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SOME NEW NOTES
ON
MACBETH

In vindication of the reading of the Folio of 1623.

BY

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PREFACE.

The main purpose of this work is to vindicate the reading of the Folio by establishing the belief that Cawdor died unjustly, that he was no traitor, but an honorable gentleman, sacrificed to ambition by Macbeth, Banquo, and Ross. The establishment of this view will affect the meaning of the play in a great many respects.

No apology is offered for the publication of this contribution to Shakespearean criticism.

The views of the characters of Ross and Cawdor are thought to be original; they are the result of some years of study and teaching; and they clear up so large a majority of the well-known obscurities of the play that their publication has been undertaken mainly to the end that other students of the tragedy more experienced, more competent, and more happily situated with reference to the best sources of information, may have an opportunity of confirming their truth or of exposing their error.

The notes of Clarke and Wright, Rolfe, Paton, Daniel, Marshall, Flathe, Hudson, White, Furness, and others, have been freely consulted, but only such notes as have seemed entirely new have been printed. As the new notes are rather generic than specific for the most part, special acknowledgments should be gratefully made to the broad, strong grasp of Dowden, Gervinus, Ulrici, and Swinburne. The facsimile of the Folio of 1623 has proved most useful.

In the single case of Flathe it will appear, in one or two instances, that his views have been appropriated, so exactly does his estimate of Banquo coincide with that arrived at here by an entirely different line of observation.

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Fortunately these notes take the place of no notes, rather than of other notes, hence they do not clash directly with many expressed opinions; but the author must differ, with much respect and diffidence, from those who would delete Scene 2 of Act I, and from those who strike out Angus from that scene.

While it is felt that most of the interpretations in this volume are heterodox, and that they may seem merely audacious, it is also hoped that since they are constructive, and offered with a profound desire for the elucidation of the play, they may not be received amiss by scholars and actors.

M. F. L.

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THE HYPOTHESIS.

It is the purpose of this chapter to set forth briefly the incongruities and obscurities of the play, for which an explanation is sought, and the working-hypothesis which is thought to account for these difficulties.

The difficulties dealt with are concerning: --

1. The motive and meaning of Sc. 2, Act I.
2. The incongruities of Macbeth's speeches referring to the condition of Cawdor, in Sc. 3, Act I.
3. The discrepancies between Ross's words in Sc. I and in Sc. 3 of Act. I.
4. The relation of Angus to Scenes. I and 3, Act I.
5. The attitude of Banquo towards Cawdor in Sc. 3, Act I.
6. The relation of Banquo to the murder of Duncan.
7. The relation of the porter's speech, Sc. 3, Act II., to the play.
8. The conduct of Ross with reference to the murder of Duncan and to the succession of Macbeth, and the motive and central idea of Sc. 4 of Act II.
9. The relation of Banquo to Macbeth.
10. The identity of the third murderer.

11. The motive of Sc. 6, Act III.

12. The relation of Ross to the murder of Lady Macduff.

The difficulties concerning these twelve points are nearly all so familiar to the student of Macbeth that they scarcely call for more than the mention of them, but for convenience the following statements are made so that there may be no misunderstanding as to what is believed to be the present state of criticism regarding each point: --

1. Scene 2, Act I., is regarded by the Cambridge editors as an interpolation, probably by Middleton: their main objections being that the language of the sergeant is not in Shakespeare's manner, that the metre is slovenly, that the

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lines referring to Cawdor are inconsistent with the references to Cawdor in Sc. 3.

Swinburne also believes the scene corrupt, but attributes the corruptness to bad editing.

No explanation of the reason why the two reports of the battle are given on the stage has been considered adequate.

2. Johnson, Daniel, and Rolfe simply state that Macbeth's references, in Sc. 3, to Cawdor are incongruous.

Furness' *Variorum* accepts the same view. No hypothesis has been brought forward to explain these discrepancies: they stand as hopelessly incongruous in all the editions. The Cambridge editors cut the knot by abandoning Sc. 2.

3. Daniel and others point out the fact that Ross tells utterly different stories in speaking to Duncan (Sc. 2), and in relating to Macbeth what he had said to Duncan (Sc. 3.)

No editor has offered any explanation of this fact.

According to the Folio of 1623, Angus heard Ross on both occasions. Modern editors have concluded that Angus does not enter with Ross in Sc. 2.

4. If Angus enters with Ross in Sc. 2, and also in Sc. 3, he must have heard the inconsistent stories of Ross.

If Angus does not enter in Sc. 2 the Folio is at fault.

5. Though Macbeth's references to Cawdor are said to be inexplicable, Banquo, who knew as much about Cawdor as we have reason to think Macbeth did, did not comment upon Macbeth's inconsistency.

6. Dowden considers Banquo innocent of complicity in the murder of Duncan, and says that though he was tempted with Macbeth, the evil thoughts which ruin Macbeth "work

no evil" in the mind of Banquo: Flathe, however, holds that Banquo is corrupted as well as Macbeth, though differently.

7. Coleridge rejects the Porter-scene, the Cambridge editors follow suit: many hold the same opinion. Some editors consider it genuine./*

/* Mr. Churton Collins defends the scene in a book just come to hand.

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8. Scene 4, of Act II., is not considered essential to the plot; is not acted on the stage, and has never been assigned an adequate motive.

9. There is a difference of opinion as to whether Banquo's relation to Macbeth was a guilty relation: Flathe holds that it was so, the greater number of critics regard Banquo as a simple and upright soldier untainted by wrong ambitions.

10. The majority of editors regard the third murderer as an unknown assassin. Paton believes Macbeth was the third murderer; many accept Paton's belief and reasons.

11. Sc. 6, Act III, is rejected in Irving's arrangement for the stage; it is not considered essential to the plot.

12. No adequate motive is given for the presence of Ross at Macduff's castle a few moments before the murder of Lady Macduff, nor is any adequate motive given for the entrance of the Messenger who warns her of her impending fate.

It will be observed that minute points have been omitted from this scheme of difficulties; but if the hypothesis prove sound and workable it will explain some verbal difficulties as well as these twelve points and the speeches connected with them.

The hypothesis offered as an explanation of all these difficulties may be briefly stated as follows: --

The Thane of Ross, though a subordinate character, is more important than has yet been shown: he is not merely loquacious and weak but an ambitious intriguer, a man of some ability but no moral worth, a coward, spy, and murderer.

The most important departure from orthodox explanation of the play is the proposition that Cawdor was in fact a loyal gentleman; that Ross from a desire to curry favour with Macbeth, and from other motives traduced and ruined Cawdor: that Macbeth and Banquo allowed Cawdor to be ruined, that the words of the witches might prove true; that Cawdor was in the camp unaware of the plot against him, and that

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the conspirators, armed with the hasty command of the king,

put him to death with complete injustice.

Of course this is a grave departure from orthodox explanation: but it must be obvious that orthodox explanation confesses its failure to account for each and every one of the points in question, and that it rather lies with the orthodox to upset this hypothesis, which accounts for all the facts, than with the hypothesis to prove its complete right to belief.

The subsequent career of Ross is briefly this: having put Macbeth under obligation to him by his intrigue against Cawdor he follows the new Thane of Cawdor to Inverness. He does not appear in the castle on the morning of the murder of Duncan, but shortly after the removal of Duncan's body he is found in the neighbourhood. He tells Macduff that he means to join Macbeth at Scone. He next appears at Macbeth's court evidently as chief minister of that council of which Macbeth speaks to Banquo. He is jealous of Banquo who is the only courtier able to be his rival as first adviser of Macbeth. He is the actual assassin of Banquo. At the banquet he does all that a skilful intriguer can to assist Lady Macbeth in protecting Macbeth in his aberration. Later on he becomes the agent of Macbeth in the murder of the Macduffs. At this time he sees Macbeth's power on the wane and deserts him, solely on that account. He goes to England and finds Macduff and Malcolm: after assuring himself that Malcolm has influence enough to overcome Macbeth he tells Macduff of his murdered family, and throws in his lot with the cause he rejected in Sc. 4 of Act II., (when Macduff remained loyal toward Malcolm). He returns with the Prince, sees Macbeth defeated, and as a reward of endless treachery is made an earl, escaping immediate punishment that the Fates may torture him later, in which he resembles Iago, whom he also resembles in many other respects.

It is freely admitted that much of this outline is not cap-

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able of direct proof. It was not to be expected that a subordinate character should be painted with the completeness of the portrait of Macbeth or his wife: and again it was not to be supposed that a spy and intriguer who deceived his intimate friends and relatives would be drawn so vile as to strike the reader as an open villain.

But if any critic should read this argument and should say to himself, "It seems quite as easy to show that Ross was weak and foolish as to show that he was an intriguing villain," it would be fair for the critic to remember that if the two views are equally probable that which accounts satisfactorily for the hitherto incongruous parts of the play must be given rank as the correct view: and moreover, if the new hypothesis has merely fewer objections to it than that which makes Ross innocent and Cawdor a traitor, then the new hypothesis must be accepted as prefer-

able to the old.

In order that this hypothesis may appear clearly and prominently, the whole play has been printed again and the speeches requiring new notes are in italics. Wherever the interpretation of the play is in any direct way affected by the view of the characters of Cawdor and Ross here entertained, notes explaining the interpretation are given below the passages affected.

Further consideration of the soundness of the hypothesis may now be deferred until the reader has had an opportunity of testing it by reading the play again in the light of the above explanation, and of the notes.

The reading followed in this book is mainly that of the Variorum edition. In one or two instances the readings of the Folio have been restored, but the vindication of the Folio at which the work aims is rather a vindication of its scenes than of its words and punctuation.

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MACBETH.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DUNCAN, king of Scotland.

MALCOLM.

DONALBAIN,

his sons.

MACBETH,

BANQUO,

generals of the king's army.

MACDUFF,

LENNOX

ROSS,

MENTEITH,

ANGUS,

CAITHNESS,

noblemen of Scotland.

FLEANCE, son to Banquo.

SIWARD, Earl of Northumberland,

general of the English forces.

Young SIWARD, his son.

SEYTON, an officer attending on Macbeth.

Boy, son to Macduff.

An English Doctor.

A Scotch Doctor

A Sergeant.

A Porter.

An Old Man.

LADY MACBETH.

LADY MACDUFF.

Gentlewoman attending on Lady

Macbeth.
HECATE.
Three Witches.
Apparitions.
Lords, Gentlemen, Officers, Soldiers,
Murderers, Attendants, and Mes-
sengers.
SCENE: Scotland: England.
ACT I.
SCENE I. A desert place.
Thunder and Lightning. Enter three Witches.
First Witch. When shall we three meet again
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?
Second Witch. When the hurlyburly's done,
When the battle 's lost and won.
Third Witch. That will be ere the set of sun.
First Witch. Where the place?
Second Witch. Upon the heath.
Third Witch. There to meet with Macbeth.
First Witch. I come, Graymalkin!
Second Witch. Paddock calls.

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Third Witch. Anon. 10
All. Fair is foul, and foul is fair:
Hover through the fog and filthy air. [Exeunt.
SCENE II. A camp near Forres.
Alarum within. Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN,
LENNOX, with attendants, meeting a bleeding Sergeant.
Duncan. What bloody man is that? He can report, 1
As seemeth by his plight, of the revolt
The newest state.
Malcolm. This is the sergeant 3
Who like a good and hardy soldier fought
'Gainst my captivity. -- Hail, brave friend!
Say to the king the knowledge of the broil
As thou didst leave it.
Sergeant. Doubtful it stood;
As two spent swimmers, that do cling together
And choke their art. The merciless Macdonwald 9
(Worthy to be a rebel, for to that
The multiplying villanies of nature
Do swarm upon him) from the western isles
Of kerns and gallowglasses is supplied;
And fortune, on his damned quarrel smiling,
Show'd like a rebel's whore: but all's too weak:

1-3. This speech tells us that the sergeant had the appearance of one who had just been wounded in battle: also that the king had been receiving reports of the revolt in earlier stages. "Revolt" may imply Duncan's keen desire to learn the doings of the rebels rather than those of Norway.

3-7. Malcolm gives the sergeant a character for courage and loyalty that predisposes us to believe his story. The Prince tells us his own liberty had been endangered in the battle. His speech stimulates the sergeant to make a brave story of the fight.

9-12. Macdonwald is described as a born rebel, in which he is a complete

contrast to Cawdor, the consideration of whose appearance leads Duncan
(I. 4.) to say
"There's no art
"To find the mind's construction in the face."

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For brave Macbeth -- well he deserves that name --
Disdaining fortune, with his brandish'd steel,
Which smoked with bloody execution,
Like valour's minion, carved out his passage
Till he faced the slave;
Which ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him,
Till he unseam'd him from the nave to the chaps, 22
And fix'd his head upon our battlements.
Duncan. O valiant cousin! worthy gentleman!
Sergeant. As whence the sun 'gins his reflection
Shipwrecking storms and direful thunders break,
So from that spring whence comfort seem'd to come
Discomfort swells. Mark, king of Scotland, mark:
No sooner justice had, with valour arm'd, 29
Compell'd these skipping kerns to trust their heels,
But the Norweyan lord, surveying vantage,
With furbish'd arms and new supplies of men,
Began a fresh assault.
Duncan. Dismay'd not this
Our captains, Macbeth and Banquo?
Sergeant. Yes;
As sparrows eagles, or the hare the lion.
If I say sooth, I must report they were
As cannons overcharged with double cracks, so they
Doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe:
Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds,
Or memorize another Golgotha,

22-23. This terrible feat is so noteworthy that it is incredible that Ross should not have known it when he speaks to the king a few moments later. Even in a great modern battle the incident by which a prominent leader was killed would rapidly spread, how much more in the compact hand to hand struggle of Duncan's day. Yet Ross says nothing of Macdonwald. "Fix'd his head upon our battlements," greatly emphasizes the publicity of the incident. This is the only "personal venture" of Macbeth's referred to by the sergeant.

29-53. It appeared a great gain to overcome Macdonwald but when Norway saw Duncan's generals pursuing the rebels he saw a good opportunity of attacking them in the rear.

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I cannot tell --
But I am faint; my gashes cry for help.
Duncan. So well thy words become thee as thy wounds;
They smack of honour both. -- Go get him surgeons. 44
Who comes here?
Enter ROSS. (Folio -- Enter Ross and Angus.)
Malcolm. The worthy thane of Ross. 45
Lennox. What a haste looks through his eyes! So
should he look
That seems to speak things strange.

Ross. God save the king! 47
 Duncan. Whence camest thou, worthy thane? 48
 Ross. From Fife, great king;
 Where the Norweyan banners flout the sky,
 And fan our people cold. Norway himself,
 With terrible numbers,
 (Assisted by that most disloyal traitor
 The thane of Cawdor), began a dismal conflict;
 Till that Bellona's bridegroom, lapp'd in proof,
 Confronted him with self-comparisons,
 Point against point rebellious, arm 'gainst arm,
 Curbing his lavish spirit: and, to conclude,
 The victory fell on us; --

44. The sergeant remains, and his presence has a marked effect upon the speech of Ross.

45-46. Contrast this sarcastic introduction with the welcome received by the truthful sergeant. Lennox tells us that the warlike courage of Ross is in the expression of his eyes. He comes up, not covered with blood from honourable warfare but full of a startling story. "Seems" is precisely the best word to show the insincere loquacity of Ross.

47. "God save the king." Contrast the blunt commencement of the sergeant. Of course the Thane should be more ceremonious.

48. "Whence camest thou?" Duncan had no need of asking the sergeant this question.

48-58-62. This long speech, broken only at line 58 by two words from Duncan, gives token of careful preparation: it is framed with the perfect subtlety of a thorough intriguer. So skilfully are the names of Cawdor and Norway mixed in it that at a single reading it is impossible to say which statements refer to the foreign king and which to the Scotch Thane. There is

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Duncan. Great happiness!
 That now
 Sweno, the Norways' king, craves composition;
 Nor would we deign him burial of his men
 Till he disbursed, at Saint Colme's Inch,
 Ten thousand dollars to our general use.
 Duncan. No more that thane of Cawdor shall deceive 63
 Our bosom interest. -- go pronounce his present death,
 And with his former title greet Macbeth.
 Ross. I'll see it done. 66
 Duncan. What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won.
 [Exeunt.]

little doubt that Duncan believes lines 54-58 to refer to a combat between Macbeth and Cawdor: it seems more than highly probable that Johnson and other annotators have been similarly misled by Ross's deceitful sentence. Angus however who is present (according to the first Folio) takes these lines (Scene 3, l. 109) as referring in a general way to Norway and his forces, as of course they do according to a grammatical analysis. If any proof of this were needed it might be had by placing in brackets as we have ventured to do above all that really refers to Cawdor ("assisted by that most disloyal traitor, the thane of Cawdor") and reading the speech without it. When however Duncan exclaims "great happiness!" Ross knows he has

taken his words to mean that Cawdor was overcome and captured and he resumes his speech by naming "Sweno, the Norway's king" fully, which he would never have done if Duncan had taken the preceding five lines to refer to this same Sweno. Is it possible to suppose that Ross would here mention Sweno elaborately if he had not been deceiving Duncan and Angus by speaking ambiguously in the lines before?

63-65. If any doubt remained as to what had silenced Duncan during this prolonged speech his words in these lines would dispel it: his whole mind is taken up with the traitorous conduct of Cawdor. He commissions Ross and Angus to (a) see to the execution of Cawdor, (b) greet Macbeth as the new Thane of Cawdor.

66-67. Ross has gained his point: while pretending to Angus to speak mainly of Norway he has pretended to Duncan to speak mainly of Cawdor. The king closes the scene by showing his rage against Cawdor.

The duplicity of Ross in this scene is excelled only by his duplicity in reporting it to Macbeth in Scene 3. It weakens both scenes greatly to remove, as some have removed, the thane of Angus from Scene 2. Cawdor has been condemned merely upon a parenthetical line and a half from Ross. There is absolutely no other proof of his guilt in the play.

It is like Ross to ignore Angus, who is also commissioned by Duncan. In Sc. 3, Angus says "we are sent." The "exeunt" of the Folio at the end of Sc. 2 probably refers to Ross and Angus but not to Duncan and his attendants.

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SCENE III. A heath,
Thunder. Enter the three Witches.
First Witch. Where hast thou been, sister?
Second Witch. Killing swine.
Third Witch. Sister, where thou?
First Witch. A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap,
And munch'd, and munch'd, and munch'd. 'Give me,'
quoth I:
'Aroint thee, witch!' the rump-fed ronyon cries.
Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' the 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.
Second Witch. I'll give thee a wind.
First Witch. Thou'rt kind.
Third Witch. And I another.
First Witch. I myself have all the other,
And the very ports they blow,
All the quarters that they know
I' the shipman'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 forbid:
Weary se'nnights nine times nine
Shall he dwindle, peak and pine:
Though his bark cannot be lost,
Yet it shall be tempest-tost.
Look what I have.
Second Witch. Show me, show me.
First Witch. Here I have a pilot's thumb,

Wreck'd as homeward he did come. [Drum within.
Third Witch. A drum, a drum!
Macbeth doth come.

17

All. The weird sisters, hand in hand,
Posters of the sea and land,
Thus do go about, about:
Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,
And thrice again, to make up nine.
Peace! the charm's wound up.
Enter MACBETH and BANQUO.
Macbeth. So foul and fair a day I have not seen.
Banquo. How far is't call'd to Forres? What are these
So wither'd, and so wild in their attire,
That look not like the inhabitants o' the earth,
And yet are on't? -- Live you? or are you aught
That man may question? You seem to understand me,
By each at once her choppy finger laying
Upon her skinny lips: you should be women,
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
That you are so.
Macbeth. Speak, if you can: what are you?
First W. All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, thane of
Glamis! 48
Sec. W. All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, thane of
Cawdor!
Third W. All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king here-
after!

48-50. Why is the thanedom of Glamis polluted by the lips of these un-
natural sisters? Would it not be in the manner of Shakespeare (so often
invoked) to hint that Macbeth's first uncertain step in criminal ambition was
an unfilial desire to succeed Sinel before the appointed time? Macbeth's habi-
tual references to future time are worthy of a separate study. In this
way of looking at the three all hail's the first ambition was premature inherit-
ance, which is a rather intangible form of murder: the second is the guilty
silence which results in the execution of the innocent Cawdor whom Macbeth
should have defended and cleared; this is passive murder: the third step is
the horrible midnight assassination of Duncan. Surely this gradual though
terribly swift descent into the river of blood is more human than the headlong
plunge of the regular view.

18

Banquo. Good sir, why do you start, and seem to fear
Things that do sound so fair? I' the name of truth,
Are ye fantastical, or that indeed 53
Which outwardly ye show? My noble partner
You greet with present grace and great prediction
Of noble, having and of royal hope,
That he seems rapt withal: to me you speak not:
If you can look into the seeds of time, 58
And say which grain will grow and which will not,
Speak then to me, who neither beg nor fear 60
Your favours nor your hate.
First Witch. Hail!
Second Witch. Hail!

Third Witch. Hail!
First Witch. Lesser than Macbeth, and greater. 65
Second Witch. Not so happy, yet much happier.
Third Witch. Thou shalt get kings, though thou be
none:
So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!
First Witch. Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!
Macbeth. Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more: 70
By Sinel's death I know I am thane of Glamis; 71

53-54. Those who habitually read to find the motive of each speech must conclude that Banquo is here made to appear an "equivocator," that is, one who holds two contrary opinions at once and yet preserves equanimity as to his conscience.

58. "If you can." This is already rather more than idle or amused curiosity.

60-61. These words clearly show the effort of Banquo to hold himself free from serious motive in consulting the witches.

65-67. Not only does Banquo receive promises fitted to inflame his hopes, but these promises link him indissolubly to Macbeth, and bind him to wish for the fulfilment both of all the witches say regarding himself and (to that end) of all they say regarding Macbeth.

70. Imperfect speakers. He knew they had spoken some truth.

71-72. Every step in Macbeth's ascent to the throne depends upon the death of a man: first Sinel, then Cawdor, then Duncan. If the witches spur in him the criminal ambition of his nature, is it not reasonable to suppose that the climax of the three honours corresponds to a climax of three crimes?

19

But how of Cawdor? the thane of Cawdor lives,
A prosperous gentleman; and to be king
Stands not within the prospect of belief,
No more than to be Cawdor. Say from whence 75

72-73. "The thane of Cawdor lives, a prosperous gentleman." Macbeth means by this that Cawdor is probably where he and Banquo left him, in the Scotch camp, and probably in command of a division of Duncan's forces. It is simply incredible that these words are used (in Banquo's presence) of an imprisoned rebel who had turned traitor on the field after being in the absolute confidence of the king. Better with Swinburne declare the scene corrupt or repudiate it with the Cambridge editors than merely call this speech incongruous. If this speech is corrupt the whole scene is corrupt, for the speech agrees most perfectly with the context: the words "The thane of Cawdor lives, a prosperous gentleman" are shaded down to "The thane of Cawdor lives, why do you dress me in borrowed robes?" when Ross salutes Macbeth as Cawdor; will any reader believe that this significant shading down of terms is the result of corrupt readings? What method there must be in the corrupting of the two scenes when they are perfectly coherent from line to line, and from speech to speech, but incongruous when compared as scenes.

But in reality there is no incongruity whatever. Macbeth and Banquo are influenced by the witches' predictions, both desire every word of these predictions to come true: both know Cawdor innocent: but Macbeth must succeed Cawdor if the witches are to speak truth: Ross comes with news that Cawdor has given place to Macbeth: this trebles the desire of Macbeth and Banquo

that Cawdor may be out of the way: after this has taken effect Angus tells them that Cawdor has been guilty of treason, at least Angus has heard so; now was it in the nature of Macbeth or of Banquo to stand up for Cawdor? If Macbeth and Banquo are not allied in a guilty silence why do they not press Ross for an explanation of the downfall of so prominent a noble as the prosperous Cawdor? Is it possible that Macbeth will not particularly inquire concerning one whose rank and title he succeeds to? Would not an honest man have questioned Ross far enough to allay the expressed doubts of Angus as to how Cawdor had been a rebel?

To suppose Cawdor an innocent man, traduced and ruined by Ross, partly to curry favour with Macbeth, who coveted his neighbour's rank and influence (Cawdor Castle is fifteen miles from Inverness) partly from a natural malignity not unlike Iago's, and partly no doubt from personal jealousies such as occur in every army, to suppose this most probable if not certain hypothesis, supported by a hundred arguments, is to banish every difficulty in this otherwise hopeless scene: to reject this view is to leave Scenes 2 and 3 in a confusion really much worse than annotators have admitted, in as much as the true meaning of many lines has been overlooked; and the very reason of the presence of Angus in the two scenes and indeed the very reason for existence of most of Scene 2 are entirely lost.

75. It does not, Macbeth says, stand within the prospect of belief to be

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You owe this strange intelligence? or why
Upon this blasted heath you stop our way
With such prophetic greeting? Speak, I charge you.
[Witches vanish.

Banquo. The earth hath bubbles as the water has,
And these are of them. Whither are they vanish'd?

Macbeth. Into the air; and what seem'd corporal
Melted as breath into the wind. Would they had stay'd!

Banquo. Were such things here as we do speak about? 83
Or have we eaten on the insane root
That takes the reason prisoner?

Macbeth. Your children shall be kings. 86

Banquo. You shall be king.

Macbeth. And thane of Cawdor too; went it not so?

Banquo. To the selfsame tune and words. Who's here?

Enter ROSS and ANGUS

Cawdor. These words are more than clear, they are most emphatic, used indeed to render the possibility of being king utterly absurd. Let those who say Cawdor was guilty explain these words away: they will find it is a question not of a new hypothesis against an old one but of a new hypothesis, not in itself improbable, against none whatever. No one will believe that Cawdor was a rebel-prisoner through Macbeth's exertions and that Macbeth was unaware of the fact. Johnson and Daniel reject that view as absurd. In an ancient battle such a thing would be absolutely impossible.

83. In order to understand Banquo this scene should be read over and over with Banquo alone in view. Two things will then appear most clearly (1) That Banquo makes a vacillating struggle between the free path of a virtuous contempt for the witches and their alluring predictions, and the side path of curiosity and hope in regard to these predictions: (2) That Macbeth watches Banquo closely and whenever he fears Banquo is about to mention Cawdor, he dangles the witches promise before his eyes and binds him to a guilty silence, as appears in the following note.

86-87. In line 85 Banquo tells Macbeth he fears his reason has been taken prisoner: Macbeth replies with apparent irrelevance "your children shall be kings." Banquo rejoins "you shall be king" showing that his mind is again fixed for the time upon the predictions: then Macbeth says in effect "If I am ever to be king and if your children are to rule, I must first be thane of Cawdor." Banquo does not refer to Cawdor when Ross and Angus come in, though he has every reason to enquire how that Thane has fallen.

21

Ross. The king hath happily received, Macbeth, 89
The news of thy success; and when he reads
Thy personal venture in the rebels' fight,
His wonders and his praises do contend
Which should be thine or his: silenced with that,
In viewing o'er the rest o' the selfsame day,
He finds thee in the stout Norwegian ranks,
Nothing afraid of what thyself didst make,
Strange images of death. As thick as hail
Came post with post; and every one did bear
Thy praises in his kingdom's great defence,
And pour'd them down before him.
Angus. We are sent 100

89-100. Much of the argument depends upon the comparison of this speech with Ross' speech to Duncan in Act 2. It certainly supports the First Folio in making Angus appear with Ross in Sc. 2. to find them together in discharging Duncan's message.

This speech is perhaps the shrewdest example of the subtle handling of ambiguous phrases by an intriguer to be met with anywhere.

Many will say no doubt that it is easy to read subtle meanings into any speeches, but in fairness let it be remembered that all the annotators who have grappled with this speech have come to one of two conclusions, (a) That it is corrupt or unintelligible, (b) That Ross forgot what he actually had said to Duncan. In reply to the former, one need but say that an explanation that gives coherence and clearness to every word is at least plausible: in reply to the latter it is urged that while a play whose very subject is murder is hardly complete without a spy and intriguer, such a play has no particular need of a weak-minded thane who cannot remember a few hours after, the most important words of his life-time. Daniel, who is accepted by most recent editors and who has indeed the best appreciation of the difficulties involved, gives up the explanation in despair: "Ross and Angus come from the King. Ross describes how the news of Macbeth's success reached the King, by post after post. He appears to have entirely forgotten that he himself was the messenger; he however greets Macbeth with the title of Cawdor, and Angus informs Macbeth that Cawdor lies under sentence of death for 'treasons capital,' but whether he was in league with Norway, or with the rebel [Macdonwald], or with both, he knows not. Ross did know when, in the preceding scene, he took the news of the victory to the King; but he also appears to have forgotten it; at any rate he does not betray his knowledge. Macbeth's loss of memory is even more remarkable than Ross's. He doesn't recollect having himself defeated Cawdor but a few short hours -- we might say minutes -- ago; and the Witches' prophetic greeting of him by that title, and Ross's

22

To give thee, from our royal master, thanks;
Only to herald thee into his sight,

Not pay thee.

Ross. And for an earnest of a greater honour, 104
He bade me, from him, call thee thane of Cawdor:
In which addition, hail, most worthy thane!
For it is thine.

Banquo. (Aside.) What, can the devil speak true? 107

confirmation of it, fill him with surprise; for, so far as he knows (or recollects, shall we say?) the thane of Cawdor lives, a prosperous gentleman."

Now what are the facts about these inconsistent speeches? Angus heard Ross deliver a confused and ambiguous account of the battle to Duncan and heard Duncan pronounce the fate of Cawdor. Angus did not interpret the "him" of line 55 Sc. 2. as referring to Cawdor but to Norway, (in which he differed from Duncan, and from Johnson and Daniel), hence we may suppose he inquired of Ross what Cawdor had done that Ross should have alluded to him (52-53 Sc. 2.) as a traitor. Ross had satisfied the stupid Angus by telling him that Cawdor had been guilty of treasons capital, confessed and proved; but he had not completely satisfied him for he tells Macbeth that he does not know what wrong Cawdor had done.

It is before this same Angus that Ross must now deliver an account of that same speech to Duncan and in such words as shall not make Macbeth and Banquo exclaim that Cawdor is innocent. Some of the ambiguities of his words may be seen below:

(a) He gives Macbeth the impression for the moment that he was not himself the messenger to Duncan: but he does this so carefully that Angus does not suspect it.

(b) "Thy personal venture in the rebel's fight" alludes to Macdonwald as Macbeth and Banquo understand it (and as the sergeant would have understood it) while to Angus it brings a confused notion of Norway and Cawdor.

(c) "Silenced with that" to Macbeth means, that Duncan was overcome with wonder and admiration by the story of the awful duel with Macdonwald: to Angus it means that Duncan was so taken up with anger at Cawdor's guilt that he paid no attention to the news of the battle.

100-103. How can Angus say "we are sent," if he was not present in Scene 2?

The slow but manly Angus expresses a dislike of Ross' flattering speeches. He cannot understand why Ross comes so slowly to the point.

104-107. Ross allows Macbeth to feel the sweetness of being called Thane of Cawdor. When Macbeth has got this new title Ross lets Angus explain that it involves the ruin of Cawdor. Will Macbeth save Cawdor and drop the new title? No, he is only anxious now that Banquo shall say nothing to save Cawdor!

107. Banquo thinks of the witches' predictions.

23

Macbeth. The thane of Cawdor lives: why do you 108
dress me in borrowed robes?

Angus. Who was the thane lives yet, 109
But under heavy judgment bears that life
Which he deserves to lose. Whether he was combined
With those of Norway, or did line the rebel
With hidden help and vantage, or that with both

He labour'd in his country's wreck, I know not;
But treasons capital, confessed and proved,
Have overthrown him.

Macbeth. [Aside.] Glamis, and **the** thane of Cawdor!
The greatest is behind. Thanks for your pains.
Do you not hope your children shall be kings,
When those that gave the thane of Cawdor to me
Promised no less to them?
Banquo. That, trusted home,
Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,

108. Macbeth, more feebly than to the witches, protests that Cawdor lives; not that he wishes Cawdor prosperous but that he wants proof of his downfall.

Some readers may argue that when Macbeth in the conversation with the witches said "The thane of Cawdor lives, a prosperous gentleman," he was merely trying to draw them out; Banquo might have understood him in that way, they will argue. But line 108 must convince every reader that such a view is utterly untenable.

109-116. This speech means, "Yes, Macbeth, the man who was thane of Cawdor is still alive but he's condemned to die, and justly so. I do not know whether his rebellious acts were overt or secret or both, but I know he has been guilty of treasons capital, because he has confessed as much and besides it has been proved; and on account of this high treason he has been condemned by the king."

As a matter of fact Angus knew nothing about the matter except what Ross had told him: it is like Shakespeare to say to the reader between the lines and with grim irony "Treasons capital have overthrown him."

Does Macbeth clear up the doubts of Angus or ask for the confessions of Cawdor or the proof Ross had offered Duncan? Not at all, but thanks Ross and Angus for their pains and turns to dangle the allurements of a royal offspring before the eyes of the conscientious Banquo for fear he may fail to connive with Ross and himself in their guilty and silent partnership. He puts the promise to Banquo's children in its most favourable light and Banquo is corrupted. Why does not Ross say to Macbeth words to this effect, -- "How can

24

Besides the thane of Cawdor. But 'tis strange:
And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
The instruments of darkness tell us truths,
Win us with honest trifles, to betray 's
In deepest consequence. --
Cousins, a word, I pray you. 127
Macbeth. [Aside.] Two truths are told,
As happy prologues to the swelling act
Of the imperial theme. -- I thank you, gentlemen. -- 129
[Aside.] This supernatural soliciting
Cannot be ill; cannot be good: if ill,
Why hath it given me earnest of success,
Commencing in a truth? I am thane of Cawdor: 133
If good, why do I yield to that suggestion
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,
Against the use of nature? Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings:
My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,

Shakes so my single state of man that function
Is smothered in surmise, and nothing is
But what is not.

Banquo. Look how our partner's rapt. 142

Macbeth. [Aside.] If chance will have me king, why,
chance may crown me,
Without my stir.

you ask about Cawdor who was overcome in open rebellion by yourself? But no, in the acting he warns Macbeth, by gestures, not to ruin his excellent plot. Is it too much to say that the subtle underplay of this scene by which Ross silences Macbeth, and Macbeth Banquo, is the central idea of it, that that alone makes it intelligible and gives proper weight and significance to every line and word.

127. Two truths are told. Not until Banquo has signified his guilty partnership in this passive murder does Macbeth say "two truths."

129. I thank you gentlemen. Banquo was conversing with Ross and Angus.

133. I am thane of Cawdor. What had he learned to silence his doubts? He had Ross's word that Cawdor was ruined, and Angus had said the same, adding that he did not know what the crime of Cawdor had been.

142. Our partner. By an indissoluble tie.

25

Banquo. New honours come upon him, 144

Like our strange garments, cleave not to their mould
But with the aid of use.

Macbeth. [Aside.] Come what come may,
Time and the hour runs through the roughest day.

Banquo. Worthy Macbeth, we stay upon your leisure.

Macbeth. Give me your favour: my dull brain was
wrought

With things forgotten. Kind gentlemen, your pains 150

Are register'd where every day I turn

The leaf to read them. Let us toward the king. --

Think upon what hath chanced, and at more time, 153

The interim having weigh'd it, let us speak

Our free hearts each to other. 155

Banquo. Very gladly.

Macbeth, Till then, enough. -- Come, friends. Exeunt. 156

144. Without my stir. Just as in the case of Cawdor, where mere silence had been the only requirement. Even Duncan expresses surprise that Cawdor proved a traitor; Macbeth and Banquo say nothing, beyond asking how it was possible for Macbeth to succeed a prosperous nobleman still living. Yet the editors ask us to believe that Cawdor was guilty and that Macbeth had defeated him in open rebellion.

150-153. Macbeth's profuse thanks to these men are not adequately explained on the mere ground that they had brought Duncan's message.

153. "What hath chanced." Without my stir.

155. Very gladly. Banquo's mind is corrupted: he struggles hard to be honourable but he never frees himself from the power of evil hopes. In the act that follows he remains a passive murderer while Macbeth becomes a

brutal assassin. Perhaps there is no instance even in these plays where two characters are discriminated with differences so miraculously drawn. Both are brave, even honourable, both are infirm of purpose; with children Macbeth might have resembled Banquo much more closely than he does; (too much cannot be made of the fact that Macbeth has no heir; it is the very cause why Lady Macbeth would make up to him in public life what is lacking in their domestic life;) but Macbeth is less conscientious and more violent; he cares less for his conscience than for his horrible imagination, and when goaded by his wife he does what Banquo without such a goad and with a more remote ambition could never have done.

156. Come friends. In massing the speeches of a scene Shakespeare never forgets the emphasis of the final words.

26

SCENE IV. Forres. The palace.

Flourish. Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, LENNOX, and Attendants.

Duncan. Is execution done on Cawdor? Are not 1
Those in commission yet returned? 2

Malcolm. My liege,
They are not yet come back. But I have spoke
With one that saw him die, who did report
That very frankly he confess'd his treasons,
Implored your highness' pardon and set forth
A deep repentance: nothing in his life
Became him like the leaving it; he died
As one that had been studied in his death,
To throw away the dearest thing he owed
As 'twere a careless trifle.

Duncan. There's no art
To find the mind's construction in the face: 12

1-2. The king is impatient and troubled about news of Cawdor. In moments of reflection he has been weighing the testimony on which he condemned the noble thane.

2. Those in commission. Ross and Angus had this commission (Sc. 2, l. 64).

2-11. In every word of this speech there is evidence that Ross has acutely supposed that Duncan would have qualms of conscience about his summary conviction of Cawdor and that the intriguer has sent such a report as would best tend to soothe the gentle old king's misgivings. In effect Malcolm has learned that though Cawdor was an atrocious hypocrite and traitor, yet he confessed his guilt and died in such a way as to make his death almost a pleasure for Duncan to hear of. His speech means "My liege, there is no direct report of the execution; Ross and Angus have not returned; but I have heard from an eye-witness that Cawdor confessed his treasons and expressed deep repentance: all through his life he was a villain but he died like an honourable gentleman: indeed his death seems to have been inconsistent with his character as reported to us, but I suppose he made a study of dying handsomely.

27

He was a gentleman on whom I built
An absolute trust. --
Enter MACBETH, BANQUO, ROSS, and ANGUS.
O worthiest cousin!

The sin of my ingratitude even now 15
 Was heavy on me: thou art so far before
 That swiftest wing of recompense is slow
 To overtake thee. Would thou had less deserved,
 That the proportion both of thanks and payment
 Might have been mine! only I have left to say,
 More is thy due than more than all can pay.
 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, by doing every thing
 Safe toward your love and honour.
 Duncan. Welcome hither:
 I have begun to plant thee, and will labour
 To make thee full of growing. -- Noble Banquo,
 That hast no less deserved, nor must be known
 No less to have done so: let me infold thee
 And hold thee to my heart.
 Banquo. There if I grow,

12-14. This speech is Duncan's death-warrant.

It is not undertaking too much to say that in this play Shakespeare is most careful to preserve an exalted conception of retributive justice. Even Lady Macduff is most untrue to her noble husband before the murderers enter: Banquo forfeits his life (not to Macbeth but to poetic justice) by his failure to warn Duncan and to defend Cawdor. Duncan forfeits his life by weakly condemning on the parenthetical accusation of the thane of Ross, a nobleman who had been trusted with the "bosom interest" of the king, "a gentleman on whom I built an absolute trust;" one clearly who had rivalled Macbeth and Banquo in his counsels.

15-17. Though these lines apply to Macbeth yet the "sin of my ingratitude" seems an echo of his feelings for the murdered Cawdor.

28

The harvest is your own.
 Duncan. My plenteous joys, 33
 Wanton in fulness, seek to hide themselves
 In drops of sorrow. -- Sons, kinsmen, thanes,
 And you whose places are the nearest, know
 We will establish our estate upon
 Our eldest, Malcolm, whom we name hereafter
 The Prince of Cumberland: which honour must
 Not unaccompanied invest him only,
 But signs of nobleness, like stars, shall shine
 On all deservers. -- From hence to Inverness,
 And bind us further to you.
 Macbeth. The rest is labour, which is not used for you:
 I'll be myself the harbinger, and make joyful
 The hearing of my wife with your approach;
 So, humbly take my leave.
 Duncan. My worthy Cawdor! 47
 Macbeth. [Aside.] The Prince of Cumberland! that is a
 step,
 On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap,
 For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires;

Let not light see my black and deep desires:
The eye wink at the hand; yet let that be
Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see. [Exit.]
Duncan. True, worthy Banquo; he is full so valiant,
And in his commendations I am fed;
It is a banquet to me. Let's after him,
Whose care is gone before to bid us welcome:
It is a peerless kinsman. [Flourish. Exeunt.]

33. The harvest is your own. This suggests suspicion of Macbeth's loyalty.

47. My worthy Cawdor. A slight emphasis on the adjective would imply that the King is satisfying himself that the former thane was a traitor.

29

SCENE V. Inverness. A room in Macbeth's castle.

Enter LADY MACBETH, reading a letter.

Lady Macbeth. 'They met me in the day of success: and I have learned by the perfectest report, they have more in them than mortal knowledge. When I burned in desire to question them further, they made themselves air, into which they vanished. Whiles I stood rapt in the wonder of it, came missives from the king, who all-hailed me "Thane of Cawdor;" by which title, before, these weird sisters saluted me, and referred me to the coming on of time, with "Hail, king that shalt be!" This have I thought good to deliver thee, my dearest partner of greatness, that thou mightst not lose the dues of rejoicing, by being ignorant of what greatness is promised thee. Lay it to thy heart, and farewell.'
Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be 13
What thou art promised: yet do I fear thy nature;
It is too full o' the milk of human kindness
To catch the nearest way: thou wouldst be great;
Art not without ambition, but without
The illness should attend it: what thou wouldst highly,
That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false,
And yet wouldst wrongly win: thou'ldst have, great 20
Glamis,

13. Glamis thou art, and Cawdor. It seems from this way of receiving these tidings that these ambitions were common domestic topics between Macbeth and his wife. Had they not discussed the death of Sinel and the title of Cawdor many a time?

20. Glamis. She knows his nature in reference to such matters, not by analogy but by his words in reference to his two former ambitions. When he was Glamis he wished to be Cawdor; when his father was alive he wished to inherit. Had his father died or Cawdor been ruined he would have been pleased, though he would have feared to cause the death of either.

Banquo's exclamation upon hearing of Duncan's death is,
"Dear Duff, I prithee, contradict thyself,
And say it is not so."

Banquo felt repentance, he wished he had warned and protected Duncan; Macbeth felt only remorse, he would have committed the crime again.

30

That which cries 'Thus thou must do, if thou have it;'
And that which rather thou dost fear to do
Than wishest should be undone. 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,
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem
To have thee crown'd withal.
Enter a Messenger.
What is your tidings?
Messenger. The king comes here to-night.
Lady Macbeth. Thou'rt mad to say it:
Is not thy master with him? who, were't so,
Would have inform'd for preparation.
Messenger. So please you, it is true: our thane is coming:
One of my fellows had the speed of him,
Who, almost dead for breath, had scarcely more
Than would make up his message.
Lady Macbeth. Give him tending;
He brings great news. [Exit Messenger.
The raven himself is hoarse
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
Under my battlements. Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full
Of direst cruelty! make thick my blood;
Stop up the access and passage to remorse,
That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
The effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,
And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers,
Wherever in your sightless substances
You wait on nature's mischief! Come, thick night,
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,

31

Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,
To cry 'Hold, hold!'
Enter MACBETH.
Great Glamis! worthy Cawdor!
Greater than both, by the all-hail hereafter!
Thy letters have transported me beyond
This ignorant present, and I feel now
The future in the instant.
Macbeth. My dearest love,
Duncan comes here to-night.
Lady Macbeth. And when goes hence?
Macbeth. To-morrow, as he purposes.
Lady Macbeth. O, never
Shall sun that morrow see!
Your face, my thane, is as a book where men
May read strange matters. To beguile the time,
Look like the time; bear welcome in your eye,
Your hand, your tongue: look like the innocent flower,
But be the serpent under 't. He that's coming
Must be provided for: and you shall put 65

This night's great business into my dispatch;
Which shall to all our nights and days to come
Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom.
Macbeth. We will speak further.
Lady Macbeth. Only look up clear;
To alter favour ever is to fear:
Leave all the rest to me. [Exeunt.]

65-68. This speech makes his murder of Duncan seem to him merely passive, like his murder of Cawdor: it bridges the two murders.

32

SCENE VI. Before Macbeth's Castle.
Hautboys and torches. Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONAL-
BAIN, LENNOX, MACDUFF, ROSS, ANGUS and Attend-
ants.
Duncan. This castle has a pleasant seat; the air
Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses.
Banquo This guest of summer, 3
The temple-haunting martlet, does approve
By his loved mansionry that the heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here: no jutty, frieze,
Buttress, nor coign of vantage, but this bird
Hath made his pendent bed and procreant cradle:
Where they most breed and haunt, I have observed
The air is delicate.
Enter LADY MACBETH.
Duncan. See, see, our honour'd hostess!
The love that follows us sometime is our trouble,
Which still we thank as love. Herein I teach you
How you shall bid God 'ild us for your pains,
And thank us for your trouble.
Lady Macbeth. All our service,
In every point twice done, and then done double,
Were poor and single business, to contend
Against those honours deep and broad, wherewith
Your majesty loads our house: for those of old,
And the late dignities heap'd up to them,
We rest your hermits.
Duncan. Where 's the thane of Cawdor?
We coursed him at the heels, and had a purpose
To be his purveyor: but he rides well;

3-10. This soothing speech is criminal: but Banquo always satisfies his conscience and like other self-deceivers passes for honourable.

33

And his great love, sharp as his spur, hath help him
To his home before us. Fair and noble hostess,
We are your guest to-night.
Lady Macbeth. Your servants ever
Have theirs, themselves, and what is theirs, in compt,
To make their audit at your highness' pleasure,
Still to return your own.
Duncan. Give me your hand;

Conduct me to mine host: we love him highly,
And shall continue our graces towards him.
By your leave, hostess. [Exeunt.]

SCENE VII. Macbeth's castle.

Hautboys and torches. Enter a Sewer, and divers Servants
with dishes and service, and pass over the stage. Then
enter MACBETH.

Macbeth. If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly: if the assassination
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch,
With his surcease, success; that but this blow
Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
We 'ld jump the life to come. But in these cases
We still have judgment here; that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which being taught return
To plague the inventor: this even-handed justice
Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice
To our own lips. He 's here in double trust;
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,
Who should against his murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels trumpet-tongued against

34

The deep damnation of his taking-off:
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubim, horsed
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
That tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
And falls on the other.

Enter LADY MACBETH.

How now! what news?

Lady Macbeth. He has almost supp'd: why have you
left the chamber?

Macbeth. Hath he ask'd for me?

Lady Macbeth. Know you not he has?

Macbeth. We will proceed no further in this business:
He hath honour'd me of late; and I have bought
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
Not cast aside so soon.

Lady Macbeth. Was the hope drunk
Wherein you dress'd yourself? hath it slept since?
And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
At what it did so freely? From this time
Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard 39
To be the same in thine own act and valour
As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have that
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,
And live a coward in thine own esteem,

Letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would,'
Like the poor cat i' the adage?
Macbeth. Prithee, peace:
I dare do all that may become a man;

39-41. She urges him to take a step nearer to active murder than before.

35

Who dares do more is none.
Lady Macbeth. What beast was't then
That made you break this enterprise to me?
When you durst do it, then you were a man;
And, to be more than what you were, you would
Be so much more the man. Nor time nor place
Did then adhere, and yet you would make both:
They have made themselves, and that their fitness now
Does unmake you. I have given suck, and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums
And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as you
Have done to this.
Macbeth. If we should fail?
Lady Macbeth. We fail.
But screw your courage to the sticking-place,
And we'll not fail. When Duncan is asleep --
Whereto the rather shall his day's hard journey
Soundly invite him -- his two chamberlains
Will I with wine and wassail so convince,
That memory, the warder of the brain,
Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason
A limbec only: when in swinish sleep
Their drenched natures lie as in a death,
What cannot you and I perform upon
The unguarded Duncan? what not put upon
His spongy officers, who shall bear the guilt
Of our great quell?
Macbeth. Bring forth men-children only;
For thy undaunted mettle should compose
Nothing but males. Will it not be received,
When we have mark'd with blood those sleepy two
Of his own chamber, and used their very daggers,
That they have done 't?

36

Lady Macbeth. Who dares receive it other,
As we shall make our griefs and clamour roar
Upon his death?
Macbeth. I am settled, and bend up
Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.
Away, and mock the time with fairest show:
False face must hide what the false heart doth know.
[Exeunt.
ACT II.
SCENE I. Court of Macbeth's castle.
Enter BANQUO, and FLEANCE bearing a torch before him.

Banquo. How goes the night, boy? 1
Fleance. The moon is down; I have not heard the clock.
Banquo. And she goes down at twelve.
Fleance. I take 't, 'tis later, sir.
Banq. Hold, take my sword. There's husbandry in heaven;
Their candles are all out. Take thee that too.
A heavy summons lies like lead upon me,
And yet I would not sleep: merciful powers,
Restrain in me the cursed thoughts that nature
Gives way to in repose!
Enter MACBETH and a Servant with a torch.
Give me my sword. --
Who's there?

1. Why is Banquo represented as restless here if he has no fears for Duncan?

4-9. This speech of Banquo's is the very epitome of his character, kindly, conscientious, poetical, but weak and vacillating: he gives up sword and dagger that he may have no means of defending the king from the fate the witches have predicted. On hearing Macbeth his purpose shifts again; he wants his sword back. "The king's a-bed," shows where his thoughts are in calling for his sword and proves his guilty silence.

37

Macbeth. A friend.
Banquo. What, sir, not yet at rest? The king 's a-bed:
He hath been in unusual pleasure, and
Sent forth great largess to your offices.
This diamond he greets your wife withal,
By the name of most kind hostess; and shut up
In measureless content.
Macbeth. Being unprepared,
Our will became the servant to defect;
Which else should free have wrought.
Banquo. All's well,
I dreamt last night of the three weird sisters: 20
To you they have show'd some truth.
Macbeth. I think not of them:
Yet, when we can entreat an hour to serve,
We would spend it in some words upon that business,
If you would grant the time.
Banquo. At your kind'st leisure.
Macbeth. If you shall cleave to my consent, when 'tis,
It shall make honour for you.
Banquo. So I lose none 26
In seeking to augment it, but still keep
My bosom franchised and allegiance clear,
I shall be counsell'd.
Macbeth. Good repose the while!
Banquo. Thanks, sir: the like to you!
[Exeunt Banquo and Fleance.
Macbeth. Go bid thy mistress, when my drink is ready,
She strike upon the bell. Get thee to bed. -- [Exit Servant.

20. He had dreamed of the witches' prophecy, they had spoken truly for Macbeth, his cursed thoughts would make him a traitor. Macbeth is not the first here to mention the witches' predictions as he was in Scene 3, Act I.

26 So I lose none. The motive of this scene is to show the attitude of Banquo to the murder of Duncan. In effect he says "Proceed with the crime, but do not ask me to countenance it. I may profit by it, though."

38

Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling as to sight? or art thou but
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?
I see thee yet, in form as palpable
As this which now I draw.
Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going;
And such an instrument I was to use.
Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses,
Or else worth all the rest: I see thee still;
And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,
Which was not so before. There's no such thing:
It is the bloody business which informs
Thus to mine eyes. Now o'er the one half-world
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtain'd sleep; witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecate's offerings, and wither'd murder,
Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
Whose howl 's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design
Moves like a ghost. -- Thou sure and firm-set earth,
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
Thy very stones prate of my whereabouts,
And take the present horror from the time,
Which now suits with it. -- Whiles I threat he lives:
Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.
[A bell rings.
I go, and it is done; the bell invites me.
Hear it not, Duncan; for it is a knell
That summons thee to heaven or to hell. [Exit.

39

SCENE II. The same.
Enter LADY MACBETH.
Lady Macbeth. That which hath made them drunk hath
made me bold;
What hath quench'd them hath given me fire. -- Hark! Peace!
It was the owl that shriek'd, the fatal bellman,
Which gives the stern'st good-night. He is about it:
The doors are open, and the surfeited grooms
Do mock their charge with snores: I have drugg'd their
possets,
That death and nature do contend about them,
Whether they live or die.
Macbeth. [Within.] Who's there? what, ho!
Lady Macbeth. Alack, I am afraid they have awaked,
And 'tis not done. The attempt and not the deed
Confounds us. Hark! I laid their daggers ready;

He could not miss 'em. Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had done't.
Enter MACBETH.
My husband!
Macb. I have done the deed. Didst thou not hear a noise?
Lady M. I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry.
Macbeth. Did not you speak?
Lady Macbeth. When? Now?
Macbeth. As I descended.
Lady Macbeth. Ay.
Macbeth. Hark!
Who lies i' the second chamber?
Lady Macbeth. Donalbain.
Macbeth. This is a sorry sight.
Lady Macbeth. A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.
Macbeth. There's one did laugh in 's sleep, and one cried
'Murder!'

40

That they did wake each other: I stood and heard them:
But they did say their prayers, and address'd them
Again to sleep.
Lady Macbeth. There are two lodged together.
Macbeth. One cried 'God bless us!' and 'Amen' the other;
As they had seen me with these hangman's hands:
Listening their fear, I could not say 'Amen,'
When they did say 'God bless us!'
Lady Macbeth. Consider it not so deeply.
Macbeth. But wherefore could not I pronounce 'Amen?'
I had most need of blessing, and 'Amen'
Stuck in my throat.
Lady Macbeth. These deeds must not be thought
After these ways; so, it will make us mad.
Macbeth. Methought I heard a voice cry 'Sleep no more!
Macbeth doth murder sleep,' the innocent sleep,
Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleeve of care,
The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast, --
Lady Macbeth. What do you mean?
Macbeth. Still it cried 'Sleep no more!' to all the house:
'Glamis hath murdered sleep, and therefore Cawdor 42
Shall sleep to more: Macbeth shall sleep no more?
Lady Macbeth. Who was it that thus cried? Why, worthy
thane,
You do unbend your noble strength, to think

43. Grant White says: "These two lines, unless their detailing of Macbeth's titles is the utterance of his distempered fancy, sink into a mere conceit unworthy of the situation." The titles are detailed in the order of Macbeth's crimes and of the witches' allurements; they imply that Macbeth realizes now that his criminal career has been a unit against his peace of mind. His unrest began with his first ambition and his crimes. The couplet is a flash of lightning on this gloomy scene. To an unprejudiced reader the vindication of the power of these two lines must go a long way to prove that Macbeth had been guilty of three crimes instead of one. Every reader must have thought them weak in the old explanation.

So brainsickly of things. Go get some water,
 And wash this filthy witness from your hand.
 Why did you bring these daggers from the place?
 They must lie there: go carry them, and smear
 The sleepy grooms with blood.
 Macbeth. I'll go no more:
 I am afraid to think what I have done;
 Look on't again I dare not.
 Lady Macbeth. Infirm of purpose!
 Give me the daggers: the sleeping and the dead
 Are but as pictures: 'tis the eye of childhood
 That fears a painted devil. If he do bleed,
 I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal;
 For it must seem their guilt. [Exit. Knocking within.
 Macbeth. Whence is that knocking?
 How is't with me, when every noise appals me?
 What hands are here? ha! they pluck out mine eyes.
 Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
 Clean from my hand? No; this my hand will rather
 The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
 Making the green one red.
 Re-enter LADY MACBETH.
 Lady Macbeth. My hands are of your colour; but I shame
 To wear a heart so white. [Knocking within.] I hear a
 knocking
 At the south entry: retire we to our chamber:
 A little water clears us of this deed:
 How easy is it, then! Your constancy
 Hath left you unattended. [Knocking within.] Hark! more
 knocking:
 Get on your nightgown, lest occasion call us
 And show us to be watchers. Be not lost
 So poorly in your thoughts.
 Macbeth. To know my deed, 'twere best not know myself.
 [Knocking within.
 Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I would thou couldst!
 [Exeunt.

SCENE III. The same.
 Knocking within. Enter a Porter.
 Porter. Here's a knocking indeed! If a man were porter
 of hell-gate, he should have old turning the key. [Knocking
 within.] Knock, knock, knock! Who's there, i' the name
 of Beelzebub? Here's a farmer, that hanged himself on the
 expectation of plenty: come in time; have napkins enow
 about you; here you'll sweat for't. [Knocking within.]
 Knock, knock! Who's there, in th' other devil's name?
 Faith, here's an equivocator, that could swear in both the
 scales against either scale; who* committed treason enough
 for God's sake, yet could not equivocate to heaven: O come
 in equivocator. [Knocking within.] Knock, knock, knock!
 Who's there? Faith, here's an English tailor come hither,
 for stealing out of a French hose: come in, tailor; here you
 may roast your goose. [Knocking within.] Knock, knock;

never at quiet! What are you? But this place is too cold for hell. I'll devil-porter it no further: I had thought to have let in some of all professions, that go the primrose way to the everlasting bonfire. [Knocking within.] Anon, anon! I pray you, remember the porter.

[Opens the gate.

Enter MACDUFF and LENNOX.

Macduff. Was it so late, friend, ere you went to bed, That you do lie so late?

Porter. Faith, sir, we were carousing till the second cock; and drink, sir, is a great provoker of three things.

4. The farmer who hanged himself on the expectation of plenty is a strange fanciful parallel to the ambitious Macbeth: the fatal castle is hell, the porter is at hell-gate and on this terrible night more than one seeks admittance. The equivocator is just such a drunken parallel to Banquo as the farmer to Macbeth. It is inconceivable that a speech of this tragic and harmonious humour reflecting the whole psychological storm raging around the drunken porter (as an untrue mirror reflects the face in grim distortion) can have been interpolated.

19. We might remember the porter by studying his speech.

43

Macduff. What three things does drink especially provoke?

Porter. Marry, sir, nose-painting, sleep, and urine.

Lechery, sir, it provokes and unprovokes; it provokes the desire, but it takes away the performance: therefore much drink may be said to be an equivocator with lechery: it makes him and it mars him; it sets him on and it takes him off; it persuades him and disheartens him; makes him stand to and not stand to; in conclusion, equivocates him in a sleep, and, giving him the lie, leaves him.

Macduff. I believe drink gave thee the lie last night.

Porter. That it did, sir, i' the very throat on me: but I requited him for his lie; and, I think, being too strong for him, though he took up my legs sometime, yet I made a shift to cast him.

Macduff. Is thy master stirring?

Enter MACBETH.

Our knocking has awaked him; here he comes.

Lennox. Good morrow, noble sir.

Macbeth. Good morrow, both.

Macduff. Is the king stirring, worthy thane?

Macbeth. Not yet.

Macduff. He did command me to call timely on him: I have almost slipp'd the hour.

Macbeth. I'll bring you to him.

Macduff. I know this is a joyful trouble to you; But yet 'tis one.

Macbeth. The labor we delight in physics pain. This is the door.

Macduff. I'll make so bold to call, For 'tis my limited service. [Exit.

Lennox. Goes the king hence to day?

Macbeth. He does: he did appoint so.

44

Lennox. The night has been unruly; where we lay,
Our chimneys were blown down, and, as they say,
Lamentings heard i' the air, strange screams of death,
And prophesying with accents terrible
Of dire combustion and confused events
New hatch'd to the woeful time: the obscure bird
Clamour'd the livelong night: some say, the earth
Was feverous and did shake.
Macbeth. 'Twas a rough night.
Lennox. My young remembrance cannot parallel
A fellow to it.
Re-enter MACDUFF.
Macduff. O horror, horror, horror! Tongue nor heart
Cannot conceive nor name thee.
Macbeth.
Lennox.
What's the matter?
Macduff. Confusion now hath made his masterpiece!
Most sacrilegious murder hath broke ope
The Lord's annointed temple, and stole thence
The life o' the building.
Macbeth. What is it you say? the life?
Lennox. Mean you his majesty?
Macduff. Approach the chamber, and destroy your sight
With a new Gorgon: do not bid me speak;
See, and then speak yourselves. [Exeunt Macbeth and Lennox.
Awake, awake!
Ring the alarum-bell. -- Murder and treason! --
Banquo and Donalbain! Malcolm! awake!
Shake off this downy sleep, death's counterfeit,
And look on death itself! up, up, and see
The great doom's image! Malcolm! Banquo!
As from your graves rise up, and walk like sprites,
To countenance this horror. Ring the bell. [Bell rings.

45

Enter LADY MACBETH.
Lady Macbeth. What 's the business,
That such a hideous trumpet calls to parley
The sleepers of the house? speak, speak!
Macduff. O gentle lady,
'Tis not for you to hear what I can speak:
The repetition, in a woman's ear,
Would murder as it fell. --
Enter BANQUO.
O Banquo, Banquo!
Our royal master 's murder'd.
Lady Macbeth. Woe, alas!
What, in our house?
Banquo. Too cruel any where.
Dear Duff, I prithee, contradict thyself, 70
And say it is not so.
Re-enter MACBETH and LENNOX.
Macbeth. Had I but died an hour before this chance,
I had lived a blessed time; for from this instant
There's nothing serious in mortality:

All is but toys: renown and grace is dead;
The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees
Is left this vault to brag of.
Enter MALCOLM and DONALBAIN.
Donalbain. What is amiss?
Macbeth. You are, and do not know 't:
The spring, the head, the fountain of your blood
Is stopped; the very source of it is stopp'd.
Macduff. Your royal father 's murdered.
Malcolm. O, by whom?

69-71. The comment of the equivocator. Banquo is not surprised.

46

Lennox. Those of his chamber, as it seem'd, had done 't:
Their hands and faces were all badged with blood;
So were their daggers, which unwiped we found
Upon their pillows:
They stared, and were distracted; no man's life
Was to be trusted with them.
Macbeth. O, yet I do repent me of my fury,
That I did kill them.
Macduff. Wherefore did you so?
Macbeth. Who can be wise, amazed, temperate and furious,
Loyal and neutral, in a moment? No man:
The expedition of my violent love
Outrun the pauser reason. Here lay Duncan,
His silver skin laced with his golden blood,
And his gash'd stabs looked like a breach in nature.
For ruin's wasteful entrance: there, the murderers,
Steep'd in the colours of their trade, their daggers
Unmannerly breech'd with gore: who could refrain,
That had a heart to love, and in that heart
Courage to make 's love known?
Lady Macbeth. Help me hence, ho!
Macduff. Look to the lady.
Malcolm. [Aside to Don.] Why do we hold our tongues,
That most may claim this argument for ours?
Don. [Aside to Mal.] What should be spoken here, where
our fate,
Hid in an auger-hole, may rush, and seize us?
Let 's away;
Our tears are not brew'd.
Malcolm. [Aside to Don.] Nor our strong sorrow
Upon the foot of motion.

Note Ross never appears in any place of danger, hence he is absent from this awful scene. In the next scene he is found near the castle endeavouring to learn from the old man and from Macduff how the wind blows.

47

Banquo. Look to the lady:
[Lady Macbeth is carried out.
And when we have our naked frailties hid,
That suffer in exposure, let us meet,
And question this most bloody piece of work, 110

To know it further. Fears and scruples shake us:
In the great hand of God I stand, and thence
Against the undivulged pretence I fight
Of treasonous malice.

Macduff, And so do I.

All. So all.

Macbeth. Let's briefly put on manly readiness,
And meet i' the hall together.

All. Well contented.

[Exeunt all but Malcolm and Donalbain.]

Malcolm. What will you do? Let's not consort with them:
To show an unfelt sorrow is an office

Which the false man does easy. I 'll to England.

Donalbain. To Ireland, I; our separated fortune
Shall keep us both the safer: where we are,
There 's daggers in men's smiles: the near in blood,
The nearer bloody.

Malcolm. This murderous shaft that 's shot
Hath not yet lighted, and our safest way
Is to avoid the aim. Therefore to horse;
And let us not be dainty of leave-taking,
But shift away: there 's warrant in that theft
Which steals itself when there's no mercy left. [Exeunt.]

112-113. In the great hand of God I stand and thence I fight against the undivulged pretence of treasonous malice. This is as near as Banquo can come to declaring in public what he feels so certain of in Scene 1, Act III., where he says, "I fear thou playdst most foully for it." In that same damning speech he hopes he may prosper from foul means, himself.

This speech fixes the hate of Macbeth upon him irrevocably.

Banquo committed treason enough in the name of God, yet he could not equivocate to Heaven.

48

SCENE IV. Outside Macbeth's castle.

Enter Ross and an old Man.

Old Man. Threescore and ten I can remember well:
Within the volume of which time I have seen
Hours dreadful and things strange; but this sore night
Hath trifled former knowings.

Ross. Ah, good father,
Thou seest, the heavens, as troubled with man's act,
Threaten his bloody stage: by the clock 'tis day,
And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp:
Is 't night's predominance, or the day's shame,
That darkness does the face of earth entomb,
When living light should kiss it?

Old Man. 'Tis unnatural,
Even like the deed that 's done. On Tuesday last,
A falcon, towering in her pride of place,
Was by a mousing owl hawk'd at and killed.

Ross. And Duncan's horses -- a thing most strange and certain --

Beauteous and swift, the minions of their race,
Turn'd wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out,
Contending 'gainst obedience, as they would make

War with mankind.
Old Man. 'Tis said they eat each other.
Ross. They did so, to the amazement of mine eyes
That look'd upon 't.
Enter MACDUFF.
Here comes the good Macduff.
How goes the world, sir, now?
Macduff. Why, see you not?
Ross. Is 't known who did this more than bloody deed?

Scene IV. To those who attach no prominence to the character of Ross, this scene must lack motive. It is meant to show Ross skulking about in safety, spying out the turn of events.

49

Macduff. Those that Macbeth hath slain.
Ross. Alas, the day!
What good could they pretend?
Macduff. They were suborn'd:
Malcolm and Donalbain, the king's two sons,
Are stol'n away and fled, which puts upon them
Suspicion of the deed.
Ross. 'Gainst nature still: 27
Thriftless ambition, that wilt ravin up
Thine own lift's means! Then 'tis most like
The sovereignty will fall upon Macbeth. 30
Macduff. He is already named, and gone to Scone
To be invested.
Ross. Where is Duncan's body?
Macduff. Carried to Colme-kill,
The sacred storehouse of his predecessors
And guardian of their bones.
Ross. Will you to Scone?
Macduff. No, cousin, I'll to Fife.
Ross. Well, I will thither.
Macduff. Well may you see things well done there: adieu!
Lest our old robes sit easier than our new!

27. 'Gainst nature still. This is said with ironical cunning in mocking allusion to the old man's "'Tis unnatural." The purpose of this scene is to contrast the candid and loyal Macduff with the cunning and plausible Ross. They show the extreme types of the conduct of the nobles on hearing of Macbeth's stroke.

32. Where is Duncan's body? Until that is safely bestowed Ross will hold aloof.

36. "No, cousin, I'll to Fife."
"Well, I will thither."
"Well, may you see things well done there."
That is, Macduff will not follow the fortunes of a murderer, but Ross with an apologetic "well" announces his intention of going to Scone to be with the successful Macbeth upon whom he has an ancient claim. Macduff's twice-repeated "well" is a sneer: but he will not, or cannot, quarrel with the smooth-mannered Ross. Unless Ross went to Macbeth to be his adviser why did Macduff enjoin him to see things well done?

50

Ross. Farewell, father.

Old Man. God's benison go with you, and with those
That would make good of bad, and friends of foes!

[Exeunt.

ACT III.

SCENE I. Forres. The Palace.

Enter BANQUO.

Banquo. Thou hast it now: king, Cawdor, Glamis, all,
As the weird women promised, and, I fear,
Thou play'dst most foully for 't: yet it was said
It should not stand in thy posterity,
But that myself should be the root and father
Of many kings. If there come truth from them
As upon thee, Macbeth, their speeches shine
Why, by the verities on thee made good,
May they not be my oracles as well
And set me up in hope? But hush! no more.

Sennet sounded. Enter MACBETH, as king; LADY MAC-
BETH, as queen; LENNOX, ROSS, Lords, Ladies,
and Attendants.

Macbeth. Here's our chief guest.

Lady Macbeth. If he had been forgotten,
It had been as a gap in our great feast,
And all-thing unbecoming.

Macbeth. To night we hold a solemn supper, sir,
And I'll request your presence.

1-6. "I fear thou play'dst most foully for it." The "it" refers to "king, Cawdor, Glamis, all." Banquo means that Macbeth has verified the witches' predictions by foul play, but he goes on to say that their prediction concerning himself would yet be verified to the ruining of Macbeth's hopes.

51

Banquo. Let your highness
Command upon me; to the which my duties
Are with a most indissoluble tie
For ever knit.

Macbeth. Ride you this afternoon?

Banquo. Ay, my good lord. 19

Macbeth. We should have else desired your good advice,
Which still hath been both grave and prosperous,
In this day's council; but we'll take to-morrow.
Is 't far you ride?

Banquo. As far, my lord, as will fill up the time
'Twixt this and supper: go not my horse the better,
I must become a borrower of the night
For a dark hour or twain.

Macbeth. Fail not our feast.

Banquo. My lord, I will not.

Macbeth. We hear our bloody cousins are bestow'd
In England and in Ireland, not confessing
Their cruel parricide, filling their hearers
With strange invention: but of that to-morrow,
When therewithal we shall have cause of state
Craving us jointly. Hie you to horse: adieu,
Till you return at night. Goes Fleance with you?

Banquo. Ay, my good lord: our time does call upon 's.

17. Indissoluble tie. This immoral allegiance is accounted for by the fact that their fortunes since Macbeth is king are bound up indissolubly in the predictions of the witches. All that the sisters predicted for Macbeth has come true: Banquo now fully hopes, Macbeth equally fears, that what they predicted for Banquo may come true next. The effect upon Banquo of the verification of the third part of the witches' prediction concerning Macbeth fully accounts for all the otherwise unaccountable words of Banquo in this damning scene. Now that the witches have completely overcome his better nature his doom is not far off, and who should with greater appropriateness give him his quietus than Macbeth and Ross, who witnessed his first step in crime when he failed to speak up for Cawdor.

18-40. Ross hears all this.

52

Macbeth. I wish your horses swift and sure of foot;
And so do I commend you to their backs.

Farewell. [Exit Banquo.

Let every man be master of his time 40
Till seven at night: to make society
The sweeter welcome, we will keep ourself
Till supper-time alone; while then, God be with you!
[Exeunt all but Macbeth and an attendant.
Sirrah, a word with you: attend those men
Our pleasure?

Attendant. They are, my lord, without the palace gate.

Macbeth. Bring them before us. [Exit Attendant.

To be thus is nothing;

But to be safely thus. 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 rebuked, as it is said
Mark Antony's was by Caesar. 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 placed 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 't be so,
For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind;
For them the gracious Duncan have I murder'd;
Put rancours in the vessel of my peace
Only for them; and mine eternal jewel
Given to the common enemy of man,
To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings:
Rather than so, come, fate, into the list,

53

And champion me to the utterance! Who's there?
Re-enter Attendant, with two Murderers.

Now go to the door, and stay there till we call.

[Exit Attendant.]

Was it not yesterday we spoke together?

First Murderer. It was, so please your highness.

Macbeth. Well then, now

Have you consider'd of my speeches? Know

That it was he in the times past which held you

So under fortune, which you thought had been

Our innocent self: this I made good to you

In our last conference, pass'd in probation with you,

How you were borne in hand, how cross'd, the instruments,

Who wrought with them, and all things else that might

To half a soul and to a notion crazed

Say 'Thus did Banquo.'

First Murderer. You made it known to us.

Macbeth. I did so, and went further, which is now

Our point of second meeting. Do you find

Your patience so predominant in your nature

That you can let this go? Are you so gospell'd

To pray for this good man and for his issue,

Whose heavy hand hath bow'd you to the grave

And beggar'd yours for ever?

First Murderer. We are men, my liege.

Macbeth. Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men;

As hounds and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs,

Shoughs, water-rugs and demi-wolves, are clept

All by the name of dogs: the valued file

Distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle,

The housekeeper, the hunter, every one

According to the gift which bounteous nature

Hath in him closed, whereby he does receive

Particular addition, from the bill

That writes them all alike: and so of men.

54

Now if you have a station in the file,

Not i' the worst rank of manhood, say 't;

And I will put that business in your bosoms,

Whose execution takes your enemy off,

Grapples you to the heart and love of us,

Who wear our health but sickly in his life,

Which in his death were perfect.

Second Murderer. I am one, my liege,

Whom the vile blows and buffets of the world

Have so incensed that I am reckless what

I do to spite the world.

First Murderer. And I another

So weary with disasters, tugg'd with fortune,

That I would set my life on any chance,

To mend it or be rid on 't.

Macbeth. Both of you

Know Banquo was your enemy.

Both Murderers. True, my lord.

Macbeth. So is he mine, and in such bloody distance

That every minute of his being thrusts

Against my near'st of life: and though I could

With barefaced power sweep him from my sight

And bid my will avouch it, yet I must not,
For certain friends that are both his and mine, 120
Whose loves I may not drop, but wail his fall
Who I myself struck down: and thence it is,
That I to your assistance do make love,
Masking the business from the common eye
for sundry weighty reasons.
Second Murderer. We shall, my lord,
Perform what you command us.
First Murderer. Though our lives --
Macbeth. Your spirits shine through you. Within this
hour at most

127. "Within this hour," he must consult Ross.

55

I will advise you where to plant yourselves,
Acquaint you with the perfect spy o' the time,
The moment on 't; for 't must be done to-night, 130
And something from the palace; always thought
That I require a clearness: and with him --
To leave no rubs nor blotches in the work --
Fleance his son, that keeps him company,
Whose absence is no less material to me
Than is his father's, must embrace the fate
Of that dark hour. Resolve yourselves apart:
I'll come to you anon.
Both Murderers. We are resolved, my lord.
Macbeth. -- I'll call upon you straight: abide within.
[Exeunt Murderers.
It is concluded: Banquo, thy soul's flight,
If it find heaven, must find it out to-night. [Exit.

129. Acquaint you with the perfect spy o' the time. Whether spy means person or act it points to Ross: the character of spy is not merely marked in Ross, it is Ross himself: love of spying is the mainspring of his nature and out of it grow his love of informing and lying. He is the prototype of all detectives and informers. It is this that leads Shakespeare to make this character's baseness so plausible as to have escaped condemnation, thus masking the business to the common eye, for sundry weighty reasons. He was the Fouché of the elaborate system of espionage of which Macbeth boasts in the fourth scene of this act (line 131).

It will be remembered that Collier's MS. has "a perfect spy."

Macbeth says "Within this hour at most I will advise you," "I'll come to you anon," "I'll call upon you straight"; how could Shakespeare tell us more plainly that Macbeth retired to consult with his confidant, and who could that confidant be but Ross? Macbeth at first pretends that he is retiring to give the murderers an opportunity of consulting each other, but when they declare they are resolved, Macbeth says in effect "Well, I must leave you anyway"; can any one doubt that he went to consult the third murder?

56

SCENE II. The palace.
Enter LADY MACBETH and a Servant.
Lady Macbeth. Is Banquo gone from court?

Servant. Ay, madam, but returns again to-night.
Lady Macbeth. Say to the king, I would attend his leisure
For a few words.

Servant. Madam, I will, [Exit.

Lady Macbeth. Nought 's had, all 's spent,
Where our desire is got without content:
T'is safer to be that which we destroy
Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy.
Enter MACBETH.

How now, my lord! why do you keep alone,
Of sorriest fancies your companions making;
Using those thoughts which should indeed have died
With them they think on? Things without all remedy
Should be without regard: what 's done is done.
Macbeth. We have scotch'd the snake, not kill'd it:
She'll close and be herself, whilst our poor malice
Remains in danger of her former tooth.
But let the frame of things disjoint, both the worlds suffer.
Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep
In the affliction of these terrible dreams
That shake as nightly; better be with the dead,
Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace,
Than on the torture of the mind to lie
In restless ecstasy. Duncan is in his grave;
After life's fitful fever he sleeps well;
Treason has done his worst: nor steel, nor poison,
Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing,
Can touch him further.

Lady Macbeth. Come on:
Gentle my lord, sleek o'er your rugged looks;
Be bright and jovial among your guests to-night.

57

Macbeth. So shall I, love; and so, I pray, be you:
Let your remembrance apply to Banquo;
Present him eminence, both with eye and tongue:
Unsafe the while, that we
Must lave our honours in these flattering streams,
And make our faces visards to our hearts,
Disguising what they are.

Lady Macbeth. You must leave this.

Macbeth. O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!
Thou know'st that Banquo, and his Fleance, lives.

Lady Macbeth. But in them nature's copy 's not eterne.

Macbeth. There 's comfort yet; they are assailable;
Then be thou jocund: ere the bat hath flown
His cloister'd flight, ere to black Hecate's summons
The shard-borne beetle with his drowsy hums
Hath rung night's yawning peal, there shall be done
A deed of dreadful note.

Lady Macbeth. What's to be done?

Macbeth. Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,
Till thou applaud the deed. Come, seeling night,
Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day,
And with thy bloody and invisible hand
Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond
Which keeps me pale! Light thickens, and the crow 50

Makes wing to the rooky wood:
Good things of day begin to droop and drowse;

49. That great bond which keeps me pale. The existence of Banquo reminded him of the "indissoluble tie" to which Banquo alludes: it means:

- (a) Their common guilt in trusting to the evil sisters.
- (b) Their common guilty silence in ruining Cawdor.
- (e) Their common guilty knowledge of Duncan's murder.
- (f) The hope of Banquo, and fear of Macbeth, that Banquo's heirs would succeed Macbeth.

52-53. These two lines show the contrast in Macbeth's heart between the days when Lady M. and their child were his companions and the present when Ross with his spies and assassins begin their rule: henceforward Lady M. loses all power over him.

58

Whiles night's black agents to their preys do rouse.
Thou marvell'st at my words: but hold thee still:
Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill. 55
So, prithee, go with me. [Exeunt.

SCENE III. A park near the palace.

Enter three Murderers.

First Murd. But who did bid thee join with us?

Third Murderer. Macbeth.

Sec. Murd. He needs not our mistrust, since he delivers
Our offices and what we have to do
To the direction just.

55. Things bad begun. Ross was his first accomplice, he is now his tool.

This scene is left mysterious by Shakespeare; critics should bear in mind that this was intentional and had a dramatic purpose. What possible advantage to the play or to the character of Macbeth can be supposed to follow if we assume that it is Macbeth himself who is shielded by the author's obscurity? But if Ross is the third murderer, as we hope to establish, then it is clear that it is because Shakespeare is dealing with the spy-system that he refuses to give up the name of this villain. It should be remembered that Shakespeare does not merely neglect to name the third murderer, he emphasizes the mystery in every possible way to arouse our curiosity, once more masking the business for weighty reasons.

Paton's eight arguments in proof of his view that Macbeth is the third murderer are as follows: --

1. Although the banquet was to commence at seven, Macbeth did not go there until near midnight.
2. His entrance to the room and the appearance of the murderer are almost simultaneous.
3. So dear to his heart was the success of this plot that during the four or five hours before the banquet he must have been taken up with the intended murder some way or other. He could not have gone to the feast with the barest chance of the plot miscarrying.

4. If there had been a third murderer sent to superintend the other two, he must have been Macbeth's chief confidant, and as such in all probability would have been the first to announce the result.

5. The twenty mortal murders was a needless and devilish mutilation, not like the work of hirelings.

6. The third murderer repeated the precise instructions, showed unusual intimacy with the exact locality, the habits of the visitors, etc., and seems to have struck down the light, probably to escape recognition (our italics).

59

First Murderer. Then stand with us.
The west yet glimmers with some streaks of day:
Now spurs the lated traveller apace
To gain the timely inn, and near approaches
The subject of our watch.
Third Murderer. Hark! I hear horses.

7. There was a levity in Macbeth's manner with the murderer at the banquet, which is quite explicable if he personally knew that Banquo was dead.

8. When the ghost rises, Macbeth asks those about him, "which of them" had done it; evidently to take suspicion off himself, and he says, in effect, to the ghost "In yon black struggle you could never know me."

In replying to these arguments it may be said generally that most of them apply well to Macbeth, but better to Ross. More particularly they are met as follows: --

1. Macbeth went to the banquet as soon as Ross had returned by a short way, and reported.

2. The murderer (who certainly did not know the short way home) reached Macbeth about twenty minutes later than Ross.

3. Macbeth had passed a terrible time of inactivity before Ross returned, and that unhinged his mind: he is more unstrung through that horrible imagining than he had been by the murder of Duncan.

4. Ross was Macbeth's chief confidant at this time, and was the first to announce the result.

5. The twenty mortal murders was extremely characteristic of that poltroon Ross panic-stricken and stabbing in the dark a rival who had recognized him.

6. Ross knew the place and the guests as only such a spy could know them: he struck down the light after the terrible recognition of Banquo's "O, slave," which applies infinitely better to this spy than to Macbeth. Ross owed his power to his service of Macbeth. If Macbeth might have been recognized by Banquo, as Mr. Paton says, why was he not recognized by the murderers?

7. Macbeth was amused by the comparison of the account of the murderer with that of Ross. The fact that he had the news accounts for his levity. Ross had given Macbeth hopes that the murderers might have pursued Fleance, and the only point Macbeth really wants information about is the death or escape of Fleance.

8. When the ghost arises Macbeth asks those about him "which of them" had done it, because he suspects his colleague in crime. On returning to the room he sees the man whom Ross and the murderer at the door had sworn to

be dead; he suspects his colleague naturally. Ross endeavours to mislead the other nobles at the banquet and to defend Macbeth. When Mr. Paton says that Macbeth says in effect to the ghost "In yon black struggle you could never know me" he probably alludes to the speech of Macbeth "Thou canst not say I did it," which means that he was not present at the murder.

8. Hark! I hear horses. The third murderer is the most alert.

60

Banquo. [Within.] Give us a light there, ho!
Second Murderer. Then 'tis he: the rest
That are within the note of expectation 10
Already are i' the court.
First Murderer. His horses go about.
Third Murderer. Almost a mile: but he does usually,
So all men do, from hence to the palace gate
Make it their walk.
Second Murderer. A light, a light!
Enter BANQUO and FLEANCE with a torch.
Third Murderer. 'Tis he.
First Murderer. Stand to 't.
Banquo. It will be rain to night.
First Murderer. Let it come down.
[They set upon Banquo.
Banquo. O, treachery! Fly, good Fleance, fly, fly, fly!
Thou mayst revenge. O slave! [Dies. Fleance escapes.
Third Murderer. Who did strike out the light?
First Murderer. Was 't not the way?
Third Murd. There's but one down; the son is fled.
Second Murderer. We have lost
Best half of our affair. 21
First Murd. Well, let 's away, and say how much is done.
[Exeunt.

10. This otherwise purposeless remark is quite dramatic when we consider that Ross is one of the invited guests.

12. The others did not know the short cut to the castle and would not attempt it in the dark. This tells us that the third murderer reached home first.

15. 'Tis he. Ross identifies Banquo.

18. O slave! Banquo recognizes Ross.

19. Who did strike out the light? Why does Shakespeare not tell us this in a stage direction? Surely because as usual he obscures the acts of Ross.

61

SCENE IV. Hall in the palace.
A banquet prepared. Enter MACBETH, LADY MACBETH,
ROSS, LENNOX, Lords and Attendants.
Macbeth. You know your own degrees; sit down: at first
And last the hearty welcome.
Lords. Thanks to your majesty.
Macbeth. Ourselves will mingle with society
And play the humble host.
Our hostess keeps her state, but in best time

We will require her welcome.
Lady Macbeth. Pronounce it for me, sir, to all our friends;
For my heart speaks they are welcome.
First Murderer appears at the door.
Macbeth. See, they encounter thee with their hearts' thanks.
Both sides are even: here I'll sit i' the midst: 10
Be large in mirth; anon we'll drink a measure
The table round. [Approaching the door.] There 's blood
upon thy face.
Murderer. 'Tis Banquo's then.
Macbeth. 'Tis better thee without than he within.
Is he dispatch'd?
Murderer. My lord, his throat is cut; that I did for him.
Macb. Thou art the best o' the cut-throats: yet he 's good
That did the like for Fleance: if thou didst it,
Thou art the nonpareil.

12. There's blood upon thy face. The first murderer knows this, it is part of his rôle.

14. If this were an aside it might mean, "'Tis better to be thee without the banquet than Ross within." "Thee" would pass for a predicate better than "he" for an objective.

15. That I did, boastingly.

15. The best o' the cut-throats. Recalls Macbeth's classification of dogs.

62

Murderer. Most royal sir,
Fleance is 'scaped. 20
Macbeth. [Aside.] Then comes my fit again: I had else
been perfect,
Whole as the marble, founded as the rock,
As broad and general as the casing air:
But now I am cabin'd, cribb'd, confined, bound in
To saucy doubts and fears. -- But Banquo's safe?
Murderer. Ay, my good lord: safe in a ditch he bides.
With twenty trenched gashes on his head,
The least a death to nature.
Macbeth. Thanks for that.
[Aside.] There the grown serpent lies; the worm that's fled
Hath nature that in time will venom breed,
No teeth for the present. -- Get thee gone: to-morrow
We'll hear ourselves again. Exit Murderer.
Lady Macbeth. My royal lord,
You do not give the cheer; the feast is sold
That is not often vouch'd, while 'tis a-making,
'Tis given with welcome: to feed were best at home;
From thence the sauce to meat is ceremony;
Meeting were bare without it.
Macbeth. Sweet remembrancer!
Now good digestion wait on appetite,
And health on both!

20. There's but one down: the son is fled. He is anxious on all accounts to have Fleance killed but is afraid to remain longer to engage in the pursuit.

21. The second murderer probably pursues Fleance: he wants the full reward.

22. The first murderer is foolishly anxious to prove his manhood to Macbeth; he shows this difference from the other all through: he talks more than the other, and is quite sentimental just before the assassination; when Banquo is attacked he gives the order rather than the blow, probably.

24. But Banquo's safe? He wants confirmation of Ross's account. The asides of this passage should convince anyone that Macbeth was not an eye-witness of Banquo's death.

63

Lennox. May 't please your highness sit.

[The Ghost of Banquo enters, and sits in Macbeth's place.

Macbeth. Here had we now our country's honour roof'd,

Were the graced person of our Banquo present; 41

Who may I rather challenge for unkindness

Than pity for mischance!

Ross. His absence, sir,

Lays blame upon his promise. Please 't your highness

To grace us with your royal company.

Macbeth. The table's full.

Lennox. Here is a place reserved, sir.

Macbeth. Where?

Lennox. Here, my good lord. What is 't that moves your highness?

Macbeth. Which of you have done this?

Lords . What, my good lord?

Macbeth. Thou canst not say I did it: never shake 50

Thy gory locks at me.

Ross. Gentlemen, rise: his highness is not well.

Lady Macbeth. Sit, worthy friends: my lord is often thus,

And hath been from his youth: pray you, keep seat;

The fit is momentary; upon a thought

He will again be well: if much you note him,

You shall offend him and extend his passion:

42. A wish not wholly insincere reminding us of his saying, "Wake Duncan with thy knocking, I wish thou couldst."

43-46. Ross finds Macbeth's last words coming too near the fatal subject and endeavours to close that subject for him and open another. Imagine a friend of Banquo's using the words Ross uses here. They are the words of an enemy, or rather of a murderer posing as an ordinary enemy. They show that Ross was known by all to be Banquo's rival.

51. Since Ross is the one who actually "did it," his speech is perfectly clear. Unless Ross is guilty how are these speeches to be explained -- he was full of curiosity and just the man to show a prying desire to draw Macbeth out. This is not a *petitio principii* inasmuch as Ross's weakness for prying is admitted by all.

64

Feed, and regard him not. Are you a man?

Macbeth. Ay, and a bold one, that dare look upon that

Which might appal the devil.

Lady Macbeth. O proper stuff;

This is the very painting of your fear:
 This is the air-drawn dagger which, you said,
 Led you to Duncan. O, these flaws and starts,
 Impostors to true fear, would well become
 A woman's story at a winter's fire,
 Authorized by her grandam. Shame itself!
 Why do you make such faces? When all 's done,
 You look but on a stool.
 Macb. Prithee, see there! behold! look! lo! how say you!
 Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak too.
 If charnel-houses and our graves must send
 Those that we bury back, our monuments
 Shall be the maws of kites. [Ghost vanishes.
 Lady Macbeth. What, quite unmann'd in folly?
 Macbeth. If I stand here, I saw him.
 Lady Macbeth. Fie, for shame!
 Macbeth. Blood hath been shed ere now, i' the olden time,
 Ere human statute purged the general weal;
 Ay, and since too, murders have been perform'd
 Too terrible for the ear: the time has been,
 That, when the brains were out, the man would die,
 And there an end; but now they rise again,
 With twenty mortal murthers on their crowns,
 And push us from our stools: this is more strange
 Than such a murder is.
 Lady Macbeth. My worthy lord,
 Your noble friends do lack you.
 Macbeth. I do forget.
 Do not muse at me, my most worthy friends:
 I have a strange infirmity, which is nothing
 To those that know me. Come, love and health to all;

65

Then I'll sit down. Give me some wine, fill full.
 I drink to the general joy o' 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.
 Lords. Our duties, and the pledge.
 Re-enter Ghost.
 Macb. Avaunt! and quit my sight! let the earth hide thee!
 Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold;
 Thou hast no speculation in those eyes
 Which thou dost glare with.
 Lady Macbeth. Think of this, good peers,
 But as a thing of custom: 'tis no other;
 Only it spoils the pleasure of the time.
 Macbeth. What man dare, I dare:
 Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear, 100
 The arm'd rhinoceros, or the Hyrcan tiger;
 Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves
 Shall never tremble: or be alive again,
 And dare me to the desert with thy sword;
 If trembling I inhabit then, protest me
 The baby of a girl. Hence, horrible shadow!
 Unreal mockery, hence! [Ghost vanishes.
 Why, so: being gone,

I am a man again. Pray you, sit still.
Lady Macbeth. You have displaced the mirth, broke the
good meeting,
With most admired disorder.
Macbeth. Can such things be? 110
And overcome us like a summer's cloud,
Without our special wonder? You make me strange

105. This crux would seem to mean, "You reproach me for cowardice in sending my deputy to kill you; dare me to the desert where I can rely only on my own strength and skill, if I then cower behind my kingly power at home, call me a weak baby."

66

Even to the disposition that I owe,
When now I think you can behold such sights,
And keep the natural ruby of your cheeks,
When mine is blanch'd with fear.
Ross. What sights, my lord?
Lady M. I pray you, speak not; he grows worse and worse;
Question enrages him. At once, good night:
Stand not upon the order of your going,
But go at once.
Lennox. Good night; and better health 120
Attend his majesty!
Lady Macbeth. A kind good night to all!
[Exeunt all but Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.
Macbeth. It will have blood: they say blood will have blood:
Stones have been known to move and trees to speak;
Augurs and understood relations have
By maggot-pies and choughs and rooks brought forth
The secret'st man of blood. What is the night?
Lady M. Almost at odds with morning, which is which.
Macbeth. How say'st thou, that Macduff denies his person
At our great bidding?
Lady Macbeth. Did you send to him, sir?
Macbeth. I hear it by the way, but I will send: 130
There 's not a one of them but in his house
I keep a servant fee'd. I will to-morrow,

116. What sights, my lord? Ross believes Macbeth to have recovered his reason when he says "I am a man again," and as a shrewd colleague he gives Macbeth an opportunity of explaining his strange conduct by saying with great contempt and seeming incredulity "What sights, my lord?"

It is not unlikely that if Lady Macbeth had not interfered Macbeth might have taken Ross's bold hint and placed his conduct in a better light, but Lady Macbeth did not know that Ross was a friend.

130 In Sc. 4. Act II., 35-36, Macduff told Ross that he would not go to Macbeth, but to his own home.

131-132. While these lines startle us with the horrors of the Macbeth-Ross administration they point directly to Macduff's house.

67

And betimes I will, to the weird sisters:

More shall they speak, for now I am bent to know,
By the worst means, the worst. For mine own good
All causes shall give way: I am in blood
Stepp'd in so far that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er.
Strange things I have in head that will to hand,
Which must be acted ere they may be scann'd. 140
Lady Macbeth. You lack the season of all natures, sleep.
Macbeth. Come, we'll to sleep. My strange and self-abuse
Is the initiate fear that wants hard use:
We are yet but young in deed. [Exeunt.]

SCENE V. A heath.

Thunder. Enter the three Witches, meeting HECATE.
First Witch. Why, how now, Hecate! you look angerly.
Hecate. Have I not reason, beldams as you are,
Saucy and overbold? How did you dare
To trade and traffic with Macbeth
In riddles and affairs of death;
And I, the mistress of your charms,
The close contriver of all harms,
Was never call'd to bear my part,
Or show the glory of our art?
And, which is worse, all you have done
Hath been but for a wayward son,
Spiteful and wrathful; who, as others do,
Loves for his own ends, not for you.

144. He tells us plainly that their ambitious scheming and passive murders had preceded their murder of Duncan.

The Hecate of this scene thinks of evil as others think of good, hence the tragedy reaches the smoothness of comedy: she is calm, confident, and even conscientious in devotion to evil, and the resulting smoothness of her speech has misled those who could not conceive of tragedy at this pitch where extremes appear to meet.

68

But make amends now: get you gone,
And at the pit of Acheron
Meet me i' the morning: thither he
Will come to know his destiny:
Your vessels and your spells provide,
Your charms and every thing beside.
I am for the air; this night I'll spend 20
Unto a dismal and a fatal end:
Great business must be wrought ere noon:
Upon the corner of the moon
There hangs a vaporous drop profound;
I'll catch it ere it come to ground:
And that, distill'd by magic sleights,
Shall raise such artificial sprites
As by the strength of their illusion
Shall draw him on to his confusion:
He shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear
His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace and fear:
And you all know security
Is mortals' chiefest enemy.

[Music and a song within: 'Come away, come away,' &c.]
Hark! I am call'd; my little spirit, see,
Sits in a foggy cloud, and stays for me. [Exit.
First Witch. Come, let 's make haste; she 'll soon be
back again. [Exeunt.

SCENE VI. Forres. The palace.
Enter LENNOX and another Lord, (possibly Angus).
Lennox. My former speeches have but hit your thoughts,
Which can interpret further: only I say
Things have been strangely borne. The gracious Duncan

If Ross were not Macbeth's accomplice he would probably appear in this scene, which of course shows the effects on the guests of Macbeth's conduct at the banquet.

So far as the speeches of the other Lord in this scene show character they seem to harmonize well with the honourable slowness of Angus.

69

Was pitied of Macbeth: marry, he was dead:
And the right-valiant Banquo walk'd too late,
Whom, you may say, if 't please you, Fleance kill'd,
For Fleance fled: men must not walk too late.
Who cannot want the thought, how monstrous
It was for Malcolm and for Donalbain
To kill their gracious farther? damned fact!
How it did grieve Macbeth? did he not straight
In pious rage the two delinquents tear,
That were the slaves of drink and thralls of sleep?
Was not that nobly done? Ay, and wisely too;
For 'twould have anger'd any heart alive
To hear the men deny 't. So that, I say,
He has borne all things well: and I do think
That had he Duncan's sons under his key --
As, an 't please heaven, he shall not -- they should find
What 'twere to kill a father; so should Fleance.
But, peace! for from broad words and 'cause he fail'd
His presence at the tyrant's feast, I hear
Macduff lives in disgrace: sir, can you tell
Where he bestows himself?
Lord. The son of Duncan,
From whom this tyrant holds the due of birth,
Lives in the English court, and is received
Of the most pious Edward with such grace
That the malevolence of fortune nothing
Takes from his high respect: thither Macduff
Is gone to pray the holy king, upon his aid
To wake Northumberland and warlike Siward;
That by help of these, with Him above
To ratify the work, we may again
Give to our tables meat, sleep to our nights,
Free from our feasts and banquets bloody knives,
Do faithful homage and receive free honours:
All which we pine for now: and this report
Hath so exasperate the king that he

70

Prepares for some attempt of war.
Lennox. Sent he to Macduff?
Lord. He did: and with an absolute 'Sir, not I,'
The cloudy messenger turns me his back,
And hums, as who should say 'You'll rue the time
That clogs me with this answer.'
Lennox. And that well might
Advise him to a caution, to hold what distance
His wisdom can provide. Some holy angel
Fly to the court of England and unfold
His message ere he come, that a swift blessing
May soon return to this our suffering country
Under a hand accursed!
Lord. I'll send my prayers with him.
[Exeunt.]

ACT IV.

SCENE I. A cavern. In the middle a boiling cauldron.
Thunder. Enter the three Witches.
First Witch. Thrice the brindled cat hath mew'd.
Second Witch. Thrice and once the hedge-pig whined.
Third Witch. Harpier cries ''Tis time, 'tis time.'
First Witch. Round about the cauldron go;
In the poison'd entrails throw.
Toad, that under cold stone
Days and nights has thirty-one
Swelter'd venom sleeping got,
Boil thou first i' the charmed pot.
All. Double, double, toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.
Second Witch. Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the cauldron boil and bake;

71

Eye of newt and toe of frog,
Wool of bat and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork and blind-worm's sting,
Lizard's leg and owlet's wing,
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.
All. Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.
Third Witch. Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf,
Witches' mummy, maw and gulf
Of the ravin'd salt-sea shark,
Root of hemlock digg'd i' the dark,
Liver of blaspheming Jew,
Gall of goat, and slips of yew
Silver'd in the moon's eclipse,
Nose of Turk and Tartar's lips,
Finger of birth-strangled babe
Ditch-deliver'd by a drab,
Make the gruel thick and slab:
Add thereto a tiger's chaudron,
For the ingredients of our cauldron.
All. Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

Second Witch. Cool it with a baboon's blood,
Then the charm is firm and good.
Enter HECATE to the other three Witches.
Hecate O, well done! I commend your pains;
And every one shall share i' the gains;
And now about the cauldron sing,
Like elves and fairies in a ring,
Enchanting all that you put in.
[Music and a song: 'Black spirits,' &c. Hecate retires].
Second Witch. By the pricking of my thumbs,

72

Something wicked this way comes.
Open, locks,
Whoever knocks!
Enter MACBETH.
Macbeth. How now, you secret, black, and midnight hags!
What is 't you do?
All. A deed without a name.
Macbeth. I conjure you, by that which you profess,
Howe'er you come to know it, answer me:
Though you untie the winds and let them fight
Against the churches; though the yesty waves
Confound and swallow navigation up;
Though bladed corn be lodged and trees blown down:
Though castles topple on their warders' heads;
Though palaces and pyramids do slope
Their heads to their foundations; though the treasure
Of nature's germens tumble all together,
Even till destruction sicken; answer me
To what I ask you.
First Witch. Speak.
Second Witch. Demand.
Third Witch. We 'll answer.
First W. Say, if thou'dst rather hear it from our mouths,
Or from our masters?
Macbeth. Call 'em; let me see 'em.
First Witch. Pour in sow's blood, that hath eaten
Her nine farrow; grease that 's sweaten
From the murderer's gibbet throw
Into the flame.
All. Come, high or low;
Thyself and office deftly show!
Thunder. First Apparation: an armed head.
Macbeth. Tell me, thou unknown power, --

73

First Witch. He knows thy thought:
Hear his speech, but say thou nought.
First App. Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth! beware Macduff;
Beware the thane of Fife. Dismiss me: enough. [Descends].
Macbeth. Whate'er thou art, for thy good caution thanks;
Thou hast harp'd my fear aright: but one word more, --
First Witch. He will not be commanded: here 's another,
More potent than the first.
Thunder. Second Apparation: a bloody Child.

Second Apparation. Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!
 Macbeth. Had I three ears, I 'ld hear thee.
 Second App. Be bloody, bold, and resolute; laugh to scorn
 The power of man, for none of woman born
 Shall harm Macbeth. [Descends.
 Macbeth. Then live, Macduff: what need I fear of thee?
 But yet I 'll make assurance double sure,
 And take a bond of fate: thou shalt not live;
 That I may tell pale-hearted fear it lies,
 And sleep in spite of thunder.
 Thunder. Third Apparation: a child crowned, with a tree
 in his hand.
 What is this,
 That rises like the issue of a king,
 And wears upon his baby-brow the round
 And top of sovereignty?
 All. Listen, but speak not to 't.
 Third App. Be lion-mettled, proud, and take no care
 Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are:
 Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be until
 Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill

91. These oracles use ambiguity, "the traitor's shield and shaft," to mislead Macbeth. Ross used the same means of deceiving Macbeth in Scene 3 of Act I.

74

Shall come against him. [Descends.
 Macbeth. That will never be:
 Who can impress the forest, bid the tree
 Unfix his earth-bound root? Sweet bodements! good!
 Rebellion's head, rise never, till the wood
 Of Birnam rise, and our high-placed Macbeth
 Shall live the lease of nature, pay his breath
 To time and mortal custom. Yet my heart
 Throbs to know one thing: tell me, if your art
 Can tell so much: shall Banquo's issue ever
 Reign in this kingdom?
 All. Seek to know no more.
 Macbeth. I will be satisfied: deny me this,
 And an eternal curse fall upon you! Let me know
 Why sinks that cauldron? and what noise is this?
 [Hautboys.
 First Witch. Show!
 Second Witch. Show!
 Third Witch. Show!
 All. Show his eyes, and grieve his heart;
 Come like shadows, so depart!
 A show of eight Kings, the last with a glass in his hand;
 Banquo's Ghost following.
 Macbeth. Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo; down!
 Thy crown does sear mine eye-balls. And thy hair,
 Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first.
 A third is like the former. Filthy hags!
 Why do you show me this? A fourth! Start, eyes!
 What, will the line stretch out to the crack of doom?
 Another yet! A seventh! I'll see no more:
 And yet the eighth appears, who bears a glass

Which shows me many more; and some I see
That two-fold balls and treble sceptres carry:
Horrible sight! Now I see 'tis true;

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For the blood-bolter'd Banquo smiles upon me,
And points at them for his. [Apparitions vanish
What, is this so?
First Witch. Ay, sir, all this is so: but why
Stands Macbeth thus amazedly?
Come, sisters, cheer we up his sprites,
And show the best of our delights:
I 'll charm the air to give a sound,
While you perform your antic round,
That this great king may kindly say
Our duties did his welcome pay.
[Music. The Witches dance, and then vanish, with Hecate.]
Macbeth. Where are they? Gone? Let this pernicious hour
Stand eye accursed in the calendar!
Come in, without there.
Enter LENNOX.
Lennox. What 's your grace's will?
Macbeth. Saw you the weird sisters?
Lennox. No my lord.
Macbeth. Came they not by you?
Lennox. No indeed, my lord.
Macbeth. Infected be the air whereon they ride;
And damn'd all those that trust them? I did hear
The galloping of horse: who was 't came by?
Lennox. 'Tis two or three, my lord, that bring you word
Macduff is fled to England.
Macbeth. Fled to England!
Lennox. Ay, my good lord.
Macbeth. [Aside]. Time, thou anticipatest my dread exploits:
The flighty purpose never is o'ertook
Unless the deed go with it: from this moment
The very firstlings of my heart shall be
The firstlings of my hand. And even now,

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To crown my thoughts with acts, be it thought and done:
The castle of Macduff I will surprise: 150
Seize upon Fife; give to the edge o' the 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 this purpose cool.
But no more sights! -- Where are these gentlemen?
Come, bring me where they are. [Exeunt.
SCENE II. Fife. Macduff's castle.
Enter LADY MACDUFF, her Son and ROSS.
Lady Macduff. What had he done, to make him fly the land?
Ross. You must have patience, madam.
Lady Macduff. He had none:
His flight was madness: when our actions do not,
Our fears do make us traitors.
Ross. You know not

Whether it was his wisdom or his fear.
Lady Macduff. Wisdom! to leave his wife, to leave his
babes,
His mansion and his titles in a place
From whence himself does fly? He loves us not;
He wants the natural touch: for the poor wren,
The most diminutive of birds, will fight, 10
Her young ones in her nest, against the owl.
All is the fear and nothing is the love;
As little is the wisdom, where the flight
So runs against all reason.

155. Who were "these gentlemen" that brought Macbeth the news that
Macduff had fled to England? Probably spies upon Macduff's house.

Scene II. Is it possible to read this scene and not see that Ross plays the
cowardly hypocrite throughout? In his weakness and loquacity he almost
warns Lady Macduff of the fate of which he is the agent.

3. When our actions do not, our fears do make us traitors. This hard
saying strikes Ross harder than Macduff.

77

Ross. My dearest coz,
I pray you, school yourself: but for your husband,
He is noble, wise, judicious, and best knows
The fits o' the season. I dare not speak much further;
But cruel are the times, when we are traitors
And do not know ourselves; when we hold rumour
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear, 20
But float upon a wild and violent sea
Each way and move. I take my leave of you:
Shall not be long but I'll be here again:
Things at the worst will cease, or else climb upwards
To what they were before. My pretty cousin,
Blessing upon you!
Lady Macduff. Father'd he is, and yet he 's fatherless.
Ross. I am so much a fool, should I stay longer,
It would be my disgrace and your discomfort:
I take my leave at once. [Exit.
Lady Macduff. Sirrah, your father 's dead: 30

17. I dare not speak much further. The rest of this speech is difficult on
the assumption that Ross is a man of honour. If he came as a friend to warn
the lady of danger, why did he leave with a few remote hints? The fact is he
came as Macbeth's spy to lead a gang of assassins: during his interview with
the lady the murderers await him outside and within three minutes of his exit
they enter, within four minutes the poor little fellow is dead, and within five
minutes the lady is butchered. Where is the sword of Ross who has just said,
"Shall not be long but I 'll be here again"? It has not occurred to any critic
that this question needs an answer, yet Shakespeare could hardly have made
it plainer that we should look into this: if possible it is made plainer by Ross's
account of this butchery to Macduff (iv., 3, 204), when he thus narrates it,
"Your castle is surprised: your wife and babes
Savagely slaughtered: to relate the manner
Were on the quarry of these murdered deer,
To add the death of you."
Unless Ross can be cleared of this charge of allowing the Macduffs to be mur-
dered before he had left the castle (there is much to show that he directed the

assassins) his character is worse than his master's.

29. It would be my disgrace and your discomfort. He poses as a man of sensibility, but his vile ambiguity bears a darker meaning. "One word with wo meanings is the traitor's shield and shaft."

78

And what will you do now? How will you live?

Son. As birds do, mother.

Lady Macduff. What, with worms and flies?

Son. With what I get, I mean; and so do they.

Lady M. Poor bird! thou 'ldst never fear the net nor lime,
The pitfall nor the gin.

Son. Why should I, mother? Poor birds they are not
set for.

My father is not dead, for all your saying.

Lady M. Yes, he is dead: how wilt thou do for a father?

Son. Nay, how will you do for a husband?

Lady Macduff. Why, I can buy me twenty at any market.

Son. Then you 'll buy 'em to sell again.

Lady Macd. Thou speak'st with all thy wit, and yet i' faith,
With wit enough for thee.

Son. Was my father a traitor, mother?

Lady Macduff. Ay, that he was.

Son. What is a traitor?

Lady Macduff. Why, one that swears and lies.

Son. And be all traitors that do so?

Lady Macduff. Every one that does so is a traitor, and
must be hanged.

Son. And must they all be hanged that swear and lie?

Lady Macduff. Every one.

Son. Who must hang them?

Lady Macduff. Why the honest men.

Son. Then the liars and swearers are fools, for there are
liars and swearers enow to beat the honest men and hang up
them.

Lady Macduff. Now, God help thee, poor monkey! But
how wilt thou do for a father?

Son. If he were dead, you 'ld weep for him: if you would

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not, it were a good sign that I should quickly have a new
father.

Lady Macduff. Poor prattler, how thou talk'st!

Enter a Messenger.

Messenger. Bless you, fair dame! I am not to you known,
Though in your state of honour I am perfect.

I doubt some danger does approach you nearly:

If you will take a homely man's advice,

Be not found here; hence with your little ones.

To fright you thus, methinks I am too savage;

To do worse to you were fell cruelty,

Which is too nigh your person. Heaven preserve you!

I dare abide no longer. [Exit.

Lady Macduff. Whither should I fly?

I have done no harm. But I remember now

I am in this earthly world, where to do harm
Is often laudable, to do good sometimes
Accounted dangerous folly: why then, alas,
Do I put up that womanly defence,
To say I have done no harm?
Enter Murderers.
What are these faces?
First Murderer. Where is your husband!
Lady Macduff. I hope, in no place so unsanctified
Where such as thou mayst find him.
First Murderer. He's a traitor.
Son. Thou liest, thou shag-hair'd villain!
First Murderer. What, you egg!
[Stabbing him.
Young fry of treachery!
Son. He has kill'd me, mother:
Run away, I pray you! [Dies.
[Exit Lady Macduff, crying 'Murder!'
Exeunt Murderers, following her.

This messenger may come from Lady Macbeth.

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SCENE III. England. Before the King's palace.
Enter MALCOLM and MACDUFF.
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 down-fall'n birthdom: 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 syllable of dolour.
Malcolm. What I believe, I'll wail,
What know, believe; and what I can redress,
As I shall find the time to friend, I will.
What you have spoke, it may be so perchance.
This tyrant, whose sole name blisters our tongues,
Was once thought honest: you have loved him well;
He hath not touch'd you yet. I am young; but something
You may deserve of him through me, and wisdom
To offer up a weak poor innocent lamb
To appease an angry god.
Macduff. I am not treacherous.
Malcolm. But Macbeth is.
A good and virtuous nature may recoil
In an imperial charge. But I shall crave your pardon;
That which you are my thoughts cannot transpose:
Angels are bright still, though the brightest fell:
Though all things foul would wear the brows of grace,
Yet grace must still look so.
Macduff. I have lost my hopes.
Malcolm. Perchance even there where I did find my doubts.
Why in that rawness left you wife and child,
Those precious motives, those strong knots of love,
Without leave-taking? I pray you,

Let not my jealousies be your dishonours,
 But mine own safeties. You may be rightly just,
 Whatever I shall think.

Macduff. Bleed, bleed, poor country!
 Great tyranny! lay thou thy basis sure,
 For goodness dare not check thee: wear thou thy wrongs;
 The title is affeer'd. Fare thee well, lord:
 I would not be the villain that thou think'st
 For the whole space that 's in the tyrant's grasp,
 And the rich East to boot.

Malcolm. Be not offended:
 I speak not as in absolute fear of you.
 I think our country sinks beneath the yoke;
 It weeps, it bleeds, and each new day a gash
 Is added to her wounds: I think withal
 There would be hands uplifted in my right;
 And here from gracious England have I offer
 Of goodly thousands: but all for this,
 When I shall tread upon the tyrant's head,
 Or wear it on my sword, yet my poor country
 Shall have more vices than it had before,
 More suffer and more sundry ways than ever,
 By him that shall succeed.

Macduff. What should he be?

Malcolm. It is myself I mean: in whom I know
 All the particulars of vice so grafted
 That, when they shall be open'd, black Macbeth
 Will seem as pure as snow, and the poor state
 Esteem him as a lamb, being compared
 With my confineless harms.

Macduff. Not in the legions
 Of horrid hell can come a devil more damn'd
 In evils to top Macbeth.

Malcolm. I grant him bloody,
 Luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful,

Sudden, malicious, smacking of every sin
 That has a name: but there's no bottom, none,
 In my voluptuousness: your wives, your daughters,
 Your matrons and your maids, could not fill up
 The cistern of my lust, and my desire
 All continent impediments would o'erbear
 That did oppose my will: better Macbeth
 Than such an one to reign.

Macduff. Boundless intemperance
 In nature is a tyranny; it hath been
 The untimely emptying of the happy throne
 And fall of many kings. But fear not yet
 To take upon you what is yours: you may
 Convey your pleasures in a spacious plenty,
 And yet seem cold, the time you may so hoodwink:
 We have willing dames enough; there cannot be
 That vulture in you, to devour so many

As will to greatness dedicate themselves,
Finding it so inclined.
Malcolm. With this there grows
In my most ill-composed affection such
A stanchless avarice that, were I king,
I should cut off the nobles for their lands,
Desire his jewels and this other's house:
And my more-having would be as a sauce
To make me hunger more, that I should forge
Quarrels unjust against the good and loyal,
Destroying them for wealth.
Macduff. This avarice
Sticks deeper, grows with more pernicious root
Than summer-seeming lust, and it hath been
The sword of our slain kings: yet do not fear;
Scotland hath foisons to fill up your will,
Of your mere own: all these are portable,
With other graces weigh'd.
Malcolm. But I have none: the king-becoming graces,

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As justice, verity, temperance, stableness,
Bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness,
Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude,
I have no relish of them, but abound
In the division of each several crime,
Acting in many ways. Nay, had I power, I should
Pour the sweet milk of concord into hell,
Uproar the universal peace, confound
All unity on earth.
Macduff. O Scotland, Scotland!
Malcolm. If such a one be fit to govern, speak;
I am as I have spoken.
Macduff. Fit to govern!
No, not to live, O nation miserable,
With an **unsettled** tyrant bloody-scepter'd,
When shalt thou see thy wholesome days again,
Since that the truest issue of thy throne
By his own interdiction stands accursed,
And does blaspheme his breed? Thy royal father
Was a most sainted king: the queen that bore thee,
Oftener upon her knees than on her feet,
Died every day she lived. Fare thee well!
These evils thou repeat'st upon thyself
Have banish'd me from Scotland. O my breast,
Thy hope ends here!
Malcolm. Macduff, this noble passion
Child of integrity, hath from my soul
Wiped the black scruples, reconciled my thoughts
To thy good truth and honour. Devilish Macbeth
By many of these trains hath sought to win me
Into his power, and modest wisdom plucks me
From over-credulous haste: but God above
Deal between thee and me! for even now
I put myself to thy direction, and
Unspeak mine own detraction, here abjure
The taints and blames I laid upon myself,

For strangers to my nature. I am yet
 Unknown to woman, never was forsworn,
 Scarcely have coveted what was mine own,
 At no time broke my faith, would not betray
 The devil to his fellow, and delight
 No less in truth than life: my first false speaking
 Was this upon myself: what I am truly,
 Is thine and my poor country's to command:
 Whither indeed, before **their** here-approach,
 Old Siward, with ten thousand warlike men,
 Already at a point, was setting forth.
 Now we 'll together; and the chance of goodness
 Be like our warranted quarrel! Why are you silent?
 Macduff. Such welcome and unwelcome things at once
 'Tis hard to reconcile.

Enter a Doctor.

Malcolm. Well; more anon. Comes the king forth, I
 pray you?

Doctor. Ay, sir; there are a crew of wretched souls
 That stay his cure: their malady convinces
 The great assay of art; but at his touch,
 Such sanctity hath heaven given his hand,
 They presently amend.

Malcolm. I thank you, doctor. [Exit Doctor

Macduff. What's the disease he means?

Malcolm. 'Tis call'd the evil;

A most miraculous work in this good king;
 Which often, since my here-remain in England,
 I have seen him do. How he solicits heaven.
 Himself best knows: but strangely-visited people, 150
 All swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
 The mere despair of surgery, he cures,
 Hanging a golden stamp about their necks,

Put on with holy prayers: and 'tis spoken,
 To the succeeding royalty he leaves.
 The healing benediction. With this strange virtue,
 He hath a heavenly gift of prophecy,
 And sundry blessings hang about his throne
 That speak him full of grace.

Enter Ross.

Macduff. See, who comes here?

Malcolm. My countryman; but yet I know him not. 160

Macduff. My ever-gentle cousin, welcome hither.

Malcolm. I know him now. Good God, betimes remove
 The means that makes us strangers!

Ross. Sir, amen.

Macduff. Stands Scotland where it did?

Ross. Alas, poor country!

Almost afraid to know itself. It cannot
 Be call'd our mother, but our grave; where nothing
 But who knows nothing, is once seen to smile;
 Where sighs and groans and shrieks that rend the air

Are made, not mark'd; where violent sorrow seems
A modern ecstasy: the dead man's knell 170
Is there scarce ask'd for who; and good men's lives
Expire before the flower in their caps,
Dying or ere they sicken.
Macduff. O, relation
Too nice, and yet too true!
Malcolm. What 's the newest grief?

154-6. It should be borne in mind that Shakespeare writing in the reign of James I. found it necessary to conciliate the Court. One reason why Banquo's character has escaped his readers is that as the ancestor of James he had to be treated cautiously.

161. Ever-gentle. Just the epithet that Macduff might use in pleasure at seeing Ross: not a great compliment in that age, rather a taunt, coming from Macduff.

173. O relation, too nice. Too elaborate and oratorical to be heart-felt.

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Ross. That of an hour's age doth hiss the speaker;
Each minute teems a new one.
Macduff. How does my wife?
Ross. Why, well.
Macduff. And all my children?
Ross. Well too.
Macduff. The tyrant has not batter'd at their peace?
Ross. No; they were well at peace when I did leave 'em.
Macduff. Be not a niggard of your speech: how goes 't?
Ross. When I came hither to transport the tidings, 181
Which I have heavily borne, there ran a rumour
Of many worthy fellows that were out;
Which was to my belief witness'd the rather,
For that I saw the tyrant's power a-foot:
Now is the time of help; your eye in Scotland
Would create soldiers, make our women fight,
To doff their dire distresses.
Malcolm. Be 't their comfort
We are coming thither: gracious England hath
Lent us good Siward and ten thousand men; 190
An older and a better soldier none
That Christendom gives out.
Ross. Would I could answer
This comfort with the like! But I have words
That would be howl'd out in the desert air,
Where hearing should not latch them.
Macduff. What concern they?
The general cause? or is it a fee-grief
Due to some single breast?

179. Why does Ross lull Macduff's suspicions to sleep now only to tell him the sad news later? The orthodox answer has been to break it gently. But does he? Macduff is in a worse condition to hear this news when it comes than if it had come at first. The true reason is that until Ross is assured that Macbeth's fate is sealed he will not commit himself to the cause of Malcolm: having been assured that Malcolm and Macduff have powerful allies he proceeds to put himself on a friendly footing with them.

Ross. No mind that's honest
 But in it shares some woe; though the main part
 Pertains to you alone.
 Macduff. If it be mine,
 Keep it not from me, quickly let me have it. 200
 Ross. Let not your ears despise my tongue for ever,
 Which shall possess them with the heaviest sound
 That ever yet they heard.
 Macduff. Hum! I guess at it.
 Ross. Your castle is surprised; your wife and babes
 Savagely slaughter'd: to relate the manner,
 Were, on the quarry of these murder'd deer,
 To add the death of you.
 Malcolm. Merciful heaven!
 What, man! ne'er pull your hat upon your brows;
 Give sorrow words: the grief that does not speak
 Whispers the o'er-fraught heart and bids it break. 210
 Macduff. My children too?
 Ross. Wife, children, servants, all
 That could be found.
 Macduff. And I must be from thence!
 My wife kill'd too?
 Ross. I have said.
 Malcolm. Be comforted:
 Let's make us medicines of our great revenge,
 To cure this deadly grief.
 Macduff. He has no children. All my pretty ones?
 Did you say all? O hell-kite! All?
 What, all my pretty chickens and their dam
 At one fell swoop?
 Malcolm. Dispute it like a man.

205. To relate the manner. He told the worst as it was: his own conduct alone he concealed: why is there no mention of his visit if he acted well by Lady Macduff? He speaks no word further except the shameful "I have said": yet he was habitually loquacious.

Macduff. I shall do so;
 But I must also feel it as a man:
 I cannot but remember such things were,
 That **they** were most precious to me. Did heaven look on,
 And would not take their part? Sinful Macduff,
 They were all struck for thee! naught that I am,
 Not for their own demerits, but for mine,
 Fell slaughter on their souls. Heaven rest them now!
 Malcolm. Be this the whetstone of your sword: let grief
 Convert to anger; blunt not the heart, enrage it.
 Macduff. O, I could play the woman with mine eyes,
 And braggart with my tongue! But, gentle heavens,
 Cut short all intermission; front to front
 Bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself;
 Within my sword's length set him: if he 'scape,
 Heaven forgive him too!

Malcolm. This tune goes manly.
Come, go we to the king; our power is ready;
Our lack is nothing but our leave. Macbeth
Is ripe for shaking, and the powers above
Put on their instruments. Receive what cheer you may:
The night is long that never finds the day.
[Exeunt.

ACT V.

SCENE I. Dunsinane. Ante-room in the castle.

Enter a Doctor of Physic and a Waiting-Gentlewoman.

Doctor. I have two nights watched with you, but can
perceive no truth in your report. When was it she last
walked?

Gentlewoman. Since his majesty went into the field, I
have seen her rise from her bed, throw her nightgown upon
her, unlock her closet, take forth paper, fold it, write upon't,

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read it, afterwards seal it, and again return to bed; yet all
this while in a most fast sleep.

Doctor. A great perturbation in nature, to receive at once
the benefit of sleep and do the effects of watching! In this
slumbry agitation, besides her walking and other actual
performances, what, at any time, have you heard her say?

Gentlewoman. That, sir, which I will not report after her.

Doctor. You may to me, and 'tis most meet you should.

Gentlewoman. Neither to you nor any one, having no
witness to confirm my speech.

Enter LADY MACBETH, with a taper.

Lo you, here she comes! This is her very guise; and,
upon my life, fast asleep. Observe her; stand close.

Doctor. How came she by that light?

Gentlewoman. Why, it stood by her: she has light by
her continually; 'tis her command.

Doctor. You see, her eyes are open.

Gentlewoman. Ay, but their sense is shut.

Doctor. What is it she does now? Look how she rubs
her hands.

Gentlewoman. It is an accustomed action with her, to
seem thus washing her hands: I have known her continue in
this a quarter of an hour.

Lady Macbeth. Yet here 's a spot.

Doctor. Hark! she speaks: I will set down what comes
from her, to satisfy my remembrance the more strongly.

Lady Macbeth. Out, damned spot! out, I say! -- One:
two: why, then 'tis time to do 't. -- Hell is murky! -- Fie, my
lord, fie! a soldier, and afeared? What need we fear who
knows it, when none can call our power to account? -- Yet
who would have thought the old man to have had so much
blood in him?

Doctor. Do you mark that?

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Lady Macbeth. The thane of Fife had a wife: where is
she now? -- What, will these hands ne'er be clean? -- No more
o' that, my lord, no more o' that: you mar all with this

starting.

Doctor. Go to, go to; you have known what you should not.

Gentlewoman. She has spoken what she should not, I am sure of that: heaven knows what she has known.

Lady Macbeth. Here 's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand.

Oh, oh, oh!

Doctor. What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely charged.

Gentlewoman. I would not have such a heart in my bosom for the dignity of the whole body.

Doctor. Well, well, well,

Gentlewoman. Pray God it be, sir.

Doctor. This disease is beyond my practice: yet I have known those which have walked in their sleep who have died holily in their beds.

Lady Macbeth. Wash your hands, put on your nightgown; look not so pale. I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried; he cannot come out on 's grave.

Doctor. Even so?

Lady Macbeth. To bed, to bed! there's knocking at the gate: come, come, come, come, give me your hand. What's done cannot be undone. To bed, to bed, to bed! [Exit.

Doctor. Will she go now to bed?

Gentlewoman. Directly.

Doctor. Foul whisperings are abroad: unnatural deeds
Do breed unnatural troubles: infected minds

To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets:
More needs she the divine than the physician.

God, God forgive us all! Look after her;

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Remove from her the means of all annoyance,
And still keep eyes upon her. So, good night:
My mind she has mated, and amazed my sight.
I think, but dare not speak.

Gentlewoman. Good night, good doctor.
[Exeunt.

SCENE II. The country near Dunsinane.

Drums and colours. Enter MENTEITH, CAITHNESS, ANGUS,
LENNOX, and Soldiers.

Menteith. The English power is near, led on by Malcolm,
His uncle Siward and the good Macduff:

Revenge burn in them; for their dear causes
Would to the bleeding and the grim alarm
Excite the mortified man.

Angus. Near Birnam wood

Shall we well meet them: that way are they coming.

Caithness. Who knows if Donalbain be with his brother?

Lennox. For certain, sir, he is not: I have a file
Of all the gentry: there is Siward's son,
And many unrough youths, that even now
Protest their first of manhood.

Menteith. What does the tyrant?

Caithness. Great Dunsinane he strongly fortifies:
Some say he 's mad; others that lesser hate him

Do call it valiant fury: but, for certain,
He cannot buckle his distemper'd cause
Within the belt of rule.
Angus. Now does he feel
His secret murders sticking on his hands;
Now minutely upbraid his faith-breach;
Those he commands move only in command,
Nothing in love: now does he feel his title
Hang loose about him, like a giant's robe
Upon a dwarfish thief.

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Menteith. Who then shall blame
His pester'd senses to recoil and start,
When all that is within him does condemn
Itself for being there?
Caithness. Well, march we on,
To give obedience where 'tis truly owed:
Meet we the medicine of the sickly weal,
And with him pour we in our country's purge
Each drop of us.
Lennox. Or so much as it needs,
To dew the sovereign flower and drown the weeds.
Make we our march towards Birnam. [Exeunt, marching.
SCENE III. Dunsinane. A room in the castle.
Enter MACBETH, Doctor, and Attendants.
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? The spirits that know
All mortal consequences have pronounced me thus:
'Fear not, Macbeth; no man that 's born of woman
Shall e'er have power upon thee." Then fly, false thanes,
And mingle with the English epicures:
The mind I sway by and the heart I bear
Shall never sag with doubt nor shake with fear.
Enter a Servant.
The devil damn thee black, thou cream-faced loon!
Where got'st thou that goose look?
Servant. There is ten thousand --
Macbeth. Geese, villain?
Servant. Soldiers, sir.
Macbeth. Go prick thy face, and over-red thy fear,
Thou lily-livered boy. What soldiers, patch?
Death of thy soul! those linen cheeks of thine

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Are counsellors to fear. What soldiers, whey-face?
Servant. The English force, so please you.
Macbeth. Take thy face hence. [Exit Servant.
Seyton! -- I am sick at heart,
When I behold -- Seyton, I say! -- This push
Will cheer me ever, or disseat me now.
I have lived long enough: my way of life
Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf;
And that which should accompany old age,

As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have; but, in their stead,
Curses, not loud but deep, mouth-honour, breath,
Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not.
Seyton!

Enter SEYTON.

Seyton. What's your gracious pleasure?

Macbeth. What news more?

Seyton. All is confirm'd, my lord, which was reported.

Macbeth. I'll fight till from my bones my flesh be hack'd.
Give me my armour.

Seyton. 'Tis not needed yet.

Macbeth. I'll put it on.

Send out more horses; skirr the country round;
Hang those that talk of fear. Give me mine armour.

How does your patient, doctor?

Doctor. Not so sick, my lord,
As she is troubled with thick-coming fancies,
That keep her from her rest.

Macbeth. Cure her of that.

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart?

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Doctor. Therein the patient
Must minister to himself.

Macbeth. Throw physic to the dogs, I 'll none of it.
Come, put mine armour on: give me my staff.

Seyton, send out. Doctor, the thanes fly from me.

Come, sir, dispatch. If thou couldst, doctor, cast

The water of my land, find her disease,
And purge it to a sound and pristine health,

I would applaud thee to the very echo,
That should applaud again. Pull't off, I say.

What rhubarb, senna, or what purgative drug,
Would scour these English hence? Hear'st thou of them?

Doctor. Ay, my good lord; your royal preparation
Makes us hear something.

Macbeth. Bring it after me.

I will not be afraid of death and bane

Till Birnam forest come to Dunsinane.

Doctor. [Aside.] Were I from Dunsinane away and clear,
Profit again should hardly draw me here. [Exeunt.]

SCENE IV. Country near Birnam wood.

Drum and colours. Enter MALCOLM, old SIWARD and his
Son, MACDUFF, MENTEITH, CAITHNESS, ANGUS, LEN-
NOX, ROSS, and Soldiers, marching.

Malcolm. Cousins, I hope the days are near at hand
That chambers will be safe.

Menteith. We doubt it nothing.

Siward. What wood is this before us?

Menteith. The wood of Birnam.

Malcolm. Let every soldier hew him down a bough

And bear 't before him: thereby shall we shadow
The numbers of our host, and make discovery
Err in report of us.
Soldiers. It shall be done.

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Siward. We learn no other but the confident tyrant
Keeps still in Dunsinane, and will endure
Our setting down before 't.

Malcolm. 'Tis his main hope:
For where there is advantage to be given,
Both more and less have given him the revolt,
But none serve with him but constrained things
Whose hearts are absent too.

Macduff. Let our just censures
Attend the true event, and put we on
Industrious soldiership.

Siward. The time approaches
That will with due decision make us know
What we shall say we have and what we owe.
Thoughts speculative their unsure hopes relate,
But certain issue strokes must arbitrate:
Towards which advance the war. [Exeunt, marching.

SCENE V. Dunsinane. Within the castle.
Enter MACBETH, SEYTON, and Soldiers, with drum
and colours.

Macbeth. Hang out our banners on the outward walls;
The cry is still 'They come': our castle's strength
Will laugh a siege to scorn: here let them lie
Till famine and the ague eat them up:
Were they not forced with those that should be ours,
We might have met them dareful, beard to beard,
And beat them backward home. [A cry of women within.
What is that noise?

Seyton. It is the cry of women, my good lord. [Exit.
Macbeth. I have almost forgot the taste of fears:
The time has been, my senses would have cool'd
To hear a night shriek, and my fell of hair
Would at a dismal treatise rouse and stir
As **if** life were in 't: I have supp'd full with horrors;

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Direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts,
Cannot once start me.

Re-enter SEYTON.

Wherefore was that cry?

Seyton. The queen, my lord, is dead
Macbeth. She should 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 recorded time,
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life 's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage

And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.
Enter a Messenger.
Thou comest to use thy tongue; thy story quickly.
Messenger. Gracious my lord,
I should report that which I say I saw,
But know not how to do it.
Macbeth. Well, say, sir.
Messenger. As I did stand my watch upon the hill,
I looked toward Birnam, and anon, methought,
The wood began to move.
Macbeth. Liar and slave!
Messenger. Let me endure your wrath, if 't be not so:
Within this three mile may you see it coming;
I say, a moving grove.
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.

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I pull in resolution and begin
To doubt the equivocation of the fiend
That lies like truth: 'fear not, till Birnam wood
Do come to Dunsinane': and now a wood
Comes toward Dunsinane. Arm, arm, and out!
If this which he avouches does appear,
There is nor flying hence nor tarrying here.
I 'gin to be aweary of the sun,
And wish the estate o' the world were now undone,
Ring the alarum-bell! Blow, wind! come, wrack!
At least we 'll die with harness on our back. [Exeunt.
SCENE VI. Dunsinane. Before the castle.
Drums and colours. Enter MALCOLM, old SIWARD, MAC-
DUFF, and their Army, with boughs.
Malcolm. Now near enough: your leavy screens throw
down,
And show like those you are. You, worthy uncle,
Shall with my cousin, your right-noble son,
Lead our first battle: worthy Macduff and we
Shall take upon 's what else remains to do,
According to our order.
Siward. Fare you well.
Do we but find the tyrant's power to-night,
Let us be beaten, if we cannot fight.
Macd. Make all our trumpets speak; give them all breath
Those clamorous harbingers of blood and death. [Exeunt.
SCENE VII. Another part of the field.
Alarums. Enter MACBETH.
Macbeth. They have tied me to a stake; I cannot fly,
But, bear-like, I must fight the course. What 's he

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That was not born of woman? Such a one
Am I to fear, or none.

Enter young SIWARD.
 Young Siw. What is thy name?
 Macbeth. Thou 'lt be afraid to hear it.
 Young Siw. No; though thou call'st thyself a hotter name
 Than any is in hell.
 Macbeth. My name is Macbeth.
 Young Siw. The devil himself could not pronounce a title
 More hateful to mine ear.
 Macbeth. No, nor more fearful.
 Young Siw. Thou liest, abhorred tyrant; with my sword
 I 'll prove the lie thou speak'st.
 [They fight, and young Siward is slain.
 Macbeth. Thou wast born of woman
 But swords I smile at, weapons laugh to scorn,
 Brandish'd by man that's of a woman born. [Exit.
 Alarums. Enter MACDUFF.
 Macduff. That way the noise is. Tyrant, show thy face!
 If thou be 'st slain and with no stroke of mine,
 My wife and children's ghosts will haunt me still.
 I cannot strike at wretched kerns, whose arms
 Are hired to bear their staves: either thou, Macbeth,
 Or else my sword with an unbatter'd edge
 I sheathe again undeeded. There thou shouldst be;
 By this great clatter, one of greatest note
 Seems bruted. Let me find him, fortune!
 And more I beg not. [Exit. Alarums.
 Enter MALCOLM and old SIWARD.
 Siward. This way, my lord; the castle's gently render'd:
 The tyrant's people on both sides do fight;
 The noble thanes do bravely in the war;

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The day almost itself professes yours,
 And little is to do.
 Malcolm. We have met with foes
 That strike beside us.
 Siward. Enter, sir, the castle.
 [Exeunt. Alarum.
 SCENE VIII. Another part of the field.
 Enter MACBETH.
 Macbeth. Why should I play the Roman fool, and die
 On mine own sword? whiles I see lives, the gashes
 Do better upon them.
 Enter MACDUFF.
 Macduff. Turn, hell-hound, turn!
 Macbeth. Of all men else I have avoided thee:
 But get thee back; my soul is too much charged
 With blood of thine already.
 Macduff. I have no words:
 My voice is in my sword: thou bloodier villain
 Than terms can give thee out! [They fight.
 Macbeth. Thou lovest labour:
 As easy mayst thou the intrenchant air
 With thy keen sword impress as make me bleed:
 Let fall thy blade on vulnerable crests;
 I bear a charmed life, which must not yield
 To one of woman born.

Macduff. Despair thy charm;
And let the angel whom thou still hast served
Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb
Untimely ripp'd.
Macbeth. Accursed be that tongue that tells me so,
For it hath cow'd my better part of man!

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And be these juggling fiends no more believed,
That palter with us in a double sense;
That keep the word of promise to our ear,
And break it to our hope. I 'll not fight with thee.
Macduff. Then yield thee, coward,
And live to be the show and gaze o' the time:
We 'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,
Painted upon a pole, and underwrit,
'Here may you see the tyrant.'
Macbeth. I will not yield,
To kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet
And to be **bated** with the rabble's curse.
Though Birnam wood be come to Dunsinane,
And thou opposed, being of no woman born,
Yet I will try the last. Before my body
I throw my warlike shield. Lay on, Macduff,
And damn'd be him that first cries 'Hold, enough!'
[Exeunt, fighting. Alarums.
Retreat. Flourish. Enter, with drum and colours, MAL-
COLM, old SIWARD, ROSS, the other Thanes, and Soldiers.
Malcolm. I would the friends we miss were safe arrived.
Siward. Some must go off: and yet by these I see,
So great a day as this is cheaply bought.
Malcolm. Macduff is missing and your noble son.
Ross. Your son, my lord, has paid a soldier's debt:
He only lived but till he was a man; 40
The which no sooner had his **powers** confirm'd
In the unshrinking station where he fought,
But like a man he died.
Siward. Then he is dead?
Ross. Aye, and brought off the field: your cause of sorrow

39-43. Here is Ross for the last time currying favour with the victor by the exercise of his obituary eloquence. He receives scant courtesy from the soldierly Siward.

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Must not be measured by his worth, for then
It hath no end.
Siward. Had he his **hurt** before?
Ross. Ay, on the front.
Siward. Why then, God's soldier be he!
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.
Malcolm. He 's worth more sorrow, 50
And that I 'll spend for him.
Siward. He 's worth no more:

They say he parted well and paid his score:
And so God be with him! Here comes newer comfort.
Re-enter MACDUFF with MACBETH'S head.
Macduff. Hail, king! for so thou art: behold, where stands
The usurper's cursed head: the time is free:
I see thee compass'd with thy kingdom's pearl,
That speak my salutation in their minds;
Whose voices I desire aloud with mine:
Hail, King of Scotland!
All. Hail, King of Scotland! [Flourish.
Malcolm. We shall not spend a large expense of time
Before we reckon with your several loves, 61
And make us even with you. My thanes and kinsmen,
Henceforth be earls, the first that ever Scotland
In such an honour named. What 's more to do,
Which would be planted newly with the time,
As calling home our exiled friends abroad

46-47. Siward assures Ross that honourable death is to be longed for.

61. My thanes and kinsmen henceforth be earls. Iago is not killed outright-though he had some traces of manly effrontry or boldness. Fate will not con- descend to punish this viper by any violence, he is to suffer by living.

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That fled the snares of watchful tyranny;
Producing forth the cruel ministers
Of this dead butcher and his fiend-like queen,
Who, as 'tis thought, by self and violent hands
Took off her life; this, and what needful else
That calls upon us, by the grace of Grace
We will perform in measure, time and place:
So, thanks to all at once and to each one,
Whom we invite to see us crown'd at Scone.
[Flourish. Exeunt.

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FINAL CONSIDERATION OF THE HYPOTHESIS.

How the Hypothesis answers the Twelve Points of the Introduction. -- The reader has now had an opportunity of observing to what extent the wording of the play supports the theory that Cawdor was innocent, and the conclusions concerning the conduct of the Thane of Ross, which follow from that theory. It is not supposed that any reader will believe Ross to have been the third murderer, who has not previously come to believe that he destroyed Cawdor; but it is confidently believed that any who may accept the latter view will hardly question the former, inasmuch as Ross's relation to Macbeth must in that case have been the relation of chief confidant, and every thing, by almost general consent, goes to prove that the third murderer was Macbeth's chief confidant.

So that we might rest the argument here, and leave the conclusion to time and the discerningly truthful spirit of

modern higher criticism. While the theory set forth is offered with serious conviction and confidence, it is offered without much hope that many readers will soon accept it, with some fear that unforeseen objections may be urged against it, and with the certainty that many of the ablest Shakespearean scholars through sheer distaste for new readings of works which have become the consolation and dearest pleasure of life in the old readings, will either pass it by in silence, or point out the extreme improbability that any change of such gravity in their views of Macbeth could be discovered at this time of day.

Such prejudices are both respectable and admirable, and in an age of "Baconian theories," have salutary effect upon the originality of ignorance with which this continent is familiar.

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But younger scholars will perhaps be freer, even though less capable judges, and to these we may look for an impartial consideration of the subject.

Twelve points were raised in the introductory chapter, and a summary of generally accepted views on those twelve points was given. In the body of the play the same points have been discussed in detail. The conclusions reached upon the hypothesis are briefly as follows:

1. Scene 2, Act I. is intended to contrast the plain, blunt, bombastic story of the truthful sergeant, with the sly, plausible, and oratorical story of the intriguing Ross, and to allow us to compare what Ross did say to Duncan with what Ross told Macbeth later on that he had said to Duncan. The language of the scene is believed to be perfectly adapted to its intentions, especially in points where it has been condemned.

2. Macbeth's speeches referring to Cawdor are believed to be absolutely truthful and serious on Macbeth's part.

3. The discrepancies (so often pointed out) between Ross's speeches in Scene 2 and his speeches in Scene 3, are exactly accounted for by the fact that he had ruined Cawdor to please Macbeth, that he had to tell Macbeth of his scheme before others, and in such a way that Macbeth should not destroy his plans by exclamations of honest surprise, and finally that Angus was present both when Ross conversed with Duncan, and when Ross reported his interview to Macbeth.

4. Angus was unquestionably present in Scene 2 and in Scene 3, precisely as the Folio indicates. It seems incredible that this can ever be disputed again.

5. Banquo, in Scene 3, knew Cawdor to be innocent; with his usual just impulses he was inclined to vindicate Cawdor's reputation for loyalty, but his desire to see the witches' promises fulfilled, made him take an equivocal position; Macbeth, discerning this, silenced him by dangling those

promises alluringly before him.

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6. Banquo not only suspected that the Macbeths meant to murder Duncan on the night of his stay at Inverness, but he felt certain of it. His conduct is plainly a marked struggle between warning Duncan and allowing Macbeth to pursue his course, in the hope that Macbeth's success would lead to the fulfilment of his own hopes.

7. The Porter's speech is believed to be a living member of the tragedy, allied to it by a hundred veins and arteries, and filling a necessary gap in the action. In its relation to the present hypothesis, it receives confirmation of this view by the allusion to Banquo in the word "equivocator."

8. Ross is never presented to us as partaking in any scene of open bloodshed. What he could do in the dark or by intrigue he did, always making sure of his own safety. In so dangerous a stroke as the murder of the rightful king he does not participate. As soon as Macbeth's succession is assured Ross joins him. Scene 4 of Act II. has for its sole motive the contrast between a selfish intriguer and a man of untarnished honour. It tells us as plainly as words can tell us, that in the face of honour and loyalty Ross is going to push his fortunes at the court of the usurper.

9. Banquo bore an equivocal relation to Macbeth. As long as Macbeth was climbing to the golden round he had Banquo's criminal friendship outwardly and passively; but Banquo assumed this attitude through selfish motives. As soon as Macbeth became King, Banquo became anxious to see the fulfilment of the promises to himself; then Macbeth had him murdered.

10. It is no longer seriously contended that the third murderer was a person of no consequence. A few will still hold that it makes no difference who he was. But it is evident that Shakespeare purposely insists upon making a mystery of his identity. Ross was a spy and intriguer if he ruined Cawdor, he went to court to push his way as a counsellor, Banquo was his only rival; every word he utters in the

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Banquet scene proclaims him the third murderer; while there is no advantage to the play in supposing Macbeth to have been the assassin, it would complete the character of Ross to assign him that place. Moreover, the fact that the two murderers did not recognize Macbeth seems fatal to Mr. Paton's contention.

11. The sixth Scene of Act III. is designed to show how slowly honourable men became acquainted with the character of Macbeth. It is highly probable that the conjecture that the other lord of this Scene was Angus, is correct, and that the Scene accentuates the character of Angus and increases

the probability that he was duped by Ross in Scenes 2 and 3 of Act I.

12. Ross's relation to Lady Macduff is mysterious in the last degree, and by design. The situation is such as to lead one to suspect him of the foulest motives in visiting the castle of Macduff in his absence. But it is impossible to say more than this in cool judgment. This state of things harmonizes perfectly with the shady character of his conduct throughout the play.

The Prima Facie Case. -- It will of course be said that the prima facie case against Cawdor is conclusive. That it has been so taken for so many years certainly makes any other view of the matter somewhat temerarious. Yet what are the facts of the case on the face of it? Ross had strong motives for ruining Cawdor in Macbeth's interest, as he plainly shows us, when in the face of Macduff's sneers (Sc. 4, Act II.) he goes to Macbeth's court to claim his reward. The sole ground of Cawdor's ruin is an ambiguous speech by Ross, which contains a reference to Cawdor of a line and a half. Macbeth plainly states, first, that the Thane of Cawdor lives a prosperous gentleman, and second, that the Thane of Cawdor lives, omitting the mention of his prosperity because the witches and Ross agreed so well, and because it was so greatly to Macbeth's interest that

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Cawdor should not prosper. Where then is the prima facie evidence of Cawdor's guilt? Why, surely, it will be said it lies in the fact that he was put to death for treason. But is even this phase of the case made prominent in the play. By no means; the execution of Cawdor is remarkable for the vagueness of the report which announces it, and so, (though of course the fact of the execution is not questioned), the guilt of Cawdor is not impressed upon us by Shakespeare through any vivid or even clear account of the execution itself. What follows this dark transaction? The King is told by the inexperienced Malcolm that Cawdor died (according to the reports sent to the palace by the commissioners) like a man of honour. Does the King question this? By no means; Duncan contradicts Malcolm's bad estimate of Cawdor's general course of life, by telling him Cawdor was a man whose bearing was so unimpeachable that his fall might well shake and destroy confidence in the human race. Dogmatism, though alas too common among editors of these plays, is unpardonable, but it is surely dogmatic to tell us that this is a prima facie case against Cawdor. Were not the fear of this same dogmatism before us, we might venture to express the opinion that, if the present generation of Shakespeare readers had been told from the beginning and without argument, that Cawdor was innocent and Ross an intriguer, they would not only have accepted that view without question, but they would have scouted with much scorn the view of Cawdor's conduct which they at present hold as the true one. And on the strength of this opinion we may hope that some at least of those who may study the argument and who may perceive its

vital importance to the character of Banquo, to the full significance of the words of the witches, to the mysterious parts of the tragedy, to the character grouping and shading of Macbeth, Banquo and Ross, (all of whom it implicates in a great and complex study, infinitely subtle and minute, of murder and intrigue, and all of whom, together with the more brutal assassins, it grades and classifies on grounds of courage, purpose and mental powers in relation to murder), to the sound-

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ness of the Folio, and above all to the round unity and living harmony of the play, will come to the conclusion that Cawdor was a loyal gentleman slandered to death. Yet this hope should not be a sanguine hope, while a critic so entirely intelligent and enlightened as Mr. Swinburne can write the following words, an echo of Dr. Samuel Johnson, about this very play: -- "Here (in the case of Macbeth) there is some genuine ground for the generally baseless and delusive opinion of self-complacent sciolism that he who runs may read Shakespeare." Let us say with becoming deference, that it must soon become clear that the greatest of all tragedies is the subtlest, that its art has concealed its art, that self-complacent sciolism can go no farther here than elsewhere, that Macbeth is the most profound and the most sphinx-like of the art-works of the world. In spite of endless essays from Germans and English, the characterization of this play is not understood, nor likely to be until long years after the final renunciation of self-complacent sciolism.