Boswell 1821 James Boswell (ed.), The plays and poems of William Shakspeare, vol. 11 (London, 1821), 1--316.

1

MACBETH.

2

3

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

In order to make a true estimate of the abilities and merit of a writer, it is always necessary to examine the genius of his age, and the opinions of his contemporaries. A poet who should now make the whole action of his tragedy depend upon enchantment, and produce the chief events by the assistance of supernatural agents, would be censured as transgressing the bounds of probability, be banished from the theatre to the nursery, and condemned to write fairy tales instead of tragedies; but a survey of the notions that prevailed at the time when this play was written, will prove that Shakspeare was in no danger of such censures, since he only turned the system that was then universally admitted, to his advantage, and was far from overburdening the credulity of his audience.

The reality of witchcraft or enchantment, which, though not strictly the same, are confounded in this play, has in all ages and countries been credited by the common people, and in most, by the learned themselves. The phantoms have indeed appeared more frequently, in proportion as the darkness of ignorance has been more gross; but it cannot be shown, that the brightest gleams of knowledge have at any time been sufficient to drive them out of the world. The time in which this kind of credulity was at its height, seems to have been that of the holy war, in which the Christians imputed all their defeats to enchantments or diabolical opposition, as they ascribed their success to the assistance of their military saints; and the learned Dr. Warburton appears to believe (Supplement to the Introduction to Don Quixote) that the first accounts of enchantments were brought into this part of the world by those who returned from their eastern expeditions. But there is always some distance between the birth and maturity of folly as of wickedness: this opinion had long existed, though perhaps the application of it had in no foregoing age been so frequent, nor the reception so general. Olympiodorus, in Photius's Extracts, tells us of one Libanius, who practised this kind of military magic, and having promised <chōris hoplitōn kata barbarōn energein,> *to perform great things against the Barbarians without soldiers*, was, at the instance of the empress Placida, put to death, when he was about to have given proofs of his abilities. The empress showed some kindness in her anger, by cutting him off at a time so convenient for his reputation.

4

But a more remarkable proof of the antiquity of this notion may be found in St. Chrysostom's book de Sacerdotio, which exhibits a scene of enchantments not exceeded by any romance of the middle age: he supposes a spectator overlooking a field of battle attended by one that points out all the various objects of horror, the engines of destruction, and the arts of slaughter. <Deiknutō de eti para tois enantiois kai petomenous hippous dia tinos magganeias, kai hoplitas di aeros pheromenous, kai pasēn goēteias dunamin kai idean.> "Let him then proceed to show him in the opposite armies horses flying by enchantment, armed men transported through the air, and every power and form of magic." Whether St. Chrysostom believed that such performances were really to be seen in a day of battle, or only endeavoured to enliven his description, by adopting the notions of the vulgar, it is equally certain, that such notions were in his time received, and that therefore they were not imported from the Saracens in a later age; the wars with the Saracens however gave occasion to their propagation, not only as bigotry naturally discovers prodigies, but as the scene of action was removed to a great distance.

The reformation did not immediately arrive at its meridian, and though day was gradually increasing upon us, the goblins of witchcraft still continued to hover in the twilight. In the time of Queen Elizabeth was the remarkable trial of the witches of Warbois, whose conviction is still commemorated in an annual sermon at Huntingdon. But in the reign of King James, in which this tragedy was written, many circumstances concurred to propagate and confirm this opinion. The King, who was much celebrated for his knowledge, had, before his arrival in England, not only examined in person a woman accused of witchcraft, but had given a very formal account of the practices and illusions of evil spirits, the compacts of witches, the ceremonies used by them, the manner of detecting them, and the justice of punishing them, in his dialogues of Dæmonologie, written in the Scottish dialect, and published at Edinburgh. This book was, soon after his succession, reprinted at London, and as the ready way to gain King James's favour was to flatter his speculations, the system of Dæmonologie was immediately adopted by all who desired either to gain preferment or not to lose it. Thus the doctrine of witchcraft was very powerfully inculcated; and as the greatest part of mankind have no other reason for their opinions than that they are in fashion, it cannot be doubted but this persuasion made a rapid progress, since vanity and credulity co-operated in its favour. The infection soon reached the parliament, who, in the first year of King James, made a law, by which it was enacted, chap. xii. That "if any person shall use any invocation or conjuration of any evil or wicked spirit; 2. or shall consult, covenant with, entertain, employ, feed or reward any evil or cursed spirit to or for any intent

or purpose; 3. or take up any dead man, woman, or child, out of the grave, -- or the skin, bone, or any part of the dead person, to be employed or used in any manner of witchcraft, sorcery, charm, or enchantment; 4. or shall use, practise, or exercise any sort of witchcraft, sorcery, charm, or enchantment; 5. whereby any person shall be destroyed, killed, wasted, consumed, pined, or lamed in any part of the body; 6. That every such person being convicted shall suffer death." This law was repealed in our own

time.

Thus, in the time of Shakspeare, was the doctrine of witchcraft at once established by law and by the fashion, and it became not only unpolite, but criminal, to doubt it; and as prodigies are always seen in proportion as they are expected, witches were every day discovered, and multiplied so fast in some places, that Bishop Hall mentions a village in Lancashire,/* where their number was greater than that of the houses. The jesuits and sectaries took advantage of this universal error, and endeavoured to promote the interest of their parties by pretended cures of persons afflicted by evil spirits; but they were detected and exposed by the clergy of the established church.

Upon this general infatuation Shakspeare might be easily allowed to found a play, especially since he has followed with great exactness such histories as were then thought true; nor can it be doubted that the scenes of enchantment, however they may now be ridiculed, were both by himself and his audience thought awful and affecting. Johnson.

In the concluding paragraph of Dr. Johnson's admirable introduction to this play, he seems apprehensive that the fame of Shakspeare's magic may be endangered by modern ridicule. I shall not hesitate, however, to predict its security, till our national taste is wholly corrupted, and we no longer deserve the first of all dramatic enjoyments; for such, in my opinion at least, is the tragedy of Macbeth. Steevens.

Malcolm II. King of Scotland, had two daughters. The eldest was married to Crynin, the father of Duncan, Thane of the Isles, and western parts of Scotland; and on the death of Malcolm, without male issue, Duncan succeeded to the throne. Malcolm's

/* In Nashe's Lenten Stuff, 1599, it is said, that no less than six hundred witches were executed at one time: "-- it is evident, by the confession of the six hundred Scotch witches executed in Scotland at Bartholomew tide was twelve month, that in Yarmouth road they were all together in a plump on Christmas eve was two years, when the great flood was; and there stirred up such tornadoes and furicanoes of tempests, as will be spoken of there whilst any winds or storms and tempests chafe and puff in the lower region." Reed.

second daughter was married to Sinel, Thane of Glamis, the father of Macbeth. Duncan, who married the daughter /* of Siward, Earl of Northumberland, was murdered by his cousin german, Macbeth, in the castle of Inverness, according to Buchanan, in the year 1040; according to Hector Boethius, in 1045. Boethius, whose History of Scotland was first printed in seventeen books, at Paris, in 1526, thus describes the event which forms the basis of the tragedy before us; "Makbeth, be persuasion of his wyfe, gaderit his friendis to ane counsall at Invernes, quhare kyng Duncane happennit to be for ye tyme. And because he fand sufficient opportunitie, *be support of Banquho* and otheris his friendis, he slew kyng Duncane, the vii zeir of his regne." After the murder of Duncan, Macbeth "come with ane gret power to Scone, and tuk the crowne." *Chroniclis of Scotland*, translated by John

Bellenden, folio, 1541. Macbeth was himself slain by Macduff in the year 1061, according to Boethius; according to Buchanan, in 1057; at which time King Edward the Confessor possessed the throne of England. Holinshed copied the history of Boethius, and on Holinshed's relation Shakspeare formed his play.

In the reign of Duncan, Banquo having been plundered by the people of Lochabar of some of the king's revenues, which he had collected, and being dangerously wounded in the affray, the persons concerned in this outrage were summoned to appear at a certain day. But they slew the *serjeant at arms* who summoned them, and chose one Macdowald as their captain. Macdowald speedily collected a considerable body of forces from Ireland and the Western Isles, and in one action gained a victory over the king's army. In this battle Malcolm, a Scottish nobleman, who was (says Boethius) "Lieutenant to Duncan in Lochaber," was slain. Afterwards Macbeth and Banquo were appointed to the command of the army; and Macdowald being obliged to take refuge in a castle in Lochaber, first slew his wife and children, and then himself. Macbeth, on entering the castle, finding his dead body, ordered his head to be cut off, and carried to the king, at the castle of Bertha, and his body to be hung on a high tree.

At a subsequent period, in the last year of Duncan's reign, Sueno, King of Norway, landed a powerful army in Fife, for the purpose of invading Scotland. Duncan immediately assembled an army to oppose him, and gave the command of two divisions of it to Macbeth and Banquo, putting himself at the head of a third. Sueno was successful in one battle, but in a second was routed; and, after a great slaughter of his troops, he escaped with ten persons only, and fled back to Norway. Though there was an interval of time between the rebellion of Macdowald and

/* -- the **daughter** --] More probably the *sister*. See note on The Cronykil of Andrew Wyntown, vol. ii. p. 475. Steevens.

7

the invasion of Sueno, our author has woven these two actions together, and immediately after Sueno's defeat the present play commences.

It is remarkable that Buchanan has pointed out Macbeth's history as a subject for the stage. "Multa hic fabulose quidam nostrorum affingunt; sed, quia *theatris* aut Milesiis fabulis sunt aptiora quam historiæ, ea omitto." *Rerum Scot. Hist.* l. vii. But there was no translation of Buchanan's work till after our author's death.

This tragedy was written, I believe, in the year 1606. See the notes at the end; and An Attempt to ascertain the Order of Shakspeare's Plays, vol. ii. Malone.

8

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

Duncan, King of Scotland:
Malcolm,)
Donalbain,) his Sons.
Macbeth,)
Banquo,) Generals of the King's Army.

Macduff,)
Lenox,   )
Rosse,   )
Menteth,) Noblemen of Scotland.
Angus,   )
Cathness,)
Fleance, Son to Banquo.
Siward, Earl of Northumberland, General of the
    English Forces:
Young Siward, his Son.
Seyton, an Officer attending on Macbeth.
Son to Macduff.
An English Doctor.   A Scotch Doctor.
A Soldier.   A Porter.   An old Man.

Lady Macbeth/1.
Lady Macduff.
Gentlewoman attending on Lady Macbeth.
Hecate, and three Witches/2.

Lords, Gentlemen, Officers, Soldiers, Murderers,
    Attendants, and Messengers.

The Ghost of Banquo, and several other Apparitions.

SCENE, in the End of the fourth Act, lies in
  England; through the rest of the Play, in Scot-
  land; and, chiefly, at Macbeth's Castle.

9

  /1 Lady Macbeth.] Her name was Gruach, filia Bodhe. See Lord Hailes's Annals of Scotland, ii. 332.   Ritson.

  Androw of Wyntown, in his Cronykil, informs us that this personage was the widow of Duncan; a circumstance with which Shakspeare must have been wholly unacquainted:

     "---- Dame *Grwok*, hys Emys wyf,
     "Tuk, and led wyth hyr his lyf,
     "And held hyr bathe hys Wyf and Qweyne,
     "As befor than scho had beyne
     "Til hys Erne Qwene, lyvand
     "Quhen he was Kyng wyth Crowne rygnand:
     "For lytyl in honowre than had he
     "The greys of affynyte." B. vi. 35.

  From the incidents, however, with which Hector Boece has diversified the legend of Macbeth, our poet derived greater advantages than he could have found in the original story, as related by Wyntown.

  The 18th Chapter of his Cronykil, book vi. together with observations by its accurate and learned editor, will be subjoined to this tragedy, for the satisfaction of inquisitive readers.
                                                    Steevens.

  /2 -- three Witches.] As the play now stands, in Act IV. Sc. I. three *other* witches make their appearance. See note thereon.   Steevens.

10

11

/1 -- hurlyburly's --] However mean this word may seem to modern ears, it came recommended to Shakspeare by the authority of Henry Peacham, who, in the year 1577, published a book professing to treat of the *ornaments* of language. It is called The Garden of Eloquence, and has this passage: "Onomatopeia, when we invent, devise, fayne, and make a name intimating the sownd of that it signifyeth, as *hurlyburly*, for an *uprore* and *tumultuous stirre*." Henderson.

So, in a translation of Herodian, 12mo. 1635, p. 26:
"---- there was a mighty *hurlyburly* in the campe," &c.
Again, p. 324:
"---- great *hurliburlies* being in all parts of the empire," &c.
Reed.

So, also, in Turbervile's Tragical Tales:
"But by the meane of horse and man
"Such *hurlie burlie* grewe."
Again, in Spenser's Fairy Queen, b. v. c. iii. st. 30:
"Thereof great *hurly burly* moved was." Malone.

Mr. Todd has the following note on the line quoted from Spenser: "None of the commentators have noticed, by any production from the literature of Scotland, the propriety of the dramatick poet's putting the expression into the *Scottish* hag's mouth. The expression is to be found in a book published indeed long after Shakspeare's time, but containing probably many *old saws*, entitled,

12

"Adagia Scotica, or a Collection of Scotch Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases. Collected by R. B. Very usefull and delightful, Lond. 12mo. 1668:
"Little kens the wife that sits by the fire
"How the wind blows cold in *hurle burle swyre*:"
that is, how the wind blows cold in the tempestuous mountain-top: for *swyre* is used either for the *top* of a hill, or the *pass over* a hill. This sense seems agreeable also to the Witch's answer: "When the hurlyburly's done," that is, the storm; for they enter in thunder and lightning. Boswell.

/2 When the battle's lost and won:] i. e. the battle in which Macbeth was then engaged. Warburton.

So, in King Richard III.:
"---- while we reason here,
"A royal battle might be *won and lost*."
So also Speed, speaking of the battle of Towton: "-- by which only stratagem, as it was constantly averred, the battle and day was *lost and won*." *Chronicle*, 1611. Malone.

/3 -- ere set of sun.] The old copy unnecessarily and harshly reads --
"---- ere *the* set of sun." Steevens.

/4 There to meet with Macbeth.] Thus the old copy. Mr. Pope, and, after him, other editors:

"There *I go* to meet Macbeth."

The insertion, however, seems to be injudicious. To "meet with Macbeth" was the final drift of all the Witches in going to the heath, and not the particular business or motive of any one of them in distinction from the rest; as the interpolated words, *I go*, in the mouth of the third Witch, would most certainly imply.

Somewhat, however, (as the verse is evidently imperfect,) must have been left out by the transcriber or printer. Mr. Capell has therefore proposed to remedy this defect, by reading --

"There to meet with *brave* Macbeth."

But surely, to beings intent only on mischief, a soldier's bravery, in an honest cause, would have been no subject of encomium.

Mr. Malone (omitting all previous remarks, &c. on this passage) assures us, that -- "*There* is here used as a dissyllable." I wish he had supported his assertion by some example. Those,

however, who can speak the line thus regulated, and suppose they are reciting a verse, may profit by the direction they have received.

The pronoun "their," having two vowels together, may be split into two syllables; but the adverb "there" can only be used as a monosyllable, unless pronounced as if it were written "the-re," a licence in which even Chaucer has not indulged himself.

It was convenient for Shakspeare's introductory scene, that his first Witch should appear uninstructed in her mission. Had she not required information, the audience must have remained ignorant of what it was necessary for them to know. Her speeches, therefore, proceed in the form of interrogatories; but, all on a sudden, an answer is given to a question which had not been asked. Here seems to be a chasm, which I shall attempt to supply by the introduction of a single pronoun, and by distributing the hitherto mutilated line among the three speakers:

"3 Witch. There to meet with --
"1 Witch. *Whom?*
"2 Witch. Macbeth."

Distinct replies have now been afforded to the three necessary enquiries -- *When* -- *Where* -- and *Whom* the Witches were to meet. Their conference receives no injury from my insertion and arrangement. On the contrary, the dialogue becomes more regular and consistent, as each of the hags will now have spoken *thrice* (a magical number) before they join in utterance of the concluding words, which relate only to themselves. -- I should add that, in the two prior instances, it is also the second Witch who furnishes decisive and material answers; and that I would give the words -- "I come, Graymalkin!" to the third. By assistance from such of our author's plays as had been published in quarto, we have often detected more important errors in the folio 1623, which, unluckily, supplies the most ancient copy of Macbeth.

Steevens.

I have endeavoured to show in the Essay on Shakspeare's versification that this line is not defective, and that neither Mr. Steevens's supplemental *whom*, nor Mr. Malone's dissyllabical pronunciation of *there*, is required. Boswell.

/5 -- Graymalkin!] From a little black-letter book, entitled, Beware the Cat, 1584, I find it was permitted to a Witch *to take on her a cattes body nine times*. Mr. Upton observes, that, to understand this passage, we should suppose one familiar calling with the voice of a cat, and another with the croaking of a toad.

Again, in Newes from Scotland, &c. (a pamphlet of which

the reader will find the entire title in a future note on this play): "Moreover she confessed, that at the time when his majestie was in Denmarke, shee being accompanied with the parties before specially mentioned, tooke a *cat* and christened it, and afterward bound to each part of that *cat* the cheefest part of a dead man, and several joyntes of his bodie, and that in the night following the said *cat* was convayed into the middest of the sea by all these witches sayling in their riddles or cives as is aforesaid, and so left the said *cat* right before the towne of Leith in Scotland. This donne, there did arise such a tempest in the sea, as a greater hath not bene seene," &c. Steevens.

/6 Paddock calls: &c.] This, with the two following lines, is given in the folio to the three Witches. Some preceding editors have appropriated the first of them to the second Witch.

According to the late Dr. Goldsmith, and some other naturalists, a *frog* is called a *paddock* in the North: as in the following instance, in Cæsar and Pompey, by Chapman, 1607:

"---- *Paddockes*, todes, and watersnakes."

Again, in Wyntownis Cronykil, b. i. c. xiii. 55:

"As ask, or eddyre, tade, or *pade*."

In Shakspeare, however, it certainly means a *toad*. The representation of St. James in the witches' house (one of the set of prints taken from the painter called Hellish Breugel, 1566,) exhibits witches flying up and down the chimney on brooms; and before the fire sit *grimalkin* and *paddock*, i. e. a *cat*, and a *toad*, with several *baboons*. There is a cauldron boiling, with a witch near it, cutting out the tongue of a snake, as an ingredient for the charm. A representation somewhat similar likewise occurs in Newes from Scotland, &c. a pamphlet already quoted.

Steevens.

"---- Some say, they [witches] can keepe devils and spirits, in the likeness of todes and cats." *Scot's Discovery of Witchcraft*, [1584] book i. c. iv. Tollet.

/7 Fair is foul, and foul is fair:] i. e. we make the sudden changes of the weather. And Macbeth, speaking of this day, soon after says:

"So foul and fair a day I have not seen." Warburton.

The common idea of witches has always been, that they had absolute power over the weather, and could raise storms of any kind, or allay them, as they pleased. In conformity to this no-

tion, Macbeth addresses them, in the fourth Act:
"Though you untie the winds, &c." Steevens.

15

I believe the meaning is, that *to us*, perverse and malignant as we are, *fair is foul, and foul is fair*. Johnson.

This expression seems to have been proverbial. Spenser has it in the 4th book of The Fairy Queen:
"Then *fair grew foul*, and *foul grew fair* in fight."
Farmer.

/8 This is the **sergeant**,] Holinshed is the best interpreter of Shakspeare in his historical plays; for he not only takes his facts from him, but often his very words and expressions. That historian, in his account of Macdowald's rebellion, mentions, that on the first appearance of a mutinous spirit among the people, the king sent a *sergeant at arms* into the country, to bring up the chief offenders to answer the charge preferred against them; but they, instead of obeying, misused the messenger with sundry reproaches, and finally slew him. This *sergeant at arms* is certainly the origin of the *bleeding sergeant* introduced on the present occasion. Shakspeare just caught *the name* from Holinshed, but the rest of the story not suiting his purpose, he does not adhere to it. The stage-direction of entrance, where the *bleeding captain* is mentioned, was probably the work of the player editors, and not of the poet.
Sergeant, however, (as the ingenious compiler of the Glossary to A. of Wyntown's Cronykil observes,) is "a degree in military service now unknown."
"Of *sergeandys* thare and knychtis kene
"He gat a gret cumpany." B. viii. ch. xxvi. v. 396.
The same word occurs again in the fourth Poem of Lawrence Minot, p. 19:
"He hasted him to the swin, with *sergantes* snell,
"To mete with the Normandes that fals war and fell."

16

According to M. le Grand, (says Mr. Ritson) *sergeants* were a sort of *gens d'armes*. Steevens.

/9 **Doubtfull**y it stood;] Mr. Pope, who introduced the epithet *long*, to assist the metre, and reads --
"Doubtful *long* it stood,"
has thereby injured the sense. If the comparison was meant to coincide in all circumstances, the struggle could not be *long*. I read --
"*Doubtfully* it stood;"
The old copy has -- *Doubtfull* -- so that my addition consists of but a single letter. Steevens.

Yet the line but one preceding is left unaltered, though equally defective. Boswell.

/1 -- Macdonwald --] Thus the old copy. According to Holinshed we should read -- *Macdowald*. Steevens.

So also the Scottish Chronicles. However, it is possible that Shakspeare might have preferred the name that has been substituted, as better sounding. It appears from a subsequent scene that he had attentively read Holinshed's account of the murder of King Duff, by *Donwald*, Lieutenant of the castle of Fores; in consequence of which he might, either from inadvertence, or choice, have here written -- *Macdonwald*. Malone.

/2 -- **to** that, &c.] i. e. in addition to that. So, in Troilus and Cressida, Act I. Sc. I.:

"The Greeks are strong, and skilful *to* their strength,
"Fierce *to* their skill, and *to* their fierceness valiant."

The soldier who describes Macdonwald, seems to mean, that, 'in addition to his assumed character of rebel, he abounds with the numerous enormities to which man, in his natural state, is liable.' Steevens.

To that I should rather explain as meaning '*to that end*: multiplying villanies have fitted him to become a rebel.' Malone.

/3 ---- from the western isles
Of Kernes and Gallowglasses is supplied;] Whether *sup-*

plied of, for *supplied from* or *with*, was a kind of Grecism of Shakspeare's expression; or whether *of* be a corruption of the editors, who took *Kernes and Gallowglasses*, which were only light and heavy armed foot, to be the names of two of the western islands, I don't know. "Hinc conjecturæ vigorem etiam adjiciunt arma quædam Hibernica, Gallicis antiquis similia, jacula nimirum peditum levis armaturæ quos *Kernos* vocant, nec non secures et loricæ ferreæ peditum illorum gravioris armaturæ, quos *Galloglassios* appellant." *Waræi Antiq. Hiber.* cap. vi. Warburton.

Of and *with* are indiscriminately used by our ancient writers.

So, in The Spanish Tragedy:

"Perform'd *of* pleasure by your son the prince."

Again, in God's Revenge against Murder, hist. vi.: "Sypontus in the mean time is prepared *of* two wicked gondoliers," &c. Again, in The History of Helyas Knight of the Sun, bl. l. no date: "-- he was well garnished *of* spear, sword, and armoure," &c. These are a few out of a thousand instances which might be brought to the same purpose.

Kernes and *Gallowglasses* are characterized in The Legend of Roger Mortimer. See The Mirror for Magistrates:

"---- the *Gallowglas*, the *Kerne*,
"Yield or not yield, whom so they take, they slay."

See also Stanyhurst's Description of Ireland, ch. viii. fol. 28. Holinshed, edit. 1577. Steevens.

The old copy has *Gallow-grosses*. Corrected by the editor of the second folio. Malone.

We have the following description of *Kernes* and *Gallowglasses* in Barnabie Riche's New Irish Prognostication, p. 37: "The *Galloglas* succeedeth the Horseman, and hee is commonly

armed with a scull, a shirt of maile, and a *Galloglas* axe: his service in the field, is neither good against horsemen, nor able to endure an encounter of pikes, yet the Irish do make great account of them. The *Kerne* of Ireland are next in request, the very drosse and scum of the countrey, a generation of villaines not worthy to live: these be they that live by robbing and spoyling the poor countreyman, that maketh him many times to buy bread to give unto them, though he want for himself and his poore children. These are they that are ready to run out with everie rebell, and these are the verie hags of hell fit for nothing but for the gallows." Boswell.

/4 And fortune, on his damned **quarrel** smiling,] The old copy has -- *quarry*; but I am inclined to read *quarrel*. *Quarrel* was formerly used for *cause*, or for *the occasion of a quarrel*, and is to

be found in that sense in Holinshed's account of the story of Macbeth, who, upon the creation of the Prince of Cumberland, thought, says the historian, that he had *a just quarrel* to endeavour after the crown. The sense therefore is, " Fortune smiling on his execrable cause," &c. Johnson.

The word *quarrel* occurs in Holinshed's relation of this very fact, and may be regarded as a sufficient proof of its having been the term here employed by Shakspeare: "Out of the western isles there came to Macdowald a great multitude of people, to assist him in that rebellious *quarrel*." Besides, Macdowald's *quarry* (i. e. game) must have consisted of *Duncan's friends*, and would the speaker then have applied the epithet -- *damned* to them? and what have the smiles of fortune to do over a carnage, when we have defeated our enemies? Her business is then at an end. Her smiles or frowns are no longer of any consequence. We only talk of these, while we are pursuing our *quarrel*, and the event of it is uncertain.

The word -- *quarrel*, in the same sense, occurs also in MS. Harl. 4690: "Thanne sir Edward of Bailoll towke his leve off king Edwarde, and went ayenne into Scottelonde, and was so grete a lorde, and so moche had his wille, that he touke no hede to hem that halpe him in his *quarelle*;" &c. Steevens.

The reading proposed by Dr. Johnson, and his explanation of it, are strongly supported by a passage in our author's King John:

"---- And put his *cause* and *quarrel*
"To the disposing of the cardinal."

Again, in this play of Macbeth:

"---- and the chance, of goodness,
"Be like our warranted *quarrel*."

Here we have *warranted quarrel*, the exact opposite of *damned quarrel*, as the text is now regulated.

Lord Bacon, in his Essays, uses the word in the same sense: "Wives are young men's mistresses, companions for middle age, and old men's nurses; so as a man may have a *quarrel* to marry, when he will." Malone.

Johnson's emendation is probably right; but it should be recol-

lected that *quarry* means not only *game*, but also *an arrow*, an offensive weapon; we might say without objection, “that Fortune smiled on a warrior’s sword.” Boswell.

/5 Show’d like a rebel’s whore:] I suppose the meaning is, that fortune, while she smiled on him, deceived him. Shakspeare probably alludes to Macdowald’s first successful action,

elated by which he attempted to pursue his fortune, but lost his life. Malone.

/6 Like valour’s minion,
Carv’d out his passage, till he fac’d the slave;] The old copy reads --
“Like valour’s minion, carv’d out his passage
“Till he fac’d the slave.”
As an hemistich must be admitted, it seems more favourable to the metre that it should be found where it is now left. -- “Till he fac’d the slave,” could never be designed as the beginning of a verse, if harmony were at all attended to in its construction.
Steevens.

“Like valour’s *minion*.” So, in King John:
“---- fortune shall cull forth,
“Out of one side, her happy *minion*.” Malone.

/7 **And ne’er** shook hands, &c.] The old copy reads -- “Which nev’r.”
“---- shook hands.” So, in King Henry VI. Part III.:
“Till our King Henry had *shook hands* with death.”
Steevens.

Mr. Pope, instead of *which*, here, and in many other places, reads -- *who*. But there is no need of change. There is scarcely one of our author’s plays in which he has not used *which* for *who*. So, in The Winter’s Tale: “-- the old shepherd, *which* stands by,” &c. Malone.

The old reading -- “Which never,” appears to indicate that some antecedent words, now irretrievable, were omitted in the playhouse manuscript; unless the compositor’s eye had caught *which* from a foregoing line, and printed it instead of *And*. *Which*, in the present instance, cannot well have been substituted for *who*, because it will refer to the *slave* Macdonwald, instead of his conqueror Macbeth. Steevens.

/8 -- he unseam’d him from the **nave** to the chaps,] We seldom hear of such terrible cross blows given and received but by giants and miscreants in *Amadis de Gaule*. Besides, it must be a strange aukward stroke that could unrip him upwards from the *navel* to the *chaps*. But Shakspeare certainly wrote:
“---- he unseam’d him from the *nape* to the chaps.”
i. e. cut his skull in two; which might be done by a Highlander’s sword. This was a reasonable blow, and very naturally expressed,

on supposing it given when the head of the wearied combatant was reclining downwards at the latter end of a long duel. For the *nape* is the hinder part of the neck, where the *vertebræ* join to the bone of the skull. So, in Coriolanus:

"O! that you could turn your eyes towards the *napes* of your necks."

The word *unseamed* likewise becomes very proper, and alludes to the suture which goes cross the crown of the head in that direction called the *sutura sagittalis*; and which, consequently, must be opened by such a stroke. It is remarkable, that Milton, who in his youth read and imitated our poet much, particularly in his Comus, was misled by this corrupt reading. For in the manuscript of that poem, in Trinity-College library, the following lines are read thus:

"Or drag him by the curls, *and cleave his scalpe*
"Down to the hippes."

An evident imitation of this corrupted passage. But he altered it with better judgment to --

"---- to a foul death
"Curs'd as his life." Warburton.

The old reading is certainly the true one, being justified by a passage in Dido Queene of Carthage, by Thomas Nash, 1594:

"Then from the *navel* to the throat at once
"He *ript* old Priam."

So likewise in an ancient MS. entitled The Boke of Huntyng, that is cleped Mayster of Game, cap. v.: "Som men haue sey hym slitte a man *fro the kne up to the brest*, and slee hym all starke dede at o strok." Steevens.

So, in Shadwell's Libertine: "I will rip you *from the navel to the chin*." Boswell.

/9 As whence the sun '**gins** his reflexion --] The thought is expressed with some obscurity, but the plain meaning is this: "As the same quarter, whence the blessing of day-light arises, sometimes sends us, by a dreadful reverse, the calamities of storms and tempests: so the glorious event of Macbeth's victory, which promised us the comforts of peace, was immediately succeeded by the alarming news of the Norweyan invasion." The natural history of the winds, &c. is foreign to the explanation of this passage. Shakspeare does not mean, in conformity to any theory, to say that storms *generally* come from the east. If it be allowed that they sometimes issue from that quarter, it is sufficient for the purpose of his comparison. Steevens.

21

The natural history of the winds, &c. was idly introduced on this occasion by Dr. Warburton. Sir William D'Avenant's reading of this passage, in an alteration of this play, published in quarto, in 1674, affords a reasonably good comment upon it:

"But then this day-break of our victory
"Serv'd but to light us into other dangers,
"That spring from whence our hopes did seem to rise."
Malone.

/1 -- thunders **break;**] The word *break* is wanting in the oldest copy. The other folios and Rowe read -- *breaking*. Mr. Pope made the emendation. Steevens.

Break, which was suggested by the reading of the second folio, is very unlikely to have been the word omitted in the original copy. It agrees with thunders; -- but who ever talked of the *breaking* of a *storm*?" Malone.

The phrase, I believe, is sufficiently common. Thus Dryden, in All for Love, &c. Act I.:

"---- the Roman camp
"Hangs o'er us black and threat'ning, like a *storm*
"Just *breaking* o'er our heads."

Again, in Ogilby's version of the 17th Iliad:

"Hector o'er all an iron tempest spreads,
"Th' impending *storm* will *break* upon our heads."

Steevens.

/2 **Discomfort** swells.] *Discomfort*, the natural opposite to comfort. Johnson.

/3 Our captains, Macbeth and Banquo?
Sold. Yes;] The reader cannot fail to observe, that some word, necessary to complete

the verse, has been omitted in the old copy. Sir T. Hanmer reads --

"Our captains, *brave* Macbeth," &c. Steevens.

The word [as Mr. Douce has observed,] was probably pronounced *capitaine* in this instance, as it is frequently in Spenser. Boswell.

/4 As cannons overcharg'd with double cracks, &c.] That is, with double charges; a metonymy of the effect for the cause. Heath.

Mr. Theobald has endeavoured to improve the sense of this passage, by altering the punctuation thus:

"------ they were
"As cannons overcharg'd; with double cracks
"So they redoubled strokes ----."

He declares, with some degree of exultation, that he has no idea of a "cannon charged with double cracks;" but surely the great author will not gain much by an alteration which makes him say of a hero, that he "redoubles strokes with double cracks," an expression not more loudly to be applauded, or more easily pardoned, than that which is rejected in its favour.

That a "cannon is charged with thunder," or "with double thunders," may be written, not only without nonsense, but with elegance, and nothing else is here meant by *cracks*, which, in the time of this writer, was a word of such emphasis and dignity, that in this play he terms the general dissolution of nature the *crack of doom*. Johnson.

Crack is used on a similar occasion by Barnaby Googe, in his Cupido Conquered, 1563:

"The canon's *cracke* begins to roore
"And darts full thycke they flye,
"And cover'd thycke the armyes both,
"And framde a counter-skye."

Barbour, the old Scotch Poet, calls fire-arms -- "*crakys* of war." Steevens.

Again, in the old play of King John, 1591, and applied, as here, to ordnance:

"---- as harmless and without effect,
"As is the echo of a cannon's *crack*." Malone.

/5 Doubly redoubled strokes, &c.] So, in King Richard II.:

"And let thy blows, *doubly redoubled*,
"Fall," &c.

The irregularity of the metre, however, induces me to believe our author wrote --

"------ they were
"As cannons overcharg'd with double cracks,
"Doubly *redoubling* strokes upon the foe."

For this thought, however, Shakspeare might have been indebted to Caxton's Recuyel, &c. "The batayll was sharp, than the grekes *dowblid and redowblid their strokes*, &c. Steevens.

/6 Or **memorize** another Golgotha.] That is, or *make* another Golgotha, which should be celebrated and delivered down to posterity, with as frequent mention as the first. Heath.

The word *memorize*, which some suppose to have been coined by Shakspeare, is used by Spenser, in a sonnet to Lord Buckhurst, prefixed to his Pastorals, 1579:

"In vaine I thinke, right honourable lord,
"By this rude rime to *memorize* thy name." T. Warton.

The word is likewise used by Drayton; and by Chapman, in his translation of the second book of Homer, 1598:

"---- which let thy thoughts be sure to *memorize*."

Again, in the third Iliad:

"---- and Clymene, whom fame
"Hath, for her fair eyes, *memoriz'd*."

And again, in a copy of verses prefixed to Sir Arthur Gorges's translation of Lucan, 1614:

"Of them whose acts they mean to *memorize*." Steevens.

/7 *Enter* ***Rosse.***] The old copy -- "Enter Rosse and *Angus*:" but as only the name of Rosse is spoken to, or speaks any thing in the remaining part of this scene, and as Duncan expresses himself in the singular number, --

"Whence cam'st *thou*, worthy thane?"

Angus may be considered as a superfluous character. Had his

present appearance been designed, the King would naturally have taken some notice of him. Steevens.

It is clear, from a subsequent passage, that the entry of Angus was here designed; for in Scene III, he again enters with Rosse, and says, --

"---- *We* are sent
"To give thee from our royal master thanks." Malone.

Because *Rosse* and *Angus* accompany each other in a subsequent scene, does it follow that they make their entrance together on the present occasion? Steevens.

/8 Who comes **here**?] The latter word is here employed as a dissyllable. Malone.

Mr. Malone has already directed us to read *there* as a dissyllable, but without supporting his direction by one example of such a practice.

I suspect that the poet wrote --

"Who *is't* comes here?" or -- "*But* who comes here?"
Steevens.

See the Essay on Shakspeare's Versification. Boswell.

/9 ------ So should he look,
That **seems** to speak things strange.] The meaning of this passage, as it now stands, is, "so should he look, that looks as if he told things strange." But Rosse neither yet told strange things, nor could look as if he told them. Lenox only conjectured from his air that he had strange things to tell, and therefore undoubtedly said:

"What a haste looks through his eyes!
"So should he look, that *teems* to speak things strange."

He looks like one that is *big with* something of importance; a metaphor so natural that it is every day used in common discourse. Johnson.

Mr. M. Mason observes, that the meaning of Lenox is, "So should he look, who seems as if he had strange things to speak."

The following passage in The Tempest seems to afford no unapt comment upon this:

"------ pr'ythee, say on:
"The setting of thine eye and cheek proclaim
"A matter from thee --."

Again, in King Richard II.:

"Men judge by the complexion of the sky, &c.
"So may you, by my dull and heavy eye,
"My tongue hath but a heavier tale to say." Steevens.

"That *seems* to speak things strange." i. e. that seems *about* to speak strange things. Our author himself furnishes us with the best comment on this passage. In Antony and Cleopatra we meet with nearly the same idea:

"The business of this man looks out of him." Malone.

/1 -- **flout** the sky,] The banners may be poetically described as waving in *mockery* or *defiance* of the sky. So, in King Edward III. 1599:

"And new replenish'd pendants cuff the air,
"And beat the wind, that for their gaudiness
"Struggles to kiss them." Steevens.

Again, in King John:

"*Mocking* the air, with *colours* idly spread."

This passage has perhaps been misunderstood. The meaning seems to be, not that the Norweyan banners proudly insulted the sky; but that, the standards being taken by Duncan's forces, and fixed in the ground, the colours idly flapped about, serving only to cool the conquerors, instead of being proudly displayed by their former possessors. The line in King John, therefore, is the most perfect comment on this. Malone.

The sense of the passage, collectively taken, is this: "Where the triumphant flutter of the Norweyan standards ventilates or cools the soldiers who had been heated through their efforts to secure such numerous trophies of victory." Steevens.

In Marston's Sophonisba, published in 1606, the second scene of the first act bears a great resemblance to the one now before us, and that which precedes it: "Carthelo enters, his sword drawne, his body wounded, his shield strucke full of darts." He gives an account of a battle between the Carthaginians and Romans, and this passage occurs:

"When we the campe that lay at Utica,
"From Carthage distant but five easie leagues,
"Descride, from of the watch three hundred saile,
"Upon whose tops the Roman eagles streach'd
"*Their large spread winges which fan'd the evening ayre*
"*To us cold breath*, for well we might discerne
"Rome swam to Carthage." Boswell.

26

/2 And fan our people cold.] In all probability, some words that rendered this a complete verse have been omitted; a loss more frequently to be deplored in the present tragedy, than perhaps in any other of Shakspeare. Steevens.

/3 Till that Bellona's **bridegroom**, lapp'd **in proof**,] This passage may be added to the many others, which show how little Shakspeare knew of ancient mythology. Henley.

Our author might have been influenced by Holinshed, who, p. 567, speaking of King Henry V. says: "He declared that the goddesse of battell, called *Bellona*," &c. &c. Shakspeare, therefore, hastily concluded that the Goddess of War was wife to the God of it; or might have been misled by Chapman's version of a line in the fifth Iliad of Homer:

"---- *Mars* himself, match'd with his *female mate*,
"The dread *Bellona* ----."

Lapp'd in proof, is, defended by armour of proof.

Steevens.

These criticisms are entirely founded in error. “Bellona’s bridegroom,” as Mr. Kemble and Mr. Douce have observed, does not mean the *God of War*, but *Macbeth*. So, in the scene quoted above, Marston’s Sophonisba:

“Scipio advanced *like the God of blood*,
“Leads up grim war.” Boswell.

/4 Confronted **him** with self-comparisons,] By *him*, in this verse, is meant *Norway*; as the plain construction of the English requires. And the assistance the *thane of Cawdor* had given Norway, was underhand; (which Rosse and Angus, indeed, had discovered, but was unknown to Macbeth;) Cawdor being in the court all this while, as appears from Angus’s speech to Macbeth, when he meets him to salute him with the title, and insinuates his crime to be “lining the rebel with *hidden* help and ‘vantage.”

“-- with self-comparisons.” i. e. gave him as good as he brought, shew’d he was his equal. Warburton.

27

/5 That now
Sweno, the Norways king,] The present irregularity of metre induces me to believe that -- *Sweno* was only a marginal reference, injudiciously thrust into the text; and that the line originally stood thus:

“That now the Norways’ king craves composition.”

Could it have been necessary for Rosse to tell Duncan the name of his old enemy, the king of Norway? Steevens.

/6 -- Saint **Colmes’ inch**,] *Colmes’* is to be considered as a dissyllable.

Colmes’-inch, now called *Inchcomb*, is a small island lying in the Firth of Edinburgh, with an abbey upon it, dedicated to St. Columb; called by Camden *Inch Colm*, or *The Isle of Columba*. Some of the modern editors, without authority, read --

“Saint Colmes’-kill Isle:”

but very erroneously; for *Colmes’ Inch* and *Colm-kill*, are two different islands; the former lying on the eastern coast, near the place where the Danes were defeated; the latter in the western seas, being the famous Iona, one of the Hebrides.

Holinshed thus relates the whole circumstance: “The Danes that escaped, and got once to their ships, obteined of Makbeth for a great summe of gold, that such of their friends as were slaine, might be buried in *Saint Colmes’ Inch*. In memorie whereof many old sepultures are yet in the said *Inch*, there to be seene graven with the armes of the Danes.” *Inch*, or *Inshe*, in the Irish and Erse languages, signifies an island. See Lhuyd’s Archæologia. Steevens.

/7 -- pronounce his death,] The old copy, injuriously to metre, reads --

“---- pronounce his *present* death.” Steevens.

28

/8 Killing swine.] So, in A Detection of Damnable Driftes practized by Three Witches, &c. Arraigned at Chelmisforde in

Essex, 1579, bl. l. 12mo: “-- Item, also she came on a tyme to the house of one Robert Lathburie &c. who dislyking her dealyng, *sent her home emptie*; but presently after her departure, his *hogges fell sicke and died*, to the number of twentie.”
Steevens.

/9 1 Witch. Where hast **thou** been, sister?
2 Witch. Killing swine.
3 Witch. **Sister**, where thou?] Thus the old copy; yet I cannot help supposing that these three speeches, collectively taken, were meant to form one verse, as follows:
“1 Witch. Where hast been, sister?
“2 Witch. Killing swine.
“3 Witch. Where thou?”
If my supposition be well founded, there is as little reason for preserving the useless *thou* in the first line, as the repetition of *sister*, in the third. Steevens.

/1 **Aroint** thee, witch!] *Aroint*, or avaunt, be gone. Pope.

In one of the folio editions the reading is -- “*Anoint* thee,” in a sense very consistent with the common account of witches, who are related to perform many supernatural acts, by the means of unguents, and particularly to fly through the air to the places where they meet at their hellish festivals. In this sense, “*anoint* thee, witch,” will mean, “away, witch, to your infernal assembly.” This reading I was inclined to favour, because I had met with the word *aroint* in no other author; till looking into Hearne’s Collections, I found it in a very old drawing, that he has pub-

lished /*, in which St. Patrick is represented visiting hell, and putting the devils into great confusion by his presence, of whom one, that is driving the damned before him with a prong, has a label issuing out of his mouth with these words, “out out Arongt,” of which the last is evidently the same with *aroint*, and used in the same sense as in this passage. Johnson.

Dr. Johnson’s memory, on the present occasion, appears to have deceived him in more than a single instance. The subject of the above-mentioned drawing is ascertained by a label affixed to it in Gothick letters. “Iesus Christus, resurgens a mortuis spoliat infernum.” My predecessor, indeed, might have been misled by an uncouth abbreviation in the Sacred Name.
The words -- “Out out arongt,” are addressed to our Redeemer by Satan, who, the better to enforce them, accompanies them with a blast of the horn he holds in his right hand. “Tartareum intendit cornu.” If the instrument he grasps in his left hand was meant for a *prong*, it is of singular make. *Ecce signum.*

Satan is not “driving the damned before him;” nor is any other dæmon present to undertake that office. Redemption, not punishment, is the subject of the piece.

This story of Christ’s exploit, in his *descensus ad inferos*, (as Mr. Tyrwhitt has observed in a note on Chaucer, 3512,) is taken from the Gospel of Nicodemus, and was called by our ancestors *the harrowinge of helle*, under which title it was represented among the Chester Whitsun Playes, MS. Harl. 2013.

“*Rynt* you, witch! quoth Besse Locket to her mother,” is a north country proverb. The word is used again in King Lear:

“And *aroint* thee, witch, *aroint* thee.”

Anoint is the reading of the folio, 1664, a book of no authority. Steevens.

It has been ingeniously suggested, (originally, as I understand,

/* See Ectypa Varia, &c. Studio et cura Thomæ Hearne, &c. 1737. Steevens.

by Mr. Perry, of the Morning Chronicle,) that “aroynt ye, witch,” may be a corruption for *a rowan tree*, i. e. the mountain ash, which is said to be considered in Scotland to this day as a preservative against witchcraft. My friend Mr. Talbot has pointed out to me a passage in Evelyn’s Sylva, which shows that the same superstition prevailed in Wales: “This tree is so sacred (*scil.* in Wales), that there is not a churchyard without one of them planted in it (as, among us, the yew); so, on a certain day in every year, every body religiously wears a cross made of the wood; and the tree is by some authors called Fraxinus Cambro-Britannica, reputed to be a *preservative against fascinations and evil spirits*; whence, perhaps, we called it *witchen*.” Millar, adds Mr. Talbot, gives this account of it: “In Scotland, and the North of England, it is called *roan tree*, and the name is variously spelt *rowen, radden*, and *rantry*.” The sailor’s wife, being in possession of this charm, is safe; and therefore the witch wreaks her vengeance upon her husband, who has no such talisman to protect him. If the phrase *Aroynt ye*, had occurred but once, we might be disposed to adopt this explanation; but it is not likely that the same mistake should have occurred twice, supported as the text is by the Cheshire proverb. If we were even to suppose that *a rowan tree* was the origin of the phrase, it is probable that Shakspeare adopted the corruption as he found it; as he has done *handsaw*, for *hernshaw*, in Hamlet. Boswell.

There is no doubt that *aroint* signifies *away! run!* and that it is of Saxon origin. The original Saxon verb has not been preserved in any other way; but the glossaries supply *ryne* for running; and, in the old Islandic, *runka* signifies *to agitate, to move*.

Douce.

/2 -- the **rump-fed** ronyon --] The chief cooks in noblemen’s families, colleges, religious houses, hospitals, &c. anciently claimed the emoluments or kitchen fees of kidneys, fat, trotters, *rumps*, &c. which they sold to the poor. The weird sister in this scene, as an insult on the poverty of the woman who

had called her *witch*, reproaches her poor abject state, as not being able to procure better provision than offals, which are considered as the refuse of the tables of others. Colepeper.

So, in The Ordinance for the Government of Prince Edward, 1474, the following fees are allowed: “mutton’s heads, the *rumpes* of every beefe,” &c. Again, in The Ordinances of the Household of George Duke of Clarence: “-- the hinder shankes of the mutton, with the *rumpe*, to be feable.”

Again, in Ben Jonson’s Staple of News, old Penny-boy says to the Cook:

“And then remember meat for my two dogs;
“Fat flaps of mutton, kidneys, rumps,” &c.

Again, in Wit at Several Weapons, by Beaumont and Fletcher:

“A niggard to your commons, that you’re fain
“To size your belly out with shoulder fees,
“With kidneys, *rumps*, and cues of single beer.”

In The Book of Haukynge, &c. (commonly called The Book of St. Albans) bl. l. no date, among the *proper terms used in kepyng of haukes*, it is said: “The hauke tyreth upon *rumps*.”

Steevens.

/3 -- ronyon cries.] i. e. scabby or mangy woman. Fr. *rogneux, royne*, scurf. Thus Chaucer, in The Romaunt of the Rose, p. 551:

“---- her necke
“Withouten bleine, or scabbe, or *roine*.”

Shakspeare uses the substantive again in The Merry Wives of Windsor, and the adjective -- *roynish*, in As You Like It.

Steevens.

/4 -- in a sieve I’ll thither sail,] Reginald Scott, in his Discovery of Witchcraft, 1584, says it was believed that witches “could sail in an egg shell, a cockle or muscle shell, through and under the tempestuous seas.” Again, says Sir W. D’Avenant, in his Albovine, 1629:

“He sits like a witch *sailing in a sieve*.”

Again, in Newes from Scotland: Declaring the damnable Life of Doctor Fian a notable Sorcerer, who was burned at Edenbrough in Januarie last, 1591; which Doctor was Register to the Devill, that sundrie Times preached at North Baricke Kirke, to a Number of notorious Witches. With the true Examinations of the said Doctor and Witches, as they uttered them in the Presence of the Scottish King. Discovering how they pretended to bewitch and drowne his Majestie in the Sea comming from Denmarke, with other such wonderful Matters as the like hath not bin heard at anie Time. Published according to the Scottish Copie. Printed for William Wright: “-- and that all they together went to sea, each one in a *riddle* or *cive*, and went in the same very substantially with flaggons of wine, making merrie and drinking by the way in the same *riddles* or *cives*,” &c. Dr. Farmer found the title of this scarce pamphlet in an interleaved copy of Maunsell’s Catalogue, &c. 1595, with additions by Archbishop Harsenet and Thomas Baker the Antiquarian. It is almost needless to mention that I have since met with the

pamphlet itself. Steevens.

/5 And, like a rat without a tail,] It should be remembered,

32

(as it was the belief of the times,) that though a witch could assume the form of any animal she pleased, the tail would still be wanting.

The reason given by some of the old writers, for such a deficiency, is, that though the hands and feet, by an easy change, might be converted into the four paws of a beast, there was still no part about a woman which corresponded with the length of tail common to almost all our four-footed creatures. Steevens.

/6 I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do. ----
I' the shipman's card. ----
Look what I have. ----
Show me, show me. ----
Thus do go about, about; ----] As I cannot help supposing this scene to have been uniformly metrical when our author wrote it, in its present state I suspect it to be clogged with interpolations, or mutilated by omissions.

Want of corresponding rhymes to the foregoing lines, induce me to hint at vacuities which cannot be supplied, and intrusions which (on the bare authority of conjecture) must not be expelled.

Were even the condition of modern transcripts for the stage understood by the public, the frequent accidents by which a poet's meaning is depraved, and his measure vitiated, would need no illustration. Steevens.

/7 I'll give thee a wind.] This free gift of a wind is to be considered as an act of sisterly friendship, for witches were supposed to sell them. So, in Summer's Last Will and Testament, 1600:

"---- in Ireland and in Denmark both,
"*Witches* for gold will *sell a man a wind*,
"Which in the corner of a napkin wrap'd,
"Shall blow him safe unto what coast he will."

Drayton, in his Mooncalf, says the same. It may be hoped, however, that the conduct of our witches did not resemble that of one of their relations, as described in an Appendix to the old translation of Marco Paolo, 1579: "-- they demanded that he should *give them a winde*; and he shewed, setting his handes *behinde*, from *whence the wind should come*," &c. Steevens.

/8 And the **very ports** they blow,] As the word *very* is here of no other use than to fill up the verse, it is likely that Shakspeare wrote *various*, which might be easily mistaken for *very*, being either negligently read, hastily pronounced, or imperfectly heard. Johnson.

The *very* ports are the exact ports. *Very* is used here (as in a

33

thousand instances which might be brought) to express the declaration more emphatically.

Instead of *ports*, however, I had formerly read *points*; but

erroneously. In ancient language, to *blow* sometimes means to *blow upon*. So, in Dumain's Ode in Love's Labour's Lost:

"Air, quoth he, thy cheeks may *blow* --."

i. e. *blow* upon them. We still say, it blows East, or West, without a preposition. Steevens.

The substituted word was first given by Sir W. D'Avenant, who, in his alteration of this play, has retained the old, while at the same time he furnished Mr. Pope with the new reading:

"I myself have all the other.
"And then from every port they blow,
"From all the points that seamen know." Malone.

/9 -- the shipman's card.] So, in The Microcosmos of John Davies, of Hereford, 4to. 1605:

"Beside the chiefe windes and collaterall
"(Which are the windes indeed of chiefe regard)
"Seamen observe more, thirtie two in all,
"All which are pointed out upon the carde."

The card is the paper on which the winds are marked under the pilot's needle; or perhaps the *sea-chart*, so called in our author's age. Thus, in The Loyal Subject, by Beaumont and Fletcher:

"The *card* of goodness in your minds, that shews you
"When you sail false."

Again, in Churchyard's Prayse and Reporte of Maister Martyne Forboisher's Voyage to Meta Incognita, &c. 12mo. bl. l. 1578: "There the generall gaue a speciall *card* and order to his captaines for the passing of the straites," &c. Steevens.

/1 -- dry as hay:] So, Spenser, in his Fairy Queen, b. iii. c. ix.:

"But he is old and *withered as hay*." Steevens.

/2 Sleep shall, neither night nor day,
Hang upon his **pent-house lid;**] So, in Decker's Gul's Horne-booke: "The two eyes are the glasse windowes, at which light disperses itselfe into every roome, having goodly *pent-houses* of haire to overshaddow them." So, also in David and Goliah, by Michael Drayton:

"His brows, like two steep *pent-houses*, hung down
"Over his eye-lids."

This poem is inserted in a Collection which Drayton entitles

The Muses Elysium, which being dedicated to Edward Earl of Dorset, "Knight of the most noble order of the Garter," must have been published after 1625, that nobleman having been then invested with the order of the garter. I do not know of any earlier edition of the piece entitled David and Goliah; but another poem which appears in this collection, Moses his Birth and Miracles, had been published originally in 4to. in 1604, under the title of Moyses in A Map of his Miracles. Malone.

/3 He shall live a man **forbid:**] i. e. as one under a *curse*, an *interdiction*. So, afterwards in this play:

"By his own *interdiction* stands *accurs'd*."

So, among the Romans, an outlaw's sentence was, "Aquæ et ignis *interdictio*;" i. e. he was forbid the use of water and fire,

which implied the *necessity of banishment*. Theobald.

Mr. Theobald has very justly explained *forbid* by *accursed*, but without giving any reason of his interpretation. To *bid* is originally to *pray*, as in this Saxon fragment:

<He is ^þis þ' bit ⁊ bote,> &c.

"He is wise that *prays* and makes amends."

As to *forbid* therefore implies to *prohibit*, in opposition to the word *bid* in its present sense, it signifies by the same kind of opposition to *curse*, when it is derived from the same word in its primitive meaning. Johnson.

To *bid*, in the sense of to *pray*, occurs in the ancient MS. romance of The Sowdon of Babyloyne, p. 78:

"Kinge Charles kneled adown
"To kisse the relikes so goode,
"And *badde* there an oryson
"To that lorde that deyde on rode."

A *forbodin* fellow, Scot. signifies an *unhappy* one. Steevens.

It may be added, that "*bitten* and *Verbieten*, in the German, signify to pray and to interdict." S. W.

/4 Shall he **dwindle**, &c.] This mischief was supposed to be put in execution by means of a waxen figure, which represented the person who was to be consumed by slow degrees.

So, in Websters Dutchess of Malfy, 1623:

"---- it *wastes* me more
"Than wer't my picture fashion'd out of wax,
"Stuck with a magick needle, and then buried
"In some foul dunghill."

So Holinshed, speaking of the witchcraft practised to destroy King Duffe:

"---- found one of the witches roasting upon a wooden broch

an image of wax at the fire, resembling in each feature the king's person, &c.

"---- for as the image did waste afore the fire, so did the bodie of the king break forth in sweat. And as for the words of the inchantment, they served to keep him still waking *from sleepe*," &c.

This may serve to explain the foregoing passage:

"Sleep shall, neither night nor day,
"Hang upon his pent-house lid."

See vol. iv. p. 55. Steevens_

/5 Though his bark cannot be lost,
Yet it shall be tempest-toss'd.] So, in Newes from Scotland, &c., a pamphlet already quoted: "Againe it is confessed, that the said christened cat was the cause of the *Kinges Majesties shippe, at his coming forthe of Denmarke, had a contrarie winde to the rest of his shippes* then beeing in his companie, which thing was most straunge and true, as the Kinges Majestie acknowledgeth, for when the rest of the shippes had a faire and good winde, then was the winde contrarie and altogether against his Majestie. And further the sayde witch declared, that his

Majestie had never come safely from the sea, if his faith had not prevayled above their ententions." To this circumstance perhaps our author's allusion is sufficiently plain. Steevens.

/6 The **weird** sisters, hand in hand,] These weird *sisters* were the *Fates* of the northern nations; the three handmaids of Odin. "Hæ nominantur Valkyriæ, quas quodvis ad prælium Odinus mittit. Hæ viros morti destinant, et victoriam gubernant. Gunna, et Rota, et Parcarum minima Skullda: per aëra et maria equitant semper ad morituros eligendos; et cædes in potestate habent." *Bartholinus de Causis contemptæ à Danis adhuc Gentilibus mortis.* It is for this reason that Shakspeare makes them *three*; and calls them,

36

"Posters of the sea and land:"

and intent only upon death and mischief. However, to give this part of his work the more dignity, he intermixes, with this Northern, the Greek and Roman superstitions; and puts Hecate at the head of their enchantments. And to make it still more familiar to the common audience (which was always his point) he adds, for another ingredient, a sufficient quantity of our own country superstitions concerning witches; their beards, their cats, and their broomsticks. So that his *witch-scenes* are like the *charm* they prepare in one of them; where the ingredients are gathered from every thing *shocking* in the *natural* world, as here, from every thing *absurd* in the *moral*. But as extravagant as all this is, the play has had the power to charm and bewitch every audience, from that time to this. Warburton.

Weird comes from the Anglo-Saxon <ƿyrd>, *fatum*, and is used as a substantive signifying a *prophecy* by the translator of Hector Boethius, in the year 1541, as well as for the Destinies, by Chaucer and Holinshed. "Of the weirdis gevyn to Makbeth and Banqhuo," is the argument of one of the chapters. Gawin Douglas, in his translation of Virgil, calls the *Parcæ*, the *weird sisters*; and in Ane verie excellent and delectabill Treatise intitulit Philotus, quhairin we may persave the greit Inconveniences that fallis out in the Mariage betweene Age and Zouth, Edinburgh, 1603, the word appears again:

"How does the quheill of fortune go,
"Quhat wickit *wierd* has wrocht our wo."

Again:

"Quhat neidis Philotus to think ill,
"Or zit his *wierd* to warie?"

The other method of spelling [*weyward*] was merely a blunder of the transcriber or printer.

The *Valkyriæ*, or *Valkyriur*, were not barely *three in number*. The learned critic might have found, in *Bartholinus*, not only *Gunna, Rota, et Skullda*, but also, *Scogula, Hilda, Gondula*, and *Geiroscogula*. Bartholinus adds, that their number is yet greater, according to other writers who speak of them. They were the *cupbearers* of *Odin*, and *conductors of the dead*. They were distinguished by the *elegance of their forms*; and it would be as just to compare youth and beauty with age and deformity, as the *Valkyriæ of the North* with the *Witches of Shakspeare*.

Steevens.

37

The old copy has -- *weyward*, probably in consequence of the transcriber's being deceived by his ear. The correction was made by Mr. Theobald. The following passage in Bellenden's translation of Hector Boethius, fully supports the emendation: "Be aventure Makbeth and Banquho were passand to Fores, quhair kyng Duncane hapnit to be for ye tyme, and met be ye gait thre women clothit in elrage and uncouth weid. They wer jugit be t he pepill to be *weird* sisters." So also Holinshed. Malone.

/7 How far is't call'd to Fores?] The king at this time resided at Fores, a town in Murray, not far from Inverness. "It fortuned, (says Holinshed) as Macbeth and Banquo journeyed towards Fores, where the king then lay, they went sporting by the way, without other company, save only themselves, when suddenly in the midst of a laund there met them three women in straunge and ferly apparell, resembling creatures of an elder world," &c. Steevens.

The old copy reads -- *Soris*. Corrected by Mr. Pope. Malone.

/8 That man may question?] Are ye any beings with which man is permitted to hold converse, or of whom it is lawful to *ask questions*. Johnson.

/9 -- You should be women,] In Pierce Pennilesse his Supplication to the Devill, 1592, there is an enumeration of spirits and their offices; and of certain watry spirits it is said: "-- by the help of Alynach a spirit of the West, they will raise stormes, cause earthquakes, rayne, haile or snow, in the clearest day that is; and if ever they appear to anie man, they come in *women's* apparell." Henderson.

38

/1 -- your **beards** --] Witches were supposed always to have hair on their chins. So, in Decker's Honest Whore, 1635;
"---- Some women have *beards*, marry they are half *witches*."
Steevens.

/2 All hail, Macbeth!] It hath lately been repeated from Mr. Guthrie's Essay upon English Tragedy, that the *portrait* of Macbeth's wife is copied from Buchanan, "whose spirit, as well as words, is translated into the play of Shakspeare: and it had signifyed nothing to have pored only on Holinshed for *facts*." -- "Animus etiam, per se ferox, prope quotidianis conviciis uxoris (quæ omnium consiliorum ei erat conscia) stimulabatur." -- This is the whole that Buchanan says of the *Lady*, and truly I see no more *spirit* in the Scotch, than in the English chronicler. "The wordes of the three weird sisters also greatly encouraged him [to the murder of Duncan,] but specially his wife lay sore upon him to attempt the thing, as she that was very ambitious, brenning in unquenchable desire to beare the name of a queene." Edit. 1577, p. 244.

This part of Holinshed is an abridgement of Johne Bellenden's translation of the Noble Clerk, Hector Boece, imprinted at Edin-

burgh, in fol. 1541. I will give the passage as it is found there. “His wyfe impacient of lang tary (*as all wemen ar*) specially quhare they are desirus of ony purpos, gaif hym gret artation to persew the third weird, that sche micht be ane quene, calland hym oft tymis febyl cowart and nocht desyrus of honouris, sen he durst not assailze the thing with manheid and curage, quhilk is offerit to hym be beniuolence of fortoun. Howbeit sindry otheris hes assailzeit sic thinges afore with maist terribyl jeopardyis, quhen they had not sic sickernes to succeid in the end of thair laubouris as he had:” p. 173.

But we can *demonstrate*, that Shakspeare had not the story from Buchanan. According to *him*, the weird sisters salute Macbeth: “Una Angusiæ Thanum, altera Moraviæ, tertia Regem.” -- Thane of Angus, and of Murray, &c. but according to Holinshed, immediately from Bellenden, as it stands in Shakspeare: “The first of them spake and sayde, All hayle Makbeth Thane of Glammis, -- the second of them sayde, Hayle Makbeth Thane of Cawder; but the third sayde, All hayle Makbeth, that hereafter shall be *King of Scotland*:” p. 243.

“1 Witch. All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, thane of Glamis!

“2 Witch. All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, thane of Cawdor!

“3 Witch. All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!”

Here too our poet found the equivocal predictions, on which his hero so fatally depended: “He had learned of certaine wysards, how that he ought to take heede of Macduffe: ---- and surely hereupon had he put Macduffe to death, but a certaine witch, whom he had in great trust, had tolde, that he should neuer be slain with *man borne of any woman*, nor vanquished till the wood of Bernane came to the castell of Dunsinane:” p. 244. And the scene between Malcolm and Macduff, in the fourth Act, is almost literally taken from the Chronicle.

Farmer.

“*All hail*, Macbeth!” *All hail* is a corruption of *al-hael*, Saxon, i. e. *ave, salve*. Malone.

/3 -- thane of Glamis!] The thaneship of *Glamis* was the ancient inheritance of Macbeth’s family. The castle where they lived is still standing, and was lately the magnificent residence of the Earl of Strathmore. See a particular description of it in Mr. Gray’s letter to Dr. Wharton, dated from *Glames Castle*.

Steevens.

/4 -- thane of **Cawdor**!] Dr. Johnson observes, in his Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland, that part of *Calder Castle*, from which Macbeth drew his second title, is still remaining. In one of his Letters, vol. i. p. 122, he takes notice of the same object: “There is one ancient tower with its battlements and winding stairs -- the rest of the house is, though not modern, of later erection.” Steevens.

/5 Are ye **fantastical**,] By *fantastical* is not meant, according to the common signification, creatures of his own brain; for he could not be so extravagant to ask such a question: but it is used for *supernatural, spiritual*. Warburton.

By *fantastical* he means creatures of *fantasy* or *imagination*: the question is, 'Are these real beings before us, or are we deceived by illusions of fancy!' Johnson.

So, in Reginald Scott's Discovery of Witchcraft, 1584: -- "He affirmeth these transubstantiations to be but *fantastical*, not ac-

cording to the veritie, but according to the appearance." The same expression occurs in All's Lost by Lust, 1633, by Rowley:

"------ or is that thing,
"Which would supply the place of soul in thee,
"Merely *phantastical*?"

Shakspeare, however, took the word from Holinshed, who in his account of the witches, says: "This was reputed at first but some vain *fantastical* illusion by Macbeth and Banquo."
Steevens.

The word occurs afterwards in this play:

"My thought, whose murder's but *fantastical*."

So, in Massinger's Maid of Honour:

"------ How he stares, and feels his legs,
"As yet uncertain whether it can be
"True or *fantastical*." Boswell.

/6 Of noble **having**,] *Having* is *estate, possession, fortune*. So, in Twelfth-Night:

" ---- my *having* is not much;
"I'll make division of my present store:
"Hold; there is half my coffer."

Again, in the ancient metrical romance of Syr Bevys of Hampton, bl. l. no date:

"And when he heareth this tydinge,
"He will go theder with great *having*."

See also note on The Merry Wives of Windsor, Act III. Sc. II.
Steevens.

/7 That he seems **rapt** withal;] *Rapt* is *rapturously affected, extra se raptus*. So, in Spenser's Fairy Queen, iv. ix. 6:

"That, with the sweetness of her rare delight,
"The prince half *rapt*, began on her to dote."

Again, in Cymbeline:

"What, dear sir, thus *raps* you?" Steevens.

/8 By Sinel's death,] The father of Macbeth. Pope.

His true name, which however appears, but perhaps only typographically, corrupted to *Synele* in Hector Boethius, from whom, by means of his old Scottish translator, it came to the knowledge of Holinshed, was *Finleg*. Both *Finlay* and *Macbeath* are common surnames in Scotland at this moment. Ritson.

Synele for *Finleg*, seems a very extraordinary typographical corruption. The late Dr. Beattie conjectured that the real name

of the family was *Sinane*, and that *Dunsinane*, or *the hill of Sinane*, from thence derived its appellation. Boswell.

/9 -- blasted heath --] Thus, after Shakspeare, Milton, Paradise Lost, b. i. 615:

"---- their stately growth though bare
"Stands on the blasted heath." Steevens.

42

/1 -- eaten of the **insane root**,] The *insane* root is the root which makes insane. Theobald.

The old copies read -- "*on* the insane root." Reed.

Shakspeare alludes to the qualities anciently ascribed to hemlock. So, in Greene's Never too Late, 1616: "You gaz'd against the sun, and so blemished your sight; or else you have *eaten of the roots of hemlock*, that makes men's eyes *conceit unseen objects*." Again, in Ben Jonson's Sejanus:

"---- they *lay that hold upon thy senses*,
"As thou hadst snuft up *hemlock*." Steevens.

This quality was anciently attributed to other roots, besides *hemlock*. In Buchanan's History of Scotland, b. vii. Duncan King of Scotland destroys the invading army of Sueno King of Norway, by sending him provisions steeped in *nightshade, solanum somniferum*, which is fully described, and this property mentioned: "Vis fructui, radici, ac maximè semini *somnifera*, et quæ in amentiam si largius sumantur agat." Shakspeare may have also recollected a passage in North's translation of Plutarch. In the Life of Antony, (which our author must have diligently read,) the Roman soldiers, while employed in the Parthian war, are said to have suffered great distress for want of provisions. "In the ende (says Plutarch) they were compelled to live of herbs and *rootes*, but they found few of them that men do commonly eate of, and were enforced to taste of them that were never eaten before; among the which there was *one* that killed them, and *made them out of their wits*; for he that had once eaten of it, his *memorye was gone from him, and he knew no manner of thing*, but only busied himself in digging and hurling of stones from one place to another, as though it had been a matter of great waight, and to be done with all possible speede." Malone.

There is another book which has been shown to have been also read, and even studied, by the poet, and wherein, it is presumed, he actually found the *name* of the above root. This will appear from the following passage: "*Henbane* . . . . is called *Insana*, mad, for the use thereof is perillous; for if it be eate or dronke, it breedeth madnesse, or slow lykenesse of sleepe. Therefore this hearb is called commonly *Mirilidium*, for it taketh away wit and *reason*." *Batman Uppon Bartholome de propriet. rerum*, lib. xvii. ch. 87. Douce.

43

/2 His wonders and his praises do contend,
Which should be thine, or his, &c.] i. e. private admira-

tion of your deeds, and a desire to do them public justice by commendation, contend in his mind for pre-eminence, -- Or, -- There is a contest in his mind whether he should indulge his desire of publishing to the world the commendations due to your heroism, or whether he should remain in silent admiration of what no words could celebrate in proportion to its desert.

Mr. M. Mason would read *wonder*, not *wonders*; for, says he, "I believe the word *wonder*, in the sense of *admiration*, has no plural." In modern language it certainly has none; yet I cannot help thinking that, in the present instance, plural was opposed to plural by Shakspeare. Steevens.

"*Silenc'd with that.*" i. e. wrapp'd in silent wonder at the deeds performed by Macbeth, &c. Malone.

/3 -- As thick as **tale**,] Meaning, that the news came as *thick* as a *tale* can *travel* with the *post*. Or we may read, perhaps, yet better:

"---- *As thick as tale*,
"Came *post with post* ----."

That is, posts arrived as fast as they could be counted. Johnson.

So, in King Henry VI. Part III. Act II. Sc. I.:

"Tidings, *as swiftly as the post could run*,
"Were brought," &c.

Mr. Rowe reads -- "as thick as *hail*. Steevens.

The old copy reads -- *Can* post. The emendation is Mr. Rowe's. Dr. Johnson's explanation would be less exceptionable, if the old copy had -- "As *quick* as tale." *Thick* applies but ill to *tale*, and seems rather to favour Mr. Rowe's emendation.

44

"As thick as hail," as an anonymous correspondent observes to me, is an expression in the old play of King John, 1591:

"---- breathe out damned orisons,
"*As thick as hail*-stones 'fore the spring's approach."

The emendation of the word *can* is supported by a passage in King Henry IV. Part II.:

"And there are twenty weak and wearied *posts*,
"*Come* from the north." Malone.

Dr. Johnson's explanation is perfectly justifiable. As *thick*, in ancient language, signified as *fast*. To speak *thick*, in our author, does not therefore mean, to have a *cloudy indistinct utterance*, but to *deliver words with rapidity*. So, in Cymbeline, Act III. Sc. II.:

"---- say, and *speak thick*,
"(Love's counsellor should fill the bores of hearing
"To the smothering of the sense) how far it is
"To this same blessed Milford."

Again, in King Henry IV. Part II. Act II. Sc, III.:

"And *speaking thick*, which nature made his blemish,
"Became the accents of the valiant;
"For those that could speak *low and tardily*,
"Would turn, &c. -- To seem like him."

Thick therefore is not less applicable to *tale*, the old reading,

than to *hail*, the alteration of Mr. Rowe. Steevens.

/4 To herald thee, &c.] The old copy redundantly reads -- *Only* to herald thee, &c. Steevens.

45

/5 -- with Norway;] The old copy reads:
"---- with *those* of Norway."
The players not understanding that by "*Norway*" our author meant *the King of Norway*, as in Hamlet --
"Whereon old *Norway*, overcome with joy," &c.
foisted in the words at present omitted. Steevens.

Mr. Steevens reads:
"------------ Whether he was
"Combin'd with Norway, or," &c.
The old copy thus exhibits these lines:
"---- Which he deserves to loose,
"Whether he was combin'd with those of Norway,
"Or did lyne the Rebell with hidden helpe
"And vantage; or that with both he labour'd
"In his countrey's wracke, I know not." Boswell.

/6 -- trusted home,] i. e. entirely, thoroughly relied on. So, in All's Well That Ends Well:
"---- lack'd the sense to know
"Her estimation *home*."
Again, in The Tempest:
"---- I will pay thy graces
"*Home*, both in word and deed." Steevens.

The added word *home* inclines me to think that our author wrote -- "That *thrusted* home. So, in a subsequent scene:
"That every minute of his being *thrusts*
"Against my nearest of life."
Thrusted is the regular participle from the verb *to thrust*, and though now not often used, was, I believe, common in the time of Shakspeare. So, in King Henry V.:

46

"With *casted* slough and fresh legerity."
Home means *to the uttermost*. So, in The Winter's Tale:
"---- all my sorrows
"You have paid *home*."
It may be observed, that "*thrusted* home" is an expression used at this day; but I doubt whether "*trusted* home," was ever used at any period whatsoever. I have had frequent occasion to remark that many of the errors in the old copies of our author's plays arose from the transcriber's ear having deceived him. In Ireland, where much of the pronunciation of the age of Queen Elizabeth is yet retained, the vulgar constantly pronounce the word *thrust* as if it were written *trust*; and hence, probably, the error in the text. Malone.

Trusted home, may as well be said as *felt* home. In Comus, we have the adjective *home-felt* with this meaning:

"Yet they in pleasing slumber lull'd the sense,
"And in sweet madness robb'd it of itself;
"But such a sacred and *home-felt* delight,
"Such sober certainty of waking bliss
"I never heard till now." Boswell.

/7 Might yet **enkindle** you --] *Enkindle*, for to stimulate you to seek. Warburton.

A similar expression occurs in As You Like It, Act I. Sc. I.:
"---- nothing remains but that I *kindle* the boy thither."
Steevens.

Might *fire* you with the hope of obtaining the crown.
Henley.

/8 Two **truths** are told, &c.] How the former of these truths has been fulfilled, we are yet to learn. Macbeth could not become Thane of Glamis, till after his father's decease, of which there is no mention throughout the play. If the Hag only announced what Macbeth already understood to have happened, her words could scarcely claim rank as a prediction. Steevens.

From the Scottish translation of Boethius it should seem that Sinel, the father of Macbeth, died after Macbeth's having been met by the weird sisters. "Makbeth (says the historian) revolvyng

all thingis, as they wer said to be the weird sisteris, began to covat ye croun. And zit he concludit to abide, quhil he saw ye tyme ganand thereto; fermelie belevyng yt ye third weird suld cum *as the first two did afore*." This, indeed, is inconsistent with our author's words, "By Sinel's death, I know, *I am* thane of Glamis;" -- but Holinshed, who was his guide, in his abridgment of the History of Boethius, has particularly mentioned that Sinel died *before* Macbeth met the weird sisters: we may, therefore, be sure that Shakspeare meant it to be understood that Macbeth had already acceded to his paternal title. Bellenden only says, "The first of them said to Macbeth, Hale thane of Glammis. The secound said," &c. But in Holinshed the relation runs thus, conformably to the Latin original: "The first of them spake and said, All haile Mackbeth, thane of Glammis (for he had latelie entered into that dignitie and office by the death of his father Sinell.) The second of them said," &c.

Still, however, the objection made by Mr. Steevens remains in its full force; for since he knew that "by Sinel's death he was thane of Glamis," how can this salutation be considered as *prophetic*? Or why should he afterwards say, with *admiration*, "*Glamis*, and thane of Cawdor;" &c.? Perhaps we may suppose that the father of Macbeth died so recently before his interview with the weirds, that the news of it had not yet got abroad; in which case, though Macbeth himself knew it, he might consider their giving him the title of Thane of Glamis as a proof of supernatural intelligence.

I suspect our author was led to use the expressions which have occasioned the present note, by the following words of Holinshed: "The same night after, at supper, Banquo jested with him, and

said, Now Mackbeth, thou hast obteined *those things which the* ***two*** *former sisters* ***prophesied***: there remaineth onelie for thee to purchase that which the third said should come to passe."
Malone.

I can see no ground for Mr. Steevens's objection. Macbeth has not called them *prophecies*, but *truths* -- "They called me Thane of Glamis; that, I knew to be true. -- They called me Thane of Cawdor; that, I have now found to be true: I may therefore confide in their prophecy that I shall be King hereafter."
Boswell.

/9 -- **swelling** act] *Swelling* is used in the same sense in the prologue to King Henry V.:
"---- princes to act,
"And monarchs to behold the *swelling* scene."
Steevens.

48

/1 This supernatural **soliciting** --] *Soliciting*, for *information*.
Warburton.

Soliciting is rather, in my opinion, *incitement*, than *information*.
Johnson.

/2 -- suggestion --] i. e. temptation. So, in All's Well That Ends Well: "A filthy officer he is in those *suggestions* for the young earl." Steevens.

/3 Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair,] So Macbeth says, in the latter part of this play:
"---- And my fell of hair
"Would, at a dismal treatise, rouse and stir,
"As life were in it." M. Mason.

/4 -- seated --] i. e. fixed, firmly placed. So, in Milton's Paradise Lost, b. vi. 643:
"From their foundations loos'ning to and fro
"They pluck'd the *seated* hills." Steevens.

/5 -------- Present **fears**
Are less than horrible imaginings:] *Present fears* are *fears of things present*, which Macbeth declares, and every man has found, to be less than the *imagination* presents them while the objects are yet distant. Johnson.

Thus, in All's Well That Ends Well: "-- when we should submit ourselves to an unknown *fear*."
Again, in The Tragedie of Crœsus, 1604, by Lord Sterline:
"For as the shadow seems more monstrous still,
"Than doth the substance whence it hath the being,
"So *th' apprehension of approaching ill*
"*Seems greater than itself, whilst fears are lying*."
Steevens.

By *present fears* is meant, the *actual presence* of any objects of terror. So, in The Second Part of King Henry IV, the King

says:
"---- All these bold *fears*
"Thou see'st with peril I have answered."

49

To *fear* is frequently used by Shakspeare in the sense of *fright*. In this very play, Lady Macbeth says --
"To alter favour ever is to *fear*."
So, in Fletcher's Pilgrim, Curio says to Alphonso:
"Mercy upon me, Sir, why are you *feared* thus?"
Meaning, thus *affrighted*. M. Mason.

/5 -- single state of man,] The *single state of man* seems to be used by Shakspeare for an *individual*, in opposition to a *commonwealth*, or *conjunct body*. Johnson.

By *single* state of man, Shakspeare might possibly mean somewhat more than *individuality*. He who, in the peculiar situation of Macbeth, is meditating a murder, dares not communicate his thoughts, and consequently derives neither spirit, nor advantage, from the countenance, or sagacity of others. This state of man may properly be styled *single*, solitary, or defenceless, as it excludes the benefits of participation, and has no resources but in itself.
It should be observed, however, that *double* and *single* anciently signified *strong* and *weak*, when applied to liquors, and perhaps to other objects. In this sense the former word may be employed by Brabantio:
"---- a voice potential,
"As *double* as the duke's;"
And the latter, by the Chief Justice, speaking to Falstaff:
"Is not your wit *single*?"
The *single* state of Macbeth may therefore signify his *weak* and *debile* state of mind. Steevens.

So, in Jonson's Every Man Out of his Humour:
"But he might have altered the shape of his argument, and explicated them better in single scenes -- That had been *single* indeed." Boswell.

/6 -------- function
Is smother'd in surmise; and nothing is,
But what is not.] All powers of action are oppressed and crushed by one overwhelming image in the mind, and nothing is present to me but that which is really future. Of things now about me I have no perception, being intent wholly on that which has yet no existence. Johnson.

Surmise, is *speculation*, conjecture concerning the future.
Malone.

50

Shakspeare has somewhat like this sentiment in The Merchant of Venice:
"Where, every something being blent together,
"Turns to a wild of nothing ----."

Again, in Richard II.:
"---- is nought but shadows
"Of what it is not." Steevens.

/7 **Time and the hour** runs through the roughest day.] "By this, I confess I do not, with his two last commentators, imagine is meant either the tautology of time and the hour, or an allusion to time painted with an hour-glass, or an exhortation to time to hasten forward, but rather to say *tempus et hora*, time and occasion, will carry the thing through, and bring it to some determined point and end, let its nature be what it will."
This note is taken from an Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakspeare, &c. by Mrs. Montagu.
So, in the Lyfe of Saynt Radegunda, printed by Pynson, 4to. no date:
"How they dispend the *tyme*, the *day*, the *houre*."
Such tautology is common to Shakspeare.
"The very head and front of my offending,"
is little less reprehensible. "Time and the hour," is "Time with his hours. Steevens.

The same expression is used by a writer nearly contemporary with Shakspeare: "Neither can there be any thing in the world more acceptable to me than death, whose *hower and time* if they were as certayne," &c. Fenton's Tragical Discourses, 1579.
Again, in Davison's Poems, 1602:
"*Time's* young *howres* attend her still."
Again, in our author's 126th Sonnet:
"O thou, my lovely boy, who in thy power
"Dost hold *Time's* fickle glass, his sickle, *hour* --."

Again, in his 57th Sonnet:
"Being your slave, what should I do but tend
"Upon the *hours* and *times* of your desire?"
Again, in The Mirrour for Magistrates, 1587 (Legend of the Duke of Buckingham):
"The unhappy *hour*, the *time*, and eke the day." Malone.

/8 -- we stay upon your leisure.] The same phraseology occurs in the Paston Letters, vol. iii. p. 80: "-- sent late to me a man ye which wuld *abydin uppon my leysir*," &c. Steevens.

/9 -- favour:] i.e. indulgence, pardon. Steevens.

/1 -- my dull brain was **wrought**
With things forgotten.] My head was *worked, agitated*, put into commotion. Johnson.

So, in Othello:
"Of one not easily jealous, but being *wrought*,
"Perplex'd in the extreme." Steevens.

/2 -- where every day I turn
The leaf to read them.] He means, as Mr. Upton has observed, that they are registered in the table-book of his heart. So Hamlet speaks of the *table* of his *memory*. Malone.

/3 The **interim** having weigh'd it,] This *intervening portion of time* is also personified: it is represented as a cool impartial judge; as *the pauser Reason*. Or, perhaps, we should read -- "*I'* th' interim." Steevens.

I believe *the interim* is used adverbially: "you having weighed it *in* the interim." Malone.

52

/4 -- **Are** not --] The old copy reads -- *Or* not. The emendation was made by the editor of the second folio. Malone.

/5 With one that saw him die:] The behaviour of the *thane of Cawdor* corresponds, in almost every circumstance, with that of the unfortunate Earl of Essex, as related by Stowe, p. 793. His asking the Queen's forgiveness, his confession, repentance, and concern about behaving with propriety on the scaffold, are minutely described by that historian. Such an allusion could not fail of having the desired effect on an audience, many of whom were eye-witnesses to the severity of that justice which deprived the age of one of its greatest ornaments, and Southampton, Shakspeare's patron, of his dearest friend. Steevens.

/6 -- studied in his death,] Instructed in the art of dying. It was usual to say *studied*, for *learned* in science. Johnson.

His own profession furnished our author with this phrase. To be *studied* in a part, or to have *studied* it, is yet the technical term of the theatre. Malone.

So, in A Midsummer-Night's Dream: "Have you the lion's part written? pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of *study*."
The same phrase occurs in Hamlet. Steevens.

53

/7 To find the mind's construction in the face:] The 'construction of the mind' is, I believe, a phrase peculiar to Shakspeare: it implies the *frame* or *disposition* of the mind, by which it is determined to good or ill. Johnson.

Dr. Johnson seems to have understood the word *construction* in this place, in the sense of *frame* or *structure*; but the school-term was, I believe, intended by Shakspeare. The meaning is -- "We cannot *construe* or discover the disposition of the mind by the lineaments of the face." So, in King Henry IV. Part II.:

"*Construe* the times to their necessities."

In Hamlet we meet with a kindred phrase:

"---- These profound heaves
"You must translate; 'tis fit we understand them."

Our author again alludes to his grammar, in Troilus and Cressida:

"I'll *decline* the whole question."

In his 93d Sonnet, however, we find a contrary sentiment asserted:

"In many's *looks* the *false heart's history*
"Is writ." Malone.

/8 More is thy due than **more than all** can pay.] More is due to thee, than, I will not say *all*, but *more* than all, i. e. the greatest recompense, can pay. Thus in Plautus: *Nihilo minus.*

There is an obscurity in this passage, arising from the word *all*, which is not used here personally, (more than all persons can pay) but for the whole wealth of the speaker. So, more clearly, in King Henry VIII.:

"*More* than *my all* is nothing."

54

This line appeared obscure to Sir William D'Avenant, for he altered it thus:

"I have only left to say,
"That thou deservest *more than I have to pay*." Malone.

/9 -------- servants;
Which do but what they should, by doing every thing --J From Scripture: "So when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do." Henley.

/1 Which do but what they should, by doing every thing
Safe toward your love and honour.] Mr. Upton gives the word *safe* as an instance of an adjective used adverbially. Steevens.

Read --
"*Safe* (i. e. saved) toward *you* love and honour;"
and then the sense will be -- "Our duties are your children, and servants or vassals to your throne and state; who do but what they should, by doing every thing with a saving of their love and honour toward you." The whole is an allusion to the forms of doing homage in the feudal times. The oath of allegiance, or *liege homage*, to the king, was absolute, and without any exception; but *simple homage*, when done to a subject for lands holden of him, was always with a *saving* of the allegiance (the *love* and *honour*) due to the sovereign. "*Sauf la foy que jeo doy a nostre seignor le roy*," as it is in Littleton. And though the expression be somewhat stiff and forced, it is not more so than many others in this play, and suits well with the situation of Macbeth, now beginning to waver in his allegiance. For, as our author elsewhere says, [in Julius Cæsar:]

"When love begins to sicken and decay,
"It useth an enforced ceremony." Blackstone.

A similar expression occurs also in the Letters of the Paston Family, vol. ii. p. 254: "-- ye shalle fynde me to yow as kynde as I maye be, *my conscience and worshyp savy'd*." Steevens.

A passage in Cupid's Revenge, a comedy by Beaumont and

55

Fletcher, adds some support to Sir William Blackstone's emenda-

tion:
"I'll speak it freely, always my *obedience*
"*And love preserved unto the prince.*"
So also the following words, spoken by Henry Duke of Lancaster to King Richard II. at their interview in the Castle of Flint, (a passage that Shakspeare had certainly read, and perhaps remembered): "My sovereign lorde and kyng, the cause of my coming, at this present, is, [*your honour saved*,] to have againe restitution of my person, my landes, and heritage, through your favourable licence." Holinshed's Chron. vol. ii.
Our author himself also furnishes us with a passage that likewise may serve to confirm this emendation. See The Winter's Tale, Act IV. Sc. III.:
"Save him from danger; do *him love and honour*."
Again, in Twelfth-Night:
"What shall you ask of me that I'll deny,
"That *honour sav'd* may upon asking give?"
Again, in Cymbeline:
"I something fear my father's wrath, but nothing
"(Always *reserv'd my holy duty*) what
"His rage can do on me."
Our poet has used the verb to *safe* in Antony and Cleopatra:
"---- best you *saf'd* the bringer
"Out of the host." Malone.

/2 -- **full** of growing.] Is, I believe, exuberant, perfect, complete in thy growth. So, in Othello:
"What a *full* fortune doth the thick-lips owe?" Malone.

/3 My plenteous joys,
Wanton in fulness, seek to hide themselves
In drops of sorrow.]
---- lachrymas non sponte cadentes
Effudit, gemitusque expressit pectore læto;

Non aliter manifesta potens abscondere mentis
Gaudia, quam lachrymis. *Lucan*, lib. ix.
There was no English translation of Lucan before 1614. -- We meet with the same sentiment again in The Winter's Tale: "It seemed sorrow wept to take leave of them, for their joy waded in tears." It is likewise employed in the first scene of Much Ado About Nothing. Malone.

It is thus also that Statius describes the appearance of Argia and Antigone, Theb. iii. 426:
Flebile gavisæ ----. Steevens.

/4 -- hence to **Inverness**,] Dr. Johnson observes, in his Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland, that the walls of the castle of Macbeth, at *Inverness*, are yet standing. Steevens.

The circumstance of Duncan's visiting Macbeth is supported by history; for, from the Scottish Chronicles, it appears that it was customary for the king to make a progress through his dominions every year. "Inerat ei [Duncano] laudabilis consuetudo regni pertransire regiones semel in anno." Fordun. Scotichron. lib. iv.

c. xliv.
"Singulis annis ad inopum querelas audiendas perlustrabat provincias." Buchan. lib. vii. Malone.

/5 The prince of **Cumberland**!] So, Holinshed, History of Scotland, p. 171: "Duncan having two sonnes, &c. he made the elder of them, called Malcolme, prince of *Cumberland*, as it was thereby to appoint him successor in his kingdome immediatlie after his decease. Mackbeth sorely troubled herewith, for that he

57

saw by this means his hope sore hindered, (where, by the old laws of the realme the ordinance was, that if he that should succeed were not of able age to take the charge upon himself, he that was next of bloud unto him should be admitted,) he began to take counsel how he might usurpe the kingdome by force, having a just quarrel so to doe (as he tooke the matter,) for that Duncane did what in him lay to defraud him of all manner of title and claime, which he might, in time to come, pretend unto the crowne."
The crown of Scotland was originally not hereditary. When a successor was declared in the life-time of a king, (as was often the case,) the title of *Prince of Cumberland* was immediately bestowed on him as the mark of his designation. *Cumberland* was at that time held by Scotland of the crown of England as a fief.
Steevens.

The former part of Mr. Steevens's remark is supported by Bellenden's translation of Hector Boethius: "In the mene tyme Kyng Duncane maid his son Malcolme *Prince of Cumbir, to signify yt he suld regne eftir hym*, quhilk was gret displeseir to Makbeth; for it maid plane derogatioun to the thrid weird promittit afore to hym be this weird sisteris. Nochtheles he thoct gif Duncane were slane, he had maist rycht to the croun, because he wes merest of blud yairto, be tenour of ye auld lavis maid eftir the deith of King Fergus, quhen young children wer unable to govern the croun, the nerrest of yair blude sal regne." So also Buchanan, Rerum Scoticarum Hist. lib. vii.:
"Duncanus e filia Sibardi reguli Northumbrorum, duos filios genuerat. Ex iis Milcolumbum, vixdum puberem, Cumbriæ præfecit. Id factum ejus Macbethus molestius, quam credi poterat, tulit, eam videlicet moram sibi ratus injectam, ut, priores jam magistratus (juxta visum nocturnum) adeptus, aut omnino a regno excluderetur, aut eo tardius potiretur, cum *præfectura Cumbriæ velut aditus ad supremum magistratum* ***semper*** *esset habitus.*" It has been asserted by an anonymous writer [Mr. Ritson] that "the crown of Scotland was always hereditary, and that it should seem from the play that Malcolm was the *first* who had the title of *Prince of Cumberland*." An extract or two from Hector Boethius will be sufficient relative to these points. In the tenth chapter of the eleventh book of his History we are informed, that some of the friends of Kenneth III. the eightieth King of Scotland, came among the nobles, desiring them to choose Malcolm, the son

58

of Kenneth, to be Lord of Cumbir, "yt he mycht be yt way the

better cum to ye crown after his faderis deid." Two of the nobles said, it was in the power of Kenneth to make whom he pleased Lord of Cumberland; and Malcolm was accordingly appointed. "Sic thingis done, King Kenneth, be advise of his nobles, abrogat ye auld lawis concerning the creation of yair king, and made new lawis in manner as followes: 1. The king beand decessit, his eldest son or his eldest nepot, (notwithstanding quhat sumevir age he be of, and youcht he was born efter his faderis death, sal succede ye croun," &c. Notwithstanding this precaution, Malcolm, the eldest son of Kenneth, did *not* succeed to the throne after the death of his father; for after Kenneth, reigned Constantine, the son of King Culyne. To him succeeded Gryme, who was *not* the son of Constantine, but the grandson of King Duffe. Gryme, says Boethius, came to Scone, "quhare he was crownit by the tenour of the auld lawis." After the death of Gryme, Malcolm, the son of King Kenneth, whom Boethius frequently calls *Prince of Cumberland*, became King of Scotland; and to him succeeded Duncan, the son of his eldest daughter.

These breaches, however, in the succession, appear to have been occasioned by violence in turbulent times; and though the eldest son could not succeed to the throne, if he happened to be a minor at the death of his father, yet, as by the ancient laws the *next of blood* was to reign, the Scottish monarchy may be said to have been hereditary, subject however to peculiar regulations.

Malone.

/6 True, worthy Banquo; **he is full so valiant;**] i. e. he is to the full as valiant as you have described him. We must imagine, that while Macbeth was uttering the six preceding lines, Duncan and Banquo had been conferring apart. Macbeth's conduct appears to have been their subject; and to some encomium supposed to have been bestowed on him by Banquo, the reply of Duncan refers. Steevens.

59

/7 -- *by the perfectest report,*] By the best intelligence.

Johnson.

/8 -- ***Missives*** *from the king,*] i. e. *messengers*. So, in Antony and Cleopatra:

"Did gibe my *missive* out of audience." Steevens.

60

/9 ---- thou'd'st have, great Glamis,
That which cries, *Thus thou must do, if thou have* **it;**
And that, &c.] As the object of Macbeth's desire is here introduced speaking of itself, it is necessary to read:

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

Johnson.

/1 *And that which rather thou dost fear to do,*] The construction, perhaps, is, thou would'st have that, [i. e. the crown,] which cries unto thee, "thou must do thus, if thou would'st have it, and *thou must do* that which rather," &c. Sir T. Hanmer, without necessity, reads -- "And *that's what* rather --." The difficulty of

this line and the succeeding hemistich seems to have arisen from their not being considered as part of the speech uttered by the object of Macbeth's ambition. As such they appear to me, and I have therefore distinguished them by Italicks. Malone.

This regulation is certainly proper, and I have followed it. Steevens.

/2 That I may **pour my spirits** in thine ear;] I meet with the same expression in Lord Sterline's Julius Cæsar, 1607:
"Thou in my bosom us'd *to pour thy spright*." Malone.

/3 ---- the **golden round**,
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth **seem**
To have thee crown'd withal.] For *seem*, the sense evidently directs us to read *seek*. The crown to which fate destines thee, and which preternatural agents *endeavour* to bestow upon thee. The *golden round* is the *diadem*. Johnson.

So, in Act IV.:
"And wears upon his baby brow the *round*
"And top of sovereignty." Steevens.

Metaphysical, for *supernatural*. But "doth seem to have thee crown'd withal," is not sense. To make it so, it should be supplied thus: "doth seem desirous to have." But no poetic licence

would excuse this. An easy alteration will restore the poet's true reading:
"---- doth seem
"To have crown'd thee withal."
i. e. they seem already to have crowned thee, and yet thy disposition at present hinders it from taking effect. Warburton.

The words, as they now stand, have exactly the same meaning. Such arrangement is sufficiently common among our ancient writers. Steevens.

I do not concur with Dr. Warburton, in thinking that Shakspeare meant to say, that fate and metaphysical aid seem *to have* crowned Macbeth. Lady Macbeth means to animate her husband to the attainment of "the golden round," with which fate and supernatural agency seem to intend *to have him crowned* on a *future* day. So, in All's Well That Ends Well, vol. x. p. 328:
"---- Our dearest friend
"Prejudicates the business, and would *seem*
"*To have* us make denial."
There is, in my opinion, a material difference between -- "To have thee crown'd," and "To have crown'd thee;" of which the learned commentator does not appear to have been aware.
Metaphysical, which Dr. Warburton has justly observed, means *supernatural*, seems, in our author's time, to have had no other meaning. In the English Dictionary, by H. C. 1655, *Metaphysicks* are thus explained: "Supernatural arts." Malone.

To *have thee crowned*, is to *desire* that you should be crowned.

So, by an idiom of our language which is in common use, but which it is not, perhaps, easy to account for, I *had rather*, means I *would* rather:

"I *had* rather be a dog and bay the moon
"Than such a Roman."

And such, I think, is evidently the meaning of the passage quoted from All's Well That Ends Well. Boswell.

62

/3 -- The raven himself is hoarse,] Dr. Warburton reads:

"---- The raven himself's *not* hoarse."

Yet I think the present words may stand. The messenger, says the servant, had hardly breath "to make up his message;" to which the lady answers mentally, that he may well want breath, such a message would add hoarseness to the raven. That even the bird, whose harsh voice is accustomed to predict calamities, could not *croak the entrance of* Duncan but in a note of unwonted harshness. Johnson.

The following is, in my opinion, the sense of this passage:

'*Give him tending*; the news he brings are worth the speed that made him lose his breath. [*Exit Attendant.*] 'Tis certain now -- *the raven himself is* spent, is *hoarse* by croaking this very message, *the fatal entrance of Duncan under my battlements.*'

Lady Macbeth (for she was not yet *unsexed*) was likelier to be deterred from her design than encouraged in it by the supposed thought that the message and the prophecy (though equally secrets to the messenger and the raven) had deprived the one of speech, and added harshness to the other's note. Unless we absurdly suppose the messenger acquainted with the hidden import of his message, *speed* alone had intercepted his breath, as *repetition* the raven's voice; though the lady considered both as organs of that destiny which hurried Duncan into her meshes.

Fuseli.

Mr. Fuseli's idea, that the raven has croaked till he is *hoarse* with croaking, may receive support from the following passage in Romeo and Juliet:

"---- make her airy tongue more *hoarse* than mine
"With *repetition* of my Romeo's name."

Again, from one of the Parts of King Henry VI.:

"Warwick is *hoarse* with daring thee to arms."

Steevens.

/4 -- Come, **come**, you spirits --] For the sake of the metre I have ventured to repeat the word -- *come*, which occurs only once in the old copy.

All had been added by Sir William D'Avenant, to supply the same deficiency. Steevens.

/5 - mortal thoughts,] This expression signifies not *the*

63

thoughts of mortals, but *murderous, deadly*, or *destructive designs*. So, in Act V.:

"Hold fast the *mortal* sword."

And in another place:
"With twenty *mortal* murders." Johnson.

In Pierce Pennilesse his Supplication to the Devil, by T. Nashe, 1592, (a very popular pamphlet of that time,) our author might have found a particular description of these spirits, and of their office:
"The second kind of devils, which he most employeth, are those northern Martii, called the *spirits of revenge*, and the authors of massacres, and seedsmen of mischief; for they have commission to incense men to rapines, sacrilege, theft, murder, wrath, fury, and all manner of cruelties: and they command certain of the southern spirits to wait upon them, as also great Arioch, that is termed *the spirit of revenge*." Malone.

/6 -- remorse;] *Remorse*, in ancient language, signifies *pity*. So, in King Lear:
"Thrill'd with *remorse*, oppos'd against the act."
Again, in Othello:
"And to obey shall be in me *remorse* --."
See notes on that passage, Act III. Sc. III. Steevens.

/7 -- nor keep **peace** between
The effect, and **it**!] The intent of Lady Macbeth evidently is to wish that no womanish tenderness, or conscientious remorse, may hinder her purpose from proceeding to effect; but neither this, nor indeed any other sense, is expressed by the present reading, and therefore it cannot be doubted that Shakspeare wrote differently, perhaps thus:
"That no compunctious visitings of nature
"Shake my fell purpose, nor keep *pace* between
"The effect and it ----."
To "keep *pace* between," may signify *to pass between*, to *intervene*. *Pace* is, on many occasions, a favourite of Shakspeare's. This phrase is, indeed, not usual in this sense; but was it not its novelty that gave occasion to the present corruption? Johnson.

"-- and *it*!" The folio reads -- and *hit*. *It*, in many of our ancient books, is thus spelt. In the first stanza of Churchyard's

Discourse of Rebellion, &c. 1570, we have, "*Hit* is a plague -- *Hit* venom castes -- *Hit* poysoneth all -- *Hit* is of kinde -- *Hit* staynes the ayre." Steevens.

The correction was made by the editor of the third folio.
Lady Macbeth's purpose was to be effected by action. To "keep peace between the effect and purpose," means, 'to delay the execution of her purpose; to prevent its proceeding to *effect*.' For as long as there should be a peace between the effect and purpose, or, in other words, till hostilities were commenced, till some bloody action should be performed, her purpose [i. e. the murder of Duncan] could not be carried into execution. So, in the following passage in King John, in which a corresponding imagery may be traced:
"Nay, in the body of this fleshly land,
"This kingdom, this confine of blood and breath,

"*Hostility* and civil tumult *reigns*
"*Between my conscience* and my cousin's *death*."

A similar expression is found in a book which our author is known to have read, The Tragicall Hystorie of Romeus and Juliet, 1562:

"In absence of her knight, the lady no way could
"*Keep truce between her griefs and her*, though ne'er so
fayne she would."

Sir W. D'Avenant's strange alteration of this play sometimes affords a reasonably good comment upon it. Thus, in the present instance:

"---- make thick
"My blood, stop all passage to remorse;
"That no relapses into mercy may
"*Shake my design, nor make it fall before*
"*'Tis ripen'd to effect*." Malone.

/8 -- take my milk for gall,] 'Take *away* my milk, and put *gall* into the place.' Johnson.

/9 You wait on **nature's mischief**!] *Nature's mischief* is 'mischief done to nature, violation of nature's order committed by wickedness.' Johnson.

/1 -- Come, thick night, &c.] A similar invocation is found in A Warning for Faire Women, 1599, a tragedy which was certainly prior to Macbeth:

"O sable night, sit on the eye of heaven,
"That it discern not this black deed of darkness!
"My guilty soul, burnt with lust's hateful fire,
"Must wade through blood to obtain my vile desire:
"Be then my *coverture*, thick ugly *night*!
"The light hates me, and I do hate the light." Malone.

/2 And **pall** thee --] i. e. wrap thyself in a *pall*.
Warburton.

A *pall* is a *robe of state*. So, in the ancient black letter romance of Syr Eglamoure of Artoys, no date:

"The knyghtes were clothed in *pall*."

Again, in Milton's Penseroso:

"Sometime let gorgeous tragedy
"In scepter'd *pall* come sweeping by."

Dr. Warburton seems to mean the covering which is thrown over the dead.

To *pall*, however, in the present instance, (as Mr. Douce observes to me,) may simply mean -- to *wrap*, to *invest*. Steevens.

/3 That my keen **knife** --] The word *knife*, which at present has a familiar undignified meaning, was anciently used to express a *sword* or *dagger*. So, in the old black letter romance of Syr Eglamoure of Artoys, no date:

"Through Goddes myght, and his *knyfe*,
"There the gyaunte lost his lyfe."

Again, in Spenser's Fairy Queen, b. i. c. vi.:

"---- the red-cross knight was slain with paynim *knife*."

Steevens.

To avoid a multitude of examples, which in the present instance do not seem wanted, I shall only observe that Mr. Steevens's remark might be confirmed by quotations without end.

Reed.

/4 -- the **blanket** of the dark,] Drayton, in the 26th Song of his Polyolbion, has an expression resembling this:

"Thick vapours, that, like *ruggs*, still hang the troubled air."

Steevens.

Polyolbion was not published till 1612, after this play had certainly been exhibited; but in an earlier piece Drayton has the same expression:

"The sullen *night* in mistie *rugge* is wrapp'd."

Mortimeriados, 4to. 1596.

Blanket was perhaps suggested to our poet by the coarse *woollen* curtain of his own theatre, through which probably, while the

house was yet but half-lighted, he had himself often peeped. -- In King Henry VI. Part III. we have -- "night's *coverture*."

A kindred thought is found in our author's Rape of Lucrece, 1594:

"Were Tarquin's night, (as he is but night's child,)
"The silver-shining queen he would distain;
"Her twinkling hand-maids too, [the stars] by him defil'd,
"Through *night's black bosom* should not *peep* again."

Malone.

/5 To cry, **Hold, hold!**]. On this passage there is a long criticism in The Rambler, Number 168. Johnson.

In this criticism the epithet *dun* is objected to as a mean one. Milton, however, appears to have been of a different opinion, and has represented Satan as flying

"---- in the *dun* air sublime,"

And had already told us, in the character of Comus,

"'Tis only daylight that makes sin,
"Which these *dun* shades will ne'er report."

Gawin Douglas employs *dun* as a synonyme to *fulvus*.

Steevens.

"To cry, *Hold, hold!*" The thought is taken from the old military laws which inflicted capital punishment upon "whosoever shall strike stroke at his adversary, either in the heat or otherwise, if a third do cry *hold*, to the intent to part them; except that they did fight a combat in a place enclosed: and then no man shall be so hardy as to bid *hold*, but the general." P. 264 of Mr. Bellay's Instructions for the Wars, translated in 1589.

Tollet.

Mr. Tollet's note will likewise illustrate the last line in Macbeth's concluding speech:

“And damn’d be him who first cries, *hold, enough!*”
Steevens.

/6 Great Glamis! worthy Cawdor!] Shakspeare has supported the character of Lady Macbeth by repeated efforts, and never omits any opportunity of adding a trait of ferocity, or a mark of the want of human feelings, to this monster of his own creation. The softer passions are more obliterated in her than in her husband, in proportion as her ambition is greater. She meets him here on his arrival from an expedition of danger, with such a salutation as would have become one of his friends or vassals; a salutation apparently fitted rather to raise his thoughts to a level with her own purposes, than to testify her joy at his return, or manifest an attachment to his person: nor does any sentiment expressive of love or softness fall from her throughout the play.

67

While Macbeth himself, amidst the horrors of his guilt, still retains a character less fiend-like than that of his queen, talks to her with a degree of tenderness, and pours his complaints and fears into her bosom, accompanied with terms of endearment.
Steevens.

/7 This **ignorant present**,] *Ignorant* has here the signification of *unknowing*; that is, I feel by anticipation those future honours, of which, according to the process of nature, the present time would be ignorant. Johnson.

So, in Cymbeline:
“---- his shipping,
“Poor *ignorant* baubles,” &c.
Again, in The Tempest:
“---- *ignorant* fumes that mantle
“Their clearer reason.” Steevens.

“This ignorant present.” Thus the old copy. Some of our modern editors read: “-- present *time*:” but the phraseology in the text is frequent in our author, as well as other ancient writers. So, in the first scene of The Tempest: “If you can command these elements to silence, and work the peace of *the present*, we will not hand a rope more.” The sense does not require the word *time*, and it is too much for the measure. Again, in Coriolanus:
“And that you not delay *the present*; but,” &c.
Again, in 1 Corinthians xv. 6: “-- of whom the greater part remain unto *this present*.”
Again, in Antony and Cleopatra:
“Be pleas’d to tell us
“(For this is from *the present*) how you take
“The offer I have sent you.” Steevens.

I am far from objecting to Mr. Steevens for not altering the old copy; but I cannot understand how the word *time* would be “too much for the measure;” unless we place the accent on the second syllable, of *present*: the verse, like many others in Shakspeare, is defective without it. Boswell.

68

/8 Your face, my thane, is as a book, where men
May read, &c.] That is, thy looks are such as will awaken men's curiosity, excite their attention, and make room for suspicion. Heath.

So, in Pericles Prince of Tyre, 1609:
"*Her face the book* of praises, *where is read*
"Nothing but curious pleasures." Steevens.

Again, in our author's Rape of Lucrece:
"Poor women's *faces* are their own faults' *books*." Malone.

/9 -- To beguile the time,
Look like the time;] The same expression occurs in the eighth book of Daniel's Civil Wars:
"He draws a traverse 'twixt his grievances;
"*Looks like the time*: his eye made not report
"Of what he felt within; nor was he less
"Than usually he was in every part;
"Wore a clear face upon a cloudy heart." Steevens.

The seventh and eighth books of Daniel's Civil Wars were not published till the year 1609; [see the Epistle Dedicatorie to that edition:] so that, if either poet copied the other, Daniel must have been indebted to Shakspeare; for there can be little doubt that Macbeth had been exhibited before that year. Malone.

/1 -- look like the innocent **flower**,
But be the **serpent** under it.] Thus, in Chaucer's Squiere's Tale, 10,827:
"So depe in greyne he died his coloures,
"Right as a *serpent* hideth him *under floures*,
"Til he may see his time for to bite." Steevens.

69

/2 To **alter favour** ever is to **fear:**] So, in Love's Labour's Lost:
"For blushing cheeks by faults are bred,
"And *fears* by *pale white* shown."
Favour, is *look, countenance*. So, in Troilus and Cressida:
"I know your *favour*, lord Ulysses, well." Steevens.

/3 This castle hath a pleasant **seat;**] *Seat* here means *situation*. Lord Bacon says, "He that builds a faire house upon an *ill seat*, committeth himself to prison. Neither doe I reckon it an *ill seat*, only where the aire is unwholsome, but likewise where the aire is unequal; as you shall see many fine seats set upon a knap of ground invironed with higher hills round about it, whereby the heat of the sunne is pent in, and the wind gathereth as in troughs; so as you shall have, and that suddenly, as great diversitie of heat and cold, as if you dwelt in several places."
Essays, 2d edit. 4to. 1632, p. 257. Reed.

"This castle hath a pleasant seat." This short dialogue between Duncan and Banquo, whilst they are approaching the

gates of Macbeth's castle, has always appeared to me a striking instance of what in painting is termed *repose*. Their conversation very naturally turns upon the beauty of its situation, and the pleasantness of the air; and Banquo, observing the martlet's nests in every recess of the cornice, remarks, that where those birds most breed and haunt, the air is delicate. The subject of this quiet and easy conversation gives that repose so necessary to

70

the mind after the tumultuous bustle of the preceding scenes, and perfectly contrasts the scene of horror that immediately succeeds. It seems as if Shakspeare asked himself, What is a prince likely to say to his attendants on such an occasion? Whereas the modern writers seem, on the contrary, to be always searching for new thoughts, such as would never occur to men in the situation which is represented. This also is frequently the practice of Homer, who, from the midst of battles and horrors, relieves and refreshes the mind of the reader, by introducing some quiet rural image, or picture of familiar domestick life.
Sir J. Reynolds.

/4 Unto our **gentle senses.**] *Senses* are nothing more than *each man's sense. Gentle sense* is very elegant, as it means *placid, calm, composed*, and intimates the peaceable delight of a fine day. Johnson.

/5 -- martlet,] This bird is in the old edition called *barlet*.
Johnson.

The correction was made by Mr. Rowe. Malone.

It is supported by the following passage in The Merchant of Venice:
"---- like the *martlet*
"Builds in the weather on the outward wall." Steevens.

/6 -- no **jutty**, frieze.] The word *jutty* has been considered as an epithet to *frieze*; but this is a mistake. A comma should have been placed after *jutty*. A jutty, or *jetty*, (for so it ought rather to be written,) is a substantive, signifying that part of a building which shoots forward beyond the rest. See Florio's Italian Dictionary, 1598: "*Barbacane.* An outnooke or corner standing out of a house; a *jettie*." -- "*Sporto.* A porch, a portal, a bay-window; or out-butting, or *jettie*, of a house, that jetties out farther than anie other part of the house." -- See also *Surpendue*, in Cotgrave's French Dict. 1611: "A *jettie*, an out-jetting room." Malone.

Shakspeare uses the verb to *jutty*, in King Henry V.:
"---- as fearfully as doth a galled rock
"O'erhang and *jutty* his confounded base."
The substantive also occurs in an agreement between Philip Henslowe, &c. &c. for building a new theatre, in the year 1599.

71

See vol. ii.: "-- besides a *juttey* forwards in eyther of the saide

two upper stories," &c. Steevens.

/7 -- coigne of vantage,] Convenient corner. Johnson.

So, in Pericles:
"By the four opposing *coignes*,
"Which the world together joins." Steevens.

/8 **Most** breed --] The folio -- *Must* breed. Steevens.

Corrected by Mr. Rowe. Malone.

/9 -- is delicate.] So this passage is exhibited in the old copy. Mr. Steevens, without giving the reader any notice of the alteration, has arranged it in the following manner:

"Smells wooingly here: no jutty, frieze, buttress,
"Nor coigne of vantage, but this bird hath made
"His pendent bed, and procreant cradle: Where they
"Most breed and haunt, I have observ'd, the air
"Is delicate."

The reader must make out the superior harmony of the first of these lines without assistance; but the next note will inform him what he is to do with the third. Boswell.

"His pendent bed, and procreant *cradle*: Where they." Lest the reader should think this verse defective in harmony, he ought to be told, that as *needle* was once written and pronounced *neele* and *neeld*, so *cradle* was contracted into *crale*, and consequently uttered as a monosyllable.

Thus, in the fragment of an ancient Christmas carol now before me:

"---- on that day
"Did aungels round him minister
"As in his *crale* he lay."

In some parts of Warwickshire, (as I am informed,) the word is drawlingly pronounced, as if it had been written -- *craale*. Steevens.

72

/1 The love that follows us, sometime is our trouble,
Which still we thank as love. Herein I teach you,
How you shall bid God **yield us for your pains,**
And thank us for your trouble.] "The attention that is paid us, (says Duncan on seeing Lady Macbeth come to meet him,) sometimes gives us pain, when we reflect that we give trouble to others; yet still we cannot but be pleased with such attentions, because they are a proof of affection." So far is clear; -- but of the following words, I confess, I have no very distinct conception, and suspect them to be corrupt. Perhaps the meaning is, -- "By being the occasion of so much trouble, I furnish you with a motive to pray to heaven to reward me for the pain I give you," inasmuch as the having such an opportunity of showing your loyalty may hereafter prove beneficial to you; "and herein also I afford you a motive to thank me for the trouble I give you," because by showing me such attention, (however painful it may be to me to be the cause of it,) you have an opportunity of displaying an amiable character, and of ingratiating yourself with your sove-

reign: which, finally, may bring you both profit and honour.
Malone.

This passage is undoubtedly obscure, and the following is the best explication of it I am able to offer:

"Marks of respect, importunately shown, are sometimes troublesome, though we are still bound to be grateful for them, as indications of sincere attachment. If you pray for us on account of the trouble we create in your house, and thank us for the molestations we bring with us, it must be on such a principle. Herein I teach you, that the inconvenience you suffer, is the result of our affection; and that you are therefore to pray for us, or thank us, only as far as prayers and thanks can be deserved for kindnesses that fatigue, and honours that oppress. You are, in short, to make your acknowledgments for intended respect and love, however irksome our present mode of expressing them may have proved." -- To *bid* is here used in the Saxon sense -- to *pray*.
Steevens.

"How you shall bid *God-yield us*." To bid any one *God-yeld him*, i. e. *God-yield him*, was the same as *God reward him*.
Warburton.

I believe *yield*, or, as it is in the folio of 1623, *eyld*, is a corrupted contraction of *shield*. The wish implores not *reward*, but *protection*. Johnson.

I rather believe it to be a corruption of *God-yield*, i. e. *reward*. In Antony and Cleopatra we meet with it at length:

"And the *gods yield* you for't."

73

Again, in the interlude of Jacob and Esau, 1568:

"*God yelde you*, Esau, with all my stomach."

Again, in the old metrical romance of Syr Guy of Warwick, bl. l. no date:

"Syr, quoth Guy, *God yield it you*,
"Of this great gift you give me now."

Again, in Chaucer's Sompnoure's Tale, v. 7759; Mr. Tyrwhitt's edit.:

"God *yelde you* adoun in your village."

Again, one of the Paston Letters, vol. iv. p. 335, begins thus:

"To begin, *God yeld you* for my hats."

God shield means *God forbid*, and could never be used as a form of returning thanks. So, in Chaucer's Milleres Tale:

"*God shilde* that he died sodenly."
V. 3427; *Mr. Tyrwhitt's edit.* Steevens.

/2 We rest your **hermits**.] *Hermits*, for *beadsmen*.
Warburton.

That is, we as *hermits* shall always pray for you. Thus, in A. of Wyntown's Cronykil, b. ix. c. xxvii. v. 99:

"His *bedmen* thai suld be for-thi,
"And pray for hym rycht hartfully."

Again, in Arden of Feversham, 1592:

"I am your *beadsman*, bound to pray for you."

Again, in Heywood's English Traveller, 1633:

"------- worshipful sir,
"I shall be still your *beadsman*."

This phrase occurs frequently in The Paston Letters.

Steevens.

/3 -- his great love, sharp as his spur,] So, in Twelfth-Night, Act III. Sc. III.:

"-------- my desire,
"*More sharp than filed steel,* did spur me forth."

Steevens.

74

/4 Your servants ever, &c.] The metaphor in this speech is taken from the Steward's compting-house or audit-room. *In compt*, means, *subject to account*. So, in Timon of Athens:

"And have the dates *in compt*."

The sense of the whole is: -- "We, and all who belong to us, look upon our lives and fortunes not as our own properties, but as things we have received merely for your use, and for which we must be accountable, whenever you please to call us to our audit; when, like faithful stewards, we shall be ready to answer your summons, by returning you what is your own." Steevens.

/5 *Enter -- a* ***Sewer***,] I have restored this stage direction from the old copy.

A *sewer* was an *officer* so called from his placing the dishes upon the table. *Asseour*, French; from *asseoir*, to *place*. Thus, in Chapman's version of the 24th Iliad:

"---- Automedon as fit
"Was for the reverend *sewer's* place; and all the browne
joints serv'd
"On wicker vessell to the board."

75

Barclay, Ecl. ii. has the following remark on the conduct of these domesticks:

"Slowe be the *sewers* in serving in alway,
"But swift be they after, taking the meate away."

Another part of the *sewer's* office was, to bring water for the guests to wash their hands with. Thus Chapman, in his version of the Odyssey:

"---- and then the *sewre*
"*Pour'd water* from a great and golden ewre,"

The *sewer's* chief mark of distinction was a towel round his arm. So, in Ben Jonson's Silent Woman: "-- clap me a clean *towel* about you, like a *sewer*." Again: "See, sir Amorous has his *towel* on already. [He enters like a *sewer*.]"

It may be worth while to observe, for the sake of preserving an ancient word, that the dishes served in by *sewers* were called *sewes*. So, in the old MS. romance of The Sowdon of Babyloyne, p. 66:

"Lest that lurdeynes come sculkynge out,
"For ever they have bene shrewes,
"Loke ech of them have such a cloute
"That thay never ete moo *sewes*." Steevens.

/6 If it were **done**, &c.] A sentiment parallel to this occurs in The Proceedings against Garnet in the Powder Plot. "It would have been commendable, when it had been done, though not before." Farmer.

/7 -- If the assassination, &c.] Of this soliloquy the meaning is not very clear; I have never found the readers of Shakspeare agreeing about it. I understand it thus:

"If that which I am about to do, when it is once *done* and executed, were *done* and ended without any following effects, it would then be best *to do it quickly*: if the murder could terminate in itself, and restrain the regular course of consequences, if *its success* could secure *its surcease*, if, being once done *successfully*, without detection, it could *fix a period* to all vengeance and inquiry, so that *this blow* might be all that I have to do, and this anxiety all that I have to suffer; if this could be my condition, even *here* in *this world*, in this contracted period of temporal existence, on this narrow *bank* in the ocean of eternity, *I would jump the life to come*, I would venture upon the deed without care of any future state. But this is one of *those cases* in which judgment is pronounced and vengeance inflicted upon us *here* in our present life. We teach others to do as we have done, and are punished by our own example. Johnson.

We are told by Dryden, that "Ben Jonson, in reading some

bombast speeches in Macbeth, which *are not to be understood*, used to say that it was *horrour*." -- Perhaps the present passage was one of those thus depreciated. Any person but this envious detractor would have dwelt with pleasure on the transcendent beauties of this sublime tragedy, which, after Othello, is perhaps our author's greatest work; and would have been more apt to have been thrown into "strong shudders" and blood-freezing "agues," by its interesting and high-wrought scenes, than to have been offended by any imaginary hardness of its language; for such, it appears from the context, is what he meant by *horrour*. That there are difficult passages in this tragedy, cannot be denied; but that there are "some *bombast* speeches in it, *which are not to be understood*," as Dryden asserts, will not very readily be granted to him. From this assertion, however, and the verbal alterations made by him and Sir W. D'Avenant, in some of our author's plays, I think it clearly appears that Dryden and the other poets of the time of Charles II. were not very deeply skilled in the language of their predecessors, and that Shakspeare was not so well understood fifty years after his death, as he is at this day. Malone.

/8 Could **trammel** up the consequence, and catch,
With **his surcease, success**;] I think the reasoning requires that we should read:
"With its *success surcease* ----." Johnson.

A *trammel* is a net in which either birds or fishes are caught. So, in The Isle of Gulls, 1633:
"Each tree and shrub wears *trammels* of thy hair."
Surcease is *cessation, stop*. So, in The Valiant Welchman,

1615:
"*Surcease* brave brother: Fortune hath crown'd our brows."
His is used instead of *its*, in many places. Steevens.

The personal pronouns are so frequently used by Shakspeare, instead of the impersonal, that no amendment would be necessary in this passage, even if it were certain that the pronoun *his* refers to *assassination*, which seems to be the opinion of Johnson and Steevens; but I think it more probable that it refers to Duncan; and that by *his surcease* Macbeth means Duncan's *death*, which was the object of his contemplation. M. Mason.

His certainly may refer to *assassination*, (as Dr. Johnson, by his proposed alteration, seems to have thought it did,) for Shakspeare very frequently uses *his* for *its*. But in this place perhaps *his* refers to Duncan; and the meaning may be, "If the assassination, at the same time that it puts an end to the life of Duncan, could procure me unalloyed happiness, promotion to the crown unmolested by the compunctious visitings of conscience, &c. To *cease*

often signifies in these plays, to *die*. So, in All's Well That Ends Well:
"Or, ere they meet, in me, O nature, *cease*."
I think, however, it is more probable that *his* is used for *its*, and that it relates to *assassination*. Malone.

/9 -- **shoal** of time,] This is Theobald's emendation, undoubtedly right. The old edition has *school*, and Dr. Warburton *shelve*.
Johnson.

By the *shoal of time*, our author means the *shallow ford of life*, between us and the abyss of eternity. Steevens.

/1 We'd jump the life to come.] So, in Cymbeline, Act V. Sc. IV.:
"---- or *jump the after-inquiry* on your own peril."
Steevens.

"We'd *jump* the life to come," certainly means, 'We'd *hazard* or run the risk of what might happen in a future state of being.' So, in Antony and Cleopatra:
"-------- Our fortune lies
"Upon this *jump*."
Again, in Coriolanus:
"------ and wish
"To *jump* a body with a dangerous physick,
"That's sure of death without it."
See note on this passage, Act III. Sc. I. Malone.

/2 ---- we but teach
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
To plague the inventor:] So, in Bellenden's translation of Hector Boethius: "He [Macbeth] was led be wod furyis, as ye nature of all tyrannis is, quhilks conquessis landis or kingdomes be wrangus titil, ay full of hevy thocht and dredour, and *traisting ilk man to do siclik crueltes to hym, as he did afore to*

othir." Malone.

/3 -- **This** even-handed justice --] Mr. M. Mason observes, that we might more advantageously read --
"*Thus* even-handed justice," &c. Steevens.

The old reading I believe to be the true one, because Shakspeare has very frequently used this mode of expression. So, a little lower: "Besides, *this* Duncan," &c. Again, in King Henry IV. Part I.:

78

"That *this* same child of honour and renown,
"*This* gallant Hotspur, *this* all-praised knight --."
Malone.

/4 **Commends** the ingredients --] Thus, in a subsequent scene of this play:
"I wish your horses swift, and sure of foot,
"And so I do *commend* you to their backs."
This verb has many shades of meaning. It seems here to signify -- *offers*, or *recommends*. Steevens.

/5 ---- our poison'd **chalice**
To our own lips.] Our poet, *apis Matinæ more modoque*, would stoop to borrow a sweet from any flower, however humble in its situation.
"The pricke of conscience (says Holinshed) caused him ever to feare, lest he should be served of the same *cup* as he had ministered to his predecessor." Steevens.

/6 First, as I am **his kinsman** --] So, in The Rape of Lucrece:
"But as he is *my kinsman* and dear friend,
"The shame and fault finds no excuse nor end."
Malone.

A soliloquy not unlike this occurs in Arden of Feversham, 1592:
"Ah, harmeles Arden how, how hast thou misdone,
"That thus thy gentle lyfe is leveld at?
"The many good turnes that thou hast done to me,
"Now must I quitance with betraying thee.
"I that should take the weapon in my hand,
"And buckler thee from ill intending foes,
"Do lead thee with a wicked fraudfull smile,
"As unsuspected, to the slaughterhouse." Boswell.

/7 Hath borne his **faculties** so meek,] *Faculties*, for *office, exercise of power*, &c. Warburton.

"Duncan (says Holinshed) was soft and gentle of nature." And again: "Macbeth spoke much against the king's softness, and overmuch slackness in punishing offenders." Steevens.

79

/8 The **deep damnation** --] So, in A Dolfull Discourse of a

Lord and a Ladie, by Churchyard, 1593:
"---- in state
"Of *deepe damnation* stood."
I should not have thought this little coincidence worth noting, had I not found it in a poem which it should seem, from other passages, that Shakspeare had read and remembered. Steevens.

/9 ---- or heaven's cherubin, hors'd
Upon the sightless **couriers** of the air,] *Courier* is only *runner. Couriers of air* are *winds, air in motion. Sightless* is *invisible*. Johnson.

Again, in this play:
"Wherever in your *sightless* substances," &c.
Again, in Heywood's Brazen Age, 1613:
"The flames of hell and Pluto's *sightless* fires."
Again:
"Hath any *sightless* and infernal fire
"Laid hold upon my flesh?"
Again, in Warner's Albion's England, 1602, b. ii. c. xi.:
"The scouring winds that *sightless* in the sounding air do fly."
Steevens.

So, in King Henry V.:
"*Borne* with the *invisible* and creeping wind."
Again, in our author's 51st Sonnet:
"Then should I spur, though *mounted on the wind*."
Again, in the Prologue to King Henry IV. Part II.:
"I, from the orient to the drooping west,
"Making the *wind* my post-*horse* --."
The thought of the *cherubin* (as has been somewhere observed) seems to have been borrowed from the eighteenth Psalm: "He rode upon the *cherubins* and did fly; he came *flying upon the wings of the wind*." Again, in the book of Job, xxx. 22:
"Thou causest me to *ride upon the wind*." Malone.

/1 That tears shall drown the wind.] Alluding to the remission of the wind in a shower. Johnson.

So, in King Henry VI. Part III.:

"For raging wind blows up incessant showers;
"And, when the rage allays, the *rain* begins."
Again, in our author's Venus and Adonis:
"Even as the *wind* is hush'd before it *raineth*."
Steevens.

Again, in The Rape of Lucrece:
"This *windy* tempest, till it blow up rain
"Held back his *sorrow's tide*, to make it more;
"At last it *rains*, and busy winds give o'er."
Again, in Troilus and Cressida:
"Where are my *tears*? -- rain, *rain* to lay this *wind*."
Malone.

/1 -------- I have no **spur**

To **prick** the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting **ambition**,] The *spur of the occasion* is a phrase used by Lord Bacon. Steevens.

So, in the tragedy of Cæsar and Pompey, 1607:
"Why think you, lords, that 'tis *ambition's spur*,
"That *pricketh* Cæsar to these high attempts?"
Malone.

Again, in The First Part of The Tragicall Raigne of Selimus, &c. 4to. 1594:
"My sonnes whom now *ambition* ginnes to *pricke*." Todd.

/2 And falls on the other.] Sir T. Hanmer has on this occasion added a word, and would read --
"And falls on the other *side*."
Yet they who plead for the admission of this supplement, should consider, that the plural of it, but two lines before, had occurred.
I, also, who once attempted to justify the omission of this word, ought to have understood that Shakspeare could never mean to describe the agitation of Macbeth's mind, by the assistance of a halting verse.
The general image, though confusedly expressed, relates to a horse, who, overleaping himself, falls, and his rider under him. To complete the line we may therefore read --
"And falls *upon* the other."
Thus, in The Taming of a Shrew: "How he left her with the horse *upon* her."
Macbeth, as I apprehend, is meant for the rider, his *intent* for his horse, and his *ambition* for his *spur*; but, unluckily, as the words are arranged, the *spur* is said to *over-leap* itself. Such

hazardous things are long-drawn metaphors in the hands of careless writers. Steevens.

I apprehend that there is not here one long-drawn metaphor, but two distinct ones. I have no spur to prick the sides of my intent; I have nothing to *stimulate* me to the execution of my purpose but ambition, which is apt to overreach itself; this he expresses by the second image, of a person meaning to vault into his saddle, who, by taking too great a leap, will fall on the other side. It should be recollected that to vault upon horseback with ease and activity was reckoned a great accomplishment by the courtiers of that time. Malone.

/3 *Enter Lady* --] The arguments by which Lady Macbeth persuades her husband to commit the murder, afford a proof of Shakspeare's knowledge of human nature. She urges the excellence and dignity of courage, a glittering idea which has dazzled mankind from age to age, and animated sometimes the housebreaker, and sometimes the conqueror; but this sophism Macbeth has for ever destroyed, by distinguishing true from false fortitude, in a line and a half; of which it may almost be said, that they ought to bestow immortality on the author, though all his other productions had been lost:
"I dare do all that may become a man;

"Who dares do more, is none."

This topick, which has been always employed with too much success, is used in this scene, with peculiar propriety, to a soldier by a woman. Courage is the distinguishing virtue of a soldier; and the reproach of cowardice cannot be borne by any man from a woman, without great impatience.

She then urges the oaths by which he had bound himself to murder Duncan, another art of sophistry by which men have sometimes deluded their consciences, and persuaded themselves that what would be criminal in others is virtuous in them: this argument Shakspeare, whose plan obliged him to make Macbeth yield, has not confuted, though he might easily have shown that a former obligation could not be vacated by a latter; that obligations, laid on us by a higher power, could not be over-ruled by obligations which we lay upon ourselves. Johnson.

Part of Lady Macbeth's argument is derived from the translation of Hector Boethius. See Dr. Farmer's note, p. 38.
Malone.

82

/4 Was the hope drunk, &c.] The same expression is found in King John:

"O, where hath our intelligence been *drunk*,
"Where hath it *slept*?" Malone.

/5 -- Would'st thou **have** that
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,
And live a coward in thine own esteem;] In this there seems to be no reasoning. I should read:

"*Or* live a coward in thine own esteem;"

Unless we choose rather:

"---- Would'st thou *leave* that." Johnson.

"Do you wish to obtain the crown, and yet would you remain such a coward in your own eyes all your life, as to suffer your paltry fears, which whisper, '*I dare not*,' to controul your noble ambition, which cries out, '*I would*?'" Steevens.

/6 Like the poor cat i' the adage?] The adage alluded to is, 'The cat loves fish, but dares not wet her feet:'

Catus amat pisces, sed non vult tingere plantas.
Johnson.

It is among Heywood's Proverbs 1566, D. 2:

"The cat would eate fishe, and would not wet her feete."
Boswell.

83

/7 Pr'ythee, peace: &c.] A passage similar to this occurs in Measure for Measure, Act II. Sc. II.:

"---- be that you are,
"That is, a woman: if you're more, you're none."

The old copy, instead of "*do* more," reads "*no* more;" but the present reading is undoubtedly right.

The correction (as Mr. Malone observes) was made by Mr.

Rowe. Steevens.

The same sentiment occurs in Beaumont and Fletcher's Rollo:

"My Rollo, tho' he dares as much as man,
"Is tender of his yet untainted valour;
"So noble, that he dares do nothing basely." Henley.

/8 Did then **adhere**,] Thus the old copy. Dr. Warburton would read -- *cohere*, not improperly, but without necessity. In The Merry Wives of Windsor, Mrs. Ford says of Falstaff, that his words and actions "no more *adhere* and keep pace together, than" &c. Again, in The Winter's Tale:

"------ a shepherd's daughter,
"And what to her *adheres*." Steevens.

So, in A Warning for Fair Women, 1599:

"-------- Neither time
"Nor place consorted to my mind." Malone.

/9 I would, while it was smiling in my face,] Polyxo, in the fifth book of Statius's Thebais, has a similar sentiment of ferocity:

In gremio (licet amplexu lachrimisque moretur)
Transadigam ferro ----. Steevens.

84

/1 -- had I so **sworn**,] The latter word is here used as a dissyllable. The editor of the second folio, from his ignorance of our author's phraseology and metre, supposed the line defective, and reads -- "had I *but* so sworn;" which has been followed by all the subsequent editors. Malone.

My regulation of the metre renders it unnecessary to read *sworn* as a dissyllable, a pronunciation of which, I believe, there is no example. Steevens.

/2 We fail!] I am by no means sure that this punctuation is the true one. -- "If we fail, we fail," is a colloquial phrase still in frequent use. Macbeth having casually employed the former part of this sentence, his wife designedly completes it. "We fail," and thereby know the extent of our misfortune. Yet *our success is certain, if you are resolute*.

Lady Macbeth is unwilling to afford her husband time to state any reasons for his doubt, or to expatiate on the obvious consequences of miscarriage in his undertaking. Such an interval for reflection to act in, might have proved unfavourable to her purposes. She therefore cuts him short with the remaining part of a common saying, to which his own words had offered an apt, though accidental introduction.

This reply, at once cool and determined, is sufficiently characteristic of the speaker: -- according to the old punctuation, she is represented as rejecting with contempt, (of which she had already manifested enough,) the very idea of failure. According to the mode of pointing now suggested, she admits a possibility of miscarriage, but at the same instant shows herself not afraid of the result. Her answer, therefore, communicates no discouragement to her husband. -- "We fail!" is the hasty interruption of scornful

impatience. “We fail,” is the calm deduction of a mind which, having weighed all circumstances, is prepared, without loss of confidence in itself, for the worst that can happen. So Hotspur:

“If we fall in, good night: -- or sink, or swim.” Steevens.

/3 But screw your courage to the **sticking-place**,] This is a metaphor from an engine formed by mechanical complication. The *sticking-place* is the *stop* which suspends its powers, till they are discharged on their proper object; as in driving piles, &c. So, in Sir W. D’Avenant’s Cruel Brother, 1630:

“---- There is an engine made,
“Which spends its strength by force of nimble wheels;
“For they, once *screwed up*, in their return
“Will rive an Oak.”

Again, in Coriolanus, Act I.Sc. VIII.:

“*Wrench up* thy power to the highest.”

Again, in Chapman’s version of the ninth book of Homer’s Odyssey:

“---- my wits which to their height
“I striv’d to *screw up* --;”

Again, in the fifteenth book:

“Come, join we hands, and *screw up* all their spite,”

Perhaps, indeed, Shakspeare had a more familiar image in view, and took his metaphor from the *screwing up* the chords of string-instruments to their proper degree of tension, when the peg remains fast in its *sticking-place*, i. e. in the place from which it is not to move. Thus, perhaps, in Twelfth-Night:

“And that I partly know the *instrument*
“That *screws* me from my true *place*,” &c. Steevens.

Mr. Steevens’s last interpretation is, in my apprehension, the true one. Sir W. D’Avenant misunderstood this passage. By *the sticking-place*, he seems to have thought the poet meant the *stabbing* place, the place where Duncan was to be wounded; for he reads,

“Bring but your courage to the *fatal* place,
“And we’ll not fail.” Malone.

/4 -- his two **chamberlains**
Will I with wine and **wassel**, so convince, &c.] The circumstance relative to Macbeth’s slaughter of Duncan’s Chamberlains, (as I observed so long ago, as in our edition 1773,) is copied from Holinshed’s account of King Duffe’s murder by Donwald.

Mr. Malone has since transcribed the whole narrative of this event from the Chronicle; but being too long to stand here as a note, it is given, with other bulky extracts, at the conclusion of the play. Steevens.

To *convince* is, in Shakspeare, to *overpower* or *subdue*, as in this play:

“---- Their malady *convinces*
“The great assay of art.” Johnson.

So, in the old tragedy of Cambyses:

"If that your heart addicted be the Egyptians to *convince*."

86

Again:
"By this his grace, by conquest great the Egyptians did *convince*."
Again, in Holinshed: "-- thus mortally fought, intending to vanquish and *convince* the other." Again, in Chapman's version of the sixth Iliad:
"Chymera the invincible he sent him to *convince*."
Steevens.

"-- and wassel." What was anciently called *was-haile* (as appears from Selden's notes on the ninth Song of Drayton's Polyolbion,) was an annual custom observed in the country on the vigil of the new year; and had its beginning, as some say, from the words which Ronix, daughter of Hengist, used, when she drank to Vortigern, "loverd king *was-heil*;" he answering her, by direction of an interpreter, *drinc-heile*; and then, as Robert of Gloucester says:
"Kuste hire and sitte hire adoune and glad dronke hire *heil*;
"And that was tho in this land the verst *was-hail*,
"As in langage of Saxoyne that me might evere iwite,
"And so wel he paith the folc about, that he is not yut voryute."
Afterwards it appears that *was-haile*, and *drinc-heil*, were the usual phrases of quaffing among the English, as we may see from Thomas de la Moore in the Life of Edward II. and in the lines of Hanvil the monk, who preceded him:
Ecce vagante cifo distento gutture *wass-heil*,
Ingeminant *wass-heil* ----."
But Selden rather conjectures it to have been a usual ceremony among the Saxons before Hengist, as a note of *health-wishing*, supposing the expression to be corrupted from *wish-heil*.
Wassel or *Wassail* is a word still in use in the midland counties, and signifies at present what is called Lambs'-Wool, i. e. roasted apples in strong beer, with sugar and spice. See Beggar's Bush, Act IV. Sc. IV.:
"What think you of a *wassel*?
"---- thou, and Ferret,
"And Ginks, to sing the song; I for the structure,
"Which is the bowl."
Ben Jonson personifies *wassel* thus: -- "Enter *Wassel* like a neat sempster and songster, her page bearing a brown bowl drest with ribbands and rosemary, before her."
Wassel is, however, sometimes used for general riot, intemperance, or festivity. On the present occasion I believe it means *intemperance*. Steevens.

So, in Antony and Cleopatra:

87

"---- Antony,
"Leave thy lascivious *wassels*."
See also vol. iv. p. 423. Malone.

/5 -- the **warder** of the brain,] A *warder* is a *guard*, a

sentinel. So, in King Henry VI. Part I.:
"Where be these *warders*, that they wait not here?"
Steevens.

/6 -- the **receipt** of reason,] i. e. the *receptacle*. Malone.

/7 A limbeck only:] That is, shall be only a vessel to emit *fumes* or *vapours*. Johnson.

The *limbeck* is the vessel through which distilled liquors pass into the recipient. So shall it be with memory; through which every thing shall pass, and nothing remain. A. C.

/8 Their **drenched natures** --] i. e. as we should say at present -- *soaked*, saturated with liquor. Steevens.

/9 -- who shall bear the guilt
Of our great **quell**?] *Quell* is *murder*, *manquellers* being, in the old language, the term for which *murderers* is now used.
Johnson.

So, in Chaucer's Tale of the Nonnes Priest, v. 15,396, Mr. Tyrwhitt's edit.:
"The dokes cryeden as men wold hem *quelle*."
The word is used in this sense by Holinshed, p. 567: "-- the poor people ran about the streets, calling the capteins and governors *murtherers* and *manquellers*." Steevens.

/1 -- Will it not be **receiv'd**,] i. e. *understood, apprehended*. So, in Twelfth-Night:
"---- To one of your *receiving*
"Enough is shown." Steevens.

/2 Who dares receive it other,] So, in Holinshed: "-- he

burthen'd the chamberleins, whom he had slaine, with all the fault, they having the keyes of the gates committed to their keeping all the night, and therefore *it could not be otherwise* (said he) but that they were of counsel in the committing of that most detestable murther." Malone.

/3 -- and **bend up** --] A metaphor from the bow. So, in King Henry V.:
"---- *bend* up every spirit
"To his full height."
The same phrase occurs in Melvil's Memoirs: "-- but that rather she should *bend up her spirit* by a princely, &c. behaviour." Edit. 1735, p. 148.
Till this instant, the mind of Macbeth has been in a state of uncertainty and fluctuation. He has hitherto proved neither resolutely good, nor obstinately wicked. Though a bloody idea had arisen in his mind, after he had heard the prophecy in his favour, yet he contentedly leaves the completion of his hopes to chance. At the conclusion, however, of his interview with Duncan, he inclines to hasten the decree of fate, and quits the stage with an apparent resolution to murder his sovereign. But

no sooner is the king under his roof, than, reflecting on the peculiarities of his own relative situation, he determines not to offend against the laws of hospitality, or the ties of subjection, kindred, and gratitude. His wife then assails his constancy afresh. He yields to her suggestions, and, with his integrity, his happiness is destroyed.

I have enumerated these particulars, because the waverings of Macbeth have, by some criticks, been regarded as unnatural and contradictory circumstances in his character; not remembering that *nemo repente fuit turpissimus*, or that (as Angelo observes):

"---- when once our grace we have forgot,
"Nothing goes right; we would, and we would not --."

a passage which contains no unapt justification of the changes that happen in the conduct of Macbeth. Steevens.

89

/4 *Scene I.*] The place is not marked in the old edition, nor is it easy to say where this encounter can be. It is not in the *hall*, as the editors have all supposed it, for Banquo sees the sky; it is not far from the bedchamber, as the conversation shows: it must be in the inner court of the castle, which Banquo might properly cross in his way to bed. Johnson.

The Scene. A large court surrounded all or in part by an open gallery; chambers opening into that gallery; the gallery ascended into by stairs, open likewise; with addition of a college-like gateway, into which opens a porter's lodge; appears to have been the poet's idea of the place of this great action. The circumstances that mark it, are scatter'd through three scenes; in the latter, *the hall* (which moderns make the scene of this action), is appointed a place of second assembly, in terms that show it plainly distinct from that assembled in them. Buildings of this description rose in ages of chivalry; when knights rode into their courts, and paid their devoirs to ladies, viewers of their tiltings and them from these open galleries. Fragments of some of them, over the mansions of noblemen, are still subsisting in London, changed to hotels or inns. Shakspeare might see them much more entire, and take his notion from them. Capell.

/5 There's **husbandry** in heaven,] *Husbandry* here means *thrift, frugality*. So, in Hamlet:

"And borrowing dulls the edge of *husbandry*." Malone.

/6 Their **candles** are all out.] The same expression occurs in Romeo and Juliet:

"Night's *candles* are *burnt out*."

90

Again, in our author's 21st Sonnet:

"As those gold *candles* fix'd in heaven's air."

See vol. v. p. 150, n. 5. Malone.

/7 ---- Merciful powers!
Restrain in me the cursed thoughts, that nature
Gives way to in repose!] It is apparent from what Banquo says afterwards, that he had been solicited in a dream to attempt

something in consequence of the prophecy of the Witches, that his waking senses were shocked at; and Shakspeare has here most exquisitely contrasted his character with that of Macbeth. Banquo is praying against being tempted to encourage thoughts of guilt even in his sleep; while Macbeth is hurrying into temptation, and revolving in his mind every scheme, however flagitious, that may assist him to complete his purpose. The one is unwilling to sleep, lest the same phantoms should assail his resolution again, while the other is depriving himself of rest through impatience to commit the murder.

The same kind of invocation occurs in Cymbeline:

"From fairies, and the *tempters of the night*,
"Guard me!" Steevens.

/8 Sent forth great largess to your **offices:**] Thus the old copy, and rightly. *Offices* are the rooms appropriated to servants and culinary purposes. Thus, in Timon:

"When all our *offices* have been oppress'd
"By riotous feeders."

Again, in King Richard II.:

"Unpeopled *offices*, untrodden stones."

Duncan was pleased with his entertainment, and dispensed his bounty to those who had prepared it. All the modern editors have transferred this largess to the *officers* of Macbeth, who

would more properly have been rewarded in the field, or at their return to court. Steevens.

Mr. Steevens, who has introduced so many arbitrary alterations of Shakspeare's text, has here endeavoured to restore a palpable misprint from the old copy; *officers* means *servants* in this passage. So before, p. 87:

"---- What not put upon
"His spongy *officers*."

i. e. his chamberlains. So also, in The Taming of The Shrew, vol. v. p. 459: "Is supper ready, &c. the serving men in their new fustian, their white stockings, and every *officer* his wedding garment on?" Malone.

/9 -- shut up --] To *shut up*, is to *conclude*. So, in The Spanish Tragedy:

"And heavens have *shut up* day to pleasure us."

Again, in Spenser's Fairy Queen, b. iv. c. ix.:

"And for to *shut up* all in friendly love."

Again, in Reynolds's God's Revenge against Murder, 1621, fourth edit. p. 137: "-- though the parents have already *shut up* the contract." Again, in Stowe's Account of the Earl of Essex's Speech on the scaffold: "he *shut up* all with the Lord's prayer." Steevens.

Again, in Stowe's Annals, p. 833: "-- the kings majestie [K. James] *shut up* all with a pithy exhortation on both sides." Malone.

I should rather suppose it means *enclosed in content*; content with every thing *around* him. So Barrow: "Hence is a

man *shut up* in an irksome bondage of spirit." *Sermons*, 1683, vol. ii. 231. Boswell.

/1 Being unprepar'd,
Our will became the servant to defect;
Which else should free have wrought.] This is obscurely expressed. The meaning seems to be: -- "Being unprepared, our entertainment was necessarily *defective*, and we only had it in our power to show the King our *willingness* to *serve* him. Had we received sufficient notice of his coming, our zeal should have been more clearly manifested by our *acts*.
Which refers, not to the last antecedent, *defect*, but to *will*.
Malone.

92

/2 All's well.] I suppose the poet originally wrote (that the preceding verse might be completed,) -- "*Sir*, all *is* well."
Steevens.

/3 If you shall cleave to my **consent**, -- when 'tis,] *Consent*, for *will*. So that the sense of the line is, If you shall go into my measures when I have determined of them, or when the time comes that I want your assistance. Warburton.

Macbeth expresses his thought with affected obscurity; he does not mention the royalty, though he apparently had it in his mind. "If you shall cleave to my consent," if you shall concur with me when I determine to accept the crown, "when 'tis," when that happens which the prediction promises, "it shall make honour for you." Johnson.

Such another expression occurs in Lord Surrey's translation of the second book of Virgil's Æneid:
"And if thy will *stick* unto mine, I shall
"In wedlocke sure knit, and make her his own."
Consent has sometimes the power of the Latin *concentus*. Both the verb and substantive, decidedly bearing this signification, occur in other plays of our author. Thus, in King Henry VI. Part I. Sc. I.:
"---- scourge the bad revolting stars
"That have *consented* to King Henry's death --."
i. e. *acted in concert* so as to occasion it. Again, in King Henry IV. Part II. Act V. Sc. I.: "-- they (Justice Shallow's servants) *flock together in consent*, (i.e. in a *party*,) like so many wild geese." In both these instances the words are spelt erroneously, and should be written *concent* and *concented*. See Spenser, &c. as quoted in a note on the passage already adduced from King Henry VI.
The meaning of Macbeth is then as follows: -- "If you shall cleave to my consent --" i. e. if you shall stick, or adhere, to my

93

party -- "when tis," i. e. at the time when such a *party* is formed, your conduct shall produce honour for you.
That *consent* means *participation*, may be proved from a passage in the 50th Psalm. I cite the translation 1568: "When

thou sawdest a thiefe, thou dydst *consent unto* hym, and hast been partaker with the adulterers." In both instances the *particeps criminis* is spoken of.

Again, in our author's As You Like It, the usurping Duke says, after the flight of Rosalind and Celia --

"---- some villains of my court
"Are of *consent* and sufferance in this."

Again, in King Henry V.:

"We carry not a heart with us from hence,
"That grows not in a fair *consent* with ours."

Macbeth mentally refers to the crown he expected to obtain in consequence of the murder he was about to commit. The commentator, indeed, (who is acquainted with what precedes and follows,) comprehends all that passes in the mind of the speaker; but Banquo is still in ignorance of it. His reply is only that of a man who determines to combat every possible temptation to do ill; and therefore expresses a resolve that in spite of future combinations of interest, or struggles for power, he will attempt nothing that may obscure his present honours, alarm his conscience, or corrupt his loyalty.

Macbeth could never mean, while yet the success of his attack on the life of Duncan was uncertain, to afford Banquo the most dark or distant hint of his criminal designs on the crown. Had he acted thus incautiously, Banquo would naturally have become his accuser, as soon as the murder had been discovered.

Steevens.

The word *consent* has always appeared to me unintelligible in the first of these lines, and was, I am persuaded, a mere error of the press. A passage in The Tempest leads me to think that our author wrote -- *content*. Antonio is counselling Sebastian to murder Gonsalo:

"O, that you bore
"The mind that I do; what a sleep were there
"For your advancement! Do you understand me?
"*Seb.* I think I do.
"*Ant.* And how does your *content*
"Tender your own good fortune?"

In the same play we have -- "Thy *thoughts I cleave to*," which differs but little from "I cleave to thy *content*."

In The Comedy of Errors our author has again used this word in the same sense:

"Sir, I commend you to your own *content*."

Again, in All's Well That Ends Well:

"Madam, the care I have taken to even your *content* --."

i. e. says Dr. Johnson, to act up to your desires. Again, in King Richard III.:

"God hold it to your honour's good *content*!"

Again, in the Merry Wives of Windsor: "You shall hear how things go, and, I warrant, *to your own content*."

The meaning then of the present difficult passage, thus corrected, will be: If you will closely adhere to my cause, if you will promote, as far as you can, what is likely to contribute to my satisfaction and *content, -- when 'tis*, when the prophecy of the weird sisters is fulfilled, when I am seated on the throme, the

event shall make honour for you.

If Macbeth does not mean to allude darkly to his attainment of the crown, (I do not say to his forcible or unjust acquisition of it, but to his attainment of it,) what meaning can be drawn from the words, “If you shall cleave,” &c. whether we read *consent*, or the word now proposed? In the preceding speech, though he *affects* not to think of it, he yet clearly marks out to Banquo what it is that is the object of the mysterious words which we are now considering:

“Yet, when we can entreat an hour to serve,
“We would spend it in some words upon *that business*;”

i. e. “upon the prophecy of the weird sisters, [that I should be thane of Cawdor, and afterwards *king*,] which, as you observe, has been *in part* fulfilled, and which by the kindness of fortune may at some future time be in the whole accomplished.”

I do not suppose that Macbeth means to give Banquo the most distant hint of his having any intention to *murder Duncan*; but merely to state to him, that if he will strenuously endeavour to promote his satisfaction or *content*, if he will espouse his cause, and support him against all adversaries, whenever he shall be seated on the *throne* of Scotland, by whatever mysterious operation of fate that event may be brought about, such a conduct shall be rewarded, shall make honour for Banquo. The word *content* admits of this interpretation, and is supported by several other passages in our author’s plays; the word *consent*, in my apprehension, affords here no meaning whatsoever.

Consent or *concent* may certainly signify *harmony*, and, in a metaphorical sense, that *union* which binds to each other a party or number of men, leagued together for a particular purpose;

but it can no more signify, as I conceive, the *party*, or body of men so combined together, or the *cause* for which they are united, than the harmony produced by a number of musical instruments can signify the instruments themselves, or the musicians that play upon them. When Fairfax, in his translation of Tasso, says --

“Birds, winds, and waters, sing with sweet *concent*,”

we must surely understand by the word *concent*, not a *party*, or a *cause*, but harmony, or *union*; and in the latter sense, I apprehend, Justice Shallow’s servants are said to flock together in *concent*, in The Second Part of King Henry IV.

If this correction be just, “In seeking to augment it,” in Banquo’s reply, may *perhaps* relate, not to his own honour, but to Macbeth’s *content*. “On condition that I lose no honour, in seeking to increase *your satisfaction*, or *content*, -- to gratify your wishes,” &c. The words, however, may be equally commodiously interpreted, -- “Provided that in *seeking an increase of honour*, I lose none,” &c.

Sir William D’Avenant’s paraphrase on this obscure passage is as follows:

“If when the prophecy begins to look like, you will
“Adhere to me, it shall make honour for you.” Malone.

/4 -- when my drink is ready,] See note on “their *possets*,” in the next scene, p. 103. Steevens.

96

/5 And on thy blade, and **dudgeon, gouts** of blood,] Though *dudgeon* sometimes signifies a *dagger*, it more properly means the *haft* or *handle* of a dagger, and is used for that particular sort of handle which has some ornament carved on the top of it. Junius explains the *dudgeon*, i. e. *haft*, by the Latin expression, *manubrium apiatum*, which means *a handle of wood with a grain rough as if the seeds of parsley were strown over it*.

Thus, in the concluding page of the Dedication to Stanyhurst's Virgil, 1583:

"Well fare thee *haft* with thee *dudgeon dagger*!"

Again, in Lyly's comedy of Mother Bombie, 1594: "-- then have at the bag with the *dudgeon hafte*, that is, at the *dudgeon* dagger that hangs by his tantony pouch." In Soliman and Perseda is the following passage:

"---- Typhon me no Typhons,
"But swear upon my *dudgeon* dagger."

Again, in Decker's Satiromastix: "I am too well ranked, Asinius, to be stabb'd with his *dudgeon* wit."

Again, in Skialetheia, a collection of Epigrams, Satires, &c. 1598:

"A *dudgin* dagger that's new scowr'd and glast."

Steevens.

Gascoigne confirms this: "The most knottie piece of box may be wrought to a fayre *doogen hafte*." *Gouts*, for *drops*, is frequent in old English. Farmer.

"-- *gouts* of blood." Or *drops*, French. Pope.

Gouts is the technical term for the *spots* on some part of the plumage of a hawk: or perhaps Shakspeare used the word in allusion to a phrase in heraldry. When a field is charged or sprinkled with red drops, it is said to be *gutty of gules*, or *gutty de sang*. The same word occurs also in The Art of Good Lyving and Good Deyng, 1503: "Befor the jugement all herbys shal sweyt read *goutys* of water, as blood." Steevens.

97

/7 -- Now o'er the one half world
Nature seems dead,] That is, 'over our hemisphere all action and motion seem to have ceased.' This image, which is, perhaps, the most striking that poetry can produce, has been adopted by Dryden, in his Conquest of Mexico:

"All things are hush'd as Nature's self lay dead,
"The mountains seem to nod their drowsy head;
"The little birds in dreams their songs repeat,
"And sleeping flow'rs beneath the night dews sweat.
"Even lust and envy sleep!"

These lines, though so well known, I have transcribed, that the contrast between them and this passage of Shakspeare may be more accurately observed.

Night is described by two great poets, but one describes a night of quiet, the other of perturbation. In the night of Dryden, all the disturbers of the world are laid asleep; in that of Shakspeare, nothing but sorcery, lust, and murder, is awake. He that reads

Dryden, finds himself lulled with serenity, and disposed to solitude and contemplation. He that peruses Shakspeare, looks round alarmed, and starts to find himself alone. One is the night of a lover; the other, of a murderer. Johnson.

Perhaps Sir Philip Sidney had the honour of suggesting the last image in Dryden's description:

"Night hath clos'd all in her cloke,
"Twinkling starres love-thoughts provoke;
"Daunger hence good care doth keepe;
"*Jealousie itselfe dooth sleepe.*"
England's Helicon, edit. 1600, p. 1. Steevens.

"-- Now o'er the one half world," &c. So, in the second part of Marston's Antonio and Mellida, 1602:

"'Tis yet dead night; yet all the earth is clutch'd
"In the dull leaden hand of snoring sleep:
"No breath disturbs the quiet of the air,
"No spirit moves upon the breast of earth,
"Save howling dogs, night-crows, and screeching-owls,
"Save meagre ghosts, Piero, and black thoughts.
"---- I am great in blood,
"Unequal'd in revenge: -- you horrid scouts
"That *sentinel* swart night, give loud applause
"From your large palms." Malone.

/8 The curtain'd sleep; **now** witchcraft celebrates --] The word *now* has been added [by Rowe] for the sake of metre. Probably Shakspeare wrote: "The curtain'd *sleeper*." The folio

spells the word *sleepe*, and an addition of the letter *r* only, affords the proposed emendation.

Milton has transplanted this image into his Masque at Ludlow Castle, v. 554:

"------ steeds
"That draw the litter of close-*curtain'd sleep*." Steevens.

Mr. Steevens's emendation of "the curtain'd *sleeper*" is well intitled to a place in the text. It is clearly Shakspeare's own word.
Ritson.

So afterwards:

"---- a hideous trumpet calls to parley
"The *sleepers* of the house."

Now was added by Sir William D'Avenant, in his alteration of this play, published in 1674. Malone.

/9 -- thus with his stealthy pace,
With Tarquin's ravishing **strides**, towards his design
Moves like a ghost.] The old copy -- *sides*. Steevens.

Mr. Pope changed *sides* to *strides*. Malone.

A *ravishing stride* is an action of violence, impetuosity, and tumult, like that of a savage rushing on his prey; whereas the poet is here attempting to exhibit an image of secrecy and caution, of

anxious circumspection and guilty timidity, the *stealthy pace* of a *ravisher* creeping into the chamber of a virgin, and of an assassin approaching the bed of him whom he proposes to murder, without awaking him; these he describes as “moving like ghosts,” whose progression is so different from *strides*, that it has been in all ages represented to be as Milton expresses it:

“Smooth sliding without step.”

This hemistich will afford the true reading of this place, which is, I think, to be corrected thus:

“---- and wither’d murder
“---- thus with his stealthy pace,
“With Tarquin ravishing, *slides* tow’rds his design,
“Moves like a ghost.”

Tarquin is, in this place, the general name of a ravisher, and the sense is: ‘Now is the time in which every one is asleep, but those who are employed in wickedness; the witch who is sacrificing to Hecate, and the ravisher, and the murderer, who, like me, are stealing upon their prey.’

99

When the reading is thus adjusted, he wishes, with great propriety, in the following lines, that the *earth* may not *hear his steps*.
Johnson.

I cannot agree with Dr. Johnson that a *stride* is always *an action of violence, impetuosity*, or *tumult*. Spenser uses the word in his Fairy Queen, b. iv. c. viii. and with no idea of violence annexed to it:

“With easy steps so soft as foot could *stride*.”

And as an additional proof that a *stride* is not always a *tumultuous effort*, the following instance, from Harrington’s translation of Ariosto, [1591,] may be brought:

“He takes a long and leisurable *stride*,
“And longest on the hinder foot he staid;
“So soft he treads, altho’ his steps were wide,
“As though to tread on eggs he was afraid.
“And as he goes, he gropes on either side
“To find the bed,” &c.
Orlando Furioso, 28th book, stanza 63.

Whoever has been reduced to the necessity of finding his way about a house in the dark, must know that it is natural to take large *strides*, in order to feel before us whether we have a safe footing or not. The ravisher and murderer would naturally take such *strides*, not only on the same account, but that their steps might be fewer in number, and the sound of their feet be repeated as seldom as possible. Steevens.

Mr. Steevens’s observation is confirmed by many instances that occur in our ancient poets. So, in a passage by J. Sylvester, cited in England’s Parnassus, 1600:

“Anon he stalketh with an *easy stride*,
“By some clear river’s lillie-paved side.”

Again, in our author’s King Richard II.:

“Nay rather every *tedious stride* I make --.”

Thus also the Roman poets:

---- *vestigia* furtim
Suspenso digitis fert *taciturna gradu*. *Ovid. Fasti.*

Eunt *taciti* per mæsta silentia *magnis*
Passibus. Statius, lib. x. <Malone.>

"With Tarquin's ravishing," &c. The justness of this similitude is not very obvious. But a stanza, in his poem of Tarquin and Lucrece, will explain it:

"Now *stole upon the time the dead of night*,
"When heavy sleep had clos'd up mortal eyes;
"No comfortable *star did lend his light*,

100

"No noise but owls and *wolves' dead-boding cries*;
"Now serves the season that they may surprise
"The silly lambs. Pure thoughts are dead and still,
"*While* lust *and* murder *wake, to stain and kill*."
Warburton.

/1 -- Thou **sure** and firm-set earth,] The old copy -- "Thou *sowre*," &c. which, though an evident corruption, directs us to the reading I have ventured to substitute in its room.

So, in Act IV. Sc. III.:

"Great tyranny, lay thou thy basis sure." Steevens.

/2 -- which **way** they walk,] The folio reads:

"---- which they *may* walk." Steevens.

Corrected by Mr. Rowe. Malone.

/3 Thy very stones prate of my where-about,] The following passage in a play which has been frequently mentioned, and which Langbaine says was very popular in the time of Queen Elizabeth, A Warning for Faire Women, 1599, perhaps suggested this thought:

"Mountains will not suffice to cover it,
"Cimmerian darknesse cannot shadow it,
"Nor any policy wit hath in store,
"Cloake it so cunningly, but at the last,
"If nothing else, yet will *the very stones*
"That lie within the street, *cry out for vengeance*,
"And point at us to be the murderers."

Yet the thought may have been derived immediately from Scripture. See St. Luke, ix. 40; and Habakkuk, xi. 10, 11.
Malone.

So, as Dr. Farmer observes, in Churchyard's Choice:

"The stepps I tread, *shall tell me my offence*." Steevens.

/4 And take the present horror from the time,
Which now suits with it.] i. e. lest the noise from the stones take away from this midnight season that present horror which suits so well with what is going to be acted in it. What was the horror he means? *Silence*, than which nothing can be more horrid to the perpetrator of an atrocious design. This shows a great knowledge of human nature. Warburton.

Whether to "take horror from the time" means not rather to *catch it* as communicated, than to *deprive the time of horror*, de-

serves to be considered. Johnson.

101

The latter is surely the true meaning. Macbeth would have nothing break through the universal silence that added such a horror to the night, as suited well with the bloody deed he was about to perform. Mr. Burke, in his Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful, observes, that "all general privations are great, because they are all terrible;" and, with other things, he gives *silence* as an instance, illustrating the whole by that remarkable passage in Virgil, where, amidst all the images of terror that could be united, the circumstance of *silence* is particularly dwelt upon:

Dii quibus imperium est animarum, umbræque *silentes*,
Et Chaos et Phlegethon, loca nocte *tacentia* late.

When Statius, in the fifth book of the Thebaid, describes the Lemnian massacre, his frequent notice of the silence and solitude, both before and after the deed, is striking in a wonderful degree:

Conticuere domus, &c.

and when the same poet enumerates the terrors to which Chiron had familiarized his pupil, he subjoins --

---- nec ad vastæ trepidare *silentia* sylvæ.
Achilleid, ii. 391.

Again, when Tacitus describes the distress of the Roman army, under Cæcina, he concludes by observing, "-- ducemque terruit, *dira quies*." See *Annal.* i. lxv.

In all the preceding passages, as Pliny remarks, concerning places of worship, *silentia ipsa adoramus*. Steevens.

In confirmation of Steevens's ingenious note on this passage, it may be observed, that one of the circumstances of horror enumerated by Macbeth is, -- "Nature seems dead." M. Mason.

So also, in the second Æneid:

-------- vestigia retro
Observata sequor per noctem, et lumine lustro.
Horror ubique animos, simul ipsa *silentia* terrent.

Dryden's well-known lines, which exposed him to so much ridicule,

"An horrid stillness first invades the ear,
"And in that *silence* we the tempest hear,"

show, that he had the same idea of the awfulness of silence as our poet. Malone.

/5 -- Whiles I threat, he lives;
Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath **gives**.] Here is evidently a false concord; but it must not be corrected, for it is necessary to the rhyme. Nor is this the only place in which Shakspeare has sacrificed grammar to rhyme. In Cymbeline, the song in Cloten's serenade runs thus:

102

"Hark! hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings,
"And Phoebus 'gins to rise,
"His steeds to water at those springs
"On chalic'd flowers that *lies*."

And Romeo says to Friar Lawrence:

"---- both our remedies
"Within thy help and holy physick *lies*." M. Mason.

/6 -- the bell **invite**s me.] So, in Cymbeline:
"The time *inviting* thee?" Steevens.

/7 -- it is a knell
That summons thee to heaven, or to hell.] Thus Raleigh, speaking of love, in England's Helicon, 4to. 1600:
"*It is perhaps that sauncing bell*,
"That toules all into heauen or hell."
Sauncing is probably a mistake for *sacring*, or *saints'* bell; originally, perhaps, written (with the Saxon genitive) *saintis* bell.
In Hudibras (as Mr. Ritson observes to me) we find
"The only *saints' bell* that *rings all in*." Steevens.

Saunce bell (still so called at Oxford) is the small bell which hangs in the window of a church tower, and is always rung when the clergyman enters the church, and also at funerals. In some places it is called *tolling all in*, i. e. into church. Harris.

/8 It was the owl that shriek'd, the fatal **bellman**,
Which gives the stern'st good-night.] Shakspeare has here improved on an image he probably found in Spenser's Fairy Queen, b. v. c. vi. 27:
"---- The native *belman* of the night,
"The bird that warned Peter of his fall,
"First rings his silver bell t' each sleepy wight."
Steevens.

"It was the *owl* that shriek'd; the *fatal* bellman." So, in King Richard III.:
"Out on ye, *owls*! nothing but songs of *death*!" Malone.

/9 ---- the surfeited grooms
Do mock their charge with snores:] i. e. By going to sleep, they trifle and make light of the trust reposed in them, that of watching by their king. So, in Othello: "O mistress, villainy hath made *mocks* with love." Malone.

/1 -- their **possets**,] It appears from this passage, as well as from many others in our old dramatick performances, that it was the general custom to eat *possets* just before bed-time. So, in the first part of King Edward IV. by Heywood: "-- thou shalt be welcome to beef and bacon, and perhaps a bag-pudding; and my daughter Nell shall pop a *posset* upon thee when thou goest to bed." Macbeth has already said:
"Go bid thy mistress when my *drink* is ready,
"She strike upon the bell."
Lady Macbeth has also just observed --
"That which hath made them drunk, hath made me bold:"
And in The Merry Wives of Windsor, Mrs. Quickly promises Jack Rugby a *posset* at night. This custom is also mentioned by Froissart. Steevens.

Posset, says Randle Holmes in his Academy of Armoury, b. iii.

p. 84, is “hot milk poured on ale or sack having sugar, grated bisket, and eggs, with other ingredients boiled in it, which goes all to a curd.” Malone.

/2 ---- death and nature do **contend** about them,
Whether they live, or die.] Of this image our ancient writers were peculiarly fond. Thus again, in Twine’s translation of the story of Prince Appollyn: “Death *strived* with life within her, and the conflict was daungerous and doubtfull who should preuaile.”

Again, in All’s Well That Ends Well:

“---- thy blood and virtue
“*Contend* for empire in thee.” Steevens.

Again, ibid:

“---- Nature and sickness
“Debate it at their leisure.” Malone.

104

/3 ---- Hark! -- I laid their daggers ready,
He could not miss them.] Compare Euripides, -- *Orestes*, v. 1291 -- where Electra stands centinel at the door of the palace, while Orestes is within for the purpose of murdering Helen. The dread of a surprize, and eagerness for the business, make Electra conclude that the deed must be done ere time enough had elapsed for attempting it. She listens with anxious impatience; and hearing nothing, expresses strong fears lest the daggers should have failed. Read the whole passage. S. W.

/4 ---- Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had done’t.] This is very artful. For, as the poet has drawn the lady and her husband, it would be thought the act should have been done by her. It is likewise highly just; for though ambition had subdued in her all the sentiments of nature towards *present* objects, yet the likeness of one *past*, which she had been accustomed to regard with reverence, made her unnatural passions, for a moment, give way to the sentiments of instinct and humanity. Warburton.

The same circumstance, on a similar occasion, is introduced by Statius, in the fifth book of his Thebaid, v. 236:

Ut vero Alcimeden etiamnum in murmure truncos
Ferre patris vultus, et egentem sanguinis ensem
Conspexi, riguere comæ, atque in viscera sævus
Horror iit. Meus ille Thoas, mea dira videri
Dextra mihi. Extemplo thalamis turbata paternis
Inferor.

Thoas was the father of Hypsipyle, the speaker. Steevens.

105

/5 This is a sorry sight.] This expression might have been borrowed from Spenser’s Fairy Queen, b. v. c. i. st. 14:

“To whom as they approched, they espide
“A *sorie sight* as ever seene with eye;
“A heedlesse ladie lying him beside,
“In her own *bloud* all wallow’d woefully.” Whalley.

/6 As they had seen me,] i. e. *as if*. So, in The Winter's Tale:

"*As* we are mock'd with art." Steevens.

/7 **Listening** their fear.] i. e. Listening *to* their fear, the particle omitted. This is common in our author. Thus, in Julius Cæsar, Act IV. Sc. I.:

"---- and now, Octavius,
"Listen great things."

Contemporary writers took the same liberty. So, in The World Toss'd at Tennis, by Middleton and Rowley, 1620:

"*Listen* the plaints of thy poor votaries."

Again, in Lyly's Maid's Metamorphosis, 1600:

"There, in rich seats, all wrought of ivory,
"The Graces sit, *listening* the melody
"Of warbling birds." Steevens.

106

/8 When they **did say**, God bless us.] The words -- *did say*, which render this hemistich too long to unite with the next in forming a verse, persuade me that the passage originally ran thus:

"---- I *could* not *say*, amen,
"When they, God bless us."

i. e. when they *could say* God bless us. *Could say*, in the second line, was left to be understood; as before --

"---- and, Amen, the other:"

i. e. the other *cried* Amen. But the players, having no idea of the latter ellipsis, supplied the syllables that destroy the measure.
Steevens.

The measure would not be very correct even with this alteration.
Boswell.

/9 ---- *the ravell'd* ***sleave*** *of care,*] Sleave signifies the "ravelled knotty part of the silk, which gives great trouble and embarrassment to the knitter or weaver." Heath.

Drayton, a poet of Shakspeare's age, has likewise alluded to *sleaved* or *ravelled* silk, in his Quest of Cynthia:

"At length I on a fountain light,
"Whose brim with pinks was platted,
"The banks with daffadillies dight,
"With grass, like *sleave*, was matted." Langton.

Sleave is properly *silk* which has not been twisted. It is mentioned in Holinshed's History of England, p. 835: "Eight wild men all apparelled in green moss made with *sleved* silk."

Again, in The Muses Elizium, by Drayton:

"---- thrumb'd with grass
"As soft as *sleave* or sarcenet ever was."

Again, ibid.:

"That in the handling feels as soft as any *sleave*."
Steevens.

107

Sleave appears to have signified *coarse, soft*, unwrought silk. *Seta grossolana*, Ital. See also, Florio's Italian Dictionary, 1598: "*Sfilazza*. Any kind of ravelled stuffe, or *sleave silk*." -- "*Capitone*, a kind of coarse silk, called *sleave silke*." Cotgrave, in his Dict. 1612, renders *soye flosche*, "sleave silk." See also, ibid.: "*Cadarce*, pour faire *capiton*. The tow, or coarsest part of silke, whereof *sleave* is made." -- In Troilus and Cressida we have -- "Thou idle immaterial skein of *sleave* silk." Malone.

Ravelled means *entangled*. So, in The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Thurio says to Proteus, speaking of Sylvia --

"Therefore as you unwind her love from him,
"Lest it should *ravel*, and be good to none,
"You must provide to bottom it on me." M. Mason.

/1 *The* ***death*** *of each day's life, sore labour's bath,* &c.] In this encomium upon sleep, amongst the many appellations which are given it, significant of its beneficence and friendliness to life, we find one which conveys a different idea, and by no means agrees with the rest, which is -- "The *death* of each day's life." I make no question but Shakspeare wrote --

"The *birth* of each day's life."

The true characteristick of sleep, which repairs the decays of labour, and assists that returning vigour which supplies the next day's activity. Warburton.

"The death of each day's life," means 'the end of each day's labour, the conclusion of all that bustle and fatigue that each day's life brings with it.'

Thus also Chapman, in his version of the nineteenth Iliad:

"But none can live without the *death of sleep*." Steevens.

"*Sleep*, that *knits* up the ravell'd *sleave* of *care*,
"The death of each day's life, *sore labour's bath*,
"*Balm of hurt minds*." Is it not probable that Shakspeare remembered the following verses in Sir Philip Sydney's Astrophel and Stella, a poem, from which he has quoted a line in The Merry Wives of Windsor?

"Come *sleepe*, O sleepe, the certain *knot* of peace,
"The *bathing* place of wits, the *balm* of woe,
"The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,
"The indifferent judge between the high and low."

So also, in The Famous Historie of George Lord Fauconbridge, &c. bl. l. "Yet sleep, *the comforter of distressed minds*, could not lock up her eyes." Again, in Golding's translation of Ovid's Metamorphoses, b. viii. 1587:

"---- At such a time as folkes are wont to find *release*
"Of *cares* that all the day before were working in their heds,
"By *sleep*," &c.

Again, ibid. b. xi.:

"O *sleepe*, quoth she, the rest of things, O gentlest of the goddes,
"Sweet sleepe, the peace of mind, with whom crookt *care* is aye at odds;
"Which cherishest men's weary limbs appall'd with *toyling*

sore,
"And makest them as fresh to worke, and lustie as before."
The late Mr. Gray had perhaps our author's "*death* of each *day's* life" in his thoughts, when he wrote --
"The curfew tolls the *knell* of parting day." Malone.

He might as probably have thought on the following passage in the first scene of The Second Part of King Henry IV.:
"---- a sullen *bell*
"Remember'd *knolling* a *departed* friend." Steevens.

/2 *Chief nourisher in life's feast;*] So, in Chaucer's Squiere's Tale, v. 10,661; Mr. Tyrwhitt's edition:
"The *norice* of digestion, the *slepe*." Steevens.

/3 ***Glamis** hath murder'd sleep; and therefore **Cawdor***
*Shall sleep no more, **Macbeth** shall sleep no more!*] This triple menace, accommodated to the different titles of Macbeth, is too quaint to be received as the natural ebullition of a guilty mind. Introduce the adjuncts of a modern nobleman in the same manner, and the fault of the passage will become yet more conspicuous: as for instance --
"*Norfolk* hath murder'd sleep; and therefore *Surrey*
"Shall sleep no more, *Howard* shall sleep no more!"
Steevens.

'*Glamis hath murdered sleep*; and therefore my lately-acquired dignity can afford no comfort to one who suffers the agony of remorse, -- *Cawdor shall sleep no more*: Nothing can restore to me that peace of mind which I enjoyed in a comparatively humbler state; the once innocent and honourable *Macbeth shall sleep no more*.' If this be, as I trust it is, a fair exposition of this passage, there is no ground for Mr. Steevens's sarcastick pleasantry. Boswell.

109

/4 Give me the daggers.] So, in Soliman and Perseda:
"What, durst thou not? give me the dagger then." Malone.

/5 -- 'tis the eye of childhood,
That fears a painted devil.] So, in Vittoria Corombona, 1612:
"*Terrify babes*, my lord, with *painted devils*." Steevens.

/6 -- gild the faces of the grooms withal,
For it must seem their **guilt**.] Could Shakspeare mean to play upon the similitude of *gild* and *guilt*? Johnson.

This quibble too frequently occurs in the old plays. A few instances (for I could produce a dozen at least) may suffice:
"*Cand.* You have a silver beaker of my wife's?
"*Flu.* You say not true, 'tis *gilt*.
"*Cand.* Then you say true: ----
"And being *gilt*, the *guilt* lies more on you."
Again, in Middleton's comedy of A Mad World my Masters, 1608:
"Though *guilt* condemns, 'tis *gilt* must make us glad."

And, lastly, from Shakspeare himself, Henry IV. Part II.:
"England shall double *gild* his treble *guilt*."
Again, in King Henry V.:
"Have for the *gilt* of France, O *guilt* indeed!" Steevens.

110

/6 Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood, &c.]
Suscipit, ô quantum non ultima Tethys,
Nec genitor nympharum abluit oceanus.
Catullus in Gellium, 83.
<Oimai gar out an Istron ou te Phasin av
Nipsai katharēō tēnde tēn stegēn.> *Sophoc. Oedip.*
Quis eluet me Tanais? aut quæ barbaris
Mæotis undis Pontico incumbens mari?
Non ipse toto magnus oceano pater
Tantum expiarit sceleris! *Senec. Hippol.*
Again, in one of Hall's Satires:
"If Trent or Thames --" &c. Steevens.

Non, si Neptuni fluctu renovare operam des;
Non, mare si totum velit eluere omnibus undis.
Lucret, l. vi. v. 1074. Holt White.

So, in The Insatiate Countess, by Marston, 1613:
"Although the waves of all the northern sea
"Should flow for ever through these guilty hands,
"Yet the sanguinolent stain would extant be." Malone.

/7 The **multitudinous** seas **incarnardine**,] To *incarnardine* is to stain any thing of a flesh colour, or red. *Carnardine* is the old term for *carnation*. So, in a comedy called Any Thing for a Quiet Life:
"Grograms, sattins, velvet fine,
"The rosy-colour'd *carnardine*." Steevens.

Shakspeare's word may be exemplified from Carew's Obsequies to the Lady Anne Hay:
"One shall ensphere thine eyes; another shall
"Impearl thy teeth; a third, thy white and small
"Hand shall besnow; a fourth, *incarnardine*
"Thy rosy cheek." Wakefield.
By *the multitudinous seas*, perhaps, the poet meant, not the seas of every denomination, as the Caspian, &c. (as some have

111

thought,) nor the many-coloured seas, (as others contend,) but the seas which swarm with myriads of inhabitants. Thus Homer:
<Ponton ep' ICHTHUOENTA philōn apaneuthe pherousin.>
The word is used by Ben Jonson, and by Thomas Decker, in The Wonderful Year, 1603, in which we find "the *multitudinous spawn*." It is objected, by Mr. Kenrick, that Macbeth, in his present disposition of mind, would hardly have adverted to a property of the sea, which has so little relation to the object immediately before him; and if Macbeth had really spoken this speech in his castle of Inverness, the remark would be just. But the critick should have remembered, that this speech is not the real

effusion of a distempered mind, but the composition of Shakspeare; of that poet, who has put a circumstantial account of an apothecary's shop into the mouth of Romeo, the moment after he has heard the fatal news of his beloved Juliet's death; and has made Othello, when in the anguish of his heart he determines to kill his wife, digress from the object which agitates his soul, to describe minutely the course of the Pontick sea.

Mr. Steevens objects, in the following note, to this explanation, thinking it more probable that Shakspeare should refer "to some visible quality in the ocean," than "to its concealed inhabitants;" "to the waters that might admit of discoloration," than "to the fishes whose hue could suffer no change from the tinct of blood." But in what page of our author do we find his allusions thus curiously rounded, and complete in all their parts? Or, rather, does not every page of these volumes furnish us with images, crouded on each other, that are not naturally connected, and sometimes are even discordant? Hamlet's proposing to take up *arms* against a *sea* of troubles is a well known example of this kind, and twenty others might be produced. Our author certainly alludes to the waters, which are capable of discoloration, and not to the fishes. His allusion to the waters is expressed by the word *seas*; to which, if he has added an epithet that has no very close connection with the subject immediately before him, he has only followed his usual practice.

If, however, no allusion was intended to the myriads of inhabitants with which the deep is peopled, I believe, by the *multitudinous seas*, was meant, not the *many-waved* ocean, as is suggested, but "the countless masses of waters wherever dispersed on the surface of the globe;" the *multitudes of seas*, as Heywood has it, in a passage quoted below, that perhaps our author re-

membered: and, indeed, it must be owned, that his having the plural, *seas*, seems to countenance such an interpretation; for the singular, *sea*, is equally suited to the epithet *multitudinous*, in the sense of <ichthuoenta>, and would certainly have corresponded better with the subsequent line. Malone.

I believe that Shakspeare referred to some visible quality in the ocean, rather than to its concealed inhabitants; to the waters that might admit of discoloration, and not to the fishes, whose hue could suffer no change from the tinct of blood. Waves appearing over waves are no unapt symbol of a croud. "A sea of heads" is a phrase employed by one of our legitimate poets, but by which of them I do not at present recollect. Blackmore, in his Job, has swelled the same idea to a ridiculous bulk:

"A waving sea of heads was round me spread,
"And still fresh streams the gazing deluge fed."

He who beholds an audience from the stage, or any other multitude gazing on any particular object, must perceive that their heads are raised over each other, *velut unda supervenit undam*. If, therefore, our author, by the "*multitudinous* sea," does not mean the *aggregate of seas*, he must be understood to design the "multitude of waves," or "the waves that have the appearance of a multitude." In Coriolanus we have -- "the many-headed *multitude*." Steevens.

/8 Making the green -- one red.] The same thought occurs in The Downfal of Robert Earl of Huntingdon, 1601:

"He made the *green sea red* with Turkish blood."

Again:

"The *multitudes* of seas died *red* with blood."

Another, not unlike it, is found in Spenser's Fairy Queen, b. ii. c. x. st. 48:

"The whiles with blood they all the shore did stain,
"And the *grey ocean into purple dye*."

Again, in the 19th Song of Drayton's Polyolbion:

"And the vast *greenish sea discolour'd like to blood*."

Steevens.

The same thought is also found in The Two Noble Kinsmen, by Fletcher, 1634:

"Thou mighty one, that with thy power hast turn'd
"*Green Neptune into purple*."

The present passage is one of those alluded to in a note at the end of As You Like It, vol. vi. on the word *quintaine*, in which, I apprehend, our author's words have been refined into a sense that he never thought of. The other is in Othello:

"Put out the light, and then put out the light."

113

The line before us, on the suggestion of the ingenious author of The Gray's-Inn Journal, has been printed in some late editions in the following manner:

"Making the green -- one red."

Every part of this line, as thus regulated, appears to me exceptionable. *One red* does not sound to my ear as the phraseology of the age of Elizabeth; and *the green*, for the green *one*, or for the green *sea*, is, I am persuaded, unexampled. The quaintness introduced by such a regulation seems of an entirely different colour from the quaintnesses of Shakspeare. He would have written, I have no doubt, "Making the green *sea*, red,"
(So, in The Tempest:

"And 'twixt *the green sea* and the azure vault
"Set roaring war.")

if he had not used the word *seas* in the preceding line, which forced him to employ another word here. As, to prevent the ear being offended, we have, in the passage before us, "the *green* one," instead of "the green *sea*," so we have in King Henry VIII. Act I. Sc. II. "lame *ones*," to avoid a similar repetition:

"They have all new *legs*, and *lame ones*."

Again, in The Merchant of Venice:

"A stage where every man must play a part,
"And mine a *sad one*."

Though the punctuation of the old copy is very often faulty, yet in all doubtful cases it ought, when supported by more decisive circumstances, to have some *little* weight. In the present instance, the line is pointed as in my text:

"Making the green one, red." Malone.

If the new punctuation be dismissed, we must correct the foregoing line, and read -- "the multitudinous *sea*; for how will the plural -- *seas*, accord with the -- green *one*?" Besides, the sense conveyed by the arrangement which Mr. Malone would reject, is

countenanced by a passage in Hamlet:

"Hath now his dread and black complexion smear'd
"With heraldry more dismal; head to foot
"Now is he *total gules*."

i. e. *one red*. The expression -- "one red," may also be justified by language yet more ancient than that of Shakspeare. In Genesis, ii. 24, (and several other places in scripture) we have -- "one flesh." Again, in our Liturgy: "-- be *made one* fold under one Shepherd." Again, in Milton's Comus, v. 133:

"And makes *one blot* of all the air."

But, setting aside examples, are there not many *unique* phrases in our author? Steevens.

114

/9 My hands are of your colour; but I shame
To wear a **heart so white.**] A similar antithesis is found in Marlowe's Lust's Dominion, written before 1593:

"Your cheeks are black, let not your *soul look white*."

Malone.

/1 To know my deed, -- 'twere best not know myself] i. e. While I have *the thoughts* of this deed, it were best not know, or *be lost* to, myself. This is an answer to the lady's reproof:

"---- be not lost
"So poorly in your thoughts." Warburton.

/2 Wake Duncan with thy knocking!] Macbeth is addressing the person who knocks at the outward gate. -- Sir W. D'Avenant, in his alteration of this play, reads -- (and intended probably to point) "Wake, Duncan, with *this* knocking!" conceiving that Macbeth called upon Duncan to awake. From the same misapprehension, I once thought his emendation right; but there is certainly no need of change. Malone.

See Mr. Malone's extract from Mr. Whateley's Remarks on some of the Characters of Shakspeare, at the conclusion of this tragedy.

Steevens.

/3 -- **Ay**, 'would thou could'st!] The old copy has -- *I*; but as *ay*, the affirmative particle, was thus written, I conceive it to have been designed here. Had Shakspeare meant to express "*I* would," he might, perhaps, only have given us -- *'Would*, as on many other occasions. -- The repentant exclamation of Macbeth, in my judgment, derives force from the present change; a change which has been repeatedly made in spelling this ancient substitute for the word of enforcement -- *ay*, in the very play before us.

If it be urged, that the line is roughen'd by the reading I would introduce, let not the following verse, in Act III. Sc. VI. of this very tragedy, be forgotten:

"Was not that nobly done? *Ay*, and wisely too?"

Steevens.

115

/4 *Scene III.*] Though Shakspeare (see Sir J. Reynolds's excellent note on Act I. Sc. VI. p. 69,) might have designed this scene as another instance of what is called the *repose* in painting,

I cannot help regarding it in a different light. A glimpse of comedy was expected by our author's audience in the most serious drama; and where else could the merriment, which he himself was always struggling after, be so happily introduced? Steevens.

/5 -- he should have **old** turning the key.] i. e. *frequent, more than enough*. So, in King Henry IV. Part II, the Drawer says, "Then here will be old *utis*." See note on this passage. Steevens.

/6 -- hanged himself on the expectation of plenty:] So, in Hall's Satires, b. iv. sat. 6:

"Each muckworme will be rich with lawlesse gaine,
"Altho he smother up mowes of seven years graine;
"*And hang'd himself when corne grows cheap again.*"

Malone.

/7 -- **napkins** enough --] i. e. handkerchiefs. So, in Othello:
"Your *napkin* is too little." Steevens.

/8 -- here's an equivocator, -- who committed treason enough for God's sake,] Meaning a Jesuit: an order so troublesome to the state in Queen Elizabeth and King James the First's time. The inventors of the execrable doctrine of *equivocation*. Warburton.

116

/8 -- here's an English tailor come hither, for stealing out of a French hose:] The archness of the joke consists in this, that a French hose being very short and strait, a tailor must be master of his trade who could steal anything from thence. Warburton.

Dr. Warburton has said this at random. The *French hose* (according to Stubbs, in his Anatomie of Abuses,) were in the year 1595, much in fashion: "The Gallic hosen *are made very large and wide*, reaching down to their knees only, with three or foure gardes apeece laid down along either hose."

Again, in The Ladies Privilege, 1640;

"-------- wear their *long*
"*Parisian* breeches, with five points at knees,
"Whose tags, concurring with their harmonious spurs,
"Afford rare music; then have they doublets
"So short i' th' waist, they seem as twere begot
"Upon their doublets by their cloaks, which to save stuff
"Are but a year's growth longer than their skirts;
"And all this magazine of device is furnish'd
"By your French taylor."

Again, in The Defence of Coneycatching, 1592: "Blest be the *French* sleeves and breech verdingales that grants them (the tailors) leave to coney-catch so mightily." Steevens.

When Mr. Steevens censured Dr. Warburton in this place, he forgot the uncertainty of *French fashions*. In The Treasury of ancient and modern Times, 1613, we have an account (from Guyon, I suppose,) of the old French dresses: "*Mens hose* answered in length to their short-skirted doublets; being made

close to their limbes, wherein they had no meanes for pockets." And Withers, in his Satyr against Vanity, ridicules "the spruze, *diminitive*, neat, *Frenchman's hose*." Farmer.

From the following passages in The Scornful Lady, by Beaumont and Fletcher, which appeared about the year 1613, it may be collected that *large* breeches were then in fashion:

Saville. [an old steward.]. "A comelier wear, I wis, than your *dangling slop*s." Afterwards Young Loveless says to the steward, -- "This is as plain as your old *minikin breeches*."
Malone.

117

/9 -- the **primrose way** to the **everlasting bonfire.**] So, in Hamlet:

"Himself the *primrose path* of dalliance treads."

Again, in All's Well That Ends Well: " -- the *flowery way* that leads, &c. to the *great fire*." Chaucer also, in his Persone's Tale, calls idleness "the *greene path-way* to hell." Steevens.

/1 -- till the second **cock:**] Cockcrowing. So, in King Lear: "-- he begins at curfew, and walks till the first *cock*." Again, in The Twelfth Mery Ieste of the Widow Edith, 1573:

"The time they pas merely til ten of the clok,
"Yea, and I shall not lye, till after the first *cok*." Steevens.

It appears, from a passage in Romeo and Juliet, that Shakspeare means, that they were carousing till *three o'clock*:

"---- The *second cock* has crow'd;
"The curfew-bell has toll'd: 'tis *three* o'clock." Malone.

/2 -- **in** a sleep,] Surely we should read -- *into* a sleep, or -- *into* sleep. M. Mason.

118

The old reading is the true one. Our author frequently uses *in* for *into*. So, in King Richard III.:

"But, first, I'll turn yon fellow *in* his grave."

Again, ibid.:

"Falsely to draw me *in* these vile suspects." Steevens.

/3 I believe, drink gave thee the lie **last night.**] It is not very easy to ascertain precisely the time when Duncan is murdered. The conversation that passes between Banquo and Macbeth, in the first scene of this Act, might lead us to suppose that when Banquo retired to rest it was not *much* after twelve o'clock:

"*Ban.* How goes the night, boy?
"*Fle.* The moon is down; I have not heard the clock.
"*Ban.* And she goes down at *twelve*.
"*Fle.* I take't 'tis later sir."

The King was then "abed;" and immediately after Banquo retires Lady Macbeth strikes upon the bell, and Macbeth commits the murder. In a few minutes afterwards the knocking at the gate commences, (end of Sc. II.) and no time can be supposed to elapse between the second and the third scene, because the Porter gets up in consequence of the knocking: yet here Macduff

talks of *last night*, and says that he was commanded to call *timely* on the King, and that he fears he has almost overpass'd the hour; and the Porter tells him "we were carousing till *the second cock*;" so that we must suppose it to be now at least six o'clock; for Macduff has already expressed his surprize that the Porter should lie *so late*.

From Lady Macbeth's words in the fifth Act, -- "One --two -- 'tis time to do't," -- it *should seem* that the murder was committed at *two* o'clock, and that hour is certainly not inconsistent with the conversation above quoted between Banquo and his son; for we are not told how much later than twelve it was when Banquo retired to rest: but even that hour of *two* will not correspond with what the Porter and Macduff say in the present scene.

I suspect our author, (who is seldom very exact in his computation of time,) in fact meant, that the murder should be supposed to be committed a little before *day-break*, which exactly corresponds with the speech of Macduff now before us, though not so well with the other circumstances already mentioned, or with Lady Macbeth's desiring her husband to put on his night-gown, (that he might have the appearance of one newly roused from bed,) lest occasion should call them, "and show them to be *watchers*;" which may signify persons who sit up *late* at night, but can hardly mean those who do not go to bed till *day-break*.

119

Shakspeare, I believe, was led to fix the time of Duncan's murder near the break of day by Holinshed's account of the murder of King Duffe, already quoted: "he was long in his oratorie, and there continued till it was *late in the night*." Donwald's servants, "enter the chamber where the king laie, *a little before cocks crow*, where they secretlie cut his throat." Donwald himself sat up with the officers of the guard the whole of the night. Malone.

/4 ---- I made a shift to **cast** him.] To *cast him up*, to ease my stomach of him. The equivocation is between *cast* or *throw*, as a term of wrestling, and *cast* or *cast up*. Johnson.

I find a similar play upon words, in an old comedy, entitled, The Two Angry Women of Abington, printed 1599: "-- to-night he's a good huswife, he reels all that he wrought to-day, and he were good now to play at dice, for he *casts* excellent well."
Steevens.

/5 The labour we delight in, **physicks** pain.] i. e. affords a cordial to it. So, in The Winter's Tale, Act I.Sc. I.: "It is a gallant child; one that, indeed, *physicks* the subject, makes old hearts fresh." Steevens.

120

So, in The Tempest:
"There be some sports are *painful*; and their *labour*
"*Delight* in them sets off." Malone.

/6 For 'tis my **limited** service.] *Limited*, for *appointed*.

Warburton.

So, in Timon:

"---- for there is boundless theft,
"In *limited* professions."

i. e. professions to which people are regularly and legally appointed. Steevens.

/7 Goes the king
From hence to-day?] I have supplied the preposition -- *from*, for the sake of metre. So, in a former scene, Duncan says,

"---- *From* hence to Inverness," &c. Steevens.

/8 **He does:** -- he did appoint so.] The words -- *he does* -- are omitted by Pope, Theobald, Hanmer, and Warburton. But perhaps Shakspeare designed Macbeth to shelter himself under an immediate falshood, till a sudden recollection of guilt restrained his confidence, and unguardedly disposed him to qualify his assertion; as he well knew the King's journey was effectually prevented by his death. A similar trait had occurred in a former scene:

"*L. M.* And when goes hence?
"*M.* To-morrow, -- as he purposes." Steevens.

121

/9 ---- strange screams of death;
And prophecying, with accents terrible,
Of dire combustion, and confus'd events,
New hatch'd to the woeful time. The obscure bird
Clamour'd the live-long night: some say, the earth
Was feverous, and did shake.] These lines, I think, should be rather regulated thus:

"---- prophecying with accents terrible,
"Of dire combustion and confus'd events.
"New-hatch'd to the woeful time, the obscure bird
"Clamour'd the live-long night. Some say, the earth
"Was feverous and did shake."

A *prophecy* of an *event new-hatch'd* seems to be a *prophecy* of an *event past*. And a *prophecy new-hatch'd* is a wry expression. The term *new-hatch'd* is properly applicable to a *bird*, and that birds of ill omen should be *new-hatch'd to the woeful time*, that is, should appear in uncommon numbers, is very consistent with the rest of the prodigies here mentioned, and with the universal disorder into which nature is described as thrown by the perpetration of this horrid murder. Johnson.

I think Dr. Johnson's regulation of these lines is improper. *Prophecying* is what is *new-hatch'd*, and in the metaphor holds the place of *the egg*. The *events* are the fruit of such hatching.
Steevens.

I think Steevens has justly explained this passage, but should wish to read -- *prophecyings* in the plural. M. Mason.

Dr. Johnson observes, that "a *prophecy* of an *event new-hatch'd* seems to be a *prophecy of an event past*. And a *prophecy new-hatch'd* is a wry expression." The construction suggested by Mr.

Steevens meets with the first objection. Yet the following passage in which the same imagery is found, inclines me to believe that our author meant, that *new-hatch'd* should be referred to *events*, though the events were yet to come. Allowing for his usual inaccuracy with respect to the active and passive participle, the events may be said to be "the *hatch* and brood of time."
See King Henry IV. Part II.:

"The which observ'd, a man may *prophesy*,
"With a near aim, of the main chance of things
"*As yet not come to life*; which in their seeds
"And weak beginnings lie entreasured.
"Such *things* become the *hatch* and brood of *time*."

Here certainly it is the *thing* or *event*, and not the *prophecy*,

122

which is the *hatch* of *time*; but it must be acknowledged, the word "*become*" sufficiently marks the future time. If therefore the construction that I have suggested be the true one, *hatch'd* must be here used for *hatching*, or "*in the state of being hatch'd*." -- "*To* the woeful time," means -- to *suit* the woeful time.
Malone.

"---- some say, the earth
"Was feverous, and did shake." So, in Coriolanus:
"---- as if the world
"Was feverous, and did tremble." Steevens.

/1 -------- Tongue, **nor** heart,
Cannot conceive, &c.]. The use of the two negatives, not to make an affirmative, but to deny more strongly, is very common in our author. So, in Julius Cæsar, Act III. Sc. I.:

"---- there is no harm
"Intended to your person, *nor* to *no* Roman else."

Steevens.

123

/2 -- this horror!] Here the old copy adds -- *Ring the bell*.
Steevens.

The subsequent hemistich -- "What's the business?" -- which completes the metre of the preceding line, without the words "Ring the bell," affords, in my opinion, a strong presumptive proof that these words were only a marginal direction. It should be remembered that the stage directions were formerly often couched in imperative terms: "Draw a knife;" "Play musick;" "Ring the bell:" &c. In the original copy we have here indeed also -- *Bell rings*, as a marginal direction; but this was inserted, I imagine, from the players misconceiving what Shakspeare had in truth set down in his copy as a dramatick direction to the property-man, ("Ring the bell.") for a part of Macduff's speech; and, to distinguish the direction which they inserted, from the supposed words of the speaker, they departed from the usual imperative form. Throughout the whole of the preceding scene we have constantly an imperative direction to the prompter: "Knock within."
I suppose, it was in consequence of an imperfect recollection of

this hemistich, that Mr. Pope, having, in his Preface, charged the editors of the first folio with introducing stage-directions into their author's text, in support of his assertion, quotes the following line:

"My queen is murder'd: -- *ring the little bell.*"

a line that is not found in any edition of these plays that I have met with, nor, I believe, in any other book. Malone.

/3 -- speak, speak, --] These words, which violate the metre, were probably added by the players, who were of opinion that -- *speak*, in the following line, demanded such an introduction. Steevens.

124

/4 The repetition, in a woman's ear,
Would murder as it fell.] So, in Hamlet:
"---- He would drown the stage with tears,
"And cleave the general ear with horrid speech."

Again, in The Puritan, 1607: "The punishments that shall follow you in this world, would *with horrour kill the ear* should hear them related." Malone.

/5 What, in our house?] This is very fine. Had she been innocent, nothing but the murder itself, and not any of its aggravating circumstances, would naturally have affected her. As it was, her business was to appear highly disordered at the news. Therefore, like one who has her thoughts about her, she seeks for an aggravating circumstance, that might be supposed most to affect her personally; not considering, that by placing it there, she discovered rather a concern for herself than for the King. On the contrary, her husband, who had repented the act, and was now labouring under the horrors of a recent murder, in his exclamation, gives all the marks of sorrow for the fact itself. Warburton.

/6 Had I but died an hour before this chance,
I had liv'd a blessed time;] So, in The Winter's Tale:
"-------- Undone, undone!
"If I might die within this hour, I have liv'd
"To die when I desire." Malone.

125

/7 -- **badg'd** with blood,] I once thought that our author wrote *bath'd*; but *badg'd* is certainly right. So, in The Second Part of King Henry VI.:

"With murder's crimson *badge*." Malone.

/8 ---- their daggers, which, unwip'd, we found
Upon their pillows:] This idea, perhaps, was taken from The Man of Lawes Tale, by Chaucer, l. 5027, Mr. Tyrwhitt's edit.:

"And in the bed the blody knif he fond."

See also the foregoing lines. Steevens.

/9 -------- Here lay Duncan,
His **silver** skin **lac'd** with his **golden** blood;] Mr. Pope has endeavoured to improve one of these lines, by substituting

goary blood for *golden blood*; but it may be easily admitted that

126

he, who could, on such an occasion, talk of *lacing the silver skin*, would *lace it* with *golden blood*. No amendment can be made to this line, of which every word is equally faulty, but by a general blot.

It is not improbable, that Shakspeare put these forced and unnatural metaphors into the mouth of Macbeth, as a mark of artifice and dissimulation, to show the difference between the studied language of hypocrisy, and the natural outcries of sudden passion. This whole speech, so considered, is a remarkable instance of judgment, as it consists entirely of antithesis and metaphor.
Johnson.

"His *silver* skin *lac'd* with his *golden* blood." The allusion is to the decoration of the richest habits worn in the age of Shakspeare, when it was usual to *lace* cloth of *silver* with *gold*, and cloth of *gold* with *silver*. The second of these fashions is mentioned in Much Ado About Nothing, Act III. Sc. IV.: "Cloth of *gold, -- laced* with *silver*."

To *gild* any thing *with blood* is a very common phrase in the old plays. So Heywood, in the second part of his Iron Age, 1632:

"---- we have *gilt* our Greekish arms
"*With blood* of our own nation."

Shakspeare repeats the image in King John:

"Their armours that march'd hence so *silver* bright,
"Hither return all *gilt* with Frenchmen's blood."
Steevens.

We meet with the same antithesis in many other places. Thus, in Much Ado About Nothing:

"------ to see the fish
"Cut with her *golden* oars the *silver* stream."

Again, in The Comedy of Errors:

"Spread o'er the *silver* waves thy *golden* hairs." Malone.

The allusion is so ridiculous on such an occasion, that it discovers the declaimer not to be affected in the manner he would represent himself. The whole speech is an unnatural mixture of far-fetched and common-place thoughts, that shows him to be acting a part. Warburton.

/1 -- a breach in nature,
For ruin's wasteful entrance:] This comparison occurs likewise in Sidney's Arcadia, lib. iii.: "-- battering down the wals of their armour, making *breaches* almost in every place, for troupes of wounds to *enter*." Again, in A Herring's Tayle, a poem, 1598:

"A batter'd *breach where* troopes of wounds may *enter in*."
Steevens.

127

/2 Unmannerly **breech'd** with gore:] The expression may mean, that the daggers were covered with blood, quite to their *breeches*, i. e. their *hilts* or *handles*. The lower end of a cannon is called the *breech* of it; and it is known that both to *breech* and to

unbreech a gun are common terms. So, in Beaumont and Fletcher's Custom of the Country;

"The main-spring's weaken'd that holds up his cock,
"He lies to be new *breech'd*."

Again, in A Cure for a Cuckold, by Webster and Rowley:

"*Unbreech* his barrel, and discharge his bullets."

Steevens.

Mr. Warton has justly observed that the word *unmannerly* is here used adverbially. So *friendly* is used for *friendily* in King Henry IV. Part II. and *faulty* for *faultily* in As You Like It.

So, in Henry VIII.:

"If I have us'd myself *unmannerly* --."

So also Taylor the Water-poet, Works, 1630, p. 173: "These and more the like such pretty aspersions, the outcast rubbish of my company hath very liberally and *unmannerly* and ingratefully bestowed upon me."

A passage in the preceding scene, in which Macbeth's visionary dagger is described, strongly supports Mr. Steevens's interpretation:

"---- I see thee still:
"And on thy blade, and *dudgeon*, [i. e. *hilt* or *haft*] gouts of *blood*,
"Which was not so before."

The following lines in King Henry VI. Part III. may, perhaps, after all, form the best comment on these controverted words:

"And full as oft came Edward to my side,
"With purple faulchion, *painted to the hilt*
"*In blood* of those that had encounter'd him."

So also, in The Mirrour for Magistrates, 1587:

"---- a naked sword he had,
"That to the *hilts* with blood was all embrued."

Though so much has been written on this passage, the commentators have forgotten to account for the attendants of Duncan being furnished with daggers. The fact is, that in Shakspeare's time a dagger was a common weapon, and was usually carried by servants and others, suspended at their backs. So, in Romeo and Juliet:

"Then I will lay the *serving creature's dagger* on your pate."

Again, ibid.:

"This *dagger* hath mista'en; for lo! his house
"Is empty on the *back* of Montague,
"And is mis-sheathed in my daughter's bosom!" Malone.

The sense is, in plain language, "Daggers filthily -- in a foul manner, -- sheath'd with blood." A *scabbard* is called a *pilche*, a *leather coat*, in Romeo; -- but you will ask, whence the allusion of *breeches*? Dr. Warburton and Dr. Johnson have well observed, that this speech of Macbeth is very artfully made up of unnatural thoughts and language. In 1605, (the year in which the play appears to have been written,) a book was published by Peter Erondell, (with commendatory Poems by Daniel, and other wits of the time,) called The French Garden, or a Summer Dayes Labour; containing, among other matters, some dialogues of a dramatick cast, which, I am persuaded, our author read in the

English; and from which he took, as he supposed, for his present purpose, this quaint expression. I will quote *literatim* from the 6th dialogue: “Boy! you do nothing but play tricks here, go fetch your master’s silver-hatched daggers, you have not brushed their *breeches*, bring the brushes, and brush them before me.” -- Shakspeare was deceived by the pointing, and evidently supposes *breeches* to be a new and affected term for *scabbards*. But had he been able to have read the French on the other page, even as a *learner*, he must have been set right at once: “Garçon, vous ne faites que badiner, allez querir les poignards argentez de vos maistres, vous n’avez pas espousseté leur *hâut-de-chausses*,’ -- their *breeches*, in the common sense of the word: as in the next sentence *bas-de-chausses, stockings*, and so on through all the articles of dress. Farmer.

/3 Look to the lady.] Mr. Whateley, from whose ingenious remarks on this play I have already made a large extract, justly observes that, “on Lady Macbeth’s seeming to faint, -- while Banquo and Macduff are solicitous about her, Macbeth, by his unconcern, betrays a consciousness that the fainting is feigned.”

I may add, that a bold and hardened villain would, from a refined policy, have assumed the *appearance* of being alarmed about her, lest this very imputation should arise against him: the irresolute Macbeth is not sufficiently at ease to act such a part. Malone.

129

/4 -------- **here**,
Where our fate, hid **within** an augre-hole,] The oldest copy reads only “-- *in* an augre-hole.” I have adopted the correction of the second folio -- *within*.

Mr. Malone reads --
“*Here*, where our fate, hid *in* an augre-hole.” Steevens.

In the old copy the word *here* is printed in the preceding line. The lines are disposed so irregularly in the original edition of this play, that the modern editors have been obliged to take many liberties similar to mine in the regulation of the metre. In this very speech the words *our tears* do not make part of the following line, but are printed in that subsequent to it. The editor of the second folio, to complete the measure, reads -- *within* an augre-hole. A word having been accidentally omitted in King Henry V.: “-- Let us die *in* [fight],” Mr. Theobald, with equal impropriety, reads there -- “Let us die *instant*:” but I believe neither transcriber or compositor ever omitted half a word. Malone.

More skilful and accurate compositors than those employed in our present republication, cannot easily be found; and yet, I believe, even *they* will not deny their having occasionally furnished examples of the omission of *half* a word.

“---- within an *augre-hole*.” So, in Coriolanus:
“---- confin’d
“Into an *augre’s bore*.” Steevens.

/5 Nor our strong sorrow **on**
The foot of motion.] The old copy -- *upon*. Steevens.

/6 And when we have our naked frailties hid,
That suffer in exposure,] i. e. “when we have clothed our half drest bodies, which may take cold from being exposed to the air.” It is possible that, in such a cloud of words, the meaning might escape the reader. Steevens.

The Porter, in his short speech, had observed, that this “place

130

[i. e. the court in which Banquo and the rest now are,] is too *cold* for hell.” Mr. Steevens’s explanation is likewise supported by the following passage in Timon of Athens:
“---- Call the creatures,
“Whose *naked natures* live in all the spight
“Of wreakful heaven.” Malone.

/7 In the great hand of God I stand; and, thence,
Against the undivulg’d **pretence** I fight
Of treasonous malice.] Pretence is *intention, design*, a sense in which the word is often used by Shakspeare. So, in The Winter’s Tale: “-- conspiring with Camillo to take away the life of our sovereign lord the king, thy royal husband, the *pretence* whereof being by circumstance partly laid open.” Again, in this tragedy of Macbeth:
“What good could they *pretend*?”
i. e. intend to themselves. Banquo’s meaning is, -- in our present state of doubt and uncertainty about this murder, I have nothing to do but to put myself under the direction of God; and, relying on his support, I here declare myself an eternal enemy to this treason, and to all its *further designs that have not yet come to light*. Steevens.

Hand, as Mr. Upton has observed, is here used for *power*, or *providence*. So, in Psalm. xxii.: “Deliver my soul from the sword, my darling from the *power* [Heb. from the *hand*] of the dog.” In King Henry V. we have again the same expression:
“---- Let us deliver
“Our puissance into *the hand of God*.” Malone.

131

/8 ---- the near in blood,
The nearer bloody.] Meaning, that he suspected Macbeth to be the murderer; for he was the *nearest in blood* to the two princes, being the cousin-german of Duncan. Steevens.

/9 This murderous shaft that’s shot,
Hath not yet lighted;] The design to fix the murder upon some innocent person has not yet taken effect. Johnson.

“The shaft is not yet lighted, and though it has done mischief in its flight, we have reason to apprehend still more before it has spent its force and falls to the ground.” The end for which the murder was committed is not yet attained. The death of the king only, could neither insure the crown to Macbeth, nor accomplish any other purpose, while his sons were yet living, who had,

therefore, just reason to apprehend they should be removed by the same means.

Such another thought occurs in Bussy D'Ambois, 1607:

"The chain-shot of thy lust *is yet aloft*,
"And it must murder," &c. Steevens.

132

/1 -- darkness does the face of earth intomb,
When living light should kiss it?] After the murder of King Duffe, (says Holinshed,) "for the space of six moneths togither there appeared no sunne by day, nor moone by night, in anie part of the realme, but still was the sky covered with continual clouds; and sometimes such outrageous winds arose with lightenings and tempests, that the people were in great fear of present destruction." -- It is evident that Shakspeare had this passage in his thoughts. Malone.

/2 -- in her **pride of place**,] Finely expressed, for *confidence in its quality*. Warburton.

In a place of which she seemed proud; -- in an elevated situation. Malone.

/3 -- by a *mousing* owl --] i. e. by an owl that was hunting for mice, as her proper prey. Whalley.

This is also found among the prodigies consequent on King Duffe's murder: "There was a *sparhawk* strangled by an owl."
Steevens.

Mousing is a very effective epithet in this passage, as contrasting the falcon, in her pride of place, with a bird that was accustomed to seek its prey on the ground. Talbot.

133

/4 -- minions of **their** race,] Theobald reads --
" ---- minions of *the* race,"
very probably, and very poetically. Johnson.

Their is probably the true reading, the same expression being found in Romeus and Juliet, 1562, a poem which Shakspeare had certainly read:

"There were two ancient stocks, which Fortune high did
place
"Above the rest, endew'd with wealth, the nobler *of their*
race."

In our author's time a *race* of horses was the term for what is now called a *stud*. Thus Thomas Blundeville, in The four chiefest Offices belonging to Horsemanship: "The horses there bred [at Naples] be of so strong and healthful complexion, as they will not quaik wheresoever they go; and that they prosper so well heere in this land as in any other foraine country, not only the Queenes Majesties *race*, but also many other mens *races*, and especially Sir Nicholas Arnolds *race*, doth well testifie." Malone.

I prefer "minions of *the* race," i. e. the *favourite* horses on

the race-ground. Thus, in Henry IV. Part I. we have “minions of *the* moon.” The horses of Duncan have just been celebrated for being *swift*.

Most of the prodigies just before mentioned are related by Holinshed, as accompanying King Duffe’s death; and it is in particular asserted, “that horses of singular beauty and swiftness did eat their own flesh.” Steevens.

134

/5 What good could they **pretend**?] To *pretend* is here to *propose to themselves*, to *set before themselves* as a motive of action. Johnson.

To *pretend*, in this instance, as in many others, is simply to *intend*, to *design*. Steevens.

So, in Goulart’s Histories, 1607: “The carauell arriued safe at her *pretended* port.” p. 575. Again, p. 586: “As for the Sclauonian captaine, he cast himselfe into the sea, meaning to swimme vnto the shelfes neere vnto the fort, where hee *pretended* to saue himselfe.” Ritson.

/6 -- that **wilt** ravin up --] The old copy reads -- *will*. Corrected by Sir Thomas Hanmer. Malone.

/7 -- Then ’tis most like,] To complete the measure, I suppose, with Sir T. Hanmer, that our author wrote --
“*Why*, then *it is* most like --.” Steevens.

/8 -- Then ’tis most like,
The sovereignty will fall upon Macbeth.] Macbeth, by his birth, stood next in the succession to the crown, immediately after the sons of Duncan. King Malcolm, Duncan’s predecessor, had two daughters, the eldest of whom was the mother of Duncan, the youngest the mother of Macbeth. *Holinshed.* Steevens.

/9 ---- Colme-kill;] *Colm-kill*, is the famous *Iona*, one of the western isles, which Dr. Johnson visited, and describes in his Tour. Holinshed scarcely mentions the death of any of the ancient kings of Scotland, without taking notice of their being buried with their predecessors in *Colme-kill*. Steevens.

It is now called *Icolmkill*. *Kill*, in the Erse language, signifies a *burying-place*. Malone.

No: *kil* is a *cell*. See Jamieson’s Dictionary *in voce*. *Colme-kill* is the *cell* or *chapel* of St. Columbo. Boswell.

135

/1 Thou hast it now, King, Cawdor, **Glamis**, all,
As the weird women **promis’d**;] Here we have another passage, that might lead us to suppose that the thaneship of Glamis descended to Macbeth subsequent to his meeting the weird sisters, though that event had certainly taken place before. See p. 46. Malone.

/2 (As upon thee, Macbeth, their speeches shine,) --] *Shine*, for *prosper*. Warburton.

136

Shine, for "appear with all the *lustre* of *conspicuous* truth." Johnson.

I rather incline to Dr. Warburton's interpretation. So, in King Henry VI. Part I. Sc. II.:

"Heaven, and our lady gracious, hath it pleased
"To *shine* on my contemptible estate." Steevens.

/3 -- a **solemn** supper, sir,] This was the phrase of the time. So, Sir Henry Wotton, Reliquiæ Wottonianæ, edit. 1651, p. 475: "Yesternight the Count Palatine invited all the councell to a *solemn supper* which was well ordered." Malone.

It was used in private life, and seems to have meant nothing more than a supper given on a regular invitation. So, Howell, in a letter to Sir Thomas Hawke, 1636: "I was invited yesternight to a *solemn supper*, by B. J. [Ben Jonson] where you were deeply remembered." Boswell.

/4 **Let** your highness
Command **upon** me;] Thus the old copy, and perhaps rightly, though modern editors have been content to read -- "*Lay* your highness," &c. Every uncouth phrase in an ancient author should not be suspected of corruption.

In As You Like It an expression somewhat similar occurs:

"And take *upon command* what help we have." Steevens.

The change was suggested by Sir W. D'Avenant's alteration of this play: it was made by Mr. Rowe. Malone.

I should rather read *lay*, or *set* your command upon me, than

137

let: for unless *command* is used as a noun, there is nothing to which the following words -- "to the which" -- can possibly refer. M. Mason.

/5 -- to the which, my **duties**
Are with a most indissoluble tie
For ever **knit**.] So, in our author's Dedication of his Rape of Lucrece, to Lord Southampton, 1594: "What I have done is yours, being part in all I have devoted yours. Were my worth greater, my *duty* would show greater; mean time as it is, it is *bound* to your lordship." Malone.

/6 -- we'll **take** to-morrow.] Thus the old copy, and, in my opinion, rightly. Mr. Malone would read --

"---- we'll *talk* to-morrow." Steevens.

I proposed this emendation some time ago, and having since met with two other passages in which the same mistake has happened, I trust I shall be pardoned for giving it a place in my text.

In King Henry V. edit. 1623, we find,

"For I can *take* [talke] for Pistol's cock is up."

Again, in The Two Gentlemen of Verona, 1623, p. 31: "It is no matter for that, so she sleep not in her *take*." [instead of *talke*, the old spelling of *talk*.] On the other hand, in the first scene of Hamlet, we find in the folio, 1623:

"---- then no planet strikes,
"No fairy *talkes* ----."

So again, in the play before us:

"The interim having weigh'd it, let us *speak*
"Our free hearts each to other."

Again, Macbeth says to his wife:

"---- We will *speak* further."

Again, in a subsequent scene between Macbeth and the assassins:

"Was it not yesterday we *spoke* together?"

In Othello we have almost the same sense, expressed in other words:

"-------- *To-morrow*, with the earliest,
"*Let me have speech with you.*"

Had Shakspeare written *take*, he would surely have said -- "but we'll *take't* to-morrow." So, in the first scene of the second Act, Fleance says to his father: "I *take't*, 'tis later, sir."

Malone.

I do not perceive the necessity of change. The poet's meaning could not be misunderstood. His end was answered, if his language was intelligible to his audience. He little supposed the time would arrive, when his words were to abide the strictest scrutiny of verbal criticism. With the ease of conversation, therefore, he copied its incorrectness. To *take*, is to *use*, to *employ*. To *take* time is a common phrase; and where is the impropriety of saying -- "we'll *take* to-morrow?" i. e. we will *make use of* to-morrow. So, in King Henry VI. Part III. Act V. Sc. I.:

"Come, Warwick, *take* the time."

Banquo, "without a prompter," must have understood, by this familiar expression, that Macbeth would employ to-morrow, as he wished to have employed to-day.

When Pistol says -- "I can *take*" -- he means, 'he can kindle, or lay hold, as fire does on its object.' -- So Dryden, speaking of flames:

"At first they warm, then scorch, and then they *take*."

Again, in Froissart's Chronicle, vol. ii. cap. C.xcii. fol. CCxliii. b. "-- he put one of the torches that his servauntes helde, so nere, that the heate of the fyre entred into the flaxe (wherein if fyre *take*, there is no remedy)," &c.

That the words *talk* and *take* may occasionally have been printed for each other, is a fact which no man conversant with the press will deny; and yet the bare possibility of a similar mistake in the present instance, ought to have little weight in opposition to an old reading sufficiently intelligible.

The word *take* is employed in quite a different sense by Fleance, and means -- "to understand in any particular sense or manner." So, Bacon: "I *take it*, that iron brass, called white brass, hath some mixture of tin." Again, in King Henry VIII.:

"-------- there, I take it,
"They may, cum privilegio, wear away
"The lag end of their lewdness." Steevens.

/7 -- go not my horse the **better**,] i. e. if he does not go well. Shakspeare often uses the *comparative* for the *positive* and *superlative*. So, in King Lear:

139

"---- her smiles and tears
"Were like a *better* day."

Again, in Macbeth:

"---- it hath cow'd my *better* part of man."

Again, in King John:

"Nay, but make haste; the *better* foot before."

Again, in P. Holland's translation of Pliny's Nat. Hist. b. ix. c. xlvi.: "Many are caught out of their fellowes hands, if they bestirre not themselves the *better*." Thus also Virgil:

"---- oblitos famæ *melioris* amantes."

It may, however, mean, 'If my horse does not go the better for the haste I shall be in to avoid the night.' Steevens.

Mr. Steevens's first interpretation is, I believe, the true one. It is supported by the following passage in Stowe's Survey of London, 1603: "-- and hee that hit it not full, if he *rid* not the *faster*, had a sound blow in his neck, with a bag full of sand hanged on the other end." Malone.

/8 And so I do **commend** you to their backs.] In old language one of the senses of to *commend* was to *commit*, and such is the meaning here. So, in King Richard II.:

"And now he doth *commend* his arms to rust." Malone.

So, in Milton's Comus, v. 831:

"*Commended* her fair innocence to the flood."

Commend, however, in the present instance, may only be a civil term, signifying -- *send*. Thus, in King Henry VIII.:

"The king's majesty *commends* his good opinion to you."

140

Thus also, in Chapman's version of the eighteenth book of Homer's Odyssey:

"The others other wealthy gifts *commended*
"To her fair hand."

What Macbeth, therefore, after expressing his friendly wish relative to their horses, appears to mean, is -- 'so I *send* (or dismiss) you to mount them.' Steevens.

/9 Sirrah, a word: &c.] The old copy reads --

"Sirrah, a word *with you*: Attend those men our pleasure?"

The words I have omitted are certainly spurious. The metre is injured by them, and the sense is complete without them.
Steevens.

The old copy arranges these words as in the text. Boswell.

/1 -- **royalty** of nature --] *Royalty*, in the present instance, signifies *nobleness, supreme excellence*. Thus, in Twelfth-Night, we have "Sport *royal*," for *excellent* sport; and Chaucer, in his Squiere's Tale, has "*crowned malice*," for *eminence of malignity*.
Steevens.

/2 -- to --] i. e. in addition to. See p. 16, n. 2. Steevens.

/3 -- to that dauntless temper of his mind,
He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour --] So, in Chapman's version of the fifteenth Iliad:
" ---- superior to his sire in feet, fight, noblenes
"Of all the virtues; *and all those did such a wisdome guide* --."
Steevens.

141

/4 My genius is rebuk'd; as, it is said,
Mark Antony's was by Cæsar.] For the sake of metre, the prænomen -- *Mark* (which probably was an interpolation) might safely be omitted. Steevens.

Though I would not often assume the critick's privilege of being confident where certainty cannot be obtained, nor indulge myself too far in departing from the established reading; yet I cannot but propose the rejection of this passage, which I believe was an insertion of some player, that, having so much learning as to discover to what Shakspeare alluded, was not willing that his audience should be less knowing than himself, and has therefore weakened the author's sense, by the intrusion of a remote and useless image into a speech bursting from a man wholly possessed with his own present condition, and therefore not at leisure to explain his own allusions to himself. If these words are taken away, by which not only the thought, but the numbers are injured, the lines of Shakspeare close together without any traces of a breach:
"My genius is rebuk'd. He chid the sisters --."
This note was written before I was fully acquainted with Shakspeare's manner, and I do not now think it of much weight: for though the words which I was once willing to eject, seem interpolated, I believe they may still be genuine, and added by the author in his revision. Mr. Heath cannot admit the measure to be faulty. There is only one foot, he says, put for another. This is one of the effects of literature in minds not naturally perspicacious. Every boy or girl finds the metre imperfect, but the pedant comes to its defence with a tribrachys or an anapæst, and sets it right at once, by applying to one language the rules of another. If we may be allowed to change feet, like the old comick writers, it will not be easy to write a line not metrical. To hint this once is sufficient. Johnson.

Sir William D'Avenant omitted these lines; but our author having alluded to this circumstance in Antony and Cleopatra, there is no reason to suspect any interpolation here:
"Therefore, O Antony, stay not by his side:
"Thy Dæmon, that's thy spirit which keeps thee, is
"Noble, courageous, high, unmatchable,
"Where Caesar's is not; but *near him thy angel*
"*Becomes a fear, as being o'erpower'd*." Malone.

To produce the example of the old Greek or Latin comick writers would, it is true, be applying to one language the rules of

142

another; but if it can be shown that versification equally licentious may be found in Shakspeare himself elsewhere, and was consistent with the practice of his contemporaries, for which I refer the reader to the Essay on Shakspeare's Versification, it may not perhaps prove the line to be metrical, but will certainly furnish a strong presumption that the poet wrote it, and did not consider it as faulty. Mr. Steevens's suggestion, that the prænomen *Mark* might be omitted, would leave the verse quite as harsh as he found it. Boswell.

Lord Clarendon had this passage in his mind, perhaps, when he wrote -- "When Cromwell refused the crown, many were of opinion that his genius at that time forsook him, and yielded to the King's spirit." Book xv. p. 554. Blakeway.

/5 For Banquo's issue have I **fil'd** my mind;] We should read:
"-------- 'filed my mind."
i. e. defiled. Warburton.

This mark of contraction is not necessary. To *file* is in the Bishops' Bible. Johnson.

So, in The Revenger's Tragedy, 1608:
"He call'd his father villain, and me strumpet,
"A name I do abhor to *file* my lips with."
Again, in The Miseries of inforc'd Marriage, 1607: "-- like smoke through a chimney that *files* all the way it goes." Again, in Spenser's Fairy Queen, b. iii. c. i.:
"She lightly lept out of her *filed* bed." Steevens.

/6 -- the common enemy of man,] It is always an entertainment to an inquisitive reader, to trace a sentiment to its original source; and therefore, though the term "enemy of man," applied to the devil, is in itself natural and obvious, yet some may be pleased with being informed, that Shakspeare probably borrowed it from the first lines of The Destruction of Troy, a book which he

143

is known to have read. This expression, however, he might have had in many other places. The word *fiend* signifies *enemy*.
Johnson.

Shakspeare repeats this phrase in Twelfth-Night, Act III. Sc. IV.: "-- Defy the devil: consider, he's an *enemy to mankind*." Again, in Fairfax's Tasso, iv. i.:
"The *ancient foe* to man and mortal seed,
"His wannish eies upon them bent askance." Steevens.

/7 -- the **seed** of Banquo kings!] The old copy reads -- *seeds*. Corrected by Mr. Pope. Malone.

/8 -- come, fate, into the list,
And champion me to the utterance!] This passage will be best explained by translating it into the language from whence the only word of difficulty in it is borrowed. “Que la destinée se rende en lice, et qu’elle me donne un defi a l’outrance.” A challenge, or a combat *a l’outrance, to extremity*, was a fixed term in the law of arms, used when the combatants engaged with an *odium internecinum, an intention to destroy each other*, in opposition to trials of skill at festivals, or on other occasions, where the contest was only for reputation or a prize. The sense therefore is: ‘Let fate, that has fore-doomed the exaltation of the sons of Banquo, enter the lists against me, with the utmost animosity, in defence of its own decrees, which I will endeavour to invalidate, whatever be the danger. Johnson.

We meet with the same expression in Gawin Douglas’s translation of Virgil, p. 331, 49:
“That war not put by Greikis to *utterance*.”
Again, in The History of Graund Amoure and La Bel Pucelle, &c. by Stephen Hawes, 1555:
“That so many monsters put to *utterance*.”
Again, and more appositely, in the 14th book of Golding’s translation of Ovid’s Metamorphosis:
“To both the parties at the length from battell for to rest,
“And not to fight to *utterance*.”
Shakspeare uses it again in Cymbeline, Act III. Sc. I.
Steevens.

144

/9 Now to the door, and stay there till we call.] The old copy reads --
“Now *go* to the door,” &c.
but, for the sake of versification, I suppose the word *go*, which is understood, may safely be omitted. Thus, in the last scene of the foregoing Act:
“Will you to Scone?
“No, cousin, *I’ll to Fife*.”
In both these instances *go* is mentally inserted. Steevens.

/1 -- pass’d in **probation with you**,
How you were **borne in hand**; &c.] The words -- *with you*, I regard as an interpolation, and conceive the passage to have been originally given thus:
“In our last conference; pass’d in probation how
“You were borne in hand; how cross’d,” &c.
“Pass’d in probation” is, I believe, only a bulky phrase, employed to signify -- *proved*. Steevens.

The meaning may be, ‘past in *proving* to you, how you were,’ &c. So, in Othello:
“-------- so *prove* it,
“That the *probation* bear no hinge or loop
“To hang a doubt on.”
Perhaps after the words “with you,” there should be a comma, rather than a semicolon. The construction, however, may be different. “This I made good to you in our last conference, past in *probation*, &c. I made good to you, how you were borne,” &c. To

bear in hand is, to delude by encouraging hope and holding out fair prospects, without any intention of performance. Malone.

So, in Ram Alley, or Merry Tricks, 1611:

"Yet I will *bear* a dozen men *in hand*,
"And make them all my gulls." Steevens.

145

/2 -- Are you so gospell'd,] Are you of that degree of precise virtue? *Gospeller* was a name of contempt given by the Papists to the Lollards, the puritans of early times, and the precursors of protestantism. Johnson.

So, in the Morality called Lusty Juventus, 1561:

"What, is Juventus become so tame
"To be a newe *gospeller*?"

Again:

"And yet ye are a great *gospeller* in the mouth."

I believe, however, that *gospel led* means no more than kept in obedience of that precept of the gospel, which teaches us "to pray for those that despitefully use us." Steevens.

/3 We are **men**, my liege.] That is, we have the same feelings as the rest of mankind, and, *as men*, are not without a *manly resentment* for the wrongs which we have suffered, and which you have now recited.

I should not have thought so plain a passage wanted an explanation, if it had not been mistaken by Dr. Grey, who says, "they don't answer in the name of *Christians*, but as *men*, whose humanity would hinder them from doing a barbarous act." This false interpretation he has endeavoured to support by the well-known line of Terence:

Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto.

That amiable sentiment does not appear very suitable to a cut-throat. They urge their manhood, in my opinion, in order to show Macbeth their willingness, not their aversion, to execute his orders. Malone.

146

/4 Shoughs,] *Shoughs* are probably what we now call *shocks*, demi-wolves, *lyciscæ*? dogs bred between wolves and dogs.
Johnson.

This species of dogs is mentioned in Nashe's Lenten Stuffe, &c. 1599: "-- a trundle-tail, tike, or *shough* or two." Steevens.

/5 -- the **valued file** --] In this speech the word *file* occurs twice, and seems in both places to have a meaning different from its present use. The expression, "valued file," evidently means, a list or catalogue of value. A station in the *file*, and not in the worst rank, may mean, a place in the list of manhood, and not in the lowest place. But *file* seems rather to mean, in this place, a post of honour; the first rank, in opposition to the last; a meaning which I have not observed in any other place.
Johnson.

"The valued file" is the file or list where the value and peculiar qualities of every thing is set down, in contradistinction to what he immediately mentions, "the bill that writes them all alike." *File*, in the second instance, is used in the same sense as in this, and with a reference to it: "Now if you belong to any class that deserves a place in the valued *file* of man, and are not of the lowest rank, the common herd of mankind, that are not worth distinguishing from each other."

File and *list* are synonymous, as in the last Act of this play:

"---- I have a *file*
"Of all the gentry."

Again, in Heywood's Dedication to the second part of his Iron Age, 1632: "-- to number you in the *file* and *list* of my best and choicest well-wishers." This expression occurs more than once in The Beggar's Bush of Beaumont and Fletcher:

"---- all ways worthy,
"As else in any *file* of mankind."

Shakspeare likewise has it in Measure for Measure: "The greater *file* of the subject held the duke to be wise." In short, the "valued file" is the catalogue with prices annexed to it.

Steevens.

147

/6 **And** not --] *And* was supplied by Mr. Rowe for the sake of metre. SteevEens.

/7 So weary with **disasters, tugg'd** with fortune,] We see the speaker means to say, that he is weary with struggling with adverse fortune. But this reading expresses but half the idea; viz. of a man tugged and haled by fortune without making resistance. To give the complete thought, we should read --

"So weary with *disastrous tugs* with fortune."

This is well expressed, and gives the reason of his being weary, because fortune always hitherto got the better. And that Shakspeare knew how to express this thought, we have an instance in The Winter's Tale:

"Let *myself and fortune*
"*Tug* for the time to come."

Besides, "to be tugg'd with fortune," is scarce English.

Warburton.

"Tugged with fortune" may be, *tugged* or *worried* by fortune.

Johnson.

I have left the foregoing note as an evidence of Dr. Warburton's propensity to needless alterations.

Mr. Malone very justly observes that the old reading is confirmed by the following passage in an Epistle to Lord Southampton, by S. Daniel, 1603:

"He who hath never warr'd with misery,
"Nor ever *tugg'd with fortune* and distress." Steevens.

148

/8 -- in such bloody **distance**,] *Distance*, for *enmity*.

Warburton.

By *bloody distance* is here meant, such a distance as mortal enemies would stand at from each other, when their quarrel must be determined by the sword. This sense seems evident from the continuation of the metaphor, “where every minute of his being is represented as thrusting at the nearest part where life resides.
Steevens.

/9 **For** certain friends --] *For*, in the present instance, signifies *because of*. So, in Coriolanus:
“---- Speak, good Cominius,
“Leave nothing out *for* length.” Steevens.

/1 -- at most,] These words have no other effect than to spoil the metre, and may therefore be excluded as an evident interpolation. Steevens.

/2 Acquaint you with the **perfect spy o’ the time**,
The **moment** on’t;] What is meant by “the spy of the

time,” it will be found difficult to explain; and therefore sense will be cheaply gained by a slight alteration. -- Macbeth is assuring the assassins that they shall not want directions to find Banquo, and therefore says:
“I will ----
“Acquaint you with a perfect *spy* o’ the time.”
Accordingly a third murderer joins them afterwards at the place of action.
Perfect is *well instructed*, or *well informed*, as in this play:
“Though in your state of honour I am *perfect*.”
Though I am *well acquainted* with your quality and rank.
Johnson.

“-- the perfect spy o’ the time,” i. e. the critical juncture.
Warburton.

How the “critical juncture” is the “spy o’ the time,” I know not, but I think my own conjecture right. Johnson.

I rather believe we should read thus:
“Acquaint you with the perfect *spot, the* time,
“The moment on’t --;” Tyrwhitt.

I believe that the word *with* has here the force of *by*; in which sense Shakspeare frequently uses it; and that the meaning of the passage is this: “I will let you know by the person best informed, of the exact moment in which the business is to be done.” And accordingly we find, in the next scene, that these two murderers are joined by a third, as Johnson has observed. -- In his letter to his wife, Macbeth says, “I have heard by the *perfectest* report, that they have more than mortal knowledge.” -- And in this very scene, we find the word *with* used to express *by*, where the murderer says he is “tugg’d *with* fortune.” M. Mason.

The meaning, I think, is, I will acquaint you with the time when you may *look out* for Banquo’s coming, with the most *perfect* assurance of not being disappointed; and not only with the *time*

in general most proper for lying in wait for him, but with the very *moment* when you may expect him. Malone.

I apprehend it means the very moment you are to *look for* or *expect*, not when you may *look out* for, Banquo. Boswell.

I explain the passage thus, and think it needs no reformation, but that of a single point:

"---- Within this hour at most,
"I will advise you where to plant yourselves."

Here I place a full stop; as no further instructions could be given by Macbeth, the hour of Banquo's return being quite uncertain. Macbeth therefore adds -- "Acquaint *you*," &c. i. e. in

ancient language, "acquaint *yourselves*" with the exact time most favourable to your purposes; for such amoment must be *spied* out by you, be selected by your own attention and scrupulous observation. -- *You* is ungrammatically employed, instead of *yourselves*; as *him* is for *himself*, in The Taming of the Shrew:

"To see her noble lord restor'd to health,
"Who, for twice seven years, hath esteemed *him*
"No better than a poor and loathsome beggar."

In this place it is evident that *him* is used instead of *himself*. Again, in King Henry IV. Part I.:

"Advantage feeds *him* fat --." i. e. *himself*.

Again, more appositely, in King Richard II, where York, addressing himself to Bolingbroke, Northumberland, and others, says --

"-------- enter in the castle
"And there repose *you* [i. e. yourselves] for this night."

Again, in Coriolanus:

"Breathe *you*, my friends --."

Macbeth, in the intervening time, might have learned, from some of Banquo's attendants, which way he had ridden out, and therefore could tell the murderers *where* to plant themselves so as to cut him off on his return; but who could ascertain the precise hour of his arrival, except the ruffians who watched for that purpose?" Steevens.

/3 ---- always thought,
That I require a clearness:] i .e. you must manage matters so, that throughout the whole transaction I may stand clear of suspicion. So, Holinshed: "-- appointing them to meet Banquo and his sonne *without the palace*, as they returned to their lodgings, and there to slea them, so that he would not have his house slandered, but that in time to come he might *cleare* himself."
Steevens.

/4 I'll come **to you** anon.] Perhaps the words -- *to you*, which corrupt the metre, without enforcing the sense, are another playhouse interpolation. Steevens.

/5 **Nought's had**, all's spent,] Surely, the unnecessary words -- *Nought's had*, are a tasteless interpolation; for they violate the measure without expansion of the sentiment.

"For a few words. Madam, I will. All's spent."

is a complete verse.

There is sufficient reason to suppose the metre of Shakspeare was originally uniform and regular. His frequent exactness in making one speaker complete the verse which another had left imperfect, is too evident to need exemplification. Sir T. Hanmer was aware of this, and occasionally struggled with such metrical difficulties as occurred; though for want of familiarity with ancient language, he often failed in the choice of words to be rejected or supplied. Steevens.

/6 -- **sorriest** fancies --] i. e. worthless, ignoble, vile. So, in Othello:

"I have a salt and *sorry* rheum offends me."

152

Sorry, however, might signify *sorrowful, melancholy, dismal*. So, in The Comedy of Errors:

"The place of death and *sorry* execution."

Again, in the play before us, (as Mr. M. Mason observes,) Macbeth says, -- "This is a *sorry* sight." Steevens.

/7 -- Things without remedy,] The old copy -- "*all* remedy." But surely, as Sir T. Hanmer thinks, the word *all* is an interpolation, hurtful to the metre, without improvement of the sense. The same thought occurs in King Richard II. Act II. Sc. III.:

"Things past redress, are now with me past care."

Steevens.

/8 -- scotch'd --] Mr. Theobald. -- Fol, *scorch'd*. Johnson.

Scotch'd is the true reading. So, in Coriolanus, Act IV.Sc. V.:

"---- he scotch'd him and notch'd him like a carbonado."

Steevens.

/9 But let

The frame of things disjoint, **both the worlds** suffer,] The old copy reads thus, and I have followed it, rejecting the modern contraction, which was:

"But let *both worlds disjoint, and all things* suffer."

The same idea occurs in Hamlet:

"That *both the worlds* I give to negligence." Steevens.

/1 Whom we, to gain our **place**, have sent to peace,] The old copy reads:

"Whom we, to gain our *peace* --."

153

The emendation was made by the editor of the second folio.

Malone.

/2 In restless **ecstacy**.] *Ecstacy*, for *madness*. Warburton.

Ecstacy, in its general sense, signifies any violent emotion of the mind. Here it means the emotion of pain, agony. So, in Marlowe's Tamburlaine, Part I.:

"Griping our bowels with retorqued thoughts,
"And have no hope to end our *extasies*."

Again, Milton, in his ode on The Nativity:

"In pensive trance, and anguish, and *ecstatic* fit."

Thus also Chapman, in his version of the last Iliad, where he describes the distracting sorrow of Achilles:

"---- Although he saw the morn
"Shew sea and shore his *extasie*." Steevens.

/3 ---- remembrance --] Is here employed as a quadrisyllable. So, in Twelfth-Night:

"And lasting in her sad *remembrance*." Steevens.

/4 -- present him eminence,] i. e. do him the highest honours. Warburton.

/5 -- unsafe the while, that we
Must lave our honours in these flattering streams;
And make our faces vizards to our hearts,
Disguising what they are.] The sense of this passage (though clouded by metaphor, and perhaps by omission,) appears to be as follows: -- "It is a sure sign that our royalty is unsafe, when it must descend to flattery, and stoop to dissimulation."

154

And yet I cannot help supposing (from the hemistich, *Unsafe the while that we*,) some words to be wanting which originally rendered the sentiment less obscure. Shakspeare might have written --

"Unsafe the while *it is for us*, that we," &c.

By a different arrangement in the old copy, the present hemistich, indeed, is avoided; but, in my opinion, to the disadvantage of the other lines. See former editions. Steevens.

The arrangement in the text is Mr. Malone's. The old copy reads this and the preceding speech thus:

"*Lady.* Come on:
"Gentle my lord, sleeke o'er your rugged looks,
"Be bright and joviall among your guests to night.
"*Macb.* So shall I, love, and so I pray be you:
"Let your remembrance apply to Banquo,
"Present him eminence, both with eye and tongue:
"*Unsafe the while that we must lave*
"*Our honors in these flattering streames*," &c.

Except in the instance of the hemistichs, distinguished by italicks, and printing *'mong* for "*among* your guests," Mr. Steevens has followed the folio. Boswell.

/6 -- nature's copy's not **eterne**.] The *copy*, the *lease*, by which they hold their lives from nature, has its time of termination limited. Johnson.

Eterne, for *eternal*, is often used by Chaucer. So, in The Knight's Tale, Mr. Tyrwhitt's edit. v. 1305:

"---- O cruel goddes, that governe
"This world with binding of your word *eterne*,
"And writen in the table of athamant
"Your parlement and your *eterne* grant." Steevens.

Dr. Johnson's interpretation is supported by a subsequent passage in this play:
"---- and our high-plac'd Macbeth
"Shall live the *lease of nature*, pay his breath
"To time and mortal custom."
Again, by our author's 13th Sonnet:
"So should that beauty which you hold in lease,
"Find no determination." Malone.

I once thought that by "Nature's copy," &c. our author meant

(to use a Scriptural phrase) man, *as formed after the Deity*, though not, like him, immortal. So, in King Henry VIII.:
"---- how shall man,
"*The image of his Maker*, hope to thrive by't?"
Or, as Milton expresses the same idea, Comus, v. 69:
"---- the human countenance,
"Th' express resemblance of the gods --."
But, (as Mr. M. Mason observes,) in support of Dr. Johnson's explanation, we find that Macbeth, in his next speech but one, alluding to the intended murder of Banquo and Fleance, says:
"Cancel, and tear to pieces, *that great bond*
"That keeps me pale."
Mr. M. Mason, however, adds, that by "nature's copy," Shakspeare might only mean -- *the human form divine*. Steevens.

The allusion is to an *estate for lives* held by *copy of court-roll*. It is clear, from numberless allusions of the same kind, that Shakspeare had been an attorney's clerk. Ritson.

/7 -- the bat hath flown
His *cloister'd* flight;] Bats are often seen flying round *cloisters*, in the dusk of the evening, for a considerable length of time. Malone.

The bats wheeling round the dim *cloisters* of Queen's College, Cambridge, have frequently impressed on me the singular propriety of this original epithet. Steevens.

/8 The **shard-borne** beetle,] i. e. the beetle hatched in clefts of wood. So, in Antony and Cleopatra:
"They are his *shards*, and he their *beetle*." Warburton.

The *shard-borne* beetle is the beetle borne along the air by its *shards* or *scaly wings*. From a passage in Gower, De Confessione Amantis, it appears that *shards* signified *scales*:
"She sigh, her thought, a dragon tho,
"Whose *scherdes* shynen as the sonne." L. VI. fol. 138.
and hence the upper or outward wings of the beetle were called *shards*, they being of a *scaly* substance. To have an outward pair of wings of a *scaly* hardness, serving as integuments to a

filmy pair beneath them, is the characteristick of the beetle kind.

Ben Jonson, in his Sad Shepherd, says --

"The *scaly* beetles with their *habergeons*,
"That make a humming murmur as they fly."

156

In Cymbeline, Shakspeare applies this epithet again to the beetle:

"-------- we find
"The *sharded* beetle in a safer hold
"Than is the full-wing'd eagle."

Here there is a manifest opposition intended between the wings and flight of the *insect* and the *bird*. The *beetle*, whose sharded *wings* can but *raise him above the ground*, is often in a state of greater *security* than the *vast-winged eagle*, that can soar *to any height*.

As Shakspeare is here describing the *beetle* in the act of flying, (for he never makes his humming noise but when he flies,) it is more natural to suppose the epithet should allude to the peculiarity of his wings, than to the circumstance of his origin, or his place of habitation, both of which are common to him with several other creatures of the insect kind.

Such another description of the *beetle* occurs in Chapman's Eugenia, 4to. 1614:

"-------- The *beetle* ----
"---- there did raise
"With his Irate wings his most unwieldie paise;
"And with his *knollike humming gave the dor*
"*Of death to men* ----."

It is almost needless to say, that the word *irate*, in the second line, must be a corruption.

The quotation from Antony and Cleopatra, seems to make against Dr. Warburton's explanation.

The meaning of Ænonarbus, in that passage, is evidently as follows: Lepidus, says he, is the *beetle* of the ^trumvirate, a dull, blind creature, that would but crawl on the earth, if Octavius and Antony, his more active colleagues in power, did not serve him for *shards* or wings to raise him a little above the ground.

What idea is afforded, if we say that Octavius and Antony are two clefts in the old wood in which Lepidus was hatched?

Steevens.

The "shard-born beetle" is the beetle born in dung. Aristotle and Pliny mention beetles that breed in dung. Poets as well as natural historians have made the same observation. See Drayton's Ideas, 31: "I scorn all earthly *dung-bred* scarabies." So, Ben Jonson, Whalley's edit. vol. i. p. 59:

"But men of thy condition feed on sloth,
"As doth the *beetle* on the *dung* she breeds in."

157

That *shard* signifies *dung*, is well known in the North of Staffordshire, where *cowshard* is the word generally used for *cow-dung*. So, in A petite Palace of Pettie his Pleasure, p. 165: "The humble-bee taketh no scorn to loge on a cowe's foule *shard*." Again, in Bacon's Natural History, exp. 775: "Turf

and peat, and cow *sheards*, are cheap fuels, and last long."
"Sharded beetle," in Cymbeline, means the "beetle lodged in dung;" and there the humble earthly abode of the beetle is opposed to the lofty eyry of the eagle in "the cedar, whose top-branch overpeer'd Jove's spreading tree," as the poet observes, in The Third Part of King Henry VI. Act V. Sc. II. Tollet.

The *shard-born* beetle is, perhaps, the beetle born among shards, i. e. (not cow's dung, for that is only a secondary or metonymical signification of the word, and not even so, generally, but) pieces of broken pots, tiles, and such-like things, which are frequently thrown together in corners as rubbish, and under which these beetles may usually breed, or (what is the same) may have been supposed so to do.
Thus, in Hamlet, the Priest says of Ophelia:
"*Shards*, flints, and pebbles, should be thrown on her."
Would Mr. Tollet say that *cow's dung* was to be thrown into the grave? It is true, however, that *sharded beetle* seems scarcely reconcilable to the above explanation. Mr. Steevens *may* be *right*; but Dr. Warburton and Mr. Tollet are certainly wrong. Ritson.

Sir W. D'Avenant appears not to have understood this epithet, for he has given instead of it --
"---- the *sharp-brow'd* beetle."
Mr. Steevens's interpretation is, I think, the true one, in the passage before us. Malone.

Mr. Steevens's interpretation is no doubt the most suitable to the context. The succeeding passages, however, make in favour of Mr. Tollet's explanation. In A briefe Discourse of the Spanish State, 1590, p. 3, there is, "How that nation rising like the *beetle* from the *cowshern* hurtleth against al things." And in Dryden, The Hind and the Panther:
"Such souls as *shards produce*, such *beetle things*,
"As only buzz to heaven with evening wings."
Holt White.

/9 -- dearest **chuck**,] I meet with this term of endearment, (which is probably corrupted from *chick* or *chicken*,) in many of our ancient writers. So, in Warner's Albion's England, b. v. c. xxvii.:

"---- immortal she-egg *chuck* of Tyndarus his wife."
It occurs also in our author's Twelfth Night:
"---- how dost thou *chuck*?
"---- Ay, *biddy*, come with me." Steevens.

/1 -- Come, **seeling** night,] *Seeling*, i. e. *blinding*. It is a term in falconry. Warburton.

So, in The Booke of Hawkyng, Huntyng, &c. bl. l. no date: "And he must take wyth hym nedle and threde, to *ensyle* the haukes that bene taken. And in thys maner they must be *ensiled*. Take the nedel and thryde, and put it through the over eye lyd, and soe of that other, and make them fast under the

becke that she se not," &c. Again, in Chapman's version of the thirteenth Iliad:

"-------- did seele
"Th' assailer's *eyes* up."

Again, in the thirteenth Odyssey:

"---- that sleep might sweetly *seel*
"His restful *eyes*." Steevens.

/2 Cancel, and tear to pieces, that great bond
Which keeps me pale!] This may be well explained by the following passage in King Richard III.:

"*Cancel his bond of life*, dear God, I pray."

^Agsin, in Cymbeline, Act V. Sc. IV.:

"---- take this life,
"And *cancel* these cold *bonds*." Steevens.

/3 -- *Light thickens*; and the crow, &c.] By the expression, "light thickens," Shakspeare means, "the light grows dull or muddy." In this sense he uses it in Antony and Cleopatra:

"---- my lustre *thickens*
"When he shines by." ---- Edwards's MSS.

It may be added, that in The Second Part of King Henry IV. Prince John of Lancaster tells Falstaff, that "his desert *is too thick to shine*." Again, in The Faithful Shepherdess of Fletcher, Act I. Sc. ult.:

"Fold your flocks up, for the air
"'Gins to *thicken*, and the sun
"Already his great course hath run." Steevens.

Again, in Spenser's Calendar, 1579:

"But see, the welkin *thicks* apace,
"And stouping Phœbus steepes his face;
"It's time to haste us home-ward." Malone.

/4 Makes wing to the **rooky** wood:] *Rooky* may mean *damp, misty, steaming with exhalations*. It is only a North country variation of dialect from *reeky*. In Coriolanus, Shakspeare mentions --

"---- the *reek* of th' rotten fens."

And in Caltha Poetarum, &c. 1599:

"Comes in a vapour like a *rookish* ryme."

"Rooky wood," indeed, may signify a *rookery, the wood that abounds with rooks*; yet, merely to say of the *crow* that he is flying to a wood inhabited by *rooks*, is to add little immediately pertinent to the succeeding observation, viz. that --

"---- things of day begin to droop and drowse."

I cannot, therefore, help supposing our author wrote --

"Makes wing to *rook i' th'* wood."

i. e. to *roost* in it. *Ruck*, or *Rouke, Sax.* So, in King Henry VI. Part I. Act V. Sc. VI.:

"The raven-**rook'd** her on the chimney's top."

See note on this passage.

Again, in Chaucer's Nonnes Preestes Tale:

"O false morderour, *rucking* in thy den."

Again, in Gower, de Confessione Amantis, lib. iv. fol. 72:

"But how their *rucken* in her nest."

Again, in the fifteenth book of A. Golding's translation of Ovid's Metamorphosis:

"He *rucketh* down upon the same, and in the spices dies."

Again, in The Contention betwyxte Churchyeard and Camell, &c. 1560:

"All day to *rucken* on my taile, and porem on a booke."

The harmless crow, that merely flew *to* the *rooky* wood, for aught we are conscious of on this occasion, might have taken a second flight *from* it; but the same bird, when become drowsy, would naturally *ruck* or roost where it settled, while the agents of nocturnal mischief were hastening to their prey. The quiescent state of innoxious birds is thus forcibly contrasted with the active vigilance of destructive beings. So Milton, in the concluding lines of the first book of his Paradise Regained:

160

"-------- for now began
"Night with her sullen wings to double-shade
"The desert; fowls in their clay nests were *couch'd*;
"And now wild beasts came forth the woods to roam."

Should this attempt to reform the passage before us be condemned, "the substance which underwent the operation, at the very worst, is but where it was."

Such an unfamiliar verb as *rook*, might, (especially in a play-house copy,) become easily corrupted. Steevens.

Mr. Steevens's first explanation may receive some support from a passage in the Historie of King Morindos and Miracola, a Spanish Witch, 1609: "It was even at the middle of night, when the scritch-owle, *rookes*, and doremice *sleepe in foggy mistes*: it was even at that houre when the ghoastes of dead men walke, when murtherers dreame of villainy." Boswell.

/5 Whiles night's black agents to their **prey** do rouse.] This appears to be said with reference to those dæmons who were supposed to remain in their several places of confinement all day, but at the close of it were released; such, indeed, as are mentioned in The Tempest, as rejoicing "To hear the solemn curfew," because it announced the hour of their freedom. So also, in Sydney's Astrophel and Stella:

"In night, of sprites the ghastly powers do stir."

Thus also in Ascham's Toxophilus, edit. 1589, p. 13: "For on the night time and in corners, spirites and theeves, &c. &c. use most styrring, when in the day light, and in open places which be ordeyned of God for honest things, they dare not once come; which thing Euripides noteth very well, saying -- *Iph. in Taur_*:

"Ill thyngs the nyght, good thyngs the day doth haunt and use." Steevens.

The old copy reads *preys*, as in the text, which Mr. Steevens and the other modern editors have altered to *prey*; but the original word was the phraseology of Shakspeare's time. So, in a translation from Virgil in The Housholders Philosophie, 1588:

"We hide our grey hairs with our helmets, liking ever more
"To live upon the sport and waft our *praies* from shore to

shore." Malone.

161

/6 But who did bid thee join with us?] The meaning of this abrupt dialogue is this. The *perfect spy*, mentioned by Macbeth, in the foregoing scene, has, before they enter upon the stage, given them the directions which were promised at the time of their agreement; yet one of the murderers suborned, suspects him of intending to betray them; the other observes, that, by his exact knowledge of *what they were to do*, he appears to be employed by Macbeth, and needs not to be mistrusted. Johnson.

The third assassin seems to have been sent to join the others, from Macbeth's superabundant caution. From the following dialogue it appears that some conversation has passed between them before their present entry on the stage. Malone.

The third Murderer enters only to tell them *where* they should place themselves. Steevens.

/7 -- lated --] i. e. *belated*, benighted. So, again, in Antony and Cleopatra:

"I am so *lated* in the world, that I
"Have lost my way for ever." Steevens.

162

/8 -- the note of expectation,] i. e. they who are set down in the list of guests, and expected to supper. Steevens.

/9 Then it is he; the rest
That are within the note of expectation,
Already are i' the court.] Perhaps this passage, before it fell into the hands of the players, stood thus:

"Then it is he;
"The rest within the note of expectation,
"Are i' the court."

The hasty recurrence of *are*, in the last line, and the redundancy of the metre, seem to support my conjecture. Numberless are the instances in which the player editors would not permit the necessary something to be supplied by the reader. They appear to have been utterly unacquainted with an ellipsis.
Steevens.

/1 Stand to't.
It will **be** rain to-night.
Let it come down.] For the sake of metre, we should certainly read --

"Stand to't.
"'Twill rain to-night.
"Let it come down." Steevens.

163

/2 *Fleance*, &c. *escape.*] *Fleance*, after the assassination of his father, fled into Wales, where, by the daughter of the Prince

of that country, he had a son named Walter, who afterwards became Lord High Steward of Scotland, and from thence assumed the name of Walter Steward. From him, in a direct line, King James I. was descended; in compliment to whom our author has chosen to describe Banquo, who was equally concerned with Macbeth in the murder of Duncan, as innocent of that crime.
Malone.

/3 Was't not the way?] i. e. the best means we could take to evade discovery. Steevens.
Rather, to effect our purpose. Ritson.

/4 You know your own degrees, sit down: **at** first,
And last, the hearty welcome.] I believe the true reading is:
"You know your own degrees, sit down. -- *To* first
"And last the hearty welcome."
All, of whatever degree, from the highest to the lowest, may be assured that their visit is well received. Johnson.

164

/5 Our hostess keeps her state; &c,] i. e. continues in her chair of state at the head of the table. This idea might have been borrowed from Holinshed, p. 805: "The king (Henry VIII.) caused the queene to *keepe the estate*, and then sat the ambassadours and ladies as they were marshalled by the king, who would not sit, but walked from place to place, making cheer," &c.
To *keep state* is a phrase perpetually occurring in our ancient dramas, &c. So, Ben Jonson, in his Cynthia's Revels:
"Seated in thy silver chair
"*State* in wonted manner *keep*."
Again, in Beaumont and Fletcher's Wild Goose Chase:
"What a *state she keeps*! how far off they sit from her!"
Many more instances, to the same purpose, might be given.
Steevens.

A *state* appears to have been a royal chair with a canopy over it. So, in King Henry IV. Part I.:
"This *chair* shall be my *state*."
Again, in Sir T. Herbert's Memoirs of Charles I.: "-- where being *set*, the king *under a state*," &c. Again, in The View of France, 1598: "-- espying the *chayre* not to stand well under the *state*, he mended it handsomely himself." Malone.

/6 'Tis **better** thee without, than **he** within.] The sense requires that this passage should be read thus:
"'Tis better thee without, than *him* within."
That is, 'I am better pleased that the blood of Banquo should be on thy face than in his body.'

165

The author might mean, 'It is better that Banquo's blood were on thy face, than *he* in this room. Expressions thus imperfect are common in his works. Johnson.

I have no doubt that this last was the author's meaning.

Malone.

/7 -- trenched gashes --] *Trancher*, to cut. Fr. So, in Arden of Feversham, 1592:

"Is deeply *trenched* on my blushing brow."

Again, in The Two Gentlemen of Verona:

"---- like a figure
"*Trenched* in ice." Steevens.

/8 -- the **worm**,] This term, in our author's time, was applied to all of the serpent kind. Malone.

166

/9 -- the feast is **sold**, &c.] Mr. Pope reads: -- "the feast is *cold*," -- and not without plausibility. Such another phrase occurs in The Elder Brother of Beaumont and Fletcher:

"You must be welcome too: -- *the feast is flat else*."

But the same expression as Shakspeare's is found in The Romaunt of the Rose:

"Good dede done through praiere,
"*Is sold* and bought to dere." Steevens.

The meaning is, -- That which is not *given cheerfully*, cannot be called a *gift*, it is something that must be paid for. Johnson.

It is still common to say, that we *pay dear* for an entertainment, if the circumstances attending the participation of it prove irksome to us. Henley.

/1 Now, **good digestion** wait on appetite,] So, in King Henry VIII.:

"A *good digestion* to you all." Steevens.

/2 *The Ghost of Banquo rises*,] This circumstance of *Banquo's ghost* seems to be alluded to in The Puritan, first printed in 1607, and ridiculously ascribed to Shakspeare: "We'll ha' the ghost i' th' white sheet sit at upper end o' th' table." Farmer.

/3 Than pity for mischance!] This is one of Shakspeare's touches of nature. Macbeth, by these words, discovers a consciousness of guilt; and this circumstance could not fail to be recollected by a nice observer on the assassination of Banquo

167

being publickly known. Not being yet rendered sufficiently callous by "hard use," Macbeth betrays himself (as Mr. Whateley has observed) "by an over-acted regard for Banquo, of whose absence from the feast he affects to complain, that he may not be suspected of knowing the cause, though at the same time he very unguardedly drops an allusion to that cause." Malone.

These words do not seem to convey any consciousness of guilt on the part of Macbeth, or allusion to Banquo's murder, as Mr. Whateley supposes. Macbeth only means to say -- "I have more cause to accuse him of unkindness for his absence, than to pity him for any accident or mischance that may have occasioned it."

Douce.

/4 Here, my lord, &c.] The old copy -- "my *good* lord;" an interpolation that spoils the metre. The compositor's eye had caught -- *good* from the next speech but one. Steevens.

Mr. Steevens makes *Where?* the commencement of this line.
Boswell.

/5 -- upon a **thought** --] i.e. as speedily as *thought* can be exerted. So, in King Henry IV. Part I.: "-- and, *with a thought*, seven of the eleven I pay'd." Again, in Hamlet:
"---- as swift
"As *meditation*, or the *thoughts* of love." Steevens.

168

/6 -- extend his passion;] Prolong his suffering; make his fit longer. Johnson.

/7 O proper stuff!] This speech is rather too long for the circumstances in which it is spoken. It had begun better at -- *Shame itself!* Johnson.

Surely it required more than a few words, to argue Macbeth out of the horror that possessed him. M. Mason.

/8 -- O, these flaws, and starts,
(**Impostors to true fear,**) would well become, &c.] i. e. these flaws and starts, as they are indications of your needless fears, are the imitators or impostors only of those which arise from a fear well grounded. Warburton.

Flaws are *sudden gusts*. Johnson.

So, in Coriolanus:
"Like a great sea-mark, standing every *flaw*." Steevens.

Again, in Venus and Adonis:
"Gusts and foul *flaws* to herdmen and to herds."
Malone.

"Impostors to true fear," mean impostors when *compared with* true fear. Such is the force of the preposition *to* in this place.
M. Mason.

So, in King Henry VIII.: "Fetch me a dozen crab-tree staves, and strong ones; these are but switches *to* them." Steevens.

To may be used for *of*. In The Two Gentlemen of Verona we have an expression resembling this:
"Thou *counterfeit* to thy true friend." Malone.

169

/9 -- our **monuments**
shall be the maws of **kites**.] The same thought occurs in Spenser's Fairy Queen, b. ii. c. viii.:

"Be not *entombed* in the raven or the *kight*."
Thus also -- inter nubes tenebrasque Lycophronis atri, v. 413:
<Pollōn gar en splagchnoisi tumbeuthēsetai
Nērithmos hesmos.> Steevens.

In splendidissimum quemque captivum, non sine verborum contumelia, sæviit: ut quidem uni suppliciter *sepulturam* precanti respondisse dicatur, jam istam *in volucrum fore potestatem. Sueton. in August.* 13.
So, in Kyd's Cornelia:
"Where are our legions, where our men at arms?
* * * * * * * *
" ------ the vultures and the crowes,
"Lyons and beares, are theyr best sepulchres." Malone.

/1 What! quite unmann'd **in folly**?] Would not this question be forcible enough without the two last words, which overflow the metre, and consequently may be suspected as interpolations?
Steevens.

/2 -- i' the **olden** time,] Mr. M. Mason proposes to read -- "the *golden* time," meaning the *golden age*: but the ancient reading may be justified by Holinshed, who, speaking of the Witches, says, they "resembled creatures of the *elder world*;" and in Twelfth-Night we have --
"---- dallies with the innocence of love,
"Like the *old age*."
Again, in Thystorie of Jacob and his Twelve Sones, bl. l. printed by Wynkyn de Worde:
"Of dedes done in the *olde tyme*."
Again, in our Liturgy -- "and in the *old time* before them."
Steevens.

170

/3 Ere human statute purg'd the **gentle weal**;] The *gentle weal*, is, the *peaceable community*, the state made quiet and safe by *human statutes*.
Mollia securæ peragebant otia gentes. Johnson.

In my opinion it means 'That state of innocence which did not require the aid of human laws to render it quiet and secure.'
M. Mason.

/4 Do not **muse** at me,] To *muse* anciently signified to *wonder*, to be in *amaze*. So, in King Henry IV. Part II. Act IV.:
"I *muse*, you make so slight a question."
Again, in All's Well that Ends Well:
"And rather *muse*, than ask, why I entreat you."
Steevens.

/5 -- to all, and him, we **thirst**,] We *thirst*, I suppose, means we desire to drink. So, in Julius Cæsar, Cassius says, when Brutus drinks to him, to bury all unkindness --
"My heart is *thirsty* for that noble pledge." M. Mason.

171

/6 And all to all.] i. e. all good wishes to all; such as he had named above, *love, health, and joy*. Warburton.

I once thought it should be *hail* to all, but I now think that the present reading is right. Johnson.

Timon uses nearly the same expression to his guests, Act I.: "All to you."
Again, in King Henry VIII. more intelligibly:
"And *to you all* good health." Steevens.

/7 -- no speculation in those eyes --] So, in the 115th Psalm; "-- eyes have they, but see not." Steevens.

/8 -- the **Hyrcan** tiger,] Theobald chooses to read, in opposition to the old copy -- "*Hyrcanian* tiger;" but the alteration was unnecessary, as Dr. Philemon Holland, in his translation of Pliny's Natural History, p. 122, mentions the *Hyrcane* sea.
Tollet.

Sir William D'Avenant unnecessarily altered this to *Hircanian* tiger, which was followed by Theobald, and others. *Hircan* tigers are mentioned by Daniel, our author's contemporary, in his Sonnets, 1594:
"---- restore thy fierce and cruel mind
"To *Hircan tygers*, and to ruthless beares." Malone.

Alteration certainly might be spared: in Riche's Second Part of Simonides, 4to. 1584, sign. C 1, we have -- "Contrariewise these souldiers, like to *Hircan* tygers, revenge themselves on their own bowelles; some parricides, some fratricides, all homicides." Reed.

/9 If trembling I **inhibit** --] *Inhabit* is the original reading, which Mr. Pope changed to *inhibit*, which *inhibit* Dr. Warburton interprets *refuse*. The old reading may stand, at least as well as the emendation. Johnson.

Inhibit seems more likely to have been the poet's own word, as he uses it frequently in the sense required in this passsage, Othello, Act I. Sc. VII.:
"---- a practiser
"Of arts *inhibited*."
Hamlet, Act II. Sc. VI.:
"I think their *inhibition* comes of the late innovation."
To *inhibit* is to *forbid*. Steevens.

I have not the least doubt that "*inhibit* thee," is the true reading. In All's Well that Ends Well, we find, in the second, and all the subsequent folios -- "which is the most *inhabited* sin of the canon," instead of *inhibited*.
The same error is found in Stowe's Survey of London, 4to. 1618, p. 772: "Also Robert Fabian writeth, that in the year 1506, the one and twentieth of Henry the Seventh, the said stew-houses in Southwarke were for a season *inhabited*, and the doores closed up, but it was not long, saith he, ere the houses there were

set open again, so many as were permitted." -- The passage is not in the printed copy of Fabian, but that writer left in manuscript a continuation of his Chronicle from the accession of King Henry VII. to near the time of his own death, (1512,) which was in Stowe's possession in the year 1600, but I believe is now lost.

By the other slight but happy emendation, the reading *thee* instead of *then*, which was proposed by Mr. Steevens, and to which I have paid the respect that it deserved, by giving it a place in my text, this passage is rendered clear and easy.

Mr. Steevens's correction is strongly supported by the punctuation of the old copy, where the line stands -- "If trembling I inhabit then, protest," &c. and not -- "If trembling I inhabit, then protest," &c. In our author's King Richard II. we have nearly the same thought:

"If I dare eat, or drink, or breathe, or live,
"*I dare meet Surrey in a wilderness*." Malone.

Inhabit is the original reading; and it needs no alteration. The obvious meaning is -- 'Should you challenge me to encounter you in the desert, and I, through fear, remain trembling in my castle, then protest me,' &c. Shakspeare here uses the verb *inhabit* in a neutral sense, to express *continuance in a given situation*; and Milton has employed it in a similar manner:

"Meanwhile *inhabit* lax, ye powers of heaven!" Henley.

To *inhabit*, a verb neuter, may undoubtedly have a meaning like that suggested by Mr. Henley. Thus, in As You Like It: "O knowledge ill-*inhabited*! worse than Jove in a thatched house!" *Inhabited*, in this instance, can have no other meaning than *lodged*.

It is not, therefore, impossible, that by *inhabit*, our author capriciously meant -- 'stay within doors.' -- If, when you have challenged me to the desert, I sculk in my house, do not hesitate to protest my cowardice. Steevens.

The reading -- "If trembling I *inhibit*," -- and the explanation of it, derives some support from Macbeth's last words --

"And damn'd be him that first cries, hold! enough!"

I cannot reconcile myself to Henley's or Steevens's explanation of *inhabit*. M. Mason.

Another instance of *inhabit*, used as a neuter verb, may be found in Fletcher's Mad Lover:

"Her eye *inhabits on him*."

Where a satisfactory meaning can be elicited from the old copy, it is surely taking too great a liberty to introduce an alteration which requires the amendment of two words. Mr. Horne Tooke very strenuously defends the original reading, which, had I been at liberty to do it, I should have retained, but has added no additional argument in its support to what had been already produced. Boswell.

/1 Unreal **mockery**,] i. e. *unsubstantial pageant*, as our author calls the vision in The Tempest; or the picture in Timon of Athens, "-- a *mocking* of the life." Steevens.

/2 Can such things be,
And **overcome** us like a summer's cloud,
Without our special wonder?] The meaning is, "Can such wonders as these *pass over* us without wonder, as a casual summer cloud passes over us?" Johnson.

No instance is given of this sense of the word *overcome*, which

has caused all the difficulty; it is, however, to be found in Spenser's Fairy Queen, b. iii. c. vii. st. 4:
"---- A little valley --
"All covered with thick woods, that quite it *overcame*."
Farmer.

Again, in Chapman's version of the fifteenth Iliad:
"---- his eyes were *overcome*
"With fervour, and resembled flames --."
Again, in the fourth Iliad:
"So (after Diomed) the field was *overcome*
"With thick impressions of the Greeks --." Steevens.

Again, in Marie Magdalene's Repentaunce, 1567:
"With blode *overcome* were both his eyen." Malone.

/3 ---- You make me strange
Even to the disposition that I owe,] Which, in plain English, is only: "You make me just mad." Warburton.

You produce in me an *alienation of mind*; which is probably the expression which our author intended to paraphrase.
Johnson.

I do not think that either of the editors has very successfully explained this passage, which seems to mean, -- "You prove to me that I am a stranger even to my own disposition, when I perceive that the very object which steals the colour from my cheek, permits it to remain in yours." In other words, -- "You prove to me how false an opinion I have hitherto maintained of my own courage, when yours, on the trial, is found to exceed it." A thought somewhat similar occurs in The Merry Wives of Windsor, Act II. Sc. I.: "I'll entertain myself like one I am not acquainted withal." Again, in All's Well That Ends Well, Act V.:
"------ if you know
"That you are well acquainted with yourself."
Steevens.

The meaning, I think, is, 'You render me a stranger to, *or forgetful of* that *brave* disposition which *I know* I possess, and make me fancy myself a coward, when I perceive that I am terrified by a sight which has not in the least alarmed you.' A passage in As You Like It may prove the best comment on that before us:
"If with myself I hold intelligence,
"Or have acquaintance with my own desires --."
So Macbeth says, he has no longer *acquaintance* with his own

brave disposition of mind: His wife's *superior* fortitude makes

175

him as ignorant of his own courage as a *stranger* might be supposed to be. Malone.

I believe it only means, 'you make me *amazed*.' The word *strange* was then used in this sense. So, in The History of Jack of Newberry: "I jest not, said she; for I mean it shall be; and stand not *strangely*, but remember that you promised me," &c.
Reed.

/4 -- are **blanch'd** with fear,] i. e. turned pale, as in Webster's Dutchess of Malfy, 1623:
"Thou dost *blanch* mischief;
"Dost make it white." Steevens.

The old copy reads -- *is* blanch'd. Sir T. Hanmer corrected this passage in the wrong place, by reading -- *cheek*; in which he has been followed by the subsequent editors. His correction gives, perhaps, a more elegant text, but not the text of Shakspeare. The alteration now made is only that which every editor has been obliged to make in almost every page of these plays. -- In this very scene the old copy has "-- the times *has* been," &c. Perhaps it may be said that *mine* refers to *ruby*, and that therefore no change is necessary. But this seems very harsh.
Malone.

/5 **A kind** good night to all!] I take it for granted, that the redundant and valueless syllables -- *a kind*, are a play-house interpolation. Steevens.

/6 It will have blood; they say, blood will have blood:] So, in The Mirror of Magistrates, p. 118:
"Take heede, ye princes, by examples past,
"*Bloud will have bloud*, eyther at first or last."
Henderson.

176

I would thus point the passage:
"It will have blood; they say, blood will have blood."
As a confirmation of the reading, I would add the following authority:
"Blood asketh blood, and death must death requite."
Ferrex and Porrex, Act IV. Sc. II. Whalley.

I have followed Mr. Whalley's punctuation, instead of placing the semicolon after -- *say*.
The same words occur in The Battle of Alcazar, 1594:
"*Bloud will have bloud*, foul murther scape no scourge."
Steevens.

/7 -- and trees to speak;] Alluding perhaps to the vocal tree which (see the third book of the Æneid) revealed the murder of Polydorus. Steevens.

/8 Augurs, and understood **relations**, &c.] By the word *relation* is understood the *connection* of effects with causes; to *understand relations* as *an augur*, is to know how those things *relate* to each other, which have no visible combination or dependence.
Johnson.

Shakspeare, in his licentious way, by *relations*, might only mean *languages*; i. e. the language of birds. Warburton.

The old copy has the passage thus:
"Augures, and understood relations, have
"By maggot-pies and choughs," &c.
The modern editors have read:
"Augurs *that understand* relations, have
"By *magpies* and *by* choughs," &c.
Perhaps we should read, *auguries*, i. e. prognostications by means of omens and prodigies. These, together with the connection of effects with causes, being understood, (says he,) have been instrumental in divulging the most secret murders.
In Cotgrave's Dictionary, a *magpie* is called *magatapie*. So, in The Night-Raven, a Satirical Collection, &c.
"I neither tattle with iack-daw,
"Or *Maggot-pye* on thatch'd house straw."
Magot-pie is the original name of the bird; *Magot* being the familiar appellation given to pies, as we say *Robin* to a redbreast, *Tom* to a titmouse, *Philip* to a sparrow, &c. The modern *mag* is the abbreviation of the ancient *Magot*, a word which we had from the French. Steevens.

Mr. Steevens rightly restores *Magot-pies*. In Minsheu's Guide to the Tongues, 1617, we meet with a *maggatapie*: and

Middleton, in his More Dissemblers beside Women, says: "He calls her *magot o' pie*." Farmer.

It appears to me that we ought to read:
"Augurs *that* understood relations," &c.
which, by a very slight alteration, removes every difficulty.
M. Mason.

/9 -- and **choughs**, and **rooks**, brought forth
The secret'st man of blood.] The inquisitive reader will find such a story in Thomas Lupton's Thousand Notable Things, &c. 4to, bl. l. no date, p. 100; and in Goulart's Admirable Histories, &c. p. 425, 4to. 1607. Steevens.

/1 How say'st thou, &c.] Macbeth here asks a question, which the recollection of a moment enables him to answer. Of this forgetfulness, natural to a mind oppressed, there is a beautiful instance in the sacred song of Deborah and Barak: "She asked her wise women counsel; yea, she returned answer to herself."
Mr. M. Mason's interpretation of this passage has, however, taught me diffidence of my own. He supposes, and not without sufficient reason, that what Macbeth means to say, is this: "What do you think of this circumstance, that Macduff denies to come at our great bidding? What do you infer from thence? What is your

opinion of the matter?"
  So, in Othello, when the Duke is informed that the Turkish fleet was making for Rhodes, which he supposed to have been bound for Cyprus, he says --
     "How *say you* by this change?"
That is, what do you think of it?
  In The Coxcomb, Antonio says to Maria --
     "Sweetheart, how *say you* by this gentleman?
     "He will away at midnight."
  Again, in The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Speed says --
  "But Launce, *how say'st thou*, that my master is become a notable lover?"
  Again, Macbeth, in his address to his wife, on the first appearance of Banquo's ghost, uses the same form of words:
     "---- behold! look! lo! *how say you*?"

178

  The circumstance, however, on which this question is founded, took its rise from the old history. Macbeth sent to Macduff to assist in building the castle of Dunsinane. Macduff sent workmen, &c. but did not choose to trust his person in the tyrant's power. From that time he resolved on his death. Steevens.

  /2 There's not **a one** of them,] *A one* of them, however uncouth the phrase, signifies an individual. Chaucer frequently prefixes the article *a* to nouns of number. See Squiere's Tale, 10,697:
     "And up they risen, wel *a* ten or twelve."
  In Albumazar, 1614, the same expression occurs: "Not *a one* shakes his tail, but I sigh out a passion." Theobald would read *thane*; and might have found his proposed emendation in D'Avenant's alteration of Macbeth, 1674. This avowal of the tyrant is authorized by Holinshed; "He had in every nobleman's house one slie fellow or other in fee with him to reveale all," &c.
Steevens.

  /3 (Betimes I will,) **unto** the weird sisters:] The ancient copy reads --
     "*And* betimes I will *to* the weird sisters."
  They whose ears are familiarized to discord, may perhaps object to my omission of the first word, and my supplement to the fifth.
Steevens.

  /4 -------- I am in blood
     Stept in so far, that, should I wade no more,
     Returning were as tedious as go o'er:] This idea is borrowed by Dryden, in his Œdipus, Act IV.:
     "---- I have already past
     "The middle of the stream; and to return
     "Seems greater labour, than to venture o'er." Steevens.

179

  /5 -- be **scann'd.**] To *scan* is to examine nicely. Thus, in Hamlet:
     "---- so he goes to heaven,
     "And so am I reveng'd: That would be *scann'd*."

Steevens.

/6 You lack the **season** of all natures, sleep.] I take the meaning to be, "*You want sleep*, which *seasons*, or gives the relish to, *all nature*." "Indiget somni vitæ condimenti."
Johnson.

This word is often used in this sense by our author. So, in All's Well That Ends Well: "'Tis the best brine a maiden can *season* her praise in." Again, in Much Ado About Nothing, where, as in the present instance, the word is used as a substantive:

"And salt too little, which may *season* give
"To her foul tainted flesh."

So, in The Miscellaneous Poems, published in the names of Lord Pembroke and Sir Benjamin Rudyer, p. 70:

"And jealousy, thus mix'd, doth prove
"The *season* and the salt of love."

An anonymous correspondent thinks the meaning is, "You stand in need of the time or season of sleep, which all natures require." Malone.

/7 We are yet but young **in deed**.] The editions before Theobald read --

"We're but young *indeed*." Johnson.

The meaning is not ill explained by a line in King Henry VI. Part III.: We are not, Macbeth would say,

"Made *impudent* with use of *evil deeds*."

or, we are not yet (as Romeo expresses it) "*old* murderers." Theobald's amendment may be countenanced by a passage in Antony and Cleopatra: "Not *in deed*, madam, for I can do nothing."

Again, in Chapman's translation of the eleventh book of the Iliad, fol. edit. p. 146:

"And would not be the first in name, unlesse the first *in deed*."

Again, in Hamlet:

"To show yourself *in deed* your father's son
"More than in words."

The initiate fear, is the fear that always attends the first initiation into guilt, before the mind becomes callous and insensible by frequent repetition of it, or (as the poet says) by *hard use*.
Steevens.

/8 *Enter Hecate,*] Shakspeare has been censured for introducing Hecate among the vulgar witches, and, consequently, for confounding ancient with modern superstitions. He has, however, authority for giving a mistress to the witches. Delrio, Disquis. Mag. lib. ii. quæst. 9, quotes a passage of Apuleius, Lib. de Asino aureo: "de quadam Caupona, *regina* Sagarum." And adds further: "ut scias etiam tum quasdam ab iis hoc *titulo* honoratas." In consequence of this information, Ben Jonson, in his Masque of Queens, has introduced a character which he calls a *Dame*, who presides at the meeting of the Witches:

"Sisters, stay; we want our *dame*."

The *dame* accordingly enters, invested with marks of superiority, and the rest pay an implicit obedience to her commands.

Again, in A true Examination and Confession of Elizabeth Stile, alias Rockyngham, &c. 1579, bl. l. 12mo: “Further she saieth, that Mother Seidre, dwelling in the almes house, was the *maistres* witche of all the reste, and she is now deade.”

Shakspeare is therefore blameable only for calling his presiding character Hecate, as it might have been brought on with propriety under any other title whatever. Steevens.

The Gothic and Pagan fictions were now frequently blended and incorporated. The Lady of the Lake floated in the suite of Neptune before Queen Elizabeth at Kenilworth; Ariel assumes the semblance of a sea-nymph, and Hecate, by an easy association, conducts the rites of the weird sisters in Macbeth.

T. Warton.

See a very curious investigation of this subject in Mr. Douce’s Illustrations of Shakspeare, vol. i. p. 382. Boswell.

Shakspeare seems to have been unjustly censured for introducing Hecate among the modern witches. Scot’s Discovery of

Witchcraft, b. iii. c. ii. and c. xvi. and b. xii. c. iii. mentions it as the common opinion of all writers, that witches were supposed to have nightly “meetings with Herodias, and the Pagan gods,” and “that in the night-times they ride abroad with Diana, the goddess of the Pagans,” &c. -- Their dame or chief leader seems always to have been an old Pagan, as “the Ladie Sibylla, Minerva, or Diana.” Tollet.

In Jonson’s Sad Shepherd, Act II. Sc. III. Maudlin, the witch, (who is the speaker,) calls Hecate the *mistress of witches*, “our Dame *Hecate*; ” which has escaped the notice of Mr. Steevens and Mr. Tollet, in their remarks on Shakspeare’s being censured for introducing Hecate among the vulgar witches. Todd.

/9 Why, how now, **Hecate**?] Marlowe, though a scholar, has likewise used the word *Hecate*, as a dissyllable:

“Pluto’s blew fire, and Hecat’s tree,
“With magick spells so compass thee.” *Dr. Faustus.*

The writers of that time were accustomed to Anglicise classical proper names in this manner.

So, Fairfax, xvi. 5:

“The *Ciclades* seem’d to swimme among the maine.”

Malone.

Mr. Todd, among his ingenious notes on Comus, has pointed out the same illegitimate pronunciation in The Sad Shepherd of Ben Jonson, Act II. Sc. III.:

“-------- that very night
“We earth’d her in the shades, when our dame *Hecat*
“Made it her gaing night over the kirk-yard.”

Milton, in his Comus, has likewise taken the same liberty:

“Stay thy cloudy ebon chair,
“Wherein thou rid’st with *Hecat*, and befriend

"Us," &c. Steevens.

Again, in King Lear, Act I.Sc. I.:
"The mysteries of *Hecate* and the night." Reed.

182

/1 -- for a wayward son,
Spiteful, and wrathful; who, **as others do**,
Loves for his own ends, not for you.] Inequality of measure, (the first of these lines being a foot longer than the second,) together with the unnecessary and weak comparison -- "as others do," incline me to regard the passage before us as both maimed and interpolated. Perhaps it originally ran thus:
"---- for a wayward son,
"*A* spiteful and a wrathful, who
"Loves for his own ends, not for you."
But the repetition of the article *a* being casually omitted by some transcriber for the theatre, the verse became too short, and a fresh conclusion to it was supplied by the amanuensis, who overlooked the legitimate rhyme *who*, when he copied the play for publication.
If it be necessary to exemplify the particular phraseology introduced by way of amendment, the following line in Chaucer,
"A frere there was, *a wanton* and *a mery*."
and a passage in The Witch, by Middleton, will sufficiently answer that purpose:
"What death is't you desire for Almachildes?
"*A* sudden, and *a* subtle."
In this instance, the repeated article *a* is also placed before two adjectives referring to a substantive in the preceding line. See also The Paston Letters, vol. iv. p. 155: "Pray God send us *a* good world and *a* peaceable." Again, in our author's King Henry IV.: "*A* good portly man, i' faith, and *a* corpulent."
Again, in an ancient MS. entitled The Boke of Huntyng, that is cleped Mayster of Game: "It [the Boar] is a prowde beest, *a* feers, and *a* perilous." Steevens.

Mr. Steevens is led upon the same principle to make an equally unauthorized alteration a few lines after this:
"Unto *a* dismal and *a* fatal end."
Contemporary authority for the inequality of measure on which his objection to the text is founded, is produced in the Essay on Shakspeare's Versification. Boswell.

/2 -- the pit of **Acheron** --] Shakspeare seems to have thought it allowable to bestow the name of *Acheron* on any fountain, lake, or pit, through which there was vulgarly supposed to be a communication between this and the infernal world. The

183

true original *Acheron* was a river in Greece; and yet Virgil gives this name to his lake in the valley of *Amsanctus* in Italy.
Steevens.

Shakspeare perhaps was led by Scripture (as Mr. Plumptre observed to me, not by any classical notion,) to make his witches

assemble at the pit of *Acheron*.

See 2 Kings i. 2, 7, sometimes called “The Fourth Book of Kings:”

“2. And Ahaziah,” &c.

“6. And they said unto him, There came a man up to meet us and said unto us, Go, turn again unto the king that sent you, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that thou sendest to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of *Ekron*? therefore thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.”

Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton, alluding to this passage in a work of great celebrity at that time, which doubtless Shakspeare had read, (Defensative against Supposed Prophecies, p. 83,) calls demons the pages of Baal-zebub the god of *Acharon*.

Ekron, according to Cruden, signifies “*barren* place.”

Malone.

/3 Unto a dismal-fatal end.] The old copy violates the metre by needless addition:

“Unto a dismal *and a* fatal end.”

I read -- *dismal-fatal*. Shakspeare, as Mr. Tyrwhitt observes, in a note on King Richard III. is fond of these compound epithets, in which the first adjective is to be considered as an adverb. So, in that play, we meet with *childish-foolish*, *senseless-obstinate*, and *mortal-staring*. And, in King John, we have *stubborn-hard*.

Steevens.

/4 Upon the corner of the **moon**, &c.] Shakspeare’s mythological knowledge, on this occasion, appears to have deserted him; for as *Hecate* is only one of three names belonging to the same goddess, she could not properly be employed in one character to catch a drop that fell from her in another. In A Midsummer-

Night’s Dream, however, our poet was sufficiently aware of her three-fold capacity:

“---- fairies, that do run
“By the *triple* Hecat’s team --.” Steevens.

/5 -- vaporous drop profound;] That is, a drop that has *profound, deep*, or *hidden* qualities. Johnson.

This vaporous drop seems to have been meant for the same as the *virus lunare* of the ancients, being a foam which the moon was supposed to shed on particular herbs, or other objects, when strongly solicited by enchantment. Lucan introduces Erictho using it, lib. vi.:

---- et virus large *lunare* ministrat. Steevens.

/6 -- slights,] Arts; subtle practices. Johnson.

/7 *Come away, come away, &c.*] This entire song I found in a MS. dramatic piece, entitled, “A Tragi-Coomodie called The Witch; long since acted &c. written by Thomas Middleton.”

The Hecate of Shakspeare has said --

“I am for the air,” &c.

The Hecate of Middleton (who, like the former, is summoned

away by aerial spirits,) has the same declaration in almost the same words --

"I am for aloft" &c.

Song.] "Come away, come away:) *in the aire.*

"Heccat, Heccat, come away, &c.)

See my note among Mr. Malone's Prolegomena, Article *Macbeth*, [vol. ii.] where other coincidences, &c. are pointed out.

Steevens.

185

/8 *Enter Lenox, and another Lord.*] As this tragedy, like the rest of Shakspeare's, is perhaps overstocked with personages, it is not easy to assign a reason why a nameless character should be introduced here, since nothing is said that might not with equal propriety have been put into the mouth of any other disaffected man. I believe, therefore, that in the original copy it was written with a very common form of contraction, *Lenox and An.* for which the transcriber, instead of Lenox and Angus, set down, "Lenox and *another Lord.*" The author had, indeed, been more indebted to the transcriber's fidelity and diligence, had he committed no errors of greater importance. Johnson.

/9 Who **cannot** want the thought,] The sense requires:

"Who *can* want the thought."

Yet, I believe, the text is not corrupt. Shakspeare is sometimes incorrect in these *minutiæ*. Malone.

/1 -- monstrous --] This word is here used as a trisyllable.

Malone.

So, in Chapman's version of the 9th book of Homer's Odyssey:

"A man in shape, immane and *monsterous*." Steevens.

186

/2 The son of Duncan,] The old copy -- *sons*. Malone.

Theobald corrected it. Johnson.

/3 -- **on** his aid --] Old copy -- *upon*. Steevens.

/4 Free from our feasts and banquets bloody knives;] The construction is -- Free our feasts and banquets from bloody knives. Perhaps the words are transposed, and the line originally stood:

"Our feasts and banquets free from bloody knives."

Malone.

Aukward transpositions in ancient language are so frequent,

187

that the passage before us might have passed unsuspected, had there not been a possibility that the compositor's eye caught the word *free* from the line immediately following. We might read, *fright*, or *fray*, (a verb commonly used by old writers,) but any change, perhaps, is needless. Steevens.

/5 -- and receive **free** honours,] Free may be either honours *freely bestowed*, not purchased by crimes; or honours *without slavery*, without dread of a tyrant. Johnson.

/6 -- exasperate --] i. e. exasperated. So *contaminate* is used for *contaminated* in King Henry V. Steevens.

/7 -- **the** king,] i. e. Macbeth. The old copy has, less intelligibly -- *their*. Steevens.

/8 Prepares for some attempt **of war**.] The singularity of this expression, with the apparent redundancy of the metre, almost persuade me to follow Sir T. Hanmer, by the omission of the two last words. Steevens.

/9 Advise him to a **caution**,] Sir T. Hammer, to add smoothness to the versification, reads -- "to a *care*."
I suspect, however, the words -- *to a*, are interpolations, designed to render an elliptical expression more clear, according to some player's apprehension. Perhaps the lines originally stood thus:

"And that well might
"Advise him caution, *and* to hold what distance
"His wisdom can provide." Steevens.

188

/1 -- to this our suffering country
Under a hand accurs'd!] The construction is, -- to our country suffering under a hand accursed. Malone.

/2 My prayers with him!] The old copy, frigidly, and in defiance of measure, reads --
"*I'll send* my prayers with him."
I am aware, that for this, and similar rejections, I shall be censured by those who are disinclined to venture out of the track of the old stage-waggon, though it may occasionally conduct them into a slough. It may soon, therefore, be discovered, that numerous beauties are resident in the discarded words -- *I'll send*; and that as frequently as the vulgarism -- *on*, has been displaced to make room for -- *of*, a diamond has been exchanged for a pebble. -- For my own sake, however, let me add, that, throughout the present tragedy, no such liberties have been exercised, without the previous approbation of Dr. Farmer, who fully concurs with me in supposing the irregularities of Shakspeare's text to be oftener occasioned by interpolations, than by omissions.
Steevens.

Mr. Steevens has proposed three alterations of the text in twenty-one lines, and has given the rein to his critical boldness in this play, more, perhaps, than in any other. The *old stage-waggon* may offend the refinement of those who may accuse Shakspeare "*Plaustris* vexisse poemata:" but his genuine admirers will prefer the vehicle which he himself has chosen to the modern curricle which Mr. Steevens would provide for him. Boswell.

189

/3 *Scene I.*] As this is the chief scene of enchantment in the play, it is proper, in this place, to observe, with how much judgment Shakspeare has selected all the circumstances of his infernal ceremonies, and how exactly he has conformed to common opinions and traditions:

"Thrice the brinded cat hath mew'd.

The usual form in which familiar spirits are reported to converse with witches, is that of a cat. A witch, who was tried about half a century before the time of Shakspeare, had a cat named Rutterkin, as the spirit of one of those witches was Grimalkin; and when any mischief was to be done, she used to bid Rutterkin *go and fly*. But once, when she would have sent Rutterkin to torment a daughter of the Countess of Rutland, instead of *going* or *flying*, he only cried *mew*, from whence she discovered that the lady was out of his power, the power of witches being not universal, but limited, as Shakspeare has taken care to inculcate:

"Though his bark cannot be lost,
"Yet it shall be tempest-tost."

The common afflictions which the malice of witches produced, were melancholy, fits, and loss of flesh, which are threatened by one of Shakspeare's witches:

"Weary sev'n mights, nine times nine,
"Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine."

It was likewise their practice to destroy the cattle of their neighbours, and the farmers have to this day many ceremonies to secure their cows and other cattle from witchcraft; but they seem to have been most suspected of malice against swine. Shakspeare has accordingly made one of his witches declare that she has been *killing swine*; and Dr. Harsnet observes, that, about that time, "a sow could not be ill of the measles, nor a girl of the sullens, but some old woman was charged with witchcraft."

"Toad, that under the cold stone,
"Days and nights hast thirty-one,
"Swelter'd venom sleeping got,
"Boil thou first i' the charmed pot."

Toads have likewise long lain under the reproach of being by some means accessary to witchcraft, for which reason Shakspeare,

in the first scene of this play, calls one of the spirits Paddock or Toad, and now takes care to put a toad first into the pot. When Vaninus was seized at Tholouse, there was found at his lodgings *ingens bufo vitro inclusus, a great toad shut in a vial*, upon which those that prosecuted him *Veneficium exprobrabant, charged him*, I suppose, *with witchcraft*.

"Fillet of a fenny snake,
"In the cauldron boil and bake:
"Eye of newt, and toe of frog; ----
"For a charm," &c.

The propriety of these ingredients may be known by consulting the books De Viribus Animalium and De Mirabilibus Mundi, ascribed to Albertus Magnus, in which the reader, who has time and credulity, may discover very wonderful secrets.

"Finger of birth-strangled babe,
"Ditch-deliver'd by a drab ----;"

It has been already mentioned, in the law against witches, that they are supposed to take up dead bodies to use in enchantments, which was confessed by the woman whom King James examined; and who had of a dead body, that was divided in one of their assemblies, two fingers for her share. It is observable, that Shakspeare, on this great occasion, which involves the fate of a king, multiplies all the circumstances of horror. The babe, whose finger is used, must be strangled in its birth; the grease must not only be human, but must have dropped from a gibbet, the gibbet of a murderer; and even the sow, whose blood is used, must have offended nature by devouring her own farrow. These are touches of judgment and genius.

"And now about the cauldron sing, ----
"Black spirits and white,
"Red spirits and grey,
"Mingle, mingle, mingle,
"You that mingle may."

And, in a former part:

"---- weird sisters, hand in hand, ----
"Thus do go about, about;
"Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,
"And thrice again, to make up nine!"

These two passages I have brought together, because they both seem subject to the objection of too much levity for the solemnity of enchantment, and may both be shown, by one quotation from Camden's account of Ireland, to be founded upon a practice really observed by the uncivilized natives of that country: "When any one gets a fall, *says the informer of*

Camden, he starts up, and, *turning three times to the right*, digs a hole in the earth; for they imagine that there is a spirit in the ground, and if he falls sick in two or three days, they send one of their women that is skilled in that way to the place, where she says, I call thee from the east, west, north, and south, from the groves, the woods, the rivers, and the fens, from the *fairies, red, black, white*." There was likewise a book written before the time of Shakspeare, describing, amongst other properties, the *colours* of spirits.

Many other circumstances might be particularised, in which Shakspeare has shown his judgment and his knowledge.

Johnson.

/4 Thrice the brinded **cat** hath mew'd.] A *cat*, from time immemorial, has been the agent and favourite of Witches. This superstitious fancy is pagan, and very ancient; and the original, perhaps, this: "When Galanthia was changed into a *cat* by the Fates, (says Antonius Liberalis, Metam. c. xxix.) by witches, (says Pausanias in his Bœotics,) Hecate took pity of her, and made her her priestess; in which office she continues to this day. Hecate herself too, when Typhon forced all the gods and goddesses to hide themselves in animals, assumed the shape of a *cat*. So, Ovid:

"*Fele* soror Phæbi latuit." Warburton.

/5 **Thrice**; and **once** the **hedge-pig** whin'd.] Mr. Theobald reads, "*twice* and once," &c. and observes that odd numbers are

used in all enchantments and magical operations. The remark is just, but the passage was misunderstood. The second Witch only repeats the number which the first had mentioned, in order to confirm what she had said; and then adds, that the *hedge-pig* had likewise cried, though but once. Or what seems more easy, the hedge-pig had whined *thrice*, and after an interval had whined once again.

Even numbers, however, were always reckoned inauspicious. So, in The Honest Lawyer, by S. S. 1616: "Sure 'tis not a lucky time; the first crow I heard this morning, cried *twice*. This *even*, sir, is no good number." "Twice and once," however, might be a cant expression. So, in King Henry IV. Part II. Silence says, "I have been merry *twice and once*, ere now."

Steevens.

The urchin, or hedgehog, from its solitariness, the ugliness of its appearance, and from a popular opinion that it sucked or poisoned the udders of cows, was adopted into the demonologic system, and its shape was sometimes supposed to be assumed by

mischievous elves. Hence it was one of the plagues of Caliban in The Tempest. T. Warton.

/6 **Harper** cries:] This is some imp, or familiar spirit, concerning whose etymology and office, the reader may be wiser than the editor. Those who are acquainted with Dr. Farmer's pamphlet, will be unwilling to derive the name of *Harper* from Ovid's Harpalos, ab <arpaxō> rapio. See Upton's Critical Observations, &c. edit. 1748, p. 155.

Harper, however, may be only a mis-spelling, or misprint, for *harpy*. So, in Marlowe's Tamburlaine, &c. 1590:

"And like a *harper* tyers upon my life."

The word *cries* likewise seems to countenance this supposition. *Crying* is one of the technical terms appropriated to the noise made by birds of prey. So, in the nineteenth Iliad, 350:

<'Ē d', ARPĒ eikuia tanupterugi, LIGUPHŌNŌ,
Ouranou ekkatepalto> --."

Thus rendered by Chapman:

"And like a *harpie*, with a *voice that shrieks*," &c.

Steevens.

We might as well imagine the names of all the evil spirits in King Lear to be corruptions because we are unacquainted with their etymology. Boswell.

/7 -- 'Tis time, 'tis time.] This familiar does not cry out that it is time for them to begin their enchantments; but *cries*, i. e. gives them the signal, upon which the third Witch communicates the notice to her sisters:

"Harper cries: -- 'Tis time, 'tis Time."

Thus too the Hecate of Middleton, already quoted:

"*Hec.*] Heard you the owle yet?
"*Stad.*] Briefely in the copps.
"*Hec.*] *'Tis high time for us then.*" Steevens.

/8 Round about the cauldron go;] Milton has caught this

image in his Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity:
"In dismal dance about the furnace blue." Steevens.

/9 -- **coldest** stone,] The old copy has -- "*cold* stone." The modern editors -- "*the* cold stone." The slighter change I have made, by substituting the superlative for the positive, has met with the approbation of Dr. Farmer, or it would not have appeared in the text. Steevens.

The was added by Mr. Pope. Malone.

193

I have endeavoured to show that neither alteration was necessary. See Essay on Shakspeare's Versification. Boswell.

/1 Days and nights **has**t --] Old copy -- *has*. Corrected by Sir T. Hanmer. Malone.

/2 **Swelter'd** venom --] This word seems to be employed by Shakspeare, to signify that the animal was moistened with its own cold exudations. So, in the twenty-second Song of Drayton's Polyolbion:
"And all the knights there dub'd the morning but before,
"The evening sun beheld there *swelter'd* in their gore."
In the old translation of Boccace's Novels, [1620] the following sentence also occurs: "-- an huge and mighty *toad* even *welter-ing* (as it were) in *a hole full of poison*." -- "*Sweltering* in blood," is likewise an expression used by Fuller, in his Church History, p. 37. And in Churchyard's Farewell to the World, 1593, is a similar expression:
"He spake great thinges that *swelted* in his greace."
Steevens.

/3 Double, double toil and trouble;] As this was a very extraordinary incantation, they were to double their pains about it. I think, therefore, it should be pointed as I have pointed it:
"Double, double toil and trouble;"
otherwise the solemnity is abated by the immediate recurrence of the rhyme. Steevens.

/4 Adder's **fork**,] Thus Pliny, Nat. Hist, book xi. ch. xxxvii.: "Serpents have very thin tongues, and the same three-*forked*." *P. Holland's translation*, edit. 1601, p. 338. Steevens.

/5 -- **blind-worm's** sting,] The *blind-worm* is the *slow-worm*. So Drayton, in Noah's Flood:
"The small-eyed *slow-worm* held of many *blind*."
Steevens.

194

/6 -- maw, and gulf,] The *gulf* is the *swallow*, the *throat*.
Steevens.

In The Mirror for Magistrates, we have "monstrous *mawes and gulfes*." Henderson.

/7 -- **ravin'd** salt-sea shark;] Mr. M. Mason observes that we should read -- *ravin*, instead of -- *ravin'd*. So, in All's Well that Ends Well, Helena says:

"Better it were
"I met the *ravin* lion, when he roar'd
"With sharp constraint of hunger."

And in Beaumont and Fletcher's Maid of the Mill, Gillian says:

"When nurse Amaranta --
"Was seiz'd on by a fierce and hungry bear,
"She was the *ravin's* prey."

However, in Phineas Fletcher's Locusts, or Appollyonists, 1627, the same word, as it appears in the text of the play before us, occurs:

"But slew, devour'd and fill'd his empty maw;
"But with his *raven'd* prey his bowells broke,
"So into four divides his brazen yoke."

Ravin'd is *glutted with prey*. *Ravin* is the ancient word for *prey obtained by violence*. So, in Drayton's Polyolbion, Song 7:

"---- but a den for beasts of *ravin* made."

The same word occurs again in Measure for Measure.

Steevens.

To *ravin*, according to Minshieu, is to *devour*, or *eat greedily*. See his Dict. 1617, in v. *To devour*. I believe our author, with his usual licence, used *ravin'd* for *ravenous*, the passive participle for the adjective. Malone.

/8 **Sliver'd** in the **moon's eclipse**;] *Sliver* is a common

word in the North, where it means *to cut a piece*, or *a slice*. Again, in King Lear:

"She who herself will *sliver* and disbranch."

Milton has transplanted the second of these ideas into his Lycidas:

"---- perfidious bark
"Built in th' *eclipse*." Steevens.

/9 Nose of Turk, and Tartar's lips;] These ingredients, in all probability, owed their introduction to the detestation in which the Turks were held, on account of the *holy wars*.

So solicitous, indeed, were our neighbours, the French, (from whom most of our prejudices. as well as customs, are derived,) to keep this idea awake, that even in their military sport of the quintain, their soldiers were accustomed to point their lances at the figure of a Saracen. Steevens.

/1 Finger of birth-strangled, &c.

Make the gruel thick and slab;] Gray appears to have had this passage in his recollection, when he wrote --

"Sword that once a monarch bore
"*Keep the tissue close and strong*." *Fatal Sisters.*

Steevens.

Mr. Steevens's comparison is very complimentary to the monarch; but seriously, can any two passages differ more from each other than these do both in subject and expression? Boswell.

/2 Add thereto a tiger's **chaudron**,] *Chaudron*, i. e. *entrails*; a word formerly in common use in the books of cookery, in one of which, printed in 1597, I meet with a receipt to make a pudding of a calf's *chaldron*. Again, in Decker's Honest Whore, 1635: "Sixpence a meal wench, as well as heart can wish, with calves' *chauldrons* and chitterlings." At the coronation feast of Elizabeth of York, queen of Henry VII. among other dishes, one was "a swan with *chaudron*," meaning sauce made with its entrails. See Ives's Select Papers, Nº 3. p. 140. See also Mr. Pegge's Forme of Cury, a Roll of Ancient English Cookery, &c. 8vo. 1780, p. 66. Steevens.

196

/3 -- the other **Three** Witches.] The insertion of these words, "and *the* other Three Witches," in the original copy, must be owing to a mistake. There is no reason to suppose that Shakspeare meant to introduce more than *Three* Witches upon the scene. Ritson.

Perhaps these additional Witches were brought on for the sake of the approaching dance. Surely the original triad of hags was insufficient for the performance of the "ancient round" introduced in page 207. Steevens

/4 O, well done!] Ben Jonson's Dame, in his Masque of Queens, 1609, addresses her associates in the same manner:

"Well done, my hags."

The attentive reader will observe, that in this piece, old Ben has exerted his strongest efforts to rival the incantation of Shakspeare's Witches, and the final address of Prospero to the aerial spirits under his command.

It may be remarked also, that Shakspeare's Hecate, after delivering a speech of five lines, interferes no further in the business of the scene, but is lost in the croud of subordinate witches. Nothing, in short, is effected by her assistance, but what might have been done without it. Steevens.

Jonson could not have intended to rival Prospero's address, as his Masque was written several years before The Tempest.

Malone.

Mr. Gifford has denied that there was any imitation in the other instance. Boswell.

/5 Song.] In a former note on this tragedy, I had observed, that the original edition contains only the two first words of the song before us; but have since discovered the entire stanza in

197

The Witch, a dramatic piece, by Middleton, already quoted. The song is there called -- "A Charme-Song, about a Vessel." -- I may add, that this invocation, as it *first* occurs in The Witch, is -- "White spirits, black spirits, gray spirits, red spirits." -- Afterwards, we find it in its present metrical shape.

The song was, in all probability, a traditional one. The colours

of spirits are often mentioned. So, in Monsieur Thomas, 1639:

"Be thou *black*, or *white*, or *green*,
"Be thou heard, or to be seen."

Perhaps, indeed, this musical scrap (which does not well accord with the serious business of the scene) was introduced by the players, without the suggestion of Shakspeare.

It may yet be urged, that however light and sportive the metre of this stanza, the sense conveyed by it is sufficiently appropriate and solemn! 'Spirits of every hue, who are permitted to unite your various influences, unite them on the present occasion.'

Steevens.

Reginald Scot, in his Discovery of Witchcraft, 1584, enumerating the different kinds of spirits, particularly mentions *white, black, grey*, and *red* spirits. See also a passage quoted from Camden, ante, p. 191, n. 3. The modern editions, without authority, read -- "*Blue* spirits and grey." Malone.

/6 By the pricking of my thumbs, &c.] It is a very ancient superstition, that all sudden pains of the body, and other sensations which could not naturally be accounted for, were presages of somewhat that was shortly to happen. Hence Mr. Upton has explained a passage in The Miles Gloriosus of Plautus: "Timeo quod rerum gesserim hic, ita *dorsus totus prurit*." Steevens.

/7 -- yesty waves --] That is, *foaming* or *frothy waves*.

Johnson.

198

/8 Though bladed corn be **lodg'd**,] So, in King Richard II.:

"Our sighs, and they, shall *lodge* the summer corn."

Again, in King Henry VI. Part II.:

"Like to the summer corn by tempest *lodg'd*."

Corn, prostrated by the wind, in modern language, is said to be *lay'd*; but *lodg'd* had anciently the same meaning. Ritson.

/9 Though castles **topple** --] *Topple* is used for *tumble*. So, in Marlowe's Lust's Dominion, Act IV. Sc. III.:

"That I might pile up Charon's boat so full,
"Until it *topple* o'er."

Again, in Shirley's Gentleman of Venice:

"---- may be, his haste hath *toppled* him
"Into the river."

Again, in Pericles, Prince of Tyre, 1609:

"The very principals did seem to rend, and all to *topple*."

Steevens.

/1 Of nature's **germins** --] This was substituted by Theobald for "Natures *germaine*." Johnson.

So, in King Lear, Act III. Sc. II.:

"---- all *germins* spill at once
"That make ungrateful man."

Germins are seeds which have begun to *germinate* or sprout. *Germen*, Lat. *Germe*, Fr. *Germe* is a word used by Brown, in his Vulgar Errors: "Whether it be not made out of the *germe* or treadle of the egg," &c. Steevens.

199

/2 -- sow's blood, that **hath eaten**
Her nine **farrow;**] Shakspeare probably caught the idea of this offence against nature from the laws of Kenneth II. King of Scotland: "If a *sowe eate hir pigges*, let hyr be stoned to death and buried, that no man eate of hyr fleshe." -- Holinshed's *History of Scotland*, edit. 1577, p. 181. Steevens.

/3 -- **deftly** show.] i. e. with adroitness, dexterously. So, in the Second Part of King Edward IV. by Heywood, 1626:
"---- my mistress speaks *deftly* and truly."
Again, in Warner's Albion's England:
"Tho Roben Hood, liell John, frier Tucke, and Marian
deftly play --."
Deft is a North Country word. So, in Richard Brome's Northern Lass, 1633:
"---- He said I were a *deft* lass." Steevens.

/4 *An Apparition of an armed Head rises.*] The armed head represents symbolically Macbeth's head cut off and brought to Malcolm by Macduff. The bloody child is Macduff untimely ripped from his mother's womb. The child with a crown on his head, and a bough in his hand, is the royal Malcolm, who ordered his soldiers to hew them down a bough, and bear it before them to Dunsinane. This observation I have adopted from Mr. Upton. Steevens.

Lord Howard, in his Defensative against the Poison of supposed Prophecies, mentions "a notable example of a conjuror, who represented (as it were, in dumb show,) all the persons who should possess the crown of France; and caused the King of Navarre, or rather a wicked spirit in his stead, to appear in the fifth place," &c. Farmer.

/5 -- say thou nought.] Silence was necessary during all incantations. So, in Doctor Faustus, 1604:

200

"Your grace, demand no questions, ----
"But in dumb *silence* let them come and go."
Again, in The Tempest:
"---- be *mute*, or else our spell is marr'd."
Steevens.

/6 Beware the thane of Fife. --] "---- He had learned of certain wizzards, in whose words he put great confidence, how that he ought to take heede of Macduff," &c. *Holinshed.*
Steevens.

/7 Dismiss me: -- Enough.] Spirits thus evoked were usually represented as impatient of being questioned. So, in Henry VI. Part II. Act I. Sc. IV. the spirit <*>by the witch Jourdain, says, "Ask what thou wilt -- *that I had said and done!*" See Mr. Steevens's note on that passage. Malone. <* raised by -- Errata vol 21>

/8 Thou hast **harp'd** my fear aright:] To *harp*, is to touch on a passion as a *harper* touches a string. So, in Coriolanus, Act II. Sc. ult.:

"*Harp* on that still." Steevens.

/9 Had I **three ears**, &c.] Does Macbeth mean to say -- that 'if his sense of hearing were thrice what it is,' &c.? -- or -- that 'if the number of his ears were equal to that of the spectre's invocations of his name,' &c.? Let the reader determine.

Steevens.

201

/1 -- shall harm Macbeth.] So, Holinshed: "And surely hereupon he had put Macduff to death, but that a certeine witch, whom he had in great trust, had told him, that he should never be slaine with man borne of anie woman, nor vanquished till the wood of Bernane came to the castell of Dunsinane. This prophecie put all feare out of his heart." Steevens.

/2 -- take a **bond** of fate:] In this scene the attorney has more than once degraded the poet; for presently we have -- "the *lease* of nature." Steevens.

/3 ------ the **round**
And **top** of sovereignty?] The *round* is that part of the crown that encircles the head. The *top* is the ornament that rises above it. Johnson.

/4 Listen, but speak not.] The old copy, injuriously to measure, reads --

"Listen, but speak not *to't*." Steevens.

/5 -- high **Dunsinane** hill --] The present quantity of *Dunsinane* is right. In every subsequent instance the accent is misplaced. Thus, in Hervey's Life of King Robert Bruce, 1729 (a good authority):

202

"The noble Weemyss, M'duff's immortal son,
"M'duff! th' asserter of the Scottish throne;
"Whose deeds let Birnam and Dunsinnan tell,
"When Canmore battled, and the villain /* fell."

Ritson.

This accent may be defended on the authority of A. of Wyntown's Cronykil, b. vi. ch. xviii.:

"A gret hows for to mak of were
"A-pon the hycht of *Dwnsynāne*:
"Tymbyr thare-til to drawe and stane --." v. 120.

It should be observed, however, that Wyntown employs both quantities. Thus, in b. vi. ch. xviii. v. 190:

"-------- the Thane wes thare
"Of Fyfe, and till *Dwnsynăne* fare
"To byde Makbeth --." Steevens.

Prophecies of apparent impossibilities were common in Scot-

land; such as the removal of one place to another. Under this popular prophetick formulary the present prediction may be ranked. In the same strain, peculiar to his country, says Sir David Lindsay:

"Quhen the Bas and the Isle of May
"Beis set upon the Mount Sinay,
"Quhen the Lowmound besyde Falkland
"Be liftit to Northumberland -----." T. Warton.

/6 Who can impress the forest;] i. e. who can command the forest to serve him like a soldier impressed. Johnson.

/7 Rebellious **head**, rise never,] The old copy has -- rebellious *dead*. Malone.

We should read -- "Rebellious *head*," -- i.e. let rebellion never make head against me till a forest move, and I shall reign in safety. Theobald.

Mr. Theobald rightly observes, that *head* means *host*, or power:

"That Douglas and the English rebels met; --
"A mighty and a fearful *head* they are."
King Henry IV. Part I.

Again, in King Henry VIII.:

/* Macbeth.

"My noble father, Henry of Buckingham,
"Who first *rais'd head* against usurping Richard."
Johnson.

This phrase is not peculiar to Shakspeare. So, in The Death of Robert Earl of Huntingdon, 1601:

"---- howling like a *head* of angry wolves."

Again, in Look About You, 1600:

"Is, like a *head* of people, mutinous." Steevens.

/8 -- what **noise** is this?] *Noise*, in our ancient poets, is often literally synonymous for *musick*. See a note on King Henry IV. Part II. Act II. Sc. IV. Thus also Spenser, Fairy Queen, b. i. xii. 39:

"During which time there was a heavenly *noise*."

See likewise the 47th Psalm: "God is gone up with a merry *noise*, and the Lord with the sound of the trump." Steevens.

/9 Show his eyes, and grieve his heart;] "And the man of thine, whom I shall not cut off from mine altar, shall be to *consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart*." 1 *Samuel*, ii. 33. Malone.

/1 Eight Kings --] "It is reported that Voltaire often laughs

at the tragedy of Macbeth, for having a legion of ghosts in it.

One should imagine he either had not learned English, or had forgot his Latin; for the spirits of Banquo's line are no more ghosts, than the representation of the Julian race in the Æneid; and there is no ghost but Banquo's throughout the play." -- *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakspeare, &c. by Mrs. Montagu.* Steevens.

/9 Thy crown does **sear** mine eye-balls:] The expression of Macbeth, 'that the crown sears his eye-balls,' is taken from the method formerly practised of destroying the sight of captives or competitors, by holding a burning bason before the eye, which dried up its humidity. Whence the Italian, *abacinare*, to *blind*. Johnson.

/1 -- And thy **air**, &c.] In former editions,

"And thy *hair*,
"Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first: --
"A third is like the former."

As Macbeth expected to see a train of kings, and was only inquiring from what race they would proceed, he could not be surprised that the *hair* of the second was *bound with gold* like that of the first; he was offended only that the second resembled the first, as the first resembled Banquo, and therefore said:

"---- and thy *air*,
"Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first."

This Dr. Warburton has followed. Johnson.

So, in The Winter's Tale:

"Your father's image is so hit in you,
"His very *air*, that I should call you brother
"As I did him."

The old reading, however, as Mr. M. Mason observes, may be the true one. "It implies that their *hair* was of the same colour, which is more likely to mark a family likeness, than the *air*, which depends on habit," &c. A similar mistake has happened in The Maid's Tragedy, by Beaumont and Fletcher:

"Mine arms thus; and mine *air* [hair] blown with the wind." Steevens.

/2 -- to the **crack** of doom?] i. e. the dissolution of nature. *Crack* has now a mean signification. It was anciently employed in a more exalted sense. So, in The Valiant Welchman, 1615

"And will as fearless entertain this sight,
"As a good conscience doth the *cracks* of Jove." Steevens.

/3 And yet the eighth appears, who bears a glass,] This method of juggling prophecy is again referred to in Measure for Measure, Act II. Sc. VII.:

"---- and like a prophet,
"Looks in a *glass*, and shows me *future evils*."

So, in an Extract from The Penal Laws Against Witches, it is said "they do answer either by voice, or else do set before their eyes in *glasses*, chrystal stones, &c. the pictures or images of the *persons* or things sought for." Among the other knaveries with

which Face taxes Subtle in The Alchemist, this seems to be one:

"And taking in of shadows with a *glass*."

Again, in Humor's Ordinarie, an ancient collection of satires, no date:

"Shew you the devil in a *chrystal glass*."

Spenser has given a very circumstantial account of the *glass* which Merlin made for King Ryence, in the second canto of the third book of The Fairy Queen. A *mirror* of the same kind was presented to Cambuscan in The Squier's Tale of Chaucer; and in John Alday's translation of Pierre Boisteau's Theatrum Mundi, &c. bl. l. no date: "A certaine philosopher did the like to Pompey, the which *shewed him in a glasse* the order of his enemies march."

Steevens.

/4 That two-fold balls and treble scepters carry:] This was intended as a compliment to King James the First, who first united the two islands and the three kingdoms under one head; whose house too was said to be descended from Banquo. Warburton.

Of this last particular our poet seems to have been thoroughly aware, having represented Banquo not only as an innocent, but as a noble character; whereas, according to history, he was confederate with Macbeth in the murder of Duncan. The flattery of Shakspeare, however, is not more gross than that of Ben Jonson, who has condescended to quote his majesty's ridiculous book on Dæmonology, in the notes to The Masque of Queens, 1609.

Steevens.

/5 -- **Ay**, now, I see, 'tis true;] That the metre may be complete, I have supplied -- *ay*, an adverb employed by our author in other places, to enforce his meaning. Steevens.

/6 ---- the **blood-bolter'd** Banquo --] The epithet *blood-bolter'd* (which Dr. Warburton and the subsequent editors supposed to mean "one whose blood hath issued out at many wounds, as flour of corn passes out of the holes of a sieve,") has been entirely misunderstood. It is a provincial term, well known in Warwickshire, and probably in some other counties. When a horse, sheep, or other animal, perspires much, and any of the hair or wool, in consequence of such perspiration, or any redundant humour, becomes matted in tufts with grime and sweat, he is said to be *boltered*; and whenever the blood issues out, and coagulates, forming the locks into hard clotted bunches, the beast is said to be *blood-bolter'd*. This precisely agrees with the account already given of the murder of Banquo, who was killed by a wound in the head, and thrown into a ditch; with the filth of which, and the blood issuing from his wounds, his hair would necessarily be hardened and coagulated. He ought, therefore, to be represented both here and at the banquet, with his hair clotted with blood. The murderer, when he informs Macbeth of his having executed his commission, says,

"-------- safe in a *ditch* he bides,
"With twenty trenched gashes on his *head*,
"The least a death to nature."

And Macbeth himself exclaims,

"Thou can'st not say, I did it; never shake

"Thy *gory locks* at me." Malone.

To *bolter*, in Warwickshire, signifies to *daub, dirty*, or *begrime*. "I ordered (says my informant) a harness-collar to be made with a linen lining, but blacked, to give it the appearance of leather. The sadler made the lining as he was directed, but did not black it, saying, it would *bolter* the horse. Being asked what he meant by *bolter*, he replied, *dirty, besmear*; and that it was a common word in his country. This conversation passed within eight miles of Stratford on Avon."

In the same neighbourhood, when a boy has a broken head, so that his hair is matted together with blood, his head is said to be *boltered* [pronounced *baltered*]. So, in Philemon Holland's translation of Pliny's Natural History, 1601, book xii. ch. xvii. p. 370: "-- they doe drop and distill the said moisture, which the shrewd and unhappie beast catcheth among the shag long haires of his beard. Now by reason of dust getting among it, it *baltereth* and cluttereth into knots," &c. Such a term is therefore applicable to Banquo, who had "twenty trenched gashes on his head."

The propriety of the foregoing note has been abundantly con-

firmed by Mr. Homer, a truly respectable clergyman of Warwickshire. I seize this opportunity to offer my best acknowledgment for his remarks, which were obligingly conveyed to me by his son, the late Reverend and amiable Henry Homer, who favoured the world with editions of Sallust and Tacitus, the elegance of which can only be exceeded by their accuracy.

Steevens.

/7 -- cheer we up his **sprights**,] i. e. spirits. So, in Sidney's Arcadia, lib. ii.:

"Hold thou my heart, establish thou my *sprights*."

Steevens.

/8 I'll charm **the air** to give a sound,] The Hecate of Middleton says, on a similar occasion:

"Come, my sweete sisters, let *the air* strike our tune,
"Whilst we show reverence to yon peeping moone."

Steevens.

/9 -- your *antique round*: ---- *The Witches* ***dance, and vanish.***] These ideas as well as a foregoing one --

"The weird sisters, *hand in hand*,"

might have been adopted from a poem, intitled Churchyard's Dreame, 1593:

"All *hand in hand* they traced on
"A tricksie *ancient round*;
"And soone *as shadowes were they gone*,
"And might no more be found." Steevens.

Antique was the old spelling for *antick*, and so perhaps it is used here. So, in Greene's James IV.: "Enter three *Antiques*, who dance *round* and take Slipper with them." Malone.

/1 Stand aye accursed in the calendar!] In the ancient alma-

208

nacks the unlucky days were distinguished by a mark of reprobation. So, in Decker's Honest Whore, 1635:

"---- henceforth let it stand
"Within the wizard's book, the *kalender*,
"*Mark'd with a marginal finger*, to be chosen,
"By thieves, by villains, and black murderers."

Steevens.

/2 **Infected** be the **air** whereon they ride;] So, in the first part of Selimus, 1594:

"Now Baiazet will ban another while,
"And vtter curses to the concaue skie,
"Which may *infect* the regions of the *ayre*." Todd.

/3 Time, thou anticipat'st my dread exploits:] To *anticipate* is here to *prevent*, by taking away the opportunity. Johnson.

/4 The very **firstlings** --] *Firstlings*, in its primitive sense, is the first produce or offspring. So, in Heywood's Silver Age, 1613:

"The *firstlings* of their vowed sacrifice."

209

Here it means the thing first thought or done. The word is used again in the prologue to Troilus and Cressida:

"Leaps o'er the vant and *firstlings* of these broils."

Steevens.

/5 That trace his line.] i. e. follow, succeed in it. Thus, in a poem interwoven with A Courtlie Controversie of Cupid's Cautels: &c. translated out of French, &c. by H. W. [Henry Wotton] 4º. 1578:

"They *trace* the pleasant groves,
"And gather floures sweete --."

Again, in Sir Arthur Gorges' translation of the third book of Lucan, 1614:

"The tribune's curses in like case
"Said he, did greedy Crassus *trace*."

The old copy reads --

"That trace *him in* his line."

The metre, however, demands the omission of such unnecessary expletives. Steevens.

/6 But no more sights!] This hasty reflection is to be considered as a moral to the foregoing scene:

Tu ne quæsieris, scire (nefas), quem mihi, quem tibi
Finem Dî dederint Leuconöe; nec Babylonios
Tentaris numeros: ut melius, quicquid erit, pati.

Steevens.

210

/7 Our fears do make us traitors.] i. e. our flight is considered as an evidence of our treason. Steevens.

/8 natural touch:] Natural sensibility. He is not touched with natural affection. Johnson.

So, in an ancient MS. play, intitled The Second Maiden's Tragedy:

"---- How she's beguil'd in him:
"There's no such *natural touch*, search all his bosom."
Steevens.

/9 -- the poor wren, &c.] The same thought occurs in The Third Part of King Henry VI.:

"---- doves will peck in safeguard of their brood.
"Who hath not seen them (even with those wings
"Which sometimes they have us'd in fearful flight)
"Make war with him that climb'd unto their nest,
"Offering their own lives in their young's defence?"
Steevens.

211

/1 The fits o' the season.] The *fits of the season* should appear to be, from the following passage in Coriolanus, the *violent disorders* of the season, its convulsions:

"-------- but that
"The *violent fit* o' th' times craves it as physick."
Steevens.

Perhaps the meaning is, -- what is most *fitting* to be done in every conjuncture. Anonymous.

/2 -- when we are traitors,
And do not **know** ourselves;] i. e. we think ourselves innocent, the government thinks us traitors; therefore we are ignorant of ourselves. This is the ironical argument. The Oxford editor alters it to --

"And do not *know't* ourselves:"

But sure they did know what they said, that the state esteemed them traitors. Warburton.

Rather, when we are considered by the state as traitors, while at the same time we are *unconscious* of guilt; when we appear to others so different from what we really are, that we seem not to *know ourselves*. Malone.

/3 -- when we hold rumour
From what we fear,] To "hold rumour," signifies to be governed by the authority of rumour. Warburton.

I rather think to *hold* means, in this place, to *believe*, as we say, "I *hold* such a thing to be true, i. e. I take it, I believe it to be so." Thus, in King Henry VIII.:

"---- Did you not of late days hear, &c.
"*1 Gen.* Yes, but *held* it not."

The sense of the whole passage will then be: "The times are cruel when our fears induce us to believe, or take for granted, what we hear rumoured or reported abroad; and yet at the same time, as we live under a tyrannical government where *will* is

substituted for *law*, we know not what we have to fear, because we know not when we offend." Or, "When we are led by our

212

fears to believe every rumour of danger we hear, yet are not conscious to ourselves of any crime for which we should be disturbed with those fears." A passage like this occurs in King John:

"Possess'd with *rumours*, full of idle dreams,
"*Not knowing what they fear*, but full of fear."

This is the best I can make of the passage. Steevens.

/4 Each way, and move. --] Perhaps the poet wrote -- "And each way move." If they *floated each way*, it was needless to inform us that they *moved*. The words may have been casually transposed, and erroneously pointed. Steevens.

Perhaps Shakspeare used it as a substantive: as a man in quitting a room is familiarly said to "make a move," or as we say he "makes a move," at chess or backgammon. Anonymous.

/5 **Sirrah**, your father's dead;] *Sirrah*, in our author's time, was not always a term of reproach, but sometimes used by masters to servants, parents to children, &c. So before, in this play, Macbeth says to his servant,

"*Sirrah*, a word with you: attend those men
"Our pleasure?"

So Gabriel Harvey writes to Spenser: "But hoe I pray you, gentle *sirra*, a word with you more." Malone.

213

214

/6 -- in your state of honour I am **perfect**.] i. e. I am *perfectly acquainted* with your rank of honour. So, in the old book that treateth of the Lyfe of Virgil, &c. bl. l. no date: "-- which when Virgil saw, he looked in his boke of negromancy, wherein he was *perfit*." Again, in The Play of the four P's, 1569:

"*Pot.* Then tell me this: Are you *perfit* in drinking?
"*Ped.* *Perfit* in drinking as may be wish'd by thinking."

Steevens.

/7 To do **worse** to you, were fell cruelty.] To do *worse* is to let her and her children be destroyed without warning.

Johnson.

Mr. Edwards explains these words differently. "To do *worse* to you (says he) signifies, -- to fright you more, by relating all the circumstances of your danger; which would detain you so long that you could not avoid it." The meaning, however, may be, "To do worse to you," not to disclose to you the perilous situation you are in, from a foolish apprehension of alarming you, would be fell cruelty. Or the Messenger may only mean, to do more than *alarm* you by this disagreeable intelligence, -- to do you any actual and bodily harm, were fell cruelty. Malone.

If to fright you thus seem savage, how fell must be the cruelty of those who seek your destruction. Boswell.

215

/8 -- **shag-ear'd** villain.] Perhaps we should read *shag-hair'd*, for it is an abusive epithet very often used in our ancient plays, &c. So, in Decker's Honest Whore, Part II. 1630: -- "-- a *shag-haired* cur." Again, in our author's King Henry VI. Part II.: "-- like a *shag-haired* crafty Kern." Again, in Sir Arthur Gorge's translation of Lucan, 1614:

"That *shag-haired* Caicos tam'd with forts."

And Chapman, in his translation of the seventh book of Homer, 1598, applies the same epithet to the Greeks. Again, in the spurious play of King Leir, 1605:

"There she had set a *shaghayr'd* murdering wretch."

Again, in Barnaby Googe's version of Palingenius, 1561:

"But sore afraid was I to meete
"The *shagheard* horson's horne."

It may be observed, that, in the seventh Iliad of Homer, the <karē komoōntes Achaioi> are rendered by Arthur Hall, 1581, "-- *peruke* Greekes." And by Chapman, 1611, "-- *shag-haird* Greekes." Steevens.

This emendation appears to me extremely probable. In King John, Act V. we find "*unhear'd* sauciness" for "*unhair'd* sauciness;" and we have had in this play *hair* instead of *air*.

Hair was formerly written *heare*. Hence perhaps the mistake. So, in Ives's Select Papers, chiefly relating to English Antiquities, No. 3, p. 133: "-- and in her *heare* a circlet of gold richely garnished." In Lodge's Incarnate Devils of the Age, 4to. 1596, we find in p. 37, "*shag-heard* slave," which still more strongly supports Mr. Steevens's emendation. However, as flap-*ear'd* is used as an epithet of contempt in The Taming of the Shrew, and prick-*ear'd* in Henry V. the old copy may be right. Malone.

Mr. Steevens's emendation will be further confirmed by a reference to one of our Law Reporters. In 23 Car. I. Ch. Justice Rolle said it had been determined that these words, "Where is that long-locked, *shag-haired* murdering rogue?" were actionable. *Aleyn's Reports*, p. 61. Reed.

216

/8 *Enter* ***Malcolm*** *and* ***Macduff.***] The part of Holinshed's Chronicle which relates to this play, is no more than an abridgment of John Bellenden's translation of The Noble Clerk, Hector Boece, imprinted at Edinburgh, 1541. For the satisfaction of the reader, I have inserted the words of the first mentioned historian, from whom this scene is almost literally taken: -- "Though Malcolme was verie sorrowfull for the oppression of his countriemen the Scots, in manner as Makduffe had declared, yet doubting whether he was come as one that ment unfeinedlie as he spake, or else as sent from Makbeth to betraie him, he thought to have some further triall, and thereupon dissembling his mind at the first, he answered as followeth:

"I am trulie verie sorie for the miserie chanced to my countrie of Scotland, but though I have never so great affection to

relieve the same, yet by reason of certaine incurable vices, which reign in me, I am nothing meet thereto. First, such immoderate lust and voluptuous sensualitie (the abhominable fountain of all vices) followeth me, that if I were made King of Scots, I should seek to defloure your maids and matrones, in such wise that my intemperancie should be more importable unto you than the bloudie tyrannie of Makbeth now is. Hereunto Makduffe answered: This surelie is a very euil fault, for manie noble princes and kings have lost both lives and kingdomes for the same; neverthelesse there are women enow in Scotland, and therefore follow my counsell. Make thy selfe kinge, and I shall conveie the matter so wiselie, that thou shalt be satisfied at thy pleasure in such secret wise, that no man shall be aware thereof.

"Then said Malcolme, I am also the most avaritious creature in the earth, so that if I were king, I should seeke so manie waies to get lands and goods, that I would slea the most part of all the nobles of Scotland by surmized accusations, to the end I might injoy their lands, goods and possessions; and therefore to shew you what mischiefe may insue on you through mine unsatiable covetousnes, I will rehearse unto you a fable. There

was a fox having a sore place on him overset with a swarme of flies, that continuallie sucked out hir bloud: and when one that came by and saw this manner, demanded whether she would have the flies driven beside hir, she answered no; for if these flies that are alreadie full, and by reason thereof sucke not verie eagerlie, should be chased awaie, other that are emptie and fellie an hungred, should light in their places, and sucke out the residue of my bloud farre more to my greevance than these, which now being satisfied doo not much annoie me. Therefore saith Malcolme, Suffer me to remaine where I am, lest if I atteine to the regiment of your realme, mine unquenchable avarice may proove such, that ye would thinke the displeasures which now grieve you, should seeme easie in respect of the unmeasurable outrage which might insue through my comming amongst you.

"Makduffe to this made answer, how it was a far woorse fault than the other: for avarice is the root of all mischiefe, and for that crime the most part of our kings have been slaine, and brought to their finall end. Yet notwithstanding follow my counsell, and take upon thee the crowne. There is gold and riches inough in Scotland to satisfie thy greedie desire. Then said Malcolme again, I am furthermore inclined to dissimulation, telling of leasings, and all other kinds of deceit, so that I naturallie rejoise in nothing so much, as to betraie and deceive such as put anie trust or confidence in my woords. Then sith there is nothing that more becommeth a prince than constancie, veritie, truth, and justice, with the other laudable fellowship of those faire and noble vertues which are comprehended onelie in soothfastnesse, and that lieng utterlie overthroweth the same, you see how unable I am to governe anie province or region: and therefore sith you have remedies to cloke and hide all the rest of my other vices, I praie you find shift to cloke this vice amongst the residue.

"Then said Makduffe: "This is yet the woorst of all, and there I leave thee, and therefore saie; Oh ye unhappie and miserable Scotishmen, which are thus scourged with so manie and

sundrie calamities ech one above other! Ye have one cursed and wicked tyrant that now reigneth over you, without anie right or title, oppressing you with his most bloudie crueltie. This other that hath the right to the crowne, is so replet with the inconstant behaviour and manifest vices of Englishmen, that he is nothing woorthie to injoy it: for by his owne confession he is not onlie avaritious and given to unsatiable lust, but so false a traitor withall, that no trust is to be had unto anie woord he speaketh. Adieu Scotland, for now I account my selfe a banished man for

ever, without comfort or consolation: and with these woords the brackish tears trickled downe his cheekes verie abundantlie.

"At the last, when he was readie to depart, Malcolme tooke him by the sleeve, and said: Be of good comfort Makduffe, for I have none of these vices before remembered, but have jested with thee in this manner, onlie to prove thy mind: for divers times heretofore Makbeth sought by this manner of means to bring me into his hand," &c.

Holinshed's History of Scotland, p. 175. Steevens.

/9 -- the mortal sword; --] i. e. the deadly sword. So, in King Henry VI. Part III.:

"Or bide the *mortal* fortune of the field."

1 Bestride our **down-fall'n birthdom:**] The old copy has -- *down-fall*. Corrected by Dr. Johnson. Malone.

He who can discover what is meant by him that earnestly exhorts him to *bestride* his *downfall birthdom*, is at liberty to adhere to the present text; but it is probable that Shakspeare wrote:

"---- like good men,

"Bestride our *down-fall'n birthdom* ----."

The allusion is to a man from whom something valuable is about to be taken by violence, and who, that he may defend it without incumbrance, lays it on the ground, and stands over it with his weapon in his hand. Our birthdom, our birthright, says he, lies on the ground; let us, like men who are to fight for what is dearest to them, not abandon it, but stand over it and defend it. This is a strong picture of obstinate resolution. So, Falstaff says to Hal: "If thou see me down in the battle, and *bestride me*, so."

Birthdom for *birthright* is formed by the same analogy with *masterdom* in this play, signifying the *privileges* or *rights* of a *master*.

Perhaps it might be *birth-dame* for *mother*; let us stand over our *mother* that lies bleeding on the ground. Johnson.

There is no need of change. In The Second Part of King Henry IV. Morton says:

"---- he doth *bestride a bleeding land*." Steevens.

King Henry IV. Act V. Sc. I. Malone.

/2 -- and yell'd out

Like syllable of dolour.] This presents a ridiculous image. But what is insinuated under it is noble; that the portents and

219

prodigies in the skies, of which mention is made before, showed that heaven sympathised with Scotland. Warburton.

The ridicule, I believe, is only visible to the commentator. Steevens.

/3 -- to **friend**,] i. e. to *befriend*. Steevens.

/4 You may **deserve** of him through me;] The old copy reads -- *discerne*. The emendation was made by Mr. Theobald, who supports it by Macduff's answer:

"I am not treacherous." Malone.

/5 -- and wisdom --] That is, and *'tis* wisdom. Heath.

The sense of this passage is obvious, but the construction difficult, as there is no verb to which *wisdom* can refer. Something is omitted, either through the negligence of the printer, or probably the inadvertence of the author. If we read --

"-- And *think it* wisdom --"

the sense will be supplied; but that would destroy the metre; and so indeed would the insertion of any word whatever. M. Mason.

I suspect this line to have suffered by interpolation, as well as omission, and that it originally ran thus:

"------ but something
"You may deserve through me; and wisdom *is it*
"To offer," &c.

So, in King Henry VI. Part II.:

"Now *is it* manhood, *wisdom* and defence."

Had the passage in question been first printed thus, would any reader have supposed the words "of him," were wanting to the sense? In this play I have already noted several instances of manifest interpolation and omission. See notes on Act I. Sc. III. p. 28, n. 9, and Act III. Sc. V. p. 182, n. 1. Steevens.

220

/6 A good and virtuous nature may recoil,
In an imperial charge.] A good mind may *recede* from goodness in the execution of a royal *commission*. Johnson.

/7 -- But 'crave your pardon;] The old copy, without attention to measure, reads:

"---- But *I shall* crave your pardon." Steevens.

/8 Though all things foul, &c.] This is not very clear. The meaning, perhaps, is this: -- "My suspicions cannot injure you, if you be virtuous, by supposing that a traitor may put on your virtuous appearance. I do not say that your virtuous appearance proves you a traitor; for virtue must wear its proper form, though that form be counterfeited by villainy." Johnson.

An expression of a similar nature occurs in Measure for Measure:

"------ Good alone
"Is good; without a name vileness is so." M. Mason.

/9 Why in that **rawness** --] Without previous provision, without due preparation, without *maturity* of counsel. Johnson.

I meet with this expression in Lyly's Euphues, 1580, and in the quarto, 1608, of King Henry V.:
"Some their wives *rawly* left." Steevens.

221

/1 For goodness **dares** not check thee!] The old copy reads -- *dare*. Corrected in the third folio. Malone.

/2 -- wear thou thy wrongs,] That is, '*Poor country*, wear thou thy wrongs.' Johnson.

/3 Thy title is **affeer'd**!] *Affeer'd*, a law term for *confirm'd*. Pope.

What Mr. Pope says of the law term is undoubtedly true; but is there absolute reason why we should have recourse to it for the explanation of this passage? Macduff first apostrophises his country, and afterwards pointing to Malcolm, may say, that his title was *afear'd*, i. e. frighted from exerting itself. Throughout the ancient editions of Shakspeare, the word *afraid* is frequently written as it was formerly pronounced, *afear'd*. The old copy reads -- "*The* title," &c. i. e. "the regal title is afraid to assert itself."
I have, however, adopted Mr. Malone's emendation, as it varies, but in a single letter, from the reading of the old copy. See his subsequent note. Steevens.

If we read -- "*The* title is *affeer'd*," the meaning may be: -- 'Poor country, wear thou thy wrongs, *the title to them is legally settled by those who had the final judication of it*.'
Affeerers had the power of confirming, or moderating, fines and amercements. Tollet.

To *affeer* (for so it should be written) is to *assess*, or reduce to certainty. All amerciaments -- that is, judgments of any court of justice, upon a presentment or other proceeding, that a party shall be amerced, or in mercy, -- are by Magna Charta to be *affeered* by lawful men, sworn to be impartial. This is the ordinary practice of a Court Leet, with which Shakspeare seems to have been intimately acquainted, and where he might have occasionally acted as an *affeerer*. Ritson.

For the emendation now made I am answerable. *The* was, I conceive, the transcriber's mistake, from the similar sounds of *the* and *thy*, which are frequently pronounced alike.
Perhaps the meaning is, -- "Poor country, wear thou thy wrongs! Thy title to them is now fully established by law." Or, perhaps, he addresses Malcolm. Continue to endure tamely the

222

wrongs you suffer: thy just title to the throne is *cow'd*, has not spirit to establish itself. Malone.

/4 -- confineless harms.] So, in The Merry Wives of Windsor, Act II. Sc. II.: "-- thou *unconfinable baseness* --." Steevens.

/5 **Sudden**, malicious,] *Sudden*, for *capricious*. Warburton.

Rather, violent, passionate, hasty. Johnson.

223

/6 **Boundless** intemperance --] Perhaps the epithet -- *boundless*, which overloads the metre, was a play-house interpolation. Steevens.

/7 -- grows with more pernicious root
Than summer-**seeming** lust;] *Summer-seeming* has no manner of sense: correct,
"Than summer-*teeming* lust --;"
i. e. the passion that lasts no longer than the *heat* of life, and which goes off in the *winter* of age. Warburton.

224

When I was younger and bolder, I corrected it thus:
"Than fume, or seething lust."
That is, an angry passion, or boiling lust. Johnson.

Summer-seeming lust, may signify lust that seems as hot as summer. Steevens.

Read -- summer-*seeding*. The allusion is to plants; and the sense is, -- "Avarice is a perennial weed; it has a deeper and more pernicious root than *lust*, which is a mere annual, and lasts but for a summer, when it sheds its seed and decays."
Blackstone_

I have paid the attention to this conjecture which I think it deserves, by admitting it into the text. Steevens.

Summer-*seeming* is, I believe, the true reading. In Donne's Poems we meet with "winter-*seeming*." Malone.

Sir W. Blackstone's elegant emendation is countenanced by the following passages: Thus, in The Rape of Lucrece:
"How will thy shame be *seeded* in thine age,
"When thus thy vices bud before thy spring?"
And in Troilus and Cressida:
"---- The *seeded* pride
"That hath to its maturity grown up
"In rank Achilles, must or now be cropp'd,
"Or, shedding, breed a nursery of evil,
"To over-bulk us all." Henley.

/8 -- foysons --] Plenty. Pope.

It means *provisions* in plenty. So, in The Ordinary, by Cart-

wright: “New *foysons* byn ygraced with new titles.” The word was antiquated in the time of Cartwright, and is by him put into the mouth of an antiquary. Again, in Holinshed’s Reign of King Henry VI. p. 1613: “-- fifteene hundred men, and great *foison* of vittels.” Steevens.

/9 -- All these are **portable**,] *Portable* is, perhaps, here used for *supportable*. ‘All these vices, being balanced by your virtues, may be endured.’ Malone.

Portable answers exactly to a phrase now in use. Such failings may be *borne with*, or are *bearable*. Steevens.

225

/1 -- Nay, had I power, I should
Pour the sweet milk of concord into hell,
Uproar the universal peace, confound
All unity on earth.] Malcolm, I think, means to say, that if he had ability, he would pour all *that* milk of human kindness, which is so beneficial to mankind, into the abyss, so as to leave the earth without any portion of it; and that by thus depriving mankind of those humane affections which are so necessary to their mutual happiness, he will throw the whole world into confusion. Malone.

I believe, all that Malcolm designs to say is, -- that, if he had power, he would even annihilate the gentle source or principle of peace: pour the soft milk by which it is nourished, among the flames of hell, which could not fail to dry it up.
Lady Macbeth has already observed that her husband was “too full of the *milk* of human kindness.” Steevens_

/2 -- an **untitled tyrant** --] Thus, in Chaucer’s Manciple’s Tale:
“Right so betwix a *titleles tiraunt*
“And an outlawe.” Steevens.

226

/3 Died every day she lived.] The expression is borrowed from the sacred writings: “I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus, *I die daily*.” Malone.

J. Davies, of Hereford, in his Epigram on -- A proud lying Dyer, has the same allusion:
“Yet (like the mortifide) he *dyes* to *live*.”
To *die* unto *sin*, and to *live* unto *righteousness*, are phrases employed in our Liturgy. Steevens.

/4 From over-credulous haste:] From over-hasty credulity. Malone.

/5 -- **thy** here-approach,] The old copy has -- *they* here. Corrected by the editor of the second folio. Malone.

227

/6 -- ten thousand warlike men,
All ready **at a point**,] *At a point*, may mean 'all ready at a time; but Shakspeare meant more: he meant both time and place, and certainly wrote:
"All ready at *appoint* ----."
i. e. at the place *appointed*, at the rendezvous. Warburton.

There is no need of change. Johnson.

So, in Spenser's Fairy Queen, b. i. c. ii.:
"A faithlesse Sarazin all arm'd *to point*." Malone.

/7 -- And the **chance of goodness**
Be like our warranted quarrel!] The *chance of goodness*, as it is commonly read, conveys no sense. If there be not some more important error in the passage, it should at least be pointed thus:
"---- and the *chance, of goodness,*
"Be like our warranted quarrel! ----"
That is, may the event be, of the goodness of heaven, [*pro justicia divina,*] answerable to the cause.
Mr. Heath conceives the sense of the passage to be rather this: 'And may the success of that goodness, which is about to exert itself in my behalf ,be such as may be equal to the justice of my quarrel.'
But I am inclined to believe that Shakspeare wrote:
"---- and the ^chanee, O goodness,
"Be like our warranted quarrel! --"
This some of his transcribers wrote with a small *o*, which another imagined to mean *of*. If we adopt this reading, the sense will be: "And O thou sovereign goodness, to whom we now appeal, may our fortune answer to our cause. Johnson.

/8 -- convinces --] i. e. overpowers, subdues. See p. 85, n. 4. Steevens.

/9 The mere despair of surgery, he cures;] Dr. Percy, in his notes on The Northumberland Houshold Book, says, "that our ancient kings even in those dark times of superstition, do not seem to have affected the cure of the king's evil. -- This miraculous gift was left to be claimed by the Stuarts: our ancient Plantagenets were humbly content to cure the cramp." In this assertion, however, the learned editor of the above curious volume has been betrayed into a mistake, by relying too implicitly on the authority of Mr. Anstis. The power of curing the king's evil was claimed by many of the Plantagenets. Dr. Borde, who wrote in the time of Henry the VIIIth, says, "The kynges of England by the power that God hath given to them dothe make sicke men whole of a sycknes called the Kynge's Evyll." In Laneham's Account of the Entertainment at Kenelworth Castle, it is said, "-- and also by her highness [Q. Elizabeth] accustomed mercy and charitee, nyne cured of the peynful and dangerous diseaz called the King's Evil, for that kings and queens of this realm without oother medsin, (save only by handling and prayer,) only doo it." Polydore Virgil asserts the same; and Will. Tooker, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, published a book on this subject,

an account of which is to be seen in Dr. Douglas's treatise, entitled, The Criterion, p. 191. See Dodsley's Collection of old Plays, vol. xii. p. 428, edit. 1780. Reed.

/1 -- a golden stamp, &c.] This was the coin called an *angel*. So, Shakspeare, in The Merchant of Venice:

229

"A coin that bears the figure of an angel
"*Stamped in gold*, but that's insculp'd upon."

The value of the coin was ten shillings. Steevens.

/2 -- and 'tis spoken,
To the succeeding royalty he leaves
The healing benediction.] It must be owned, that Shakspeare is often guilty of strange absurdities in point of history and chronology. Yet here he has artfully avoided one. He had a mind to hint, that the cure of the *evil* was to descend to the successors in the royal line, in compliment to James the First. But the Confessor was the first who pretended to the gift: How then could it be at that time generally spoken of, that the gift was hereditary? This he has solved by telling us that Edward had the gift of prophecy along with it."
Warburton.

Dr. Warburton here invents an objection, in order to solve it. "The Confessor (says he) was the *first* who pretended to this gift: how then could it be at that time generally spoken of, that the gift was *hereditary*? This he [Shakspeare] has solved, by telling us that Edward had the gift of prophecy along with it." But Shakspeare does not say, that it was hereditary in Edward, or, in other words, that he had inherited this extraordinary power from his *ancestors*; but that "it was generally *spoken*, that he *leaves* the healing benediction to *succeeding* kings:" and such a rumour there might be in the time of Edward the Confessor, (supposing he had such a gift,) without his having the gift of prophecy along with it.

Shakspeare has merely transcribed what he found in Holinshed, without the conceit which Dr. Warburton has imputed to him: "As hath beene thought, he was inspired with the gift of prophesie, and also to have had the gift of healing infirmities and diseases. He used to helpe those that were vexed with the disease commonlie called the King's Evil, and *left that virtue* as it were *a portion of inheritance unto his successors*, the *kings* of this realme." *Holinshed*, vol. i. p. 195. Malone.

230

/3 My countryman; but yet I know him not.] Malcolm discovers Rosse to be his countryman, while he is yet at some distance from him, by his dress. This circumstance loses its propriety on our stage, as all the characters are uniformly represented in English habits. Steevens.

This has long been reformed on the stage, which, in point of costume, as in every other respect, is under the highest obligations to the taste and knowledge of Mr. Kemble. Boswell.

/4 -- **rent** the air,] To *rent* is an ancient verb, which has been long ago disused. So, in Cæsar and Pompey, 1607:

"With *rented* hair and eyes besprent with tears."

Steevens.

Again, in The Legend of Orpheus and Eurydice, 1597:

"While with his fingers he his haire doth *rent*." Malone.

/5 A **modern** ecstacy:] That is, no more regarded than the contorsions that fanatics throw themselves into. The author was thinking of those of his own times. Warburton.

I believe *modern* is only *foolish* or *trifling*. Johnson.

Modern is generally used by Shakspeare to signify *trite, common*; as "*modern* instances," in As You Like It, &c. &c. See vol. vi. p. 409, n. 4. Steevens.

231

Ecstacy is used by Shakspeare for a temporary alienation of mind. Malone.

/6 Expire before the flowers in their caps,] So, in All's Well That Ends Well:

"---- whose constancies

"Expire before their fashions." Steevens.

/7 Too nice, **and** yet **too** true!] The redundancy of this hemistich induces me to believe our author only wrote --

"Too nice, yet true!" Steevens.

/8 Why, well. ---- Well too.] So, in Antony and Cleopatra:

"-------- We use

"To say, *the dead are well*." Steevens.

/9 -- children?] *Children* is, in this place, used as a trisyllable. So, in The Comedy of Errors:

"These are the parents to these *children*."

See note on this passage, vol. iv. p. 265. Steevens.

232

/1 To **doff** their dire distresses.] To *doff* is to *do off*, to *put off*. See King John, Act III. Sc. I. Steevens.

/2 -- should not **latch** them.] Thus the old copy, and rightly. To *latch* any thing, is to *lay hold of* it. So, in the prologue to Gower, De Confessione Amantis, 1554:

"Hereof for that thei wolden *lache*,

"With such duresse," &c.

Again, book i. fol. 27:

"When that he Galathe besought

"Of love, which he maie not *latche*."

Again, in the first book of Ovid's Metamorphosis, as translated by Golding:

"As though he would, at everie stride, betweene his teeth

hir *latch*."

Again, in the eighth book:

"But that a bough of chesnut-tree, thick-leaved, by the way
"Did *latch* it," &c.

To *latch* (in the North country dialect) signifies the same as to *catch*. Steevens.

/3 -- fee-grief,] A peculiar sorrow; a grief that hath a single owner. The expression is, at least to our ears, very harsh. Johnson.

So, in our author's Lover's Complaint:

"My woeful self that did in freedom stand,
"And was my own *fee-simple*." Malone.

233

It must, I think, be allowed that, in both the foregoing instances, the Attorney has been guilty of a flat trespass on the Poet. Steevens.

/4 Were, on the **quarry** of these murder'd deer,] *Quarry* is a term used both in *hunting* and *falconry*. In both sports it means the game after it is killed. So, in Massinger's Guardian:

"-------- he strikes
"The trembling bird, who even in death appears
"Proud to be made his *quarry*."

Again, in an ancient MS. entitled The Boke of Huntyng that is cleped Mayster of Game: "While that the huntyng lesteth, should cartes go fro place to place to bringe the deer to the *querre*," &c. "to kepe the *querre*, and to make ley it on a rowe, al the hedes o way, and every deeres feet to other's bak, and the hertes should be leyde on a rowe, and the rascaile by hemselfe in the same wise. And thei shuld kepe that no man come in the *querre* til the king come, saif the maister of the game." It appears, in short, that the game was arranged in a hollow square, within which none but privileged persons, such as had claims to the particular animals they had killed, were permitted to enter. Hence, perhaps, the origin of the term *quarry*. Steevens.

/5 -- ne'er pull your hat upon your brows;] The same thought occurs in the ancient ballad of Northumberland betrayed by Douglas:

234

"*He pulled his hatt down over his browe,*
"And in his heart he was full woe," &c.

Again:

"Jamey *his hatt pull'd over his brow*," &c. Steevens.

/6 -- the grief, that does not speak,] So, in Vittoria Corombona, 1612:

"Those are the killing *griefs*, which *dare not speak*."
Curæ leves loquuntur, ingentes stupent.

Again, in Greene's old bl. l. novel entitled The Tragicall History of Faire Bellora:

"Light *sorrowes* often *speake*,

“When great the heart in silence breake.” Steevens.

In Daniel’s Complaint of Rosamond, 1595, we have the like sentiment:

“Striving to tell his woes words would not come:
“For *light cares speak*, when mighty *griefs* are dombe.”
Reed.

So, in Venus and Adonis:

“---- the heart hath treble wrong,
“When it is barr’d the aidance of the tongue.” Malone.

/7 He has no children.] It has been observed by an anonymous critick, that this is not said of Macbeth, who had children, but of Malcolm, who, having none, supposes a father can be so easily comforted. Johnson.

The meaning of this may be, either that Macduff could not, by retaliation, revenge the murder of his children, because Macbeth had none himself; or that if he had any, a father’s feelings for a father would have prevented him from the deed. I know not from what passage we are to infer that Macbeth had children alive.

Holinshed’s Chronicle does not, as I remember, mention any. The same thought occurs again in King John:

“He talks to me that *never had a son*.”

Again, in King Henry VI. Part III.:

“You have *no children*: butchers, if you had,
“The thought of them would have stirr’d up remorse.”
Steevens.

Surely the latter of the two interpretations offered by Mr. Steevens is the true one, supposing these words to relate to Macbeth.

The passage, however, quoted from King John, seems in favour of the supposition that these words relate to Malcolm.

That Macbeth had children at some period, appears from what Lady Macbeth says in the first Act: “I have given suck,” &c.

I am still more strongly confirmed in thinking these words relate to Malcolm, and not to Macbeth, because Macbeth *had* a son then alive, named Lulah, who after his father’s death was proclaimed king by some of his friends, and slain at Strathbolgie, about four months after the battle of Dunsinane. See Fordun. Scoti-Chron. l. v. c. viii.

Whether Shakspeare was apprized of this circumstance, cannot be now ascertained; but we cannot prove that he was unacquainted with it. Malone.

My copy of the Scotichronicon (Goodall’s edit. vol. i. p. 252,) affords me no reason for supposing that *Lulach* was a *son* of Macbeth. The words of Fordun are: -- “Subito namque post mortem Machabedæ convenerunt quidam ex ejus parentela sceleris hujusmodi fautores, suum *consobrinum*, nomine *Lulach*, ignomine fatuum, ad Sconam ducentes, et impositum sede regali constituunt regem,” &c. Nor does Wyntown, in his Cronykil, so much as hint that this mock-monarch was the immediate offspring of his predecessor:

"Eftyre all this, that ilke yhere,
"That this Makbeth was browcht on bere,
"*Lulawch* fule ras, and he
"As kyng regnyd monethis thre.
"This Malcolme gert sla hym syne
"Wyth-in the land of Straybolgyne." B. vi. 47, &c.

It still therefore remains to be proved that "Macbeth *had* a son *then* alive." Besides, we have been already assured, by himself, on the authority of the Witches, p. 142, that his scepter would pass away into another family, "*no son of his succeeding*."
Steevens.

236

Upon comparing Mr. Steevens's quotation from Fordun, with the more correct edition by Hearne, I am satisfied that Mr. Malone was inaccurate in producing that historian as an authority for *Lulah, Lulach, Luthlac*, or *Lugtag*, (for by all these names is he mentioned,) being the son of Macbeth. By a slip of memory, or an incorrect memorandum, he was probably led to confound *Fordun* with *Buchanan*, whose words are these: -- "Hæc dum Forfaræ geruntur, qui supererant ex factione Macbethi, *filium ejus Luthlacum* (cui ex ingenio cognomen inditum erat Fatuo) Sconam ductum regem appellant." Fordun does not express this, indeed, but he does not contradict it. *Suum consobrinum* may mean, *their* relation, i.e. of the same clan. Mr. Steevens's last argument might be turned the other way. That his son should not succeed him, would more afflict a man who *had* a son than one who was childless. Boswell.

/8 At one fell **swoop**?] *Swoop* is the descent of a bird of prey on his quarry. So, in The White Devil, 1612:
"That she may take away all at one swoop."
Again, in The Beggar's Bush, by Beaumont and Fletcher:
"---- no star prosperous!
"All at a *swoop*."
It is frequently, however, used by Drayton, in his Polyolbion, to express the swift descent of rivers. Steevens.

/9 Dispute it like a man.] i. e contend with your present sorrow like a man. So, in Twelfth Night, Act IV. Sc. III.:
"For though my soul *disputes* well with my sense," &c.
Again, in Romeo and Juliet:
"Let me *dispute* with thee of thy estate." Steevens.

237

/1 Cut short all **intermission**;] i. e. all pause, all intervening time. So, in King Lear:
"Deliver'd letters, spite of *intermission*." Steevens.

/2 ---- if he 'scape,
Heaven forgive him too!] That is, 'if he escape my vengeance, let him escape that of Heaven also."
An expression nearly similar occurs in The Chances, where Petruchio, speaking of the Duke, says:
"He scap'd me yesternight; which if he dare
"Again adventure for, heaven pardon him!

"I shall, with all my heart." M. Mason.

The meaning, I believe, is, -- "If heaven be so unjust as to let him escape my vengeance, I am content that it should proceed still further in its injustice, and to impunity in this world add forgiveness hereafter. Malone.

/3 This **tune** --] The folio reads -- This *time*. *Tune* is Rowe's emendation. Steevens.

The emendation is supported by a former passage in this play, where the word is used in a similar manner:

"*Macb.* Went it not so?
"*Banq.* To the self-same *tune* and words." Malone.

/4 Put on their instruments.] i. e. encourage, thrust forward us

their instruments against the tyrant. So, in King Lear, Act I. Sc. IV. vol. x. p. 60:

"That you protect this course, and *put* it *on*
"By your allowance."

Again, in Chapman's version of the eleventh Iliad:

"For Jove makes Trojans *instruments*, and virtually then
"Wields arms himself." Steevens.

/5 Since his majesty **went into the field**,] This is one of Shakspeare's oversights. He forgot that he had shut up Macbeth in Dunsinane, and surrounded him with besiegers. That he could *not go into the field*, is observed by himself with splenetic impatience:

"-------- our castle's strength
"Will laugh a siege to scorn. Here let them lie
"Till famine and the ague eat them up.
"Were they not forc'd with those that should be ours,
"*We might have met them dareful, beard to beard,*
"*And beat them backward home.*"

It is clear also, from other passages, that Macbeth's motions had long been circumscribed by the walls of his fortress.

The truth may be, that Shakspeare thought the spirit of Lady Macbeth could not be so effectually subdued, and her peace of mind so speedily unsettled by reflection on her guilt, as during the absence of her husband:

---- deserto jacuit dum frigida lecto,
Dum queritur tardos ire relicta dies.

For the present change in her disposition, therefore, our poet

(though in the haste of finishing his play he forgot his plan) might mean to have provided, by allotting her such an interval of solitude as would subject her mind to perturbation, and dispose her thoughts to repentance.

It does not appear, from any circumstance within the compass of this drama, that she had once been separated from her husband, after his return from the victory over Macdonwald, and the King of Norway. Steevens.

Yet Rosse says, [p. 232.] that ‘he saw the tyrant’s power a-foot.’ The strength of his adversaries, and the revolt of his own troops, mentioned in a subsequent scene, might compel him to retreat into his castle. Boswell.

240

/6 -- her **eyes are open.**] So, in The Tempest:
“This is a strange repose, to be asleep
“With *eyes* wide *open*,” &c. Steevens.

/7 Ay, but their sense **are** shut.] Thus the old copy; and so the author certainly wrote, though it sounds very harshly to our ears. So again, in his 112th Sonnet:
“In so profound abysm I throw all care
“Of others’ voices, that my adder’s *sense*
“To critick and to flatterer stopped *are*.”
Malone.

In the Sonnet our author was compelled to sacrifice grammar to the convenience of rhyme. In the passage before us, he was free from such constraint.
What, therefore, should forbid us to read, as in my text? --
“Ay, but their sense *is* shut.” Steevens.

We have the same inaccurate grammar in Julius Cæsar, where no rhyme was required --
“The posture of his blows *are* yet unknown.”
Malone.

/8 Yet here’s a spot.] A passage somewhat similar occurs in Webster’s Vittoria Corombona, &c. 1612:
“-------- Here’s a white hand
“Can blood so soon be wash’d out?”
Webster’s play was published in 1612; Shakspeare’s in 1623.
Steevens.

/9 -- One; Two;] Macbeth does not, previously to the murder, mention the hour at which Lady Macbeth is to strike upon the bell, which was to be the signal for his going into Duncan’s chamber to execute his wicked purpose; but it seems that Lady

241

Macbeth is now thinking of the moment when she rang the bell; and that two o’clock was the hour when the deed was perpetrated. This agrees with the scene that immediately precedes the murder, but not with that which follows it. See p. 118, n. 3.
Malone.

/1 -- Hell is **murky**!] *Murky* is *dark*. So, in The Tempest, Act IV. Sc. I.:
“---- the *murkiest* den
“The most opportune place,” &c.
Lady Macbeth is acting over, in a dream, the business of the murder of Duncan, and encouraging her husband as when awake. She, therefore, would not have even hinted the terrors of hell to

one whose conscience she saw was too much alarmed already for her purpose. She certainly imagines herself here talking to Macbeth, who, (she supposes,) had just said, *Hell is murky*, (i. e. hell is a dismal place to go to in consequence of such a deed,) and repeats his words in contempt of his cowardice.

"Hell is murky! -- Fye, my lord, fye! a soldier, and afear'd?"

This explanation, I think, gives a spirit to the passage, which has hitherto appeared languid, being perhaps misapprehended by those who placed a full point at the conclusion of it. Steevens.

/2 -- who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?] Statius, in a passage already quoted, speaking of the sword by which an old man was slain, calls it *egentem sanguinis ensem*; and Ovid, [Met. 1. vii.] describing a wound inflicted on a superannuated ram, has the same circumstance:

-------- guttura cultro
Fodit, et *exiguo* maculavit *sanguine* ferrum.

Steevens.

/3 -- you mar all with this starting.] Alluding to the terrors of Macbeth, when the Ghost broke in on the festivity of the banquet.

Steevens.

242

/4 To bed, to bed; there's knocking at the gate.] Lady Macbeth, in her sleep, is talking of Duncan's murder, and recalls to her mind the circumstance of the knocking at the gate just after it. A. C.

243

/5 My mind she has **mated**,] Astonished, confounded.

Johnson.

The expression is taken from *chess-playing*:

"---- that so young a warrior
"Should bide the shock of such approved knights,
"As he this day hath *match'd* and *mated* too."

Soliman and Perseda.

"-------- woman,
"Worse than Medusa *mateth* all our minds."

Orlando Furioso, by R. Greene, 1599.

"Not mad, but *mated*." *Comedy of Errors*.

In the following instances, (both taken from the ancient metrical romance of The Sowdon of Babyloyne, MS.) the allusion to chess is still more evident:

"The dikes there so develye depe
"Thai held them selfe *chek mate*." P. 7.
"Richard raught him with a barr of bras
"That he caught at the gate;
"He brake his legges, he cryed alas,
"And felle alle *chek mate*." Steevens.

Scory, in the commendatory verses prefixed to Drayton's Heroicall Epistles, makes use of this phrase, and exactly in the same sense:

"Yet with these broken reliques, *mated mind*,
"And what a justly-grieved thought can say."
Holt White.

Our author, as well as his contemporaries, seems to have used the word as explained by Dr. Johnson. Mr. Pope supposes *mated* to mean here *conquered* or *subdued*; but that clearly is not the sense affixed to it by Shakspeare; though the etymology, supposing the expression to be taken from *chess-playing*, might favour such an interpretation. "Cum sublatis gregariis agitur regis de vita et sanguine, sic cum nulla est elabendi via, nullum subterfugium, qui *vicit*, **mate**, inquit, quasi *matado*; i.e. occisus, killed, a *mater*, [Hispan.] occidere." *Minsheu's Dict, in* v. *Mate.*
The original word was to *amate*, which Bullokar, in his Expositor, 8vo. 1616, explains by the words, "to dismay, to make afraid;" so that to *mate*, as commonly used by our old writers, has no reference to chess-playing. Malone.

244

/6 His **uncle** Siward,] "Duncan had two sons (says Holinshed) by his wife, who was the daughter of *Siward, Earl of Northumberland*." See, however, a note on the Personae Dramatis.
Steevens.

/7 Excite the **mortified** man.] Mr. Theobald will needs explain this expression. "It means (says he) the man who has abandoned himself to despair, who has no spirit or resolution left." And, to support this sense of *mortified man*, he quotes *mortified spirit* in another place. But, if this was the meaning, Shakspeare had not wrote "*the* mortified man," but "*a* mortified man." In a word, by *the mortified man*, is meant a *religious*; one who has subdued his passions, is *dead* to the world, has abandoned it, and all the affairs of it: an *Ascetic*. Warburton.

So, in Monsieur D'Olive, 1606:
"He like a *mortified* hermit sits."
Again, in Greene's Never Too Late, 1616: "I perceived in the words of the hermit the perfect idea of a *mortified man*."
Again, in Love's Labour's Lost, Act I. Sc. I.:
"My loving lord, Dumain is *mortified*;
"The grosser manner of this world's delights
"He throws upon the gross world's baser slaves," &c.
Steevens.

245

/8 -- **unrough** youths,] An odd expression. It means smooth-faced, unbearded. Steevens.

See The Tempest:
"---- till new-born chins
"Be *rough* and razorable."
Again, in King John:
"This *unhair'd* sauciness, and boyish troops,
"The king doth smile at." Malone.

/9 He cannot **buckle** his distemper'd cause

Within the belt of rule.] The same metaphor occurs in Troilus and Cressida:

"And *buckle in* a waist most fathomless." Steevens.

/1 When all that is within him does condemn
Itself, for being there?] That is, when all the faculties of the mind are employed in self-condemnation. Johnson.

/2 -- the medecin --] i. e. physician. Shakspeare uses this word in the feminine gender, where Lafeu speaks of Helen in

All's Well That Ends Well; and Florizel, in The Winter's Tale, calls Camillo "the *medecin* of our house." Steevens.

/3 To **dew** the sovereign flower, &c.] This uncommon verb occurs in Look About You, 1600:

"*Dewing* your princely hand with pity's tears."

Again, in Spenser's Fairy Queen, b. iv. c. viii.:

"*Dew'd* with her drops of bounty soveraigne." Steevens.

/4 Bring me no more reports, &c.] "Tell me not any more of desertions: -- Let all my subjects leave me: -- I am safe till," &c. Johnson.

/5 All mortal consequents, pronounc'd me thus:] The old copy reads --

"All mortal *consequences have* pronounc'd me thus."

But the line must originally have ran as I have printed it: -- *Currents, consequents, occurrents, ingredients*, &c. are always spelt, in the ancient copies of our author's plays, "*currence, consequence, occurrence, ingredience*," &c. Steevens.

/6 -- **on** thee.] Old copy -- *upon*. Steevens.

/7 -- English epicures:] The reproach of epicurism, on which Mr. Theobald has bestowed a note, is nothing more than a natural invective uttered by an inhabitant of a barren country, against those who have more opportunities of luxury. Johnson.

Of the ancient poverty of Scotland, the following mention is made by Froissart, vol. ii. cap. ii.: "They be lyke wylde and savage people -- they dought ever to lese that they have, for it is a poore countrey. And when the Englyshe men maketh any roode or voyage into the countrey, if they thynke to lyve, they must cause their provysion and vitayle to followe theym at their backe, for they shall fynde nothyng in that countrey," &c.

Shakspeare, however, took the thought from Holinshed, p. 179 and 180, of his History of Scotland: "-- The Scotish people before had no knowledge nor understanding of fine fare or riotous surfet; yet after they had once tasted the sweet poisoned bait thereof, &c. -- those superfluities which came into the realme of Scotland with the *Englishmen*," &c. Again: "For manie of the people abhorring the riotous manners and superfluous gormandizing brought in among them by the *Englyshemen*, were willing

inough to receive this Donald for their king, trusting (because he had beene brought up in the Isles, with the old customes and manners of their antient nation, without tast of *English likerous delicats*), they should by his seuere order in gouernement recouer againe the former temperance of their old progenitors." The same historian informs us, that in those ages the Scots eat but once a day, and even then very sparingly. It appears from Dr. Johnson's Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland, that the natives had neither *kail* nor brogues, till they were taught the art of planting the one, and making the other, by the soldiers of Cromwell; and yet King James VI. in his 7th parliament, thought it necessary to form an act "against superfluous banqueting." Steevens.

/8 * Shall never **sagg** with doubt,] To *sag*, or *swag*, is to sink down by its own weight, or by an overload. See Junius's Etymologicon. It is common in Staffordshire to say, "a beam in a building *sags*, or has *sagged*." Tollet.

So, in the 16th Song of Drayton's Polyolbion:

"This said, the aged Street *sag'd* sadly on alone."

Drayton is personifying one of the old Roman ways.

Again, in The Misfortunes of Arthur, 1587:

"The more his state and tottering empire *sagges*."

Steevens.

Again, in Wits, Fits, and Fancies, 1595: "He tooke exceptions to his traveller's bag, which he wore *sagging* down his belly before." Malone.

/9 -- loon!] At present this word is only used in Scotland, and signifies a base fellow. So, in Marlowe's tragedy of King Edward II. 1598:

"For shame subscribe; and let the *lowne* depart."

Again, in Decker's Honest Whore, second part, 1630:

"The sturdy beggar, and the lazy *lowne*."

King Stephen, in the old song, called his taylor, *loon*.

Steevens.

/1 Where got'st thou that **goose** look?] So, in Coriolanus:

"------ ye souls of *geese*,
"That bear the shape of men, how have ye run
"From slaves that apes would beat?" Malone.

/2 -- lily-liver'd boy.] Chapman thus translates a passage in the 20th Iliad:

"---- his sword that made a vent for his *white liver's blood*,
"*That caus'd such pitiful effects* ----."

Again, Falstaff says, in The Second Part of King Henry IV.: "-- left the liver *white and pale*, which is the badge of *pusillanimity and cowardice*." Steevens.

/3 -- patch?] An appellation of contempt, alluding to the *pied, patched*, or particoloured coats anciently worn by the fools belonging to noble families. Steevens.

/4 -- those linen cheeks of thine
Are **counsellors** to fear.] The meaning is, they infect others who see them, with cowardice. Warburton.

In King Henry V. his Majesty says to the Conspirators --
"Your cheeks are *paper*." Steevens.

/5 -- **whey**-face?] So, in The Merry Wives of Windsor,

4to. edit. 1619: "-- and has as it were a *whey*-coloured beard." Steevens.

/6 -- or **disseat** me now.] The old copy reads *disseat*, though modern editors have substituted *disease* in its room. The word *disseat* occurs in The Two Noble Kinsmen, by Fletcher and Shakspeare, scene the last, where Perithous is describing the fall of Arcite from his horse:

"---- seeks all foul means
"Of boisterous and rough jadry, to *disseat*
"His lord that kept it bravely."

Dr. Percy would read:

"Will *chair* me ever, or *disseat* me now."

It is still, however, possible, that *disease* may be the true reading. Thus, in N. Breton's Toyes of an Idle Head, 1577:

"My ladies maydes too I must please,
"But chiefely Mistress Anne,
"For else by the masse she *will disease*
"Me vyly now and than."

Disease is the reading of the second folio. Steevens.

/7 I have liv'd long enough: my **way of life**, &c.] As there is no relation between the *way of life*, and *fallen into the sear*, I am inclined to think that the *W* is only an *M* inverted, and that it was originally written:

"---- my *May* of life."

"I am now passed from the spring to the autumn of my days: but I am without those comforts that should succeed the sprightliness of bloom, and support me in this melancholy season."

The author has *May* in the same sense elsewhere. Johnson.

An *anonymous* writer [Dr. Johnson, whose Remarks on this tragedy were originally published, without his name, in 1745,] would have it:

"---- my *May* of life:"

But he did not consider that Macbeth is not here speaking of his *rule* or government, or of any sudden change; but of the gradual decline of life, as appears from that line:

"And that, which should accompany *old age*."

And *way* is used for *course, progress*. Warburton.

To confirm the justness of "*May* of life" for "*way* of life," Mr. Colman quotes from Much Ado About Nothing:

"*May* of youth and bloom of lustyhood."

And King Henry V.:
"My puissant liege is in the very *May*-morn of his youth."
Langton.

So, in Sidney's Astrophel and Stella, Stanza 21:
"If now *the May of my years* much decline."
Again, in The Spanish Curate of Beaumont and Fletcher:
"-------- you met me
"With equal ardour in your *May of blood*."
Again, in The Sea Voyage, by the same authors:
"And in their *May* of youth," &c.
Again, in The Guardian of Massinger:
"I am in the *May* of my abilities,
"And you in your December."
Again, in The Renegado of the same author:
"Having my heat and *May* of youth, to plead
"In my excuse."
Again, in Claudius Tiberius Nero, 1607:
"Had I in this fair *May* of all my glory," &c.
Again, in King John and Matilda, by R. Davenport, 1655:
"Thou art yet in thy green *May*, twenty-seven summers," &c.
Steevens.

I have now no doubt that Shakspeare wrote *May*, and not *way*. It is observable, in this very play, that the contrary error of the press has happened from a mistake of the same letters;
"Hear not my steps which *may* they walke."
Besides, that a similarity of expression in other passages of Shakspeare, and the concinnity of the figure, both unite to support the proposed emendation.
Thus, in his Sonnets:
"Two beauteous *springs* to *yellow autumns* turn'd."
Again, in King Richard II.:
"He that hath suffered this disorder'd *spring*,
"Hath now himself met with the *fall of leaf*."
The sentiment of Macbeth I take to be this: "The tender leaves of hope, the promise of my greener days, are now in my autumn, withered and fruitless: my mellow hangings are all shook down, and I am left bare to the weather." Henley.

The old reading should not have been discarded, as the following passages prove that it was a mode of expression in use at that time, as course of life is now.
In Massinger's Very Woman, the Doctor says --
"In *way of life* I did enjoy one friend."

Again, in The New Way To Pay Old Debts, Lady Allworth says --
"If that when I was mistress of myself,
"And in my *way of youth*," &c. M. Mason.

Again, in Pericles, Prince of Tyre, 1609, Act I. Sc.I.:
"Thus ready for the *way of life* or death,
"I wait the sharpest blow." Steevens.

The meaning of this contested passage, I think, is this. I have

lived long enough. In the course or progress of life, I am arrived at that period when the body begins to decay; I have reached the autumn of my days. Those comforts which ought to accompany that old age to which I am approaching, (to compensate for the infirmities naturally attending it,) I have no title to expect; but on the contrary, the curses of those I have injured, and the hollow adulation of mortified dependants. I have lived long enough. It is time for me to retire.

A passage in one of our author's Sonnets, (quoted by Mr. Steevens, in a subsequent note,) may prove the best comment on the present:

"*That time of year* in *me* thou may'st behold,
"When *yellow leaves* or none or few do hang
"Upon those boughs, which shake against the cold,
"Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang."

Are not these lines almost a paraphrase on the contested part of the passage before us?. He who could say that you might behold the *autumn* in *him*, would not scruple to write, that *he* was fallen into the autumn of his days (i. e. into that decay which always accompanies autumn); and how easy is the transition from this to saying that "the *course* or *progress of his life* had reached the autumnal season?" which is all that is meant by the words of the text, "My way of life," &c.

The using "the sear, the yellow leaf," simply and absolutely for *autumn*, or rather *autumnal decay*, because in autumn the leaves of trees turn yellow, and begin to fall and decay, is certainly a licentious mode of expression; but it is such a licence as may be found in almost every page of our author's works. It would also have been more natural for Macbeth to have said, that, in the course or progress of life, *he* had arrived at his autumn, than to say, that the course of his life itself had fallen into autumn or decay; but this too is much in Shakspeare's manner. With respect to the word *fallen*, which at first view seems a very singular expression, I strongly suspect that he caught it from the language of conversation, in which we at this day often say that this or that person is "fallen into a decay;" a phrase that might have been

current in his time also. It is the very idea here conveyed. Macbeth is *fallen into his* autumnal *decline*.

In King Henry VIII, the word *way* seems to signify, as in the present passage, *course* or *tenour*:

"The *way* of our profession is against it."

And in King Richard II. "the fall of leaf" is used, as in the passage before us, simply and absolutely for *bodily decay*.

"He who hath suffer'd this disorder'd spring,
"Hath now himself met with *the fall of leaf*."

When a passage can be thus easily explained, and the mode of expression is so much in our poet's general manner, surely any attempt at emendation is not only unnecessary, but dangerous. However, as a reading which was originally proposed by Dr. Johnson, and has been adopted in the modern editions, "-- my *May* of life," has many favourers, I shall add a word or two on that subject.

By his "*May* of life having fallen into the yellow leaf," that is, into autumn, we must understand that Macbeth means either, that being in reality young, he is, in consequence of his cares, arrived

at a *premature* old age; -- or that he means simply to assert, that in the progress of life he has passed from *May* or youth to autumn or old age; in other words, that he is now an old man, or at least near being one.

If the first interpretation be maintained, it is sufficient to say, (I use the words of my friend Mr. Flood, whose ingenious comment on this passage I published some years ago,) that "Macbeth, when he speaks this speech, is *not youthful*. He is contemporary to Banquo, who is advanced in years, and who hath a son upon the scene able to escape the pursuit of assassins and the vigilance of Macbeth." I may likewise add that Macbeth, having now sat for seventeen years on the throne of Scotland, cannot with any probability be supposed to be like our author's Henry V. "in the *May*-morn of his youth." We must therefore understand these words in the latter sense; namely, that he means only, that in the ordinary progress he has passed from the spring to the autumn of life, from youth to the confines of age. What then is obtained by this alteration? for this is precisely the meaning of the words as they stand in the old copy.

There is still another very strong objection to the proposed emendation. It is alledged that in this very play *may* is printed instead of *way*, and why may not the contrary error have happened

here? For this plain reason; because *May* (the month) both in manuscript and print always is exhibited with a capital letter; and it is exceedingly improbable that a compositor at the press should use a small *w* instead of a capital *M*.

But, without going further into this subject, it is sufficient for our purpose, that the text, as it is exhibited in the ancient copy, affords an obvious, easy sense, without any emendation whatsoever. Malone.

My *way of youth* occurs in Massinger, in two passages, one of which Mr. Mason has quoted incorrectly, and assigned the other to a wrong play:

"If that when I was mistress of myself,
"And in my *way of youth* pure and untainted."
Roman Actor.
"In *way of youth* I did enjoy one friend." *Very Woman.*

Mr. Gifford understands it to be merely a periphrasis for *youth*; as *way of life* here is merely, he thinks, *life*. Boswell.

/8 -- the **sear**,] *Sear* is *dry*. So, in Beaumont and Fletcher's Monsieur Thomas, 1639:

"---- *sear* winter
"Hath seal'd the sap up."

And Milton has -- "Ivy never *sear*."

Shakspeare has the same thought in his 73d Sonnet:

"That time of year thou may'st in me behold,
"When *yellow leaves*," &c. Steevens.

Again, in our author's Lover's Complaint, where the epithet is so used, as clearly to ascertain the meaning of "the *sear*, the yellow leaf," in the passage before us:

"-------- spite of heaven's fell rage,
"Some beauty peep'd through lattice of *sear'd age*."

Malone.

We have the same expression and sentiment in Spenser's Pastorals, January:

"Also my lustful leaf is *drie* and *seare*." Boswell.

254

/9 -- **skirr** the country round;] To *skirr*, I believe, signifies to *scour*, to *ride hastily*. The word is used by Beaumont and Fletcher, in The Martial Maid:

"Whilst I, with this and this, well mounted, *skirr'd*
"A horse troop, through and through."

Again, in King Henry V.

"And make them *skirr* away, as swift as stones
"Enforced from the old Assyrian slings."

Again, in Beaumont and Fletcher's Bonduca:

"---- the light shadows,
"That, in a thought, *scur* o'er the fields of corn,
"Halted on crutches to them." Steevens.

/1 -- **talk of** fear.] The second folio reads "*stand in* fear." Henderson.

/2 That keep **her** --] The latter word, which was inadvertently omitted in the old copy, was added by the editor of the second folio. Malone.

/3 Canst thou not minister to a mind **diseas'd;**] In The Spanish Tragedy Isabella thus complains:

"So that you say, this herb will purge the eye,
"And this the head; but *none of them will purge the heart:*
"No, there's no medicine left for my *disease*,
"Nor any physick to recure the dead." Malone.

/4 And, with some sweet **oblivious** antidote,] Perhaps, as Dr. Farmer has observed, our poet here remembered Spenser's description of Nepenthe:

"Nepenthe is a drinck of sovereign grace,
"Devized by the gods for to asswage
"Harts grief, and bitter gall away to chace, --
"Instead thereof sweet peace and quietage
"It doth establish in the troubled mynd."
Fairy Queen, b. iv. c. iii. st. 34. Malone.

255

Our author's idea might have been caught from the sixth book of the Æneid, where the effects of Lethe are described:

---- Lethæi ad fluminis undam
Securos latices, et longa *oblivia* potant.

Thus translated by Phaer, 1558:

"These liquors quenching cares, and long forgetful draughts thei drink
"That of their liues, and former labours past, they neuer thinck."

Thus also Statius, Theb. i. 341:

Grata laboratae referens *oblivia* vitae. Steevens.

/5 Cleanse the **stuff'd** bosom of that perilous stuff,] *Stuff'd* is the reading of the old copy; but, for the sake of the ear, which must be shocked by the recurrence of so harsh a word, I am willing to read -- *foul*, as there is authority for the change from Shakspeare himself, in As You Like It, Act II. Sc. VI.:

"Cleanse the *foul* body of the infected world."

We properly speak of *cleansing* what is *foul*, but not what is *stuffed*. Steevens.

The recurrence of the word *stuff*, in this passage, is very unpleasing to the ear, but there is no ground, I think, to suspect the text to be corrupt: for our author was extremely fond of such repetitions. Thus, in Antony and Cleopatra:

"Now for the *love* of *love*."
"The greatest *grace* lending *grace*."
All's Well that Ends Well.
"---- with what good speed
"Our *means* will make us *means*."
All's Well that Ends Well.
"Is *only* grievous to me, *only* dying." *King Henry VIII.*
"Upon his brow *shame* is *asham'd* to sit."
Romeo and Juliet.
"For by this knot thou shalt so *surely* tie
"Thy now *unsur'd assurance* to the crown." *King John.*
"*Believe* me, I do not *believe* thee, man." *Ibid.*
"Those he *commands*, move only in *command* --."
Macbeth.

The words *stuff* and *stuff'd*, however mean they may sound at present, have, like many other terms, been debased by time, and appear to have been formerly considered as words proper to be used in passages of the greatest dignity. As such, Shakspeare has employed them in Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet, The Winter's Tale, Julius Cæsar, &c. Again, in The Tempest, in a passage where the author certainly aimed at dignity:

"And, like this unsubstantial pageant, faded,
"Leave not a rack behind. -- We are such *stuff*
"As dreams are made of."

In a note on a passage in Othello, Dr. Johnson observes, that "*stuff*, in the Teutonick languages, is a word of great force. The elements (he adds) are called in Dutch *hoefd stoffen*, or *head-stuffs*." Malone.

The present question is not concerning the dignity of the word -- *stuffed*, but its nauseous iteration, of which no example has been produced by Mr. Malone; for that our author has indulged himself in the repetition of harmonious words, is no proof that he would have repeated harsh ones.

I may venture also (in support of my opinion) to subjoin, that the same gentleman, in a very judicious comment on King Henry IV. Part II. has observed, "that when a word is repeated without propriety, *in the same*, or two succeeding lines, there is great reason to suspect some corruption." Steevens.

To show Mr. Steevens's inconsistency, I will transcribe what he

says in Othello, vol. ix. p. 316, on the line --
"If this poor *trash* of Venice, whom I *trash*."
"It is scarce necessary to support the present jingle of the word *trash*; it is *so much in our author's manner*, although his worst." Is *trash* more harmonious than *stuff*? Boswell.

/6 -- cast
The water of my land,] "To cast the water" was the phrase in use for finding out disorders by the inspection of urine. So, in Eliosto Libidinoso, a novel, by John Hinde, 1606: "Lucilla perceiving, without *casting her water*, where she was pained,"' &c. Again, in The Wise Woman of Hogsdon, 1638: "Mother Nottingham, for her time, was pretty well skilled in *casting waters*."
Steevens.

257

/6 -- senna,] The old copy reads -- *cyme*. Steevens.

Corrected by Mr. Rowe. Malone.

/7 Let every soldier hew him down a bough,] A similar incident is recorded by Olaus Magnus, in his Northern History, lib. vii. cap. xx. "De Stratagemate Regis Hachonis per Frondes:
"Nec accelerationi prospera fortuna defuit: nam primam et secundam vigilum stationem suspenso tacitoque itinere prætervectus, cum ad extremas sylvarum latebras devenisset, jussit abscissos arborum ramos singulorum suorum manibus gestari. Quod cum milites in tertiâ statione constituti adverterant, mox Sigaro nuntiant se insolitam et stupendam rei novitatem admirantibus oculis subjecisse. Visum quippe erat nemus suis sedibus evulsum ad regiam usque properare. Tum Sigarus animo ad insidiarum con-

258

sideration converso, respondit, eo sylvarum accessu sibi extrema fata portendi." Boswell.

/8 But the **confident** tyrant --] We must surely read --
"---- the *confin'd* tyrant." Warburton.

He was *confident* of success; so *confident* that he would not fly, but endure their *setting down* before his castle. Johnson.

/9 For where there is **advantage to be given**,
Both more and less have given him the revolt;] The impropriety of the expression "advantage to be given," instead of "advantage given," and the disagreeable repetition of the word *given*, in the next line, incline me to read:
"---- where there is *a 'vantage* to be *gone*,
"Both more and less have given him the revolt."
Advantage or *'vantage*, in the time of Shakspeare, signified *opportunity*. "He shut up himself and his soldiers (says Malcolm) in the castle, because when there is an opportunity to be gone, they all desert him."
More and less is the same with *greater and less*. So, in the interpolated Mandeville, a book of that age, there is a chapter of India the More and the Less. Johnson.

I would read, if any alteration were necessary:
"For where there is advantage to be *got*."
But the words, as they stand in the text, will bear Dr. Johnson's explanation, which is most certainly right. -- "For wherever an opportunity of flight is *given* them," &c.
More and *less*, for *greater* and *less*, is likewise found in Chaucer:
"From Boloigne is the erle of Pavie come,
"Of which the fame yspronge to *most* and *leste*."
Again, in Drayton's Polyolbion, Song the 12th:
"Of Britain's forests all from th' *less* unto the *more*."
Again, in Spenser's Fairy Queen, b. v. c. viii.:
"---- all other weapons *lesse* or *more*,
"Which warlike uses had devis'd of yore." Steevens.

"Where there is advantage to be given," I believe, means,

where advantageous offers are made to allure the adherents of Macbeth to forsake him. Henley.

I suspect that *given* was caught by the printer's eye glancing on the subsequent line, and strongly incline to Dr. Johnson's emendation -- *gone*. Malone.

Why is the repetition of the word -- *given*, less venial than the recurrence of the word *stuff'd*, in a preceding page? See Mr. Malone's objections to my remark on "Cleanse the *stuff'd* bosom of that perilous *stuff*," p. 255. Steevens.

Mr. Malone does not here object to the repetition of the word, but to its meaning. Boswell.

/1 Let our **just** censures
Attend the true event,] The arbitrary change made in the second folio (which some criticks have represented as an *improved* edition) is here worthy of notice:
"Let our *best* censures
"*Before* the true event, and put we on," &c. Malone.

Surely, a few errors in a few pages of a book, do not exclude all idea of *improvement* in other parts of it. I cherish this hope for my own sake, as well as for that of other commentators on Shakspeare. Steevens.

/2 What we shall say we **have**, and what we **owe**.] i. e. *property* and *allegiance*. Warburton.

When we are governed by legal kings, we shall know the limits of their claim, i. e. shall know what we have of our own, and what they have a right to take from us.
Mr. Henley explains the passage thus: "The issue of the contest will soon decide what we shall say we *have*, and what may be accounted *our own*." To *owe* here is to *possess*. Steevens.

Had these lines been put into the mouth of any of the Scottish Peers, they might possibly bear the meaning that Steevens con-

tends for; but as they are supposed to be spoken by Siward, who was not to be governed either by Malcolm or Macbeth, they can scarcely admit of that interpretation. Siward probably only means to say, in more pompous language, that the time approached which was to decide their fate. M. Mason.

260

Siward, having undertaken the cause of Scotland, speaks, as a Scotsman would have spoken; and especially as he is now in the presence of Malcolm, Macduff, and others of the same country. Steevens.

/2 -- arbitrate:] i. e. *determine*. Johnson.

So, in the 18th Odyssey, translated by Chapman:
"-------- straight
"Can *arbitrate* a war of deadliest weight." Steevens.

/3 Towards which, advance the war.] It has been understood that local rhymes were introduced in plays to afford an actor the advantage of a more pointed exit, or to close a scene with additional force. Yet, whatever might be Shakspeare's motive for continuing such a practice, it may be observed that he often seems immediately to repent of it; and, in the tragedy before us, has repeatedly counteracted it by hemistichs which destroy the effect, and consequently defeat the supposed purpose of the antecedent couplets. See the following instances, in addition to that which introduces the present note:

Leave all the rest to me	Act	I.	end of Scene V.
So pr'ythee go with me	Act	III.	Scene II.
We are yet but young in deed	Act	III.	Scene IV.
But no more sights, &c.	Act	IV.	Scene I.
I think, but dare not speak	Act	V.	Scene I.
Make we our march towards Birnam	Act	V.	Scene II.

In Hamlet, &c. we find such hemistichs after the rhymes at the end of Acts, as well as Scenes. Steevens.

261

/4 The time has been, &c.] May has imitated this passage twice; once in The Heir, and again in The Old Couple. See Dodsley's Collection of Old Plays, vol. viii. p. 150 vol. x. p. 473, edit. 1780. Reed.

/5 -- my senses would have **cool'd**
To hear a night-shriek;] The *blood* is sometimes said to be *chilled*; but I do not recollect any other instance in which this phrase is applied to the *senses*. Perhaps our author wrote -- *'coil'd*. My senses would have shrunk back; died within me. So, in the second scene of the present Act:
"---- Who then shall blame
"His pester'd *senses* to *recoil* and start?" Malone.

I retain the old reading. Perhaps, no word so forcible can be placed in its room. Thus, in the fifth Æneid:
Sanguis hebet, *frigentque* effœtae in corpore vires.
The same expression occurs also in The Merry Wives of

Windsor: “My humour shall not *cool*.”
  Again, in King Henry IV. Part II.:
    “My lord Northumberland will soon be *cool’d*.”
  Thus, also, in the tragedy now before us, p. 209:
    “This deed I’ll do, before this purpose *cool*.”
  Again, in King John:
    “---- shall *cool* the hearts
    “Of all his people --.”
  Again, in Pope’s version of the 18th Odyssey, 156:
    “*Cool’d* every breast, and damp’d the rising joy.”
  Again, in Chapman’s version of the 22d Iliad:
    “---- his still desperate spirit is *cool’d*.”
  But what example is there of the verb *recoiled* clipped into *’coiled*? *Coiled* can only afford the idea of *wound in a ring*, like a rope or a serpent. Steevens.

  /6 -- **fell** of hair --] My hairy part, my *capillitium*. *Fell* is *skin*. Johnson.

  So, in Alphonsus, Emperor of Germany, by George Chapman, 1654:
    “---- Where the lyon’s hide is thin and scant,
    “I’ll firmly patch it with a fox’s *fell*.”

  Again, in King Lear:
    “The goujeres shall devour them, flesh and *fell*.”
  A dealer in hides is still called a *fell*-monger. Steevens.

  /7 -- I have **supp’d full** with horrors;] Statius has a similar thought in the second book of his Thebais:
    ---- attollit membra, toroque
    Erigitur, *plenus monstris*, vanumque cruorem
    Excutiens.
  The conclusion of this passage may remind the reader of Lady Macbeth’s behaviour in her sleep. Steevens.

  /8 She should have died hereafter;
    There would have been a time for such a word, &c.] This passage has very justly been suspected of being corrupt. It is not apparent for what *word* there would have been a *time*, and that there would or would not be a *time* for any *word*, seems not a consideration of importance sufficient to transport Macbeth into the following exclamation. I read therefore:
    “She should have died hereafter,
    “There would have been a time for -- such a *world*! --
    “To-morrow,” &c.
  It is a broken speech, in which only part of the thought is expressed, and may be paraphrased thus: “The queen is dead. -- *Macbeth*. Her death should have been deferred to some more peaceful hour; had she lived longer, *there would at length have been a time for* the honours due to her as a queen, and that respect which I owe her for her fidelity and love. Such is the *world* -- such is the condition of human life, that we always think *to-morrow* will be happier than to-day, but to-morrow and to-morrow steals over us unenjoyed and unregarded, and we still linger in the same expectation to the moment appointed for our end. All

these days, which have thus passed away, have sent multitudes of fools to the grave, who were engrossed by the same dream of future felicity, and, when life was departing from them, were, like me, reckoning on to-morrow."

Such was once my conjecture, but I am now less confident. Macbeth might mean, that there would have been a more convenient *time* for such a *word*, for such *intelligence*, and so fall

into the following reflection. We say we send *word* when we give intelligence. Johnson.

By -- *a word*, Shakspeare certainly means more than a single one. Thus, in King Richard II.:

"The hopeless *word* of -- *never to return*
"Breathe I against thee."

Again, in The Captain, by Beaumont and Fletcher:

"A musquet, with this *word* upon the label --
"I have discharg'd the office of a soldier." Steevens.

Word may perhaps be used here in its common acceptation. There would have been a time when I could have better borne the mention of *death*, when my mind was not so depressed and enfeebled by the approach of danger and the pangs of remorse. Boswell.

/9 To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,] This repetition, as Dr. Farmer observed to me, occurs in Barclay's Ship of Fooles, 1570:

"*Cras, cras, cras*, to-morrow we shall amende." Steevens.

/1 To the last syllable of **recorded time**;] *Recorded time* seems to signify the time fixed in the decrees of heaven for the period of life. The *record* of *futurity* is indeed no accurate expression; but, as we only know transactions past or present, the language of men affords no term for the volumes of prescience in which future events may be supposed to be written. Johnson.

So, in All's Well That Ends Well:

"To the *utmost syllable* of your worthiness."

Recorded is probably here used for *recording* or *recordable*; one participle for the other, of which there are many instances, both in Shakspeare and other English writers. Virgil uses *penetrabile* frigus for *penetrans* frigus, and *penetrabile* telum for telum *penetrans*. Steevens.

By *recorded* time, Shakspeare means not only the time that *has been*, but also that which *shall be* recorded. M. Mason.

/2 The way to **dusty** death.] We should read -- *dusky*, as appears from the figurative term *lighted*. Warburton.

Dusty is a very natural epithet. The second folio has:

"The way to *study* death --."

which Mr. Upton prefers; but it is only an error, by an accidental transposition of the types, Johnson.

"The dust of death" is an expression used in the 22d Psalm. "*Dusty* death" alludes to the expression of "dust to dust" in

264

the burial service; and to the sentence pronounced against Adam: "*Dust* thou art, and to *dust* thou shalt return." In Troilus and Cressida also the same epithet occurs:

"---- are grated
"To *dusty* nothing --."

Shakspeare, however, in the first Act of this play, speaks of the thane of Cawdor, as of one "-- who had been *studied* in his *death*." Steevens.

Dr. Johnson justly observes that *dusty* is a very natural epithet. Our author again alludes to the *dust* of death in The Winter's Tale:

"Some hangman must put on my shrowd, and lay me
"Where no priest shovels-in *dust*." Malone.

In Sydney's Arcadia, 1598, p. 445, we have the following stanza of a Song on Death:

"Our owly eyes, which dimm'd with passions be,
"And scarce discerne the dawn of coming day;
"Let them be clearde, and now begin to see
"Our life is but a step in *dustie way*." Reed.

/3 [*Striking him.*] This direction is not in the old copy. Boswell.

265

/4 Till famine **cling** thee:] *Clung*, in the Northern counties, signifies any thing that is shrivelled or shrunk up. By famine, the intestines are, as it were, stuck together. In The Roman Actor, by Massinger, the same word, though differently spelt, appears to be used:

"-------- my entrails
"Are *clamm'd* with keeping a continual fast."

Again, in Pierce's Supererogation, or A New Praise of the Old Asse, &c. 1593: "Who should have thought, or could have imagined, to have found the wit of Pierce so starved and *clunged*?" Again, in George Whetstone's Castle of Delight, 1576:

"My wither'd corps with deadly cold is *clung*."

Again, in Heywood's Pleasant Dialogues and Dramas, 1637:

"His entrails with long fast and hunger *clung* --."

Again, in Golding's version of Ovid's Metamorphosis, b. vii.:

"---- old Æacus also, *cloong*
"With age --."

Thus also, in Philemon Holland's translation of the 8th book of Pliny's Natural History, ch. xxxvi.: "The first thing that they doe [i. e. the famished bears] is to devoure a certaine herb named Aron: and that they doe to open their guts, which otherwise were *clunged* and growne together."

To cling likewise signifies, to *gripe*, to *compress*, to *embrace*. So, in The Revenger's Tragedy, 1607:

"---- slide from the mother,
"And *cling* the daughter."

Again, in Antonio's Revenge, 1607:

"And found even *cling'd* in sensuality."

Again, in Northward Hoe, 1607:

"I will never see a white flea, before I will *cling* you."

Ben Jonson uses the word *clem* in the Poetaster, Act I. Sc. II.: "I cannot eat stones and turfs; say, what will he *clem* me and my followers? ask him an he will *clem* me." To be *clemed* is a Staffordshire expression, which means, to be *starved*: and there is likewise a Cheshire proverb: "You been like Smithwick, either *clemed*, or bursten." Again, in Antonio and Mellida:

"Now lions' half-*clem'd* entrails roar for food."

In the following instances, the exact meaning of this word is not very clear:

"Andrea slain! then weapon *cling* my breast."
First Part of *Jeronimo*, 1605.

"Although my conscience hath my courage *cleng'd*,
"And knows what valour was employ'd in vain."
Lord Sterline's Darius, 1603.

266

Again, in The Sadler's Play, among the Chester Whitsun Plays, MS. Harl. 1013, p. 154, where the burial of our Saviour is spoken of:

"That now is clongen under clay."

I have given these varieties of the word, for the sake of any future lexicographer, or commentator on ancient authors.

Mr. Whalley, however, observes, that "till famine cling thee," means -- till it dry thee up, or exhaust all thy moisture. Clung wood is wood of which the sap is entirely dried or spent. Clung and clem, says he, are terms of very different meaning.

The same idea is well expressed by Pope, in his version of the 19th Iliad, 166:

"Shrunk with dry famine, and with toils declin'd -----."
Steevens.

/4 I **pull** in resolution; and begin
To doubt the equivocation of the fiend,
That lies like truth:] Though this is the reading of all the editions, yet, as it is a phrase without either example, elegance, or propriety, it is surely better to read:

"I *pall* in resolution --."

'I languish in my constancy, my confidence begins to forsake me.' It is scarcely necessary to observe how easily *pall* might be changed into *pull* by a negligent writer, or mistaken for it by an unskilful printer. With this emendation Dr. Warburton and Mr. Heath concur. Johnson.

There is surely no need of change; for Shakspeare, who made Trinculo, in The Tempest, say --

"I will *let loose* my opinion,"

might have written --

"I *pull in* my resolution."

He had permitted his courage (like a fiery horse) to carry him to the brink of a precipice, but, seeing his danger, resolves to *check* that confidence to which he had *given the rein before*.
Steevens.

This reading is supported by a passage in Fletcher's Sea Voyage, where Aminta says:

"-------- and all my spirits,
"As if they had heard my passing bell go for me,
"*Pull in their powers*, and give me up to destiny."
M. Mason.

267

/5 I 'gin to be a-weary of the sun, &c.]
Tum vero infelix fatis exterrita Dido
Mortem orat, tædet cæli convexa tueri." Theobald.

/6 -- harness --] An old word for armour. So, in The Cobler's Prophecy, 1594:
"His *harness* is converted to soft silke." Henderson.

So, in the continuation of Hardyng's Chronicle, 1543: "-- well perceyving that the intendours of such a purpose would rather have had their *harnesse on their backs*, than to have bound them up in barrelles." Malone.

268

/7 -- I must fight the **course**.] A phrase taken from bear-baiting. So, in The Antipodes, by Brome, 1638:
"Also you shall see two ten-dog *courses* at the great bear."
Steevens.

269

/8 This short scene is injudiciously omitted on the stage. The poet designed Macbeth should *appear* invincible, till he encountered the object destined for his destruction. Steevens.

/9 Seems **bruited:**] From *bruit*, Fr. To *bruit* is to report with clamour; to noise. So, in King Henry IV. Part II.:
"---- his death
"Being *bruited* once," &c.
Again, in Timon of Athens:
"-------- I am not
"One that rejoices in the common wreck,
"As common *bruit* doth put it."
Again, in Acolastus, a comedy, 1540: "Lais was one of the most *bruited* common women that clerkes do write of."
Steevens.

/1 -- There thou should'st be;
By this great clatter, one of greatest note
Seems bruited. Let me find him, fortune!
And more I beg not.] I suspect, from deficience of metre, that the latter part of this passage originally stood thus:
"Seems bruited *there*. Let me *but* find him, fortune!
"And more," &c. Steevens.

270

/3 Why should I play the **Roman Fool**, and die

On mine own sword?] Alluding, perhaps, to the suicide of Cato Uticensis, which our author must have read of in the old translation of Plutarch, as the same circumstance is mentioned again in Julius Cæsar:

"---- I did blame *Cato* for the death
"Which he did give himself." Steevens.

/4 I have no words,
My voice is in my sword;] Thus Casca, in Julius Cæsar:
"Speak hands for me." Steevens.

271

/5 As easy may'st thou the **intrenchant air**
With thy keen sword impress, as make me bleed:] That is, air which cannot be cut. Johnson.

Mr. M. Mason wishes to interpret the word *intrenchant* differently, and says that it may signify *surrounding*; but of a participle with such a meaning, I believe there is no example. -- Shakspeare's indiscriminate use of active and passive participles has been frequently noticed. In Timon he has *trenchant* in an active sense, and in the line before us *intrenchant* is employed as passive. Milton, in his Paradise Lost, b. vi. seems to have imitated this passage:

"Nor in their liquid texture mortal wound
"Receive, no more than can the fluid air." Steevens.

So, in Hamlet:
"For it is as the *air invulnerable*." Malone.

/6 I bear a **charmed** life,] In the days of chivalry, the champions' arms being ceremoniously blessed, each took an oath that he used no *charmed* weapons. Macbeth, according to the law of arms, or perhaps only in allusion to this custom, tells Macduff of the security he had in the prediction of the spirit.

To this likewise Posthumus alludes in Cymbeline, Act V.:
"---- I, in my own woe *charm'd*,
"Could not find death." Upton.

So, in The Dumb Knight, 1633, by L. Machin:
"Here you shall swear by hope, by heaven, by Jove,
"And by the right you challenge in true fame,
"That here you stand, not arm'd with any guile,
"Of philters, *charms*, of night-spells, characters,
"Or other black infernal vantages," &c.

Again, in Spenser's Fairy Queen, b. i. c. iv.:
"---- *he bears a charmed* shield,
"And eke enchaunted arms that none can pierce."
Steevens.

272

/7 -- **palter** with us in a double sense;] That *shuffle* with ambiguous expressions. Johnson.

So, in Marius and Sylla, 1594:
"Now fortune, frown and *palter*, if thou please."

Again, in Julius Cæsar:
"---- Romans, that have spoke the word,
"And will not *palter*." Steevens.

/8 We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,
Painted **upon a pole**;] That is, on cloth suspended on a pole. Malone.

/9 ------- *Hold, enough*.] See Mr. Tollet's note on the words -- "To cry, *hold, hold!*" p. 66, n. 5. Again, in Stowe's Chronicle, one of the combatants was an esquire, and knighted after the battle, which the king terminated by crying *Hoo*, i. e. *hold*. Thus also, in the ancient MS. Romance of The Sowdon of Babyloyne, p. 33:
"His bare guttis men myght see,
"The blode faste downe ranne:
"*Hoo*, Olyuere I yelde me to the,
"And here I become thy man." Steevens.

"To cry *hold*, is the word of yielding," says Carew's Survey of Cornwall, p. 74, i. e. when one of the combatants cries so.
Tollet.

273

/1 Had I as many sons as I have hairs,
I would not wish them to a fairer death:
And so his knell is knoll'd.] This incident is thus related from Henry of Huntingdon, by Camden, in his Remains, from which our author probably copied it.
When Siward, the martial earl of Northumberland, understood that his son, whom he had sent in service against the Scotchmen, was slain, he demanded whether his wounds were in the fore part or hinder part of his body. When it was answered, in the fore part, he replied, "I am right glad; neither wish I any other death to me or mine." Johnson.

Our author might have found the same incident recorded by Holinshed, in his Chronicle, vol. i. p. 192. Malone.

274

/2 So God, &c.] The old copy redundantly reads -- *And* so, God, &c. Steevens.

/3 -- *on a Pole.*] These words I have added to the stage-direction, from the Chronicle: "Then cutting his head from his shoulders, he set it upon a pole, and brought it unto Malcolm." This explains the word *stands* in Macduff's speech.
Many of the stage-directions appear to have been inserted by the players; and they are often very injudicious. In this scene, (as Mr. Steevens has observed,) according to their direction, Macbeth is slain on the stage, and Macduff immediately afterwards enters with Macbeth's head. MALONE.

Our ancient players were not even skilful enough to prevent absurdity in those circumstances which fell immediately under their own management. No bad specimen of their want of com-

mon sense, on such occasions, may be found in Heywood's Golden Age, 1611: "Enter Sybilla *lying in childbed*, with her child *lying* by her," &c. Steevens.

/4 -- thy kingdom's **pearl**,] This metaphorical expression was excluded by Mr. Rowe, after whom our modern editors were content to read -- *peers*.

The following passage from Ben Jonson's Entertainment of the Queen and Prince at Althorpe, may, however, countenance the old reading, which I have inserted in the text:

"Queen, prince, duke, and earls,
"Countesses, ye courtly *pearls*," &c.

Again, in Shirley's Gentlemen of Venice:

"---- he is the very *pearl*
"Of courtesy --." Steevens.

275

"Thy kingdom's pearl" means 'thy kingdom's wealth,' or rather ornament. So, J. Sylvester, England's Parnassus, 1600:

"Honour of cities, *pearle of kingdoms all*."

Again, in Sir Philip Sydney's Ourania, by N. Breton, 1606:

"-------- an earl,
"And worthily then termed Albion's *pearl*."

John Florio, in a Sonnet prefixed to his Italian Dictionary, 1598, calls Lord Southampton -- "bright *pearle* of peers." Malone.

/5 King of Scotland, **hail**!] Old copy -- "*Hail*, king of Scotland!" For the sake of metre, and in conformity to a practice of our author, I have transplanted the word -- *hail*, from the beginning to the end of this hemistich. Thus, in the third scene of the play, p. 41:

"So, all *hail*, Macbeth, and Banquo!
"Banquo, and Macbeth, all *hail*." Steevens.

/6 We shall not **spend** a large **expence** of time,] To *spend* an *expence*, is a phrase with which no reader will be satisfied. We certainly owe it to the mistake of a transcriber, or the negligence of a printer. Perhaps *extent* was the poet's word. Be it recollected, however, that at the end of the first scene of the third Act of The Comedy of Errors, Antipholus of Ephesus says -- "This jest shall *cost* me some *expence*." Steevens.

/7 -- the first that ever Scotland
In such an honour nam'd.] "Malcolm immediately after his coronation called a parlement at Forfair, in the which he rewarded them with lands and livings that had assisted him against Macbeth. -- Manie of them that were before *thanes*, were at this time made *earles*, as Fife, Menteth, Atholl, Levenox, Murrey, Cathness, Rosse, and Angus." *Holinshed's History of Scotland*, p. 176. Malone.

276

/8 This play is deservedly celebrated for the propriety of its fictions, and solemnity, grandeur, and variety of its action; but it has no nice discriminations of character; the events are too great to

admit the influence of particular dispositions, and the course of the action necessarily determines the conduct of the agents.

The danger of ambition is well described; and I know not whether it may not be said, in defence of some parts which now seem improbable, that, in Shakspeare's time, it was necessary to warn credulity against vain and illusive predictions.

The passions are directed to their true end. Lady Macbeth is merely detested; and though the courage of Macbeth preserves some esteem, yet every reader rejoices at his fall. Johnson.

How frequent the practice of enquiring into the events of futurity, similar to those of Macbeth, was in Shakspeare's time, may be seen in the following instances: "The Marshall of Raiz wife hath bin heard to say, that Queen Katherine beeing desirous to know what should become of her children, and who should succeed them, the party which undertooke to assure her, let her see a glasse, representing a hall, in the which either of them made so many turns as he should raigne yeares; and that King Henry the Third, making his, the Duke of Guise crost him like a flash of lightning; after which, the Prince of Navarre presented himselfe, and made 22 turnes, and then vanished." *P. Mathieu's Heroyk Life and Deplorable Death of Henry the Fourth, translated by Ed. Grimeston*, 4to. 1612, p. 42. -- Again: "It is reported that a Duke of Bourgondy had like to have died for feare at the sight of the nine worthies which a magician shewed him." *Ibid.* p. 116.

Reed.

Mr. Whitaker, in his judicious and spirited Vindication of Mary Queen of Scots, 8vo. p. 486, edit. 1790, has the following reference to the prophecies of one John Lenton: "All this serves to show

the propriety of Shakspeare's scenes of the weird sisters, &c. as adapted to his own age. In the remote period of Macbeth, it might be well presumed, the popular faith mounted up into all the wildest extravagance described by him. In his own age it rose, as in Lady Shrewsbury here, and in Lady Derby, (Camden, Trans. 529, Orig. ii. 129,) into a belief in the verbal predictions of some reputed prophet then alive, or into a reliance upon the written predictions of some dead one. And Shakspeare might well endeavour to expose such a faith, when we see here, that though it could not lay hold of Queen Mary, yet it fastened firmly upon such a woman of the world as Lady Shrewsbury."

It may be worth while to remark, that Milton, who left behind him a list of no less than CII. dramatic subjects, had fixed on the story of this play among the rest. His intention was to have begun with the arrival of Malcolm at Macduff's castle. "The matter of Duncan (says he) may be expressed by the appearing of his ghost." It should seem, from this last memorandum, that Milton disliked the licence his predecessor had taken in comprehending a history of such length within the short compass of a play, and would have new-written the whole, on the plan of the ancient drama. He could not surely have indulged so vain a hope, as that of excelling Shakspeare in the tragedy of Macbeth.

The late Mr. Whateley's Remarks on some of the Characters of Shakspeare, have shown, with the utmost clearness of distinction and felicity of arrangement, that what in Richard III. is fortitude,

in Macbeth is no more than resolution. But this judicious critick having imputed the cause of Macbeth's inferiority in courage to his natural disposition, induces me to dissent, in one particular, from an Essay, which otherwise is too comprehensive to need a supplement, and too rational to admit of confutation.

Throughout such parts of this drama as afford opportunities for a display of personal bravery, Macbeth sometimes *screws his courage to the sticking place*, but never rises into constitutional heroism. Instead of meditating some decisive stroke on the enemy, his restless and self-accusing mind discharges itself in splenetic effusions and personal invectives on the attendants about his person. His genuine intrepidity had forsaken him when he ceased to be a virtuous character. He would now deceive himself into confidence, and depends on forced alacrity, and artificial valour, to extricate him from his present difficulties. Despondency too deep to be rooted out, and fury too irregular to be successful, have, by turns, possession of his mind. Though he has been assured of what he certainly credited, that *none of woman born shall hurt him*, he has twice given us reason to suppose that he would have *fled*, but that he *cannot*, being *tied to the stake*, and compelled to *fight the course*. Suicide also has once entered into his thoughts; though this idea, in a paroxysm of noisy rage, is suppressed. Yet here it must be acknowledged that his apprehen-

sions had betrayed him into a strange inconsistency of belief. As he persisted in supposing he could be destroyed by *none of woman born*, by what means did he think to destroy himself? for he was produced in the common way of nature, and fell not within the description of the only object that could end the being of Macbeth. In short, his efforts are no longer those of courage, but of despair, excited by self-conviction, infuriated by the menaces of an injured father, and confirmed by a presentiment of inevitable defeat. Thus situated, -- "Dum nec luce frui, nec mortem arcere licebit," -- he very naturally prefers a manly and violent, to a shameful and lingering termination of life.

One of Shakspeare's favourite morals is -- that criminality reduces the brave and pusillanimous to a level. "Every puny whipster gets my sword, (exclaims Othello,) for why should honour outlive modesty?" "Where I could not be honest, (says Albany,) I was never valiant;" Iachimo imputes his "want of manhood" to the "heaviness and guilt within his bosom;" Hamlet asserts that "conscience does make cowards of us all;" and Imogen tells Pisanio "he may be valiant in a better cause, but now he seems a coward." The late Dr. Johnson, than whom no man was better acquainted with general nature, in his Irene, has also observed of a once faithful Bassa --

"How guilt, when harbour'd in the conscious breast,
"Intimidates the brave, degrades the great!
"See Cali, dread of kings, and pride of armies,
"By treason levell'd with the dregs of men!
"Ere guilty fear depress'd the hoary chief,
"An angry murmur, a rebellious frown,
"Had stretch'd the fiery boaster in his grave."

Who then can suppose that Shakspeare would have exhibited his Macbeth with encreasing guilt, but undiminished bravery? or wonder that our hero --

“Whose pester’d senses do recoil and start,
“When all that is within him does condemn
“Itself for being there,”

should have lost the magnanimity he displayed in a righteous cause, against Macdonwald and the thane of Cawdor? Of this circumstance, indeed, the murderer of Duncan was soon aware, as appears from his asking himself the dreadful question --

“How is’t with me, when every noise *appals* me?”

Between the courage of Richard and Macbeth, however, no comparison in favour of the latter can be supported. Richard was so thoroughly designed for a daring, impious, and obdurate character, that even his birth was attended by prodigies, and his person armed with ability to do the earliest mischief of which infancy is capable. Macbeth, on the contrary, till deceived by the illusions of witchcraft, and depraved by the suggestions of his wife, was a religious, temperate, and blameless character. The vices of

the one were originally woven into his heart; those of the other were only applied to the surface of his disposition. They can scarce be said to have penetrated quite into its substance, for while there was sliame, there might have been reformation.

The precautions of Richard concerning the armour he was to wear in the next day’s battle, his preparations for the onset, and his orders after it is begun, are equally characteristick of a calm and intrepid soldier, who possesses the *wisdom* that appeared so formidable to Macbeth, and *guided Banquo’s valour to act in safety*. But Macbeth appears in confusion from the moment his castle is invested, issues no distinct or material directions, prematurely calls for his armour, as irresolutely throws it off again, and is more intent on self-crimination, than the repulse of the besiegers, or the disposition of the troops who are to defend his fortress. But it is useless to dwell on particulars so much more exactly enumerated by Mr. Whateley.

The truth is, that the mind of Richard, unimpregnated by original morality, and uninfluenced by the laws of Heaven, is harassed by no subsequent remorse. *Repente fuit turpissimus.* Even the depression he feels from preternatural objects, is speedily taken off. In spite of ominous visions he sallies forth, and seeks his competitor in the *throat of death*. Macbeth, though he had long abandoned the practice of goodness, had not so far forgot its accustomed influence, but that a virtuous adversary whom he had injured, is as painful to his sight as the spectre in a former scene, and equally blasts the resolution he was willing to think he had still possessed. His conscience (as Hamlet says of the poison) *overcrows his spirit*, and all his *enterprizes are sicklied over by the pale cast of thought*. The curse that attends on him is, *virtutem videre, et intabescere relictâ*. Had Richard once been a feeling and conscientious character, when his end drew nigh, he might also have betrayed evidences of timidity -- “there sadly summing what he late had lost;” and if Macbeth originally had been a hardened villain, no terrors might have obtruded themselves in his close of life. *Qualis ab incepto processerat.* In short, Macbeth is timid in spite of all his boasting, as long as he thinks timidity can afford resources; nor does he exhibit a specimen of determined intrepidity, till the completion of the prophecy, and the challenge of Macduff, have taught him that life is no longer

tenable. Five counterfeit Richmonds are slain by Richard, who, before his fall, has *enacted wonders* beyond the common ability of man. The prowess of Macbeth is confined to the single conquest of Siward, a novice in the art of war. Neither are the truly brave ever disgraced by unnecessary deeds of cruelty. The victims of Richard, therefore, are merely such as obstructed his progress to the crown, or betrayed the confidence he had reposed in their assurances of fidelity. Macbeth, with a savage wantonness that would have dishonoured a Scythian female, cuts off a whole de-

fenceless family, though the father of it was the only reasonable object of his fear. -- Can it be a question then, which of these two personages would manifest the most determined valour in the field? Shall we hesitate to bestow the palm of courage on the steady unrepenting Yorkist, in whose bosom ideas of hereditary greatness, and confidence resulting from success, had fed the flame of glory, and who dies in combat for a crown which had been the early object of his ambition? and shall we allot the same wreath to the wavering self-convicted Thane, who, educated without hope of royalty, had been suggested into greatness, and yet, at last, would forego it all to secure himself by flight, but that flight is become an impossibility?

To conclude; a picture of conscience encroaching on fortitude, of magnanimity once animated by virtue, and afterwards extinguished by guilt, was what Shakspeare meant to display in the character and conduct of Macbeth. Steevens.

Macbeth was certainly one of Shakspeare's latest productions, and it might possibly have been suggested to him by a little performance on the same subject at Oxford, before King James, 1605. I will transcribe my notice of it from Wake's Rex Platonicus: "Fabulæ ansam dedit antiqua de regiâ prosapiâ historiola apud Scoto-Britannos celebrata, quæ narrat tres olim Sibyllas occurrisse duobus Scotiæ proceribus, Macbetho et Banchoni, et illum prædixisse regem futurum, sed regem nullum geniturum; hunc regem non futurum, sed reges geniturum multos. Vaticinii veritatem rerum eventus comprobavit. Banchonis enim è stirpe potentissimus Jacobus oriundus." P. 29.

Since I made the observation here quoted, I have been repeatedly told, that I unmttingly make Shakspeare learned, at least in Latin, as this must have been the language of the performance before King James. One might, perhaps, have plausibly said, that he probably picked up the story at second-hand; but mere accident has thrown a pamphlet in my way, intitled The Oxford Triumph, by one Anthony Nixon, 1605, which explains the whole matter: "This performance," says Antony, "was first in Latine to the king, then in English to the queene and young prince:" and, as he goes on to tell us, "the conceipt thereof the kinge did very much applaude." It is likely that the friendly letter, which we are informed King James once wrote to Shakspeare, was on this occasion. Farmer.

Dr. Johnson used often to mention an acquaintance of his, who was for ever boasting what great things he would do, could he but meet with Ascham's Toxophilus /*, at a time when Ascham's

/* -- Ascham's Toxophilus,] Mr. Malone is somewhat mistaken in his account of Dr. Johnson's pleasantry, which originated from an observation made by Mr. Theobald in 1733, and repeated

281

pieces had not been collected, and were very rarely to be found. At length Toxophilus was procured, but -- nothing was done. The interlude performed at Oxford in 1605, by the students of Saint John's college, was, for a while, so far my Toxophilus, as to excite my curiosity very strongly on the subject. Whether Shakspeare, in the composition of this noble tragedy, was at all indebted to any preceding performance, through the medium of translation, or in any other way, appeared to me well worth ascertaining. The British Museum was examined in vain. Mr. Warton very obligingly made a strict search at St. John's college, but no traces of this literary performance could there be found. At length chance threw into my liands the very verses that were spoken in 1605, by three young gentlemen of that college; and, being thus at last obtained, "that no man" (to use the words of Dr. Johnson) "may ever want them more," I will here transcribe them.

There is some difficulty in reconciling the different accounts of this entertainment. The author of Rex Platonicus says, "Tres adolescentes concinno Sibyllarum habitu induti, è collegio [Divi Johannis] prodeuntes, et carmina lepida alternatim canentes, regi se tres esse Sibyllas profitentur, quæ Banchoni olim sobolis imperia prædixerant, &c. Deinde tribus principibus suaves felicitatum triplicitates triplicatis carminum vicibus succinentes, -- principes ingeniosa fictiuncula delectatos dimittunt."

But in a manuscript account of the king's visit to Oxford in 1605, in the Museum, (MSS. Baker, 7044,) this interlude is thus described: "This being done, he [the king] rode on untill he came unto St. John's college, where coming against the gate, three young youths, in habit and attire like *Nymphes*, confronted him, representing England, Scotland, and Ireland; and talking dialogue-wise each to other of their state, at last concluded, yielding up themselves to his gracious government." With this A. Nixon's account, in The Oxford Triumph, quarto, 1605, in some measure agrees, though it differs in a very material point;

by him in 1740. See his note on Much Ado About Nothing, in his 8vo. edition of Shakspeare, vol, i. p. 410; and his duodecimo, vol. ii. p. 12: "-- and had I the convenience of consulting Ascham's Toxophilus, I might probably grow better acquainted with his history:" i. e. that of Adam Bell, the celebrated archer.

Mr. Theobald was certainly no diligent inquirer after ancient books, or was much out of luck, if, in the course of ten years, he could not procure the treatise he wanted, which was always sufficiently common. I have abundant reason to remember the foregoing circumstance, having often stood the push of my late coadjutor's merriment, on the same score; for he never heard me lament the scarcity of any old pamphlet, from which I expected to derive information, but he instantly roared out -- "Sir, remember Tib and his Toxophilus." Steevens.

282

for, if his relation is to be credited, these young men did not al-

ternately recite verses, but pronounced three distinct orations: “This finished, his Majestie passed along till hee came before Saint John’s college, when three little boyes, coming foorth of a castle made all of ivie, drest like three *nymphes*, (the conceipt whereof the king did very much applaude,) delivered three *orations*, first in Latine to the king, then in English to the queene and young prince; which being ended, his majestie proceeded towards the east gate of the citie, where the townesmen againe delivered to him another speech in English.”

From these discordant accounts one might be led to suppose, that there were six actors on this occasion, three of whom personated the Sybills, or rather the Weird Sisters, and addressed the royal visitors in Latin, and that the other three represented England, Scotland, and Ireland, and spoke only in English. I believe, however, that there were but three young men employed; and after reciting the following Latin lines, (which prove that the weird sisters and the representatives of England, Scotland, and Ireland, were the same persons,) they might, perhaps, have pronounced some English verses of a similar import, for the entertainment of the queen and the princes.

To the Latin play of Vertumnus, written by Dr. Matthew Gwynne, which was acted before the king by some of the students of St. John’s college on a subsequent day, we are indebted for the long-sought-for interlude, performed at St. John’s gate; for Dr. Gwynne, who was the author of this interlude also, has annexed it to his Vertumnus, printed in 4to. in 1607:

“Ad regis introitum, e Joannensi Collegio extra portam urbis borealem sito, tres quasi Sibyllæ, sic (ut e sylva) salutarunt.

“1. Fatidicas olim fama est cecinisse sorores
“Imperium sine fine tuæ, rex inclyte, stirpis.
“Banquonem agnovit generosa Loquabria Thanum;
“Nec tibi, Banquo, tuis sed sceptra nepotibus illæ
“Immortalibus immortalia vaticinatæ:
“In saltum, ut lateas, dum Banquo recedis ab aula.
“Tres eadem pariter canimus tibi fata tuisque,
“Dum spectande tuis, e saltu accedis ad urbem;
“Teque salutamus: Salve, cui Scotia servit;
“2. Anglia cui, salve. 3. Cui servit Hibernia, salve.
“1. Gallia cui titulos, terras dant cætera, salve.
“2. Quem divisa prius colit una Britannia, salve.
“3. Summe Monarcha Britannice, Hibernice, Gallice, salve.
“1. Anna, parens regum, soror, uxor, filia, salve.
“2. Salve, Henrice hæres, princeps pulcherrime, salve.
“3. Dux Carole, et perbelle Polonice regule, salve.
“1. Nec metas fatis, nec tempora ponimus istis;
“Quin orbis regno, famæ sint terminus astra:
“Canutum referas regno quadruplice clarum;

“Major avis, æquande tuis diademate solis.
“Nec serimus cædes, nec bella, nec anxia corda;
“Nec furor in nobis; sed agente calescimus illo
“Numine, quo Thomas Whitus per somnia motus,
“Londinenses eques, musis hæc tecta dicavit.

“Musis? imo Deo, tutelarique Joanni.

“Ille Deo charum et curam, prope prætereuntem
“Ire salutatum, Christi precursor, ad ædem
“Christi pergentem, jussit. Dictâ ergo salute
“Perge, tuo aspectu sit læta Academia, perge.” Malone.

As that singular curiosity, The Witch, printed by Mr. Reed, and distributed only among his friends, cannot fall in the way of every curious and inquisitive reader of Shakspeare, I am induced to subjoin such portions of it (though some of them are already glanced at) as might have suggested the idea on which our author founded his unrivalled scene of enchantment, in the fourth Act of the present tragedy.

Let it not be supposed, however, that such coincidences ought any way to diminish the fame of Shakspeare, whose additions and adoptions have, in every instance, manifested the richness of his own fancy, and the power of his own judgment.

The lyrick part, indeed, of the second of these extracts, has already appeared in my note, under the article *Macbeth*, in Mr. Malone’s Attempt to ascertain the Order of Shakspeare’s Plays, vol. ii. and is repeated here only for the sake of juxtaposition, and because its adjuncts (to borrow a phrase from Lady Macbeth) would have been “bare without it.” The whole is given with its antiquated spelling, corrected from the original MS.

Steevens.

ACT I. SCENE II.

Enter Heccat; and other Witches {with Properties, and Habitts fitting.)

Hec. Titty, and Tiffin, Suckin
And Pidgen, Liard, and Robin!
White spiritts, black spiritts, gray spiritts, redd speritts;
Devill-Toad, Devill-Ram, Devill-Catt, and Devill-Dam.
Why Hoppo and Stadlin, Hellwin and Prickle!
Stad. Here, sweating at the vessel.
Hec. Boyle it well.
Hop. It gallops now.
Hec. Are the flames blew enough?
Or I shall use a little seeten more?

Stad. The nipps of Fayries upon maides white hipps,
Are not more perfect azure.
Hec. Tend it carefully.
Send Stadlin to me with a brazen dish,
That I may fall to work upon theis serpents,
And squieze ’em ready for the second howre.
Why, when?
Stad. Heere’s Stadlin, and the dish.
Hec. There take this un-baptized brat:
Boile it well: preserve the fat:
You know ’tis pretious to transfer
Our ’noynted flesh into the aire,
In moone-light nights, ore steeple-topps,
Mountains, and pine-trees, that like pricks, or stopps,
Seeme to our height: high towres, and roofes of princes,

Like wrinckles in the earth: whole provinces
Appeare to our sight then, ev'n leeke
A russet-moale upon some ladies cheeke.
When hundred leagues in aire we feast and sing,
Daunce, kisse, and coll, use every thing;
What yong-man can we wish to pleasure us
But we enjoy him in an Incubus?
Thou know'st it Stadlin?
  Stad. Usually that's don.
  Hect. Last night thou got'st the Maior of Whelplies son,
I knew him by his black cloake lyn'd with yallow;
I thinck thou hast spoild the youth: hee's but seaventeene.
I'll have him the next mounting: away, in.
Goe feed the vessell for the second howre.
  Stad. Where be the magicall herbes?
  Hec. They're downe his throate.
His mouth cramb'd full; his eares, and nosthrills stufft.
I thrust in Eleoselinum, lately
Aconitum, frondes populeus, and soote,
You may see that, he looks so black i' th' mouth:
Then Sium, Acharum, Vulgaro too
Dentaphillon, the blood of a flitter-mowse,
Solanum somnificum et oleum.
  Stad. Then ther's all Heccat?
  Hec. Is the hart of wax
Stuck full of magique needles?
  Stad. 'Tis don Heccat.
  Hec. And is the Farmer's picture, and his wives,
Lay'd downe to th' fire yet?
  Stad. They are a roasting both too.
  Hec. Good;
Then their marrowes are a melting subtelly,

285

And three monethes sicknes sucks up life in 'em.
They denide me often flowre, barme, and milke,
Goose-greaze and tar, when I nere hurt their churnings,
Their brew-locks nor their batches, nor fore-spoake
Any of their breedings. Now I'll be-meete with 'em.
Seaven of their yong piggs I have be-witch'd already
Of the last litter, nine ducklyngs, thirteene goselings and a hog
Fell lame last Sonday after even-song too.
And mark how their sheepe prosper; or what soupe
Each milch-kine gives to th' paile: I'll send these snakes
Shall milke 'em all before hand: the dew'd-skirted dayrie
    wenches
Shall stroak dry duggs for this, and goe home curssing:
I'll mar their syllabubs, and swathie feastings
Under cowes bellies, with the parish-youthes:

  Enter Firestone.

Wher's Firestone? our son Firestone.
  Fire. Here am I mother.
  Hec. Take in this brazen dish full of deere ware,
Thou shalt have all when I die, and that wil be
Ev'n just at twelve a clock at night come three yeere.

Fire. And may you not have one a-clock in to th' dozen (Mother?)
Hec. Noh.
Fire. Your spirits are then more unconscionable then bakers: You'll have liv'd then (Mother) six-score yeare to the hundred; and me-thincks after six-score yeares the devill might give vou a cast; for he's a fruiterer too, and has byn from the beginning: the first aj)ple that ere was eaten, came through his fingers: The Costermongers then I hold to be the auncientest trade, though some would have the Tailor prick'd downe before him.
Hec. Goe and take heed you shed not by the way:
The howre must have her portion, 'tis deere sirrop.
Each charmed drop is able to confound
A famely consisting of nineteene,
Or one and twentie feeders.
Fire. Mary, heere's stuff indeed! Deere surrup call you it? a little thing would make me give you a dram on't in a possett, and cutt you three yeares shorter.
Hec. Thou'rt now about some villany.
Fire. Not I (forsooth) Truly the devil's in her I thinck. How one villanie smells out an other straight: Ther's no knavery but is nosde like a dog, and can smell out a doggs meaning. (Mother) I pray give me leave to ramble a-broad to-night with the night-mare, for I have a great mind to over-lay a fat parson's daughter.
Hec. And who shall lye with me then?

Fire. The great cat for one night (Mother). 'Tis but a night: make shift with him for once.
Hec. You're a kind son:
But 'tis the nature of you all, I see that:
You had rather hunt after strange women still,
Then lye with your owne mother: Gett thee gon:
Sweatt thy six ounces out about the vessell,
And thou shalt play at mid-night: the night-mare
Shall call thee when it walkes.
Fire. Thancks most sweet Mother. [*Exit.*

Enter Sebastian.

Hec. Urchins, Elves, Haggs, Satires, Pans, Fawnes, silence. Kitt with the candlestick; Tritons, Centaures, Dwarfes, Imps, the Spoone, the Mare, the Man i' th' oake; the Hell-waine, the Fire-drake, the Puckle. A. Ab. Hur. Hus.
Seb. Heaven knowes with what unwillingnes and hate
I enter this dambd place: but such extreemes
Of wrongs in love, fight 'gainst religion's knowledge.
That were I ledd by this disease to deaths
As numberles as creatures that must die,
I could not shun the way: I know what 'tis
To pitty mad-men now; they're wretched things
That ever were created, if they be
Of woman's making, and her faithles vowes:
I fear they're now a kissing: what's a clock?
'Tis now but supper-time: But night will come.
And all new-married copples make short suppers.
What ere thou art, I have no spare time to feare thee;

My horrors are so strong and great already.
That thou seem'st nothing: Up and laze not:
Hadst thou my busynes, thou couldst nere sit soe;
'Twould firck thee into ayre a thousand mile.
Beyond thy oynetments: I would, I were read
So much in thy black powre, as mine owne greifes!
I'me in great need of help: wil't give me any?
  Hec. Thy boldnes takes me bravely: we are all sworne
To sweatt for such a spirit: See; I regard thee,
I rise, and bid thee welcome. What's thy wish now?
  Seb. Oh my heart swells with't. I must take breath first.
  Hec. Is't to confound some enemie on the seas?
It may be don to night. Stadlin's within;
She raises all your sodaine ruinous stormes
That shipwrack barks, aud teares up growing oakes,
'Flyes over houses, and takes Anno Domini
Out of a rich man's chimney (a sweet place for't)
He would be hang'd ere he would set his owne yeares there.

287

They must be chamber'd in a five-pound picture,
A greene silk curtaine davvne before the eies on't,
(His rotten diseasd yeares)! Or dost thou envy
The fat prosperitie of any neighbour?
I'll call forth Hoppo, and her incantation
Can straight destroy the yong of all his cattell:
Blast vine-yards, orchards, meadowes; or in one night
Transport his doong, hay, corne, by reekes, whole stacks,
Into thine owne ground.
  Seb. This would come most richely now
To many a cuntry grazier: But my envy
Lies not so lowe as cattell, corne, or vines:
'Twill trouble your best powres to give me ease.
  Hec. Is yt to starve up generation?
To strike a barrennes in man or woman?
  Seb. Hah!
  Hec. Hah! did you feele me there? I knew your griefe.
  Seb. Can there be such things don?
  Hec. Are theis the skins
Of serpents? theis of snakes?
  Seb. I see they are.
  Hec. So sure into what house theis are convay'd
Knitt with theis charmes, and retentive knotts,
Neither the man begetts, nor woman breeds;
No, nor performes the least desire of wedlock,
Being then a mutuall dutie: I could give thee
Chiroconita, Adincantida,
Archimadon, Marmaritin, Calicia,
Which I could sort to villanous barren ends,
But this leades the same way: More I could instance:
As the same needles thrust into their pillowes
That soawes and socks up dead men in their sheets:
A privy grizzel of a man that hangs
After sun-sett: Good, excellent: yet all's there (Sir).

  Seb. You could not doe a man that speciall kindnes
To part them utterly, now? Could you doe that?

Hec. No: time must do't: we cannot disioyne wedlock:
'Tis of heaven's fastning: well may we raise jarrs,
Jealouzies, striffes, and hart-burning disagreements,
Like a thick skurff ore life, as did our master
Upon that patient miracle: but the work itself
Our powre cannot dis-joynt.
Seb. I depart happy
In what I have then, being constrain'd to this:
And graunt you (greater powres) that dispose men.
That I may never need this hag agen. [*Exit.*
Hec. I know he loves me not, nor there's no hope on't;
'Tis for the love of mischief I doe this.

And that we are sworne to the first oath we take.
Fire. Oh mother, mother.
Hec. What's the newes with thee now?
Fire. There's the bravest yong gentleman within, and the fineliest drunck: I thought he would have falne into the vessel: he stumbled at a pipkin of childes greaze; reelde against Stadlin, overthrew her, and in the tumbling cast, struck up old Puckles heels with her clothes over her eares.
Hec. Hoy-day!
Fire. I was fayne to throw the cat upon her, to save her honestie; and all litle enough: I cryde out still, I pray be coverd. See where he comes now (Mother).

Enter Almachildes.

Alm. Call you theis witches?
They be tumblers me-thinckes, very flat tumblers.
Hec. 'Tis Almachildes: fresh blood stirrs in me --
The man that I have lusted to enjoy:
I have had him thrice in Incubus already.
Al. Is your name gooddy Hag?
Hec. 'Tis any thing.
Call me the horridst and unhallowed things
That life and nature tremble at; for thee
I'll be the same. Thou com'st for a love-charme now?
Al. Why thou'rt a witch, I thinck.
Hec. Thou shalt have choice of twentie, wett, or drie.
Al. Nay let's have drie ones.
Hec. Yf thou wilt use't by way of cup and potion,
I'll give thee a Remora shall be-witch her straight.

Al. A Remora? what's that?
Hec. A litle suck-stone,
Some call it a stalamprey, a small fish.
Al. And must 'be butter'd?
Hec. The bones of a greene frog too: wondrous pretious,
The flesh consum'd by pize-mires.
Al. Pize-mires! give me a chamber-pot.
Fire. You shall see him goe nigh to be so unmannerly, hee'll make water before my mother anon.
Al. And now you talke of frogs, I have somewhat here:
I come not emptie pocketted from a bancket.
(I learn'd that of my haberdashers wife.)

Looke, gooddy witch, there's a toad in marchpane for you.
Hec. Oh sir, y'have fitted me.
Al. And here's a spawne or two.
Of the same paddock-brood too, for your son.
Fire. I thanck your worship, sir: how comes your handkercher
so sweetely thus beray'd? sure tis wet sucket, sir.

289

Al. 'Tis nothing but the sirrup the toad spit.
Take all I pree-thee.
Hec. This was kindly don, sir.
And you shall sup with me to-night for this.
Al. How? sup with thee? dost thinck I'll eate fryde ratts,
And pickled spiders?
Hec. No: I can command, Sir,
The best meat i' th' whole province for my frends,
And reverently servd in too.
Al. How?
Hec. In good fashion.
Al. Let me but see that, and I'll sup with you.

She conjures; and enter a Catt {playing on a fidle) and Spiritts (with meate).

The Catt and Fidle's an excellent ordinarie:
You had a devill once in a fox-skin.
Hec. Oh, I have him still: come walke with me, Sir. [*Exit.*
Fire. How apt and ready is a drunckard now to reele to the
devill! Well I'll even in, and see how he eates, and I'll be hang'd
if I be not the fatter of the twaine with laughing at him. [*Exit.*

ACT III. SCENE III.

Enter Heccat, Witches, and Fire-Stone.

Hec. The moone's a gallant; see how brisk she rides.
Stad. Heer's a rich evening, Heccat.
Hec. I, is't not wenches,
To take a jorney of five thousand mile?
Hop. Ours will be more to-night.
Hec. Oh, 'twill be pretious: heard you the owle yet?
Stad. Breifely in the copps,
As we came through now.
Hec. 'Tis high time for us then.
Stad. There was a bat hoong at my lips three times
As we came through the woods, and drank her fill.
Old Puckle saw her.
Hec. You are fortunate still:
The very schreich-owle lights upon your shoulder,
And wooes you, like a pidgeon. Are you furnish'd?
Have you your oyntments?
Stad. All.

290

Hec. Prepare to flight then:
I'll over-take you swiftly.

Stad. Hye thee Heccat:
We shal be up betimes.
Hec. I'll reach you quickly.
Fire. They are all going a birding to-night. They talk of fowles i' th' aire, that fly by day: I am sure they'll be a company of fowle slutts there to night. Yf we have not mortallitie affer'd, I'll be hang'd, for they are able to putryfie, to infect a whole region. She spies me now.
Hec. What Fire-Stone, our sweet son?
Fire. A little sweeter then some of you; or a doong hill were too good for me.
Hec. How much hast here?
Fire. Nineteene, and all brave plump ones; besides six lizards, and three serpentine eggs.
Hec. Deere and sweet boy: what herbes hast thou?
Fire. I have some Mar-martin, and Man-dragon.
Hec. Marmaritin, and Mandragora, thou wouldst say.
Fire. Heer's Pannax too: I thanck thee, my pan akes I am sure with kneeling downe to cut 'em.
Hec. And Selago,
Hedge hisop too: how neere he goes my cuttings?
Were they all cropt by moone-light?
Fire. Every blade of 'em, or I am moone-calf (Mother).
Hec. Hye thee home with 'em.
Looke well to the house to night: I am for aloft.
Fire. Aloft (quoth you?) I would you would breake your neck once, that I might have all quickly. Hark, hark, mother; they are above the steeple alredy, flying over your head with a noyse of musitians.
Hec. They are they indeed. Help me, help me; I'm too late els.
Song. Come away, come away; *in the aire.*
Heccat, Heccat, come away.
Hec. I come, I come, I come, I come,
With all the speed I may,
With all the speed I may.
Wher's Stadlin?
Heere *in the aire.*
Wher's Puckle?
Heere:
And Hoppo too, and Hellwaine too: *in the aire.*
We lack but you; we lack but you;
Come away, make up the count.
Hec. I will but noynt, and then I mount.
[*A spirit like a Cat descends.*

Ther's one comes downe to fetch his dues;
A kisse, a coll, a sip of blood: *above.*
And why thou staist so long
I muse, I muse,
Since the air's so sweet and good.
Hec. Oh, art thou come,
What newes, what newes?
All goes still to our delight.
Either come, or els
Refuse, refuse.

Hec. Now I am furnish'd for the flight.
Fire. Hark, hark, the Catt sings a brave treble in her owne language.
Hec. going up.] Now I goe, now I flie,
Malkin my sweete spirit and I.
Oh what a daintie pleasure tis
To ride in the aire
When the moone shines faire.
And sing and daunce, and toy and kiss:
Over woods, high rocks, and mountaines,
Over seas, our mistris fountaines,
Over steepe towres and turretts
We fly by night, 'mongst troopes of spiritts.
No ring of bells to our eares sounds,
No howles of wolves, no yelpes of hounds;
No, not the noyse of water's-breache,
Or cannon's throat, our height can reache.
No Ring of bells, &c. *above.*
Fire. Well mother, I thanck your kindnes: You must be gambolling i' th' aire, and leave me to walk here like a foole and a mortall. [*Exit.*

ACT V. SCENE II.

Enter Duchesse, Heccat, Firestone.

Hec. What death is't you desire for Almachildes?
Duch. A sodaine and a subtle.
Hec. Then I have fitted you.
Here lye the guifts of both; sodaine and subtle:
His picture made in wax, and gently molten
By a blew fire, kindled with dead mens' eyes.
Will waste him by degrees.
Duch. In what time, pree-thee?

Hec. Perhaps in a moone's progresse.
Duch. What? a moneth?
Out upon pictures! if they be so tedious,
Give me things with some life.
Hec. Then seeke no farther.
Duch. This must be don with speed, dispatch'd this night.
If it may possible.
Hec. I have it for you:
Here's that will do't: stay but perfection's time,
And that's not five howres hence.
Duch. Canst thou do this?
Hec. Can I?
Duch. I meane, so closely.
Hec. So closely doe you meane too?
Duch. So artfully, so cunningly.
Hec. Worse and worse; doubts and incredulities,
They make me mad. Let scrupulous creatures know
Cum volui, ripis ipsis mirantibus, amnes
In fontes rediere suos; concussaq. sisto,
Stantia concutio cantu freta; nubila pello,
Nubilaq. induco: ventos abigoq. vocoq.

Vipereas rumpo verbis et carmine fauces;
Et silvas moveo, jubeoq. tremiscere montes,
Et mugire solum, manesq. exire sepulchris.
Te quoque Luna traho.
Can you doubt me then, daughter,
That can make mountains tremble, miles of woods walk;
Whole earth's foundation bellow, and the spiritts
Of the entomb'd to burst out from their marbles;
Nay, draw yond moone to my envolv'd designes?
Fire. I know as well as can be when my mother's mad and our great catt angrie; for one spitts French then, and thother spitts Latten.
Duch. I did not doubt you, Mother.
Hec. No? what did you,
My powre's so firme, it is not to be question'd.
Duch. Forgive what's past: and now I know th' offensivenes
That vexes art, I'll shun th' occasion ever.
Hec. Leave all to me and my five sisters, daughter.
It shall be convaid in at howlett-time.
Take you no care. My spiritts know thir moments:
Raven, or screitch-owle never fly by th' dore
But they call in (I thanck 'em) and they loose not by't.
I give 'em barley soak'd in infants' blood:
They shall have semina cum sanguine,
Their gorge cramd full if they come once to our house:
We are no niggard.

Fire. They fare but too well when they come heather: they eate up as much tother night as would have made me a good conscionable pudding.
Hec. Give me some lizard's-braine: quickly Firestone.
Wher's grannam Stadlin, and all the rest o' th' sisters?
Fire. All at hand forsooth.
Hec. Give me Marmaritin; some Beare-breech: when?
Fire. Heer's Beare-breech, and lizards-braine forsooth.
Hec. In to the vessell;
And fetch three ounces of the red-hair'd girle
I kill'd last midnight.
Fire. Whereabouts, sweet Mother?
Hec. Hip; hip or flanck. Where is the Acopus?
Fire. You shall have Acopus, forsooth.
Hec. Stir, stir about; whilst I begin the charme.

A charme Song, about a Vessell.

Black spiritts, and white: Red spiritts, and gray;
Mingle, mingle, mingle, you that mingle may.
Titty, Tiffin, keepe it stiff in;
Fire-drake, Puckey, make it luckey;
Liard, Robin, you must bob in.
Round, around, around, about, about;
All ill come running in, all good keepe out!
1. Witch. Heer's the blood of a bat.
Hec. Put in that; oh put in that.
2. Heer's libbard's-bane.
Hec. Put in againe.

1. The juice of toad; the oile of adder.
2. Those will make the yonker madder.
Hec. Put in; ther's all, and rid the stench.
Fire. Nay heer's three ounces of the red-hair'd wench.
All. Round, around, around, &c.
Hec. So, soe, enough: into the vessell with it.
There, 't hath the true perfection: I am so light
At any mischief: ther's no villany
But is a tune methinkes.
Fire. A tune! 'tis to the tune of dampnation then, I warrant you; and that song hath a villanous burthen.
Hec. Come my sweet sisters; let the aire strike our tune,
Whilst we show reverence to yond peeping moone.
[*Here they daunce the Witches dance, and Exeunt.*

294

*** The following Songs are found in Sir William D'Avenant's alteration of this play, printed in 1674. The first and second of them were, I believe, written by him, being introduced at the end of the second Act, in a scene of which he undoubtedly was the author. Of the other song, which is sung in the third Act, the first words (*Come away*) are in the original copy of Macbeth, and the whole is found at length in Middleton's play, entitled The Witch, which has been lately printed from a manuscript in the collection of Major Pearson. Whether this song was written by Shakspeare, and omitted, like many others, in the printed copy, cannot now be ascertained. Malone.

ACT II.

First Song by the Witches.

1 Witch. Speak, sister, speak; is the deed done?
2 Witch. Long ago, long ago:
Above twelve glasses since have run.
3 Witch. Ill deeds are seldom slow;
Nor single; following crimes on former wait:
The worst of creatures fastest propagate.
Many more murders must this one ensue.
As if in death were propagation too.
2 Witch. He will --
1 Witch. He shall --
3 Witch. He must spill much more blood;
And become worse, to make his title good.
1 Witch. Now let's dance.
2 Witch. Agreed.
3 Witch. Agreed.
4 Witch. Agreed.
Chor. We should rejoice when good kings bleed.
When cattle die, about we go;
What then, when monarchs perish, should we do?

Second Song.

Let's have a dance upon the heath;
We gain more life by Duncan's death.
Sometimes like brinded cats we shew,

Having no musick but our mew:
Sometimes we dance in some old mill,
Upon the hopper, stones, and wheel,
To some old saw, or bardish rhyme
Where still the mill-clack does keep time.

295

Sometimes about an hollow tree.
Around, around, around dance we:
Thither the chirping cricket comes,
And beetle, singing drowsy hums:
Sometimes we dance o'er fens and furze,
To howls of wolves, and barks of curs:
And when with none of those we meet,
We dance to the echoes of our feet.
At the night-raven's dismal voice,
Whilst others tremble, we rejoice;
And nimbly, nimbly dance we still,
To the echoes from an hollow hill. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III. SCENE V.

Hecate and the Three Witches.

Musick and Song.

[*Within.*] *Hecate, Hecate, Hecate!* O come away!
Hec. Hark, I am call'd, my little spirit, see,
Sits in a foggy cloud, and stays for me.
[*Within.*] Come away, *Hecate, Hecate!* O come away!
Hec. I come, I come, with all the speed I may,
With all the speed I may.
Where's Stadling?
2. Here, [*within.*]
Hec. Where's Puckle?
3. Here; [*within.*]
And Hopper too, and Helway too /*.

/* And **Hopper** too, and **Helway** too.] In The Witch, these personages are called *Hoppo* and *Hellwayne*. Malone.

"-- Helway. --" The name of this witch, perhaps, originates from the leader of a train of frolicksome apparitions, supposed to exist in Normandy, ann. 1091. He is called by Ordericus Vitalis (l. viii. p. 695,) *Herlechin*. In the continuation of The Canterbury Tales of Chaucer, (verse 8,) he is changed to -- *Hurlewayne*. In the French Romance of Richard sans peur, he becomes -- *Hellequin*. Hence, I suppose, according to the chances of spelling, pronunciation, &c. are derived the *Helwin* and *Helwayne* of Middleton, and, eventually, the *Helway* of Sir William D'Avenant. -- See Mr. Tyrwhitt's Chaucer, vol. v. pp. 270, 271, in voc. **Meinie**.

296

We want but you, we want but you:
Come away, make up the count.

Hec. I will but 'noint, and then I mount;
I will but 'noint, &c.
[Within.] Here comes down one to fetch his dues,
[A Machine with Malkin in it descends /*.
A kiss, a coll, a sip of blood;
And why thou stay'st so long, I muse,
Since the air's so sweet and good.
Hec. O, art thou come? What news?
[Within.] All goes fair for our delight:
Either come, or else refuse.
Hec. Now I'm furnish'd for the flight;
[Hecate places herself in the Machine.
Now I go, and now I fly,
Malkin, my sweet spirit, and I.
O, what a dainty pleasure's this,
To sail i' the air,
While the moon shines fair;
To sing, to toy, to dance, and kiss!
Over woods, high rocks, and mountains;
Over hills, and misty fountains /†;
Over steeples, towers, and turrets,
We fly by night 'mongst troops of spirits.

It may also be observed, (trivial as the remark appears,) that here we have not only *Herlechinus*, but the *familia Herlechini*, which, with sufficient singularity, still subsists on the Italian stage and our own. It is needless to mention, that the bills at our country fairs continue to promise entertainment from the exertions of "Mr. Punch and his merry *family*."

As the work of Ord. Vital, who died in 1143, is known to exhibit the name of *Harlequin*, it will not readily be allowed that his theatrical namesake was obliged, for the same title, to an *invention* of Francis I. in ridicule of his enemy, Charles le Quint, who was born in 1500, and left the world in 1558. See Johnson's Dictionary, in voc. **Harlequin**. Steevens.

/* This stage direction I have added. In The Witch there is the following marginal note: "A spirit like a cat descends." In Sir W. D'Avenant's alteration of Macbeth, printed in 1674, this song, as well as all the rest of the piece, is printed very incorrectly. I have endeavoured to distribute the different parts of the song before us, as, I imagine, the author intended. Malone.

/† "Over hills," &c. In The Witch, instead of this line, we find:
"Over seas, our mistress' fountains." Malone.

No ring of bells to our ears sounds,
No howls of wolves, nor yelps of hounds;
No, not the noise of water's breach,
Nor cannons' throat our height can reach. [*Hecate ascends.*
1 Witch. Come, let's make haste; she'll soon be back again.
2 Witch. But whilst she moves through the foggy air,
Let's to the cave, and our dire charms prepare. [*Exeunt.*

Notes omitted (on account of length) in their proper places.

[See p. 85.]

“-------- his two *chamberlains*
“Will I with wine and wassel so convince, &c.
“-------- Will it not be receiv’d,
“When we have mark’d with blood those sleepy two
“Of his own chamber, and us’d their very daggers,
“That they have don’t?” In the original Scottish History, by Boethius, and in Holinshed’s Chronicle, we are merely told that Macbeth slew Duncan at Inverness. No particulars whatsoever are mentioned. The circumstance of making Duncan’s chamberlains drunk, and laying the guilt of his murder upon them, as well as some other circumstances, our author has taken from the history of Duffe, king of Scotland, who was murdered by Donwald, Captain of the castle of Fores, about eighty years before Duncan ascended the throne. The fact is thus told by Holinshed, in p. 150 of his Scottish History, [208, edit. 1577.] (the history of the reign of Duncan commences in p. 168: [239, edit. 1577.])
“Donwald, not forgetting the reproach which his linage had susteined by the execution of those his kinsmen, whom the king for a spectacle to the people had caused to be hanged, could not but shew manifest tokens of great griefe at home amongst his familie: which his wife perceiving, ceased not to travell with him till she understood what the cause was of his displeasure. Which at length when she had learned by his owne relation, she, as one that bare no lesse malice in hir heart, for the like cause on his behalfe, than hir husband did for his friends, counselled him (sith the king used oftentimes to lodge in his house without anie gard about him other than the garrison of the castle, [of Fores,] which was wholie at his commandement) to make him awaie, *and showed him the meanes whereby he might soonest accomplish it*.
“Donwald, thus being the more kindled in wrath by the words of his wife, determined to follow hir advice in the execution of so heinous an act. Whereupon devising with himselfe for a while,

which way hee might best accomplish his cursed intent, at length gat opportunitie, and sped his purpose as foUoweth. It chanced that the king upon *the daie before he purposed to depart foorth of the castell*, was long in his oratorie at his praiers, and there continued till it was late in the night. At the last, comming foorth, he called such afore him as had faithfullie served him *in pursute and apprehension of the rebels*, and giving them heartie thanks *he bestowed sundrie honourable gifts amongst them, of the which number Donwald was one, as he that had been ever accounted a most faithful servant to the king*.
“At length, having talked with them a long time he got him into his privie chamber, *onlie with two of his chamberlains*, who having brought him to bed, came foorth againe, and then fell to banketting with Donwald and his wife, who had prepared diverse delicate dishes, and sundrie sorts of drinks for their reare supper or collation, whereat *they sate up so long, till they had charged their stomachs with such full gorges*, that their heads were no sooner got to the pillow, but asleepe they were so fast, that a man might have removed the chamber over them, sooner than to have awaked

them out of their drunken sleepe.

"Then Donwald, though he abhorred the act greatlie in heart, yet through instigation of his wife, he called foure of his servants unto him, (whom he had made privie to his wicked intent before, and framed to his purpose with large gifts,) and now declaring unto them, after what sort they should worke the feat, they gladlie obeyed his instructions, and speedilie going about the murther, they enter the chamber in which the king laie, a little before cocks crow, where they secretlie cut his throte as he lay sleeping, without any buskling at all: and immediately by a posterne gate they carried foorth the dead bodie into the fields, and throwing it upon a horse there provided for that purpose, they convey it unto a place about two miles distant from the castell. --

"Donwald, about the time that the murther was in dooing, got him amongst them that kept the watch, and so continued to companie with them all the residue of the night. But in the morning when the noise was raised in the kings chamber, how the king was slaine, his bodie conveied awaie, and the bed all bewraied with bloud, *he with the watch ran thither, as though he had known nothing of the matter*; and breaking into the chamber, and finding cakes of bloud in the bed, and on the floore about the sides of it, *he forthwith slew the chamberlains*, as guiltie of that heinous murther, and then like a madman running to and fro, he ransacked everie corner within the castell, as thoogh it had beene to have seene if he might have found either the bodie, or any of the murtherers hid in anie privie place: but at length comming to the posterne gate, and finding it open, he burdened the *chamberleins, whom he had slaine, with all the fault*, they having the keyes of the

gates committed to their keeping all the night, and therefore it could not be otherwise (said he) but that they were of counsell in the committing of that most detestable murther.

"Finallie, such was his over-earnest diligence in the severe inquisition and trial of the offenders heerein, that some of the lords began to mislike the matter, and to smell foorth shrewd tokens that he should not be altogether cleare himselfe. But for so much as they were in that countrie where he had the whole rule, what by reason of his friends and authoritie together, they doubted to utter what they thought, till time and place should better serve thereunto, and hereupon got them awaie everie man to his home."

Malone.

See p. 114, n. 2.] After the horrour and agitation of this scene, the reader may, perhaps, not be displeased to pause for a few minutes. The consummate art which Shakspeare has displayed in the preparation for the murder of Duncan, and during the commission of the dreadful act, cannot but strike every intelligent reader. An ingenious writer, however, whose comparative view of Macbeth and Richard III. has just reached my hands, has developed some of the more minute traits of the character of Macbeth, particularly in the present and subsequent scene, with such acuteness of observation, that I am tempted to transcribe such of his remarks as relate to the subject now before us, though I do not *entirely* agree with him. After having proved, by a deduction of many particulars, that the towering ambition of Richard is of a very different colour from that of Macbeth, whose weaker desires

seem only to aim at pre-eminence of place, not of dominion, he adds: “Upon the same principle a distinction still stronger is made in the article of courage, though both are possessed of it even to an eminent degree; but in Richard it is intrepidity, and in Macbeth no more than resolution: in him it proceeds from exertion, not from nature; in enterprize he betrays a degree of fear, though he is able, when occasion requires, to stifle and subdue it. When he and his wife are concerting the murder, his doubt, ‘if we should fail?’ is a difficulty raised by an apprehension, and as soon as that is removed by the contrivance of Lady Macbeth, to make the officers dmnk and lay the crime upon them, he runs with violence into the other extreme of confidence, and cries out, with a rapture unusual to him,

‘---- Bring forth men children only, &c.
‘---- Will it not be receiv’d
‘When we have mark’d with blood those sleepy two
‘Of his own chamber, and us’d their very daggers,
‘That they have done it?’

which question he puts to her who had the moment before suggested the thought of --

‘His spongy officers, who shall bear the guilt
‘Of our geat quell.’

And his asking it again, proceeds from that extravagance with which a delivery from apprehension and doubt is always accompanied. Then, summoning all his fortitude, he says, ‘I am settled,’ &c. and proceeds to the bloody business without any further recoil. But a certain degree of restlessness and anxiety still continues, such as is constantly felt by a man not naturally very bold, worked up to a momentous atchievement. His imagination dwells entirely on the circumstances of horrour which surround him; the vision of the dagger; the darkness and the stillness of the night, and the terrors and the prayers of the chamberlains. Lady Macbeth, who is cool and undismayed, attends to the business only; considers of the place where she had laid the daggers ready; the impossibility of his missing them; and is afraid of nothing but a disappointment. She is earnest and eager; he is uneasy and impatient; and therefore wishes it over:

‘I go, and it is done;’ &c.

“But a resolution thus forced cannot hold longer than the immediate occasion for it: the moment after that is accomplished for which it was necessary, his thoughts take the contrary turn, and he cries out, in agony and despair, --

‘Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I would thou could’st.’

“That courage which had supported him while he was *settled and bent up*, forsakes him so immediately after he has performed the *terrible feat*, for which it had been exerted, that he forgets the favourite circumstance of laying it on the officers of the bedchamber; and, when reminded of it, he refuses to return and complete his work, acknowledging --

‘I am afraid to think what I have done;
‘Look on’t again I dare not.’

“His disordered senses deceive him; and his debilitated spirits fail him; he owns that ‘every noise appals him:’ he listens when nothing stirs; he mistakes the sounds he does hear; he is

so confused as not to know whence the knocking proceeds. She, who is more calm, knows that it is from the south entry; she gives clear and direct answers to all the incoherent questions he asks her; but he returns none to that which she puts to him; and though after some time, and when necessity again urges him to recollect himself, he recovers so far as to conceal his distress, yet he still is not able to divert his thoughts from it: all his answers to the trivial questions of Lenox and Macduff are evidently given by a man thinking of something else; and by taking a tincture from the subject of his attention, they become equivocal:

301

'*Macd.* Is the king stirring, worthy thane?
'*Macb.* Not yet.
'*Len.* Goes the king hence to-day?
'*Macb.* He did appoint so.
'*Len.* The night has been unruly; where we lay
'Our chimneys were blown down; &c.
'*Macb.* 'Twas a rough night.'

"*Not yet* implies that he will by and by, and is a kind of guard against any suspicion of his knowing that the king would never stir more. *He did appoint so*, is the very counterpart of that which he had said to Lady Macbeth, when on his first meeting her she asked him --

'*Lady M.* When goes he hence?
'*Macb.* To-morrow, as he purposes.'

In both which answers he alludes to his disappointing the King's intention. And when forced to make some reply to the long description given by Lenox, he puts off the subject which the other was so much inclined to dwell on, by a slight acquiescence in what had been said of the roughness of the night; but not like a man who had been attentive to the account, or was willing to keep up the conversation." *Remarks on some of the Characters of Shakspeare*, [by Mr. Whatelcy,] 8vo. 1785.

To these ingenious observations I entirely subscribe, except that I think the wavering irresolution and agitation of Macbeth after the murder ought not to be ascribed solely to a remission of courage, since much of it may be imputed to the remorse which would arise in a man who was of a good natural disposition, and is described as originally "full of the milk of human kindness; -- not without ambition, but without the illness should attend it."

Malone.

A most decisive refutation of Mr. Whateley's Essay, as far as the courage of Macbeth is concerned, which will serve equally well as an answer to Mr. Steevens's note in a former page, was published by Mr. Kemble in the year 1786. A new edition of this Essay, enlarged and improved, appeared in 1817. The knowledge which it displays of our great poet's meaning and spirit, would be sufficient to account for that distinguished performer's superiority over all his contemporaries in the exhibition of Shakspeare's characters. It is with good acting as with good writing: "Sapere est et principium et fons." Boswell.

See Remarks on Mr. Whateley's Dissertation, p. 277, et seq. They first appeared in the European Magazine, for April, 1787.

I cannot, however, dismiss this subject without taking some

notice of an observation that rather diminishes than encreases the reputation of the foregoing tragedy.

It has been more than once observed by Mr. Boswell, and other collectors of Dr. Johnson's fugitive remarks, that he always described Macbeth as a drama that might be exhibited by pup-

pets; and that it was rather injured than improved by scenical accompaniments, *et quicquid telorum habent armamentaria theatri*.

I must confess, I know not on what circumstances in this tragedy such a decision could have been founded; nor shall I feel myself disposed to admit the propriety of it, till the inimitable performances of Mr. Garrick and Mrs. Pritchard have faded from my remembrance. Be it observed, however, that my great coadjutor had not advanced this position among his original or subsequent comments on Macbeth. It rather seems to have been an effusion provoked from him in the warmth of controversy, and not of such a nature as he himself would have trusted to the press. In Boswell's Tour to the Hebrides, 3d edit. p. 386, the Doctor makes the following frank confession: "Nobody, at times, *talks* more laxly than I do." Yet they are mistaken who think he was sufficiently adventurous to print whatever his mind suggested. I know The Life of Milton to have been composed under the strongest restraint of public opinion.

The reports of our metropolitan, as well as provincial theatres, will testify, that no dramatic piece is more lucrative in representation than Macbeth. It is equally a favourite with the highest and lowest ranks of society; those who delight in rational amusement, and those who seek their gratification in pageantry and show. Whence, then, such constant success and popularity as attends it, if stage exhibition, in this unfortunate instance, not only refuses to co-operate with the genius of Shakspeare, but obstinately proceeds to counteract the best and boldest of his designs?

Has the insufficiency of machinists hitherto disgraced the imagery of the poet? or is it in itself too sublime for scenical contrivances to keep pace with? or must we at last be compelled to own that our author's cave of incantation, &c. &c. are a mere abortive parade, that raises expectation only to disappoint it, and keeps, like his own Witches,

"---- the word of promise to our ear,
"And breaks it to our hope?"

Let me subjoin, that I much question if Dr. Johnson ever saw the characters of Macbeth and his wife represented by those who have most excelled in them; or, if he did, that in this, or any other tragedy, the blended excellence of a Garrick and a Pritchard had sufficient power to fix his attention on the business of the stage. He most certainly had no partialities in its favour, and as small a turn for appropriate embellishments. Add to this, that his defective hearing, as well as eye-sight, must especially have disqualified him from being an adequate judge on the present occasion. When Mrs. Abington solicited his attendance at her benefit, he plainly told her, he "could not hear." -- "Baretti," said he, (looking toward the bar at which the prisoner stood,) "cannot see my face, nor can I see his." Much less distinguishable to the

Doctor would have been the features of actors, because, in a play-house, their situation must have been yet remoter from his own. Without the ability of seeing, therefore, he had no means of deciding on the merit of dramatick spectacles: and who will venture to assert that a legitimate impersonation of the guilty Thane does not more immediately depend on expression of countenance, than on the most vigorous exertions of gesticulation or voice?

Dr. Johnson s sentiments, on almost all subjects, may justly claim my undissembled homage; but I cannot acquiesce in the condemnation of such stage-exhibitions as his known prejudices, want of attention, eye-sight, and hearing, forbade him to enjoy. His decree, therefore, in the present instance, is, I hope, not irreversible:

Quid valet, ad surdas si cantet Phemius aures?
Quid cœcum Thamyran picta tabella juvat. Steevens.

I am pretty well acquainted with the works to which Mr. Steevens has referred in the beginning of his note; but I cannot recollect, in any one of them, what that gentleman has professed to have found in them all. Had Johnson uttered such a remark, it would not have conveyed any slight opinion of Macbeth, but, rather, would have been an instance of his prejudice against actors, for which Mr. Steevens has well accounted. That this sublime drama stands in no need of scenic decoration will be readily allowed; but those who have had the good fortune to hear the scenes of witchcraft read by the greatest actress of this, or perhaps of any other age, will acknowledge that even “Shakspeare’s magick” may derive additional solemnity from (what I could almost term) the unearthly recitation of Mrs. Siddons. Boswell.

WINTOWNIS CRONYKIL.

BOOK VI. CHAP. XVIII.

Qwhen Makbeth-Fynlay rase
And regnand in-til Scotland was.

IN þis tyme, as yhe herd me tell
Of Trewsone þat in Ingland fell,
In Scotland nere þe lyk cás
Be Makbeth-Fynlayk practykyd was,

Quhen he mwrthrysyde his awyne Eme,
Be hope, þat he had in a dreme,
Đat he sawe, quhen he wes yhyng
In Hows duelland wyth þe Kyng,
Đat fayrly trettyd hym and welle
In all, þat langyd hym ilkè dele:
For he wes hys Systyr Sone,
Hys yharnyng all he gert be done.
A´ nycht he thowcht in hys dremyng,
Đat syttand he wes besyde þe Kyng
At a Sete in hwntyng; swá
In-til his Leisch had Grewhundys twá.
He thowcht, quhile he wes swá syttand,

He sawe thre Wamen by gangand;
And þái Wemen þan thowcht he
Thre Werd Systrys mást lyk to be.
Đe fyrst he hard say gangand by,
'Lo, yhondyr þe Thayne of Crwmbawchty.'
Đe toþir Woman sayd agayne,
'Of Morave yhondyre I se þe Thayne.'
Đe thryd þan sayd, 'I se þe Kyng.'
All þis he herd in hys dremyng.
  Sone eftyre þat in hys yhowthad
Of thyr Thayndomys he Thayne wes made.
Syne neyst he thowcht to be Kyng,
Frá Dunkanys dayis had táne endyng.
Đe fantasy þus of hys Dreme
Movyd hym mást to sla hys Eme;
As he dyd all furth in-dede,
As before yhe herd me rede,
And Dame Grwok, hys Emys Wyf,
Tuk, and led wyth hyr hys lyf,
And held hyr báthe hys Wyf, and Qweyne,
As befor þan scho had beyne
Til hys Eme Qwene, lyvand
Quhen he wes Kyng wyth Crowne rygnand:
F 150 a For lytyl in honowre þan had he
Đe greys of Affynytè.
  All þus quhen his Eme wes dede,
He succedyt in his stede:

L. 26.] This is the original of the story of the Weird Sisters, whom Shakspeare has rendered so familiar to every reader: in its original state it is within the bounds of probability.
D. Macpherson.

And sevyntene wyntyr full rygnand
As Kyng he wes þan in-til Scotland.
  All hys tyme was gret Plentè
Abowndand, báth on Land and Se.
He wes in Justice rycht lawchful,
And til hys Legis all awful.
Quhen Leo þe tend wes Pápe of Rome,
As Pylgryne to þe Curt he come:
And in hys Almus he sew Sylver
Til all pure folk, þat had myster.
And all tyme oysyd he to wyrk
Profytably for Haly Kyrke.
  Bot, as we fynd be sum Storys,
Gottyne he wes on ferly wys.
Hys Modyr to Woddis mád oft repayre
For þe delyte of halesum ayre.
Swá, scho past a-pon á day
Til a Wod, hyr for to play:
Scho met of cás wyth a fayr man
(Nevyr náne sá fayre, as scho thowcht þan,
Before þan had scho sene wytht sycht)
Of Bewtè plesand, and of Hycht
Proportyownd wele, in all mesoure

Of Lym and Lyth a fayre fygowre.
In swylk a qweyntans swá þai fell,
Ðat, schortly þare-of for to tell,
Ðar in þar Gamyn and þar Play
Ðat Persown be that Woman lay,
And on hyr þat tyme to Sowne gat
Ðis Makbeth, þat eftyr þat
Grew til þir Státis, and þis hycht,
To þis gret powere, and þis mycht,
As befor yhe have herd sayd.
  Frá þis persowne wyth hyr had playd,
And had þe Jowrnè wyth hyr done,
Ðat he had gottyne on hyr a Sone,
(And he þe Deẅil wes, þat hym gat)
And bad hyr noucht fleyd to be of þat;
Bot sayd, þat hyr Sone suld be
A man of gret state, and bowntè;
And ná man suld be borne of wyf
Of powere to reẅe hym hys lyf.
And of þat Dede in taknyng
He gave his Lemman þare a Ryng;
And bad hyr, þat scho suld kepe þat wele,
And hald for hys luve þat Jwele.
Eftyr þat oft oysyd he
Til cum til hyr in preẅaté;

And tauld hyr mony thyngis to fall;
F 150 b Set trowd þai suld noucht haẅe bene all.
  At hyr tyme scho wes lychtare,
And þat Sowne, þat he gat, scho bare.
Makbeth-Fynlake wes cald hys name,
Ðat grewe, as yhe herd, til gret fame.
Ðis was Makbethys Ofspryng,
Ðat hym eftyr mád oure Kyng,
As of þat sum Story sayis;
Set of hys Get fell oþir wayis,
And to be gottyn kyndly,
As oþir men ar generaly.

L. 104.] The tale of the supernatural descent of Macbeth, copied, perhaps, from that of Merlin, by Geoffrey of Monmouth, puts him on a footing with the heroes and demigods of ancient fable. It was not, however, intended, by the inventors of it, to do honour to his memory, but to ingratiate themselves with the reigning family; for they concluded, from wicked men being allegorically called *Sons of Belial* in the Scripture, that to call a man the son of the devil was to call him every thing that was bad. How many ugly stories were, in a more enlightened age, reported of Richard III. of England, in order to flatter the family which rose on his fall? Both these princes have had the additional misfortune to be gibbetted in Shakspeare's drama, as objects of detestation to all succeeding ages, as long as theatres shall be attended, and, perhaps, long after Shakspeare's own language shall have become unintelligible to the bulk of English readers. Wyntown, however, gravely cautions us against believing this foolish story, by telling us immediately that his "Get" was

“kyndly” as other men’s.

The brief account of Macbeth’s life raises his character above all the preceding princes, at least in as far as their actions are known to us. The

“-------- gret plente
“Abowndand, bath on land and se,”

and the riches of the country during his reign, which, together with the firm establishment of his government, enabled him to make a journey to Rome, and there to exercise a liberality of charity to the poor, remarkable even in that general resort of wealthy pilgrims, exhibit undeniable proofs of a beneficent government, and a prudent attention to agriculture, and to the fishery, that inexhaustible fund of wealth, wherewith bountiful nature has surrounded Scotland. Macbeth’s journey to Rome is not a fable, as supposed by the learned and worthy author of The Annals of Scotland, [vol. i. p. 3, note,] but rests on the evidence of Marianus Scotus, a respectable contemporary historian, whose words, almost lite-

And quhen fyrst he to rys began,
Hys Emys Sownnys twa lauchful þan
For dowt owt of þe Kynryk fled.
Malcolme, noucht gottyn of lauchful bed,
Đe thryd, past off þe Land alsuá
As banysyd wyth hys Breþyr twá,
Til Saynt Edward in Ingland,
Đat þat tyme þare wes Kyng ryngnand.
He þayme ressaẅyd thankfully,
And trettyd þame rycht curtasly.
And in Scotland þan as Kyng
Đis Makbeth mád gret steryng;
And set hym þan in hys powere
A gret Hows for to mak of Were
A-pon þe hycht of Dwnsynane:
Tymbyr þare-til to drawe, and stáne,
Of fyfe, and of Angws, he
Gert mony oxin gadryd be.
Sá, on á day in þare traẅaile
A yhok of oxyn Makbeth saw fayle:
Đat speryt Makbeth, quha þat awcht
Đe yhoke, þat faylyd in þat drawcht.
Đai awnsweryd til Makbeth agayne,
And sayd, Makduff of Fyfe þe Thayne
Đat ilk yhoke of oxyn awcht,
Đat he saw fayle in-to þe drawcht.
Đan spak Makbeth dyspytusly,
And to þe Thayne sayd angryly,

rally translated by Wyntown, are -- “A. D. ml. Rex Scotie Machetad Rome argentum seminando pauperibus distribuit.” [See VI. xviii. 48, 63, 303, 408.]

The only blot upon his memory is the murder of his predecessor, (if it was indeed a murder,) who, to make the crime the blacker, is called his uncle, though that point is extremely doubtful. Among the numerous kings who made their way to the throne by the same means, is Greg, who is held up as a mirror to princes. To this is added the crime of incest in taking

his uncle's widow to wife; but, admitting her former husband to have been his uncle, we must remember, that the rules concerning marriage in Scotland appear to have been partly formed upon the Jewish model, before the ecclesiastical polity was re-formed, or romanized, by the influence of Queen Margaret. [Vita Margaretæ ap. Bollandi Acta Sanctorum 10mo. Junii, p. 331.]

Thus much was due from justice to a character calumniated in the beaten track of history. D. Macpherson.

308

Lyk all wrythyn in hys skyn,
His awyn Nek he suld put in
Đe yhoke, and ger hym drawchtis drawe,
Noucht dowtand all hys Kynnys awe.
Frá þe Thayne Makbeth herd speke,
Đat he wald put in yhok hys Neke,
Of all hys thowcht he mád ná Sang;
Bot preẅaly owt of þe thrang
Wyth slycht he gat; and þe Spensere
A Láfe him gaẅe til hys Supere.
And als swne as he mycht se
Hys tyme and opportunytè,
Owt of þe Curt he past, and ran,
F 151 a And þat Láyf bare wyth hym þan
To þe Wattyre of Eryne. Đat Brede
He gaẅe þe Batwartis hym to lede,
And on þe sowth half hym to sete,
But delay, or ony lete.
Đat passage cald wes eftyre þan
Lang tyme Portnebaryan;
Đe Haẅyn of Brede þat suld be
Callyd in-tyl propyrtè.
Owre þe Wattyre þan wes he sete,
Bwt dawngere, or bwt ony lete.
At Dwnsynane Makbeth þat nycht,
As sone as hys Supere wes dycht,
And hys Marchalle hym to þe Halle
Fechyd, þan amang þaim all
Awaye þe Thayne of Fyfe wes myst;
And ná man, quhare he wes, þan wyst.
Yhit a Knycht, at þat Supere
Đat til Makbeth wes syttand nere,

L. 152.] In the infancy of navigation, when its efforts extended no further than crossing a river, ferrying places were the only harbours, and were called *port* in the Gaelic languages, and apparently in the most ancient Greek. Hence we have so many places on the banks of rivers and lochs in Scotland, called *ports*, and hence the Greek called their ferry-boats *porthmia* and *porthmides*. [Dictionaries, and Calcagnini Opera, p. 307.] No ferry on the Earn is known by this name; perhaps it was originally the *braide* [*broad*] *ferry*, which being confounded with *bread*, has been gaelized *port-ne~bara*, the harbour of bread. [v. Davies Dict. Brit. v. *Bara*.] The transcriber of the Cotton MS. has here interpolated a line with a French explanation of the name. [v. V. R.] D. Macpherson.

309

Sayd til hym, it wes hys part
For til wyt sowne, quheþirwart
Đe Thayne of Fyfe þat tyme past:
For he a wys man wes of cast,
And in hys Deyd wes rycht wyly.
Til Makbeth he sayd, for-þi
For ná cost þat he suld spare,
Sowne to wyt quhare Makduffe ware.
Đis heyly movyd Makbeth in-dede
Agayne Makduffe þan to procede.
  Yhit Makduff nevyrþeles
Đat set besowth þe Wattyre wes
Of Erne, þan past on in Fyfe
Til Kennawchy, quhare þan hys Wyfe
Dwelt in a Hows mád of defens:
And bad hyr, wyth gret diligens
Kepe þat Hows, and gyve þe Kyng
Điddyr come, and mád bydyng
Đare ony Felny for to do,
He gave hyr byddyng þan, þat scho
Suld hald Makbeth in fayre Trettè,
A Bate quhill scho suld sayland se
Frá north to þe sowth passand;
And frá scho sawe þat Bate sayland,
Đan tell Makbeth, þe Thayne wes þare
Of Fyfe, and til Dwnsynane fare
To byde Makbeth; for þe Thayne
Of Fyfe thowcht, or he come agayne
Til Kennawchy, þan for til bryng
Háme wyth hym a lawchful Kyng.
  Til Kennawchy Makbeth come sone,
And Felny gret þare wald have done:
F 151 b Bot þis Lady wyth fayre Trettè
Hys purpos lettyde done to be.
And sone, frá scho þe Sayle wp saw,
Đan til Makbeth wyth lytil awe
Scho sayd, ‘Makbeth, luke wp, and se
‘Wndyr yhon Sayle forsuth is he,
‘Đe Thayne of Fyfe, þat þow has sowcht.
‘Trowe þowe welle, and dowt rycht nowcht,

L. 179.] This “hows of defens” was perhaps Maiden Castle, the ruins of which are on the south side of the present Kennoway. There are some remains of Roman antiquity in this neighbourhood, and it is very probable that Macduff’s castle stood on the site of a Roman *Castellum*. D. Macpherson.

310

‘Gyve evyr þow sall hym se agayne,
‘He sall þe set in-tyl gret payne;
‘Syne þow wald haẅe put hys Neke
‘In-til þi yhoke. Now will I speke
‘Wyth þe ná mare: fare on þi waye,
‘Owþire welle, or ill, as happyne may.’
  Đat passage syne wes comownly

In Scotland cald þe Erlys-ferry.
Of þat Ferry for to knaw
Báth þe Statute and þe Lawe,
A Bate suld be on ilkè syde
For to wayt, and tak þe Tyde,
Til mak þame frawcht, þat wald be
Frá land to land be-yhond þe Se.
Frá þat þe sowth Bate ware sene
Đe landis wndyre sayle betwene
Frá þe sowth as þan passand
Toward þe north þe trad haldand,
Đe north Bate suld be redy made
Towart þe sowth to hald þe trade:
And þare suld náne pay mare
Đan foure pennys for þare fare,
Quha-evyr for his frawcht wald be
For caus frawchtyd owre þat Se.
Đis Makduff þan als fast
In Ingland a-pon Cowndyt past.
Đare Dunkanys Sownnys thre he fand,
Đat ware as banysyd off Scotland,
Quhen Makbeth-Fynlake þare Fadyr slwe,
And all þe Kynryk til hym drwe.

L. 228.] Four pennies, in Wyntown's time, weighed about one eightieth part of a pound of silver: how much they were in Macbeth's time, I suppose, cannot be ascertained; but, in the reign of David Ist, they weighed one sixtieth of a pound. If we could trust to Regiam Majestatem, four pennies, in David's time, were the value of one third of a boll of wheat, or two *lagenæ* of wine, or four *lagenæ* of ale, or half a sheep. [Tables of Money and Prices in Ruddiman's Introduction to And. Diplo. For the quantity of the *lagenæ* compare VIII. xvii. 35, with Fordun, p. 990: Sc. Chr. v. ii. p. 223, wherein *lagena* is equivalent to *galown* in Wyntown.] It is reasonable to suppose, that the whole of the boat was hired for this sum.

The landing place on the south side was most probably at North Berwick, which belonged to the family of Fife, who founded the nunnery there. D. Macpherson.

311

Saynt Edward Kyng of Ingland þan,
Đat wes of lyf a haly man,
Đat trettyd þir Barnys honestly,
Ressayvyd Makduff rych curtasly,
Quhen he come til hys presens,
And mád hym honowre and reverens,
As afferyd. Til þe Kyng
He tauld þe caus of hys cummyng.
Đe Kyng þan herd hym movyrly,
And answeryd hym all gudlykly,
And sayd, hys wyll and hys delyte
F 152 a Wes to se for þe profyte
Of þá Barnys; and hys wille
Wes þare honowre to fullfille.
He cownsalyd þis Makduffe for-þi
To trete þá Barnys curtasly.

And quhilk of þame wald wyth hym gá,
He suld in all þame sykkyre má,
As þai wald þame redy mak
For þare Fadyre dede to take
Revengeans, or wald þare herytage,
Ðat to þame felle by rycht lynage,
He wald þame helpe in all þare rycht
With gret suppowale, fors, and mycht.
  Schortly to say, þe lawchful twá
Breþire forsuke wyth hym to gá
For dowt, he put þaim in þat peryle,
Ðat þare Fadyre sufferyd qwhyle.
Malcolme þe thyrd, to say schortly,
Makduff cownsalyd rycht thraly,
Set he wes noucht of lauchfull bed,
As in þis Buke yhe have herd rede:
Makduff hym trettyd nevyr-þe-les
To be of stark hart and stowtnes,
And manlykly to tak on hand
To bere þe Crowne þan of Scotland:
And bade hym þare-of haẅe ná drede:
For kyng he suld be made in-dede:
And þat Traytoure he suld sla,
Ðat banysyd hym and hys Bredyr twa.

L. 274.] The story of these two brothers of Malcolm, (see also c. xvi. of this book) and their refusal of the kingdom, which he, a bastard, obtained, seems to be a mere fiction. Yet, why it should have been invented, I can see no reason: surely not with intent to disgrace Malcolm, whose posterity never lost the crown, and were such eminent friends to the church. The transcriber of the

  Ðam Malcolme sayd, he had a ferly,
Ðat he hym fandyde sá thraly
Of Scotland to tak þe Crowne,
Qwhill he kend hys condytyowne.
Forsuth, he sayde, þare wes náne þan
Swá lycherows a lyvand man,
As he wes; and for þat thyng
He dowtyde to be made a Kyng.
A Kyngis lyf, he sayd, suld be
Ay led in-til gret honestè:
For-þi he cowth iẅyl be a Kyng,
He sayd, þat oysyd swylk lyvyng.
  Makduff þan sayd til hym agayne,
Ðat þat excusatyowne wes in ẅayne:
For gyve he oysyd þat in-dede,
Of Women he suld have ná nede;
For of hys awyne Land suld he
Fayre Wemen have in gret plentè.

Harleian MiS. not liking this story, so derogatory to the royal family, omitted it in his transcript, and afterwards, changing his mind, added it at the end of his book. All the Scottish writers, who followed Wyntown, have carefully suppressed it.

Of Malcolm's brothers only Donald, who reigned after him, is

known to the Scottish historians: but another Melmare is mentioned in Orkneyinga Saga, [p. 176,] whose son Maddad, Earl of Athol, is called son of a King Donald by the genealogists, because they knew of no other brother of Malcolm. Perhaps Melmare is the same whom Kennedy calls Oberard, and says, that on the usurpation of Macbeth he fled to Norway, (more likely to his cousin the Earl of Orknay, which was a Norwegian country,) and was progenitor of an Italian family, called Cantelmi. [Dissertation on the Family of Stuart, p. 193, where he refers to records examined reg. Car. II.] In Scala Chronica [ap. Lel. v. i. p. 529] there is a confused story of two brothers of Malcolm. These various notices seem sufficient to establish the existence of two brothers of Malcolm; but that either of them was preferable to him for age or legitimacy is extremely improbable. It is, however, proper to observe, that, in those days, bastardy was scarcely an impediment in the succession to the crown in the neighbouring kingdoms of Norway and Ireland; that Alexander, the son of this Malcolm, took a bastard for his queen; and that, in England, a victorious king, the cotemporary of Malcolm, assumed *bastard* as a title in his charters.

John Cumin, the competitor for the crown, who derived his right from Donald, the brother of Malcolm, knew nothing of this story, which, if true, would at least have furnished him an excellent argument. D. Macpherson.

313

Gyve he had Conscyens of þat plycht,
Mend to God, þat has þe mycht.
Đan Malcolme sayd, ‘Đare is mare,
F 152 b ‘Đat lettis me wyth þe to fare:
‘Đat is, þat I am suá brynnand
‘In Coẅatys, þat all Scotland
‘Owre lytil is to my persowne:
‘I set nowcht þare-by a bwttowne.’
Makduff sayd, ‘Cum on wyth me:
‘In Ryches þow sall abowndand be.
‘Trow wele þe Kynryk of Scotland
‘Is in Ryches abowndand.’
Yhit mare Malcolme sayd agayne
‘Til Makduff of Fyfe þe Thayne,
‘Đe thryd ẅyce yhit máis me Lete
‘My purpos on thys thyng to sete:
‘I am sá fals, þat ná man may
‘Trow á worde, þat evyre I say.’
‘Ha, ha! Frend, I leve þe þare,’
Makduff sayd, ‘I will ná mare.
‘I will ná langare karpe wyth þe,
‘Ná of þis matere have Trettè;
‘Syne þow can noþire hald, ná say
‘Đat stedfast Trowth wald, or gud Fay.
‘He is ná man, of swylk a Kynd
‘Cummyn, bot of þe Đeẅylis Strynd,
‘Đat can noþyr do ná say
‘Đan langis to Trowth, and gud Fay.
‘God of þe Đeẅyl sayd in á quhile,
‘As I haẅe herd red þe Ẅangyle,
‘He is, he sayd, a Leare fals:
‘Swylk is of hym þe Fadyre als.

‘Here now my Leve I tak at þè,
‘And gyvys wp hályly all Trettè.
‘I cownt noucht þe toþir twá
‘Ẅycys þe ẇalu of a Strá:
‘Bot hys thryft he has sald all owte,
‘Quham falshad haldis wndyrlowte.’
  Til Makduff of Fyf þe Thayne
Ðis Malcolme awnsweryde þan agayne,
‘I will, I will,’ he sayd, ‘wyth þe
‘Pass, and prove how all will be.
‘I sall be lele and stedfast ay,
‘And hald till ilkè man gud fay.
‘And ná les in þe I trowe.
‘For-þi my purpos hále is nowe
‘For my Fadrys Dede to tá
‘Revengeans, and þat Traytoure sla,

314

‘Ðat has my Fadyre befor slayne;
‘Or I sall dey in-to þe payne.’
  To þe Kyng þan als fast
To tak hys Leve þan Malcolme past,
Makduff wyth hym hand in hand.
Ðis Kyng Edward of Ingland
F 133 a Gaẅe hym hys Leẅe, and hys gud wyll,
And gret suppowale heycht þame tille,
And helpe to wyn hys Herytage.
  On þis þai tuke þane þaire ẇayage.
And þis Kyng þan of Ingland
Bad þe Lord of Northwmbyrland,
Schyr Sward, to rys wyth all hys mycht
In Malcolmys helpe to wyn hys rycht.
  Ðan wyth þame of Northumbyrland
Ðis Malcolme enteryd in Scotland,
And past oure Forth, doun strawcht to Tay,
Wp þat Wattyre þe hey way
To þe Brynnane to-gyddyr hále.
Ðare þai bád, and tvk cownsale.
Syne þai herd, þat Makbeth aye
In fantown Fretis had gret Fay,
And trowth had in swylk Fantasy,
Be þat he trowyd stedfastly,
Nevyre dyscumfyt for to be,
Qwhill wyth hys Eyne he suld se
Ðe Wode browcht of Brynnane
To þe hill of Dwnsynane.
  Of þat Wode [þare] ilka man
In-til hys hand a busk tuk þan:

L. 357.] The word “doun,” taken in here from the Cotton MS. instead of “syne” in the Royal, affords us a tolerable plan of the route of Malcolm and his Northumbrian allies; which, as far as Perth, seems to be the same that Agricola, and all the other invaders of Scotland after him, have pursued. After passing the Forth, probably at the first ford above Stirling, they marched down the coast of Fife, no doubt taking Kennauchy, the seat of Macduff, in their way, where they would be joined by the forces

of Fife: thence they proceeded, gathering strength as they went, attended and supported (like Agricola) by the shipping, which the Northumbrians of that age had in abundance, [“valida classé,” says Sim. Dun. col. 187, describing this expedition,] and turned west along the north coast of Fife, the shipping being then stationed in the river and firth of Tay. Macbeth appears to have retreated before them to the north part of the kingdom, where, probably, his interest was strongest. D. Macpherson.

315

Of all hys Ost wes ná man fré,
Đan in his hand a busk bare he:
And til Dwnsynane alsa fast
Agayne þis Makbeth þai past,
For þai thowcht wytht swylk a wyle
Đis Makbeth for til begyle.
Swá for to cum in preẅatè
On hym, or he suld wytryd be.
Đe flyttand Wod þai callyd ay
Đat lang tyme eftyre-hend þat day.
Of þis quhen he had sene þat sycht,
He wes rycht wá, and tuk þe flycht:
And owre þe Mownth þai chást hym þan
Til þe Wode of Lunfanan.
Đis Makduff wes þare mást felle,
And on þat chás þan mást crwele.
Bot a Knycht, þat in þat chás
Til þis Makbeth þan nerest was,
Makbeth turnyd hym agayne,
And sayd, ‘Lurdane, þow prykys in ẅayne,
‘For þow may noucht be he, I trowe,
‘Đat to dede sall sla me nowe.
‘Đat man is nowcht borne of Wyf
‘Of powere to reẅe me my lyfe.’
Đe Knycht sayd, ‘I wes nevyr borne;
F 155 b ‘Bot of my Modyre Wáme wes schorne.
‘Now sall þi Tresowne here tak end;
‘For to þi Fadyre I sall þé send.’
Đus Makbeth slwe þai þan
In-to þe Wode of Lunfanan:
And his Heẅyd þai strak off þare;
And þat wyth þame frá þine þai bare
Til Kynkardyn, quhare þe Kyng
Tylle þare gayne-come made bydyng.
Of þat slawchter ar þire ẅers
In Latyne wryttyne to rehers;
Rex Macabeda decem Scotie septemque fit annis,
In cujus regno fertile tempus erat:
Hunc in Lunfanan truncavit morte crudeli
Duncani natus, nomine Malcolimus.

L. 398.] This appears to be historic truth. But Boyse thought it did not make so good a story, as that Macbeth should be slain by Macduff, whom he therefore works up to a proper temper of revenge, by previously sending Macbeth to murder his wife and children. All this has a very fine effect in romance, or upon the stage. D. Macpherson.

From the non-appearance of Banquo in this ancient and authentick Chronicle, it is evident that his character, and consequently that of Fleance, were the fictions of Hector Boece, who seems to have been more ambitious of furnishing picturesque incidents for the use of playwrights, than of exhibiting sober facts on which historians could rely. The phantoms of a dream /*, in the present instance, he has embodied, and

"-------- gives to airy nothing
"A local habitation and a name."

Nor is he solicitous only to reinforce creation. In thinning the ranks of it he is equally expert; for as often as lavish slaughters are necessary to his purpose, he has unscrupulously supplied them from his own imagination. "I laud him," however, "I praise him," (as Falstaff says,) for the tragedy of Macbeth, perhaps, might not have been so successfully raised out of the less dramatick materials of his predecessor Wyntown. The want of such an essential agent as Banquo, indeed, could scarce have operated more disadvantageously in respect to Shakspeare, than it certainly has in regard to the royal object of his flattery; for, henceforward, what prop can be found for the pretended ancestry of James the First? or what plea for Isaac Wake's most courtly deduction from the supposed prophecy of the Weird Sisters? "Vaticinii veritatem rerum eventus comprobavit; Banquonis enim e stirpe potentissimus Jacobus oriundus." See Rex Platonicus, &c. 1605. Steevens.

/* Lord Hailes, on the contrary, in a note on his Annals of Scotland, vol. i. p. 3, charges Buchanan with having softened the *appearance* of the Witches into a *dream* of the same tendency; whereas he has only brought this story back to the probability of its original, as related by Wyntown. Steevens.