

• T H E •
PICTURE
SHAKES:
P E A R E



H A M L E T

HAMLET

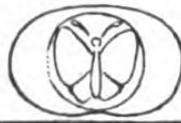
PRINCE OF DENMARK



Polonius.

For Lord Hamlet,
Believe so much in him, that he is young,
And with a larger tether may he walk
Than may be given you.

(Act I, Scene 3)



THE PICTURE SHAKESPEARE

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HAMLET



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The Notes and Appendices in this edition are substantially those of the Junior School Shakespeare. For the purpose of this edition both texts and notes have been revised by practical teachers, in order to secure entire suitability for class use, and particularly for the needs of those reading for the College of Preceptors or Junior Local Examinations. The following are the names of those who have performed this work of revision:—

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INTRODUCTION

THE STORY OF THE PLAY

Act I.—*Hamlet*, Prince of Denmark, although thirty years of age, was still studying philosophy in the University of Wittenberg when he heard of the sudden death of his father. He at once hastened home, only to find that his mother (*Gertrude*) had already married again, and actually married her dead husband's brother (*Claudius*). Indeed, the marriage followed the funeral so closely that according to Hamlet (i. 2. 179),—

“the funeral baked-meats
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables”.

This marriage was intensely disliked by everyone, for it had been celebrated with most unseemly haste, and the dead king, compared with Claudius, was as “Hyperion to a satyr” (i. 2. 140); and suspicions arose that Claudius had murdered his brother, partly for the sake of Gertrude and partly for the sake of the Danish throne, to which Hamlet was probably the lawful heir (v. 2. 65).

Hamlet had been deeply attached to his father, and showed his grief in dress and demeanour in spite of his mother's remonstrances. What troubled him most, however, was the uncertainty about his father's death. Claudius had given out that he had been stung by a serpent; but Hamlet's “prophetic soul” had grasped the truth (i. 2. 255; i. 5. 40).

While he was in this state of terrible uncertainty, he

was visited by his bosom friend, *Horatio*, and two other soldiers, *Marcellus* and *Bernardo*, who told him that the ghost of the dead king had appeared for three nights in succession on the platform before the castle,—that it did not answer even when addressed by Horatio,—and that it vanished the moment the cock crew (i. 2. 195, &c.).

Convinced that this apparition betokened “some foul play”, Hamlet took the next watch himself, along with Horatio and Marcellus. The ghost again appeared, and beckoned Hamlet apart. Horatio implored him not to go, for fear it was only an evil spirit tempting him on to his destruction (i. 4. 69); but Hamlet vowed that he did not set his life “at a pin’s fee”, and that he would “make a ghost” of anyone who tried to stop him.

In the subsequent interview (i. 5.) the ghost told Hamlet all the story of the murder, adjuring him by his love towards him to

“Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder”,

but, in doing so, not to contrive aught against his mother —“to leave her to heaven”.

All this Hamlet swore that he would faithfully perform; and, after pledging his two friends to the strictest secrecy, he hinted to them that he was going to

“put an antic disposition on”,

i.e. pretend to be mad. This would allay any possible suspicions on the part of his uncle, and thus enable him to mature his plans for vengeance. To this one purpose, henceforth, he swore to devote his life, sacrificing for it even his love for *Ophelia*, the only daughter of a time-serving old proverb-monger, *Polonius*; and this course was made easier for him by the fact that she had been warned in the meantime both by her father and by her brother, *Laertes*, to avoid Hamlet (i. 3.), and to lay no store by all his letters and presents, by the many tenders

of his affection, or by the honourable fashion in which he had importuned her with love.

Act II.—So well did Hamlet counterfeit madness that both the king and the queen were more or less deceived; but, having some suspicion of the cause of the madness, they sent for two courtiers, *Rosencrantz* and *Guildenstern*, whom they commissioned to cheer and at the same time carefully observe their “too much changed son” (ii. 2. 1–39). Polonius, however, assured the king that Hamlet’s madness was caused by unrequited love—his love for Ophelia; and, in proof of his assertion, he produced a wild letter which Hamlet had sent to her, and which she had passed on—apparently, without any hesitation—to her father (ii. 2. 110).

In the meantime there came to court a certain theatrical company in which Hamlet had formerly taken great interest; and the idea occurred to him of having a performance—before the king—of something very like the murder of his father. By this means he intended to “catch the conscience of the king”, and to remove from his own mind a fear that the ghost was only an evil spirit masquerading as his father for the express purpose of tempting him into crime.

Act III.—This plan he carried out to the letter, even inserting in the play a passage which he had written—in accordance with the ghost’s story—specially to test Claudius; and the result utterly confirmed his worst suspicions. For, when the players came to ‘a poisoning scene in a garden’, the conscience-stricken king sprang up, called for lights, and abruptly left the theatre (iii. 2. 253).

Convinced by this of his uncle’s guilt, Hamlet was thinking over the means of taking vengeance on him when he was summoned to a private interview with the queen. On his way to her he had an opportunity of killing the king, but failed to take it. [This was a fatal

mistake, involving the deaths of Ophelia, Polonius, Laertes, Gertrude, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern; and the *reasons* given by Hamlet (iii. 3. 79) for his delay seem to be only *excuses*.]

It was at her husband's orders that the queen had sent the summons, with a view to rebuking Hamlet for his unfilial conduct; and, as the king suspected that her motherly love might cause her to give an incomplete or prejudiced account of the interview, Polonius offered to hide behind the curtains in the queen's room, where he could overhear all that passed between the mother and son (iii. 3. 28, &c.).

In the interview Hamlet bitterly reproached her with her conduct; and he became so vehement in his language that she, believing all the time that he was mad, began to fear he would do her some bodily injury, and cried out for help. Her cry was at once repeated from behind the curtains; and Hamlet, mistaking Polonius' voice for the king's, ran his sword through the curtains at the place from which the voice had seemed to come (iii. 4. 25).

Act IV.—The death of Polonius gave the king an excuse for banishing Hamlet from Denmark. Indeed, if he had dared, he would have put him to death openly. As he dared not do that, he shipped him away to England in the company of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, by whom also he sent letters to the English sovereign ordering him to put Hamlet to death (iv. 3).

[Hamlet, however, suspected some treachery, and got temporary possession of the letters by night. Then, having erased his own name and inserted instead the names of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, he returned the letters to the place from which he had abstracted them (v. 2. 1-55).]

On the way the ship was attacked by pirates; and, as Hamlet was leading a boarding-column on to the pirate vessel, he was suddenly deserted by his companions and

taken prisoner by the pirates. The latter, however, partly out of admiration for his courage, partly out of disgust at the treachery of the others, and partly in hope of reward from such an important person as the heir-apparent to the Danish throne, landed him at the nearest Danish port (iv. 6.).

Meanwhile, the shock of her father's death, and the fact that it had been caused by the prince whom she loved, had proved too much for Ophelia's naturally feeble brain; it gave way under the strain, and she drowned herself. Then this double calamity was used by the king to stir up her brother, Laertes, to kill Hamlet as the cause of it all (iv. 7.).

Act V.—Accordingly, Laertes, after quarrelling violently with Hamlet at Ophelia's grave, challenged him to a "brother's wager" with the foils. At this, by the king's direction, he used a poisoned and buttonless foil; and with it he wounded Hamlet, knowing that the wound must be fatal. Hamlet, incensed at the blow, redoubled his efforts and disarmed his opponent; and, in restoring him a weapon, he accidentally gave him the wrong one. Then he himself innocently wounded Laertes with the poisoned point.

At that very moment the queen, who had just tasted some wine which the king had prepared for Hamlet, fell dead, shrieking out that she was poisoned; and Laertes, realizing that he too had been wounded mortally by the poisoned foil, confessed all. Thereupon Hamlet turned his sword on his uncle, thus fulfilling the oath made to his father's spirit.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

CLAUDIUS, King of Denmark.

HAMLET, son to the late, and nephew to the present King.

POLONIUS, lord chamberlain.

HORATIO, friend to Hamlet.

LAERTES, son to Polonius.

VOLTIMAND,

CORNELIUS,

ROSENCRANTZ,

GULDENSTERN,

OSRIC,

A Gentleman,

A Priest.

MARCELLUS,

BERNARDO,

FRANCISCO, a soldier.

REYNALDO, servant to Polonius.

Players.

Two Clowns, grave-diggers.

FORTINBRAS, Prince of Norway.

A Captain.

English Ambassadors.

GERTRUDE, Queen of Denmark, and mother to Hamlet.

OPHELIA, daughter to Polonius.

Lords, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Sailors, Messengers, and other Attendants.

Ghost of Hamlet's Father.

SCENE: *Denmark.*

HAMLET

ACT I

SCENE I. *Elsinore. A platform before the castle*

FRANCISCO at his post. Enter to him BERNARDO

Ber. Who's there?

Fran. Nay, answer me: stand, and unfold yourself.

Ber. Long live the king!

Fran. Bernardo?

Ber. He.

Fran. You come most carefully upon your hour.

Ber. 'Tis now struck twelve; get thee to bed,
Francisco.

Fran. For this relief much thanks: 't is bitter cold,
And I am sick at heart.

Ber. Have you had quiet guard?

Fran. Not a mouse stirring. 10

Ber. Well, good night.

If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,
The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste.

Fran. I think I hear them. Stand, ho! Who is
there?

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS

Hor. Friends to this ground.

Mar. And liegemen to the Dane. 15

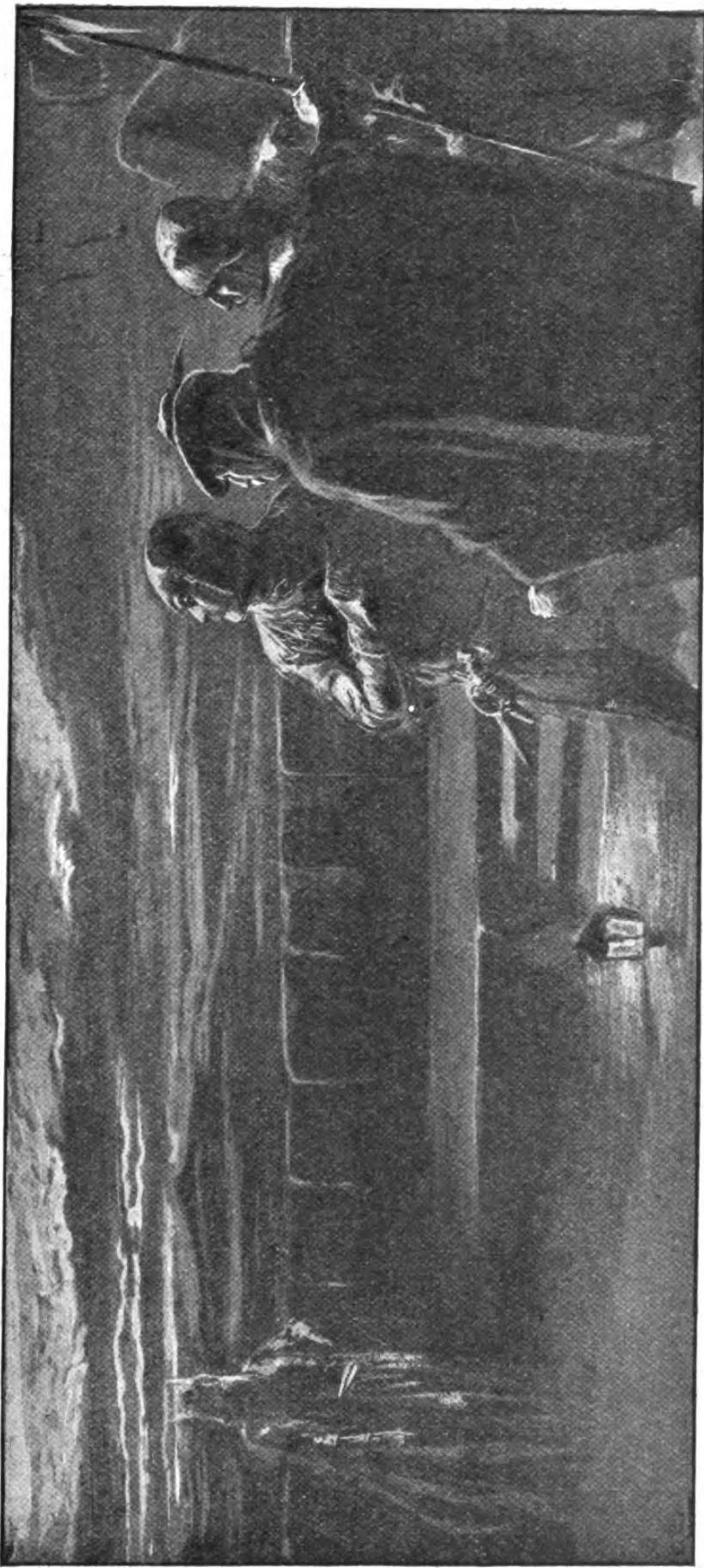
Fran. Give you good night.

Mar. O, farewell, honest soldier:
Who hath relieved you?

Fran. Bernardo hath my place.
Give you good night. [*Exit*]
Mar. Holla! Bernardo!
Ber. Say,
What, is Horatio there?
Hor. A piece of him.
Ber. Welcome, Horatio: welcome, good Marcellus.
Mar. What, has this thing appear'd again to-night?
Ber. I have seen nothing.
Mar. Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy,
And will not let belief take hold of him
Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us:
Therefore I have entreated him along
With us to watch the minutes of this night,
That if again this apparition come,
He may approve our eyes and speak to it.
Hor. Tush, tush, 't will not appear.
Ber. Sit down awhile;
And let us once again assail your ears,
That are so fortified against our story,
What we have two nights seen.
Hor. Well, sit we down,
And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.
Ber. Last night of all,
When yond same star that's westward from the pole
Had made his course to illume that part of heaven
Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,
The bell then beating one,—

Enter Ghost

40 *Mar.* Peace, break thee off; look, where it comes again!
Ber. In the same figure, like the king that's dead.
Mar. Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio.
Ber. Looks it not like the king? mark it, Horatio.
Hor. Most like: it harrows me with fear and wonder.



Marr. Peace, break thee off; look, where it comes again!—(Act i. 1. 40.)

45 *Ber.* It would be spoke to.

Mar. Question it, Horatio.

Hor. What art thou, that usurp'st this time of night,
Together with that fair and warlike form
In which the majesty of buried Denmark
Did sometimes march? by heaven I charge thee,
speak!

50 *Mar.* It is offended.

Ber. See, it stalks away!

Hor. Stay! speak, speak! I charge thee, speak!

[*Exit Ghost*

Mar. 'T is gone, and will not answer.

Ber. How now, Horatio! you tremble and look pale:

Is not this something more than fantasy?

55 What think you on't?

Hor. Before my God, I might not this believe
Without the sensible and true avouch
Of mine own eyes.

Mar. Is it not like the king?

Hor. As thou art to thyself:

60 Such was the very armour he had on
When he the ambitious Norway combated;
So frown'd he once, when, in an angry parle,
He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice.

'T is strange.

65 *Mar.* Thus twice before, and jump at this dead hour,

With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.

Hor. In what particular thought to work I know not;

But, in the gross and scope of my opinion,
This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

70 *Mar.* Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that knows,

Why this same strict and most observant watch

So nightly toils the subject of the land,
And why such daily cast of brazen cannon,
And foreign mart for implements of war;
Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task
Does not divide the Sunday from the week;
What might be toward, that this sweaty haste
Doth make the night joint-labourer with the day:
Who is 't that can inform me?

Of this post-haste and romage in the land.

Ber. I think it be no other but e'en so:

Well may it sort that this portentous figure

110 Comes armed through our watch; so like the king

' That was and is the question of these wars.

Hor. A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.

In the most high and palmy state of Rome,

A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,

115 The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead

Did squeak and gibber in the open streets:

As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,

Disasters in the sun; and the moist star

Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands,

120 Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse:

And even the like prelude of fierce events,

As harbingers preceding still the fates

And prologue to the omen coming on,

Have heaven and earth together demonstrated

125 Unto our climatures and countrymen.

Re-enter Ghost

But soft, behold! lo, where it comes again!

I'll cross it, though it blast me. Stay, illusion!

If thou hast any sound, or use of voice,

Speak to me:

130 If there be any good thing to be done,

That may to thee do ease and grace to me,

Speak to me!

If thou art privy to thy country's fate,

Which, happily, foreknowing may avoid,

135 O, speak!

Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life

Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,

For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death,

[*The cock crows*

Speak of it: stay, and speak! Stop it, Marcellus.

Mar. Shall I strike at it with my partisan? 140

Hor. Do, if it will not stand.

Ber.

'T is here.

Hor.

'T is here.

Mar. 'T is gone!

[*Exit Ghost*•

We do it wrong, being so majestical,
To offer it the show of violence;
For it is, as the air, invulnerable,
And our vain blows malicious mockery. 145

Ber. It was about to speak when the cock crew.

Hor. And then it started like a guilty thing
Upon a fearful summons. I have heard,
The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn, 150
Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat
Awake the god of day; and at his warning,
Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,
The extravagant and erring spirit hies
To his confine: and of the truth herein
This present object made probation. 155

Mar. It faded on the crowing of the cock.
Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth all night long: 160
And then, they say, no spirit dare stir abroad,
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.

Hor. So have I heard and do in part believe it. 165
But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill:
Break we our watch up; and, by my advice,
Let us impart what we have seen to-night
Unto young Hamlet; for, upon my life, 170
This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him:
Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,
As needful in our loves, fitting our duty?

Mar. Let's do't, I pray; and I this morning know
 175 Where we shall find him most conveniently. [Exeunt

SCENE 2. *A room of state in the castle*

*Enter the KING, QUEEN, HAMLET, POLONIUS, LAERTES,
 VOLTIMAND, CORNELIUS, Lords, and Attendants*

King. Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's
 death

The memory be green, and that it us befitted
 To bear our hearts in grief and our whole kingdom
 To be contracted in one brow of woe,

5 Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature

That we with wisest sorrow think on him
 Together with remembrance of ourselves.

Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,
 The imperial jointress to this warlike state,

10 Have we, as 't were with a defeated joy,—

With an auspicious and a dropping eye,

With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,

In equal scale weighing delight and dole,—

Taken to wife: nor have we herein barr'd

15 Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone

With this affair along. For all, our thanks.

Now follows that you know,—young Fortinbras,

Holding a weak supposal of our worth,

Or thinking by our late dear brother's death

20 Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,

Colleagued with the dream of his advantage,

He hath not fail'd to pester us with message,

Importing the surrender of those lands

Lost by his father, with all bonds of law,

25 To our most valiant brother. So much for him.

Now for ourself and for this time of meeting:

Thus much the business is: we have here writ

To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras,—

Who, impotent and bed-rid, scarcely hears
 Of this his nephew's purpose,—to suppress
 His further gait herein; in that the levies,
 The lists and full proportions, are all made
 Out of his subject: and we here dispatch
 You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltimand,
 For bearers of this greeting to old Norway;
 Giving to you no further personal power
 To business with the king more than the scope
 Of these delated articles allow.
 Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty.

Cor. } In that and all things will we show our duty. 40
Vol. }

King. We doubt it nothing: heartily farewell.

[*Exeunt Voltimand and Cornelius*

And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?
 You told us of some suit; what is 't, Laertes?
 You cannot speak of reason to the Dane,
 And lose your voice: what wouldest thou beg, Laertes, 45
 That shall not be my offer, not thy asking?
 The head is not more native to the heart,
 The hand more instrumental to the mouth,
 Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.
 What wouldest thou have, Laertes?

Laer. Dread my lord, 50
 Your leave and favour to return to France;
 From whence though willingly I came to Denmark,
 To show my duty in your coronation,
 Yet now, I must confess, that duty done,
 My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France, 55
 And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

King. Have you your father's leave? What says
 Polonius?

Pol. He hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow
 leave

By laboursome petition, and at last

60 Upon his will I seal'd my hard consent;
I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

King. Take thy fair hour, Laertes; time be thine,
And thy best graces spend it at thy will!

But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son,—

65 *Ham.* [Aside.] A little more than kin, and less than kind.

King. How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

Ham. Not so, my lord: I am too much i' the sun.

Queen. Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.

70 Do not for ever with thy vailed lids

Seek for thy noble father in the dust:

Thou know'st 't is common; all that lives must die,
Passing through nature to eternity.

Ham. Ay, madam, it is common.

Queen. If it be,

75 Why seems it so particular with thee?

Ham. Seems, madam! nay, it is; I know not
'seems'.

'T is not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
Nor customary suits of solemn black,
Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,

80 No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,

Nor the dejected haviour of the visage,

Together with all forms, moods, shows of grief,
That can denote me truly: these indeed seem,
For they are actions that a man might play:

85 But I have that within which passeth show;

These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

King. 'T is sweet and commendable in your nature,
Hamlet,

To give these mourning duties to your father:

But, you must know, your father lost a father,

90 That father lost, lost his, and the survivor bound
In filial obligation for some term

To do obsequious sorrow: but to persever
In obstinate condolement is a course
Of impious stubbornness; 'tis unmanly grief:
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven, 95
A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,
An understanding simple and unschool'd:
For what we know must be and is as common
As any the most vulgar thing to sense,
Why should we in our peevish opposition 100
Take it to heart? Fie! 't is a fault to heaven,
A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
To reason most absurd, whose common theme
Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,
From the first corse till he that died to-day, 105
'This must be so'. We pray you, throw to earth
This unprevailing woe, and think of us
As of a father: for let the world take note,
You are the most immediate to our throne;
And with no less nobility of love 110
Than that which dearest father bears his son,
Do I impart toward you. For your intent
In going back to school in Wittenberg,
It is most retrograde to our desire:
And we beseech you, bend you to remain 115
Here in the cheer and comfort of our eye,
Our chieftest courtier, cousin, and our son.

Queen. Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet:
I pray thee, stay with us; go not to Wittenberg.

Ham. I shall in all my best obey you, madam. 120

King. Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply:
Be as ourself in Denmark. Madam, come;
This gentle and unforced accord of Hamlet
Sits smiling to my heart: in grace whereof
No jocund health that Denmark drinks to-day 125
But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,
And the king's rouse the heavens shall bruit again,

Re-speaking earthly thunder. Come away.

[*Exeunt all but Hamlet*

Ham. O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,
130 Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!

Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! God!
How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world!

135 Fie on't! ah fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely. That it should come to this!
But two months dead! nay, not so much, not two:
So excellent a king; that was, to this,

140 Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!
Must I remember? why, she would hang on him
As if increase of appetite had grown

145 By what it fed on: and yet, within a month—
Let me not think on't—Frailty, thy name is woman!—
A little month, or ere those shoes were old
With which she followed my father's poor body,
Like Niobe, all tears, why she, even she—

150 O God! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,
Would have mourn'd longer—married with my uncle,
My father's brother, but no more like my father
Than I to Hercules: within a month:
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears

155 Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
She married.

It is not, nor can it come to good:
But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue.

Enter HORATIO, MARCELLUS, and BERNARDO

Hor. Hail to your lordship!

Ham. I am glad to see you well:

Horatio,—or I do forget myself.

160

Hor. The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.

Ham. Sir, my good friend; I'll change that name with you:

And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio?
Marcellus?

Mar. My good lord—

165

Ham. I am very glad to see you. Good even, sir.
But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?

Hor. A truant disposition, good my lord.

Ham. I would not hear your enemy say so,
Nor shall you do mine ear that violence
To make it truster of your own report
Against yourself: I know you are no truant.
But what is your affair in Elsinore?
We'll teach you to drink deep ere you depart.

170

Hor. My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.

175

Ham. I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow-student;
I think it was to see my mother's wedding.

Hor. Indeed, my lord, it follow'd hard upon.

Ham. Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral baked-meats

Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.
Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven
Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio!
My father!—methinks I see my father.

180

Hor. O where, my lord?

Ham. In my mind's eye, Horatio.

Hor. I saw him—once; he was a goodly king.

185

Ham. He was a man, take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.

Hor. My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

Ham. Saw? who?

Hor. My lord, the king your father.

Ham. The king my father!

190

Hor. Season your admiration for a while
With an attent ear, till I may deliver,
Upon the witness of these gentlemen,
This marvel to you.

Ham. For God's love, let me hear.

195 *Hor.* Two nights together had these gentlemen,
Marcellus and Bernardo, on their watch,



Ham. For God's love, let me hear.—(Act i. 2. 194.)

In the dead vast and middle of the night,
Been thus encounter'd. A figure like your father,
Armed at point exactly, cap-a-pe,
200 Appears before them, and with solemn march
Goes slow and stately by them: thrice he walk'd
By their oppress'd and fear-surprised eyes,
Within his truncheon's length; whilst they, distill'd
Almost to jelly with the act of fear,
205 Stand dumb and speak not to him. This to me

In dreadful secrecy impart they did;
And I with them the third night kept the watch:
Where, as they had deliver'd, both in time,
Form of the thing, each word made true and good,
The apparition comes: I knew your father; 210
These hands are not more like.

Ham. But where was this?

Mar. My lord, upon the platform where we watch'd.

Ham. Did you not speak to it?

Hor. My lord, I did;

But answer made it none: yet once methought
It lifted up it head and did address 215
Itself to motion, like as it would speak;
But even then the morning cock crew loud,
And at the sound it shrunk in haste away,
And vanish'd from our sight.

Ham. 'T is very strange.

Hor. As I do live, my honour'd lord, 't is true; 220
And we did think it writ down in our duty
To let you know of it.

Ham. Indeed, indeed, sirs, but this troubles me.
Hold you the watch to-night?

Mar. } We do, my lord.
Ber. }

Ham. Arm'd, say you? 225

Mar. } Arm'd, my lord.
Ber. }

Ham. From top to toe?

Mar. } My lord, from head to foot.
Ber. }

Ham. Then saw you not his face?

Hor. O, yes, my lord; he wore his beaver up.

Ham. What, look'd he frowningly? 230

Hor. A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.

Ham. Pale or red?

Hor. Nay, very pale.

Ham. And fix'd his eyes upon you?

Hor. Most constantly.

Ham. I would I had been there.

235 *Hor.* It would have much amazed you.

Ham. Very like, very like. Stay'd it long?

Hor. While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.

Mar. } Longer, longer.
Ber. }

Hor. Not when I saw 't.

Ham. His beard was grizzled? no?

240 *Hor.* It was, as I have seen it in his life,
A sable silver'd.

Ham. I will watch to-night;
Perchance 't will walk again.

Hor. I warrant it will.

245 *Ham.* If it assume my noble father's person,
I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape
And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,

If you have hitherto conceal'd this sight,
Let it be tenable in your silence still;
And whatsoever else shall hap to-night,
Give it an understanding, but no tongue:

250 I will requite your loves. So, fare you well:
Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,
I'll visit you.

All. Our duty to your honour.

Ham. Your loves, as mine to you: farewell.

[*Exeunt all but Hamlet*

My father's spirit in arms! all is not well;

255 I doubt some foul play: would the night were come!
Till then sit still, my soul: foul deeds will rise,
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes.

[*Exit*

SCENE 3. *A room in Polonius's house*

Enter LAERTES and OPHELIA

Laer. My necessaries are embark'd: farewell:
And, sister, as the winds give benefit
And convoy is assistant, do not sleep,
But let me hear from you.

Oph. Do you doubt that?

Laer. For Hamlet and the trifling of his favour, 5
Hold it a fashion and a toy in blood,
A violet in the youth of primy nature,
Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,
The perfume and suppliance of a minute,
No more.

Oph. No more but so?

Laer. Think it no more: 10
For nature crescent does not grow alone
In thews and bulk, but, as this temple waxes,
The inward service of the mind and soul
Grows wide withal. Perhaps he loves you now,
And now no soil nor cautel doth besmirch 15
The virtue of his will: but you must fear,
His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own;
For he himself is subject to his birth:
He may not, as unvalued persons do,
Carve for himself, for on his choice depends 20
The safety and health of this whole state;
And therefore must his choice be circumscribed
Unto the voice and yielding of that body
Whereof he is the head. Then if he says he loves
you,

It fits your wisdom so far to believe it 25
As he in his particular act and place
May give his saying deed; which is no further
Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.

Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain,
 30 If with too credent ear you list his songs,
 Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open
 To his unmaster'd importunity.

Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister,
 And keep you in the rear of your affection,
 35 Out of the shot and danger of desire.

The chariest maid is prodigal enough,
 If she unmask her beauty to the moon:
 Virtue itself 'scapes not calumnious strokes:
 The canker galls the infants of the spring
 40 Too oft before their buttons be disclosed,
 And in the morn and liquid dew of youth
 Contagious blastments are most imminent.
 Be wary then; best safety lies in fear:
 Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

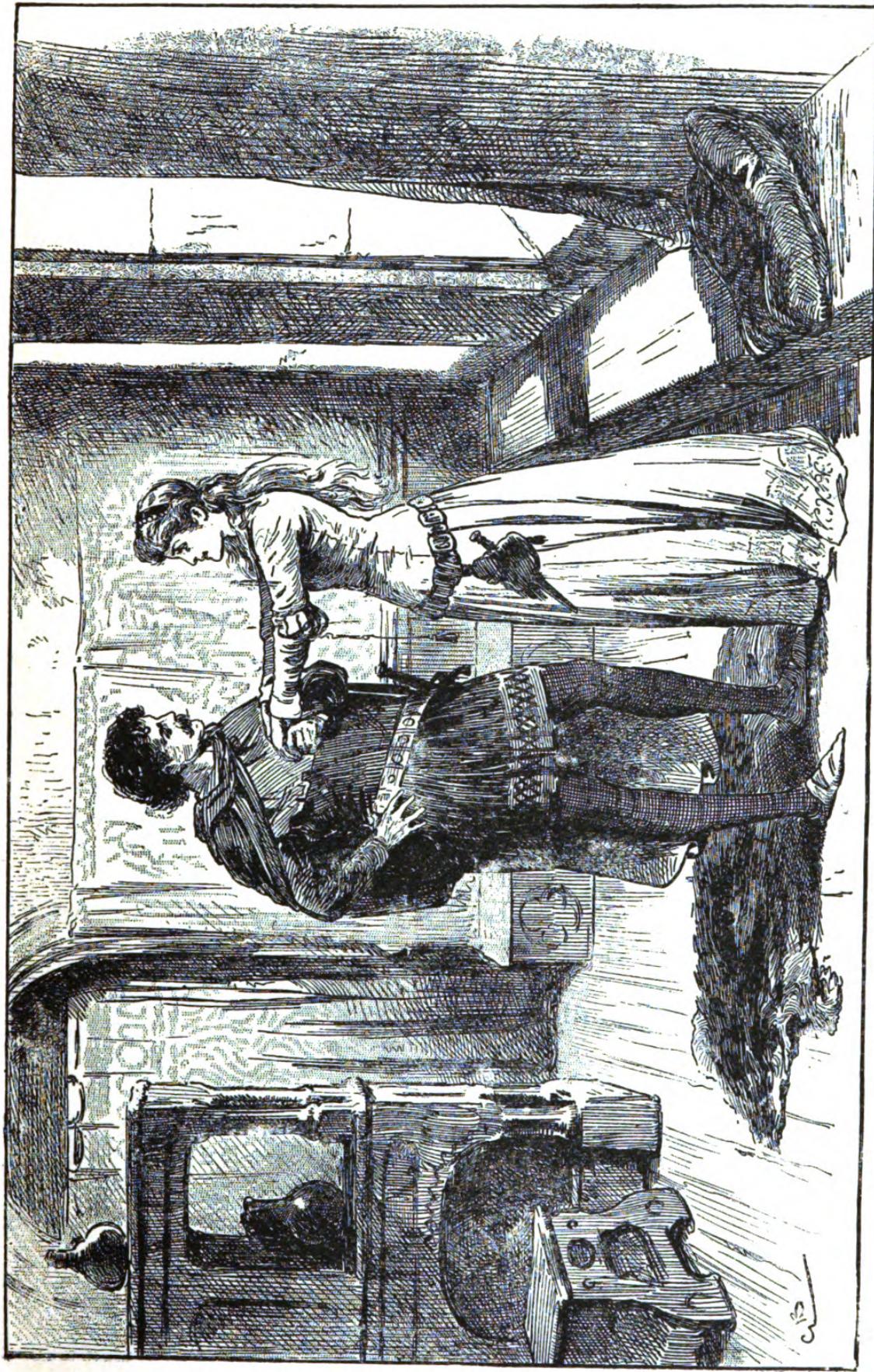
45 *Oph.* I shall the effect of this good lesson keep,
 As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother,
 Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
 Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven;
 Whiles, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,
 50 Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads
 And recks not his own rede.

Laer. O, fear me not.
 I stay too long: but here my father comes.

Enter POLONIUS

A double blessing is a double grace;
 Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

55 *Pol.* Yet here, Laertes! aboard, aboard, for shame!
 The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,
 And you are stay'd for. There; my blessing with thee!
 And these few precepts in thy memory
 See thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,
 60 Nor any unproportion'd thought his act.
 Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.



Oph.
But, good my brother,
Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven;

Whilst, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads
And reck's not his own rede.—(Act i. 3. 46-51.)

Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
 Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel,
 But do not dull thy palm with entertainment

65 Of each new-hatch'd, unfledged comrade. Beware
 Of entrance to a quarrel, but, being in,
 Bear 't that the opposed may beware of thee.
 Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice:
 Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgement.

70 Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
 But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy;
 For the apparel oft proclaims the man,
 And they in France of the best rank and station
 Are of a most select and generous chief in that.

75 Neither a borrower nor a lender be;
 For loan oft loses both itself and friend,
 And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
 This above all: to thine own self be true,
 And it must follow, as the night the day,
 80 Thou canst not then be false to any man.
 Farewell: my blessing season this in thee!

Laer. Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

Pol. The time invites you; go; your servants tend.

Laer. Farewell, Ophelia, and remember well

85 What I have said to you.

Oph. 'T is in my memory lock'd,
 And you yourself shall keep the key of it.

Laer. Farewell.

[Exit]

Pol. What is 't, Ophelia, he hath said to you?

Oph. So please you, something touching the Lord
 Hamlet.

90 *Pol.* Marry, well bethought:

'T is told me, he hath very oft of late
 Given private time to you, and you yourself
 Have of your audience been most free and bounteous:
 If it be so—as so 't is put on me,

95 And that in way of caution—I must tell you,

You do not understand yourself so clearly
As it behoves my daughter and your honour.
What is between you? give me up the truth.

Oph. He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders
Of his affection to me.

100

Pol. Affection! pooh! you speak like a green girl,
Unsifted in such perilous circumstance.

Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?

Oph. I do not know, my lord, what I should think.

Pol. Marry, I'll teach you: think yourself a baby, 105
That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,
Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly;
Or—not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,
Running it thus—you'll tender me a fool.

Oph. My lord, he hath importuned me with love 110
In honourable fashion.

Pol. Ay, fashion you may call it; go to, go to.

Oph. And hath given countenance to his speech,
my lord,

With almost all the holy vows of heaven.

Pol. Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do know, 115
When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul
Lends the tongue vows: these blazes, daughter
Giving more light than heat, extinct in both,
Even in their promise, as it is a-making,
You must not take for fire. From this time 120
Be something scanter of your maiden presence;
Set your entreatments at a higher rate
Than a command to parley. For Lord Hamlet,
Believe so much in him, that he is young,
And with a larger tether may he walk 125
Than may be given you: in few, Ophelia,
Do not believe his vows; for they are brokers,
Not of that dye which their investments show,
But mere implorators of unholy suits,
Breathing like sanctified and pious frauds 130

The better to beguile. This is for all:
 I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,
 Have you so slander any moment leisure
 As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.
 135 Look to 't, I charge you: come your ways.

Oph. I shall obey, my lord.

[*Exeunt*

SCENE 4. *The platform*

Enter HAMLET, HORATIO, and MARCELLUS

Ham. The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.

Hor. It is a nipping and an eager air.

Ham. What hour now?

Hor. I think it lacks of twelve.

Mar. No, it is struck.

5 *Hor.* Indeed? I heard it not: then it draws near
the season

Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

[*A flourish of trumpets, and ordnance shot off within*
What does this mean, my lord?

Ham. The king doth wake to-night and takes his
rouse,

Keeps wassail, and the swaggering up-spring reels;

10 And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,

The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out

The triumph of his pledge.

Hor. Is it a custom?

Ham. Ay, marry, is 't:

But to my mind, though I am native here

15 And to the manner born, it is a custom

More honour'd in the breach than the observance.

This heavy-headed revel east and west

Makes us traduced and tax'd of other nations:

They clepe us drunkards, and with swinish phrase

20 Soil our addition; and indeed it takes

From our achievements, though perform'd at height,

The pith and marrow of our attribute.
So, oft it chances in particular men,
That for some vicious mole of nature in them,
As, in their birth—wherein they are not guilty, 25
Since nature cannot choose his origin—
By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,
Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,
Or by some habit that too much o'er-leavens
The form of plausible manners, that these men, 30
Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,
Being nature's livery, or fortune's star,—
Their virtues else, be they as pure as grace,
As infinite as man may undergo—
Shall in the general censure take corruption 35
From that particular fault: the dram of eale
Doth all the noble substance of a doubt
To his own scandal.

Enter GHOST

Hor. Look, my lord, it comes!
Ham. Angels and ministers of grace defend us!
Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd, 40
Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,
Be thy intents wicked or charitable,
Thou comest in such a questionable shape
That I will speak to thee: I'll call thee Hamlet,
King, father, royal Dane: O, answer me! 45
Let me not burst in ignorance; but tell
Why thy canonized bones, hearsed in death,
Have burst their cerements; why the sepulchre,
Wherein we saw thee quietly inurn'd,
Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws, 50
To cast thee up again. What may this mean,
That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel
Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,
Making night hideous; and we fools of nature

55 So horridly to shake our disposition
 With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?
 Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we do?

[*Ghost beckons Hamlet*

Hor. It beckons you to go away with it,
 As if it some impartment did desire
 60 To you alone.

Mar. Look, with what courteous action
 It waves you to a more removed ground:
 But do not go with it.

Hor. No, by no means.

Ham. It will not speak; then I will follow it.

Hor. Do not, my lord.

Ham. Why, what should be the fear?

65 I do not set my life at a pin's fee;
 And for my soul, what can it do to that,
 Being a thing immortal as itself?
 It waves me forth again: I'll follow it.

Hor. What if it tempt you toward the flood, my
 lord,

70 Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff
 That beetles o'er his base into the sea,
 And there assume some other horrible form,
 Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason
 And draw you into madness? think of it:

75 The very place puts toys of desperation,
 Without more motive, into every brain
 That looks so many fathoms to the sea
 And hears it roar beneath.

Ham. It waves me still.

Go on; I'll follow thee.

80 *Mar.* You shall not go, my lord.

Ham. Hold off your hands.

Hor. Be ruled; you shall not go.

Ham. My fate cries out,
 And makes each petty artery in this body

As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.
Still am I called. Unhand me, gentlemen.



Ham. It waves me still.
Go on; I'll follow thee.—(Act i. 4. 78, 79.)

By heaven, I 'll make a ghost of him that lets me: 85
I say, away! Go on; I 'll follow thee.

[*Exeunt Ghost and Hamlet*

Hor. He waxes desperate with imagination.

Mar. Let's follow; 't is not fit thus to obey him.

Hor. Have after. To what issue will this come?

90 *Mar.* Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

Hor. Heaven will direct it.

Mar. Nay, let's follow him. [*Exeunt*

SCENE 5. *Another part of the platform*

Enter Ghost and HAMLET

Ham. Where wilt thou lead me? speak; I'll go no further.

Ghost. Mark me.

Ham. I will.

Ghost. My hour is almost come,
When I to sulphurous and tormenting flames
Must render up myself.

Ham. Alas, poor ghost!

5 *Ghost.* Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing
To what I shall unfold.

Ham. Speak; I am bound to hear.

Ghost. So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt
hear.

Ham. What?

Ghost. I am thy father's spirit;
10 Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,
And for the day confined to fast in fires,
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
Are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,

15 I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their
spheres,
Thy knotted and combined locks to part
And each particular hair to stand an end,

Like quills upon the fretful porpentine:
But this eternal blazon must not be
To ears of flesh and blood. List, list, O, list!
If thou didst ever thy dear father love—

Ham. O God!

Ghost. Revenge his foul and most unnatural mur-
der.

Ham. Murder!

Ghost. Murder most foul, as in the best it is;
But this most foul, strange and unnatural.

Ham. Haste me to know't, that I, with wings as
swift

As meditation or the thoughts of love,
May sweep to my revenge.

Ghost. I find thee apt;
And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed
That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,
Wouldst thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear:
'T is given out that, sleeping in my orchard,
A serpent stung me; so the whole ear of Denmark
Is by a forged process of my death
Rankly abused: but know, thou noble youth,
The serpent that did sting thy father's life
Now wears his crown.

Ham. O my prophetic soul!
My uncle!

Ghost. But, soft! methinks I scent the morning air;
Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,
My custom always of the afternoon,
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,
With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,
And in the porches of my ear did pour
The leperous distilment; whose effect
Holds such an enmity with blood of man
That swift as quicksilver it courses through
The natural gates and alleys of the body,

And with a sudden vigour it doth posset
 And curd, like eager droppings into milk,
 The thin and wholesome blood: so did it mine;
 55 And a most instant tetter bark'd about,
 Most lazarus-like, with vile and loathsome crust,
 All my smooth body.
 Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand
 Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatch'd:
 60 Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
 Unhousel'd, disappointed, unaneled,
 No reckoning made, but sent to my account
 With all my imperfections on my head:
 O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!
 65 If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not.
 But, howsoever thou pursuest this act,
 Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
 Against thy mother aught: leave her to heaven
 And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,
 70 To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once!
 The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,
 And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire:
 Adieu, adieu! Hamlet, remember me. [Exit
Ham. O all you host of heaven! O earth! what
 else?
 75 And shall I couple hell? O fie! Hold, hold, my
 heart;
 And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,
 But bear me stiffly up. Remember thee!
 Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
 In this distracted globe. Remember thee!
 80 Yea, from the table of my memory
 I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
 All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,
 That youth and observation copied there;
 And thy commandment all alone shall live
 85 Within the book and volume of my brain,

Unmix'd with baser matter: yes, by heaven!
O most pernicious woman!
O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!



Ham. Remember thee!
Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe.—(Act i. 5. 77-79.)

My tables,—meet it is I set it down,
That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain!

At least I'm sure it may be so in Denmark:

[Writing]

So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word;
It is 'Adieu, adieu! remember me'.

I have sworn 't.

Mar. } [Within.] My lord, my lord!
Hor. }

95 Mar. [Within.] Lord Hamlet!

Hor. [Within.] Heaven secure him!

Ham. So be it!

Hor. [Within.] Hillo, ho, ho, my lord!

Ham. Hillo, ho, ho, boy! come, bird, come.

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS

Mar. How is 't, my noble lord?

Hor. What news, my lord?

100 *Ham.* O, wonderful!

Hor. Good my lord, tell it.

Ham. No; you will reveal it.

Hor. Not I, my lord, by heaven.

Mar. Nor I, my lord.

Ham. How say you, then; would heart of man once think it?

But you'll be secret?

Hor. } Ay, by heaven, my lord.
Mar. }

105 *Ham.* There's ne'er a villain dwelling in all Denmark

But he's an arrant knave.

Hor. There needs no ghost, my lord, come from
the grave

To tell us this.

Ham. Why, right; you are i' the right;
And so, without more circumstance at all,
I hold it fit that we shake hands and part:
You, as your business and desire shall point you;

For every man hath business and desire
Such as it is; and for my own poor part,
Look you, I'll go pray.

Hor. These are but wild and whirling words, my lord.

115

Ham. I'm sorry they offend you, heartily;
Yes, faith, heartily.

Hor. There's no offence, my lord.

Ham. Yes, by Saint Patrick, but there is, Horatio,
And much offence too. Touching this vision here,
It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you: 120
For your desire to know what is between us,
O'ermaster't as you may. And now, good friends,
As you are friends, scholars and soldiers,
Give me one poor request.

Hor. What is 't my lord? we will. 125

Ham. Never make known what you have seen to-night.

Hor. } My lord, we will not.
Mar. } My lord, we will not.

Ham. Nay, but swear 't.

Hor. In faith,

My lord, not I.

Mar. Nor I, my lord, in faith.

Ham. Upon my sword.

Mar. We have sworn, my lord, already.

Ham. Indeed, upon my sword, indeed. 130

Ghost. [Beneath.] Swear.

Ham. Ah, ha, boy! say'st thou so? art thou there,
true-penny?

Come on: you hear this fellow in the cellarage:
Consent to swear.

Hor. Propose the oath, my lord.

Ham. Never to speak of this that you have seen, 135
Swear by my sword.

Ghost [Beneath.] Swear.

Ham. Hic et ubique? then we'll shift our ground.
 Come hither, gentlemen,
 140 And lay your hands again upon my sword:
 Never to speak of this that you have heard,
 Swear by my sword.

Ghost. [Beneath.] Swear.

Ham. Well said, old mole! canst work i' the earth
 so fast?

145 A worthy pioner! Once more remove, good friends.

Hor. O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!

Ham. And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.
 There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
 Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

150 But come:

Here, as before, never, so help you mercy,
 How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself,
 As I perchance hereafter shall think meet
 To put an antic disposition on,

155 That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,
 With arms encumber'd thus, or this head-shake,
 Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,
 As 'Well, well, we know', or 'We could, an if we
 would', .

Or 'If we list to speak', or 'There be, an if they might',

160 Or such ambiguous giving out, to note
 That you know aught of me: this not to do,
 So grace and mercy at your most need help you,
 Swear.

Ghost. [Beneath.] Swear.

165 *Ham.* Rest, rest, perturbed spirit! [They swear.] So,
 gentlemen,
 With all my love I do commend me to you:
 And what so poor a man as Hamlet is
 May do, to express his love and friending to you,
 God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together;
 170 And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.

The time is out of joint: O cursed spite
 That ever I was born to set it right!
 Nay, come, let's go together.

[*Exeunt*

ACT II

SCENE I. *A room in Polonius's house*

Enter POLONIUS and REYNALDO

Pol. Give him this money and these notes, Reynaldo.

Rey. I will, my lord.

Pol. You shall do marvellous wisely, good Reynaldo,
 Before you visit him, to make inquire
 Of his behaviour.

Rey. My lord, I did intend it. 5

Pol. Marry, well said; very well said. Look you, sir,
 Inquire me first what Danskers are in Paris,
 And how, and who, what means, and where they
 keep,

What company, at what expense; and finding
 By this encompassment and drift of question 10
 That they do know my son, come you more nearer
 Than your particular demands will touch it:
 Take you, as't were, some distant knowledge of him;
 As thus, 'I know his father and his friends,
 And in part him': do you mark this, Reynaldo? 15

Rey. Ay, very well, my lord:

Pol. 'And in part him; but' you may say 'not well:
 But if't be he I mean, he's very wild;
 Addicted so and so': and there put on him.
 What forgeries you please; marry, none so rank 20
 As may dishonour him; take heed of that;
 But, sir, such wanton, wild and usual slips
 As are companions noted and most known
 To youth and liberty.

Rey. As gaming, my lord.

25 *Pol.* Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing, quarreling:
You may go so far.

Rey. My lord, that would dishonour him.

Pol. Faith, no; as you may season it in the charge.
You must not put another scandal on him,
30 That he is open to incontinency;

That's not my meaning; but breathe his faults so
quaintly
That they may seem the taints of liberty,
The flash and outbreak of a fiery mind,
A savageness in unreclaimed blood,
35 Of general assault.

Rey. But, my good lord,—

Pol. Wherefore should you do this?

Rey. Ay, my lord,

I would know that.

Pol. Marry, sir, here's my drift;
And I believe it is a fetch of warrant:
You laying these slight sullies on my son,
40 As't were a thing a little soil'd i' the working,
Mark you,
Your party in converse, him you would sound,
Having ever seen in the prenominate crimes
The youth you breathe of guilty, be assured
45 He closes with you in this consequence;
'Good sir', or so, or 'friend', or 'gentleman',
According to the phrase or the addition
Of man and country.

Rey. Very good, my lord.

50 *Pol.* And then, sir, does he this—he does—what
was I about to say? By the Mass, I was about to
say something: where did I leave?

Rey. At 'closes in the consequence', at 'friend or
so', and 'gentleman'.

Pol. At 'closes in the consequence', ay marry;

He closes thus: 'I know the gentleman; 55
 I saw him yesterday, or t' other day,
 Or then, or then, with such, or such, and, as you say,
 There was a' gaming, there o'ertook in 's rouse;
 There falling out at tennis': or perchance,
 'I saw him enter such a house', or so forth. 60
 See you now;
 Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth:



Pol. Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth.—(Act ii. i. 62.)

And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,
 With windlasses and with assays of bias,
 By indirections find directions out: 65
 So, by my former lecture and advice,
 Shall you my son. You have me, have you not?

Rey. My lord, I have.

Pol. God be wi' you; fare you well.

Rey. Good my lord!

Pol. Observe his inclination in yourself. 70

Rey. I shall, my lord!

Pol. And let him ply his music.

Rey.

Well, my lord.

Pol. Farewell !

[Exit Reynaldo]

Enter OPHELIA

How now, Ophelia ! what's the matter ?

Oph. O, my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted !

75 *Pol.* With what, i' the name of God?

Oph. My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced;
No hat upon his head; his stockings foul'd,
Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ankle;
80 Pale as his shirt; his knees knocking each other,
And with a look so piteous in purport
As if he had been loosed out of hell
To speak of horrors, he comes before me.

Pol. Mad for thy love?

Oph. My lord, I do not know ;
85 But truly I do fear it.

Pol. What said he?
Oph. He took me by the wrist and held me hard;
Then goes he to the length of all his arm;
And with his other hand thus o'er his brow,
He falls to such perusal of my face
90 As he would draw it. Long stay'd he so;

At last, a little shaking of mine arm,
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,
He raised a sigh so piteous and profound
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk

95 And end his being: that done, he lets me go,
And with his head over his shoulder turn'd,
He seem'd to find his way without his eyes;
For out o' doors he went without their help,
And to the last bended their light on me.

100 *Pol.* Come, go with me: I will go seek the king.

This is the very ecstasy of love,
 Whose violent property fordoes itself
 And leads the will to desperate undertakings
 As oft as any passion under heaven
 That does afflict our natures. I am sorry. 105
 What, have you given him any hard words of late?



Oph. He took me by the wrist and held me hard.—(Act ii. i. 86.)

Oph. No, my good lord; but, as you did command,
 I did repel his letters and denied
 His access to me.

Pol. That hath made him mad. 110
 I am sorry that with better heed and judgement
 I had not quoted him: I fear'd he did but trifled,
 And meant to wreck thee; but beshrew my jealousy!
 By heaven, it is as proper to our age
 To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions
 As it is common for the younger sort 115

To lack discretion. Come, go we to the king:
 This must be known; which, being kept close, might
 move

More grief to hide than hate to utter love.

Come.

[*Exeunt*

SCENE 2. A room in the castle

*Enter KING, QUEEN, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN,
 and Attendants*

King. Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern!
 Moreover that we much did long to see you,
 The need we have to use you did provoke
 Our hasty sending. Something have you heard
 5 Of Hamlet's transformation; so call it,
 Sith nor the exterior nor the inward man
 Resembles that it was. What it should be,
 More than his father's death, that thus hath put him
 So much from the understanding of himself,
 10 I cannot dream of: I entreat you both,
 That, being of so young days brought up with him,
 And sith so neighbour'd to his youth and haviour
 That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court
 Some little time: so by your companies
 15 To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather
 So much as from occasion you may glean,
 Whether aught, to us unknown, afflicts him thus,
 That open'd lies within our remedy.

Queen. Good gentlemen, he hath much talk'd of you;
 20 And sure I am two men there are not living
 To whom he more adheres. If it will please you
 To show us so much gentry and good will
 As to expend your time with us awhile,
 For the supply and profit of our hope,
 25 Your visitation shall receive such thanks
 As fits a king's remembrance.

Ros. Both your majesties
Might, by the sovereign power you have of us,
Put your dread pleasures more into command
Than to entreaty.

Guild. But we both obey,
And here give up ourselves, in the full bent 30
To lay our service freely at your feet,
To be commanded.

King. Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.

Queen. Thanks, Guildenstern and gentle Rosen-
crantz:

And I beseech you instantly to visit 35
My too much changed son. Go, some of you,
And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.

Guild. Heavens make our presence and our practices
Pleasant and helpful to him!

Queen. Ay, amen!

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz, Guildenstern,
and some Attendants*

Enter POLONIUS

Pol. The ambassadors from Norway, my good lord, 40
Are joyfully return'd.

King. Thou still hast been the father of good news.

Pol. Have I, my lord? I assure my good liege,
I hold my duty, as I hold my soul,
Both to my God and to my gracious king: 45
And I do think, or else this brain of mine
Hunts not the trail of policy so sure
As it hath used to do, that I have found
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

King. O, speak of that; that do I long to hear. 50

Pol. Give first admittance to the ambassadors;
My news shall be the fruit to that great feast.

King. Thyself do grace to them, and bring them in.

[*Exit Polonius*

He tells me, my dear Gertrude, he hath found
 55 The head and source of all your son's distemper.

Queen. I doubt it is no other but the main;
 His father's death and our o'erhasty marriage.

King. Well, we shall sift him.

Re-enter POLONIUS, with VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS

Welcome, my good friends!

Say, Voltimand, what from our brother Norway?

60 *Vol.* Most fair return of greetings and desires.

Upon our first, he sent out to suppress
 His nephew's levies, which to him appear'd
 To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack;
 But, better look'd into, he truly found

65 It was against your highness: whereat grieved,
 That so his sickness, age and impotence
 Was falsely borne in hand, sends out arrests
 On Fortinbras; which he, in brief, obeys;
 Receives rebuke from Norway, and in fine

70 Makes vow before his uncle never more
 To give the assay of arms against your majesty.

Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,
 Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee,
 And his commission to employ those soldiers,

75 So levied as before, against the Polack:
 With an entreaty, herein further shown,

[*Giving a paper*

That it might please you to give quiet pass
 Through your dominions for this enterprise,
 On such regards of safety and allowance

80 As therein are set down.

King. It likes us well;
 And at our more consider'd time we'll read,
 Answer, and think upon this business.
 Meantime we thank you for your well-took labour:

Go to your rest; at night we'll feast together:
 Most welcome home! [Exeunt Voltimand and Cornelius
 Pol. This business is well ended. 85

My liege, and madam, to expostulate
 What majesty should be, what duty is,
 Why day is day, night night, and time is time,
 Were nothing but to waste night, day and time.
 Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit, 90
 And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,
 I will be brief. Your noble son is mad:
 Mad call I it; for, to define true madness,
 What is 't but to be nothing else but mad?
 But let that go.

Queen. More matter, with less art. 95

Pol. Madam, I swear I use no art at all.
 That he is mad, 't is true: 't is true 't is pity,
 And pity 't is 't is true: a foolish figure;
 But farewell it, for I will use no art.
 Mad let us grant him then: and now remains 100
 That we find out the cause of this effect,
 Or rather say, the cause of this defect,
 For this effect defective comes by cause:
 Thus it remains and the remainder thus.
 Perpend. 105

I have a daughter—have while she is mine—
 Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,
 Hath given me this: now gather and surmise.

[Reads]

'To the celestial and my soul's idol, the most
 beautified Ophelia,'— 110
 That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase; 'beautified' is a
 vile phrase: but you shall hear. Thus:

[Reads]

'In her excellent white bosom, these, &c.'

Queen. Came this from Hamlet to her?

Pol. Good madam, stay awhile; I will be faithful. 115

[*Reads*] ‘Doubt thou the stars are fire;
 Doubt that the sun doth move;
 Doubt truth to be a liar;
 But never doubt I love.

120 ‘O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers; I have
 not art to reckon my groans; but that I love thee best,
 O most best, believe it. Adieu.

‘Thine evermore, most dear lady,
 whilst this machine is to him,

125

HAMLET.’

This in obedience hath my daughter shown me,
 And more above, hath his solicitings,
 As they fell out by time, by means and place,
 All given to mine ear.

King. But how hath she
 Received his love?

Pol. What do you think of me?

King. As of a man faithful and honourable.

130 *Pol.* I would fain prove so. But what might you
 think,

When I had seen this hot love on the wing—

As I perceived it, I must tell you that,

135 Before my daughter told me—what might you,
 Or my dear majesty your queen here, think,
 If I had play'd the desk or table-book,
 Or given my heart a winking, mute and dumb,
 Or look'd upon this love with idle sight;

140 What might you think? No, I went round to work,
 And my young mistress thus I did bespeak:

‘Lord Hamlet is a prince, out of thy star;

This must not be’: and then I prescripts gave her,
 That she should lock herself from his resort,

145 Admit no messengers, receive no tokens.

Which done, she took the fruits of my advice;

And he repulsed, a short tale to make,
Fell into sadness, then into a fast,
Thence to a watch, thence into a weakness,
Thence to a lightness, and by this declension
Into the madness wherein now he raves
And all we mourn for.

King. Do you think 'tis this?

Queen. It may be, very like.

Pol. Hath there been such a time, I 'ld fain know
that,

That I have positively said 'T is so',
When it proved otherwise?

King. Not that I know.

Pol. [Pointing to his head and shoulder]. Take this
from this, if this be otherwise:

If circumstances lead me, I will find
Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed
Within the centre.

King. How may we try it further? 160

Pol. You know, sometimes he walks for hours
together

Here in the lobby.

Queen. So he does indeed.

Pol. At such a time I 'll loose my daughter to him:
Be you and I behind an arras then;
Mark the encounter: if he love her not,
And be not from his reason fall'n thereon,
Let me be no assistant for a state,
But keep a farm and carters.

King. We will try it.

Queen. But look where sadly the poor wretch comes
reading.

Pol. Away, I do beseech you, both away:
I 'll board him presently.

[*Exeunt King, Queen, and Attendants*

Enter HAMLET, reading

O, give me leave!

How does my good Lord Hamlet?

Ham. Well, God-a-mercy.

Pol. Do you know me, my lord?

175 *Ham.* Excellent well; you are a fishmonger.

Pol. Not I, my lord.

Ham. Then I would you were so honest a man.

Pol. Honest, my lord!

180 *Ham.* Ay, sir; to be honest, as this world goes, is
to be one man picked out of ten thousand.

Pol. That's very true, my lord.

Ham. For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog,
being a god kissing carrion—Have you a daughter?

Pol. I have, my lord.

185 *Ham.* Let her not walk i' the sun:—friend, look to 't.

Pol. [Aside]. How say you by that? Still harping
on my daughter: yet he knew me not at first; he said
I was a fishmonger: he is far gone: and truly in my
youth I suffered much extremity for love; very near
190 this. I'll speak to him again. What do you read,
my lord?

Ham. Words, words, words.

Pol. What is the matter, my lord?

Ham. Between who?

195 *Pol.* I mean, the matter that you read, my lord?

Ham. Slanders, sir: for the satirical rogue says
here that old men have grey beards, that their faces
are wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber and plum-
tree gum, and that they have a plentiful lack of wit,
200 together with the most weak hams: all which, sir,
though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I
hold it not honesty to have it thus set down; for
yourself, sir, should be old as I am, if like a crab you
could go backward.

Pol. [Aside]. Though this be madness, yet there is 205
method in 't. Will you walk out of the air, my lord?

Ham. Into my grave.

Pol. Indeed, that's out of the air. *[Aside]* How
pregnant sometimes his replies are! a happiness that



Pol. [Aside]. Will you walk out of the air, my lord?

Ham. Into my grave.—(Act ii. 2. 206, 207.)

often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could 210
not so prosperously be delivered of. I will leave him,
and suddenly contrive the means of meeting between
him and my daughter.—My honourable lord, I will
most humbly take my leave of you.

Ham. You cannot, sir, take from me anything that 215

I will more willingly part withal: except my life,
except my life, except my life.

Pol. Fare you well, my lord.

Ham. These tedious old fools!

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

220 *Pol.* You go to seek the Lord Hamlet; there he is.

Ros. [To Pol.]. God save you, sir! [Exit Polonius
Guild. My honoured lord!

Ros. My most dear lord!

Ham. My excellent good friends! How dost thou,
225 *Guildenstern?* Ah, Rosencrantz! Good lads, how do
you both?

Ros. As the indifferent children of the earth.

Guild. Happy, in that we are not over-happy;

On Fortune's cap we are not the very button.

230 *Ham.* Nor the soles of her shoe?

Ros. Neither, my lord.

Ham. Then you live about her waist. What's the
news?

235 *Ros.* None, my lord, but that the world's grown
honest.

Ham. Then is doomsday near: but your news is not
true. Let me question more in particular: what have
you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of
Fortune, that she sends you to prison hither?

240 *Guild.* Prison, my lord!

Ham. Denmark's a prison.

Ros. Then is the world one.

Ham. A goodly one; in which there are many
confines, wards and dungeons, Denmark being one o'
245 the worst.

Ros. We think not so, my lord.

Ham. Why, then, 't is none to you; for there is
nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so:
to me it is a prison.

Ros. Why, then your ambition makes it one; 't is 250
too narrow for your mind.

Ham. O God, I could be bounded in a nut-shell
and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not
that I have bad dreams.

Guild. Which dreams indeed are ambition; for the 255
very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow
of a dream.

Ham. A dream itself is but a shadow.

Ros. Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light
a quality that it is but a shadow's shadow. 260

Ham. Then are our beggars bodies, and our monarchs
and outstretched heroes the beggars' shadows. Shall
we to the court? for, by my fay, I cannot reason.

Ros. } We'll wait upon you.
Guild. }

Ham. No such matter: I will not sort you with the 265
rest of my servants; for, to speak to you like an
honest man, I am most dreadfully attended. But, in
the beaten way of friendship, what make you at
Elsinore?

Ros. To visit you, my lord; no other occasion. 270

Ham. Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks;
but I thank you: and sure, dear friends, my thanks
are too dear a halfpenny. Were you not sent for? Is
it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come,
deal justly with me: come, come; nay, speak. 275

Guild. What should we say, my lord?

Ham. Why, any thing, but to the purpose. You
were sent for; and there is a kind of confession in
your looks which your modesties have not craft enough
to colour: I know the good king and queen have sent 280
for you.

Ros. To what end, my lord?

Ham. That you must teach me. But let me conjure
you, by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy

285 of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by what more dear a better proposer could charge you withal, be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for, or no.

Ros. [Aside to *Guildenstern*]. What say you?

290 *Ham.* [Aside]. Nay, then, I have an eye of you.— If you love me, hold not off.

Guild. My lord, we were sent for.

Ham. I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the king 295 and queen moult no feather. I have of late—but wherefore I know not—lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, 300 the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in 305 form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not me: no, nor woman neither, though by 310 your smiling you seem to say so.

Ros. My lord, there was no such stuff in my thoughts.

Ham. Why did you laugh then, when I said ‘man delights not me’?

315 *Ros.* To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what lenten entertainment the players shall receive from you: we coted them on the way; and hither are they coming, to offer you service.

Ham. He that plays the king shall be welcome; his 320 majesty shall have tribute of me; the adventurous

knight shall use his foil and target; the lover shall not sigh gratis; the humorous man shall end his part in peace; the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickle o' the sere; and the lady shall say her mind freely, or the blank verse shall halt for't. What 325 players are they?

Ros. Even those you were wont to take delight in, the tragedians of the city.

Ham. How chances it they travel? their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways. 330

Ros. I think their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation.

Ham. Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city? are they so followed?

Ros. No, indeed, are they not.

335

Ham. How comes it? do they grow rusty?

Ros. Nay, their endeavour keeps in the wonted pace: but there is, sir, an aery of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of question and are most tyrannically clapped for't: these are now the fashion, and so be- 340 rattle the common stages—so they call them—that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose-quills and dare scarce come thither.

Ham. What, are they children? who maintains 'em? how are they escoted? Will they pursue the quality no 345 longer than they can sing? will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players—as it is most like, if their means are no better—their writers do them wrong, to make them exclaim against their own succession?

350

Ros. Faith, there has been much to do on both sides; and the nation holds it no sin to tarre them to controversy: there was for a while no money bid for argument unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question.

355

Ham. Is 't possible?

Guild. O, there has been much throwing about of brains.

Ham. Do the boys carry it away?

360 *Ros.* Ay, that they do, my lord; Hercules and his load too.

Ham. It is not very strange; for mine uncle is king of Denmark, and those that would make mows at him while my father lived, give twenty, forty, fifty, a hundred ducats a-piece for his picture in little. 'S blood, there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out. [Flourish of trumpets within

Guild. There are the players.

Ham. Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. 370 Your hands, come then: the appurtenance of welcome is fashion and ceremony: let me comply with you in this garb, lest my extent to the players, which, I tell you, must show fairly outwards, should more appear like entertainment than yours. You are welcome: but 375 my uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceived.

Guild. In what, my dear lord?

Ham. I am but mad north-north-west: when the wind is southerly I know a hawk from a handsaw.

Enter POLONIUS

Pol. Well be with you, gentlemen!

380 *Ham.* Hark you, Guildenstern; and you too: at each ear a hearer: that great baby you see there is not yet out of his swaddling clouts.

Ros. Happily he's the second time come to them; for they say an old man is twice a child.

385 *Ham.* I will prophesy he comes to tell me of the players; mark it. You say right, sir: o' Monday morning; 'twas so indeed.

Pol. My lord, I have news to tell you.

Ham. My lord, I have news to tell you. When 390 Roscius was an actor in Rome,—

Pol. The actors are come hither, my lord.

Ham. Buz, buz!

Pol. Upon my honour,—

Ham. Then came each actor on his ass,—

Pol. The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, 395
comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-
pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-
pastoral, scene indivisible, or poem unlimited: Seneca
cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light. For the
law of writ and the liberty, these are the only men. 400

Ham. O Jephthah, judge of Israel, what a treasure
hadst thou!

Pol. What a treasure had he, my lord?

Ham. Why,

405

‘One fair daughter, and no more,
The which he loved passing well’.

Pol. [Aside]. Still on my daughter.

Ham Am I not i' the right, old Jephthah?

Pol. If you call me Jephthah, my lord, I have a
daughter that I love passing well. 410

Ham. Nay, that follows not.

Pol. What follows, then, my lord?

Ham. Why,

415

‘As by lot, God wot,’

and then, you know,

‘It came to pass, as most like it was,—
the first row of the pious chanson will show you more;
for look, where my abridgement comes.

Enter four or five Players

You are welcome, masters; welcome, all. I am glad
to see thee well. Welcome, good friends. O, my old 420
friend! thy face is valanced since I saw thee last:
comest thou to beard me in Denmark? What, my
young lady and mistress! By'r lady, your ladyship is

nearer to heaven than when I saw you last, by the altitude of a chopine. Pray God, your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not cracked within the ring. Masters, you are all welcome. We'll e'en to't like French falconers, fly at anything we see: we'll have a speech straight: come, give us a taste of your quality; 430 come, a passionate speech.

First Player. What speech, my lord?

Ham. I heard thee speak me a speech once, but it was never acted; or, if it was, not above once; for the play, I remember, pleased not the million; 'twas 435 caviare to the general: but it was—as I received it, and others, whose judgements in such matters cried in the top of mine—an excellent play, well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning. I remember, one said there were no sallents in the lines to 440 make the matter savoury, nor no matter in the phrase that might indict the author of affectation; but called it an honest method, as wholesome as sweet, and by very much more handsome than fine. One speech in it I chiefly loved: 'twas Æneas' tale to Dido; and there- 445 about of it especially, where he speaks of Priam's slaughter: if it live in your memory, begin at this line: let me see, let me see;

‘The rugged Pyrrhus, like the Hyrcanian beast,’—
It is not so: it begins with ‘Pyrrhus’:

450 ‘The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms,
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble
When he lay couched in the ominous horse,
Hath now this dread and black complexion smear'd
With heraldry more dismal; head to foot
455 Now is he total gules; horridly trick'd
With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,
Baked and impasted with the parching streets,
That lend a tyrannous and damned light
To their lord's murder: roasted in wrath and fire,

And thus o'er-sized with coagulate gore,
With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus
Old grandsire Priam seeks.' 460

So, proceed you.

Pol. 'Fore God, my lord, well spoken, with good
accent and good discretion. 465

First Player. 'Anon he finds him
Striking too short at Greeks; his antique sword,
Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,
Repugnant to command: unequal match'd,
Pyrrhus at Priam drives; in rage strikes wide; 470
But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword
The unnerved father falls. Then senseless Ilium,
Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top
Stoops to his base, and with a hideous crash
Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear: for lo! his sword, 475
Which was declining on the milky head
Of reverend Priam, seem'd i' the air to stick:
So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood,
And, like a neutral to his will and matter,
Did nothing. 480

But as we often see, against some storm,
A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still,
The bold winds speechless and the orb below
As hush as death, anon the dreadful thunder
Doth rend the region, so after Pyrrhus' pause 485
Aroused vengeance sets him new a-work;
And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall
On Mars's armour, forged for proof eterne,
With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword
Now falls on Priam. 490

Out, out, thou false thing, Fortune! All you gods,
In general synod, take away her power;
Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel,
And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven
As low as to the fiends!' 495

Pol. This is too long.

Ham. It shall to the barber's, with your beard.
Prithee, say on: come to Hecuba.

First Player. 'But who, O, who had seen the
mobled queen—'

500 *Ham.* 'The mobled queen?'

Pol. That's good; 'mobled queen' is good.

First Player. 'Run barefoot up and down, threatening
the flames

With bisson rheum; a clout upon that head

Where late the diadem stood; and for a robe,

505 About her lank and all o'er-teemed loins,
A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up:
Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd,
'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have pro-nounced:

But if the gods themselves did see her then,

510 When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport
In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs,
The instant burst of clamour that she made,
Unless things mortal move them not at all,
Would have made milch the burning eyes of
heaven,

515 And passion in the gods.'

Pol. Look, whether he has not turned his colour
and has tears in's eyes. Prithee, no more.

Ham. 'T is well; I'll have thee speak out the rest
of this soon. Good my lord, will you see the players
520 well bestowed? Do you hear, let them be well used,
for they are the abstract and brief chronicles of the
time: after your death you were better have a bad
epitaph than their ill report while you live.

Pol. My lord, I will use them according to their
525 desert.

Ham. God's bodykins, man, much better: use every
man after his desert, and who shall 'scape whipping?

Use them after your own honour and dignity: the less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty. Take them in.

530

Pol. Come, sirs.

Ham. Follow him, friends: we'll hear a play to-morrow. [*Exit Polonius with all the Players but the First.*] Dost thou hear me, old friend; can you play the Murder of Gonzago?

535

First Player. Ay, my lord.

Ham. We'll ha't to-morrow night. You could, for a need, study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which I would set down and insert in't, could you not?

540

First Player. Ay, my lord.

Ham. Very well. Follow that lord; and look you mock him not. [*Exit First Player.*] My good friends, I'll leave you till night: you are welcome to Elsinore.

545

Ros. Good my lord!

Ham. Ay, so, God be wi' ye!

[*Exeunt Rosencrants and Guildenstern*

Now I am alone.

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit
That from her working all his visage wann'd;
Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit? and all for nothing!
For Hecuba!

550

What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her? What would he do,
Had he the motive and the cue for passion
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,

555

560

Make mad the guilty and appal the free,
 Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed
 The very faculties of eyes and ears.

565 Yet I,
 A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,



Ham. Yet I,
 A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,
 Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
 And can say nothing.—(Act ii. 2. 565-568.)

Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
 And can say nothing; no, not for a king,
 Upon whose property and most dear life
 570 A damn'd defeat was made. Am I a coward?

Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?
Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face?
Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i' the throat,
As deep as to the lungs? who does me this?

Ha!

575

'S wounds, I should take it: for it cannot be
But I am pigeon-liver'd and lack gall
To make oppression bitter, or ere this
I should have fatt'd all the region kites
With this slave's offal: bloody, bloody villain! 580
Remorseless, treacherous, lustful, kindless villain!
O, vengeance!

Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,
That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell, 585
Must fall a-cursing, like a very slut,
A scullion!

Fie upon 't! foh! About, my brain! Hum, I have
heard

That guilty creatures, sitting at a play,
Have by the very cunning of the scene 590
Been struck so to the soul that presently
They have proclaim'd their malefactions;
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players
Play something like the murder of my father 595
Before mine uncle: I'll observe his looks;
I'll tent him to the quick: if he but blench,
I know my course. The spirit that I have seen
May be the devil: and the devil hath power
To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps 600
Out of my weakness and my melancholy,
As he is very potent with such spirits,
Abuses me to damn me: I'll have grounds
More relative than this. The play's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king. [Exit⁶⁰⁵

ACT III

SCENE I. *A room in the castle*

Enter KING, QUEEN, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSEN-CRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN

King. And can you, by no drift of circumstance,
Get from him why he puts on this confusion,
Grating so harshly all his days of quiet
With turbulent and dangerous lunacy?

5 *Ros.* He does confess he feels himself distracted;
But from what cause he will by no means speak.

Guild. Nor do we find him forward to be sounded,
But, with a crafty madness, keeps aloof,
When we would bring him on to some confession
10 Of his true state.

Queen. Did he receive you well?

Ros. Most like a gentleman.

Guild. But with much forcing of his disposition.

Ros. Niggard of question, but of our demands
Most free in his reply.

Queen. Did you assay him
15 To any pastime?

Ros. Madam, it so fell out that certain players
We o'er-raught on the way: of these we told him,
And there did seem in him a kind of joy
To hear of it: they are about the court,
20 And, as I think, they have already order
This night to play before him.

Pol. 'Tis most true.
And he beseech'd me to entreat your majesties
To hear and see the matter.

King. With all my heart; and it doth much content me
25 To hear him so inclined.

Good gentlemen, give him a further edge,
And drive his purpose on to these delights.



Ros. He does confess he feels himself distracted;
But from what cause he will by no means speak.

—(Act iii. i. 5, 6.)

Ros. We shall, my lord.

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*

King. Sweet Gertrude, leave us too;
 For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither
 30 That he, as 't were by accident, may here
 Affront Ophelia:
 Her father and myself, lawful espials,
 Will so bestow ourselves that, seeing unseen,
 We may of their encounter frankly judge,
 35 And gather by him, as he is behaved,
 If 't be the affliction of his love or no
 That thus he suffers for.

Queen. I shall obey you.
 And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish
 That your good beauties be the happy cause
 40 Of Hamlet's wildness: so shall I hope your virtues
 Will bring him to his wonted way again,
 To both your honours.

Oph. Madam, I wish it may. [*Exit Queen*]
Pol. Ophelia, walk you here. [*To King*] Gracious,
 so please you,
 We will bestow ourselves. [*To Ophelia*] Read on
 this book;
 45 That show of such an exercise may colour
 Your loneliness. We are oft to blame in this,
 'Tis too much proved—that with devotion's visage
 And pious action we do sugar o'er
 The devil himself.

King. [Aside] O, 'tis too true!
 50 How smart a lash that speech doth give my con-
 science!

The withered cheek, beautied with plastering art,
 Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it
 Than is my deed to my most painted word:
 O heavy burthen!

55 *Pol.* I hear him coming: let's withdraw, my lord.

[*Exeunt King and Polonius*

Enter HAMLET

Ham. To be, or not to be: that is the question:
Whether 't is nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep; 60
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to, 't is a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;
To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub; 65
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause: there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life;
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time, 70
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make 75
With a bare bodkin? who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will, 80
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought, 85
And enterprises of great pitch and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action. Soft you now!
The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons

90 Be all my sins remember'd.

Oph. Good my lord,
How does your honour for this many a day?
Ham. I humbly thank you; well, well, well.



Oph. Take these again; for to the noble mind
Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.
There, my lord.—(Act iii. i. 100-102.)

Oph. My lord, I have remembrances of yours,
That I have longed long to re-deliver;
95 I pray you, now receive them.

Ham. No, not I;
I never gave you aught.
Oph. My honour'd lord, you know right well you did;
And with them words of so sweet breath composed
As made the things more rich: their perfume lost,
100 Take these again; for to the noble mind
Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.
There, my lord.

Ham. Ha, ha; are you honest?

Oph. My lord?

Ham. Are you fair?

105

Oph. What means your lordship?

Ham. That if you be honest and fair, your honesty
should admit no discourse to your beauty.

Oph. Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce
than with honesty?

110

Ham. Ay, truly; for the power of beauty will sooner
transform honesty from what it is than the force of
honesty can translate beauty into his likeness: this was
sometime a paradox, but now the time gives it proof.
I did love you once.

115

Oph. Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

Ham. You should not have believed me; for virtue
cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of
it: I loved you not.

Oph. I was the more deceived.

120

Ham. Get thee to a nunnery: why wouldest thou be a
breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest; but
yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better
my mother had not borne me: I am very proud, re-
vengeful, ambitious; with more offences at my beck 125
than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to
give them shape, or time to act them in. What should
such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven?
We are arrant knaves all; believe none of us. Go thy
ways to a nunnery. Where's your father?

130

Oph. At home, my lord.

Ham. Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may
play the fool no where but in's own house. Farewell.

Oph. O help him, you sweet heavens!

Ham. If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for 135
thy dowry: be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow,
thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery,
go: farewell. Or, if thou wilt needs marry, marry a

fool; for wise men know well enough what monsters
 140 you make of them. To a nunnery, go; and quickly too.
 Farewell.

Oph. O heavenly powers, restore him.

Ham. I have heard of your paintings too, well enough; God hath given you one face, and you make
 145 yourselves another: you jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nick-name God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance. Go to, I'll no more on't; it hath made me mad. I say, we will have no more marriages: those that are married already, all but one, shall live;
 150 the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go.

[Exit]

Oph. O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown! The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword; The expectancy and rose of the fair state, The glass of fashion and the mould of form,
 155 The observed of all observers, quite, quite down! And I, of ladies most deject and wretched, That suck'd the honey of his music vows, Now see that noble and most sovereign reason, Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh; That unmatch'd form and feature of blown youth
 160 Blasted with ecstasy: O woe is me, To have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

Re-enter KING and POLONIUS

King. Love! his affections do not that way tend; Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a little,
 165 Was not like madness. There's something in his soul, O'er which his melancholy sits on brood; And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose Will be some danger: which for to prevent, I have in quick determination
 170 Thus set it down: he shall with speed to England, For the demand of our neglected tribute:

Haply the seas and countries different
With variable objects shall expel
This something-settled matter in his heart,
Whereon his brains still beating puts him thus 175
From fashion of himself. What think you on 't?

Pol. It shall do well: but yet do I believe
The origin and commencement of his grief
Sprung from neglected love. How now, Ophelia!
You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said; 180
We heard it all. My lord, do as you please;
But, if you hold it fit, after the play
Let his queen mother all alone entreat him
To show his grief: let her be round with him;
And I 'll be placed, so please you, in the ear 185
Of all their conference. If she find him not,
To England send him, or confine him where
Your wisdom best shall think.

King. It shall be so:
Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go.

[*Exeunt*

SCENE 2. *A hall in the castle*

Enter HAMLET and Players

Ham. Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue: but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus; but use all gently; for in the very 5 torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but 10 inexplicable dumb-shows and noise: I would have such

a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Termagant; it out-herods Herod: pray you, avoid it.

15 *First Player.* I warrant your honour.

Ham. Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature; for any-
20 thing so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 't were, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now this
25 overdone, or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of the which one must in your allowance o'er-weigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be players that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that
30 highly, not to speak it profanely, that neither having the accent of Christians nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellowed, that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men and not made them well, they imitated humanity
35 so abominably.

First Player. I hope we have reformed that indifferently with us, sir.

Ham. O, reform it altogether. And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for
40 them: for there be of them that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too, though in the mean time some necessary question of the play be then to be considered: that 's villainous, and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses
45 it. Go, make you ready. [Exeunt Players]

Enter POLONIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN

How now, my lord! will the king hear this piece of work?

Pol. And the queen too, and that presently.

Ham. Bid the players make haste. [Exit Polonius.]

Will you two help to hasten them? 50

Ros. } We will, my lord.
Guild. }

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*

Ham. What ho! Horatio!

Enter HORATIO

Hor. Here, sweet lord, at your service.

Ham. Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man
As e'er my conversation coped withal. 55

Hor. O, my dear lord,—

Ham. Nay, do not think I flatter;
For what advancement may I hope from thee,
That no revenue hast but thy good spirits
To feed and clothe thee? Why should the poor be
flatter'd?

No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp, 60
And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee

Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou hear?

Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice
And could of men distinguish, her election

Hath seal'd thee for herself; for thou hast been 65
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing,

A man that fortune's buffets and rewards

Hast ta'en with equal thanks: and blest are those
Whose blood and judgement are so well commingled,

That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger 70
To sound what stop she please. Give me that man

That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,

As I do thee. Something too much of this.
 75 There is a play to-night before the king;
 One scene of it comes near the circumstance



Ham. Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man
 As e'er my conversation coped withal.—(Act iii. 2. 54, 55.)

Which I have told thee of my father's death:
 I prithee, when thou seest that act afoot,
 Even with the very comment of thy soul

Observe my uncle: if his occulted guilt
Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
It is a damned ghost that we have seen,
And my imaginations are as foul
As Vulcan's stithy. Give him needful note;
For I mine eyes will rivet to his face,
And after we will both our judgements join
In censure of his seeming.

Hor. Well, my lord:
If he steal aught the whilst this play is playing,
And 'scape detecting, I will pay the theft.

Ham. They are coming to the play; I must be idle:
Get you a place.

Danish march. *A flourish.* Enter KING, QUEEN,
POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDEN-
STERN, and other Lords attendant, with the Guard
carrying torches.

King. How fares our cousin Hamlet?

Ham. Excellent, i' faith; of the chameleon's dish:
I eat the air, promise-crammed: you cannot feed
capons so.

King. I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet;
these words are not mine.

Ham. No, nor mine now. [To Polonius] My lord,
you played once i' the university, you say?

Pol. That did I, my lord; and was accounted a good 100
actor.

Ham. What did you enact?

Pol. I did enact Julius Cæsar: I was killed i' the
Capitol; Brutus killed me.

Ham. It was a brute part of him to kill so capital 105
a calf there. Be the players ready?

Ros. Ay, my lord; they stay upon your patience.

Queen. Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

Ham. No, good mother, here's metal more attractive.

Pol. [To the King]. O, ho! do you mark that?

Oph. You are merry, my lord.

Ham. Who? I?

Oph. Ay, my lord.

Ham. O God, your only jig-maker. What should a man do but be merry? for, look you, how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within's two hours.

Oph. Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

Ham. So long? Nay then, let the devil wear black; for I'll have a suit of sables. O heavens! die two months ago, and not forgotten yet? Then there's hope a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year: but, by'r lady, he must build churches then; or else shall he suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-horse, whose epitaph is 'For, O, for, O, the hobby-horse is forgot'.

Hautboys play. The dumb-show enters

Enter a King and a Queen very lovingly; the Queen embracing him and he her. She kneels, and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up, and declines his head upon her neck: lays him down upon a bank of flowers: she, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the King's ears, and exit. The Queen returns; finds the King dead, and makes passionate action. The Poisoner, with some two or three Mutes, comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away. The Poisoner wooes the Queen with gifts: she seems loath and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts his love. [Exeunt]

Oph. What means this, my lord?

Ham. Marry, this is miching mallecho; it means mischief.

130

Oph. Belike this show imports the argument of the play.

Enter Prologue

Ham. We shall know by this fellow: the players cannot keep counsel; they'll tell all.

Prologue. For us, and for our tragedy,

135

Here stooping to your clemency,

We beg your hearing patiently.

[Exit]

Ham. Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring?

Oph. 'T is brief, my lord.

Ham. As woman's love.

140

Enter two Players, King and Queen

P. King. Full thirty times hath Phœbus' cart gone round Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orbed ground, And thirty dozen moons with borrowed sheen About the world have times twelve thirties been, Since love our hearts and Hymen did our hands Unite commutual in most sacred bands.

145

P. Queen. So many journeys may the sun and moon Make us again count o'er ere love be done!

But, woe is me, you are so sick of late, So far from cheer and from your former state That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust, Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must: For women's fear and love holds quantity; In neither aught, or in extremity.

150

Now, what my love is, proof hath made you know; And as my love is sized, my fear is so: Where love is great the littlest doubts are fear; Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.

155

P. King. Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too; My operant powers their functions leave to do: And thou shalt live in this fair world behind, Honour'd, beloved; and haply one as kind For husband shalt thou—

160

P. Queen. O, confound the rest!
 Such love must needs be treason in my breast:
 165 In second husband let me be accurst!
 None wed the second but who kill'd the first.

Ham. [Aside]. Wormwood, wormwood.

P. Queen. The instances that second marriage move
 Are base respects of thrift, but none of love:
 170 A second time I kill my husband dead,
 When second husband kisses me.
 P. King. I do believe you think what now you speak;
 But what we do determine oft we break.
 Purpose is but the slave to memory,
 175 Of violent birth, but poor validity:
 Which now, like fruit unripe, sticks on the tree;
 But fall unshaken when they mellow be.
 Most necessary 't is that we forget
 To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt:
 180 What to ourselves in passion we propose,
 The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.
 The violence of either grief or joy
 Their own enactures with themselves destroy:
 Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament;
 185 Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.
 This world is not for aye, nor 't is not strange
 That even our loves should with our fortunes change;
 For 't is a question left us yet to prove,
 Whether love lead fortune or else fortune love.
 190 The great man down, you mark his favourite flies;
 The poor advanced makes friends of enemies.
 And hitherto doth love on fortune tend;
 For who not needs shall never lack a friend,
 And who in want a hollow friend dot^h try,
 195 Directly seasons him his enemy.
 But, orderly to end where I begun,
 Our wills and fates do so contrary run
 That our devices still are overthrown:
 Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own:
 200 So think thou wilt no second husband wed;
 But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.
 P. Queen. Nor earth to me give food, nor heaven light!
 Sport and repose lock from me day and night!
 To desperation turn my trust and hope!

An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope!
 Each opposite that blanks the face of joy
 Meet what I would have well and it destroy!
 Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife,
 If, once a widow, ever I be wife!

205

Ham. If she should break it now!

210

P. King. 'T is deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here awhile;
 My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile
 The tedious day with sleep.

[Sleeps]

P. Queen. Sleep rock thy brain;
 And never come mischance between us twain!

[Exit]

Ham. Madam, how like you this play?

215

Queen. The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

Ham. O, but she'll keep her word.

King. Have you heard the argument? Is there no
 offence in't?

Ham. No, no, they do but jest, poison in iest; no
 offence i' the world.

King. What do you call the play?

Ham. The Mouse-trap. Marry, how? Tropically.
 This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna:
 Gonzago is the duke's name; his wife, Baptista: you
 shall see anon; 't is a knavish piece of work: but what
 o' that? your majesty and we that have free souls,
 it touches us not: let the galled jade wince, our
 withers are unwrung.

Enter Lucianus

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.

230

Oph. You are as good as a chorus, my lord.

Ham. I could interpret between you and your love,
 if I could see the puppets dallying.

Oph. Still better, and worse.

Ham. So you must take your husbands. Begin, 235
 murderer; leave thy damnable faces, and begin.
 Come: 'the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge'.

Luc. Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing;
 Confederate season, else no creature seeing;
 240 Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,
 With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected.
 Thy natural magic and dire property,
 On wholesome life usurp immediately.

[Pours the poison into the sleeper's ear]

Ham. He poisons him i' the garden for his estate.
 245 His name's Gonzago: the story is extant, and writ
 in very choice Italian: you shall see anon how the
 murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

Oph. The king rises.

Ham. What, frightened with false fire?

250 Queen. How fares my lord?

Pol. Give o'er the play.

King. Give me some light: away!

All. Lights, lights, lights!

[Exeunt all but Hamlet and Horatio]

Ham. Why, let the stricken deer go weep,
 255 The hart ungalled play;
 For some must watch, while some must sleep:
 Thus runs the world away.

Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers—if the
 rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me—with two
 260 Provincial roses on my razed shoes, get me a fellow-
 ship in a cry of players, sir?

Hor. Half a share.

Ham. A whole one, I.

For thou dost know, O Damon dear,
 265 This realm dismantled was
 Of Jove himself; and now reigns here
 A very, very—pajock.

Hor. You might have rhymed.

Ham. O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word
 270 for a thousand pound. Didst perceive?

Hor. Very well, my lord.

Ham. Upon the talk of the poisoning?

Hor. I did very well note him.

Ham. Ah, ah! Come, some music! come, the recorders!

275

For if the king like not the comedy,

Why then, belike, he likes it not, perdy.

Come, some music!

Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

Guild. Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

Ham. Sir, a whole history.

280

Guild. The king, sir,—

Ham. Ay, sir, what of him?

Guild. Is in his retirement marvellous distempered.

Ham. With drink, sir?

Guild. No, my lord, rather with choler.

285

Ham. Your wisdom should show itself more richer to signify this to the doctor: for, for me to put him to his purgation would perhaps plunge him into far more choler.

Guild. Good my lord, put your discourse into some 290 frame and start not so wildly from my affair.

Ham. I am tame, sir: pronounce.

Guild. The queen, your mother, in most great affliction of spirit, hath sent me to you.

Ham. You are welcome.

295

Guild. Nay, good my lord, this courtesy is not of the right breed. If it shall please you to make me a wholesome answer, I will do your mother's commandment: if not, your pardon and my return shall be the end of my business.

300

Ham. Sir, I cannot.

Guild. What, my lord?

Ham. Make you a wholesome answer; my wit's diseased: but, sir, such answer as I can make, you

305 shall command: or rather, as you say, my mother: therefore no more, but to the matter: my mother, you say,—

Ros. Then thus she says; your behaviour hath struck her into amazement and admiration.

310 *Ham.* O wonderful son, that can so astonish a mother! But is there no sequel at the heels of this mother's admiration? Impart.

Ros. She desires to speak with you in her closet, ere you go to bed.

315 *Ham.* We shall obey, were she ten times our mother. Have you any further trade with us?

Ros. My lord, you once did love me.

Ham. So I do still, by these pickers and stealers.

320 *Ros.* Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper? you do surely bar the door upon your own liberty, if you deny your griefs to your friend.

Ham. Sir, I lack advancement.

Ros. How can that be, when you have the voice of the king himself for your succession in Denmark?

325 *Ham.* Ay, sir, but 'While the grass grows',—the proverb is something musty.

Re-enter Players with recorders

O, the recorders! let me see one. To withdraw with you:—why do you go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would drive me into a toil?

330 *Guild.* O, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly.

Ham. I do not well understand that. Will you play upon this pipe?

Guild. My lord, I cannot.

335 *Ham.* I pray you.

Guild. Believe me, I cannot.

Ham. I do beseech you.

Guild. I know no touch of it, my lord.

Ham. 'Tis as easy as lying: govern these ventages with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. 340
Look you, these are the stops.

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

Ham. Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing 345 you make of me! You would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass: and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ; yet 350 cannot you make it speak. 'S blood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, yet you cannot play upon me.

Enter POLONIUS

God bless you, sir!

355

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

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

Pol. By the mass, and 'tis like a camel, indeed. 360

Ham. Methinks it is like a weasel.

Pol. It is backed like a weasel.

Ham. Or like a whale?

Pol. Very like a whale.

Ham. Then I will come to my mother by and by. 365
[Aside] They fool me to the top of my bent.—I will come by and by.

Pol. I will say so. [Exit Polonius]

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

[Exeunt all but Hamlet]

'Tis now the very witching time of night, 370
When churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out

Contagion to this world: now could I drink hot blood,
 And do such bitter business as the day
 Would quake to look on. Soft! now to my mother.

375 O heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever
 The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom:
 Let me be cruel, not unnatural:
 I will speak daggers to her, but use none;
 My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites;
 380 How in my words soever she be shent,
 To give them seals never, my soul, consent! [Exit]

SCENE 3. *A room in the castle*

Enter KING, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN

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

Guild. We will ourselves provide:
 Most holy and religious fear it is
 To keep those many many bodies safe
 10 That live and feed upon your majesty.

Ros. The single and peculiar life is bound,
 With all the strength and armour of the mind,
 To keep itself from noyance; but much more
 That spirit upon whose weal depends and rests
 15 The lives of many. The cease of majesty
 Dies not alone; but, like a gulf, doth draw
 What's near it with it: it is a massy wheel,
 Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,
 To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things
 20 Are mortised and adjoin'd; which, when it falls,
 Each small annexment, petty consequence,

Attends the boisterous ruin. Never alone
Did the king sigh, but with a general groan.

King. Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage;
For we will fetters put upon this fear, 25
Which now goes too free-footed.

Ros. }
Guild. }

We will haste us.

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*

Enter POLONIUS

Pol. My lord, he's going to his mother's closet:
Behind the arras I'll convey myself,
To hear the process; I'll warrant she'll tax him
home:

And, as you said, and wisely was it said, 30
'Tis meet that some more audience than a mother,
Since nature makes them partial, should o'erhear
The speech, of vantage. Fare you well, my liege:
I'll call upon you ere you go to bed,
And tell you what I know.

King. Thanks, dear my lord. [*Exit Polonius* 35
O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven;
It hath the primal eldest curse upon 't,
A brother's murder. Pray can I not,
Though inclination be as sharp as will:
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent; 40
And, like a man to double business bound,
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
And both neglect. What if this cursed hand
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens 45
To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy
But to confront the visage of offence?
And what's in prayer but this twofold force,
To be forestalled ere we come to fall,
Or pardon'd being down? Then I'll look up; 50

My fault is past. But O, what form of prayer
 Can serve my turn? ‘Forgive me my foul murder’?
 That cannot be; since I am still possess’d
 Of those effects for which I did the murder,
 55 My crown, mine own ambition and my queen.
 May one be pardon’d and retain the offence?
 In the corrupted currents of this world
 Offence’s gilded hand may shove by justice,
 And oft ’tis seen the wicked prize itself
 60 Buys out the law: but ’tis not so above;
 There is no shuffling, there the action lies
 In his true nature, and we ourselves compell’d,
 Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
 To give in evidence. What then? what rests?
 65 Try what repentance can: what can it not?
 Yet what can it when one can not repent?
 O wretched state! O bosom black as death!
 O limed soul, that, struggling to be free,
 Art more engaged! Help, angels! make assay!
 70 Bow, stubborn knees; and, heart with strings of steel,
 Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe!
 All may be well.

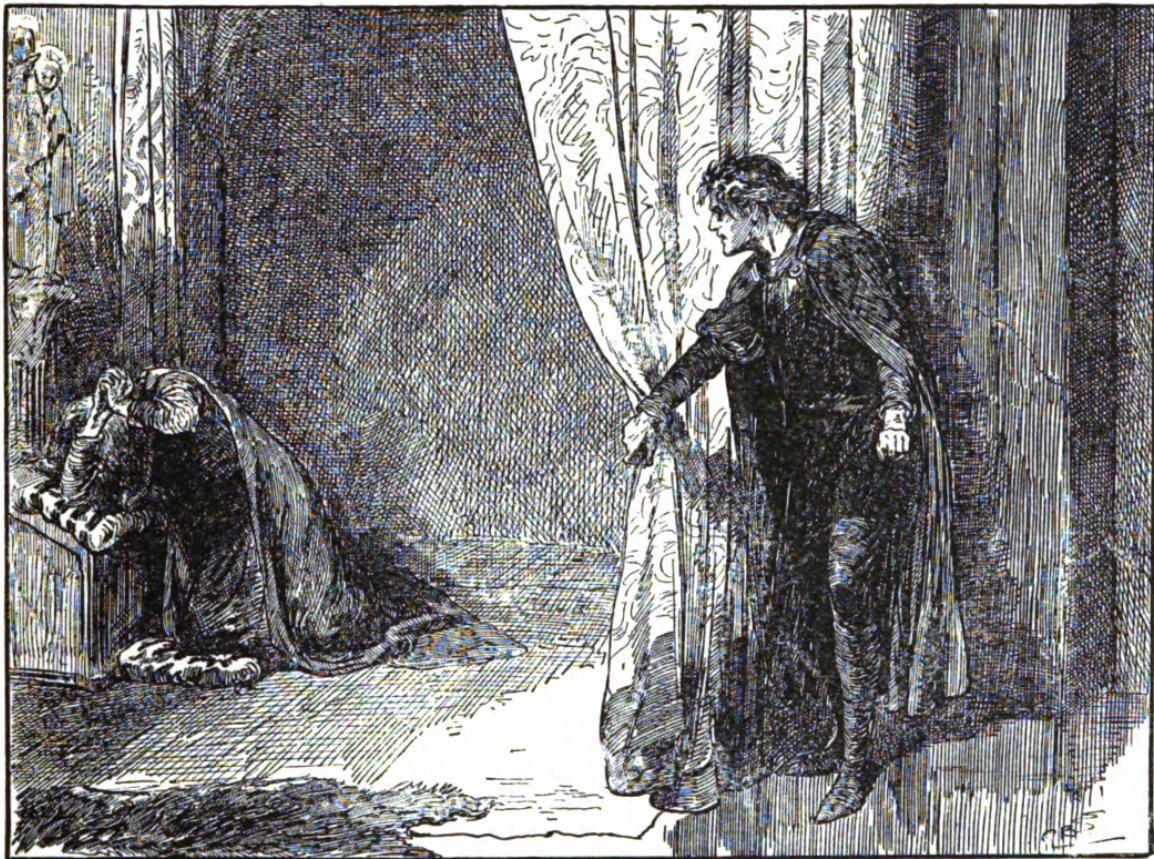
[Retires and kneels]

Enter HAMLET

Ham. Now might I do it pat, now he is praying;
 And now I’ll do’t: and so he goes to heaven;
 75 And so am I revenged. That would be scann’d:
 A villain kills my father; and for that,
 I, his sole son, do this same villain send
 To heaven.
 O, this is hire and salary, not revenge.
 80 He took my father grossly, full of bread,
 With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May;
 And how his audit stands who knows save Heaven?
 But in our circumstance and course of thought,
 ’T is heavy with him: and am I then revenged,

To take him in the purging of his soul,
When he is fit and season'd for his passage? 85
No!

Up, sword, and know thou a more horrid hent:
When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,



Ham. Now might I do it pat, now he is praying.—(Act iii. 3. 73.)

At game, a-swear ing, or about some act
That has no relish of salvation in 't;
Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven,
And that his soul may be as damn'd and black
As hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays:
This physic but prolongs thy sickly days. [Exit] 95

King. [Rising]. My words fly up, my thoughts
remain below:

Words without thoughts never to heaven go. [Exit]

SCENE 4. *The Queen's closet**Enter QUEEN and POLONIUS*

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

Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with,

And that your grace hath screen'd and stood between Much heat and him. I'll sconce me even here.

5 Pray you, be round with him.

Ham. [Within]. Mother, mother, mother!

Queen. I'll warrant you, fear me not. Withdraw, I hear him coming. [Polonius hides behind the arras

Enter HAMLET

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

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

Ham. Mother, you have my father much offended.

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

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

Queen. Why, how now, Hamlet!

Ham. What's the matter now?

15 *Queen.* Have you forgot me?

Ham. No, by the rood, not so:

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

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

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

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

20 You go not till I set you up a glass

Where you may see the inmost part of you.

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

Help, help, ho!

Pol. [Behind]. What, ho! help, help, help!

Ham. [Drawing]. How now! a rat? Dead, for a
ducat, dead! [Makes a pass through the arras] 25

Pol. [Behind]. O, I am slain! [Falls and dies]
Queen. O me, what hast thou done?

Ham. Nay, I know not: is it the king?

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

Ham. A bloody deed! almost as bad, good mother,
As kill a king, and marry with his brother. 30

Queen. As kill a king!

Ham. Ay, lady, 't was my word.

[Lifts up the arras and discovers Polonius]

Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!

I took thee for thy better: take thy fortune;

Thou find'st to be too busy is some danger.

Leave wringing of your hands: peace! sit you down, 35

And let me wring your heart; for so I shall,

If it be made of penetrable stuff,

If damned custom have not brass'd it so

That it be proof and bulwark against sense.

Queen. What have I done, that thou darest wag
thy tongue 40

In noise so rude against me?

Ham. Such an act
That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,
Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose
From the fair forehead of an innocent love
And sets a blister there, makes marriage-vows 45

As false as dicers' oaths: O, such a deed

As from the body of contraction plucks

The very soul, and sweet religion makes

A rhapsody of words: heaven's face doth glow;

Yea, this solidity and compound mass,

With tristful visage, as against the doom,

Is thought-sick at the act.

Queen. Ay me, what act,
That roars so loud, and thunders in the index?



Ham. Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!
I took thee for thy better.—(Act iii. 4. 32, 33.)

Ham. Look here, upon this picture, and on this,
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers. 55
See, what a grace was seated on this brow;
Hyperion's curls, the front of Jove himself,
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;
A station like the herald Mercury
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill; 60
A combination and a form indeed,
Where every god did seem to set his seal
To give the world assurance of a man:
This was your husband. Look you now, what follows:
Here is your husband; like a mildew'd ear, 65
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,
And batten on this moor? Ha! have you eyes?
You cannot call it love, for at your age
The hey-day in the blood is tame, it's humble, 70
And waits upon the judgement: and what judgement
Would step from this to this? Sense sure you have,
Else could you not have motion; but sure that sense
Is apoplex'd; for madness would not err,
Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd 75
But it reserved some quantity of choice,
To serve in such a difference. What devil was't
That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind?
Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,
Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all, 80
Or but a sickly part of one true sense
Could not so mope.
O shame! where is thy blush? Rebellious hell,
If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,
To flaming youth let virtue be as wax, 85
And melt in her own fire: proclaim no shame
When the compulsive ardour gives the charge,
Since frost itself as actively doth burn
And reason pandars will.

Queen.

O Hamlet, speak no more:

90 Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul;
And there I see such black and grained spots
As will not leave their tinct.

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

Ham.

A murderer and a villain:

95 A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe
Of your precedent lord; a vice of kings;
A cutpurse of the empire and the rule,
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,
And put it in his pocket!

Queen.

No more!

100 *Ham.* A king of shreds and patches—

Enter Ghost

Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,
You heavenly guards! What would your gracious
figure?

Queen. Alas, he's mad!

Ham. Do you not come your tardy son to chide,
105 That, lapsed in time and passion, lets go by
The important acting of your dread command?
O, say!

Ghost. Do not forget: this visitation
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.
110 But look, amazement on thy mother sits:
O, step between her and her fighting soul:
Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works:
Speak to her, Hamlet.

Ham. How is it with you, lady?

Queen. Alas, how is 't with you,
115 That you do bend your eye on vacancy
And with the incorporal air do hold discourse?
Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep;

And, as the sleeping soldiers in the alarm,
 Your bedded hair, like life in excrements,
 Start up and stand an end. O gentle son,
 Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper
 Sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look?

120



Ham. Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,
 You heavenly guards! What would your gracious figure?—(Act iii. 4. 101, 102.)

Ham. On him, on him! Look you, how pale he
 glares!

His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,
 Would make them capable. Do not look upon me; 125
 Lest with this piteous action you convert
 My stern effects: then what I have to do
 Will want true colour; tears perchance for blood.

Queen. To whom do you speak this?

Ham. Do you see nothing there?

Queen. Nothing at all; yet all that is I see. 130

Ham. Nor did you nothing hear?

Queen. No, nothing but ourselves.

Ham. Why, look you there! look, how it steals away!

My father, in his habit as he lived!

Look, where he goes, even now, out at the portal!

[*Exit Ghost*

135 *Queen.* This is the very coinage of your brain:

This bodiless creation ecstasy

Is very cunning in.

Ham. Ecstasy!

My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time,

And makes as healthful music: it is not madness

140 That I have utter'd: bring me to the test,

And I the matter will re-word; which madness

Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace,

Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,

That not your trespass, but my madness speaks:

145 It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,

Whiles rank corruption, mining all within,

Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven;

Repent what's past, avoid what is to come,

And do not spread the compost on the weeds,

150 To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue;

For in the fatness of these pursy times

Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg,

Yea, curb and woo for leave to do him good.

Queen. O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain.

155 *Ham.* O, throw away the worser part of it,

And live the purer with the other half.

Good night: but go not to my uncle;

Assume a virtue, if you have it not.

That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat,

160 Of habits devil, is angel yet in this,

That to the use of actions fair and good

He likewise gives a frock or livery

That aptly is put on. Refrain to-night,

And that shall lend a kind of easiness

To the next abstinence: the next more easy; 165
 For use almost can change the stamp of nature,
 And either quell the devil, or throw him out
 With wondrous potency. Once more, good night:
 And when you are desirous to be blest,
 I'll blessing beg of you. For this same lord, 170

[*Pointing to Polonius*

I do repent: but heaven hath pleased it so,
 To punish me with this and this with me,
 That I must be their scourge and minister.
 I will bestow him, and will answer well
 The death I gave him. So, again, good night. 175
 I must be cruel, only to be kind:
 Thus bad begins, and worse remains behind.
 One word more, good lady.

Queen.

What shall I do?

Ham. Not this, by no means, that I bid you do:
 Let the bloat king for a pair of kisses 180
 Make you to ravel all this matter out,
 That I essentially am not in madness,
 But mad in craft. 'T were good you let him know;
 For who, that's but a queen, fair, sober, wise,
 Would from a paddock, from a bat, a gib, 185
 Such dear concernings hide? who would do so?
 No, in despite of sense and secrecy,
 Unpeg the basket on the house's top,
 Let the birds fly, and like the famous ape,
 To try conclusions, in the basket creep, 190
 And break your own neck down.

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

Ham. I must to England; you know that?

Queen.

Alack, 195

I had forgot: 't is so concluded on.

Ham. There's letters seal'd; and my two school-fellows

Whom I will trust as I will adders fang'd,
 They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way,
 200 And marshal me to knavery. Let it work;
 For 't is the sport to have the enginer
 Hoist with his own petar: and 't shall go hard
 But I will delve one yard below their mines,
 And blow them at the moon: O, 't is most sweet,
 205 When in one line two crafts directly meet.
 This man shall set me packing.
 Mother, good night. Indeed this counsellor
 Is now most still, most secret and most grave,
 Who was in life a foolish prating knave.
 210 Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you.
 Good night, mother.

[*Exeunt severally; Hamlet dragging Polonius*

ACT IV

SCENE I. *A room in the castle*

Enter KING, QUEEN, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN

King. There's matter in these sighs, these profound
 heaves:

You must translate; 't is fit we understand them.
 Where is your son?

Queen. Bestow this place on us a little while.

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*

5 Ah, mine own lord, what have I seen to-night!

King. What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

Queen. Mad as the sea and wind, when both
 contend

Which is the mightier: in his lawless fit,

Behind the arras hearing something stir,

10 Whips out his rapier, cries 'A rat, a rat!'



Queen. Behind the arras hearing something stir,
Whips out his rapier, cries 'A rat, a rat!'
And in this brainish apprehension kills
The unseen good old man.—(Act iv. 1. 9-12.)

And in this brainish apprehension kills
The unseen good old man.

King.

O heavy deed!

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

His liberty is full of threats to all;

15 To you yourself, to us, to every one.

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

It will be laid to us, whose providence

Should have kept short, restrain'd and out of haunt,

This mad young man: but so much was our love,

20 We would not understand what was most fit;

But, like the owner of a foul disease,

To keep it from divulging, let it feed

Even on the pith of life. Where is he gone?

Queen. To draw apart the body he hath kill'd:

25 O'er whom his very madness, like some ore

Among a mineral of metals base,

Shows itself pure; he weeps for what is done.

King. O Gertrude, come away!

The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch,

30 But we will ship him hence: and this vile deed

We must, with all our majesty and skill,

Both countenance and excuse. Ho, Guildenstern!

Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

Friends both, go join you with some further aid:

Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,

35 And from his mother's closet hath he dragg'd him:

Go seek him out; speak fair, and bring the body

Into the chapel. I pray you, haste in this.

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*

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

And let them know, both what we mean to do,

40 And what's untimely done. So haply slander

Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter,

As level as the cannon to his blank,

Transports his poison'd shot, may miss our name

And hit the woundless air. O, come away!
My soul is full of discord and dismay. [Exeunt 45]

SCENE 2. *Another room in the castle*

Enter HAMLET

Ham. Safely stowed.

Ros. } [Within]. Hamlet! Lord Hamlet!
Guild. } Hamlet! Lord Hamlet!

Ham. But soft, what noise? who calls on Hamlet?
O, here they come.

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

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

5

Ham. Compounded it with dust, whereto 't is kin.

Ros. Tell us where 't is, that we may take it thence
And bear it to the chapel.

Ham. Do not believe it.

Ros. Believe what?

10

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

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

Ham. Ay, sir; that soaks up the king's countenance, 15
his rewards, his authorities. But such officers do the
king best service in the end: he keeps them, like an
ape, in the corner of his jaw; first mouthed, to be
last swallowed: when he needs what you have gleaned,
it is but squeezing you, and, sponge, you shall be dry 20
again.

Ros. I understand you not, my lord.

Ham. I am glad of it: a knavish speech sleeps in
a foolish ear.

Ros. My lord, you must tell us where the body is, 25
and go with us to the king.

Ham. The body is with the king, but the king is not with the body. The king is a thing—

Guild. A thing, my lord?

30 *Ham.* Of nothing: bring me to him. Hide fox, and all after. [Exeunt

SCENE 3. *Another room in the castle*

Enter KING, attended

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

Enter ROSENCRANTZ

How now! what hath befall'n?

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

King. But where is he?

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

15 *King.* Bring him before us.

Ros. Ho, Guildenstern! bring in my lord.

Enter HAMLET and GUILDENSTERN

King. Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

Ham. At supper.

King. At supper! where?

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

certain convocation of politic worms are e'en at him. Your worm is your only emperor for diet: we fat all creatures else to fat us, and we fat ourselves for maggots: your fat king and your lean beggar is but variable service, two dishes, but to one table: that's ²⁵ the end.

King. Alas, alas!

Ham. A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king, and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm. ³⁰

King. What dost thou mean by this?

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

King. Where is Polonius?

Ham. In heaven; send thither to see: if your ³⁵ messenger find him not there, seek him i' the other place yourself. But indeed, if you find him not within this month, you shall nose him as you go up the stairs into the lobby.

King. Go seek him there. [To some Attendants ⁴⁰

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

King. Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety,—
Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve
For that which thou hast done,—must send thee hence
With fiery quickness: therefore prepare thyself; ⁴⁵
The bark is ready and the wind at help,
The associates tend, and every thing is bent
For England.

Ham. For England?

King. Ay, Hamlet.

Ham. Good

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

Ham. I see a cherub that sees them. But, come; for ⁵⁰
England! Farewell, dear mother.

King. Thy loving father, Hamlet.

Ham. My mother: father and mother is man and

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

King. Follow him at foot; tempt him with speed
 aboard;

Delay it not; I'll have him hence to-night:
 Away! for every thing is seal'd and done
 That else leans on the affair: pray you, make haste.

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*

60 And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught—

As my great power thereof may give thee sense,
 Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red
 After the Danish sword, and thy free awe
 Pays homage to us—thou mayst not coldly set

65 Our sovereign process; which imports at full,

By letters congruing to that effect,
 The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England;
 For like the hectic in my blood he rages,
 And thou must cure me: till I know 'tis done,

70 Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun. [Exit

SCENE 4. *A plain in Denmark*

Enter FORTINBRAS, a Captain, and Soldiers, marching

For. Go, captain, from me greet the Danish king;
 Tell him that by his license Fortinbras
 Craves the conveyance of a promised march
 Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.

5 If that his majesty would aught with us,
 We shall express our duty in his eye;
 And let him know so.

Cap. I will do 't, my lord.

For. Go softly on. [*Exeunt Fortinbras and Soldiers*

Enter HAMLET, ROSENCRANTZ, GULDENSTERN, and others

Ham. Good sir, whose powers are these?

10 *Cap.* They are of Norway, sir.

Ham. How purposed, sir, I pray you?

Cap. Against some part of Poland.

Ham. Who commands them, sir?

Cap. The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.

Ham. Goes it against the main of Poland, sir, 15
Or for some frontier?

Cap. Truly to speak, and with no addition,
We go to gain a little patch of ground
That hath in it no profit but the name.
To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it; 20
Nor will it yield to Norway or the Pole
A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee.

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

Cap. Yes, it is already garrison'd.

Ham. Two thousand souls and twenty thousand
ducats 25

Will not debate the question of this straw:
This is the imposthume of much wealth and peace,
That inward breaks, and shows no cause without
Why the man dies. I humbly thank you, sir.

Cap. God be wi' you, sir. [Exit

Ros. Will't please you go, my lord? 30

Ham. I'll be with you straight. Go a little before.

[*Exeunt all but Hamlet*

How all occasions do inform against me,
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,
If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more. 35
Sure, he that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and god-like reason
To fust in us unused. Now, whether it be
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple
Of thinking too precisely on the event, 40
A thought which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom
And ever three parts coward, I do not know

Why yet I live to say 'This thing's to do';
 45 Sith I have cause and will and strength and means
 To do 't. Examples gross as earth exhort me:
 Witness this army of such mass and charge
 Led by a delicate and tender prince,
 Whose spirit with divine ambition puff'd
 50 Makes mouths at the invisible event,
 Exposing what is mortal and unsure
 To all that fortune, death and danger dare,
 Even for an egg-shell. Rightly to be great
 Is not to stir without great argument,
 55 But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
 When honour's at the stake. How stand I then,
 That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,
 Excitements of my reason and my blood,
 And let all sleep? while to my shame I see
 60 The imminent death of twenty thousand men,
 That, for a fantasy and trick of fame,
 Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot
 Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
 Which is not tomb enough and continent
 65 To hide the slain? O, from this time forth,
 My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth! [Exit

SCENE 5. *Elsinore. A room in the castle*

Enter QUEEN, HORATIO, and a Gentleman

Queen. I will not speak with her.

Gent. She is importunate, indeed distract:

Her mood will needs be pitied.

Queen. What would she have?

Gent. She speaks much of her father; says she hears

5 There's tricks i' the world, and hems and beats her heart,
 Spurns enviously at straws; speaks things in doubt,
 That carry but half sense: her speech is nothing,
 Yet the unshaped use of it doth move

The hearers to collection; they aim at it,
And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts; 10
Which, as her winks and nods and gestures yield them,
Indeed would make one think there might be thought,
Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.

Hor. 'T were good she were spoken with; for she
may strew

Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds. 15

Queen. Let her come in. [Exit Gentleman

[Aside] To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,
Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss:
So full of artless jealousy is guilt,
It spills itself in fearing to be spilt. 20

Re-enter Gentleman, with OPHELIA

Oph. Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?

Queen. How now, Ophelia!

Oph. [Sings]. How should I your true love know
From another one?

By his cockle hat and staff, 25
And his sandal shoon.

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

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

[Sings] He is dead and gone, lady,
He is dead and gone; 30
At his head a grass-green turf,
At his heels a stone.

Queen. Nay, but, Ophelia,—

Oph. Pray you, mark.

[Sings] White his shroud as the mountain-
snow,—

Enter KING

Queen. Alas, look here, my lord. 35

Oph. [Sings]. Larded with sweet flowers;
Which bewept to the grave did go
With true love showers.

King. How do you, pretty lady?

40 *Oph.* Well, God 'ild you! They say the owl was a
baker's daughter. Lord, we know what we are, but
know not what we may be. God be at your table!

King. Conceit upon her father.

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

[Sings] To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day,
All in the morning betime,
And I a maid at your window,
To be your valentine.

50 *King.* How long hath she been thus?

Oph. I hope all will be well. We must be patient:
but I cannot choose but weep, to think that they
should lay him i' the cold ground. My brother shall
know of it: and so I thank you for your good counsel.
55 Come, my coach! Good night, ladies; good night,
sweet ladies; good night, good night. [Exit]

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

O, this is the poison of deep grief; it springs
All from her father's death. O Gertrude, Gertrude,
60 When sorrows come, they come not single spies,
But in battalions. First, her father slain:
Next, your son gone; and he most violent author
Of his own just remove: the people muddied,
Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts and whispers,
65 For good Polonius' death; and we have done but
greenly,

In hugger-mugger to inter him: poor Ophelia
Divided from herself and her fair judgement,
Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts:
Last, and as much containing as all these,
70 Her brother is in secret come from France;
Feeds on his wonder, keeps himself in clouds,

And wants not buzzers to infect his ear
 With pestilent speeches of his father's death;
 Wherein necessity, of matter beggar'd,
 Will nothing stick our person to arraign
 In ear and ear. O my dear Gertrude, this,
 Like to a murdering-piece, in many places
 Gives me superfluous death. [A noise within] 75

Queen.

Alack, what noise is this?

King. Where are my Switzers? Let them guard
 the door.

Enter another Gentleman

What is the matter?

Gent. Save yourself, my lord: 80
 The ocean, overpeering of his list,
 Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste
 Than young Laertes, in a riotous head,
 O'erbears your officers. The rabble call him lord;
 And, as the world were now but to begin, 85
 Antiquity forgot, custom not known,
 The ratifiers and props of every word,
 They cry 'Choose we: Laertes shall be king!'
 Caps, hands, and tongues applaud it to the clouds:
 'Laertes shall be king, Laertes king!' 90

Queen. How cheerfully on the false trail they cry!
 O, this is counter, you false Danish dogs!

King. The doors are broke. [Noise within]

Enter LAERTES, armed; Danes following

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

Danes. No, let's come in.

Laer. I pray you, give me leave. 95

Danes. We will, we will.

[They retire without the door]

Laer. I thank you: keep the door. O thou vile king,

Give me my father!

Queen. Calmly, good Laertes.

King. What is the cause, Laertes,
100 That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?

Let him go, Gertrude; do not fear our person:
There's such divinity doth hedge a king,
That treason can but peep to what it would,
Acts little of his will. Tell me, Laertes,
105 Why thou art thus incensed. Let him go, Gertrude.

Speak, man.

Laer. Where is my father?

King. Dead.

Queen. But not by him.

King. Let him demand his fill.

Laer. How came he dead? I'll not be juggled
with:
110 To hell, allegiance! vows, to the blackest devil!
Conscience and grace, to the profoundest pit!

I dare damnation. To this point I stand,
That both the worlds I give to negligence,
Let come what comes; only I'll be revenged
115 Most throughly for my father.

King. Who shall stay you?

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

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

Laer. None but his enemies.

King. Will you know them then?

Laer. To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my
arms;
125 And like the kind life-rendering pelican,

Repast them with my blood.

King. Why, now you speak
Like a good child and a true gentleman.
That I am guiltless of your father's death,
And am most sensibly in grief for it,
It shall as level to your judgement pierce 130
As day does to your eye.

Danes [Within]. Let her come in.

Laer. How now! what noise is that?

Re-enter OPHELIA

O heat, dry up my brains! tears seven times salt,
Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye!
By heaven, thy madness shall be paid with weight, 135
Till our scale turn the beam. O rose of May!
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!
O heavens! is't possible, a young maid's wits
Should be as mortal as an old man's life?
Nature is fine in love, and where 't is fine, 140
It sends some precious instance of itself
After the thing it loves.

Oph. [Sings]

They bore him barefaced on the bier;
Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny;
And in his grave rain'd many a tear,— 145

Fare you well, my dove!

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

Oph. [Sings]

You must sing a-down, a-down,
An you call him a-down-a. 150

O, how the wheel becomes it! It is the false steward
stole his master's daughter.

Laer. This nothing's more than matter.

Oph. There's rosemary, that's for remembrance;
155 pray, love, remember: and there is pansies, that's for thoughts.

Laer. A document in madness, thoughts and remembrance fitted.

Oph. There's fennel for you, and columbines: there's
160 rue for you; and here's some for me: we may call it



Oph. There's rosemary, that's for remembrance.—(Act iv. 5. 154.)

herb of grace o' Sundays: O, you must wear your rue with a difference. There's a daisy: I would give you some violets, but they withered all when my father died: they say he made a good end,—

[*Sings*]

165 For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy.

Laer. Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself,
She turns to favour and to prettiness.

Oph. [Sings]

And will a' not come again?

And will a' not come again?

No, no, he is dead:

170

Go to thy death-bed:

He never will come again.

His beard was as white as snow,

All flaxen was his poll:

He is gone, he is gone,

175

And we cast away moan:

God ha' mercy on his soul!

And of all Christian souls, I pray God. God be wi' you. [Exit]

| Exit

Laer. Do you see this, O God?

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

Laer. Let this be so;

190

His means of death, his obscure funeral,
No trophy, sword, nor hatchment o'er his bones,
No noble rite nor formal ostentation,
Cry to be heard, as 't were from heaven to earth,
That I must call 't in question.

King. So you shall;

195

And where the offence is let the great axe fall.

I pray you, go with me.

[*Exeunt*

SCENE 6. *Another room in the castle**Enter HORATIO and a Servant**Hor.* What are they that would speak with me?*Serv.* Sea-faring men, sir: they say they have letters for you.*Hor.* Let them come in.[*Exit Servant*5 I do not know from what part of the world
I should be greeted, if not from Lord Hamlet.*Enter Sailors**First Sailor.* God bless you, sir.*Hor.* Let him bless thee too.

10 a letter for you, sir: it comes from the ambassador that was bound for England; if your name be Horatio, as I am let to know it is.

15 *Hor.* [Reads]. ‘Horatio, when thou shalt have overlooked this, give these fellows some means to the king: they have letters for him. Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us chase. Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put on a compelled valour, and in the grapple I boarded them: on the instant they got clear of our 20 ship; so I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me like thieves of mercy: but they knew what they did; I am to do a good turn for them. Let the king have the letters I have sent; and repair thou to me with as much speed as thou wouldest fly 25 death. I have words to speak in thine ear will make thee dumb; yet are they much too light for the bore of the matter. These good fellows will bring thee where I am. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England: of them I have much to tell 30 thee. Farewell. He that thou knowest thine,

‘HAMLET.’

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

SCENE 7. *Another room in the castle*

Enter KING and LAERTES

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

Laer. It well appears: but tell me 5
Why you proceeded not against these feats,
So crimeful and so capital in nature,
As by your safety, wisdom, all things else,
You mainly were stirred up.

King. O, for two special reasons;
Which may to you perhaps seem much unsinew'd, 10
But yet to me they are strong. The queen his mother
Lives almost by his looks; and for myself—
My virtue or my plague, be it either which—
She's so conjunctive to my life and soul,
That, as the star moves not but in his sphere, 15
I could not but by her. The other motive,
Why to a public count I might not go,
Is the great love the general gender bear him;
Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,
Would, like the spring that turneth wood to stone, 20
Convert his gyves to graces; so that my arrows,
Too slightly timber'd for so loud a wind,
Would have reverted to my bow again,
And not where I had aim'd them.

Laer. And so have I a noble father lost; 25
A sister driven into desperate terms,

Whose worth, if praises may go back again,
 Stood challenger on mount of all the age
 For her perfections: but my revenge will come.

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

That we are made of stuff so flat and dull
 That we can let our beard be shook with danger
 And think it pastime. You shortly shall hear more:
 I loved your father, and we love ourself;
 35 And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine—

Enter a Messenger

How now! what news?

Mess. Letters, my lord, from Hamlet:
 This to your majesty; this to the queen.

King. From Hamlet! who brought them?

Mess. Sailors, my lord, they say; I saw them not:
 40 They were given me by Claudio; he received them
 Of him that brought them.

King. Laertes, you shall hear them.

Leave us. [*Exit Messenger*

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

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

50 *Laer.* Know you the hand?

King. ‘T is Hamlet’s character. ‘Naked’!
 And in a postscript here, he says ‘alone’.
 Can you advise me?

Laer. I’m lost in it, my lord. But let him come:
 It warms the very sickness in my heart,
 55 That I shall live and tell him to his teeth,
 ‘Thus didest thou’.

King. If it be so, Laertes—
As how should it be so, how otherwise,—
Will you be ruled by me?

Laer. Ay, my lord;
So you will not o'errule me to a peace.

King. To thine own peace. If he be now return'd, 60
As checking at his voyage, and that he means
No more to undertake it, I will work him
To an exploit now ripe in my device,
Under the which he shall not choose but fall:
And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe, 65
But even his mother shall uncharge the practice
And call it accident.

Laer. My lord, I will be ruled;
The rather, if you could devise it so
That I might be the organ.

King. It falls right.
You have been talk'd of since your travel much, 70
And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality
Wherein, they say, you shine: your sum of parts
Did not together pluck such envy from him
As did that one, and that in my regard
Of the unworthiest siege.

Laer. What part is that, my lord? 75
King. A very riband in the cap of youth,
Yet needful too; for youth no less becomes
The light and careless livery that it wears
Than settled age his sables and his weeds,
Importing health and graveness. Two months since, 80
Here was a gentleman of Normandy:—
I've seen myself, and served against, the French
And they can well on horseback: but this gallant
Had witchcraft in't; he grew unto his seat,
And to such wondrous doing brought his horse, 85
As had he been incorpsed and demi-natured
With the brave beast: so far he topp'd my thought

That I, in forgery of shapes and tricks,
Come short of what he did.

Laer. A Norman was't?

90 *King.* A Norman.

Laer. Upon my life, Lamond.

King. The very same.

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

King. He made confession of you,
95 And gave you such a masterly report

For art and exercise in your defence
And for your rapier most especial,
That he cried out, 't would be a sight indeed
If one could match you: the scrimers of their nation,
100 He swore, had neither motion, guard, nor eye,
If you opposed them. Sir, this report of his
Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy
That he could nothing do but wish and beg
Your sudden coming o'er, to play with him.

105 Now, out of this—

Laer. What out of this, my lord?

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

Laer. Why ask you this?

King. Not that I think you did not love your father;
110 But that I know love is begun by time,
And that I see, in passages of proof,
Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.
There lives within the very flame of love
A kind of wick or snuff that will abate it;
115 And nothing is at a like goodness still,
For goodness, growing to a plurisy,
Dies in his own too much: that we would do,
We should do when we would; for this 'would'
changes

And hath abatements and delays as many
As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents; 120
And then this 'should' is like a spendthrift sigh,
That hurts by easing. But to the quick o' the ulcer:
Hamlet comes back: what would you undertake,
To show yourself your father's son in deed
More than in words?

Laer. To cut his throat i' the church. 125

King. No place, indeed, should murder sanctuarize;
Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,
Will you do this, keep close within your chamber.
Hamlet return'd shall know you are come home:
We'll put on those shall praise your excellence 130
And set a double varnish on the fame
The Frenchman gave you, bring you in fine together,
And wager on your heads: he, being remiss,
Most generous and free from all contriving,
Will not peruse the foils; so that with ease, 135
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose
A sword unbated, and in a pass of practice
Requite him for your father.

Laer. I will do't:

And for that purpose I'll anoint my sword.
I bought an unction of a mountebank, 140
So mortal that but dip a knife in it,
Where it draws blood no cataplasm so rare,
Collected from all simples that have virtue
Under the moon, can save the thing from death
That is but scratch'd withal: I'll touch my point 145
With this contagion, that, if I gall him slightly,
It may be death.

King. Let's further think of this:

Weigh what convenience both of time and means
May fit us to our shape: if this should fail,
And that our drift look through our bad performance, 150
'T were better not assay'd: therefore this project

Should have a back or second, that might hold
 If this did blast in proof. Soft! let me see:
 We'll make a solemn wager on your cunnings:

155 I ha't:

When in your motion you are hot and dry—
 As make your bouts more violent to that end—
 And that he calls for drink, I'll have prepared him
 A chalice for the nonce, whereon but sipping,
 160 If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,
 Our purpose may hold there. But stay, what noise?

Enter Queen

How now, sweet queen!

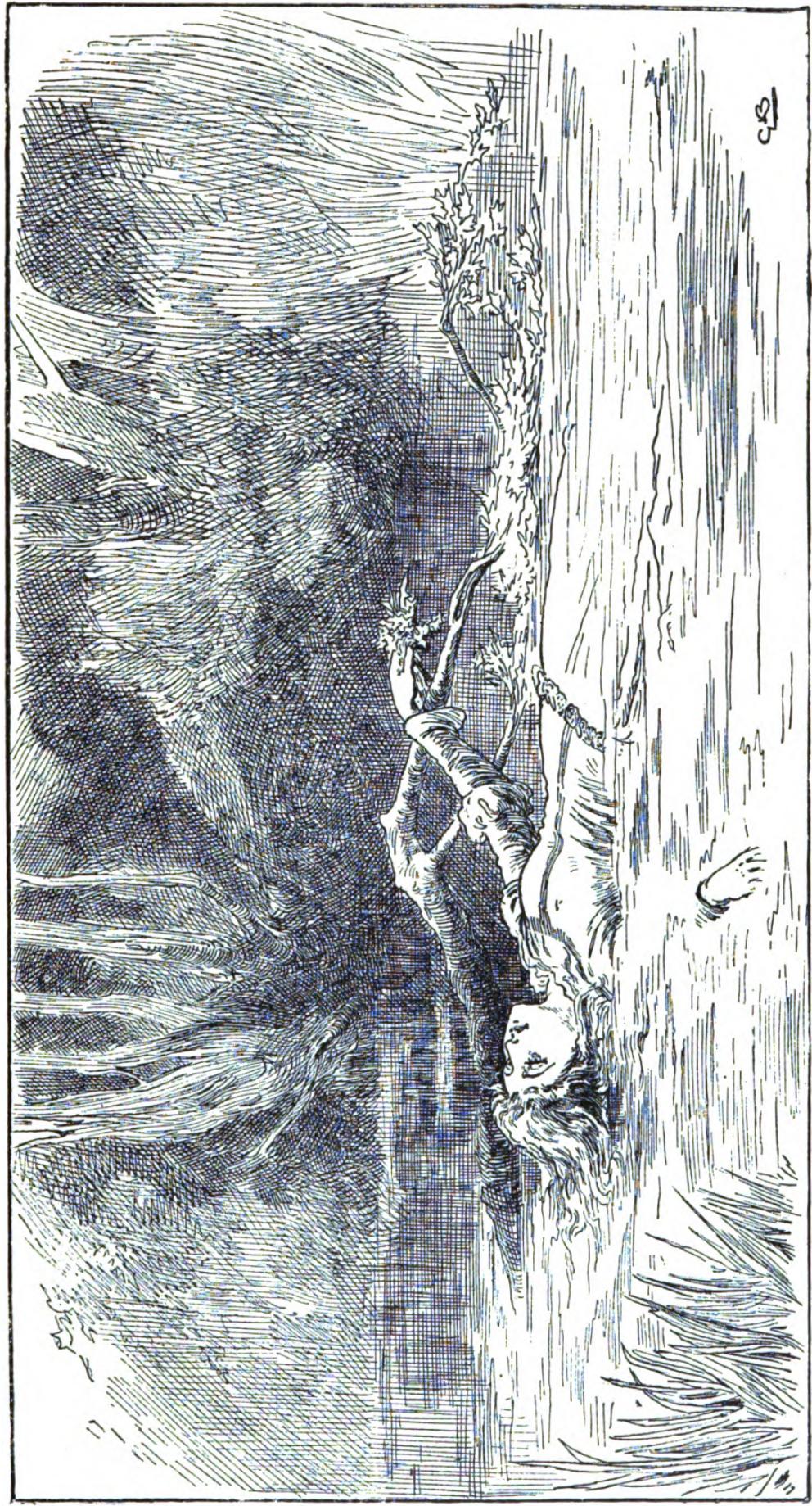
Queen. One woe doth tread upon another's heel,
 So fast they follow: your sister's drown'd, Laertes.

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

Queen. There is a willow grows aslant a brook,
 That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream;
 There with fantastic garlands did she come
 Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples
 170 That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,
 But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them:
 There, on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds
 Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke;
 When down her weedy trophies and herself
 175 Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide;
 And mermaid-like awhile they bore her up:
 Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes;
 As one incapable of her own distress,
 Or like a creature native and indued
 180 Unto that element: but long it could not be
 Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
 Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay
 To muddy death.

Laer. Alas, then she is drown'd?

Queen. Drown'd, drown'd.



Queen.
Her clothes spread wide;
And mermaid-like awhile they bore her up.—(Act iv. 7. 175, 176.)

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

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

ACT V

SCENE I. *A Churchyard*

Enter two Clowns, with spades, &c.

First Clown. Is she to be buried in Christian burial
 that wilfully seeks her own salvation?

Second Clown. I tell thee she is; and therefore make
 her grave straight: the crowner hath sat on her, and
 5 finds it Christian burial.

First Clown. How can that be, unless she drowned
 herself in her own defence?

Second Clown. Why, 'tis found so.

First Clown. It must be 'se offendendo'; it cannot
 10 be else. For here lies the point: if I drown myself
 wittingly, it argues an act: and an act hath three
 branches; it is, to act, to do, and to perform: argal,
 she drowned herself wittingly.

Second Clown. Nay, but hear you, goodman delver.

15 *First Clown.* Give me leave. Here lies the water;
 good: here stands the man; good: if the man go to
 this water and drown himself, it is, will he, nill he,

he goes: mark you that; but if the water come to him and drown him, he drowns not himself: argal; he that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own life. 20

Second Clown. But is this law?

First Clown. Ay, marry, is 't; crowner's quest law.

Second Clown. Will you ha' the truth on 't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o' Christian burial. 25

First Clown. Why, there thou say'st: and the more pity that great folk should have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves, more than their even Christian. Come, my spade. There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers and grave-makers: 30 they hold up Adam's profession.

Second Clown. Was he a gentleman?

First Clown. A' was the first that ever bore arms.

Second Clown. Why, he had none.

First Clown. What, art a heathen? How dost thou 35 understand the Scripture? The Scripture says Adam digged: could he dig without arms? I'll put another question to thee: if thou answerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself—

Second Clown. Go to. 40

First Clown. What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?

Second Clown. The gallows-maker; for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.

First Clown. I like thy wit well, in good faith: the 45 gallows does well; but how does it well? it does well to those that do ill: now thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the church: argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To 't again, come.

Second Clown. 'Who builds stronger than a mason, 50 a shipwright, or a carpenter?'

First Clown. Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.

Second Clown. Marry, now I can tell.

First Clown. To 't.

55 *Second Clown.* Mass, I cannot tell.

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO afar off

First Clown. Cudgel thy brains no more about it, for your dull ass will not mend his pace with beating; and, when you are asked this question next, say 'a grave-maker': the houses that he makes last till doomsday.
60 Go get thee to Vaughan: fetch me a stoup of liquor.

[*Exit Second Clown*

[*He digs and sings]*

In youth, when I did love, did love,
Methought it was very sweet,
To contract, O, the time, for-a my behove,
O, methought, there-a was nothing-a meet.

65 *Ham.* Has this fellow no feeling of his business, that he sings at grave-making?

Hor. Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.

Ham. 'Tis e'en so: the hand of little employment
70 hath the daintier sense.

First Clown. [Sings]

But age, with his stealing steps,
Hath claw'd me in his clutch,
And hath shipped me intil the land,
As if I had never been such.

[*Throws up a skull*

75 *Ham.* That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once: how the knave jowls it to the ground, as if it were Cain's jaw-bone, that did the first murder! It might be the pate of a politician, which this ass now o'er-reaches; one that would circumvent God, might it
80 not?

Hor. It might, my lord.

Ham. Or of a courtier; which could say 'Good-

morrow, sweet lord! How dost thou, sweet lord?' This might be my lord such-a-one, that praised my lord such-a-one's horse, when he meant to beg it; 85 might it not?

Hor. Ay, my lord.

Ham. Why, e'en so: and now my Lady Worm's; chapless, and knocked about the mazzard with a sexton's spade: here's fine revolution, an we had the trick 90 to see 't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding, but to play at loggats with 'em? mine ache to think on 't.

First Clown. [Sings]

A pick-axe, and a spade, a spade,
For and a shrouding sheet:
O, a pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet.

95

[*Throws up another skull*

Ham. There's another: why may not that be the skull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddities now, his quillets, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? why 100 does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery? Hum! This fellow might be in's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers, his re- 105 coveries: is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures? The very conveyances of his lands 110 will hardly lie in this box; and must the inheritor himself have no more, ha?

Hor. Not a jot more, my lord.

Ham. Is not parchment made of sheep-skins?

Hor. Ay, my lord, and of calf-skins too.

115

Ham. They are sheep and calves which seek out assurance in that. I will speak to this fellow. Whose grave's this, sirrah?

First Clown. Mine, sir.

120 [Sings] O, a pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet.

Ham. I think it be thine, indeed: for thou liest in 't.

First Clown. You lie out on 't, sir, and therefore 't is not yours: for my part, I do not lie in 't, and yet it is 125 mine.

Ham. Thou dost lie in 't, to be in 't and say it is thine: 't is for the dead, not for the quick; therefore thou liest.

First Clown. 'T is a quick lie, sir; 't will away again, 130 from me to you.

Ham. What man dost thou dig it for?

First Clown. For no man, sir.

Ham. What woman, then?

First Clown. For none, neither.

135 *Ham.* Who is to be buried in 't?

First Clown. One that was a woman, sir; but, rest her soul, she's dead.

Ham. How absolute the knave is! we must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us. By the Lord, 140 Horatio, this three years I have taken note of it; the age is grown so picked that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibe. How long hast thou been a grave-maker?

First Clown. Of all the days i' the year, I came to 't 145 that day that our last king Hamlet overcame Fortinbras.

Ham. How long is that since?

First Clown. Cannot you tell that? every fool can tell that: it was the very day that young Hamlet was 150 born; he that is mad, and sent into England,

Ham. Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?

First Clown. Why, because a' was mad: a' shall recover his wits there; or, if a' do not, it's no great matter there.

Ham. Why? 155

First Clown. 'T will not be seen in him there; there the men are as mad as he.

Ham. How came he mad?

First Clown. Very strangely, they say.

Ham. How 'strangely'? 160

First Clown. Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

Ham. Upon what ground?

First Clown. Why, here in Denmark: I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years.

Ham. How long will a man lie i' the earth ere he 165 rot?

First Clown. I' faith, if a' be not rotten before a' die, a' will last you some eight year or nine year: a tanner will last you nine year.

Ham. Why he more than another? 170

First Clown. Why, sir, his hide is so tanned with his trade, that a' will keep out water a great while; and your water is a sore decayer of your dead body. Here's a skull now; this skull has lain in the earth three and twenty years. 175

Ham. Whose was it?

First Clown. A mad fellow's it was: whose do you think it was?

Ham. Nay, I know not.

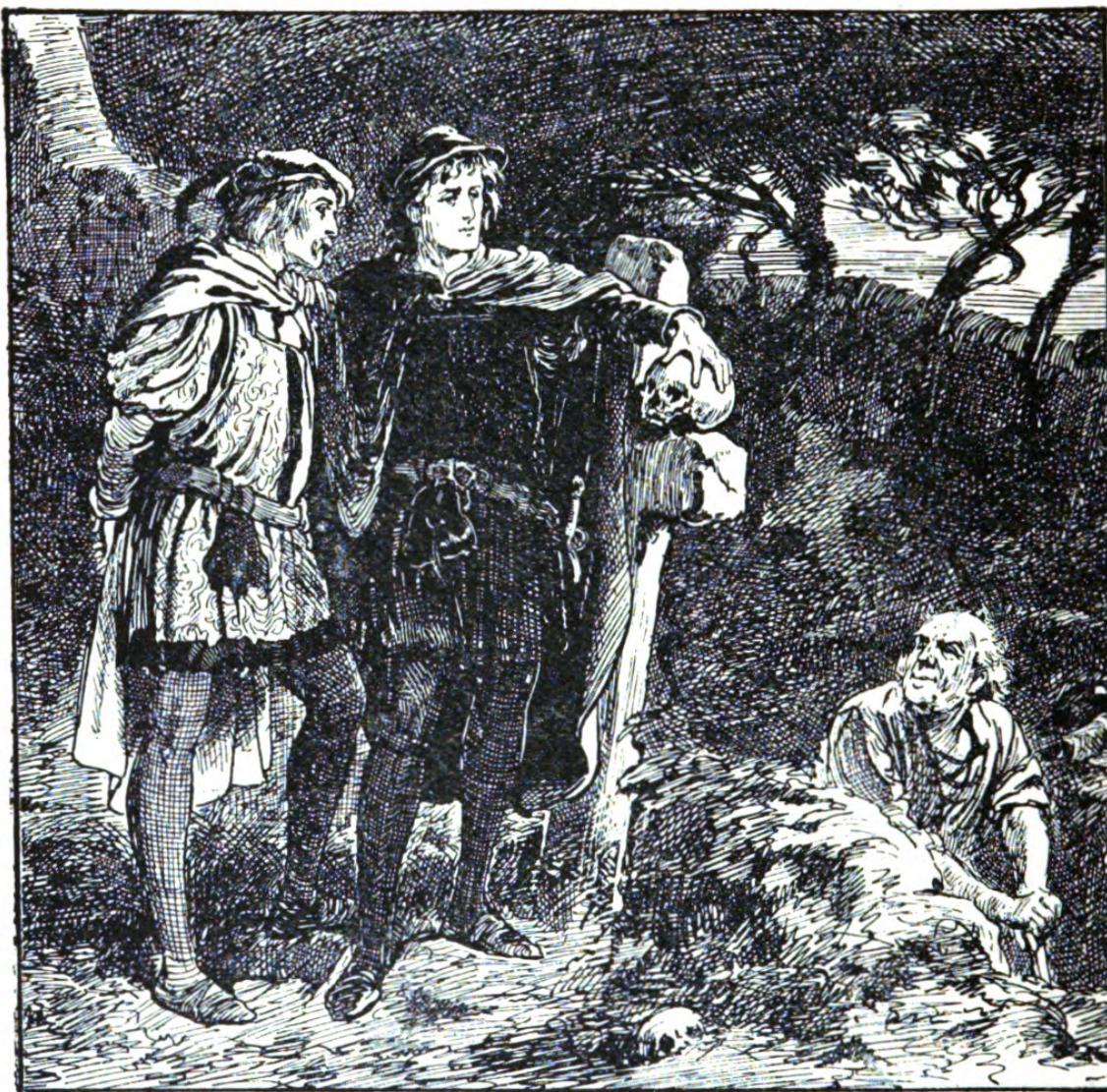
First Clown. A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! 180 a' poured a flagon of Rhenish on my head once. This same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the king's jester.

Ham. This?

First Clown. E'en that.

Ham. Let me see. [Takes the skull.] Alas, poor 185 Yorick! I knew him, Horatio: a fellow of infinite jest,

of most excellent fancy: he hath borne me on his back
a thousand times; and now how abhorred in my imagi-
nation it is! my gorge rises at it. Here hung those
190 lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where
be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your



Ham. I knew him, Horatio: a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy.

—(Act v. i. 186, 187.)

flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on
a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning?
quite chap-fallen? Now get you to my lady's chamber,
195 and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour
she must come; make her laugh at that. Prithee,
Horatio, tell me one thing.

Hor. What's that, my lord?

Ham. Dost thou think Alexander looked o' this fashion i' the earth?

200

Hor. E'en so.

Ham. And smelt so? pah! [Puts down the skull

Hor. E'en so, my lord.

Ham. To what base uses we may return, Horatio!

Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till he find it stopping a bung-hole?

Hor. 'T were to consider too curiously, to consider so.

Ham. No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither with modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it: as thus: Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth into dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam; and why of that loam, whereto he was converted, might they not stop a beer-barrel?

Imperious Caesar, dead and turn'd to clay,

Might stop a hole to keep the wind away:

O, that that earth, which kept the world in awe,

Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw!

But soft! but soft! aside: here comes the king.

Enter Priests, &c., in procession; the Corpse of Ophelia, LAERTES, and Mourners following; KING, QUEEN, their trains, &c.

The queen, the courtiers: who is this they follow?

And with such maimed rites? This doth betoken

220

The corse they follow did with desperate hand

Fordo it own life: 't was of some estate.

Couch me awhile, and mark. [Retiring with Horatio

Laer. What ceremony else?

Ham. That is Laertes, a very noble youth: mark.

225

Laer. What ceremony else?

First Priest. Her obsequies have been as far enlarged

As we have warranty: her death was doubtful;

And, but that great command o'ersways the order,

She should in ground unsanctified have lodged

230

Till the last trumpet; for charitable prayers,
 Shards, flints and pebbles should be thrown on her:
 Yet here she is allowed her virgin crants,
 Her maiden strewments and the bringing home
 235 Of bell and burial.

Laer. Must there no more be done?

First Priest. No more be done:
 We should profane the service of the dead
 To sing a requiem and such rest to her
 As to peace-parted souls.

Laer. Lay her i' the earth:
 240 And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
 May violets spring! I tell thee, churlish priest,
 A ministering angel shall my sister be,
 When thou liest howling.

Ham. What, the fair Ophelia?

Queen. Sweets to the sweet: farewell!

[Scattering flowers]

245 I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife;
 I thought thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,
 And not have strew'd thy grave.

Laer. O, treble woe
 Fall ten times treble on that cursed head,
 Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense
 250 Deprived thee of! Hold off the earth a while,
 Till I have caught her once more in mine arms:

[Leaps into the grave]

Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,
 Till of this flat a mountain you have made,
 To o'ertop old Pelion, or the skyish head
 255 Of blue Olympus.

Ham. [Advancing]. What is he whose grief
 Bears such an emphasis? whose phrase of sorrow
 Conjures the wandering stars, and makes them stand
 Like wonder-wounded heroes? This is I,
 Hamlet the Dane. [Leaps into the grave]



Ham. What is he whose grief
Bears such an emphasis?—(Act v. i. 255, 256.)

Laer. The devil take thy soul!

[*Grappling with him*

260 *Ham.* Thou pray'st not well.

I prithee, take thy fingers from my throat;
For, though I am not splenitive and rash,
Yet have I something in me dangerous,
Which let thy wisdom fear: hold off thy hand.

265 *King.* Pluck them asunder.

Queen. Hamlet, Hamlet!

All. Gentlemen,—

Hor. Good my lord, be quiet.

[*The Attendants part them, and they come out of the grave*

Ham. Why, I will fight with him upon this theme

270 Until my eyelids will no longer wag.

Queen. O my son, what theme?

Ham. I loved Ophelia: forty thousand brothers
Could not, with all their quantity of love,
Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her?

275 *King.* O, he is mad, Laertes.

Queen. For love of God, forbear him.

Ham. 'S wounds, show me what thou 'lt do:

Woo 't weep? woo 't fight? woo 't fast? woo 't tear
thyself?

Woo 't drink up eisel? eat a crocodile?

280 I 'll do 't. Dost thou come here to whine?

To outface me with leaping in her grave?
Be buried quick with her, and so will I:
And, if thou prate of mountains, let them throw
Millions of acres on us, till our ground,

285 Singeing his pate against the burning zone,

Make Ossa like a wart! Nay, an thou 'lt mouth,
I 'll rant as well as thou.

Queen. This is mere madness:

And thus awhile the fit will work on him;
Anon, as patient as the female dove,

When that her golden couplets are disclosed,
His silence will sit drooping.

Ham. Hear you, sir;
What is the reason that you use me thus?
I loved you ever: but it is no matter;
Let Hercules himself do what he may,
The cat will mew and dog will have his day. [Exit 295]

King. I pray thee, good Horatio, wait upon him.
[To Laertes] [Exit Horatio]
Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech;
We'll put the matter to the present push.
Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.
This grave shall have a living monument: 300
An hour of quiet shortly shall we see;
Till then, in patience our proceeding be. [Exeunt]

SCENE 2. *A hall in the castle**Enter HAMLET and HORATIO*

Ham. So much for this, sir: now shall you see the other;

You do remember all the circumstance?

Hor. Remember it, my lord!

Ham. Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting,
That would not let me sleep: methought I lay 5
Worse than the mutines in the bilboes. Rashly,
And praised be rashness for it, let us know,
Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,
When our deep plots do pall: and that should learn us
There's a divinity that shapes our ends, 10
Rough-hew them how we will,—

Hor. That is most certain.

Ham. Up from my cabin,
My sea-gown scarf'd about me, in the dark
Groped I to find out them; had my desire,
Finger'd their packet, and in fine withdrew 15

To mine own room again; making so bold,
My fears forgetting manners, to unseal
Their grand commission; where I found, Horatio,—
O royal knavery!—an exact command,
₂₀ Larded with many several sorts of reasons
Importing Denmark's health and England's too,
With, ho! such bugs and goblins in my life,
That, on the supervise, no leisure bated,
No, not to stay the grinding of the axe,
₂₅ My head should be struck off.

Hor. Is 't possible?

Ham. Here's the commission: read it at more leisure.

But wilt thou hear me how I did proceed?

Hor. I beseech you.

Ham. Being thus be-netted round with villanies,—

30 Or I could make a prologue to my brains,
They had begun the play,—I sat me down,
Devised a new commission, wrote it fair:
I once did hold it, as our statists do,
A baseness to write fair, and labour'd much
35 How to forget that learning, but, sir, now
It did me yeoman's service: wilt thou know
The effect of what I wrote?

Hor. Ay, good my lord.

Ham. An earnest conjuration from the king,
As England was his faithful tributary,
40 As love between them like the palm might flourish,
As peace should still her wheaten garland wear
And stand a comma 'tween their amities,
And many such-like 'As' es of great charge,
That, on the view and knowing of these contents,
Without debatelement further, more or less,
He should the bearers put to sudden death,
Not shriving-time allow'd.

Hor. How was this seal'd?

Ham. Why, even in that was heaven ordain'd.
I had my father's signet in my purse,
Which was the model of that Danish seal; 50
Folded the writ up in the form of the other,
Subscribed it, gave't the impression, placed it safely,
The changeling never known. Now, the next day
Was our sea-fight; and what to this was sequent
Thou know'st already. 55

Hor. So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't.

Ham. Why, man, they did make love to this em-
ployment;

They are not near my conscience; their defeat
Does by their own insinuation grow:
'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes 60
Between the pass and fell incensed points
Of mighty opposites.

Hor. Why, what a king is this!

Ham. Does it not, thinks thee, stand me now upon—
He that hath killed my king and stain'd my mother,
Popp'd in between the election and my hopes, 65
Thrown out his angle for my proper life,
And with such cozenage—is't not perfect conscience,
To quit him with this arm? and is't not to be damn'd,
To let this canker of our nature come
In further evil? 70

Hor. It must be shortly known to him from England
What is the issue of the business there.

Ham. It will be short: the interim is mine;
And a man's life's no more than to say 'One'.
But I am very sorry, good Horatio, 75
That to Laertes I forgot myself;
For, by the image of my cause, I see
The portraiture of his: I'll court his favours:
But, sure, the bravery of his grief did put me
Into a towering passion.

Hor. Peace! who comes here? 80

Enter OSRIC

Os. Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

Ham. I humbly thank you, sir. Dost know this water-fly?

Hor. No, my good lord.

85 *Ham.* Thy state is the more gracious; for 't is a vice to know him. He hath much land, and fertile: let a beast be lord of beasts, and his crib shall stand at the king's mess: 't is a chough; but, as I say, spacious in the possession of dirt.

90 *Os.* Sweet lord, if your lordship were at leisure, I should impart a thing to you from his majesty.

Ham. I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit. Put your bonnet to his right use; 't is for the head.

Os. I thank your lordship, it is very hot.

95 *Ham.* No, believe me, 't is very cold; the wind is northerly.

Os. It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed.

Ham. But yet methinks it is very sultry and hot, or my complexion—

100 *Os.* Exceedingly, my lord; it is very sultry, as 't were,—I cannot tell how.. But, my lord, his majesty bade me signify to you that he has laid a great wager on your head: sir, this is the matter—

Ham. I beseech you to remember—

[Hamlet moves him to put on his hat]

105 *Os.* Nay, good my lord; for mine ease, in good faith. Sir, here is newly come to court Laertes; believe me, an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences, of very soft society and great showing: indeed, to speak feelingly of him, he is the card or calendar of gentry, for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see.

Ham. Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you; though, I know, to divide him inventorially would dizzy

the arithmetic of memory, and yet but yaw neither, in respect of his quick sail. But, in the verity of extol- 115
ment, I take him to be a soul of great article; and his infusion of such dearth and rareness, as, to make true diction of him, his semblable is his mirror, and who else would trace him, his umbrage, nothing more.

Os. Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him. 120

Ham. The concernancy, sir? why do we wrap the gentleman in our more rawer breath?

Os. Sir?

Hor. Is't not possible to understand in another tongue? You will do't, sir, really. 125

Ham. What imports the nomination of this gentleman?

Os. Of Laertes?

Hor. His purse is empty already; all's golden words are spent. 130

Ham. Of him, sir.

Os. I know you are not ignorant—

Ham. I would you did, sir; yet, in faith, if you did, it would not much approve me. Well, sir?

Os. You are not ignorant of what excellency Laertes 135 is—

Ham. I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with him in excellency; but, to know a man well, were to know himself.

Os. I mean, sir, for his weapon; but in the imputa- 140
tion laid on him by them, in his meed he's unfellowed.

Ham. What's his weapon?

Os. Rapier and dagger.

Ham. That's two of his weapons: but, well.

Os. The king, sir, hath wagered with him six 145
Barbary horses: against the which he has imposed, as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hangers, and so: three of the carriages, in faith, are very dear to fancy, very

150 responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages, and of very liberal conceit.

Ham. What call you the carriages?

Hor. I knew you must be edified by the margent ere you had done.

155 *Os.* The carriages, sir, are the hangers.

Ham. The phrase would be more germane to the matter, if we could carry a cannon by our sides: I would it might be hangers till then. But, on: six Barbary horses against six French swords, their assigns, 160 and three liberal-conceited carriages; that's the French bet against the Danish. Why is this 'imponed', as you call it.

165 *Os.* The king, sir, hath laid, sir, that in a dozen passes between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you three hits: he hath laid on twelve for nine; and it would come to immediate trial, if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer.

Ham. How if I answer 'no'?

170 *Os.* I mean, my lord, the opposition of your person in trial.

Ham. Sir, I will walk here in the hall: if it please his majesty, it is the breathing time of day with me; let the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the king hold his purpose, I will win for him an I can; if not, I 175 will gain nothing but my shame and the odd hits.

Os. Shall I redeliver you e'en so?

Ham. To this effect, sir, after what flourish your nature will.

Os. I commend my duty to your lordship.

180 *Ham.* Yours, yours. [Exit *Osric.*] He does well to commend it himself; there are no tongues else for's turn.

Hor. This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head.

185 *Ham.* He did comply with his dug before he sucked

it. Thus has he—and many more of the same breed that I know the drossy age dotes on—only got the tune of the time and outward habit of encounter; a kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through the most fond and winnowed opinions; and do ¹⁹⁰ but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out.

Enter a Lord

Lord. My lord, his majesty commended him to you by young Osric, who brings back to him, that you attend him in the hall: he sends to know if your pleasure hold to play with Laertes, or that you will ¹⁹⁵ take longer time.

Ham. I am constant to my purposes; they follow the king's pleasure: if his fitness speaks, mine is ready; now or whensoever, provided I be so able as now.

Lord. The king and queen and all are coming down. ²⁰⁰

Ham. In happy time.

Lord. The queen desires you to use some gentle entertainment to Laertes before you fall to play.

Ham. She well instructs me. [Exit *Lord*

Hor. You will lose this wager, my lord. ²⁰⁵

Ham. I do not think so: since he went into France, I have been in continual practice; I shall win at the odds. But thou wouldest not think how ill all's here about my heart: but it is no matter.

Hor. Nay, good my lord,—

Ham. It is but foolery; but it is such a kind of gain-giving, as would perhaps trouble a woman.

Hor. If your mind dislike anything, obey it. I will forestal their repair hither, and say you are not fit.

Ham. Not a whit; we defy augury: there is special ²¹⁵ providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 't is not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come: the readiness is all; since

no man has aught of what he leaves, what is 't to leave
 220 betimes? Let be.

Enter KING, QUEEN, LAERTES, and Lords, OSRIC, and other Attendants with foils and gauntlets; a table and flagons of wine on it.

King. Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me. [The King puts Laertes' hand into Hamlet's Ham. Give me your pardon, sir: I've done you wrong;

But pardon 't, as you are a gentleman.

This presence knows,

225 And you must needs have heard, how I am punish'd With sore distraction. What I have done, That might your nature, honour and exception Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness. Was 't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never Hamlet:

230 If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away, And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes, Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it. Who does it, then? His madness: if 't be so, Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd;

235 His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.

Sir, in this audience,

Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil Free me so far in your most generous thoughts That I have shot mine arrow o'er the house,

240 And hurt my brother.

Laer. I am satisfied in nature, Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most To my revenge: but in my terms of honour I stand aloof, and will no reconciliation, Till by some elder masters of known honour 245 I have a voice and precedent of peace, To keep my name ungored. But till that time, I do receive your offered love like love,

And will not wrong it.

Ham. I embrace it freely,
And will this brother's wager frankly play.
Give us the foils. Come on.

Laer. Come, one for me. 250

Ham. I'll be your foil, Laertes: in mine ignorance
Your skill shall, like a star i' the darkest night,
Stick fiery off indeed.

Laer. You mock me, sir.

Ham. No, by this hand.

King. Give them the foils, young Osric. Cousin
Hamlet,

255

You know the wager?

Ham. Very well, my lord;
Your grace hath laid the odds o' the weaker side.

King. I do not fear it; I have seen you both:
But since he is better'd, we have therefore odds.

Laer. This is too heavy, let me see another. 260

Ham. This likes me well. These foils have all a
length? [They prepare to play

Os. Ay, my good lord.

King. Set me the stoups of wine upon that table.
If Hamlet give the first or second hit,
Or quit in answer of the third exchange, 265
Let all the battlements their ordnance fire;
The king shall drink to Hamlet's better breath;
And in the cup an union shall he throw,
Richer than that which four successive kings
In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the cups; 270
And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,
The trumpet to the cannoneer without,
The cannons to the heavens, the heaven to earth,
'Now the king drinks to Hamlet'. Come, begin:
And you, the judges, bear a wary eye. 275

Ham. Come on, sir.

Laer. Come, my lord. [They play

<i>Ham.</i>	One.
<i>Laer.</i>	No.
<i>Ham.</i>	Judgement.

Os. A hit, a very palpable hit.

Laer. Well; again.

King. Stay; give me drink. Hamlet, this pearl is thine;

Here's to thy health.

[*Trumpets sound, and cannon shot off within*
Give him the cup.]

280 *Ham.* I'll play this bout first; set it by awhile.
Come. [*They play.*] Another hit; what you say?

Laer. A touch, a touch, I do confess.

King. Our son shall win.

Queen. He's fat, and scant of breath.
Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows:

285 The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.

Ham. Good madam!

King. Gertrude, do not drink.

Queen. I will, my lord; I pray you, pardon me.

King [*Aside*]. It is the poison'd cup: it is too late.

Ham. I dare not drink yet, madam; by and by.

290 *Queen.* Come, let me wipe thy face.

Laer. My lord, I'll hit him now.

King. I do not think't.

Laer. [*Aside*]. And yet it is almost against my conscience.

Ham. Come, for the third, Laertes: you but dally;
I pray you, pass with your best violence;

295 I am afeard you make a wanton of me.

Laer. Say you so? come on. [*They play*

Os. Nothing, either way.

Laer. Have at you now!

[*Laertes wounds Hamlet; then, in scuffling, they change rapiers, and Hamlet wounds Laertes*

King. Part them; they are incensed.

Ham. Nay, come, again. [The Queen falls

Os. Look to the queen there, ho!

Hor. They bleed on both sides. How is it, my lord?

300

Os. How is 't, Laertes?

Laer. Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe,
Osric;

I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.

Ham. How does the queen?

King. She swounds to see them bleed.

Queen. No, no, the drink, the drink,—O my dear Hamlet,—

305

The drink, the drink! I am poison'd. [Dies

Ham. O villany! Ho! let the door be lock'd:
Treachery! Seek it out.

Laer. It is here, Hamlet: Hamlet, thou art slain;
No medicine in the world can do thee good; 310
In thee there is not half an hour of life;
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,
Unbated and envenom'd: the foul practice
Hath turn'd itself on me; lo, here I lie,
Never to rise again: thy mother's poison'd: 315
I can no more: the king, the king's to blame.

Ham. The point envenom'd too!
Then, venom, to thy work. [Stabs the King

All. Treason! treason!

King. O, yet defend me, friends; I am but hurt. 320

Ham. Here, thou murderous, damned Dane,
Drink off this potion. Is thy union here?

Follow my mother. [King dies

Laer. He is justly served;
It is a poison temper'd by himself.
Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet: 325
Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,
Nor thine on me. [Dies

Ham. Heaven make thee free of it! I follow thee.

I am dead, Horatio. Wretched queen, adieu!
330 You that look pale and tremble at this chance,



Ham. The point envenom'd too!
Then, venom, to thy work. [Stabs the King.—(Act v. 2. 317, 318.)]

That are but mutes or audience to this act,
Had I but time—as this fell sergeant, death,

Is strict in his arrest—O, I could tell you—
But let it be. Horatio, I am dead;
Thou livest; report me and my cause aright
To the unsatisfied. 335

Hor. Never believe it:
I am more an antique Roman than a Dane:
Here's yet some liquor left.

Ham. As thou 'rt a man,
Give me the cup: let go; by heaven, I'll have 't.
O good Horatio, what a wounded name, 340
Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me!
If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity awhile,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
To tell my story. [March afar off, and shot within
What warlike noise is this? 345

Os. Young Fortinbras with conquest come from
Poland,
To the ambassadors of England gives
This warlike volley.

Ham. O, I die, Horatio;
The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit:
I cannot live to hear the news from England; 350
But I do prophesy the election lights
On Fortinbras: he has my dying voice;
So tell him, with the occurrents, more and less,
Which have solicited. The rest is silence. [Dies

Hor. Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet
prince: 355
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!
Why does the drum come hither? [March within

*Enter FORTINBRAS and the English Ambassadors,
with drums, colours, and Attendants*

For. Where is this sight?

Hor. What is it you would see?

If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search.

360 *For.* This quarry cries on havoc. O proud death,
What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,
That thou so many princes at a shot
So bloodily hast struck?

First Amb. The sight is dismal;
And our affairs from England come too late:
365 The ears are senseless that should give us hearing,
To tell him his commandment is fulfill'd,
That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead:
Where should we have our thanks?

Hor. Not from his mouth,
Had it the ability of life to thank you:
370 He never gave commandment for their death.
But since, so jump upon this bloody question,
You from the Polack wars, and you from England,
Are here arrived, give order that these bodies
High on a stage be placed to the view;
375 And let me speak to the yet unknowing world
How these things came about: so shall you hear
Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,
Of accidental judgements, casual slayings,
Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause,
380 And, in this upshot, purposes mistook
Fall'n on the inventors' heads: all this can I
Truly deliver.

For. Let us haste to hear it,
And call the noblest to the audience.
For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune:
385 I have some rights of memory in this kingdom,
Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me.

Hor. Of that I shall have also cause to speak,
And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more:
But let this same be presently perform'd,
390 Even while men's minds are wild; lest more mis-
chance

On plots and errors happen.

For.

Let four captains

Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage;

For he was likely, had he been put on,

To have proved most royally: and, for his passage,

The soldiers' music and the rites of war

395 .

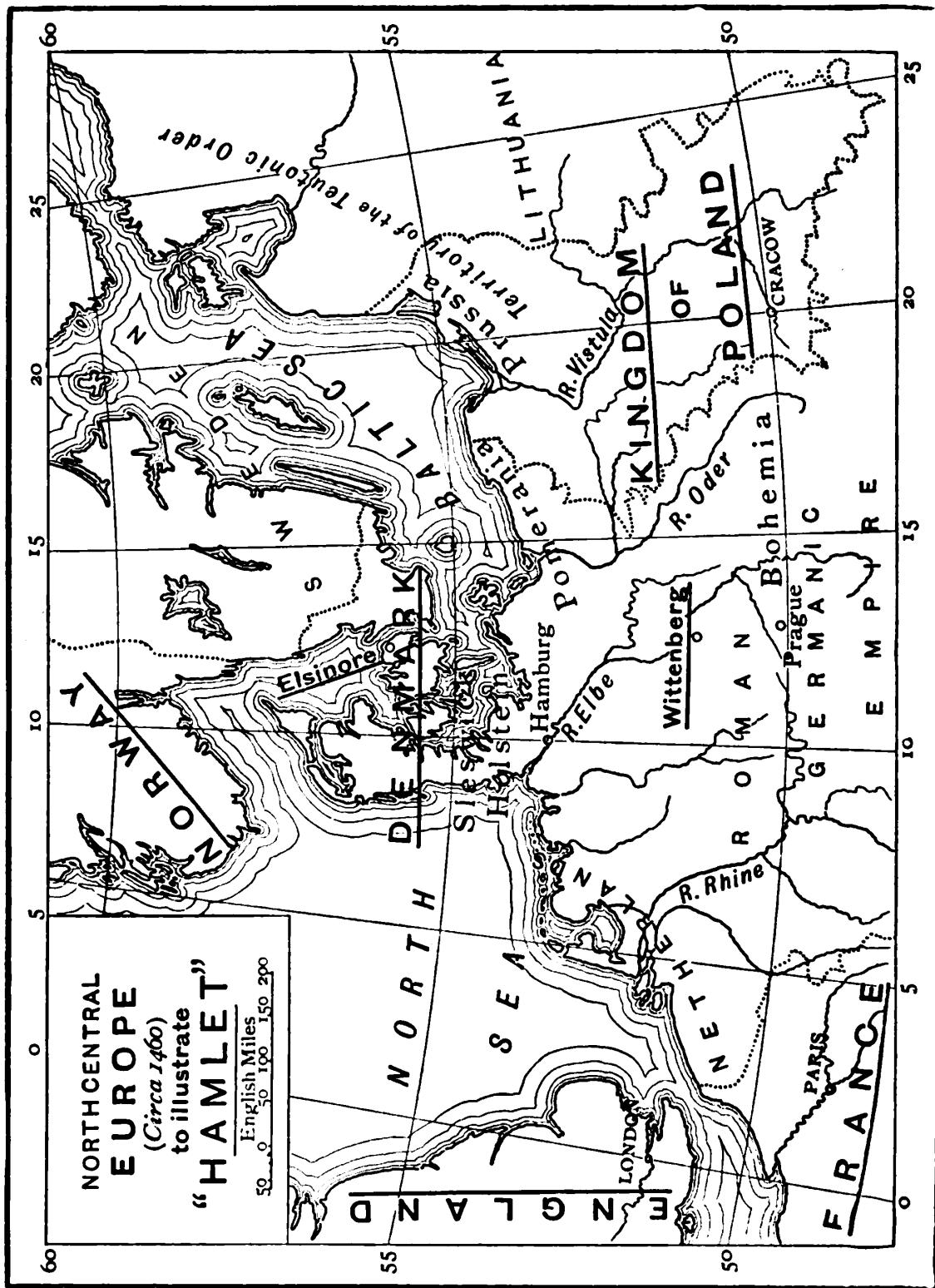
Speak loudly for him.

Take up the bodies: such a sight as this

Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.

Go, bid the soldiers shoot.

[*A dead march. Exeunt, bearing off the dead bodies; after which a peal of ordnance is shot off*



NOTES

Act I—Scene 1

A soldier—Francisco—is on guard, alone, in the silence of midnight, before the Castle of Elsinore, expecting to be relieved. If any challenge is heard at all, it *ought* to come from him; but he himself is suddenly challenged by Bernardo. This breach of military etiquette, and the peremptory manner in which Bernardo speaks, show that he is nervous and startled.

Elsinore is on the east coast of Zealand, about 24 miles from Copenhagen. The Gothic castle, now called Kronborg, stands on a little promontory to the east of the port, commanding the entrance to the Baltic.

2. *me* is emphatic.

3. **Long live the king!** The watchword for the night.

6. **upon your hour.** We still use the phrase ‘*upon* this’; and the simple preposition with *just* has the same meaning, e.g. ‘it is *just on* the hour’.

7. **is struck.** Intransitive verbs in Anglo-Saxon formed their perfect and pluperfect tenses with the auxiliary *to be*. The verbs *come* and *go* still use *to be* indifferently with *to have*. Cf. I. 52, below.

now or ‘*new*’.

8. **much** is a quantitative adjective, and was formerly used indifferently with the singular or the plural number; cf. *any*, *all*, *some*, all of which denote either *quantity* or *indefinite number*.

10. There is special significance in Bernardo’s anxiety to know whether Francisco has had a “*quiet guard*”.

13. **rivals**, i.e. partners. *Rivals* were originally those who lived along the same *river*. They were continually disputing about their *share* of the water.

make haste. Bernardo is anxious not to be left alone.

15. **liegemen**, i.e. men *bound* (Latin *ligare*, ‘to bind’) as vassals.

the Dane, i.e. ‘*The Dane*’ *par excellence*. Cf. the Scotch and Irish use of *the* in, e.g. ‘*The Douglas*’, ‘*The O’Donoghue*’. Many common names have been converted into proper names by the addition of this *the*, cf. *Le Havre*, *the Parson*, *the Crown*, &c. See note on I. 84.

16. **Give you** Supply ‘*God*’.

23. **fantasy** is a doublet of *fancy*, and means here *imagination*. *Fantasy* is borrowed *directly* from the Latin; *fancy* comes *indirectly*, through Norman-French. Cf. *superficies* and *surface*, *separate* and *sever*, *fidelity* and *fealty*.

25. **of us.** *Of* is frequently used for *by*, as in *1 Cor. xv, seen of Cephas*.

29. **approve our eyes**, *i.e.* corroborate (the witness of) our eyes.

31. **assail** is a soldier's word; cf. 'fortified' below.

36. **pole**, *i.e.* the pole-star. The *half* line preceding gives a pause for effect.

37. **made his course**, *i.e.* 'so far completed his course as to be there', at exactly the same time last night.

39. **beating**, striking.

42. **scholar.** Horatio, being a scholar, spoke Latin, the language of the priests, and therefore the language in which ghosts were exorcised.

45. **would**, *i.e.* *wishes*.

be spoke. Past tense used for past participle, as in many other places. There was a notion that a ghost never spoke until spoken to.

46. **usurp'st this time.** The ghost *invades* the night, and *usurps* the form of the dead king.

48. **Denmark.** The name of the kingdom is put for that of the king; cf. *Norway* in l. 61.

49. **sometimes** is an old genitive, like *once* and *always*, and means 'at one time', *i.e.* formerly.

55. **on't.** *On* and *of* are used indifferently in iv. 5. 177, 178:

"God ha' mercy *on* his soul!
And *of* all Christian souls."

56. **might** has here its literal meaning of *could*. It is really the past tense of the Old English *magan*, 'to be able'; and we still have the root meaning in the nouns *might* and *main*. Cf. '*may*' in l. 131.

57. **sensible avouch**, *i.e.* 'actual *information*' (through the senses).

62. **parle** is an obsolete form of *parley*. Its usual meaning is 'a conference between enemies'.

63. **sledded Polacks**, *i.e.* Poles on sledges. Russia did not extend her empire to the Baltic till 1703; before that date Finland, Estonia, and Livonia belonged to Poland.

65. **jump**, *i.e.* just.

68. **gross and scope**, *i.e.* speaking generally.

70. **Good now**, *i.e.* be good enough to.

72. **toils**, causes to toil.

73. **cast**, *i.e.* casting.

N.B.—Cannon were not in use in Northern Europe at that time, but the Moors had used them in Spain. They were made of brass or bronze, because these compounds are so easily cast.

74. **mart**, *i.e.* marketing or purchasing.
75. **impress**. It was the custom in England to *press* (seize and compel) men to join the army and navy in time of war or threatened invasion.
- sore**. The heavy burden of work imposed upon them prevented any distinction between Sundays and week-days — all alike were working days.
77. **toward**, *i.e.* in preparation, coming on. *Might*=literally ‘can’; cf. note on l. 56.
83. **emulate** is a verb used as an adjective. The adjective is either *emulative* or *emulous*.
84. **the combat**, *i.e.* ‘*mortal combat*’. Cf. ‘*The Plague*’, and see note on l. 15.
- Hamlet, *i.e.* the late king.
86. **compact** is accented on the last syllable, as if it were the adjective, not the noun.
87. Having all the binding force which a court of law and a court of honour could give.
88. **with his life**, *i.e.* ‘along with his life’, *if* he lost that.
89. **seized of**, *i.e.* possessed of.
90. Against which lands a part fully equal in value was pledged by our king.
91. **had return'd**, *i.e.* would have returned.
94. **carriage**, *i.e.* the tenor of the article (drawn up and) signed at the foot.
96. **unimproved mettle**, *i.e.* untutored courage.
97. **skirts**=out-skirts.
98. **Shark'd . . . resolute**, *i.e.* ‘hunted up a company of landless desperadoes’.
100. **a stomach**, *i.e.* ‘that requires *courage*’. The word is also used by Shakespeare in the senses of *inclination* and *pride*.
102. **of** has its literal sense ‘off’. Cf. note on l. 25.
107. **romage**, *i.e.* making ‘*room*’ for—clearing out (of stores).
108. **be**. Bernardo’s opinion is much the same as Horatio’s; but the subjunctive *be* expresses less certainty than the indicative *is* would have expressed. For *but*=‘than’, cf. ‘no more but that’, and see lines 100 and 102 above.
109. **sort**, *i.e.* suit.
112. **mote**, *i.e.* a very small thing. Cf. *St. Matthew*, vii. 3.
115. **sheeted**, *i.e.* in winding-sheets.
116. **gibber**, *i.e.* to utter inarticulate sounds.
117. **As**. A line has apparently fallen out of the text here. It must have been to this purport:—‘And there were other terrible sights, such as comets.
118. **Disasters** are literally ‘evil-stars’ (Gr. δυσ-ἀστρηρ), *i.e.* ‘evil influences’. The *moon* is called ‘the *moist* star’ because of her in-

fluence on the tides; Neptune's empire 'stands upon', *i.e.* 'depends on', what 'flows in' from her.

120. **to doomsday**, *i.e.* 'in a manner suitable to'. See *St. Matthew*, xxiv. 29.

121. **precurse** = fore-runner.

122. **harbingers**. Literally, a harbinger is one who goes before to prepare lodgings or shelter (harborage) for those who are coming.

still, from its root sense of 'unmovedly', was used by Shakespeare in the general sense of '*always*'. Cf. ii. 2. 42.

123. **omen** stands here for 'the *calamity* foretold by the omen'. A somewhat similar transference of meaning has taken place in the words *text* and *note*. Cf. 'trumpet' for 'trumpeter' in l. 150 below.

125. **climatures**, *i.e.* simply 'climate', 'country'.

127. To cross the path of a ghost was supposed to bring down its evil influence on the person who dared venture so near.

129. **Speak to me**. The broken lines in this speech are quite in keeping with the occasion, for Horatio—though no longer in the state of fear into which the first appearance of the ghost threw him—is labouring under intense excitement. He has talked over with his friends in the meantime several reasons—historical and practical—for the ghost's appearance; and he now boldly appeals to it by its hopes of peace, its love for Denmark, and its desire to make restitution to any whom it has wronged.

134. **foreknowing**. 'Foreknowledge of which may, by good fortune, *enable us to avoid it*.'

136. **uphoarded**. Separable particles have usually variable meanings according as they are prefixes and compounded or suffixes and separate. For instance, *to upset* and *to overlook* are not the same as *to set up* and *to look over*. Here, however, *uphoarded* has exactly the same meaning as *hoarded up*.

140. **partisan**, *i.e.* pike.

146. **malicious**. *Malice* is a doublet of *malevolence*, *i.e.* 'evil-wishing'. They can only offer it an empty appearance of violence, though their intention is evil enough; and thus their attempt only becomes a subject for ridicule.

150. **trumpet**. See note on l. 123.

154. **extravagant** and **erring** both meant originally wandering abroad, or beyond bounds, and are used literally here.

hies, *i.e.* hastens.

155. **confine**, *i.e.* place of confinement.

156. **probation** ('proof') is *four* syllables.

160. **bird of dawning**, *i.e.* the cock. Cf. l. 150.

162. **strike**, like *takes* in the next line, is used in a peculiar 'magical' sense.

163. **takes**, *i.e.* enchant; cf. the slang use of 'taking'.

167. **Walks**. Cf. "the floods *clap their hands*".

168. **Break we**, *i.e.* (I advise that) we break.

170. **young Hamlet.** This introduces the central figure in the tragedy, and prepares the reader for his appearance in the next scene.

Act I—Scene 2

The King's speech is divided into two distinct parts. The first part refers to his marriage with Gertrude, his dead brother's widow; and its affected language marks the mental strain of the murderer; the second part refers to matters of state, and is straightforward and dignified.

2. **that** repeats the *though*; cf. *que* in French.
4. **one brow of woe**, i.e. a united expression of sorrow. *Brow of woe*=‘woful brow’, a very common construction in Shakespeare. Cf. ‘waste of shame’=‘shameful waste’.
5. **nature**, i.e. natural feeling.
6. **wisest**, because ‘we’ have no right to forget ourselves and the state.
8. **sometime**, ‘formerly’, an adverb used for an adjective. Contrast “*bitter cold*”, i. i. 8.
9. **jointress**, i.e. joint possessor.
10. **defeated**, disfigured, i.e. marred.
11. ‘With *one* eye cheerful, and *one* sorrowful.’ Cf. ‘*an* ounce’, ‘*a* pound’.
12. The Greek name for this construction is *oxymoron*, i.e. ‘a bitter sweet’. Tennyson writes:—“And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true”.
13. **dole** is connected with the Latin *doleo*, ‘I weep’, and means grief.
14. **to wife.** Cf. *St. Matthew*, iii. 9, “We have Abraham *to* our father”.
15. **barr'd**, i.e. opposed, excluded.
15. **wisdoms.** Cf. ‘loves’, i. i. 173.
- 15, 16. **gone along with**, i.e. approved of.
17. **that**=*that which*. The relative is seldom omitted when the demonstrative is expressed.
18. ‘Having a poor opinion of our strength.’ *Weak* really qualifies *worth*, not *supposal*. He held his ‘supposal’ strongly, or he would not have acted on it. A ‘supposal’ is an ‘unfounded opinion’.
20. **disjoint.** The final *t* of the present tense is made to do duty for the *t* or *ed* which ought to be added to form the weak past participle. This is sometimes found, especially in Shakespeare, even when the present tense ends in *te*, not simple *t*, e.g. *degenerate*.
21. **Colleagued with** goes closely after *supposal*. ‘Having a poor opinion of our strength *added to* a dream of conquest.’
22. **He** is superfluous in grammar; but the real nominative to *hath—young Fortinbras*—is so far off that its repetition by *he* makes the sense clearer.

23, 24. 'Referring to the surrender of these lands (which were) legally lost by his father.' *With*, i.e. 'according to'.

27. *writ*, i.e. written. See note on l. 20 above and l. 29 below.

28. **Norway**. Cf. i. 1. 61.

29. **impotent**, i.e. sick. Cf. *Acts*, iv. 9.

bed-rid. Cf. note on l. 20 above; but *ridden* is, of course, a strong past participle.

31. **gait**, i.e. proceeding.

in that goes with *writ*—'We have writ to Norway (bidding him) to suppress . . . because the levying of money, the enlistment of soldiers, and the complete equipment are made entirely from among his subjects'.

33. **subject**—a collective noun.

35. **For**, i.e. as. Cf. *St. Luke*, xi. 12, "for a fish".

37. **To business**—a noun used as a verb. Cf. "to shark up", i. 1. 98. *more* is redundant after *further*.

38. **delated**, i.e. 'handed over to you'.

39. 'Let your haste win our approval of your loyalty.'

41. **nothing** is used adverbially, =not, 'in no degree'.

42. **news**, like *odds*, was originally an adjective inflected for plural and then used as a noun in the singular.

44. **of reason**, in reason.

the Dane. Cf. i. 1. 15.

45. **lose your voice**, i.e. ask in vain. Cf. l. 118 below.

thou is more personal and more friendly than *you* when used to *friends*.

47. **native**, i.e. necessary, or closely related.

48. **instrumental**, i.e. useful, or subservient.

49. What he *means* is that Polonius is necessary and useful to him as king; what he *says* is that he as king is closely related to or dependent on and subservient to Polonius.

50. **Dread my lord**. The possessive adjective stands in this peculiar position either (1) because it was used so often with such words as *lord*, *lady*, *sir*, &c., that the two words came to be treated as a compound noun, cf. *mon-sieur* and *ma-dame*; or (2) to emphasize the *dread*. Cf. i. 3. 46.

51. **Your leave and favour**, i.e. 'your kind leave'.

52. **From whence**. Either the preposition or the suffix is redundant.

53. **in**, i.e. 'by being present at'.

56. **them**. The personal pronouns originally did not need to be compounded with *self* to have a reflexive sense. Cf. "I repent *Me* of having chosen Israel", "Get *thee* to bed" (i. 1. 7), "Let every soldier hew *him* down a bough".

58. **slow leave**; cf. 'weak supposal' in l. 18 above, and 'hard consent' below.

59. **laboursome** is a hybrid, *labour* being Latin and *some* being English. The proper Latin word is *laborious*; the proper English word is *toilsome*.

60. 'I put the seal of my consent, though it was won with difficulty, upon his wishes.'

62. **fair hour**, favourable opportunity.

64. **cousin**, from its root meaning (Latin *consanguineus*, 'a blood relation'), could be applied to a *nephew*.

65. He was more than an ordinary kinsman, for he was stepson as well as nephew; but he was far from feeling kindly towards his 'stepfather uncle'.

67. There is a punning reference in *sun* to *son* in l. 64.

68. **nighted**; cf. note on l. 37 above. Hamlet's first appearance on the scene, dressed in black and with eyes cast down, is suggestive of the coming tragedy.

70. **vailed lids**. 'Vailing lids' would be more accurate; it was the eye that was vailed—by the eyelids.

72. **all that lives**, i.e. everything that ever has life.

75. **particular with thee**, i.e. 'so special in your case'.

76. Contrast this outburst (at the word *seems*) with Hamlet's previous "Ay, madam, it is common". The outburst draws attention to his estimate of external things. The words, though courteous enough in form, must have galled his mother; and they drew from the king the long pedantic speech to which Hamlet makes no answer.

77. **inky**, i.e. 'black as ink'. 'It is not the deep dye of my cloak, nor even the sombre appearance of the usual mourning apparel, nor the breaking forth of heavy sighs, nor the abundant flow of tears, nor the forlorn and downcast expression of the countenance, nor any of the forms and fashions, fits and starts of grief, that can truly set forth my feelings.'

81. **haviour** is the manner which a person 'has'.

84. **play**, and, therefore, deserve the word 'seems'. Cf. l. 76.

85. **passeth show**, i.e. is a *reality*, not merely an appearance. *Passeth*=*surpasseth*.

86. **These . . . suits**. 'These things (ll. 77-81) are only external evidences of mourning.'

90. 'That lost father of *yours* lost *his* father, and the survivor (your father) was bound to mourn for some time.'

92. **obsequious** has its literal sense of 'following to the grave'—'funereal'.

perséver has the old spelling and the old accent.

93. **condolement** is simply a pompous word for 'grief', which betrays the king's self-conscious state of mind.

95. **incorrect to**, i.e. not correct in the sight of. Both *incorrect* and *unfortified* are rare and artificial words. Cf. 'condolement'.

97. **simple and unschool'd**, i.e. ignorant and undisciplined.

99. 'As any thing that is most commonly noticed.'

101. **to heaven**, *i.e.* towards—against heaven.

104. **who is for which**, as if Reason were a person.
still, *i.e.* always.

109. **immediate** (Latin *in*, 'not', and *medius*, 'middle'), without anyone between.

113. **school**, *i.e.* college; but, as the University of Wittenberg was not founded till 1502, this is an anachronism. See 'cannon', l. 126 below.

114. **retrograde to** is simply an affected way of saying 'contrary to'.

118. **lose**. Cf. note on l. 45 above.

124. 'Sits close to my heart and pleases me; and, in proof, I will have a cannon fired every time I drink a health to-day.'

126. **cannon** were not invented till the beginning of the 14th century.

127. **rouse**, *i.e.* deep draught. The word is said to come from the Danish *røs*, 'a beaker of wine'. In Shakespeare's time the Danes were notorious as the most intemperate people in Europe.

bruit, *i.e.* noise abroad.

132. **canon**, *i.e.* religious law.

N.B.—The idea of suicide has, therefore, already occurred to him.

134. **uses**, *i.e.* customs, ways.

137. **merely**, *i.e.* entirely.

139, 140. 'He was to my uncle as the sun-god is to a grotesque being, half man and half goat.'

141. **might not beteem**, 'could not allow'.

147. **or ere**. One of the words is redundant, as *or* is simply another form of *ere*. Cf. *an if*. *Or*, the alternative conjunction, is connected with *other-(wise)*.

149. **Niobe** was the daughter of Tantalus, King of Lydia. She was so proud of her large family that she jeered at Latona for having only two children, Apollo and Diana. In revenge, Apollo slew all her sons, and Diana slew all her daughters. This awful blow smote her dumb with grief, and Zeus eventually turned her into a 'stone' which sheds tears all the summer long.

150. **wants discourse**, *i.e.* 'does not possess the power of reasoning'.

153. **Hercules** was the 'Samson' of the Greeks.

157. In Elizabethan, as still in provincial English, two negatives **strengthen** one another, instead of, as in Latin, contradicting one another.

160. **do** can now be used as an auxiliary (with the infinitive) only, (1) with a negative—'I *do* not know', (2) in questions—'Do you know?', (3) for emphasis—'I *do* know'.

162. **change**, *i.e.* exchange. 'In my circumstances I am *your* poor servant.'

163. **make**, *i.e.* do.

167. Supply *make* in another sense—‘developing a truant disposition’.
173. **affair**, *i.e.* business.
178. **upon** is here an adverb, or supply *it* (*i.e.* the funeral).
181. **dearest** is used simply with an intensive force—*i.e.* greatest—what touches the heart most closely, whether pleasure or pain.
182. **Or ever.** Cf. note on l. 147.
189. **who** is for ‘whom’, as often in Shakespeare.
191. **Season.** ‘Keep till the right *time*’—‘control’.
- admiration** has its literal meaning of ‘wonder’ (Latin *admirari*).
192. **attent**=attentive.
197. **vast** is a noun—a doublet of ‘waste’, ‘desert’.
199. **at point**, *i.e.* at every point.
- cap-a-pe**=French *cap-à-pied*, ‘from head to foot’.
201. **slow** and **stately** are either adjectives used adverbially, or agree with ‘figure’.
203. **truncheon**, *i.e.* ‘a staff’, especially ‘of authority’. The word is connected with *trunk*.
- 203, 204. **distill'd Almost**, *i.e.* almost melted.
211. ‘My right hand is not more like my left hand than the apparition was like your father.’
215. **it** was used as the neuter genitive before *its* was introduced, which was about Shakespeare’s time. In Old English the neuter nominative was *hit*, and the neuter genitive was *his*. The latter is found very often in the Authorized Version of the Bible (1611 A.D.).
225. **Arm'd** refers to the apparition.
229. **beaver** was the part of the helmet which could be raised to allow the wearer to *drink* (Latin *bibo*).
234. **constantly**, *i.e.* steadily.
236. **like** is an adjective used adverbially. As the suffix *-ly* is itself a corruption of *like*, the word *likely* is an anomalous form.
237. **tell**, *i.e.* count. Cf. “the *tale* of the bricks”, *Exodus*, v. 8.
244. **gape**, *i.e.* open its mouth.
247. **tenable**=‘held’.
255. **doubt**=suspect, fear.

Act I—Scene 3

3. **convoy**, *i.e.* means of *conveying safely*.
6. **toy in blood**, *i.e.* a passing fancy of youth.
7. **primy**, *i.e.* early spring.
9. **perfume and suppliance**, ‘that which supplies a pleasant scent for a moment’.
11. **crescent**, *i.e.* when it is growing (Latin *cresco*).
12. **thews**, *i.e.* sinews.
- temple**, *i.e.* of the body. Cp. *St. John*, ii. 21.

15. 'Nothing that can sully or deceive (*cautel*) stains his virtuous intention.'
17. His greatness weigh'd, *i.e.* taking into consideration his high rank.
18. subject to his birth, *i.e.* must consult the dignity of the position which he inherits.
19. unvalued, *i.e.* not valued *so highly*.
20. Carve, *i.e.* choose.
21. safety must be pronounced with *three* syllables.
23. 'By what the state says and will yield to.'
26. particular, *i.e.* definite, precise.
30. credent=credulous.
32. importunity, *i.e.* urgent request.
39. 'The canker-worm too often frets the tender plants of spring before the buds are opened.'
40. button is connected with the same root as *bud*.
42. blastments—'blights'.
46. good my brother. Cf. note on i. 2. 50.
47. ungracious, *i.e.* graceless.
49. Whiles is simply the genitive of *while*—'at the time that'. puff'd, *i.e.* with pride, or 'bloated'.
50. Himself, *i.e.* each of the 'pastors'.
- primrose path of dalliance, *i.e.* the path of trifling in his early youth.
51. reck . . . rede, *i.e.* 'heeds not his own counsel'.
54. 'I have a favourable opportunity for taking leave of my father a second time.'
56. sits in, *i.e.* blows steadily on.
59. character, *i.e.* 'engrave'—the literal meaning of the original Greek word.
60. unproportion'd, *i.e.* immature, or unsuitable.
his=its. Cf. note on i. 2. 215.
61. vulgar, *i.e.* 'common'—'Don't make yourself cheap'.
62. and . . . tried, *i.e.* 'and that after having tested your choice by experience'.
64. 'Do not make your hand-shake of welcome lose its freshness by entertaining too freely.'
67. Bear 't, *i.e.* conduct the quarrel.
69. censure has its literal sense of 'opinion'. (Latin *censeo* 'I think').
70. habit, *i.e.* dress, as still in 'riding-habit'.
71. 'Let the price be shown not in the fanciful and gaudy pattern, but in the richness of the material.'
74. 'Are at once most particular and most free in their expenditure on that special point.'

77. **husbandry**, *i.e.* economy—literally ‘household-management’.
81. **season**. ‘May my blessing cause this advice to *season* or *influence* your conduct.’
90. **Marry** is a corruption of ‘By Mary’, *i.e.* ‘By St. Mary the Virgin’.
- bethought, *i.e.* thought of.
94. **put on**, *i.e.* put *to*—explained to.
101. **green** is allied to *grow*, and therefore means ‘young’ and so ‘inexperienced’.
102. **Unsifted**, *i.e.* inexperienced.
- circumstance** is used here in the singular as a collective noun.
107. **Tender**, *i.e.* regard.
108. **crack the wind**—the metaphor is from a broken-winded horse.
109. **tender . . . fool**, *i.e.* make a fool of me.
112. **go to**. In Shakespeare’s time *go* implied merely ‘motion’, not necessarily ‘motion *from*’; and so *to* could be used with it=‘Come, come!’ There may, however, be an ellipse of some such words as are found in a slang expression—‘Go to *Bath*’.
113. **countenance**, *i.e.* appearance (of reality).
115. **springes**, *i.e.* snares with a *spring*-noose.
- woodcocks** were in Shakespeare’s time supposed to have no brains, because they were so easily snared.
119. **a-making**. The preposition *a* is a corruption of *on*, and the adjective *a* a corruption of *one*.
121. **something** is used adverbially—‘in some degree’. Cf. *nothing* in i. 2. 41.
122. ‘Do not allow yourself to be addressed by everyone who demands a hearing.’
123. **parley** is literally ‘to discuss terms of peace’. (Fr. *parler*, ‘to speak’.)
126. **in few**. Supply *words*. Adjectives are often thus used for nouns in Shakespeare. Cf. ‘for all’ in l. 131 below.
127. **brokers**, *i.e.* negotiators.
128. ‘Not of the true colour which their outward appearance would suggest.’
- investments**, *i.e.* clothing.
129. **implorators**=implorers.
130. ‘Sounding like the words of one whose troth is pledged with sacred vows.’
131. **for all**=in short. Cf. l. 126 above. *Once* might be supplied before the *for*.
133. **slander**, *i.e.* ‘abuse’, or ‘misuse’, is an infinitive.
moment is for *moment*’s.
135. **come your ways**, *i.e.* come along. The *s* is probably the genitive inflexion of the noun—used adverbially. Cf. ‘any *ways* afflicted’.

Act I—Scene 4

This conversation about the weather and the time is most characteristic of men whose minds are trying to escape from one all-absorbing thought.

1. **shrewdly**, *i.e.* keenly.
2. **eager**, *i.e.* sharp. (Latin *acer*, 'sharp'. Cf. *vinegar*, 'sharp-wine'.)
3. **lacks of**, *i.e.* is deficient *off*.
6. **held his wont**, *i.e.* has been in the habit of. *Wont* is really an adjective (wonted) used as a noun. Cf. 'held his *own*'.
8. **wake**, *i.e.* keep a 'watch-night' feast.
rouse. Cf. note on i. 2. 127.
9. **wassail** was literally *wæs hail*, 'be healthy!' Then it came to mean generally 'a drinking-bout'.
- up-spring** is said to mean 'a riotous German dance', in which case *reels* must mean 'makes the dancers reel'.
10. **Rhenish**, *i.e.* Rhenish wine.
12. **triumph of his pledge**, *i.e.* triumphant reception of the health he has pledged.
15. **born**, *i.e.* accustomed from birth.
17. **east and west** practically means 'in all directions'. In *sense* the words follow 'nations'.
18. **traduced and tax'd**, *i.e.* slandered and censured — 'blamed deservedly and even more than we deserve'.
19. **clepe=call**.
'And sully our title of 'drunkard' further by offensive charges of gluttony.'
- swinish phrase**, *i.e.* by calling us swine. Cf. note on 'slow leave', i. 2. 58.
21. **at height**, *i.e.* however noble.
22. 'The best part of the good that is attributed to us.'
24. **mole of nature**, *i.e.* inherited blemish. Cf. l. 40 below.
26. **his=its**. Cf. i. 2. 215.
27. 'By the excess of some natural habit.'
- complexion** (Latin *complexio*, 'physical structure of body'), a 'congenital defect'. "The ancients believed that the disposition depended upon the temperament or due intermixture (complexion or interweaving) of 'humours' of the body—blood, phlegm, and bile, especially; an excess of any one of these humours made a man of sanguinary, phlegmatic, choleric, or melancholy complexion. The term is now employed for the complicated effect of the disposition on the countenance."
30. **plausible** is literally 'praiseworthy'.
- 31-34. 'Carrying the deep impress of that one defect, whether it is an inherited defect or the result of an accident,—their virtues being otherwise free from all blemish and human limitation.'

35. **censure**, *i.e.* opinion. Cf. i. 3. 69.
36. 'The small admixture of *eale* makes all that is really good in the character a matter for doubt, and so brings it into ill-repute altogether.'
- eale**=ale. Hamlet obviously means *e'il* (=evil), but is punning on the subject of conversation, which is the *drinking* habits of the Danes.
40. **spirit of health**, *i.e.* *healed* spirit, opposed to the goblin. For this use of the genitive cf. note on l. 24 above and on i. 2. 4.
43. **questionable**, *i.e.* inviting question.
47. **canonized . . . hearsed**, 'buried with sacred rites'. Shakespeare always accents *canónized* on the second syllable.
48. **cerements** (Latin *cera*, 'wax') are the *waxed* shrouds in which the dead were wrapt.
49. **inurn'd**, *i.e.* buried. An *urn*, as a symbol or ornament of a tomb, speaks of a time when bodies were cremated.
52. **complete**, accented here on the first syllable.
53. 'Appearest thus by the fitful light of the moon.'
55. **to shake our disposition**, *i.e.* by shaking our mental constitution.
56. **reaches**, *i.e.* grasp.
57. **should**, *i.e.* ought.
59. **impartment**, *i.e.* to make communication.
65. **a pin's fee**, *i.e.* the price of *one* pin.
71. **beetles**, *i.e.* leans over.
- his**=its. Cf. note on i. 2. 215.
73. **deprive**—'take away'—does not need *of* before an impersonal object, especially when—as here—the person is also omitted.
- your sovereignty of reason**, *i.e.* the controlling power of your reason. Cf. 'a pin's fee' in l. 65 above.
75. **toys of desperation**, *i.e.* desperate fancies. Cf. l. 40 above.
82. 'Even my blood-vessels as *hard* as the sinews of the Nemean lion.' *Nemea* was the name of a rock in the Peloponnese near which Hercules strangled a gigantic lion.
85. **lets**, *i.e.* makes *late*—'hinders'.
87. 'His thoughts give him the strength of madness or despair.'
89. **Have after**, *i.e.* Let us *take* ourselves after. *Have* is connected with the Latin *capio*, 'I take'. Cf. 'have at him'

Act I—Scene 5

1. **further** ought to be *farther*. *Further* is the comparative of *forth*; *far* makes *farther*, into which the *-th* was introduced by false analogy with *further*. *Farther* ought always to be used of actual distance.
4. **render**, *i.e.* give back—Latin *re* and *do*.
10. **term**, *i.e.* limited time (Latin *terminus*, 'a boundary').

15. **whose**, *i.e.* of which. Contrast 'Our Father *which*'. *Who* was formerly used where we now use *which* (even of *inanimate* objects), and *vice versa*.

17. **spheres**, *i.e.* sockets.

20. **porpentine** is Shakespeare's regular way of spelling *porcupine*. (Latin *porcus-spina*, 'a thorny-hog'.)

21. **eternal blazon**, *i.e.* awful proclamation, a disclosure. *Eternal* is used very commonly in this sense both in the east of England and in America.

29. **Haste me**, *i.e.* do not keep me waiting.

29, 30. **swift As meditation**, *i.e.* quick as thought.

31. **sweep** is simply a doublet of *swoop*.

apt, *i.e.* quick—to understand and to undertake my commission.

32. **fat**=rank.

33. **Leth wharf**, *i.e.* the bank of the river of Forgetfulness (in Hades).

36. **whole ear of Denmark**, *i.e.* ear of all Denmark.

37. **process** is the legal word for '*narrative*'.

38. **abused**, *i.e.* deceived.

44. **of** is used as a preposition for 'time'. Cf. '*of old*', '*of late*'.

45. **secure** obviously does not mean 'safe', but 'careless'—'unguarded'. (Latin *sine-cura*.)

46. **hebenon**, *i.e.* *hen-bane*—the stinking nightshade, which is *baneful* to *fowls*.

47. **porches**, *i.e.* openings.

48. **leperous distilment**, *i.e.* *contagious* essence. Leprosy was considered the most loathsome of contagious diseases.

51. **alleys** are literally 'canals', the word being connected (through the French *aller*, 'to go') with the Latin *adnare*, 'to go to by water'.

52, 53. **posset**—'hot milk curdled with wine or acid'—and **curd** are nouns used as verbs.

53. **eager**, *i.e.* 'sour'. Cf. note on i. 4. 2.

54. **thin**=not curdled.

55. **tetter**, *i.e.* eruption.

bark'd about, *i.e.* grew like a bark over. This is another instance of a noun used as a verb. The ordinary verb *to bark* means 'to strip off the bark', not 'to cover with bark'. Cf. l. 52.

56. **lazar-like**, *i.e.* leper-like. The word was derived from *Lazarus* (*St. Luke*, xvi.), and was corrupted into *Lizard* in the name *Lizard Point*, where there was formerly a *Lazaretto* for the reception of cases of leprosy from homeward-bound vessels.

59. **Of** has its literal sense of '*off*'=from.

dispatch has also its literal sense of 'remove as an obstacle'. (Latin *dispedicare*, 'to unfetter'.)

61. 'Without the Sacrament, without due preparation (appointments), and without being anointed by the oil of Extreme Unction.'

65. **nature**, *i.e.* natural feeling.
66. 'In whatever way you follow up this act, to avenge it.'
71. **matin**, *i.e.* 'morning'.
72. **pale** is an intransitive verb used transitively.
73. **Adieu** is really two words, *à Dieu*—'I commend you *to God*'.
76. **instant** is an adjective used for an adverb.
79. **globe**, *i.e.* 'his head'.
80. **table**, *i.e.* tablet.
81. **fond**, *i.e.* foolish.
82. **saw** is a doublet of *saying*.
pressures, *i.e.* impressions.
83. **youth and observation**, *i.e.* 'youthful observation'.
89. The old habit of making generalization from what he saw, is too strong for him even now.
92. **word**, *i.e.* watchword.
97. **Hillo, ho, ho!** was the cry used by a falconer to recall his hawk.
99. **is't**, *i.e.* How are things *with you*?
101. **Good my lord.** See note on i. 2. 50.
103. **once**, *i.e.* ever.
109. **circumstance**, *i.e.* circumlocution—'beating about the bush'.
111. **shall** has an idea of compulsion in it which is explained by the next line.
115. **whirling**. The epithet is transferred from the brain to the product of the brain.
118. **Saint Patrick**, a Scotch missionary in Ireland at the beginning of the 5th century, was said to have cleared the island of *snakes*, and Hamlet is apparently referring to this legend in connection with his father's words, ll. 36-38 above.
124. 'Grant me one trifling request.'
129. **sword**, which was 'cross-hilted'.
132. **true-penny**, *i.e.* honest ghost—not a counterfeit.
138. **Hic et ubique**, *i.e.* here and everywhere.
145. **pioner** = pioneer (Latin *pedo*, 'a foot-soldier')—a foot-soldier whose duty it is to clear the way in front of an army.
146. **wondrous** is an adjective used for an adverb.
147. Cf. *Hebrews*, xiii. 2.
149. **your** is not emphatic, but is used in a somewhat contemptuous general sense. Cf. iii. 2. 3, and iv. 3. 22.
154. **antic**—'odd'—is a doublet of *antique*.
155. That depends on *swear* understood.
156. **encumber'd** means literally 'heaped one on the other'—(Latin *cumulus*, 'a heap')—'folded'.
159. **an if**. *An* is simply a broken form of 'and' (and = +, but = -); and *an if* means here 'if indeed'.

162. **most** is used here as the superlative of 'great'.

168. **friending**=friendliness.

169. **lack**, *i.e.* be lacking.

170. **still**, *i.e.* always.

171. This summing up of the first act gives the key to the play. Hamlet receives from his father a task which he feels to be beyond his powers.

Act II—Scene 1

This scene serves (1) as a short relief to the minds of the audience; (2) to show the rotten state of Danish society; (3) to admit us to the secret of the character of the practical Laertes as a foil to the dreamy Hamlet.

3. **marvellous** is an adjective used adverbially.

4. **inquire**=inquiry.

7. **me** is the dative—generally called the ethic dative.

Danskers is the northern—*i.e.* the hard—form of Danes. Cf. *kirk* and *church*, *brig* and *bridge*.

8. *How* they live, *who* they are, *what* their fortune is, *where* they live, *who* are their companions, *what* state they keep up.

keep is still used in Cambridge for 'live' or 'lodge'.

10. 'By the compass and general drift of these inquiries.'

11. **do.** Cf. note on i. 2. 160.

more nearer is a *treble* comparative, for *nearer*=nigh-er-er. 'Find out by general questions whether they know my son; then go on to more particular questions; and from their answers guess even nearer to the truth than your particular questions and their particular answers would seem to imply.'

13. **Take**, *i.e.* assume.

18. **he I mean.** For the suppression of the relative cf. i. 2. 17.

19. 'Then lay to his charge whatever faults you like to make up for the occasion, so long as none are so gross.'

31. 'Whisper his faults so astutely that they may seem merely blemishes due to newly-won freedom.'

34. 'A wildness in untamed 'young bloods' such as attacks even one of them.'

38. **fetch of warrant**, *i.e.* 'a justifiable contrivance'.

39–45. 'When you are making mention of these slight faults, just as you would speak of an article rather soiled with use, remember that *if* the person whom you are speaking to and want to sound, has ever seen him guilty of the fore-named crimes, he will follow up the conversation in this way.'

43. **prenominate**—'afore-said'—is a participle. Cf. *deject* for *dejected* in iii. 1. 156.

45. **He** is redundant after *your party* above.

47. **addition**, *i.e.* title. Cf. note on i. 4. 19.

51. **leave**, i.e. leave off.

58. **a'** is a corruption of **he**.

o'ertook=over-taken—by intoxication.

rouse. Cf. note on i. 2. 127.

63. 'Thus we men of wisdom and foresight, by our winding ways and roundabout tests, get direct information by indirect means.'

of wisdom might possibly mean *by wisdom*.

64. **bias**. The metaphor is from the game of Bowls, the balls for which are weighted on one side so as to roll in a particular (curved) direction.

66. **former** refers to his present advice—*before* Reynaldo starts for Paris, where he is to try this plan.

67. **me**, i.e. my meaning.

69. **Good my lord!** Cf. note on i. 2. 50.

70. 'Suspect that he feels the same temptations as you feel yourself.'

72. **ply**, i.e. work steadily at. The word might possibly be metaphorical—'let him carry on his own game'.

76. **closet**, i.e. private room. (Latin *claudio*, 'I shut'.)

77. **doublet all unbraced**, i.e. 'double-breasted coat altogether unfastened'. Such disorder in dress was always supposed to be a symptom of love-sickness.

79. **down-gyved**, i.e. (hanging) down like gyves fetters' to his ankles.

81. **purport**, i.e. meaning.

87. **goes**. The use of the present tense—usually called the Historic Present—throughout this passage makes the scene more vivid and realistic. Cf. i. 2. 210.

89. **perusal**, i.e. study.

101. **ecstasy**, i.e. madness—literally 'being beside himself'. (Gr.—'standing outside of'.)

102. 'The peculiarity of which is that by its own violence it destroys itself, or the person who feels it.'

108. **repel**, i.e. send back hastily. (Latin *repello*, 'I drive back'.)

111. **quoted**, i.e. noticed carefully.

112. **beshrew my jealousy!** i.e. 'curse my suspicions!'

113. **proper**, i.e. as much a distinguishing mark.

114. 'To overreach ourselves by too much prudence.'

117. **which** is governed by *to hide* in the next line. 'Hiding this might annoy the King more than telling him that Hamlet is in love with you.'

Act II—Scene 2

2. **Moreover that**, i.e. over and above the fact that.

6. **Sith**=since.

nor=neither.

10. **dream of**, *i.e.* imagine. The *of* is really redundant, as often after intransitive verbs in Shakespeare.

11-14. ‘That, as you have been brought up with him from such an early date, and afterwards so closely associated with him in his youth, you will condescend to stay some time at least.’

12. **sith** seems here to have its literal meaning of ‘later’.

13. **vouchsafe**, *i.e.* literally ‘to guarantee as certain’. *Vouch* is connected with the Latin *vox*, ‘the voice’.

rest, *i.e.* remaining.

16. **occasion**, *i.e.* opportunity.

18. ‘To remedy which is in our power if it were discovered.

22. **gentry**, *i.e.* courtesy—‘the appropriate conduct of the *gentry*’, on the principle of *noblesse oblige*. Contrast such words as ‘villain’ or ‘heathen’.

23. **expend** is a doublet of *spend*. Cf. ‘estate’ and ‘state’, ‘example’ and ‘sample’.

24. ‘To aid and further our hope.’

25. **visitation**, *i.e.* visit.

26. **fits** is singular because *thanks* is treated as singular.

27. **of**, *i.e.* over.

30. **bent**, *i.e.* inclination.

38. **practices**, *i.e.* devices.

41. **are return'd**. Shakespeare often uses the auxiliary *be* for *have* with an intransitive verb, especially when it is a verb of motion. Cf. i. 1. 7.

42. **still**, *i.e.* ‘always’—its usual meaning in Shakespeare.

47. ‘Does not find out the obvious motives of action so surely.’

sure is an adjective used adverbially.

48. **hath used** seems to combine the sense of (1) *used*=‘did once’ and (2) *has been used*=‘has been accustomed to’.

49. **very**, *i.e.* true. (Latin *verus*.)

52. **fruit**, *i.e.* the dessert-course.

55. **head and source**—‘the chief source’.

56. **doubt**, *i.e.* suspect. Cf. ii. 2. 116.

the main. Supply *cause*.

60. **desires**, *i.e.* good wishes.

61. **first**. Supply *arrival* or *request*.

64. **truly** is misplaced; it really qualifies *was*.

65-67. ‘And grieved at *this* fact, that he was so played with and deceived because of his sickness, age, and powerlessness.’

67. **Was borne**. The singular may be accounted for by the fact that *he* himself—rather than his ‘sickness, age, and impotence’—is really the subject of the sentence.

71. **assay**, *i.e.* ‘to try force’. *Assay* is a doublet of *essay*.

77. **pass**, *i.e.* passage.

79. 'On such terms as are safe for you and therefore allowed to them.'
80. **likes**, *i.e.* pleases.
81. **more consider'd**, *i.e.* time for further consideration. Cf. note on ii. i. 102.
83. **took**, *i.e.* undertaken.
86. **expostulate**, *i.e.* discuss fully.
90. **wit** here means *wisdom*.
95. **matter**, *i.e.* facts.
98. **figure**. Supply 'of speech'.
103. **effect defective**. The result was a defective mind.
104. 'It remains for us to find out that, and the question stands in this way.'
105. **perpend**, *i.e.* weigh carefully.—*N.B.* Polonius uses pedantic Latin words.
108. **gather and surmise**. 'Take these facts and guess the result.'
- 116-119. **doubt** in the first two lines and the last line means 'to be doubtful about', and in the third 'to suspect'.
121. **reckon**, *i.e.* to express in *numbers*—*i.e.* in numbered feet. Cf. "I am ill at these *numbers*".
122. **most best** is a double superlative. Cf. note on ii. i. 11.
124. **machine**. 'So long as this body belongs to him, and can be used by him.'
127. **more above**=moreover. The *ove* in 'above' is the same as in '*over*', both being connected with 'up'.
137. 'If I had acted as though I were simply a piece of furniture—blind, deaf, and dumb', the agent of their correspondence.
- table-book**, *i.e.* tablet, note-book.
140. **round**, an adjective used adverbially, meaning 'plainly'.
141. **bespeak**, *i.e.* address.
142. **out of thy star**, *i.e.* 'out of thy sphere'.
146. **took the fruits of**, *i.e.* profited by.
147. **repulsed**—by her.
149. **watch**, *i.e.* wakefulness—loss of sleep.
150. **lightness**, *i.e.* light-headedness.
154. **fain**, *i.e.* gladly.
160. **centre**—of the earth.
164. **an arras**, *i.e.* a wall-curtain, or piece of tapestry. See iii. 3. 28.
- Arras* is a town in the north of France where curtains for covering the rough walls of houses (before paper and paint came into fashion) were first manufactured.
166. **thereon**, *i.e.* because he loves her.
171. **board**, *i.e.* attack, accost.
presently, *i.e.* immediately.

173. **God-a-mercy**, *i.e.* God *have* mercy—‘Please God’.
175. **fishmonger**—fishing for *news*.
182. ‘If even the sun, who is a god, can only bring evil out of evil, so bad men will continue to be bad.’
186. **say**, *i.e.* mean.
194. **who** ought to be *whom*. Cf. note on i. 2. 189.
195. **matter** is used by Polonius in the sense of ‘subject-matter of the book’, but Hamlet intentionally misunderstands.
198. **purging**, *i.e.* discharging.
199. **plentiful lack** is an instance of oxymoron.
204. **go backward**—in years, not literally. Crabs go *sideways*.
209. **pregnant**, *i.e.* full of meaning.
happiness, *i.e.* appropriateness—a sense in which it is still used of language.
227. **indifferent**, *i.e.* average.
229. **button**—which crowns the very top of it.
244. **confines**, *i.e.* places of confinement.
- 255–257. ‘What an ambitious man looks upon as a substantial possibility well within his reach is really merely the shadow of a dream.’
261. **beggars bodies**. Beggars have no ambition, and are therefore substantial people; heroes are ambitious, and are therefore mere shadows.
262. **outstretched**, *i.e.* far-grasping, ambitious.
263. **fay**, *i.e.* faith.
- 265–269. ‘Nothing of the kind: I will not mix you up with my other servants, for I honestly tell you that they are a worthless set. But do you, as companions on the high-road of friendship, honestly tell me what you are doing here.’
273. **a halfpenny**. Supply *at*.
274. **free visitation**, *i.e.* spontaneous visit.
284. **consonancy**, refers to their being ‘of the *same* age’.
286. **a better proposer**, *i.e.* a better speaker.
287. **even and direct**, *i.e.* plain and straightforward.
290. **of you**, *i.e.* on you.
After this ‘Aside’ Hamlet at once begins to play the madman, as he has found out that the two courtiers are really spies.
- 293–295. ‘I will anticipate your explanation of the reason of your coming; and so there will be no necessity for you to reveal it, and you will not have dropped a single word of what you promised to keep secret.’
294. **discovery**, *i.e.* disclosure.
296. **forgone all custom**, *i.e.* given up all practice. The *for* is a negative prefix, as in *forget*, *forgive*.
299. **sterile promontory**—a barren headland thrust out into the ocean of space.

300. **brave**, *i.e.* splendid.

301. **fretted** here is adorned.

304. **faculty**, *i.e.* powers.

305. **express**, *i.e.* expressive.

307. **paragon** is literally 'a model *with which comparisons are made*'.

308. **quintessence**. The fifth (Latin *quintus*) was the purest or characteristic essence, according to alchemists—*i.e.* the one which remained after the four 'elements'—earth, air, fire, and water—had been removed from the substance.

316. **lenten**, *i.e.* meagre.

These players are not merely incidental; they play a very important part—in the plot.

317. **coted**, *i.e.* overtook and passed.

321. **target**, *i.e.* round shield.

322. **gratis** (Latin *gratis*, 'for thanks'), *i.e.* for nothing.

humorous means 'who displays some particular *humour*, *i.e.* disposition of the mind'.

324. **tickl o' the sere** means literally 'easily touched on the trigger', *i.e.* 'easily moved to laughter'.

tickl=ticklish.

sere, or sear, is the catch of a gun which keeps the hammer at half or full cock.

325. **halt**, *i.e.* be lame as to the 'feet'.

328. **the city**, *i.e.* Copenhagen, not Elsinore. Hamlet's love of the drama is quite in keeping with his intellectual tastes.

329. **residence**, *i.e.* remaining in the city.

330. **both ways** is redundant.

331. **inhibition**, *i.e.* prohibition to act in the city. This probably refers to events which had actually been taking place in London, where in 1600 and 1601 performances were 'inhibited' in all the theatres except 'the Globe' and 'the Fortune'. About the same time a company of boys from the Savoy Chapel Royal was licensed to act in Blackfriars, and their popularity still further drew away support from the grown-up actors.

337-343. 'The grown-up actors win less support because there is a troop of boy-actors—a regular nest of young hawks—who scream out their parts at the top of their voices, and are violently applauded for doing so. Indeed, they are so much the rage, in spite of their noise, that many good and experienced actors dare not enter the lists against their shrill voices.'

338. **aery** is 'the nest of a bird of prey'.

eyases, *i.e.* nestlings.

345. **escoted**, *i.e.* paid. Cf. 'scot-free'='without payment'.

345-350. 'Will they give up their *profession* when their voices break? Will they not say later on, if—as is most likely, unless they have other resources to fall back on—they become public players,

that those who write dramas for them, are wronging them by making them *exclaim against* what they are themselves going to be?

345. **quality**, i.e. profession. Cf. l. 429 below.

349. **exclaim against**, i.e. either (1) find fault with, or (2) use their shrill treble voices to the prejudice of actors.

352. **tarre**, i.e. to urge.

353. **argument**, i.e. a plot.

354. **cuffs**, i.e. fisticuffs—blows.

359. **it**, i.e. the prize. The boys carry *everything* before them, even the very theatre itself, which, if Shakespeare's own Globe Theatre, had for a sign 'Hercules carrying the earth on his shoulders'.

362. **mine uncle is king** accounts, in Hamlet's mind, for everything that is amiss. He generalizes hastily—from his own unhappy experience.

363. **mows**, i.e. grimaces.

365. **picture in little**, i.e. a miniature of him.

'**s blood** stands for 'Christ's blood' as '**s death** and **sounds** stand for 'Christ's death' and 'Christ's wounds'.

370. **the appurtenance of**. That which appertains to welcome should always be made in customary fashion with due formality; allow me to treat you in this way, otherwise my condescension to the players, which *must* be ceremonious, will seem to be more friendly than to you.

371. **comply**, i.e. 'compliment'—'show *complete* civility to'.

372. **garb**, i.e. way.

extent, i.e. show of courtesy.

373. **show**, &c., i.e. must have all necessary external formality.

377. **but mad north-north-west**, i.e. only in one particular direction.

378. **handsaw**. Hamlet is satirically punning on the word *heronsaw* = heron.

379. **Well** is an adjective used as a noun. Cf. *good*; or *it* may be understood after *be*.

382. **swaddling cloots**, i.e. baby's clothes.

383. **Happily**, i.e. haply—perhaps. Cf. i. i. 134, where it *may* mean the same.

390. **Roscius** was a great actor at Rome in the year B.C. 70, who taught Cicero to speak.

392. **Buz, buz!**= 'stale news'.

394. **on his ass** is Hamlet's satirical interpretation of 'on my honour'.

398. **scene indivisible**, i.e. a play in which the *Unity of Place* was strictly adhered to.

poem unlimited, i.e. a play in which neither the *Unity of Time* nor the *Unity of Place* was adhered to.

Seneca was a tragedian and **Plautus** a comedian,

400. **law of writ**, *i.e.* a drama completely worked out on the regular lines.

the liberty, *i.e.* an improvised sketch.

401. **Jephthah**. See *Judges*, xi. and xii.

411. **follows**. Hamlet is again punning on the double sense of *follows*—(1) coming after, and (2) resulting from.

417. **row . . . chanson**, *i.e.* line of the song—the ‘affected’ words are used in satirical imitation of Polonius.

418. **abridgement** probably means—‘that which cuts me short’, but in Shakespeare’s time the word also meant ‘a short play’, and Hamlet may be punning on the two meanings.

421. **valanced**, *i.e.* fringed with a *beard*.

424, 425. **altitude of a chopine**, *i.e.* by the height of a cork heel—which was sometimes as much as 18 inches high.

426. **cracked**—because female parts were played by *boys*.

ring. Another pun. There was a *ring* stamped on the coin round the head of the sovereign; and if the crack extended inside the *ring*, the coin would not ‘ring’ sound, and was made unfit for currency.

429. **straight** is an adjective used adverbially, ‘at once’.

432. **me** is another instance of the so-called *ethic dative*. Cf. note on ii. i. 7.

435. **caviare to the general**, *i.e.* delicacy unappreciated by the mass. *Caviare* is a highly-seasoned preparation of sturgeon’s roe, which requires a cultivated taste. *General* is an adjective used as a noun. Cf. l. 379 above.

436, 437. **cried in the top**, *i.e.* were superior to.

437. **digested**, *i.e.* arranged.

438. **modesty** (Latin *modestia*) has its old sense of ‘correctness’.

439. **sallets**, *i.e.* something to give a relish.

440. **nor no**. Cf. note on i. 2. 157.

phrase, *i.e.* style.

443. **more handsome than fine**, *i.e.* with more natural charm than *finished* art; or, owing more to its proportion than to its ornamentation.

444. **thereabout**, *i.e.* at that part. Cf. whereabouts.

Æneas, the reputed founder of the Roman nation, wandering through the Mediterranean, landed at Carthage, and was entertained by Queen *Dido*, to whom he related the story of the fall of Troy (*Ilium*)—how the Greeks, failing to take the city by assault, craftily filled a *wooden horse* with armed men; this was dragged within the walls by the Trojans as a trophy, whereupon the Greeks, coming forth at night, devastated the city with fire and sword; King *Priam* was killed by *Pyrrhus*; *Hecuba*, the queen, was made a slave; and Æneas escaped, bearing his father, Anchises, on his shoulders through the flames.

448. **Hyrcanian beast**, *i.e.* the tiger. Hyrcania was the name of Central Persia.

452. **ominous**, *i.e.* fatal.

454. **heraldry** is the art of designing, representing, and interpreting the coats of arms which are the badges of noble families. Frequent terms of heraldry are: *sable*, black; *gules*, red; *couchant*, an attitude of repose; *tricked*, drawn or sketched.

457. **impasted**, *i.e.* pasted over with the dust of the streets.

460. **size** is a kind of weak glue.

coagulate is a past participle, not an ordinary adjective, the *-ed* having been dropped for euphony—after the *-te*.

461. **carbuncles** (Latin *carbunculus*, ‘a little coal’) are blood-red in colour.

466. **Anon**=in one (moment).

467. **short** is another adjective used adverbially.

469. **Repugnant to**, *i.e.* disobeying.

unequal. Cf. *short* above.

471. **fell**, *i.e.* cruel.

474. **his**=its. Cf. note on i. 2. 215.

476. **milky**, *i.e.* milk-white.

478. **painted**, *i.e.* in a picture.

479. ‘Ignoring both his own wishes and the deed in hand.’

481. **against**, *i.e.* before.

482. **rack**, *i.e.* thin *drifting* clouds (in the upper air).

484. **hush**, *i.e.* silent. This use of a noun for an adjective is very rare unless it goes immediately with its noun, as in “any *moment* leisure” (i. 3. 133), “the region kites” (ii. 2. 579), or “his music vows” (iii. 1. 157).

485. **the region**, *i.e.* that part of the sky.

486. **a-work**, *i.e.* at work. Cf. *asleep*.

487. **the Cyclops** were fabled giants who were said to assist Vulcan at his smithy beneath Mount Etna in making weapon-proof armour for the gods.

488. **Mars** was the god of war.

proof eterne, *i.e.* resisting all blows.

489. **remorse**, *i.e.* simply ‘pity’, not ‘regret’.

bleeding, *i.e.* dripping with blood.

493. **fellies**, *i.e.* felloes—the curved pieces of wood that form the rim of a wheel.

494. **nave**=navel—the hub.

499. **who**, *i.e.* whoever.

500. **mobled**, *i.e.* muffled.

503. **bisson rheum**, *i.e.* blinding tears.

504. **late**=lately.

505. **o'er-teemed**, *i.e.* that had borne too many children.

508. ‘Would have proposed the dethronement of Fortune

512. **instant**. Cf. i. 5. 55.

514. **milch**, i.e. moist.
515. **passion**, i.e. compassion.
519. **Good my lord.** Cf. note on i. 2. 50.
520. **bestowed**, i.e. lodged.
521. **abstract**, i.e. epitomes.
- 522, 523. 'It would be better *for you* (to) have a bad epitaph after your death.' *You* is the dative, as in 'if you please'; but this fact was forgotten, and we have in Shakespeare '*I* were better', as in modern English 'if *I* please'.
526. **bodykins**, i.e. body—'the bread in the sacrament'.
527. **after**, i.e. according to.
534. **you**, i.e. the whole company, opposed to *thou*, the First Player.
551. **conceit**, i.e. conception (of the part).
554. **whole function**. 'All his actions being appropriate to his conception of the part.'
559. **cue**, i.e. that which prompts—literally 'the last words of the previous speaker' (Latin *cauda*, 'a tail').
561. **the general ear**, i.e. the ear of the public. Cf. 435 above.
562. **free**, i.e. free—from *guilt*.
563. **amaze** is simply the Teutonic synonym for the Roman *confound*=‘confuse’.
566. **muddy-mettled**, i.e. irresolute—not ‘*clear-minded*’. He is evidently conscience-stricken at the thought of his own weakness.
peak, i.e. pine.
567. **John-a-dreams** is a general name for any dreamer. Cf. *Jack-lantern*, *Jackanapes* (Jack o' apes). *Jacques* is the most common name in France, as *John* is in England (cf. '*John Bull*'); so *Jack* came to be used as a substitute for *John*, though it is really the short form of *Jacobus*, the Latin for *James*. The word is also used, with a similar 'general' meaning, in 'boot-Jack', 'roasting-Jack'. 'Union Jack'.
- unpregnant of**, i.e. not inspired by.
569. **property**, i.e. all that was *his own* (Latin *proprium*).
570. **defeat**, i.e. undoing—destruction (Fr. *dé-faire*).
- 577-580. 'I have no more *liver* than a pigeon, and do not feel resentment against oppression; otherwise I should have fattened all the kites in this part of the sky with the carcass of this slave.'
577. The *liver* was in ancient times considered to be the seat of the passions as the *heart* is nominally now; and the liver has a great effect on many 'passions', but not on '*the* passions', i.e. hate and love. Gall is the bitter fluid 'secreted' by the liver.
579. **the region kites**. Cf. note on l. 484 above.
581. **kindless** is the opposite of *kindly*, and has its root meaning of 'unnatural'—'with no proper feeling for his *kin*'.
586. **a-cursing**. Cf. note on i. 3. 119.

587. **scullion**, *i.e.* a kitchen drudge.
 588. **About**, *i.e.* (set) about (your work).
 591. **presently**, *i.e.* 'on the spot', as it is still used in Scotland.
 597. **tent**, *i.e.* probe (Latin *tentare*).
 blench, *i.e.* wince—connected with *blink*.
 603. **Abuses**, *i.e.* deceives.
 604. **relative**, *i.e.* closely connected with the matter—conclusive.
 A rhyming couplet was often introduced as a cue, to mark the end of a speech or scene.

Act III—Scene 1

1. **circumstance**, *i.e.* roundabout method (Latin *circum-stare*, 'to stand round').
 3. **Grating**, *i.e.* disturbing.
 4. Hamlet's delay has given time for the king's suspicions to be aroused.
 12. 'In a restrained manner—with forced politeness.'
 13. **of**, in each instance, makes a genitive of respect—'in the matter *of*'.
 14. **assay**, *i.e.* (1) invite to, or (2) test by.
 17. **o'er-raught**=over-reached, *i.e.* overtook.
 26. **edge**, *i.e.* stimulus.
 29. **closely** has its literal sense of 'secretly' (Latin *clausus*, 'shut up').
 31. **affront**, *i.e.* come face to face with.
 32. **lawful espials**, *i.e.* spies with right to spy.
 33. **bestow**, *i.e.* hide.
 35. **by him**, *i.e.* from him.
 45. **colour**, *i.e.* give some colour to.
 49. This is the first hint of any stings of conscience in the king's heart.
 52. **to**, *i.e.* compared *to*.
 the thing that helps it, *i.e.* the paint which helps it to appear beautiful.
 53. **painted**, *i.e.* disguised.
 56. **To be**, *i.e.* is it *to be* suicide. The idea of suicide has occurred to him before (i. 2. 132), but that way out of the difficulty is too easy—for a philosopher.
 59. **N.B.**—The metaphor is mixed.
 65. **rub**. The metaphor is from the game of bowls—a *rub* being anything that turns a bowl out of its course.
 66. **what . . . come** is the nominative to must in I. 68—'the question what'.
 67. **mortal coil**, *i.e.* 'the burden, turmoil, of mortality'.

68, 69. 'Must cause us to pause; in that lies the consideration that makes calamity so long-lived.'

73. **office**, *i.e.* 'office-bearers', so *patient merit* below means '*a man* of patience and merit'.

76. **bare**—(1) mere, or (2) unsheathed.

fardels, *i.e.* burdens.

77. **grunt** is a strong cognate of *groan*.

79. **ourn**, *i.e.* boundary.

83. **conscience**=consideration, deliberation, 'thought' in l. 85.

84. 'And thus the healthy colour natural to Resolution is so destroyed by over-anxiety as to turn to pallor.'

86. **pitch**, *i.e.* importance.

87. 'By too much attention to this have their currents turned aside.'

88. **the name**, *i.e.* even the name.

89. **orisons**, *i.e.* prayers.

His mother's sin has made him lose faith in womanhood, and now he sees that Ophelia is acting as a decoy. He had known before that she was weak; he now finds that she is also false.

99. **their perfume lost**—'if the words have lost their sweetness'.

101. **wax**, *i.e.* grow.

103. **honest** here means to be *true (to him)* and *virtuous*. He probably hears a rustle behind the arras, and probably suspects a spy.

107. 'You should jealously guard your virtue from the attacks which your beauty might bring upon it.'

109. **commerce**, *i.e.* conversation.

114. **sometime**, *i.e.* at some former time—once.

118, 119. **relish of it**, *i.e.* smack of it=we shall still smack of our old (worthless) stock in despite of a leaven of virtue.

122. **indifferent**=indifferently, *i.e.* 'moderately'.

125. **at my beck**, *i.e.* at my command.

129, 130. **thy . . . your**. *Thou* in Shakespeare is used in much the same way as the modern German *Du* is used,—to express (1) affection towards friends; (2) anger or contempt towards foes; (3) the kindly superiority of a master over a servant.

130. **ways**. Cf. note on i. 3. 135.

131. Hamlet obviously sees that this is a lie.

139. **monsters**—'something to be pointed at' (Latin *monstrare*, 'to point out').

145, 146. 'You misname men out of sheer wantonness, and excuse yourselves on the score of ignorance.'

152. 'The courtier's discerning eye, the brave soldier's sword, the scholar's eloquence.'

153. 'The hope and flower of the nation at its best.'

154. **mould**, *i.e.* model.

156. **deject.** Cf. note on i. 2. 20.
 157. **music vows.** Cf. note on ii. 2. 484.
 160. **blown,** *i.e.* fully blown.
 161. **Blasted with ecstasy,** *i.e.* ruined by madness.
 164, 165. **Nor . . . not.** For the double negative, cf. note i. 2. 157.
 166. **on brood,** *i.e.* brooding.
 167. **disclose** is the technical word for a young bird chipping its way out of the egg.
 171. **demand,** *i.e.* demanding.
 173. **shall expel.** The 'shall' implies 'will expel as they *ought* to'.
 174. **something** is used adverbially=somewhat.
 175. **brains** is practically singular—'mind'.
 176. **From fashion of himself,** *i.e.* off his usual behaviour.
 184. **round,** *i.e.* plain.
 186. **find him,** *i.e.* find him (his secret) *out*.

Act III—Scene 2

3. **I had as lief.** *I had* is subjunctive—'*I would have* the town-crier speaking my lines as *gladly* as *I would have* you'.

Lief is of course an adverb here, modifying *had*, but it is used by Shakespeare as an adjective='dear', and it is always adjectival in form.

7. **temperance,** *i.e.* a moderation—self-control.
 9. **robustious periwig-pated,** *i.e.* an energetic actor, wearing a wig.
 10. **groundlings,** *i.e.* the hearers who stood on the floor or pit while the gentry sat in the gallery.
 11. **capable of,** *i.e.* understand—have capacity for.
 12. **inexplicable,** *i.e.* unintelligible.
 13. **Termagant** was the name given, in the old mystery plays, to a fiendish deity of the Saracens.
 13, 14. **out-herods.** Herod, in the same way, was the 'violent character' in the mystery-plays.
 19. **modesty,** *i.e.* the moderation.
 20. **from,** *i.e.* contrary to.
 24. **his form and pressure,** *i.e.* impression of *its* character.
 25. **come tardy off,** *i.e.* inefficiently represented.
 27. **censure** (Latin *censeo*, 'I think') means simply 'opinion', not '*adverse* opinion'.

the which. The use of *the* in this manner emphasizes the antecedent—the judicious.

- allowance,** *i.e.* estimation.
 36. **indifferently,** *i.e.* moderately well.
 40. **themselves,** *i.e.* of themselves—when the joke is not in the play.

55. 'I have met with in my *intercourse* among men.'

60. **candied**, i.e. flattering.

61, 62. 'Let the flatterer bend his knee significantly where his fawning is certain to be rewarded.'

64. **of men**, i.e. about men.

69. **blood and judgement**, i.e. animal and intellectual nature—passion and reason.

70. **pipe**. Hamlet uses the same metaphor in line 349 below.

74. 'But I have said *rather* too much about this.'

78. **afoot**, i.e. started—literally 'on foot'. Cf. 'abroad', 'afloat', &c.

79. **comment**, i.e. strained attention.

80. **occulted**, i.e. hidden.

81. **itself unkennel**, i.e. simply 'reveal'.

in one speech, probably=at one speech, i.e. Hamlet's addition.

84. **stithy** is an instance of the part being put for the whole—the *anvil* being put for the whole *smithy*.

needful note, i.e. all possible attention. Another reading is *heedful*.

87. 'In deciding how he looked.'

88, 89. 'I will 'go bail' that not the slightest manifestation of guilt shall escape detection.'

90. **idle**, i.e. trifling—light-headed.

92. **fares**, i.e. 'is', but Hamlet intentionally takes the word in the sense of 'eats'.

93. **Excellent**=excellently.

the chameleon is a lizard of varying colour, which was supposed to live on air.

94. **promise-crammed**, i.e. crammed with *nothing real*.

96. **have**, i.e. grasp (mentally)—understand.

98. **now**, i.e. since I have given them to you.

103, 104. **the Capitol** was at once a temple to Jupiter and the dominating fortress of Rome.

N.B.—Cæsar was not killed in the Capitol, but in Pompey's Theatre.

107. **stay**, i.e. wait.

115. **your only jig-maker**, i.e. your *unique* causer of merriment: cf. iv. 3. 22.

117. **within's**=within this.

121. **sables**, i.e. the most magnificent and expensive mourning.

124. **by'r lady**=by our lady—i.e. the Virgin Mary.

125. 'Or else he will sink into *oblivion*.'

the hobby-horse—a pantomime 'horse', made of two men—was an important feature in the morris-dances of May-Day, which the Puritans of Shakespeare's time were trying to abolish.

Stage directions. **Hautboy**, i.e. oboe, a reed instrument.

129. **miching mallecho**, i.e. sneaking mischief. *Miching* is the common word in Gloucestershire for 'playing truant'. *Mallecho* is the Spanish for 'an evil action'.

131. 'I suppose this dumb-show illustrates the plot of the play.'

133. **by this**, i.e. from this.

the players—though the *King* can.

138. **posy**, i.e. love motto.

141. **cart** is a diminutive of *car*, and is probably a double of *chariot*.

142. **Tellus'**. Sometimes when the nominative singular of a word containing more than one syllable ends in an -s (written or only sounded), we drop the genitive inflection for euphony, e.g. 'For conscience' sake'; and this is always done in the case of a genitive plural the nominative plural of which ends in -s.

orbed, i.e. round.

143. **sheen** is the noun of *shine*.

146. **commutual** is a strong form of *mutual*.

150. **cheer**, i.e. cheerfulness.

151. **distrust**, i.e. am anxious about you.

151, 152. 'My anxiety must in no way discomfort you.'

153. **holds quantity**, i.e. are proportionate.

154. 'Neither exists at all, or both exist to excess.'

160. 'My active powers cease to perform their functions.'

166. **but**, i.e. except *those*.

167. **Wormwood**—for the Queen; the plot is to convict the King.

168. **instances**, i.e. inducements.

169. **respects**, i.e. considerations.

174. 'We keep our purpose only as long as we remember it.'

175. **validity**, i.e. permanent strength.

177. **fall unshaken**, i.e. falls without shaking.

178. **Most necessary**, i.e. quite unavoidable.

181. **The passion ending** is a nominative absolute.

182, 183. 'The resolutions made under the stress of grief or joy grow weaker with the feelings which produced them.'

190. **great man down** is another nominative absolute.

193. **who not needs**, i.e. he who does not need.

194. **who in want**, i.e. he who being in want.

195. **seasons**, i.e. ripens him into.

196. **begun**=began. Past indicative forms in *u* are very common in Shakespeare, e.g. *sung*, *drunk*, *sprung*.

198. **still**, i.e. 'always'—as usual in Shakespeare.

201. **die**, i.e. 'let die', or 'will die'.

203. **day** and **night** are probably the subjects to *lock*, *day* referring to the *sport* and *night* to the *repose*.

204. **desperation**, i.e. despair.
205. 'May the utmost limit of my joy be, as it were, an imprisoned hermit's fare.'
- anchor**=anchorite.
206. 'May every impediment that makes pale the face of joy.'
- blank** is the hard doublet of *blanch*. Cf. *brig* and *bridge*, *kirk* and *church*, *skirt* and *shirt*.
208. **hence**, i.e. hereafter.
212. **fain** is an adverb—'gladly'.
216. **methinks**. The verb 'to think' had originally two forms, one active—'to consider', and the other neuter—'to seem'; and the latter survives in *methinks*, i.e. '(to) me (it) seems'.
- 218, 219. It has been supposed that the King and the Queen had not noticed the dumb-show which had given the general drift of the plot.
223. **Tropically**, i.e. in a trope, or figurative fashion—for it is 'to catch the conscience of the king'.
224. **image**, i.e. representation.
- 228, 229. 'It is only a horse whose shoulders are already sore that shrinks from a touch'='It is only a wounded conscience that smarts'.
231. **chorus**. In classical plays the *chorus* supplies information and connects the different parts of the argument. Shakespeare's *Henry V* is written with a chorus.
- 232, 233. 'I could explain the difference between your actions and your pretended love for me if I only saw who was pulling the strings.'
- 238, 239. 'No one watching but opportunity, *who* is in league with the murderer.'
241. **Hecate**, or *Diana*, or *Luna*, according as she was thought of as queen of *Hades*, *Earth*, or *Heaven*.
- ban**, i.e. curse.
- 242, 243. 'Thy marvellous nature, with its essential power of destruction, instantly seizes even a perfectly healthy body.'
246. Italian literature exercised great influence on Shakespeare and his contemporaries.
- 258-261. 'If the rest of my fortunes turned *traitors* to me, would not this successful performance—with the necessary outfit of feathers and embroidered shoes—get me a place in any theatrical company?'
258. **feathers** were much worn on the stage in Shakespeare's time.
260. **Provincial**, i.e. from *Provence*, the (first) 'province' of the Roman Republic.
- roses**, i.e. rosettes.
- razed**, i.e. embroidered.
261. **cry**, i.e. 'company'—generally used in this sense only of dogs.

262. Actors in Shakespeare's time were not paid salaries, but shared any profits.

263. *I* Supply *know* from the next line.

264. **Damon** is an allusion to the old classical story of the two friends *Damon* and *Pythias*.

267. **pajock**—*i.e.* peacock—is inserted by Hamlet instead of the rhyming *ass*.

274. **recorders**, *i.e.* flageolets.

277. **perdy** is a corruption of '*par Dieu*'.

283. **marvellous distempered**, *i.e.* 'marvellously out of temper', but Hamlet intentionally misunderstands the word.

285. **choler**, *i.e.* anger.

286. **should** means 'would *and* ought to'.

more richer is a double comparative.

287, 288. **to put him to his purgation**, *i.e.* 'to take his cure in hand'.

291. **frame**, *i.e.* definite form.

from my affair, *i.e.* 'at a tangent from the business I have to bring before you'.

297. **wholesome**, *i.e.* sensible.

299. **pardon**, *i.e.* leave to go.

309. **admiration**, *i.e.* 'surprise'—its literal sense.

318. 'By these *hands*.'

319. **your cause of**, *i.e.* the cause of *your*. Cf. "his means of death" (iv. 5. 191). When two nouns are connected by *of*, they may be so strictly regarded as one word that an adjective may be placed before the whole compound word instead of before the second part of it.

325. 'While the grass grows, the steed starves.'

326. **something**=somewhat—an accusative of respect—cf. i. 2. 41.

327, 328. 'To speak privately with you—why do you *try to take advantage* (go round so as to get to windward) of me?'

329. **toil**, net—from Latin *tela*, 'a web'.

330, 331. 'If my duty to the Queen makes me seem too bold to you, it is also my love for you that makes me speak out so frankly.'

339. **govern these ventages**, *i.e.* manage these stops. A *vantage* is a wind-hole (Latin *ventus*, 'wind').

353. **fret** is used punningly—(1) to vex and (2) to guide the fingers (by means of frets—or small lengths of wire).

356. **would speak**, *i.e.* wishes to speak—literally 'wished' (when she gave me her order).

357. **presently**, *i.e.* at once.

361. **Methinks**. Cf. note on l. 216 above.

366. **top of my bent**, *i.e.* to the highest pitch. The metaphor is probably from archery.

376. **Nero** was a Roman emperor who murdered his mother.

378. Cf. iii. 4. 93.

380, 381. ‘However much she may be *blamed* by my words, I will never confirm them by my deeds.’

Act III—Scene 3

2. **range**, i.e. have free play.

5-7. ‘The conditions of my power *cannot* bear the imminent risks that I run hour after hour from his mad pranks.’

11-13. ‘Each individual is bound to defend himself by all conceivable means from injury.’

13. **noyance**=annoyance.

15. **cease**=decease. Either the *cease* or the *dies* is redundant, owing to the abstract being used for the concrete.

16. **gulf**, i.e. the whirlpool—which *engulfs*.

17. **massy**=massive.

20. **mortised**, i.e. closely fixed. A *mortise* is a hole cut in one piece of timber to receive the *tenon*, or projection, of another.

which, i.e. ‘as to which’—an accusative of respect.

25. **fear**, i.e. cause of fear.

28. **arras**. Cf. note ii. 2. 164.

29. **process**, i.e. the proceedings.

tax . . . home, i.e. reprove . . . deeply.

31. **more audience** is another instance of the abstract for the concrete. Cf. l. 15 above.

33. **of vantage**, i.e. from (off) a post of vantage.

36. **smells** is intransitive.

37. **primal eldest**, i.e. the oldest and the one which headed the list of curses—Cain’s sin.

42. **stand in pause**, i.e. ‘hesitate’—governing the noun clause in the objective.

first is redundant before *begin*.

47. ‘Except to stand face to face with sin—and forgive it.’

49. **forestalled**, i.e. saved *before*—so that here again there is redundancy.

52. Claudius regrets, but does not repent of, his crime. His confession serves only to remove the last vestige of doubt from Hamlet’s mind, and the latter’s delay in carrying out his vengeance is simply weak. The reasons given below (in ll. 85, 86) for not acting *now* are merely excuses.

53, 54. **am possess’d Of**. Cf. note on i. 1. 89.

54. **effects**, i.e. advantages.

55. **ambition**, i.e. ‘the object of ambition’, as **offence** in the next line is—‘the objects gained by the offence’.

58. **Offence's gilded hand**, *i.e.* simply 'a rich offender'.
59. **the wicked prize**, *i.e.* the gains wickedly got.
65. **can**; supply *do*.
68. **limed**, *i.e.* snared—as a bird.
69. **engaged**, *i.e.* entangled.
assay, *i.e.* an effort.
73. **pat**, *i.e.* 'easily and at once'.
75. **would be scann'd**, *i.e.* needs to be closely looked into.
80. **grossly** refers to *father* ('unshrived'), not to *took*.
81. **broad blown**. Cf. i. 5. 60.
flush as May, *i.e.* 'in the full *spring* of life'.
82. **audit**, *i.e.* examination of his 'accounts'. Cf. i. 5. 62.
83. 'As far as the details go which *we* can run over from our own knowledge.'
85. **To take**, *i.e.* by taking.
purgung, *i.e.* cleansing—by confession of sin.
86. **passage**—to the other world.
88. **hent**, *i.e.* grip or course.
94. **stays**, *i.e.* is waiting.
95. 'This remedy of prayer will not cure your soul, nor save your body—permanently.'

Act III—Scene 4

1. **straight**=straightway.
lay home. Cf. iii. 3. 29.
2. **broad**, *i.e.* openly unrestrained.
4. **heat**, *i.e.* anger from the king.
sconce=ensconce.
15. **forgot**=forgotten.
rood, *i.e.* the holy rood—the cross.
25. Hamlet makes a pass or thrust with his sword, and declares he will wager a ducat (about 4 shillings) that the man he struck is dead.
This is the first tragic result of Hamlet's delay to kill Claudius.
30. **marry** is intransitive—'enter into marriage *with*'.
- Hamlet assumes—wrongly—that his mother was guilty of *murder* also.
38. **brass'd**, *i.e.* hardened.
39. 'Impenetrable defence against *feeling*.'
46. **dicers**, *i.e.* gamblers.
- 46–49. 'Such a deed as deprives the material contract of marriage of all its essential spirit, and converts an act of pure worship into a mere form of fine words.'
49. **glow**—with shame.

50-52. 'The solid compact earth looks as sad as if doomsday were at hand, and loathes the mere thought of the act.'

51. **tristful** is a hybrid, *trist* being Latin and *ful* being English; and it is also an anomalous form, as *trist* is already an adjective. Cf. *grateful*.

53. **index**, i.e. preface.

54. Portraits of the two being on the wall.

55. **counterfeit presentment**, i.e. copied representation.

57. **Hyperion**=Apollo.

front, i.e. forehead.

59. **station**, i.e. attitude.

60. **New-lighted**=newly *a-lighted*.

68. **batten**, i.e. grow fat.

70. **hey-day**, i.e. wild gaiety.

74. **apoplex'd**, i.e. paralysed.

75-77. 'Nor was sense ever so much in bondage to madness that it did not retain some power of discrimination, at all events in a case in which the difference is so very striking.'

78. 'Cheated you at Blind-man's-buff.'

80. **sans all**, i.e. without all the *rest*.

82. **so mope**, i.e. be so stupid.

84. **mutine**=mutiny.

89. 'Reason ministers to the wishes of the passions.'

91. **grained**=ingrained—'dyed in *grain*'.

92. 'Will not loose their stain.'

93. **in**=into.

95. **tithe**, i.e. tenth part.

96. **a vice of kings**, i.e. a vice among kings: i.e. a blustering buffoon. The *Vice* was a stock character in old plays.

97. **A cutpurse**, i.e. a thief.

100. A clown king, or a puppet, made of oddments like a rag doll.

103. From this moment she is practically paralysed with fear.

105. **lapsed in time and passion**, i.e. having missed the time and lost the passion.

112. **Conceit**, i.e. imagination.

116. **incorporeal**=incorporeal—immortal.

119, 120. 'Your hair, instead of lying flat, starts up like living excrescences and stands on end.'

119. **excrements** has its literal sense (Latin *ex-crescere*, 'to grow out of').

120. **an**=on. Cf. '*a-shore*'.

125. **capable**—of feeling.

127. **My stern effects**, i.e. the things I intend to do sternly.

128. **want**, *i.e.* lack.
 for, *i.e.* instead of.
133. **habit**, *i.e.* dress.
- 136, 137. ‘Madness is very cunning in erecting these phantoms.’
139. **music** suggests the full rhythmic beating of a healthy pulse.
141. **re-word**, *i.e.* repeat word for word.
143. **unction**, *i.e.* soothing balm.
149. **compost**, *i.e.* a (mixed) manure.
151. ‘When men become gross by luxurious living.’
153. **curb**, *i.e.* bow.
155. **worser** is a double comparative.
158. **Assume** has its literal sense of ‘take to yourself’ (Latin *assumo*). .
- 159–163. ‘Custom is a monster that gradually destroys the original meaning of all actions—a fiend in respect of bad habits (which we cannot get rid of), but a blessing in the gradual strengthening (by practice) of good resolves.’
166. Cf. ‘custom is second nature’.
- 169, 170. ‘When your conscience leads you to seek Heaven’s blessing, then I will ask for your blessing.’
170. **For**, *i.e.* as for.
174. **bestow**, *i.e.* stow away.
answer, *i.e.* account for.
- 182, 183. ‘I am *really* not mad, but very crafty.’
185. **paddock**, *i.e.* a toad—which was popularly supposed to ‘spit poison’.
- bat—a nocturnal wanderer of evil omen.
- gib, *i.e.* a tom-cat—the third ‘familiar’ of a witch.
186. **concernings**=concerns.
- 188–191. This seems to be a reference to a story of the imitative powers of an ape, which openly (on the house top) set a cage of birds free, and to try the experiment himself leaped headlong after them.
190. **conclusions**, *i.e.* a conclusive experiment.
- 199, 200. ‘They have to aid in getting rid of me, and lead me into the knavish plot laid for me.’
201. **the sport**, *i.e.* the (best) sport. Cf. note on i. i. 15.
202. **Hoist**, a past participle. Cf. ‘deject’.
- petar**=petard—a kind of grenade for bursting open gates.
203. **delve** is an old word for *dig*.
205. **crafts**, *i.e.* cunning plots. Cf. “When Greek joins Greek, then comes *the tug of war*”.
206. **packing**—for my speedy departure, after having killed him.
210. ‘To have an end of you—and your long speeches.’

Act IV—Scene 1

1. **matter**, *i.e.* something significant.
 profound, *i.e.* 'deep' (Latin *profundus*), might possibly contain an idea of 'unintelligible', which suggests the word *translate* in the next line.
4. **Bestow**, *i.e.* 'give up', 'retire from'.
11. **brainish apprehension**, *i.e.* a suggestion of his imagination.
14. **full of threats**, *i.e.* dangerous.
16. **answer'd**, *i.e.* accounted for. Cf. iii. 4. 174.
17. **providence** has its literal meaning of 'fore-sight' (Latin *pro-video*).
18. 'Should have kept in retirement (from men's haunts) under close restraint.'
22. **divulging**, *i.e.* being divulged.
25. **ore**, *i.e.* 'pure ore'.
30. **But** is frequently used thus (=than) after a 'negative' comparative. Cf. i. 1. 108.
36. **fair**, *i.e.* gently.
42. **blank**, *i.e.* 'mark'—literally 'white (*blanch*) mark'.
43. **his=its**. Cf. *whose* above.
44. **woundless**, *i.e.* which cannot be wounded.

Act IV—Scene 2

13. **replication**=reply.
15. **countenance**, *i.e.* favour.
- 17, 18. **like an ape**, *i.e.* as an ape keeps nuts.
20. **it is but squeezing**, *i.e.* he needs only to squeeze.
- 23, 24. 'The full meaning of a cunning remark never enters a fool's head.'
- 27, 28. 'The body (of the responsibility for this) lies with the King, but the King is not with that corpse (as he ought to be);' or perhaps Hamlet is talking nonsense.
30. **Of nothing**, *i.e.* of no value.
 Hide, &c.,—'when the fox is hidden, all set off to find him'—a reference to a game of *hide-and-seek*.

Act IV—Scene 3

5. 'Who judge by appearances, not by reason.'
6. **scourge**, *i.e.* punishment.
9. **Deliberate pause**, *i.e.* the result of deliberate arrangement.
10. **desperate appliance**, *i.e.* application of desperate remedies.
21. **politic worms**. There is a punning reference to (1) Polonius, the typical 'politician', and (2) the German Imperial 'Diets' held at Worms.

21. *e'en*, i.e. just now.
 25. **variable**, i.e. various.
 33. **progress** is used ironically—‘a royal journey’.
 38. **nose** is another noun used as a verb.
 43. **tender**, i.e. cherish.
 dearly, i.e. sorely. Cf. i. 2. 181.
 46. **at help**, i.e. ready to help. Cf. *at ebb*, *at rest*, *at foot* below.
 56. **at foot**, i.e. at *his* heels.
 59. **else** really modifies *everything* in the previous line.
 leans on, i.e. ‘depends on’—in the sense of ‘affects’.
 60. **England**. Cf. note on i. 1. 48.
 at aught, i.e. at any value. Cf. iv. 2. 30.
 61. **As . . . thereof**, i.e. of which.
 62. **cicatrice**, i.e. scar.
 63. **free awe**, i.e. awe spontaneously shown.
 64. **set= set aside**.
 65. **process**, i.e. instructions for *procedure*.
 66. **congruing**, i.e. agreeing.
 67. **present**, i.e. immediate.
 68. **hectic**, i.e. fever.
 70. ‘Whatever chances of joy I might have, I should never realize any of them.’

Act IV—Scene 4

- 3, 4. **march Over**, i.e. right of way across.
 4. **rendezvous**, i.e. meeting place ‘to which you are to betake yourself’.
 5. **would aught with**, i.e. wishes for any (interview) with.
 6. ‘We shall give expression to our reverence for him to his face.’
 9. **powers**, i.e. forces.
 15. **main**, i.e. ‘mainland’ in the sense of ‘the *whole* country’.
 20. **To pay**, i.e. if I had to pay.
 22. **ranker**, i.e. richer.
 in fee, i.e. if it were sold out and out—with all the rights of absolute ownership.
 26. **debate** has its literal sense of ‘beat down thoroughly’—i.e. ‘decide’.
 27. **the imposthume** (or *abscess*), i.e. ‘that which undermines’.
 30. **God be wi' you** has now been contracted into *good-bye*.
 32. **inform**, i.e. tell.
 34. **market**, i.e. that for which he *exchanges* his time.
 36. **discourse**, i.e. range of reason.
 39. **fust**, i.e. to grow fusty.

40-42. 'Forgetfulness such as you might expect from a beast, or some cowardly and superstitious custom of trying to forecast the issue of one's actions.'

- 44. **to do**, *i.e.* for (future) doing.
- 46. **gross**, *i.e.* obvious.
- 47. **mass and charge**, *i.e.* size and cost.
- 49. **puff'd**, in a good sense—'inspired'.
- 50. **Makes mouths at**, mocks—disregards.
event, *i.e.* outcome.

- 54. **argument**, *i.e.* reason.
- 55. **quarrel**, *i.e.* cause of quarrel.
- 58. Cf. note on iii. 2. 69.

61. 'Who, for a fancied point of honour.'

63-65. 'On which there is actually not room for all those to stand face to face in fight (who are doomed to die in the wars), still less room to bury them.'

- 64. **continent**, *i.e.* capable of containing (the dead).

Act IV—Scene 5

2. **distract**. Cf. note on i. 2. 20. This is the second result of Hamlet's delay.

3. **needs**, *i.e.* of necessity.

6. **Spurns enviously**, *i.e.* takes offence suddenly.

9. **collection** has its literal sense of 'conclusions' (Latin *colligo*, 'I gather').

10. **botch** is simply a doublet of *patch*.

15. **ill-breeding**, *i.e.* mischief-making.

18. **toy**, *i.e.* trifle.

amiss, *i.e.* 'disaster'.

19. **artless jealousy**, *i.e.* ignorant suspicion.

20. **spills**, *i.e.* betrays.

25. Pilgrims wore a cockle-shell in their hats to show that they had crossed the sea.

26. **shoon** is an old plural. Cf. 'oxen'.

36. **Larded**, *i.e.* garnished with.

40. **'ild**, *i.e.* *yield* (reward).

A Gloucestershire legend says that a baker's daughter once refused a loaf of bread to Christ, and was changed into an owl. To Ophelia even such a transformation was now not incredible.

43. **Conceit**, *i.e.* thought.

44. **of this**, *i.e.* about this.

47. **betime**=**betimes**—'*by* (the right) *time*', *i.e.* early.

63. **remove** is a verb used as a noun—'removal'.

65. **greenly**, *i.e.* foolishly—in an unexperienced way.

66. **hugger-mugger**, *i.e.* secretly and hastily.

71-76. ‘Ruminates on these astonishing events, hides himself and his intentions, listens to tale-bearers who poison his mind with scandal about his father’s death, with regard to which, as they necessarily are short of facts, they will not scruple to accuse me to anyone who will listen to them.’

77. **murdering-piece**, *i.e.* cannon loaded with case-shot.

The introduction of *cannon* at all is an anachronism, as also the *Swiss guards* are.

78. **superfluous**, *i.e.* imaginary. This suggests that *murdering-piece* might mean ‘a play representing a murder’—which would affect his imagination.

79. Swiss guards were employed by monarchs in France, Spain, Italy, and elsewhere, because they could be trusted to have no connection with any local factions.

81. **overpeering of his list**, *i.e.* rising above its *boundaries*.

83. **head**, *i.e.* a raising of rebellion.

87. ‘Taking to themselves to ratify and support anything they choose to.’

92. **counter** is a hunting term for hounds ‘tracing the scent in the wrong direction’.

93. **broke**. Cf. note on i. i. 45.

101. **fear=fear for**.

102. ‘A king is surrounded by such a body-guard of heavenly protectors that traitors can only peep through their ranks and get a distant view of the king, who remains beyond the reach of real harm.’

108. ‘Ask questions till he is satisfied.’

113. ‘I don’t care about this life or any future life.’

115. **throughly=thoroughly**.

116. ‘Nothing in the world except my own will.’

118. **with little**, *i.e.* though they are little.

121. **swoopstake**, *i.e.* with one fell sweep.

125. The *pelican* was supposed to feed its young with its own blood.

126. **Repast** is a noun used as a verb—‘feed’.

129. **sensibly in grief**, *i.e.* keenly affected.

134. **virtue**, *i.e.* power.

140. **fine**, *i.e.* tenderly refined.

141. **instance**, *i.e.* example. ‘Ophelia’s wits have gone after her father.’

151. ‘How well the song goes to the motion of the spinning-wheel’ (at which she fancies that she is sitting).

153. This is simply another way of saying what he had just said (147, 148), that ‘her want of wits is a more powerful motive to stir him to revenge than much argument would have been’.

154. **rosemary** signifies 'memory'.

155. **there is pansies.** The word *pansies* is from the French *pensées*, 'thoughts'. The rosemary (Latin *ros-marinus*, 'sea-spray') and the pansies are for her brother.

159. The **fennel** and **columbine**—flattery and ingratitude—are for the King.

160. **rue**—pity—is for the Queen, who is to be pitied 'with a difference', *i.e.* to *distinguish* her from the rest, and for a *different cause*.

161. **herb of grace**, because—being symbolical of repentance—it was often mixed with the 'holy water'.

162. **difference**—'pity' to Ophelia, 'repentance' to the Queen. 'With a difference' was a term in heraldry meaning the slight changes in a coat of arms to distinguish one member of a family from another.

The **daisy** made the necessary distinction—by adding the idea of 'unfaithfulness'.

166. **thought**, *i.e.* grief.

167. **favour**, *i.e.* charm.

168. **a'**=he.

178. These are her last words in the drama.

182. 'Choose' of your wisest friends *whom* you will.'

185. **touch'd**, *i.e.* implicated.

192. **hatchment** is said to be a corruption of *achievement*—'account of his achievements'. It means 'coat of arms'.

193. **formal ostentation**, *i.e.* state ceremony.

195. **That**, *i.e.* so that.

Act IV—Scene 6

9. **shall** is continually used in this way in the Bible, with reference to God's performance of promise, *e.g.* "The zeal of the Lord of Hosts *shall* perform this", *i.e.* *must* perform, because He has said that He will do it. No one can say what God *will* do.

11, 12. **I am let**, *i.e.* I am kindly informed.

14. **means**—of access.

18. **compelled**, *i.e.* to which there was no alternative.

21. **thieves of mercy**, *i.e.* merciful thieves. Cf. 'a dish of wood', and 'brow of woe' (*i. 2. 4.*).

24. **fly**=flee.

26. **light . . . bore**, *i.e.* too light for the importance of the matter. The metaphor is from the *bore* of a gun.

Act IV—Scene 7

6. **feats**, *i.e.* deeds. The word is a doublet of *fact*.

7. **crimeful** is a hybrid.

8. **safety**, *i.e.* desire for safety.

10. **unsinew'd**, *i.e.* weak.
13. **be it either which**, *i.e.* whichever of the *two* it may be.
14. **conjunctive**, *i.e.* bound up with.
17. **count**, *i.e.* account.
 might, *i.e.* could.
18. **general gender**, *i.e.* common kind (of men).
20. There is one of these petrifying springs at Knaresborough.
21. **gyves**, perhaps 'faults that ought to impede his course'.
22. The best arrows were made of pine, and 'footed' with heavy wood for some six inches from the point to steady them against the wind.
26. **terms**, *i.e.* conditions.
27. **again**—to what she *was*.
28. 'Was conspicuous above all her rivals.'
32. **shook**. Cf. iv. 5. 93.
49. **abuse**, *i.e.* trick.
50. **character**, *i.e.* writing.
53. **lost in**, *i.e.* bewildered by.
61. **checking at** is the term for a hawk leaving the proper game to fly at something else.
66. **uncharge the practice**, *i.e.* be unable to make a charge of treachery.
69. **organ**, *i.e.* instrument.
- 72-75. 'The sum total of your other good qualities did not rouse his envy as much as that one quality, which I myself look upon as least worthy of being grasped at.'
75. **siege** may also mean 'seat'—rank.
79. **weeds** means simply 'garments'. Cf. 'widow's *weeds*'.
80. **health**, *i.e.* generally 'prosperity'.
83. **can well**, *i.e.* have great skill.
86. 'As if he had been made one with his horse in body and in nature.'
87. **topp'd**, *i.e.* surpassed.
88. 'That I could not have imagined such feats were possible.'
92. **brooch**, *i.e.* the conspicuous jewel.
95. **masterly report**, *i.e.* report of your masterly skill.
96. **defence**, *i.e.* knowledge of the art of *defence*.
99. **scrimers**, *i.e.* fencers (French *escrimeur*).
111. **passages of proof**, *i.e.* events within my own experience.
115. **still**, *i.e.* always.
- 116, 117. 'Goodness, growing to feverish excess, dies of surfeit.'
117. **too much** is an adverb used as a noun.
122. **hurts by easing**, *i.e.* injures (his character) while it relieves (his feelings). Instead of *sighing* over his lost fortune, he ought

to be 'up and doing'. There may also be a reference to the notion prevalent in Shakespeare's time that every sigh wasted one drop of blood.

- 126. **sanctuarize**, *i.e.* protect.
- 132. **in fine**, *i.e.* finally.
- 134. **generous**, *i.e.* unsuspicuous.
contriving, *i.e.* plotting.
- 135. **peruse**, *i.e.* examine carefully.
- 137. **unbated**, *i.e.* without a button—literally 'unblunted'.
pass of practice, *i.e.* a 'treacherous pass'.
- 140. **unction**, *i.e.* ointment.
mountebank, *i.e.* a quack doctor who stands ('mounts on a bench'), to sell his wares.
- 142. **cataplasm**, &c. 'No *poultice* made from all the *herbs* gathered by moonlight that have virtue.' Cf. iii. 2. 240.
- 146. **contagion** is another instance of the abstract used for the concrete.
- 149. **shape**, *i.e.* course designed.
- 150. 'Our object is betrayed by our bad management.'
- 153. **blast in proof**, *i.e.* collapse in the trial.
- 159. **for the nonce**=*for then once*, *i.e.* 'for that particular occasion'.
- 160. **stuck**, *i.e.* 'a thrust in fencing'.
- 164. This is another result of Hamlet's delay.
- 167. **hoar**, *i.e.* white on the *under* side.
- 169. **crow-flowers**, *i.e.* 'Ragged Robin'.
purples, *i.e.* 'Lords and Ladies'.
- 170. **liberal**, *i.e.* free-spoken.
- 173. **sliver**, *i.e.* rotten branch.
- 178. **incapable**—of understanding.
- 179. **indued**, *i.e.* endowed with fitting qualities.
- 188, 189. 'When these tears are gone, all womanish thoughts of grief and pity will give place to virile thoughts of revenge.'
- 191. **douts**, *i.e.* does out—puts out.

Act V—Scene 1

- 1. **burial**, *i.e.* burial *place*. Cf. I. 25 below.
- 2. **salvation** is used for its opposite—'destruction'.
- 4. **straight**, *i.e.* straight-way—at once.
crownor=coroner—'an officer appointed originally to secure to the 'crown' the property of suicides'.
- 9. **offendendo**. He means '*defendendo*'—'in defending herself'.
- 11. **wittingly**, *i.e.* intentionally.
- 12. **argal**. He means *ergo*—'therefore'.
- 14. **deliver**, *i.e.* digger,

17. **nill=ne** will, *i.e.* ‘will not’.
22. **quest**=inquest.
26. **say'st**, *i.e.* sayest *truly*.
27. **countenance**, *i.e.* ‘leave’ or ‘encouragement’.
29. **even**, *i.e.* fellow.
33. **arms** is a pun on ‘armorial bearings’ (cf. I. 37).
52. **unyoke**, *i.e.* ‘go free’—as if he were a beast of burden.
55. **Mass**, *i.e.* by the mass.
60. **Yaughan** seems to be the name of an innkeeper.
stoup, *i.e.* flagon.
61. These stanzas are from an old song by Lord Vaux, which was published a few years before Shakespeare was born. The clown sings his own—nonsensical—version of them; and the *o*'s and *a*'s represent grunts after the strokes of his mattock.
- 67, 68. **a property of easiness**, *i.e.* ‘naturally easy’. Cf. note on I. 2. 4.
74. **such**, *i.e.* young.
76. **jowls**, *i.e.* knocks.
78. **politician**, *i.e.* ‘schemer’, as always in Shakespeare. In Elizabeth’s time politics were essentially ‘state-craft’—plotting and counterplotting.
89. **chapless**, *i.e.* ‘without cheeks’—simply ‘a skeleton’.
mazzard, *i.e.* jaw—French *machoire*.
90. **trick**, *i.e.* skill.
92. **loggats** is the diminutive of *log*.
99. **quiddities**, *i.e.* subtleties.
100. **quilletts**, *i.e.* quibbles.
tenures, *i.e.* terms on which land is *held* (Latin *teneo*, ‘I hold’).
102. **sconce**, *i.e.* ‘skull’—literally ‘a head-piece’ (of armour).
103. **of battery**, *i.e.* for being beaten (unlawfully)—a legal term.
105. **recognizances** are ‘bonds acknowledging money lent on land’.
vouchers are the ‘written promises to pay’.
106. **fine**, *i.e.* end (Latin *finis*). Fines are payments at the *end* of a lawsuit.
110. **indentures** were made out in duplicate, each party to the contract keeping one copy; and the *indenture* was literally the perforated line by which the whole parchment was torn into two pieces. These lines were ‘indented’ (Latin *dens*, ‘a tooth’) differently for every new ‘indenture’, in order that the genuineness of each might be proved by the two pieces ‘tallying’ exactly.
- conveyances** are ‘deeds which *convey* the right to land’.
111. **inheritor**, *i.e.* the owner (of that land).
113. **jot** is a doublet of *iota*, the name of the smallest letter in the Greek alphabet.
117. **assurance**, *i.e.* ‘perfect security’ for the conveyance of land.
127. **quick**, *i.e.* living.

138. **absolute**, *i.e.* positive and precise.
- 138, 139. **by the card**=by the *compass-card*, *i.e.* exactly to the point.
- 141-143. ‘That the peasant runs the courtier so hard in the imitation of his *picked* phrases that the rivalry is positively galling.’
143. **kibe** is ‘a chilblain on the *heel*’.
149. This would make Hamlet thirty years old. Cf. I. 164.
168. **last you**. This is another instance of the *ethic dative*. Cf. note on II. I. 7.
181. **Rhenish**, *i.e.* Rhine wine—hock.
191. **gibes**, *i.e.* jests.
194. **chap-fallen**. Cf. I. 89 above.
my lady, *i.e.* any fine lady.
195. **favour**, *i.e.* appearance.
199. **Alexander** was “The Great” king of Macedon, who conquered Persia and India.
207. **too curiously**, *i.e.* with too much *care*.
214. **Imperious**=imperial.
217. **flaw**, *i.e.* gust of wind.
220. **maimed**, *i.e.* ‘defective’—‘partial’, because, as Ophelia had committed suicide, some ceremonies were omitted. Cf. I. 1 above.
222. **fordo**=undo. Cf. II. I. 102.
estate, *i.e.* rank.
223. **Couch me**, *i.e.* let me crouch down.
228. **warranty**=warrant.
229. ‘The King’s command overrules the ordinary regulations of the church.’
232. **Shards**=shreds—‘potsherds’.
233. **crants**, *i.e.* ‘garlands’—as becoming a young and unmarried woman.
234. **strewments**, *i.e.* the strewing of flowers. *Strewment* is a hybrid.
home, *i.e.* ‘her last long home’.
238. **a requiem** is a funeral hymn praying for the *rest* (Latin *requies*) of the soul.
239. **peace-parted**, *i.e.* ‘departed this life in peace’. Cf. ‘thought-sick’, III. 4. 52.
241. **violets**. Cf. IV. 5. 163.
249. **ingenious sense**, *i.e.* reason.
255. **Olympus** is a snow-capped mountain of Greece, whose summit, high in the sky, was the fabled abode of the gods, and was often spoken of as the *blue* vault of heaven itself. **Pelion** is a high mountain in Thessaly; the giants are said, in their war against the gods, to have heaped Pelion on the sides of Olympus, and Ossa upon Pelion, to enable them to cope with the gods on Olympus.

256. **phrase of sorrow**, 'who in the expression of his grief *adjures* the *planets*'.
262. **splenitive**, *i.e.* 'passionate', for the spleen was supposed to be the seat of *anger*.
276. **forbear**. Cf. ii. 1. 102.
277. **'S wounds**. Cf. note on ii. 2. 365.
278. **Woo't**=wouldst thou.
279. **eisel**, *i.e.* vinegar.
281. **outface**, *i.e.* put me out of countenance.
282. **quick**, *i.e.* alive.
286. **Ossa**. Cf. note on l. 255 above.
an thou 'lt mouth, *i.e.* if thou wilt boast (about thy love for her).
290. 'When her pair of young are hatched, covered with yellow down.'
291. 'He will sit drooping in *silence*.'
- 294, 295. 'Nature will show itself in spite of Herculean efforts to prevent it.'
297. **in**, *i.e.* in the thought of.
298. **the present push**, *i.e.* an instant trial.
300. **living** has a double sense: (1) enduring, in which sense the Queen takes it, and (2) *in Hamlet's life*, in which sense the King intends Laertes to take it.

Act V—Scene 2

6. **mutines**=mutineers. In iii. 4. 84 the word is used as a verb.
bilboes, *i.e.* 'iron (stocks)'—used on board ship. The name comes from *Bilbao*, which has been famous for its *iron* ever since the Roman conquest of Spain. Cf. note on ii. 2. 164.
7. **know**, *i.e.* acknowledge.
9. **pall**, *i.e.* fail. The word has no connection with *pall*=Latin *palla*, 'a mantle'.
- learn** is causative—'*make us learn*'='teach us'. Cf. *toils*, i. 1. 72.
- 10, 11. The metaphor here is from *sculpture*. Common workmen 'rough-hew' the mass of stone into the general shape required, but far higher skill is necessary to 'finish' the work—to 'shape the ends'.
13. **scarf'd**, *i.e.* thrown on—without using the sleeves.
17. **forgetting**, *i.e.* causing me to forget. Cf. l. 9 above.
to unseal, *i.e.* as to unseal.
20. **Larded**. Cf. iv. 5. 36.
21. **Importing**, *i.e.* referring to.
22. 'With bug-bears and other objects of fear *as long as I lived*'.
23. **supervise**, *i.e.* 'looking over'.
bated, *i.e.* allowed.

24. **to stay**, i.e. by waiting for.

30. **Or**, i.e. ere.

'Before I could make up my mind to any definite cause of action, I found myself acting on impulse.'

31. **They**, i.e. my brains.

sat is used transitively.

32. **fair**=fairly, i.e. well.

33. **statists**, i.e. statesmen.

36. **yeoman's**, i.e. such as the small tenant-farmers rendered to their lords in time of war.

37. **effect**, i.e. import.

42. 'And stand as a *connection* and a bond of friendship between them.'

43. **As'es of great charge**, i.e. (1) *reasons* of great 'weight', (2) *asses* heavily burdened.

45. **debatement**, i.e. discussion.

47. **shrieving-time**, i.e. time for shrift (confession).

48. **ordinant**—'ordering'—is a participle formed on the French model, as often in heraldry, e.g. couchant, rampant.

52. **Subscribed**, i.e. signed at the foot. .

53. **changeling**, i.e. exchange.

54. **was sequent**, i.e. followed.

56. **to 't**. *It*=death.

58. **near**, i.e. heavy upon.

'Their death is the result of their own cunning *interference*.'

61. 'Between the swords of mighty opponents who are greatly incensed against one another.'

pass, i.e. a thrust with a sword.

62. **opposites**=opponents.

63. **thinks thee**, i.e. it *seems* to thee. Cf. note on iii. 2. 216.

stand upon, i.e. devolve upon.

65. 'Stepped in and seized the throne to which I hoped to be elected.'

66. **angle**, i.e. 'bait'.

proper, i.e. own.

67. **cozenage** is—and literally here—'the cheating of a *cousin*'.

is't not, &c., i.e. is it not a thing to be done with a perfectly blameless conscience.

68. **quit**, i.e. requite.

70. **In**=into.

73. **short**=shortly.

interim, i.e. the meantime.

77, 78. 'I can sympathize with his case—because it is the same as my own; we both have lost a father.'

79. **bravery**, i.e. display.

83. **water-fly**, i.e. busy trifler.

85-89. 'If a base fellow is only supremely base, he will find a place at the king's table; he is a jack-daw, but he owns an immense amount of land.'

97. **indifferent**, i.e. rather.

105. **for mine ease**. Cf. l. 90 above.

107. **differences**, i.e. 'distinctions'—that make him different to other men. The words are almost equal to 'different excellences'.

108. **soft**, i.e. gentle.

showing, i.e. appearance.

109-111. 'He is the guide (*compass-card*, cf. v. i. 139) and director of good manners, for he contains the sum total of all the good qualities ('parts') that a gentleman would like to show.'

112. **his definiteness**, i.e. your definition of him.

perdition, i.e. loss.

N.B.—Hamlet answers Osric in his own affected manner.

113-119. 'To go into particulars about him, as if one were drawing up an inventory, would only turn one's head dizzy; and after all one could make *nothing but* slow and unsteady progress in trying to trace his rapid evolutions. But, to speak seriously and truly in praise of him, I do take him to be a combination of great qualities; and his *essential* virtues are so rare that, to tell the truth, the only thing like him is his image in a mirror, and all those who would imitate him are merely his shadows.'

114. **yaw** is a nautical term for a vessel refusing to obey the helm.

117. **infusion**, i.e. essence.

121. **concernancy**, i.e. object.

122. **more rawer**, i.e. more unexperienced. For the double comparative, cf. note on ii. i. 11.

125. 'You will understand if you try.'

126. 'Why has this gentleman been named?'

134. **approve**, i.e. do credit to.

137, 138. **compare with**, i.e. dare to rival.

140, 141. 'But in the reputation won for him by his weapons he stands alone in merit.'

146. **the which**. The use of *the* in this manner emphasizes the antecedent—'those six horses'.

imponed, i.e. put in (pledge).

148. **assigns**, i.e. belongings.

149. **carriages**, i.e. the girdles and hangers by which the weapons were *carried*.

149, 150. **very responsive**, i.e. a very good match.

151. **liberal conceit**, i.e. fanciful design.

153. 'I knew you would need some *marginal* explanations.'

156. **germane**, i.e. relevant.

172. **breathing time**, i.e. time for exercise.

175. **will gain**, i.e. am willing (to) get besides (defeat).
176. **redeliver you**, i.e. take back an answer from you.
177. **after what flourish**, i.e. with such flourishes of language as.
- 181, 182. **for's turn**, i.e. that will serve his turn.
- 183, 184. 'He is very young—only just born.'
185. **comply with his dug**, i.e. pay compliments to his (mother's) breast.
187. **drossy age**, i.e. age when the scum rises to the top.
 'He has caught the general manner of the age and its social etiquette, a kind of frothy superficiality which enables them to give out the most foolish and worthless (as chaff) opinions.'
191. **bubbles** introduces a different metaphor.
198. **fitness**, i.e. convenience.
199. **whencever**—he pleases.
203. **entertainment**, i.e. conversation.
 fall to, i.e. begin.
208. **wouldst not=unless** I told thee.
211. **gain-giving**, i.e. misgiving. The *gain* has nothing to do with *gain* 'profit', but is a corruption of *against*. Cf. *gainsay*.
214. **repair**='repairing'—another verb used as a noun.
- 215, 216. Cf. St. Matthew, x. 29.
217. **to come**, i.e. yet to come—in the future.
218. **all**, i.e. all that is necessary.
- 219, 220. 'As no man can possess anything but his own personality, where is the hardship in leaving the earth early?'
224. **This presence**, i.e. 'the people present'—the abstract for concrete.
227. **exception**, i.e. objection.
236. **audience**. Cf. *presence* above.
237. **purposed**, i.e. intentional.
- 239, 240. 'I have accidentally done an injury to one whom I love as a brother.'
240. **in nature**, i.e. so far as my natural feelings of resentment are concerned.
241. **Whose motive**, i.e. the sting of which.
242. **in my terms of honour**, i.e. so far as my conventional ideals of 'honour' are concerned.
243. **will**, i.e. wish for.
- 245, 246. 'I have an opinion that precedents will justify me in making peace without being dishonoured.'
253. **Stick fiery off**, i.e. stand out brilliantly.
261. **me** is dative. Cf. ii. 2. 80.
a=one, i.e. the same.
265. 'Or pay him out in returning his third thrust.'
268. **union**, i.e. *one* (large pearl) (Latin *unus*, 'one').

271. **kettle.** Kettle-drum.
280. **bout,** *i.e.* round.
283. **fat.** This is said to be a hit at a certain Richard Burbage, who played the part of Hamlet in Shakespeare's own times.
284. **napkin,** *i.e.* handkerchief.
294. **pass,** *i.e.* thrust.
295. **wanton,** *i.e.* 'a plaything'.
304. **swounds**=swoons.
313. **Unbated.** Cf. iv. 7. 137.
322. Cf. l. 268 above.
324. **temper'd,** *i.e.* mixed.
332. **sergeant,** *i.e.* sheriff's officer.
336. **it,** *i.e.* that I will live.
341. **shall,** *i.e.* will have to (if you are dead).
343. 'Deny *thyself* the happiness of death.'
349. **o'er-crows,** *i.e.* overcomes.
- 353, 354. 'And tell him at the same time all that has occurred to prompt my choice.'
356. **flights**=literally 'a *troop* of *winged* creatures'.
360. This heap of dead proclaims an indiscriminate slaughter.
361. **toward,** *i.e.* going on.
371. **jump.** Cf. note on i. 1. 65.
377. **carnal,** *i.e.* sinful.
379. **put on,** *i.e.* instigated.
388. **draw on more,** *i.e.* will be seconded by others.
391. **On,** *i.e.* in consequence of.
393. **put on,** *i.e.* (1) put on—the throne, or (2) put to—the test.
394. **royally,** *i.e.* like a king.
- passage.** Cf. iii. 3. 86.

APPENDIX

I. THE DATE OF THE PLAY

The date of a play is important for two reasons, and can be fixed in two ways.

I. The importance of it lies in the fact that it enables us

- (1) To compare the play with other plays written by the same author, and to put it into its right place;
- (2) To estimate the precise influences and circumstances under which the play was written.

There is often, however, considerable difficulty in fixing the date of any particular play; and such difficulty is generally due to the fact that the earliest evidence of the existence of an *old* play is usually its being *printed*, though many plays were *written* long before they were printed. For instance, more than half Shakespeare's plays were not printed at all during his lifetime. The reason for this was that Shakespeare was an actor as well as an author; and if his plays had once been printed, other theatrical companies might have acted them without obtaining his permission or paying him any fees, and the public might have been tempted to read a play instead of going to see it acted.

II. The method of fixing the date of a play is to collect and compare two kinds of evidence:—

(1) *External evidence*, e.g. contemporary records of the actual writing or performing of the play,—allusions to or quotations from the play by other authors,—historical events which might have suggested certain scenes and passages.

(2) *Internal evidence*, e.g. the general style,—allusions to or quotations from the works of other authors,—direct reference to contemporary events.

With regard to Shakespeare's *style*, it may be laid down as a general rule that his early plays are full of classical allu-

sions, puns, rhymes, and disjointed lines; his later plays contain fewer classical allusions, fewer puns, fewer rhymes, and the sense runs on much more freely from line to line.

The External Evidence of the date of *Hamlet* is both positive and negative.

- { (a) It was *registered* at the Stationers' Hall in 1602.
- { (b) A *printed* edition actually appeared in 1603.

(c) It is *not* mentioned in the list of Shakespeare's plays given by Francis Meres in 1598.

The Internal Evidence also points to a late period in Shakespeare's life:—

(a) The *Style* is very mature. For instance, there are few classical allusions (cf. i. 2. 140, 149; i. 4. 83; i. 5. 33, &c.), few puns (cf. i. 2. 67; i. 3. 106–9, &c.), except where Hamlet is intentionally talking nonsense to Polonius,—and few rhymes, except at the end of scenes (cf. note on ii. 2. 604); and the blank verse runs on with the greatest freedom from line to line (cf. almost any long speech of Hamlet's).

(b) The *Subject* is far removed from the historical themes of his early years and from the playful comedy of his middle life, and goes naturally with that of *King Lear* (c. 1604), *Othello* (c. 1604), and *Macbeth* (c. 1606).

(c) The *Inhibition* mentioned in ii. 2. 331 refers either to the years 1600–1601 or to the years 1603–1604. Cf. note on the passage, and remarks below on James VI.

2. THE SOURCES OF THE PLOT

It was evidently a common occurrence in Shakespeare's time for an actor to become an author, and to make very free use of any existing manuscripts or books with which he was acquainted. For instance, in 1204, Saxo Grammaticus, a native of Elsinore, wrote a *Historia Danica*, which was printed in 1514. From this a Frenchman, called Francis de Belleforest, borrowed the 'Legend of Amleth' for his *Histoires Tragiques*; and from the latter the Legend was again borrowed by an unknown English writer for his novel *The Hystorie of Hamblett*. There was obviously no reason why Shakespeare should not make a similar use of existing works, though, as a matter of fact, he seems never to have simply *copied*. — Moreover, we have abundant proof that he was a very earnest and diligent

student; and, as such, he must have read much more widely than the majority of his contemporaries. At the same time, he evidently preferred to take his plots from stories that were sure to be familiar to his audience. For instance, all his earliest plays were 'historical', which shows also that he had no taste for sensationalism.

Now, besides the novel above-mentioned, there was also in existence before 1587 a play on this 'Legend of Amleth'; and thus the story would be sufficiently well known to suit Shakespeare's purpose. At all events, he borrowed the legend for this great tragedy of *Hamlet*; but he completely transformed it in the borrowing, especially for the second edition of his play, which appeared in 1604. Not only does he represent the Danes as Christians, with customs and ideals like those of the Elizabethan English; but he also, in the second edition, throws the character of Hamlet into marked prominence, chiefly by putting into his mouth 'monologues' on the most pressing problems of human life at the time. He was probably induced to do this partly by a study of Montaigne's 'Essays', the English translation of which appeared in 1603, and partly by the political importance of that 'wisest fool in Christendom', James VI of Scotland. He certainly possessed a copy of 'The Essays'; and there are, possibly, references in the play to the family relations and circumstances of James.

3. THE SCENE

The Scene is laid at Elsinore, or Helsingör, on the east coast of Zealand, about twenty-four miles from Copenhagen. On a neighbouring point there had been built in 1577 the Castle of Kronborg; and it is at this castle that the play opens. Most of the scenes are 'Rooms in the Castle'; but two very important scenes are on the 'Platform before the Castle', and in the Fifth Act there is the famous scene in 'the Churchyard'. Two scenes are in 'Polonius' house', and one is on 'a Plain in Denmark'.

4. CRITICAL REMARKS

As the title of the play shows, the main interest centres round a single figure—that of the young prince, the son of a

noble father and a weak mother. Of his father he himself said :

“He was a man, take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again” (i. 2. 186, 187);

his mother stands self-condemned, a woman of weak will and strong passions. Consequently, his own character is complicated and rather contradictory. At the same time, it causes some difficulty and considerable difference of opinion about the whole play, and specially about the character of HAMLET himself.

Some people think that Shakespeare meant to describe a great soul under circumstances for which it was, nevertheless, not quite great enough; and they support their view by quoting Hamlet's own words :

“The time is out of joint: O cursed spite,
That ever I was born to set it right!” (i. 5. 171, 172).

From this point of view Hamlet may be regarded as a man of a highly intellectual and moral nature, but without the mental and physical strength to become a hero like his father.

Other people think that Shakespeare meant to describe the paralysing effect of too much consideration of the contingencies and possible consequences of an action; and these, again, can quote his own words in support of their view :

“the native hue of resolution
Is sickled o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pitch and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action” (iii. 1. 84-88).

From this point of view Hamlet may be regarded as a man of weak will—will as weak as his mother's—with a natural tendency to dissimulation and a strong element of cowardice.

Others, again, think that Shakespeare meant to illustrate the practical necessity of a due proportion between facts and fancies; and from this point of view Hamlet has an excess of intellectuality and a lack of practical activity; he pays too much attention to the workings of his own fancies and too little attention to the pressing facts of everyday life. Consequently, when he is suddenly plunged into circumstances

demanding instant action, he procrastinates till he is almost powerless to act.

It may help us to arrive at a true estimate of Hamlet, from Shakespeare's point of view, if we notice what his friends thought of him, and what kind of men his friends were. Horatio, the devotedly unselfish "scholar and soldier", and Fortinbras, the firm self-possessed leader who is destined to reorganize the shaken kingdom and stand alone successful in the end, agree in their estimate of him; the humble servant speaks of his sweet and noble heart (v. 2. 355); the proud leader bids four captains

"Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage;
For he was likely, had he been put on,
To have proved most royally" (v. 2. 392-394).

The action of the play also brings out certain facts about him which can scarcely be misunderstood.

He was assuredly *brave*, and showed his courage in very different ways. For instance, he was as ready to follow the ghost (i. 4. 63), in spite of the earnest entreaties of his brave friends, as he was to board the pirate ship alone (iv. 6. 18) in contempt for cowardice and treachery; and his consistent attitude towards anything that was not absolutely sincere and noble, was one of unsparing sarcasm and hostility; cf. his treatment of the king, Polonius, Osric, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern.

He was also intensely *affectionate*; and it is, perhaps, not too much to say that, if either Ophelia or his mother had been worthy of him and his love, he would have succeeded instead of failing in the task assigned him. The vehemence of his love for his father is, of course, one of the most important features of the whole situation; and even for his unworthy mother he had a strong affection. The passage in i. 2. 70, &c., brings out his love for both father and mother, and should be compared with his own words about his mother (iii. 2. 374) after he knows the truth.

He certainly has *self-control*, and, indeed, considers it to be the greatest ornament in manners. He tells the First Player (iii. 2. 7):

"You must acquire and beget a temperance";

and directly afterwards he speaks to Horatio in the same strain :

“blest are those

Whose blood and judgement are so well commingled,
That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger
To sound what stop she please. Give me that man
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
In my heart's core” (iii. 2. 68–73).

He himself shows the most marvellous self-control while Horatio and Marcellus are telling him about the appearance of the ghost (i. 2. 220, &c.), and, again, in his interviews with the ghost (i. 5), with his mother (iii. 4. 139), and with Laertes (v. 2. 221). Indeed, his self-control absolutely degenerates into an excess of *caution*. He keeps the ghost's appearance a close secret, and makes even his dearest and most trusted friends swear to do the same (i. 5. 126); he assumes madness (i. 5. 154); he devises ‘the play within the play’ (ii. 2. 596); he is for ever meditating and reflecting on far-reaching ends and considerations, even when both his natural impulse and his national customs spur him to instant revenge, cf. the famous soliloquy (iii. 1. 56); the nature of the deed is repugnant to him, and he intends to be master of the circumstances which oppress him—to be quite sure that he is right both in the revenge itself and in the particular method of taking it.

He is a man of great *culture*, with that strong love of *truth* which almost invariably accompanies a real feeling for beauty. His appreciation and knowledge of dramatic poetry are well brought out in his talks with the First Player (ii. 2. 432; iii. 2. 1); though thirty years of age, he is anxious to return to Wittenberg (i. 2. 112); he is continually reflecting on grave problems of art and philosophy—the nature of man, the object of life, the Greek ideal of moderation.

He is also *humorous*, with the deep pathetic humour of the scholar; for the faculty of the punster is the same as that of the great critic who ‘emends’ some corrupt Greek or Latin text. Even in his moments of intensest pain he makes his pun or his point; and in this Shakespeare shows his extraordinary knowledge of human nature, for the source of tears and laughter is one and the same. Cf. v. 1. 185, &c.

One further point must be noticed, if only on account of the

mass of controversy to which it has given rise; it is the question of Hamlet's madness. If a man's own words and the opinion of unprejudiced friends are worthy of trust, Hamlet was not mad. He warned Horatio that he might think meet

"To put an antic disposition on" (i. 5. 154);

he told the two courtiers that both they and his uncle-father and aunt-mother were deceived:—"I am but mad north-north-west: when the wind is southerly I know a hawk from a handsaw" (ii. 2. 377); he asserted pointedly to his mother:

"I essentially am not in madness,
But mad in craft" (iii. 4. 182, 183).

Again, that a sane man should say that he intended to feign madness, should do so, should subsequently go mad, should then commit a murder, and should still assert that he was feigning madness in order to divert the suspicions of the murdered man, is incredible.

Lastly, not a single individual thought he was mad except those whom he deliberately deceived. The players were, at least, as capable of judging as Polonius and his feeble-minded daughter; the grave-diggers were quite as shrewd as Rosen-crantz and Guildenstern; Horatio knew him just as well as the queen did; and there is much more evidence that the king thought him sane than that Fortinbras thought him insane.

OPHELIA is, in some ways, the feminine counterpart of Hamlet; but, whereas Hamlet's only difficulty is to express himself in action, her still more reserved woman's nature finds difficulty in expressing itself even in language. She is dreamy, silent, and sweet, but very weak—so weak as to be positively helpless; and, therefore, she must win our pity in spite of her unwilling treachery to Hamlet. For her songs, when she is insane (iv. 5. 23), prove the depth of her love for him; and yet she betrays him to her father apparently without hesitation, and deserts him at the very moment when a woman's help and love might have saved him. But she is the daughter of a fool, and is motherless.

Laertes, Horatio, and the king seem all intended to throw into relief the character of Hamlet. LAERTES, unlike Hamlet, never deliberates; but, like Hamlet, he is so perfectly sincere that the king has great difficulty in persuading him to dis-

simulate (iv. 5; iv. 7). The KING, unlike both, is a coward and a sneak; but he deliberates almost as profoundly as Hamlet, and acts almost as promptly as Laertes. HORATIO alone is sincere, thoughtful yet prompt. Indeed, Hamlet describes him (iii. 2. 54, &c.) as the personification of justice and self-control; he thinks of everyone, and gives each man his due. Consequently, he never has time enough for thinking about himself to lose his self-control, and he is never pushing his own interest far enough to bring it into conflict with that of anyone else.

Polonius and Fortinbras perhaps represent the two classes of Elizabethan courtiers. FORTINBRAS is the young, deep-hearted, high-souled leader, of "mettle hot and full—to some enterprise that hath a stomach in't" (i. 1. 96, &c.). POLONIUS is a fawning, superficial, time-serving proverb-monger, who—in the first part of the play—supplies the comic element, which the grave-diggers supply afterwards.

