Seymour 1805 Edward Hickey Seymour, Remarks, critical, conjectural, and explanatory, upon the plays of Shakspeare (London, 1805), vol. 1, pp. 172--219.

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MACBETH.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Enter three witches.

The witches here seem to be introduced for no other purpose than to tell us they are to meet again; and as I cannot discover any advantage resulting from such anticipation, but, on the contrary, think it injurious, I conclude the scene is not genuine.

12. "**There to meet with Macbeth.**"

There is evidently a word wanting here; and if *we* instead of *I* were inserted, and *go* put before *we*, Mr. Pope's supplement appears to be satisfactory:

"There go we (i. e. let us go) to meet Macbeth."

14. "**Fair is foul and foul is fair.**"

The meaning, I believe, is, now shall confusion work; let the order of things be inverted -- what is fair shall become foul, and what is foul become fair.

SCENE II.

16. "**Doubtfully it stood.**"

The deficiency of this hemistic, Mr. Pope supplied, by inserting "long" after "doubtfully,"

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which appears far preferable to Mr. Steevens's expedient of extending "doubtful" adverbially; and censure has been passed perhaps too hastily

on the poetic editor, for the application of *long* in this instance; *long* and *short* are terms merely relative, and depend, for their propriety, or unfitness, upon the cases to which they are referred. A lover, in the absence of his mistress, or a patient under the surgeon's knife, will call a moment long; and the contest for victory between two armies may properly enough be so termed, if it is protracted beyond the probable or expected period of decision.

17. "And Fortune, on his damned quarry smiling."

Quarry, in this place, signifies that harvest of spoil which Macdonald with his own hand was reaping in the field of battle.

"---- those ancient arms bestow,
"Which as a quarry on the soil'd earth lay,
"Seiz'd only conquest as a glorious pray."
Drayton's Bar. Wars, second Canto.
B. Strutt.

22. "---- I must report they were
"As cannons overcharged with double cracks."

The disorder in the metre is always, I think, just reason for suspecting corruption. Whatever is overdone, cannot be said to be well done: if the cannons performed their office so as to pour an extraordinary measure of destruction on the foe, they were not "overcharged," although they might have double charges; and these generals, whose resistless valour the cannon is to illustrate, were not less prudent than brave. The

want of a copy of some better authority than that of Messrs. Hemings and Condell, unhappily leaves open a wider door for conjectural emendation in this play than in many others. I should propose to read,

"---- ---- they were
"As cannons charg'd with double cracks; so they
"Doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe."

26. "Norway himself, with terrible numbers."

The obvious restoration of the prosody, by Pope, in this line, should be adopted,

"Norway himself, with numbers terrible."

"---- Bellona's bridegroom."

Another instance, says Mr. Henley, of our author's ignorance of the ancient mythology; but where is this ignorance at present? Macbeth is represented as a warrior so complete, that the poet would confer on him a kind of semi-apotheosis, and marry him to Bellona; for it is not Mars, as Mr. Henley and Mr. Steevens suppose, that is implied by the bridegroom of Bellona, but Macbeth himself.

SCENE III.

32. "---- I myself have all the other,
"And the very points they blow."

The second folio has *ports*; but admitting, with Mr. Steevens, that *blow* may stand for *blow upon*, it is still very difficult to make sense of the passage.

"I have all the other (winds)
"And the very ports they blow upon."

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By having the ports, perhaps we are to understand having a fatal influence over them.

36. "The weird sisters, hand in hand," &c.

It has been suggested to me, by my ingenious friend Mr. Strutt, that the play should properly begin here; and, indeed, all that has preceded might well be omitted. Rosse and Angus express every thing material that is contained in the third scene; and as Macbeth is the great object of the witches, all that we hear of the sailor and his wife is rather ludicrous and impertinent than solemn and material; I strongly suspect it is spurious.

"The weird sisters,"

The play would certainly begin much more dramatically at "the weird sisters," or preferably, I think, a line higher;

"Macbeth doth come!"

This uttered with solemn horror, by one of the prophetic sisters, would immediately fix and appropriate the incantation; and give it an awful dignity, by determining its reference to the great object of the play, the fate and fortune of Macbeth; and martial music in the antique style, founded upon some of the oldest Scotch melodies, heard at a distance, as Macbeth is approaching, would give to the opening of the play a very characteristic grandeur, when combined with due scenery, and the weird sisters properly represented. C. Lofft.

38. **"All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, Thane of Glamis."**

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This title, by which Macbeth is saluted, is, in Scotland, always pronounced as a monosyllable, with the open sound of the first vowel, as in *alms*. We find the word eight times, in the course of the play, possessing a station in the metre. In four of these instances it seems to be a monosyllable, as besides the line just quoted --

"By Sinel's death, I know I'm Thane of
Glames."

"---- Treasons capital ----
"Have overthrown him."
"---- Glames! and Thane of Cawdor!"

"And yet wou'd'st wrongly win; thou'dst have,
great Glames."

The other four lines, indeed, appear to exhibit the word as a dissyllable: Glāmēs or Glāmīs, a mistake somewhat similar to that by which, in Ireland, James and Charles are so extended --

Jāmēs, Chārlēs; and, possibly, Shakspeare would so have delivered it: but I cannot consider the poet's accidental ignorance of the sound or quantity of a foreign proper name, a sufficient reason for perpetuating an error so easily corrected; as thus, after the Lady has read the letter: --

"Glām's thou art (now,) and Cawdor, and
shalt be
"What thou art promised," &c.

"To cry -- Hold, hold, great Glām's! (my) worthy Cawdor."

"Still it cried -- Sleep no more, to all the house!
"(For) Glāms hath murder'd sleep, and therefore Cawdor
"Shall sleep no more," &c.

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"Thou hast it now; King Glāms and Cawdor;
all."

41. "That he seems rapt withal."

The meaning may be, *which he seems rapt with*; but I rather think it is, *insomuch that he seems rapt with what you have told him*. -- This ellipsis occurs in other places; as, again, in this play, Act 2:

"There's one did laugh in hĭs sleep, and one
cried murder,
"That they did wake each other."

And in K. Lear, Act 4:

"But I am bound upon a wheel of fire,
"That my own tears do scald like molten lead."

And we also meet with it in Milton:

"---- The fields revive,
"The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds
"Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings."
Paradise Lost.

43. "His wonders and his praises do contend,

"Which should be thine, or his."

In his mind there is a contest between praise and admiration; each is abundantly extended, and with such emulous equality, that judgment pauses, unable to pronounce where lies the advantage; with you, on the score of applause, or with him in the sense of your merits.

45. **"In which addition, hail."**

Addition is title, style of address, appropriate distinction; as in many other instances: -- thus in Hamlet -- "Soil our addition," i. e. stain our cha-

racter or national distinction, Dane: it is probably, as a learned friend suggests, one of our poet's many law terms; the addition being a part of the name itself in indictments.

46. **"The greatest is behind."**

This is equivocal: the succession of Macbeth to the crown was the last prediction of the wéird women, and Macbeth would indulge the hope that *it is to be fulfilled*, as the others have been. I would point it thus:

"---- Glamis! and Thane of Cawdor!"
"The greatest -- is -- behind."

"Do you not hope your children shall be kings?"

This is introduced with consumate art and an intimate knowledge of the human mind: the predictions, now verified in two instances, have taken entire possession of Macbeth's thoughts; and his ambition is at once elevated and depressed, by the jarring ideas of the *fruitless crown* -- the *barren sceptre*, that awaits him: -- he would communicate with Banquo, but he perceives that Banquo, in this case, is not fit to be trusted; yet he cannot forego some attempt to sound, as at a distance, his rival's disposition: if he durst speak out, he would argue in this manner: -- "Is it not probable, that they who so truly foretold

my succession to the dignities of Glamis and Cawdor, will also fulfil the remainder of their promise, and place me on the throne?" But, just at this moment, he is startled at the consequence; the elevation of Banquo's posterity, and his question begins where his meditation ended: the caution, too, with which he speaks at last is admira-

ble: he forbears to touch on "the imperial theme," as relating to himself, and only asks --

"Do you not hope -- your children -- shall be
    kings,
"When those that gave -- the Thane of Cawdor
    to me,
"Promis'd no less to them?"

Thus are we, with exquisite delicacy, by one sentence in the opening of the play, possessed of the perfect spirit of Macbeth's character.

"**That, trusted home.**"

That prediction, obtaining full credence, believed to the utmost extent of it.

48. "**---- Why do I yield to that suggestion?**"

Suggestion, here, does not mean temptation, as Mr. Steevens would have it, but merely the mental image of the murder; for the crown is the temptation, and the idea or image of that was far from being horrid.

49. "**---- Present fears**
"**Are less than horrible imaginings.**"

Dangers distinctly and immediately before us, are less alarming than those remote, which present themselves through the mist of a terrified imagination: -- fears for dangers, or cause of fears. A similar reflection is uttered by Satan, in Paradise Regained:

"---- The expectation more
"Of fear torments me, than the feeling can."

"---- My single state of man."

This may only imply my mere manhood, or

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the frail, unsupported condition of human nature; but I rather think it signifies, my "entire frame," or constitution, my whole corporeal and mental establishment; as in K. John:

"This kingdom, this confine of flesh and blood."

And in Julius Caesar:

"---- The state of man,
"Like to a little kingdom, suffers, then,
"The nature of an insurrection."

Milton says, in the eleventh book of Paradise Lost --

"---- Compassion quell'd
"His best of man." ----

51. "Time and the hour runs thro' the roughest day."

The word "hour," as I apprehend, is not introduced to express a new or different idea from that which belongs to "time," but is rather an amplification or enlargement of the previous sense, and might be so associated by the particle "or," as well as "and;" the verb, therefore, "runs" is properly singular; and I fully agree with Mrs. Montague in the interpretation -- "Time and occasion;" i. e. time, and the fit time. It is not strictly pleonasm, as Mr. Steevens calls it, no more than is, in my opinion, the instance produced by him, for similar censure, from Othello:

"The head and front of my offending" --

Which I take to mean -- the capital accusation and full exhibition of the charge against me, or the substance and full display of my offence:

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or, perhaps, Othello, full of military ideas, by "*head*," means "*force*," the collected strength and arranged view. Neither do I think Mr. Malone successful in the instance which he has produced to sustain his colleague:

"Death, whose hour and time were certain."

This surely is, whose hour and season, period of life; and then in the verses, "Time's young Hours," are merely the poetic personified Hours attendant upon Time.

52. **"---- My dull brain was wrought**
"With things forgotten."

I was perplexed in an endeavour to recal what my dull brain had suffered to slip into oblivion. This is connected with what follows:

"---- Kind gentlemen, *your pains*
"Are *registered* where every day I turn
"The leaf to read them."

But your kindness is set down in the book of my remembrance; and that the record may not, like lighter impressions, be effaced, I shall every day turn the leaf to read it.

"The interim having weigh'd it."

The interim is here used adverbially, as Mr. Malone justly remarks; "the while" is a common phrase of the same meaning.

SCENE IV.

55. **"Safe toward your love and honour."**

Safe toward, I believe, means -- with sure ten-

dency, with certain direction; and if so, it ought to be marked as a compound -- " safe-toward."

57. **"---- Noble Banquo,**
"Thou hast no less deserv'd, nor must be

known
"No less to have done so."

The position here being affirmative, the negative conjunction is wrong; it ought to be "and must," &c.

"On all deservers. -- From hence to Inverness."

The preposition here, alike impertinent to grammar, and burthensome to the metre, was properly omitted by Pope.

SCENE V.

61. **"The illness should attend it." ----**

"Illness," for criminal disposition.

62. **"---- Thou'dst have, great Glamis,**
"That which cries, *Thus thou must do, if thou have it;*
"And that which rather thou dost fear to do,
***"Than wishest should be undone*."**

The obscurity of this passage arises from the accumulative conjunction, which leads us to expect new matter; whereas what follows is only amplification:

"And that which rather thou dost fear to do," &c.

Mr. Malone, I think, is mistaken, in supposing this to be a continuance of what was uttered by

the object of ambition: -- "Thou would'st have (says the Lady) the crown; which cries, *thou must* kill Duncan, if thou have it." This is an act which thou *must* do, if thou have the crown. "And (adds she) what thou art not disinclined to, but art rather fearful to *perform*, than unwilling to have executed." Lady Macbeth avoids to name the murder in express terms; and most artfully tries to blend and confound the repulsive means with the alluring object.

"---- The golden round,
"Which fate and metaphisical aid doth seem
"To have thee crown'd withal."

The poet's meaning is, I believe, what Mr. Malone has stated -- (little differing, indeed, from what Doctor Warburton had before suggested) ---- "Which fate and supernatural agency seem *to intend* to have thee crowned with. But it is impossible for this sense to be supported by any construction of the words before us. Something has been omitted; and, to make the passage intelligible, something must certainly be supplied. Doctor Johnson's expedient seems easy and satisfactory:

"---- Doth seek
"To have thee crown'd withal."

64. **"---- Give him tending,**
"He brings great news. The raven himself is hoarse,
"That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
"Under my battlements."

Doctor Johnson and Mr. Fuseli appear to have been refining this passage into perplexity. That the messenger was out of breath, was surely from no

other cause than the speed he had made; and the words "give him tending, he brings great news," mean simply, let him be waited on; the business he has come upon is important. The messenger withdrawn, the lady reflects on his message, and on the circumstance of his hoarseness while he uttered it, and deeming this prophetic of what she had been ruminating on, she poetically makes this messenger the fatal raven.

"---- The raven himself is hoarse."

The present reading is right; but it is observable that Sir William Davenant appears to have supposed that the true reading was that which was proposed by Warburton, for his alteration of the passage stands thus:

"There would be music in the raven's voice
"Which would but croak the entrance of the
king
"Under my battlements." Lord Chedworth.

65. "That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan."

Entrance is here a trisyllable and should be so set down, agreeably to the ancient orthography -- éntérance.

69. "This ignorant present."

The word "time" which was inserted by Mr. Pope after "present," Mr. Steevens says is not required for the sense, and is too much for the metre; the sense, indeed, is not dependant on it, as "present" might stand for "present time," but it is indispensible to the metre, unless we load the latter syllable of the noun "present," contrary to all usage, with the weight of the accent.

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"This ignorant presént, and I feel now,"

Whereas "ignorant," as it stands in the line, may be uttered in the time of a dissyllable, by means of the vowels o and a, which sufficiently coalesce, notwithstanding the intervention of a consonant.

"This ignŏrant present time, and I feel now."

Vide Introduction, page 16, Note 5.

71. "To alter favour ever is to fear."

To change countenance is always a dangerous indication of what is passing in the mind; *to fear* for, to give cause for fear.

"To alter favour," &c.

I take the meaning to be "change of countenance is an indication of fear, always well understood; if you change your countenance thus, your fears will not fail to be known; since all men

understand this symptom by which fear betrays itself." C. Lofft.

SCENE VI.

73. **"---- Does approve."**

Proves, gives evidence.

74. **"The love that follows us, sometime is our trouble,**
"Which still we thank as love. Herein I teach you
"How ye shall bid God yield us for your pains,
"And thank us for your trouble."

The first part of this sentence is indeed, as Mr.

Malone has remarked, clear enough, though I suspect that gentleman's endeavour to explain what follows will not be found satisfactory. With as little success, I think, has Mr. Henley tried to paraphrase the passage. Perhaps the failure of both those critics as well as of their predecessors and corrivals has been owing to their mistaking the application of the words "god yield us," which I am persuaded do not refer to the king, but to the hostess, whom Duncan addresses to this effect. -- The expressions of affection and loyalty that attend a king are sometimes troublesome, yet in regard to the motive, we overlook the trouble, and acknowledge the love; and let this argument teach you to implore the heavenly grace; saying, in your orisons, "God yield us for your pains," (i. e. the pains *you* take) and to thank *us* (the king) for having given you so profitable an occasion for the exercise of your devotion. Mr. Henley conceives, I think erroneously, that "the love which follows us, sometimes is our trouble," implies the king's love, (not that of the hostess,) and the trouble of the hostess, (not that of the king.)

SCENE VII.

77. **"If it were done," &c.**

This speech has often been censured for perplexity of thought and expression; the seeming embarrassment in the language I believe was carefully studied, and will be found admirably suited to the character of the speaker, and the nature of his reflections. Macbeth is distinguished by an active and ardent imagination, operating on the most exquisite sensibility; and,

with this glowing temper, brooding on the perpetration of an act that,

"Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream,"

shakes his "whole state of man," every word almost that he utters, suggests an image to him; the train of thinking, however, though frequently obstructed, is never broken; and it may not be uninteresting to trace it, step by step, through the whole of this complex soliloquy. He begins his meditation generally; "if it were done," i. e. if the act of the murder were performed, the reflection was proceeding thus: if it were done when he is asleep; but the word "done" suggesting instantly a new idea, the final issue of the business, he pauses on it for a moment, and then recurs to that with which he began, the simple act of the assassination, "when 'tis done," and proceeds, "then 'twere well it were done quickly;" here again he pauses, and returns to the second reflection, the ultimate event.

"---- If the assassination
"Could trammel up the consequence, and catch
"With his surcease, success:"

i. e. The full attainment of my desire.

"---- That but this blow
"Might be the be-all and the end-all here:"

i. e. On this spot where it is struck; but, no sooner has the word "here" been uttered, but a new idea starts forth, which he pursues, -- the idea of our frail existence in this world, in opposition to the world hereafter.

"---- The be-all and the end-all here --
"But *here*, upon this bank and shoal of time,
"We'd jump the life to come."

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We would run a bold risk as to futurity, "but in these cases we still have judgment here," i. e. on earth, and that judgment is --

"---- That we but teach
"Bloody instructions, which, being taught, re-
turn
"To plague th' inventor."

i. e. When we commit a murder we only instruct others how to murder ourselves; inclining now to the better side of the argument, he calls in the sentiments of honour and hospitality to invigo-rate his virtue.

"---- He's here in double trust,
"First as I am his kinsman and his subject,
"Strong both against the deed; then as his host,
"That should, against his murderer, shut the
door,
"Not bear the knife myself."

To these generous suggestions he now adds one of prudence:

"---- Besides, this Duncan
"Hath borne his faculties so meek; hath been
"So clear in his great office, that his virtues
"Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against
"The deep damnation of his taking off;
"And Pity, like a naked new-born babe,
"Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubim, hors'd
"Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
"Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
"That tears shall drown the wind."

Pity in its most amiable and affecting form, like a naked new-born infant, or a cherubim

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mounted on the invisible couriers of the divine

will, (not the winds, as Dr. Johnson would have it,) shall blow, i. e. taint and tumify with horror, in the eyes of all the world, this execrable deed; insomuch that the ambient wind shall be allayed and overcome by a universal shower of tears. He is now almost a convert to compunction, having "no spur to prick" him on but "vaulting ambition;" and finding, on the lady's entrance, that the king had asked for him, his honourable resolution is wound up, and gratitude comes forth to put her seal upon it. Nothing can exceed the delicacy or the energy of these words:

"We will proceed no further in this business,
"He hath honour'd me of late," &c.

79. "Catch, with his surcease, success."

Dr. Johnson's proposed emendation of "its" for "his," would wipe out a capital beauty in this speech. Macbeth enters, ruminating upon an action he is about to commit, and now for the first time discloses it; imperfectly, however, by the use of "his," instead of the substantive to which, in his mind, it has reference; and of "surcease," instead of a word of more open meaning. B. Strutt.

80. "We'd jump the life to come."

Mr. Steevens thinks the meaning of "jump" here is overleap, make no account of the life to come; but it is rather, make a bold or desperate trial, as in Cariolanus:

"---- Who would fear
"To jump a body with a dangerous physic,
"That's sure of death without it.

80. "We but teach bloody instructions."

A similar reflection to this I find in Sir Walter Raleigh's preface to his history of the world; "and he (king Edward IV.) which instructed Gloucester to kill Henry the VI. his predecessor, taught him also, by the same act, to kill his own

sons and successors, Edward and Richard; for those kings which have sold the blood of others at a low rate, have made the market for their own enemies to buy of theirs at the same price.

82. "Like angels, trumpet-tongued."

Not trumpet-tongued like angels generally, but like *those* angels who, to plead most powerfully, are trumpet-tongued. "The sightless couriers of the air" are not winds, as Dr. Johnson supposes, but invisible posters of the divine will; that fly unperceived by sense, and unconnected with matter. If winds were meant as the supporters of the babe, the infant would be left in a very perilous predicament, for he must soon be unhorsed by the drowning of the wind.

"That tears shall drown the wind."

I suspect the death of Sir Thomas Overbury, and the consequent events, were here much in the poet's thoughts. C. Lofft.

86. "I have given suck," &c.

This passage has, perhaps, too hastily been censured for unnatural horror and ferocity. The lady's object is to stimulate Macbeth to the murder by any means: she strengthens every incitement, and invalidates every objection. On such an occasion the speaker is not uttering so much his own real sentiments as those which are

most likely to operate on the hearer; that tender sentiment was not quite extinguished in the breast even of this sanguinary woman, there is a beautiful instance, in the proper place, where, after leaving the daggers by the king's pillow, she says,

"---- Had he not resembled
"My father as he slept, I had don't."

In an old Collection of Anthems, London, printed by W. G. 1663, I find one, on Psalm 137, set by Henry Lawes, of so much poetic excellence that a judicious friend of mine ascribes it to Mil-

ton. -- There is in it a sentiment not unlike this in ferocity.

"Men shall blesse the hand that tears
"From the mother's soft embraces
"Sucking infants, and besmears
"With their brains the rugged faces
"Of the rocks and stony places."

87. **"Had I so sworn" &c.**

This is most judiciously put; the savageness of the sentiment is not only mitigated by the idea of the speaker's acting under the obligation of an oath, but the force of that obligation is artfully impressed on Macbeth to incite him to the murder.

"**So sworn.**"

"Sworn," says Mr. Malone, is used as a dissyllable, but what ear will recognise it as such? The measure, however, is complete without the word "but" from the second folio; and we might read,

"And dash'd the brains out, had I *sworn* as you
"Have done to this."

"---- If we should fail."
"---- ---- We fail."

88. **"Screw your courage to the sticking place,**
"And we'll not fail."

Apply, with energy, your courage to that place where it will stick, cleave, or be effectual. Macbeth says, in another place: --

"If you shall cleave to my consent."

90. **"A limbeck."**

Alembic, or alambic, from "al" (Arabic) "the" and ambix (Gr.) a cup or cover of a pot; it properly meant only a part of a distilling apparatus (the head), it now means the whole.

91. "I am settled and bend up," &c.

Those who regard the waverings of Macbeth as unnatural and contradictory are not worthy the name of critics; in my opinion, they constitute one of the greatest excellencies of this play; such tasteless objectors deserve not the answer which Mr. Steevens has condescended to give them. Lord Chedworth.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Enter Banquo and Fleance, with a Torch before him.

It has been suggested to me by my friend Mr. Strutt, that the appearance of Fleance was either a mistake, or some slovenly expedient of the play-

ers; he has no other employment than that of a mere attendant; and, indeed, the decorum of the scene seems to require two servants, one attending on Banquo, and the other in the ordinary service of his master; to the latter of these Macbeth says, afterwards,

"Go, bid thy mistress, when my drink is ready,
"She strike upon the bell --"

and, having so got rid of him; to the former, who had now returned from lighting Banquo to his chamber, "Get thee to bed:" and this regulation appears necessary to reconcile the seeming contradiction or inconsistency in Macbeth's orders, "Go, bid thy mistress," &c. and "Get thee to bed."

**93. "How goes the night, boy?"
"---- The moon is down," &c.**

The metre as well as the sense of the context seems to require a different disposition of the sentences here:

Banq. "How goes the night, boy?"

Fl. "---- I've not heard the clock:
"The moon is down."
Banq. "And she goes down at twelve."

Again, some words seem to have been lost: we might read,

Fl. "I take't 'tis later, sir."
Banq. "---- Hold, take my sword;
"('Tis very dark;) there's husbandry in heaven:
"Take thee that too: (probably his dirk or dagger)
"Give me my sword."

Banquo, but the instant before, had desired the

boy to take his sword; and what he could want with it now again, it is not easy to discover; but if we observe that the action is not only useless and improbable, but the words an intrusion on the metre, I think we must regard it as an interpolation. -- The passage might stand thus:

"Restrain in me the cursed thoughts that nature
"Gives way to in repose."
Enter Macbeth.
"---- ---- Who's there?"
Macb. "---- ---- A friend,

94. "**Great largess to your offices.**"

The latter copies read "officers," which appears to be right, but those are not, as Mr. Steevens supposes, officers for the field, but officers of the household.

95. "**Being unprepared,**
"**Our will became the servant to defect,**
"**Which else shou'd free have wrought.**"

Not having expected this visit of the king, the want of due accommodation predominated over my hospitable will; which else should have operated without restraint. Macbeth, always anxious and suspicious, has, to cloak his pernicious policy, adopted a constrained and ambiguous diction,

which he cannot throw off, even on occasions where mystery is needless. I know not whether the poet had, here, a glance at the character of Tiberius, as given by Tacitus, but the resemblance is very striking, "Tiberioque etiam in rebus quas non occuleret, seu natura, sive adsuetudine, suspensa semper et obscura verba; tunc vero nitenti, ut sensus suos penitus abderet, in incertum et ambi-

guum magis implicabantur." As, according to Mr. Malone's catalogue, there was a translation of Tacitus in Shakspeare's time, it is very probable he had read it; although this poet's practical knowledge of human nature might, of itself, sufficiently account for such a coincidence with the philosophic historian.

"I dreamt, last night, of the three weird sisters:
"To you they have showed some truth."

Macbeth, alarmed at words which seem an intrusion upon his "occult guilt," recovers suddenly from his surprise, and assumes an air of indifference -- "I think not of them;" but, finding his "corporal agents" a little unsettled and relaxed, he catches up the design of fortifying his resolution by the co-operation of Banquo: he knows not well what to propose, but something he will try.

"Yet when we can entreat an hour to serve,
"Would spend it in some words upon that busi-
ness,
"If you would grant the time."
Banq. "---- At your kind leisure."

This reply gives encouragement; and he then obscurely hints a bribe to his friend's ambition.

"If you shall cleave to my consent, when 'tis
"It shall make honour for you."

This dawn of hope, however, is at once dissipated when Banquo says,

"---- ---- So I lose none
"In seeking to augment it, but still keep

"My bosom franchis'd, and allegiance clear,
"I shall be counsell'd."

196

Macbeth now "shuts-up," or "pulls-in" confidence, and dismisses Banquo, and every thought of trusting him, with --

"Good repose the while."

96. "**If you shall cleave to my consent.**"

If you will stick closely to my will or purpose: thus in The Tempest: --

"Thy thoughts I cleave to."

99. "**Go, bid thy mistress, when my drink is ready,**
"**She strike upon the bell.**"

Macbeth, perceiving the servant, and desiring now to be alone, gives this message merely for that purpose; he wanted no drink, nor any such mechanical signal as a bell for the performance of the murder: the bell, which afterwards strikes, is the clock, that accidentally, and with much more solemnity, reminds him it is time to dispatch.

"**Is this a dagger,**" **&c.**

This is always delivered on the stage with an expression of terror as well as surprise, but I am persuaded it is a misconception: if the vision were indeed terrible, the irresolute spirit of Macbeth would shrink from it; but the effect is confidence and animation, and he tries to lay hold of the dagger; and, indeed, upon what principle of reason, or on what theory of the human mind, can it be presumed, that the appearance of supernatural agency, to effect the immediate object of our wish, should produce dread and not encouragement?

197 "179"

101. "**The curtain'd sleep.**"

Mr. Steevens's proposed emendation which rejects the offensive repetition of "now" is very plausible and judicious.

"The curtain'd sleeper; witchcraft celebrates."

102. **"Alarum'd by his centinel, the wolf,**
"Whose howl's his watch."

i. e. I believe, whose howl is a signal for murder. "Watch," if I mistake not, in military language, stands for watch-word.

SCENE II.

108. **"---- The surfeited grooms**
"Do mock their charge with snores."

This will admit of two interpretations: -- Duncan himself may be the charge, who, snoring, is imitated or mocked by the grooms; or "their charge" may be the obligation of their duty, (as the king's guards,) which they *trifle with*, in going to sleep -- this latter sense I rather "cleave to."

"I have drugged their possets,
"That death and nature do contend."

And again,

111. **"There's one did laugh in his sleep, and one**
cried murder,
"That they did wake each other."

i. e. By an ellipsis taken notice of in the 3d Scene, Act 1, so that, or insomuch that "death and nature do contend," &c. insomuch that "they did wake," &c.

"---- Listening their fear."

The application thus of the neuter or intransitive verb or participle to an active sense, seems to be vicious idiom, yet Milton is chargeable with it. --

"They ---- ----
"---- ---- expatiate and confer
"Their state affairs." *Parad. Lost, B.* 1.

And because the imperfections of great men must be imitated, Thomson amuses us with "Gazing the landscape," -- "The voice warbling the heart," &c. &c.

112. **"Methought I heard a voice cry, sleep no more!**
"Macbeth does murder sleep."

This is all that the voice is said to have uttered; the rest, "the innocent sleep," &c. is Macbeth's own speech, and is falsely put into Italics, as is also, for the same reason, a little lower down, the line and half,

"---- And therefore Cawdor
"Shall sleep no more, Macbeth shall sleep no more."

"Methought I heard a voice" &c.

The distinction above noted is judicious; a similar inaccuracy is to be observed in the following speech of Macbeth, 119:

"Still it cried, '*sleep no more*,' to all the house."

If the voice, according to this punctuation, said only, "sleep no more," the words that follow might be omitted as superfluous, it being sufficiently clear that the sleepers in the house were those addressed; but the natural construction is,

"Still it cried, *sleep no more to all the house;*
"*Glamis hath murdered sleep.*"

i. e. *There shall be no sleep any more to all those who are now reposing under this roof; Glamis hath murdered sleep.* The following part, which, as it has been justly remarked, is Macbeth's own speech, approaches with a horrid solemnity that is inimitable.

"---- And therefore Cawdor
"Shall sleep no more, Macbeth shall sleep no
more." B. Strutt.

115. **"Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this
blood
"Clean from my hands?"**

A thought resembling this, but with advantage, occurs in Hamlet --

"---- What if this cursed hand
"Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,
"Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens
"To wash it white as snow."

120. **"Your constancy hath left you unattended."**

Hath forsaken you, left you by yourself.

"---- Show us to be watchers."

To have been purposely awake, or on the watch.

SCENE III.

131. **"Had I but died an hour before this
chance,
"I had liv'd a bless'd time."**

Besides the instance quoted by Mr. Malone,

from The Winter's Tale; this thought occurs again in Othello --

"If it were now to die, 'twere now to be most
happy."

SCENE III.

138. **"---- The near in blood,
"The nearer bloody."**

Thus in K. Richard III.

"Nearer in bloody thoughts though not in

blood."

139. **"---- There's warrant in that theft**
"Which steals itself when there's no mer-
cy left."

Here is a jingle between "steel" and "steal," to steal itself away, and to steel or make hard itself by dismissing the softness of good manners.

SCENE IV.

"The heavens, as troubled with man's act,
"Threaten his bloody stage."

Shakspeare is very profuse of theatrical allusions.

140. **"---- Duncan's horses ----**
"---- broke their stalls, flung out
"Contending 'gainst obedience."

Churchill has amplified on this prodigy, in the Ghost --

"The horses that were us'd to go
"A foot pace, in my lord mayor's shew,

"Impetuous, from their stables broke,
"And aldermen and oxen spoke."

141. **"Make war with mankind."**

The metre would be saved by reading, with Pope,

"Make war with man."
"---- 'Tis said they eat each other."

ACT III. SCENE I.

149. **"Mark Antony's was by Caesar -- he chid**
the sisters"

Dr. Johnson's censure of Mr. Heath, who contended for the prosody of this line, might have been spared. The measure is not incompa-

tible with the legitimate occasional licence in the structure of dramatic verse.

"Mark An'tonỳ's was' by Caesăr' he chid' the sis'-
tĕrs."

See Introduction Note.

151. **Put rancours in the vessel of my peace."**

Embittered my cup of happiness.

157. **"Acquaint you with the perfect spy o' the time."**

"Acquaint" is used imperatively, and the sense is obscured only by that common corruption of putting the accusative plural of the second personal pronoun into the place of the nominative: *you* for *ye*; acquaint ye i. e. learn, make yourselves acquainted.

SCENE II.

160. **"---- Nought's had; all's spent,**
"Where our desire is got without content."

When disappointment accompanies the possession of what we sought, we have in effect gained nothing; and we have lost that animating expectation which constitutes our chief happiness. I fully agree with Mr. Steevens here, in supposing that Shakspeare's metre was originally regular; but cannot admit of the offered correction in this place; an opposition is evidently intended between what had been lost and what had been gained, or "had." I would propose the rejection of "Madam;" "*I will*," submissively uttered, is sufficiently expressive of the servant's obedience.

It has been remarked to me, by my ingenious friend Mr. Strutt, that these four lines, "Nought's had," &c. seem to be the property of Macbeth himself, who is supposed to be speaking them as he enters; and who, at the conclusion of them, is addressed by the lady.

"How now, my lord! why do you keep alone?"

And, indeed, the querulous spirit which they breathe is much more in character with Macbeth than with his wife.

162. "---- Better be with the dead,
"Whom we, to gain our place, have sent to
peace."

I think it strange that any editor should have made, and still more so that Mr. Steevens should applaud, the alteration from the first copy, of

"peace" to "place;" the old reading appears to me not only in itself better, but exactly conformable to the language and turn of thinking by which the author has designated the character of Macbeth: the form of words is not yet arranged in his mind, when he begins,

"Better be with the dead,
"Whom we, to gain our peace,"

(That tranquillity and satisfaction which can only result from Duncan's death,) -- have sent to the *grave* -- he was about to say; but catching hold of, according to his fanciful habit, a word already uttered, which will apply in the sequel of the sentence, he says "to peace."

"Better be with the dead;"

"Whom we, (in hope,) to gain our peace,
have (actually) sent to peace." The same sentiment had occurred a little before.

"'Tis better to be that which we destroy,
"Than, by destruction, dwell in doubtful joy."

i. e. It is a condition more secure of peace to be the victim of assassination, than by triumphant murder, to be subject to the perturbations and alarms of conscience.

My friend's conjecture that the liness set down

to the lady, in the foregoing part of the scene, should properly belong to Macbeth, may derive support from the passage last quoted.

"**---- Be bright and jovial**
"**Among your guests to-night.**
Macb. "**---- So shall I love,**
"**And so, I pray, be you; let your re-**
membrance
"**Apply to Banquo; present him emi-**
nence," &c.

204

Macbeth, who had heretofore been scrupulous, timid, and rather subordinate in the work of murder, acquiring confidence as he advances in enormity, is now ambitious of surpassing the lady in desperate device; but though he chuses to conceal his object, and reserve to himself the glory of the exploit, he is yet desirous to obtain, by suggestion, the powerful incentive of his wife's concurrence. Nothing can exceed the art by which this is attempted. He had already decreed the death of Banquo; the mortal instruments were now actually at work: conscious, however, of the boldness of the step he had taken, he wants to fortify his resolution, by the coincidence of that wisdom to which he has habitually looked up; but proud of his new important project, he is unwilling to hazard the credit he expects from it, by the slightest disclosure at present; and therefore elaborately brings his wife, without any consciousness, on her part, of his covert purpose, to give her thoughts upon it.

"---- Present him eminence, &c.
"---- Unsafe the while, that we
"Should lave our honours in these flattering
streams,
"Making our faces vizards to our hearts,
"Disguising what they are."

This is not sufficient; the lady, though prompt enough to concur in mischief, does not perceive his drift; and taking notice only of his disorder, says, "You must leave this." He now becomes impatient at not being understood, or rather anticipated, and exclaims,

"O! full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife," --

205

And then advances a little more openly to the point --

"Thou know'st that Banquo and his Fleance
live."

The lady, superior to all little scruples, replies at once, with philosophic coolness --

"But in them nature's copy's not eterne."

This was all that Macbeth wanted, to plume himself in the pride of consummate policy, and his joy almost intoxicates him.

"There's comfort yet; they are assailable,
"Then be thou jocund, &c."

There is, perhaps, no one passage in this wonderful drama, that exhibits so complete an evidence of the poet's incomparable genius as this does, yet the actors always omit the best part of it.

168. **"---- The rooky wood."**

Rooky is dark, gloomy, perhaps corrupted from reeky; teeming with dark and misty exudations. The term is well known in most parts of Norfolk, where a cloudy or gloomy day is called a rooky day.

170. **"Things, bad begun, make strong themselves by ill."**

Scelera sceleribus tuenda. Senec.
Lord Chedworth.

SCENE III.

171. **"So all men do, from hence to the palace-gate."**

206

The measure requires the ejection of the idle particle "from."

SCENE IV.

173. **"Sit down; at first and last, the hearty welcome."**

The King is willing to wave all ceremony. -- "Sit down," says he, "and instead of a formal address, either at the beginning or ending of our feast, I shall only express, once for all, the hearty welcome."

175. **"---- I had else been perfect."**

I had been composed, collected, free, independent, completely master of myself.

"---- I had else been perfect."

Perfect here implies "*in omnibus muneris absolutus*;" it is "*totus teres atque rotundus*."
Lord Chedworth.

"We'll hear ourselves, again."

It is difficult to extract sense from this passage; nothing that has come before me in the form of explanation is at all satisfactory. May I advance a desperate conjecture, in which I own I place but little confidence? Perhaps Macbeth dismisses the murderer with these words: -- "Get thee gone;" and then, conceiving some new purpose, says to himself -- "To-morrow we will" -- But suddenly recollecting his guests, and the suspended banquet, he breaks-off -- "Here" -- i. e. "Home my thoughts! I must now mingle with

society." But, indeed, this entrance of the assassin, with his bloody face, into the apartment where the King is feasting his peers, and the account of the murder, delivered at such a time, appears so unskilful and improbable, that though the scene is not without some colour of our author's manner, I am very dubious as to its au-

thenticity: it has, however, been intimated to me, that, in the great and throng'd halls of our ancient nobility, such an incident might have taken place.

"---- The feast is sold,
"That is not often vouch'd while 'tis a making,
"'Tis given with welcome." ----

Neither the sense nor the construction of this passage is very clear: I believe the meaning is -- the favour or obligation we confer, when we regale our friends, is cancelled or acquitted, when we omit the frequent and cordial assurances that they are welcome. The embarrassment in the construction arises from the relative "that," on which is imposed a weight of inference beyond what it will bear.

176. **"Here had we now our country's honour roof'd,**
"Were the grac'd person of our Banquo present."

This passage will admit of three different constructions; it may mean --

"O that we had here, now, Banquo, the honour of our country; were he but here!"

Or -- "Here should we now have safely shel-

tered with us our country's chief ornament and honour, if Banquo were among us."

Or -- "Here should we now have collected under one roof all the prime spirits and glory of the country, if we had but Banquo to complete the list."

This last, I believe, is the true sense.

"Who may I rather challenge?" &c.

"Who," here, was properly altered to "whom," by Pope.

177. "---- The table's full."

In the late representations of this play, at one of the great theatres in the capital, Macbeth is seen

"To start and tremble at the vacant chair,"

according to the conception of Mr. Lloyd, in his poem called The Actor. It would be deemed only a waste of criticism to combat an opinion so defenceless, which presumes that Macbeth's agitations are merely the result of phrensy; whereas there can hardly be a serious doubt that the poet designed the real introduction of the spectre; and the superstition, wherever it prevailed, has been, that though the ghost was sometimes invisible to all except the special object of its visitation, yet it was really and *bona fide* present.

What I am going to advance will not obtain quite so ready an assent, though I am almost as firmly persuaded of its propriety.

I think two ghosts are seen; Duncan's first, and afterwards that of Banquo; for what new terror, or what augmented perturbation, is to be

produced by the re-appearance of the same object in the same scene? or, if but one dread monitor could gain access to this imperial malefactor, which had the superior claim, or who was the more likely to harrow the remorseful bosom of Macbeth -- "the gracious Duncan," he who had "borne his faculties so meek," had been "so clear in his great office," and in "the deep damnation of whose taking off," not only friendship, kindred, and allegiance, but sacred hospitality, had been profaned, -- or Banquo, his mere "partner," of whom it only could be said, that "he was brave, and to be feared;" that wisdom guided his valour, and that under him the genius of Macbeth sustained rebuke? Which, I demand, of these two sacrifices to his "vaulting ambition" was the more likely, at the regal banquet, to break in upon and confound the usurper? Besides this obvious general claim to precedence,

exhibited by Duncan, how else can we apply these lines? --

"If charnel houses, and our graves, must send
"Those that we bury back, our monuments
"Shall be the maws of kites."

For they will not suit with Banquo, who had no grave or charnel-house assigned to him, (having been left in a ditch, to find a monument in the maws of kites;) but must refer to Duncan, who, we may naturally suppose, received the formal ostentatious rites of sepulture. I do not overlook the words --

"Thou canst not say I did it," &c.

which may be urged against my argument; but if this sentence will stand, in the case of

Banquo, as the subterfuge of one who had, by deputy, and not in person, done the murder, it surely will accord with the casuistry of him, who knows he struck a *sleeping* victim; and this, with the pains that had been taken to fix the murder on the grooms, may sufficiently defend the application of the remark to the royal spectre. Besides, to whom, except Duncan, can these words refer? --

"If I stand here, I saw him."

The ghost being gone, and Macbeth "a man again," he reasons like a man, and gives this answer to his wife, who had reproached him with being "unmann'd in folly:" but if Banquo were the object alluded to in this declaration, it must be unintelligible to the Lady, who had not yet heard of Banquo's murder. The ghost of Duncan having performed his office, and departed, Macbeth is at leisure to ruminate on the prodigy; and he naturally reflects, that if the grave can thus cast up the form of buried Duncan, Banquo may likewise rise again, regardless of the "trenched gashes, and twenty mortal murders on his crown." The Lady interrupts this reverie, and he proceeds to "mingle with society;" and

when, insidiously, with the raised goblet in his hand, he invokes the health of his friend whose life he had destroyed, just at that moment his friend's ghost confronts him. All this, indeed, is only conjecture, but conjecture, I trust, on the ground of strong probability; a basis that, in the estimation of those who are best acquainted with the subject, will, I doubt not, be deemed at least as secure as the authority of Messrs. Heminge and Condell, which, unhappily, is the only plot we have yet had to build upon.

178. "Impostors to true fear."

These impostors have eluded the scrutiny of all the critical inquisitors, and still are undetected. I wish I could bring them to justice. Perhaps the lady, in her displeasure at Macbeth's ill-timed disorder, would imply, by "these flaws and starts, impostors to true fear," theatrical gesticulations, such as might, indeed, become a person who was counterfeiting fear, or who weakly resigned his imagination to the effect of an artificial tale, but are not suitable or natural to the true impression of real fear: or are we, by impostors, to understand "mean betrayers," these flaws and starts, these exterior perturbations, which disclose to the observer the terrors that exist within? This sense has some support in what was said in a former scene:

"---- Look up clear;
"To alter favour, ever is to fear --"

Which I interpret thus: -- To change countenance, is always a dangerous indication of what is passing in the mind; and it is somewhat remarkable that the passage before us will admit of a similar construction -- "these flaws and starts," which, by betraying what your mind is brooding on, will lead to a consequence that is to be feared indeed.

**179. "Blood hath been shed ere now, i'the olden
time,
"Ere human statute purg'd the gentle
weal."**

"Gentle weal (says Dr. Johnson) is the state made quiet and safe by human statutes." But such a state would not want to be purged. A

strong opposition seems intended between the old and present times; and the former necessarily implying a condition of comparative purity, "to purge" must have a signification different from the obvious one, and indicative of sophistication or political quackery; and so the sense will be -- Blood hath been shed ere now, ay, even in those early days, when legal institutions had not yet changed and perverted the simplicity of human society, and when, of course, a murder must have been more sinful and atrocious than at this period, when it is not the act itself that is at all strange or unusual, but these supernatural consequences of it.

"---- Purg'd the gentle weal."

"Gentle weal" I think wrong, and would read either "general," with Capell, or "ungentle."

"*Sylvestres homines sacer interpresque Deorum*
"*Caedibus & victu faedo deterruit Orpheus*
"*Dictus ob hoc lenire tigres.*" C. Lofft.

"I'the olden time."

Perhaps "elden." I believe there is no where to be found such a word as "olden."

187. "Augurs, and understood relations."

Sir William Davenant understood relations in the same sense that Dr. Warburton did; for his alteration is,

"Augurs well read in languages of birds."

I am not sure that we ought not to read, with the modern editors,

"Augurs that understood." &c.

Sir William Daventon seems to have read so.
Lord Chedworth.

213

190. "You lack the season of all natures, sleep."

That, says Dr. Johnson, which gives the relish to all nature; but is it not rather, that which tempers, preserves, and nourishes nature? Mr. Malone's correspondent thinks the meaning is, "You stand in need of the time or season for sleep;" but the lady would hardly have advised her husband to go to bed while she was remarking that there was no time for doing so.

"My strange and self-abuse," &c.

"Strange," here, does not imply extraordinary or wonderful, but only unpracticed, wanting habit or experience, as in Romeo and Juliet:

"---- 'Till strange love, grown bold,
"Thinks love, true acted, simple modesty."

And in Cymbeline --

"I pray you, sir, desire my man's abode
"Where I did leave him; he is strange and
peevish."

SCENE VI.

198. "Hath so exasperate the king, that he" &c.

"Exasperate" has here a participial office -- hath made the king "exasperate," or exasperated.

214 "314"

ACT IV. SCENE I.

209. "I conjure you, by that which you profess."

This accentuation of "cónjure," in the sense of solemn adjuration, as well as of the, practising magic, is, I think, invariable throughout these works; I find it also in Warner's Albion's England:

"I pray thee, nay I cónjure thee, to nourish as
thine owne."

But in *A Mad World my Master's*, by Middleton,
the word occurs with the modern pronunciation:

"I do conjúre thee by that dreadful power."

And again:

"Devil, I do conjúre thee once again."

THE INCANTATIONS.
It may be amusing to compare Shakspeare's
charms with those of other authors, particularly
with the witches of Ben Jonson and the Canidia
of Horace: I think Shakspeare will lose nothing
by the comparison. Lord Chedworth.

212. **"Had I three ears, I'd hear thee."**

This is impatience at the three-fold utterance
of his name: Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!
you need not repeat any thing to my eager atten-
tion, for had I a distinct organ of hearing for
every word thou utterest, they should all be en-
gaged in listening.

216. **"---- Thy hair,"**
"Thou other gold-bound brow is like the
first."

215

This, the old reading, is, I am persuaded,
right; besides that "air" has much too modern
an "air" for Shakspeare, and was, I believe, ne-
ver used, so early as his time, in that sense: it was
the colour of the hair, rather than the gold-bind-
ing which Dr. Johnson supposes, that should
naturally mark the visions, as the descendants, or
stock of Banquo; thus, in Clarence's dream, the
ghost of Prince Edward is described as

"The shadow of an angel with bright hair."

218. **"---- Now I see 'tis true,**
"For the blood-bolter'd Banquo smiles
upon me,

"**And points at them for his.**"

But how came Banquo here in company with the Visions? He is no vision, but a real ghost; and I believe it was beyond the power of these wéird women to disturb and conjure-up the noble Banquo at their pleasure; indeed, the producing him in this manner with the prospective figures of his progeny might almost justify the sarcasm, or mistake of Voltaire, in calling them all a legion of ghosts. -- It is the suggestion of my ingenious friend Mr. Strutt, that the ghost should by no means be exhibited with the visions as a part of the spectacle, but that he should appear much more forward upon the stage, and of his own motion, just as the last of the visions had gone by, confirming, by his looks and action, the verity of what had been shown. -- This would abundantly heighten the dramatic effect in the representation, as well as render that justice to the poet's conception and genius, of which I am persuaded he has here been deprived, by the unskilfulness or inattention of Messrs. Heminge and Condell.

216

SCENE II.

222. "**---- When our actions do not,**
"**Our fears do make us traitors.**"

I believe the treachery alluded to by the lady is Macduff's desertion of his family.

224. "**Shall not be long but I'll be here again.**"

This is not legitimate idiom, "the time," or "it," is indispensible before "shall."

"**Things at the worst will cease, or else**
climb upward
"**To what they were before.**"

This thought is introduced in K. Lear, with enlargment: --

"---- To be worst,
"The lowest and most abject thing of fortune,
"Stands still in esperance; lives not in fear;

"The lamentable change is from the best;
"The worst returns to laughter."

SCENE III.

238. **"Uproar the universal peace, confound."**

"Upróar," This seems to be the proper accentuation of the verb. Milton gives the same accent to the noun: --

"---- Hell scarce holds
"The vast uproar."

241. **"Thy here-approach."**

A similar compound occurs a little further on -- my here-remain.

245. **"The dead man's knell**
"Is there scarce ask'd, for who."

"Who" should be *whom*; but the construction is harsh and unwarrantable: the knell is *heard* without the *question* being asked for whom?

246. **"There ran a rumour**
"Of many worthy fellows that were out."

i. e. Abroad, in the field, against the usurper.
Lord Chedworth.

249. **"He has no children."**

It is hardly necessary to enquire here whether Macbeth really had children or not -- the words are the passionate ejaculation of a father, and imply no more than, "he who could do this deed cannot have a father's feelings. Queen Margaret, in a similar strain of reproach, exclaims, at the murderers of her son Edward,

"Ye have no children, butchers!

251. **"Cut short all intermission."**

Just so does Hotspur invoke --

"O let the hours be short."

252. "Our lack is nothing but our leave."

We want nothing but the king's leave or permission to go: or may it not mean, nothing now remains but the ceremony of taking leave.

ACT V. SCENE II.

260. "Minutely revolts."

Revolts that are breaking out every minute.

SCENE III.

265. "---- ---- This push
"Will cheer me ever, or disseat me now."

It is probable that in Shakspeare's time chair was pronounced as at present it is, vulgarly, like "cheer;" a quibble is plainly observable between "chairing" (seating), and "cheering" (encouraging); a similar licence, for a similar purpose, is used with reasons, and raisins, in K. Henry IV. "If reasons were as plenty as blackberries."

273. "Pull't off, I say."

This is said to the person helping to arm Macbeth, who is impatient at some obstacle.

SCENE IV.

274. "Where there is advantage to be given,
"Both more and less have given him the revolt."

It appears to me, that, the true sense of this passage has been overlooked by all the commentators. "Where there is advantage to be given," I believe, implies, where there is evident inferiority; the castle is the tyrant's "main hope;" because (says the speaker) from an army already inferior to ours, desertions, both great and small,

are continually weakening him. That this is the meaning, I think is clear, from a passage in King

Henry V. where the Dauphin, speaking of the weak condition of the English army, asks --

"Shall we go send them dinners and fresh suits,
"And give their fasting horses provender,
"And after fight them?"

"Where there is advantage to be given."

Perhaps we should read, "to be taken."
Lord Chedworth.

SCENE VII.

287. **"---- Either thou, Macbeth,
"Or else my sword, with an unbatter'd edge,
"I sheathe again unheeded."**

This is a broken sentence: if the speaker's impetuosity had allowed him to be explicit, he would have said -- Either thou, Macbeth, shalt receive in thy body my sword, or else I will return it unbattered into the scabbard.

290. **"---- It hath cow'd my better part of man!"**

Milton says

"---- Compassion quell'd
"His best of man." ---- *Parad. Lost.*

292. **"Had I as many sons as I have hairs."**

In the Pilgrim, by Beaumont and Fletcher, we find a similar expression:

"Thou hast as many sins as hairs."

And Othello exclaims --

"---- Had all his hairs been lives,
"My great revenge had stomach for them all."