of the third exchange,  
Let all the battlements their ordnance fire;  
The king shall drink to Hamlet's better breath;  
And in the cup an union shall he throw<sup>4</sup>,  
Richer than that which four successive kings  
In Denmark's crown have worn: Give me the cups;  
And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,  
The trumpet to the cannoneer without,  
The cannons to the heavens, the heaven to earth,  
*Now the king drinks to Hamlet.*—Come, begin;—  
And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

*Ham.* Come on, fir.

*Laer.* Come, my lord.

[*They play.*

*Ham.* One.

*Laer.* No.

*Ham.* Judgment.

*Ofr.* A hit, a very palpable hit.

*Laer.* Well,—again.

*King.* Stay, give me drink: Hamlet, this pearl is thine<sup>5</sup>;  
Here's

<sup>3</sup> —the stoups of wine—] A *stoup* is a *flaggon*, or *bowel*. STEEVENS  
Containing somewhat more than two quarts. See Vol. IV. p. 33.  
n. 1. MALONE.

<sup>4</sup> And in the cup an union shall be throw,] Thus the folio rightly.  
In the first quarto by the carelessness of the printer, for *union*, we have  
*unice*, which in the subsequent quarto copies was made *onyx*. An  
*union* is a very precious pearl. See Bullokar's *English Expositor*, 1616,  
and Florio's Italian Dictionary, 1598, in v. MALONE.

The *union* is thus mentioned in P. Holland's translation of *Pliny's*  
*Nat. Hist.* "And hereupon it is that our dainties and delicates here at  
Rome, &c. call them *unions*, as a man would say singular and by them-  
selves alone."

To swallow a *pearl* in a draught seems to have been equally common  
to royal and mercantile prodigality. So, in the second part of *If you*  
*know not me, you know No Body*, 1606, Sir Thomas Gresham says:

"Here 16,000 pound at one clap goes.

"Instead of sugar, Gresham drinks this *pearle*

"Unto his queen and mistress." STEEVENS.

<sup>5</sup> —this pearl is thine;] Under pretence of throwing a *pearl* into  
the cup, the king may be supposed to drop some poisonous drug into  
the

Here's to thy health.—Give him the cup.

[*Trumpets sound; and cannon shot off within.*]

*Ham.* I'll play this bout first, set it by a while.

Come.—Another hit; What say you? [*They play.*]

*Laer.* A touch, a touch, I do confess.

*King.* Our son shall win.

*Queen.* He's fat, and scant of breath<sup>6</sup>.—

Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows:

The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.

*Ham.* Good madam,—

*King.* Gertrude, do not drink.

*Queen.* I will, my lord;—I pray you, pardon me.

*King.* It is the poison'd cup; it is too late. [*Aside.*]

*Ham.* I dare not drink yet, madam; by and by.

*Queen.* Come, let me wipe thy face.

*Laer.* My lord, I'll hit him now.

*King.* I do not think it.

*Laer.* And yet it is almost against my conscience. [*Aside.*]

*Ham.* Come, for the third, Laertes: You do but dally;

I pray you, pass with your best violence;

I am afeard, you make a wanton of me<sup>7</sup>.

the wine. Hamlet seems to suspect this, when he afterwards discovers the effects of the poison, and tauntingly asks him,—*Is the union here?*

STEEVENS.

<sup>6</sup> *Queen.* *He's fat, and scant of breath.*] It seems that *John Lowin*, who was the original *Falstaff*, was no less celebrated for his performance of *Henry VIII.* and *Hamlet*. See the *Historia Histrionica*, &c. If he was adapted, by the corpulence of his figure, to appear with propriety in the two former of these characters, Shakspeare might have put this observation into the mouth of her majesty, to apologise for the want of such elegance of person as an audience might expect to meet with in the representative of the youthful Prince of Denmark, whom Ophelia speaks of "as the glass of fashion and the mould of form." This, however, is mere conjecture, as *Joseph Taylor* likewise acted *Hamlet* during the life of Shakspeare. STEEVENS.

The authour of *Historia Histrionica*, and Downes the prompter, concur in saying that Taylor was the performer of Hamlet. Roberts the player alone has asserted, (apparently without any authority,) that this part was performed by Lowin. MALONE.

<sup>7</sup> —*you make a wanton of me.*] A wanton was a man feeble and effeminate. In *Cymbeline*, Imogen says, I am not

"—so citizen a wanton, as

"To seem to die, ere sick." JOHNSON.

*Laer.* Say you so? come on.

[*They play.*]

*Ofr.* Nothing neither way.

*Laer.* Have at you now.

[*Laertes wounds Hamlet; then, in scuffling, they change rapiers, and Hamlet wounds Laertes.*]

*King.* Part them, they are incens'd.

*Ham.* Nay, come again.

[*The queen falls.*]

*Ofr.* Look to the queen there, ho!

*Hor.* They bleed on both sides:—How is it, my lord?

*Ofr.* How is't, Laertes?

*Laer.* Why, as a woodcock to my own springe, Ofrick;  
I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.

*Ham.* How does the queen?

*King.* She swoons to see them bleed.

*Queen.* No, no, the drink, the drink,—O my dear  
Hamlet!—

The drink, the drink;—I am poison'd! [*dies.*]

*Ham.* O villainy!—Ho! let the door be lock'd:

Treachery! seek it out.

[*Laertes falls.*]

*Laer.* It is here, Hamlet: Hamlet, thou art slain;

No medicine in the world can do thee good,

In thee there is not half an hour's life;

The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,

Unbated, and evenenom'd: the foul practice

Hath turn'd itself on me; lo, here I lie,

Never to rise again: Thy mother's poison'd;

I can no more;—the king, the king's to blame.

*Ham.* The point evenenom'd too!—

Then, venom, to thy work,

[*Stabs the king.*]

*Ofr. and Lords.* Treason! treason!

*King.* O, yet defend me, friends, I am but hurt.

*Ham.* Here, thou incestuous, murd'rous, damned Dane,  
Drink off this potion:—Is the union here<sup>8</sup>?

Follow my mother.

[*King dies.*]

*Laer.* He is justly serv'd;

<sup>8</sup> *Is the union here?*] Thus the folio. In a former passage in the quarto, 1604, for *union* we had *unice*; here it has *onyx*.

It should seem from this line, and Laertes's next speech, that Hamlet here forces the expiring king to drink some of the poisoned cup, and that he dies while it is at his lips. MALONE.

It is a poison temper'd by himself.—

Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet:

Mine and my father's death come not upon thee;

Nor thine on me!

[*dies.*]

*Ham.* Heaven make thee free of it! I follow thee.

I am dead, Horatio:—Wretched queen, adieu!—

You that look pale and tremble at this chance,

That are but mutes or audience to this act<sup>9</sup>,

Had I but time, (as this fell serjeant, death,

Is strict in his arrest<sup>1</sup>,) O, I could tell you,—

But let it be:—Horatio, I am dead;

Thou liv'st; report me and my cause aright

To the unsatisfied.

*Hor.* Never believe it;

I am more an antique Roman than a Dane,

Here's yet some liquor left.

*Ham.* As thou'rt a man,—

Give me the cup; let go; by heaven, I'll have it.—

O God!—Horatio<sup>2</sup>, what a wounded name,

Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me<sup>3</sup>?

If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,

Absent thee from felicity a while,

And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,

To tell my story.— [*March afar off, and shot within.*]

What warlike noise is this?

*Ofr.* Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from Poland,

To the ambassadors of England gives

This warlike volley.

*Ham.* O, I die, Horatio;

<sup>9</sup> *That are but mutes or audience to this act,*] That are either mere auditors of this catastrophe, or at most only mute performers, that fill the stage without any part in the action. JOHNSON.

<sup>1</sup> — *as this fell serjeant, death,*

*Is strict in his arrest,*] So, in our poet's 74th Sonnet:

“ — when that fell arrest,

“ *Without all bail, shall carry me away,—*” MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> *O God!—Horatio, &c.*] Thus the quarto, 1604. Folio: *O good Horatio.* MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> — *shall live behind me?*] Thus the folio. The quartos read—*shall I leave behind me.* STEEVENS.

The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit<sup>4</sup>;  
 I cannot live to hear the news from England:  
 But I do prophesy, the election lights  
 On Fortinbras; he has my dying voice;  
 So tell him, with the occurrents<sup>5</sup>, more and less,  
 Which have solicited<sup>6</sup>,—The rest is silence. [*dies.*]

*Hor.* Now cracks a noble heart:—Good night, sweet  
 prince;  
 And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest<sup>7</sup>!—  
 Why does the drum come hither? [*March within.*]

*Enter*

\* *The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit;*] This word, for which Mr. Pope and the succeeding editors have substituted *over-grows*, is used by Holinshed in his *History of Ireland*: "These noblemen laboured with tooth and nayle to *over-crowe*, and consequently to overthrow, one another."

Again, in the epistle prefixed to Nashe's *Apologie of Pierce Penniless*, 1593: "About two yeeres since a certayne demi-divine took upon him to set his foote to mine, and *over-crowe* mee with comparative terms."

MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> — *the occurrents,*] i. e. incidents. The word is now disused. So, in *The Hog bath lost his Pearl*, 1614:

"Such strange *occurrents* of my fore-past life." STEEVENS.

<sup>6</sup> *Which have solicited,*—] What Hamlet would have said, the poet has not given us any ground for conjecturing. By *solicited*, Dr. Warburton understands, *brought on the event*. The words seem to mean no more than—*which have incited me to*— MALONE.

<sup>7</sup> *Now cracks a noble heart:—Good night, sweet prince;  
 And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!*] So, in *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, 1609:

"If thou liv'st, Pericles, thou hast a *heart*,

"That even *cracks* for woe."

The concluding words of the unfortunate Lord Essex's prayer on the scaffold were these: "—and when my life and body shall part, *send thy blessed angels, which may receive my soule, and convey it to the joys of heaven.*"

Hamlet had certainly been exhibited before the execution of that amiable nobleman; but the words here given to Horatio might have been one of the many additions made to this play. As no copy of an earlier date than 1604 has yet been discovered, whether Lord Essex's last words were in our authour's thoughts, cannot now be ascertained.

MALONE.

Let us review for a moment the behaviour of Hamlet, on the strength of which Horatio sounds this eulogy, and recommends him to the patronage of angels.

Hamlet, at the command of his father's ghost, undertakes with seeming alacrity to revenge the murder; and declares he will banish all other thoughts from his mind. He makes, however, but one ef-

*Enter* FORTINERAS, *the English Ambassadors, and Others.*

*Fort.* Where is this fight?

*Hor.*

fort to keep his word, and that is, when he mistakes Polonius for the king. On another occasion, he defers his purpose till he can find an opportunity of taking his uncle when he is least prepared for death, that he may insure damnation to his soul. Though he assassinated Polonius by accident, yet he deliberately procures the execution of his school-fellows, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who appear to have been unacquainted with the treacherous purposes of the mandate which they were employed to carry. Their death (as he declares in a subsequent conversation with Horatio) gives him no concern, for they obtruded themselves into the service, and he thought he had a right to destroy them. He is not less accountable for the distraction and death of Ophelia. He comes to interrupt the funeral designed in honour of this lady, at which both the king and queen were present; and, by such an outrage to decency, renders it still more necessary for the usurper to lay a second stratagem for his life, though the first had proved abortive. He comes to insult the brother of the dead, and to boast of an affection for his sister, which, before, he had denied to her face; and yet at this very time must be considered as desirous of supporting the character of a madman, so that the openness of his confession is not to be imputed to him as a virtue. He apologizes to Horatio afterwards for the absurdity of this behaviour, to which, he says, he was provoked by that nobleness of fraternal grief, which, indeed, he ought rather to have applauded than condemned. Dr. Johnson has observed, that to bring about a reconciliation with Laertes, he has availed himself of a dishonest fallacy; and to conclude, it is obvious to the most careless spectator or reader, that he kills the king at last to revenge himself, and not his father.

Hamlet cannot be said to have pursued his ends by very warrantable means; and if the poet, when he sacrificed him at last, meant to have enforced such a moral, it is not the worst that can be deduced from the play; for, as *Maximus*, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Valentinian*, says,

“Although his justice were as white as truth,

“His way was crooked to it; that condemns him.”

The late Dr. Akenfide once observed to me, that the conduct of Hamlet was every way unnatural and indefensible, unless he were to be regarded as a young man whose intellects were in some degree impaired by his own misfortunes; by the death of his father, the loss of expected sovereignty, and a sense of shame resulting from the hasty and incestuous marriage of his mother.

I have dwelt the longer on this subject, because Hamlet seems to have been hitherto regarded as a hero not undeserving the pity of the audience; and because no writer on Shakspeare has taken the pains to point out the immoral tendency of his character. STEEVENS.

*Hor.* What is it, you would see?  
If aught of woe, or wonder, cease your search.

*Fort.*

Some of the charges here brought against Hamlet appear to me questionable at least, if not unfounded. I have already observed that in the novel on which this play is constructed, the ministers who by the king's order accompanied the young prince to England, and carried with them a packet in which his death was concerted, were apprized of its contents; and therefore we may *presume* that Shakspeare meant to describe their representatives, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, as equally criminal; as combining with the king to deprive Hamlet of his life. His procuring their execution therefore does not with certainty appear to have been an unprovoked cruelty, and *might* have been considered by him as necessary to his *future safety*; knowing, as he must have known, that they had devoted themselves to the service of the king in whatever he should command. The principle on which he acted, is ascertained by the following lines, from which also it may be inferred that the poet meant to represent Hamlet's school-fellows as privy to the plot against his life:

"There's letters seal'd; and my two school-fellows—  
"Whom I will trust as I will adders fang'd,—  
"They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way,  
"And marshall me to knavery; Let it work;  
"For 'tis the sport, to have the engineer  
"Hoist with his own petar; and it shall go hard,  
"But I will delve one yard below *their* mines,  
"And blow them to the moon."

Another charge is, that "*he comes to disturb the funeral of Ophelia*:" but the fact is otherwise represented in the first scene of the fifth act: for when the funeral procession appears, (which he does not seek, but finds,) he exclaims,

"The queen, the courtiers: *who is this they follow,*  
"And with such maimed rites?"

nor does he know it to be the funeral of Ophelia, till Laertes mentions that the dead body was that of his sister.

I do not perceive that he is accountable for the madness of Ophelia. He did not mean to kill her father when concealed behind the arras, but the king; and still less did he intend to deprive her of her reason and her life: her subsequent distraction therefore can no otherwise be laid to his charge, than as an unforeseen consequence from his too ardently pursuing the object recommended to him by his father.

He appears to have been induced to leap into Ophelia's grave, not with a design to insult Laertes, but from his love to her, (which then he had no reason to conceal,) and from the *bravery of her brother's grief*, which excited him (not to condemn that brother, as has been stated, but) to *vie* with him in the expression of affection and sorrow:

"Why,

*Fort.* This quarry cries on havoc<sup>9</sup>!—O proud death!  
What feast is toward in thine eternal cell<sup>1</sup>,  
That thou so many princes, at a shot,  
So bloodily hast struck?

1. *Amb.* The sight is dismal;  
And our affairs from England come too late:  
The ears are senseless, that should give us hearing,  
To tell him, his commandment is fulfill'd,  
That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead:  
Where should we have our thanks?

*Hor.* Not from his mouth<sup>2</sup>,  
Had it the ability of life to thank you;  
He never gave commandment for their death.  
But since, to jump upon this bloody question,  
You from the Polack wars, and you from England,  
Are here arriv'd; give order, that these bodies

“Why, I will fight with him upon this theme,  
“Until my eyelids will no longer wag.—  
“I lov'd Ophelia; forty thousand brothers  
“Could not with all their quantity of love  
“Make up my sum.”

When Hamlet says, “the bravery of his grief did put me into a towering passion,” I think, he means, into a lofty expression (not of resentment, but) of sorrow. So, in *King John*, Vol. IV. p. 487:

“She is sad and passionate at your highness' tent.”

Again, more appositely in the play before us:

“The instant burst of clamour that she made,  
“ (Unless things mortal move them not at all,)  
“Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven,  
“And passion in the gods.”

I may also add, that he neither assaulted, nor insulted Laertes, till that nobleman had cursed him, and seized him by the throat. MALONE.

<sup>9</sup> *This quarry cries on havoc!* Hammer reads,

— cries out, *havock!*

To cry on, was to exclaim against. I suppose, when unfair sportsmen destroyed more quarry or game than was reasonable, the censure was to cry, *Havock*. JOHNSON.

<sup>1</sup> *What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,*] Shakspeare has already employed this allusion to the *Chœæ*, or *feasts of the dead*, which were anciently celebrated at Athens, and are mentioned by Plutarch in the life of *Antonius*. Our author likewise makes *Talbot* say to his son in the First Part of *King Henry VI*:

“Now art thou come unto a feast of death.” STEVENS.

<sup>2</sup> — his mouth,] i. e. the king's. STEVENS.

High on a stage be placed to the view ;  
 And let me speak, to the yet unknowing world,  
 How these things came about : So shall you hear  
 Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts<sup>3</sup> ;  
 Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters ;  
 Of deaths put on<sup>4</sup> by cunning, and forc'd cause<sup>5</sup> ;  
 And, in this upshot, purposes mistook  
 Fall'n on the inventors' heads : all this can I  
 Truly deliver.

*Fort.* Let us haste to hear it,  
 And call the noblest to the audience.  
 For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune ;  
 I have some rights of memory in this kingdom<sup>6</sup>,  
 Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me.

*Hor.* Of that I shall have also cause to speak,  
 And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more<sup>7</sup> :

<sup>3</sup> *Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts ;*] Of sanguinary and unnatural acts, to which the perpetrator was instigated by concupiscence, or, to use our poet's own words, by "*carnal stings*." The speaker alludes to the murder of old Hamlet by his brother, previous to his incestuous union with Gertrude. A feeble *Remarker* asks, "was the relationship between the usurper and the deceased king a secret confined to Horatio?"—No, but the murder of Hamlet by Claudius was a secret which the young prince had imparted to Horatio, and had imparted to him alone ; and to this it is he principally, though covertly, alludes.—*Carnal* is the reading of the only authentick copies, the quarto 1604, and the folio 1623. The modern editors, following a quarto of no authority, for *carnal*, read *cruel*. MALONE.

<sup>4</sup> *Of deaths put on—*] i. e. instigated, produced. See Vol. VII. p. 217, n. 7. MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> *—and forc'd cause ;*] Thus the folio. The quartos read—and for no cause. STEEVENS.

<sup>6</sup> *—some rights of memory in this kingdom,*] Some rights, which are remembered in this kingdom. MALONE.

<sup>7</sup> *And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more :*] Thus the folio. The quarto 1604, reads—draw no more. MALONE.

Hamlet, just before his death, had said,

*But I do prophesy, the election lights*

*On Fortinbras : he has my dying voice ;*

*So tell him, &c.*

Accordingly, Horatio here delivers that message ; and very justly infers, that Hamlet's voice will be seconded by others, and procure them in favour of Fortinbras's succession. THEOBALD.

But

But let this fame be presently perform'd,  
Even while men's minds are wild; lest more mischance,  
On plots, and errors, happen.

*Fort.* Let four captains

Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage;  
For he was likely, had he been put on,  
To have prov'd most royally: and, for his passage,  
The soldiers' musick, and the rites of war,  
Speak loudly for him.—

Take up the bodies:—Such a fight as this  
Becomes the field, but here shews much amiss.

Go, bid the soldiers shoot.<sup>8</sup> *[A dead march.*

*[Exeunt, bearing off the dead bodies; after which,  
a peal of ordnance is shot off.]*

<sup>8</sup> If the dramas of Shakspeare were to be characterised, each by the particular excellence which distinguishes it from the rest, we must allow to the tragedy of Hamlet the praise of variety. The incidents are so numerous, that the argument of the play would make a long tale. The scenes are interchangeably diversified with merriment and solemnity; with merriment that includes judicious and instructive observations; and solemnity not strained by poetical violence above the natural sentiments of man. New characters appear from time to time in continual succession, exhibiting various forms of life and particular modes of conversation. The pretended madness of Hamlet causes much mirth, the mournful distraction of Ophelia fills the heart with tenderness, and every personage produces the effect intended, from the apparition that in the first act chills the blood with horror, to the sop in the last, that exposes affectation to just contempt.

The conduct is perhaps not wholly secure against objections. The action is indeed for the most part in continual progression, but there are some scenes which neither forward nor retard it. Of the feigned madness of Hamlet there appears no adequate cause, for he does nothing which he might not have done with the reputation of sanity. He plays the madman most, when he treats Ophelia with so much rudeness, which seems to be useless and wanton cruelty.

Hamlet is, through the whole piece, rather an instrument than an agent. After he has, by the stratagem of the play, convicted the king, he makes no attempt to punish him; and his death is at last effected by an incident which Hamlet had no part in producing.

The catastrophe is not very happily produced; the exchange of weapons is rather an expedient of necessity, than a stroke of art. A scheme might easily be formed to kill Hamlet with the dagger, and Laertes with the bowl.

The poet is accused of having shewn little regard to poetical justice, and may be charged with equal neglect of poetical probability. The apparition left the regions of the dead to little purpose; the revenge which he demands is not obtained, but by the death of him that was required

required to take it; and the gratification, which would arise from the destruction of an usurper and a murderer, is abated by the untimely death of Ophelia, the young, the beautiful, the harmless, and the pious. JOHNSON.

ACT II. SCENE II. P. 275.

*The rugged Pyrrhus, be, &c.*] The two greatest poets of this and the last age, Mr. Dryden, in the preface to *Troilus and Cressida*, and Mr. Pope in his note on this place, have concurred in thinking that Shakspeare produced this long passage with design to ridicule and expose the bombast of the play from whence it was taken; and that Hamlet's commendation of it is purely ironical. This is become the general opinion. I think just otherwise; and that it was given with commendation to upbraid the false taste of the audience of that time, which would not suffer them to do justice to the simplicity and sublime of this production. And I reason, first, from the character Hamlet gives of the play, from whence the passage is taken. Secondly, from the passage itself. And thirdly, from the effect it had on the audience.

Let us consider the character Hamlet gives of it. *The play, I remember, pleased not the million; 'twas caviare to the general: but it was (as I received it, and others, whose judgment in such matters cried in the top of mine) an excellent play, well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning. I remember one said, there was no salt in the lines to make the matter savoury; nor no matter in the phrase that might indite the author of affection; but called it an honest method.* They who suppose the passage given to be ridiculed, must needs suppose this character to be purely ironical. But if so, it is the strangest irony that ever was written. *It pleased not the multitude.* This we must conclude to be true, however ironical the rest be. Now the reason given of the designed ridicule is the supposed bombast. But those were the very plays, which at that time we know took with the multitude. And Fletcher wrote a kind of *Rehearsal* purposely to expose them. But say it is bombast, and that therefore it took not with the multitude. Hamlet presently tells us what it was that displeased them. *There was no salt in the lines to make the matter savoury; nor no matter in the phrase that might indite the author of affection; but called it an honest method.* Now whether a person speaks ironically or no, when he quotes others, yet common sense requires he should quote what they say. Now it could not be, if this play displeased because of the bombast, that those whom it displeased should give this reason for their dislike. The same inconsistencies and absurdities abound in every other part of Hamlet's speech, supposing it to be ironical; but take him as speaking his sentiments, the whole is of a piece; and to this purpose. The play, I remember, pleased not the multitude, and the reason was, its being wrote on the rules of the ancient drama; to which they were entire strangers. But, in my opinion, and in the opinion of those for whose judgement I have the highest esteem, it was an excellent play, *well digested in the scenes*, i. e. where the three unities were well preserved

preserved. *Set down with as much modesty as cunning*, i. e. where not only the art of composition, but the simplicity of nature, was carefully attended to. The characters were a faithful picture of life and manners, in which nothing was overcharged into farce. But these qualities, which gained my esteem, lost the public's. For *I remember one said, There was no salt in the lines to make the matter savoury*, i. e. there was not, according to the mode of that time, a fool or clown, to joke, quibble, and talk freely. *Nor no matter in the phrase that might indite the author of affection*, i. e. nor none of those passionate, pathetic love scenes, so essential to modern tragedy. *But he called it an honest method*, i. e. he owned, however tasteless this method of writing, on the ancient plan, was to our times, yet it was chaste and pure; the distinguishing character of the Greek drama. I need only make one observation on all this; that, thus interpreted, it is the justest picture of a good tragedy, wrote on the ancient rules. And that I have rightly interpreted it, appears farther from what we find in the old quarto, *An honest method, as wholesome as sweet, and by very much more HANDSOME than FINE*, i. e. it had a natural beauty, but none of the fucus of false art.

2. A second proof that this speech was given to be admired, is from the intrinsic merit of the speech itself; which contains the description of a circumstance very happily imagined, namely, Ilium and Priam's falling together, with the effect it had on the destroyer.

———*The belliss Pyrrhus, &c.*

To, *Repugnant to command.*

*The unnerv'd father falls, &c.*

To, ———*So after Pyrrhus' pause.*

Now this circumstance, illustrated with the fine similitude of the storm, is so highly worked up, as to have well deserved a place in Virgil's second book of the *Æneid*, even though the work had been carried on to that perfection which the Roman poet had conceived.

3. The third proof is, from the effects which followed on the recital. Hamlet, his best character, approves it; the player is deeply affected in repeating it; and only the foolish Polonius tired with it. We have said enough before of Hamlet's sentiments. As for the player, he changes colour, and the tears start from his eyes. But our author was too good a judge of nature to make bombast and unnatural sentiment produce such an effect. Nature and Horace both instructed him,

*Si vis me flere, dolendum est*

*Primum ipsi tibi, tunc tua me infortunia laedent,*

*Telephe, vel Peleu. MALE SI MANDATA LOQUERIS,*

*Aut dormitabo aut ridebo.*

And it may be worth observing, that Horace gives this precept particularly to shew, that bombast and unnatural sentiments are incapable of moving the tender passions, which he is directing the poet how to raise. For in the lines just before, he gives this rule:

*Telephus*

*Telephus & Peleus, cum pauper & exul uterque,  
Projicit ampullas, & sesquipedalia verba.*

Not that I would deny, that very bad lines in bad tragedies have had this effect. But then it always proceeds from one or other of these causes :

1. Either when the subject is domestic, and the scene lies at home ; the spectators in this case, become interested in the fortunes of the distressed ; and their thoughts are so much taken up with the subject, that they are not at liberty to attend to the poet ; who otherwise, by his faulty sentiments and diction, would have stifled the emotions springing up from a sense of the distress. But this is nothing to the case in hand. For, as Hamlet says,

*What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba ?*

2. When bad lines raise this affection, they are bad in the other extreme ; low, abject, and groveling, instead of being highly figurative and swelling ; yet, when attended with a natural simplicity, they have force enough to strike illiterate and simple minds. The tragedies of Banks will justify both these observations.

But if any one will still say, that Shakspeare intended to represent a player unnaturally and fantastically affected, we must appeal to Hamlet, that is, to Shakspeare himself in this matter ; who, on the reflection he makes upon the player's emotion, in order to excite his own revenge, gives not the least hint that the player was unnaturally or injudiciously moved. On the contrary, his fine description of the actor's emotion shews, he thought just otherwise :

*———this player here,  
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,  
Could force his soul so to his own conceit,  
That from her working all his visage wan'd ;  
Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect,  
A broken voice, &c.*

And indeed had Hamlet esteemed this emotion any thing unnatural, it had been a very improper circumstance to spur him to his purpose.

As Shakspeare has here shewn the effects which a fine description of nature, heightened with all the ornaments of art, had upon an intelligent player, whose business habituates him to enter intimately and deeply into the characters of men and manners, and to give nature its free workings on all occasions ; so he has artfully shewn what effects the very same scene would have upon a quite different man, Polonius ; *by nature*, very weak and very artificial [two qualities, though commonly enough joined in life, yet generally so much disguised as not to be seen by common eyes to be together ; and which an ordinary poet durst not have brought so near one another] ; *by discipline*, practised in a species of wit and eloquence, which was stiff, forced, and pedantic ; and *by trade* a politician, and therefore, of consequence, without any of the affecting notices of humanity. Such is the man whom Shakspeare has judiciously chosen to represent the false taste of that audience which had condemned the play here reciting. When the actor comes to the finest and most pathetic part of the speech, Polonius

cries

cries out, *This is too long*; on which Hamlet, in contempt of his ill judgment, replies, *It shall to the barber's with thy beard*; [intimating that, by this judgment, it appeared that all his wisdom lay in his length of beard.] *Pr'ythee, say on.* *He's for a jig or a tale of bawdry* [the common entertainment of that time, as well as this, of the people] *or he sleeps*; *say on.* And yet this man of modern taste, who stood all this time perfectly unmoved with the forcible imagery of the relator, no sooner hears, amongst many good things, one quaint and fantastical word, put in, I suppose, purposely for this end, than he professes his approbation of the propriety and dignity of it. *That's good. Moulded queen is good.* On the whole then, I think, it plainly appears, that the long quotation is not given to be ridiculed and laughed at, but to be admired. The character given of the play, by Hamlet, cannot be ironical. The passage itself is extremely beautiful. It has the effect that all pathetic relations, naturally written, should have; and it is condemned, or regarded with indifference, by one of a wrong, unnatural taste. From hence (to observe it by the way) the actors, in their representation of this play, may learn how this speech ought to be spoken, and what appearance Hamlet ought to assume during the recital.

That which supports the common opinion, concerning this passage, is the turgid expression in some parts of it; which, they think, could never be given by the poet to be commended. We shall therefore, in the next place, examine the lines most obnoxious to censure, and see how much, allowing the charge, this will make for the induction of their conclusion.

*Pyrrhus at Priam drives, in rage strikes wide,  
But with the rebuff and wind of his fell sword  
The unnerved father falls.*

And again,

*Out, out, thou strumpet fortune! All you gods,  
In general synod, take away her power:  
Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel,  
And bowl the round nave down the bill of heaven,  
As low as to the fiends.*

Now whether these be bombast or not, is not the question; but whether Shakespeare esteemed them so. That he did not so esteem them appears from his having used the very same thoughts in the same expressions, in his best plays, and given them to his principal characters, where he aims at the sublime. As in the following passages.

Troilus, in *Troilus and Cressida*, far outstrains the execution of Pyrrhus's sword, in the character he gives of Hector's:

*When many times the captive Grecians fall  
Even in the fan and wind of your fair sword,  
You bid them rise and live.*

Cleopatra, in *Antony and Cleopatra*, rails at fortune in the same manner:

*No,*

*No, let me speak, and let me rail so big,  
That the false huswife Fortune break her wheel,  
Provok'd at my offence.*

But another use may be made of these quotations; a discovery of this recited play: which, letting us into a circumstance of our author's life (as a writer) hitherto unknown, was the reason I have been so large upon this question. I think then it appears, from what has been said, that the play in dispute was Shakspeare's own; and that this was the occasion of writing it. He was desirous, as soon as he had found his strength, of restoring the chasteness and regularity of the ancient stage: and therefore composed this tragedy on the model of the Greek drama, as may be seen by throwing so much *action* into *relation*. But his attempt proved fruitless; and the raw, unnatural taste, then prevalent, forced him back again into his old Gothic manner. For which he took this revenge upon his audience.

WARBURTON.

The praise which Hamlet bestows on this piece is certainly dissembled, and agrees very well with the character of madness, which, before witnesses, he thought it necessary to support. The speeches before us have so little merit, that nothing but an affectation of singularity could have influenced Dr. Warburton to undertake their defence. The poet, perhaps, meant to exhibit a just resemblance of some of the plays of his own age, in which the faults were too general and too glaring to permit a few splendid passages to atone for them. The player knew his trade, and spoke the lines in an affecting manner, because Hamlet had declared them to be pathetic, or might be in reality a little moved by them; for, "There are less degrees of nature (says Dryden) by which some faint emotions of pity and terror are raised in us, as a less engine will raise a less proportion of weight, though not so much as one of Archimedes' making." The mind of the prince, it must be confessed, was fitted for the reception of gloomy ideas, and his tears were ready at a slight solicitation. It is by no means proved, that Shakspeare has employed the same thoughts clothed in the same expressions, in his best plays. If he bids the false huswife Fortune break her wheel, he does not desire her to break all its spokes; nay, even its periphery, and make use of the nave afterwards for such an immeasurable cast. Though if what Dr. Warburton has said should be found in any instance to be exactly true, what can we infer from thence, but that Shakspeare was sometimes wrong in spite of conviction, and in the hurry of writing committed those very faults which his judgment could detect in others? Dr. Warburton is inconsistent in his assertions concerning the literature of Shakspeare. In a note on *Troilus and Cressida*, he affirms, that his want of learning kept him from being acquainted with the writings of Homer; and, in this instance, would suppose him capable of producing a complete tragedy written on the ancient rules; and that the speech before us had sufficient merit to entitle it to a place in the second book of Virgil's *Æneid*, even though the  
work

*work had been carried to that perfection which the Roman poet had conceived.*

Had Shakspeare made one unsuccessful attempt in the manner of the ancients, (that he had any knowledge of their rules, remains to be proved,) it would certainly have been recorded by contemporary writers, among whom Ben Jonson would have been the first. Had his darling ancients been unskilfully imitated by a rival poet, he would at least have preserved the memory of the fact, to shew how unsafe it was for any one, who was not as thorough a scholar as himself, to have meddled with their sacred remains.

"Within that circle none durst walk but he." He has represented Inigo Jones as being ignorant of the very names of those classic authors, whose architecture he undertook to correct: in his *Poetaster* he has in several places hinted at our poet's injudicious use of words, and seems to have pointed his ridicule more than once at some of his descriptions and characters. It is true that he has praised him, but it was not while that praise could have been of any service to him; and posthumous applause is always to be had on easy conditions. Happy it was for Shakspeare, that he took nature for his guide, and, engaged in the warm pursuit of her beauties, left to Jonson the repositories of learning: so has he escaped a contest which might have rendered his life uneasy, and bequeathed to our possession the more valuable copies from nature herself: for Shakspeare was (says Dr. Hurd, in his notes on Horace's Art of Poetry) "the first that broke through the bondage of classical superstition. And he owed this felicity, as he did some others, to his want of what is called the advantage of a learned education. Thus, uninfluenced by the weight of early prepossession, he struck at once into the road of nature and common sense: and without designing, without knowing it, hath left us in his historical plays, with all their anomalies, an exacter resemblance of the Athenian stage, than is any where to be found in its most professed admirers and copyists." Again, *ibid.* "It is possible, there are, who think a want of reading, as well as vast superiority of genius, hath contributed to lift this astonishing man, to the glory of being esteemed the most original THINKER and SPEAKER, since the times of Homer."

To this extract I may add the sentiments of Dr. Edward Young on the same occasion. "Who knows whether Shakspeare might not have thought less, if he had read more? Who knows if he might not have laboured under the load of Jonson's learning, as Enceladus under Ætna? His mighty genius, indeed, through the most mountainous oppression would have breathed out some of his inextinguishable fire; yet possibly, he might not have risen up into that giant, that much more than common man, at which we now gaze with amazement and delight. Perhaps he was as learned as his dramatic province required; for whatever other learning he wanted, he was master of two books, which the last conflagration alone can destroy; the book of nature, and that of man. These he had by heart, and has transcribed many admirable pages of them into his immortal works. These are the fountain-head, whence

the Castilian streams of *original* composition flow; and these are often mudded by other waters, though waters in their distinct channel most wholesome and pure; as two chemical liquors, separately clear as crystal, grow foul by mixture, and offend the sight. So that he had not only as much learning as his dramatic province required, but, perhaps, as it could safely bear. If Milton had spared some of his learning, his muse would have gained more glory, than he would have lost by it."

*Conjectures on Original Composition.*

The first remark of Voltaire on this tragedy, is that the former king had been poisoned by his brother and his queen. The guilt of the latter, however, is far from being ascertained. The Ghost forbears to accuse her as an accessory, and very forcibly recommends her to the mercy of her son. I may add, that her conscience appears undisturbed during the exhibition of the mock tragedy, which produces no visible a disorder in her husband, who was really criminal. The last observation of the same author has no greater degree of veracity to boast of; for now, says he, all the actors in the piece are swept away, and one Monsieur Fortenbras is introduced to conclude it. Can this be true, when Horatio, Osrick, Voltimand, and Cornelius, survive? These, together with the whole court of Denmark, are supposed to be present at the catastrophe; so that we are not indebted to the Norwegian chief for having kept the stage from vacancy.

Monsieur de Voltaire has since transmitted in an Epistle to the Academy of Belles Lettres some remarks on the late French translation of Shakspeare; but alas! no traces of genius or vigour are discoverable in this *crambe repetita*, which is notorious only for its insipidity, fallacy, and malice. It serves indeed to shew an apparent decline of talents and spirit in its writer, who no longer relies on his own ability to depreciate a rival, but appeals in a plaintive strain to the queen and princesses of France for their assistance to stop the further circulation of Shakspeare's renown.

Impartiality, nevertheless, must acknowledge that his private correspondence displays a superior degree of animation. Perhaps an ague shook him when he appealed to the publick on this subject; but the effects of a fever seem to predominate in his subsequent letter to Monsieur D'Argenteuil on the same occasion; for such a letter it is as our John Dennis (while his frenzy lasted) might be supposed to have written. "C'est moi qui autrefois parlai le premier de ce Shakspeare: c'est moi qui le premier montrai aux François quelques perles que j'avois trouvées dans son énorme fumier." Mrs. Montague, the justly celebrated authoress of the *Essay on the genius and writings* of our author, was at Paris, and in the circle where these ravings of the Frenchman were first publicly recited. On hearing the illiberal expression already quoted, with no less elegance than readiness she replied—"C'est un fumier qui a fertilisé une terre bien ingrate."—In short, the author of *Zayre*, *Mabomet*, and *Semiramis*, possesses all the mischievous qualities of a midnight felon, who, in the hope to conceal his guilt, sets the house which he has robbed on fire.

As for Messieurs D'Alembert and Marmontel, they might safely be passed over with that neglect which their impotence of criticism deserves. Voltaire, in spite of his natural disposition to vilify an English poet, by adopting sentiments, characters, and situations from Shakspeare, has bestowed on him involuntary praise. Happily, he has not been disgraced by the worthless encomiums or disfigured by the awkward imitations of the other pair, who "follow in the chase not like hounds that hunt, but like those who fill up the cry." When D'Alembert declares that more sterling sense is to be met with in ten French verses than in thirty English ones, contempt is all that he provokes,—such contempt as can only be exceeded by that which every scholar will express, who may chance to look into the prose translation of Lucan by Marmontel, with the vain expectation of discovering either the sense, the spirit, or the whole of the original. STEVENS.

I formerly thought that the lines which have given rise to the foregoing observations, were extracted from some old play, of which it appeared to me probable that Christopher Marlowe was the author; but whatever Shakspeare's view in producing them may have been, I am now decidedly of opinion that they were written by himself, not in any former unsuccessful piece, but expressly for the play of *Hamlet*. It is observable that what Dr. Warburton calls "the fine similitude of the storm," is likewise found in our poet's *Venus and Adonis*.

The levity of behaviour which Hamlet assumes immediately after the disappearance of the ghost in the first act, [sc. v.] has been objected to; but the writer of some sensible Remarks on this tragedy, published in 1736, justly observes, that the poet's object there was, that Marcellus "might not imagine that the ghost had revealed to Hamlet some matter of great consequence to him, and that he might not therefore be suspected of any deep design."

"I have heard (adds the same writer,) many persons wonder, why the poet should bring in this ghost in complete armour.—I think these reasons may be given for it. We are to consider, that he could introduce him in these dresses only; in his regal dress, in a habit of interment, in a common habit, or in some fantastick one of his own invention. Now let us examine, which was most likely to affect the spectators with passions proper on the occasion.—

"The regal habit has nothing uncommon in it, nor surprising, nor could it give rise to any fine images. The habit of interment was something too horrible; for terror, not horror, is to be raised in the spectators. The common habit (or *habit de ville*, as the French call it,) was by no means proper for the occasion. It remains then that the poet should choose some habit from his own brain: but this certainly could not be proper, because invention in such a case would be so much in danger of falling into the grotesque, that it was not to be hazarded.

"Now as to the armour, it was very suitable to a king who is described as a great warrior, and is very particular; and consequently affects the spectators without being fantastick.—

"The king spurs on his son to revenge his soul and unnatural murder,  
F f 2 from

from these two considerations chiefly; that he was sent into the other world without having had time to repent of his sins, and without the necessary sacraments, according to the church of Rome, and that consequently his soul was to suffer, if not eternal damnation, at least a long course of penance in purgatory; which aggravates the circumstances of his brother's barbarity; and secondly, that Denmark might not be the scene of usurpation and incest, and the throne thus polluted and profaned. For these reasons he prompts the young prince to revenge; else it would have been more becoming the character of such a prince as Hamlet's father is represented to have been, and more suitable to his present condition, to have left his brother to the divine punishment, and to a possibility of repentance for his base crime, which, by cutting him off, he must be deprived of.

"To conform to the ground-work of his plot, Shakspeare makes the young prince feign himself mad. I cannot but think this to be injudicious; for so far from securing himself from any violence which he feared from the usurper, it seems to have been the most likely way of getting himself confined, and consequently debarred from an opportunity of revenging his father's death, which now seemed to be his only aim; and accordingly it was the occasion of his being sent away to England; which design, had it taken effect upon his life, he never could have revenged his father's murder. To speak truth, our poet by keeping too close to the ground-work of his plot, has fallen into an absurdity; for there appears no reason at all in nature, why the young prince did not put the usurper to death as soon as possible, especially as Hamlet is represented as a youth so brave, and so careless of his own life.

"The case indeed is this. Had Hamlet gone naturally to work, as we could suppose such a prince to do in parallel circumstances, there would have been an end of our play. The poet therefore was obliged to delay his hero's revenge: but then he should have contrived some good reason for it.

"His beginning his scenes of Hamlet's madness by his behaviour to Ophelia, was judicious, because by this means he might be thought to be mad for her, not that his brain was disturbed about state affairs, which would have been dangerous.

"It does not appear whether Ophelia's madness was chiefly for her father's death, or for the loss of Hamlet. It is not often that young women run mad for the loss of their fathers. It is more natural to suppose that, like *Chimene* in the *Cid*, her great sorrow proceeded from her father's being killed by the man she loved, and thereby making it indecent for her ever to marry him.

"Laertes's character is a very odd one; it is not easy to say whether it is good or bad; but his consenting to the villainous contrivance of the usurper's to murder Hamlet, makes him much more a bad man than a good one.—It is a very nice conduct in the poet to make the usurper build his scheme upon the generous unsuspecting temper of the person he intends to murder, and thus to raise the prince's character by the confession of his enemy; to make the villain ten times more odious from his own mouth. The contrivance of the foil unbated (i.e.

without

without a button,) is methinks too gross a deceit to go down even with a man of the most unsuspicious nature.

"Laertes's death and the queen's are truly poetical justice, and very naturally brought about, although I do not conceive it so easy to change rapiers in a scuffle without knowing it at the time. The death of the queen is particularly according to the strictest rules of poetical justice; for she loses her life by the villainy of the very person, who had been the cause of all her crimes.

"Since the poet deferred so long the Usurper's death, we must own that he has very naturally effected it, and still added fresh crimes to those the murderer had already committed.

"Upon Laertes's repentance for contriving the death of Hamlet, one cannot but feel some sentiments of pity for him; but who can see or read the death of the young prince without melting into tears and compassion? Horatio's earnest desire to die with the prince, thus not to survive his friend, gives a stronger idea of his friendship for Hamlet in the few lines on that occasion, than many actions or expressions could possibly have done. And Hamlet's begging him to *draw his breath in this barbed world* a little longer, to clear his reputation, and manifest his innocence, is very suitable to his virtuous character, and the honest regard that all men should have not to be misrepresented to posterity; that they may not set a bad example, when in reality they have set a good one: which is the only motive that can, in reason, recommend the love of fame and glory.

"Horatio's desire of having the bodies carried to a stage, &c. is very well imagined, and was the best way of satisfying the request of his deceased friend: and he acts in this, and in all points, suitably to the manly honest character, under which he is drawn throughout the piece. Besides, it gives a sort of content to the audience, that though their favourite (which must be Hamlet) did not escape with life, yet the greatest amends will be made him, which can be in this world, viz. justice done to his memory.

"Fortinbras comes in very naturally at the close of the play, and lays a very just claim to the throne of Denmark, as he had the dying voice of the prince. He in a few words gives a noble character of Hamlet, and serves to carry off the deceased hero from the stage with the honours due to his birth and merit." MALONE.

O T H E L L O.

## Persons Represented,

*Duke of Venice.*

*Brabantio, a Senator.*

*Two other Senators.*

*Gratiano, brother to Brabantio,*

*Lodovico, kinsman to Brabantio,*

*Othello, the Moor :*

*Cassio, his Lieutenant ;*

*Iago, his Ancient.*

*Roderigo, a Venetian Gentleman.*

*Montano, Othello's predecessor in the government of  
Cyprus.*

*Clown, servant to Othello.*

*Herald.*

*Desdemona, daughter to Brabantio, and wife to Othello,*

*Emilia, wife to Iago.*

*Bianca, a courtesan, mistress to Cassio.*

*Officers, Gentlemen, Messengers, Musicians, Sailors, At-  
tendants, &c.*

*SCENE, for the first Act, in Venice ; during the rest  
of the play, at a sea-port in Cyprus.*

# O T H E L L O.

## ACT I. SCENE I.

Venice. *A Street.*

*Enter RODERIGO, and IAGO.*

*Rod.* Tush, never tell me<sup>2</sup>, I take it much unkindly,  
That thou, Iago,—who hast had my purse,  
As if the strings were thine,—should'st know of this.

*Iago.* 'Sblood, but you will not hear me: if ever  
I did dream of such a matter, abhor me.

*Rod.* Thou told'st me, thou did'st hold him in thy hate.

*Iago.* Despise me, if I do not. Three great ones of the  
city,

In personal suit to make me his lieutenant,  
Oft capp'd to him<sup>3</sup>;—and, by the faith of man,  
I know my price, I am worth no worse a place:

<sup>2</sup> The story is taken from *Cymbio's Novels*. POPE.

I have not hitherto met with any translation of this novel (the seventh in the third decad) of so early a date as the age of Shakspeare; but undoubtedly many of those little pamphlets have perished between his time and ours.

This play was first entered at Stationers' Hall, Oct. 6, 1621, by Thomas Walkeiy. STEEVENS.

I have seen a French translation of *Cymbio*, by Gabriel Chappnys, Par. 1584. This is not a faithful one; and I suspect, through this medium the work came into English. FARMER.

This tragedy I have ascribed (but on no very sure ground) to the year 1611. See *An Attempt to ascertain the order of Shakspeare's plays*, Vol. I. MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> Tush, never tell me,] Thus the quarto, 1622. In the folio the word *tush* is omitted. MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> Oft capp'd to him;—] Thus the quarto. The folio reads, *Off-capp'd to him*. STEEVENS.

In support of the folio, *Antony and Cleopatra* may be quoted:

"I have ever held my cap off to thy fortunes."

This reading I once thought likely to be the true one. But a more intimate knowledge of the quarto copies has convinced me that they ought not without very strong reason to be departed from.

MALONE.

But

But he, as loving his own pride and purposes,  
 Evades them, with a bombast circumstance,  
 Horribly stuff'd with epithets of war;  
 And, in conclusion, nonsuits my mediators;  
 For, *certes*<sup>4</sup>, says he, *I have already*  
*Chosen my officer.* And what was he?  
 Forsooth, a great arithmetician<sup>5</sup>,  
 One Michael Cassio, a Florentine,  
 A fellow almost damn'd in a fair wife<sup>6</sup>;

That

4 —*certes*,] i. e. certainly, in truth. Obsolete, So Spenser, in the *Fairy Queen*, b. 4. c. 9:

"*Certes* her losse ought me to sorrow most." STEEVENS.

5 *Forsooth, a great arithmetician*,] So, in *Romeo and Juliet*, Mercutio says: "— one that fights by the book of *arithmetick*." STEEV.

Iago, however, means to represent Cassio, not as a person whose arithmetic was "*one, two, and the third in your bosom*," but as a man merely conversant with *civil* matters, and who knew no more of a squadron than the *number of men* it contained. So afterwards he calls him this *counter-caster*. MALONE.

6 *A fellow almost damn'd in a fair wife*;] Sir Thomas Hanmer supposed that the text must be corrupt, because it appears from a following part of the play that Cassio was an unmarried man. Mr. Steevens has clearly explained the words in the subsequent note: I have therefore no doubt that the text is right; and have not thought it necessary to insert Mr. Tyrwhitt's note, in which he proposed to read—"a fellow almost damn'd in a fair life." Shakspeare, he conceived, might allude to the judgment denounced in the gospel against those *of whom all men speak well*. MALONE.

Mr. Tyrwhitt's conjecture is ingenious, but cannot be right; for the malicious Iago would never have given Cassio the highest commendation that words can convey, at the very time that he wishes to depreciate him to Roderigo: though afterwards, in speaking to himself, [Act V. sc. i.] he gives him his just character. MASON.

That Cassio was *married*, is not sufficiently implied in the words, *a fellow almost damn'd in a fair wife*, since they may mean, according to Iago's licentious manner of expressing himself, no more than a man *very near being married*. This seems to have been the case in respect of Cassio.—Act IV. Scene i, Iago, speaking to him of Bianca, says, —*Why, the cry goes, that you shall marry her.* Cassio acknowledges that such a report has been raised, and adds, *This is the monkey's own giving out: she is persuaded I will marry her, out of her own love and self-flattery, not out of my promise.* Iago then, having heard this report before, very naturally circulates it in his present conversation with Roderigo. If Shakspeare, however, designed Bianca for a curtizan of Cyprus, (where Cassio had not yet been, and had therefore never seen her,)

Iago

That never set a squadron in the field,  
Nor the division of a battle knows

More

Iago cannot be supposed to allude to the report concerning his marriage with her, and consequently this part of my argument must fall to the ground.

Had Shakspeare, consistently with Iago's character, meant to make him say that Cassio was *actually damn'd in being married to a handsome woman*, he would have made him say it *outright*, and not have interposed the palliative *almost*. Whereas what he says at present amounts to no more than that (however near his marriage) he is not yet *completely damn'd*, because he is not *absolutely married*. The succeeding parts of Iago's conversation sufficiently evince, that the poet thought no mode of conception or expression too brutal for the character. STEEV.

There is no ground whatsoever for supposing that Shakspeare designed Bianca for a courtesan of Cyprus. Cassio, who was a Florentine, and Othello's lieutenant, sailed from Venice in a ship belonging to Verona, at the same time with the Moor; and what difficulty is there in supposing that Bianca, who, Cassio himself informs us, "haunted him every where," took her passage in the same vessel with him; or followed him afterwards? Othello, we may suppose, with some of the Venetian troops, sailed in another vessel; and Desdemona and Iago embarked in a third.

Iago, after he has been at Cyprus but one day, speaks of Bianca, (Act IV. sc. i.) as one whom he had long known: he must therefore (if the poet be there correct) have known her at Venice:

"Now will I question Cassio of Bianca,

"*A housewife, that, by selling her desires,*

"*Buys herself bread and cloaths: it is a creature,*

"*That dotes on Cassio;—as 'tis the strumpet's plague,*

"*To beguile many, and be beguil'd by one.*" MALONE.

Ingenuous as Mr. Tyrwhitt's conjecture may appear, it but ill accords with the context. Iago is enumerating the disqualifications of Cassio for his new appointment; but surely his *being well spoken of by all men* could not be one of them. It is evident from what follows that a report had prevailed at Venice of Cassio's being soon to be married "to the most fair Bianca." Now as she was in Shakspeare's language "a customer," it was with a view to such a connexion that Iago called the new lieutenant *a fellow almost damn'd*. It may be gathered from various circumstances that an intercourse between Cassio and Bianca had existed before they left Venice; for Bianca is not only well known to Iago at Cyprus, but she upbraids Cassio, (Act III. sc. iv.) with having been absent a week from her, when he had not been *two days* on the island. Hence, and from what Cassio himself relates, (Act IV. sc. i.) *I was the other day talking on the sea-bank with certain Venetians, and thither comes the bauble; by this hand she falls thus about my neck;*"—it may be presumed she had secretly

More than a spinster; unless the bookish theorick<sup>7</sup>,  
 Wherein the toged consuls can propose<sup>8</sup>  
 As masterly as he: mere prattle, without practice,  
 Is all his foldiership. But, he, fir, had the election:  
 And I,—of whom his eyes had seen the proof,  
 At Rhodes, at Cyprus; and on other grounds  
 Christian and heathen,—must be be-lee'd and calm'd<sup>9</sup>

By

followed him to Cyprus: a conclusion not only necessary to explain the passage in question, but to preserve the consistency of the fable at large.—The *sea-bank* on which Cassio was conversing with certain Venetians, was at Venice; for he had never till the day before been at Cyprus: he specifies those with whom he conversed as *Venetians*, because he was himself a *Florentine*; and he mentions the behaviour of Bianca in their presence, as tending to corroborate the report she had spread that he was soon to marry her. HENLEY.

I think, as I have already mentioned, that Bianca was a Venetian courtesan: but the *sea-bank* of which Cassio speaks, may have been the shore of Cyprus. In several other instances beside this, our poet appears not to have recollected that the persons of his play had only been one day at Cyprus. I am aware, however, that this circumstance may be urged with equal force against the concluding part of my own preceding note; and the term *sea-bank* certainly adds support to what Mr. Henley has suggested, being the very term used by Lewkenor, in his account of the *Lido maggior of Venice*. See p. 453, n. 2. MALONE.

<sup>7</sup> —the bookish theorick,] *Theorick* for *theory*. STEEVENS.

This was the common language of Shakspeare's time. See Vol. III. p. 445, n. 8. MALONE.

<sup>8</sup> —the toged consuls—] The *rulers of the state*, or civil governments. The word is used by Marlowe, in the same sense, in *Tamburlaine*, a tragedy, 1590:

“Both we will raigne as *consuls* of the earth.” MALONE.

By *toged* perhaps is meant *peaceable*, in opposition to the *warlike* qualifications of which he had been speaking. He might have formed the word in allusion to the Latin adage,—*Cedant arma togæ*. STEEV.

<sup>9</sup> —must be be-lee'd and calm'd—] *Be-lee'd* and *be-calm'd* are terms of navigation.

I have been informed that one vessel is said to be in the *lee* of another, when it is so placed that the wind is intercepted from it. Iago's meaning therefore is, that Cassio had got to the wind of him, and *be-calm'd* him from going on.

To *be-calm* (as I learn from Falconer's *Marine Dictionary*) is likewise to obstruct the current of the wind in its passage to a ship, by any contiguous object. STEEVENS.

The quarto, 1622, reads—

—must be *lee'd* and *calm'd*—.

I suspect therefore that Shakspeare wrote—must be *lee'd* and *calm'd*.

The

By debtor and creditor, this counter-caster<sup>1</sup>;  
He, in good time, must his lieutenant be,  
And I, (God blefs the mark<sup>2</sup>!) his Moor-ship's<sup>3</sup> ancient.

*Rod.* By heaven, I rather would have been his hang-  
man.

*Iago.* But there's no remedy, 'tis the curse of service;  
Preferment goes by letter<sup>4</sup>, and affection,  
Not by the old gradation<sup>5</sup>, where each second  
Stood heir to the first. Now, fir, be judge yourself,  
Whether I in any just term am affin'd<sup>6</sup>  
To love the Moor.

*Rod.* I would not follow him then.

*Iago.* O, fir, content you;  
I follow him to serve my turn upon him:  
We cannot all be masters, nor all masters

The lee-side of a ship is that on which the wind blows. To *lee*, or to be *lee'd*, may mean, to fall to leeward, or to lose the advantage of the wind.

The reading of the text is that of the folio. I doubt whether there be any such sea-phrase as to *be-lee*; and suspect the word *be* was inadvertently repeated by the compositor of the folio.

Mr. Steevens has explain'd the word *becalm'd*, but where is it found in the text? MALONE.

<sup>1</sup> — *this counter-caster*;] It was anciently the practice to reckon up sums with *counters*. To this Shakspeare alludes again in *Cymbeline*, Act V. "— it fums up thousands in a trice: you have no true debtor and creditor, but it; of what's past, is, and to come, the discharge. Your neck, fir, is pen, book, and *counters*;" &c. Again, in *Acadastus*, a comedy, 1540: "I wyl cast my *counters*, or with *counters* make all my rekenynges." STEEVENS.

So, in *The Winter's Tale*:—"fifteen hundred thorn,—What comes the wool to?—I cannot do't without *counters*." MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> — *blefs the mark!*] Kelly, in his comments on Scots proverbs, observes, that the Scots, when they compare person to person, use this exclamation. STEEVENS.

<sup>3</sup> — *his Moorship's*—] The first quarto reads—his *warship's*— STE.

<sup>4</sup> — *by letter*,—] By recommendation from powerful friends. JOHNS.

<sup>5</sup> *Not by the old gradation*,—] Old gradation, is gradation established by ancient practice. JOHNSON.

<sup>6</sup> *Whether I in any just term am affin'd*—] *Affin'd* is the reading of the third quarto and the first folio. The second quarto and all the modern editions have *assign'd*. The meaning is, *Do I stand within any such terms of propinquity or relation to the Moor, as that it is my duty to love him?* JOHNSON.

The original quarto, 1622 has *assign'd*; but it was manifestly an error of the press. MALONE.

Cannot

Cannot be truly follow'd. You shall mark  
 Many a duteous and knee-crooking knave,  
 That, doing on his own obsequious bondage,  
 Wears out his time, much like his master's ass,  
 For nought but provender, and, when he's old, cashier'd;  
 Whip me such honest knaves<sup>7</sup>: Others there are,  
 Who, trimm'd in forms and visages of duty,  
 Keep yet their hearts attending on themselves;  
 And, throwing but shows of service on their lords,  
 Do well thrive by them, and, when they have lin'd their  
 coats,

Do themselves homage: these fellows have some foul;  
 And such a one do I profess myself.

For, sir,

It is as sure as you are Roderigo,  
 Were I the Moor, I would not be Iago:  
 In following him, I follow but myself;  
 Heaven is my judge, not I for love and duty,  
 But seeming so, for my peculiar end:  
 For when my outward action doth demonstrate  
 The native act and figure of my heart  
 In compliment extern<sup>8</sup>, 'tis not long after  
 But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve  
 For doves to peck at<sup>9</sup>: I am not what I am.

<sup>7</sup> — *honest knaves*:] *Knave* is here for *servant*, but with a mixture of sly contempt. JOHNSON.

<sup>8</sup> *In compliment extern*,] In that which I do only for an outward shew of civility. JOHNSON.

So, in Sir W. D'Avenant's *Albion*, 1629:

" — that in sight *extern*

" A patriarch seems." STEEVENS.

<sup>9</sup> *But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve*

*For doves to peck at*:] Thus the quarto, 1622. The folio reads—*For doves, &c.* I have adhered to the original copy, because I suspect Shakspeare had in his thoughts a passage in Lily's *Euphues and his England*, 1580: "As all coynes are not good that have the image of Cæsar, nor all gold, that is coyned with the kings stampe, so all is not truth that beareth the shew of godlinesse, nor all friends that beare a faire face. If thou pretend such love to Euphues, carry *thy heart on the backe of thy hand*, and thy tongue in thy palme, that I may see what is in thy minde, and thou with thy finger claspe thy mouth.—I can better take a blister of a nettle, than a pricke of a rose; more willing that a raven should peck out mine eyes, than a turtle peck at them." MALONE.

*Rod.* What a full fortune does the thick-lips owe<sup>1</sup>,  
If he can carry't thus!

*Iago.* Call up her father,  
Rouse him: make after him, poison his delight,  
Proclaim him in the streets; incense her kinsmen,  
And, though he in a fertile climate dwell,  
Plague him with flies: though that his joy be joy,  
Yet throw such changes of vexation on't,  
As it may lose some colour.

*Rod.* Here is her father's house; I'll call aloud.

*Iago.* Do; with like timorous accent, and dire yell,  
As when, by night and negligence, the fire  
Is spy'd in populous cities<sup>2</sup>.

*Rod.* What ho! Brabantio! signior Brabantio, ho!

*Iago.* Awake! what, ho! Brabantio! thieves! thieves!  
thieves!  
Look to your house, your daughter, and your bags!  
Thieves! thieves!

BRABANTIO, *above, at a window.*

*Bra.* What is the reason of this terrible summons?  
What is the matter there?

<sup>1</sup> *What a full fortune does the thick-lips owe,*] Full fortune is, I believe, a complete piece of good fortune, as in another scene of this play a full soldier is put for a complete soldier. To owe is in ancient language, to own, to possess. STEEVENS.

So, in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

"—not the imperious shew

"Of the full-*fortun'd* Cæsar—."

Full is used by Chaucer in the same sense in his *Troilus*, B. I.

"Sufficeth this, my full friend Pandare,

"That I have said—."

See also Vol. VII. p. 534, n. 5. MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> *As when, by night and negligence, the fire*

*Is spy'd in populous cities.*] The meaning, as Mr. Edwards has observed, is, "not that the fire was spied by negligence, but the fire, which came by night and negligence, was spied.—And this double meaning to the same word is common to Shakspeare with all other writers, especially where the word is so familiar a one, as this in question. Ovid seems even to have thought it a beauty instead of a defect." MALONE.

The particle is used equivocally; the same liberty is taken by writers more correct.

*The wonderful creature! a woman of reason!*

*Never grave out of pride, never gay out of season.* JOHNSON.

*Rod.*

*Rod.* Signior, is all your family within?

*Iago.* Are your doors lock'd<sup>3</sup>?

*Bra.* Why? wherefore ask you this?

*Iago.* 'Zounds, fir, you are robb'd; for shame, put on your gown;

Your heart is burst<sup>4</sup>, you have lost half your soul;

Even now, very now, an old black ram

Is tupp<sup>5</sup>ing your white ewe<sup>5</sup>. Arise, arise;

Awake the snorting citizens with the bell,

Or else the devil will make a grandfire of you:

Arise, I say.

*Bra.* What, have you lost your wits?

*Rod.* Most reverend signior, do you know my voice?

*Bra.* Not I; What are you?

*Rod.* My name is—Roderigo.

*Bra.* The worse welcome:

I have charg'd thee, not to haunt about my doors:

In honest plainness thou hast heard me say,

My daughter is not for thee; and now, in madness,

Being full of supper, and distempering draughts<sup>6</sup>,

Upon malicious bravery, dost thou come

To start my quiet.

*Rod.* Sir, fir, fir,—

*Bra.* But thou must needs be sure,

My spirit, and my place, have in them power

To make this bitter to thee.

*Rod.* Patience, good fir.

*Bra.* What tell'st thou me of robbing? this is Venice;

<sup>3</sup> *Are your doors lock'd?*] The first quarto reads, Are all doors lock'd? STEEVENS.

<sup>4</sup> — *is burst,*] i. e. broken. *Burst* for *broke* is used in our author's *King Henry IV.* P. II: "— and then he *burst* his head for crowding among the marshal's men." STEEVENS.

See also Vol. III. p. 244, n. 6, and p. 312, n. 1. MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> — *tupp<sup>ing</sup> your white ewe.*] In the north of England a ram is called a *tup*. MALONE.

<sup>6</sup> — *distempering draughts,*—] To be distempered with liquor, was, in Shakespeare's age, the phrase for intoxication. In *Hamlet*, the king is said to be "marvellous *distempered* with wine." MALONE.

My house is not a grange<sup>7</sup>.

*Rod.* Most grave Brabantio,  
In simple and pure soul I come to you.

*Iago.* 'Zounds, sir, you are one of those, that will not serve God, if the devil bid you. Because we come to do you service, you think we are ruffians: You'll have your daughter cover'd with a Barbary horse; you'll have your nephews neigh to you<sup>8</sup>: you'll have coursers for cousins, and gennets for Germans<sup>9</sup>.

*Bra.* What profane wretch art thou<sup>1</sup>?

*Iago.*

<sup>7</sup> — *this is Venice:*

*My house is not a grange.*] That is, "you are in a populous city, not in a *lone house*, where a robbery might easily be committed." *Grange* is strictly and properly the farm of a monastery, where the religious repositied their corn. *Grangia*, Lat. from *Gratum*. But in Lincolnshire, and in other northern counties, they call every lone house, or farm which stands solitary, a *grange*. WARTON.

So, in *Daniel's Complaint of Rosamond*, 1599:

"— soon was I train'd from court

"To a solitary grange," &c.

Again, in *Measure for Measure*:

"At the moated grange resides this dejected Mariana."

STEEVENS.

<sup>8</sup> — *your nephews neigh to you:*] *Nephew*, in this instance, has the power of the Latin word *nepos*, and signifies a grandson, or any lineal descendant, however remote. So, in Spenser:

"And all the sons of these five brethren reign'd

"By due success, and all their *nephews* late,

"Even thrice eleven descents the crown obtain'd."

Again, in Chapman's version of the *Odyssey*, B. 24, Laertes says of Telemachus, his *grandson*:

"— to behold my son

"And *nephew* close in such contention."

Sir W. Dugdale very often employs the word in this sense; and without it, it would not be very easy to shew how *Brabantio* could have *nephews* by the marriage of his daughter. Ben Jonson likewise uses it with the same meaning. The alliteration in this passage caused Shakspeare to have recourse to it. STEEVENS.

See Vol. VI. p. 555, n. 7. MALONE.

<sup>9</sup> — *gennets for Germans.*] A *jennet* is a Spanish horse. STEEVENS.

<sup>1</sup> *What profane wretch art thou?*] That is, *what wretch of gross and licentious language?* In that sense Shakspeare often uses the word *profane*. JOHNSON.

*Iago.* I am one, sir, that comes to tell you, your daughter and the Moor are now making the beast with two backs<sup>2</sup>.

*Bra.* Thou art a villain.

*Iago.* You are—a senator.

*Bra.* This thou shalt answer; I know thee, Roderigo.

*Red.* Sir, I will answer any thing. But I beseech you, If't be your pleasure<sup>3</sup>, and most wise consent, (As partly, I find, it is,) that your fair daughter, At this odd-even and dull watch o' the night<sup>4</sup>, Transported—with no worse nor better guard,

It is so used by other writers of the same age:

“How far off dwells the house-furgeon?”

“—You are a *profane* fellow, i'faith.”

Again, in Ben Jonson's *Tale of a Tub*:

“By the fly justice, and his clerk *profane*.” STEEVENS.

<sup>2</sup> — *your daughter and the Moor are now making the beast with two backs.*] This is an ancient proverbial expression in the French language, whence Shakspeare probably borrowed it; for in the *Dictionnaire des Proverbes François*, par G. D. B. Brusselles, 1710, 12mo, I find the following article: “Faire la bête à deux dos,” pour dire, faire l'amour. PERCY.

In the *Dictionnaire Comique*, par le Roux, 8vo. 1750, this phrase is more particularly explained, under the article *Bete*. “Faire la bête à deux dos. Maniere de parler, qui signifie être couché avec une femme; faire le deduit.—‘Et faisoient tous-deux souvent ensemble la bête à deux dos joyeusement.’—Rabelais. liv. I.” There was a translation of Rabelais published in the time of Shakspeare. MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> *If't be your pleasure, &c.*] This and the sixteen following lines are not in the original quarto. They are found in the folio, 1623.

MALONE.

<sup>4</sup> *At this odd-even and dull-watch o' the night,*] “The *even of night*,” Dr. Johnson observes, “is *midnight*, the time when night is divided into two *even* parts.” This is certainly true; but our business is to explain the *odd-even of night*. By this singular expression,—“this *odd-even of night*,” our poet appears to have meant, that it was just approaching to, or just past, midnight; so near, or so recently past, that it was doubtful whether at that moment it stood at the point of midnight, or at some other less equal division of the twenty four hours; which a few minutes either before or after midnight would be.

So, in *Macbeth*:

“——— What is the *night*?”

“*Lady M.* Almost at *odds with morning*, which is which.”

Shakspeare was probably thinking of his boyish school-play, *odd or even*. MALONE.

But

# THE MOOR OF VENICE.

45

But with a knave of common hire, a gondalier,—  
To the gross clasps of a lascivious Moor,—  
If this be known to you, and your allowance<sup>5</sup>,  
We then have done you bold and saucy wrongs;  
But, if you know not this, my manners tell me,  
We have your wrong rebuke. Do not believe,  
That, from the sense of all civility<sup>6</sup>,  
I thus would play and trifle with your reverence:  
Your daughter,—if you have not given her leave,—  
I say again, hath made a gross revolt;  
Tying her duty, beauty, wit, and fortunes,  
In an extravagant<sup>7</sup> and wheeling stranger<sup>8</sup>,  
Of here and every where: Straight satisfy yourself:  
If she be in her chamber, or your house,  
Let loose on me the justice of the state  
For thus deluding you<sup>9</sup>.

*Bra.* Strike on the tinder, ho!  
Give me a taper;—call up all my people:—  
This accident is not unlike my dream,  
Belief of it oppresses me already:—

<sup>5</sup> — and your allowance,] i. e. done with your approbation. See Vol. VIII. p. 203, n. 3, and p. 505, n. 5. MALONE.

<sup>6</sup> That from the sense of all civility,] That is, in opposition to, or departing from the sense of all civility. So, in *Twelfth Night*:

“But this is from my commission.”

Again, in *The Mayor of Queenborough*, by Middleton, 1661:

“But this is from my business.” MALONE.

<sup>7</sup> In an extravagant, &c.] *Extravagant* is here used in its Latin signification, for wandering. Thus in *Hamlet*: “—The extravagant and erring spirit,—” STEEVENS.

<sup>8</sup> Tying her duty, beauty, wit, and fortunes,

In an extravagant and wheeling stranger,] Thus the old copies, for which the modern editors, following Mr. Pope, have substituted—*To an extravagant, &c.* In *K. Lear* we find—“And hold our lives in mercy; (not at mercy;)” in *The Winter’s Tale*, “he was torn to pieces with a bear,” not “by a bear;” and in *Hamlet*,

“To let this canker of our nature come

“In further evil.”

So, in the next scene, p. 468, we have “—in your part,” not “on your part.” We might substitute modern for ancient phraseology in all these passages with as much propriety as in the present. We yet say, “she is wrapp’d up in him.” MALONE.

<sup>9</sup> For thus deluding you.] The first quarto reads, *For this delusion.*

STEEVENS.

Light, I say! light!

[*Exit, from above.*]

*Iago.* Farewel; for I must leave you:

It seems not meet, nor wholefome to my place,

To be produc'd<sup>1</sup> (as, if I stay, I shall,)

Against the Moor: For, I do know, the state,—

However this may gall him with some check<sup>2</sup>,—

Cannot with safety cast him<sup>3</sup>; for he's embark'd

With such loud reason to the Cyprus' wars,

(Which even now stand in act) that, for their souls,

Another of his fathom they have not,

To lead their business: in which regard,

Though I do hate him as I do hell pains,

Yet, for necessity of present life,

I must shew out a flag and sign of love,

Which is indeed but sign. That you shall surely find him,

Lead to the Sagittar<sup>4</sup> the raised search;

And there will I be with him. So, farewell. [*Exit.*]

*Enter, below, BRABANTIO, and Servants with torches.*

*Bra.* It is too true an evil: gone she is;

And what's to come of my despised time<sup>5</sup>,

Is nought but bitterness.—Now, Roderigo,

Where didst thou see her?—O unhappy girl!—

With the Moor, say'st thou?—Who would be a father?—

How didst thou know 'twas she?—O, thou deceiv'st me

Past thought<sup>6</sup>!—What said she to you?—Get more tapers;

Raise

<sup>1</sup> To be produc'd—] The folio reads, *produced*. STEEVENS.

<sup>2</sup> — *some check*,] Some rebuke. JOHNSON.

<sup>3</sup> — *cast him*;—] That is, *dismiss* him; *reject* him. We still say, a *cast* coat, and a *cast* serving-man. JOHNSON.

<sup>4</sup> — *the Sagittar*—] Thus the quarto, 1622. Folio:—the *Sagittary*. MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> *And what's to come of my despised time*,] *Despised time*, is time of no value; time in which

“There's nothing serious in morality;

“The wine of life is drawn, and the mere dregs

“Are left this vault to brag of.” *Macbeth*. JOHNSON.

Again, in *Romeo and Juliet*:

“——— expire the term

“Of a *despised* life, clos'd in my breast.” STEEVENS.

<sup>6</sup> — *O, thou deceiv'st me*

*Past thought*!—] Thus the quarto 1622. The folio 1623, and the quartos 1630 and 1655 read,

THE MOOR OF VENICE. 453

Raise all my kindred.—Are they marry'd, think you?

Rod. Truly, I think, they are.

Bra. O heaven!—How got she out?—O treason of the blood!—

Fathers, from hence trust not your daughters' minds  
By what you see them act.—Is there not charms<sup>7</sup>,  
By which the property<sup>8</sup> of youth and maidhood<sup>9</sup>  
May be abus'd? Have you not read, Roderigo,  
Of some such thing?

Rod. Yes, sir; I have, indeed.

Bra. Call up my brother.—O, that you had had her!—  
Some one way, some another.—Do you know  
Where we may apprehend her and the Moor?

Rod. I think, I can discover him; if you please  
To get good guard, and go along with me.

Bra. Pray you, lead on<sup>1</sup>. At every house I'll call;  
I may command at most:—Get weapons, ho!

And raise some special officers of night<sup>2</sup>.—

On, good Roderigo; I'll deserve your pains. [Exeunt.

SCENE

——— *O she deceives me*<sup>6</sup>

*Past thought.*

I have chosen the apostrophe to his absent daughter, as the most spirited of the two readings. STEEVENS.

<sup>7</sup> —*Is there not charms,*] Is there not such a thing as charms, &c. The modern editors, following an alteration made by the editor of the second folio, read—*Are there not charms,* &c. MALONE.

<sup>8</sup> *By which the property of youth and maidhood*

*May be abus'd?*] By which the faculties of a young virgin may be infatuated, and made subject to illusions and false imagination:

“—wicked dreams abuse

“The curtain'd sleep.” *Macbeth.* JOHNSON.

<sup>9</sup> —*and maidhood*—] The quartos read—*and manhood*—. STEEV.

<sup>1</sup> *Pray you, lead on.*] The first quarto reads, *Pray lead me on.*

STEEVENS.

<sup>2</sup> *And raise some special officers of night.*—] Thus the original quarto, 1622; for which the editor of the folio substituted—*officers of might*; a reading which all the modern editors have adopted. I have more than once had occasion to remark that the quarto readings were sometimes changed by the editor of the folio, from ignorance of our poet's phraseology or meaning.

I have no doubt that Shakspeare, before he wrote this play, read *The Commonwealth and Government of Venice*, translated from the Italian

## S C E N E II.

*The same. Another street.**Enter OTHELLO, IAGO, and Attendants.*

*Iago.* Though in the trade of war I have slain men,  
 Yet do I hold it very stuff o' the conscience<sup>3</sup>  
 To do no contriv'd murder; I lack iniquity  
 Sometimes, to do me service: Nine or ten times  
 I had thought to have yer'k'd him<sup>4</sup> here under the ribs.

*Oth.* 'Tis better as it is,

by Lewes Lewkenor, and printed in 4to, 1599: a book prefixed to which we find a copy of verses by Spenser. This treatise furnished our poet with the knowledge of those *officers of night*, whom Brabantio here desires to be called to his assistance.

"For the greater expedition thereof, of these kinds of judgments, the heades or chieftaines of *the officers by night* do obtaine the authority of which the advocates are deprived. These *officers of the night* are six, and six likewise are those meane officers, that have only power to correct base vagabonds and trifling offences.

"Those that do execute this office are called heades of the tribes of the city, because out of every tribe, (for the city is divided into six tribes,) there is elected an *officer of the night*, and a head of the tribe. —The duty of eyther of these officers is, to keepe a watch every other night by turn, within their tribes; and, now the one and then the other, to make rounds about his quarter, till the dawning of the day, being always guarded and attended on with weaponed officers and sergeants, and to see that there be not any disorder done in the darkness of the night, which alwaies emboldeneth men to naughtinesse; and that there be not any houses broken up, nor theeves nor rogues lurking in corners with intent to do violence." *Commonwealth of Venice*, pp. 97, 99. MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> — stuff o' the conscience — ] This expression to common readers appears harsh. *Stuff of the conscience* is, *substance, or essence of the conscience*. *Stuff* is a word of great force in the Teutonic languages. The elements are called in Dutch, *Hoofd stoffen*, or *head-stuffs*.

JOHNSON,

Again, in *King Henry VIII.*

"You're full of heavenly *stuff*," &c.

Frish's *German Dictionary* gives this explanation of the word *stoff*:—*materies ex qua aliquid fieri poterit*. STEVENS.

<sup>4</sup> *I had thought to have yer'k'd him* — ] Iago is probably here speaking of Roderigo. MALONE.

*Iago.*

Iago. Nay, but he prated,  
 And spoke such scurvy and provoking terms  
 Against your honour,  
 That, with the little godliness I have,  
 I did full hard forbear him. But, I pray, sir,  
 Are you fast marry'd? for, be sure of this,—  
 That the magnifico<sup>5</sup> is much belov'd;  
 And hath, in his effect, a voice potential  
 As double as the duke's<sup>6</sup>: he will divorce you;

<sup>5</sup> — *the magnifico*—] “The chief men of Venice are by a peculiar name called *Magnifici*, i. e. *magnifices*.” *Minthew's Dictionary*. See too *Volpone*. TOLLET.

<sup>6</sup> — *a voice potential*

*As double as the duke's*:] It appears from Thomas's *History of Italy*, 4to. 1560, to have been a popular opinion, though a false one, that the duke of Venice had a *double voice*. “Whereas,” says he, “many have reported, the duke in balloting should have *two voices*; it is nothing so; for in giving his voice he hath but one ballot, as all others have.” Shakspeare, therefore, might have gone on this received opinion, which he might have found in some other book. Supposing, however, that he had learned from this very passage that the duke had *not* a double voice in the Council of Seven, yet as he has a vote in each of the various councils of the Venetian state, (a privilege which no other person enjoys,) our poet might have thought himself justified in the epithet which he has here used; and this circumstance, which he might have found in a book already quoted, Contarino's *Commonwealth and Government of Venice*, 4to, 1599, was, I believe, here in his thoughts.

“The duke himself also, if he will, may use the authority of an advocate or president, and make report to the council of any offence, and of any amercement or punishment that is thereupon to be inflicted;—for so great is the prince's authority, that he may, in whatsoever court, ADJOIN<sup>g</sup> himself to the magistrate therein, being president, as his colleague and companion, and have EQUAL POWER WITH THE OTHER PRESIDENTS, that he might so by this means be able to look into all things.” p. 41. Again, *ibidem*, p. 42: “Besides this, this prince [i. e. the duke,] hath in every council equal authority with any of them, for one suffrage or lotte.” Thus we see, though he had not a double voice in any one assembly, yet as he had a vote in all the various assemblies, his voice, thus added to the voice of each of the presidents of those assemblies, might with strict propriety be called *double*, and *potential*.—*Potential*, Dr. Johnson thinks, means, operative, having the effect, (by weight and influence,) without the external actual property. It is used, he conceives, “in the sense of science; a caustick is called *potential* fire.” I question whether Shakspeare meant more by the word than *operative*, or *powerful*. MALONE.

Or put upon you what restraint and grievance  
The law (with all his might, to enforce it on,)  
Will give him cable.

*Oth.* Let him do his spite:  
My services, which I have done the signiory,  
Shall out-tongue his complaints. 'Tis yet to know,  
(Which, when I know that boasting is an honour,  
I shall promulgate<sup>7</sup>;) I fetch my life and being  
From men of royal siege<sup>8</sup>; and my demerits<sup>9</sup>  
May speak, unbonnetted<sup>1</sup>, to as proud a fortune

As

<sup>7</sup> — 'Tis yet to know,  
(Which, when I know that boasting is an honour,  
I shall promulgate,)—] Thus the folio. The quarto, 1622, reads;  
—Tis yet to know  
That boasting is an honour.  
I shall promulgate, I fetch, &c.

Some words certainly were omitted at the press; and perhaps they have been supplied in the wrong place. Shakspeare might have written:

— 'Tis yet to know  
That boasting is an honour; which when I know,  
I shall promulgate, I fetch my life, &c.

I am yet to learn that boasting is honourable, which when I have learned, I shall proclaim to the world that I fetch my life, &c.

MALONE.

<sup>8</sup> — *men of royal siege*;] Men who have sat upon royal thrones. The quarto has—*men of royal height*. *Siege* is used for *seat* by other authors. So, in Stowe's *Chronicle*, p. 575: "—there was set up a throne or *siege royall* for the king."

Again, in Spenser's *Faery Queen*, b. 2. c. 7:

"A stately *siege* of soveraign majesty." STEEVENS.

So, in Grafton's *Chronicle*, p. 443: "Incontinent after that he was placed in the *royal siege*," &c. MALONE.

<sup>9</sup> — *and my demerits*—] *Demerits* has the same meaning in our author, and many others of that age, as *merits*:

"Opinion that so sticks on Martius, may

"Of his *demerits* rob Cominius." *Coriolanus*.

Again, in Dugdale's *Warwickshire*, p. 850, edit. 1730: "Henry Conway, esq. for his singular *demerits* received the dignity of knight-hood."

*Merec* and *demerec* had the same meaning in the Roman language.

STEEVENS.

<sup>1</sup> *May speak unbonnetted*,] Thus all the copies read this passage. But, to speak *unbonnetted*, is to speak *with the cap off*, which is directly

As this that I have reach'd : For know, Iago,  
But that I love the gentle Desdemona,  
I would not my unhoused<sup>2</sup> free condition  
Put into circumscription and confine  
For the sea's worth<sup>3</sup>. But, look ! what lights come yonder ?

*Enter CASSIO, at a distance, and certain officers, with torches.*

*Iago.* These are the raised father, and his friends :  
You were best go in.

*Oth.* Not I : I must be found ;

My

rectly opposite to the poet's meaning. Othello means to say, that his birth and services set him upon such a rank, that he may speak to a senator of Venice with his hat on ; i. e. without shewing any marks of deference or inequality. I therefore am inclined to think Shakspeare wrote :

*May speak, and bonnetted, &c.* THEOBALD.

*Bonnetted* (says Cotgrave) is to *put off one's cap*. So, in *Coriolanus* : "—those, who having been supple and courteous to the people, *bonnetted* without any further deed to have them at all into their estimation." *Unbonnetted* may therefore signify, *without taking the cap off*. We might, I think, venture to read *imbonnetted*. It is common with Shakspeare to make or use words compounded in the same manner. Such are *impawon*, *impaint*, *impale*, and *immask*. Of all the readings hitherto proposed, that of Theobald is, I think, the best. STEEVENS.

The objection to Mr. Steevens's explanation of *unbonnetted*, i. e. *without taking the cap off*, is, that Shakspeare has himself used the word in *K. Lear*, Act III. sc. i. with the very contrary signification, namely, *for one whose cap is off* :

"—*Unbonnetted* he runs,

" And bids what will take all."

He might, however, have employed the word here in a different sense. MALONE.

*Unbonnetted*, is uncovered, revealed, made known. In the second act and third scene of this play we meet with an expression similar to this : "—you *unlace* your reputation ;" and another in *As you like it*, Act IV. sc. i. "Now *unmuzzle* your wisdom." A. C.

<sup>2</sup> — *unhoused* — ] Free from domestic cares. A thought natural to an adventurer. JOHNSON.

Othello talking as a soldier, *unhoused* may signify the having no settled house or habitation. WHALLEY.

<sup>3</sup> *For the sea's worth.* ] I would not marry her, though she were as rich as the Adriatick, which the Doge annually marries. JOHNSON.

I believe

My parts, my title, and my perfect soul,  
Shall manifest me rightly. Is it they?

*Iago.* By Janus, I think no.

*Oth.* The servants of the duke, and my lieutenant,  
The goodness of the night upon you, friends!  
What is the news?

*Caf.* The duke does greet you, general;  
And he requires your haste, post-haste appearance,  
Even on the instant.

*Oth.* What is the matter, think you?

*Caf.* Something from Cyprus, as I may divine;  
It is a business of some heat: the gallies  
Have sent a dozen sequent messengers<sup>4</sup>  
This very night, at one another's heels;  
And many of the consuls<sup>5</sup>, rais'd, and met,  
Are at the duke's already: You have been hotly call'd for;  
When, being not at your lodging to be found,

I believe the common and obvious meaning is the true one.

The same words occur in Sir W. D'Avenant's *Cruel Brother*, 1630:

"— he would not loose that privilege,

" *For the sea's worth.*"

Perhaps the phrase is proverbial.

Pliny the naturalist has a chapter on *the riches of the sea*.

Again, in the *Winter's Tale*:

" ——— for all the sun sees, or

" The close earth wombs, or *the profound sea bides*

" *In unknown fathoms,*" &c.

Again, in *King Henry V.* Act I:

" ——— As rich with praise,

" As is the ouze, and *bottom of the sea,*

" With sunken wreck, and sumless treasures." STEEVENS.

4 — sequent messengers.—] The first quarto reads—*frequent messengers.* STEEVENS.

5 — consuls.] Hanmer reads, *council*. Theobald would have us read *counsellors*. Venice was originally governed by *consuls*: and *consuls* seems to have been commonly used for *counsellors*, as before in this play. In *Albion's Triumph*, a masque, 1631, the emperor Albanact is said to be attended by fourteen consuls.—Again: "*The habits of the consuls were after the same manner.*" Geoffrey of Monmouth, and Matthew Paris after him, call both dukes and earls, *consuls*. STEEVENS.

See p. 442, n. 8. MALONE.

The senate hath sent about three several quests<sup>6</sup>,  
To search you out.

Oth. 'Tis well I am found by you.  
I will but spend a word here in the house,  
And go with you.

[Exit.

Caf. Ancient, what makes he here?

Iago. 'Faith, he to-night hath boarded a land carack<sup>7</sup>;   
If it prove lawful prize, he's made for ever.

Caf. I do not understand,

Iago. He's married.

Caf. To who<sup>8</sup>?

Re-enten

<sup>6</sup> *The senate hath sent about—*] The early quartos, and all the modern editors, have,

*The senate sent above three several quests.*

The folio, *The senate hath sent about, &c.* that is, *about* the city. I have adopted the reading of the folio. JOHNSON.

*Quests* are, on this occasion, searches. So, in Heywood's *Brazen Age*, 1613:

"Now, if in all his *quests*, he be withheld,—." STEEVENS.

<sup>7</sup> — *a land carack*;] A *carack* is a ship of great bulk, and commonly of great value; perhaps what we now call a *galleon*. JOHNSON. So, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Coxcomb*:

"—They'll be freighted;

"They're made like *caracks*, all for strength and stowage."

STEEVENS.

Mr. Mason observes, that "the first ship that came richly laden from the West Indies to Europe were those from the *Caraccas*;" and seems to think that the vessel called a *carack* derived its name from thence. But a *carack*, or *carick*, (for so it was more frequently written in Shakspeare's time,) is of higher origin, and was denominated from the Spanish word, *caraca*, which signifies a vessel of great bulk, constructed to carry a heavy burthen. The Spanish *caraca*, Minshew thinks, may have been formed from the Italian *carico*, a lading, or freight.

MALONE.

<sup>8</sup> *To who*?] It is somewhat singular that Cassio should ask this question. In the third scene of the third Act, Iago says:

Did Michael Cassio, when you woo'd my lady,

Know of your love?

Oth. *From first to last.*

He who was acquainted with the object courted by his friend, could have little reason for doubting to whom he would be married. STEEV.

Cassio's seeming ignorance of Othello's courtship or marriage might only be affected; in order to keep his friend's secret, till it became publicly known. BLACKSTONE.

*Re-enter OTHELLO.*

*Iago.* Marry, to—Come, captain, will you go?

*Oth.* Have with you.

*Cas.* Here comes another troop to seek for you.

*Enter BRABANTIO, RODERIGO, and Officers of night,  
with torches and weapons.*

*Iago.* It is Brabantio:—general, be advis'd<sup>o</sup>;  
He comes to bad intent.

*Oth.* Hola! stand there!

*Rod.* Signior, it is the Moor.

*Bra.* Down with him, thief! [*They draw on both sides.*]

*Iago.* You, Roderigo! come, fir, I am for you.

*Oth.* Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them.—

Good signior, you shall more command with years,  
Than with your weapons.

*Bra.* O thou foul thief, where hast thou stow'd my daughter?

Damn'd as thou art, thou hast enchanted her:  
For I'll refer me to all things of sense,  
If she in chains of magick were not bound,  
Whether a maid—so tender, fair, and happy;  
So opposite to marriage, that she shunn'd  
The wealthy curled darlings of our nation<sup>a</sup>,—

Would

Or he might fear that Othello had proved false to the gentle Desdemona, and married another. MALONE.

<sup>o</sup> —be advis'd;] That is, be cool; be cautious; be discreet.

<sup>a</sup> *The wealthy curled darlings of our nation,*] *Curled* is elegantly and ostentatiously dressed. He had not the hair particularly in his thoughts.

JOHNSON.

On another occasion Shakspeare employs the same expression, and evidently alludes to the hair:

“If the first meet the curled Antony,” &c.

Sir W. D'Avenant uses the same expression in his *Just Italian*, 1630:

“The curl'd and filken nobles of the town.”

Again:

“Such is the curled youth of Italy.”

I believe Shakspeare has the same meaning in the present instance.

STEEVENS,

That

Would ever have, to incur a general mock,  
Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom  
Of such a thing as thou; to fear, not to delight<sup>2</sup>,  
Judge me<sup>3</sup> the world, if 'tis not gross in sense,  
That thou hast practis'd on her with foul charms;  
Abus'd her delicate youth with drugs, or minerals,  
That waken motion<sup>4</sup>:—I'll have it disputed on:

'Tis

That Dr. Johnson was mistaken in his interpretation of this line, is ascertained by our poet's *Rape of Lucrece*, where the hair is not merely alluded to, but expressly mentioned, and the epithet *curled* is added as characteristick of a person of the highest rank:

"Let him have time to tear his *curled hair*."

Tarquin, a king's son, is the person spoken of. See Vol. X. p. 102, n. 1. Edgar, when he was "proud in heart and mind," *curl'd his hair*. MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> — to fear, not to delight.] To one more likely to terrify than to delight her. So, in the next scene (Brabantio is again the speaker):

"To fall in love with what *she fear'd* to look on."

Mr. Steevens supposes *fear* to be a verb here, used in the sense of to terrify; a signification which it formerly had. But *fear*, I apprehend, is a substantive, and poetically used for the *object* of fear. MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> Judge me, &c.] This and the five following lines are not in the quarto, 1622. MALONE.

<sup>4</sup> Abus'd her delicate youth with drugs, or minerals,

That waken motion:] The folio, where alone this passage is found, reads—That *weaken* motion. The emendation was made by Sir Thomas Hanmer; and I have adopted it, because I have a good reason to believe that the words *weaken* and *waken* were in Shakspeare's time pronounced alike, and hence the mistake might easily have happened. *Motion* is elsewhere used by our poet precisely in the sense required here. So, in *Cymbeline*:

"—— for there's no *motion*

"That tends to vice in man, but I affirm

"It is the woman's part."

Again, in *Hamlet*:

"—— sense sure you have,

"Else could you not have *motion*."

Again, in *Measure for Measure*:

"—— one who never feels

"The wanton stings and *motions* of the sense."

So also, in *A Mad World, my Masters*, by Middleton, 1608:

"And in myself sooth up adulterous *motions*,

"And such an appetite as I know damns me."

'Tis probable, and palpable to thinking.  
 I therefore apprehend and do attach thee,  
 For an abuser<sup>3</sup> of the world, a practiser  
 Of arts inhibited and out of warrant:—  
 Lay hold upon him; if he do resist,  
 Subdue him at his peril.

We have in the play before us—*waken'd wrath*, and I think in some other play of Shakspeare—*waken'd love*. So, in our poet's 117th Sonnet:

"But shoot not at me in your *waken'd hate*."

Ben Jonson in the preface to his *Volpone* has a similar phraseology. "—it being the office of the comick poet to *stirre up gentle affections*."

Mr. Theobald reads—That weaken *notion*, i. e. says he, her right conception and idea of things; understanding, judgment.

This reading it must be acknowledged, derives some support from a passage in *King Lear*, Act II. sc. iv.—"either his *notion weakens*, or his discernings are lethargy'd." But the objection to it is, that no opiates or intoxicating potions or powders of any sort can distort or pervert the *intellects*, but by destroying them for a time; nor was it ever at any time believed by the most credulous, that *love-powders*, as they were called, could *weaken the understanding*, though it was formerly believed that they could *fascinate the affections*; or in other words, *waken motion*.

Brabantio afterwards asserts,

"That with some mixtures powerful o'er the blood,

"He wrought upon her."

(Our poet, it should be remembered, in almost all his plays uses *blood* for *passion*. See p. 356, n. 5; and Vol. VIII. p. 81, n. 4, and p. 199, n. 7.) And one of the senators asks Othello, not, whether he had *weaken'd* Desdemona's *understanding*, but whether he did

"—by indirect and forced courses

"Subdue and *poison* this young maid's *affections*."

The notion of the efficacy of love-powders was formerly so prevalent, that in the parliament summoned by King Richard the Third, on his usurping the throne, it was publicly urged as a charge against Lady Grey, that she had bewitched King Edward the Fourth "by strange potions and amorous *charms*." See Fabian, p. 495; Speed, p. 913, edit. 1632; and Habington's *History of King Edward the Fourth*, p. 35.

MALONE.

*Motion* in a subsequent scene of this play is used in the very sense in which Hammer would employ it. "But we have reason to cool our raging *motions*, our carnal stings, our unbitted lusts." STEEVENS.

<sup>3</sup> For an abuser, &c.] The first quarto reads, *Such an abuser*, &c. STEEVENS.

Oth.

*Oth.* Hold your hands,  
Both you of my inclining, and the rest:  
Were it my cue to fight, I should have known it  
Without a prompter.—Where will you that I go  
To answer this your charge?

*Bra.* To prison; till fit time  
Of law, and course of direct session,  
Call thee to answer.

*Oth.* What if I do obey?  
How may the duke be therewith satisfied;  
Whose messengers are here about my side,  
Upon some present business of the state,  
To bring me to him<sup>6</sup>?

*Off.* 'Tis true, most worthy signior,  
The duke's in council; and your noble self,  
I am sure, is sent for.

*Bra.* How! the duke in council!  
In this time of the night!—Bring him away:  
Mine's not an idle cause: the duke himself,  
Or any of my brothers of the state,  
Cannot but feel this wrong, as 'twere their own:  
For if such actions may have passage free,  
Bond-slaves, and pagans, shall our statesmen be<sup>7</sup>.

[*Exeunt.*]

<sup>6</sup> To bring.—] The quartos read—To bear. STEEVENS.

<sup>7</sup> Bond-slaves, and pagans, &c.] Brabantio alludes to the common condition of all blacks, who come from their own country, both *slaves* and *pagans*; and uses the words in contempt of Othello and his complexion.—If this Moor is now suffered to escape with impunity, it will be such an encouragement to his black countrymen, that we may expect to see all the first offices of our state filled up by the *pagans* and *bond-slaves* of Africa. STEEVENS.

In our authour's time *pagan* was a very common expression of contempt. So, in *K. Henry IV.* P. II.

“What *pagan* may that be?”

See Vol. V. p. 319, n. 8. MALONE.

## S C E N E III.

*The same. A Council-Chamber.**The Duke, and Senators, sitting at a table; Officers attending.*

*Duke.* There is no composition<sup>3</sup> in these news<sup>4</sup>,  
That gives them credit.

1. *Sen.* Indeed, they are disproportion'd;  
My letters say, a hundred and seven gallies.

*Duke.* And mine, a hundred and forty.

2. *Sen.* And mine, two hundred:

But though they jump not on a just account,  
(As in these cases, where the aim reports<sup>5</sup>,  
'Tis oft with difference,) yet do they all confirm  
A Turkish fleet, and bearing up to Cyprus.

*Duke.* Nay, it is possible enough to judgment;  
I do not so secure me in the error,  
But the main article I do approve  
In fearful sense.

*Sailor.* [*within.*] What ho! what ho! what ho!

*Enter an Officer, with a Sailor.*

*Off.* A messenger from the gallies.

*Duke.* Now? the business?

*Sail.* The Turkish preparation makes for Rhodes;  
So was I bid report here to the state,  
By signior Angelo<sup>6</sup>.

*Duke.* How say you by this change?

<sup>3</sup> *There is no composition—*] *Composition, for consistency, concordancy.*  
WARRBURTON.

<sup>4</sup> *—these news,*] Thus the quarto, 1622, and such was frequently the phraseology of Shakspeare's age. So, in *The Spanish Tragedy*, 1610:

"The news are more delightful to his soul,—"

See also Vol. VI. p. 194, n. 2. The folio reads—*this news*. MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> *—where the aim reports,*] In these cases where conjecture or suspicion tells the tale. *Aim* is again used as a substantive, in this sense, in *Julius Cæsar*:

"What you would work me to, I have some aim."

Thus the folio. The quarto reads—*they aim'd reports*. MALONE.  
To aim is to conjecture. So, in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*:

"But fearing lest my jealous aim might err," STEEVENS.

<sup>6</sup> *By Signior Angelo.*] This hemistich is wanting in the first quarto.  
STEEVENS.

1. *Sen.* This cannot be,  
 By no assay of reason<sup>2</sup>; 'tis a pageant,  
 To keep us in false gaze: When we consider  
 The importancy of Cyprus to the Turk;  
 And let ourselves again but understand,  
 That, as it more concerns the Turk than Rhodes,  
 So may he with more facile question<sup>3</sup> bear it,  
 For that it stands not<sup>4</sup> in such warlike brace<sup>5</sup>,  
 But altogether lacks the abilities  
 That Rhodes is dress'd in:—if we make thought of this,  
 We must not think, the Turk is so unskilful,  
 To leave that latest, which concerns him first;  
 Neglecting an attempt of ease, and gain,  
 To wake, and wage, a danger profitless<sup>6</sup>.  
*Duke.* Nay, in all confidence, he's not for Rhodes.  
*Offi.* Here is more news.

*Enter a Messenger.*

*Mef.* The Ottomites, reverend and gracious,  
 Steering with due course toward the isle of Rhodes,  
 Have there injoined them with an after fleet.

1. *Sen.* Ay, so I thought<sup>7</sup>:—How many, as you guess?

*Mef.* Of thirty sail: and now do they re-stem<sup>8</sup>  
 Their backward course, bearing with frank appearance  
 Their purposes toward Cyprus.—Signior Montano,

<sup>2</sup> *By no assay of reason*; —] Bring it to the test, examine it by reason as we examine metals by the assay, it will be found counterfeit by all trials. JOHNSON.

<sup>3</sup> — *with more facile question* —] With less dispute; with less opposition. MASON.

<sup>4</sup> *For that it stands not, &c.*] The seven following lines are added since the first edition. POPE.

<sup>5</sup> — *warlike brace*,] State of defence. To arm was called to brace on the armour. JOHNSON.

<sup>6</sup> *To wake, and wage, a danger profitless.*] To wage here, as in many other places in Shakspeare, signifies to fight, to combat. Thus, in *King Lear*:

“To wage against the enmity of the air.”

It took its rise from the more common expression, to wage war.

STEEVENS.

<sup>7</sup> *Ay, so, &c.*—] This line is not in the first quarto. STEEVENS.

<sup>8</sup> — *they do re-stem*—] The quartos mean to read *re-stem*, though in the first of them the word is misspelt. STEEVENS.

Your trusty and most valiant servitor,  
With his free duty, recommends you thus,  
And prays you to believe him <sup>9</sup>.

Duke. 'Tis certain then for Cyprus.—  
Marcus Lucchese <sup>1</sup>, is not he in town?

1. Sen. He's now in Florence.

Duke. Write from us; with him, post, post-haste dispatch <sup>2</sup>.

1. Sen. Here comes Brabantio, and the valiant Moor.

Enter BRABANTIO, OTHELLO, IAGO, RODERIGO, and  
Officers.

Duke. Valiant Othello, we must straight employ you  
Against the general enemy Ottoman <sup>3</sup>.

I did not see you; welcome, gentle signior; [to Bra.  
We lack'd your counsel and your help to-night.

Bra. So did I yours: Good your grace, pardon me;  
Neither my place, nor aught I heard of business,  
Hath rais'd me from my bed; nor doth the general care  
Take hold <sup>4</sup> on me; for my particular grief  
Is of so flood-gate and o'er-bearing nature,

<sup>9</sup> And prays you to believe him.] He intreats you not to doubt the truth of this intelligence. JOHNSON.

<sup>1</sup> Marcus Lucchese.] The old copies have Luccicos. Mr. Steevens made the correction. MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> — with him, post, post-haste dispatch.] i. e. tell him we wish him to make all possible haste. Post-haste is before in this play used adjectively:

"And he requires your haste, post-haste appearance."

All messengers in the time of Shakspeare were enjoined, "Haste haste; for thy life, post haste."

The reading of the text is that of the quarto, 1622, The folio reads:

"Write from us to him, post, post-haste dispatch." MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> Valiant Othello, we must straight employ you

Against the general enemy Ottoman.] It is part of the policy of the Venetian state never to entrust the command of an army to a native. "To exclude, therefore," (says Contareno, as translated by Lewkenor, 4to, 1599,) "out of our estate the danger or occasion of any such ambitious enterprises, our ancestors held it a better course to defend the dominions on the continent with foreign mercenary soldiers, than with their homebred citizens." Again: "Their charges and yearly occasions of disbursement are likewise very great; for alwaies they do entertain in honourable sort with great provision a captain general, who alwaies is a stranger borne." MALONE.

<sup>4</sup> Take hold —] The first quarto reads, Take any hold. STEEVENS.  
That

That it engults and swallows other sorrows,  
And it is still itself.

*Duke.* Why, what's the matter?

*Bra.* My daughter! O, my daughter!

*Sen.* Dead?

*Bra.* Ay, to me;

She is abus'd, stol'n from me, and corrupted  
By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks<sup>5</sup>;  
For nature so preposterously to err,  
Being not deficient<sup>6</sup>, blind, or lame of sense,  
Sans witchcraft could not<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> *By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks:*] Rymer has ridiculed this circumstance as unbecoming (both for its weakness and superfluousness) the gravity of the accuser, and the dignity of the tribunal; but his criticism only exposes his own ignorance. The circumstance was not only exactly in character, but urged with the greatest address, as the thing chiefly to be insisted on. For, by the Venetian law, the giving love-potions was very criminal, as Shakspeare without question well understood. Thus the law, *De i maleficii et herbarie*, cap. 17. of the Code, intitled, *Delta promission del maleficio*. "Statuimo etiamdio, che se alcun homo, o femina, harra fatto "maleficii, iquali se dimandano vulgarmente *amatorie*, o veramente "alcuni altri maleficii, che alcun homo o femina se haveffon in odio, "sia frusta et bollado, et che hara consagliado patisca simile pena." And therefore in the preceding scene Brabantio calls them,

— arts inhibited, and out of warrant. *WARBURTON.*

Though I believe Shakspeare knew no more of this Venetian law than I do, yet he was well acquainted with the edicts of that sapient prince king James the first, against

— practisers

Of arts inhibited and out of warrant. *STEEVENS.*

See p. 462, n. 4. *MALONE.*

<sup>6</sup> *Being not, &c.*] This line is wanting in the first quarto.

*STEEVENS.*

<sup>7</sup> *For nature so preposterously to err—*

*Sans witchcraft could not.*] Omit *to*, says Mr. Mason, "and then the sentence will be complete."

Omission is at all times the most dangerous mode of emendation, and here assuredly is unnecessary. We have again and again had occasion to observe, that Shakspeare frequently begins to construct a sentence in one mode, and ends it in another. See p. 239, n. 6. Here he uses *could not*, as if he had written, *has not the power or capacity to, &c.* It is not in nature *so to err*; she knows not how to do it.

*MALONE.*

*Duke.* Whoe'er he be, that, in this foul proceeding,  
Hath thus beguil'd your daughter of herself,  
And you of her, the bloody book of law  
You shall yourself read in the bitter letter,  
After your own sense; yea, though our proper son  
Stood in your action<sup>3</sup>.

*Bra.* Humbly I thank your grace.  
Here is the man, this Moor; whom now, it seems,  
Your special mandate, for the state affairs,  
Hath hither brought.

*Duke, and Sen.* We are very sorry for it.

*Duke.* What, in your own part, can you say to this?

[to Othello,

*Bra.* Nothing, but this is so.

*Oth.* Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors,  
My very noble and approv'd good masters,—  
That I have ta'en away this old man's daughter,  
It is most true; true, I have married her;  
The very head and front of my offending<sup>9</sup>  
Hath this extent, no more. Rude am I in my speech;  
And little bless'd with the set phrase of peace<sup>1</sup>;

<sup>3</sup> *Stood in your action.*] Were the man exposed to your charge or accusation. JOHNSON.

<sup>9</sup> *The very head and front of my offending—*] The main, the whole, unextenuated. JOHNSON.

A similar expression is found in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, 1590:

"The man that in the forehead of his fortunes,

"Beares figures of renowne and miracle."

Again, in *Troilus and Cressida*:

"So rich advantage of a promis'd glory,

"As smiles upon the forehead of this action." MALONE.

<sup>1</sup> *And little bless'd with the set phrase of peace;*] Thus the quarto, 1622. The folio reads—with the soft phrase of peace. *Soft* may have been used for *still* and *calm*, as opposed to the clamours of war. So, in *Coriolanus*:

"——— Say to them,

"Thou art their soldier, and, being bred in broils,

"Hast not the soft way, which thou dost confess

"Were fit for thee to use."

Again, in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

"——— 'Tis a worthy deed,

"And shall become you well, to entreat your captain

"To soft and gentle speech." MALONE.

For since these arms of mine had seven years' pith,  
 Till now some nine moons walted, they have us'd  
 Their dearest action<sup>2</sup> in the tented field;  
 And little of this great world can I speak,  
 More than pertains to feats of broil and battle;  
 And therefore little shall I grace my cause,  
 In speaking for myself: Yet, by your gracious patience,  
 I will a round unvarnish'd tale deliver  
 Of my whole course of love; what drugs, what charms,  
 What conjuration, and what mighty magick,  
 (For such proceeding I am charg'd withal,)  
 I won his daughter<sup>3</sup>.

*Bra.* A maiden never bold;  
 Of spirit so still and quiet, that her motion  
 Blush'd at herself<sup>4</sup>; And she,—in spite of nature,  
 Of years, of country, credit, every thing,—  
 To fall in love with what she fear'd to look on?  
 It is a judgment maim'd, and most imperfect,  
 That will confess—perfection so could err  
 Against all rules of nature; and must be driven  
 To find out practices of cunning hell,  
 Why this should be. I therefore vouch again,

<sup>2</sup> *Their dearest action*—] i. e. their most important action. See VI. VIII. p. 130, n. 6. MALONE.

I should give these words a more natural signification, and suppose that they mean—their favourite action, the action most dear to them. Othello says afterwards:

“ ——— I do agnize

“ A natural and prompt alacrity

“ I find in hardness.” MASON.

<sup>3</sup> *I won his daughter.*] i. e. I won his daughter *with*: and so all the modern editors read, adopting an interpolation made by the editor of the second folio, who was wholly unacquainted with our poet's metre and phraseology. In *Timon of Athens* we have the same elliptical expression:

“ Who had the world as my confectionary,

“ The mouths, the tongues, the eyes, and hearts of men,

“ At duty, more than I could frame employment [for].

See also Vol. VIII. p. 472, n. 3. where several other instances of a similar phraseology are collected. MALONE.

<sup>4</sup> *Blush'd at herself*;] Mr. Pope reads—at *itself*, but without necessity. Shakspeare, like other writers of his age, frequently uses the *personal*, instead of the *neutral* pronoun. STEEVENS.

That with some mixtures powerful o'er the blood,  
Or with some dram conjur'd to this effect,  
He wrought upon her.

*Duke.* To vouch this<sup>5</sup>, is no proof;  
Without more certain and more overt test<sup>6</sup>,  
Than these thin habits<sup>7</sup>, and poor likelihoods  
Of modern seeming, do prefer against him.

1. *Sen.* But, Othello, speak;—  
Did you by indirect and forced courses  
Subdue and poison this young maid's affections?  
Or came it by request, and such fair question  
As soul to soul affordeth?

*Oth.* I do beseech you,  
Send for the lady to the Sagittary<sup>8</sup>,  
And let her speak of me before her father:  
If you do find me foul in her report,  
The trust, the office, I do hold of you<sup>9</sup>,  
Not only take away, but let your sentence  
Even fall upon my life.

*Duke.* Fetch Desdemona hither.

*Oth.* Ancient, conduct them; you best know the place.—  
[*Exeunt IAGO, and Attendants.*]

<sup>5</sup> *To vouch, &c.*] The first folio unites this speech with the preceding one of *Brabantio*; and instead of *certain* reads *wider*.

STEEVENS.

<sup>6</sup> — *overt test*,] Open proofs, external evidence. JOHNSON.

<sup>7</sup> — *thin habits*,—

*Of modern seeming*,—] Weak shew of slight appearance.

JOHNSON.

So *modern* is generally used by Shakspeare. See Vol. III. p. 396, n. 6, and Vol. IV. p. 409, n. 8. MALONE.

The first quarto reads:

*These* are thin habits, and poore likelihoods

*Of modern seemings* you prefer against him. STEEVENS.

<sup>8</sup> — *to the Sagittary*,] So the folio here and in a former passage. The quarto in both places reads—the *Sagittar*. MALONE.

The *Sagittary* means the sign of the fictitious creature so called, i. e. an animal compounded of man and horse, and armed with a bow and quiver. STEEVENS.

<sup>9</sup> *The trust, &c.*] This line is wanting in the first quarto.

STEEVENS.

And

And, till she come, as truly<sup>1</sup> as to heaven  
I do confels<sup>2</sup> the vices of my blood,  
So justly to your grave ears I'll present  
How I did thrive in this fair lady's love,  
And she in mine.

*Duke.* Say it, Othello.

*Oth.* Her father

Lov'd me; oft invited me; still question'd me  
The story of my life, from year to year;  
The battles, sieges, fortunes, that I have pass'd.  
I ran it through, even from my boyish days,  
To the very moment that he bade me tell it.  
Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances,  
Of moving accidents, by flood, and field;  
Of hair-breadth scapes i' the imminent deadly breach;  
Of being taken by the insolent foe,  
And sold to slavery; of my redemption thence,  
And portance in my travel's history<sup>3</sup>:

Wherein

<sup>1</sup> — as truly—] The first quarto reads, as *faithful*. STEEVENS.

<sup>2</sup> *I do confels*, &c.] This line is omitted in the first quarto.

STEEVENS.

<sup>3</sup> *And portance*, &c.] I have restored,

*And with it all my travel's history*:

from the old edition. It is in the rest,

*And portance in my travel's history*.

Rymer, in his criticism on this play, has changed it to *portents*, instead of *portance*. POPE.

Mr. Pope has restored a line, to which there is little objection, but which has no force. I believe *portance* was the author's word in some revised copy. I read thus,

*Of being —*

*— sold to slavery, of my redemption thence,*

*And portance in't; my travel's history*.

My redemption from slavery, and behaviour in it. JOHNSON.

I doubt much whether this line, as it appears in the folio, came from the pen of Shakspeare. The reading of the quarto may be *weak*, but it is sense; but what are we to understand by my demeanour, or my sufferings, (which ever is the meaning,) in my travel's history?

MALONE.

*Portance* is a word already used in *Coriolanus*:

“ ——— took from you

“ The apprehension of his present *portance*,

“ Which most gibingly, ungravely, he did fashion,” &c.

Wherein of antres vast<sup>4</sup>, and desarts idle<sup>5</sup>,  
 Rough quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads touch heaven,  
 It was my hint to speak<sup>6</sup>, such was the process;

Spenser, in the third Canto of the second Book of the *Faery Queen*, likewise uses it:

"But for in court gay portance he perceiv'd." STEEVENS,

4 *Wherein of antres vast, &c.*] Discourse of this nature made the subject of the politest conversations, when voyages into, and discoveries of, the new world were all in vogue. So when the Bastard Faulconbridge, in *King John*, describes the behaviour of upstart greatness, he makes one of the essential circumstances of it to be this kind of table-talk. The fashion then running altogether in this way, it is no wonder a young lady of quality should be struck with the history of an adventurer. So that Rymer, who professedly ridicules this whole circumstance, and the noble author of the *Characteristicks*, who more obliquely sneers at it, only expose their own ignorance. WARBURTON,

Whoever ridicules this account of the progress of love, shews his ignorance, not only of history, but of nature and manners. It is no wonder that, in any age, or in any nation, a lady, recluse, timorous, and delicate, should desire to hear of events and scenes which she could never see, and should admire the man who had endured dangers, and performed actions, which, however great, were yet magnified by her timidity. JOHNSON.

5 —and desarts idle,] Every mind is liable to absence and inadvertency, else Pope [who reads—desarts wild,] could never have rejected a word so poetically beautiful. *Idle* is an epithet used to express the infertility of the chaotick state, in the Saxon translation of the Pentateuch. JOHNSON.

So, in the *Comedy of Errors*:

"Usurping ivy, briar, or idle moss."

Mr. Pope might have found the epithet *wild* in all the three last folios. STEEVENS.

The epithet, *idle*, which the ignorant editor of the second folio did not understand, and therefore changed to *wild*, is confirmed by another passage in this act "—either to have it steril with idleness, or manured with industry." MALONE.

—antres—] *Caves and dens.* JOHNSON.

6 *It was my hint to speak,*] Thus the folio. The quarto, 1622 reads, *It was my bent to speak.* MALONE.

*Hent* occurs at the conclusion of the fourth Act of *Measure for Measure*. It is derived from the Saxon *Hentan*, and means, to take hold of, to seize.

"—— the gravest citizen

"Have bent the gates."

But in the very next page *Othello* says:

— Upon this *bint* I spake.

It is certain therefore that change is unnecessary. STEEVENS.

And of the Cannibals that each other eat,  
 The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads  
 Do grow beneath their shoulders<sup>7</sup>. These things to hear,  
 Would Desdemona seriously incline :  
 But still the house affairs would draw her thence ;  
 Which ever as she could with haste dispatch,  
 She'd come again, and with a greedy ear  
 Devour up my discourse<sup>8</sup> : Which I observing,  
 Took once a pliant hour ; and found good means

<sup>7</sup> — men whose heads

*Do grow beneath their shoulders.*] Of these men there is an account in the interpolated travels of Mandeville, a book of that time.

JOHNSON.

The *Cannibals* and *Anthropophagi* were known to an English audience before Shakspeare introduced them. In the *History of Orlando Furioso*, play'd for the entertainment of Queen Elizabeth, they are mentioned in the very first scene ; and Raleigh speaks of people whose heads appear not above their shoulders.

Again, in the *Tragedy of Locrine*, 1595 :

" Or where the bloody *Anthropophagi*

" With greedy jaws devour the wand'ring wights."

The poet might likewise have read of them in Pliny's *Nat. Hist.* translated by P. Holland, 1601, and in Stowe's *Chronicle*.

STEEVENS.

Our poet has again in *The Tempest* mentioned " men whose heads stood in their breasts." He had in both places probably Hackluyt's *Voyages*, 1598, in view :—" On that branch which is called Caora, are a nation of people whose heads appear not above their shoulders :— they are reported to have their eyes in their shoulders, and their mouths in the middle of their breasts."

Raleigh also has given an account of men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders, in his *Description of Guiana*, published in 1596, a book that without doubt Shakspeare had read. MALONE.

<sup>8</sup> — and with a greedy ear

*Devour up my discourse :*] So, in Marlowe's *Lust's Dominion*, written before 1593 :

" Hang both your greedy ears upon my lips ;

" Let them devour my speech."

Again, in Spenser's *Faery Queene*, B. VI. c. ix.

" Whylest thus he talkt, the knight with greedy eare

" Hong still upon his melting mouth attent." MALONE.

" Iliacosque iteram demens audire labores

" Exposcit, pendetque iterum narrantis ab ore." Virg.

MASON.

To

To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart,  
 That I would all my pilgrimage dilate,  
 Whereof by parcels she had something heard,  
 But not intently<sup>9</sup>: I did consent;  
 And often did beguile her of her tears,  
 When I did speak of some distressful stroke,  
 That my youth suffer'd. My story being done,  
 She gave me for my pains a world of sighs<sup>1</sup>:  
 She swore,—In faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing strange;  
 'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful:  
 She wish'd, she had not heard it; yet she wish'd  
 That heaven had made her such a man: she thank'd me;  
 And bade me, if I had a friend that lov'd her,  
 I should but teach him how to tell my story,  
 And that would woo her. Upon this hint, I spake:  
 She lov'd me for the dangers I had pass'd;  
 And I lov'd her, that she did pity them.  
 This only is the witchcraft I have us'd;  
 Here comes the lady, let her witness it.

*Enter DESDEMONA, IAGO, and Attendants.*

Duke. I think, this tale would win my daughter too.—  
 Good Brabantio,

<sup>9</sup> But not intently:—] Thus the eldest quarto. The folio reads *insistently*. Perhaps it should be, *distinctively*.

The old word, however, may stand. *Intention* and *attention* were once synonymous. So, in a play called *The Isle of Gulls*, 1633: "Grace! at sitting down they cannot *intend* it for hunger," i. e. *attend* to it. Desdemona, who was often called out of the room on the score of house-affairs, could not have heard *Othello's* tale *intently*, i. e. with *attention to all its parts*.

Again, in Chapman's Version of the *Odyssey*, B. VIII.

"For our ships know th' expressed minds of men;

"And will so most *intently* retaine

"Their scopes appointed, that they never erre." STEEVENS.

Shakspeare has already used the word in the same sense in his *Merry Wives of Windsor*: "—she did course over my exterior with such a greedy *intention*." See also Vol. VIII. p. 48, n. 4.

*Distinctively* was the conjectural emendation of the editor of the second folio, who never examined a single quarto copy. MALONE.

"—a world of sighs:] It was *kisses* in the later editions: but this is evidently the true reading. The lady had been forward indeed to give him a world of *kisses* upon the bare recital of his story; nor does it agree with the following lines. POPE.

*Sighs* is the reading of the quarto, 1622; *kisses* of the folio. MALONE.

Take

Take up this mangled matter at the best :  
Men do their broken weapons rather use,  
Than their bare hands.

*Bra.* I pray you, hear her speak ;  
If she confess, that she was half the wooer,  
Destruction on my head <sup>2</sup>, if my bad blame  
Light on the man !—Come hither, gentle mistress ;  
Do you perceive in all this noble company,  
Where most you owe obedience ?

*Des.* My noble father,  
I do perceive here a divided duty :  
To you I am bound for life, and education ;  
My life, and education, both do learn me  
How to respect you ; you are the lord of duty <sup>3</sup>,  
I am hitherto your daughter : But here's my husband ;  
And so much duty as my mother shew'd  
To you, preferring you before her father <sup>4</sup>,  
So much I challenge that I may profess  
Due to the Moor, my lord.

*Bra.* God be with you !—I have done :—  
Please it your grace, on to the state affairs ;  
I had rather to adopt a child, than get it.—  
Come hither, Moor :  
I here do give thee that with all my heart,  
Which <sup>5</sup>, but thou hast already, with all my heart  
I would keep from thee.—For your sake, jewel,  
I am glad at soul I have no other child ;  
For thy escape would teach me tyranny,  
'To hang clogs on them.—I have done, my lord.

<sup>2</sup> *Destruction, &c.*] The quartos read, destruction light on me.

STEEVENS.

<sup>3</sup> *You are the lord of duty,*] The first quarto reads,  
You are lord of all my duty.

STEEVENS.

<sup>4</sup> *And so much duty as my mother shew'd*

*To you, preferring you before her father, &c.*] Perhaps Shakspeare had here in his thoughts the answer of the youngest daughter of *Ina*, king of the West Saxons, to her father, which he seems to have copied in *King Lear*. See Vol. VIII. p. 486. MALONE.

<sup>5</sup> *Which, &c.*] This line is omitted in the first quarto. STEEVENS.

*Duke.* Let me speak like yourself<sup>6</sup>; and lay a sentence,

Which, as a grise<sup>7</sup>, or step, may help these lovers  
Into your favour<sup>8</sup>.

When remedies are past, the griefs are ended<sup>9</sup>,  
By seeing the worst, which late on hopes depended.  
To mourn a mischief that is past and gone,  
Is the next way to draw new mischief on<sup>1</sup>.

What cannot be preserv'd when fortune takes,  
Patience her injury a mockery makes.  
The robb'd, that smiles, steals something from the thief;  
He robs himself, that spends a bootless grief.

*Bra.* So let the Turk of Cyprus us beguile;  
We lose it not, so long as we can smile.  
He bears the sentence well, that nothing bears  
But the free comfort which from thence he hears<sup>2</sup>:  
But he bears both the sentence and the sorrow,  
That, to pay grief, must of poor patience borrow.

<sup>6</sup> *Let me speak like your self;*] The duke seems to mean, when he says he will speak like Brabantio, that he will speak sententiously.

JOHNSON.

*Let me speak like yourself;*] i. e. let me speak as yourself would speak, were you not too much heated with passion. Sir J. REYNOLDS.

<sup>7</sup> — *as a grise,*] *Grise* from *degrees*. A *grise* is a step. So in *Timon*:

“ ——— for every *grise* of fortune

“ Is smooth'd by that below.” —

Ben Jonson, in his *Sejanus*, gives the original word:

“ Whom when he saw lie spread on the *degrees*.”

In the will of K. Henry VI, where the dimensions of King's College chapel at Cambridge are set down, the word occurs, as spelt in some of the old editions of Shakspeare. “ — From the provost's stall, unto the greice called *Gradus Chori*, 90 feet.” STEEVENS.

<sup>8</sup> *Into your favour.*] This is wanting in the folio, but found in the quarto. JOHNSON.

<sup>9</sup> *When remedies are past, the griefs are ended,* —] This our poet has elsewhere expressed by a common proverbial sentence, *Past cure is still past care*. See Vol. X. p. 313, n. 5. MALONE.

<sup>1</sup> — *new mischief on.*] The quartos read — *more mischief*. —

STEEVENS.

<sup>2</sup> *But the free comfort which from thence he hears:*] But the moral precepts of consolation, which are liberally bestowed on the occasion of the sentence. JOHNSON.

These

These sentences, to sugar, or to gall,  
Being strong on both sides, are equivocal:  
But words are words; I never yet did hear,  
That the bruise'd heart was pierc'd through the ear<sup>3</sup>.

I humbly

<sup>3</sup> *But words are words; I never yet did hear,*

*That the bruise'd heart was pierc'd through the ear.*] These moral precepts, says Brabantio, may perhaps be founded in wisdom, but they are of no avail. Words after all are but words; and I never yet heard that consolatory speeches could *reach* and *penetrate* the afflicted heart, through the medium of the ear.

Brabantio here expresses the same sentiment as the father of Hero in *Much ado about Nothing*, when he derides the attempts of those comforters who in vain endeavour to

“ Charm *æthe* with *air*, and *agony* with *words*.”

Our authour has in various places shewn a fondness for this antithesis between the *heart* and *ear*. Thus, in his *Venus and Adonis*:

“ This dismal cry rings sadly in her *ear*,

“ Through which it enters, to surprise her *heart*.”

Again, in *Much ado about Nothing*: “ My cousin tells him in his *ear*, that he is in her *heart*.”

Again, in *Cymbeline*:

“ — I have such a *heart* as both mine *ears*

“ Must not in haste abuse.”

Again, in his *Rape of Lucrece*:

“ His *ear* her prayers admits, but his *heart* granteth

“ No *penetrable* entrance to her *plainings*.”

A doubt has been entertained concerning the word *pierced*, which Dr. Warburton supposed to mean *wounded*, and therefore substituted *pieced* in its room. But *pierced* is merely a figurative expression, and means not *wounded*, but *penetrated*, in a *metaphorical sense*; thoroughly affected; as in the following passage in Shakspeare's 46th sonnet:

“ My *heart* doth plead, that thou in him dost lie;

“ A closet never *pierc'd* with crystal eyes.”

So also, in *Love's Labour's Lost*:

“ Honest plain words best *pierce* the *ear* of grief.”

Again, in *The Merchant of Venice*:

“ With sweetest touches *pierces* your mistress's *ear*.”

In a word, a *heart pierc'd through the ear*, is a heart which (to use our poet's words elsewhere,) has granted a *penetrable entrance* to the language of consolation. So, in *The Mirrour for Magistrates*, 1575:

“ My *piteous plaint*—the hardest *heart* may *pierce*.”

Spenser has used the word exactly in the same figurative sense in which it is here employed; *Fairy Queen*, B. VI. c. ix:

“ Whylest

I humbly beseech you, proceed to the affairs of state.

*Duke.* The Turk with a most mighty preparation makes for Cyprus:—Othello, the fortitude of the place is best known to you: And though we have there a substitute of most allow'd sufficiency, yet opinion, a sovereign mistress of effects, throws a more safer voice off you: you must therefore be content to slubber the gloss of your new fortunes with this more stubborn and boisterous expedition.

*Oth.* The tyrant custom, most grave senators,

“Whylest thus he talkt, the knight with greedy care

“Hing still upon his melting mouth attent;

“Whose sensefull words empierst his hart so neare,

“That he was rapt with double ravishment.”

And in his Fourth Book, c. viii. we have the very words of the text:

“Her words, —————

“Which, passing through the eares, would pierce the hart.”

Some persons have supposed that *pierced* when applied metaphorically to the heart, can only be used to express pain; that the poet might have said, *pierced with grief*, or *pierced with plains*, &c. but that to talk of *piercing* a heart with *consolatory speeches*, is a catachresis: but the passage above quoted from Spenser's sixth book shews that there is no ground for the objection. So also, in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, 1590, we find—

“Nor thee nor them, thrice noble Tamburlaine,

“Shall want my heart to be with gladness pierc'd.” MALONE.

*That the bruised heart was pierced through the ear.* Shakespeare was continually changing his first expression for another, either stronger or more uncommon; so that very often the reader, who has not the same continuity or succession of ideas, is at a loss for its meaning. Many of Shakespeare's uncouth strained epithets may be explained, by going back to the obvious and simple expression, which is most likely to occur to the mind in that state. I can imagine the first mode of expression that occurred to the poet was this:

The troubled heart was never cured by words.

To give it poetical force, he altered the phrase:

The wounded heart was never reached through the ear.

*Wounded heart* he changed to *broken*, and that to *bruised*, as a more uncommon expression. *Reached* he altered to *touch'd*, and the transition is then easy to *pierced*, i. e. thoroughly touched. When the sentiment is brought to this state, the commentator, without this unravelling clue, expounds *piercing the heart* in its common acceptation, *wounding the heart*, which making in this place nonsense, is corrected to *pierced the heart*, which is very stiff, and, as Polonius says, *is a vile phrase*.

Sir J. REYNOLDS.

Hath

Hath made the flinty and steel couch of war  
 My thrice-driven bed of down<sup>4</sup>: I do agnize<sup>5</sup>  
 A natural and prompt alacrity,  
 I find in hardness; and do undertake  
 These present wars<sup>\*</sup> against the Ottomites.  
 Most humbly therefore bending to your state,  
 I crave fit disposition for my wife;  
 Due reference of place, and exhibition<sup>6</sup>;  
 With such accommodation, and besort,  
 As levels with her breeding.

*Duke.* If you please,  
 Be't at her father's.

*Bra.* I will not have it so.

*Oth.* Nor I.

*Des.* Nor I; I would not there reside,  
 To put my father in impatient thoughts,  
 By being in his eye. Most gracious duke,  
 To my unfolding lend a gracious ear<sup>7</sup>;  
 And let me find a charter in your voice<sup>8</sup>,

<sup>4</sup> — *thrice-driven bed of down*:—] A *driven* bed, is a bed for which the feathers are selected, by *driving* with a fan, which separates the light from the heavy. JOHNSON.

<sup>5</sup> — *I do agnize*:—] i. e. acknowledge, confess, avow. STEEVENS. It is so defined in Bullokar's *English Expofitor*, 8vo. 1616.

MALONE.

<sup>\*</sup> *These present wars*:—] The quarto 1622, and the folio, by an error of the press, have—*this* present wars. For the emendation I am responsible. MALONE.

<sup>6</sup> *I crave fit disposition for my wife*;

*Due reference of place, and exhibition, &c.*] I desire, that proper disposition be made for my wife; that she may have *predacency*, and *revenue*, accommodation, and company, suitable to her rank.

For *reference of place*, the old quartos have *reverence*, which Hammer has received. I should read, *due preference of place*,—.

*Exhibition* is allowance. The word is at present used only at the universities. STEEVENS.

See Vol. VIII. p. 507, n. 3. MALONE.

<sup>7</sup> — *Most gracious duke*,

*To my unfolding lend a gracious ear*;] Thus the quarto 1622. The folio, to avoid the repetition of the same epithet, reads:—your *prosperous* ear. i. e. your *propitious* ear. STEEVENS.

<sup>8</sup> — *a charter in your voice*,] Let your favour *privilege* me.

JOHNSON.

To

To assist my simpleness<sup>9</sup>.

Duke. What would you, Desdemona?

Des. That I did love the Moor to live with him,  
My down-right violence and storm of fortunes<sup>1</sup>

May

<sup>9</sup> *To assist my simpleness.*] The first quarto reads this as an unfinished sentence :

*And if my simpleness — STEEVENS.*

<sup>1</sup> *My down-right violence and storm of fortunes.*—] *Violence* is not violence suffered, but violence acted. Breach of common rules and obligations. The old quarto has, *scorn of fortune*, which is perhaps the true reading. JOHNSON.

I would rather continue to read *storm of fortunes*, on account of the words that follow, viz. *May trumpet to the world*.

So, in *King Henry IV.* P. I :

“ ——— the southern wind

“ Doth play the trumpet to his purposes.”

Again, in *Troilus and Cressida* :

“ ——— so

“ Doth valour’s shew, and valour’s worth, divide

“ In storms of fortune.” STEEVENS.

So, in *King Henry VIII.*

“ An old man broken with the storms of state.”

The expression in the text is found in Spenser’s *Faery Queen*, B. VI.

c. 9.

“ Give leave awhile, good father, in this shore

“ To rest my baroque, which hath bene beaten late

“ With storms of fortune and tempestuous fate.”

And Bacon, in his *History of King Henry the Seventh*, has used the same language : “ The king in his account of peace and calms did much overcast his *fortunes*, which proved for many years together full of broken seas, tides, and *tempests*.”

Mr. Mason objects, that Mr. Steevens has not explained these words. Is any explanation wanting ? or can he, who has read in *Hamlet*, that a judicious player “ in the *tempest* and *whirlwind* of his *passion* should acquire and beget a temperance ;” who has heard Falstaff wish for a *tempest* of provocation ; and finds in *Troilus and Cressida*—“ in the wind and *tempest* of her frown,” be at a loss to understand the meaning of a *storm of fortunes* ? By her *downright violence and storm of fortunes*, Desdemona without doubt means, the bold and decisive measure she had taken, of following the dictates of passion and giving herself to the Moor ; regardless of her parent’s displeasure, the forms of her country, and the future inconvenience she might be subject to, by “ tying her duty, beauty, wit, and *fortunes*, in an extravagant and wheeling stranger, of here and every where.”

ON

May trumpet to the world; my heart's subdu'd  
 Even to the very quality of my lord<sup>2</sup>;  
 I saw Othello's visage in his mind<sup>3</sup>;  
 And to his honours, and his valiant parts,  
 Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate.  
 So that, dear lords, if I be left behind,  
 A moth of peace, and he go to the war,  
 The rites, for which I love him, are bereft me,  
 And I a heavy interim shall support  
 By his dear absence: Let me go with him.  
*Oth.* Your voices, lords<sup>4</sup>:—beseech you, let her will  
 Have a free way.

On looking into Mr. Edwards's remarks, I find he explains these words nearly in the same manner. "*Downright violence*," says he, "means, the unbridled impetuosity with which her passion hurried her on to this unlawful marriage; and *storm of fortunes* may signify the hazard she thereby ran, of making shipwreck of her worldly interest. Both very agreeable to what she says a little lower—

"—to his honours and his valiant parts

"Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate." MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> *Even to the very quality of my lord's*] The first quarto reads,

Even to the utmost pleasure— STEEVENS.

*Quality* here means *possession*. "I am so much enamoured of Othello, that I am even willing to endure all the inconveniences incident to a military life, and to attend him to the wars." "I cannot marvel," (said Lord Essex to Mr. Ashton, a Puritan preacher who was sent to him in the Tower,) "though my protestations are not believed of my enemies, when they so little prevail with a man of your quality." See also p. 267, n. 1.

That this is the meaning, appears not only from the reading of the quarto,—"my heart's subdued, even to the utmost pleasure of my lord, i. e. so as to prompt me to go with him wherever he wishes I should go," but also from the whole tenour of Desdemona's speech; the purport of which is, that as she had married a soldier, so she was ready to accompany him to the wars, and to consecrate her soul and fortunes to his honours, and his valiant parts; i. e. to attend him wherever his military character and his love of fame should call him. MALONE.

<sup>3</sup> *I saw Othello's visage in his mind*;) It must raise no wonder, that I loved a man of an appearance so little engaging; I saw his face only in his mind; the greatness of his character reconciled me to his form.

JOHNSON.

<sup>4</sup> *Your voices, lords*:] The folio reads, *Let her have your voice*.

STEEVENS.