

Masefield 1945 John Masefield, *A Macbeth production* (London, 1945).

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MACBETH PRODUCTION

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MACBETH PRODUCTION

BY

JOHN MASEFIELD

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WILLIAM HEINEMANN LTD
LONDON :: TORONTO

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To

MY WIFE

FIRST PUBLISHED 1945

THIS BOOK IS PRODUCED IN COMPLETE
CONFORMITY WITH THE AUTHORISED
ECONOMY STANDARDS

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN AT THE WINDMILL PRESS
KINGSWOOD, SURREY

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A MACBETH PRODUCTION

While I was thinking of what might be, and of that more sinister thing, which probably, would be, there came a knocking at my door; and there, suddenly were young men, released from the war, wishing to speak with me. "What

can I do for you?" I asked.

"We want to ask you something", the leader said. "I'm afraid there are rather a lot of us."

"I am glad that so many have been spared", I said, "Are you musicians?"

"Only some of us; only seven, to be exact; seven, at present."

They seemed rather too many to seat within-doors. "How many of you are there?" I asked.

"Beside the musicians", he said, "there are thirty-one in the main body, counting the drivers; then, eight more, executive, and to help."

"All men?"

"O yes; all men."

"I suppose you mean to act", I said, "And being all men, I expect you plan Elizabethan plays. Well; come along to this grassy bank and fallen tree, where all of you can sit or lie. And now, tell on, and ask."

"We were much together in the war", the leader said.

"We planned, that if we got through, we would stick together for a time, and go about the country in lorries, for all the summer months, doing poetical plays."

"That is splendid", I said. "And what of the winter and autumn?"

"We hoped that schools of all sorts might like us."

"If not, what can they be for?" I asked. "You mentioned 'eight, executive'. I suppose that these are your advance agents; lights-property-and-costume-men, prompter

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and curtain-man, ticket-sellers, treasurer and carpenters?"

"Yes; we have some specialists; but most of us can bear a hand at most things."

"You have the look of that", I said. "Now, will you tell me of your equipment?"

"We have lorries to take our gear and ourselves. We shall live a circus life for as long as we hang together; that IS the life, wherever men do hang together. We shall try to be down in the extreme west, in October and March, when the open may be rather bleak. We are not unused to cooking and camping. We have some devices for keeping dry, washing clothes, keeping clean and so forth. We may not be quite gypsies or sailors at these things, but we have learned some of their ways in these last years. You may take the living part as provided for. The acting equipment, we shall hope to show you soon. We have a portable stage, which we have built together. We can strike it in an hour; and hope, with practice, to get it up in daylight, in most

places, in under three hours. It is very strong and yet light. It has a balcony at the back, because we want to revive some Elizabethan plays. Some of us have rather a knack for designing and making clothes. We have some curtains and back-cloths. We have some costumes, armour, jewels, crowns and so forth. Light, too, we can be sure of; and we can do posters and programmes. We hope to stay more than one night in most places, and give more than one play."

"Indeed, I hope that you will", I said. "And now, your question?"

"We wanted to ask you about *Macbeth*. It is a play we have thought of doing, and someone said, you used to like the play."

"I did, and do, but it will take time to collect my thoughts about the play, and to set them down for you. Let me do

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that during the next few days and post the results to you.

But, in the meantime, please, will you let me say, how glad I am that you are going to bring poetry to the thousands who are starved of it, by long years of war and some generations of stupidity?

You have comradeship; and the power of a comradeship in art is almost the greatest power; it may become the greatest power.

For a year or two, perhaps even for three, you will be together, before life parts you. In that time, you will have done the work, shewn the way and lit the light.

Please let me wish you all, all happiness. You may, and should, have great success. But in any case you will have the real success, of coming with joy and leaving glad memories."

In the days which followed, I put down my suggestions, speculations and enjoyments, following on another reading of the play. Great poetry is rare, but it is less touched by death than other matters; it comes with joy and leaves glad memories.

It is a glad fever, to brood upon deathless poetry; and yet . . .

"These burning fits but meteors bee,
Whose matter in thee is soone spent.
Thy beauty, and all parts, which are thee,
Are unchangeable firmament."

On Duncan and Macbeth, as shewn in histories.

Before beginning my comment, I tried to learn something about the two Kings, Duncan and Macbeth, whose names this poem makes familiar to us.

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Both must have been young men when Olaf Peacock kept house at Herdholt, when Gudrun's Lovers came wooing, and Kjartan was killed. Perhaps the passionate, man-slaughterous life of the sagas was familiar to both kings from boyhood. The eagle, the raven and the wolf must then have been frequent, in Nature as in the spirit of Man. Certainly, the Scotland of the eleventh century was a turbulent place, with few undisputed boundaries. Duncan, though he was styled High King, never ruled more than half the land. Macbeth was less his subject than a ruler in his own right over a land of his own. Duncan ruled southern Scotland, from the Border to about Perth. His marriage with Siward's daughter gave him an ally and perhaps a claim south of the Border.

In his day, the West of Scotland and the Islands seem to have been turbulent independencies. The extreme North, (the present Sutherland and Caithness), seems to have been held by Scandinavian chieftains, of whom one Thorfinn, of Caithness, comes most into the story.

Macbeth was the son of Findlaech, the Mormaer of Moray. The name, Mac Beth, is said to mean "Son of Life". The Mormaership was an hereditary office; it has been translated as "High Steward" or "Sea Steward" but the Mormaer of Moray seems to have been more important than other Mormaers; he is sometimes styled "King of Alba", and undoubtedly counted himself, and waged war as, an independent sovereign.

Moray, Moravia or Alba was hedged by the Moray Firth and the North Sea; by the Linnhe Loch and Loch Ness; and by a somewhat debatable southern land-border, varying, perhaps from the Mounth to the River Tay. Findlaech, King and Mormaer, was killed by his nephews about the year 1020.

One of these nephews, Malcolm, was King of Alba till he died in 1029.

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Another nephew, Gillecomgain, was Mormaer of Moray when burned in 1032. He was burned "with fifty of his men", we are not told how. Gillecomgain left a widow, Gruach, and a son, Lulach.

After Gillecomgain's burning, Macbeth, whom we may

suppose to have been then between 20 and 30 years of age, became King of Alba, and married Gruach.

Gruach, being the grand-daughter of Kenneth, King of the southern parts of Scotland, and now the Queen of Alba, was an important lady. Her son, Lulach, had now claims to both crowns.

Duncan was chosen to be the King of the southern parts of Scotland in the year 1034, after the murder of the preceding King, (Malcolm) at Glamis. He was the son of one Crinan or Cronan, abbot of Dunkeld and Mormaer of Atholl. We may perhaps suppose that he was aged about thirty or thirty-five when he was chosen to be king.

There seem to have been rebellions and irruptions upon him from the west, which Macbeth from the northern kingdom helped him to quell. When these had been settled, Duncan went to war with the Scandinavian King in Caithness, named Thorfinn, who had some success against him. Macbeth, for a time, allied himself with Duncan against Thorfinn, and took command of the joint army sent against him.

Time passed, policies and interests changed, in ways of which we know nothing whatever. In August, 1040, Duncan was apparently at war with both Thorfinn and Macbeth. Thorfinn defeated him in battle; Macbeth killed him, near Elgin.

As Duncan's sons were boys, Macbeth, through Gruach, had a claim to the southern Kingdom, and being a very capable warrior was chosen as High King. We may suppose that the Duncan party, in Atholl, the South of Scotland and

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Northumbria, took no part in this choice, and remained hostile to Macbeth during the boyhood of Duncan's sons.

Being King, Macbeth seems to have dealt swift and deadly justice to evil-doers, and to have made some effective laws. Some of these are against any attempts by which his lieutenants might hope to strengthen their powers. They are shrewdly conceived and clearly stated.

Some wild utterances in what is called a Prophecy have been taken to refer to Macbeth. They refer certainly to someone who was King, Red, ruddy, yellow-haired, furious, generous, and likely to be slaughterous. The coasts of Scotland at that time probably contained some hundreds of men to whom these words would apply.

After eleven years, the Duncan or Atholl party rose against Macbeth and were defeated by him.

Macbeth is said to have visited Rome in the year 1050.

On August the 15th, 1057, Macbeth was killed in the

wood at Lumphanan, in Aberdeenshire, while fighting against Malcolm, the son of Duncan. It is possible, that he was killed, as Shakespeare declares, by Macduff. He had reigned for seventeen prosperous years.

He was succeeded by Gruach's son, Lulach, called the Simpleton, who was killed "in Essie, in Strathbogie" by craft of some kind in March, 1058. Malcolm, son of Duncan, then ruled Scotland, or, rather, ruled Duncan's southern share of it.

The (traditional) scenes of Macbeth's last fights are shewn still. The bodies of Macbeth, Lulach, and Duncan are buried with the other Scottish Kings, in the Island of Iona. Malcolm, after a long reign, was killed at Alnwick, and buried at Dunfermline.

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On the Play as we have it.

We do not know when, nor where, *Macbeth* was written. My instinct is, that it was written in fine weather about the year 1605, for immediate performance by Shakespeare's fellow-actors at the Globe Theatre, with Richard Burbage as Macbeth. It was undoubtedly successful; it became well-known and must have been frequently played.

Our text of the play is, in the main, that of the First Folio, printed in 1623 by John Heminge and Henry Condell, two of Shakespeare's fellow-players.

The First Folio text is divided into scenes and acts; it contains some stage-directions most of which, slightly enlarged by later editors, are printed today; it looks very well upon the page, but is plainly printed from a cut and untidy copy, and passed for press by someone with little or no ear for verse. It seems to me that the copy used was a theatre copy made for some performance after Shakespeare's death; it contains some interpolations, which Shakespeare, as an important member of the company and a prominent shareholder, would surely have had the power to annul. What is much worse, is, that it has been so much cut, that it is now one of the three shortest of the plays.

The text was somewhat revised in the later Folios. From the early eighteenth century onwards, much pious care has been given to the pointing, scanning and correction of the text by poets and scholars. This care, unfortunately, cannot remedy the evil done by men who were neither scholars nor poets.

I fear that Shakespeare's manuscript of the play was burned in the Globe Theatre in 1613. I still hope, let us all hope, that even now from some old attic or cupboard a

hitherto unsuspected Quarto of the play may come to light to show us what it was when complete.

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Shakespeare, as an actor, was, of course, well-used to the mangling of his plays by every possible kind of mangler. In the case of *Macbeth*, the damage done by the mangler was very grievous.

Shakespeare was a poet of power. When the mood was upon him he was abundant and overflowing like the sun. It was upon him with an overwhelming illumination when he wrote *Macbeth* at the very peak of his splendid maturity. The text, as it came from him, must have been of a sublime excess, at least seven hundred lines longer than the play preserved to us. Not all the lines and scenes were equally good, of course, but all must have been touched with the quality of this sublime mood, and some of them must have been wholly of that quality, which is unique and unapproached; there is nothing like it elsewhere. On paper of some sort this miracle of poetry was brought to the tavern or to the theatre, and there cut by somebody's knife, or erased with somebody's pen, by men who preferred a jig or a tale of bawdry, or were certainly asleep. What became of the scraps? What were the scraps? What had Shakespeare chosen to write, of all that he might have written, having Holinshed before him? and his poetical power upon him? Keeping apart some half dozen favourite poets, would you not give all the rest of English poetry for those cut thirty pages?

Well "Truth like a bastard comes into the world"; we must be glad that it is no worse. The theatre managers did at least feel that there was something in the play likely to bring them money; and preserved, say, three quarters of it.

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The Sources.

Macbeth makes images of power in the mind of every instructed man now in the world. The play is a part of all imagination; some of it is in our daily speech and thought. Twelve generations ago, this was not so; the name and fable were almost unknown. From what springs, sources and materials did Shakespeare make his miracle?

Shakespeare found his fable in those pages of Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of Scotland* which tell, firstly, of the murder of King Duffe or Duff, (in 972 ____) by his castellan,

Donwald, and, later, of the lives and violent deaths of King Duncan and Macbeth. He mingled these tales with such supreme skill that the characters of Macbeth and his Lady have seemed black to the world's eye ever since. The Scotch know better. To them, Macbeth was a rightful King, whose reign makes a bright patch in a troublous century.

From other pages in Holinshed, Shakespeare found other suggestions, thus: -- among the marvels of the year 972, the following are mentioned: --

"Horses in Lothian, being of singular beauty and swiftness, did eat their own flesh and would in no wise taste any other meat.

There was a sparhawk also strangled by an owl."

In the account of King Kenneth, who had poisoned Malcolm, the son of the murdered King Duff, Holinshed says that as the King lay in bed at night, he heard a voice crying "Think not . . . that the wicked slaughter by thee contrived is kept secret".

In the tale of the murder of King Duff, Donwald, the lieutenant, or captain of Forres Castle, at first a loyal subject, is angered because King Duff refuses to pardon some rebels, "near of kin unto Donwald".

While brooding over King Duff's deed, Donwald's wife

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"counselled him to make him away, and shewed him the means". Presently, Donwald, "through setting on of his wife and in revenge, found means to murder the King within the foresaid castle".

"Donwald thus being the more kindled in wrath by the words of his wife, determined to follow her advice in the execution of so heinous an act . . .

It chanced that the King, upon the day before he purposed to depart forth of the castle, (Fores), was long in his oratory at his prayers, and there continued till it was late in the night. At the last, coming forth, he called such afore him as had faithfully served him in pursuit and apprehension of the rebels, and giving them hearty thanks, he bestowed sundry honourable gifts among them of the which number Donwald was one, as he that had been ever accounted a most faithful servant to the King.

At length, having talked with them a long time, he got him into his privy chamber, only with two of his chamberlains, who, having brought him to bed, came

forth again, and then fell to banquetting with Donwald and his wife, who had prepared divers delicate dishes, and sundry sorts of drinks, for their rear supper or collation, whereat they sat up so long, till they had charged their stomachs with such full gorges, that their heads were no sooner got to the pillow, but asleep they were so fast, that a man might have removed the chamber over them, sooner than to awake them out of their drunken sleep.

Then Donwald, though he abhorred the act greatly in heart, yet through instigation of his wife he called four of his servants unto him (whom he had made privy to his wicked intent before, and framed to his purpose with large gifts) and now declaring unto them after what sort

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they should work the feat, they gladly obeyed his instructions, and speedily going about the murther, they enter the chamber (in which the King lay) a little before cocks crow, where they secretly cut his throat as he lay sleeping."

The body was at once carried forth, and buried deep in the bed of a river about two miles away.

"Donwald, about the time that the murther was in doing, got him amongst them that kept the watch, and so continued in company with them all the residue of the night. But in the morning, when the noise was raised in the King's chamber how the King was slain, his body conveyed away, and the bed all berayed with blood; he with the watch ran thither, as though he had known nothing of the matter, and breaking into the chamber, and finding cakes of blood in the bed, and on the floor about the sides of it, he forthwith slew the chamberlains, as guilty of that heinous murther, and then like a mad man running to and fro, he ransacked every corner within the castle, as though it had been to have seen if he might have found either the body, or any of the murtherers hid in any privy place: but at length coming to the postern gate, and finding it open, he burdened the chamberlains, whom he had slain, with all the fault, they having the keys of the gates committed to their keeping all the night, and therefore it could not be otherwise (said he) but that they were of counsel in the committing of that most detestable murther.

Finally, such was his over earnest diligence in the severe inquisition and trial of the offenders herein, that some

of the lords began to mislike the matter, and to smell forth shrewd tokens, that he should not be altogether clear himself. But forasmuch as they were in that country, where he had the whole rule, what by reason of his friends and

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his authority together, they doubted to utter what they thought, till time and place should better serve therunto, and hereupon got them away, every man to his home."

In his account of Duncan, Holinshed makes Macbeth the King's cousin, calling him the son of Sinell, the thane of Glamis. This relationship, only mentioned once in the play, as we have it, was certainly in Shakespeare's mind, and had more mention once.

Holinshed calls Banquo "the thane of Lochquhaber, of whom the House of the Stewards is descended, the which by order of lineage hath now for a long time enjoyed the crown of Scotland".

He makes Banquo Macbeth's chief supporter in the killing of Duncan.

He makes it clear that Malcolm and Donalbain, Duncan's two sons, were only boys when their father was killed.

His account of Macduff's flying to England is much clearer and fuller than that given in our mutilated text.

The main suggestion for the play came from the following: --

"It fortun'd as Macbeth and Banquo journeyed towards Fores, where the King then lay, they went sporting by the way together, without other company, save only themselves, passing through the woods and fields, when suddenly, in the midst of a laund, there met them three women, in strange and wild apparel, resembling creatures of elder world, whom, when they attentively beheld, wondering much at the sight, the first of them spake and said: 'All hail, Macbeth, thane of Glamis' (for he had lately entered into that dignity and office by the death of his father Sinell). The second of them said: 'Hail, Macbeth, thane of Cawdor'. But the third said: 'All hail, Macbeth, that hereafter shalt be King of Scotland'.

Then Banquo: 'What manner of women,, (saith he) are

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you, that seem so little favourable unto me, whereas to my fellow here, besides high offices, ye assign also the Kingdom, appointing forth nothing for me at all?' 'Yes'

(saith the first of them) 'we promise greater benefits unto thee than unto him, for he shall reign indeed, but with an unlucky end: neither shall he leave any issue behind him to succeed in his place, where contrarily thou indeed shalt not reign at all, but of thee those shall be borne which shall govern the Scottish Kingdom by long order of continual descent.' Herewith the foresaid women vanished immediately out of their sight. This was reputed at the first but some vain fantastical illusion by Macbeth and Banquo, insomuch that Banquo would call Macbeth in jest, King of Scotland; and Macbeth again would call him in sport likewise, the father of many kings. But afterwards the common opinion was that these women were either the weird sisters, that is, (as ye would say) the goddesses of destiny, or else some nymphs or fairies, indued with knowledge of prophecy by their necromantical science, because everything came to pass as they had spoken. For shortly after, the thane of Cawdor being condemned at Fores of treason against the King committed; his lands, livings and offices were given of the King's liberality to Macbeth.

The same night after, at supper, Banquo jested with him and said; 'Now Macbeth thou hast attained those things which the two former sisters prophesied, there remaineth only for thee to purchase that which the third said should come to pass. Whereupon Macbeth revolving the thing in his mind, began even then to devise how he might attain to the Kingdom: but yet he thought with himself that he must tarry a time, which should advance him thereto (by the divine providence) as it had come to pass in his former preferment. But shortly after it

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chanced that King Duncan, having two sons by his wife, which was the daughter of Siward earl of Northumberland, he made the elder of them, called Malcolm, Prince of Cumberland, as it were thereby to appoint him his successor in the Kingdom, immediately after his decease. Macbeth sore troubled herewith, for that he saw by this means his hope sore hindered (where, by the old laws of the realm, the ordinance was, that if he that should succeed were not of able age to take the charge upon himself, he that was next of blood unto him should be admitted) he began to take counsel how he might usurp the kingdom by force, having a just quarrel so to do, (as he took the matter) for that Duncan did what in him lay to defraud him of all manner of title and claim, which he might in time to come, pretend unto the

crown.

The words of the three weird sisters also (of whom before ye have heard) greatly encouraged him hereunto, but specially his wife lay sore upon him to attempt the thing, as she that was very ambitious, burning in unquenchable desire to bear the name of a Queen. At length therefore, communicating his purposed intent with his trusty friends, amongst whom Banquo was the chiefest, upon confidence of their promised aid, he slew the King at Inverness, or, (as some say) at Botgосуane, in the sixth year of his reign. Then having a company about him of such as he had made privy to his enterprise, he caused himself to be proclaimed King, and forthwith went unto Scone, where (by common consent) he received the investiture of the Kingdom, according to the accustomed manner."

These passages make the fable from which Shakespeare made his two first marvellous acts, of the doing of the frightful thing, the murder of Duncan. His manner in

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all his best years was, to give full measure. Whenever the text gives full measure, we may feel fairly sure, that we have what Shakespeare gave. Comparing the text with the fables, we wonder, whether there were not another scene between Macbeth and his Wife; and exactly what was cut in the great scene following the discovery of the murder. Something has been clumsily cut there; it was certainly wonderful, the poetical mood there being so sure; but in all theatrical scenes of great tension and confusion, the minds of audiences perceive as the herd, by communicated instinct; there is no need of words; and so, to the barbers with the beard.

In the remaining three acts, Shakespeare has to mark the usurper's uneasy triumph, his attempt to establish himself, the gathering of the world against him, and his final ruin and death. The pages of Holinshed, provide him with these suggestions for scenes:

The plotting of the murder of Banquo, in the hope of annulling the witch's prophecy, that Banquo's issue will be Kings.

The murder of Banquo; and the Banquet.

Another interview with witches.

The growing savagery and cruelty of Macbeth as King: -- "he began to make those away . . . whom he thought most able to work him any displeasure. At length, he found such sweetness by putting his nobles thus to death, that

his earnest thirst after blood in their behalf might in no wise be satisfied".

The building of Dunsinane, "on the top of an high hill . . . on such a proud height that standing there aloft, a man might behold well near all the counties of Angus, Fife, Stermond and Ernedale".

Macduff's growing dread of Macbeth; his keeping away from Dunsinane, when it was the turn of his retainers to

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work at the fortifying of Dunsinane. He sent his men, but would not come with them.

Macbeth's consequent suspicion of Macduff.

Macduff's plotting against Macbeth, and visit to England, to seek support for the Malcolm party against Macbeth.

Macbeth's assault of Macduff's castle, and slaughter of Lady Macduff and her children.

The visit of Macduff to Malcolm, urging him to strike against the tyrant; Malcolm's suspicion, and trial of Macduff.

The marching of the armies against Macbeth, with the craft, of the boughs plucked at Birnam.

Macbeth's flight, Macduff's vengeance upon him, and the saluting of Malcolm as King.

To these suggestions for scenes, Shakespeare had to add, those suggested by what he had made of the fable in the first two acts. Certain characters had become alive within him, and insisted on speaking out their souls, and shewing forth their destinies. No man who knows the Shakespearean manner can doubt, that the splendour was prodigal in him throughout the writing of the play.

I suspect that a wonderful scene has gone from the beginning of Act III; to mark the division made by the murder between Macbeth and his Wife, each being ruined by it so differently. One can speculate upon its nature; and upon the reasons for its cutting. Burbage may not have liked it, as being a little too like madness. The appearance of the third murderer to deal with Banquo is a little odd. Then, beyond all doubt, a scene of Macduff has gone. The turning of Macduff against Macbeth is of the utmost importance to the play. Holinshed is clear upon the point; Shakespeare, who is usually sunlight upon his points, is not clear here. The jagged knife has cut ruthlessly; having cut clumsily, something was noticed; and a clumsy line or two had to be added to repair the gash; perhaps late in rehearsal.

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Who can turn the pages of the last Acts, all broken into

little scenes, without knowing, that the scenes have all been cut, hacked, jagged, defaced and shortened, so that the end might come with a rush. There must have been another scene between Macbeth and his Wife; there must have been some scene of the Queen, to prepare us for her suicide. All these spirits were luminous and furious in Shakespeare's mind and were all light and life upon his page. Look for them on the page now, and see where the knives have gone.

Some few passages (the scenes with Hecate), though printed in our first text, cannot be by Shakespeare. These, you will, of course, omit. One or two other scenes have been questioned; surely without cause. Some have doubted the early scene of the bleeding soldier. Perhaps the bleeding soldier touched it up a little, during rehearsal, to suit his peculiar talents, and perhaps the printer dropped some, but the bulk of the speech is Shakespearean. The little scene of the English Doctor and Malcolm, describing the touching for the evil, by King Edward the Confessor, seems to have been added to the text (in a cold mood) after the play had been written and performed. It reads, as though it had been added for some special performance before King James the First. Few in any audience would notice or lament the absence of this little scene.

The rest of the text is necessary to you.

With your thirty-one men you have actors enough. The play can be done with twenty. With thirty-one, letting some of your cleverer character-actors take two or three parts apiece, you will be well-stocked, even when your armies are engaged and your music playing.

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On the Stage needed for your Performance.

Since you plan to play *Twelfth Night*, you will have seen for yourselves, that *Twelfth Night* was undoubtedly written for performance upon the simplest kind of stage, probably with one possible entrance at each side. It was written, you would say, would you not, for a special performance, away from the theatre?

That was not so with *Macbeth*, which was written for the best-equipped theatre of the time. A modern producer should have something not worse-equipped. What equipment should you have, for a right and swift performance?

Our modern theatres are usually without some devices which make the Elizabethan play easy to produce at speed. It is, of course, monstrous, that we have not in our bigger cities a theatre built and reserved for the playing of Elizabethan plays. The further fact, that we have not an audience

demanding this, is also monstrous. *Macbeth* was undoubtedly written for a deep stage, jutting well out into the pit or yard, with an audience on three sides of it.

Some part of the back of this deep stage, could, if the action demanded it, be shut from the sight of the audience by the drawing of a cross curtain, while the play continued on the fore part. I have no doubt, that the stage on which *Macbeth* was played had and used such a curtain.

Right at the very back of the deep stage was a wall, or house-front, of two storeys, pierced with windows and doors, leading into inner rooms, both on the ground floor and on the floor above. These inner rooms could be used in the action. In front of the upper-storey, which may have overhung the ground floor, there must have been a landing or balcony, easily reached by stairs from the stage. This landing or balcony is one of the most useful of all stage devices. Shakespeare made use of it as a balcony,

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in *Romeo & Juliet*; and in *The Comedy of Errors*; he may have used it as battlements, in *Hamlet*; and quite certainly used it as the approach to Duncan's death-rooms, in *Macbeth*.

With a stage so fitted and arranged, the Elizabethan manager was equipped for the art of the time. As yet, we shew few signs of knowing the range of that art, in power and beauty.

We have no stage of the kind; we have the deep picture stage, often remote from the audience, and without the permanent house-front structure at the back. Still, the modern stage can be adapted; and in time, perhaps, schools, cities and universities, when building stages, will build them with some thought of possible romantic performance. You have prepared these adaptations.

Whenever you perform your *Macbeth*, try to build or fit a fore-stage or apron in front of the existing curtain, over the space usually given to the orchestra. It is very important, that you should have this fore-stage; make it as spacious as you can; and if you can contrive it on a lower level than your main stage, with a step at least a foot high between them, all the better. It can be shut from the main stage by the usual theatre curtain.

On the main stage, the play needs, or, shall we say, would be the better, for two Elizabethan things: a back-cloth, to be dropped or drawn as the back-ground for certain scenes; and, behind this, the setting of the inside of *Macbeth's* castle, a wall with doors, having an upper landing or gallery, (also shewing doors), easily reached by stairs from the stage,

visible to the audience. Your back-cloth may be a plain cloth in whatever shade will give the most effect to your stage colours or groups; or, if you prefer it, something of a tapestry, with Scottish emblems; thistle, birk, heather or rowan; or scene of mountain, loch and moor.

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The landing, or balcony, which you mean to have at the back of your stage, must be strong enough to bear the swift movement of several men. The staircase leading to it should be simple and strong, like a ship's gangway, with an inch rope handrail.

The wooden railing of the landing can be hung with shields.

One of the doors opening from the landing, must be used as leading to the room in which Duncan is killed. As it is the best room, the guest-room, it may be used later as the room to which Lady Macbeth goes at the end of the sleep walking scene; from it, there may come the cry of women, late in the play, when the Queen dies.

With these three scenes, the <>permanent setting at the back, the rear back-cloth, occasionally hiding the permanent setting, and the fore-curtain, occasionally hiding both, all the scenes can be given their full effect and their necessary swiftness.

In my notes, I shall speak of the fore-stage, the mid-stage and the full-stage.

Stage devices and properties.

Shakespeare certainly needed and used some stage devices in the great scene of the Witches and the Apparitions. These were probably of a simple kind, such as a trap-door, out of which the apparitions could appear in the midst of coloured smokes from the cauldron, and by means of which the three Witches and the cauldron could vanish at the end of their scene. The Folio text mentions "Thunder"; of the kind made by a rolled cannon-ball. This, or its storm-sister the shaken metal sheet, is a part of theatrical equipment.

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Have a settle at the back of your stage, against the back wall.

Let your Witches' cauldron be big and broad. Take great pains to make its fire and smoke appear uncanny. Modern lighting and chemistry together will make many strange

effects easily possible to you. In arming your armies; let your spears be short, your shields, small and round; and the other weapons shortish swords, and hand-axes. You must have some banners upon lances.

You will need two chairs of state.

For the banquet table, I would recommend something upon trestles, liker the mess-table of a ship than the refectory table of a monastery. The guests sit upon stools; it is a military society, and all is cleared after the meal so that the hall may be used as the main bedroom.

Trenchers, cups and jugs must be on the table. These are made in papier-maché or some such stuff, for stage use. I would be inclined to cause your craftsmen to make or turn plates and small cups in wood; so that there may be a noise of dinner. Forks and spoons need not be there; the guests use their own knives and their fingers, when the stewards have ladled their portions on to their trenchers. Let your craftsmen spend some invention on the equipping of the stewards. One must bear bread, another wine, another or two others the courses; these will need trays, baskets or leather jacks; all of which must look new, like the dynasty, not dirty, dingy and smoky. It is one of the great scenes of the play; the one in which Lady Macbeth had hoped to taste to the full the glory of her new estate in all its splendour, of new robes, a crown, new suits for the servants, and new dinner sets for the table.

Among the properties, you must not forget an alarm bell. The effect of a big bell jangled and at last set furiously ringing, on the discovery of the murder may be very great.

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Macbeth makes a furious exit to the sound of it. A ringing of it when Malcolm is proclaimed King would add to the general rejoicing at the end of the play.

Torches need a few words. The old text has several references to torches. As the ancient performances took place in daylight, these torches must have been used for one or other of two purposes, to suggest to the audience that it was now night.

"This is as much to say as hit were Night."

or, for the great beauty of their appearance in ceremony, when borne in procession. Stage torches are reasonably safe; and look very well, in ceremony. You may be well advised to use lanterns, instead of torches, for your travellers, and people moving about the castle at night. Banquo, when murdered, should have some light easily

extinguished. Lanterns when flung down upon a stage sometimes continue burning.

You have among your company, some men skilled in modelling. These men may find happy chances to shew their skill in the Apparition scene. You may prefer to play the Armed Head, the Bloody Child, and the Child Crowned, with members of your cast; but these three heads demand fine masks. Will you not play the Show of Kings with men in masks resembling Banquo?

One other important image must be modelled. You must have the tyrant's bleeding head for Macduff to bring on at the end upon a short spear, or better, upon the banner staff from which Macbeth's banner has been partly hacked in the battle. Take great pains with this head; you must model a very good one, light and grim, to fit into Macbeth's helm; and be very sure, that it is securely fixed.

Modern feeling is against the bringing on of the head. Actors complain that it makes people laugh; of course it does; the laughter is hysterical, it comes from deep feeling,

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from relief, that justice has been done. On the stage, in poetry, justice IS done. On your stage show that it IS done; and let all know, certainly, that this time there will not be another war, with war criminals not punished.

The usual settings for Macbeth's castle are gloomy, stony and awful. Often they suggest vastness, always they are ill-lit and depressing. Remember, that the audience has to stare at them for a long time. Do not let them be gloomy, stony and awful; they could not have been so in reality, and certainly were not so in Shakespeare's imagination.

Shakespeare saw every detail of the action with intense clearness and supreme delight. That clearness and delight affect us still. The outward view of Macbeth's castle delighted Duncan. The mention of the martins' nests, (for martins or swallows must have been meant) shows that the King's visit was in the late summer or very early autumn. The King was made welcome, and very comfortable; unusually comfortable. Indeed, until about 1.45 a.m. the Macbeths seem to have been delightful hosts.

One other little point affects the charm of the scene; the King certainly arrived in fine weather, though the glass must have been dropping like a stone before a very violent and swiftly moving depression, (of a rather odd kind).

Instead of making your castle grim and ghastly like The Old Murder Inn in a Christmas tale, make it the trim, bright attractive home of two remarkable Scots, both of royal blood. Let it have the brightness and manliness of a ship's

deck. Let the shields hung on the rail of the landing and the stair be smart and gaily painted.

After the murder, when Macbeth is King, let the display be a little less smart and more vulgar; let the decorations on the rails be less manly; bright woven stuffs, surmounted with gold work; let this display be marked also in the setting of the banquet table and the liveries of the servants; let

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there be an emphasis on the fact that the Macbeths are now King and Queen; over twice their former having; let gold crowns be stamped on the liveries, and let the wearers of the liveries shew always a certain cringing fear before Macbeth and his Queen, and insolence towards others.

On your Lights.

The modern theatre, the first theatre of man to have light at command, has a morbid fondness for ill-lit scenes. When light does not dazzle, it always gladdens; and, even in a night scene, an audience longs to see, and to see without strain, what is happening on the stage. I beg you therefore, to let your light shine, to heighten the beauty of your colours, your groups, and the faces and bodies of your young energies. Even in the midnight scene of Duncan's death remember, that it is a festal (and not a winter) midnight; the great fires are still burning, and the torches have not yet burned out. In the witch scenes contrive a strangeness of light rather than a darkness. You may have seen the green light of an eclipse of the sun, or the reddish glare preceding a hurricane, or the bleakness of March's worst. These things you remember forever; why have upon your stage that which all will hasten to forget?

I ask you to take great care with your lighting, but to be sure, that all the scenes are well-lit.

Men will go to see your performance in order to get a heightened sense of life, to escape from the modern world's horror into an intensity of feeling. You must strive to delight every eye in your audience with happy colour and gracious line. Nature gives these with bounty; a modern city grudges both. Any stinting of colour, any jaggling or blunting of the line is mark of disease, or of a mind at war.

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You have escaped from war. Insist upon sweet colours and delightful lines. If you know not what colours are sweet, nor what lines are delightful, spend some receptive

morning in a garden. If this fail, give up art, and take to rags and bones.

Costume.

In dressing the play, you will have a happy opportunity, for the Scots still keep their ancient and very beautiful costume. Even if the tartan be modern, the kilt is of great antiquity; and, surely, variety in the kilts must have marked each district, from a very early time, owing to the rarity of the local dyes, the differences in the breeds of sheep and the methods of spinning and washing wool. The play was acted in Scotch costume as early as the late eighteenth century.

To Shakespeare, Macbeth, although Duncan's kinsman, was undoubtedly a subject rebelling against his lawful King. In life, as I have shewn, he was an independent King, sometimes allied with Duncan, sometimes at war with him, finally, his killer and supplanter.

As actors of the play, you have to take Shakespeare's view of the relations between the two men, and make Macbeth the rebel and traitor. In dressing the play, should you not make the Duncan party wear a distinctive tartan? Should not Macbeth wear this, during the first two acts, before he usurps the throne? With the kilt and plaid of Duncan, Macbeth might yet wear a bonnet of his own personal colours, with a plume or cognizance of his own. After the murder, should not Macbeth and his adherents wear a Macbeth tartan and cognizance?

I feel sure, that they should, and that the Duncan and

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Macbeth tartans should be strongly unlike, so that the two parties may be instantly distinguished in the battle-scenes at the end of the play.

What should these tartans be?

Perhaps, the great Clan Alpine, which has given so many Kings to Scotland, may claim both Duncan and Lady Macbeth. If so, which branch of the Clan Alpine has the surest claim? Each branch may claim them, and each with cause. Even if you choose one, you must know that no existing clan tartan is known to have been worn in the mid eleventh century.

You are dealing with a work of imagination, not of history; therefore invent your tartans with the joy of the inspired poet, caring chiefly to make them beautiful to look at. Let me suggest, that you make your Duncan tartan of the gray-green and blue of a lavender bush in blossom; and

the Macbeth tartan of black, gray and red, like withered murder. A couple of hours' work with a paint-box and a ruler will show you, that attractive tartans can be made without any resemblance to the tartan of an existing clan. You will need much of both tartans, to dress your armies; you will have to have the stuff made; when made it will last long. Take much care over these costumes; make them such that people will come from far to see them.

I know not what dyes were most in use in Scotland in the eleventh century. An authority tells me that saffron was in use then, but that probably most of the homespun was left in the natural colour of the wool. This must have varied a great deal, of course; some sheep were black, no doubt, and variety of process would make much variety of tint. Repeated washings in peaty or in clear water (to get rid of the oil in the wool) might perhaps make some plaids almost brown, others almost white. Still, your task is to make the living eye glad with delightful colour and graceful lines.

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If you make your audience glad in these ways, they will not question your right to do so.

It is possible that the satiric youth of some of you may wish to deck Siward and his staff with a characteristic something rather scarlet and behind the times.

Your armies will have to move to music. You may have noticed in the East that drums and other instruments are sometimes of great beauty; try to make your drums and trumpets beautiful. I shall ever remember some white Indian drums decked with scarlet. Always delight the eye when you can.

The Doctor needs a long black gown, but let it have many little silver buttons. The Gentlewoman may wear the Macbeth, Lady Macduff, the Duncan colours, each with some linen jacket of gay embroidery.

For Lady Macbeth, you must take pains to show some of the elements in her character. Is she not a vain woman, eager to be first, and snatching a chance to be first, by making Macbeth first? Let her wear the Macbeth colours in her first scene; let her change to the Duncan colours for the reception of Duncan, and in the Banquet scene, her first appearance in robes and crown, let her keep her state in a royal overall of blue, broad-edged with gold. After this scene, you must make her increasingly careless of her appearance, but always wearing the crown. Let her have the crown in the sleep-walking scene. Let her bed-wrap in this scene be of the Macbeth colours, with white edgings.

Lastly, we come to the Witches; and here you cannot do better than follow Shakespeare, who knew them better than we do. The costumes, he tells us, are those of women; the figures, are those of bearded men. They are black, secret and skinny. They have bloody chaps or cracks upon their fingers. You must therefore create three figures,

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impressive, shrivelled, intense and awful, with arms which look like skin and bone, and hands used to working with the hangman and in the charnel-house.

Macbeth will need some body armour at the end. Your armies will depend more upon their shields than upon body armour. Keep to things easy to wear in swift movement. Let your costumes be such that the wearers could either dance or fight for their lives in them.

On the Music.

Now, we must speak of the very important matter of the music. The text speaks of drums, hautboys, and of "sennets" and "flourishes", presumably of trumpets. You will need all these; no doubt you have them among your party. Have you, I wonder, a fifer, a 'cellist, or a harp-player, for certain effects? Have you, or could you lure to you, from the North, some player of the pipes? Has anyone, yet, tried the effect of the pipes in this great poem? Surely, the Scots Kings and chieftains had the royal and the clan pipers. In the war scenes, such things would have great effect; the music of the pipes is exciting beyond most music; and the aim of the last scenes is to rouse the primitive sense of justice in which the bringing-on of the dead tyrant's head will seem right to all. I want you also, to be inspired to marvellous effects for the rhythmical movements, almost dances, of the witches; dances of the left-hand, against the way of the sun, to the harp, with uncanny entrances of oboes. Then, too, since Shakespeare, who was no mean judge of what the scene demanded, wrote the witch scenes with his imagination strained to the height, with his lyric gift in its supremest power, the words demand all the care that can be given to them. Music or at least a

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rhythm to stricken strings must go with the incantations. Then, as so often moods of body or mind have their forebodings or symptoms, I would ask you to consider the invention of certain notes to foretell the witches' presences.

As they felt pricking in the thumbs at the approach of something wicked, so let an aguish music make us tremble before they are seen. To Shakespeare, writing somewhere the most imaginative poem of the last six hundred years, and we know not what the room looked like, nor where it was, the witches were attended by utterances in the air. Greymalkin summoned, Paddock called, Harpier cried, the hedge-pig whined, and the brinded cat mewed. Each suggestion of these five should move you to uncanny invention. He tells you the nature of the noises, each different. Invent therefore with happy imagination the thin, cold awful notes which will terrify those who hear. You will not be playing to weary, blase theatre-goers, sick of stale tricks, deniers of imagination, haters of all things not new or foolish, you will be playing to the young, who do not yet know the tale.

Then I want you musicians to give your utmost imaginings to the great scene of the murder of Duncan. You are here in the presence of the greatest mood in modern poetry; a mood in which Shakespeare moved four times, but never in such ecstasy of power. In his imagining, the tumult in life is attended by tempest in Nature. While Duncan goes to his bed, and the hour of death draws to him, the Night (at any rate outside the castle) is unruly; there are

"Lamentings heard i' the air; strange screams of death
And prophesyings with accents terrible. . . .

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.
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The obscure bird clamoured the livelong night."

Now these great lines are suggestions; they show what

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Shakespeare had in his mind, and something of this suggestion can be used with terrible effect, if it be kept to its place of heightening the horror of the murder. An anointed King is to be killed; a benefactor is to be killed; a guest is to be killed; and the motive is a feverish prompting upon one vulgar and one unstable. The peace and sleep are to be broken, blood is to be shed; the most frightful thing is to be done; and the noises outside the castle must subtly raise the tensity not distract from it.

Within the castle, remember, the storm is not noticed. Banquo finds the night only dark, Macbeth says Nature seems dead; the owls are calling outside, and crickets chirping within.

It is clear, that Shakespeare meant the castle to be still,

save for the owls and the crickets. The castle is dead still, for the tip-toe scene of creeping to the murder. But will you musicians ponder on the fact that to Shakespeare the night had three utterances, "lamentings" as before the murder, "strange screams of death" at the time of the murder; and terrible "propheysings" of justice slowly to follow. A phrase or two of each of these voices of the night must be found place for. Therefore, will you invent what you can for each, with the strings and oboes? When you come to test these in rehearsal, you will find the exact place for each, and will be able to heighten or soften the effects you imagine. It falls to you, to make voices for speechless Nature outraged by the breaking of faith, of peace, of sleep, and the shedding of man's blood.

On the speaking of the lines.

The play has to be spoken. It is written in verse of extreme beauty by an unusual spirit touched to the extreme of

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power. I know, that when you come to learn your lines, their beauty will touch you with its quality, and lift you to the knowledge, that you cannot, by any practice of your own, embellish it. At the same time beauty so great will help to clear from you any defect which may impede it. No lovelier verse exists in English; let its quality inspire you into that ecstasy in which truth is uttered and persuasion brought. Let your Macbeth be chosen for the nervy, fiery beauty of his power. He must have tense intelligence, a swift leaping, lovely body, and a voice able to exalt and to blast. Let him not play the earlier scenes, like a moody traitor, but like Lucifer, star of the morning. Let him not play the later scenes like a hangman who has taken to drink, but like an angel who has fallen.

In some of the lesser parts, here and there, in entrances which have little importance, save as introductions of new scenes, there is, even in this play, a want to supreme quality; something that is commonplace has to be stated. Whenever the verse ceases to inspire, put all your power into making the speaker a real person. The lines will show you clearly, the sort of person Shakespeare had in mind; think out little traits, little movements, and so forth, which will make your actor enjoy the game of being somebody else.

The poem is a living imagination; the verse has a life of its own; you must feel this, as you read it through. Let

that life give life to you, new life, new perception. Do not go dredging among "the rotten rags of memory" for hint of what old . . . did here, or how old . . . took this line, or where old . . . stood, when he did the other thing. What these old fellows did needed the old fellows to do them, and the old audiences to enjoy them. You are the new men, born to the new world, with a new perception

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of what life is, and of what joy your new England longs for. Is not to be young "very Heaven" to you?

On Surprise, Suspense and Division.

Since you are going to act this play to those who do not know it, or know it slightly, you may be very sure, that what you do will rouse surprise and suspense. In all your audiences, you will have some familiar with the work. You must make it a new and living thing to them. You must surprise these by bringing passion to your performance; and by bringing passion, be sure, that you will bring suspense of an agonizing kind; suspense, through the first half of the play, lest Macbeth shall fling away his soul; suspense, in all the rest, lest he should be left in triumph, with justice not done upon the shedder of blood. Since your main audiences will be of fresh minds, unused to the theatre, and open to the overwhelming influence of poetry, offer the great poem to them freshly, from your own fresh imaginations, forgetting, if indeed, you can remember, any past performance.

For performance, I would suggest that you divide it into three parts. Take it, in the sweep of the Shakespearean design, in a great rush to the ending of a frightful act, in a second great wash of welter and confusion, and in a final great rush, to the doing of a dreadful justice. Both great events are winged; take them at speed. Have only the two breaks for the audience and the actors. Insist, that the ill-manners of a few in any audience shall not interrupt the performance. The audience must be seated when the curtain rises; the late comer must keep out. The bad manners of audiences spring from a contempt of art; all artists ought to combine to make the intolerable abuse impossible.

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Fresh, eager audiences, who want to be lost in the great mood of poetry, will not need tobacco, chocolate or tea during the performance, any more than they need such

things at a cathedral service or a Beethoven Symphony. Those who must have them, should take them outside the auditorium, during one of the two intervals. But at all costs stop your audience from doing what Blake calls "the most irritating things in the midst of tears and love".

You have your portable stage and your companions for the instant trial of any of my suggestions, which may please you.

Anyone with a little leisure and skill of hand can make a toy-stage divided and equipped as I have described. It should not take more than a day, to make it, complete with landing and curtains. Some three-ply wood, cardboard, and an old handkerchief will make it. Anyone with this toy stage and a set of chessmen as actors can produce the play for himself; and at small extra expense, try effects of lighting and colour.

He may not have the fun that you have, (having fewer companions), but he will have a good deal of fun, and perhaps the beginning of ambition to have more.

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SUGGESTIONS AND NOTES.

Act I. Scene I. [On fore- and mid-stages.]

Let us imagine, now, that your music has played an overture, to heighten the mood of your audience; that the signal has been given, to close the doors to latecomers, so that all are in their seats and no more are to come in. Let the house-lights go out. Let the curtain rise upon a dark stage to the witch music written for the play. In the darkness of the stage near the back-cloth are Duncan, Malcolm, Lennox, Menteith and Angus; in front, motionless before the curtain, is the Bleeding Sergeant; all these six men stand still, and are perceived only as gleams upon armour. As the curtain rises, let the three Witches dance in to the music; you must contrive light upon them, to show their faces, their beards, their hands; let the music and the song be dread; and their appearance bring shudder. Be very careful, to make the scene one of intense poetry, to show, that these are unearthly beings in touch with terrible life, which cries and croaks to them out of the air. It is a little scene of forty seconds which you must make men remember for ever. Friends, do not let your witches laugh; Satan's kingdom does not laugh.

Shakespeare bids them *hover* as they go; the hesitancy of broken rhythm will help you to end the music and raise the stage lights to the full.

Scene 2.

On the coming of the light, the six men stir; the Bleeding Sergeant moves up towards his King. It is important, that the lad Malcolm should show, that he recognizes his helper and is grateful to him.

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The action of the first two Acts, is to show Macbeth as a rebel, with the multiplying villainies of nature swarming upon him: --

"And fortune on his demand quarrel smiling"

The Bleeding Sergeant or Captain is at pains to shew him before his fall, as a most valiant and faithful destroyer of rebels. The speech is by Shakespeare, but somewhat marred by the theory long prevalent that if you leave out some lines of poetry, it will not much matter, and nobody will notice. It can hardly be doubted, that Shakespeare wrote something interesting, perhaps profound, about Fortune and her dealings with Macdonwald; and that it was Fortune, not Macbeth,

"Which ne'er shook hands nor bade farewell to him"

However, let us be glad, that we have what has been left. When Duncan dismisses him, Menteith and Angus help the Bleeding Sergeant off the stage (RB) as Rosse enters, as the Bleeding Sergeant entered, from the left front. But where the Sergeant was hesitant, and faint, Rosse is swift, exultant and the bringer of good news, first, of new rebellion broken by victory; then, of rich indemnity for damage done. The victory should bring reward to the news' bringer; Rosse should receive some gold chain from Duncan with the words "Great happiness". Duncan pronounces justice on the rebel, and reward, to the saviour of his throne. The four men move down the stage together and off at the left front, as the main stage darkens somewhat to the darkness of a storm cloud in daylight, and the witch music plays on the three Witches, from the back and the wings, for Scene 3.

Scene 3.

They dance on, to their marvellous song. Do not send

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Macbeth upon the stage with a drummer; let the drum that beats, be, as it were, the voice of one of their unseen helpers. Make the winding up of the charm in this scene a following of the hints Shakespeare gives. . . . Let the Witches draw down the stage to the RF, as Banquo and Macbeth enter from the L side. As these two enter, let there be a marked, but only momentary, darkening of the stage; let Banquo be a step ahead of Macbeth, and up-stage from him; he first sees the Witches, and questions with them, first, startled; then, bewildered; lastly, shaken; let him fall back a step, as Macbeth advances, to challenge. Let the darkening, of which I spoke, pass, as Macbeth challenges.

Give every thought within you to the making of this precious scene most moving. Banquo (plainly) sees the Witches in a line, acting as one; they are therefore in line when Macbeth challenges. Let the First Witch stand still to speak; only pointing her left arm straight at Macbeth. Let the Second, move forward a step, with left arm pointing before she speaks; after speaking, let her make the dancer's courtesy and fall back. Let the Third Witch come forward, abase herself in the dancer's courtesy before him, then, reverently rise, and with arms outstretched make semblance of slowly placing a heavy crown on Macbeth's head; then let her abase herself and from that posture cry her marvellous cry. The three must speak to musical notes. When the Third has cried, risen, and rejoined her Sisters, let all three advance and abase themselves. It is the intensity of this swift show which shakes Macbeth; valour's minion starts and seems to fear. He falls back rapt to the left of the stage; Banquo speaks to him, receives no answer, and then in his turn advances to challenge the Witches. Let each of the three in turn advance one step towards him before speaking her single Hail. When the three have hailed him, I would like them to be very near him, so that the three awful faces

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are very near to his, as they sing in turn the line of consolation and contempt allotted to each. During this prophecying, Macbeth draws near to the group, down-stage from them.

I do not doubt, that in Shakespeare's theatre, the Witches, when charged and challenged by Macbeth, disappeared through a trap-door in the stage. You have more means of illusion at your disposal, and can choose your favourite. As they disappear, Macbeth and Banquo come down on to the fore-stage, and the curtain falls behind them.

All the following scene must be played on the fore-stage.

Let Rosse and Angus enter from the Right Front. Rosse brings from the King some estoille or other badge of thaneship. For convenience, this had better be of the nature of a pendant on a chain, to be placed over the head.

The character of Rosse is generous. In his earlier scene, he is whole-heartedly a praiser of Macbeth, seeing his good points and setting them forward with all the eloquence of enthusiasm. In this scene, he is warm in the praise of Duncan, because Duncan has been warm in the praise of Macbeth; he is also enthusiastic about Macbeth's success. Not many greet success with such enjoyment; to do this, seems Rosse's genius. Angus and he have seemingly rehearsed their little scene upon the way; Angus's first lines make a clever prelude to Rosse's giving of the badge of thaneship.

It is a startling little scene, after the conferment; Macbeth staggered by the fulfilment of the prophecy; Banquo also somewhat shaken, but rooted firm in right and loyalty; Angus and Rosse perplexed at Macbeth's mood; Banquo trying to explain it to them, while Macbeth first thinks of murder, quakes at the thought, yet, like a man of action, says that a deed is ever less than the dread of it, and reveals, that there is nothing stable in his soul, neither will to be

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king, nor dread of anything. In his last speech in this scene, he shows the delicate good manners, which make him so winning a man. Let your actor ever remember, that Shakespeare gave to Macbeth, an exquisite sensibility, a charm hard to resist, an eloquence like the tongue of an angel. It must be suggested here, that already Macbeth puts out feelers toward Banquo, as a possible ally in a venture towards rebellion and usurpation.

Scene 4.

As they move off the fore-stage by the Right Front; the curtain rises, upon the mid-stage, with a back-cloth, discovering Duncan throned before a bare-headed, and reverent court. (The Bleeding Sergeant can now be playing Caithness.) Let Rosse and Angus enter by the Right Wing, approach, kneel, as though asking leave, then let them back, bowing, to usher in Macbeth and Banquo. As these enter, Duncan rises and moves to meet Macbeth. It is very important, that the generosity and gratitude of Duncan should appear as of the very essence of the man. Macbeth kneels before he speaks his lines. Duncan lifts him to his feet, and embraces him; then lifts and embraces Banquo.

Like all generous men, he is deeply moved. Let your Duncan draw Macbeth and Banquo with him so that they are beside his throne, as he sits for the crowning of Malcolm as Prince of Cumberland. Donalbain, a boy prince who has not yet spoken, has been on the stage throughout this scene, bearing something covered upon a cushion. This is a simple gold coronet, with which Duncan now crowns his son. Duncan makes it clear that both Banquo and Macbeth are to shine with signs of nobleness. He then dismisses Macbeth, to prepare his home for a royal visit.

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Macbeth goes down to the Right of the fore-stage to speak his brief soliloquy before going off. As he stands, the men round the King listen to Banquo, who has seen Macbeth's deeds in the war, and now likens them, with no touch of professional jealousy, to those of Hector of Troy, Alexander and Hannibal. As Duncan rises at the word welcome, the curtain falls.

Scene 5.

Lady Macbeth at once enters upon the Left of the fore-stage; she is reading the Letter; her Gentlewoman lingers in the Left Wing ready for a call.

The prophecy, which has shaken Macbeth's loyalty, has hardened his wife's ambition; she sees the prospect of queenship, and has no scruple.

The Messenger, who enters Right, is one of the old Macbeth retainers, who has hurried from the gates, with the news of the King's coming. Lady Macbeth sends him off Left, in care of the Gentlewoman.

What follows in this scene is so exquisite, that I would urge your Lady Macbeth and your Musicians to devise musical notes for her incantation.

Macbeth enters at the Right; from the first, he is under the spell of his Wife's decision; they go off upon the Left. Duncan, his two sons, and five or six attendant Lords, enter an instant later on the Right.

Scene 6. [Also on the fore-stage.]

The speech of Duncan to Lady Macbeth is difficult, and perhaps corrupt; it seems to me to mean, "The love of

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subjects for their King may sometimes be an annoyance to

the King, though he be grateful for the love which prompts it. I wish you now to bend your prayers to God, that He may suggest to me the reward most pleasing to you, so that I may thank you fittingly". This entails the changing of the word "us" to "you", makes some sort of sense, (otherwise not easily found in the passage), and is in keeping with all the other speeches and actions of the King. Duncan needs not to be wiled within doors like Agamemnon; he thinks no evil, and goes gladly and friendly into the house of death. It is a swift scene, without much possibility of suspense; the interest of it is in the character of the Lady.

Scene 7.

For this scene, you will use the full stage, for the first time in the play. You may adopt the stage directions of the Folio, and suggest that Duncan is at supper off stage, shall we say, Right Back, by causing the Gentlewoman, and other Macbeth retainers, to cross the back of the empty stage, with lights, and dishes, from Left to Right, to the unseen supper room. Faint music, and the clatter of knives and trenchers in the supper room, may become louder for an instant as the door opens to let in the new course; then let it cease, as Macbeth closes it, enters as from the supper room, and comes down stage.

For this marvellous scene, with its most delicate poetic tension and lyric passion, you need an extraordinary being, profoundly shaken and stirred, and a second extraordinary being, with a lyric passion as utter, stubbornly resolved. Beings of such quality, in such states, are infrequent; and even the words of this scene may meet with the impervious

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mind. Choose your Macbeth for his sensitiveness. The scene ends the Folio First Act.

Act II. Scene I. [Using the full stage.]

On the curtain rising, upon the same scene, let Banquo and Fleance be coming down the stair to the stage; let them not speak till they reach the stage and let them be directed towards the Left. Macbeth and his retainer enter from the Right Front, somewhat silently and behind them, so that they are startled. Let Macbeth move very silently, having already donned his murderer's shoes. Let your Macbeth play this scene with Banquo with a caressing, playful lightness, with all the winning charm of his nature.

The two guests go off to the Left. Macbeth sends his Retainer off to the Right Back and is there alone upon his pinnacle before an appalling plunge.

If your Macbeth have any sympathy with his part, he will show a tenseness as of a violin string stretched. Hallucination, then worse hallucination, then an absorption into the midnight world of secrecy, darkness and wickedness, these mark his few steps before the bell rings, and he begins his slow climbing of the stair, and entrance to Duncan's room. He leaves the door open for his retreat. As I urged before, avoid any suggestion of darkness here; let this scene be well lit as by festal firelight. For an instant, the stage must be empty; then, could you not contrive the chirping of crickets; then a sudden collapsing of a log in the fire, with perhaps a puff of smoke blowing into the stage and a silencing of the crickets' cry? Upon this silence, let Lady Macbeth come forward from the Right Back, as a very terrible creature, drunken with blood and posset, and exultant in sin. She bears a cup, which she drinks from,

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laughing, and flings away. Then, at her words "hath given me fire", I want you to have the cry "Sleep no more" cried as with an owl's voice from within Duncan's death-room. Let this be practised, till it is perfect, and be sure, that when it is perfect, you will have an effect of which the author felt the power. Lady Macbeth in her confidence, decides that it was an owl that cried. Shakespeare in the height of his power, was less sure.

Then, in the dead silence, later, does she not hear something in the death-room, just before Macbeth cries "Who's there?" Does not this make her shrink against the very back of the stage at the side of the stairway? She is there out of sight of Macbeth as he comes down, but in full view of the audience. Let Macbeth, in his shaken mood of guilt, as he nears the foot of the stair, ejaculate "Sleep no more", not knowing that he speaks.

There follows a famous scene of broken nerve and callousness, ending in a burst of hysterical laughter, a real explosion of shuddering, mirthless, but intense laughter from the two, at Lady Macbeth's pun, of "gild" and "guilt". As she goes up the stair there comes the first light knock from within the Right Front.

Macbeth is left alone with the blood which he has shed. He and his hands hold the stage for a moment. Lady Macbeth on her return is proud of hers; she kisses them to her husband. The knocking is repeated gently, as though the knocker strove only to call a night-watchman, not to

waken any sleepers.

Macbeth follows his Wife off the stage, as the knocking grows louder.

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Act II. Scene 3. [The full stage.]

The Porter enters upon the empty stage from the opposite side.

We know that Shakespeare's company had among its actors the famous low comedian of his time. Few can doubt, that Shakespeare meant him to take this part, devised it with sufficient lowness and trusted to him to make it comic. He knew his man; he also knew that an audience shaken by the foregoing scenes could be rocked into hysterical laughter without a word spoken, by a comical appearance, and the expectation of fun which the famous comedian brings with him.

As farce demands facial play, this scene must be well-lighted; it is morning.

You do not need to be told what extravagances of farce can be extemporised by the real comedian. Our stage has had many such, whose native genius is not soon forgotten. Shakespeare gives to his Porter plenty of material for the native genius. The man comes on, (perhaps in some caricature of a nightgown) rather drunk and tottery, very sleepy, and bearing oddments of clothes, which he proceeds to put on, while sitting on the step between the two stages. While doing this, the fancy comes to him, that he is keeping the door of hell, and at the same time impersonating the people entering hell. A comedian playing a drunkard trying to dress can be very funny. A comedian playing a drunkard trying to arrange a kilt might go far. However, low comedy has to cease, when Macbeth enters a moment later.

Macbeth has now to play his most difficult scene, having had only a few minutes of rest since the terrible scene of the murder. His instinct is that of a hardly pressed boxer, to be cautious and quiet. He leads Macduff up-stage to point out Duncan's door, on the landing above. To his relief,

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Lennox, a young man, makes the conversation about the weather; his speech is very beautiful verse; let your Lennox pay much attention to it, and speak it as though he were Lennox, had been wakened by falling chimney-pots, had been told of mournful and awful voices abroad, had himself heard the screech-owl, and had somehow, somewhere, met

some who told of earthquake. His own mind keeps to the chimney-pots and the owl, and to the point, that it was the worst night in his memory.

Macduff's re-entry upon the scene is a sudden rush from the death-room to the little landing, and a screaming of "Horror".

As Macbeth and Lennox swing round to cry "What's the matter?" Macduff comes <>hurling down the stair, shouting as he goes. His speech goes well with violent movement and emotion. The essential words in it stand out. These are "Confusion", <>"sacriligious Murder", "anointed temple", and "life".

It is clear, that Shakespeare meant the movement to be more expressive than the words, for Lennox is completely puzzled. But now Macduff is on the stage, shaken and gasping, urging them up to see for themselves; and as they hurry up the stair, Macduff, alone, holds the stage, shouting, and calling upon the three most concerned. The Porter should be the first to appear, from the Left at the Back; and to him Macduff gives the order to ring the bell. It should be possible to have the rope for a great bell somewhere on the Left; and for the Porter to set it going, in a confused and horrid clanging. Macduff runs to aid the Porter on the rope; and they are swaying on it together, when Lady Macbeth coming in upon the other side of the stage makes them stop.

Let Lady Macbeth's entrance make the stage suddenly still, and Macduff's words to her be very courteous and

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quiet. Banquo, entering to the Left of Macduff, is told the news; and Lady Macbeth is just a shade too quick upon her cue; with a note which jars upon Banquo's integrity. As he pleads with Macduff, to contradict himself, Macbeth comes down into the centre of the group and begins his solemn speech. All those on the stage are ill-clad, or partly clad, in wraps and plaids. It is early morning and the passing of the storm has brought a northerly wind. While Macbeth speaks, Malcolm and Donalbain, coming from the second of the upper rooms, look over at the group from the landing and then come rapidly down, Donalbain, the younger, a little in advance.

The scene which follows is too tense, when acted, to let any audience judge or question. The players, Shakespeare among them, knew that this would be so. Making all allowances for this, the questions of production remain. Given the situation and the remaining text, how will you conduct this scene?

Does it not seem certain to you, that a clumsy, jagged cut has been made in this part of the play, and the torn edges roughly pulled together with a hasty darning needle?

Have you not found in the world, a temptation to play Duncan as an old man? Is it not easier for the actor? Does it not make Macbeth's murder of him even more atrocious? Does it not save trouble, to play Malcolm and Donalbain as grown men?

Shakespeare, following Holinshed, knew Duncan as mild, not as old; he thought of him perhaps as no older than Macbeth; (it is his skin, not his hair, that is silver); and, still following Holinshed, he seems to have considered Malcolm and Donalbain, in this scene, as hardly more than boys. They were boys brought up in a rough society, and very wide-awake, but immature, and knowing that in a grown-up rough society they do not count.

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Plainly, in Shakespeare's view of that society, they do not count as mature during this scene.

When they enter the scene, there are shall we say, from three to seven principal followers of Duncan on the stage. Each one of these knows, that Malcolm was named by Duncan, in Act One, Scene Four, as his heir. Not one of them, not even the loyal Banquo, makes any attempt whatsoever to hail him as King, now that Duncan is dead.

Political murder was rarer in Elizabethan Europe than at the present time. Then as now, it was the work of faith (or fanaticism of some kind) or of vulgar ambition, but being rarer then, (and considered highly criminal), it roused horror.

In arranging this scene upon the stage, try to recover, the Shakespearean sense of horror. You have lived through a time of atrocious, wholesale slaughterings, when a few criminal lunatics have made their once respected nations like themselves. To the Englishman of Shakespeare's time, murder was the utmost atrocity of wickedness. Try to represent upon a stage a simpler society than ours, with that feeling.

You will have upon your stage between nine and fifteen persons, roused suddenly from bed by an alarm bell to hear frightful news. Most of your Court is there, the Porter and the other Macbeth servants are at the back; the lords in the centre stage; all in bewilderment and horror, at the suddenness and wickedness of the deed, and all for the moment too much shocked and scared to ask who has done this frightful thing, even though all be looking from face to face for someone to take the lead. Such is the scene, when

the two Princes appear.

In the text as we have it, we have no suggestion left to us of what Macbeth and his Wife were planning to do, after Duncan's murder was known. Having no suggestion from

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the text, we must suppose, that they had no plan, but were watchfully waiting for any opening.

Of the persons certainly on the stage, Macduff suspects no-one; he is in a noisy mood, of horror, and calling the household. Banquo, is plainly touched to a swift suspicion by Lady Macbeth's "What? In our house?" Yet both men turn to the two lads as they appear. Donalbain had slept next door to the death-room, Malcolm was the heir who might profit by the murder, or being but a lad, might well have friends seeking to rule through him. Something in Macbeth's speech to Malcolm jars upon Macduff as not ringing true; he interrupts, telling the news. Lennox tells his stirring story admirably. Macbeth's speech, about repenting his fury, in killing the grooms, again jars Macduff into putting a very searching question. Macbeth answers readily; he tells a good tale; and yet it does not ring quite true; he is too willing a witness; and on coming to an end, at the point at which, in any modern crime-play, the detective's questions might be awkward, Lady Macbeth comes to her husband's help, by fainting.

As she is on the side of the stage away from the two Princes, the general rush to help her leaves them alone, agreeing that they are in deadly danger from one or more of the men near them.

Macbeth, as the husband, is the main figure in the group about his Wife; Banquo is the main figure outside that group. Banquo directs the servants to carry off Lady Macbeth, and then gives other sensible directions, pointing out that they are all ill-clad and cold; urging them to go back to dress, and then hold an enquiry. It should be clear to all, that he excludes no-one there from suspicion; his natural honesty makes him proclaim this; very solemnly, upon the cross of his dagger, he declares before God, that he is against the unknown criminals. Macbeth, returning

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at this point, does not join the others in the oath; he is a little vexed at Banquo's direction of affairs, but is now the master of the house and the host of all present; he takes charge, with the suggestion already made by Banquo, that they should dress, and then meet together.

The two princes, left alone, shew all the shrewdness of boys; they know their danger; no-one has shewn them either sympathy or loyalty; any one of the company may be their father's murderer, and may fall next upon them.

They shew no personal affection for each other, but they think and act like brothers, and are prompt as youth to act. On their hurrying off to reach the stables and take horse, let Malcolm, the elder, think a little of his brother; let him turn back, check his brother, and share with him what money and jewelry he, as the heir to the Kingdom, may have upon him. Let them then part with feeling. On their hurrying out, preferably by the front stage, the curtain falls.

Act II. Scene 4. [On the fore-stage.]

In slow time, with the limp of age, the Old Man comes in upon the opposite side, with Rosse, to mark a change in the time, and the passing of a difficult hour.

Their little scene together can be made most beautiful. When Macduff joins them, to shew how events have passed and parties are divided, you must endeavour to shew the suspicion and dread which have come into life with the murder of Duncan; who can now trust the other?

The scene ends the great first movement of the play, and admirably shews the situation with which the second great period, of slack water and hesitation, will begin.

After the three have gone off, in their different ways, you

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can mark the break in the action by trumpet, (if you have a good trumpeter), or by a roll of drums.

The Third Act. [The Second Movement.]

Scene I. [On the full stage.]

Let Macbeth's castle be smartened, to shew the new dynasty. Let there be hangings on the rail of the landing aloft; gold on the settle at the back; chairs of state for the new King and Queen, and a table and stools set for a banquet.

Banquo is discovered by the rising of the curtain. It has to be made clear to the audience that Banquo, the honest, the loyal, is no friend to the new dynasty, suspects Macbeth of Duncan's murder, yet is sorely perplexed at the fulfilment of the prophecy, and is wondering, whether men are free agents, whether a designing fate has not brought it all to

be, and if the prophecy about his descendants will be fulfilled, too. His position in the court is not explained, nor can we understand why his duties are so knit to Macbeth, unless we remember, what Shakespeare knew from Holinshed but is no longer in his poem, that with Malcolm and Donalbain fled away, as supposed parricides, Macbeth is the rightful King, both as Duncan's cousin and by election.

In the scene between Banquo and Macbeth, you must stress the charming, winning, bewitching manner of Macbeth, which is the manner of the fallen angel, able to beguile almost everybody; from this point until the end, it is Macbeth's nature, to be compelling and false.

Your Macbeth must play him, as one who has lost his human soul, with all its purpose and delight, for something which proves to be not quite real, although it has destroyed

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all other reality. He was esteemed; he is now suspected or dreaded; he was open; he is now secret; he was partner with his wife until the crime; now he is alone, for her nerve has gone; she is nothing but a weariness in a crown. His own will has gone; he has now the devil's or the wolf's will. His interest, now, is crime, to stablish his throne and secure his dynasty. To the Shakespearean audience such a creature roused an intense, religious interest; this terror has been permitted . . . how long will it be before an avenging power rises in the world, to bring him to an end? *Macbeth*, like *Julius Caesar*, depends upon this interest in the last acts. Shakespeare's audiences seem to have watched these last acts breathlessly. Today, criticism sometimes finds them less moving than what comes before.

Sometimes the two Murderers in this scene, are made up to display the violent breach of all the seven deadly sins; they come on, such scarecrows of villainy, that no palace guard would have let them within a mile of the precincts. Macbeth was too clever for this. He had looked about for his murderers, and made enquiries, had chosen them shrewdly and tempted them with cunning, knowing one to be a possible killer, from outraged vanity, the other a likely killer, from desperation. With much skill, he fastens on the vain one (generally called 2nd M) as the man who will decide the gamester; it is by vanity, that he persuades him. Play the scene with the intensity it demands; an evil man is tempting the weak and the violent to do a bloody deed. Bring out all the cunning and all the wickedness of the temptation; try to rouse the young in your audience to call to the 1st and 2nd Ms not to listen to it.

Act III. Scene 2. [On the full stage, as at the end of Scene 1.]

Much has been cut here; yet, what images of guilt remain. Is there a more terrible scene in drama, than this meeting of husband and wife, one blasted, the other broken by murder; she, loving and thoughtful for him, he, shaken, yet resolved, no longer needing her incentives, no longer sharing his secrets, but planning crime without her, drawing no comfort from her kindness, and giving none to her despair. The curtain falls on this.

Scene 3. [On the fore-stage.]

The appearance of the third Murderer, so puzzling to some, need not puzzle you. Possibly there were originally three Murderers in Act III, Scene 1, and the third may have been cut out at his own request, having already too many lines to learn in the other parts he was supporting. Later, it may have been pointed out, that Macbeth could hardly expect two Murderers to make a good job of two armed men, even in a surprise attack by night. The third murderer was therefore kept in the third Scene, and his presence explained in a couple of lines. It is, however, very Shakespearean, to give dramatic life to a tiny scene; and it must be remembered, that the sudden appearance of a third to the two murderers already trusted with the task, gave the three something to talk of, as they came right forward on the deep Elizabethan stage. Let your Murderers crouch, in not too great a darkness to make their last preparations, of vizards and knives.

Take great pains with the noise of the horses. At their first drawing near, they are moving fast: they slow down and

halt; you hear men dismount, and, like the Murderers, you listen for the men to draw near. Instead, the noise which the Murderers hear, is of horses, stamping, blowing, and then being led away. This delay brings an explanation, which puzzles a commentator, but makes the suspense of the scene acute. It is a very terrible little scene: to those who do not know the play, the anguish of wondering, whether both will be killed, or one escape, may be intense.

A grim effect can be given, by the Third Murderer pawing over the dark ground for corpses, before declaring that

only one is down; and the other two pawing also, before they give up hope, and go off with Banquo's body.

Scene 4. [On the full stage.]

The Banquet table on the Left of the stage, is set with stools, four or five on each side. To the Right, there are two chairs of State, in one of which Lady Macbeth sits. The curtain rising discovers the Lords newly admitted to the presence. Macbeth stands to welcome them. Let your artists do what they can to make this scene gay, with the new bright plaids of the servants, and colour in the table decoration. Lady Macbeth had longed for queenship, thinking that she would do it well.

Let the stool (at the table) kept empty for Macbeth (and the Ghost) be the second from the up-stage end. Let Rosse have the stool up-stage from this empty stool. Let no stool be set at the head of the table; let a steward stand there, watching and directing the service.

The appearance of Banquo's Ghost is the chief incident in this scene. Illusionists have taught how to produce most unearthly and uncanny effects upon the stage; some appearances of Banquo's Ghost have been all that Shakespeare

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could have asked. Even so, there is a school, which proclaims, that no Ghost visible to the audience need be there; since "nobody now believes in ghosts". Well, most of those who disbelieve in ghosts, believe that people sometimes see them. On the stage, whatever can be made effective is precious. In this scene, you have something which Shakespeare felt could be made most effective.

Shakespeare tells us, that Macbeth feared Banquo, and that under him his Genius was rebuked. Acting (as you will often be) on stages ill-equipped, you may have no chance to use the devices of illusionists. Even so, with care and imagination you can devise as shocking a spectre as scared our forefathers at the Globe when, perhaps, Shakespeare played the part. Shakespeare gives useful hints about it.

Let the thing be partly done up in a blood-stained shroud. Let it all be deathly white, save for the gashes and the blood-smears. The long gray hair must be gory. Its walk must be trembling, tottering and groping, as though all movement in this new life, were strange. Let it look upon nothing save Macbeth. Let your Musicians devise something uncanny upon the oboes for it; very uncanny notes can be had from the oboes. It glares upon Macbeth; it shakes, and, later, nods its head. Does it not, later, make

some sudden semblance of pushing Macbeth from his stool? Shakespeare saw in his mind something "which might appal the Devil".

When Lady Macbeth gathers her broken nerves to an effort to save her Husband, and leaves her throne, to draw him down-stage, away from the table, I would suggest, (what the text shows was Shakespeare's thought) that the Ghost follow them. Let the Ghost then leave the stage on the Right, perhaps with a twittering cry, such as the ghosts use in the Odyssey, or with some more phrases from the oboes, at the cue "maws of kites".

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Having left the stage, the Ghost can hurry round at the back of the stage, to reappear on the Left.

Let the scene be very quiet, with the paralysis, not the hysteria of terror. Macbeth, usually valorous to the height, is daunted; the Lords, most of whom must suspect Macbeth, are daunted by his appearance and what it suggests; Lady Macbeth, herself upon the verge of breaking down, is sustained by the need of keeping her husband sane and facing to the situation. Her social sense, more than anything else, restores her husband. The Lords are all standing near the table. Macbeth returns towards them, and calls for wine from the chief steward; it takes some little time to fill. You have every opportunity of bringing the Ghost unobserved upon the stage; and in the noisy riot of the health, you can suddenly display him like Death himself. Presently, Macbeth seems to remember the old belief, that ghosts do what they are bidden to do; he draws his dagger upon it, and drives it backward from him up the stage. The Lords, closing-in as they follow, help the Ghost to disappear. When the Ghost has gone, the Lords are in mid-stage, for Macbeth's speech to them, of "Can such things be?"

There are few scenes of greater tensity, and little verse of greater beauty. The curtain falls at the end of the scene.

Scene 5.

I omit this, as not by Shakespeare. Two lines, and parts of two other lines, may have been written by him in scenes now gone, in contexts now perished.

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Scene 6. [On the fore-stage.]

This is one of the skilful transitional scenes, marking the

passing of time and the changing of mood, occurring at about this point in a Shakespearean tragedy; murder and usurpation have come to full flood, or almost full flood. With one murder more, the tide will ebb and carry Macbeth away to ruin. It may occur to some, that Lennox, who was present in the death room, when Macbeth killed Duncan's grooms, has taken an appreciable time to come to question that killing. Still, this is the stage. "The gracious Duncan. . . Was pitied of Macbeth." May not this line suggest to the actor how to take the speech of Macbeth "Here lay Duncan"? (Act III. Sc. 3.)

Act IV. Scene 1. [Upon the fore- and mid-stages.]

Let there be light enough upon the witches and Macbeth; nothing can be more wearying to an audience than trying to see; an ominous glare is very much more terrible than a gloom.

Let the Witches sing, or at least chant their incantations, and dance as they sing or chant; omit the entrance and five lines of Hecate. Let your Musicians devise also a suggestion of storm, without allowing the tumult of storm to keep the song of the witches, and the eloquence of Macbeth, from being in every word audible; let the Musicians bring in (as it were) a cry of Nature as a refrain.

The cauldron should not be a tripod, but a substantial vessel upon a fire on the ground, a little to the Right of the stage, so that Macbeth may be in the centre. The three apparitions, of Armed Head, Bloody Child, and Child Crowned appear by a trap-door as from within the cauldron.

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Let each of the apparitions sing his tidings, a man's voice followed by two boys' voices. For the show of the Kings you will need masks or make-up to resemble Banquo. Let the hair also be worn in Banquo's style. Lastly the bloody Ghost of Banquo will reappear to point at the image in the held mirror.

At the cry "What . . . Is this so?" I would have your Musician to devise a gusty music, as of wind sweeping the stage; let all the nine images of kings lift hands and be as dead leaves sweeping off the stage from Right to Left, with a murmured crying. The cauldron and fire have gone; there remain the Witches and Macbeth. Not more than the first six words of the First Witch's speech here can be by Shakespeare, the rest of that speech can be omitted. Let the Music play the Witch music; let the witches dance and then be as it were blown away from the stage by another

gust. As Macbeth curses them, let there be the sound of galloping horses (two or three) drawing near; let them slacken speed and halt, and at the instant of their halting, let a great noise of galloping burst out and pass away, as though Witches, Kings, Apparitions and Macbeth's Luck, were all galloping away forever. Let this last galloping be, as it were the knocking, warning Macbeth of Lennox' approach.

Act IV. Scene 2. [On the fore-stage.]

In the text as we have it, the flying of Macduff to England causes some perplexity to the audience. I do not doubt that in the full draft of the play, he debated with his wife the policy of going and had her full approval. Her outcry against him to Rosse, in the beginning of this scene, is surely to divert suspicion from herself. She knows, very

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well, the secret, bloody treachery of Macbeth; she knows that spies are everywhere, and that Rosse may be one.

It should be easy for actors who have watched similar bloody treacheries at work in Europe, to understand her mood.

If you allow the little boy a toy, let it be something like a coloured balloon upon a string, which will not get in the way of the Murderers.

Use all three Murderers; let them kill Lady Macduff as she tries to save her son; then let them plunder the bodies and remove them; let the Third Murderer be glad of the coloured balloon for his own little boy. The old stage direction says that Lady Macduff "Exit, crying Murther". She had to get off the deep Elizabethan stage, remember.

Act IV. Scene 3. [Using the fore- and mid-stage.]

This scene, of over 240 lines, an eighth part of the play, is suggested by the story told in Holinshed, which it closely follows. It seems to preserve the original text of the poet. It is very important in the fabric of the play; it shows the first gathering of judgment and justice against the oppressor. It has certain other uses less frequently noted. It gives Macbeth a well-earned and much-needed rest, so that he may brace himself for the efforts of the last Act. Does it not also give to two men an opportunity for very remarkable acting? Is it not a little like the scene in *Julius Caesar* between Brutus and Cassius, (Act IV, Sc. 3_) played by Shakespeare's company, with such success, only a little while before?

That scene was famous. It may be, that the two actors who made it so were still Shakespeare's fellows. Two men must have been in Shakespeare's mind for the parts; and the scene gives to both their first real chances in the play.

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It is a scene of intense interest; Malcolm, like a modern European, expects treachery; Macduff, like a modern statesman, seeks help against an oppressor. Since the events of recent years, actors will know how to act these parts with depth of feeling, as though the matter debated were the one thing in the world. We know what it is to think that justice is long in coming, and righteousness slow to act. Let your men be in deadly earnest, and your audience will quake at the issues debated.

Act V. Scene 1. [Using the full stage, as for the murder of Duncan.]

The settle at the back will serve for Lady <>Macbeths' seat, and as a stand for her taper, while she washes her hands. Let the castle clock strike Two, as in the murder-scene. Let Lady Macbeth speak the words, "I tell you yet again", directly to the Doctor. As the Gentlewoman follows her up the stairs, let the Doctor check her, when she is halfway up, to give her his directions. "Look after her", etc. The scene ends with a curtain.

Scene 2. [Upon the fore-stage.]

This marks the revolt of the Scots Lords from the usurping power. Let them mark their revolt, (not otherwise easy to follow) by action, such as the stripping-off and casting aside, the badges and colours of Macbeth, and the resumption of the Duncan colours. Would it not be as well to shew a Macbeth spy among them, who does not march off with them, but returns to Dunsinane with the news of their defection? Was there not such a

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person in the original draft, and did he not open the scene which follows?

Scene 3. [Upon the full stage: the Macbeth interior again.]

The play, all cut as it is to snippets here, is pinned together by Macbeth, who has now to shew as something mad, tense

and tigrish, a dealer of very sudden death.

Let the Doctor enter down the staircase from Duncan's death-room, and let all other people on the stage make way and silence for him, and let Macbeth be slow to note the silence, and not at once delay his unrobing, in order to arm. Let Macbeth's first thought be, that his Wife is dead.

Perhaps the Doctor's words to Macbeth, that "the patient must minister to himself", should be misjudged by the suspicious King as a hint to go and confess his crimes, and be followed by a leap at the Doctor's throat. The words "throw physic to the dogs" (in this case) may be an order to the retainers to pitch the Doctor into the kennels. The violence is sudden and swiftly repented; in another instant, Macbeth is, preparing to arm, giving orders, and has a swift gleam of his old playful charm; but the scene ends with something which leaves the doctor quaking, something playful and tigrish such, perhaps, as the drawing of Macbeth's dagger and some passes with it at the doctor's throat. A curtain ends the scene.

Scene 4. [On the fore-stage.]

Give this all possible gaiety and movement, with drums, fifes, colour and *panache*. The screening of the advancing vanguard with branches cut in Birnam Wood may very well

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have happened. The Scots tradition is clear, that Macbeth was surprised at Dunsinane, and hurried swiftly north, hoping to reach his main force in Moray. This camouflaged advance may have been a part of the surprise. Therefore, at Malcolm's order let the ranks fall out, cross to the opposite wing, and cut, and bring back some evergreen boughs for the staff officers. As your audience, like yourselves, will know something of war, the movements in these scenes must be soldierly.

Scene 5. [On the stage as in Scene 3.]

Let the death-cry of the women come from Duncan's death room above; it might have more shattering effect upon Macbeth, if it were made to resemble the cry of "Sleep no more" from the murder scene. Seyton, running up the stairs at the noise, may call the news of the Queen's death from the landing.

It may have been Shakespeare's thought, that the murder of Duncan had destroyed the humanity of the two murderers, leaving, in Lady Macbeth, nothing but broken nerve;

in Macbeth, nothing but sound and fury. Let the alarm bell clang, and the Macbeth retainers move off with sound and fury; get all the vehemence you can into their music, their war-cries, and their beating of metal upon metal. Make a quick curtain here.

Scene 6. [On the fore-stage.]

The General Staff in this scene gives as little thought to preparation as is usually supposed. The noise of trumpets called for by Macduff at the end of the scene, must be backed

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by all the drums, fifes and trombones at your command; and let this noise be interspersed by shouts of sergeants, the ring and clash of arms, and then, war cries. The Scots' war cries are well remembered, and often very noble. Let them be answered by the cries of the Macbeth faction, of the clans from North of the Mounth.

Scene 7. [On the fore- and mid-stages.]

No scene deserves more careful rehearsal. Strive to make it intense and splendid. Few things are so arresting as contest; few contests so linked to the beginnings of man as those between swordsmen and spearmen. Let there be a vigorous, tense, carefully rehearsed contest on the main stage while Macbeth and Young Siward fight on the stage below.

If you arrange, say, that Macbeth kill the young man on the extreme Left of the fore-stage, arrange for a charge of Malcolm's army from right to left of the mid-stage, as though the invaders were breaking into Macbeth's castle. Let Macbeth charge after them into their rear, and follow them off at the left back. Two retainers, or camp-followers can rob Young Siward's body and carry it off.

The noise of the dispute at the Left back must dwindle down as soon as Macduff has entered the fore-stage on the right, so that he may speak five of his lines with some chance of being heard. At "sheathe again undeeded", the tumult must break out with increased fury; an assault is being given, and the noise must be mixed with cries of surrender and of victory. As Macduff goes off towards this noise, let Old Siward with some of his victorious soldiers, press in from the left-back, to welcome Malcolm now coming on upon the right-front, with a lord or two.

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Siward may be a prophetic model of some more recent commander allowing a pet politician to visit a safe part of the line. Let the mid-stage fill up with victorious troops, who welcome him in with shouts of "good King Malcolm". Let them hoist King Malcolm upon a shield, or interlocking of shields, and carry him off the stage upon it to military music, with voices lifting to the music. Make this as exciting and kindling a scene as you possibly can; it is triumph over evil, the most wonderful thing in life.

For an instant, the stage is empty; then Macbeth enters at the front, somewhat shattered and desperate, but still bent upon harm to others. As he goes up-stage to seek for battle, Macduff, entering behind him, calls upon him to turn.

They are about the mid-stage, Macbeth somewhat to the Right. Macduff is the attacker, and very furious; let Macbeth have a clever minute of defence before he tells Macduff, that he loses labour. In the two-minute scene between them let them quarter the stage almost like boxers sparring for a lead, very watchful, both, for some sudden spring. Macbeth's last desperate speech goes on a mounting note like a war-cry and ends in a furious attack.

The Folio stage directions read "Exeunt fighting. Alarum"; then, upon another line, "Enter fighting, and Macbeth slaine".

I would be inclined to follow the Folio. Drop your curtain, as Macbeth makes his last attack; continue the noise of duel, clash and cry, with what exciting accompaniment your musicians can provide, and then, let the two men come onto the fore-stage, having now neither swords nor shields. Let them grapple and wrestle across the fore-stage to the Wing, and there let Macduff get his man down, kill him with a dagger and drag him off, leaving the stage bare.

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Scene 8.

At once, the curtain rises on Scene 8, the last scene, with the full stage, inside the dead tyrant's castle.

As there has been some fighting; it would be well to have a few wounded lying on the left, in care of the Doctor and Gentlewoman. The Lords and soldiers are at the back of the stage behind Malcolm and the General Staff. The little scene of Siward fills in the necessary minute before Macduff comes in with the head of Macbeth upon the spear. At his first appearance in the Right Wing, and Siward's speech

of "Here comes newer comfort", let the soldiers burst out into applause of a wild personal kind, checked by Siward and then by Macduff, who wishes to speak.

Macduff has already shewn a singular power of ready rhetoric. As this must be known to all there, let them be eager to hear him. His speech, now, is admirable for the occasion, and could not fail to be applauded by the company. When the soldiers are quiet, Macduff continues, more to them than to Malcolm, to propose a cheer to them. Be careful of the cheer. You may have heard men cheering for joy, for evil overthrown and hope beginning, do not let this cheer be other than joyous and hopeful. Let it come with a mad rapture of deliverance, all the gladder for having death and discipline both present on the stage.

Malcolm makes the generous and feeling speech to be expected from the son of Duncan. When he ends, let there be a triumphant burst with the trumpets, then a long roll of the drums, mixed with flutes or fifes; then a crash of drums. At this, let the two standard-bearers on each side of Malcolm, lift their banners and slowly bring them downward till the colours are on the stage. Let the curtain fall on this.

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NOTE.

I wish to thank Lady Adam Smith for her enquiries on my behalf, and Dr. W. Douglas Simpson, of The University Library at Aberdeen, for his helpful replies to these. His book, *The Province of Mar*, makes even a Southerner share in Macbeth's heritage of Moray.

I thank my friends and helpers of the Scottish Association for the Speaking of Verse, Miss M. Lorrain Smith and Miss Fletcher, for their patient help in lessening my ignorance of tartans and plaids. I am glad to remember that the founding of that Association brought me to an evergreen thicket in Birnam Wood, and gave me a first sight of Dunsinane.

John Masefield.