Samuel Johnson, Miscellaneous observations on the tragedy of Macbeth (London, 1745).

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MISCELLANEOUS
OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
TRAGEDY
OF
MACBETH.

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MISCELLANEOUS
OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
TRAGEDY
OF
MACBETH:

WITH
REMARKS
ON
Sir T. H.'s Edition of Shakespear.

To which is affix'd,

PROPOSALS for a New Edition
of SHAKESHEAR, with a Specimen.

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NOTE I.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Enter three Witches.

In order to make a true Estimate of the Abilities and Merit of a Writer, it is always necessary to examine the Genius of his Age, and the Opinions of his Contemporaries. A Poet who should now make the whole Action of his Tragedy depend upon Enchantment, and produce the chief Events by the Assistance of supernatural Agents, would be censured as transgressing the Bounds of Probability, he would be banished from the Theatre to the Nursery, and condemned to write Fairy Tales instead of Tragedies; but a Survey of the Notions that prevailed at the Time when this Play was written, will prove that Shakespeare was in no Danger of such Censures, since he only turned the System that was then universally admitted to his Advantage, and was far from overburthening the Credulity of his Audience.

The Reality of Witchcraft or Enchantment, which, though not strictly the same, are confounded in this Play, has in all Ages and Countries been credited by the common People, and in most by

the Learned themselves. These Phantoms have indeed appeared more frequently, in proportion as the Darkness of Ignorance has been more gross; but it cannot be shown, that the brightest Gleams of Knowledge have at any Time been sufficient to drive them out of the World. The Time in which this Kind of Credulity was at its Height, seems to have been that of the Holy War, in which the Christians imputed all their Defeats to Enchantments or diabolical Opposition, as they ascribed their Success to the Assistance of their military Saints, and the Learned Mr W------ appears to believe (*Suppl. to the Introduction to Don Quixote*) that the first Accounts of Enchantments were brought into this Part of the World by those who returned from their eastern Expeditions. But there is always some Distance between the Birth and Maturity of Folly as of Wickedness: This Opinion had long existed, though perhaps the Application of it had in no foregoing Age been so frequent, nor the Reception so general. Olympiodorus, in Photius's Extracts, tells us of one Libanius, who practised

this Kind of military Magic, and having promised <chōris hoplitōn kata barbarōn energein>, *to perform great Things against the Barbarians without Soldiers*, was, at the Instances of the Empress Placidia, put to Death, when he was about to have given Proofs of his Abilities. The Empress shewed some Kind-

ness in her Anger by cutting him off at a Time so convenient for his Reputation.

But a more remarkable Proof of the Antiquity of this Notion may be found in St Chrysostom's Book *de Sacerdotio*, which exhibits a Scene of Enchantments not exceeded by any Romance of the middle Age; he supposes a Spectator overlooking a Field of Battle attended by one that points out all the various Objects of Horror, the Engines of Destruction, and the Arts of Slaughter. <Deiknutō de eti para tois enantiois kai petomenous hippous dia tinos magganeias, kai hoplitas di aeros pheromenous, kai pasēn goēteias dunamin kai idean.> *Let him then proceed to show him in the opposite Armies Horses flying by Enchantment, armed Men transported through the Air, and every Power and Form of Magic.* Whether St Chrysostom believed that such Performances were really to be seen in a Day of Battle, or only endeavoured to enliven his Description, by adopting the Notions of the Vulgar, it is equally certain, that such Notions were in his Time received, and that therefore they were not imported from the Saracens in a later Age; the Wars with the Saracens however gave Occasion to their Propagation, not only as Bigotry naturally discovers Prodigies, but as the Scene of Action was removed to a great Distance, and Distance either of Time or Place is

sufficient to reconcile weak Minds to wonderful Relations.

The Reformation did not immediately arrive at its Meridian, and tho' Day was gradually encreasing upon us, the Goblins of Witchcraft still continued to hover in the Twilight. In the Time of Queen Elizabeth was the remarkable Trial of the Witches of Warbois, whose Conviction is still commemorated in an annual Sermon at Huntingdon. But in the Reign of King James, in which this

Tragedy was written, many Circumstances concurred to propagate and confirm this Opinion. The King, who was much celebrated for his Knowledge, had, before his Arrival in England, not only examined in Person a Woman accused of Witchcraft, but had given a very formal Account of the Practices and Illusions of evil Spirits, the Compacts of Witches, the Ceremonies used by them, the Manner of detecting them, and the Justice of punishing them, in his Dialogues of *Dæmonologie*, written in the Scottish Dialect, and published at Edinburgh. This Book was, soon after his Accession, reprinted at London, and as the ready way to gain K. James's Favour was to flatter his Speculations, the System of *Dæmonologie* was immediately adopted by all who desired either to gain Preferment or not to lose it. Thus the Doctrine of Wichcraft was very powerfully inculcated, and as

the greatest Part of Mankind have no other Reason for their Opinions than that they are in Fashion, it cannot be doubted but this Persuasion made a rapid Progress, since Vanity and Credulity co-operated in its favour, and it had a Tendency to free Cowardice from Reproach. The Infection soon reached the Parliament, who, in the first Year of King James, made a Law by which it was enacted Ch. XII. That "if any Person shall use any Invocation or Conjuration of any evil or wicked Spirit; 2. Or shall consult, covenant with, entertain, employ, feed or reward any evil or cursed Spirit to or for any Intent or Purpose; 3. Or take up any dead Man, Woman or Child out of the Grave, -- or the Skin, Bone, or any Part of the dead Person, to be employed or used in any Manner of Witchcraft, Sorcery, Charm, or Enchantment; 4. Or shall use, practise, or exercise any sort of Witchcraft, Sorcery, Charm, or Enchantment; 5. Whereby any Person shall be destroyed, killed, wasted, consumed, pined, or lamed in any Part of the Body; 6. That every such Person being convicted shall suffer Death."

Thus, in the time of Shakespeare, was the Doctrine of Witchcraft at once established by Law and by the Fashion, and it became not only unpolite, but criminal, to doubt it, and as Prodigies

are always seen in proportion as they are expected, Witches were every Day discovered, and multiplied so fast in some Places, that Bishop Hall mentions a Village in Lancashire, where their Number was greater than that of the Houses. The Jesuites and Sectaries took Advantage of this universal Error, and endeavoured to promote the Interest of their Parties by pretended Cures of Persons afflicted by evil Spirits, but they were detected and exposed by the Clergy of the established Church.

Upon this general Infatuation Shakespeare might be easily allowed to found a Play, especially since he has followed with great Exactness such Histories as were then thought true; nor can it be doubted that the Scenes of Enchantment, however they may now be ridiculed, were both by himself and his Audience thought awful and affecting.

NOTE II.

SCENE II.

-- The merciless Macdonel, -- from the Western Isles
Of *Kerns* and *Gallow-glasses* was supply'd,
And Fortune on his damned *Quarry* smiling;
Shew'd like a Rebel's Whore.

Kerns are light-armed, and *Gallow-glasses* heavy-

armed Soldiers. The word *Quarry* has no Sense that is properly applicable in this Place, and therefore it is necessary to read

And Fortune on his damned Quarrel *smiling.*

Quarrel was formerly used for *Cause*, or for *the Occasion of a Quarrel*, and is to be found in that Sense in Hollingshead's Account of the Story of Macbeth, who, upon the Creation of the Prince of Cumberland, thought, says the Historian, that he had *a just Quarrel* to endeavour after the Crown. The Sense therefore is *Fortune smiling on his execrable Cause*, &c.

NOTE III.

If I say sooth, I must report they were
As Cannons overcharged with double Cracks,
So they redoubled Strokes upon the Foe:

Mr Theobald has endeavoured to improve the Sense of this Passage by altering the Punctuation thus:

------ They were
As Cannons overcharg'd, with double Cracks
So they redoubled Strokes ------

He declares, with some Degree of Exultation, that he has no Idea of a *Cannon charged with double*

Cracks; but surely the great Author will not gain much by an Alteration which makes him say of a Hero, that he *redoubles Strokes with double Cracks*, an Expression not more loudly to be applauded, or more easily pardon'd than that which is rejected in its Favour. That *a Cannon is charged with Thunder* or *with double Thunders* may be written, not only without Nonsense, but with Elegance, and nothing else is here meant by *Cracks*, which in the Time of this Writer was a Word of such Emphasis and Dignity, that in this Play he terms the general Dissolution of Nature the *Crack of Doom*.

There are among Mr Theobald's Alterations others which I do not approve, though I do not always censure them; for some of his Amendments are so excellent, that, even when he has failed, he ought to be treated with Indulgence and Respect.

NOTE IV.

King. But who comes here?
Mal. The worthy Thane of Rosse.
Lenox. What Haste looks thro' his Eyes?
So should he look, that *seems* to speak Things strange.

The Meaning of this Passage as it now stands is, *so should he look, that looks as if he told Things strange*. But Rosse neither yet told strange Things, nor could look as if he told them; Lenox only conjectured from his Air that he had strange Things to tell, and therefore undoubtedly said

---- What Haste looks thro' his Eyes?
So should he look, that *teems* to speak Things
strange.

He looks like one that is big with something of Importance; a Metaphor so natural that it is every Day used in common Discourse.

NOTE V.

SCENE III.

Thunder. Enter the three Witches.

1st Witch. Where hast thou been Sister?
2d Witch. Killing Swine.
3d Witch. Sister, where Thou?
1st Witch. A Sailor's Wife had Chesnuts in her
Lap,
And mouncht, and mouncht, and mouncht. Give
me, quoth I.
(1) Aroint thee, Witch, the rump-fed Ronyon cries.

Her Husband's to Aleppo gone, Master o' th' Tiger:
But in a Sieve I'll thither sail,
And like a Rat without a Tail,
I'll do -- I'll do -- and I'll do.
2d Witch. I'll give thee a Wind,
1st Witch. Thou art kind.
3d Witch. And I another.
1st. Witch. I myself have all the other.
And the (2) very Points they blow,
All the Quarters that they know,
I'th' Ship-man's Card ----
I will drain him dry as Hay;
Sleep shall neither Night nor Day
Hang upon his pent-house Lid;
He shall live a Man (3) forbid;
Weary Sev'n-nights nine times nine,

Shall he dwindle, peak and pine:
Tho' his Bark cannot be lost,
Yet it shall be Tempest-tost.
Look what I have.
  2d Witch. Shew me, shew me.

  (1) Aroint thee, Witch, ----
  In one of the Folio Editions the Reading is *Anoint thee*, in a Sense very consistent with the common Account of Witches, who are related to perform many supernatural Acts by the Means of Unguents, and particularly to fly through the Air to the Places where they meet at their hellish

Festivals. In this Sense *anoint thee, Witch*, will mean, *Away, Witch, to your infernal Assembly*. This Reading I was inclined to favour, because I had met with the Word *aroint* in no other Place; till looking into Hearne's Collections, I found it in a very old Drawing, that he has published, in which St Patrick is represented visiting Hell, and putting the Devils into great Confusion by his Presence, of whom one that is driving the damned before him with a Prong, has a Label issuing out from his Mouth with these Words **out out arongt**, of which the last is evidently the same with *aroint*, and used in the same Sense as in this Passage.

  (2) And the *very* Points they blow.
  As the Word *very* is here of no other Use than to fill up the Verse, it is likely that Shakespeare wrote *various*, which might be easily mistaken for *very*, being either negligently read, hastily pronounced, or imperfectly heard.

  (3) He shall live a Man *forbid*.
  Mr Theobald has very justly explained *forbid* by *accursed*, but without giving any Reason of his Interpretation. To *bid* is originally *to pray*, as in this Saxon Fragment.

    <He is ꝑis þ' bit ⁊ bote>, &c.
    He is wise that *prays* & improves.

  As to *forbid* therefore implies to *prohibit*, in

Opposition to the Word *bid* in its present Sense, it signifies by the same Kind of Opposition to *curse*, when it is derived from the same Word in its primitive Meaning.

NOTE VI.

SCENE V.

The Incongruity of all the Passages in which the Thane of Cawdor is mentioned is very remarkable; in the second Scene the Thanes of Rosse and Angus bring the King an Account of the Battle, and inform him that Norway

Assisted by that most disloyal Traytor
The Thane of Cawdor, 'gan a dismal Conflict.

It appears that Cawdor was taken Prisoner, for the King says in the same Scene.

------ Go, pronounce his Death,
And with his former Title greet Macbeth.

Yet though Cawdor was thus taken by Macbeth, in Arms against his King, when Macbeth is saluted, in the fourth Scene, *Thane of Cawdor*, by the Weird Sisters, he asks,

How of Cawdor? the *Thane of Cawdor lives*,
A prosp'rous Gentleman. ----

13 % sig C

And in the next Line considers the Promises, that he should be Cawdor and King, as equally unlikely to be accomplished. How can Macbeth be ignorant of the State of the Thane of Cawdor whom he has just defeated and taken Prisoner, or call him a *prosperous Gentleman* who has forfeited his Title, and Life by open Rebellion? Or why should he wonder that the Title of the Rebel whom he has overthrown should be conferred upon him? He cannot be supposed to dissemble his Knowledge of the Condition of Cawdor, because he enquires with all the Ardour of Curiosity, and the Vehemence of sudden Astonishment, and because Nobody is present but Banquo, who had an equal Part in the Battle, and was equally acquainted with

Cawdor's Treason. However in the next Scene, his Ignorance still continues, and, when Rosse and Angus present him from the King with his new Title, he cries out

---- The Thane of Cawdor lives.
Why do you dress me in his borrowed Robes?

Rosse and Angus, who were the Messengers that in the second Scene informed the King of the Assistance given by Cawdor to the Invader, having lost, as well as Macbeth, all Memory of what they had so lately seen and related, make this Answer,

------ Whether he was
Combin'd with Norway, or did line the Rebels

With hidden Help and Vantage, or with both
He labour'd in his Country's Wreck, I know not.

Neither Rosse knew what he had just reported, nor Macbeth what he had just done. This seems not to be one of the Faults that are to be imputed to the Transcribers, since, though the Inconsistency of Rosse and Angus might be removed, by supposing that their Names are erroneously inserted, and that only Rosse brought the Account of the Battle, and only Angus was sent to compliment Macbeth, yet the Forgetfullness of Macbeth cannot be palliated, since what he says could not have been spoken by any other.

NOTE VII.

The Thought, whose Murder yet is but fan-
tastical,
Shakes so my single State of Man, ------

The *single State of Man* seems to be used by Shakespeare for an *Individua*l, in Opposition to a *Commonwealth*, or *conjunct Body* of Men.

NOTE VIII.

Macbeth. Come what come may,
Time and the Hour runs thro' the
roughest Day.

15

I suppose every Reader is disgusted at the Tautology in this Passage, *Time and the Hour*, and will therefore willingly believe that Shakespeare wrote it thus,

---- Come what come may,
Time! on! -- the Hour runs thro' the roughest Day.

Macbeth is deliberating upon the Events which are to befal him, but finding no Satisfaction from his own Thoughts, he grows impatient of Reflection, and resolves to wait the Close without harrassing himself with Conjectures,

---- Come what come may.

But to shorten the Pain of Suspense, he calls upon Time in the usual Stile of ardent Desire, to quicken his Motion,

Time! on! ----

He then comforts himself with the Reflection that all his Perplexity must have an End,

---- The Hour runs thro' the roughest Day.

This Conjecture is supported by the Passage in the Letter to his Lady in which he says, *They referr'd me to the* coming on of Time *with Hail King that shall be*.

16

NOTE IX.

SCENE VI.

Malcolm. ---- Nothing in his Life
Became him like the lea-
ving it. He died.
As one that had been studied in his Death,
To throw away the dearest Thing he *ow'd*,
As 'twere a careless Trifle.

As the Word *ow'd* affords here no Sense but such

as is forced and unnatural, it cannot be doubted that it was originally written, *The dearest Thing he own'd*, a Reading which needs neither Defence nor Explication.

NOTE X.

King. ---- There's no Art,
To find the Minds Construction
in the Face.

The *Construction of the Mind* is, I believe, a Phrase peculiar to Shakespeare; it implies the *Frame* or *Disposition* of the Mind, by which it is determined to good or ill.

NOTE XI.

Macbeth. The Service, and the Loyalty I owe,
In doing it, pays itself. Your
Highness' part
Is to receive our Duties, and our Duties
Are to your Throne and State, Children and Servants,
Which do but what they should, in doing *every Thing*
Safe tow'rds your Love and Honour.

Of the last Line of this Speech which is certainly as it is now read, unintelligible, an Emendation has been attempted which Mr Warburton, and Mr Theobald have admitted as the true Reading.

---- Our Duties
Are to your Throne and State, Children and Servants,
Which do but what they should, in doing every Thing
Fiefs to your Love and Honour.

My Esteem of these Critics, inclines me to believe that they cannot be much pleased with the Expressions *Fiefs to Love*, or *Fiefs to Honour*; and that they have proposed this Alteration rather because no other occurred to them, than because they approved it. I shall therefore propose a bolder Change,

perhaps with no better Success, but *sua cuique placent*. I read thus,

---- Our Duties
Are to your Throne and State, Children and Servants,
Which do but what they should, in doing *Nothing Save* tow'rds *your Love and Honour*.

We do but perform our Duty when we contract all our Views to your Service, when we act with *no other* Principle than regard to *your Love and Honour*.

It is probable that this Passage was first corrupted by writing *Safe* for *Save*, and the Lines then stood thus,

---- Doing Nothing
Safe tow'rd your Love and Honour.

Which the next Transcriber observing to be wrong, and yet not being able to discover the real Fault, altered to the present Reading.

NOTE XII.

SCENE VII.

---- Thou'dst have, great Glamis,
That which cries, "thus thou must do if thou have it,
"And that, &c.

As the Object of Macbeth's Desire is here introduced speaking of itself it is necessary to read,

---- Thoud'st have, great Glamis,
That which cries, "thus thou must do if thou have *me*.

NOTE XIII.

---- Hie thee hither,
That I may pour my Spirits in thine Ear,
And chastise with the Valour of my Tongue

All that impedes thee from the golden Round,
That Fate and metaphysical Aid do *seem*
To have thee crown'd withal.

For *seem* the Sense evidently directs us to read *seek*. The Crown to which Fate destines thee, and which preternatural Agents *endeavour* to bestow upon thee. The *Golden Round* is the *Diadem*.

NOTE XIV.

Lady Macbeth. ---- Come all you Spirits
That tend on *mortal*
Thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me from the Crown to th' Toe, top-full
Of direst Cruelty; make thick my Blood,
Stop up th' Access and Passage to Remorse,
That no compunctious Visitings of Nature
Shake my fell Purpose, nor *keep Peace* between
Th' Effect and it.

Mortal Thoughts.

This Expression signifies not *the Thoughts of Mortals*, but *murtherous*, *deadly*, or *destructive Designs*. So in Act 5th.

Hold fast the *mortal* Sword,

And in another Place,

With twenty *mortal* Murthers.

---- Nor keep Peace between
Th' Effect and it.

The Intent of Lady Macbeth, evidently is to wish that no womanish Tenderness, or conscientious Remorse may hinder her Purpose from proceeding to Effect, but neither this nor indeed any other Sense is expressed by the present Reading, and therefore it cannot be doubted that Shakespeare wrote differently, perhaps thus.

That no compunctious Visitings of Nature
Shake my fell Purpose, nor *keep pace* between
Th' Effect and it.

To *keep pace between* may signify *to pass between*, to *intervene*. *Pace* is on many Occasions a Favourite of Shakespeare. This Phrase is indeed not usual in this Sense, but was it not its Novelty that gave Occasion to the present Corruption?

21

NOTE XV.

SCENE VIII.

King. This Castle hath a pleasant *Seat*; the Air
Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle Senses.
Banquo. This Guest of Summer,
The Temple-haunting Martlet, does approve,
By his lov'd Mansionry, that Heaven's Breath
Smells wooingly here. No jutting Frieze,
Buttrice, nor Coigne of Vantage, but this Bird
Hath made his pendent Bed, and procreant Cradle:
Where they most breed and haunt, I have observ'd
The Air is delicate.

In this short Scene, I propose a slight Alteration to be made, by substituting *Site* for *Seat*, as the antient Word for *Situation*; and *Sense* for *Senses* as more agreeable to the Measure; for which Reason likewise I have endeavoured to adjust this Passage,

---- Heaven's Breath
Smells wooingly here. No jutting Frieze,

By changing the Punctuation and adding a Syllable thus,

---- Heaven's Breath
Smells wooingly. Here is no jutting Frieze.

22

Those who have perused Books printed at the Time of the first Editions of Shakespeare know, that greater Alterations than these are necessary almost in every Page, even where it is not to be doubted that the Copy was correct.

NOTE XVI.

SCENE X.

The Arguments by which Lady Macbeth persuades her Husband to commit the Murder, afford a Proof of Shakespeare's Knowledge of Human Nature. She urges the Excellence and Dignity of Courage, a glittering Idea which has dazzled Mankind from Age to Age, and animated sometimes the Housebreaker, and sometimes the Conqueror; but this Sophism Macbeth has for ever destroyed by distinguishing true from false Fortitude, in a Line and a half; of which it may almost be said, that they ought to bestow Immortality on the Author, though all his other Productions had been lost.

I dare do all that may become a Man,
Who dares do more is none.

This Topic, which has been always employed with too much Success, is used in this Scene with

peculiar Propriety, to a Soldier by a Woman. Courage is the distinguishing Virtue of a Soldier, and the Reproach of Cowardice cannot be borne by any Man from a Woman, without great Impatience.

She then urges the Oaths by which he had bound himself to murder Duncan, another Art of Sophistry by which Men have sometimes deluded their Consciences, and persuaded themselves that what would be criminal in others is virtuous in them; this Argument Shakespeare, whose Plan obliged him to make Macbeth yield, has not confuted, though he might easily have shown that a former Obligation could not be vacated by a latter.

NOTE XVII.

Letting *I dare not*, wait upon *I would*,
Like the poor Cat i'th' Adage.

The Adage alluded to is, *The Cat loves Fish, but dares not wet her Foot,*

Catus amat Pisces, sed non vult tingere Plantas.

NOTE XVIII.

Will I with Wine and Wassel so convince.

To convince is in Shakespeare to *over-power* or *subdue*, as in this Play,

24

---- Their Malady *convinces*
The great Assay of Art.

NOTE XIX.

---- Who shall bear the Guilt
Of our great *Quell*.

Quell is *murder*, *Manquellers* being in the old Language the Term for which *Murderers* is now used.

NOTE XX.

ACT II. SCENE II.

---- Now o'er one half the World
(1) *Nature seems dead*, and wicked
Dreams abuse
The curtain'd Sleep; now Witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecat's Offerings: And wither'd Murder,
(Alarum'd by his Sentinel, the Wolf,
Whose Howl 's his Watch) thus with his stealthy
Pace,
With (2) *Tarquin's ravishing Sides*, tow'rds his De-
sign
Moves like a Ghost -- Thou sound and firm-set
Earth,
Hear not my Steps, which Way they walk, for fear

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Thy very Stones prate of my where-about,
And (3) *take the present Horror from the Time,*
That now suits with it. ----

(1) ---- Now o'er one half the World
Nature seems dead.

That is, *over our Hemisphere all Action and*

Motion seem to have ceased. This Image which is perhaps the most striking that Poetry can produce, has been adopted by Dryden in his Conquest of Mexico.

All things are hush'd as Nature's self lay dead,
The Mountains seem to nod their drowsy Head;
The little Birds in Dreams their Songs repeat,
And sleeping Flow'rs beneath the Night-dews
sweat.
Even Lust and Envy sleep!

These Lines, though so well known, I have transcrib'd, that the Contrast between them and this Passage of Shakespeare may be more accurately observed.

Night is described by two great Poets, but one describes a Night of Quiet, the other of Perturbation. In the Night of Dryden, all the Disturbers of the World are laid asleep; in that of Shake-

speare, nothing but Sorcery, Lust, and Murder is awake. He that reads Dryden, finds himself lull'd with Serenity, and disposed to Solitude and Contemplation. He that peruses Shakespeare, looks round alarmed, and starts to find himself alone. One is the Night of a Lover, the other that of a Murderer.

(2) ---- *Wither'd Murder*,
---- *Thus with his stealthy Pace,*
With Tarquin's ravishing Sides tow'rd his Design,
Moves like a Ghost. ----

This was the reading of this Passage in all the Editions before that of Mr Pope, who for *Sides*, inserted in the Text *Strides*, which Mr Theobald has tacitely copied from him, tho' a more proper Alteration might perhaps have been made. A ravishing Stride is an Action of Violence, Impetuosity, and Tumult, like that of a Savage rushing on his Prey; whereas the Poet is here attempting to exhibit an Image of Secrecy and Caution, of anxious Circumspection and guilty Timidity, the *stealthy Pace* of a *Ravisher* creeping into the Chamber of a Virgin, and of an Assassin approaching the Bed of him whom he proposes to murder, without

awaking him; these he describes as *moving like Ghosts*, whose Progression is so different from

Strides, that it has been in all Ages represented to be, as Milton expresses it,

Smooth sliding without Step.

This Hemistick will afford the true Reading of this Place, which is, I think, to be corrected thus:

---- And wither'd Murder,
---- Thus with his stealthy Pace,
With Tarquin ravishing, slides tow'rd his Design,
Moves like a Ghost.

Tarquin is in this Place the general Name of a Ravisher, and the Sense is, Now is the Time in which every one is a-sleep, but those who are employed in Wickedness, the Witch who is sacrificing to Hecate, and the Ravisher, and the Murderer, who, like me, are stealing upon their Prey.

When the Reading is thus adjusted, he wishes with great Propriety in the following Lines, that the *Earth* may not *hear his Steps*.

(3) And take the present Horror from the Time
That now suits with it.

I believe every one that has attentively read this dreadful Soliloquy is disappointed at the Con-

clusion, which, if not wholly unintelligible, is, at least, obscure, nor can be explained into any Sense worthy of the Author. I shall therefore propose a slight Alteration.

---- Thou sound and firm set Earth,
Hear not my Steps, which way they walk, for fear
Thy very Stones prate of my Where-about,
And *talk* -- the present Horror of the Time! ----
That now suits with it. ----

Macbeth has, in the foregoing Lines, disturbed his Imagination by enumerating all the Terrors of the Night, at length he is wrought up to a Degree of Frenzy, that makes him afraid of some supernatural Discovery of his Design, and calls out to the Stones not to betray him, not to declare where he walks, nor *to talk*. -- As he is going to say of what, he discovers the Absurdity of his Suspicion and pauses, but is again o'erwhelmed by his Guilt, and concludes, that such are the Horrors of the present Night, that the Stones may be expected to cry out against him.

That now suits with it.

He observes in a subsequent Passage, that on such Occasions *Stones have been known to move*. It is now a very just and strong Picture of a Man

about to commit a deliberate Murder under the strongest Convictions of the Wickedness of his Design.

NOTE XXI.

SCENE IV.

Lenox. The Night has been unruly; where we
lay
Our Chimnies were blown down. And, as they
say,
Lamentings heard i'th' Air, strange Screams of
Death,
And Prophecying with Accents terrible
Of dire Combustions, and confused Events,
New-hatch'd to the woful Time.
The obscure Bird clamour'd the live-long Night,
Some say the Earth was fev'rous and did shake.

These Lines I think should be rather regulated thus:

---- Prophecying with Accents terrible,
Of dire Combustions and confused Events.
New-hatch'd to th' woful Time, the obscure
Bird
Clamour'd the live-long Night. Some say the Earth

was fev'rous and did shake.

30

A *Prophecy* of an *Event new hatch'd*, seems to be *a Prophecy* of an *Event past*. The Term *new-hatch'd* is properly applicable to a *Bird*, and that Birds of ill Omen should be *new-hatch'd to the woful Time*, is very consistent with the rest of the Prodigies here mentioned, and with the universal Disorder into which Nature is described as thrown, by the Perpetration of this horrid Murder.

NOTE XXII.

---- Up! Up! and see
The great Doom's Image Malcom
Banquo,
As from your Graves rise up. ----

The second Line might have been so easily completed, that it cannot be supposed to have been left imperfect by the Author, who probably wrote,

---- Malcolm! Banquo! rise!
As from your Graves rise up. --

Many other Emendations of the same Kind might be made, without any greater Deviation from the printed Copies, than is found in each of them from the rest.

31

NOTE XXIII.

Macbeth. ---- Here lay Duncan,
His silver Skin laced with his
golden Blood,
And his gash'd Stabs look'd like a Breach in Nature,
For Ruin's wasteful Entrance; there the Murtherers
Steep'd in the Colours of their Trade, their Daggers
Unmannerly breech'd with Gore: ----

An *unmannerly Dagger* and a *Dagger breeched*, or as in some Editions *breach'd with Gore*, are Expressions not easily to be understood, nor can it be

imagined that Shakespeare would reproach the Murderer of his King only with *Want of Manners*. There are undoubtedly two Faults in this Passage which I have endeavoured to take away by reading,

---- *Daggers*
Unmanly drench'd with Gore. ----

I saw drench'd *with the King's Blood the fatal Daggers, not only Instruments of Murder, but Evidences of Cowardice.*

Each of these Words might easily be confounded with that which I have substituted for it by a

Hand not exact, a casual Blot, or a negligent Inspection.

Mr Pope has endeavoured to improve one of these Lines by substituting *goary Blood* for *golden Blood*, but it may easily be admitted that he who could on such an Occasion talk of *lacing the silver Skin* would *lace it* with *golden Blood*. No Amendment can be made to this Line of which every Word is equally faulty but by a general Blot.

It is not improbable, that Shakespeare put these forced and unnatural Metaphors into the Mouth of Macbeth as a Mark of Artifice and Dissimulation, to show the Difference between the studied Language of Hypocrisy, and the natural Outcries of sudden Passion. This whole Speech considered in this Light is a remarkable Instance of Judgment as it consists entirely of Antitheses and Metaphors.

NOTE XXIV.

ACT III. SCENE II.

Macbeth, ---- Our Fears in Banquo
Stick deep, and in his Royalty of Nature
Reigns that which would be fear'd. 'Tis much he dares,

And to that dauntless Temper of his Mind,
He hath a Wisdom that doth guide his Valour

To act in Safety. There is none but he,
Whose Being I do fear: And under him,
My Genius is rebuk'd; (1) *as it is said*
Anthony's was by Cæsar. He chid the Sisters,
When first they put the Name of King upon me,
And bade them speak to him; then Prophet-like,
They hail'd him Father to a Line of Kings,
Upon my Head they plac'd a fruitless Crown,
And put a barren Sceptre in my Gripe,
Thence to be wrench'd with an unlineal Hand,
No Son of mine succeeding. If 'tis so,
For Banquo's Issue have I 'fil'd my Mind,
For them the gracious Duncan have I murther'd,
Put Rancours in the Vessel of my Peace
Only for them, and mine eternal Jewel
Given to the (2) common Enemy of Man,
To make them Kings, -- the Seed of Banquo Kings.
Rather than so, come Fate into the List,
(3) And champion me to th' Utterance ----

(1) ---- As it is said
Anthony's was by Cæsar.

Though I would not often assume the Critic's Privilege of being confident where Certainty cannot be obtained, nor indulge myself too far in departing from the establ_shed Reading; yet I can-

not but propose the Rejection of this Passage, which I believe was an Insertion of some Player, that having so much Learning as to discover to what Shakespeare alluded, was not willing that his Audience should be less knowing than himself, and has therefore weakened the Author's Sense by the Intrusion of a remote and useless Image into a Speech bursting from a Man wholly possess'd with his own present Condition, and therefore not at leisure to explain his own Allusions to himself. If these Words are taken away, by which not only the Thought but the Numbers are injured, the Lines of Shakespeare close together without any Traces of a Breach.

My Genius is rebuk'd. He chid the Sisters.

(2) ---- The common Enemy of Man.

It is always an Entertainment to an inquisitive Reader, to trace a Sentiment to its original Source, and therefore though the Term *Enemy of Man* applied to the Devil is in itself natural and obvious, yet some may be pleased with being informed, that Shakespeare probably borrowed it from the first Lines of the Destruction of Troy, a Book which he is known to have read.

That this Remark may not appear too trivial, I shall take occasion from it to point out a beauti-

ful Passage of Milton evidently copied from a Book of no greater Authority, in describing the Gates of Hell, Book 2. v. 879. he says,

> ---- On a sudden open fly,
> With impetuous Recoil and jarring Sound,
> Th' infernal Doors and on their Hinges grate
> Harsh Thunder.

In the History of Don Bellianis, when one of the Knights approaches, as I remember, the Castle of Brandezar, the Gates are said to open *grating harsh Thunder upon their brasen Hinges*.

(3) ---- Come Fate into the Lists,
And champion me to th' Utterance. ----

This Passage will be best explained by translating it into the Language from whence the only Word of Difficulty in it is borrowed. *Que la Destinée se rende en Lice, et qu' elle me donne un Defi* a l' Outrance. A Challenge or a Combat *a l' Outrance, to Extremity*, was a fixed Term in the Law of Arms, used when the Combatants engaged with an *odium internecinum, an Intention to destroy each other*, in Opposition to Trials of Skill at Festivals, or on other Occasions, where the Contest was only for Reputation or a Prize. The Sense therefore is, *Let Fate, that has fore-doom'd the Exaltation of the Sons of Banquo, enter the Lists against me, with the utmost Animosity, in defence of its own De-*

crees, which I will endeavour to invalidate, whatever be the Danger.

NOTE XXV.

Macbeth. Ay, in the Catalogue, ye go for Men,
As Hounds and Grey-hounds,
Mungrels, Spaniels, Curs,
Shoughs, Water-ruggs, and Demy-wolves are clept
All by the Name of Dogs.

Though this is not the most sparkling Passage in the Play, and though the Name of a Dog is of no great Importance, yet it may not be improper to remark, that there is no such Species of Dogs as *Shoughs* mentioned by *Caius de Canibus Britannicis*, or any other Writer that has fallen into my Hands, nor is the Word to be found in any Dictionary which I have examined. I therefore imagined that it is falsely printed for *Slouths*, a Kind of slow Hound bred in the southern Parts of England, but was informed by a Lady, that it is more probably used, either by mistake, or according to the Orthography of that Time, for *Shocks*.

NOTE XXVI.

Macbeth. ---- In this Hour at most,
I will advise you where to
plant yourselves,
Acquaint you with the perfect Spy o' th' Time,

The Moment on't, for't must be done to Night,
And something from the Palace: ----

What is meant by *the Spy of the Time it* will be found difficult to explain; and therefore Sense will be cheaply gained by a slight Alteration. ---- Macbeth is assuring the Assassins that they shall not want Directions to find Banquo, and therefore says,

I will ----
Acquaint you with a perfect Spy *o'th' Time*.

Accordingly a third Murderer joins them afterwards at the Place of Action.

Perfect is *well instructed*, or *well informed* as in this Play,

Though in your State of Honour I am *perfect*,

Though I am well acquainted *with your Quality and Rank.*

NOTE XXVII.

SCENE IV.

2d Murderer. He needs not to mistrust, since
he delivers
Our Offices and what we have to do,
To the Direction just.

38

Mr Theobald has endeavoured unsuccessfully to amend this Passage, in which nothing is faulty but the Punctuation. The Meaning of this abrupt Dialogue is this. The *perfect Spy*, mentioned by Macbeth in the foregoing Scene has, before they enter upon the Stage, given them the Directions which were promised at the Time of their Agreement; and therefore one of the Murderers observes, that, since *he has given them such exact Information, he needs not doubt of their Performance*. Then by way of Exhortation to his Associates he cries out

---- To the Direction just.

Now nothing remains but that we conform exactly to Macbeth's Directions.

NOTE XXVIII.

SCENE V.

Macbeth. You know your own Degrees, sit
down:
At first and last the hearty Welcome.

As this Passage stands, not only the Numbers are very imperfect, but the Sense, if any can be found, weak and contemptible. The Numbers will be improved by reading

39

---- Sit down at first,

And last a hearty Welcome.

But for *last* should then be written *next*. I believe the true Reading is

You know your own Degrees, sit down. -- To First And Last the hearty Welcome.

All of whatever Degree from the highest to the lowest may be assured that their Visit is well received.

NOTE XXIX.

Macbeth. -- There's Blood upon thy Face.
[To the Murtherer aside at the Door.
Murtherer. 'Tis Banquo's then.
Macbeth. 'Tis better *thee without, than he within*.

The Sense apparently requires that this Passage should be read thus:

'Tis better *thee* without, than *him* within.

That is, *I am more pleased that the Blood of Banquo should be on thy Face than in his Body.*

NOTE XXX.

Lady Macbeth. Proper Stuff!
This is the very Painting of your
Fear; [aside to Macb.

This is the air-drawn Dagger which you said
Led you to Duncan. Oh, these Flaws and Starts,
Impostures to true fear, would well become
A Woman's Story at a Winter's Fire,
Authoriz'd by her Grandam. Shame itself! --
Why do you make such Faces? When all's done
You look but on a Stool.

As *Starts* can neither with Propriety nor Sense be called *Impostures to true Fear*, something else was undoubtedly intended by the Author, who perhaps wrote

---- Those Flaws and Starts,
Impostures true to Fear would well become,

A Woman's Story, ----

These Symptoms of Terror and Amazement might better become *Impostures true* only *to Fear, might become a Coward at the Recital of such Falsehoods as no Man could credit whose Understanding was not weaken'd by his Terrors; Tales, told by a Woman over a Fire on the Authority of her Grandam.*

NOTE XXXI.

Macbeth. ---- Love and Health to all!
Then I'll sit down : Give me
some Wine, fill full ----
I drink to th' general Joy of the whole Table,
And to our dear Friend Banquo whom we miss,

Would he were here! to all, and him, we thirst.
And all to All. ----

Though this Passage is, as it now stands, capable of more Meanings than one, none of them are very satisfactory; and therefore I am inclined to read it thus:

---- To all, and him, we thirst,
And Hail to All.

Macbeth, being about to salute his Company with a Bumper, declares that he includes Banquo, though absent, in this Act of Kindness, and wishes *Health* to all. *Hail* or *Heil* for *Health* was in such continual Use among the Good-fellows of antient Times, that a Drinker was called a *Was-heiler* or a *Wisher of Health*, and the Liquor was termed *Was-heil*, because *Health* was so often wished over it. Thus in the Lines of Hanvil the Monk,

Jamque vagante Scypho, discincto Gutture Was-heil
Ingeminant Was-heil: *Labor est plus perdere Vini*
Quam Sitis. ----

These Words were afterwards corrupted into *Wassail* and *Wassailer*.

NOTE XXXII.

Macbeth. Can such Things be,
And overcome us like a Summer's
Cloud
Without our special Wonder? You make me
strange
Ev'n to the Disposition that I *owe*,
When now I think you can behold such Sights,
And keep the natural Ruby of your Cheek,
When mine is blanched with Fear.

This Passage as it now stands is unintelligible, but may be restored to Sense by a very slight Alteration,

---- You make me strange
Ev'n to the Disposition that I *know*,

Though I had before seen many Instances of your Courage, yet it now appears in a Degree altogether new. *So that my* long Acquaintance *with your* Disposition *does not hinder me from that Astonishment which* Novelty *produces.*

NOTE XXXIII.

It will have Blood, they say Blood will have
Blood,
Stones have been known to move, and Trees to speak,

Augurs, that understood Relations, have
By Magpies, and by Choughs, and Rooks brought
forth
The secret'st Man of Blood. ----

In this Passage the first Line loses much of its Force by the present Punctuation. Macbeth having considered the Prodigy which has just appeared, infers justly from it, that the Death of Duncan cannot pass unpunished.

It will have Blood, ----

Then after a Short Pause, declares it as the general Observation of Mankind, that Murderers cannot escape.

---- *They say, Blood will have Blood.*

Murderers, when they have practised all human Means of Security, are detected by supernatural Directions.

Augurs, that understand Relations, &c.

By the word *Relation* is understood the *Connection* of Effects with Causes; to *understand Relations* as *an Augur* is to know how those Things *relate to* each other which have no visible Combination or Dependence.

NOTE XXXIV.

SCENE VII.

Enter Lenox and another Lord.

As this Tragedy like the rest of Shakespeare's is perhaps overstocked with Personages, it is not easy to assign a Reason, why a nameless Character should be introduced here, since nothing is said that might not with equal Propriety have been put into the Mouth of any other disaffected Man. I believe therefore that in the original Copy it was written with a very common Form of Contraction *Lenox* and *An.* for which the Transcriber instead of *Lenox* and *Angus*, set down *Lenox* and *another Lord*. The Author had indeed been more indebted to the Transcriber's Fidelity and Diligence had he committed no Errors of greater Importance.

NOTE XXXV.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

As this is the chief Scene of Inchantment in the Play, it is proper in this Place to observe, with how much Judgement Shakespeare has selected all the Circumstances of his infernal Ceremonies, and how exactly he has conformed to common Opinions and Traditions.

Thrice the brinded Cat hath mew'd.

The usual Form in which familiar Spirits are reported to converse with Witches, is that of a Cat. A Witch, who was tried about half a Century before the Time of Shakespeare, had a Cat named Rutterkin, as the Spirit of one of those Witches was Grimalkin; and when any Mischief was to be done she used to bid *Rutterkin go and fly*, but once when she would have sent Rutterkin to torment a Daughter of the Countess of Rutland, instead of *going* or *flying*, he only cried *Mew*, from which she discovered that the Lady was out of his Power, the Power of Witches being not universal, but limited as Shakespeare has taken care to inculcate.

Though his Bark cannot be lost,
Yet it shall be Tempest tost.

The common Afflictions which the Malice of Witches produced was Melancholy, Fits, and Loss of Flesh, which are threatned by one of Shakespeare's Witches.

Weary Sev'nnights nine times nine
Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine.

It was likewise their Practice to destroy the Cattle of their Neighbours, and the Farmers have

to this Day many Ceremonies to secure their Cows and other Cattle from Witchcraft; but they seem to have been most suspected of Malice against Swine. Shakespeare has accordingly made one of his Witches declare that she has been *killing Swine*, and Dr Harsenet observes, that about that Time, *a Sow could not be ill of the Measles, nor a Girl of the Sullens, but some old Woman was charged with Witchcraft*.

Toad, that under the cold Stone
Days and Nights has forty one
Swelter'd Venom sleeping got,
Boil thou first i'th' charmed Pot.

Toads have likewise long lain under the Reproach of being by some Means accessary to Witchcraft, for which Reason Shakespeare in the first Scene of this Play calls one of the Spirits Padocke or Toad, and now takes care to put a Toad first into the Pot. When Vaninus was seized at Tholouse, there was found at his Lodgings *ingens Bufo Vitro inclusus*, *a great Toad shut in a Vial*, upon which those that prosecuted him *Veneficium exprobrabant*, *charged him*, I suppose, *with Witchcraft*.

Fillet of a fenny Snake
In the Cauldron boil and bake;
Eye of Neut, and Toe of Frog; ----
For a Charm, &c.

47

The Propriety of these Ingredients may be known by consulting the Books *de Viribus Animalium* and *de Mirabilibus Mundi*, ascribed to Albertus Magnus, in which the Reader, who has Time and Credulity, may discover very wonderful Secrets.

Finger of birth-strangled Babe,
Ditch-deliver'd by a Drab; ----

It has been already mentioned in the Law against Witches, that they are supposed to take up dead Bodies to use in Enchantments, which was confessed by the Woman whom King James examined, and who had of a dead Body, that was divided in one of their Assemblies, two Fingers for her Share. It is observable that Shakespeare, on this great Occasion which involves the Fate of a King, multiplies all the Circumstances of Horror. The Babe whose Finger is used, must be strangled in its Birth, the Grease must not only be human, but must have dropped from a Gibbet, the Gibbet of a Murderer, and even the Sow whose Blood is used must have offended Nature by devouring her own Farrow. These are Touches of Judgement and Genius.

And now about the Cauldron sing ----

48

Blue Spirits and White,

Black Spirits and Grey
Mingle, mingle, mingle,
You that mingle may.

And in a former Part,

Weird Sisters Hand in Hand ----
Thus do go about, about
Thrice to mine, and thrice to thine
And thrice again to make up nine.

These two Passages I have brought together, became they both seem subject to the Objection of too much Levity for the Solemnity of Enchantment, and may both be shown, by one Quotation from Camden's Account of Ireland, to be founded upon a Practice really observed by the uncivilised Natives of that Country. "When any one gets a Fall, *says the Informer of Camden*, he starts up, and *turning three times to the Right* digs a Hole in the Earth; for they imagine that there is a Spirit in the Ground, and if he falls sick in two or three Days, they send one of their Women that is skilled in that way to the Place, where she fays, I call thee from the East, West, North, and South, from the Groves, the Woods, the Rivers, and the Fens, from the *Fairies red, black, white*." There was likewise

a Book written before the Time of Shakespeare describing, amongst other Properties, the *Colours* of Spirits.

Many other Circumstances might be particularised in which Shakespeare has shown his Judgment and his Knowledge.

NOTE XXXVI.

SCENE II.

Macbeth. Thou art too like the Spirit of Banquo, down,
Thy Crown does (1) sear my Eye-balls, and thy (2) *Hair*,
Thou other Gold-bound Brow, is like the first,
A Third is like the former. ----

(1) The Expression of Macbeth that the *Crown sears his* Eyeballs, is taken from the Method formerly practised of destroying the Sight of Captives or Competitors by holding a burning Bason before the Eye, which dried up its Humidity.

(2) As Macbeth expected to see a Train of Kings, and was only enquiring from what Race they would proceed, he could not be surprised that the *Hair* of the second was *bound with Gold* like that of the first, he was offended only that the

second resembled the first, as the first resembled Banquo, and therefore said,

---- And thy *Air*,
Thou other gold-bound Brow, is like the first.

NOTE XXXVII.

I will ---- give to the Edge o'th' Sword
His Wife his Babes, and all unfortunate Souls
That *trace him in his Line* -- no boasting like a Fool,
This Deed I'll do before my Purpose cool.

Both the Sense and Measure of the third Line which, as it rhymes, ought, according to the Practice of this Author, to be regular, are at present injured by two superfluous Syllables which may eafily be removed by reading,

---- Souls,
That trace his Line -- no boasting like a Fool.

NOTE XXXVIII.

SCENE III.

Rosse. Dearest Cousin,
I pray you school yourself; but for
your Husband,
He's noble, wise, judicious, and best knows

The fits o'th'Time. I dare not speak much farther,
But cruel are the Times when we are Traitors,

And do not know't ourselves: When we (1) *hold*
Rumour
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear,
But float upon a wild and violent Sea
Each way, and (2) *move*. I'll take my Leave of you;
Shall not be long but I'll be here again:
Things at the worst will cease, or else climb up-
wards
To what they were before: My pretty Cousin,
Blessing upon you.

(1) ---- When we hold Rumour
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear,

The present Reading seems to afford no Sense; and therefore some critical Experiments may be properly tried upon it, though, the Verses being without any Connexion, there is Room for Suspicion, that some intermediate Lines are lost, and that the Passage is therefore irretrievable. If it be supposed that the Fault arises only from the Corruption of some Words, and that the Traces of the true Reading are still to be found, the Passage may be changed thus:

---- When we *bode Ruin*
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear.

Or in a Sense very applicable to the Occasion of the Conference,

---- When the *bold running*
From what they fear, yet know not what they fear.

(2) But float upon a wild and violent Sea
Each way, and move.

That he who *floats* upon a *rough Sea* must *move* is evident, too evident for Shakespeare so emphatically to assert. The Line therefore is to be written thus:

Each way, and move ---- I'll take my Leave of you,

Rosse is about to proceed, but finding himself over-power'd by his Tenderness, breaks off abruptly, for which he makes a short Apology and retires.

NOTE XXXIX.

SCENE IV.

Malcolm. Let us seek out some desolate Shade, and there
Weep our sad Bosoms empty.
Macduff. Let us rather
Hold fast the mortal Sword; and like good Men,
Bestride our *downfal birth-doom*: Each new Morn,

New Widows howl, new Orphans cry, new Sorrows
Strike Heaven on the Face, that it resounds
As if it felt with Scotland, and yell'd out
Like Syllables of Dolour.

He who can discover what is meant by him that earnestly exhorts him to *bestride* his *downfal Birth-doom*, is at Liberty to adhere to the present Text; but those who are willing to confess that such Counsel would to them be unintelligible, must endeavour to discover some reading less obscure. It is probable that Shakespeare wrote,

---- Like good Men,
Bestride our *downfaln Birthdom* ----

The Allusion is to a Man from whom something valuable is about to be taken by Violence, and who, that he may defend it without Encumbrance, lays it on the Ground, and stands over it with his Weapon in his Hand. Our Birthdom, or Birthright, says he, lies on the Ground, let us, like Men who are to fight for what is dearest to them, not abandon it, but stand over it and defend it. This is a strong Picture of obstinate Resolution.

Birthdom for *Birth-right* is formed by the same

Analogy with *Masterdom* in this Play, signifying the *Privileges* or *Rights* of a *Master*.

Perhaps it might be *Birth-dame* for *Mother*,; let us stand over our Mother that lies bleeding on

the Ground.

NOTE XL.

Malcolm. Now we'll together, and the *Chance of Goodness*
Be like our warranted Quarrel.

The *Chance of Goodness*, as it is commonly read, conveys no Sense. If there be not some more important Error in the Passage, it should at least be pointed thus:

---- And the Chance, of Goodness,
Be like our warranted Quarrel.

That is, may the Event be, of the Goodness of Heaven, [*pro Justitia divina*] answerable to the Cause.

But I am inclined to believe that Shakespeare wrote,

---- And the Chance, O Goodness,
Be like our warranted Quarrel.

This some of his Transcribers wrote with a small *o*, which another imagined to mean *of*. If we adopt this Reading, the Sense will be, *and O thou Sovereign Goodness, to whom we now appeal, may our Fortune answer to our Cause*.

NOTE XLI.

ACT V. SCENE III.

Macbeth. Bring me no more Reports, let them fly all,
'Till Birnam Wood remove to Dunsinane,
I cannot taint with fear. What's the Boy Malcolm?
Was he not born of Woman? ----
---- Fly false Thanes,
And mingle with the English Epicures.

In the first Line of this Speech, the proper Pauses are not observed in the present Editions.

Bring me no more Reports -- let them fly all --

Tell me not any more of Desertions -- Let all my Subjects leave me -- I am safe till, &c.

The Reproach of Epicurism on which Mr Theobald has bestowed a Note, is nothing more than a natural Invective uttered by an Inhabitant

of a barren Country, against those who have more Opportunities of Luxury.

NOTE XLII.

Macbeth. I have liv'd long enough: My *Way* of Life
Is fall'n into the Sear, the yellow Leaf:

As there is no Relation between the *Way of Life*, and *fallen into the Sear*, I am inclined to think that the *W* is only an *M* inverted, and that it was originally written. ---- My *May* of Life.

I am now passed from the Spring to the Autumn of my Days, but I am without those Comforts, that should succeed the Sprightliness of Bloom, and support me in this melancholy Season.

NOTE XLIII.

SCENE IV.

Malcolm. 'Tis his main Hope:
For where there is *Advantage to be given*,
Both more or less have given him the Revolt;
And none serve with him but constrained Things,
Whose Hearts are absent too.

The Impropriety of the Expression *Advantage to be given*, instead of *Advantage given*, and the disagreeable Repetition of the Word *given* in the next Line, incline me to read,

---- Where there is *a Vantage* to be *gone*
Both more and less have given him the Revolt.

Advantage or *Vantage* in the Time of Shakespeare signified *Opportunity*.

More and less is the same with *Greater and Less*. So in the interpolated Mandeville, a Book of that Age, there is a Chapter of *India the more and the Less*.

NOTE XLIV.

SCENE V.

Macbeth. ---- Wherefore was that Cry?
Seyton. The Queen is dead.
Macbeth. She should (1) have died hereafter;
There would have been a Time for such a *Word*,
To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow
Creeps in this petty pace from Day to Day,
To the last Syllable of (2) recorded Time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted Fools
The Way to dusty Death. Out, out, brief Candle!
Life's but a walking Shadow. ----

She should have died hereafter,
There would have been a Time for such a *Word*.

This Passage has very justly been suspected of being corrupt. It is not apparent for what *Word* there would have been a *Time*, and that there would or would not be a *Time* for any *Word* seems not a Consideration of Importance sufficient to transport Macbeth into the following Exclamation. I read therefore,

(1) She should have died hereafter.
There would have been a Time for -- such a *World!* --
To-morrow, &c.

It is a broken Speech in which only Part of the Thought is expressed and may be paraphrased thus: *The Queen is dead. Macbeth. Her Death should have been deferred to some more peaceful Hour; had she lived longer,* there would at length have been a Time for *the Honours due to her as a Queen, and that Respect which I owe her for her Fidelity and Love. Such is the* World *-- such is the Condition of human Life, that we always think to-*

morrow will be happier than to-day, but to-morrow and to-morrow steals over us unenjoyed and unregarded, and we still linger in the same Expectation to the Moment appointed for our End. All these Days,

59

which have thus passed away, have sent Multitudes of Fools to the Grave, who were engrossed by the same Dream of future Felicity, and, when Life was departing from them, were like me reckoning on to-morrow.

(2) To the last Syllable of recorded Time,

Recorded Time seems to signify the Time fixed in the Decrees of Heaven for the Period of Life. The *Record of Futurity* is indeed no accurate Expression, but as we only know Transactions past or present, the Language of Men affords no Term for the Volumes of Prescience, in which future Events may be supposed to be written.

NOTE XLV.

Macbeth. If thou speak'st false,
Upon the next Tree shalt thou hang
alive
Till Famine cling thee: If thy Speech be sooth,
I care not if thou dost for me as much ----
I pull in Resolution, and begin
To doubt th' Equivocation of the Fiend,
That lies like Truth. "Fear not till Birnam
Wood
Do come to Dunsinane," and now a Wood
Comes toward Dunsinane.

60

I pull in Resolution ----

Though this is the Reading of all the Editions, yet as it is a Phrase without either Example, Elegance or Propriety, it is surely better to read

I pall in Resolution ----

I languish in my Constancy, my Confidence begins to forsake me. It is scarcely necessary to observe how easily *pall* might be changed into *pull* by a negligent

Writer, or mistaken for it by an unskilful Printer.

NOTE XLVI.

SCENE VIII.

Seyward. Had I as many Sons as I have Hairs,
I would not wish them to a fairer
Death:
And so his Knell is knoll'd.

This Incident is thus related from Henry of Huntingdon by Camden in his *Remains*, from which our Author probably copied it.

When Seyward, the martial Earl of Northumberland, understood that his Son, whom he had sent

<catchword> in

sent in Service against the Scotchmen was slain, he demanded whether his Wound were in the fore Part or hinder Part of his Body. When it was answered in the fore Part, he replied, "I am right glad; neither wish I any other Death to me or mine."

AFTER the foregoing Pages were printed, the late Edition of Shakespear, ascribed to Sir T. H. fell into my Hands, and it was therefore convenient for me to delay the Publication of my Remarks till I had examined, whether they were not anticipated by similar Observations, or precluded by better. I therefore read over this Tragedy, but found that the Editor's Apprehension is of a Cast so different from mine, that he appears to find no Difficulty in most of those Passages which I have represented as unintelligible, and has therefore past smoothly over them, without any Attempt to alter or explain them.

Some of the Lines with which I had been perplexed have been indeed so fortunate as to attract his Regard, and it is not without all the Satisfaction which it is usual to express on such Occasions, that I find an entire Agreement between us in sub-

stituting [See Note II.] *Quarrel* for *Quarry*, and in explaining the Adage of the *Cat* [Note XVII.]

62

But this Pleasure is, like most others, known only to be regretted; for I have the Unhappiness to find no such Conformity with regard to any other Passage.

The Line which I have endeavoured to amend, Note XI. is likewise attempted by the new Editor, and is perhaps the only Passage in the Play in which he has not submissively admitted the Emendations of foregoing Critics. Instead of the common Reading,

---- Doing every thing
Safe towards your Love and Honour,

he has published,

---- Doing every thing
Shap'd towards your Love and Honour.

This Alteration, which, like all the rest attempted by him, the Reader is expected to admit, without any Reason alleged in its Defence, is, in my Opinion, more plausible than that of Mr Theobald; whether it is right, I am not to determine.

In the Passage which I have altered in Note XL. an Emendation is likewise attempted in the late Edition, where, for

---- And the Chance *of* Goodness
Be like our warranted Quarrel,

63

is substituted -- And the Chance *in* Goodness -- whether with more or less Elegance, Dignity and Propriety than the Reading which I have offered, I must again decline the Province of deciding.

Most of the other Emendations which he has endeavoured, whether with good or bad Fortune, are too trivial to deserve Mention. For surely the Weapons of Criticism ought not to be blunted against an Editor, who can imagine that he is restoring Poetry, while he is amusing himself with Alterations like these;

For ---- *This is the Serjeant,*
Who like a good and hardy Soldier fought,

---- This is the Serjeant, who
Like a *right* good and hardy Soldier fought;

For ---- Dismay'd not this
Our Captains Macbeth and Banquo? -- Yes

---- Dismay'd not this
Our Captains *brave* Macbeth and Banquo? -- Yes

Such harmless Industry may, surely, be forgiven, if it cannot be praised: May he therefore never want a Monosyllable, who can use it with such wonderful Dexterity.

64

Rumpatur quisquis rumpitur Invidia!

The rest of this Edition I have not read, but, from the little that I have seen, think it not dangerous to declare that, in my Opinion, its Pomp recommends it more than its Accuracy. There is no Distinction made between the antient Reading, and the Innovations of the Editor; there is no Reason given for any of the Alterations which are made; the Emendations of former Criticks are adopted without any Acknowledgment, and few of the Difficulties are removed which have hitherto embarrassed the Readers of Sbakespear.

I would not, however, be thought to insult the Editor, nor to censure him with too much Petulance, for having failed in little Things, of whom I have been told, that he excells in greater. But I may, without Indecency, observe, that no Man should attempt to teach others what he has never learned himself; and that those who, like Themistocles, have studied the Arts of Policy, and *can teach a small State how to grow great*, should, like him, disdain to labour in Trifles, and consider petty Accomplishments as below their Ambition.

The END.