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William Shakespeare and George MacDonald**

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE TRAGEDIE OF HAMLET, PRINCE OF
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THE TRAGEDIE OF HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARKE

A STUDY WITH THE TEXT OF THE FOLIO OF 1623

BY GEORGE MACDONALD

"What would you gracious figure?"

TO

MY HONOURED RELATIVE

ALEXANDER STEWART MACCOLL

A LITTLE *LESS* THAN KIN, AND *MORE* THAN KIND

TO WHOM I OWE IN ESPECIAL THE TRUE UNDERSTANDING OF

THE GREAT SOLILOQUY

I DEDICATE

WITH LOVE AND GRATITUDE

THIS EFFORT TO GIVE HAMLET AND SHAKSPERE THEIR DUE

BORDIGHERA

Christmas, 1884

Summary:

The Tragedie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark:
a study of the text of the folio of 1623

By George MacDonald

[Motto]: "What would you, gracious figure?"

Dr. Greville MacDonald looks on his father's commentary as the "most important interpretation of the play ever written... It is his intuitive understanding ... rather than learned analysis—of which there is yet overwhelming evidence—that makes it so splendid."

Reading Level: Mature youth and adults.

PREFACE

By this edition of HAMLET I hope to help the student of Shakspeare to understand the play—and first of all Hamlet himself, whose spiritual and moral nature are the real material of the tragedy, to which every other interest of the play is subservient. But while mainly attempting, from the words and behaviour Shakspeare has given him, to explain the man, I have cast what light I could upon everything in the play, including the perplexities arising from extreme condensation of meaning, figure, and expression.

As it is more than desirable that the student should know when he is reading the most approximate presentation accessible of what Shakspeare uttered, and when that which modern editors have, with reason good or bad, often not without presumption, substituted for that which they received, I have given the text, letter for letter, point for point, of the First Folio, with the variations of the Second Quarto in the margin and at the foot of the page.

Of HAMLET there are but two editions of authority, those called the Second Quarto and the First Folio; but there is another which requires remark.

In the year 1603 came out the edition known as the First Quarto—clearly without the poet's permission, and doubtless as much to his displeasure: the following year he sent out an edition very different, and larger in the proportion of one hundred pages to sixty-four. Concerning the former my theory is—though it is not my business to enter into the question here—that it was printed from Shakspeare's sketch for the play, written with matter crowding upon him too fast for expansion or development, and intended only for a continuous memorandum of things he would take up and work out afterwards. It seems almost at times as if he but marked certain bales of thought so as to find them again, and for the present threw them aside—knowing that by the marks he could recall the thoughts they stood for, but not intending thereby to convey them to any reader. I cannot, with evidence before me, incredible but through the eyes themselves, of the illimitable scope of printers' blundering, believe *all* the confusion, unintelligibility, neglect of grammar, construction, continuity, sense, attributable to them. In parts it is more like a series of notes printed with the interlineations horribly jumbled; while in other parts it looks as if it had been taken down from the stage by an ear without a brain, and then yet more incorrectly printed; parts, nevertheless, in which it most differs from the authorized editions, are yet indubitably from the hand of Shakspeare. I greatly doubt if any ready-writer would have dared publish some of its chaotic passages as taken down from the stage; nor do I believe the play was ever presented in anything like such an unfinished state. I rather think some fellow about the theatre, whether more rogue or fool we will pay him the thankful tribute not to enquire, chancing upon the crude embryonic mass in the poet's hand, traitorously pounced upon it, and betrayed it to the printers—therein serving the poet such an evil turn as if a sculptor's workman took a mould of the clay figure on which his master had been but a few days employed, and published casts of it as the sculptor's work. [1] To us not the less is the *corpus delicti* precious—and that unspeakably—for it enables us to see something of the creational development of the drama, besides serving occasionally to cast light upon portions of it, yielding hints of the original intention where the after work has less plainly presented it.

[Footnote 1: Shakspeare has in this matter fared even worse than Sir Thomas Browne, the first edition of whose *Religio Medici*, nowise intended for the public, was printed without his knowledge.]

The Second Quarto bears on its title-page, compelled to a recognition of the former,—'Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect Coppie'; and it is in truth a harmonious world of which the former issue was but the chaos. It is the drama itself, the concluded work of the master's hand, though yet to be once more subjected to a little pruning, a little touching, a little rectifying. But the author would seem to have been as trusting over the work of the printers, as they were careless of his, and the result is sometimes pitiable. The blunders are appalling. Both in it and in the Folio the marginal note again and again suggests itself: 'Here the compositor was drunk, the press-reader asleep, the devil only aware.' But though the blunders elbow one another in tumultuous fashion, not therefore all words and phrases supposed to be such are blunders. The old superstition of plenary inspiration may, by its reverence for the very word, have saved many a meaning from the obliteration of a misunderstanding scribe: in all critical work it seems to me well to cling to the *word* until one sinks not merely baffled, but exhausted.

I come now to the relation between the Second Quarto and the Folio.

My theory is—that Shakspeare worked upon his own copy of the Second Quarto, cancelling and adding, and that, after his death, this copy came, along with original manuscripts, into the hands of his friends the editors of the Folio, who proceeded to print according to his alterations.

These friends and editors in their preface profess thus: 'It had bene a thing, we confesse, worthie to haue bene wished, that the Author himselfe had liu'd to haue set forth, and ouerseen his owne writings; But since it hath bin ordain'd otherwise, and he by death departed from that right, we pray you do not envie his Friends, the office of their care, and paine, to haue collected & publish'd them, as where (before) you were abus'd with diuerse stolne, and surreptitious copies, maimed, and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of iniurious impostors, that expos'd them: euen those, are now offer'd to your view cur'd, and perfect of their limbes; and all the rest, absolute in their numbers, as he conceiued th[is]. Who, as he was a happie imitator of Nature, was a most gentle expresser of it. His mind and hand went together: And what he thought, he vttered with that easinesse, that wee haue scarce receiued from him a blot in his papers. But it is not our prouince, who onely gather his works, and giue them you, to praise him. It is yours that reade him.'

These are hardly the words of men who would take liberties, and liberties enormous, after ideas of their own, with the text of a friend thus honoured. But although they printed with intent altogether faithful, they did so certainly without any adequate jealousy of the printers—apparently without a suspicion of how they could blunder. Of blunders therefore in the Folio also there are many, some through mere following of blundered print, some in fresh corruption of the same, some through mistaking of the manuscript corrections, and some probably from the misprinting of mistakes, so that the corrections themselves are at times anything but correctly recorded. I assume also that the printers were not altogether above the mean passion, common to the day-labourers of Art, from Chaucer's Adam Scrivener down to the present carvers of marble, for modifying and improving the work of the master. The vain incapacity of a self-constituted critic will make him regard his poorest fancy as an emendation; seldom has he the insight of Touchstone to recognize, or his modesty to acknowledge, that although his own, it is none the less an ill-favoured thing.

Not such, however, was the spirit of the editors; and all the changes of importance from the text of the Quarto I receive as Shakspeare's own. With this belief there can be no presumption in saying that they seem to me not only to trim the parts immediately affected, but to render the play more harmonious and consistent. It is no presumption to take the Poet for superior to his work and capable of thinking he could better it—neither, so believing, to imagine one can see that he has been successful.

A main argument for the acceptance of the Folio edition as the Poet's last presentment of his work, lies in the fact that there are passages in it which are not in the Quarto, and are very plainly from his hand. If we accept these, what right have we to regard the omission from the Folio of passages in the Quarto as not proceeding from the same hand? Had there been omissions only, we might well have doubted; but the insertions greatly tend to remove the doubt. I cannot even imagine the arguments which would prevail upon me to accept the latter and refuse the former. Omission itself shows for a master-hand: see the magnificent passage omitted, and rightly, by Milton from the opening of his *Comus*.

'But when a man has published two forms of a thing, may we not judge between him and himself, and take the reading we like better?' Assuredly. Take either the Quarto or the Folio; both are Shakspeare's. Take any reading from either, and defend it. But do not mix up the two, retaining what he omits along with what he inserts, and print them so. This is what the editors do—and the thing is not Shakspeare's. With homage like this, no artist could be other than indignant. It is well to show every difference, even

to one of spelling where it might indicate possibly a different word, but there ought to be no mingling of differences. If I prefer the reading of the Quarto to that of the Folio, as may sometimes well happen where blunders so abound, I say I *prefer*—I do not dare to substitute. My student shall owe nothing of his text to any but the editors of the Folio, John Heminge and Henrie Condell.

I desire to take him with me. I intend a continuous, but ever-varying, while one-ended lesson. We shall follow the play step by step, avoiding almost nothing that suggests difficulty, and noting everything that seems to throw light on the character of a person of the drama. The pointing I consider a matter to be dealt with as any one pleases—for the sake of sense, of more sense, of better sense, as much as if the text were a Greek manuscript without any division of words. This position I need not argue with anyone who has given but a cursory glance to the original page, or knows anything of printers' pointing. I hold hard by the word, for that is, or may be, grain: the pointing as we have it is merest chaff, and more likely to be wrong than right. Here also, however, I change nothing in the text, only suggest in the notes. Nor do I remark on any of the pointing where all that is required is the attention of the student.

Doubtless many will consider not a few of the notes unnecessary. But what may be unnecessary to one, may be welcome to another, and it is impossible to tell what a student may or may not know. At the same time those form a large class who imagine they know a thing when they do not understand it enough to see there is a difficulty in it: to such, an attempt at explanation must of course seem foolish.

A *number* in the margin refers to a passage of the play or in the notes, and is the number of the page where the passage is to be found. If the student finds, for instance, against a certain line upon page 8, the number 12, and turns to page 12, he will there find the number 8 against a certain line: the two lines or passages are to be compared, and will be found in some way parallel, or mutually explanatory.

Wherever I refer to the Quarto, I intend the 2nd Quarto—that is Shakspeare's own authorized edition, published in his life-time. Where occasionally I refer to the surreptitious edition, the mere inchoation of the drama, I call it, as it is, the *1st Quarto*.

Any word or phrase or stage-direction in the 2nd Quarto differing from that in the Folio, is placed on the margin in a line with the other: choice between them I generally leave to my student. Omissions are mainly given as footnotes. Each edition does something to correct the errors of the other.

I beg my companion on this journey to let Hamlet reveal himself in the play, to observe him as he assumes individuality by the concretion of characteristics. I warn him that any popular notion concerning him which he may bring with him, will be only obstructive to a perception of the true idea of the grandest of all Shakspeare's presentations.

It will amuse this and that man to remark how often I speak of Hamlet as if he were a real man and not the invention of Shakspeare—for indeed the Hamlet of the old story is no more that of Shakspeare than a lump of coal is a diamond; but I imagine, if he tried the thing himself, he would find it hardly possible to avoid so speaking, and at the same time say what he had to say.

I give hearty thanks to the press-reader, a gentleman whose name I do not know, not only for keen watchfulness over the printing-difficulties of the book, but for saving me from several blunders in derivation.

BORDIGHERA: *December*, 1884.

[Transcriber's Note: In the paper original, each left-facing page contained the text of the play, with sidenotes and footnote references, and the corresponding right-facing page contained the footnotes themselves and additional commentary. In this electronic text, the play-text pages are numbered (contrary to custom in electronic texts), to allow use of the cross-references provided in the sidenotes and footnotes. In the play text, sidenotes towards the left of the page are those marginal cross-references described earlier, and sidenotes toward the right of the page are the differences noted a few paragraphs later.]

[Page 1]

THE TRAGEDIE

ACTUS PRIMUS.

Enter Barnardo and Francisco two Centinels[1].

Barnardo. Who's there?

Fran.[2] Nay answer me: Stand and vnfold yourselfe.

Bar. Long liue the King.[3]

Fran. *Barnardo?*

Bar. He.

Fran. You come most carefully vpon your houre.

Bar. 'Tis now strook twelue, get thee to bed *Francisco.*

Fran. For this releefe much thankes: 'Tis [Sidenote: 42] bitter cold, And I am sicke at heart.[4]

Barn. Haue you had quiet Guard?[5]

Fran. Not a Mouse stirring.

Barn. Well, goodnight. If you do meet *Horatio* and *Marcellus*, the Riuals[6] of my Watch, bid them make hast.

Enter Horatio and Marcellus.

Fran. I thinke I heare them. Stand: who's there? [Sidenote: Stand ho, who is there?]

Hor. Friends to this ground.

Mar. And Leige-men to the Dane.

Fran. Giue you good night.

Mar. O farwel honest Soldier, who hath [Sidenote: souldiers] relieu'd you?

[Footnote 1: —meeting. Almost dark.]

[Footnote 2: —on the post, and with the right of challenge.]

[Footnote 3: The watchword.]

[Footnote 4: The key-note to the play—as in *Macbeth*: 'Fair is foul and foul is fair.' The whole nation is troubled by late events at court.]

[Footnote 5: —thinking of the apparition.]

[Footnote 6: *Companions.*]

Fra. *Barnardo* ha's my place: giue you good-night. [Sidenote: hath] *Exit Fran.*

Mar. Holla *Barnardo.*

Bar. Say, what is *Horatio* there?

Hor. A peece of him.

Bar. Welcome *Horatio*, welcome good *Marcellus*.

Mar. What, ha's this thing appear'd againe to [Sidenote: *Hor.*[1]] night.

Bar. I haue seene nothing.

Mar. Horatio saies, 'tis but our Fantasie,
And will not let beleefe take hold of him
Touching this dreaded sight, twice seene of vs,
Therefore I haue intreated him along
With vs, to watch the minutes of this Night,
That if againe this Apparition come,
[Sidenote: 6] He may approue our eyes, and speake to it.[2]

Hor. Tush, tush, 'twill not appeare.

Bar. Sit downe a-while,
And let vs once againe assaile your eares,
That are so fortified against our Story,
What we two Nights haue seene. [Sidenote: have two nights seen]

Hor. Well, sit we downe, And let vs heare *Barnardo* speake of this.

Barn. Last night of all,
When yond same Starre that's Westward from the Pole
Had made his course t'illuminate that part of Heauen
Where now it burnes, *Marcellus* and my selfe,
The Bell then beating one.[3]

Mar. Peace, breake thee of: *Enter the Ghost*. [Sidenote: Enter Ghost] Looke where it comes againe.

Barn. In the same figure, like the King that's dead.

[Footnote 1: Better, I think; for the tone is scoffing, and Horatio is the incredulous one who has not seen it.]

[Footnote 2: —being a scholar, and able to address it as an apparition ought to be addressed—*Marcellus* thinking, perhaps, with others, that a ghost required Latin.]

[Footnote 3: *1st Q.* 'towl'ing one.]

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[Sidenote: 4] *Mar.* Thou art a Scholler; speake to it *Horatio*.

Barn. Lookes it not like the King? Marke it *Horatio*.

[Sidenote: Looks a not]

Hora. Most like: It harrowes me with fear and wonder.

[Sidenote: horrowes[1]]

Barn. It would be spoke too.[2]

Mar. Question it *Horatio*. [Sidenote: Speak to it *Horatio*]

Hor. What art thou that vsurp'st this time of night,[3]
Together with that Faire and Warlike forme[4]
In which the Maiesty of buried Denmarke
Did sometimes[5] march: By Heauen I charge thee speake.

Mar. It is offended.[6]

Barn. See, it stalkes away.

Hor. Stay: speake; speake: I Charge thee, speake. *Exit the Ghost*. [Sidenote: *Exit Ghost*.]

Mar. 'Tis gone, and will not answer.

Barn. How now *Horatio*? You tremble and look pale: Is not this something more then Fantasie? What thinke you on't?

Hor. Before my God, I might not this beleefe Without the sensible and true auouch Of mine owne

eyes.

Mar. Is it not like the King?

Hor. As thou art to thy selfe,
Such was the very Armour he had on,
When th' Ambitious Norway combatted: [Sidenote: when he the ambitious]
So frown'd he once, when in an angry parle
He smot the sledded Pollax on the Ice.[8] [Sidenote: sleaded[7]]
'Tis strange.

[Sidenote: 274] *Mar.* Thus twice before, and iust at this dead houre,
[Sidenote: and jump at this]

[Footnote 1: *1st Q.* 'horrors mee'.]

[Footnote 2: A ghost could not speak, it was believed, until it was spoken to.]

[Footnote 3: It was intruding upon the realm of the embodied.]

[Footnote 4: None of them took it as certainly the late king: it was only clear to them that it was like him. Hence they say, 'usurp'st the forme.']

[Footnote 5: *formerly.*]

[Footnote 6: —at the word *usurp'st.*]

[Footnote 7: Also *1st Q.*]

[Footnote 8: The usual interpretation is 'the sledged Poles'; but not to mention that in a parley such action would have been treacherous, there is another far more picturesque, and more befitting the *angry parle*, at the same time more characteristic and forcible: the king in his anger smote his loaded pole-axe on the ice. There is some uncertainty about the word *sledded* or *sleaded* (which latter suggests *lead*), but we have the word *sledge* and *sledge-hammer*, the smith's heaviest, and the phrase, 'a sledging blow.' The quarrel on the occasion referred to rather seems with the Norwegians (See Schmidt's *Shakespeare-Lexicon: Sledded.*) than with the Poles; and there would be no doubt as to the latter interpretation being the right one, were it not that *the Polacke*, for the Pole, or nation of the Poles, does occur in the play. That is, however, no reason why the Dane should not have carried a pole-axe, or caught one from the hand of an attendant. In both our authorities, and in the *1st Q.* also, the word is *pollax*—as in Chaucer's *Knights Tale*: 'No maner schot, ne pollax, ne schort knyf,'—in the *Folio* alone with a capital; whereas not once in the play is the similar word that stands for the Poles used in the plural. In the *2nd Quarto* there is *Pollacke* three times, *Pollack* once, *Pole* once; in the *1st Quarto*, *Polacke* twice; in the *Folio*, *Poleak* twice, *Polake* once. The Poet seems to have avoided the plural form.]

[Page 8]

With Martiall stalke,[1] hath he gone by our Watch.

Hor. In what particular thought to work, I know not: But in the grosse and scope of my Opinion,
[Sidenote: mine] This boades some strange erruption to our State.

Mar. Good now sit downe, and tell me he that knowes
[Sidenote: 16] Why this same strict and most obseruant Watch,[2]
So nightly toyles the subiect of the Land,
And why such dayly Cast of Brazon Cannon
[Sidenote: And with such dayly cost]
And Forraigne Mart for Implements of warre:
Why such impresse of Ship-wrights, whose sore Taske
Do's not diuide the Sunday from the weeke,
What might be toward, that this sweaty hast[3]
Doth make the Night ioynt-Labourer with the day:
Who is't that can informe me?

Hor. That can I,
At least the whisper goes so: Our last King,
Whose Image euen but now appear'd to vs,
Was (as you know) by *Fortinbras* of Norway,
(Thereto prick'd on by a most emulate Pride)[4]
Dar'd to the Combate. In which, our Valiant *Hamlet*,

(For so this side of our knowne world esteem'd him)[5]
[Sidenote: 6] Did slay this *Fortinbras*: who by a Seal'd Compact,
Well ratified by Law, and Heraldrie, [Sidenote: heraldy]
Did forfeite (with his life) all those his Lands [Sidenote: these]
Which he stood seiz'd on,[6] to the Conqueror: [Sidenote: seiz'd of,]
Against the which, a Moity[7] competent
Was gaged by our King: which had return'd [Sidenote: had returne]
To the Inheritance of *Fortinbras*,

[Footnote 1: *1st Q.* 'Marshall stalke'.]

[Footnote 2: Here is set up a frame of external relations, to inclose with fitting contrast, harmony, and suggestion, the coming show of things. 273]

[Footnote 3: *1st Q.* 'sweaty march'.]

[Footnote 4: Pride that leads to emulate: the ambition to excel—not oneself, but another.]

[Footnote 5: The whole western hemisphere.]

[Footnote 6: *stood possessed of.*]

[Footnote 7: Used by Shakspeare for *a part.*]

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Had he bin Vanquisher, as by the same Cou'nant
 [Sidenote: the same comart]
And carriage of the Article designe,[1] [Sidenote: desseigne,]
His fell to *Hamlet*. Now sir, young *Fortinbras*,
Of vnimproued[2] Mettle, hot and full,
Hath in the skirts of Norway, heere and there,
Shark'd[3] vp a List of Landlesse Resolutes, [Sidenote: of lawlesse]
For Foode and Diet, to some Enterprize
That hath a stomacke in't[4]: which is no other
(And it doth well appeare vnto our State) [Sidenote: As it]
But to recouer of vs by strong hand
And termes Compulsatiue, those foresaid Lands [Sidenote: compulsatory,]
So by his Father lost: and this (I take it)
Is the maine Motiue of our Preparations,
The Source of this our Watch, and the cheefe head
Of this post-hast, and Romage[5] in the Land.

[A]*Enter Ghost againe.*

But soft, behold: Loe, where it comes againe:

[Footnote A: *Here in the Quarto*:—

Bar. I thinke it be no other, but enso;
Well may it sort[6] that this portentous figure
Comes armed through our watch so like the King
That was and is the question of these warres.

Hora. A moth it is to trouble the mindes eye:
In the most high and palmy state of Rome,
A little ere the mightiest *Iulius* fell
The graues stood tennatlesse, and the sheeted dead
Did squeake and gibber in the Roman streets[7]
As starres with traines of fier, and dewes of blood
Disasters in the sunne; and the moist starre,
Vpon whose influence *Neptunes* Empier stands
Was sicke almost to doomesday with eclipse.
And euen the like precurse of feare euent
As harbindgers preceeding still the fates
And prologue to the *Omen* comming on
Haue heauen and earth together demonstrated
Vnto our Climatures and countrymen.[8]

Enter Ghost.]

[Footnote 1: French désigné.]

[Footnote 2: *not proved* or *tried*. *Improvement*, as we use the word, is the result of proof or trial: *upon-proof-ment*.]

[Footnote 3: Is *shark'd* related to the German *scharren*? *Zusammen scharren—to scrape together*. The Anglo-Saxon *searwian* is *to prepare, entrap, take*.]

[Footnote 4: Some enterprise of acquisition; one for the sake of getting something.]

[Footnote 5: In Scotch, *remish*—the noise of confused and varied movements; a *row*; a *rampage*.—Associated with French *remuage*?]

[Footnote 6: *suit*: so used in Scotland still, I think.]

[Footnote 7: *Julius Caesar*, act i. sc. 3, and act ii. sc. 2.]

[Footnote 8: The only suggestion I dare make for the rectifying of the confusion of this speech is, that, if the eleventh line were inserted between the fifth and sixth, there would be sense, and very nearly grammar.

and the sheeted dead

Did squeake and gibber in the Roman streets,

As harbingers preceeding still the fates;

As starres with traines of fier, and dewes of blood

(Here understand *precede*)

Disasters in the sunne;

The tenth will close with the twelfth line well enough.

But no one, any more than myself, will be *satisfied* with the suggestion. The probability is, of course, that a line has dropped out between the fifth and sixth. Anything like this would restore the connection:

The labouring heavens themselves teemed dire portent As starres &c.]

[Page 12]

Ile crosse it, though it blast me.[1] Stay Illusion:[2]

[Sidenote: *It[4] spreads his armes.*]

If thou hast any sound, or vse of Voyce,[3]

Speake to me. If there be any good thing to be done,

That may to thee do ease, and grace to me; speake to me.

If thou art priuy to thy Countries Fate

(Which happily foreknowing may auoyd) Oh speake.

Or, if thou hast vp-hoarded in thy life

Extorted Treasure in the wombe of Earth,

(For which, they say, you Spirits oft walke in death) [Sidenote: your]

[Sidenote: *The cocke crows*]

Speake of it. Stay, and speake. Stop it *Marcellus*.

Mar. Shall I strike at it with my Partizan? [Sidenote: strike it with]

Hor. Do, if it will not stand.

Barn. 'Tis heere.

Hor. 'Tis heere.

Mar. 'Tis gone. *Exit Ghost*[5]

We do it wrong, being so Maiesticall[6]

To offer it the shew of Violence,

For it is as the Ayre, invulnerable,

And our vaine blowes, malicious Mockery.

Barn. It was about to speake, when the Cocke crew.

Hor. And then it started, like a guilty thing
Vpon a fearfull Summons. I haue heard,

The Cocke that is the Trumpet to the day, [Sidenote: to the morne,]
Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding Throate[7]
Awake the God of Day: and at his warning,
Whether in Sea, or Fire, in Earth, or Ayre,
Th'extrauagant,[8] and erring[9] Spirit, hyes
To his Confine. And of the truth heerein,
This present Obiect made probation.[10]

Mar. It faded on the crowing of the Cocke.[11]

[Footnote 1: There are various tales of the blasting power of evil ghosts.]

[Footnote 2: Plain doubt, and strong.]

[Footnote 3: 'sound of voice, or use of voice': physical or mental faculty of speech.]

[Footnote 4: I judge this *It* a mistake for *H.*, standing for *Horatio*: he would stop it.]

[Footnote 5: *Not in Q.*]

[Footnote 6: 'As we cannot hurt it, our blows are a mockery; and it is wrong to mock anything so majestic': *For* belongs to *shew*; 'We do it wrong, being so majestic, to offer it what is but a *show* of violence, for it is, &c.']

[Footnote 7: *1st Q.* 'his earely and shrill crowing throate.']

[Footnote 8: straying beyond bounds.]

[Footnote 9: wandering.]

[Footnote 10: 'gave proof.']

[Footnote 11: This line said thoughtfully—as the text of the observation following it. From the *eerie* discomfort of their position, Marcellus takes refuge in the thought of the Saviour's birth into the haunted world, bringing sweet law, restraint, and health.]

[Page 14]

Some sayes, that euer 'gainst that Season comes [Sidenote: say]
Wherein our Sauious Birth is celebrated,
The Bird of Dawning singeth all night long: [Sidenote: This bird]
And then (they say) no Spirit can walke abroad,
 [Sidenote: spirit dare sturre]
The nights are wholsome, then no Planets strike,
No Faiery talkes, nor Witch hath power to Charme:
 [Sidenote: fairy takes,[1]]
So hallow'd, and so gracious is the time. [Sidenote: is that time.]

Hor. So haue I heard, and do in part beleuee it.
But looke, the Morne in Russet mantle clad,
Walkes o're the dew of yon high Easterne Hill, [Sidenote: Eastward[2]]
Breake we our Watch vp, and by my aduice [Sidenote: advise]
Let vs impart what we haue scene to night
Vnto yong *Hamlet*. For vpon my life,
This Spirit dumbe to vs, will speake to him:
Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,
As needfull in our Loues, fitting our Duty?

[Sidenote: 30] *Mar.* Let do't I pray, and I this morning know Where we shall finde him most
conueniently. [Sidenote: convenient.] *Exeunt.*

SCENA SECUNDA[3]

*Enter Claudius King of Denmarke. Gertrude the
Queene, Hamlet, Polonius, Laertes, and his Sister
Ophelia, Lords Attendant.*[4]

[Sidenote: *Florish.* *Enter Claudius, King of Denmarke,
Gertrad the Queene, Counsaile: as Polonius, and his*

King. Though yet of *Hamlet* our deere Brothers death

[Sidenote: *Claud.*]

The memory be greene: and that it vs befitted
To beare our hearts in greefe, and our whole Kingdome
To be contracted in one brow of woe:
Yet so farre hath Discretion fought with Nature,
That we with wisest sorrow thinke on him,

[Footnote 1: Does it mean—*carries off any child, leaving a changeling?* or does it mean—*affect with evil*, as a disease might infect or *take?*]

[Footnote 2: *1st Q.* 'hie mountaine top,']

[Footnote 3: *In neither Q.*]

[Footnote 4: The first court after the marriage.]

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Together with remembrance of our selues.

Therefore our sometimes Sister, now our Queen,
Th'Imperiall Ioyntresse of this warlike State, [Sidenote: to this]
Haue we, as 'twere, with a defeated ioy,
With one Auspicious, and one Dropping eye,

[Sidenote: an auspicious and a]

With mirth in Funerall, and with Dirge in Marriage,
In equall Scale weighing Delight and Dole[1]
Taken to Wife; nor haue we heerein barr'd[2]
Your better Wisedomes, which haue freely gone
With this affaire along, for all our Thankes.

[Sidenote: 8] Now followes, that you know young *Fortinbras*,[3]

Holding a weake supposall of our worth;
Or thinking by our late deere Brothers death,
Our State to be disioynt, and out of Frame,
Colleagued with the dreame of his Aduantage;[4] [Sidenote: this dreame]
He hath not fayl'd to pester vs with Message,
Importing the surrender of those Lands
Lost by his Father: with all Bonds of Law [Sidenote: bands]
To our most valiant Brother. So much for him.

Enter Voltemand and Cornelius.[5]

Now for our selfe, and for this time of meeting
Thus much the businesse is. We haue heere writ
To Norway, Vncle of young *Fortinbras*,
Who Impotent and Bedrid, scarsely heares
Of this his Nephewes purpose, to suppress
His further gate[6] heerein. In that the Leuies,
The Lists, and full proportions are all made
Out of his subiect: and we heere dispatch
You good *Cornelius*, and you *Voltemand*,
For bearing of this greeting to old Norway, [Sidenote: bearers]
Giuing to you no further personall power
To businesse with the King, more then the scope
Of these dilated Articles allow:[7] [Sidenote: delated[8]]
Farewell and let your hast commend your duty.[9]

[Footnote 1: weighing out an equal quantity of each.]

[Footnote 2: Like *crossed*.]

[Footnote 3: 'Now follows—that (*which*) you know—young *Fortinbras*:—']

[Footnote 4: *Colleagued* agrees with *supposall*. The preceding two lines may be regarded as somewhat parenthetical. *Dream of advantage*—hope of gain.]

[Footnote 5: *Not in Q.*]

[Footnote 6: *going; advance.* Note in Norway also, as well as in Denmark, the succession of the brother.]

[Footnote 7: (*giving them papers*).]

[Footnote 8: Which of these is right, I cannot tell. *Dilated* means *expanded*, and would refer to _the scope; *delated* means *committed*—to them, to limit them.]

[Footnote 9: idea of duty.]

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Volt. In that, and all things, will we shew our duty.

King. We doubt it nothing, heartily farewell.

[Sidenote: 74] [1]*Exit Voltemand and Cornelius.*

And now *Laertes*, what's the newes with you?
You told vs of some suite. What is't *Laertes*?
You cannot speake of Reason to the Dane,
And loose your voyce. What would'st thou beg *Laertes*,
That shall not be my Offer, not thy Asking?[2]
The Head is not more Natiue to the Heart,
The Hand more Instrumentall to the Mouth,
Then is the Throne of Denmarke to thy Father.[3]
What would'st thou haue *Laertes*?

Laer. Dread my Lord, [Sidenote: My dread]
Your leaue and fauour to returne to France,
From whence, though willingly I came to Denmarke
To shew my duty in your Coronation,
Yet now I must confesse, that duty done,
[Sidenote: 22] My thoughts and wishes bend againe towards toward
France,[4]
And bow them to your gracious leaue and pardon.

King. Haue you your Fathers leaue? What sayes *Pollonius*?

[A] *Pol.* He hath my Lord:
I do beseech you giue him leaue to go.

King. Take thy faire houre *Laertes*, time be thine, And thy best graces spend it at thy will: But now my Cosin *Hamlet*, and my Sonne?

[Footnote A: *In the Quarto*:—

Polo. Hath[5] my Lord wrong from me my slowe leaue
By laboursome petition, and at last
Vpon his will I seald my hard consent,[6]
I doe beseech you giue him leaue to goe.]

[Footnote 1: *Not in Q.*]

[Footnote 2: 'Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.'—*Isaiah*, lxv. 24.]

[Footnote 3: The villain king courts his courtiers.]

[Footnote 4: He had been educated there. Compare 23. But it would seem rather to the court than the university he desired to return. See his father's instructions, 38.]

[Footnote 5: *H'ath*—a contraction for *He hath*.]

[Footnote 6: A play upon the act of sealing a will with wax.]

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Ham. A little more then kin, and lesse then kinde.[1]

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

Ham. Not so my Lord, I am too much i'th'Sun.[2]
[Sidenote: so much my ... in the sonne.]

Queen. Good Hamlet cast thy nightly colour off,[4]
[Sidenote: nighted[3]]

And let thine eye looke like a Friend on Denmarke.
Do not for euer with thy veyled[5] lids [Sidenote: vailed]
Seeke for thy Noble Father in the dust;
Thou know'st 'tis common, all that liues must dye,
Passing through Nature, to Eternity.

Ham. I Madam, it is common.[6]

Queen. If it be; Why seemes it so particular with thee.

Ham. Seemes Madam? Nay, it is: I know not Seemes:[7]
'Tis not alone my Inky Cloake (good Mother)
[Sidenote: cloake could mother [8]]

Nor Customary suites of solemne Blacke,
Nor windy suspiration of forc'd breath,
No, nor the fruitfull Riuer in the Eye,
Nor the dejected hauiour of the Visage,
Together with all Formes, Moods, shewes of Griefe,
[Sidenote: moodes, chapes of]
That can denote me truly. These indeed Seeme,[9] [Sidenote: deuote]
For they are actions that a man might[10] play:
But I haue that Within, which passeth show; [Sidenote: passes]
These, but the Trappings, and the Suites of woe.

King. 'Tis sweet and commendable
In your Nature *Hamlet*,
To giue these mourning duties to your Father:[11]
But you must know, your Father lost a Father,
That Father lost, lost his, and the Suruiuer bound
In filiall Obligation, for some terme
To do obsequious[12] Sorrow. But to perseuer
In obstinate Condolement, is a course

[Footnote 1: An *aside*. Hamlet's first utterance is of dislike to his uncle. He is more than *kin* through his unwelcome marriage—less than *kind* by the difference in their natures. To be *kind* is to behave as one *kinned* or related. But the word here is the noun, and means *nature*, or sort by birth.]

[Footnote 2: A word-play may be here intended between *sun* and *son*: *a little more than kin—too much i' th' Son*. So George Herbert:

For when he sees my ways, I die;
But I have got his *Son*, and he hath none;

and Dr. Donne:

at my death thy Son Shall shine, as he shines now and
heretofore.]

[Footnote 3: 'Wintred garments'—*As You Like It*, iii. 2.]

[Footnote 4: He is the only one who has not for the wedding put off his mourning.]

[Footnote 5: *lowered*, or cast down: *Fr. avaler*, to lower.]

[Footnote 6: 'Plainly you treat it as a common matter—a thing of no significance!' *I* is constantly used for *ay, yes*.]

[Footnote 7: He pounces on the word *seems*.]

[Footnote 8: Not unfrequently the type would appear to have been set up from dictation.]

[Footnote 9: They are things of the outside, and must *seem*, for they are capable of being imitated;

they are the natural *shows* of grief. But he has that in him which cannot *show* or *seem*, because nothing can represent it. These are 'the Trappings and the Suites of *woe*;' they fitly represent woe, but they cannot shadow forth that which is within him—a something different from woe, far beyond it and worse, passing all reach of embodiment and manifestation. What this something is, comes out the moment he is left by himself.]

[Footnote 10: The emphasis is on *might*.]

[Footnote 11: Both his uncle and his mother decline to understand him. They will have it he mourns the death of his father, though they must at least suspect another cause for his grief. Note the intellectual mastery of the hypocrite—which accounts for his success.]

[Footnote 12: belonging to *obsequies*.]

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Of impious stubbornnesse. Tis vnmanly greefe,
It shewes a will most incorrect to Heauen,
A Heart vnfortified, a Minde impatient, [Sidenote: or minde]
An Vnderstanding simple, and vnschool'd:
For, what we know must be, and is as common
As any the most vulgar thing to sence,
Why should we in our peeish Opposition
Take it to heart? Fye, 'tis a fault to Heauen,
A fault against the Dead, a fault to Nature,
To Reason most absurd, whose common Theame
Is death of Fathers, and who still hath cried,
From the first Coarse,[1] till he that dyed to day, [Sidenote: course]
This must be so. We pray you throw to earth
This vnpreuayling woe, and thinke of vs
As of a Father; For let the world take note,
You are the most immediate to our Throne,[2]
And with no lesse Nobility of Loue,
Then that which deerest Father beares his Sonne,
Do I impart towards you. For your intent [Sidenote: toward]
[Sidenote: 18] In going backe to Schoole in Wittenberg,[3]
It is most retrograde to our desire: [Sidenote: retrogard]
And we beseech you, bend you to remaine
Heere in the cheere and comfort of our eye,
Our cheefest Courtier Cosin, and our Sonne.

Qu. Let not thy Mother lose her Prayers *Hamlet*: [Sidenote: loose] I prythee stay with vs, go not to Wittenberg. [Sidenote: pray thee]

Ham. I shall in all my best Obey you Madam.[4]

King. Why 'tis a louing, and a faire Reply,
Be as our selfe in Denmarke. Madam come,
This gentle and vnforc'd accord of *Hamlet*[5]
Sits smiling to my heart; in grace whereof,
No iocond health that Denmarke drinkes to day,
[Sidenote: 44] But the great Cannon to the Clouds shall tell,

[Footnote 1: *Corpse*.]

[Footnote 2: —seeking to propitiate him with the hope that his succession had been but postponed by his uncle's election.]

[Footnote 3: Note that Hamlet was educated in Germany—at Wittenberg, the university where in 1508 Luther was appointed professor of Philosophy. Compare 19. There was love of study as well as disgust with home in his desire to return to *Schoole*: this from what we know of him afterwards.]

[Footnote 4: Emphasis on *obey*. A light on the character of Hamlet.]

[Footnote 5: He takes it, or pretends to take it, for far more than it was. He desires friendly relations with Hamlet.]

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And the Kings Rouse,[1] the Heauens shall bruite againe, Respeaking earthly Thunder. Come away.
Exeunt [Sidenote: *Florish. Exeunt all but Hamlet.*]

Manet Hamlet.

[2]*Ham.* Oh that this too too solid Flesh, would melt,
[Sidenote: sallied flesh[3]]

Thaw, and resolute it selfe into a Dew:

[Sidenote: 125,247,260] Or that the Euerlasting had not fixt

[Sidenote: 121 *bis*] His Cannon 'gainst Selfe-slaughter. O God, O God!

[Sidenote: seale slaughter, o God, God,]

How weary, stale, flat, and vnprofitable [Sidenote: wary]

Seemes to me all the vses of this world? [Sidenote: seeme]

Fie on't? Oh fie, fie, 'tis an vnweeded Garden [Sidenote: ah fie,]

That growes to Seed: Things rank, and grosse in Nature

Possesse it meereley. That it should come to this:

[Sidenote: meereley that it should come thus]

But two months dead[4]: Nay, not so much; not two,

So excellent a King, that was to this

Hiperion to a Satyre: so louing to my Mother,

That he might not beteene the windes of heauen [Sidenote: beteeme[5]]

Visit her face too roughly. Heauen and Earth

Must I remember: why she would hang on him, [Sidenote: should]

As if encrease of Appetite had growne

By what it fed on; and yet within a month?

Let me not thinke on't: Frailty, thy name is woman.[6]

A little Month, or ere those shooes were old,

With which she followed my poore Fathers body

Like *Niobe*, all teares. Why she, euen she.[7]

(O Heauen! A beast that wants discourse[8] of Reason [Sidenote: O God]

Would haue mourn'd longer) married with mine Vnkle, [Sidenote: my]

[Footnote 1: German *Rausch, drunkenness.* 44, 68]

[Footnote 2: A soliloquy is as the drawing called a section of a thing: it shows the inside of the man. Soliloquy is only rare, not unnatural, and in art serves to reveal more of nature. In the drama it is the lifting of a veil through which dialogue passes. The scene is for the moment shifted into the lonely spiritual world, and here we begin to know Hamlet. Such is his wretchedness, both in mind and circumstance, that he could well wish to vanish from the world. The suggestion of suicide, however, he dismisses at once—with a momentary regret, it is true—but he dismisses it—as against the will of God to whom he appeals in his misery. The cause of his misery is now made plain to us—his trouble that passes show, deprives life of its interest, and renders the world a disgust to him. There is no lamentation over his father's death, so dwelt upon by the king; for loving grief does not crush. Far less could his uncle's sharp practice, in scheming for his own election during Hamlet's absence, have wrought in a philosopher like him such an effect. The one makes him sorrowful, the other might well annoy him, but neither could render him unhappy: his misery lies at his mother's door; it is her conduct that has put out the light of her son's life. She who had been to him the type of all excellence, she whom his father had idolized, has within a month of his death married his uncle, and is living in habitual incest—for as such, a marriage of the kind was then unanimously regarded. To Hamlet's condition and behaviour, his mother, her past and her present, is the only and sufficing key. His very idea of unity had been rent in twain.]

[Footnote 3: *1st Q.* 'too much grieu'd and sallied flesh.' *Sallied*, sullied: compare *sallets*, 67, 103. I have a strong suspicion that *sallied* and not *solid* is the true word. It comes nearer the depth of Hamlet's mood.]

[Footnote 4: Two months at the present moment.]

[Footnote 5: This is the word all the editors take: which is right, I do not know; I doubt if either is. The word in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, act i. sc. 1—

Belike for want of rain; which I could well
Beteem them from the tempest of mine eyes—

I cannot believe the same word. The latter means *produce for*, as from the place of origin. The word, in the sense necessary to this passage, is not, so far as I know, to be found anywhere else. I have no suggestion to make.]

[Footnote 6: From his mother he generalizes to *woman*. After having believed in such a mother, it may well be hard for a man to believe in any woman.]

[Footnote 7: *Q.* omits 'even she.']

[Footnote 8: the going abroad among things.]

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My Fathers Brother: but no more like my Father,
Then I to *Hercules*. Within a Moneth?
Ere yet the salt of most vnrighteous Teares
Had left the flushing of her gauled eyes, [Sidenote: in her]
She married. O most wicked speed, to post[1]
With such dexterity to Incestuous sheets:
It is not, nor it cannot come to good,
But breake my heart, for I must hold my tongue.[2]

Enter Horatio, Barnard, and Marcellus.
[Sidenote: *Marcellus, and Bernardo.*]

Hor. Haile to your Lordship.[3]

Ham. I am glad to see you well: *Horatio*, or I do forget my selfe.

Hor. The same my Lord, And your poore Seruant euer.

[Sidenote: 134] *Ham.* [4]Sir my good friend,
Ile change that name with you:[5]
And what make you from Wittenberg *Horatio*?[6]
Marcellus.[7]

Mar. My good Lord.

Ham. I am very glad to see you: good euen Sir.[8] But what in faith make you from *Wittemberge*?

Hor. A truant disposition, good my Lord.[9]

Ham. I would not haue your Enemy say so;[10] [Sidenote: not heare]
Nor shall you doe mine eare that violence,[11] [Sidenote: my eare]
[Sidenote: 134] To make it truster of your owne report
Against your selfe. I know you are no Truant:
But what is your affaire in *Elsenour*?
Wee'l teach you to drinke deepe, ere you depart.[12]
[Sidenote: you for to drinke ere]

Hor. My Lord, I came to see your Fathers Funerall.

Ham. I pray thee doe not mock me (fellow Student) [Sidenote: pre thee] I thinke it was to see my Mothers Wedding. [Sidenote: was to my]

[Footnote 1: I suggest the pointing:

speed! To post ... sheets!]

[Footnote 2: Fit moment for the entrance of his father's messengers.]

[Footnote 3: They do not seem to have been intimate before, though we know from Hamlet's speech (134) that he had had the greatest respect for Horatio. The small degree of doubt in Hamlet's recognition of his friend is due to the darkness, and the unexpectedness of his appearance.]

[Footnote 4: *1st Q.* 'O my good friend, I change, &c.' This would leave it doubtful whether he wished to exchange servant or friend; but 'Sir, my *good friend*,' correcting Horatio, makes his intent plain.]

[Footnote 5: Emphasis on *that*: 'I will exchange the name of *friend* with you.']

[Footnote 6: 'What are you doing from—out of, *away from*—Wittenberg?']

[Footnote 7: In recognition: the word belongs to Hamlet's speech.]

[Footnote 8: *Point thus*: 'you.—Good even, sir.'—to *Barnardo*, whom he does not know.]

[Footnote 9: An ungrammatical reply. He does not wish to give the real, painful answer, and so replies confusedly, as if he had been asked, 'What makes you?' instead of, 'What do you make?']

[Footnote 10: '—I should know how to answer him.']

[Footnote 11: Emphasis on *you*.]

[Footnote 12: Said with contempt for his surroundings.]

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Hor. Indeed my Lord, it followed hard vpon.

Ham. Thrift, thrift *Horatio*: the Funerall Bakt-meats
Did coldly furnish forth the Marriage Tables;
Would I had met my dearest foe in heauen,[1]
Ere I had euer seerie that day *Horatio*.[2] [Sidenote: Or ever I had]
My father, me thinks I see my father.

Hor. Oh where my Lord? [Sidenote: Where my]

Ham. In my minds eye (*Horatio*)[3]

Hor. I saw him once; he was a goodly King. [Sidenote: once, a was]

Ham. He was a man, take him for all in all: [Sidenote: A was a man] I shall not look vpon his like againe.

Hor. My Lord, I thinke I saw him yesternight.

Ham. Saw? Who?[4]

Hor. My Lord, the King your Father.

Ham. The King my Father?[5]

Hor. Season[6] your admiration for a while
With an attent eare;[7] till I may deliuer
Vpon the witsnesse of these Gentlemen,
This maruell to you.

Ham. For Heauens loue let me heare. [Sidenote: God's love]

Hor. Two nights together, had these Gentlemen
(*Marcellus* and *Barnardo*) on their Watch
In the dead wast and middle of the night[8]
Beene thus encountred. A figure like your Father,[9]
Arm'd at all points exactly, *Cap a Pe*,[10] [Sidenote: Armed at poynt]
Appeares before them, and with sollemne march
Goes slow and stately: By them thrice he walkt,
[Sidenote: stately by them; thrice]
By their opprest and feare-surprized eyes,
Within his Truncheons length; whilst they bestil'd
[Sidenote: they distill'd[11]]
Almost to Ielly with the Act of feare,[12]
Stand dumbe and speake not to him. This to me
In dreadfull[13] secrecie impart they did,
And I with them the third Night kept the Watch,
Whereas[14] they had deliuer'd both in time,

[Footnote 1: *Dear* is not unfrequently used as an intensive; but 'my dearest foe' is not 'the man who hates me most,' but 'the man whom most I regard as my foe.']

[Footnote 2: Note Hamlet's trouble: the marriage, not the death, nor the supplantation.]

[Footnote 3: —with a little surprise at Horatio's question.]

[Footnote 4: Said as if he must have misheard. Astonishment comes only with the next speech.]

[Footnote 5: *1st Q.* 'Ha, ha, the King my father ke you.']

[Footnote 6: Qualify.]

[Footnote 7: *1st Q.* 'an attentive eare,']

[Footnote 8: Possibly, *dead vast*, as in *1st Q.*; but *waste* as good, leaving also room to suppose a play in the word.]

[Footnote 9: Note the careful uncertainty.]

[Footnote 10: *1st Q.* 'Capapea.']

[Footnote 11: Either word would do: the *distilling* off of the animal spirits would leave the man a jelly; the cold of fear would *bestil* them and him to a jelly. *1st Q.* *distilled*. But I judge *bestil'd* the better, as the truer to the operation of fear. Compare *The Winter's Tale*, act v. sc. 3:—

There's magic in thy majesty, which has

From thy admiring daughter took the spirits,
Standing like stone with thee.]

[Footnote 12: Act: present influence.]

[Footnote 13: a secrecy more than solemn.]

[Footnote 14: 'Where, as'.]

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Forme of the thing; each word made true and good,
The Apparition comes. I knew your Father:
These hands are not more like.

Ham. But where was this?

Mar. My Lord, vpon the platforme where we watcht. [Sidenote: watch]

Ham. Did you not speake to it?

Her. My Lord, I did;
But answer made it none: yet once me thought
It lifted vp it head, and did addresse
It selfe to motion, like as it would speake:
But euen then, the Morning Cocke crew lowd;
And at the sound it shrunke in hast away,
And vanisht from our sight.

Ham. Tis very strange.

Hor. As I doe liue my honourd Lord 'tis true; [Sidenote: 14] And we did thinke it writ downe in our duty To let you know of it.

[Sidenote: 32,52] *Ham.* Indeed, indeed Sirs; but this troubles me.

[Sidenote: Indeede Sirs but]

Hold you the watch to Night?

Both. We doe my Lord. [Sidenote: *All.*]

Ham. Arm'd, say you?

Both. Arm'd, my Lord. [Sidenote: *All.*]

Ham. From top to toe?

Both. My Lord, from head to foote. [Sidenote: *All.*]

Ham. Then saw you not his face?

Hor. O yes, my Lord, he wore his Beauer vp.

Ham. What, lookt he frowningly?

[Sidenote: 54,174] *Hor.* A countenance more in sorrow then in anger.[1]

[Sidenote: 120] *Ham.* Pale, or red?

Hor. Nay very pale.

[Footnote 1: The mood of the Ghost thus represented, remains the same towards his wife throughout the play.]

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Ham. And fixt his eyes vpon you?

Hor. Most constantly.

Ham. I would I had beene there.

Hor. It would haue much amaz'd you.

Ham. Very like, very like: staid it long? [Sidenote: Very like, stayd]

Hor. While one with moderate hast might tell a hundred. [Sidenote: hundreth]

All. Longer, longer. [Sidenote: *Both.*]

Hor. Not when I saw't.

Ham. His Beard was grisly?[1] no. [Sidenote: grissl'd]

Hor. It was, as I haue seene it in his life, [Sidenote: 138] A Sable[2] Siluer'd.

Ham. Ile watch to Night; perchance 'twill wake againe.
[Sidenote: walke againe.]

Hor. I warrant you it will. [Sidenote: warn't it]

[Sidenote: 44] *Ham.* If it assume my noble Fathers person,[3]
Ile speake to it, though Hell it selfe should gape
And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,
If you haue hitherto conceald this sight;
Let it bee treble[5] in your silence still: [Sidenote: be tenable in[4]]
And whatsoever els shall hap to night, [Sidenote: what someuer els]
Giue it an vnderstanding but no tongue;
I will requite your loues; so, fare ye well: [Sidenote: farre you]
Vpon the Platforme twixt eleuen and twelue,
[Sidenote: a leauen and twelfe]
Ile visit you.

All. Our duty to your Honour. *Exeunt.*

Ham. Your loue, as mine to you: farewell. [Sidenote: loves,] My Fathers Spirit in Armes?[6] All is not well: [Sidenote: 30,52] I doubt some foule play: would the Night were come; Till then sit still my soule; foule deeds will rise, [Sidenote: fonde deedes] Though all the earth orewhelm them to mens eies. *Exit.*

[Footnote 1: *grisly*—gray; *grissl'd*—turned gray;—mixed with white.]

[Footnote 2: The colour of sable-fur, I think.]

[Footnote 3: Hamlet does not *accept* the Appearance as his father; he thinks it may be he, but seems to take a usurpation of his form for very possible.]

[Footnote 4: *1st Q.* 'tenible']

[Footnote 5: If *treble* be the right word, the actor in uttering it must point to each of the three, with distinct yet rapid motion. The phrase would be a strange one, but not unlike Shakspeare. Compare *Cymbeline*, act v. sc. 5: 'And your three motives to the battle,' meaning 'the motives of you three.' Perhaps, however, it is only the adjective for the adverb: '*having concealed it hitherto, conceal it trebly now.*' But *tenible* may be the word: 'let it be a thing to be kept in your silence still.')

[Footnote 6: Alone, he does not dispute *the idea* of its being his father.]

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SCENA TERTIA[1]

Enter Laertes and Ophelia. [Sidenote: *Ophelia his Sister.*]

Laer. My necessaries are imbarck't; Farewell: [Sidenote: imbarckt,]
And Sister, as the Winds giue Benefit,
And Conuoy is assistant: doe not sleepe,
[Sidenote: conuay, in assistant doe]
But let me heare from you.

Ophel. Doe you doubt that?

Laer. For *Hamlet*, and the trifling of his fauours,
[Sidenote: favour,]
Hold it a fashion and a toy in Bloud;
A Violet in the youth of Primy Nature;
Froward,[2] not permanent; sweet not lasting
The suppliance of a minute? No more.[3]
[Sidenote: The perfume and suppliance]

Ophel. No more but so.[4]

Laer. Thinke it no more.
For nature cressant does not grow alone,
[Sidenote: 172] In thewes[5] and Bulke: but as his Temple waxes,[6]
[Sidenote: bulkes, but as this]
The inward seruice of the Minde and Soule
Growes wide withall. Perhaps he loues you now,[7]
And now no soyle nor cautell[8] doth besmerch
The vertue of his feare: but you must feare
[Sidenote: of his will, but]
His greatnesse weigh'd, his will is not his owne;[9] [Sidenote: wayd]
For hee himselve is subiect to his Birth:[10]
Hee may not, as vnuallued persons doe,
Carue for himselve; for, on his choyce depends
The sanctity and health of the weole State.
[Sidenote: The safty and | this whole]
And therefore must his choyce be circumscrib'd[11]
Vnto the voyce and yeelding[12] of that Body,
Whereof he is the Head. Then if he sayes he loues you,
It fits your wisdome so farre to beleuee it;
As he in his peculiar Sect and force[13]
[Sidenote: his particuler act and place]
May giue his saying deed: which is no further,

[Footnote 1: *Not in Quarto.*]

[Footnote 2: Same as *forward.*]

[Footnote 3: 'No more' makes a new line in the *Quarto.*]

[Footnote 4: I think this speech should end with a point of interrogation.]

[Footnote 5: muscles.]

[Footnote 6: The body is the temple, in which the mind and soul are the worshippers: their service grows with the temple—wide, changing and increasing its objects. The degraded use of the grand image is after the character of him who makes it.]

[Footnote 7: The studied contrast between Laertes and Hamlet begins already to appear: the dishonest man, honestly judging after his own dishonesty, warns his sister against the honest man.]

[Footnote 8: deceit.]

[Footnote 9: 'You have cause to fear when you consider his greatness: his will &c.' 'You must fear, his greatness being weighed; for because of that greatness, his will is not his own.']

[Footnote 10: *This line not in Quarto.*]

[Footnote 11: limited.]

[Footnote 12: allowance.]

[Footnote 13: This change from the *Quarto* seems to me to bear the mark of Shakspeare's hand. The meaning is the same, but the words are more individual and choice: the *sect*, the *head* in relation to the body, is more pregnant than *place*; and *force*, that is *power*, is a fuller word than *act*, or even *action*, for which it plainly appears to stand.]

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Then the maine voyce of *Denmarke* goes withall.
Then weigh what losse your Honour may sustaine,
If with too credent eare you list his Songs;
Or lose your Heart; or your chast Treasure open [Sidenote: Or loose]
To his vnmastred[1] importunity.
Feare it *Ophelia*, feare it my deare Sister,
And keepe within the reare of your Affection;[2]
 [Sidenote: keepe you in the]
Out of the shot and danger of Desire.
The chariest Maid is Prodigall enough, [Sidenote: The]
If she vnmaske her beauty to the Moone:[3]
Vertue it selfe scapes not calumnious stroakes, [Sidenote: Vertue]
The Canker Galls, the Infants of the Spring
 [Sidenote: The canker gaules the]
Too oft before the buttons[6] be disclos'd, [Sidenote: their buttons]
And in the Morne and liquid dew of Youth,
Contagious blastments are most imminent.
Be wary then, best safety lies in feare;
Youth to it selfe rebels, though none else neere.[6]

Ophe. I shall th'effect of this good Lesson keepe,
As watchmen to my heart: but good my Brother [Sidenote: watchman]
Doe not as some vngracious Pastors doe,
Shew me the steepe and thorny way to Heauen;
Whilst like a puft and recklesse Libertine
Himselfe, the Primrose path of dalliance treads,
And reaks not his owne reade.[7][8][9]

Laer. Oh, feare me not.[10]

Enter Polonius.

I stay too long; but here my Father comes:
A double blessing is a double grace;
Occasion smiles vpon a second leaue.[11]

Polon. Yet heere *Laertes*? Aboord, aboard for shame,
The winde sits in the shoulder of your saile,
And you are staid for there: my blessing with you;
 [Sidenote: for, there my | with thee]

[Footnote 1: Without a master; lawless.]

[Footnote 2: Do not go so far as inclination would lead you. Keep behind your liking. Do not go to the front with your impulse.]

[Footnote 3: —but to the moon—which can show it so little.]

[Footnote 4: Opened but not closed quotations in the *Quarto*.]

[Footnote 5: The French *bouton* is also both *button* and *bud*.]

[Footnote 6: 'Inclination is enough to have to deal with, let alone added temptation.' Like his father, Laertes is wise for another—a man of maxims, not behaviour. His morality is in his intellect and for self-ends, not in his will, and for the sake of truth and righteousness.]

[Footnote 7: *1st Q.*

Polon. The time inuites you, goe, your seruants tend.

[Sidenote: time inuests]

Laer. Farewell *Ophelia*, and remember well What I haue said to you.[14]

Ophe. Tis in my memory lockt, And you your selfe shall keepe the key of it,

Laer. Farewell. *Exit Laer.*

Polon. What ist *Ophelia* he hath said to you?

[Footnote 1: He hurries him to go, yet immediately begins to prose.]

[Footnote 2: Engrave.]

[Footnote 3: Not settled into its true shape (?) or, out of proportion with its occasions (?)—I cannot say which.]

[Footnote 4: 'Cultivate close relations, but do not lie open to common access.' 'Have choice intimacies, but do not be *hail, fellow! well met* with everybody.' What follows is an expansion of the lesson.]

[Footnote 5: 'The friends thou hast—and the choice of them justified by trial—'*equal to*: 'provided their choice be justified &c.']

[Footnote 6: 'Do not make the palm hard, and dull its touch of discrimination, by shaking hands in welcome with every one that turns up.']

[Footnote 7: judgment, opinion.]

[Footnote 8: *Generosus*, of good breed, a gentleman.]

[Footnote 9: *1st Q.* 'generall chiefe.']

[Footnote 10: No doubt the omission of *of a* gives the right number of syllables to the verse, and makes room for the interpretation which a dash between *generous* and *chief* renders clearer: 'Are most select and generous—chief in that,'—'are most choice and well-bred—chief, indeed—at the head or top, in the matter of dress.' But without *necessity* or *authority*—one of the two, I would not throw away a word; and suggest therefore that Shakspeare had here the French idiom *de son chef* in his mind, and qualifies the noun in it with adjectives of his own. The Academy Dictionary gives *de son propre mouvement* as one interpretation of the phrase. The meaning would be, 'they are of a most choice and developed instinct in dress.' *Cheff* or *chief* suggests the upper third of the heraldic shield, but I cannot persuade the suggestion to further development. The hypercatalectic syllables *of a*, swiftly spoken, matter little to the verse, especially as it is *dramatic*.]

[Footnote 11: Those that borrow, having to pay, lose heart for saving.

'There's husbandry in heaven;
Their candles are all out.'—*Macbeth*, ii. 1.]

[Footnote 12: Certainly a man cannot be true to himself without being true to others; neither can he be true to others without being true to himself; but if a man make himself the centre for the birth of action, it will follow, '*as the night the day*,' that he will be true neither to himself nor to any other man. In this regard note the history of *Laertes*, developed in the play.]

[Footnote 13: —as salt, to make the counsel keep.]

[Footnote 14: See *note 9, page 37*.]

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Ophe. So please you, somthing touching the L. *Hamlet*.

Polon. Marry, well bethought:

Tis told me he hath very oft of late
Giuen priuate time to you; and you your selfe
Haue of your audience beene most free and bounteous.[1]
If it be so, as so tis put on me;[2]
And that in way of caution: I must tell you,
You doe not vnderstand your selfe so cleerely,

As it behoues my Daughter, and your Honour
What is betweene you, giue me vp the truth?

Ophe. He hath my Lord of late, made many tenders Of his affection to me.

Polon. Affection, puh. You speake like a greene Girle, Vnsifted in such perillous Circumstance. Doe you beleue his tenders, as you call them?

Ophe. I do not know, my Lord, what I should thinke.

Polon. Marry Ile teach you; thinke your self a Baby,
[Sidenote: I will]

That you haue tane his tenders for true pay, [Sidenote: tane these]
Which are not starling. Tender your selfe more dearly;

[Sidenote: sterling]

Or not to crack the winde of the poore Phrase,

[Sidenote: (not ... &c.)]

Roaming it[3] thus, you'l tender me a foole.[4]

[Sidenote: Wrong it thus]

Ophe. My Lord, he hath importun'd me with loue, In honourable fashion.

Polon. I, fashion you may call it, go too, go too.

Ophe. And hath giuen countenance to his speech, My Lord, with all the vowes of Heauen. [Sidenote: with almost all the holy vowes of]

[Footnote 1: There had then been a good deal of intercourse between Hamlet and Ophelia: she had heartily encouraged him.]

[Footnote 2: 'as so I am informed, and that by way of caution,']

[Footnote 3: —making it, 'the poor phrase' *tenders*, gallop wildly about—as one might *roam* a horse; *larking it*.]

[Footnote 4: 'you will in your own person present me a fool.']

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Polon. I, Springes to catch Woodcocks.[1] I doe know
[Sidenote: springs]

When the Bloud burnes, how Prodigall the Soule[2]
Giues the tongue vowes: these blazes, Daughter, [Sidenote: Lends the]
Giuing more light then heate; extinct in both,[3]

Euen in their promise, as it is a making;

You must not take for fire. For this time Daughter,[4]

[Sidenote: fire, from this]

Be somewhat scanter of your Maiden presence; [Sidenote: something]

Set your entreatments[5] at a higher rate,

Then a command to parley. For Lord *Hamlet*, [Sidenote: parle;]

Beleue so much in him, that he is young,

And with a larger tether may he walke, [Sidenote: tider]

Then may be giuen you. In few,[6] *Ophelia*,

Doe not beleue his vowes; for they are Broakers,

Not of the eye,[7] which their Inuestments show:

[Sidenote: of that die]

But meere implorators of vnholly Sutes, [Sidenote: implorators]

Breathing like sanctified and pious bonds,

The better to beguile. This is for all:[8] [Sidenote: beguide]

I would not, in plaine tearmes, from this time forth,

Haue you so slander any moment leisure,[9]

[Sidenote: 70, 82] As to giue words or talke with the Lord *Hamlet*: [10]

Looke too't, I charge you; come your wayes.

Ophe. I shall obey my Lord.[11] *Exeunt.*

Enter Hamlet, Horatio, Marcellus. [Sidenote: and Marcellus]

[Sidenote: 2] *Ham.* [12]The Ayre bites shrewdly: is it very cold?[13]

Hor. It is a nipping and an eager ayre.

Ham. What hower now?

Hor. I thinke it lacks of twelue.

Mar. No, it is strooke.

Hor. Indeed I heard it not: then it drawes neere the season,
[Sidenote: it then]

Wherein the Spirit held his wont to walke.

What does this meane my Lord? [14]

[Sidenote: *A flourish of trumpets and 2 peeces goes of.*[14]]

[Footnote 1: Woodcocks were understood to have no brains.]

[Footnote 2: *1st Q.* 'How prodigall the tongue lends the heart vowes.' I was inclined to take *Prodigall* for a noun, a proper name or epithet given to the soul, as in a moral play: *Prodigall, the soul*; but I conclude it only an adjective used as an adverb, and the capital P a blunder.]

[Footnote 3: —in both light and heat.]

[Footnote 4: The *Quarto* has not 'Daughter.']

[Footnote 5: *To be entreated* is *to yield*: 'he would nowise be entreated:' *entreatments, yieldings*: 'you are not to see him just because he chooses to command a parley.']

[Footnote 6: 'In few words'; in brief.]

[Footnote 7: I suspect a misprint in the Folio here—that an *e* has got in for a *d*, and that the change from the *Quarto* should be *Not of the dye*. Then the line would mean, using the antecedent word *brokers* in the bad sense, 'Not themselves of the same colour as their garments (*investments*); his vows are clothed in innocence, but are not innocent; they are mere panders.' The passage is rendered yet more obscure to the modern sense by the accidental propinquity of *bonds, brokers, and investments*—which have nothing to do with *stocks*.]

[Footnote 8: 'This means in sum:'.]

[Footnote 9: 'so slander any moment with the name of leisure as to': to call it leisure, if leisure stood for talk with Hamlet, would be to slander the time. We might say, 'so slander any man friend as to expect him to do this or that unworthy thing for you.']

[Footnote 10: *1st Q.*

Ofelia, receiue none of his letters,
For louers lines are snares to intrap the heart;
[Sidenote: 82] Refuse his tokens, both of them are keyes
To vnlocke Chastitie vnto Desire;
Come in *Ofelia*; such men often prouue,
Great in their wordes, but little in their loue.

'*men often prove such*—great &c.'—Compare *Twelfth Night*, act ii. sc. 4, lines 120, 121, _Globe ed.]

[Footnote 11: Fresh trouble for Hamlet_.]

[Footnote 12: *1st Q.*

The ayre bites shrewd; it is an eager and
An nipping winde, what houre i'st?]

[Footnote 13: Again the cold.]

[Footnote 14: The stage-direction of the *Q.* is necessary here.]

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[Sidenote: 22, 25] *Ham.* The King doth wake to night, and takes his
rouse,

Keepes wassels and the swaggering vpspring reeles,[1]

[Sidenote: wassell | up-spring]

And as he dreines his draughts of Renish downe,

The kettle Drum and Trumpet thus bray out
The triumph of his Pledge.

Horat. Is it a custome?

Ham. I marry ist;
And to my mind, though I am natiue heere, [Sidenote: But to]
And to the manner borne: It is a Custome
More honour'd in the breach, then the obseruance.
[A]

Enter Ghost.

Hor. Looke my Lord, it comes.

[Sidenote: 172] *Ham.* Angels and Ministers of Grace defend vs:
[Sidenote: 32] Be thou a Spirit of health, or Goblin damn'd,
Bring with thee ayres from Heauen, or blasts from Hell,[2]

[Footnote A: *Here in the Quarto*:—

This heauy headed reueale east and west[3]
Makes vs tradust, and taxed of other nations,
They clip[4] vs drunkards, and with Swinish phrase
Soyle our addition,[5] and indeede it takes
From our atchieuements, though perform'd at height[6]
The pith and marrow of our attribute,
So oft it chaunces in particuler men,[7]
That for some vicious mole[8] of nature in them
As in their birth wherein they are not guilty,[8]
(Since nature cannot choose his origin)
By their ore-grow'th of some complextion[10]
Oft breaking downe the pales and forts of reason
Or by[11] some habit, that too much ore-leauens
The forme of plausiue[12] manners, that[13] these men
Carrying I say the stamp of one defect
Being Natures liuery, or Fortunes starre,[14]
His[15] vertues els[16] be they as pure as grace,
As infinite as man may vndergoe,[17]
Shall in the generall censure[18] take corruption
From that particuler fault:[19] the dram of eale[20]
Doth all the noble substance of a doubt[21]
To his[22] owne scandle.]

[Footnote 1: Does Hamlet here call his uncle an *upspring*, an *upstart*? or is the *upspring* a dance, the English equivalent of 'the high *lavolt*' of *Troil. and Cress.* iv. 4, and governed by *reels*—'keeps wassels, and reels the swaggering upspring'—a dance that needed all the steadiness as well as agility available, if, as I suspect, it was that in which each gentleman lifted the lady high, and kissed her before setting her down? I cannot answer, I can only put the question. The word *swaggering* makes me lean to the former interpretation.]

[Footnote 2: Observe again Hamlet's uncertainty. He does not take it for granted that it is *his father's* spirit, though it is plainly his form.]

[Footnote 3: The Quarto surely came too early for this passage to have been suggested by the shameful habits which invaded the court through the example of Anne of Denmark! Perhaps Shakspeare cancelled it both because he would not have it supposed he had meant to reflect on the queen, and because he came to think it too diffuse.]

[Footnote 4: clepe, *call*.]

[Footnote 5: Same as *attribute*, two lines lower—the thing imputed to, or added to us—our reputation, our title or epithet.]

[Footnote 6: performed to perfection.]

[Footnote 7: individuals.]

[Footnote 8: A mole on the body, according to the place where it appeared, was regarded as significant of character: in that relation, a *vicious mole* would be one that indicated some special vice; but here the allusion is to a live mole of constitutional fault, burrowing within, whose presence the mole-*heap* on the skin indicates.]

[Footnote 9: The order here would be: 'for some vicious mole of nature in them, as by their o'ergrowth, in their birth—wherein they are not guilty, since nature cannot choose his origin (or parentage)—their o'ergrowth of (their being overgrown or possessed by) some complexion, &c.']

[Footnote 10: *Complexion*, as the exponent of the *temperament*, or masterful tendency of the nature, stands here for *temperament*—'oft breaking down &c.' Both words have in them the element of *mingling*—a mingling to certain results.]

[Footnote 11: The connection is:

That for some vicious mole—
As by their o'ergrowth—
Or by some habit, &c.]

[Footnote 12: pleasing.]

[Footnote 13: Repeat from above '—so oft it chaunces,' before 'that these men.']

[Footnote 14: 'whether the thing come by Nature or by Destiny,' *Fortune's star*: the mark set on a man by fortune to prove her share in him. 83.]

[Footnote 15: A change to the singular.]

[Footnote 16: 'be his virtues besides as pure &c.']

[Footnote 17: *walk under; carry.*]

[Footnote 18: the judgment of the many.]

[Footnote 19: 'Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour: so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour.' Eccles. x. 1.]

[Footnote 20: Compare Quarto reading, page 112:

The spirit that I haue scene
May be a deale, and the deale hath power &c.

If *deale* here stand for *devil*, then *eale* may in the same edition be taken to stand for *evil*. It is hardly necessary to suspect a Scotch printer; *evil* is often used as a monosyllable, and *eale* may have been a pronunciation of it half-way towards *ill*, which is its contraction.]

[Footnote 21: I do not believe there is any corruption in the rest of the passage. 'Doth it of a doubt:' *affects it with a doubt*, brings it into doubt. The following from *Measure for Measure*, is like, though not the same.

I have on Angelo imposed the office,
Who may, in the ambush of my name, strike home
And yet my nature never in the fight
To do in slander.

'To do my nature in slander'; to affect it with slander; to bring it into slander, 'Angelo may punish in my name, but, not being present, I shall not be accused of cruelty, which would be to slander my nature.']

[Footnote 22: *his*—the man's; see *note* 13 above.]

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[Sidenote: 112] Be thy euent wicked or charitable,

[Sidenote: thy intent]

Thou com'st in such a questionable shape[1]

That I will speake to thee. Ile call thee *Hamlet*,[2]

King, Father, Royall Dane: Oh, oh, answer me,

[Sidenote: Dane, ô answere]

Let me not burst in Ignorance; but tell

Why thy Canoniz'd bones Hearsed in death,[3]
Haue burst their cerments; why the Sepulcher
Wherein we saw thee quietly enurn'd,[4]

[Sidenote: quietly interr'd[3]]

Hath op'd his ponderous and Marble iawes,
To cast thee vp againe? What may this meane?
That thou dead Coarse againe in compleat steele,
Reuisits thus the glimpses of the Moone,
Making Night hidious? And we fooles of Nature,[6]
So horridly to shake our disposition,[7]
With thoughts beyond thee; reaches of our Soules,[8]

[Sidenote: the reaches]

Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we doe?[9]

Ghost beckens Hamlet.

Hor. It beckons you to goe away with it, [Sidenote: Beckins] As if it some impartment did desire To you alone.

Mar. Looke with what courteous action It wafts you to a more remoued ground: [Sidenote: waues] But doe not goe with it.

Hor. No, by no meanes.

Ham. It will not speake: then will I follow it. [Sidenote: I will]

Hor. Doe not my Lord.

Ham. Why, what should be the feare?
I doe not set my life at a pins fee;
And for my Soule, what can it doe to that?
Being a thing immortall as it selfe:[10]
It waues me forth againe; Ile follow it.

Hor. What if it tempt you toward the Floud my Lord?[11]

[Footnote 1: —that of his father, so moving him to question it. *Questionable* does not mean *doubtful*, but *fit to be questioned*.]

[Footnote 2: 'I'll *call* thee'—for the nonce.]

[Footnote 3: I think *hearse* was originally the bier—French *herse*, a harrow—but came to be applied to the coffin: *hearsed* in death—*coffined* in death.]

[Footnote 4: There is no impropriety in the use of the word *inurned*. It is a figure—a word once-removed in its application: the sepulchre is the urn, the body the ashes. *Interred* Shakspeare had concluded incorrect, for the body was not laid in the earth.]

[Footnote 5: So in *1st Q.*]

[Footnote 6: 'fooles of Nature'—fools in the presence of her knowledge—to us no knowledge—of her action, to us inexplicable. A *fact* that looks unreasonable makes one feel like a fool. See Psalm lxxiii. 22: 'So foolish was I and ignorant, I was as a beast before thee.' As some men are our fools, we are all Nature's fools; we are so far from knowing anything as it is.]

[Footnote 7: Even if Shakspeare cared more about grammar than he does, a man in Hamlet's perturbation he might well present as making a breach in it; but we are not reduced even to justification. *Toschaken* (*to* as German *zu* intensive) is a recognized English word; it means *to shake to pieces*. The construction of the passage is, 'What may this mean, that thou revisitest thus the glimpses of the moon, and that we so horridly to-shake our disposition?' So in *The Merry Wives*,

And fairy-like to-pinch the unclean knight.

'our disposition': our *cosmic structure*.]

[Footnote 8: 'with thoughts that are too much for them, and as an earthquake to them.']

[Footnote 9: Like all true souls, Hamlet wants to know what he is *to do*. He looks out for the action required of him.]

[Footnote 10: Note here Hamlet's mood—dominated by his faith. His life in this world his mother has ruined; he does not care for it a pin: he is not the less confident of a nature that is immortal. In virtue of this belief in life, he is indifferent to the form of it. When, later in the play, he seems to fear death, it is death the consequence of an action of whose rightness he is not convinced.]

[Footnote 11: *The Quarto has dropped out 'Lord.'*]

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Or to the dreadfull Sonnet of the Cliffe, [Sidenote: somnet]
That beetles[1] o're his base into the Sea, [Sidenote: bettles]
[Sidenote: 112] And there assumes some other horrible forme,[2]
[Sidenote: assume]
Which might deprive your Soueraignty[3] of Reason
And draw you into madnesse thinke of it?

[A]

Ham. It wafts me still; goe on, Ile follow thee. [Sidenote: waues]

Mar. You shall not goe my Lord.

Ham. Hold off your hand. [Sidenote: hands]

Hor. Be rul'd, you shall not goe.

Ham. My fate cries out,
And makes each petty Artire[4] in this body, [Sidenote: arture[4]]
As hardy as the Nemian Lions nerue:
Still am I cal'd? Vnhand me Gentlemen:
By Heau'n, Ile make a Ghost of him that lets me:
I say away, goe on, Ile follow thee.

Exeunt Ghost & Hamlet.

Hor. He waxes desperate with imagination.[5] [Sidenote: imagination]

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

Hor. Haue after, to what issue will this come?

Mar. Something is rotten in the State of Denmarke.

Hor. Heauen will direct it.

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

Enter Ghost and Hamlet.

Ham. Where wilt thou lead me? speak; Ile go no further. [Sidenote: Whether]

Gho. Marke me.

Ham. I will.

[Footnote A: *Here in the Quarto:—*

The very place puts toys of desperation
Without more motiue, into euery braine
That lookes so many fadoms to the sea
And heares it rore beneath.]

[Footnote 1: *1st Q.* 'beckles'—perhaps for *buckles—bends.*]

[Footnote 2: Note the unbelief in the Ghost.]

[Footnote 3: sovereignty—*soul*: so in *Romeo and Juliet*, act v. sc. 1, l. 3:—

My bosom's lord sits lightly in his throne.]

[Footnote 4: The word *artery*, invariably substituted by the editors, is without authority. In the first

Quarto, the word is *Artiue*; in the second (see margin) *arture*. This latter I take to be the right one—corrupted into *Artire* in the Folio. It seems to have troubled the printers, and possibly the editors. The third Q. has followed the second; the fourth has *artyre*; the fifth Q. and the fourth F. have *attire*; the second and third Folios follow the first. Not until the sixth Q. does *artery* appear. See *Cambridge Shakespeare*. *Arture* was to all concerned, and to the language itself, a new word. That *artery* was not Shakspeare's intention might be concluded from its unfitnes: what propriety could there be in *making an artery hardy*? The sole, imperfect justification I was able to think of for such use of the word arose from the fact that, before the discovery of the circulation of the blood (published in 1628), it was believed that the arteries (found empty after death) served for the movements of the animal spirits: this might vaguely *associate* the arteries with *courage*. But the sight of the word *arture* in the second Quarto at once relieved me.

I do not know if a list has ever been gathered of the words *made* by Shakspeare: here is one of them—*arture*, from the same root as *artus*, *a joint*—*arcere*, *to hold together*, adjective *arctus*, *tight*. *Arture*, then, stands for *junction*. This perfectly fits. In terror the weakest parts are the joints, for their *artures* are not *hardy*. 'And you, my sinews, ... bear me stiffly up.' 55, 56.

Since writing as above, a friend informs me that *arture* is the exact equivalent of the [Greek: haphae] of Colossians ii. 19, as interpreted by Bishop Lightfoot—'the relation between contiguous limbs, not the parts of the limbs themselves in the neighbourhood of contact,'—for which relation 'there is no word in our language in common use.']

[Footnote 5: 'with the things he imagines.']

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Gho. My hower is almost come,[1] When I to sulphurous and tormenting Flames Must render vp my selfe.

Ham. Alas poore Ghost.

Gho. Pitty me not, but lend thy serious hearing To what I shall vnfold.

Ham. Speake, I am bound to heare.

Gho. So art thou to reuenge, when thou shalt heare.

Ham. What?

Gho. I am thy Fathers Spirit,
Doom'd for a certaine terme to walke the night;[2]
And for the day confin'd to fast in Fiers,[3]
Till the foule crimes done in my dayes of Nature
Are burnt and purg'd away? But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my Prison-House;
I could a Tale vnfold, whose lightest word[4]
Would harrow vp thy soule, freeze thy young blood,
Make thy two eyes like Starres, start from their Spheres,
Thy knotty and combined locks to part, [Sidenote: knotted]
And each particular haire to stand an end,[5]
Like Quilles vpon the fretfull[6] Porpentine [Sidenote: fearefull[6]]
But this eternall blason[7] must not be
To eares of flesh and bloud; list *Hamlet*, oh list,
[Sidenote: blood, list, ô list;]
If thou didst euer thy deare Father loue.

Ham. Oh Heauen![8] [Sidenote: God]

Gho. Reuenge his foule and most vnnaturall Murther.[9]

Ham. Murther?

Ghost. Murther most foule, as in the best it is; But this most foule, strange, and vnnaturall.

Ham. Hast, hast me to know it, [Sidenote: Hast me to know't,] That with wings as swift

[Footnote 1: The night is the Ghost's day.]

[Footnote 2: To walk the night, and see how things go, without being able to put a finger to them, is

part of his cleansing.]

[Footnote 3: More horror yet for Hamlet.]

[Footnote 4: He would have him think of life and its doings as of awful import. He gives his son what warning he may.]

[Footnote 5: *An end* is like *agape*, *an hungred*. 71, 175.]

[Footnote 6: The word in the Q. suggests *fretfull* a misprint for *frightful*. It is *fretfull* in the 1st Q. as well.]

[Footnote 7: To *blason* is to read off in proper heraldic terms the arms blasoned upon a shield. *A blason* is such a reading, but is here used for a picture in words of other objects.]

[Footnote 8: —in appeal to God whether he had not loved his father.]

[Footnote 9: The horror still accumulates. The knowledge of evil—not evil in the abstract, but evil alive, and all about him—comes darkening down upon Hamlet's being. Not only is his father an inhabitant of the nether fires, but he is there by murder.]

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As meditation, or the thoughts of Loue,
May sweepe to my Reuenge.[1]

Ghost. I finde thee apt,
And duller should'st thou be then the fat weede[2]
[Sidenote: 194] That rots it selfe in ease, on Lethe Wharfe,[4]
[Sidenote: rootes[3]]
Would'st thou not stirre in this. Now *Hamlet* heare:
It's giuen out, that sleeping in mine Orchard, [Sidenote: 'Tis]
A Serpent stung me: so the whole eare of Denmarke,
Is by a forged processe of my death
Rankly abus'd: But know thou Noble youth,
The Serpent that did sting thy Fathers life,
Now weares his Crowne.

[Sidenote: 30,32] *Ham*. O my Propheticke soule: mine Vncle?[5]
[Sidenote: my]

Ghost. I that incestuous, that adulterate Beast[6]
With witchcraft of his wits, hath Traitorous guifts.
[Sidenote: wits, with]
Oh wicked Wit, and Gifts, that haue the power
So to seduce? Won to to this shamefull Lust [Sidenote: wonne to his]
The will of my most seeming vertuous Queene:
Oh *Hamlet*, what a falling off was there, [Sidenote: what failing]
From me, whose loue was of that dignity,
That it went hand in hand, euen with[7] the Vow
I made to her in Marriage; and to decline
Vpon a wretch, whose Naturall gifts were poore
To those of mine. But Vertue, as it neuer wil be moued,
Though Lewdnesse court it in a shape of Heauen:
So Lust, though to a radiant Angell link'd, [Sidenote: so but though]
Will sate it selfe in[8] a Celestiall bed, and prey on Garbage.[9]
[Sidenote: Will sort it selfe]
But soft, me thinkes I sent the Mornings Ayre; [Sidenote: morning ayre,]
Briefe let me be: Sleeping within mine Orchard, [Sidenote: my]
My custome alwayes in the afternoone; [Sidenote: of the]
Vpon my secure hower thy Vncle stole

[Footnote 1: Now, *for the moment*, he has no doubt, and vengeance is his first thought.]

[Footnote 2: Hamlet may be supposed to recall this, if we suppose him afterwards to accuse himself so bitterly and so unfairly as in the *Quarto*, 194.]

[Footnote 3: Also *1st Q.*]

[Footnote 4: landing-place on the bank of Lethe, the hell-river of oblivion.]

[Footnote 5: This does not mean that he had suspected his uncle, but that his dislike to him was prophetic.]

[Footnote 6: How can it be doubted that in this speech the Ghost accuses his wife and brother of adultery? Their marriage was not adultery. See how the ghastly revelation grows on Hamlet—his father in hell—murdered by his brother—dishonoured by his wife!]

[Footnote 7: *parallel with; correspondent to.*]

[Footnote 8: *1st Q.* 'fate itself from a'.]

[Footnote 9: This passage, from 'Oh *Hamlet*,' most indubitably asserts the adultery of Gertrude.]

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With iuyce of cursed Hebenon[1] in a Violl, [Sidenote: Hebona]
And in the Porches of mine eares did poure [Sidenote: my]
The leaperous Distilment;[2] whose effect
Holds such an enmity with bloud of Man,
That swift as Quick-siluer, it courses[3] through
The naturall Gates and Allies of the Body;
And with a sodaine vigour it doth posset [Sidenote: doth possesse]
And curd, like Aygre droppings into Milke, [Sidenote: eager[4]]
The thin and wholesome blood: so did it mine;
And a most instant Tetter bak'd about, [Sidenote: barckt about[5]]
Most Lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust,
All my smooth Body.
Thus was I, sleeping, by a Brothers hand,
Of Life, of Crowne, and Queene at once dispatcht; [Sidenote: of Queene]
[Sidenote: 164] Cut off euen in the Blossomes of my Sinne,
Vnhouzzled, disappointed, vnmaned,[6] [Sidenote: Vnhuzled, | vnanued,]
[Sidenote: 262] No reckoning made, but sent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head;
Oh horrible, Oh horrible, most horrible:
If thou hast nature in thee beare it not;
Let not the Royall Bed of Denmarke be
A Couch for Luxury and damned Incest.[7]
But howsoeuer thou pursuest this Act,
[Sidenote: howsomeuer thou pursues]
[Sidenote: 30,174] Taint not thy mind; nor let thy Soule contriue
[Sidenote: 140] Against thy Mother ought; leaue her to heauen,
And to those Thornes that in her bosome lodge,
To pricke and sting her. Fare thee well at once;
The Glow-worme showes the Matine to be neere,
And gins to pale his vneffectuall Fire:
Aduie, adue, *Hamlet*: remember me. *Exit.*
[Sidenote: Adiew, adiew, adiew, remember me.[8]]

Ham. Oh all you host of Heauen! Oh Earth: what els?
And shall I couple Hell?[9] Oh fie[10]: hold my heart;
[Sidenote: hold, hold my]
And you my sinnewes, grow not instant Old;

[Footnote 1: Ebony.]

[Footnote 2: *producing leprosy*—as described in result below.]

[Footnote 3: *1st Q.* 'posteth'.]

[Footnote 4: So also *1st Q.*]

[Footnote 5: This *barckt*—meaning *cased as a bark cases its tree*—is used in *1st Q.* also: 'And all my smoothe body, barked, and tetterd ouer.' The word is so used in Scotland still.]

[Footnote 6: *Husel* (*Anglo-Saxon*) is an offering, the sacrament. *Disappointed, not appointed*: Dr. Johnson. *Unaneled, unoled, without the extreme unction.*]

[Footnote 7: It is on public grounds, as a king and a Dane, rather than as a husband and a murdered man, that he urges on his son the execution of justice. Note the tenderness towards his wife that follows—more marked, 174; here it is mingled with predominating regard to his son to whose filial nature he dreads injury.]

[Footnote 8: *Q.* omits *Exit.*]

[Footnote 9: He must: his father is there!]

[Footnote 10: The interjection is addressed to *heart* and *sinews*, which forget their duty.]

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But beare me stiffely vp: Remember thee?[1] [Sidenote: swiftly vp]

I, thou poore Ghost, while memory holds a seate [Sidenote: whiles]

In this distracted Globe[2]: Remember thee?

Yea, from the Table of my Memory,[3]

Ile wipe away all triuiall fond Records,

All sawes[4] of Bookes, all formes, all presures past,

That youth and obseruation coppied there;

And thy Commandment all alone shall liue

Within the Booke and Volume of my Braine,

Vnmixt with baser matter; yes, yes, by Heauen:

[Sidenote: matter, yes by]

[Sidenote: 168] Oh most pernicious woman![5]

Oh Villaine, Villaine, smiling damned Villaine!

My Tables, my Tables; meet it is I set it downe,[6]

[Sidenote: My tables, meet]

That one may smile, and smile and be a Villaine;

At least I'm sure it may be so in Denmarke; [Sidenote: I am]

So Vnckle there you are: now to my word:[7]

It is; Aduie, Aduie, Remember me:[8] I haue sworn't.

[Sidenote: *Enter Horatio, and Marcellus*]

Hor. and Mar. within. My Lord, my Lord. [Sidenote: *Hora. My*]

Enter Horatio and Marcellus.

Mar. Lord *Hamlet.*

Hor. Heauen secure him. [Sidenote: Heauens]

Mar. So be it.

Hor. Illo, ho, ho, my Lord.

Ham. Hillo, ho, ho, boy; come bird, come.[9] [Sidenote: boy come, and come.]

Mar. How ist't my Noble Lord?

Hor. What newes, my Lord?

Ham. Oh wonderfull![10]

Hor. Good my Lord tell it.

Ham. No you'l reueale it. [Sidenote: you will]

Hor. Not I, my Lord, by Heauen.

Mar. Nor I, my Lord.

Ham. How say you then, would heart of man once think it? But you'l be secret?

[Footnote 1: For the moment he has no doubt that he has seen and spoken with the ghost of his father.]

[Footnote 2: his head.]

[Footnote 3: The whole speech is that of a student, accustomed to books, to take notes, and to fix things in his memory. 'Table,' *tablet.*]

[Footnote 4: *wise sayings.*]

[Footnote 5: The Ghost has revealed her adultery: Hamlet suspects her of complicity in the murder, 168.]

[Footnote 6: It may well seem odd that Hamlet should be represented as, at such a moment, making a note in his tablets; but without further allusion to the student-habit, I would remark that, in cases where strongest passion is roused, the intellect has yet sometimes an automatic trick of working independently. For instance from Shakspeare, see Constance in *King John*—how, in her agony over the loss of her son, both her fancy, playing with words, and her imagination, playing with forms, are busy.

Note the glimpse of Hamlet's character here given: he had been something of an optimist; at least had known villainy only from books; at thirty years of age it is to him a discovery that a man may smile and be a villain! Then think of the shock of such discoveries as are here forced upon him! Villainy is no longer a mere idea, but a fact! and of all villainous deeds those of his own mother and uncle are the worst! But note also his honesty, his justice to humanity, his philosophic temperament, in the qualification he sets to the memorandum, '—at least in Denmark!'

[Footnote 7: 'my word,'—the word he has to keep in mind; his cue.]

[Footnote 8: Should not the actor here make a pause, with hand uplifted, as taking a solemn though silent oath?]

[Footnote 9: —as if calling to a hawk.]

[Footnote 10: Here comes the test of the actor's *possible*: here Hamlet himself begins to act, and will at once assume a *rôle*, ere yet he well knows what it must be. One thing only is clear to him—that the communication of the Ghost is not a thing to be shared—that he must keep it with all his power of secrecy: the honour both of father and of mother is at stake. In order to do so, he must begin by putting on himself a cloak of darkness, and hiding his feelings—first of all the present agitation which threatens to overpower him. His immediate impulse or instinctive motion is to force an air, and throw a veil of grimmest humour over the occurrence. The agitation of the horror at his heart, ever working and constantly repressed, shows through the veil, and gives an excited uncertainty to his words, and a wild vacillation to his manner and behaviour.]

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Both. I, by Heau'n, my Lord.[1]

Ham. There's nere a villaine dwelling in all Denmarke But hee's an arrant knaue.

Hor. There needs no Ghost my Lord, come from the Graue, to tell vs this.

Ham. Why right, you are i'th'right; [Sidenote: in the]
And so, without more circumstance at all,
I hold it fit that we shake hands, and part:
You, as your busines and desires shall point you: [Sidenote: desire]
For euery man ha's businesse and desire,[2] [Sidenote: hath]
Such as it is: and for mine owne poore part, [Sidenote: my]
Looke you, Ile goe pray.[4] [Sidenote: I will goe pray.[3]]

Hor. These are but wild and hurling words, my Lord.
[Sidenote: whurling[5]]

Ham. I'm sorry they offend you heartily: [Sidenote: I am] Yes faith, heartily.

Hor. There's no offence my Lord.

Ham. Yes, by Saint *Patricke*, but there is my Lord,[6]
[Sidenote: there is *Horatio*]
And much offence too, touching this Vision heere:[7]
[Sidenote: 136] It is an honest Ghost, that let me tell you:[8]
For your desire to know what is betweene vs,
O'remaster't as you may. And now good friends,
As you are Friends, Schollers and Soldiers,
Giue me one poore request.

Hor. What is't my Lord? we will.

Ham. Neuer make known what you haue seen to night.[9]

Both. My Lord, we will not.

Ham. Nay, but swear't.

Hor. Infaith my Lord, not I.[10]

Mar. Nor I my Lord: in faith.

Ham. Vpon my sword.[11]

[Footnote 1: *Q. has not* 'my Lord.']

[Footnote 2: Here shows the philosopher.]

[Footnote 3: *Q. has not* 'Looke you.']

[Footnote 4: '—nothing else is left me.' This seems to me one of the finest touches in the revelation of Hamlet.]

[Footnote 5: *1st Q.* 'wherling'.]

[Footnote 6: I take the change from the *Quarto* here to be no blunder.]

[Footnote 7: *Point thus:* 'too!—Touching.']

[Footnote 8: The struggle to command himself is plain throughout.]

[Footnote 9: He could not endure the thought of the resulting gossip;—which besides would interfere with, possibly frustrate, the carrying out of his part.]

[Footnote 10: This is not a refusal to swear; it is the oath itself: '*In faith I will not!*']

[Footnote 11: He would have them swear on the cross-hilt of his sword.]

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Marcell. We haue sworne my Lord already.[1]

Ham. Indeed, vpon my sword, Indeed.

Gho. Sweare.[2] *Ghost cries vnder the Stage.*[3]

Ham. Ah ha boy, sayest thou so. Art thou [Sidenote: Ha, ha,] there truepenny?[4] Come one you here this fellow [Sidenote: Come on, you heare] in the selleredge Consent to sweare.

Hor. Propose the Oath my Lord.[5]

Ham. Neuer to speake of this that you haue seene. Sweare by my sword.

Gho. Sweare.

Ham. *Hic & vbique?* Then wee'l shift for grownd, [Sidenote: shift our]
Come hither Gentlemen,
And lay your hands againe vpon my sword,
Neuer to speake of this that you haue heard:[6]
Sweare by my Sword.

Gho. Sweare.[7] [Sidenote: Sweare by his sword.]

Ham. Well said old Mole, can'st worke i'th' ground so fast? [Sidenote: it'h' earth] A worthy Pioner, once more remoue good friends.

Hor. Oh day and night: but this is wondrous strange.

Ham. And therefore as a stranger giue it welcome.
There are more things in Heauen and Earth, *Horatio*,
Then are dream't of in our Philosophy But come, [Sidenote: in your]
Here as before, neuer so helpe you mercy,
How strange or odde so ere I beare my selfe; [Sidenote: How | so mere]
(As I perchance heereafter shall thinke meet [Sidenote: As])

[Sidenote: 136, 156, 178] To put an Anticke disposition on:)[8]

[Sidenote: on]

That you at such time seeing me, neuer shall [Sidenote: times]

With Armes encombred thus, or thus, head shake;

[Sidenote: or this head]

[Footnote 1: He feels his honour touched.]

[Footnote 2: The Ghost's interference heightens Hamlet's agitation. If he does not talk, laugh, jest, it will overcome him. Also he must not show that he believes it his father's ghost: that must be kept to himself—for the present at least. He shows it therefore no respect—treats the whole thing humorously, so avoiding, or at least parrying question. It is all he can do to keep the mastery of himself, dodging horror with half-forced, half-hysterical laughter. Yet is he all the time intellectually on the alert. See how, instantly active, he makes use of the voice from beneath to enforce his requisition of silence. Very speedily too he grows quiet: a glimmer of light as to the course of action necessary to him has begun to break upon him: it breaks from his own wild and disjointed behaviour in the attempt to hide the conflict of his feelings—which suggests to him the idea of shrouding himself, as did David at the court of the Philistines, in the cloak of madness: thereby protected from the full force of what suspicion any absorption of manner or outburst of feeling must occasion, he may win time to lay his plans. Note how, in the midst of his horror, he is yet able to think, plan, resolve.]

[Footnote 3: *1st Q. 'The Gost under the stage.]*

[Footnote 4: While Hamlet seems to take it so coolly, the others have fled in terror from the spot. He goes to them. Their fear must be what, on the two occasions after, makes him shift to another place when the Ghost speaks.]

[Footnote 5: Now at once he consents.]

[Footnote 6: In the *Quarto* this and the next line are transposed.]

[Footnote 7: What idea is involved as the cause of the Ghost's thus interfering?—That he too sees what difficulties must encompass the carrying out of his behest, and what absolute secrecy is thereto essential.]

[Footnote 8: This idea, hardly yet a resolve, he afterwards carries out so well, that he deceives not only king and queen and court, but the most of his critics ever since: to this day they believe him mad. Such must have studied in the play a phantom of their own misconception, and can never have seen the Hamlet of Shakspeare. Thus prejudiced, they mistake also the effects of moral and spiritual perturbation and misery for further sign of intellectual disorder—even for proof of moral weakness, placing them in the same category with the symptoms of the insanity which he simulates, and by which they are deluded.]

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Or by pronouncing of some doubtfull Phrase;

As well, we know, or we could and if we would,

[Sidenote: As well, well, we]

Or if we list to speake; or there be and if there might,

[Sidenote: if they might]

Or such ambiguous giuing out to note, [Sidenote: note]

That you know ought of me; this not to doe:

[Sidenote: me, this doe sweare,]

So grace and mercy at your most neede helpe you:

Sweare.[1]

Ghost. Sweare.[2]

Ham. Rest, rest perturbed Spirit[3]: so Gentlemen,

With all my loue I doe commend me to you;

And what so poore a man as *Hamlet* is,

May doe t'expresse his loue and friending to you,

God willing shall not lacke: let vs goe in together,

And still your fingers on your lippes I pray,

The time is out of ioynt: Oh cursed spight,[4]

[Sidenote: 126] That euer I was borne to set it right.

Nay, come let's goe together. *Exeunt.*[5]

SUMMARY OF ACT I.

This much of Hamlet we have now learned: he is a thoughtful man, a genuine student, little acquainted with the world save through books, and a lover of his kind. His university life at Wittenberg is suddenly interrupted by a call to the funeral of his father, whom he dearly loves and honours. Ere he reaches Denmark, his uncle Claudius has contrived, in an election (202, 250, 272) probably hastened and secretly influenced, to gain the voice of the representatives at least of the people, and ascend the throne. Hence his position must have been an irksome one from the first; but, within a month of his father's death, his mother's marriage with his uncle—a relation universally regarded as incestuous—plunges him in the deepest misery. The play introduces him at the first court held after the wedding. He is attired in the mourning of his father's funeral, which he had not laid aside for the wedding. His aspect is of absolute dejection, and he appears in a company for which he is so unfit only for the sake of desiring permission to leave the court, and go back to his studies at Wittenberg.[A] Left to himself, he breaks out in agonized and indignant lamentation over his mother's conduct, dwelling mainly on her disregard of his father's memory. Her conduct and his partial discovery of her character, is the sole cause of his misery. In such his mood, Horatio, a fellow-student, brings him word that his father's spirit walks at night. He watches for the Ghost, and receives from him a frightful report of his present condition, into which, he tells him, he was cast by the murderous hand of his brother, with whom his wife had been guilty of adultery. He enjoins him to put a stop to the crime in which they are now living, by taking vengeance on his uncle. Uncertain at the moment how to act, and dreading the consequences of rousing suspicion by the perturbation which he could not but betray, he grasps at the sudden idea of affecting madness. We have learned also Hamlet's relation to Ophelia, the daughter of the selfish, prating, busy Polonius, who, with his son Laertes, is destined to work out the earthly fate of Hamlet. Of Laertes, as yet, we only know that he prates like his father, is self-confident, and was educated at Paris, whither he has returned. Of Ophelia we know nothing but that she is gentle, and that she is fond of Hamlet, whose attentions she has encouraged, but with whom, upon her father's severe remonstrance, she is ready, outwardly at least, to break.

[Footnote A: Roger Ascham, in his *Scholemaster*, if I mistake not, sets the age, up to which a man should be under tutors, at twenty-nine.]

[Footnote 1: 'Sweare' *not in Quarto*.]

[Footnote 2: They do not this time shift their ground, but swear—in dumb show.]

[Footnote 3: —for now they had obeyed his command and sworn secrecy.]

[Footnote 4: 'cursed spight'—not merely that he had been born to do hangman's work, but that he should have been born at all—of a mother whose crime against his father had brought upon him the wretched necessity which must proclaim her ignominy. Let the student do his best to realize the condition of Hamlet's heart and mind in relation to his mother.]

[Footnote: 5 This first act occupies part of a night, a day, and part of the next night.]

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ACTUS SECUNDUS.[1]

Enter Polonius, and Reynoldo.

[Sidenote: *Enter old Polonius, with his man, or two.*]

Polon. Giue him his money, and these notes *Reynoldo*.^[2]

[Sidenote: this money]

Reynol. I will my Lord.

Polon. You shall doe maruels wisely: good *Reynoldo*,

[Sidenote: meruiles]

Before you visite him you make inquiry

[Sidenote: him, to make inquire]

Of his behaiour.^[3]

Reynol. My Lord, I did intend it.

Polon. Marry, well said;
Very well said. Looke you Sir,
Enquire me first what Danskers are in Paris;
And how, and who; what meanes; and where they keepe:
What company, at what expence: and finding
By this encompassment and drift of question,
That they doe know my sonne: Come you more neerer[4]
Then your particular demands will touch it,
Take you as 'twere some distant knowledge of him,
And thus I know his father and his friends, [Sidenote: As thus]
And in part him. Doe you marke this *Reynoldo*?

Reynol. I, very well my Lord.

Polon. And in part him, but you may say not well;
But if't be hee I meane, hees very wilde;
Addicted so and so; and there put on him
What forgeries you please: marry, none so ranke,
As may dishonour him; take heed of that:
But Sir, such wanton, wild, and vsuall slips,
As are Companions noted and most knowne
To youth and liberty.

[Footnote 1: *Not in Quarto.*

Between this act and the former, sufficient time has passed to allow the ambassadors to go to Norway and return: 74. See 138, and what Hamlet says of the time since his father's death, 24, by which together the interval *seems* indicated as about two months, though surely so much time was not necessary.

Cause and effect *must* be truly presented; time and space are mere accidents, and of small consequence in the drama, whose very idea is compression for the sake of presentation. All that is necessary in regard to time is, that, either by the act-pause, or the intervention of a fresh scene, the passing of it should be indicated.

This second act occupies the forenoon of one day.]

[Footnote 2: *1st Q.*

Montano, here, these letters to my sonne, And this same mony with my blessing to him,
And bid him ply his learning good *Montano*.]

[Footnote 3: The father has no confidence in the son, and rightly, for both are unworthy: he turns on him the cunning of the courtier, and sends a spy on his behaviour. The looseness of his own principles comes out very clear in his anxieties about his son; and, having learned the ideas of the father as to what becomes a gentleman, we are not surprised to find the son such as he afterwards shows himself. Till the end approaches, we hear no more of Laertes, nor is more necessary; but without this scene we should have been unprepared for his vileness.]

[Footnote 4: *Point thus*: 'son, come you more nearer; then &c.' The *then* here does not stand for *than*, and to change it to *than* makes at once a contradiction. The sense is: 'Having put your general questions first, and been answered to your purpose, then your particular demands will come in, and be of service; they will reach to the point—*will touch it*.' The *it* is impersonal. After it should come a period.]

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Reynol. As gaming my Lord.

Polon. I, or drinking, fencing, swearing, Quarelling, drabbing. You may goe so farre.

Reynol. My Lord that would dishonour him.

Polon. Faith no, as you may season it in the charge;[1]
[Sidenote: Fayth as you]

You must not put another scandall on him,
That hee is open to Incontinencie;[2]

That's not my meaning: but breath his faults so quaintly,
That they may seeme the taints of liberty;
The flash and out-breake of a fiery minde,
A sauagenes in vnreclaim'd^[3] bloud of generall assault.^[4]

Reynol. But my good Lord.^[5]

Polon. Wherefore should you doe this?^[6]

Reynol. I my Lord, I would know that.

Polon. Marry Sir, heere's my drift,
And I belieue it is a fetch of warrant:^[7] [Sidenote: of wit,]
You laying these slight sulleyes^[8] on my Sonne,
[Sidenote: sallies^[8]]
As 'twere a thing a little soil'd i'th'working:
[Sidenote: soiled with working,]
Marke you your party in conuerse; him you would sound,
Hauing euer seene. In the prenominate crimes, [Sidenote: seene in the]
The youth you breath of guilty, be assur'd
He closes with you in this consequence:
Good sir, or so, or friend, or Gentleman.
According to the Phrase and the Addition,^[9] [Sidenote: phrase or the]
Of man and Country.

Reynol. Very good my Lord.

Polon. And then Sir does he this?
[Sidenote: doos a this a doos, what was I]
He does: what was I about to say?
I was about to say somthing: where did I leaue?
[Sidenote: By the masse I was]

Reynol. At closes in the consequence: At friend, or so, and Gentleman.^[10]

[Footnote 1: *1st Q.*

I faith not a whit, no not a whit,

As you may bridle it not disparage him a iote.]

[Footnote 2: This may well seem prating inconsistency, but I suppose means that he must not be represented as without moderation in his wickedness.]

[Footnote 3: *Untamed*, as a hawk.]

[Footnote 4: The lines are properly arranged in *Q.*

A sauagenes in vnreclaimed blood,
Of generall assault.

—that is, 'which assails all.')

[Footnote 5: Here a hesitating pause.]

[Footnote 6: —with the expression of, 'Is that what you would say?']

[Footnote 7: 'a fetch with warrant for it'—a justifiable trick.]

[Footnote 8: Compare *sallied*, 25, both Quartos; *sallets* 67, 103; and see *soil'd*, next line.]

[Footnote 9: 'Addition,' epithet of courtesy in address.]

[Footnote 10: *Q.* has not this line]

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Polon. At closes in the consequence, I marry,
He closes with you thus. I know the Gentleman,
[Sidenote: He closes thus,]
I saw him yesterday, or tother day; [Sidenote: th'other]

Or then or then, with such and such; and as you say,
[Sidenote: or such,]
[Sidenote: 25] There was he gaming, there o'retooke in's Rouse,
[Sidenote: was a gaming there, or tooke]
There falling out at Tennis; or perchance,
I saw him enter such a house of saile; [Sidenote: sale,]
Videlicet, a Brothell, or so forth. See you now;
Your bait of falshood, takes this Cape of truth;
[Sidenote: take this carpe]
And thus doe we of wisdome and of reach[1]
With windlesses,[2] and with assaies of Bias,
By indirections finde directions out:
So by my former Lecture and aduice
Shall you my Sonne; you haue me, haue you not?

Reynol. My Lord I haue.

Polon. God buy you; fare you well, [Sidenote: ye | ye]

Reynol. Good my Lord.

Polon. Obserue his inclination in your selfe.[3]

Reynol. I shall my Lord.

Polon. And let him[4] plye his Musicke.

Reynol. Well, my Lord. *Exit.*

Enter Ophelia.

Polon. Farewell: How now *Ophelia*, what's the matter?

Ophe. Alas my Lord, I haue beene so affrighted.
[Sidenote: O my Lord, my Lord,]

Polon. With what, in the name of Heauen?
[Sidenote: i'th name of God?]

Ophe. My Lord, as I was sowing in my Chamber, [Sidenote: closset,]
Lord *Hamlet* with his doublet all vnbrac'd,[5]
No hat vpon his head, his stockings foul'd,
Vngartred, and downe giued[6] to his Anckle,
Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other,
And with a looke so pitious in purport,
As if he had been loosed out of hell,

[Footnote 1: of far reaching mind.]

[Footnote 2: The word windlaces is explained in the dictionaries as *shifts*, *subtleties*—but apparently on the sole authority of this passage. There must be a figure in *windlesses*, as well as in *assaies of Bias*, which is a phrase plain enough to bowlers: the trying of other directions than that of the *jack*, in the endeavour to come at one with the law of the bowl's bias. I find *wanlass* a term in hunting: it had to do with driving game to a given point—whether in part by getting to windward of it, I cannot tell. The word may come of the verb wind, from its meaning 'to manage by shifts or expedients': *Barclay*. As he has spoken of fishing, could the *windlesses* refer to any little instrument such as now used upon a fishing-rod? I do not think it. And how do the words *windlesses* and *indirections* come together? Was a windless some contrivance for determining how the wind blew? I bethink me that a thin withered straw is in Scotland called a *windlestrae*: perhaps such straws were thrown up to find out 'by indirection' the direction of the wind.

The press-reader sends me two valuable quotations, through Latham's edition of Johnson's Dictionary, from Dr. H. Hammond (1605-1660), in which *windlass* is used as a verb:—

'A skilful woodsman, by windlassing, presently gets a shoot, which, without taking a compass, and thereby a commodious stand, he could never have obtained.'

'She is not so much at leasure as to windlace, or use craft, to satisfy them.'

To *windlace* seems then to mean 'to steal along to leeward;' would it be absurd to suggest that, so doing, the hunter *laces the wind*? Shakspeare, with many another, I fancy, speaks of *threading the night* or *the darkness*.

Johnson explains the word in the text as 'A handle by which anything is turned.']

[Footnote 3: 'in your selfe.' may mean either 'through the insight afforded by your own feelings'; or 'in respect of yourself,' 'toward yourself.' I do not know which is intended.]

[Footnote 4: 1st Q. 'And bid him'.]

[Footnote 5: loose; *undone*.]

[Footnote 6: His stockings, slipped down in wrinkles round his ankles, suggested the rings of *gyves* or fetters. The verb *gyve*, of which the passive participle is here used, is rarer.]

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To speake of horrors: he comes before me.

Polon. Mad for thy Loue?

Ophe. My Lord, I doe not know: but truly I do feare it.[1]

Polon. What said he?

Ophe.[2] He tooke me by the wrist, and held me hard;
Then goes he to the length of all his arme;
And with his other hand thus o're his brow,
He fals to such perusall of my face,
As he would draw it. Long staid he so, [Sidenote: As a]
At last, a little shaking of mine Arme:
And thrice his head thus wauing vp and downe;
He rais'd a sigh, so pittious and profound,
That it did seeme to shatter all his bulke, [Sidenote: As it]
And end his being. That done, he lets me goe,
And with his head ouer his shoulders turn'd, [Sidenote: shoulder]
He seem'd to finde his way without his eyes,
For out adores[3] he went without their helpe; [Sidenote: helps,]
And to the last, bended their light on me.

Polon. Goe with me, I will goe seeke the King, [Sidenote: Come, goe]
This is the very extasie of Loue,
Whose violent property foredoes[4] it selfe,
And leads the will to desperate Vndertakings,
As oft as any passion vnder Heauen, [Sidenote: passions]
That does afflict our Natures. I am sorrie,
What haue you giuen him any hard words of late?

Ophe. No my good Lord: but as you did command, [Sidenote: 42, 82] I did repell his Letters, and deny'de His accesse to me.[5]

Pol. That hath made him mad.
I am sorrie that with better speed and Judgement
[Sidenote: better heede]
[Sidenote: 83] I had not quoted[6] him. I feare he did but trifle,
[Sidenote: coted[6] | fear'd]
And meant to wracke thee: but beshrew my ievalousie:

[Footnote 1: She would be glad her father should think so.]

[Footnote 2: The detailed description of Hamlet and his behaviour that follows, must be introduced in order that the side mirror of narrative may aid the front mirror of drama, and between them be given a true notion of his condition both mental and bodily. Although weeks have passed since his interview with the Ghost, he is still haunted with the memory of it, still broods over its horrible revelation. That he had, probably soon, begun to feel far from certain of the truth of the apparition, could not make the thoughts and questions it had awaked, cease tormenting his whole being. The stifling smoke of his mother's conduct had in his mind burst into loathsome flame, and through her he has all but lost his faith in humanity. To know his uncle a villain, was to know his uncle a villain; to know his mother false,

was to doubt women, doubt the whole world.

In the meantime Ophelia, in obedience to her father, and evidently without reason assigned, has broken off communication with him: he reads her behaviour by the lurid light of his mother's. She too is false! she too is heartless! he can look to her for no help! She has turned against him to curry favour with his mother and his uncle!

Can she be such as his mother! Why should she not be? His mother had seemed as good! He would give his life to know her honest and pure. Might he but believe her what he had believed her, he would yet have a hiding-place from the wind, a covert from the tempest! If he could but know the truth! Alone with her once more but for a moment, he would read her very soul by the might of his! He must see her! He would see her! In the agony of a doubt upon which seemed to hang the bliss or bale of his being, yet not altogether unintimidated by a sense of his intrusion, he walks into the house of Polonius, and into the chamber of Ophelia.

Ever since the night of the apparition, the court, from the behaviour assumed by Hamlet, has believed his mind affected; and when he enters her room, Ophelia, though such is the insight of love that she is able to read in the face of the son the father's purgatorial sufferings, the picture of one 'loosed out of hell, to speak of horrors,' attributes all the strangeness of his appearance and demeanour, such as she describes them to her father, to that supposed fact. But there is, in truth, as little of affected as of actual madness in his behaviour in her presence. When he comes before her pale and trembling, speechless and with staring eyes, it is with no simulated insanity, but in the agonized hope, scarce distinguishable from despair, of finding, in the testimony of her visible presence, an assurance that the doubts ever tearing his spirit and sickening his brain, are but the offspring of his phantasy. There she sits!—and there he stands, vainly endeavouring through her eyes to read her soul! for, alas,

there's no art To find the mind's construction
in the face!

—until at length, finding himself utterly baffled, but unable, save by the removal of his person, to take his eyes from her face, he retires speechless as he came. Such is the man whom we are now to see wandering about the halls and corridors of the great castle-palace.

He may by this time have begun to doubt even the reality of the sight he had seen. The moment the pressure of a marvellous presence is removed, it is in the nature of man the same moment to begin to doubt; and instead of having any reason to wish the apparition a true one, he had every reason to desire to believe it an illusion or a lying spirit. Great were his excuse even if he forced likelihoods, and suborned witnesses in the court of his own judgment. To conclude it false was to think his father in heaven, and his mother not an adulteress, not a murderess! At once to kill his uncle would be to seal these horrible things irrevocable, indisputable facts. Strongest reasons he had for not taking immediate action in vengeance; but no smallest incapacity for action had share in his delay. The Poet takes recurrent pains, as if he foresaw hasty conclusions, to show his hero a man of promptitude, with this truest fitness for action, that he would not make unlawful haste. Without sufficing assurance, he would have no part in the fate either of the uncle he disliked or the mother he loved.]

[Footnote 3: *a doors*, like *an end*. 51, 175.]

[Footnote 4: *undoes*, *frustrates*, *destroys*.]

[Footnote 5: See quotation from *1st Quarto*, 43.]

[Footnote 6: *Quoted or coted: observed*; Fr. *coter*, to mark the number. Compare 95.]

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It seemes it is as proper to our Age, [Sidenote: By heauen it is]
To cast beyond our selues[1] in our Opinions,
As it is common for the yonger sort
To lacke discretion.[2] Come, go we to the King,
This must be knowne, which being kept close might moue
More greefe to hide, then hate to vtter loue.[3] [Sidenote: Come.]
Exeunt.

SCENA SECUNDA.[4]

Enter King, Queene, Rosincrane, and Guildensterne Cum alijs.
[Sidenote: Florish: Enter King and Queene, Rosencraus and

King. Welcome deere *Rosincrance* and *Guildensterne*.
Moreouer,[6] that we much did long to see you,
The neede we haue to vse you, did prouoke
[Sidenote: 92] Our hastie sending.[7] Something haue you heard
Of *Hamlets* transformation: so I call it, [Sidenote: so call]
Since not th'exterior, nor the inward man [Sidenote: Sith nor]
Resembles that it was. What it should bee
More then his Fathers death, that thus hath put him
So much from th'understanding of himselfe,
I cannot deeme of.[8] I intreat you both, [Sidenote: dreame]
That being of so young dayes[9] brought vp with him:
And since so Neighbour'd to[10] his youth,and humour,
[Sidenote: And sith | and hauior,]
That you vouchsafe your rest heere in our Court
Some little time: so by your Companies
To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather
[Sidenote: 116] So much as from Occasions you may gleane,
[Sidenote: occasion]

[A]

That open'd lies within our remedie.[11]

[Footnote A: *Here in the Quarto*:—

Whether ought to vs vnknowne afflicts him thus,]

[Footnote 1:

'to be overwise—to overreach ourselves' 'ambition, which o'erleaps itself,' —*Macbeth*, act i.
sc. 7.]

[Footnote 2: Polonius is a man of faculty. His courtier-life, his self-seeking, his vanity, have made and make him the fool he is.]

[Footnote 3: He hopes now to get his daughter married to the prince.

We have here a curious instance of Shakspeare's not unfrequently excessive condensation. Expanded, the clause would be like this: 'which, being kept close, might move more grief by the hiding of love, than to utter love might move hate:' the grief in the one case might be greater than the hate in the other would be. It verges on confusion, and may not be as Shakspeare wrote it, though it is like his way.

1st Q.

Lets to the king, this madnesse may prooue,
Though wilde a while, yet more true to thy loue.]

[Footnote 4: *Not in Quarto*.]

[Footnote 5: *Q.* has not *Cum alijs*.]

[Footnote 6: 'Moreover that &c.': *moreover* is here used as a preposition, with the rest of the clause for its objective.]

[Footnote 7: *Rosincrance* and *Guildensterne* are, from the first and throughout, the creatures of the king.]

[Footnote 8: The king's conscience makes him suspicious of Hamlet's suspicion.]

[Footnote 9: 'from such an early age'.]

[Footnote 10: 'since then so familiar with'.]

[Footnote 11: 'to gather as much as you may glean from opportunities, of that which, when disclosed to us, will lie within our remedial power.' If the line of the Quarto be included, it makes plainer construction. The line beginning with '*So much*,' then becomes parenthetical, and *to gather* will not immediately govern that line, but the rest of the sentence.]

Qu. Good Gentlemen, he hath much talk'd of you,
And sure I am, two men there are not liuing, [Sidenote: there is not]
To whom he more adheres. If it will please you
To shew vs so much Gentry,[1] and good will,
As to expend your time with vs a-while,
For the supply and profit of our Hope,[2]
Your Visitation shall receiue such thankes
As fits a Kings remembrance.

Rosin. Both your Maiesties
Might by the Soueraigne power you haue of vs,
Put your dread pleasures, more into Command
Then to Entreatie,

Guil. We both[3] obey, [Sidenote: But we]
And here giue vp our selues, in the full bent,[4]
To lay our Seruices freely at your feete, [Sidenote: seruice]
To be commanded.

King. Thankes *Rosin*crance, and gentle *Guildensterne*.

Qu. Thankes *Guildensterne* and gentle *Rosin*crance,[5]
And I beseech you instantly to visit
My too much changed Sonne.
Go some of ye, [Sidenote: you]
And bring the Gentlemen where *Hamlet* is, [Sidenote: bring these]

Guil. Heauens make our presence and our practises Pleasant and helpfull to him. *Exit*[6]

Queene. Amen. [Sidenote: Amen. *Exeunt Ros. and Guyl.*]

Enter Polonius.

[Sidenote: 18] *Pol.* Th'Ambassadors from Norway, my good Lord,
Are ioyfully return'd.

[Footnote 1: gentleness, grace, favour.]

[Footnote 2: Their hope in Hamlet, as their son and heir.]

[Footnote 3: both majesties.]

[Footnote 4: If we put a comma after *bent*, the phrase will mean 'in the full *purpose* or *design* to lay our services &c.' Without the comma, the content of the phrase would be general:—'in the devoted force of our faculty.' The latter is more like Shakspeare.]

[Footnote 5: Is there not tact intended in the queen's reversal of her husband's arrangement of the two names—that each might have precedence, and neither take offence?]

[Footnote 6: *Not in Quarto.*]

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King. Thou still hast bin the Father of good Newes.

Pol. Haue I, my Lord?[1] Assure you, my good Liege,
[Sidenote: I assure my]
I hold my dutie, as I hold my Soule,
Both to my God, one to my gracious King:[2] [Sidenote: God, and to[2]]
And I do thinke, or else this braine of mine
Hunts not the traile of Policie, so sure
As I haue vs'd to do: that I haue found [Sidenote: it hath vsd]
The very cause of *Hamlets* Lunacie.

King. Oh speake of that, that I do long to heare.
[Sidenote: doe I long]

Pol. Giue first admittance to th'Ambassadors, My Newes shall be the Newes to that great Feast,
[Sidenote: the fruite to that]

King. Thy selfe do grace to them, and bring them in.
He tels me my sweet Queene, that he hath found
[Sidenote: my deere Gertrard he]
The head^[3] and sourse of all your Sonnes distemper.

Qu. I doubt it is no other, but the maine, His Fathers death, and our o're-hasty Marriage.^[4]
[Sidenote: our hastie]

Enter Polonius, Voltumand, and Cornelius. [Sidenote: *Enter* Embassadors.]

King. Well, we shall sift him. Welcome good Friends: [Sidenote: my good] Say *Voltumand*, what from our Brother Norway?

Volt. Most faire returne of Greetings, and Desires.
Vpon our first,^[5] he sent out to suppress
His Nephewes Leuies, which to him appear'd
To be a preparation 'gainst the Poleak: [Sidenote: Pollacke,]
But better look'd into, he truly found
It was against your Highnesse, whereat greeued,
That so his Sicknesse, Age, and Impotence
Was falsely borne in hand,^[6] sends^[7] out Arrests
On *Fortinbras*, which he (in breefe) obeyes,

[Footnote 1: To be spoken triumphantly, but in the peculiar tone of one thinking, 'You little know what better news I have behind!']

[Footnote 2: I cannot tell which is the right reading; if the *Q.*'s, it means, '*I hold my duty precious as my soul, whether to my God or my king*'; if the *F.*'s, it is a little confused by the attempt of Polonius to make a fine euphuistic speech:—'*I hold my duty as I hold my soul,—both at the command of my God, one at the command of my king.*']

[Footnote 3: the spring; the river-head

'The spring, the head, the fountain of your blood'

Macbeth, act ii. sc. 3.]

[Footnote 4: She goes a step farther than the king in accounting for Hamlet's misery—knows there is more cause of it yet, but hopes he does not know so much cause for misery as he might know.]

[Footnote 5: Either 'first' stands for *first desire*, or it is a noun, and the meaning of the phrase is, 'The instant we mentioned the matter'.]

[Footnote 6: 'borne in hand'—played with, taken advantage of.

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

Macbeth, act iii. sc. 1.]

[Footnote 7: The nominative pronoun was not *quite* indispensable to the verb in Shakspeare's time.]

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Receiues rebuke from Norway: and in fine,
Makes Vow before his Vnkle, neuer more
To giue th'assay of Armes against your Maiestie.
Whereon old Norway, ouercome with ioy,
Giues him three thousand Crownes in Annuall Fee,
[Sidenote: threescore thousand]
And his Commission to imploy those Soldiers
So leuied as before, against the Poleak: [Sidenote: Pollacke,]
With an intreaty heerein further shewne,
[Sidenote: 190] That it might please you to giue quiet passe
Through your Dominions, for his Enterprize, [Sidenote: for this]
On such regards of safety and allowance,
As therein are set downe.

King. It likes vs well:
And at our more consider'd^[1] time wee'l read,

Answer, and thinke vpon this Businesse.
Meane time we thanke you, for your well-tooke Labour.
Go to your rest, at night wee'l Feast together.[2]
Most welcome home. *Exit Ambass.*

[Sidenote: Exeunt Embassadors]

Pol. This businesse is very well ended.[3] [Sidenote: is well]
My Liege, and Madam, to expostulate[4]
What Maiestie should be, what Dutie is,[5]
Why day is day; night, night; and time is time,
Were nothing but to waste Night, Day and Time.
Therefore, since Breuitie is the Soule of Wit,
[Sidenote: Therefore breuitie]
And tediousnesse, the limbes and outward flourishes,[6]
I will be breefe. Your Noble Sonne is mad:
Mad call I it; for to define true Madnesse,
What is't, but to be nothing else but mad.[7]
But let that go.

Qu. More matter, with lesse Art.[8]

Pol. Madam, I sweare I vse no Art at all:
That he is mad, 'tis true: 'Tis true 'tis pittie, [Sidenote: hee's mad]
And pittie it is true; A foolish figure,[9]
[Sidenote: pittie tis tis true,]

[Footnote 1: time given up to, or filled with consideration; *or, perhaps*, time chosen for a purpose.]

[Footnote 2: He is always feasting.]

[Footnote 3: Now for *his* turn! He sets to work at once with his rhetoric.]

[Footnote 4: to lay down beforehand as postulates.]

[Footnote 5: We may suppose a dash and pause after '*Dutie is*'. The meaning is plain enough, though logical form is wanting.]

[Footnote 6: As there is no imagination in Polonius, we cannot look for great aptitude in figure.]

[Footnote 7: The nature of madness also is a postulate.]

[Footnote 8: She is impatient, but wraps her rebuke in a compliment. Art, so-called, in speech, was much favoured in the time of Elizabeth. And as a compliment Polonius takes the form in which she expresses her dislike of his tediousness, and her anxiety after his news: pretending to wave it off, he yet, in his gratification, coming on the top of his excitement with the importance of his fancied discovery, plunges immediately into a very slough of *art*, and becomes absolutely silly.]

[Footnote 9: It is no figure at all. It is hardly even a play with the words.]

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But farewell it: for I will vse no Art.
Mad let vs grant him then: and now remaines
That we finde out the cause of this effect,
Or rather say, the cause of this defect;
For this effect defectiue, comes by cause,
Thus it remaines, and the remainder thus. Perpend,
I haue a daughter: haue, whil'st she is mine, [Sidenote: while]
Who in her Dutie and Obedience, marke,
Hath giuen me this: now gather, and surmise.

The Letter.[1] *To the Celestiall, and my Soules Idoll, the most beautified Ophelia.* That's an ill Phrase, a vilde Phrase, beautified is a vilde Phrase: but you shall heare these in her thus in her excellent white bosome, these.[2] [Sidenote: these, &c]

Qu. Came this from *Hamlet* to her.

Pol. Good Madam stay awhile, I will be faithfull. *Doubt thou, the Starres are fire,* [Sidenote: *Letter*] *Doubt, that the Sunne doth moue; Doubt Truth to be a Lier, But neuer Doubt, I loue.*[3] *O deere*

Ophelia, I am ill at these Numbers: I haue not Art to reckon my grones; but that I loue thee best, oh most Best beleuee it. Adieu. Thine euermore most deere Lady, whilst this Machine is to him, Hamlet.
 This in Obedience hath my daughter shew'd me: [Sidenote: *Pol.* This showne] And more about hath his soliciting, [Sidenote: more about solicitings] As they fell out by Time, by Meanes, and Place, All giuen to mine eare.

King. But how hath she receiu'd his Loue?

Pol. What do you thinke of me?

King. As of a man, faithfull and Honourable.

Pol. I wold faine proue so. But what might you think?

[Footnote 1: *Not in Quarto.*]

[Footnote 2: *Point thus: 'but you shall heare. These, in her excellent white bosom, these:'*

Ladies, we are informed, wore a small pocket in front of the bodice;—but to accept the fact as an explanation of this passage, is to cast the passage away. Hamlet *addresses* his letter, not to Ophelia's pocket, but to Ophelia herself, at her house—that is, in the palace of her bosom, excellent in whiteness. In like manner, signing himself, he makes mention of his body as a machine of which he has the use for a time. So earnest is Hamlet that when he makes love, he is the more a philosopher. But he is more than a philosopher: he is a man of the Universe, not a man of this world only.

We must not allow the fashion of the time in which the play was written, to cause doubt as to the genuine heartiness of Hamlet's love-making.]

[Footnote 3: *1st Q.*

Doubt that in earth is fire,
 Doubt that the starres doe moue,
 Doubt trueth to be a liar,
 But doe not doubt I loue.]

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When I had seene this hot loue on the wing,
 As I perceiued it, I must tell you that
 Before my Daughter told me, what might you
 Or my deere Maiestie your Queene heere, think,
 If I had playd the Deske or Table-booke,[1]
 Or giuen my heart a winking, mute and dumbe, [Sidenote: working]
 Or look'd vpon this Loue, with idle sight,[2]
 What might you thinke? No, I went round to worke,
 And (my yong Mistris) thus I did bespeake[3]
 Lord *Hamlet* is a Prince out of thy Starre,[4]
 This must not be:[5] and then, I Precepts gaue her,
 [Sidenote: I prescripts]
 That she should locke her selfe from his Resort, [Sidenote: from her]
 [Sidenote: 42[6], 43, 70] Admit no Messengers, receiue no Tokens:
 Which done, she tooke the Fruites of my Aduice,[7]
 And he repulsed. A short Tale to make, [Sidenote: repell'd, a]
 Fell into a Sadnesse, then into a Fast,[8]
 Thence to a Watch, thence into a Weaknesse, [Sidenote: to a wath,]
 Thence to a Lightnesse, and by this declension [Sidenote: to lightnes]
 Into the Madnesse whereon now he raues, [Sidenote: wherein]
 And all we waile for.[9] [Sidenote: mourne for]

King. Do you thinke 'tis this?[10] [Sidenote: thinke this?]

Qu. It may be very likely. [Sidenote: like]

Pol. Hath there bene such a time, I'de fain know that,
 [Sidenote: I would]

That I haue possitiuely said, 'tis so,
 When it prou'd otherwise?

King. Not that I know.

Pol. Take this from this[11]; if this be otherwise,
If Circumstances leade me, I will finde
Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeede
Within the Center.

King. How may we try it further?

[Footnote 1: —behaved like a piece of furniture.]

[Footnote 2: The love of talk makes a man use many idle words, foolish expressions, and useless repetitions.]

[Footnote 3: Notwithstanding the parenthesis, I take 'Mistris' to be the objective to 'bespeake'—that is, *address*.]

[Footnote 4: *Star*, mark of sort or quality; brand (45). The *1st Q.* goes on—

An'd one that is vnequall for your loue:

But it may mean, as suggested by my *Reader*, 'outside thy destiny,'—as ruled by the star of nativity—
and I think it does.]

[Footnote 5: Here is a change from the impression conveyed in the first act: he attributes his interference to his care for what befitted royalty; whereas, talking to Ophelia (40, 72), he attributes it entirely to his care for her;—so partly in the speech correspondent to the present in *1st Q.*:—

Now since which time, seeing his loue thus cross'd,
Which I tooke to be idle, and but sport,
He straitway grew into a melancholy,]

[Footnote 6: See also passage in note from *1st Q.*]

[Footnote 7: She obeyed him. The 'fruits' of his advice were her conformed actions.]

[Footnote 8: When the appetite goes, and the sleep follows, doubtless the man is on the steep slope of madness. But as to Hamlet, and how matters were with him, what Polonius says is worth nothing.]

[Footnote 9: '*wherein* now he raves, and *wherefor* all we wail.'

[Footnote 10: *To the queen*.]

[Footnote 11: head from shoulders.]

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Pol. You know sometimes He walkes foure houres together, heere[1] In the Lobby.

Qu. So he ha's indeed. [Sidenote: he dooes indeede]

[Sidenote: 118] *Pol.* At such a time Ile loose my Daughter to him,
Be you and I behinde an Arras then,
Marke the encounter: If he loue her not,
And be not from his reason falne thereon;
Let me be no Assistant for a State,
And keepe a Farme and Carters. [Sidenote: But keepe]

King. We will try it.

Enter Hamlet reading on a Booke. [2]

Qu. But looke where sadly the poore wretch Comes reading. [3]

Pol. Away I do beseech you, both away, He boord[4] him presently. *Exit King & Queen* [5] Oh giue me leaue. [6] How does my good Lord *Hamlet*?

Ham. Well, God-a-mercy.

Pol. Do you know me, my Lord?

[Sidenote: 180] *Ham.* Excellent, excellent well: y'are a
Fish-monger. [7] [Sidenote: Excellent well, you are]

Pol. Not I my Lord.

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

Pol. Honest, my Lord?

Ham. I sir, to be honest as this world goes, is to be one man pick'd out of two thousand. [Sidenote: tenne thousand[8]]

Pol. That's very true, my Lord.

Ham.[9] For if the Sun breed Magots in a dead dogge, being a good kissing Carrion—[10] [Sidenote: carrion. Have] Have you a daughter?[11]

Pol. I haue my Lord.

[Footnote 1: *1st Q.*

The Princes walke is here in the galery,
There let *Ofelia*, walke vntill hee comes:
Your selfe and I will stand close in the study,]

[Footnote 2: *Not in Quarto.*]

[Footnote 3: *1st Q.*—

King. See where hee comes poring vppon a booke.]

[Footnote 4: The same as accost, both meaning originally *go to the side of.*]

[Footnote 5: *A line back in the Quarto.*]

[Footnote 6: 'Please you to go away.' 89, 203. Here should come the preceding stage-direction.]

[Footnote 7: Now first the Play shows us Hamlet in his affected madness. He has a great dislike to the selfish, time-serving courtier, who, like his mother, has forsaken the memory of his father—and a great distrust of him as well. The two men are moral antipodes. Each is given to moralizing—but compare their reflections: those of Polonius reveal a lover of himself, those of Hamlet a lover of his kind; Polonius is interested in success; Hamlet in humanity.]

[Footnote 8: So also in *1st Q.*]

[Footnote 9: —reading, or pretending to read, the words from the book he carries.]

[Footnote 10: When the passion for emendation takes possession of a man, his opportunities are endless—so many seeming emendations offer themselves which are in themselves not bad, letters and words affording as much play as the keys of a piano. 'Being a god kissing carrion,' is in itself good enough; but Shakspeare meant what stands in both Quarto and Folio: *the dead dog being a carrion good at kissing.* The arbitrary changes of the editors are amazing.]

[Footnote 11: He cannot help his mind constantly turning upon women; and if his thoughts of them are often cruelly false, it is not Hamlet but his mother who is to blame: her conduct has hurled him from the peak of optimism into the bottomless pool of pessimistic doubt, above the foul waters of which he keeps struggling to lift his head.]

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Ham. Let her not walke i'th'Sunne: Conception[1] is a blessing, but not as your daughter may [Sidenote: but as your] conceiue. Friend looke too't.

[Sidenote: 100] *Pol.*[2] How say you by that? Still harping on my daughter: yet he knew me not at first; he said [Sidenote: a sayd I] I was a Fishmonger: he is farre gone, farre gone: [Sidenote: Fishmonger, a is farre gone, and truly] and truly in my youth, I suffred much extreimity and truly for loue: very neere this. Ile speake to him againe.

What do you read my Lord?

Ham. Words, words, words.

Pol. What is the matter, my Lord?

Ham. Betweene who?[3]

Pol. I meane the matter you meane, my [Sidenote: matter that you reade my] Lord.

Ham. Slanders Sir: for the Satyricall slaue [Sidenote: satericall rogue sayes] saies here, that old men haue gray Beards; that their faces are wrinkled; their eyes purging thicke Amber, or Plum-Tree Gumme: and that they haue [Sidenote: Amber, and] a plentifull locke of Wit, together with weake [Sidenote: lacke | with most weake] Hammes. All which Sir, though I most powerfully, and potently beleue; yet I holde it not Honestie[4] to haue it thus set downe: For you [Sidenote: for your selfe sir shall grow old as I am:] your selfe Sir, should be old as I am, if like a Crab you could go backward.

Pol.[5] Though this be madnesse, Yet there is Method in't: will you walke Out of the ayre[6] my Lord?

Ham. Into my Graue?

Pol. Indeed that is out o'th'Ayre:

[Sidenote: that's out of the ayre;]

How pregnant (sometimes) his Replies are?

A happinesse,

That often Madnesse hits on,

Which Reason and Sanitie could not [Sidenote: sanctity]

So prosperously be deliuer'd of.

[Footnote 1: One of the meanings of the word, and more in use then than now, is *understanding*.]

[Footnote 2: (*aside*).]

[Footnote 3: —pretending to take him to mean by *matter*, the *point of quarrel*.]

[Footnote 4: Propriety.]

[Footnote 5: (*aside*).]

[Footnote 6: the draught.]

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[A] I will leaue him,

And sodainely contriue the meanes of meeting

Betweene him,[1] and my daughter.

My Honourable Lord, I will most humbly

Take my leaue of you.

Ham. You cannot Sir take from[2] me any thing, that I will more willingly part withall, except my [Sidenote: will not more | my life, except my] life, my life.[3] [Sidenote: *Enter Gylldersterne, and Rosencrans.*]

Polon. Fare you well my Lord.

Ham. These tedious old fooles.

Polon. You goe to seeke my Lord *Hamlet*; [Sidenote: the Lord] there hee is.

Enter Rosincran and Guildensterne.[4]

Rosin. God saue you Sir.

Guild. Mine honour'd Lord?

Rosin. My most deare Lord?

Ham. My excellent good friends? How do'st [Sidenote: My extent good] thou *Guildensterne*? Oh, *Rosincrane*; good Lads: [Sidenote: A Rosencraus] How doe ye both? [Sidenote: you]

Rosin. As the indifferent Children of the earth.

Guild. Happy, in that we are not ouer-happy: [Sidenote: euer happy on] on Fortunes Cap, we are not the very Button. [Sidenote: Fortunes lap,]

Ham. Nor the Soales of her Shoo?

Rosin. Neither my Lord.

Ham. Then you lue about her waste, or in the middle of her fauour? [Sidenote: fauors.]

Guil. Faith, her priuates, we.

Ham. In the secret parts of Fortune? Oh, most true: she is a Strumpet.[5] What's the newes?
[Sidenote: What newes?]

Rosin. None my Lord; but that the World's [Sidenote: but the] growne honest.

Ham. Then is Doomesday neere: But your

[Footnote A: *In the Quarto, the speech ends thus:—*I will leaue him and my daughter.[6] My Lord, I will take my leaue of you.]

[Footnote 1: From 'And sodainely' to 'betweene him,' *not in Quarto.*]

[Footnote 2: It is well here to recall the modes of the word *leave*: 'Give me leave,' Polonius says with proper politeness to the king and queen when he wants *them* to go—that is, 'Grant me your *departure*'; but he would, going himself, *take* his leave, his departure, *of* or *from* them—by their permission to go. Hamlet means, 'You cannot take from me anything I will more willingly part with than your leave, or, my permission to you to go.' 85, 203. See the play on the two meanings of the word in *Twelfth Night*, act ii. sc. 4:

Duke. Give me now leave to leave thee;

though I suspect it ought to be—

Duke. Give me now leave.

Clown. To leave thee!—Now, the melancholy &c.]

[Footnote 3: It is a relief to him to speak the truth under the cloak of madness—ravingly. He has no one to whom to open his heart: what lies there he feels too terrible for even the eye of Horatio. He has not apparently told him as yet more than the tale of his father's murder.]

[Footnote 4: *Above, in Quarto.*]

[Footnote 5: In this and all like utterances of Hamlet, we see what worm it is that lies gnawing at his heart.]

[Footnote 6: This is a slip in the *Quarto*—rectified in the *Folio*: his daughter was not present.]

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newes is not true.[1] [2] Let me question more in particular: what haue you my good friends, deserued at the hands of Fortune, that she sends you to Prison hither?

Guil. Prison, my Lord?

Ham. Denmark's a Prison.

Rosin. Then is the World one.

Ham. A goodly one, in which there are many Confines, Wards, and Dungeons; *Denmarke* being one o'th'worst.

Rosin. We thinke not so my Lord.

Ham. Why then 'tis none to you; for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so[3]: to me it is a prison.

Rosin. Why then your Ambition makes it one: 'tis too narrow for your minde.[4]

Ham. O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell, and count my selfe a King of infinite space; were it not that I haue bad dreames.

Guil. Which dreames indeed are Ambition: for the very substance[5] of the Ambitious, is meere the shadow of a Dreame.

Ham. A dreame it selfe is but a shadow.

Rosin. Truly, and I hold Ambition of so airy and light a quality, that it is but a shadowes shadow.

Ham. Then are our Beggers bodies; and our Monarchs and out-stretcht Heroes the Beggers Shadowes: shall wee to th'Court: for, by my fey[6] I cannot reason?[7]

Both. Wee'l wait vpon you.

Ham. No such matter.[8] I will not sort you with the rest of my seruants: for to speake to you like an honest man: I am most dreadfully attended;[9] but in the beaten way of friendship,[10] [Sidenote: But in]

What make you at *Elsonower*?

[Footnote 1: 'it is not true that the world is grown honest': he doubts themselves. His eye is sharper because his heart is sorer since he left Wittenberg. He proceeds to examine them.]

[Footnote 2: This passage, beginning with 'Let me question,' and ending with 'dreadfully attended,' is not in the *Quarto*.

Who inserted in the Folio this and other passages? Was it or was it not Shakspeare? Beyond a doubt they are Shakspeare's all. Then who omitted those omitted? Was Shakspeare incapable of refusing any of his own work? Or would these editors, who profess to have all opportunity, and who, belonging to the theatre, must have had the best of opportunities, have desired or dared to omit what far more painstaking editors have since presumed, though out of reverence, to restore?]

[Footnote 3: 'but it is thinking that makes it so:']

[Footnote 4: —feeling after the cause of Hamlet's strangeness, and following the readiest suggestion, that of chagrin at missing the succession.]

[Footnote 5: objects and aims.]

[Footnote 6: *foi*.]

[Footnote 7: Does he choose beggars as the representatives of substance because they lack ambition—that being shadow? Or does he take them as the shadows of humanity, that, following Rosincrance, he may get their shadows, the shadows therefore of shadows, to parallel *monarchs* and *heroes*? But he is not satisfied with his own analogue—therefore will to the court, where good logic is not wanted—where indeed he knows a hellish lack of reason.]

[Footnote 8: 'On no account.']

[Footnote 9: 'I have very bad servants.' Perhaps he judges his servants spies upon him. Or might he mean that he was *haunted with bad thoughts*? Or again, is it a stroke of his pretence of madness—suggesting imaginary followers?]

[Footnote: 10: 'to speak plainly, as old friends.']

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Rosin. To visit you my Lord, no other occasion.

Ham. Begger that I am, I am euen poore in [Sidenote: am ever poore] thankes; but I thanke you: and sure deare friends my thanks are too deare a halfepeny[1]; were you [Sidenote: 72] not sent for? Is it your owne inclining? Is it a free visitation?[2] Come, deale iustly with me: come, come; nay speake. [Sidenote: come, come,]

Guil. What should we say my Lord?[3]

Ham. Why any thing. But to the purpose; [Sidenote: Any thing but to'th purpose:] you were sent for; and there is a kinde confession [Sidenote: kind of confession] in your lookes; which your modesties haue not craft enough to color, I know the good King and [Sidenote: 72] Queene haue sent for you.

Rosin. To what end my Lord?

Ham. That you must teach me: but let mee coniure[4] you by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth,[5] by the Obligation of our euer-preserued loue, and by what more deare, a better proposer could charge you withall; [Sidenote: can] be euen and direct with me, whether you

were sent for or no.

Rosin. What say you?[6]

Ham. Nay then I haue an eye of you[7]: if you loue me hold not off.[8]

[Sidenote: 72] *Guil.* My Lord, we were sent for.

Ham. I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation preuent your discouery of your secrecie to [Sidenote: discovery, and your secrecie to the King and Queene moult no feather,[10]] the King and Queene[9] moult no feather, I haue [Sidenote: 116] of late, but wherefore I know not, lost all my mirth, forgone all custome of exercise; and indeed, [Sidenote: exercises;] it goes so heauenly with my disposition; that this [Sidenote: heauily] goodly frame the Earth, seemes to me a sterrill Promontory; this most excellent Canopy the Ayre, look you, this braue ore-hanging, this Maiesticall [Sidenote: orehanging firmament,] Roofe, fretted with golden fire: why, it appeares no [Sidenote: appeareth]

[Footnote 1: —because they were by no means hearty thanks.]

[Footnote 2: He wants to know whether they are in his uncle's employment and favour; whether they pay court to himself for his uncle's ends.]

[Footnote 3: He has no answer ready.]

[Footnote 4: He will not cast them from him without trying a direct appeal to their old friendship for plain dealing. This must be remembered in relation to his treatment of them afterwards. He affords them every chance of acting truly—conjuring them to honesty—giving them a push towards repentance.]

[Footnote 5: Either, 'the harmony of our young days,' or, 'the sympathies of our present youth.']

[Footnote 6: —to *Guildestern*.]

[Footnote 7: (*aside*) 'I will keep an eye upon you;'.]

[Footnote 8: 'do not hold back.']

[Footnote 9: The *Quarto* seems here to have the right reading.]

[Footnote 10: 'your promise of secrecy remain intact;'.]

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other thing to mee, then a foule and pestilent congregation [Sidenote: nothing to me but a] of vapours. What a piece of worke is [Sidenote: what peece] a man! how Noble in Reason? how infinite in faculty? in forme and mouing how expresse and [Sidenote: faculties,] admirable? in Action, how like an Angel? in apprehension, how like a God? the beauty of the world, the Parragon of Animals; and yet to me, what is this Quintessence of Dust? Man delights not me;[1] no, nor Woman neither; though by your [Sidenote: not me, nor women] smiling you seeme to say so.[2]

Rosin. My Lord, there was no such stufte in my thoughts.

Ham. Why did you laugh, when I said, Man [Sidenote: yee laugh then, when] delights not me?

Rosin. To thinke, my Lord, if you delight not in Man, what Lenton entertainment the Players shall receiue from you:[3] wee coated them[4] on the way, and hither are they comming to offer you Seruice.

Ham.[5] He that playes the King shall be welcome; his Maiesty shall haue Tribute of mee: [Sidenote: on me,] the aduenturous Knight shal vse his Foyle and Target: the Louer shall not sigh *gratis*, the humorous man[6] shall end his part in peace: [7] the Clowne shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickled a'th' sere:[8] and the Lady shall say her minde freely; or the blanke Verse shall halt for't[9]: [Sidenote: black verse] what Players are they?

Rosin. Euen those you Were wont to take [Sidenote: take such delight] delight in the Tragedians of the City.

Ham. How chances it they trauaile? their residence both in reputation and profit was better both wayes.

Rosin. I thinke their Inhibition comes by the meanes of the late Innouation?[10]

[Footnote 1: A genuine description, so far as it goes, of the state of Hamlet's mind. But he does not

reveal the operating cause—his loss of faith in women, which has taken the whole poetic element out of heaven, earth, and humanity: he would have his uncle's spies attribute his condition to mere melancholy.]

[Footnote 2: —said angrily, I think.]

[Footnote 3: —a ready-witted subterfuge.]

[Footnote 4: came alongside of them; got up with them; apparently rather from Fr. *côté* than *coter*, like *accost*. Compare 71. But I suspect it only means *noted*, *observed*, and is from *coter*.]

[Footnote 5: —with humorous imitation, perhaps, of each of the characters.]

[Footnote 6: —the man with a whim.]

[Footnote 7: This part of the speech—from [7] to [8], is not in the *Quarto*.]

[Footnote 8: Halliwell gives a quotation in which the touch-hole of a pistol is called the *sere*: the *sere*, then, of the lungs would mean the opening of the lungs—the part with which we laugh: those 'whose lungs are tickled a' th' sere,' are such as are ready to laugh on the least provocation: *tickled—irritable*, *ticklish*—ready to laugh, as another might be to cough. 'Tickled o' the sere' was a common phrase, signifying, thus, *propense*.

1st Q. The clowne shall make them laugh That are tickled in the lungs,]

[Footnote 9: Does this refer to the pause that expresses the unutterable? or to the ruin of the measure of the verse by an incompetent heroine?]

[Footnote 10: Does this mean, 'I think their prohibition comes through the late innovation,'—of the children's acting; or, 'I think they are prevented from staying at home by the late new measures,'—such, namely, as came of the puritan opposition to stage-plays? This had grown so strong, that, in 1600, the Privy Council issued an order restricting the number of theatres in London to two: by such an *innovation* a number of players might well be driven to the country.]

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Ham. Doe they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the City? Are they so follow'd?

Rosin. No indeed, they are not. [Sidenote: are they not.]

[1]*Ham.* How comes it? doe they grow rusty?

Rosin. Nay, their indeauour keepest in the wonted pace; But there is Sir an ayrie of Children,[2] little Yases,[3] that crye out[4] on the top of question;[5] and are most tyrannically clap't for't: these are now the fashion, and so be-rattled the common Stages[6] (so they call them) that many wearing Rapiers,[7] are affraide of Goose-quils, and dare scarce come thither.[8]

Ham. What are they Children? Who maintains 'em? How are they escoted?[9] Will they pursue the Quality[10] no longer then they cansing?[11] Will they not say afterwards if they should grow themselues to common Players (as it is like most[12] if their meanes are no better) their Writers[13] do them wrong, to make them exclaim against their owne Succession.[14]

Rosin. Faith there ha's bene much to do on both sides: and the Nation holds it no sinne, to tarre them[15] to Controuersie. There was for a while, no mony bid for argument, vnlesse the Poet and the Player went to Cuffes in the Question.[16]

Ham. Is't possible?

Guild. Oh there ha's beene much throwing about of Braines.

Ham. Do the Boyes carry it away?[17]

Rosin. I that they do my Lord, *Hercules* and his load too.[18]

Ham. It is not strange: for mine Vnckle is [Sidenote: not very strange, | my] King of Denmarke, and those that would make mowes at him while my Father liued; giue twenty, [Sidenote: make mouths]

[Footnote 1: The whole of the following passage, beginning with 'How comes it,' and ending with 'Hercules and his load too,' belongs to the *Folio* alone—is not in the *Quarto*.

In the *1st Quarto* we find the germ of the passage—unrepresented in the *2nd*, developed in the *Folio*.

Ham. Players, what Players be they?

Ross. My Lord, the Tragedians of the Citty,
Those that you tooke delight to see so often.

Ham. How comes it that they trauell? Do they grow restie?

Gil. No my Lord, their reputation holds as it was wont.

Ham. How then?

Gil. Yfaith my Lord, noueltie carries it away,
For the principall publike audience that
Came to them, are turned to priuate playes,[19]
And to the humour[20] of children.

Ham. I doe not greatly wonder of it,
For those that would make mops and moes
At my vncke, when my father liued, &c.]

[Footnote 2: *a nest of children.* The acting of the children of two or three of the chief choirs had become the rage.]

[Footnote 3: *Eyases*—unfledged hawks.]

[Footnote 4: Children *cry out* rather than *speak* on the stage.]

[Footnote 5: 'cry out beyond dispute'—*unquestionably*; 'cry out and no mistake.' 'He does not top his part.' *The Rehearsal*, iii. 1.—'He is not up to it.' But perhaps here is intended *above reason*: 'they cry out excessively, excruciatingly.' 103.

This said, in top of rage the lines she rents,—*A Lover's Complaint.*]

[Footnote 6: I presume it should be the present tense, *berattle*—except the *are* of the preceding member be understood: 'and so berattled *are* the common stages.' If the *present*, then the children 'so abuse the grown players,'—in the pieces they acted, particularly in the new *arguments*, written for them—whence the reference to *goose-quills.*]

[Footnote 7: —of the play-going public.]

[Footnote 8: —for dread of sharing in the ridicule.]

[Footnote 9: *paid*—from the French *escot*, a shot or reckoning: *Dr. Johnson.*]

[Footnote 10: —the quality of players; the profession of the stage.]

[Footnote 11: 'Will they cease playing when their voices change?']

[Footnote 12: Either *will* should follow here, or *like* and *most* must change places.]

[Footnote 13: 'those that write for them'.]

[Footnote 14: —what they had had to come to themselves.]

[Footnote 15: 'to incite the children and the grown players to controversy': *to tarre them on like dogs*: see *King John*, iv. 1.]

[Footnote 16: 'No stage-manager would buy a new argument, or prologue, to a play, unless the dramatist and one of the actors were therein represented as falling out on the question of the relative claims of the children and adult actors.']

[Footnote 17: 'Have the boys the best of it?']

[Footnote 18: 'That they have, out and away.' Steevens suggests that allusion is here made to the sign of the Globe Theatre—Hercules bearing the world for Atlas.]

[Footnote 19: amateur-plays.]

[Footnote 20: whimsical fashion.]

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forty, an hundred Ducates a peece, for his picture[1] [Sidenote: fortie, fifty, a hundred] in Little.[2] There is something in this more then [Sidenote: little, s'bloud there is] Naturall, if Philosophic could finde it out.

Flourish for tke Players.[3] [Sidenote: A *Florish.*]

Guil. There are the Players.

Ham. Gentlemen, you are welcom to *Elsonower*: your hands, come: The appurtenance of [Sidenote: come then, th'] Welcome, is Fashion and Ceremony. Let me [Sidenote: 260] comply with you in the Garbe,[4] lest my extent[5] to [Sidenote: in this garb: let me extent] the Players (which I tell you must shew fairely outward) should more appeare like entertainment[6] [Sidenote: outwards,] then yours.[7] You are welcome: but my Vnckle Father, and Aunt Mother are deceiu'd.

Guil. In what my deere Lord?

Ham. I am but mad North, North-West: when the Winde is Southerly, I know a Hawke from a Handsaw.[8]

Enter Polonius.

Pol. Well[9] be with you Gentlemen.

Ham. Hearke you *Guildensterne*, and you too: at each eare a hearer: that great Baby you see there, is not yet out of his swathing clouts. [Sidenote: swadling clouts.]

Rosin. Happily he's the second time come to [Sidenote: he is] them: for they say, an old man is twice a childe.

Ham. I will Prophetise. Hee comes to tell me of the Players. Mark it, you say right Sir: for a [Sidenote: sir, a Monday] Monday morning 'twas so indeed.[10] [Sidenote: t'was then indeede.]

Pol. My Lord, I haue Newes to tell you.

Ham. My Lord, I haue Newes to tell you. When *Rossius* an Actor in Rome—[11] [Sidenote: *Rossius* was an]

Pol. The Actors are come hither my Lord.

Ham. Buzze, buzze.[12]

Pol. Vpon mine Honor.[13] [Sidenote: my]

Ham. Then can each Actor on his Asse— [Sidenote: came each]

[Footnote 1: If there be any logical link here, except that, after the instance adduced, no change in social fashion—nothing at all indeed, is to be wondered at, I fail to see it. Perhaps the speech is intended to belong to the simulation. The last sentence of it appears meant to convey the impression that he suspects nothing—is only bewildered by the course of things.]

[Footnote 2: his miniature.]

[Footnote 3: —to indicate their approach.]

[Footnote 4: *com'ply*—accent on first syllable—'pass compliments with you' (260)—*in the garb*, either 'in appearance,' or 'in the fashion of the hour.')

[Footnote 5: 'the amount of courteous reception I extend'—'my advances to the players.')

[Footnote 6: reception, welcome.]

[Footnote 7: He seems to desire that they shall no more be on the footing of fellow-students, and thus to rid himself of the old relation. Perhaps he hints that they are players too. From any further show of friendliness he takes refuge in convention—and professed convention—supplying a reason in order to escape a dangerous interpretation of his sudden formality—'lest you should suppose me more cordial to the players than to you.' The speech is full of inwoven irony, doubtful, and refusing to be ravelled out. With what merely half-shown, yet scathing satire it should be spoken and accompanied!]

[Footnote 8: A proverb of the time comically corrupted—*handsaw for hernshaw*—a heron, the quarry of the hawk. He denies his madness as madmen do—and in terms themselves not unbefitting madness—so making it seem the more genuine. Yet every now and then, urged by the commotion of his being, he

treads perilously on the border of self-betrayal.]

[Footnote 9: used as a noun.]

[Footnote 10: *Point thus*: 'Mark it.—You say right, sir; &c.' He takes up a speech that means nothing, and might mean anything, to turn aside the suspicion their whispering might suggest to Polonius that they had been talking about him—so better to lay his trap for him.]

[Footnote 11: He mentions the *actor* to lead Polonius so that his prophecy of him shall come true.]

[Footnote 12: An interjection of mockery: he had made a fool of him.]

[Footnote 13: Polonius thinks he is refusing to believe him.]

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Polon. The best Actors in the world, either for Tragedie, Comedie, Historic, Pastorall: Pastorall-Comicall-Historicall-Pastorall: [1] Tragical-Historicall: Tragical-Comical—Historicall-Pastorall[1]: Scene indiuible,[2] or Poem vnlimited.[3] *Seneca* cannot
[Sidenote: scene indeuidible,[2]]
be too heauy, nor *Plautus* too light, for the law of Writ, and the Liberty. These are the onely men.[4]

Ham. O *Iephta* Iudge of Israel, what a Treasure had'st thou?

Pol. What a Treasure had he, my Lord?[5]

Ham. Why one faire Daughter, and no more,[6] The which he loued passing well.[6]

[Sidenote: 86] *Pol.* Still on my Daughter.

Ham. Am I not i'th'right old *Iephta*?

Polon. If you call me *Iephta* my Lord, I haue a daughter that I loue passing well.

Ham. Nay that followes not.[7]

Polon. What followes then, my Lord?

Ham. Why, As by lot, God wot:[6] and then you know, It came to passe, as most like it was:[6] The first rowe of the *Pons*[8] *Chanson* will shew you more, [Sidenote: pious chanson] For looke where my Abridgements[9] come. [Sidenote: abridgment[9] comes]

Enter foure or fiue Players. [Sidenote: *Enter the Players.*]

Y'are welcome Masters, welcome all. I am glad [Sidenote: You are] to see thee well: Welcome good Friends. O my [Sidenote: oh old friend, why thy face is valant[10]] olde Friend? Thy face is valiant[10] since I saw thee last: Com'st thou to beard me in Denmarke? What, my yong Lady and Mistris?[11] Byrlady [Sidenote: by lady] your Ladiship is neerer Heauen then when I saw [Sidenote: nerer to] you last, by the altitude of a Choppine.[12] Pray God your voice like a peece of vncurrant Gold be not crack'd within the ring.[13] Masters, you are all welcome: wee'l e'ne to't like French Faulconers,[14] [Sidenote: like friendly Fankner] flie at any thing we see: wee'l haue a Speech

[Footnote 1: From [1] to [1] is not in the *Quarto*.]

[Footnote 2: Does this phrase mean *all in one scene*?]

[Footnote 3: A poem to be recited only—one not *limited*, or *divided* into speeches.]

[Footnote 4: *Point thus*: 'too light. For the law of Writ, and the Liberty, these are the onely men':—*either for written plays, that is, or for those in which the players extemporized their speeches.*

1st Q. 'For the law hath writ those are the onely men.'

[Footnote 5: Polonius would lead him on to talk of his daughter.]

[Footnote 6: These are lines of the first stanza of an old ballad still in existence. Does Hamlet suggest that as Jephthah so Polonius had sacrificed his daughter? Or is he only desirous of making him talk about her?]

[Footnote 7: 'That is not as the ballad goes.']

[Footnote 8: That this is a corruption of the *pious* in the *Quarto*, is made clearer from the *1st Quarto*: 'the first verse of the godly Ballet wil tel you all.']

[Footnote 9: *abridgment*—that which *abridges*, or cuts short. His 'Abridgements' were the Players.]

[Footnote 10: *1st Q.* 'Vallanced'—*with a beard*, that is. Both readings may be correct.]

[Footnote 11: A boy of course: no women had yet appeared on the stage.]

[Footnote 12: A Venetian boot, stilted, sometimes very high.]

[Footnote 13: —because then it would be unfit for a woman-part. A piece of gold so worn that it had a crack reaching within the inner circle was no longer current. *1st Q.* 'in the ring:'—was a pun intended?]

[Footnote 14: —like French sportsmen of the present day too.]

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straight. Come giue vs a tast of your quality: come, a passionate speech.

1. Play. What speech, my Lord? [Sidenote: my good Lord?]

Ham. I heard thee speak me a speech once, but it was neuer Acted: or if it was, not aboue once, for the Play I remember pleas'd not the Million, 'twas *Cauiarie* to the Generall[1]: but it was (as I receiu'd it, and others, whose iudgement in such matters, cried in the top of mine)[2] an excellent Play; well digested in the Scoenes, set downe with as much modestie, as cunning.[3] I remember one said there was no Sallets[4] in the lines, to make the [Sidenote: were] matter sauoury; nor no matter in the phrase,[5] that might indite the Author of affectation, but cal'd it [Sidenote: affection,] an honest method[A]. One cheefe Speech in it, I [Sidenote: one speech in't I] cheefely lou'd, 'twas *Aeneas* Tale to *Dido*, and [Sidenote: *Aeneas* talke to] thereabout of it especially, where he speaks of [Sidenote: when] *Priams*[6] slaughter. If it liue in your memory, begin at this Line, let me see, let me see: The rugged *Pyrrhus* like th'*Hyrceanian* Beast.[7] It is [Sidenote: tis not] not so: it begins[8] with *Pyrrhus*.[9]

[10] The rugged *Pyrrhus*, he whose Sable Armes[11]
Blacke as his purpose, did the night resemble
When he lay couched in the Ominous[12] Horse,
Hath now this dread and blacke Complexion smear'd
With Heraldry more dismall: Head to foote
Now is he to take Geulles,[13] horridly Trick'd
[Sidenote: is he totall Gules [18]]
With blood of Fathers, Mothers, Daughters, Sonnes,
[14] Bak'd and impasted with the parching streets,
That lend a tyrannous, and damned light [Sidenote: and a damned]

[Footnote A: *Here in the Quarto*:— as wholesome as sweete, and by very much, more handsome then fine:]

[Footnote 1: The salted roe of the sturgeon is a delicacy disliked by most people.]

[Footnote 2: 'were superior to mine.'

The *1st Quarto* has,

'Cried in the toppe of their iudgements, an excellent play,'—that is, *pronounced it, to the best of their judgments, an excellent play.*

Note the difference between 'the top of *my* judgment', and 'the top of *their* judgments'. 97.]

[Footnote 3: skill.]

[Footnote 4: coarse jests. 25, 67.]

[Footnote 5: *style.*]

[Footnote 6: *1st Q.* 'Princes slaughter.']

[Footnote 7: *1st Q.* 'th'arganian beast:' 'the Hyrcan tiger,' *Macbeth*, iii. 4.]

[Footnote 8: 'it *begins*': emphasis on begins.]

[Footnote 9: A pause; then having recollected, he starts afresh.]

[Footnote 10: These passages are Shakspeare's own, not quotations: the Quartos differ. But when he wrote them he had in his mind a phantom of Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage*. I find Steevens has made a similar conjecture, and quotes from Marlowe two of the passages I had marked as being like passages here.]

[Footnote 11: The poetry is admirable in its kind—intentionally *charged*, to raise it to the second stage-level, above the blank verse, that is, of the drama in which it is set, as that blank verse is raised above the ordinary level of speech. 143.

The correspondent passage in *1st Q.* runs nearly parallel for a few lines.]

[Footnote 12:—like *portentous*.]

[Footnote 13: 'all red', *1st Q.* 'tollall guise.']

[Footnote 14: Here the *1st Quarto* has:—

Back't and imparched in calagulate gore,
Rifted in earth and fire, olde grandsire *Pryam* seekes:
So goe on.]

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To their vilde Murthers, roasted in wrath and fire,
[Sidenote: their Lords murther,]

And thus o're-sized with coagulate gore,
With eyes like Carbuncles, the hellish *Pyrrhus*
Old Grandsire *Priam* seekes.[1]

[Sidenote: seekes; so proceede you.[2]]

Pol. Fore God, my Lord, well spoken, with good accent, and good discretion.[3]

1. Player. Anon he findes him, [Sidenote: *Play*]
Striking too short at Greekes.[4] His anticke Sword,
Rebellious to his Arme, lyes where it falles
Repugnant to command[4]: vnequall match, [Sidenote: matcht,]
Pyrrhus at *Priam* driues, in Rage strikes wide:
But with the whiffe and winde of his fell Sword,
Th'vnnerued Father fals.[5] Then senselesse Illium,[6]
Seeming to feele his blow, with flaming top
[Sidenote: seele[7] this blowe,]
Stoopest to his Bace, and with a hideous crash
Takes Prisoner *Pyrrhus* eare. For loe, his Sword
Which was declining on the Milkie head
Of Reuerend *Priam*, seem'd i'th'Ayre to sticke:
So as a painted Tyrant *Pyrrhus* stood,[8] [Sidenote: stood Like]
And like a Newtrall to his will and matter,[9] did nothing.[10]
[11] But as we often see against some storme,
A silence in the Heauens, the Racke stand still,
The bold windes speechlesse, and the Orbe below
As hush as death: Anon the dreadfull Thunder
[Sidenote: 110] Doth rend the Region.[11] So after *Pyrrhus* pause,
Arowded Vengeance sets him new a-worke,
And neuer did the Cyclops hammers fall
On Mars his Armours, forg'd for prooffe Eterne,
[Sidenote: *Marses* Armor]

With lesse remorse then *Pyrrhus* bleeding sword
Now falles on *Priam*.

[12] Out, out, thou Strumpet-Fortune, all you Gods,
In generall Synod take away her power:
Breake all the Spokes and Fallies from her wheele, [Sidenote: follies]

[Footnote 1: This, though horrid enough, is in degree below the description in *Dido*.]

[Footnote 2: He is directing the player to take up the speech there where he leaves it. See last quotation from *1st Q.*]

[Footnote 3: *judgment.*]

[Footnote 4: —with an old man's under-reaching blows—till his arm is so jarred by a missed blow, that he cannot raise his sword again.]

[Footnote 5:

Whereat he lifted up his bedrid limbs,
And would have grappled with Achilles' son,

* * * * *

Which he, disdainning, whisk'd his sword about,
And with the wound[13] thereof the king fell down.

Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage.*]

[Footnote 6: The *Quarto* has omitted '*Then senselesse Illium,*' or something else.]

[Footnote 7: Printed with the long f[symbol for archaic long s].]

[Footnote 8: —motionless as a tyrant in a picture.]

[Footnote 9: 'standing between his will and its object as if he had no relation to either.']

[Footnote 10:

And then in triumph ran into the streets,
Through which he could not pass for slaughtered men;
So, leaning on his sword, he stood stone still,
Viewing the fire wherewith rich Ilion burnt.

Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage.*]

[Footnote 11: Who does not feel this passage, down to 'Region,' thoroughly Shakspearean!]

[Footnote 12: Is not the rest of this speech very plainly Shakspeare's?]

[Footnote 13: *wind*, I think it should be.]

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And boule the round Naue downe the hill of Heauen,
As low as to the Fiends.

Pol. This is too long.

Ham. It shall to'th Barbaras, with your beard. [Sidenote: to the] Prythee say on: He's for a Iigge, or a tale of Baudry, or hee sleepes. Say on; come to *Hecuba*.

1. Play. But who, O who, had seen the inobled[1] Queen. [Sidenote: But who, a woe, had | mobled[1]]

Ham. The inobled[1] Queene? [Sidenote: mobled]

Pol. That's good: Inobled[1] Queene is good.[2]

1. Play. Run bare-foot vp and downe,
Threatning the flame [Sidenote: flames]
With Bisson Rheume:[3] A clout about that head, [Sidenote: clout vpon]
Where late the Diadem stood, and for a Robe
About her lanke and all ore-teamed Loines,[4]
A blanket in th'Alarum of feare caught vp. [Sidenote: the alarme]
Who this had seene, with tongue in Venome steep'd,
'Gainst Fortunes State, would Treason haue pronounc'd?[5]
But if the Gods themselues did see her then,
When she saw *Pyrrhus* make malicious sport
In mincing with his Sword her Husbands limbes,[6] [Sidenote: husband]
The instant Burst of Clamour that she made

(Vnlesse things mortall moue them not at all)
Would haue made milche[7] the Burning eyes of Heauen,
And passion in the Gods.[8]

Pol. Looke where[9] he ha's not turn'd his colour, and ha's teares in's eyes. Pray you no more.
[Sidenote: prethee]

Ham. 'Tis well, He haue thee speake out the rest, soone. Good my Lord, will you see the [Sidenote: rest of this] Players wel bestow'd. Do ye heare, let them be [Sidenote: you] well vs'd: for they are the Abstracts and breefe [Sidenote: abstract] Chronicles of the time. After your death, you

[Footnote 1: '*mobled*'—also in *1st Q.*—may be the word: *muffled* seems a corruption of it: compare *mob-cap*, and

'The moon does mobble up herself'

—*Shirley*, quoted by *Farmer*;

but I incline to '*inobled*,' thrice in the *Folio*—once with a capital: I take it to stand for '*ignobled*,' *degraded*.]

[Footnote 2: 'Inobled Queene is good.' *Not in Quarto*.]

[Footnote 3: —threatening to put the flames out with blind tears: '*bisen*,' *blind*—Ang. Sax.]

[Footnote 4: —she had had so many children.]

[Footnote 5: There should of course be no point of interrogation here.]

[Footnote 6:

This butcher, whilst his hands were yet held up,
Treading upon his breast, struck off his hands.

Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage*.]

[Footnote 7: '*milche*'—capable of giving milk: here *capable of tears*, which the burning eyes of the gods were not before.]

[Footnote 8: 'And would have made passion in the Gods.']

[Footnote 9: 'whether'.]

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were better haue a bad Epitaph, then their ill report while you liued.[1] [Sidenote: live]

Pol. My Lord, I will vse them according to their desart.

Ham. Gods bodykins man, better. Vse euerie [Sidenote: bodkin man, much better,] man after his desart, and who should scape whipping: [Sidenote: shall] vse them after your own Honor and Dignity. The lesse they deserue, the more merit is in your bountie. Take them in.

Pol. Come sirs. *Exit Polon*. [2]

Ham. Follow him Friends: wee'l heare a play to morrow.[3] Dost thou heare me old Friend, can you play the murther of *Gonzago*?

Play. I my Lord.

Ham. Wee'l ha't to morrow night. You could for a need[4] study[5] a speech of some dosen or sixteene [Sidenote: for neede | dosen lines, or] lines, which I would set downe, and insert in't? Could ye not?[6] [Sidenote: you]

Play. I my Lord.

Ham. Very well. Follow that Lord, and looke you mock him not.[7] My good Friends, Ile leaue you til night you are welcome to *Elsonower*? [Sidenote: *Exeuent Pol. and Players*.]

Rosin. Good my Lord. *Exeunt*.

Manet Hamlet. [8]

Ham. I so, God buy'ye[9]: Now I am alone. [Sidenote: buy to you,[9]]
Oh what a Rogue and Pesant slaue am I?[10]
Is it not monstrous that this Player heere,[11]
But in a Fixion, in a dreame of Passion,
Could force his soule so to his whole conceit,[12]
 [Sidenote: his own conceit]
That from her working, all his visage warm'd;
 [Sidenote: all the visage wand,]
Teares in his eyes, distraction in's Aspect, [Sidenote: in his]
A broken voyce, and his whole Function suiting [Sidenote: an his]
With Formes, to his Conceit?[13] And all for nothing?

[Footnote 1: Why do the editors choose the present tense of the *Quarto*? Hamlet does not mean, 'It is worse to have the ill report of the Players while you live, than a bad epitaph after your death.' The order of the sentence has provided against that meaning. What he means is, that their ill report in life will be more against your reputation after death than a bad epitaph.]

[Footnote 2: *Not in Quarto.*]

[Footnote 3: He detains their leader.]

[Footnote 4: 'for a special reason'.]

[Footnote 5: *Study* is still the Player's word for *commit to memory*.]

[Footnote 6: Note Hamlet's quick resolve, made clearer towards the end of the following soliloquy.]

[Footnote 7: Polonius is waiting at the door: this is intended for his hearing.]

[Footnote 8: *Not in Q.*]

[Footnote 9: Note the varying forms of *God be with you*.]

[Footnote 10: *1st Q.*]

Why what a dunghill idiote slaue am I?
Why these Players here draw water from eyes:
For Hecuba, why what is Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba?]

[Footnote 11: Everything rings on the one hard, fixed idea that possesses him; but this one idea has many sides. Of late he has been thinking more upon the woman-side of it; but the Player with his speech has brought his father to his memory, and he feels he has been forgetting him: the rage of the actor recalls his own 'cue for passion.' Always more ready to blame than justify himself, he feels as if he ought to have done more, and so falls to abusing himself.]

[Footnote 12: *imagination*.]

[Footnote 13: 'his whole operative nature providing fit forms for the embodiment of his imagined idea'—of which forms he has already mentioned his *warm'd visage*, his *tears*, his *distracted look*, his *broken voice*.

In this passage we have the true idea of the operation of the genuine *acting faculty*. Actor as well as dramatist, the Poet gives us here his own notion of his second calling.]

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For *Hecuba*?
What's *Hecuba* to him, or he to *Hecuba*,[1]
 [Sidenote: or he to her,]
That he should weepe for her? What would he doe,
Had he the Motiue and the Cue[2] for passion
 [Sidenote: , and that for]
That I haue? He would drowne the Stage with teares,
And cleaue the generall eare with horrid speech:
Make mad the guilty, and apale[3] the free,[4]
Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed,
The very faculty of Eyes and Eares. Yet I, [Sidenote: faculties]
A dull and muddy-metled[5] Rascall, peake
Like Iohn a-dreames, vnpregnant of my cause,[6]

And can say nothing: No, not for a King,
 Vpon whose property,[7] and most deere life,
 A damn'd defeate[8] was made. Am I a Coward?[9]
 Who calles me Villaine? breakes my pate a-crosse?
 Pluckes off my Beard, and blowes it in my face?
 Tweakes me by'th'Nose?[10] giues me the Lye i'th' Throate,
 [Sidenote: by the]
 As deepe as to the Lungs? Who does me this?
 Ha? Why I should take it: for it cannot be,
 [Sidenote: Hah, s'wounds I]
 But I am Pigeon-Liuer'd, and lacke Gall[11]
 To make Oppression bitter, or ere this,
 [Sidenote: 104] I should haue fatted all the Region Kites
 [Sidenote: should a fatted]
 With this Slaues Offfall, bloody: a Bawdy villaine,
 [Sidenote: bloody, baudy]
 Remorselesse,[12] Treacherous, Letcherous, kindles[13] villaine!
 Oh Vengeance![14]
 Who? What an Asse am I? I sure, this is most braue,
 [Sidenote: Why what an Asse am I, this]
 That I, the Sonne of the Deere murdered, [Sidenote: a deere]
 Prompted to my Reuenge by Heauen, and Hell,
 Must (like a Whore) vnpacke my heart with words,
 And fall a Cursing like a very Drab,[15]
 A Scullion? Fye vpon't: Foh. About my Braine.[16]
 [Sidenote: a stallyon, | braines; hum,]

[Footnote 1: Here follows in 1st *Q*.

What would he do and if he had my losse?
 His father murdred, and a Crowne bereft him,
 [Sidenote: 174] He would turne all his teares to droppes of blood,
 Amaze the standers by with his laments,

&c. &c.]

[Footnote 2: Speaking of the Player, he uses the player-word.]

[Footnote 3: *make pale*—appal.]

[Footnote 4: *the innocent*.]

[Footnote 5: *Mettle* is spirit—rather in the sense of *animal-spirit*: *mettlesome*—spirited, *as a horse*.]

[Footnote 6: '*unpossessed by my cause*'.]

[Footnote 7: *personality, proper person*.]

[Footnote 8: *undoing, destruction*—from French *défaire*.]

[Footnote 9: In this mood he no more understands, and altogether doubts himself, as he has previously come to doubt the world.]

[Footnote 10: 1st *Q*. 'or twites my nose.']

[Footnote 11: It was supposed that pigeons had no gall—I presume from their livers not tasting bitter like those of perhaps most birds.]

[Footnote 12: *pitiless*.]

[Footnote 13: *unnatural*.]

[Footnote 14: This line is not in the *Quarto*.]

[Footnote 15: Here in *Q*. the line runs on to include *Foh*. The next line ends with *heard*.]

[Footnote 16: *Point thus*: 'About! my brain.' He apostrophizes his brain, telling it to set to work.]

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I haue heard, that guilty Creatures sitting at a Play,
Haue by the very cunning of the Scoene,[1]
Bene strooke so to the soule, that presently
They haue proclaim'd their Malefactions.
For Murther, though it haue no tongue, will speake
With most myraculous Organ.[2] Ile haue these Players,
Play something like the murder of my Father,
Before mine Vnkle. Ile obserue his lookes,
[Sidenote: 137] Ile tent him to the quicke: If he but blench[3]
[Sidenote: if a doe blench]
I know my course. The Spirit that I haue seene
[Sidenote: 48] May[4] be the Diuell, and the Diuel hath power
[Sidenote: May be a deale, and the deale]
T'assume a pleasing shape, yea and perhaps
Out of my Weaknesse, and my Melancholly,[5]
As he is very potent with such Spirits,[6]
[Sidenote: 46] Abuses me to damne me.[7] Ile haue grounds
More Relatiue then this: The Play's the thing,
Wherein Ile catch the Conscience of the King.

Exit.

* * * * *

SUMMARY.

The division between the second and third acts is by common consent placed here. The third act occupies the afternoon, evening, and night of the same day with the second.

This soliloquy is Hamlet's first, and perhaps we may find it correct to say *only* outbreak of self-accusation. He charges himself with lack of feeling, spirit, and courage, in that he has not yet taken vengeance on his uncle. But unless we are prepared to accept and justify to the full his own hardest words against himself, and grant him a muddy-mettled, pigeon-livered rascal, we must examine and understand him, so as to account for his conduct better than he could himself. If we allow that perhaps he accuses himself too much, we may find on reflection that he accuses himself altogether wrongfully. If a man is content to think the worst of Hamlet, I care to hold no argument with that man.

We must not look for *expressed* logical sequence in a soliloquy, which is a vocal mind. The mind is seldom conscious of the links or transitions of a yet perfectly logical process developed in it. This remark, however, is more necessary in regard to the famous soliloquy to follow.

In Hamlet, misery has partly choked even vengeance; and although sure in his heart that his uncle is guilty, in his brain he is not sure. Bitterly accusing himself in an access of wretchedness and rage and credence, he forgets the doubt that has restrained him, with all besides which he might so well urge in righteous defence, not excuse, of his delay. But ungenerous criticism has, by all but universal consent, accepted his own verdict against himself. So in common life there are thousands on thousands who, upon the sad confession of a man immeasurably greater than themselves, and showing his greatness in the humility whose absence makes admission impossible to them, immediately pounce upon him with vituperation, as if he were one of the vile, and they infinitely better. Such should be indignant with St. Paul and say—if he was the chief of sinners, what insolence to lecture *them!* and certainly the more justified publican would never by them have been allowed to touch the robe of the less justified Pharisee. Such critics surely take little or no pains to understand the object of their contempt: because Hamlet is troubled and blames himself, they without hesitation condemn him—and there where he is most commendable. It is the righteous man who is most ready to accuse himself; the unrighteous is least ready. Who is able when in deep trouble, rightly to analyze his feelings? Delay in action is not necessarily abandonment of duty; in Hamlet's case it is a due recognition of duty, which condemns precipitancy—and action in the face of doubt, so long as it is nowise compelled, is precipitancy. The first thing is *to be sure*: Hamlet has never been sure; he spies at length a chance of making himself sure; he seizes upon it; and while his sudden resolve to make use of the players, like the equally sudden resolve to shroud himself in pretended madness, manifests him fertile in expedient, the carrying out of both manifests him right capable and diligent in execution—a *man of action in every true sense of the word*.

The self-accusation of Hamlet has its ground in the lapse of weeks during which nothing has been done towards punishing the king. Suddenly roused to a keen sense of the fact, he feels as if surely he might have done something. The first act ends with a burning vow of righteous vengeance; the second

shows him wandering about the palace in profoundest melancholy—such as makes it more than easy for him to assume the forms of madness the moment he marks any curious eye bent upon him. Let him who has never loved and revered a mother, call such melancholy weakness. He has indeed done nothing towards the fulfilment of his vow; but the way in which he made the vow, the terms in which he exacted from his companions their promise of silence, and his scheme for eluding suspicion, combine to show that from the first he perceived its fulfilment would be hard, saw the obstacles in his way, and knew it would require both time and caution. That even in the first rush of his wrath he should thus be aware of difficulty, indicates moral symmetry; but the full weight of what lay in his path could appear to him only upon reflection. Partly in the light of passages yet to come, I will imagine the further course of his thoughts, which the closing couplet of the first act shows as having already begun to pale 'the native hue of resolution.'

'But how shall I take vengeance on my uncle? Shall I publicly accuse him, or slay him at once? In the one case what answer can I make to his denial? in the other, what justification can I offer? If I say the spirit of my father accuses him, what proof can I bring? My companions only saw the apparition—heard no word from him; and my uncle's party will assert, with absolute likelihood to the minds of those who do not know me—and who here knows me but my mother!—that charge is a mere coinage of jealous disappointment, working upon the melancholy I have not cared to hide. (174-6.) When I act, it must be to kill him, and to what misconstruction shall I not expose myself! (272) If the thing must so be, I must brave all; but I could never present myself thereafter as successor to the crown of one whom I had first slain and then vilified on the accusation of an apparition whom no one heard but myself! I must find *proof*—such proof as will satisfy others as well as myself. My immediate duty is *evidence*, not vengeance.'

We have seen besides, that, when informed of the haunting presence of the Ghost, he expected the apparition with not a little doubt as to its authenticity—a doubt which, even when he saw it, did not immediately vanish: is it any wonder that when the apparition was gone, the doubt should return? Return it did, in accordance with the reaction which waits upon all high-strung experience. If he did not believe in the person who performed it, would any man long believe in any miracle? Hamlet soon begins to question whether he can with confidence accept the appearance for that which it appeared and asserted itself to be. He steps over to the stand-point of his judges, and doubts the only testimony he has to produce. Far more:—was he not bound in common humanity, not to say *filialness*, to doubt it? To doubt the Ghost, was to doubt a testimony which to accept was to believe his father in horrible suffering, his uncle a murderer, his mother at least an adulteress; to kill his uncle was to set his seal to the whole, and, besides, to bring his mother into frightful suspicion of complicity in his father's murder. Ought not the faintest shadow of a doubt, assuaging ever so little the glare of the hell-sun of such crime, to be welcome to the tortured heart? Wretched wife and woman as his mother had shown herself, the Ghost would have him think her far worse—perhaps, even accessory to her husband's murder! For action he *must* have proof!

At the same time, what every one knew of his mother, coupled now with the mere idea of the Ghost's accusation, wrought in him such misery, roused in him so many torturing and unanswerable questions, so blotted the face of the universe and withered the heart of hope, that he could not but doubt whether, in such a world of rogues and false women, it was worth his while to slay one villain out of the swarm.

Ophelia's behaviour to him, in obedience to her father, of which she gives him no explanation, has added 'the pangs of disprized love,' and increased his doubts of woman-kind. 120.

But when his imagination, presenting afresh the awful interview, brings him more immediately under the influence of the apparition and its behest, he is for the moment delivered both from the stunning effect of its communication and his doubt of its truth; forgetting then the considerations that have wrought in him, he accuses himself of remissness, blames himself grievously for his delay. Soon, however, his senses resume their influence, and he doubts again. So goes the mill-round of his thoughts, with the revolving of many wheels.

His whole conscious nature is frightfully shaken: he would be the poor creature most of his critics would make of him, were it otherwise; it is because of his greatness that he suffers so terribly, and doubts so much. A mother's crime is far more paralyzing than a father's murder is stimulating; and either he has not set himself in thorough earnest to find the proof he needs, or he has as yet been unable to think of any serviceable means to the end, when the half real, half simulated emotion of the Player yet again rouses in him the sense of remissness, leads him to accuse himself of forgotten obligation and heartlessness, and simultaneously suggests a device for putting the Ghost and his words to the test. Instantly he seizes the chance: when a thing has to be done, and can be done, Hamlet is *never* wanting—shows himself the very promptest of men.

In the last passage of this act I do not take it that he is expressing an idea then first occurring to him:

that the whole thing may be a snare of the devil is a doubt with which during weeks he has been familiar.

The delay through which, in utter failure to comprehend his character, he has been so miserably misjudged, falls really between the first and second acts, although it seems in the regard of most readers to underlie and protract the whole play. Its duration is measured by the journey of the ambassadors to and from the neighbouring kingdom of Norway.

It is notably odd, by the way, that those who accuse Hamlet of inaction, are mostly the same who believe his madness a reality! In truth, however, his affected madness is one of the strongest signs of his activity, and his delay one of the strongest proofs of his sanity.

This second act, the third act, and a part always given to the fourth, but which really belongs to the third, occupy in all only one day.

[Footnote 1: Here follows in *1st Q.*

 confest a murder
Committed long before.
This spirit that I haue seene may be the Diuell,
And out of my weakenesse and my melancholy,
As he is very potent with such men,
Doth seeke to damne me, I will haue sounder proofes,
The play's the thing, &c.]

[Footnote 2:

'Stones have been known to move, and trees to speak;' &c.

Macbeth, iii. 4.]

[Footnote 3: In the *1st Q.* Hamlet, speaking to Horatio (l 37), says,

And if he doe not bleach, and change at that,—

Bleach is radically the same word as *blench*:—to bleach, to blanch, to blench—to *grow white*.]

[Footnote 4: Emphasis on *May*, as resuming previous doubtful thought and suspicion.]

[Footnote 5: —caused from the first by his mother's behaviour, not constitutional.]

[Footnote 6: —'such conditions of the spirits'.]

[Footnote 7: Here is one element in the very existence of the preceding act: doubt as to the facts of the case has been throughout operating to restrain him; and here first he reveals, perhaps first recognizes its influence. Subject to change of feeling with the wavering of conviction, he now for a moment regards his uncertainty as involving unnatural distrust of a being in whose presence he cannot help *feeling* him his father. He was familiar with the lore of the supernatural, and knew the doubt he expresses to be not without support.—His companions as well had all been in suspense as to the identity of the apparition with the late king.]

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Enter King, Queene, Polonius, Ophelia, Rosinrance, Guildenstern, and Lords.[1] [Sidenote: Gylldensterne, Lords.]

[Sidenote: 72] *King*. And can you by no drift of circumstance

[Sidenote: An can | of conference]

Get from him why he puts on[2] this Confusion:

Grating so harshly all his dayes of quiet

With turbulent and dangerous Lunacy.

Rosin. He does confesse he feeles himselfe distracted, [Sidenote: 92] But from what cause he will by no meanes speake. [Sidenote: a will]

Guil. Nor do we finde him forward to be sounded,
But with a crafty Madnesse[3] keepes aloofe:
When we would bring him on to some Confession
Of his true state.

Qu. Did he receiue you well?

Rosin. Most like a Gentleman.

Guild. But with much forcing of his disposition.[4]

Rosin. Niggard of question, but of our demands Most free in his reply.[5]

Qu. Did you assay him to any pastime?

Rosin. Madam, it so fell out, that certaine Players
We ore-wrought on the way: of these we told him,
[Sidenote: ore-raught[6]]

And there did seeme in him a kinde of ioy
To heare of it: They are about the Court, [Sidenote: are heere about]
And (as I thinke) they haue already order
This night to play before him.

Pol. 'Tis most true; And he beseech'd me to intreate your Majesties To heare, and see the matter.

King. With all my heart, and it doth much content me To heare him so inclin'd. Good Gentlemen,

[Footnote 1: This may be regarded as the commencement of the Third Act.]

[Footnote 2: The phrase seems to imply a doubt of the genuineness of the lunacy.]

[Footnote 3: *Nominative pronoun omitted here.*]

[Footnote 4: He has noted, without understanding them, the signs of Hamlet's suspicion of themselves.]

[Footnote 5: Compare the seemingly opposite statements of the two: Hamlet had bewildered them.]

[Footnote 6: *over-reached*—came up with, caught up, overtook.]

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Giue him a further edge,[1] and driue his purpose on
[Sidenote: purpose into these]
To these delights.

Rosin. We shall my Lord. *Exeunt.*
[Sidenote: *Exeunt Ros. & Gysl.*]

King. Sweet Gertrude leaue vs too, [Sidenote: Gertrard | two]
For we haue closely sent for *Hamlet* hither,
[Sidenote: 84] That he, as 'twere by accident, may there
[Sidenote: heere]

Affront[2] *Ophelia.* Her Father, and my selfe[3] (lawful espials)[4]
Will so bestow our selues, that seeing vnseene
We may of their encounter frankly iudge,
And gather by him, as he is behaued,
If't be th'affliction of his loue, or no,
That thus he suffers for.

Qu. I shall obey you,
And for your part *Ophelia*,[5] I do wish
That your good Beauties be the happy cause
Of *Hamlets* wildenesse: so shall I hope your Vertues
[Sidenote: 240] Will bring him to his wonted way againe,
To both your Honors.[6]

Ophe. Madam, I wish it may.

Pol. *Ophelia*, walke you heere. Gracious so please ye[7]
[Sidenote: you,]
We will bestow our selues: Reade on this booke,[8]
That shew of such an exercise may colour
Your lonelinesse.[9] We are oft too blame in this,[10]

[Sidenote: lowlines:]

'Tis too much prou'd, that with Deuotions visage,
And pious Action, we do surge o're [Sidenote: sugar]
The diuell himselfe.

[Sidenote: 161] *King*. Oh 'tis true: [Sidenote: tis too true]
How smart a lash that speech doth giue my Conscience?
The Harlots Cheeke beautied with plaist'ring Art
Is not more vgly to the thing that helps it,[11]
Then is my deede, to my most painted word.[12]
Oh heauie burthen![13]

[Footnote 1: '*edge* him on'—somehow corrupted into *egg*.]

[Footnote 2: *confront*.]

[Footnote 3: *Clause in parenthesis not in Q*.]

[Footnote 4: —apologetic to the queen.]

[Footnote 5: —*going up to Ophelia*—I would say, who stands at a little distance, and has not heard what has been passing between them.]

[Footnote 6: The queen encourages Ophelia in hoping to marry Hamlet, and may so have a share in causing a certain turn her madness takes.]

[Footnote 7: —*aside to the king*.]

[Footnote 8: —*to Ophelia*: her prayer-book. 122.]

[Footnote 9: *1st Q*.

And here *Ophelia*, reade you on this booke,
And walke aloofe, the King shal be vnseene.]

[Footnote 10: —*aside to the king*. I insert these *asides*, and suggest the queen's going up to Ophelia, to show how we may easily hold Ophelia ignorant of their plot. Poor creature as she was, I would believe Shakspeare did not mean her to lie to Hamlet. This may be why he omitted that part of her father's speech in the *1st Q*. given in the note immediately above, telling her the king is going to hide. Still, it would be excuse enough for *her*, that she thought his madness justified the deception.]

[Footnote 11: —ugly to the paint that helps by hiding it—to which it lies so close, and from which it has no secrets. Or, 'ugly to' may mean, 'ugly *compared with*.'

[Footnote 12: 'most painted'—*very much painted*. His painted word is the paint to the deed. *Painted* may be taken for *full of paint*.]

[Footnote 13: This speech of the king is the first *assurance* we have of his guilt.]

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Pol. I heare him comming, let's withdraw my Lord.

[Sidenote: comming, with-draw]

Exeunt. [1]

Enter Hamlet. [2]

Ham. To be, or not to be, that is the Question:
Whether 'tis Nobler in the minde to suffer
The Slings and Arrowes of outrageous Fortune,
[Sidenote: 200,250] Or to take Armes against a Sea of troubles,[3]
And by opposing end them:[4] to dye, to sleepe
No more; and by a sleepe, to say we end
The Heart-ake, and the thousand Naturall shockes
That Flesh is heyre too? 'Tis a consummation
Deuoutly to be wish'd.[5] To dye to sleepe,
To sleepe, perchance to Dreame:[6] I, there's the rub,
For in that sleepe of death, what[7] dreames may come,[8]
When we haue shuffle'd off this mortall coile,
[Sidenote: 186] Must giue vs pawse.[9] There's the respect

That makes Calamity of so long life:[10]
 For who would beare the Whips and Scornes of time,
 The Oppressors wrong, the poore mans Contumely,
 [Sidenote: proude mans]
 [Sidenote: 114] The pangs of dispriz'd Loue,[11] the Lawes delay,
 [Sidenote: despiz'd]
 The insolence of Office, and the Spurnes
 That patient merit of the vnworthy takes, [Sidenote: th']
 When he himselfe might his *Quietus* make
 [Sidenote: 194,252-3] With a bare Bodkin?[12] Who would these Fardles
 beare[13] [Sidenote: would fardels]
 To grunt and sweat vnder a weary life,
 [Sidenote: 194] But that the dread of something after death,[14]
 The vndiscovered Countrey, from whose Borne
 No Traueller returnes,[15] Puzels the will,
 And makes vs rather beare those illes we haue,
 Then flye to others that we know not of.
 Thus Conscience does make Cowards of vs all,[16]
 [Sidenote: 30] And thus the Natiue hew of Resolution[17]
 Is sicklied o're, with the pale cast of Thought,[18]
 [Sidenote: sickled]

[Footnote 1: *Not in Q.*—They go behind the tapestry, where it hangs over the recess of the doorway. Ophelia thinks they have left the room.]

[Footnote 2: *In Q. before last speech.*]

[Footnote 3: Perhaps to a Danish or Dutch critic, or one from the eastern coast of England, this simile would not seem so unfit as it does to some.]

[Footnote 4: To print this so as I would have it read, I would complete this line from here with points, and commence the next with points. At the other breaks of the soliloquy, as indicated below, I would do the same—thus:

And by opposing end them....
 To die—to sleep,]

[Footnote 5: *Break.*]

[Footnote 6: *Break.*]

[Footnote 7: Emphasis on *what.*]

[Footnote 8: Such dreams as the poor Ghost's.]

[Footnote 9: *Break.* —'pawse' is the noun, and from its use at page 186, we may judge it means here 'pause for reflection.']

[Footnote 10: 'makes calamity so long-lived.']

[Footnote 11: —not necessarily disprized by the *lady*; the disprizer in Hamlet's case was the worldly and suspicious father—and that in part, and seemingly to Hamlet altogether, for the king's sake.]

[Footnote 12: *small sword.* If there be here any allusion to suicide, it is on the general question, and with no special application to himself. 24. But it is the king and the bare bodkin his thought associates. How could he even glance at the things he has just mentioned, as each, a reason for suicide? It were a cowardly country indeed where the question might be asked, 'Who would not commit suicide because of any one of these things, except on account of what may follow after death?! One might well, however, be tempted to destroy an oppressor, *and risk his life in that.*]

[Footnote 13: *Fardel*, burden: the old French for *fardeau*, I am informed.]

[Footnote 14: —a dread caused by conscience.]

[Footnote 15: The Ghost could not be imagined as having *returned.*]

[Footnote 16: 'of us all' *not in Q.* It is not the fear of evil that makes us cowards, but the fear of *deserved* evil. The Poet may intend that conscience alone is the cause of fear in man. '*Coward*' does not here involve contempt: it should be spoken with a grim smile. But Hamlet would hardly call turning

from *suicide* cowardice in any sense. 24.]

[Footnote 17: —such as was his when he vowed vengeance.]

[Footnote 18: —such as immediately followed on that The *native* hue of resolution—that which is natural to man till interruption comes—is ruddy; the hue of thought is pale. I suspect the '*pale cast*' of an allusion to whitening with *rough-cast*.]

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And enterprizes of great pith and moment,[1] [Sidenote: pitch [1]]
With this regard their Currants turne away, [Sidenote: awry]
And loose the name of Action.[2] Soft you now,
[Sidenote: 119] The faire *Ophelia*? Nimph, in thy Orizons[3]
Be all my sinnes remembred.[4]

Ophe. Good my Lord, How does your Honor for this many a day?

Ham. I humbly thanke you: well, well, well.[5]

Ophe. My Lord, I haue Remembrances of yours, That I haue longed long to re-deliver. I pray you now, receiue them.

Ham. No, no, I neuer gaue you ought.[6]
[Sidenote: No, not I, I never]

Ophe. My honor'd Lord, I know right well you did,
[Sidenote: you know]
And with them words of so sweet breath compos'd,
As made the things more rich, then perfume left:
[Sidenote: these things | their perfume lost.[7]]
Take these againe, for to the Noble minde
Rich gifts wax poore, when giuers proue vnkinde.
There my Lord.[8]

Ham. Ha, ha: Are you honest?[9]

Ophe. My Lord.

Ham. Are you faire?

Ophe. What meanes your Lordship?

Ham. That if you be honest and faire, your [Sidenote: faire, you should admit] Honesty[10] should admit no discourse to your Beautie.

Ophe. Could Beautie my Lord, haue better Commerce[11] then your Honestie?[12] [Sidenote: Then with honestie?[11]]

Ham. I trulie: for the power of Beautie, will sooner transforme Honestie from what it is, to a Bawd, then the force of Honestie can translate Beautie into his likenesse. This was sometime a Paradox, but now the time giues it prooffe. I did loue you once.[13]

Ophe. Indeed my Lord, you made me beleue so.

[Footnote 1: How could *suicide* be styled *an enterprise of great pith*? Yet less could it be called *of great pitch*.]

[Footnote 2: I allow this to be a general reflection, but surely it serves to show that *conscience* must at least be one of Hamlet's restraints.]

[Footnote 3: —by way of intercession.]

[Footnote 4: Note the entire change of mood from that of the last soliloquy. The right understanding of this soliloquy is indispensable to the right understanding of Hamlet. But we are terribly trammelled and hindered, as in the understanding of Hamlet throughout, so here in the understanding of his meditation, by traditional assumption. I was roused to think in the right direction concerning it, by the honoured friend and relative to whom I have feebly acknowledged my obligation by dedicating to him this book. I could not at first see it as he saw it: 'Think about it, and you will,' he said. I did think, and by degrees—not very quickly—my prejudgments thinned, faded, and almost vanished. I trust I see it

now as a whole, and in its true relations, internal and external—its relations to itself, to the play, and to the Hamlet, of Shakspeare.

Neither in its first verse, then, nor in it anywhere else, do I find even an allusion to suicide. What Hamlet is referring to in the said first verse, it is not possible with certainty to determine, for it is but the vanishing ripple of a preceding ocean of thought, from which he is just stepping out upon the shore of the articulate. He may have been plunged in some profound depth of the metaphysics of existence, or he may have been occupied with the one practical question, that of the slaying of his uncle, which has, now in one form, now in another, haunted his spirit for weeks. Perhaps, from the message he has just received, he expects to meet the king, and conscience, confronting temptation, has been urging the necessity of proof; perhaps a righteous consideration of consequences, which sometimes have share in the primary duty, has been making him shrink afresh from the shedding of blood, for every thoughtful mind recoils from the irrevocable, and that is an awful form of the irrevocable. But whatever thought, general or special, this first verse may be dismissing, we come at once thereafter into the light of a definite question: 'Which is nobler—to endure evil fortune, or to oppose it *à outrance*; to bear in passivity, or to resist where resistance is hopeless—resist to the last—to the death which is its unavoidable end?'

Then comes a pause, during which he is thinking—we will not say 'too precisely on the event,' but taking his account with consequences: the result appears in the uttered conviction that the extreme possible consequence, death, is a good and not an evil. Throughout, observe, how here, as always, he generalizes, himself being to himself but the type of his race.

Then follows another pause, during which he seems prosecuting the thought, for he has already commenced further remark in similar strain, when suddenly a new and awful element introduces itself:

....To die—to sleep.—
—To *sleep!* perchance to *dream!*

He had been thinking of death only as the passing away of the present with its troubles; here comes the recollection that death has its own troubles—its own thoughts, its own consciousness: if it be a sleep, it has its dreams. '*What dreams may come*' means, 'the sort of dreams that may come'; the emphasis is on the *what*, not on the *may*; there is no question whether dreams will come, but there is question of the character of the dreams. This consideration is what makes calamity so long-lived! 'For who would bear the multiform ills of life'—he alludes to his own wrongs, but mingles, in his generalizing way, others of those most common to humanity, and refers to the special cure for some of his own which was close to his hand—'who would bear these things if he could, as I can, make his quietus with a bare bodkin'—that is, by slaying his enemy—'who would then bear them, but that he fears the future, and the divine judgment upon his life and actions—that conscience makes a coward of him!'[14]

To run, not the risk of death, but the risks that attend upon and follow death, Hamlet must be certain of what he is about; he must be sure it is a right thing he does, or he will leave it undone. Compare his speech, 250, 'Does it not, &c.':—by the time he speaks this speech, he has had perfect proof, and asserts the righteousness of taking vengeance in almost an agony of appeal to Horatio.

The more continuous and the more formally logical a soliloquy, the less natural it is. The logic should be all there, but latent; the bones of it should not show: they do not show here.]

[Footnote 5: *One* 'well' *only in Q.*]

[Footnote 6: He does not want to take them back, and so sever even that weak bond between them. He has not given her up.]

[Footnote 7: The *Q.* reading seems best. The perfume of his gifts was the sweet words with which they were given; those words having lost their savour, the mere gifts were worth nothing.]

[Footnote 8: Released from the commands her father had laid upon her, and emboldened by the queen's approval of more than the old relation between them, she would timidly draw Hamlet back to the past—to love and a sound mind.]

[Footnote 9: I do not here suppose a noise or movement of the arras, or think that the talk from this point bears the mark of the madness he would have assumed on the least suspicion of espial. His distrust of Ophelia comes from a far deeper source—suspicion of all women, grown doubtful to him through his mother. Hopeless for her, he would give his life to know that Ophelia was not like her. Hence the cruel things he says to her here and elsewhere; they are the brood of a heart haunted with horrible, alas! too excusable phantoms of distrust. A man wretched as Hamlet must be forgiven for being rude; it is love suppressed, love that can neither breathe nor burn, that makes him rude. His

horrid insinuations are a hungry challenge to indignant rejection. He would sting Ophelia to defence of herself and her sex. But, either from her love, or from gentleness to his supposed madness, as afterwards in the play-scene, or from the poverty and weakness of a nature so fathered and so brothered, she hears, and says nothing. 139.]

[Footnote 10: Honesty is here figured as a porter,—just after, as a porter that may be corrupted.]

[Footnote 11: If the *Folio* reading is right, *commerce* means *companionship*; if the *Quarto* reading, then it means *intercourse*. Note *then* constantly for our *than*.]

[Footnote 12: I imagine Ophelia here giving Hamlet a loving look—which hardens him. But I do not think she lays emphasis on *your*; the word is here, I take it, used (as so often then) impersonally.]

[Footnote 13: '—proof in you and me: *I* loved *you* once, but my honesty did not translate your beauty into its likeness.']

[Footnote 14: That the Great Judgement was here in Shakspeare's thought, will be plain to those who take light from the corresponding passage in the *1st Quarto*. As it makes an excellent specimen of that issue in the character I am most inclined to attribute to it—that of original sketch and continuous line of notes, with more or less finished passages in place among the notes—I will here quote it, recommending it to my student's attention. If it be what I suggest, it is clear that Shakspeare had not at first altogether determined how he would carry the soliloquy—what line he was going to follow in it: here hope and fear contend for the place of motive to patience. The changes from it in the text are well worth noting: the religion is lessened: the hope disappears: were they too much of pearls to cast before 'barren spectators'? The manuscript could never have been meant for any eye but his own, seeing it was possible to print from it such a chaos—over which yet broods the presence of the formative spirit of the Poet.

Ham. To be, or not to be, I there's the point,
To Die, to sleepe, is that all? I all:
No, to sleepe, to dreame, I mary there it goes,
For in that dreame of death, when wee awake,
[Sidenote: 24, 247, 260] And borne before an euerlasting Iudge,
From whence no passenger euer retur'nd,
The vndiscovered country, at whose sight
The happy smile, and the accursed damn'd.
But for this, the ioyfull hope of this,
Whol'd beare the scornes and flattery of the world,
Scorned by the right rich, the rich curssed of the poore?
The widow being oppressed, the orphan wrong'd,
The taste of hunger, or a tirants raigne,
And thousand more calamities besides,
To grunt and sweate vnder this weary life,
When that he may his full *Quietus* make,
With a bare bodkin, who would this indure,
But for a hope of something after death?
Which pulses the braine, and doth confound the sence,
Which makes vs rather beare those euilles we haue,
Than flie to others that we know not of.
I that, O this conscience makes cowardes of vs all,
Lady in thy orizons, be all my sinnes remembred.]

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Ham. You should not haue beleeued me. For vertue cannot so innoculate[1] our old stocke,[2] but we shall rellish of it.[3] I loued you not.[4]

Ophe. I was the more deceiued.

Ham. Get thee to a Nunnerie. Why would'st [Sidenote: thee a] thou be a breeder of Sinners? I am my selfe indifferent[5] [Sidenote: 132] honest, but yet I could accuse me of such things,[6] that it were better my Mother had [Sidenote: 62] not borne me,[7] I am very proud, reuengefull, Ambitious, with more offences at my becke, then I haue thoughts to put them in imagination, to giue them shape, or time to acte them in. What should such Fellowes as I do, crawling betweene Heauen [Sidenote: earth and heauen] and Earth.[8] We are arrant Knaues all[10], beleeuue none of vs.[9] Goe thy wayes to a Nunnery. Where's your Father?[11]

Ophe. At home, my Lord.[12]

Ham. Let the doores be shut vpon him, that he may play the Foole no way, but in's owne house.[13]
[Sidenote: no where but] Farewell.[14]

Ophe. O helpe him, you sweet Heauens.

Ham.[15] If thou doest Marry, Ile giue thee this Plague for thy Dowrie. Be thou as chast as Ice, as pure as Snow, thou shalt not escape Calumny.[16] Get thee to a Nunnery. Go,[17] Farewell.[18] Or if thou wilt needs Marry, marry a fool: for Wise men know well enough, what monsters[19] you make of them. To a Nunnery go, and quickly too. Farwell.[20]

Ophe. O[21] heauenly Powers, restore him.

Ham.[22] I haue heard of your prattlings[23] too wel [Sidenote: your paintings well] enough. God has giuen you one pace,[23] and you [Sidenote: hath | one face,] make your selfe another: you gidge, you amble, [Sidenote: selves | you gig and amble, and] and you lispe, and nickname Gods creatures, and [Sidenote: you list you nickname] make your Wantonnesse, your[24] Ignorance.[25] Go

[Footnote 1: 'inoculate'—*bud*, in the horticultural use.]

[Footnote 2: *trunk* or *stem* of the family tree.]

[Footnote 3: Emphasis on *relish*—'keep something of the old flavour of the stock.']

[Footnote 4: He tries her now with denying his love—perhaps moved in part by a feeling, taught by his mother's, of how imperfect it was.]

[Footnote 5: tolerably.]

[Footnote 6: He turns from baiting woman in her to condemn himself. Is it not the case with every noble nature, that the knowledge of wrong in another arouses in it the consciousness of its own faults and sins, of its own evil possibilities? Hurling from the heights of ideal humanity, Hamlet not only recognizes in himself every evil tendency of his race, but almost feels himself individually guilty of every transgression. 'God, God, forgive us all!' exclaims the doctor who has just witnessed the misery of Lady Macbeth, unveiling her guilt.

This whole speech of Hamlet is profoundly sane—looking therefore altogether insane to the shallow mind, on which the impression of its insanity is deepened by its coming from him so freely. The common nature disappointed rails at humanity; Hamlet, his earthly ideal destroyed, would tear his individual human self to pieces.]

[Footnote 7: This we may suppose uttered with an expression as startling to Ophelia as impenetrable.]

[Footnote 8: He is disgusted with himself, with his own nature and consciousness—]

[Footnote 9: —and this reacts on his kind.]

[Footnote 10: 'all' *not in Q.*]

[Footnote 11: Here, perhaps, he grows suspicious—asks himself why he is allowed this prolonged *tête à tête*.]

[Footnote 12: I am willing to believe she thinks so.]

[Footnote 13: Whether he trusts Ophelia or not, he does not take her statement for correct, and says this in the hope that Polonius is not too far off to hear it. The speech is for him, not for Ophelia, and will seem to her to come only from his madness.]

[Footnote 14: *Exit.*]

[Footnote 15: (*re-entering*)]

[Footnote 16: 'So many are bad, that your virtue will not be believed in.']

[Footnote 17: 'Go' *not in Q.*]

[Footnote 18: *Exit, and re-enter.*]

[Footnote 19: *Cornuti.*]

[Footnote 20: *Exit.*]

[Footnote 21: 'O' *not in Q.*]

[Footnote 22: (*re-entering*)]

[Footnote 23: I suspect *pratlings* to be a corruption, not of the printed *paintings*, but of some word substituted for it by the Poet, perhaps *prancings*, and *pace* to be correct.]

[Footnote 24: 'your' *not in Q.*]

[Footnote 25: As the present type to him of womankind, he assails her with such charges of lightness as are commonly brought against women. He does not go farther: she is not his mother, and he hopes she is innocent. But he cannot make her speak!]

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too, Ile no more on't, it hath made me mad. I say, we will haue no more Mariages.[1] Those that are [Sidenote: no mo marriage,] married already,[2] all but one shall liue, the rest shall keep as they are. To a Nunnery, go.

Exit Hamlet. [Sidenote: *Exit*]

[3] *Ophe.* O what a Noble minde is heere o're-throwne?
The Courtiers, Soldiers, Schollers: Eye, tongue, sword,
Th'expectansie and Rose[4] of the faire State,
 [Sidenote: Th' expectation,]
The glasse of Fashion,[5] and the mould of Forme,[6]
Th'obseru'd of all Obseruers, quite, quite downe.
Haue I of Ladies most deiect and wretched, [Sidenote: And I of]
That suck'd the Honie of his Musicke Vowes: [Sidenote: musickt]
Now see that Noble, and most Soueraigne Reason, [Sidenote: see what]
Like sweet Bels iangled out of tune, and harsh,[7]
 [Sidenote: out of time]
That vnmatch'd Forme and Feature of blowne youth,[8]
 [Sidenote: and stature of]
Blasted with extasie.[9] Oh woe is me,
T'haue scene what I haue scene: see what I see.[10]
 [Sidenote: *Exit.*]

Enter King, and Polonius.

King. Loue? His affections do not that way tend,
Nor what he spake, though it lack'd Forme a little, [Sidenote: Not]
Was not like Madnesse.[11] There's something in his soule?
O're which his Melancholly sits on brood,
And I do doubt the hatch, and the disclose[12]
Will be some danger,[11] which to preuent [Sidenote: which for to]
I haue in quicke determination
[Sidenote: 138, 180] Thus set it downe. He shall with speed to England
For the demand of our neglected Tribute:
Haply the Seas and Countries different

[Footnote 1: 'The thing must be put a stop to! the world must cease! it is not fit to go on.']

[Footnote 2: 'already—(*aside*) all but one—shall live.']

[Footnote 3: *1st Q.*]

Ofe. Great God of heauen, what a quicke change is this?
The Courtier, Scholler, Souldier, all in him,
All dasht and splinterd thence, O woe is me,
To a seene what I haue seene, see what I see. *Exit.*

To his cruel words Ophelia is impenetrable—from the conviction that not he but his madness speaks.

The moment he leaves her, she breaks out in such phrase as a young girl would hardly have used had she known that the king and her father were listening. I grant, however, the speech may be taken as a soliloquy audible to the spectators only, who to the persons of a play are *but* the spiritual presences.]

[Footnote 4: 'The hope and flower'—The *rose* is not unfrequently used in English literature as the type of perfection.]

[Footnote 5: 'he by whom Fashion dressed herself'—*he who set the fashion*. His great and small virtues taken together, Hamlet makes us think of Sir Philip Sidney—ten years older than Shakspeare, and dead sixteen years before *Hamlet* was written.]

[Footnote 6: 'he after whose ways, or modes of behaviour, men shaped theirs'—therefore the mould in which their forms were cast;—*the object of universal imitation*.]

[Footnote 7: I do not know whether this means—the peal rung without regard to tune or time—or—the single bell so handled that the tongue checks and jars the vibration. In some country places, I understand, they go about ringing a set of hand-bells.]

[Footnote 8: youth in full blossom.]

[Footnote 9: madness 177.]

[Footnote 10: 'to see now such a change from what I saw then.']

[Footnote 11: The king's conscience makes him keen. He is, all through, doubtful of the madness.]

[Footnote 12: —of the fact- or fancy-egg on which his melancholy sits brooding]

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With variable Obiects, shall expell
This something settled matter[1] in his heart
Whereon his Braines still beating, puts him thus
From[2] fashion of himselfe. What thinke you on't?

Pol. It shall do well. But yet do I beleeeue
The Origin and Commencement of this greefe [Sidenote: his greefe,]
Sprung from neglected loue.[3] How now *Ophelia*?
You neede not tell vs, what Lord *Hamlet* saide,
We heard it all.[4] My Lord, do as you please,
But if you hold it fit after the Play,
Let his Queene Mother all alone intreat him
To shew his Greefes: let her be round with him, [Sidenote: grieffe,]
And Ile be plac'd so, please you in the eare
Of all their Conference. If she finde him not,[5]
To England send him: Or confine him where
Your wisdome best shall thinke.

King. It shall be so:
Madnesse in great Ones, must not vnwatch'd go.[6]
[Sidenote: unmatched]
Exeunt.

Enter Hamlet, and two or three of the Players.
[Sidenote: *and three*]

Ham.[7] Speake the Speech I pray you, as I pronounc'd it to you trippingly[8] on the Tongue: But if you mouth it, as many of your Players do, [Sidenote: of our Players] I had as liue[9] the Town-Cryer had spoke my [Sidenote: cryer spoke] Lines:[10] Nor do not saw the Ayre too much your [Sidenote: much with] hand thus, but vse all gently; for in the verie Torrent, Tempest, and (as I may say) the Whirlwinde [Sidenote: say, whirlwind] of Passion, you must acquire and beget a [Sidenote: of your] Temperance that may giue it Smoothnesse.[11] O it offends mee to the Soule, to see a robustious Perywig-pated [Sidenote: to heare a] Fellow, teare a Passion to tatters, to [Sidenote: totters,] verie ragges, to split the eares of the Groundlings:[12] [Sidenote: spleet] who (for the most part) are capeable[13] of nothing, but inexplicable dumbe shewes,[14] and noise:[15] I could haue such a Fellow whipt for o're-doing [Sidenote: would]

[Footnote 1: 'something of settled matter'—*idée fixe*.]

[Footnote 2: '*away from* his own true likeness'; 'makes him so unlike himself.']

[Footnote 3: Polonius is crestfallen, but positive.]

[Footnote 4: This supports the notion of Ophelia's ignorance of the espial. Polonius thinks she is about to disclose what has passed, and *informs* her of its needlessness. But it *might* well enough be taken as only an assurance of the success of their listening—that they had heard without difficulty.]

[Footnote 5: 'If she do not find him out': a comparable phrase, common at the time, was, *Take me with you*, meaning, *Let me understand you*.

Polonius, for his daughter's sake, and his own in her, begs for him another chance.]

[Footnote 6: 'in the insignificant, madness may roam the country, but in the great it must be watched.' The *unmatcht* of the *Quarto* might bear the meaning of *countermatched*.]

[Footnote 7: I should suggest this exhortation to the Players introduced with the express purpose of showing how absolutely sane Hamlet was, could I believe that Shakspeare saw the least danger of Hamlet's pretence being mistaken for reality.]

[Footnote 8: He would have neither blundering nor emphasis such as might rouse too soon the king's suspicion, or turn it into certainty.]

[Footnote 9: 'liue'—*lief*]

[Footnote 10: 1st Q.:—

I'de rather heare a towne bull bellow,
Then such a fellow speake my lines.

Lines is a player-word still.]

[Footnote 11: —smoothness such as belongs to the domain of Art, and will both save from absurdity, and allow the relations with surroundings to manifest themselves;—harmoniousness, which is the possibility of co-existence.]

[Footnote 12: those on the ground—that is, in the pit; there was no gallery then.]

[Footnote 13: *receptive*.]

[Footnote 14: —gestures extravagant and unintelligible as those of a dumb show that could not by the beholder be interpreted; gestures incorrespondent to the words.

A *dumb show* was a stage-action without words.]

[Footnote 15: Speech that is little but rant, and scarce related to the sense, is hardly better than a noise; it might, for the purposes of art, as well be a sound inarticulate.]

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Termagant[1]: it out-Herod's Herod[2] Pray you auoid it.

Player. I warrant your Honor.

Ham. Be not too tame neyther: but let your owne Discretion be your Tutor. Sute the Action to the Word, the Word to the Action, with this speciall obseruance: That you ore-stop not the [Sidenote: ore-steppe] modestie of Nature; for any thing so ouer-done, [Sidenote ore-doone] is fro[3] the purpose of Playing, whose end both at the first and now, was and is, to hold as 'twere the Mirrour vp to Nature; to shew Vertue her owne [Sidenote: her feature;] Feature, Scorne[4] her owne Image, and the verie Age and Bodie of the Time, his forme and pressure.[5] Now, this ouer-done, or come tardie off,[6] though it make the vnskilfull laugh, cannot but make the [Sidenote: it makes] Iudicious greeue; The censure of the which One,[7] [Sidenote: of which one] must in your allowance[8] o're-way a whole Theater of Others. Oh, there bee Players that I haue scene Play, and heard others praise, and that highly [Sidenote: praysd,] (not to speake it prophanely) that neyther hauing the accent of Christians, nor the gate of Christian, Pagan, or Norman, haue so strutted and bellowed, [Sidenote: Pagan, nor man, haue] that I haue thought some of Natures Iouerney-men had made men, and not made them well, they imitated Humanity so abhominably.[9]

[Sidenote: 126] *Play*. I hope we haue reform'd that indifferently[10] with vs, Sir.

Ham. O reforme it altogether. And let those that play your Clownes, speake no more then is set downe for them.[12] For there be of them, that will themselues laugh, to set on some quantitie of barren Spectators to laugh too, though in the meane time, some necessary Question of the Play be then to be considered:[12] that's Villanous, and shewes a most pittifull Ambition in the Fool that vses it.[13]

Go make you readie. *Exit Players*

[Footnote 1: 'An imaginary God of the Mahometans, represented as a most violent character in the old Miracle-plays and Moralities.'—*Sh. Lex.*]

[Footnote 2: 'represented as a swaggering tyrant in the old dramatic performances.'—*Sh. Lex.*]

[Footnote 3: *away from*: inconsistent with.]

[Footnote 4: —that which is deserving of scorn.]

[Footnote 5: *impression*, as on wax. Some would persuade us that Shakspeare's own plays do not do this; but such critics take the *accidents* or circumstances of a time for the *body* of it—the clothes for the person. *Human* nature is 'Nature,' however *dressed*.

There should be a comma after 'Age.'

[Footnote 6: 'laggingly represented'—A word belonging to *time* is substituted for a word belonging to *space*:—'this over-done, or inadequately effected'; 'this over-done, or under-done.')

[Footnote 7: 'and the judgment of such a one.' 'the which' seems equivalent to *and—such*.]

[Footnote 8: 'must, you will grant.')

[Footnote 9: Shakspeare may here be playing with a false derivation, as I was myself when the true was pointed out to me—fancying *abominable* derived from *ab* and *homo*. If so, then he means by the phrase: 'they imitated humanity so from the nature of man, so *inhumanly*.')

[Footnote 10: tolerably.]

[Footnote 11: 'Sir' *not in Q.*]

[Footnote 12: Shakspeare must have himself suffered from such clowns: Coleridge thinks some of their *gag* has crept into his print.]

[Footnote 13: Here follow in the *1st Q.* several specimens of such a clown's foolish jests and behaviour.]

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Enter Polonius, Rosincrance, and Guildensterne.[1]

[Sidenote: *Guyldensterne, & Rosencraus.*]

How now my Lord,
Will the King heare this peece of Worke?

Pol. And the Queene too, and that presently.[2]

Ham. Bid the Players make hast.

Exit Polonius.[3]

Will you two helpe to hasten them?[4]

Both. We will my Lord. *Exeunt.* [Sidenote: *Ros.* I my Lord. *Exeunt they two.*]

Enter Horatio[5]

Ham. What hoa, *Horatio*? [Sidenote: What howe,]

Hora. Heere sweet Lord, at your Seruice.

[Sidenote: 26] *Ham.*[7] *Horatio*, thou art eene as iust a man
As ere my Conversation coap'd withall.

Hora. O my deere Lord.[6]

Ham.[7] Nay do not thinke I flatter:
For what aduancement may I hope from thee,[8]
That no Reuennew hast, but thy good spirits
To feed and cloath thee. Why shold the poor be flatter'd?
No, let the Candied[9] tongue, like absurd pompe, [Sidenote: licke]

And crooke the pregnant Hindges of the knee,[10]
Where thrift may follow faining? Dost thou heare,
[Sidenote: fauning;]

Since my deere Soule was Mistris of my choyse,[11]
[Sidenote: her choice,]

And could of men distinguish, her election
Hath seal'd thee for her selfe. For thou hast bene
[Sidenote: S'hath seald]

[Sidenote: 272] As one in suffering all, that suffers nothing.

A man that Fortunes buffets, and Rewards
Hath 'tane with equall Thankes. And blest are those, [Sidenote: Hast]
Whose Blood and Iudgement are so well co-mingled,
[Sidenote: comedled,[12]]

[Sidenote: 26] That they are not a Pipe for Fortunes finger,
To sound what stop she please.[13] Giue me that man,
That is not Passions Slaue,[14] and I will weare him
In my hearts Core: I, in my Heart of heart,[15]
As I do thee. Something too much of this.[16]

[Footnote 1: *In Q. at end of speech.*]

[Footnote 2: He humours Hamlet as if he were a child.]

[Footnote 3: *Not in Q.*]

[Footnote 4: He has sent for Horatio, and is expecting him.]

[Footnote 5: *In Q. after next speech.*]

[Footnote 6: —repudiating the praise.]

[Footnote 7: To know a man, there is scarce a readier way than to hear him talk of his friend—why he loves, admires, chooses him. The Poet here gives us a wide window into Hamlet. So genuine is his respect for *being*, so indifferent is he to *having*, that he does not shrink, in argument for his own truth, from reminding his friend to his face that, being a poor man, nothing is to be gained from him—nay, from telling him that it is through his poverty he has learned to admire him, as a man of courage, temper, contentment, and independence, with nothing but his good spirits for an income—a man whose manhood is dominant both over his senses and over his fortune—a true Stoic. He describes an ideal man, then clasps the ideal to his bosom as his own, in the person of his friend. Only a great man could so worship another, choosing him for such qualities; and hereby Shakspeare shows us his Hamlet—a brave, noble, wise, pure man, beset by circumstances the most adverse conceivable. That Hamlet had not misapprehended Horatio becomes evident in the last scene of all. 272.]

[Footnote 8: The mother of flattery is self-advantage.]

[Footnote 9: *sugared. 1st Q.:*

Let flattery sit on those time-pleasing tongs;
To glose with them that loues to heare their praise;
And not with such as thou *Horatio*.
There is a play to night, &c.]

[Footnote 10: A pregnant figure and phrase, requiring thought.]

[Footnote 11: 'since my real self asserted its dominion, and began to rule my choice,' making it pure, and withdrawing it from the tyranny of impulse and liking.]

[Footnote 12: The old word *medle* is synonymous with *mingle*.]

[Footnote 13: To Hamlet, the lordship of man over himself, despite of circumstance, is a truth, and therefore a duty.]

[Footnote 14: The man who has chosen his friend thus, is hardly himself one to act without sufficing reason, or take vengeance without certain proof of guilt.]

[Footnote 15: He justifies the phrase, repeating it.]

[Footnote 16: —apologetic for having praised him to his face.]

There is a Play to night before the King,
One Scoene of it comes neere the Circumstance
Which I haue told thee, of my Fathers death.
I prythee, when thou see'st that Acte a-foot,[1]
Euen with the verie Comment of my[2] Soule [Sidenote: thy[2] soule]
Obserue mine Vnkle: If his occulted guilt, [Sidenote: my Vnkle,]
Do not it selfe vnkennell in one speech,
[Sidenote: 58] It is a damned Ghost that we haue seene:[3]
And my Imaginations are as foule
As Vulcans Stythe.[4] Giue him needfull note,
[Sidenote: stithy; | heedfull]
For I mine eyes will riuet to his Face:
And after we will both our iudgements ioyne,[5]
To censure of his seeming.[6] [Sidenote: in censure]

Hora. Well my Lord.

If he steale ought the whil'st this Play is Playing. [Sidenote: if a]
And scape detecting, I will pay the Theft.[1] [Sidenote: detected,]

Enter King, Queene, Polonius, Ophelia, Rosincrance, Guildensterne, and other Lords attendant with his Guard carrying Torches. Danish March. Sound a Flourish. [Sidenote: *Enter Trumpets and Kettle Drummes, King, Queene, Polonius, Ophelia.*]

Ham. They are comming to the Play: I must [Sidenote: 60, 156, 178] be idle.[7] Get you a place.

King. How fares our Cosin *Hamlet*?

Ham. Excellent Ifaith, of the Camelions dish: [Sidenote: 154] I eate the Ayre promise-cramm'd,[8] you cannot feed Capons so.[9]

King. I haue nothing with this answer *Hamlet*, these words are not mine.[10]

Ham. No, nor mine. Now[11] my Lord, you plaid once i'th'Vniuersity, you say?

Polon. That I did my Lord, and was accounted [Sidenote: did I] a good Actor.

[Footnote 1: Here follows in *1st Q.*

Marke thou the King, doe but obserue his lookes,
For I mine eies will riuet to his face:
[Sidenote: 112] And if he doe not bleach, and change at that,
It is a damned ghost that we haue seene.
Horatio, haue a care, obserue him well.

Hor. My lord, mine eies shall still be on his face,
And not the smallest alteration
That shall appeare in him, but I shall note it.]

[Footnote 2: I take 'my' to be right: 'watch my uncle with the comment—the discriminating judgment, that is—of *my* soul, more intent than thine.']

[Footnote 3: He has then, ere this, taken Horatio into his confidence—so far at least as the Ghost's communication concerning the murder.]

[Footnote 4: a dissyllable: *stithy*, *anvil*; Scotch, *studdy*.

Hamlet's doubt is here very evident: he hopes he may find it a false ghost: what good man, what good son would not? He has clear cause and reason—it is his duty to delay. That the cause and reason and duty are not invariably clear to Hamlet himself—not clear in every mood, is another thing. Wavering conviction, doubt of evidence, the corollaries of assurance, the oppression of misery, a sense of the worthlessness of the world's whole economy—each demanding delay, might yet well, all together, affect the man's feeling as mere causes of rather than reasons for hesitation. The conscientiousness of Hamlet stands out the clearer that, throughout, his dislike to his uncle, predisposing him to believe any ill of him, is more than evident. By his incompetent or prejudiced judges, Hamlet's accusations and justifications of himself are equally placed to the *discredit* of his account. They seem to think a man could never accuse himself except he were in the wrong; therefore if ever he excuses himself, he is the more certainly in the wrong: whatever point may tell on the other side, it is to be disregarded.]

[Footnote 5: 'bring our two judgments together for comparison.']

[Footnote 6: 'in order to judge of the significance of his looks and behaviour.']

[Footnote 7: Does he mean *foolish*, that is, *lunatic*? or *insouciant*, and *unpreoccupied*?]

[Footnote 8: The king asks Hamlet how he *fares*—that is, how he gets on; Hamlet pretends to think he has asked him about his diet. His talk has at once become wild; ere the king enters he has donned his cloak of madness. Here he confesses to ambition—will favour any notion concerning himself rather than give ground for suspecting the real state of his mind and feeling.

In the *1st Q.* 'the Camelions dish' almost appears to mean the play, not the king's promises.]

[Footnote 9: In some places they push food down the throats of the poultry they want to fatten, which is technically, I believe, called *cramming* them.]

[Footnote 10: 'You have not taken me with you; I have not laid hold of your meaning; I have nothing by your answer.' 'Your words have not become my property; they have not given themselves to me in their meaning.']

[Footnote 11: *Point thus*: 'No, nor mine now.—My Lord,' &c. '—not mine, now I have uttered them, for so I have given them away.' Or does he mean to disclaim their purport?]

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Ham. And[1] what did you enact?

Pol. I did enact *Iulius Caesar*, I was kill'd i'th'Capitol: *Brutus* kill'd me.

Ham. It was a brute part of him, to kill so Capitall a Calfe there.[2] Be the Players ready?

Rosin. I my Lord, they stay vpon your patience.

Qu. Come hither my good *Hamlet*, sit by me. [Sidenote: my deere]

Ham. No good Mother, here's Mettle more attractiue.[3]

Pol. Oh ho, do you marke that?[4]

Ham. Ladie, shall I lye in your Lap?

Ophe. No my Lord.

Ham. I meane, my Head vpon your Lap?[5]

Ophe. I my Lord.[6]

Ham. Do you thinke I meant Country[7] matters?

Ophe. I thinke nothing, my Lord.

Ham. That's a faire thought to ly between Maids legs.

Ophe. What is my Lord?

Ham. Nothing.

Ophe. You are merrie, my Lord?

Ham. Who I?

Ophe. I my Lord.[8]

Ham. Oh God, your onely ligge-maker[9]: what should a man do, but be merrie. For looke you how cheerefully my Mother lookes, and my Father dyed within's two Houres.

[Sidenote: 65] *Ophe.* Nay, 'tis twice two moneths, my Lord.[10]

Ham. So long? Nay then let the Diuel weare [Sidenote: 32] blacke, for Ile haue a suite of Sables.[11] Oh Heauens! dye two moneths ago, and not forgotten yet?[12] Then there's hope, a great mans Memorie, may out-liue his life halfe a yeare: But byrlady [Sidenote: ber Lady a] he must builde Churches then: or else shall he [Sidenote: shall a]

[Footnote 1: 'And ' *not in Q.*]

[Footnote 2: Emphasis on *there*. 'There' is not in *1st Q.* Hamlet means it was a desecration of the Capitol.]

[Footnote 3: He cannot be familiar with his mother, so avoids her—will not sit by her, cannot, indeed, bear to be near her. But he loves and hopes in Ophelia still.]

[Footnote 4: '—Did I not tell you so?']

[Footnote 5: This speech and the next are not in the *Q.*, but are shadowed in the *1st Q.*]

[Footnote 6: —*consenting.*]

[Footnote 7: In *1st Quarto*, 'contrary.'

Hamlet hints, probing her character—hoping her unable to understand. It is the festering soreness of his feeling concerning his mother, making him doubt with the haunting agony of a loathed possibility, that prompts, urges, forces from him his ugly speeches—nowise to be justified, only to be largely excused in his sickening consciousness of his mother's presence. Such pain as Hamlet's, the ferment of subverted love and reverence, may lightly bear the blame of hideous manners, seeing, they spring from no wantonness, but from the writhing of tortured and helpless Purity. Good manners may be as impossible as out of place in the presence of shameless evil.]

[Footnote 8: Ophelia bears with him for his own and his madness' sake, and is less uneasy because of the presence of his mother. To account *satisfactorily* for Hamlet's speeches to her, is not easy. The freer custom of the age, freer to an extent hardly credible in this, will not *satisfy* the lovers of Hamlet, although it must have *some* weight. The necessity for talking madly, because he is in the presence of his uncle, and perhaps, to that end, for uttering whatever comes to him, without pause for choice, might give us another hair's-weight. Also he may be supposed confident that Ophelia would not understand him, while his uncle would naturally set such worse than improprieties down to wildest madness. But I suspect that here as before (123), Shakespere would show Hamlet's soul full of bitterest, passionate loathing; his mother has compelled him to think of horrors and women together, so turning their preciousness into a disgust; and this feeling, his assumed madness allows him to indulge and partly relieve by utterance. Could he have provoked Ophelia to rebuke him with the severity he courted, such rebuke would have been joy to him. Perhaps yet a small addition of weight to the scale of his excuse may be found in his excitement about his play, and the necessity for keeping down that excitement. Suggestion is easier than judgment.]

[Footnote 9: 'here's for the jig-maker! he's the right man!' Or perhaps he is claiming the part as his own: 'I am your only jig-maker!']

[Footnote 10: This needs not be taken for the exact time. The statement notwithstanding suggests something like two months between the first and second acts, for in the first, Hamlet says his father has not been dead two months. 24. We are not bound to take it for more than a rough approximation; Ophelia would make the best of things for the queen, who is very kind to her.]

[Footnote 11: the fur of the sable.]

[Footnote 12: *1st Q.*

 nay then there's some Likelihood, a gentlemans death
 may outliue memorie, But by my faith &c.]

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suffer not thinking on, with the Hoby-horsse, whose Epitaph is, For o, For o, the Hoby-horse is forgot.

Hoboyes play. The dumbe shew enters. [Sidenote: *The Trumpets sounds. Dumbe show followes.*]

Enter a King and Queene, very louingly; the Queene [Sidenote: *and a Queene, the queen*] embracing him. She kneeles, and makes shew of [Sidenote: *embracing him, and he her, he takes her up, and*] Protestation vnto him. He takes her vp, and declines his head vpon her neck. Laves him downe [Sidenote: *necke, he lyes*] vpon a Banke of Flowers. She seeing him a-sleepe, leaues him. Anon comes in a Fellow, [Sidenote: *anon come in an other man,*] takes off his Crowne, kisses it, and powres poyson [Sidenote: *it, pours*] in the Kings eares, and Exits. The Queene returnes, [Sidenote: *the sleepers eares, and leaues him:*] findes the King dead, and makes passionate [Sidenote: *dead, makes*] Action. The Poysoner, with some two or [Sidenote: *some three or foure come in againe, seeme to condole*] three Mutes comes in againe, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away: The [Sidenote:

with her, the] Poysoner Wooes the Queene with Gifts, she [Sidenote: 54] seemes loath and vnwilling awhile, but in the end, [Sidenote: *seemes harsh awhile,*] accepts his loue.[1] *Exeunt*[2] [Sidenote: *accepts loue.*]

Ophe. What meanes this, my Lord?

Ham. Marry this is Miching *Malicho*[3] that [Sidenote: this munching *Mallico*] meanes Mischeefe.

Ophe. Belike this shew imports the Argument of the Play?

Ham. We shall know by these Fellowes: [Sidenote: this fellow, *Enter Prologue*] the Players cannot keepe counsell, they'l tell [Sidenote: keepe, they'le] all.[4]

Ophe. Will they tell vs what this shew meant? [Sidenote: Will a tell]

Ham. I, or any shew that you'l shew him. Bee [Sidenote: you will] not you asham'd to shew, hee'l not shame to tell you what it meanes.

Ophe. You are naught,[5] you are naught, Ile marke the Play.

[Footnote 1: The king, not the queen, is aimed at. Hamlet does not forget the injunction of the Ghost to spare his mother. 54.]

The king should be represented throughout as struggling not to betray himself.]

[Footnote 2: *Not in Q.*]

[Footnote 3: *skulking mischief*: the latter word is Spanish, To *mich* is to *play truant*.

How tenderly her tender hands betweene
In yvorie cage she did the micher bind.

The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia, page 84.

My *Reader* tells me the word is still in use among printers, with the pronounciation *mike*, and the meaning *to skulk* or *idle*.]

[Footnote 4: —their part being speech, that of the others only dumb show.]

[Footnote 5: *naughty*: persons who do not behave well are treated as if they were not—are made nought of—are set at nought; hence our word naughty.

'Be naught awhile' (*As You Like It*, i. 1)—'take yourself away;' 'be nobody;' 'put yourself in the corner.')

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Enter[1] *Prologue*.

For vs, and for our Tragedie, Heere stooping to your Clemencie: We begge your hearing Patientlie.

Ham. Is this a Prologue, or the Poesie[2] of a [Sidenote: posie] Ring?

Ophe. 'Tis[3] briefe my Lord.

Ham. As Womans loue.

[4] *Enter King and his Queene.* [Sidenote: *and Queene*]

[Sidenote: 234] *King.* Full thirtie times[5] hath Phoebus Cart gon round,

Neptunes salt Wash, and *Tellus* Orbed ground: [Sidenote: orb'd the]

And thirtie dozen Moones with borrowed sheene,

About the World haue times twelue thirties beene,

Since loue our hearts, and *Hymen* did our hands

Vnite comutuall, in most sacred Bands.[6]

Bap. So many iournies may the Sunne and Moone [Sidenote: *Quee.*]
Make vs againe count o're, ere loue be done.
But woe is me, you are so sicke of late,
So farre from cheere, and from your forme state,

[Sidenote: from our former state,]

That I distrust you: yet though I distrust,
Discomfort you (my Lord) it nothing must:

[A]

For womens Feare and Loue, holds quantitie, [Sidenote: And womens hold]
In neither ought, or in extremity:[7]

[Sidenote: Eyther none, in neither]

Now what my loue is, prooffe hath made you know,

[Sidenote: my Lord is prooffe]

And as my Loue is siz'd, my Feare is so. [Sidenote: ciz'd,]

[B]

[Footnote A: *Here in the Quarto*:—

For women feare too much, euen as they loue,]

[Footnote B: *Here in the Quarto*:—

Where loue is great, the litlest doubts are feare,
Where little feares grow great, great loue growes there.]

[Footnote 1: *Enter not in Q.*]

[Footnote 2: Commonly *posy*: a little sentence engraved inside a ring—perhaps originally a tiny couplet, therefore *poesy*, *1st Q.*, 'a poesie for a ring?']

[Footnote 3: Emphasis on "'Tis.']

[Footnote 4: Very little blank verse of any kind was written before Shakspeare's; the usual form of dramatic verse was long, irregular, rimed lines: the Poet here uses the heroic couplet, which gives a resemblance to the older plays by its rimes, while also by its stately and monotonous movement the play-play is differenced from the play into which it is introduced, and caused to *look* intrinsically like a play in relation to the rest of the play of which it is part. In other words, it stands off from the surrounding play, slightly elevated both by form and formality. 103.]

[Footnote 5: *1st Q.*

Duke. Full fortie yeares are past, their date is gone,
Since happy time ioyn'd both our hearts as one:
And now the blood that fill'd my youthfull veines,
Ruunes weakely in their pipes, and all the straines
Of musicke, which whilome please mine eare,
Is now a burthen that Age cannot beare:
And therefore sweete Nature must pay his due,
To heauen must I, and leaue the earth with you.]

[Footnote 6: Here Hamlet gives the time his father and mother had been married, and Shakspeare points at Hamlet's age. 234. The Poet takes pains to show his hero's years.]

[Footnote 7: This line, whose form in the *Quarto* is very careless, seems but a careless correction, leaving the sense as well as the construction obscure: 'Women's fear and love keep the scales level; in *neither* is there ought, or in *both* there is fulness;' or: 'there is no moderation in their fear and their love; either they have *none* of either, or they have *excess* of both.' Perhaps he tried to express both ideas at once. But compression is always in danger of confusion.]

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King. Faith I must leaue thee Loue, and shortly too:

My operant Powers my Functions leaue to do: [Sidenote: their functions]
And thou shalt liue in this faire world behinde,
Honour'd, belou'd, and haply, one as kinde.
For Husband shalt thou—

Bap. Oh confound the rest: [Sidenote: *Quee.*]

Such Loue, must needs be Treason in my breast:
In second Husband, let me be accurst,
None wed the second, but who kill'd the first.[1]

Ham. Wormwood, Wormwood. [Sidenote: *Ham.* That's wormwood[2]]

Bapt. The instances[3] that second Marriage moue,
Are base respects of Thrift,[4] but none of Loue.
A second time, I kill my Husband dead,
When second Husband kisses me in Bed.

King. I do beleeeue you. Think what now you speak:
But what we do determine, oft we breake:
Purpose is but the slaue to Memorie,[5]
Of violent Birth, but poore validitie:[6]
Which now like Fruite vnripe stickes on the Tree,
 [Sidenote: now the fruite]
But fall vnshaken, when they mellow bee.[7]
Most necessary[8] 'tis, that we forget
To pay our selues, what to our selues is debt:
What to our selues in passion we propose,
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.
The violence of other Greefe or Ioy, [Sidenote: eyther,]
Their owne enactors with themselues destroy: [Sidenote: enactures]
Where Ioy most Reuels, Greefe doth most lament;
Greefe ioyes, Ioy greeues on slender accident.[9]
 [Sidenote: Greefe ioy ioy griefes]
This world is not for aye, nor 'tis not strange
That euen our Loues should with our Fortunes change.
For 'tis a question left vs yet to proue,
Whether Loue lead Fortune, or else Fortune Loue.

[Footnote 1: Is this to be supposed in the original play, or inserted by Hamlet, embodying an unuttered and yet more fearful doubt with regard to his mother?]

[Footnote 2: This speech is on the margin in the *Quarto*, and the Queene's speech runs on without break.]

[Footnote 3: the urgencies; the motives.]

[Footnote 4: worldly advantage.]

[Footnote 5: 'Purpose holds but while Memory holds.']

[Footnote 6: 'Purpose is born in haste, but is of poor strength to live.']

[Footnote 7: Here again there is carelessness of construction, as if the Poet had not thought it worth his while to correct this subsidiary portion of the drama. I do not see how to lay the blame on the printer.—'Purpose is a mere fruit, which holds on or falls only as it must. The element of persistency is not in it.']

[Footnote 8: unavoidable—coming of necessity.]

[Footnote 9: 'Grief turns into joy, and joy into grief, on a slight chance.']

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The great man downe, you marke his fauourites flies,
 [Sidenote: fauourite]
The poore aduanc'd, makes Friends of Enemies:
And hitherto doth Loue on Fortune tend,
For who not needs, shall neuer lacke a Frend:
And who in want a hollow Friend doth try,
Directly seasons him his Enemie.[1]
But orderly to end, where I begun,
Our Willes and Fates do so contrary run,
That our Deuices still are ouerthrowne,
Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our owne.[2]
[Sidenote: 246] So thinke thou wilt no second Husband wed.
But die thy thoughts, when thy first Lord is dead.

Bap. Nor Earth to giue me food, nor Heauen light, [Sidenote: *Quee.*]
Sport and repose locke from me day and night:[3]
[A]

Each opposite that blankes the face of ioy,
Meet what I would haue well, and it destroy:
Both heere, and hence, pursue me lasting strife,[4]
If once a Widdow, euer I be Wife.[5] [Sidenote: once I be a | be a wife]

Ham. If she should breake it now.[6]

King. 'Tis deeply sworne:
Sweet, leaue me heere a while,
My spirits grow dull, and faine I would beguile
The tedious day with sleepe.

Qu. Sleepe rocke thy Braine, [Sidenote: Sleepes[7]] And neuer come mischance betweene vs twaine,
Exit [Sidenote: *Exeunt.*]

Ham. Madam, how like you this Play?

Qu. The Lady protests to much me thinkes, [Sidenote: doth protest]

Ham. Oh but shee'l keepe her word.

[Footnote A: *Here in the Quarto:—*

To desperation turne my trust and hope,[8]
And Anchors[9] cheere in prison be my scope]

[Footnote 1: All that is wanted to make a real enemy of an unreal friend is the seasoning of a requested favour.]

[Footnote 2: 'Our thoughts are ours, but what will come of them we cannot tell.']

[Footnote 3: 'May Day and Night lock from me sport and repose.']

[Footnote 4: 'May strife pursue me in the world and out of it.']

[Footnote 5: In all this, there is nothing to reflect on his mother beyond what everybody knew.]

[Footnote 6: *This speech is in the margin of the Quarto.*]

[Footnote 7: *Not in Q.*]

[Footnote 8: 'May my trust and hope turn to despair.']

[Footnote 9: an anchoret's.]

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King. Haue you heard the Argument, is there no Offence in't?[1]

Ham. No, no, they do but iest, poyson in iest, no Offence i'th'world.[2]

King. What do you call the Play?

Ham. The Mouse-trap: Marry how? Tropically:[3] This Play is the Image of a murder done in *Vienna*: *Gonzago* is the Dukes name, his wife *Baptista*: you shall see anon: 'tis a knauish peece of worke: But what o'that? Your Maiestie, and [Sidenote: of that?] wee that haue free soules, it touches vs not: let the gall'd iade winch: our withers are vnrunge.[4]

Enter Lucianus.[5]

This is one *Lucianus* nephew to the King.

Ophe. You are a good Chorus, my Lord.
[Sidenote: are as good as a Chorus]

Ham. I could interpret betweene you and your loue: if I could see the Puppets dallying.[6]

Ophe. You are keene my Lord, you are keene.

Ham. It would cost you a groaning, to take off my edge. [Sidenote: mine]

Ophe. Still better and worse.

Ham. So you mistake Husbands.[7] [Sidenote: mistake your] Begin Murderer. Pox, leaue thy damnable Faces, [Sidenote: murthrerer, leaue] and begin. Come, the croaking Rauen doth bellow for Reuenge.[8]

Lucian. Thoughts blacke, hands apt,
Drugges fit, and Time agreeing:
Confederate season, else, no Creature seeing:[9] [Sidenote: Considerat]
Thou mixture ranke, of Midnight Weeds collected,
With Hecats Ban, thrice blasted, thrice infected, [Sidenote: inveccted]
Thy naturall Magicke, and dire propertie,
On wholesome life, vsurpe immediatly. [Sidenote: vsurps]

Powres the poyson in his eares.[10]

Ham. He poysons him i'th Garden for's estate: [Sidenote: A poysons | for his]

[Footnote 1: —said, perhaps, to Polonius. Is there a lapse here in the king's self-possession? or is this speech only an outcome of its completeness—a pretence of fearing the play may glance at the queen for marrying him?]

[Footnote 2: 'It is but jest; don't be afraid: there is no reality in it'—as one might say to a child seeing a play.]

[Footnote 3: Figuratively: from *trope*. In the *1st Q.* the passage stands thus:

Ham. Mouse-trap: mary how trapically: this play is
The image of a murder done in *guyana*,]

[Footnote 4: Here Hamlet endangers himself to force the king to self-betrayal.]

[Footnote 5: *In Q. after next line.*]

[Footnote 6: In a puppet-play, if she and her love were the puppets, he could supply the speeches.]

[Footnote 7: Is this a misprint for 'so you *must take* husbands'—for better and worse, namely? or is it a thrust at his mother—'So you mis-take husbands, going from the better to a worse'? In *1st Q.*: 'So you must take your husband, begin.')

[Footnote 8: Probably a mocking parody or burlesque of some well-known exaggeration—such as not a few of Marlowe's lines.]

[Footnote 9: 'none beholding save the accomplice hour:'.]

[Footnote 10: *Not in Q.*]

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His name's *Gonzago*: the Story is extant and writ
[Sidenote: and written]
in choyce Italian. You shall see anon how the
[Sidenote: in very choice]
Murthrerer gets the loue of *Gonzago's* wife.

Ophe. The King rises.[1]

Ham. What, frighted with false fire.[2]

Qu. How fares my Lord?

Pol. Giue o're the Play.

King. Giue me some Light. Away.[3]

All. Lights, Lights, Lights. *Exeunt* [Sidenote: *Pol. | Exeunt all but Ham. & Horatio.*]

Manet Hamlet & Horatio.

Ham.[4] Why let the strucken Deere go weepe, The Hart vngalled play: For some must watch, while some must sleepe; So runnes the world away. Would not this[5] Sir, and a Forrest of Feathers, if the rest of my Fortunes turne Turke with me; with two Prouinciall Roses[6] on my rac'd[7] Shooes, get me [Sidenote: with prouinciall | raz'd] a Fellowship[8] in a crie[9] of Players sir. [Sidenote: Players?]

Hor. Halfe a share.

Ham. A whole one I,[10] [11] For thou dost know: Oh Damon deere, This Realme dismantled was of Loue himselfe, And now reignes heere. A verie verie Paiocke.[12]

Hora. You might haue Rim'd.[13]

Ham. Oh good *Horatio*, Ile take the Ghosts word for a thousand pound. Did'st perceiue?

Hora. Verie well my Lord.

Ham. Vpon the talke of the poysoning?

Hora. I did verie well note him.

Enter Rosinrance and Guildensterne.[14]

Ham. Oh, ha? Come some Musick.[15] Come the Recorders: [Sidenote: Ah ha,]

[Footnote 1: —in ill suppressed agitation.]

[Footnote 2: *This speech is not in the Quarto.*—Is the 'false fire' what we now call *stage-fire*?—'What! frighted at a mere play?']

[Footnote 3: The stage—the stage-stage, that is—alone is lighted. Does the king stagger out blindly, madly, shaking them from him? I think not—but as if he were taken suddenly ill.]

[Footnote 4: —*singing*—that he may hide his agitation, restrain himself, and be regarded as careless-mad, until all are safely gone.]

[Footnote 5: —his success with the play.]

[Footnote 6: 'Roses of Provins,' we are told—probably artificial.]

[Footnote 7: The meaning is very doubtful. But for the *raz'd* of the *Quarto*, I should suggest *lac'd*. Could it mean *cut low*?]

[Footnote 8: *a share*, as immediately below.]

[Footnote 9: A *cry* of hounds is a pack. So in *King Lear*, act v. sc. 3, 'packs and sects of great ones.']

[Footnote 10: *I* for *ay*—that is, *yes!*—He insists on a whole share.]

[Footnote 11: Again he takes refuge in singing.]

[Footnote 12: The lines are properly measured in the *Quarto*:

For thou doost know oh Damon deere
This Realme dismantled was
Of *Ioue* himselfe, and now raignes heere
A very very paiock.

By *Jove*, he of course intends *his father*. 170. What 'Paiocke' means, whether *pagan*, or *peacock*, or *bajocco*, matters nothing, since it is intended for nonsense.]

[Footnote 13: To rime with *was*, Horatio naturally expected *ass* to follow as the end of the last line: in the wanton humour of his excitement, Hamlet disappointed him.]

[Footnote 14: *In Q. after next speech.*]

[Footnote 15: He hears Rosinrance and Guildensterne coming, and changes his behaviour—calling for music to end the play with. Either he wants, under its cover, to finish his talk with Horatio in what is for the moment the safest place, or he would mask himself before his two false friends. Since the departure of the king—I would suggest—he has borne himself with evident apprehension, every now and then glancing about him, as fearful of what may follow his uncle's recognition of the intent of the play. Three times he has burst out singing.

Or might not his whole carriage, with the call for music, be the outcome of a grimly merry satisfaction at the success of his scheme?]

For if the King like not the Comedie,
Why then belike he likes it not perdie.[1]
Come some Musicke.

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

Ham. Sir, a whole History.

Guild. The King, sir.

Ham. I sir, what of him?

Guild. Is in his retyrement, maruellous distemper'd.

Ham. With drinke Sir?

Guild. No my Lord, rather with choller.[2] [Sidenote: Lord, with]

Ham. Your wisdome should shew it selfe more richer, to signifie this to his Doctor: for me to [Sidenote: the Doctor,] put him to his Purgation, would perhaps plundge him into farre more Choller.[2] [Sidenote: into more]

Guild. Good my Lord put your discourse into some frame,[3] and start not so wildely from my [Sidenote: stare] affayre.

Ham. I am tame Sir, pronounce.

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

Ham. You are welcome.[4]

Guild. Nay, good my Lord, this courtesie is not of the right breed. If it shall please you to make me a wholsome answer, I will doe your Mothers command'ment: if not, your pardon, and my returne shall bee the end of my Businesse. [Sidenote: of busines.]

Ham. Sir, I cannot.

Guild. What, my Lord?

Ham. Make you a wholsome answere: my wits diseas'd. But sir, such answers as I can make, you [Sidenote: answere] shal command: or rather you say, my Mother: [Sidenote: rather as you] therefore no more but to the matter. My Mother you say.

[Footnote 1: These two lines he may be supposed to sing.]

[Footnote 2: Choler means bile, and thence anger. Hamlet in his answer plays on the two meanings: —'to give him the kind of medicine I think fit for him, would perhaps much increase his displeasure.']

[Footnote 3: some logical consistency.]

[Footnote 4: —with an exaggeration of courtesy.]

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Rosin. Then thus she sayes: your behaiour hath stroke her into amazement, and admiration.[1]

Ham. Oh wonderfull Sonne, that can so astonish [Sidenote: stonish] a Mother. But is there no sequell at the heeles of this Mothers admiration? [Sidenote: admiration, impart.]

Rosin. She desires to speake with you in her Closset, ere you go to bed.

Ham. We shall obey, were she ten times our Mother. Haue you any further Trade with vs?

Rosin. My Lord, you once did loue me.

Ham. So I do still, by these pickers and [Sidenote: And doe still] stealers.[2]

Rosin. Good my Lord, what is your cause of distemper? You do freely barre the doore of your [Sidenote: surely barre the door vpon your] owne Libertie, if you deny your greefes to your your Friend.

Ham. Sir I lacke Aduancement.

Rosin. How can that be, when you haue the [Sidenote: 136] voyce of the King himselfe, for your

Succession in Danmarke?

[3]

Ham. I, but while the grasse growes,[4] the [Sidenote: I sir,] Prouerbe is something musty.

Enter one with a Recorder.[5]

O the Recorder. Let me see, to withdraw with, [Sidenote: ô the Recorders, let mee see one, to] you,[6] why do you go about to recouer the winde of mee,[7] as if you would driue me into a toyle?[8]

Guild. O my Lord, if my Dutie be too bold, my loue is too vnmanly.[9]

Ham. I do not well vnderstand that.[10] Will you, play vpon this Pipe?

Guild. My Lord, I cannot.

Ham. I pray you.

Guild. Beleeue me, I cannot.

Ham. I do beseech you.

[Footnote 1: wonder, astonishment.]

[Footnote 2: He swears an oath that will not hold, being by the hand of a thief.

In the Catechism: 'Keep my hands from picking and stealing.')

[Footnote 3: Here in Quarto, *Enter the Players with Recorders.*]

[Footnote 4: '... the colt starves.')

[Footnote 5: *Not in Q.* The stage-direction of the *Folio* seems doubtful. Hamlet has called for the orchestra: we may either suppose one to precede the others, or that the rest are already scattered; but the *Quarto* direction and reading seem better.]

[Footnote 6: —*taking Guildensterne aside.*]

[Footnote 7: 'to get to windward of me.')

[Footnote 8: 'Why do you seek to get the advantage of me, as if you would drive me to betray myself?'—Hunters, by sending on the wind their scent to the game, drive it into their toils.]

[Footnote 9: Guildensterne tries euphuism, but hardly succeeds. He intends to plead that any fault in his approach must be laid to the charge of his love. *Duty* here means *homage*—so used still by the common people.]

[Footnote 10: —said with a smile of gentle contempt.]

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

Ham. Tis as easie as lying: gouerne these [Sidenote: It is] Ventiges with your finger and thumb, giue it [Sidenote: fingers, & the vंबर, giue] breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most [Sidenote: most eloquent] excellent Musicke. Looke you, these are the stoppes.

Guild. But these cannot I command to any vtterance of hermony, I haue not the skill.

Ham. Why looke you now, how vnworthy a thing you make of me: you would play vpon mee; you would seeme to know my stops: you would pluck out the heart of my Mysterie; you would sound mee from my lowest Note, to the top of my [Sidenote: note to my compasse] Compasse: and there is much Musicke, excellent Voice, in this little Organe, yet cannot you make [Sidenote: it speak, s'hloud do you think I] it. Why do you thinke, that I am easier to bee plaid on, then a Pipe? Call me what Instrument you will, though you can fret[1] me, you cannot [Sidenote: you fret me not,] [Sidenote: 184] play vpon me. God blesse you Sir.[2]

Enter Polonius.

Polon. My Lord; the Queene would speak with you, and presently.

Ham. Do you see that Cloud? that's almost in [Sidenote: yonder cloud] shape like a Camell.
[Sidenote: shape of a]

Polon. By'th'Misse, and it's like a Camell [Sidenote: masse and tis,] indeed.

Ham. Me thinks it is like a Weazell.

Polon. It is back'd like a Weazell.

Ham. Or like a Whale?[3]

Polon. Verie like a Whale.[4]

Ham. Then will I come to my Mother, by and by: [Sidenote: I will] [Sidenote: 60, 136, 178] They foole me to the top of my bent.[5] I will come by and by.

[Footnote 1: —with allusion to the *frets* or *stop-marks* of a stringed instrument.]

[Footnote 2: —to *Polonius*.]

[Footnote 3: There is nothing insanely arbitrary in these suggestions of likeness; a cloud might very well be like every one of the three; the camel has a hump, the weasel humps himself, and the whale is a hump.]

[Footnote 4: He humours him in everything, as he would a madman.]

[Footnote 5: Hamlet's cleverness in simulating madness is dwelt upon in the old story. See '*Hystorie of Hamblet, prince of Denmarke*.'

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Polon.[1] I will say so. *Exit.*[1]

Ham.[1] By and by, is easily said. Leaue me Friends:
'Tis now the verie witching time of night,
When Churchyards yawne, and Hell it selfe breaths out
[Sidenote: brakes[2]]
Contagion to this world.[3] Now could I drink hot blood,
And do such bitter businesse as the day
[Sidenote: such busines as the bitter day]
Would quake to looke on.[4] Soft now, to my Mother:
Oh Heart, loose not thy Nature;[5] let not euer
The Soule of *Nero*[6] enter this firme bosome:
Let me be cruell, not vnnaturall.
[Sidenote: 172] I will speake Daggers[7] to her, but vse none:
[Sidenote: dagger]
My Tongue and Soule in this be Hypocrites.[8]
How in my words someuer she be shent,[9]
To giue them Seales,[10] neuer my Soule consent.[4]
[Sidenote: *Exit.*]

Enter King, Rosincrance, and Guildensterne.

King. I like him not, nor stands it safe with vs,
To let his madnesse range.[11] Therefore prepare you,
[Sidenote: 167] I your Commission will forthwith dispatch,[12]
[Sidenote: 180] And he to England shall along with you:
The termes of our estate, may not endure[13]
Hazard so dangerous as doth hourelly grow [Sidenote: so neer's as]
Out of his Lunacies. [Sidenote: his browes.]

Guild. We will our selues prouide:
Most holie and Religious feare it is[14]
To keepe those many many bodies safe
That liue and feede vpon your Maiestie.[15]

Rosin. The single And peculiar[16] life is bound With all the strength and Armour of the minde,

[Footnote 1: The *Quarto*, not having *Polon.*, *Exit*, or *Ham.*, and arranging differently, reads thus:—

They foole me to the top of my bent, I will come by and by,
Leaue me friends.
I will, say so. By and by is easily said,
Tis now the very &c.]

[Footnote 2: *belches.*]

[Footnote 3: —thinking of what the Ghost had told him, perhaps: it was the time when awful secrets wander about the world. Compare *Macbeth*, act ii. sc. 1; also act iii. sc. 2.]

[Footnote 4: The assurance of his uncle's guilt, gained through the effect of the play upon him, and the corroboration of his mother's guilt by this partial confirmation of the Ghost's assertion, have once more stirred in Hamlet the fierceness of vengeance. But here afresh comes out the balanced nature of the man—say rather, the supremacy in him of reason and will. His dear soul, having once become mistress of his choice, remains mistress for ever. He *could* drink hot blood, he *could* do bitter business, but he will carry himself as a son, and the son of his father, *ought* to carry himself towards a guilty mother—*mother* although guilty.]

[Footnote 5: Thus he girds himself for the harrowing interview. Aware of the danger he is in of forgetting his duty to his mother, he strengthens himself in filial righteousness, dreading to what word or deed a burst of indignation might drive him. One of his troubles now is the way he feels towards his mother.]

[Footnote 6: —who killed his mother.]

[Footnote 7: His words should be as daggers.]

[Footnote 8: *Pretenders.*]

[Footnote 9: *reproached* or *rebuked*—though oftener *scolded.*]

[Footnote 10: 'to seal them with actions'—Actions are the seals to words, and make them irrevocable.]

[Footnote 11: *walk at liberty.*]

[Footnote 12: *get ready.*]

[Footnote 13: He had, it would appear, taken them into his confidence in the business; they knew what was to be in their commission, and were thorough traitors to Hamlet.]

[Footnote 14: —holy and religious precaution for the sake of the many depending on him.]

[Footnote 15: Is there not unconscious irony of their own parasitism here intended?]

[Footnote 16: *private individual.*]

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To keepe it selfe from noyance:[1] but much more,
That Spirit, vpon whose spirit depends and rests
 [Sidenote: whose weale depends]
The lives of many, the cease of Maiestie [Sidenote: cesse]
Dies not alone:[2] but like a Gulfe doth draw
What's neere it, with it. It is a massie wheele
 [Sidenote: with it, or it is]
Fixt on the Somnet of the highest Mount,
To whose huge Spoakes, ten thousand lesser things
 [Sidenote: hough spokes]
Are mortiz'd and adioyn'd: which when it falles,
Each small annexment, pettie consequence
Attends the boystrous Ruine. Neuer alone [Sidenote: raine,]
Did the King sighe, but with a generall grone. [Sidenote: but a[3]]

King.[4] Arme you,[5] I pray you to this speedie Voyage;
 [Sidenote: viage,]

For we will Fetters put vpon this feare,[6] [Sidenote: put about this]
Which now goes too free-footed.

Both. We will haste vs. *Exeunt Gent*

Enter Polonius.

Pol. My Lord, he's going to his Mothers Closset:
Behinde the Arras Ile conuey my selfe
To heare the Processe. Ile warrant shee'l tax him home,
And as you said, and wisely was it said,
'Tis meete that some more audience then a Mother,
Since Nature makes them partiall, should o're-heare
The speech of vantage.[7] Fare you well my Liege,
Ile call vpon you ere you go to bed,
And tell you what I know. [Sidenote: Exit.]

King. Thankes deere my Lord.
Oh my offence is ranke, it smels to heauen,
It hath the primall eldest curse vpon't,
A Brothers murther.[8] Pray can I not,
Though inclination be as sharpe as will:
My stronger guilt,[9] defeats my strong intent,

[Footnote 1: The philosophy of which self is the centre. The speeches of both justify the king in proceeding to extremes against Hamlet.]

[Footnote 2: The same as to say: 'The passing, ceasing, or ending of majesty dies not—is not finished or accomplished, without that of others;' 'the dying ends or ceases not,' &c.]

[Footnote 3: The *but* of the *Quarto* is better, only the line halts.
It is the preposition, meaning *without*.]

[Footnote 4: *heedless of their flattery*. It is hardly applicable enough to interest him.]

[Footnote 5: 'Provide yourselves.']

[Footnote 6: fear active; cause of fear; thing to be afraid of; the noun of the verb *fear*, to *frighten*:

Or in the night, imagining some fear,
How easy is a bush supposed a bear!

A Midsummer Night's Dream, act v. sc. i.]

[Footnote 7: Schmidt (*Sh. Lex.*) says *of vantage* means *to boot*. I do not think he is right. Perhaps Polonius means 'from a position of advantage.' Or perhaps 'The speech of vantage' is to be understood as implying that Hamlet, finding himself in a position of vantage, that is, alone with his mother, will probably utter himself with little restraint.]

[Footnote 8: This is the first proof positive of his guilt accorded even to the spectator of the play: here Claudius confesses not merely guilt (118), but the very deed. Thoughtless critics are so ready to judge another as if he knew all they know, that it is desirable here to remind the student that only he, not Hamlet, hears this soliloquy. The falseness of half the judgments in the world comes from our not taking care and pains first to know accurately the actions, and then to understand the mental and moral condition, of those we judge.]

[Footnote 9: —his present guilty indulgence—stronger than his strong intent to pray.]

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And like a man to double businesse bound,[1]
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
And both[2] neglect; what if this cursed hand
Were thicker then it selfe with Brothers blood,
Is there not Raine enough in the sweet Heauens
To wash it white as Snow? Whereto serues mercy,
But to confront the visage of Offence?
And what's in Prayer, but this two-fold force,
To be fore-stalled ere we come to fall,
Or pardon'd being downe? Then Ile looke vp, [Sidenote: pardon]
My fault is past. But oh, what forme of Prayer
Can serue my turne? Forgiue me my foule Murther:
That cannot be, since I am still possest

Of those effects for which I did the Murther.[3]
My Crowne, mine owne Ambition, and my Queene:
May one be pardon'd, and retaine th'offence?
In the corrupted currants of this world,
Offences gilded hand may shoue by Iustice [Sidenote: showe]
And oft 'tis seene, the wicked prize it selfe
Buyes out the Law; but 'tis not so aboue,
There is no shuffling, there the Action lyes
In his true Nature, and we our selues compell'd
Euen to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
To giue in euidence. What then? What rests?
Try what Repentance can. What can it not?
Yet what can it, when one cannot repent?[4]
Oh wretched state! Oh bosome, blacke as death!
Oh limed[5] soule, that struggling to be free,
Art more ingag'd[6]: Helpe Angels, make assay:[7]
Bow stubborne knees, and heart with strings of Steele,
Be soft as sinewes of the new-borne Babe,
All may be well.

[Footnote 1: Referring to his double guilt—the one crime past, the other in continuance.]

Here is the corresponding passage in the *1st Q.*, with the adultery plainly confessed:—

Enter the King.

King. O that this wet that falles vpon my face
Would wash the crime cleere from my conscience!
When I looke vp to heauen, I see my trespasse,
The earth doth still crie out vpon my fact,
Pay me the murder of a brother and a king,
And the adulterous fault I haue committed:
O these are sinnes that are vnardonable:
Why say thy sinnes were blacker then is ieat,
Yet may contrition make them as white as snowe:
I but still to perseuer in a sinne,
It is an act gainst the vniuersall power,
Most wretched man, stoope, bend thee to thy prayer,
Aske grace of heauen to keepe thee from despaire.]

[Footnote 2: both crimes.]

[Footnote 3: He could repent of and pray forgiveness for the murder, if he could repent of the adultery and incest, and give up the queen. It is not the sins they have done, but the sins they will not leave, that damn men. 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.' The murder deeply troubled him; the adultery not so much; the incest and usurpation mainly as interfering with the forgiveness of the murder.]

[Footnote 4: Even hatred of crime committed is not repentance: repentance is the turning away from wrong doing: 'Cease to do evil; learn to do well.']

[Footnote 5: —caught and held by crime, as a bird by bird-lime.]

[Footnote 6: entangled.]

[Footnote 7: *said to his knees.* Point thus:—'Helpe Angels! Make assay—bow, stubborne knees!']

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Enter Hamlet.

Ham.[1] Now might I do it pat, now he is praying,
[Sidenote: doe it, but now a is a praying,]
And now Ile doo't, and so he goes to Heauen, [Sidenote: so a goes]
And so am I reueng'd: that would be scann'd, [Sidenote: reuendge,]
A Villaine killes my Father, and for that
I his foule Sonne, do this same Villaine send [Sidenote: sole sonne]

To heauen. Oh this is hyre and Sallery, not Reuenge.

[Sidenote: To heauen. Why, this is base and silly, not]

He tooke my Father grossely, full of bread, [Sidenote: A tooke]

[Sidenote: 54, 262] With all his Crimes broad blowne, as fresh as May,

[Sidenote: as flush as]

And how his Audit stands, who knowes, saue Heauen:[2]

But in our circumstance and course of thought

'Tis heaueie with him: and am I then reueng'd,

To take him in the purging of his Soule,

When he is fit and season'd for his passage? No.

Vp Sword, and know thou a more horrid hent[3]

When he is drunke asleepe: or in his Rage,

Or in th'incestuous pleasure of his bed,

At gaming, swearing, or about some acte [Sidenote: At game a swearing,]

That ha's no rellish of Saluation in't,

Then trip him,[4] that his heeles may kicke at Heauen,

And that his Soule may be as damn'd and blacke

As Hell, whereto it goes.[5] My Mother stayes,[6]

This Physicke but prolongs thy sickly dayes.[7]

Exit.

King. My words flye vp, my thoughts remain below, Words without thoughts, neuer to Heauen go.[8]
Exit.

Enter Queene and Polonius. [Sidenote: *Enter Gertrard and*]

Pol. He will come straight: [Sidenote: A will] Looke you lay home to him

[Footnote 1: In the *1st Q.* this speech commences with, 'I so, come forth and worke thy last,' evidently addressed to his sword; afterwards, having changed his purpose, he says, 'no, get thee vp agen.']

[Footnote 2: This indicates doubt of the Ghost still. He is unwilling to believe in him.]

[Footnote 3: *grasp.* This is the only instance I know of *hent* as a noun. The verb *to hent, to lay hold of*, is not so rare. 'Wait till thou be aware of a grasp with a more horrid purpose in it.']

[Footnote 4: —still addressed to his sword.]

[Footnote 5: Are we to take Hamlet's own presentment of his reasons as exhaustive? Doubtless to kill him at his prayers, whereupon, after the notions of the time, he would go to heaven, would be anything but justice—the murdered man in hell—the murderer in heaven! But it is easy to suppose Hamlet finding it impossible to slay a man on his knees—and that from behind: thus in the unseen Presence, he was in sanctuary, and the avenger might well seek reason or excuse for not *then*, not *there* executing the decree.]

[Footnote 6: 'waits for me.']

[Footnote 7: He seems now to have made up his mind, and to await only fit time and opportunity; but he is yet to receive confirmation strong as holy writ.

This is the first chance Hamlet has had—within the play—of killing the king, and any imputation of faulty irresolution therein is simply silly. It shows the soundness of Hamlet's reason, and the steadiness of his will, that he refuses to be carried away by passion, or the temptation of opportunity. The sight of the man on his knees might well start fresh doubt of his guilt, or even wake the thought of sparing a repentant sinner. He knows also that in taking vengeance on her husband he could not avoid compromising his mother. Besides, a man like Hamlet could not fail to perceive how the killing of his uncle, and in such an attitude, would look to others.

It may be judged, however, that the reason he gives to himself for not slaying the king, was only an excuse, that his soul revolted from the idea of assassination, and was calmed in a measure by the doubt whether a man could thus pray—in supposed privacy, we must remember—and be a murderer. Not even yet had he proof *positive*, absolute, conclusive: the king might well take offence at the play, even were he innocent; and in any case Hamlet would desire *presentable* proof: he had positively none to show the people in justification of vengeance.

As in excitement a man's moods may be opalescent in their changes, and as the most contrary feelings may coexist in varying degrees, all might be in a mind, which I have suggested as present in that of Hamlet.

To have been capable of the kind of action most of his critics would demand of a man, Hamlet must have been the weakling they imagine him. When at length, after a righteous delay, partly willed, partly inevitable, he holds documents in the king's handwriting as proofs of his treachery—*proofs which can be shown*—giving him both right and power over the life of the traitor, then, and only then, is he in cool blood absolutely satisfied as to his duty—which conviction, working with opportunity, and that opportunity plainly the last, brings the end; the righteous deed is done, and done righteously, the doer blameless in the doing of it. The Poet is not careful of what is called poetic justice in his play, though therein is no failure; what he is careful of is personal rightness in the hero of it.]

[Footnote 8: *1st Q.*

King My wordes fly vp, my sinnes remaine below.
No King on earth is safe, if Gods his foe. *Exit King.*

So he goes to make himself safe by more crime! His repentance is mainly fear.]

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Tell him his pranks haue been too broad to beare with,
And that your Grace hath scree'nd, and stooode betweene
Much heate, and him. Ile silence me e'ene heere:

[Sidenote: euen heere,]

Pray you be round[1] with him.[2] [Sidenote: *Enter Hamlet.*]

Ham. within. Mother, mother, mother.[3]

Qu. Ile warrant you, feare me not. [Sidenote: *Ger.* Ile wait you,] Withdraw, I heare him comming.

Enter Hamlet.[4]

Ham.[5] Now Mother, what's the matter?

Qu. *Hamlet*, thou hast thy Father much offended. [Sidenote: *Ger.*]

Ham. Mother, you haue my Father much offended.

Qu. Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue. [Sidenote: *Ger.*]

Ham. Go, go, you question with an idle tongue. [Sidenote: with a wicked tongue.]

Qu. Why how now *Hamlet*?[6] [Sidenote: *Ger.*]

Ham. Whats the matter now?

Qu. Haue you forgot me?[7] [Sidenote: *Ger.*]

Ham. No by the Rood, not so:
You are the Queene, your Husbands Brothers wife,
But would you were not so. You are my Mother.[8]
[Sidenote: And would it were]

Qu. Nay, then Ile set those to you that can speake.[9]
[Sidenote: *Ger.*]

Ham. Come, come, and sit you downe, you shall not boudge: You go not till I set you vp a glasse,
Where you may see the inmost part of you? [Sidenote: the most part]

Qu. What wilt thou do? thou wilt not murther [Sidenote: *Ger.*] me?[10] Helpe, helpe, hoa. [Sidenote: Helpe how.]

Pol. What hoa, helpe, helpe, helpe. [Sidenote: What how helpe.]

Ham. How now, a Rat? dead for a Ducate, dead.[11]

[Footnote 1: *The Quarto has not 'with him.'*]

[Footnote 2: *He goes behind the arras.*]

[Footnote 3: *The Quarto has not this speech.*]

[Footnote 4: *Not in Quarto.*]

[Footnote 5: *1st Q.*

Ham. Mother, mother, O are you here? How i'st with you mother?

Queene How i'st with you?

Ham, I'll tell you, but first weelee make all safe.

Here, evidently, he bolts the doors.]

[Footnote 6: *1st Q.*

Queene How now boy?

Ham. How now mother! come here, sit downe, for you shall heare me speake.]

[Footnote 7: —'that you speak to me in such fashion?']

[Footnote 8: *Point thus:* 'so: you'—'would you were not so, for you are *my* mother.'—*with emphasis on 'my.'* The whole is spoken sadly.]

[Footnote 9: —'speak so that you must mind them.']

[Footnote 10: The apprehension comes from the combined action of her conscience and the notion of his madness.]

[Footnote 11: There is no precipitancy here—only instant resolve and execution. It is another outcome and embodiment of Hamlet's rare faculty for action, showing his delay the more admirable. There is here neither time nor call for delay. Whoever the man behind the arras might be, he had, by spying upon him in the privacy of his mother's room, forfeited to Hamlet his right to live; he had heard what he had said to his mother, and his death was necessary; for, if he left the room, Hamlet's last chance of fulfilling his vow to the Ghost was gone: if the play had not sealed, what he had now spoken must seal his doom. But the decree had in fact already gone forth against his life. 158.]

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Pol. Oh I am slaine. [1]*Killes Polonius.*[2]

Qu. Oh me, what hast thou done? [Sidenote: *Ger.*]

Ham. Nay I know not, is it the King?[3]

Qu. Oh what a rash, and bloody deed is this? [Sidenote: *Ger.*]

Ham. A bloody deed, almost as bad good Mother, [Sidenote: 56] As kill a King,[4] and marrie with his Brother.

Qu. As kill a King? [Sidenote: *Ger.*]

Ham. I Lady, 'twas my word.[5] [Sidenote: it was]
Thou wretched, rash, intruding foole farewell,
I tooke thee for thy Betters,[3] take thy Fortune, [Sidenote: better,]
Thou find'st to be too busie, is some danger,
Leaue wringing of your hands, peace, sit you downe,
And let me wring your heart, for so I shall
If it be made of penetrable stuffe;
If damned Custome haue not braz'd it so,
That it is prooffe and bulwarke against Sense. [Sidenote: it be]

Qu. What haue I done, that thou dar'st wag thy tong, [Sidenote: *Ger.*] In noise so rude against me?[6]

Ham. Such an Act
That blurres the grace and blush of Modestie,[7]
Calls Vertue Hypocrite, takes off the Rose
From the faire forehead of an innocent loue,
And makes a blister there.[8] Makes marriage vowes
[Sidenote: And sets a]
As false as Dicers Oathes. Oh such a deed,
As from the body of Contraction[9] pluckes
The very soule, and sweete Religion makes

A rapsidie of words. Heavens face doth glow, [Sidenote: dooes]
Yea this solidity and compound masse, [Sidenote: Ore this]
With tristfull visage as against the doome,
[Sidenote: with heated visage,]
Is thought-sicke at the act.[10] [Sidenote: thought sick]

Qu. Aye me; what act,[11] that roares so lowd,[12] and thunders in the Index.[13]

[Footnote 1: *Not in Q.*]

[Footnote 2: —*through the arras.*]

[Footnote 3: Hamlet takes him for, hopes it is the king, and thinks here to conclude: he is not praying now! and there is not a moment to be lost, for he has betrayed his presence and called for help. As often as immediate action is demanded of Hamlet, he is immediate with his response—never hesitates, never blunders. There is no blunder here: being where he was, the death of Polonius was necessary now to the death of the king. Hamlet's resolve is instant, and the act simultaneous with the resolve. The weak man is sure to be found wanting when immediate action is necessary; Hamlet never is. Doubtless those who blame him as dilatory, here blame him as precipitate, for they judge according to appearance and consequence.

All his delay after this is plainly compelled, although I grant he was not sorry to have to await such *more presentable* evidence as at last he procured, so long as he did not lose the final possibility of vengeance.]

[Footnote 4: This is the sole reference in the interview to the murder. I take it for tentative, and that Hamlet is satisfied by his mother's utterance, carriage, and expression, that she is innocent of any knowledge of that crime. Neither does he allude to the adultery: there is enough in what she cannot deny, and that only which can be remedied needs be taken up; while to break with the king would open the door of repentance for all that had preceded.]

[Footnote 5: He says nothing of the Ghost to his mother.]

[Footnote 6: She still holds up and holds out.]

[Footnote 7: 'makes Modesty itself suspected.']

[Footnote 8: 'makes Innocence ashamed of the love it cherishes.']

[Footnote 9: 'plucks the spirit out of all forms of contracting or agreeing.' We have lost the social and kept only the physical meaning of the noun.]

[Footnote 10: I cannot help thinking the *Quarto* reading of this passage the more intelligible, as well as much the more powerful. We may imagine a red aurora, by no means a very unusual phenomenon, over the expanse of the sky:—

Heaven's face doth glow (*blush*)
O'er this solidity and compound mass,

(*the earth, solid, material, composite, a corporeal mass in confrontment with the spirit-like ethereal, simple, uncompounded heaven leaning over it*)

With tristful (*or heated, as the reader may choose*) visage: as against the doom,
(*as in the presence, or in anticipation of the revealing judgment*)

Is thought sick at the act.

(*thought is sick at the act of the queen*)

My difficulties as to the *Folio* reading are—why the earth should be so described without immediate contrast with the sky; and—how the earth could be showing a tristful visage, and the sickness of its thought. I think, if the Poet indeed made the alterations and they are not mere blunders, he must have made them hurriedly, and without due attention. I would not forget, however, that there may be something present but too good for me to find, which would make the passage plain as it stands.

Compare *As you like it*, act i. sc. 3.

For, by this heaven, now at our sorrows pale,
Say what thou canst, I'll go along with thee.]

[Footnote 11: In Q. the rest of this speech is Hamlet's; his long speech begins here, taking up the queen's word.]

[Footnote 12: She still stands out.]

[Footnote 13: 'thunders in the very indication or mention of it.' But by 'the Index' may be intended the influx or table of contents of a book, at the beginning of it.]

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Ham. Looke heere vpon this Picture, and on this,
The counterfet presentment of two Brothers:[1]
See what a grace was seated on his Brow, [Sidenote: on this]
[Sidenote: 151] *Hyperions* curies, the front of Ioue himselfe,
An eye like Mars, to threaten or command [Sidenote: threaten and]
A Station, like the Herald Mercurie
New lighted on a heauen kissing hill: [Sidenote: on a heaue, a kissing]
A Combination, and a forme indeed,
Where euery God did seeme to set his Seale,
To giue the world assurance of a man.[2]
This was your Husband. Looke you now what followes.
Heere is your Husband, like a Mildew'd eare
Blasting his wholsom breath. Haue you eyes?
[Sidenote: wholesome brother,]
Could you on this faire Mountaine leaue to feed,
And batten on this Moore?[3] Ha? Haue you eyes?
You cannot call it Loue: For at your age,
The hey-day[4] in the blood is tame, it's humble,
And waites vpon the Judgement: and what Iudgement
Would step from this, to this? [A] What diuell was't,
That thus hath cousend you at hoodman-blinde?[5] [Sidenote: hodman]
[B]
O Shame! where is thy Blush? Rebellious Hell,
If thou canst mutine in a Matrons bones,

[Footnote A: *Here in the Quarto*:—

sence sure youe haue
Els could you not haue motion, but sure that sence
Is appoplext, for madnesse would not erre
Nor sence to extacie[6] was nere so thral'd
But it reseru'd some quantity of choise[7]
To serue in such[8] a difference,]

[Footnote B: *Here in the Quarto*:—

Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight.
Eares without hands, or eyes, smelling sance[9] all,
Or but a sickly part of one true sence
Could not so mope:[10]

[Footnote 1: He points to the portraits of the two brothers, side by side on the wall.]

[Footnote 2: See *Julius Caesar*, act v. sc. 5,—speech of *Antony* at the end.]

[Footnote 3: —perhaps an allusion as well to the complexion of *Claudius*, both moral and physical.]

[Footnote 4: —perhaps allied to the German *heida*, and possibly the English *hoyden* and *hoity-toity*. Or is it merely *high-day—noontide*?]

[Footnote 5: 'played tricks with you while hooded in the game of *blind-man's-bluff*?' The omitted passage of the *Quarto* enlarges the figure.

1st Q. 'hob-man blinde.')

[Footnote 6: madness.]

[Footnote 7: Attributing soul to sense, he calls its distinguishment *choise*.]

[Footnote 8: —emphasis on *such*.]

[Footnote 9: This spelling seems to show how the English word *sans* should be pronounced.]

[Footnote 10: —'be so dull.']

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To flaming youth, let Vertue be as waxe,
And melt in her owne fire. Proclaime no shame,
When the compulsiue Ardure giues the charge,
Since Frost it selfe,[1] as actiuely doth burne,
As Reason panders Will. [Sidenote: And reason pardons will.]

Qu. O Hamlet, speake no more.[2] [Sidenote: *Ger.*]
Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soule,
 [Sidenote: my very eyes into my soule,]
And there I see such blacke and grained[3] spots,
 [Sidenote: greeued spots]
As will not leaue their Tinct.[4] [Sidenote: will leaue there their]

Ham. Nay, but to liue[5]
In the ranke sweat of an enseamed bed, [Sidenote: inseeded]
Stew'd in Corruption; honying and making loue
[Sidenote: 34] Ouer the nasty Stye.[6]

Qu. Oh speake to me, no more, [Sidenote: *Ger.*]
[Sidenote: 158] These words like Daggers enter in mine eares.
 [Sidenote: my]
No more sweet *Hamlet*.

Ham. A Murderer, and a Villaine:
A Slaue, that is not twentieth part the tythe [Sidenote: part the kyth]
Of your precedent Lord. A vice[7] of Kings,
A Cutpurse of the Empire and the Rule.
That from a shelfe, the precious Diadem stole,
And put it in his Pocket.

Qu. No more.[8] [Sidenote: *Ger.*]

Enter Ghost.[9]

Ham. A King of shreds and patches.
[Sidenote: 44] Saue me; and houer o're me with your wings[10]
You heauenly Guards. What would you gracious figure?
 [Sidenote: your gracious]

Qu. Alas he's mad.[11] [Sidenote: *Ger.*]

Ham. Do you not come your tardy Sonne to chide, That laps't in Time and Passion, lets go by[12]
Th'important acting of your dread command? Oh say.[13]

[Footnote 1: —his mother's matronly age.]

[Footnote 2: She gives way at last.]

[Footnote 3: —spots whose blackness has sunk into the grain, or final particles of the substance.]

[Footnote 4: —transition form of tint:—'will never give up their colour;' 'will never be cleansed.']

[Footnote 5: He persists.]

[Footnote 6: —Claudius himself—his body no 'temple of the Holy Ghost,' but a pig-sty. 3.]

[Footnote 7: The clown of the old Moral Play.]

[Footnote 8: She seems neither surprised nor indignant at any point in the accusation: her consciousness of her own guilt has overwhelmed her.]

[Footnote 9: The *1st Q.* has *Enter the ghost in his night gowne*. It was then from the first intended

that he should not at this point appear in armour—in which, indeed, the epithet *gracious figure* could hardly be applied to him, though it might well enough in one of the costumes in which Hamlet was accustomed to see him—as this dressing-gown of the *1st Q.* A ghost would appear in the costume in which he naturally imagined himself, and in his wife's room would not show himself clothed as when walking among the fortifications of the castle. But by the words lower down (174)—

My Father in his habite, as he liued,

the Poet indicates, not his dressing-gown, but his usual habit, *i.e.* attire.]

[Footnote 10: —almost the same invocation as when first he saw the apparition.]

[Footnote 11: The queen cannot see the Ghost. Her conduct has built such a wall between her and her husband that I doubt whether, were she a ghost also, she could see him. Her heart had left him, so they are no more together in the sphere of mutual vision. Neither does the Ghost wish to show himself to her. As his presence is not corporeal, a ghost may be present to but one of a company.]

[Footnote 12: 1. 'Who, lapsed (*fallen, guilty*), lets action slip in delay and suffering.' 2. 'Who, lapsed in (*fallen in, overwhelmed by*) delay and suffering, omits' &c. 3. 'lapsed in respect of time, and because of passion'—the meaning of the preposition *in*, common to both, reacted upon by the word it governs. 4. 'faulty both in delaying, and in yielding to suffering, when action is required.' 5. 'lapsed through having too much time and great suffering.' 6. 'allowing himself to be swept along by time and grief.'

Surely there is not another writer whose words would so often admit of such multiform and varied interpretation—each form good, and true, and suitable to the context! He seems to see at once all the relations of a thing, and to try to convey them at once, in an utterance single as the thing itself. He would condense the infinite soul of the meaning into the trembling, overtaxed body of the phrase!]

[Footnote 13: In the renewed presence of the Ghost, all its former influence and all the former conviction of its truth, return upon him. He knows also how his behaviour must appear to the Ghost, and sees himself as the Ghost sees him. Confronted with the gracious figure, how should he think of self-justification! So far from being able to explain things, he even forgets the doubt that had held him back—it has vanished from the noble presence! He is now in the world of belief; the world of doubt is nowhere!—Note the masterly opposition of moods.]

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Ghost. Do not forget: this Visitation

Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.[1]

But looke, Amazement on thy Mother sits;[2]

[Sidenote: 30, 54] O step betweene her, and her fighting Soule,[3]

[Sidenote: 198] Conceit[4] in weakest bodies, strongest workes.

Speake to her *Hamlet*. [5]

Ham. How is it with you Lady?[6]

Qu. Alas, how is't with you? [Sidenote: *Ger.*]

That you bend your eye on vacancie, [Sidenote: you do bend]

And with their corporall ayre do hold discourse.

[Sidenote: with th'incorporall ayre]

Forth at your eyes, your spirits wildely peepe,

And as the sleeping Soldiours in th'Alarme,

Your bedded haire, like life in excrements,[7]

Start vp, and stand an end.[8] Oh gentle Sonne,

Vpon the heate and flame of thy distemper

Sprinkle coole patience. Whereon do you looke?[9]

Ham. On him, on him: look you how pale he glares,

His forme and cause conioyn'd, preaching to stones,

Would make them capeable.[10] Do not looke vpon me,[11]

Least with this pitteous action you conuert

My sterne effects: then what I haue to do,[12]

[Sidenote: 111] Will want true colour; teares perchance for blood.[13]

Qu. To who do you speake this? [Sidenote: *Ger.* To whom]

Ham. Do you see nothing there?

Qu. Nothing at all, yet all that is I see.[14] [Sidenote: *Ger.*]

Ham. Nor did you nothing heare?

Qu. No, nothing but our selues. [Sidenote: *Ger.*]

Ham. Why look you there: looke how it steals away: [Sidenote: 173] My Father in his habite, as he liued, Looke where he goes euen now out at the Portall. *Exit.* [Sidenote: *Exit Ghost.*]

[Sidenote: 114] *Qu.* This is the very coynage of your Braine,
[Sidenote: *Ger.*]

[Footnote 1: The Ghost here judges, as alone is possible to him, from what he knows—from the fact that his brother Claudius has not yet made his appearance in the ghost-world. Not understanding Hamlet's difficulties, he mistakes Hamlet himself.]

[Footnote 2: He mistakes also, through his tenderness, the condition of his wife—imagining, it would seem, that she feels his presence, though she cannot see him, or recognize the source of the influence which he supposes to be moving her conscience: she is only perturbed by Hamlet's behaviour.]

[Footnote 3: —fighting within itself, as the sea in a storm may be said to fight.

He is careful as ever over the wife he had loved and loves still; careful no less of the behaviour of the son to his mother.

In the *1st Q.* we have:—

But I perceiue by thy distracted lookes,
Thy mother's fearefull, and she stands amazde:
Speake to her Hamlet, for her sex is weake,
Comfort thy mother, Hamlet, thinke on me.]

[Footnote 4: —not used here for bare *imagination*, but imagination with its concomitant feeling: —*conception*. 198.]

[Footnote 5: His last word ere he vanishes utterly, concerns his queen; he is tender and gracious still to her who sent him to hell. This attitude of the Ghost towards his faithless wife, is one of the profoundest things in the play. All the time she is not thinking of him any more than seeing him—for 'is he not dead!'—is looking straight at where he stands, but is all unaware of him.]

[Footnote 6: I understand him to speak this with a kind of lost, mechanical obedience. The description his mother gives of him makes it seem as if the Ghost were drawing his ghost out to himself, and turning his body thereby half dead.]

[Footnote 7: 'as if there were life in excrements.' The nails and hair were 'excrements'—things *growing out*.]

[Footnote 8: Note the form *an end*—not *on end*. 51, 71.]

[Footnote 9: —all spoken coaxingly, as to one in a mad fit. She regards his perturbation as a sudden assault of his ever present malady. One who sees what others cannot see they are always ready to count mad.]

[Footnote 10: able to *take*, that is, to *understand*.]

[Footnote 11: —*to the Ghost*.]

[Footnote 12: 'what is in my power to do.']

[Footnote 13: Note antithesis here: '*your piteous action*;' '*my stern effects*'—the things, that is, 'which I have to effect.' 'Lest your piteous show convert—change—my stern doing; then what I do will lack true colour; the result may be tears instead of blood; I shall weep instead of striking.']

[Footnote 14: It is one of the constantly recurring delusions of humanity that we see all there is.]

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[Sidenote: 114] This bodillesse Creation extasie[1] is very cunning in.[2]

Ham. Extasie?[3]
My Pulse as yours doth temperately keepe time,

And makes as healthfull Musicke.[4] It is not madnesse
That I haue vttered; bring me to the Test
And I the matter will re-word: which madnesse [Sidenote: And the]
Would gamboll from. Mother, for loue of Grace,
Lay not a flattering Vnction to your soule,

[Sidenote: not that flattering]

That not your trespasse, but my madnesse speakes:
[Sidenote: 182] It will but skin and filme the Vlcerous place,
Whil'st ranke Corruption mining all within, [Sidenote: whites]
Infects vnseene, Confesse your selfe to Heauen,
Repent what's past, auoyd what is to come,
And do not spred the Compost or the Weedes, [Sidenote: compost on the]
To make them ranke. Forgiue me this my Vertue, [Sidenote: ranker,]
For in the fatnesse of this pursie[5] times, [Sidenote: these]
Vertue it selfe, of Vice must pardon begge,
Yea courb,[6] and woe, for leaue to do him good.

[Sidenote: curbe and woee]

Qu. Oh Hamlet, [Sidenote: *Ger.*] Thou hast cleft my heart in twaine.

Ham. O throw away the worser part of it,
And Liue the purer with the other halfe. [Sidenote: And leaue the]
Good night, but go not to mine Vnkles bed, [Sidenote: my]
Assume a Vertue, if you haue it not,[7][A] refraine to night
[Sidenote: Assune | to refraine night,]
And that shall lend a kinde of easinesse

[Footnote A: *Here in the Quarto*:—

[8]That monster custome, who all sence doth eate
Of habits deuill,[9] is angell yet in this
That to the vse of actions faire and good,
He likewise giues a frock or Liuary
That aptly is put on]

[Footnote 1: madness 129.]

[Footnote 2: Here is the correspondent speech in the *1st Q.* I give it because of the queen's denial of complicity in the murder.

Queene Alas, it is the weakenesse of thy braine.
Which makes thy tongue to blazon thy hearts griefe:
But as I haue a soule, I sweare by heauen,
I neuer knew of this most horride murder:
But Hamlet, this is onely fantasie,
And for my loue forget these idle fits.

Ham. Idle, no mother, my pulse doth beate like yours,
It is not madnesse that possesseth Hamlet.]

[Footnote 3: *Not in Q.*]

[Footnote 4: —*time* being a great part of music. Shakspeare more than once or twice employs *music* as a symbol with reference to corporeal condition: see, for instance, *As you like it*, act i. sc. 2, 'But is there any else longs to see this broken music in his sides? is there yet another dotes upon rib-breaking?' where the *broken music* may be regarded as the antithesis of the *healthful music* here.]

[Footnote 5: *swoln, pampered*: an allusion to the *purse* itself, whether intended or not, is suggested.]

[Footnote 6: *bend, bow.*]

[Footnote 7: To *assume* is to take to one: by *assume a virtue*, Hamlet does not mean *pretend*—but the very opposite: *to pretend* is *to hold forth, to show*; what he means is, 'Adopt a virtue'—that of *abstinence*—'and act upon it, order your behaviour by it, although you may not *feel* it. Choose the virtue—take it, make it yours.']

[Footnote 8: This omitted passage is obscure with the special Shakspearean obscurity that comes of over-condensation. He omitted it, I think, because of its obscurity. Its general meaning is plain enough

—that custom helps the man who tries to assume a virtue, as well as renders it more and more difficult for him who indulges in vice to leave it. I will paraphrase: 'That monster, Custom, who eats away all sense, the devil of habits, is angel yet in this, that, for the exercise of fair and good actions, he also provides a habit, a suitable frock or livery, that is easily put on.' The play with the two senses of the word *habit* is more easily seen than set forth. To paraphrase more freely: 'That devil of habits, Custom, who eats away all sense of wrong-doing, has yet an angel-side to him, in that he gives a man a mental dress, a habit, helpful to the doing of the right thing.' The idea of hypocrisy does not come in at all. The advice of Hamlet is: 'Be virtuous in your actions, even if you cannot in your feelings; do not do the wrong thing you would like to do, and custom will render the abstinence easy.'

[Footnote 9: I suspect it should be '*Of habits evil*'—the antithesis to *angel* being *monster*.]

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To the next abstinence. [A] Once more goodnight,
And when you are desirous to be blest,
He blessing begge of you.[1] For this same Lord,
I do repent: but heauen hath pleas'd it so,[2]
To punish me with this, and this with me,
That I must be their[3] Scourge and Minister.
I will bestow him,[4] and will answer well
The death I gaue him:[5] so againe, good night.
I must be cruell, onely to be kinde:[6]
Thus bad begins,[7] and worse remaines behinde.[8] [Sidenote: This bad]

[B]

Qu. What shall I do? [Sidenote: *Ger.*]

Ham. Not this by no meanes that I bid you do:
Let the blunt King tempt you againe to bed, [Sidenote: the blowt King]
Pinch Wanton on your cheeke, call you his Mouse,
And let him for a paire of reechie[9] kisses,
Or padling in your necke with his damn'd Fingers,
Make you to rauell all this matter out, [Sidenote: rouell]
[Sidenote: 60, 136, 156] That I essentially am not in madnesse.
But made in craft.[10] 'Twere good you let him know, [Sidenote: mad]
For who that's but a Queene, faire, sober, wise,
Would from a Paddocke,[11] from a Bat, a Gibbe,[12]
Such deere concernings hide, Who would do so,
No in despite of Sense and Secrecie,
Vnpegge the Basket on the houses top:
Let the Birds flye, and like the famous Ape
To try Conclusions[13] in the Basket, creepe
And breake your owne necke downe.[14]

Qu. Be thou assur'd, if words be made of breath, [Sidenote: *Ger.*]

[Footnote A: *Here in the Quarto*:—

the next more easie:[15]
For vse almost can change the stamp of nature,
And either[16] the deuill, or throwe him out
With wonderous potency:]

[Footnote B: *Here in the Quarto*:—

One word more good Lady.[17]]

[Footnote 1: In bidding his mother good night, he would naturally, after the custom of the time, have sought her blessing: it would be a farce now: when she seeks the blessing of God, he will beg hers; now, a plain *good night* must serve.]

[Footnote 2: Note the curious inverted use of *pleas'd*. It is here a transitive, not an impersonal verb. The construction of the sentence is, 'pleas'd it so, *in order to* punish us, that I must' &c.]

[Footnote 3: The noun to which *their* is the pronoun is *heaven*—as if he had written *the gods*.]

[Footnote 4: 'take him to a place fit for him to lie in.']

[Footnote 5: 'hold my face to it, and justify it.']

[Footnote 6: —omitting or refusing to embrace her.]

[Footnote 7: —looking at Polonius.]

[Footnote 8: Does this mean for himself to do, or for Polonius to endure?]

[Footnote 9: reeky, smoky, fummy.]

[Footnote 10: Hamlet considers his madness the same that he so deliberately assumed. But his idea of himself goes for nothing where the experts conclude him mad! His absolute clarity where he has no occasion to act madness, goes for as little, for 'all madmen have their sane moments'!]

[Footnote 11: *a toad*; in Scotland, *a frog*.]

[Footnote 12: an old cat.]

[Footnote 13: *Experiments*, Steevens says: is it not rather *results*?]

[Footnote 14: I fancy the story, which so far as I know has not been traced, goes on to say that the basket was emptied from the house-top to send the pigeons flying, and so the ape got his neck broken. The phrase 'breake your owne necke *downe*' seems strange: it could hardly have been written *neck-bone*!]

[Footnote 15: This passage would fall in better with the preceding with which it is vitally one—for it would more evenly continue its form—if the preceding *devil* were, as I propose above, changed to *evil*. But, precious as is every word in them, both passages are well omitted.]

[Footnote 16: Plainly there is a word left out, if not lost here. There is no authority for the supplied *master*. I am inclined to propose a pause and a gesture, with perhaps an *inarticulation*.]

[Footnote 17: —interrogatively perhaps, Hamlet noting her about to speak; but I would prefer it thus: 'One word more:—good lady—' Here he pauses so long that she speaks. Or we *might* read it thus:

Qu. One word more. *Ham.* Good lady? *Qu.* What shall I do?]

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And breath of life: I haue no life to breath
What thou hast saide to me.[1]

[Sidenote: 128, 158] *Ham.* I must to England, you know that?[2]

Qu. Alacke I had forgot: Tis so concluded on. [Sidenote: *Ger.*]

Ham. [A] This man shall set me packing:[3]
Ile lugge the Guts into the Neighbor roome,[4]
Mother goodnight. Indeede this Counsellor [Sidenote: night indeed, this]
Is now most still, most secret, and most graue,
[Sidenote: 84] Who was in life, a foolish prating Knaue.
[Sidenote: a most foolish]
Come sir, to draw toward an end with you.[5]
Good night Mother.

Exit Hamlet tugging in Polonius.[6] [Sidenote: *Exit.*]

[7]

Enter King. [Sidenote: Enter King, and Queene, with
Rosenkraus and Guyldensterne.]

King. There's matters in these sighes.
These profound heaues
You must translate; Tis fit we vnderstand them.
Where is your Sonne?[8]

Qu. [B] Ah my good Lord, what haue I seene to night?
[Sidenote: *Ger.* | Ah mine owne Lord,]

King. What Gertrude? How do's Hamlet?

Qu. Mad as the Seas, and winde, when both contend [Sidenote: *Ger.* | sea and] Which is the Mightier, in his lawlesse fit[9]

[Footnote A: *Here in the Quarto*:—

[10]Ther's letters seald, and my two Schoolefellowes,
Whom I will trust as I will Adders fang'd,
They beare the mandat, they must sweep my way
And marshall me to knauery[11]: let it worke,
For tis the sport to haue the enginer
Hoist[12] with his owne petar,[13] an't shall goe hard
But I will delue one yard belowe their mines,
And blowe them at the Moone: ô tis most sweete
When in one line two crafts directly meete,]

[Footnote B: *Here in the Quarto*:—

Bestow this place on vs a little while.[14]]

[Footnote 1: *1st Q.*

O mother, if euer you did my deare father loue,
Forbeare the adulterous bed to night,
And win your selfe by little as you may,
In time it may be you wil lothe him quite:
And mother, but assist mee in reuenge,
And in his death your infamy shall die.

Queene. Hamlet, I vow by that maiesty,
That knowes our thoughts, and lookes into our hearts,
I will conceale, consent, and doe my best,
What stratagem soe're thou shalt deuise.]

[Footnote 2: The king had spoken of it both before and after the play: Horatio might have heard of it and told Hamlet.]

[Footnote 3: 'My banishment will be laid to this deed of mine.']

[Footnote 4: —to rid his mother of it.]

[Footnote 5: It may cross him, as he says this, dragging the body out by one end of it, and toward the end of its history, that he is himself drawing toward an end along with Polonius.]

[Footnote 6: —*and weeping.* 182. See *note* 5, 183.]

[Footnote 7: Here, according to the editors, comes 'Act IV.' For this there is no authority, and the point of division seems to me very objectionable. The scene remains the same, as noted from Capell in *Cam. Sh.*, and the entrance of the king follows immediately on the exit of Hamlet. He finds his wife greatly perturbed; she has not had time to compose herself.

From the beginning of Act II., on to where I would place the end of Act III., there is continuity.]

[Footnote 8: I would have this speech uttered with pauses and growing urgency, mingled at length with displeasure.]

[Footnote 9: She is faithful to her son, declaring him mad, and attributing the death of 'the unseen' Polonius to his madness.]

[Footnote 10: This passage, like the rest, I hold to be omitted by Shakspeare himself. It represents Hamlet as divining the plot with whose execution his false friends were entrusted. The Poet had at first intended Hamlet to go on board the vessel with a design formed upon this for the out-witting of his companions, and to work out that design. Afterwards, however, he alters his plan, and represents his escape as more plainly providential: probably he did not see how to manage it by any scheme of Hamlet so well as by the attack of a pirate; possibly he wished to write the passage (246) in which Hamlet, so consistently with his character, attributes his return to the divine shaping of the end rough-hewn by himself. He had designs—'dear plots'—but they were other than fell out—a rough-hewing that was

shaped to a different end. The discomfiture of his enemies was not such as he had designed: it was brought about by no previous plot, but through a discovery. At the same time his deliverance was not effected by the fingering of the packet, but by the attack of the pirate: even the re-writing of the commission did nothing towards his deliverance, resulted only in the punishment of his traitorous companions. In revising the Quarto, the Poet sees that the passage before us, in which is expressed the strongest suspicion of his companions, with a determination to outwit and punish them, is inconsistent with the representation Hamlet gives afterwards of a restlessness and suspicion newly come upon him, which he attributes to the Divinity.

Neither was it likely he would say so much to his mother while so little sure of her as to warn her, on the ground of danger to herself, against revealing his sanity to the king. As to this, however, the portion omitted might, I grant, be regarded as an *aside*.]

[Footnote 11: —to be done *to* him.]

[Footnote 12: *Hoised*, from verb *hoise*—still used in Scotland.]

[Footnote 13: a kind of explosive shell, which was fixed to the object meant to be destroyed. Note once more Hamlet's delight in action.]

[Footnote 14: —*said to Ros. and Guild.*: in plain speech, 'Leave us a little while.']

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Behinde the Arras, hearing something stirre,
He whips his Rapier out, and cries a Rat, a Rat,
 [Sidenote: Whyps out his Rapier, cryes a]
And in his brainish apprehension killes [Sidenote: in this]
The vnseene good old man.

King. Oh heauy deed:
It had bin so with vs[1] had we beene there:
His Liberty is full of threats to all,[2]
To you your selfe, to vs, to euery one.
Alas, how shall this bloody deede be answered?
It will be laide to vs, whose prouidence
Should haue kept short, restrain'd, and out of haunt,
This mad yong man.[2] But so much was our loue,
We would not vnderstand what was most fit,
But like the Owner of a foule disease,
[Sidenote: 176] To keepe it from divulging, let's it feeде
 [Sidenote: let it]
Euen on the pith of life. Where is he gone?

Qu. To draw apart the body he hath kild, [Sidenote: Ger.]
O're whom his very madnesse[3] like some Oare
Among a Minerall of Mettels base
[Sidenote: 181] Shewes it selfe pure.[4] He weepes for what is done.[5]
 [Sidenote: pure, a weepes]

King: Oh *Gertrude*, come away:
The Sun no sooner shall the Mountaines touch,
But we will ship him hence, and this vilde deed,
We must with all our Maiesty and Skill
[Sidenote: 200] Both countenance, and excuse.[6]
 Enter Ros. & Guild.[7]

Ho Guildenstern:
Friends both go ioynе you with some further ayde:
Hamlet in madnesse hath Polonius slaine,
And from his Mother Clossets hath he drag'd him.
 [Sidenote: closet | dreg'd]
Go seeke him out, speake faire, and bring the body
Into the Chappell. I pray you hast in this.
 Exit Gent[8]
Come *Gertrude*, wee'l call vp our wisest friends,
To let them know both what we meane to do, [Sidenote: And let]

[Footnote 1: the royal plural.]

[Footnote 2: He knows the thrust was meant for him. But he would not have it so understood; he too lays it to his madness, though he too knows better.]

[Footnote 3: 'he, although mad'; 'his nature, in spite of his madness.']

[Footnote 4: by his weeping, in the midst of much to give a different impression.]

[Footnote 5: We have no reason to think the queen inventing here: what could she gain by it? the point indeed was rather against Hamlet, as showing it was not Polonius he had thought to kill. He was more than ever annoyed with the contemptible old man, who had by his meddlesomeness brought his death to his door; but he was very sorry nevertheless over Ophelia's father: those rough words in his last speech are spoken with the tears running down his face. We have seen the strange, almost discordant mingling in him of horror and humour, after the first appearance of the Ghost, 58, 60: something of the same may be supposed when he finds he has killed Polonius: in the highstrung nervous condition that must have followed such a talk with his mother, it would be nowise strange that he should weep heartily even in the midst of contemptuous anger. Or perhaps a sudden breakdown from attempted show of indifference, would not be amiss in the representation.]

[Footnote 6: 'both countenance with all our majesty, and excuse with all our skill.']

[Footnote 7: In the *Quarto* a line back.]

[Footnote 8: *Not in Q.*]

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And what's vntimely[1] done. [A] Oh come away, [Sidenote: doone,]
My soule is full of discord and dismay. *Exeunt.*

Enter Hamlet. [Sidenote: *Hamlet, Rosencrans, and others.*]

Ham. Safely stowed.[2] [Sidenote: stowed, but soft, what noyse,]

Gentlemen within. Hamlet. Lord Hamlet?

Ham. What noise? Who cal's on *Hamlet*? Oh heere they come.

Enter Ros. and Guildensterne.[4]

Ro. What haue you done my Lord with the dead body?

Ham. Compounded it with dust, whereto 'tis Kinne.[5]
[Sidenote: Compound it]

Rosin. Tell vs where 'tis, that we may take it thence, And beare it to the Chappell.

Ham. Do not beleeeue it.[6]

Rosin. Beleeue what?

[Sidenote: 156] *Ham.* That I can keepe your counsell, and not mine owne. Besides, to be demanded of a Spundge, what replication should be made by the Sonne of a King.[7]

Rosin. Take you me for a Spundge, my Lord?

Ham. I sir, that sokes vp the Kings Countenance, his Rewards, his Authorities, but such Officers do the King best seruice in the end. He keepes them like an Ape in the corner of his iaw,[8] first [Sidenote: like an apple in] mouth'd to be last swallowed, when he needes what you haue glean'd, it is but squeezing you, and Spundge you shall be dry againe.

Rosin. I vnderstand you not my Lord.

[Footnote A: *Here in the Quarto:—*

Whose whisper ore the worlds dyiameter,[9]
[Sidenote: 206] As leuell as the Cannon to his blanck,[10]
Transports his poysned shot, may miffe[11] our Name,
And hit the woundlesse ayre.]

[Footnote 1: unhappily.]

[Footnote 2: He has hid the body—to make the whole look the work of a mad fit.]

[Footnote 3: This line is not in the *Quarto*.]

[Footnote 4: *Not in Q. See margin above.*]

[Footnote 5: He has put it in a place which, little visited, is very dusty.]

[Footnote 6: He is mad to them—sane only to his mother and Horatio.]

[Footnote 7: *euphuistic*: 'asked a question by a sponge, what answer should a prince make?']

[Footnote 8: *1st Q*:

For hee doth keep you as an Ape doth nuttes,
In the corner of his Iaw, first mouthes you,
Then swallowes you:]

[Footnote 9: Here most modern editors insert, '*so, haply, slander*'. But, although I think the Poet left out this obscure passage merely from dissatisfaction with it, I believe it renders a worthy sense as it stands. The antecedent to *whose* is *friends: cannon* is nominative to *transports*; and the only difficulty is the epithet *poysned* applied to *shot*, which seems transposed from the idea of an *unfriendly* whisper. Perhaps Shakspeare wrote *poysed shot*. But taking this as it stands, the passage might be paraphrased thus: 'Whose (favourable) whisper over the world's diameter (*from one side of the world to the other*), as level (*as truly aimed*) as the cannon (of an evil whisper) transports its poisoned shot to his blank (*the white centre of the target*), may shoot past our name (so keeping us clear), and hit only the invulnerable air.' (*the intrenchant air*: *Macbeth*, act v. sc. 8). This interpretation rests on the idea of over-condensation with its tendency to seeming confusion—the only fault I know in the Poet—a grand fault, peculiarly his own, born of the beating of his wings against the impossible. It is much as if, able to think two thoughts at once, he would compel his phrase to utter them at once.]

[Footnote 10:

for the harlot king Is quite beyond mine arm,
out of the blank And level of my brain, plot-
proof;

The Winter's Tale, act ii. sc. 3.

My life stands in the level of your dreams,

Ibid, act iii. sc. 2.]

[Footnote 11: two *ff* for two long *ss*.]

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

Rosin. My Lord, you must tell us where the body is, and go with us to the King.

Ham. The body is with the King, but the King is not with the body.[1] The King, is a thing—

Guild. A thing my Lord?

Ham. Of nothing[2]: bring me to him, hide Fox, and all after.[3] *Exeunt*[4]

Enter King. [Sidenote: *King, and two or three.*]

King. I have sent to seeke him, and to find the bodie:

How dangerous is it that this man goes loose:[5]

Yet must not we put the strong Law on him:

[Sidenote: 212] Hee's loved of the distracted multitude,[6]

Who like not in their iudgement, but their eyes:

And where 'tis so, th'Offenders scourge is weigh'd

But neerer the offence: to beare all smooth, and euen,

[Sidenote: neuer the]

This sodaine sending him away, must seeme

[Sidenote: 120] Deliberate pause,[7] diseases desperate growne,

By desperate appliance are relieved,
Or not at all. *Enter Rosincrane.*

[Sidenote: *Rosencraus and all the rest.*]

How now? What hath befallne?

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

King. But where is he?[8]

Rosin. Without my Lord, guarded[9] to know your pleasure.

King. Bring him before us.

Rosin. Ho, Guildensterne? Bring in my Lord. [Sidenote: *Ros.* How, bring in the Lord. *They enter.*]

Enter Hamlet and Guildensterne[10]

King. Now *Hamlet*, where's *Polonius*?

[Footnote 1: 'The body is in the king's house, therefore with the king; but the king knows not where, therefore the king is not with the body.']

[Footnote 2: 'A thing of nothing' seems to have been a common phrase.]

[Footnote 3: The *Quarto* has not 'hide Fox, and all after.']

[Footnote 4: Hamlet darts out, with the others after him, as in a hunt. Possibly there was a game called *Hide fox, and all after.*]

[Footnote 5: He is a hypocrite even to himself.]

[Footnote 6: This had all along helped to Hamlet's safety.]

[Footnote 7: 'must be made to look the result of deliberate reflection.' Claudius fears the people may imagine Hamlet treacherously used, driven to self-defence, and hurried out of sight to be disposed of.]

[Footnote 8: Emphasis on *he*; the point of importance with the king, is *where he is*, not where the body is.]

[Footnote 9: Henceforward he is guarded, or at least closely watched, according to the *Folio*—left much to himself according to the *Quarto*. 192.]

[Footnote 10: *Not in Quarto.*]

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Ham. At Supper.

King. At Supper? Where?

Ham. Not where he eats, but where he is eaten, [Sidenote: where a is] a certaine conuocation of wormes are e'ne at him. [Sidenote: of politique wormes[1]] Your worm is your onely Emperor for diet. We fat all creatures else to fat vs, and we fat our selfe [Sidenote: ourselves] for Magots. Your fat King, and your leane Begger is but variable seruice to dishes, but to one [Sidenote: two dishes] Table that's the end.

[A]

King. What dost thou meane by this?[2]

Ham. Nothing but to shew you how a King may go a Progresse[3] through the guts of a Begger.[4]

King. Where is *Polonius*.

Ham. In heauen, send thither to see. If your Messenger finde him not there, seeke him i'th other place your selfe: but indeed, if you finde him not [Sidenote: but if indeed you find him not within this] this moneth, you shall nose him as you go vp the staires into the Lobby.

King. Go seeke him there.

Ham. He will stay till ye come.

[Sidenote: A will stay till you]

K. Hamlet, this deed of thine, for thine especial safety
[Sidenote: this deede for thine especiall]

Which we do tender, as we deerely greeue
For that which thou hast done,[5] must send thee hence
With fierie Quicknesse.[6] Therefore prepare thy selfe,
The Barke is readie, and the winde at helpe,[7]
Th'Associates tend,[8] and euery thing at bent [Sidenote: is bent]
For England.

[Footnote A: *Here in the Quarto*:—

King Alas, alas.[9]

Ham. A man may fish with the worme that hath eate of a King, and eate of the fish that hath fedde of that worme.]

[Footnote 1: —such as Rosincrance and Guildensterne!]

[Footnote 2: I suspect this and the following speech ought by the printers to have been omitted also: without the preceding two speeches of the Quarto they are not accounted for.]

[Footnote 3: a royal progress.]

[Footnote 4: Hamlet's philosophy deals much now with the worthlessness of all human distinctions and affairs.]

[Footnote 5: 'and we care for your safety as much as we grieve for the death of Polonius.']

[Footnote 6: 'With fierie Quicknesse.' *Not in Quarto*.]

[Footnote 7: fair—ready to help.]

[Footnote 8: attend, wait.]

[Footnote 9: pretending despair over his madness.]

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Ham. For England?

King. I *Hamlet*.

Ham. Good.

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

Ham. I see a Cherube that see's him: but [Sidenote: sees them,] come, for England. Farewell deere Mother.

King. Thy louing Father *Hamlet*.

Hamlet. My Mother: Father and Mother is man and wife: man and wife is one flesh, and so [Sidenote: flesh, so my] my mother.[1] Come, for England. *Exit*

[Sidenote: 195] *King.* Follow him at foote,[2]
Tempt him with speed aboard:
Delay it not, He haue him hence to night.
Away, for euery thing is Seal'd and done
That else leanes on[3] th'Affaire pray you make hast.
And England, if my loue thou holdst at ought,
As my great power thereof may giue thee sense,
Since yet thy Cicatrice lookes raw and red[4]
After the Danish Sword, and thy free awe
Payes homage to vs[5]; thou maist not coldly set[6]
Our Soueraigne Processe,[7] which imports at full
By Letters conjuring to that effect [Sidenote: congruing]
The present death of *Hamlet*. Do it England,
For like the Hecticke[8] in my blood he rages,
And thou must cure me: Till I know 'tis done,
How ere my happes,[9] my ioyes were ne're begun.[10]

[Sidenote: ioyes will nere begin.]

Exit[11]

[Sidenote: 274] [12]*Enter Fortinbras with an Armie.*

[Sidenote: with his Army ouer the stage.]

For. Go Captaine, from me greet the Danish King,
Tell him that by his license, *Fortinbras*

[Sidenote: 78] Claimes the conueyance[13] of a promis'd March

[Sidenote: Craues the]

Ouer his Kingdome. You know the Rendeuous:[14]

[Footnote 1: He will not touch the hand of his father's murderer.]

[Footnote 2: 'at his heels.']

[Footnote 3: 'belongs to.']

[Footnote 4: 'as my great power may give thee feeling of its value, seeing the scar of my vengeance has hardly yet had time to heal.']

[Footnote 5: 'and thy fear uncompeled by our presence, pays homage to us.']

[Footnote 6: 'set down to cool'; 'set in the cold.']

[Footnote 7: *mandate*: 'Where's Fulvia's process?' *Ant. and Cl.*, act i. sc. 1. *Shakespeare Lexicon.*]

[Footnote 8: *hectic fever*—*habitual* or constant fever.]

[Footnote 9: 'whatever my fortunes.']

[Footnote 10: The original, the *Quarto* reading—'*my ioyes will nere begin*' seems to me in itself better, and the cause of the change to be as follows.

In the *Quarto* the next scene stands as in our modern editions, ending with the rime,

ô from this time forth,

My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth. *Exit.*

This was the act-pause, the natural end of act iii.

But when the author struck out all but the commencement of the scene, leaving only the three little speeches of Fortinbras and his captain, then plainly the act-pause must fall at the end of the preceding scene. He therefore altered the end of the last verse to make it rime with the foregoing, in accordance with his frequent way of using a rime before an important pause.

It perplexes us to think how on his way to the vessel, Hamlet could fall in with the Norwegian captain. This may have been one of Shakspeare's reasons for striking the whole scene out—but he had other and more pregnant reasons.]

[Footnote 11: Here is now the proper close of the *Third Act.*]

[Footnote 12: *Commencement of the Fourth Act.*

Between the third and the fourth passes the time Hamlet is away; for the latter, in which he returns, and whose scenes are *contiguous*, needs no more than one day.]

[Footnote 13: 'claims a convoy in fulfilment of the king's promise to allow him to march over his kingdom.' The meaning is made plainer by the correspondent passage in the *1st Quarto*:

Tell him that *Fortenbrasse* nephew to old *Norway*,
Craues a free passe and conduct ouer his land,
According to the Articles agreed on:]

[Footnote 14: 'where to rejoin us.']

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If that his Maiesty would ought with vs,
We shall expresse our dutie in his eye,[1]
And let[2] him know so.

Cap. I will doo't, my Lord.

For. Go safely[3] on. *Exit.* [Sidenote: softly]

[A]

[4] *Enter Queene and Horatio.* [Sidenote: *Enter Horatio, Gertrard, and a Gentleman.*]

Qu. I will not speake with her.

Hor.[5] She is importunate, indeed distract, her [Sidenote: *Gent.*] moode will needs be pittied.

Qu. What would she haue?

Hor. She speakes much of her Father; saies she heares [Sidenote: *Gent.*]

[Footnote A: *Here in the Quarto:—*

Enter Hamlet, Rosenbraus, &c.

Ham. Good sir whose powers are these?

Cap. They are of *Norway* sir.

Ham. How purposd sir I pray you?

Cap. Against some part of *Poland.*

Ham. Who commaunds them sir?

Cap. The Nephew to old *Norway, Fortenbrasse.*

Ham. Goes it against the maine of *Poland* sir, Or for some frontire?

Cap. Truly to speake, and with no addition,[6]

We goe to gaine a little patch of ground[7]

That hath in it no profit but the name

To pay fiue duckets, fiue I would not farme it;

Nor will it yeeld to *Norway* or the *Pole*

A rancker rate, should it be sold in fee.

Ham. Why then the Pollacke neuer will defend it.

Cap. Yes, it is already garisond.

Ham. Two thousand soules, and twenty thousand duckets

Will not debate the question of this straw

This is th'Impostume of much wealth and peace,

That inward breakes, and showes no cause without

Why the man dies.[8] I humbly thanke you sir.

Cap. God buy you sir.

Ros. Wil't please you goe my Lord?

[Sidenote: 187, 195] *Ham.* Ile be with you straight, goe a little before.[9] [10]How all occasions[11] doe informe against me,

[Continued on next text page.]

[Footnote 1: 'we shall pay our respects, waiting upon his person.']

[Footnote 2: 'let,' *imperative mood.*]

[Footnote 3: 'with proper precaution,' *said to his attendant officers.*]

[Footnote 4: This was originally intended, I repeat, for the commencement of the act. But when the greater part of the foregoing scene was omitted, and the third act made to end with the scene before that, then the small part left of the all-but-cancelled scene must open the fourth act.]

[Footnote 5: Hamlet absent, we find his friend looking after Ophelia.

Gertrude seems less friendly towards her.]

[Footnote 6: exaggeration.]

[Footnote 7: —probably a small outlying island or coast-fortress, *not far off*, else why should Norway care about it at all? If the word *frontier* has the meaning, as the *Shakespeare Lexicon* says, of 'an outwork in fortification,' its use two lines back would, taken figuratively, tend to support this.]

[Footnote 8: The meaning may be as in the following paraphrase: 'This quarrelling about nothing is (the breaking of) the abscess caused by wealth and peace—which breaking inward (in general corruption), would show no outward sore in sign of why death came.' Or it might be *forced* thus:—

This is the imposthume of much wealth and peace.
That (which) inward breaks, and shows no cause without—
Why, the man dies!

But it may mean:—'The war is an imposthume, which will break within, and cause much affliction to the people that make the war.' On the other hand, Hamlet seems to regard it as a process for, almost a sign of health.]

[Footnote 9: Note his freedom.]

[Footnote 10: See 'examples grosse as earth' *below*.]

[Footnote 11: While every word that Shakspeare wrote we may well take pains to grasp thoroughly, my endeavour to cast light on this passage is made with the distinct understanding in my own mind that the author himself disapproved of and omitted it, and that good reason is not wanting why he should have done so. At the same time, if my student, for this book is for those who would have help and will take pains to the true understanding of the play, would yet retain the passage, I protest against the acceptance of Hamlet's judgment of himself, except as revealing the simplicity and humility of his nature and character. That as often as a vivid memory of either interview with the Ghost came back upon him, he should feel rebuked and ashamed, and vexed with himself, is, in the morally, intellectually, and emotionally troubled state of his mind, nowise the less natural that he had the best of reasons for the delay because of which he *here* so unmercifully abuses himself. A man of self-satisfied temperament would never in similar circumstances have done so. But Hamlet was, by nature and education, far from such self-satisfaction; and there is in him besides such a strife and turmoil of opposing passions and feelings and apparent duties, as can but rarely rise in a human soul. With which he ought to side, his conscience is not sure—sides therefore now with one, now with another. At the same time it is by no means the long delay the critics imagine of which he is accusing himself—it is only that the thing *is not done*.

In certain moods the action a man dislikes will *therefore* look to him the more like a duty; and this helps to prevent Hamlet from knowing always how great a part conscience bears in the omission because of which he condemns and even contemns himself. The conscience does not naturally examine itself—is not necessarily self-conscious. In any soliloquy, a man must speak from his present mood: we who are not suffering, and who have many of his moods before us, ought to understand Hamlet better than he understands himself. To himself, sitting in judgment on himself, it would hardly appear a decent cause of, not to say reason for, a moment's delay in punishing his uncle, that he was so weighed down with misery because of his mother and Ophelia, that it seemed of no use to kill one villain out of the villainous world; it would seem but 'bestial oblivion'; and, although his reputation as a prince was deeply concerned, *any* reflection on the consequences to himself would at times appear but a 'craven scruple'; while at times even the whispers of conscience might seem a 'thinking too precisely on the event.' A conscientious man of changeful mood will be very ready in either mood to condemn the other. The best and rightest men will sometimes accuse themselves in a manner that seems to those who know them best, unfounded, unreasonable, almost absurd. We must not, I say, take the hero's judgment of himself as the author's judgment of him. The two judgments, that of a man upon himself from within, and that of his beholder upon him from without, are not congeneric. They are different in origin and in kind, and cannot be adopted either of them into the source of the other without most serious and dangerous mistake. So adopted, each becomes another thing altogether. It is to me probable that, although it involves other unfitnesses, the Poet omitted the passage chiefly from coming to see the danger of its giving occasion, or at least support, to an altogether mistaken and unjust idea of his Hamlet.]

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There's trickes i'th'world, and hems, and beats her heart,
Spurnes enuiously at Strawes,[1] speakes things in doubt,[2]

That carry but halfe sense: Her speech is nothing,[3]
Yet the vnshaped vse of it[4] doth moue
The hearers to Collection[5]; they ayme[6] at it,
 [Sidenote: they yawne at]
And botch the words[7] vp fit to their owne thoughts

[Continuation of quote from Quarto from previous text page:—

And spur my dull reuenge. [8]What is a man
If his chiefe good and market of his time
Be but to sleepe and feede, a beast, no more;
Sure he that made vs with such large discourse[9]
Looking before and after, gaue vs not
That capabilitie and god-like reason
To fust in vs vnvsd,[8] now whether it be
[Sidenote: 52, 120] Bestiall obliuion,[10] or some crauen scruple
Of thinking too precisely on th'euent,[11]
A thought which quarterd hath but one part wisdom,
And euer three parts coward, I doe not know
Why yet I liue to say this thing's to doe,
Sith I haue cause, and will, and strength, and meanes
To doo't;[12] examples grosse as earth exhort me,
Witnes this Army of such masse and charge,
[Sidenote: 235] Led by a delicate and tender Prince,
Whose spirit with diuine ambition puft,
Makes mouthes at the invisible euent,
[Sidenote: 120] Exposing what is mortall, and vnsecure,
To all that fortune, death, and danger dare,[13]
Euen for an Egge-shell. Rightly to be great,
Is not to stirre without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrell in a straw
When honour's at the stake, how stand I then
That haue a father kild, a mother staine,
Excytements of my reason, and my blood,
And let all sleepe,[14] while to my shame I see
The imminent death of twenty thousand men,
That for a fantasie and tricke[15] of fame
Goe to their graues like beds, fight for a plot
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,[16]
Which is not tombe enough and continent[17]
To hide the slaine,[18] ô from this time forth,
My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth.[19] *Exit.*

[Footnote 1: trifles.]

[Footnote 2: doubtfully.]

[Footnote 3: 'there is nothing in her speech.']

[Footnote 4: 'the formless mode of it.']

[Footnote 5: 'to gathering things and putting them together.']

[Footnote 6: guess.]

[Footnote 7: Ophelia's words.]

[Footnote 8: I am in doubt whether this passage from 'What is a man' down to 'unused,' does not refer to the king, and whether Hamlet is not persuading himself that it can be no such objectionable thing to kill one hardly above a beast. At all events it is far more applicable to the king: it was not one of Hamlet's faults, in any case, to fail of using his reason. But he may just as well accuse himself of that too! At the same time the worst neglect of reason lies in not carrying out its conclusions, and if we cannot justify Hamlet in his delay, the passage is of good application to him. 'Bestiall oblivion' does seem to connect himself with the reflection; but how thoroughly is the thing intended by such a phrase alien from the character of Hamlet!]

[Footnote 9: —the mental faculty of running hither and thither: 'We look before and after.' *Shelley: To*

[Footnote 10: —the forgetfulness of such a beast as he has just mentioned.]

[Footnote 11: —the *consequences*. The scruples that come of thinking of the event, Hamlet certainly had: that they were *craven* scruples, that his thinking was too precise, I deny to the face of the noble self-accuser. Is that a craven scruple which, seeing no good to result from the horrid deed, shrinks from its irretrievableness, and demands at least absolute assurance of guilt? or that 'a thinking too precisely on the event,' to desire, as the prince of his people, to leave an un wounded name behind him?]

[Footnote 12: This passage is the strongest there is on the side of the ordinary misconception of the character of Hamlet. It comes from himself; and it is as ungenerous as it is common and unfair to use such a weapon against a man. Does any but St. Paul himself say he was the chief of sinners? Consider Hamlet's condition, tormented on all sides, within and without, and think whether this outbreak against himself be not as unfair as it is natural. Lest it should be accepted against him, Shakspeare did well to leave it out. In bitter disappointment, both because of what is and what is not, both because of what he has done and what he has failed to do, having for the time lost all chance, with the last vision of the Ghost still haunting his eyes, his last reproachful words yet ringing in his ears, are we bound to take his judgment of himself because it is against himself? Are we *bound* to take any man's judgment because it is against himself? I answer, 'No more than if it were for himself.' A good man's judgment, where he is at all perplexed, especially if his motive comes within his own question, is ready to be against himself, as a bad man's is sure to be for himself. Or because he is a philosopher, does it follow that throughout he understands himself? Were such a man in cool, untroubled conditions, we might feel compelled to take his judgment, but surely not here! A philosopher in such state as Hamlet's would understand the quality of his spiritual operations with no more certainty than another man. In his present mood, Hamlet forgets the cogency of the reasons that swayed him in the other; forgets that his uppermost feeling then was doubt, as horror, indignation, and conviction are uppermost now. Things were never so clear to Hamlet as to us.

But how can he say he has strength and means—in the position in which he now finds himself? I am glad to be able to believe, let my defence of Hamlet against himself be right or wrong, that Shakspeare intended the omission of the passage. I lay nothing on the great lack of logic throughout the speech, for that would not make it unfit for Hamlet in such mood, while it makes its omission from the play of less consequence to my general argument.]

[Footnote 13: *threaten*. This supports my argument as to the great soliloquy—that it was death as the result of his slaying the king, or attempting to do so, not death by suicide, he was thinking of: he expected to die himself in the punishing of his uncle.]

[Footnote 14: He had had no chance but that when the king was on his knees.]

[Footnote 15: 'a fancy and illusion.']

[Footnote 16: 'which is too small for those engaged to find room to fight on it.']

[Footnote 17: 'continent,' *containing space*.]

[Footnote 18: This soliloquy is antithetic to the other. Here is no thought of the 'something after death.']

[Footnote 19: If, with this speech in his mouth, Hamlet goes coolly on board the vessel, *not being compelled thereto* (190, 192, 216), and possessing means to his vengeance, as here he says, and goes merely in order to hoist Rosinrance and Guildensterne with their own petard—that is, if we must keep the omitted passages, then the author exposes his hero to a more depreciatory judgment than any from which I would justify him, and a conception of his character entirely inconsistent with the rest of the play. He did not observe the risk at the time he wrote the passage, but discovering it afterwards, rectified the oversight—to the dissatisfaction of his critics, who have agreed in restoring what he cancelled.]

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Which as her winkes, and nods, and gestures yeeld[1] them,
Indeed would make one thinke there would[2] be thought,

[Sidenote: there might[2] be]

Though nothing sure, yet much vnhappily.

Qu. 'Twere good she were spoken with,[3] [Sidenote: *Hora*.]
For she may strew dangerous coniectures

In ill breeding minds.[4] Let her come in. [Sidenote: *Enter Ophelia.*]

To my sicke soule (as sinnes true Nature is)

[Sidenote: *Quee.* 'To my[5]]

Each toy seemes Prologue, to some great amisse, [Sidenote: 'Each]

So full of Artlesse iealousie is guilt, [Sidenote: 'So]

It spill's it selfe, in fearing to be spilt.[6] [Sidenote: 'It]

Enter Ophelia distracted.[7]

Ophe. Where is the beauteous Maiesty of Denmark.

Qu. How now *Ophelia*? [Sidenote: *shee sings.*]

Ophe. How should I your true loue know from another one? By his Cockle hat and staffe, and his Sandal shoone.

Qu. Alas sweet Lady: what imports this Song?

Ophe. Say you? Nay pray you marke. *He is dead and gone Lady, he is dead and gone, At his head a grasse-greene Turfe, at his heeles a stone.* [Sidenote: O ho.]

Enter King.

Qu. Nay but *Ophelia*.

Ophe. Pray you marke. *White his Shrow'd as the Mountaine Snow.* [Sidenote: *Enter King.*]

Qu. Alas looke heere my Lord,

[Sidenote: 246] *Ophe. Larded[8] with sweet flowers:* [Sidenote: Larded all with] *Which bewept to the graue did not go,* [Sidenote: ground | *Song.*] *With true-loue showres,*

[Footnote 1: 'present them,'—her words, that is—giving significance or interpretation to them.]

[Footnote 2: If this *would*, and not the *might* of the *Quarto*, be the correct reading, it means that Ophelia would have something thought so and so.]

[Footnote 3: —changing her mind on Horatio's representation. At first she would not speak with her.]

[Footnote 4: 'minds that breed evil.']

[Footnote 5: —as a quotation.]

[Footnote 6: Instance, the history of Macbeth.]

[Footnote 7: *1st Q. Enter Ofelia playing on a Lute, and her haire downe singing.*

Hamlet's apparent madness would seem to pass into real madness in Ophelia. King Lear's growing perturbation becomes insanity the moment he sees the pretended madman Edgar.

The forms of Ophelia's madness show it was not her father's death that drove her mad, but his death by the hand of Hamlet, which, with Hamlet's banishment, destroyed all the hope the queen had been fostering in her of marrying him some day.]

[Footnote 8: This expression is, as Dr. Johnson says, taken from cookery; but it is so used elsewhere by Shakspeare that we cannot regard it here as a scintillation of Ophelia's insanity.]

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King. How do ye, pretty Lady? [Sidenote: you]

Ophe. Well, God dil'd you.[1] They say the [Sidenote: good dild you,[1]] Owle was a Bakers daughter. [2] Lord, wee know what we are, but know not what we may be. God be at your Table.

[Sidenote: 174] *King.* Conceit[3] vpon her Father.

Ophe. Pray you let's haue no words of this: [Sidenote: Pray lets] but when they aske you what it meanes, say you this:

[4] *To morrow is S. Valentines day, all in the morning betime,
And I a Maid at your Window to be your Valentine.
Then vp he rose, and don'd[5] his clothes, and dupt[5] the chamber dore,*

Let in the Maid, that out a Maid, neuer departed more.

King. Pretty *Ophelia*.

Ophe. Indeed I? without an oath Ile make an [Sidenote: Indeede without] end ont.[6]

By gis, and by S. Charity,

Alacke, and fie for shame:

Yong men wil doo't, if they come too't,

By Cocke they are too blame.

Quoth she before you tumbled me,

You promis'd me to Wed:

So would I ha done by yonder Sunne, [Sidenote: (He answers,) So would]

And thou hadst not come to my bed.

King. How long hath she bin this? [Sidenote: beene thus?]

Ophe. I hope all will be well. We must bee patient, but I cannot choose but weepe, to thinke they should lay him i'th'cold ground: My brother [Sidenote: they would lay] shall knowe of it, and so I thanke you for your good counsell. Come, my Coach: Goodnight Ladies: Goodnight sweet Ladies: Goodnight, goodnight. *Exit*[7]

[Footnote 1: *1st Q.* 'God yeeld you,' that is, *reward you*. Here we have a blunder for the contraction, 'God 'ild you'—perhaps a common blunder.]

[Footnote 2: For the silly legend, see Douce's note in *Johnson and Steevens*.]

[Footnote 3: imaginative brooding.]

[Footnote 4: We dare no judgment on madness in life: we need not in art.]

[Footnote 5: Preterites of *don* and *dup*, contracted from *do on* and *do up*.]

[Footnote 6: —disclaiming false modesty.]

[Footnote 7: *Not in Q.*]

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King. Follow her close,

Giue her good watch I pray you:

Oh this is the poyson of deepe greefe, it springs

All from her Fathers death. Oh *Gertrude, Gertrude,*

[Sidenote: death, and now behold, ô *Gertrard, Gertrard,*]

When sorrowes comes, they come not single spies,[1]

[Sidenote: sorrowes come]

But in Battaliaes. First, her Father slaine, [Sidenote: battalians:]

Next your Sonne gone, and he most violent Author

Of his owne iust remoue: the people muddied,[2]

Thicke and vnwholsome in their thoughts, and whispers

[Sidenote: in thoughts]

For[3] good *Polonius* death; and we haue done but greenly

[Sidenote: 182] In hugger mugger[4] to interre him. Poore *Ophelia*

Diuided from her selfe,[5] and her faire Iudgement,

Without the which we are Pictures, or meere Beasts.

Last, and as much containing as all these,

Her Brother is in secret come from France,

Keepes on his wonder,[6] keepes himselfe in clouds,

[Sidenote: Feeds on this[6]]

And wants not Buzzers to infect his eare [Sidenote: care]

With pestilent Speeches of his Fathers death,

Where in necessitie of matter Beggard, [Sidenote: Wherein necessity]

Will nothing sticke our persons to Arraigne [Sidenote: person]

In eare and eare.[7] O my deere *Gertrude*, this,

Like to a murdering Peece[8] in many places,

Giues me superfluous death. *A Noise within.*

Enter a Messenger.

Qu. Alacke, what noyse is this?[9]

King. Where are my *Switzers*?[10] [Sidenote: *King.* Attend, where is my Swissers,] Let them guard the doore. What is the matter?

Mes. Saue your selfe, my Lord. [Sidenote: 120] The Ocean (ouer-peering of his List[11]) Eates not the Flats with more impittious[12] haste

[Footnote 1: —each alone, like scouts.]

[Footnote 2: stirred up like pools—with similar result.]

[Footnote 3: because of.]

[Footnote 4: The king wished to avoid giving the people any pretext or cause for interfering: he dreaded whatever might lead to enquiry—to the queen of course pretending it was to avoid exposing Hamlet to the popular indignation. *Hugger mugger—secretly: Steevens and Malone.*]

[Footnote 5: The phrase has the same *visual* root as *beside herself*—both signifying 'not at one with herself.']

[Footnote 6: If the *Quarto* reading is right, 'this wonder' means the hurried and suspicious funeral of his father. But the *Folio* reading is quite Shakspearean: 'He keeps on (as a garment) the wonder of the people at him'; *keeps his behaviour such that the people go on wondering about him*: the phrase is explained by the next clause. Compare:

By being seldom seen, I could not stir
But, like a comet, I was wondered at.

K. Henry IV. P. I. act iii. sc. 1.]

[Footnote 7: 'wherein Necessity, beggared of material, will not scruple to whisper invented accusations against us.']

[Footnote 8: —the name given to a certain small cannon—perhaps charged with various missiles, hence the better figuring the number and variety of 'sorrows' he has just recounted.]

[Footnote 9: *This line not in Q.*]

[Footnote 10: Note that the king is well guarded, and Hamlet had to lay his account with great risk in the act of killing him.]

[Footnote 11: *border, as of cloth*: the mounds thrown up to keep the sea out. The figure here specially fits a Dane.]

[Footnote 12: I do not know whether this word means *pitiless*, or stands for *impetuous*. The *Quarto* has one *t*.]

[Page 202]

Then young *Laertes*, in a Riotous head,[1]
Ore-beares your Officers, the rabble call him Lord,
And as the world were now but to begin,
Antiquity forgot, Custome not knowne,
The Ratifiers and props of euery word,[2]
[Sidenote: 62] They cry choose we? *Laertes* shall be King,[3]

[Sidenote: The cry]

Caps, hands, and tongues, applaud it to the clouds,
Laertes shall be King, *Laertes* King.

Qu. How cheerefully on the false Traile they cry, [Sidenote: *A noise within.*] Oh this is Counter you false Danish Dogges.[4]

Noise within. Enter Laertes[5]. [Sidenote: *Laertes with others.*]

King. The doores are broke.

Laer. Where is the King, sirs? Stand you all without. [Sidenote: this King? sirs stand]

All. No, let's come in.

Laer. I pray you giue me leaue.[6]

All. We will, we will.

Laer. I thanke you: Keepe the doore. Oh thou vilde King, giue me my Father.

Qu. Calmely good *Laertes*.

Laer. That drop of blood, that calmes[7] [Sidenote: thats calme]

Proclaimes me Bastard:

Cries Cuckold to my Father, brands the Harlot

Euen heere betweene the chaste vnsmirched brow

Of my true Mother.[8]

Kin. What is the cause *Laertes*,

That thy Rebellion lookes so Gyant-like?

Let him go *Gertrude*: Do not feare[9] our person:

There's such Diuinity doth hedge a King,[10]

That Treason can but peepe to what it would,

Acts little of his will.[11] Tell me *Laertes*,

[Footnote 1: *Head* is a rising or gathering of people—generally rebellious, I think.]

[Footnote 2: Antiquity and Custom.]

[Footnote 3: This refers to the election of Claudius—evidently not a popular election, but effected by intrigue with the aristocracy and the army: 'They cry, Let us choose: Laertes shall be king!'

We may suppose the attempt of Claudius to have been favoured by the lingering influence of the old Norse custom of succession, by which not the son but the brother inherited. 16, *bis*.]

[Footnote 4: To hunt counter is to 'hunt the game by the heel or track.' The queen therefore accuses them of not using their scent or judgment, but following appearances.]

[Footnote 5: Now at length re-appears Laertes, who has during the interim been ripening in Paris for villainy. He is wanted for the catastrophe, and requires but the last process of a few hours in the hell-oven of a king's instigation.]

[Footnote 6: The customary and polite way of saying *leave me*: 'grant me your absence.' 85, 89.]

[Footnote 7: grows calm.]

[Footnote 8: In taking vengeance Hamlet must acknowledge his mother such as Laertes says inaction on his part would proclaim his mother.

The actress should here let a shadow cross the queen's face: though too weak to break with the king, she has begun to repent.]

[Footnote 9: fear *for*.]

[Footnote 10: The consummate hypocrite claims the protection of the sacred hedge through which he had himself broken—or crept rather, like a snake, to kill. He can act innocence the better that his conscience is clear as to Polonius.]

[Footnote 11: 'can only peep through the hedge to its desire—acts little of its will.']

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Why thou art thus Incenst? Let him go *Gertrude*.
Speake man.

Laer. Where's my Father? [Sidenote: is my]

King. Dead.

Qu. But not by him.

King. Let him demand his fill.

Laer. How came he dead? Ile not be Iuggel'd with.
To hell Allegiance: Vowes, to the blackest diuell.
Conscience and Grace, to the profoundest Pit
I dare Damnation: to this point I stand,
That both the worlds I giue to negligence,
Let come what comes: onely Ile be reueng'd
Most throughly for my Father.

King. Who shall stay you?[1]

Laer. My Will, not all the world,[1] [Sidenote: worlds:] And for my meanes, Ile husband them so well,
They shall go farre with little.

King. Good *Laertes*:
If you desire to know the certaintie
Of your deere Fathers death, if writ in your reuenge,
[Sidenote: Father, i'st writ]
That Soop-stake[2] you will draw both Friend and Foe,
Winner and Looser.[3]

Laer. None but his Enemies.

King. Will you know them then.

La. To his good Friends, thus wide Ile ope my Armes:
And like the kinde Life-rend'ring Politician,[4]
[Sidenote: life-rendring Pelican,]
Repast them with my blood.[5]

King. Why now you speake
Like a good Childe,[6] and a true Gentleman.
That I am guiltlesse of your Fathers death,
And am most sensible in greefe for it,[7] [Sidenote: sencibly]

[Footnote 1:

'Who shall *prevent* you?'
'My own will only—not all the world,'

or,

'Who will *support* you?'
'My will. Not all the world shall prevent me,'—

so playing on the two meanings of the word *stay*. Or it *might* mean: 'Not all the world shall stay my will.']

[Footnote 2: swoop-stake—*sweepstakes*.]

[Footnote 3: 'and be loser as well as winner—' If the *Folio's* is the right reading, then the sentence is unfinished, and should have a dash, not a period.]

[Footnote 4: A curious misprint: may we not suspect a somewhat dull joker among the compositors?]

[Footnote 6: 'a true son to your father.']

[Footnote 7: 'feel much grief for it.']

[Footnote 5: *Laertes* is a ranter—false everywhere.

Plainly he is introduced as the foil from which Hamlet 'shall stick fiery off.' In this speech he shows his moral condition directly the opposite of Hamlet's: he has no principle but revenge. His conduct ought to be quite satisfactory to Hamlet's critics; there is action enough in it of the very kind they would have of Hamlet; and doubtless it would be satisfactory to them but for the treachery that follows. The one, dearly loving a father who deserves immeasurably better of him than Polonius of *Laertes*, will not for the sake of revenge disregard either conscience, justice, or grace; the other will not delay even to inquire into the facts of his father's fate, but will act at once on hearsay, rushing to a blind satisfaction that cannot even be called retaliation, caring for neither right nor wrong, cursing conscience and the will of God, and daring damnation. He slights assurance as to the hand by which his father fell, dismisses all reflection that might interfere with a stupid revenge. To make up one's mind at

once, and act without ground, is weakness, not strength: this Laertes does—and is therefore just the man to be the villainous, not the innocent, tool of villainy. He who has sufficing ground and refuses to act is weak; but the ground that will satisfy the populace, of which the commonplace critic is the fair type, will not satisfy either the man of conscience or of wisdom. The mass of world-bepraised action owes its existence to the pressure of circumstance, not to the will and conscience of the man. Hamlet waits for light, even with his heart accusing him; Laertes rushes into the dark, dagger in hand, like a mad Malay: so he kill, he cares not whom. Such a man is easily tempted to the vilest treachery, for the light that is in him is darkness; he is not a true man; he is false in himself. This is what comes of his father's maxim:

To thine own self be true;
And it must follow, *as the night the day* (!)
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

Like the aphorism 'Honesty is the best policy,' it reveals the difference between a fact and a truth. Both sayings are correct as facts, but as guides of conduct devilishly false, leading to dishonesty and treachery. To be true to the divine self in us, is indeed to be true to all; but it is only by being true to all, against the ever present and urging false self, that at length we shall see the divine self rise above the chaotic waters of our selfishness, and know it so as to be true to it.

Of Laertes we must note also that it is not all for love of his father that he is ready to cast allegiance to hell, and kill the king: he has the voice of the people to succeed him.]

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[Sidenote: 184] It shall as leuell to your Iudgement pierce
[Sidenote: peare']

As day do's to your eye.[1]

A noise within. [2]Let her come in.

Enter Ophelia[3]

Laer. How now? what noise is that?[4]

[Sidenote: *Laer.* Let her come in. How now,]

Oh heate drie vp my Braines, teares seuen times salt,
Burne out the Sence and Vertue of mine eye.

By Heauen, thy madnesse shall be payed by waight,

[Sidenote: with weight]

Till our Scale turnes the beame. Oh Rose of May, [Sidenote: turne]

Deere Maid, kinde Sister, sweet *Ophelia*:

Oh Heauens, is't possible, a yong Maids wits,

Should be as mortall as an old mans life?[5] [Sidenote: a poore mans]

Nature is fine[6] in Loue, and where 'tis fine,

It sends some precious instance of it selfe

After the thing it loues.[7]

Ophe. *They bore him bare fac'd on the Beer.* [Sidenote: *Song.*] [Sidenote: bare-faste] *Hey non nony, nony, hey nony:[8]* *And on his graue raines many a teare,* [Sidenote: And in his graue rain'd] *Fare you well my Doue.*

Laer. Had'st thou thy wits, and did'st perswade Reuenge, it could not moue thus.

Ophe. You must sing downe a-downe, and [Sidenote: sing a downe a downe, And] you call him[9] a-downe-a. Oh, how the wheele[10] becomes it? It is the false Steward that stole his masters daughter. [11]

Laer. This nothings more then matter.[12]

Ophe. There's Rosemary,[13] that's for Remembraunce. Pray loue remember: and there is [Sidenote: , pray you loue] Paconcies, that's for Thoughts. [Sidenote: Pancies[14]]

Laer. A document[15] in madnesse, thoughts and remembrance fitted.

Ophe. There's Fennell[16] for you, and Columbines[16]: ther's Rew[17] for you, and heere's some for

[Footnote 1: 'pierce as *directly* to your judgment.'

But the simile of the *day* seems to favour the reading of the *Q.*—'peare,' for *appear*. In the word *level*

would then be indicated the *rising* sun.]

[Footnote 2: *Not in Q.*]

[Footnote 3: *1st Q. 'Enter Ofelia as before.'*]

[Footnote 4: To render it credible that Laertes could entertain the vile proposal the king is about to make, it is needful that all possible influences should be represented as combining to swell the commotion of his spirit, and overwhelm what poor judgment and yet poorer conscience he had. Altogether unprepared, he learns Ophelia's pitiful condition by the sudden sight of the harrowing change in her—and not till after that hears who killed his father and brought madness on his sister.]

[Footnote 5: *1st Q.*

I'st possible a yong maides life,
Should be as mortall as an olde mans sawe?]

[Footnote 6: delicate, exquisite.]

[Footnote 7: 'where 'tis fine': I suggest that the *it* here may be impersonal: 'where *things*, where *all* is fine,' that is, 'in a fine soul'; then the meaning would be, 'Nature is fine always in love, and where the soul also is fine, she sends from it' &c. But the *where* may be equal, perhaps, to *whereas*. I can hardly think the phrase means merely '*and where it is in love.*' It might intend—'and where Love is fine, it sends' &c. The 'precious instance of itself,' that is, 'something that is a part and specimen of itself,' is here the 'young maid's wits': they are sent after the 'old man's life.'—These three lines are not in the Quarto. It is not disputed that they are from Shakspeare's hand: if the insertion of these be his, why should the omission of others not be his also?]

[Footnote 8: *This line is not in Q.*]

[Footnote 9: '*if you call him*': I think this is not a part of the song, but is spoken of her father.]

[Footnote 10: *the burden of the song*: Steevens.]

[Footnote 11: The subject of the ballad.]

[Footnote 12: 'more than sense'—in incitation to revenge.]

[Footnote 13: —an evergreen, and carried at funerals: *Johnson*.

For you there's rosemary and rue; these keep
Seeming and savour ail the winter long:
Grace and remembrance be to you both.

The Winter's Tale, act iv. sc. 3.]

[Footnote 14: *penseés*.]

[Footnote 15: *a teaching, a lesson*—the fitting of thoughts and remembrance, namely—which he applies to his intent of revenge. Or may it not rather be meant that the putting of these two flowers together was a happy hit of her madness, presenting the fantastic emblem of a document or writing—the very idea of which is the keeping of thoughts in remembrance?]

[Footnote 16: —said to mean *flattery* and *thanklessness*—perhaps given to the king.]

[Footnote 17: *Repentance*—given to the queen. Another name of the plant was *Herb-Grace*, as below, in allusion, doubtless, to its common name—*rue* or *repentance* being both the gift of God, and an act of grace.]

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me. Wee may call it Herbe-Grace a Sundaies: [Sidenote: herbe of Grace a Sondaies, you may weare] Oh you must weare your Rew with a difference.[1] There's a Daysie,[2] I would giue you some Violets, [3] but they wither'd all when my Father dyed: They say, he made a good end; [Sidenote: say a made]

For bonny sweet Robin is all my ioy.

Laer. Thought, and Affliction, Passion, Hell it selfe: [Sidenote: afflictions,] She turnes to Fauour, and to prettinesse.

[Sidenote: *Song*.]

Ophe. And will he not come againe, [Sidenote: will a not] *And will he not come againe:* [Sidenote: will a not] *No, no, he is dead, go to thy Death-bed, He neuer wil come againe. His Beard as white as Snow,* [Sidenote: beard was as] *All[4] Flaxen was his Pole: He is gone, he is gone, and we cast away mone, Gramercy[5] on his Soule.* [Sidenote: God a mercy on] And of all Christian Soules, I pray God.[6] [Sidenote: Christians soules,] God buy ye.[7] *Exeunt Ophelia*[8] [Sidenote: you.]

Laer. Do you see this, you Gods? [Sidenote: Doe you this ô God.]

King. Laertes, I must common[9] with your greefe, [Sidenote: commune]
Or you deny me right: go but apart,
Make choice of whom your wisest Friends you will,
And they shall heare and iudge 'twixt you and me;
If by direct or by Colaterall hand
They finde vs touch'd,[10] we will our Kingdome giue,
Our Crowne, our Life, and all that we call Ours
To you in satisfaction. But if not,
Be you content to lend your patience to vs,[11]
And we shall ioyntly labour with your soule
To giue it due content.

Laer. Let this be so:[12] His meanes of death,[13] his obscure buriall; [Sidenote: funerall,] No Trophee, Sword, nor Hatchment o're his bones,[14]

[Footnote 1: —perhaps the heraldic term. The Poet, not Ophelia, intends the special fitness of the speech. Ophelia means only that the rue of the matron must differ from the rue of the girl.]

[Footnote 2: 'the dissembling daisy': *Greene*—quoted by *Henley*.]

[Footnote 3: —standing for *faithfulness*: *Malone*, from an old song.]

[Footnote 4: '*All*' not in *Q*.]

[Footnote 5: Wherever else Shakspeare uses the word, it is in the sense of *grand merci*—*great thanks* (*Skeat's Etym. Dict.*); here it is surely a corruption, whether Ophelia's or the printer's, of the *Quarto* reading, '*God a mercy*' which, spoken quickly, sounds very near *gramercy*. The *1st Quarto* also has '*God a mercy*.'

[Footnote 6: 'I pray God.' not in *Q*.]

[Footnote 7: 'God b' wi' ye': *good bye*.]

[Footnote 8: *Not in Q*.]

[Footnote 9: 'I must have a share in your grief.' The word does mean *commune*, but here is more pregnant, as evidenced in the next phrase, 'Or you deny me right:'—'do not give me justice.')

[Footnote 10: 'touched with the guilt of the deed, either as having done it with our own hand, or caused it to be done by the hand of one at our side.')

[Footnote 11: We may paraphrase thus: 'Be pleased to grant us a loan of your patience,' that is, *be patient for a while at our request*, 'and we will work along with your soul to gain for it (your soul) just satisfaction.')

[Footnote 12: He consents—but immediately *re-sums* the grounds of his wrathful suspicion.]

[Footnote 13: —the way in which he met his death.]

[Footnote 14: —customary honours to the noble dead. A *trophy* was an arrangement of the armour and arms of the dead in a set decoration. The origin of the word *hatchment* shows its intent: it is a corruption of *achievement*.]

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No Noble rite, nor formall ostentation,[1]
Cry to be heard, as 'twere from Heauen to Earth,
That I must call in question.[2] [Sidenote: call't in]

King. So you shall: And where th'offence is, let the great Axe fall. I pray you go with me.[3] *Exeunt*

Enter Horatio, with an Attendant. [Sidenote: *Horatio and others*.]

Hor. What are they that would speake with me?

Ser. Saylor's sir, they say they haue Letters [*Gent.* Sea-faring men sir,] for you.

Hor. Let them come in,[4] I do not know from what part of the world I should be greeted, if not from Lord *Hamlet*.

Enter Saylor. [Sidenote: *Saylers.*]

Say. God blesse you Sir.

Hor. Let him blesse thee too.

Say. Hee shall Sir, and't[5] please him. There's [Sidenote: A shall sir and please] a Letter for you Sir: It comes from th'Ambassadors [Sidenote: it came frō th' Embassador] that was bound for England, if your name be *Horatio*, as I am let to know[6] it is.

Reads the Letter[7]

Horatio, When thou shalt haue ouerlook'd this, [Sidenote: *Hor. Horatio* when] *giue these Fellowes some meanes to the King: They haue Letters for him. Ere we were two dayes*[8] *old at Sea, a Pyrate of very Warlicke appointment gaue vs Chace. Finding our selues too slow of Saile, we put on a compelled Valour. In the Grapple, I boarded* [Sidenote: valour, and in the] *them: On the instant they got cleare of our Shippe, so I alone became their Prisoner.*[9] *They haue dealt with mee, like Theeues of Mercy, but they knew what they did. I am to doe a good turne for them. Let* [Sidenote: a turne] *the King haue the Letters I haue sent, and repaire thou to me with as much hast as thou wouldest flye* [Sidenote: much speede as] *death*[10] *I haue words to speake in your eare, will* [Sidenote: in thine eare]

[Footnote 1: 'formal ostentation'—show or publication of honour according to form or rule.]

[Footnote 2: 'so that I must call in question'—institute inquiry; or '—*that* (these things) I must call in question.']

[Footnote 3: Note such a half line frequently after the not uncommon closing couplet—as if to take off the formality of the couplet, and lead back, through the more speech-like, to greater verisimilitude.]

[Footnote 4: Here the servant goes, and the rest of the speech *Horatio* speaks *solus*. He had expected to hear from *Hamlet*.]

[Footnote 5: 'and it please'—*if it please. An* for *if* is merely *and*.]

[Footnote 6: 'I am told.']

[Footnote 7: *Not in Q.*]

[Footnote 8: This gives an approximate clue to the time between the second and third acts: it needs not have been a week.]

[Footnote 9: Note once more the unfailing readiness of *Hamlet* where there was no question as to the fitness of the action seemingly required. This is the man who by too much thinking, forsooth, has rendered himself incapable of action!—so far ahead of the foremost behind him, that, when the pirate, not liking such close quarters, 'on the instant got clear,' he is the only one on her deck! There was no question here as to what ought to be done: the pirate grappled them; he boarded her. Thereafter, with his prompt faculty for dealing with men, he soon comes to an understanding with his captors, and they agree, upon some certain condition, to put him on shore.

He writes in unusual spirits; for he has now gained full, presentable, and indisputable proof of the treachery which before he scarcely doubted, but could not demonstrate. The present instance of it has to do with himself, not his father, but in itself would justify the slaying of his uncle, whose plausible way had possibly perplexed him so that he could not thoroughly believe him the villain he was: bad as he must be, could he actually have killed his own brother, and *such* a brother? A better man than *Laertes* might have acted more promptly than *Hamlet*, and so happened to *do* right; but he would not have *been* right, for the proof was *not* sufficient.]

[Footnote 10: The value *Hamlet* sets on his discovery, evident in his joyous urgency to share it with his friend, is explicable only on the ground of the relief it is to his mind to be now at length quite certain of his duty.]

make thee dumbe, yet are they much too light for the bore of the Matter.[1] These good Fellowes will bring [Sidenote: the bord of] thee where I am. Rosincrance and Guildensterne, hold their course for England. Of them I haue much to tell thee, Farewell. He that thou knowest thine. [Sidenote: So that thou knowest thine Hamlet.] Hamlet.

Come, I will giue you way for these your Letters,
[Sidenote: *Hor.* Come I will you way]
And do't the speedier, that you may direct me
To him from whom you brought them. *Exit.* [Sidenote: *Exeunt.*]

Enter King and Laertes.[2]

King. Now must your conscience my acquittance seal,
And you must put me in your heart for Friend,
Sith you haue heard, and with a knowing eare,[3]
That he which hath your Noble Father slaine,
Pursued my life.[4]

Laer. It well appeares. But tell me,
Why you proceeded not against these feates,[5] [Sidenote: proceede]
So crimefull, and so Capitall in Nature,[6] [Sidenote: criminall]
As by your Safety, Wisedome, all things else,
[Sidenote: safetie, greatnes, wisdome,]
You mainly[7] were stirr'd vp?

King. O for two speciall Reasons,
Which may to you (perhaps) seeme much vnsinnowed,[8]
And yet to me they are strong. The Queen his Mother,
[Sidenote: But yet | tha'r strong]
Liues almost by his lookes: and for my selfe,
My Vertue or my Plague, be it either which,[9]
She's so coniunctiue to my life and soule;
[Sidenote: she is so concliue]
That as the Starre moues not but in his Sphere,[10]
I could not but by her. The other Motiue,
Why to a publike count I might not go,
[Sidenote: 186] Is the great loue the generall gender[11] beare him,
Who dipping all his Faults in their affection,

[Footnote 1: Note here also Hamlet's feeling of the importance of what has passed since he parted with his friend. 'The bullet of my words, though it will strike thee dumb, is much too small for the bore of the reality (the facts) whence it will issue.']

[Footnote 2: While we have been present at the interview between Horatio and the sailors, the king has been persuading Laertes.]

[Footnote 3: an ear of judgment.]

[Footnote 4: 'thought then to have killed me.']

[Footnote 5: *faits*, deeds.]

[Footnote 6: 'deeds so deserving of death, not merely in the eye of the law, but in their own nature.']

[Footnote 7: powerfully.]

[Footnote 8: 'unsinewed.']

[Footnote 9: 'either-which.']

[Footnote 10: 'moves not but in the moving of his sphere,'—The stars were popularly supposed to be fixed in a solid crystalline sphere, and moved in its motion only. The queen, Claudius implies, is his sphere; he could not move but by her.]

[Footnote 11: Here used in the sense of the Fr. '*genre*'—*sort*. It is not the only instance of the word so used by Shakspeare.]

The king would rouse in Laertes jealousy of Hamlet.]

Would like the Spring that turneth Wood to Stone, [Sidenote: Worke like]
Conuert his Gyues to Graces.[1] So that my Arrowes
Too slightly timbred for so loud a Winde,
[Sidenote: for so loued Arm'd[2]]
Would haue reuerted to my Bow againe,
And not where I had arm'd them.[2]
[Sidenote: But not | have aym'd them.]

Laer. And so haue I a Noble Father lost,
A Sister driuen into desperate tearmes,[3]
Who was (if praises may go backe againe) [Sidenote: whose worth, if]
Stood Challenger on mount of all the Age
For her perfections. But my reuenge will come.

King. Breake not your sleepes for that,
You must not thinke
That we are made of stuffe, so flat, and dull,
That we can let our Beard be shooke with danger,[4]
And thinke it pastime. You shortly shall heare more,[5]
I lou'd your Father, and we loue our Selfe,
And that I hope will teach you to imagine—[6]

Enter a Messenger. [Sidenote: *with letters.*]

How now? What Newes?

Mes. Letters my Lord from *Hamlet*.[7] This to [Sidenote: *Messen.* These to] your Maiesty: this to the Queene.

King. From *Hamlet*? Who brought them?

Mes. Saylors my Lord they say, I saw them not: They were giuen me by *Claudio*, he recciud them.[8]
[Sidenote: them Of him that brought them.]

King. *Laertes* you shall heare them:[9] Leauē vs. *Exit Messenger*[10]

High and Mighty, you shall know I am set naked on your Kingdome. To morrow shall I begge leauē to see your Kingly Eyes[11] *When I shall (first asking your Pardon thereunto) recount th'Occasions* [Sidenote: the occasion of my suddaine returne.] *of my sodaine, and more strange returne.*[12] *Hamlet.* [13] What should this meane? Are all the rest come backe? [Sidenote: *King.* What]

[Footnote 1: 'would conuert his fetters—if I imprisoned him—to graces, commending him yet more to their regard.']

[Footnote 2: *arm'd* is certainly the right, and a true Shakspearean word:—it was no fault in the aim, but in the force of the flight—no matter of the eye, but of the arm, which could not give momentum enough to such slightly timbered arrows. The fault in the construction of the last line, I need not remark upon.

I think there is a hint of this the genuine meaning even in the blundered and partly unintelligible reading of the *Quarto*. If we leaue out 'for so loued,' we haue this: 'So that my arrows, too slightly timbered, would haue reuerted armed to my bow againe, but not (*would not haue gone*) where I haue aimed them,'—implying that his arrows would haue turned their armed heads against himself.

What the king says here is true, but far from *the* truth: he feared driving Hamlet, and giving him at the same time opportunity, to speak in his own defence and render his reasons.]

[Footnote 3: *extremes?* or *conditions?*]

[Footnote 4: 'With many a tempest hadde his berd ben schake.'—*Chaucer*, of the Schipman, in *The Prologue to The Canterbury Tales.*]

[Footnote 5: —hear of Hamlet's death in England, he means.

At this point in the *1st Q.* comes a scene between Horatio and the queen, in which he informs her of a letter he had just received from Hamlet,

Whereas he writes how he escap't the danger,

And subtle treason that the king had plotted,
Being crossed by the contention of the windes,
He found the Packet &c.

Horatio does not mention the pirates, but speaks of Hamlet 'being set ashore,' and of *Gilderstone* and *Rossenraft* going on to their fate. The queen assures Horatio that she is but temporizing with the king, and shows herself anxious for the success of her son's design against his life. The Poet's intent was not yet clear to himself.]

[Footnote 6: Here his crow cracks.]

[Footnote 7: *From* 'How now' *to* 'Hamlet' is *not in Q.*]

[Footnote 8: Horatio has given the sailors' letters to Claudio, he to another.]

[Footnote 9: He wants to show him that he has nothing behind—that he is open with him: he will read without having pre-read.]

[Footnote 10: *Not in Q.*]

[Footnote 11: He makes this request for an interview with the intent of killing him. The king takes care he does not have it.]

[Footnote 12: '*more strange than sudden.*']

[Footnote 13: *Not in Q.*]

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Or is it some abuse?[1] Or no such thing?[2]

[Sidenote: abuse, and no[2]]

Laer. Know you the hand?[3]

Kin. 'Tis *Hamlets* Character, naked and in a Postscript here he sayes alone:[4] Can you advise
[Sidenote: devise me?] me?[5]

Laer. I'm lost in it my Lord; but let him come, [Sidenote: I am]
It warmes the very sicknesse in my heart,
That I shall liue and tell him to his teeth; [Sidenote: That I liue and]
Thus diddest thou. [Sidenote: didst]

Kin. If it be so *Laertes*, as how should it be so:[6] How otherwise will you be rul'd by me?

Laer. If so[7] you'l not o'rerule me to a peace.
[Sidenote: I my Lord, so you will not]

Kin. To thine owne peace: if he be now return'd,
[Sidenote: 195] As checking[8] at his Voyage, and that he meanes
[Sidenote: As the King[8] at his]
No more to vndertake it; I will worke him
To an exployt now ripe in my Deuice, [Sidenote: devise,]
Vnder the which he shall not choose but fall;
And for his death no winde of blame shall breath,
[Sidenote: 221] But euen his Mother shall vncharge the practice,[9]
And call it accident: [A] Some two Monthes hence[10]
[Sidenote: two months since]
Here was a Gentleman of *Normandy*,
I'ue seene my selfe, and seru'd against the French, [Sidenote: I haue]

[Footnote A: *Here in the Quarto*:—

Laer. My Lord I will be rul'd, The rather if you could devise it so That I might be the organ.

King. It falls right,
You haue beene talkt of since your trauaile[11] much,
And that in *Hamlets* hearing, for a qualitie
Wherein they say you shine, your summe of parts[12]
Did not together plucke such enuie from him
As did that one, and that in my regard

Of the vnworthiest siedge.[13]

Laer. What part is that my Lord?

King. A very ribaud[14] in the cap of youth,
Yet needfull to, for youth no lesse becomes[15]
The light and carelesse liuery that it weares
Then settled age, his sables, and his weedes[16]
Importing health[17] and grauenes;]

[Footnote 1: 'some trick played on me?' Compare *K. Lear*, act v. sc. 7:
'I am mightily abused.']

[Footnote 2: I incline to the *Q.* reading here: 'or is it some trick, and no reality in it?']

[Footnote 3: —following the king's suggestion.]

[Footnote 4: *Point thus*: 'Tis *Hamlets* Character. 'Naked'!—And, in a
Postscript here, he sayes 'alone'! Can &c.

'*Alone*'—to allay suspicion of his having brought assistance with him.]

[Footnote 5: Fine flattery—preparing the way for the instigation he is about to commence.]

[Footnote 6: *Point thus*: '—as how should it be so? how otherwise?—will' &c. The king cannot tell
what to think—either how it can be, or how it might be otherwise—for here is Hamlet's own hand!]

[Footnote 7: provided.]

[Footnote 8: A hawk was said *to check* when it forsook its proper game for some other bird that
crossed its flight. The blunder in the *Quarto* is odd, plainly from manuscript copy, and is not likely to
have been set right by any but the author.]

[Footnote 9: 'shall not give the *practice*'—*artifice, cunning attempt, chicane, or trick*—but a word not
necessarily offensive—the name it deserves, but call it *accident*:' 221.]

[Footnote 10: 'Some' *not in Q.*—*Hence* may be either *backwards* or *forwards*; now it is used only
forwards.]

[Footnote 11: travels.]

[Footnote 12: 'all your excellencies together.']

[Footnote 13: seat, place, grade, position, merit.]

[Footnote 14: 'A very riband'—a mere trifling accomplishment: the *u* of the text can but be a misprint
for *n*.]

[Footnote 15: *youth* obj., *livery* nom. to *becomes*.]

[Footnote 16: 'than his furs and his robes become settled age.']

[Footnote 17: Warburton thinks the word ought to be *wealth*, but I doubt it; *health*, in its sense of
wholeness, general soundness, in affairs as well as person, I should prefer.]

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And they ran[1] well on Horsebacke; but this Gallant
 [Sidenote: they can well[1]]
Had witchcraft in't[2]; he grew into his Seat, [Sidenote: vnto his]
And to such wondrous doing brought his Horse,
As had he beene encorps't and demy-Natur'd
With the braue Beast,[3] so farre he past my thought,
 [Sidenote: he topt me thought,[4]]
That I in forgery[5] of shapes and trickes,
Come short of what he did.[6]

Laer. A Norman was't?

Kin. A Norman.

Laer. Vpon my life *Lamound*. [Sidenote: *Lamord*.]

Kin. The very same.

Laer. I know him well, he is the Brooch indeed, And Iemme of all our Nation, [Sidenote: all the Nation.]

Kin. Hee mad confession of you,
And gaue you such a Masterly report,
For Art and exercise in your defence;
And for your Rapier most especially, [Sidenote: especial,]
That he cryed out, t'would be a sight indeed,[7]
If one could match you [A] Sir. This report of his
[Sidenote: ; sir this]
[Sidenote: 120, 264] Did *Hamlet* so envenom with his Enuy,[8]
That he could nothing doe but wish and begge,
Your sodaine comming ore to play with him;[9] [Sidenote: with you]
Now out of this.[10]

Laer. Why out of this, my Lord? [Sidenote: What out]

Kin. *Laertes* was your Father deare to you? Or are you like the painting[11] of a sorrow, A face without a heart?

Laer. Why aske you this?

Kin. Not that I thinke you did not loue your Father, But that I know Loue is begun by Time[12]:

[Footnote A: *Here in the Quarto*:—

; the Scrimures[13] of their nation He swore had neither motion, guard nor eye, If you opposd them;]

[Footnote 1: I think the *can* of the *Quarto* is the true word.]

[Footnote 2: —in his horsemanship.]

[Footnote 3: There is no mistake in the order 'had he beene'; the transposition is equivalent to *if*: 'as if he had been unbodied with, and shared half the nature of the brave beast.'

These two lines, from *As* to *thought*, must be taken parenthetically; or else there must be supposed a dash after *Beast*, and a fresh start made.

'But he (as if Centaur-like he had been one piece with the horse) was no more moved than one with the going of his own legs:'

'it seemed, as he borrowed the horse's body, so he lent the horse his mind:'—Sir Philip Sidney. *Arcadia*, B. ii. p. 115.]

[Footnote 4: '—surpassed, I thought.']

[Footnote 5: 'in invention of.']

[Footnote 6: Emphasis on *did*, as antithetic to *forgery*: 'my inventing came short of his doing.']

[Footnote 7: 'it would be a sight indeed to see you matched with an equal.' The king would strengthen *Laertes*' confidence in his proficiency.]

[Footnote 8: 'made him so spiteful by stirring up his habitual envy.']

[Footnote 9: All invention.]

[Footnote 10: Here should be a dash: the king pauses. He is approaching dangerous ground—is about to propose a thing abominable, and therefore to the influence of flattered vanity and roused emulation, would add the fiercest heat of stimulated love and hatred—to which end he proceeds to cast doubt on the quality of *Laertes*' love for his father.]

[Footnote 11: the picture.]

[Footnote 12: 'through habit.']

[Footnote 13: French *escrimeurs*: fencers.]

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And that I see in passages of prooffe,[1]
Time qualifies the sparke and fire of it:[2]
[A]

Hamlet comes backe: what would you vndertake,
To show your selfe your Fathers sonne indeed,
[Sidenote: selfe indeede your fathers sonne]
More then in words?

Laer. To cut his throat i'th'Church.[3]

Kin. No place indeed should murder Sancturize;
Reuenge should haue no bounds: but good *Laertes*
Will you doe this, keepe close within your Chamber,
Hamlet return'd, shall know you are come home:
Wee'l put on those shall praise your excellence,
And set a double varnish on the fame
The Frenchman gaued you, bring you in fine together,
And wager on your heads, he being remissee,[4] [Sidenote: ore your]
[Sidenote: 218] Most generous, and free from all contriuing,
Will not peruse[5] the Foiles? So that with ease,
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose
A Sword vnbaited,[6] and in a passe of practice,[7] [Sidenote: pace of]
Requit him for your Father.

Laer. I will doo't,
And for that purpose Ile annoint my Sword:[8] [Sidenote: for purpose,]
I bought an Vnction of a Mountebanke
So mortall, I but dipt a knife in it,[9]
[Sidenote: mortall, that but dippe a]
Where it drawes blood, no Cataplasme so rare,
Collected from all Simples that haue Vertue

[Footnote A: *Here in the Quarto*:—

There liues within the very flame of loue
A kind of weeke or snufe that will abate it,[10]
And nothing is at a like goodnes still,[11]
For goodnes growing to a plurisie,[12]
Dies in his owne too much, that we would doe
We should doe when we would: for this would change,[13]
And hath abatements and delayes as many,
As there are tongues, are hands, are accedents,
And then this should is like a spend thrifts sigh,
That hurts by easing;[14] but to the quick of th'vlcer,]

[Footnote 1: 'passages of prooffe,'—*trials*. 'I see when it is put to the test.']

[Footnote 2: 'time modifies it.']

[Footnote 3: Contrast him here with Hamlet.]

[Footnote 4: careless.]

[Footnote 5: *examine*—the word being of general application then.]

[Footnote 6: *unblunted*. Some foils seem to have been made with a button that could be taken—probably *screwed* off.]

[Footnote 7: Whether *practice* here means exercise or cunning, I cannot determine. Possibly the king uses the word as once before 216—to be taken as Laertes may please.]

[Footnote 8: In the *1st Q.* this proposal also is made by the king.]

[Footnote 9:

'So mortal, yes, a knife being but dipt in it,' or,
'So mortal, did I but dip a knife in it.'

[Footnote 10: To understand this figure, one must be familiar with the behaviour of the wick of a common lamp or tallow candle.]

[Footnote 11: 'nothing keeps always at the same degree of goodness.']

[Footnote 12: A *plurisie* is just a *too-muchness*, from *plus, pluris—a plethora*, not our word *pleurisy*, from [Greek: *pleura*]. See notes in *Johnson and Steevens*.]

[Footnote 13: The sense here requires an *s*, and the space in the *Quarto* between the *e* and the comma gives the probability that a letter has dropt out.]

[Footnote 14: Modern editors seem agreed to substitute the adjective *spendthrift*: our sole authority has *spendthrifts*, and by it I hold. The meaning seems this: 'the *would* changes, the thing is not done, and then the *should*, the mere acknowledgment of duty, is like the sigh of a spendthrift, who regrets consequences but does not change his way: it eases his conscience for a moment, and so injures him.' There would at the same time be allusion to what was believed concerning sighs: Dr. Johnson says, 'It is a notion very prevalent, that *sighs* impair the strength, and wear out the animal powers.']

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Vnder the Moone, can saue the thing from death,
That is but scratcht withall: Ile touch my point,
With this contagion, that if I gall him slightly,[1]
It may be death.

Kin. Let's further thinke of this,
Weigh what conuenience[2] both of time and meanes
May fit vs to our shape,[3] if this should faile;
And that our drift looke through our bad performance,
'Twere better not assaid; therefore this Proiect
Should haue a backe or second, that might hold,
If this should blast in proefe:[4] Soft, let me see[5]
[Sidenote: did blast]
Wee'l make a solemne wager on your commings,[6] [Sidenote: cunnings[6]]
I ha't: when in your motion you are hot and dry, [Sidenote: hate, when]
As[7] make your bowts more violent to the end,[8]
[Sidenote: to that end,]
And that he cals for drinke; Ile haue prepar'd him
[Sidenote: prefard him]
[Sidenote: 268] A Challice for the nonce[9]; whereon but sipping,
If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,[10]
Our purpose may[11] hold there: how sweet Queene.
[Sidenote: there: but stay, what noyse?]

Enter Queene.

Queen. One woe doth tread vpon anothers heele, So fast they'l follow[12]: your Sister's drown'd
Laertes. [Sidenote: they follow;]

Laer. Drown'd! O where?[13]

Queen. There is a Willow[14] growes aslant a Brooke,
[Sidenote: ascaunt the Brooke]
That shewes his hore leaues in the glassie streame:
[Sidenote: horry leaues]
There with fantasticke Garlands did she come,[15]
[Sidenote: Therewith | she make]
Of Crow-flowers,[16] Nettles, Daysies, and long Purples,
That liberall Shepheards giue a grosser name;
But our cold Maids doe Dead Mens Fingers call them:
[Sidenote: our cull-cold]
There on the pendant[17] boughes, her Coronet weeds[18]
Clambring to hang:[19] an enuious sliuer broke,[20]
When downe the weedy Trophies,[19] and her selfe, [Sidenote: her weedy]

[Footnote 1: 'that though I should gall him but slightly,' or, 'that if I gall him ever so slightly.']

[Footnote 2: proper arrangement.]

[Footnote 3: 'fit us exactly, like a garment cut to our shape,' or perhaps 'shape' is used for *intent, purpose*. *Point thus*: 'shape. If this should faile, And' &c.]

[Footnote 4: This seems to allude to the assay of a firearm, and to mean '*burst on the trial*.' Note 'assaid' two lines back.]

[Footnote 5: There should be a pause here, and a longer pause after *commings*: the king is contriving. 'I ha't' should have a line to itself, with again a pause, but a shorter one.]

[Footnote 6: *Veney, venue*, is a term of fencing: a bout, a thrust—from *venir, to come*—whence 'commings.' (259) But *cunnings*, meaning *skills*, may be the word.]

[Footnote 7: 'As' is here equivalent to 'and so.']

[Footnote 8: —to the end of making Hamlet hot and dry.]

[Footnote 9: for the special occasion.]

[Footnote 10: thrust. *Twelfth Night*, act iii. sc. 4. 'he gives me the stuck in with such a mortal motion.' *Stocco* in Italian is a long rapier; and *stoccata* a thrust. *Rom. and Jul.*, act iii. sc. 1. See *Shakespeare-Lexicon*.]

[Footnote 11: 'may' does not here express *doubt*, but *intention*.]

[Footnote 12: If this be the right reading, it means, 'so fast they insist on following.']

[Footnote 13: He speaks it as about to rush to her.]

[Footnote 14: —the choice of Ophelia's fantastic madness, as being the tree of lamenting lovers.]

[Footnote 15: —always busy with flowers.]

[Footnote 16: *Ranunculus*: *Sh. Lex.*]

[Footnote 17: —specially descriptive of the willow.]

[Footnote 18: her wild flowers made into a garland.]

[Footnote 19: The intention would seem, that she imagined herself decorating a monument to her father. Hence her *Coronet weeds* and the Poet's *weedy Trophies*.]

[Footnote 20: *Sliver*, I suspect, called so after the fact, because *slivered* or torn off. In *Macbeth* we have:

slips of yew
Slivered in the moon's eclipse.

But it may be that *sliver* was used for a *twig*, such as could be torn off.

Slip and *sliver* must be of the same root.]

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Fell in the weeping Brooke, her cloathes spred wide,
And Mermaid-like, a while they bore her vp,
Which time she chaunted snatches of old tunes,[1]

[Sidenote: old laudes,[1]]

As one incapable of[2] her owne distresse,
Or like a creature Natiue, and indued[3]
Vnto that Element: but long it could not be,
Till that her garments, heauy with her drinke, [Sidenote: theyr drinke]
Pul'd the poore wretch from her melodious buy,[4]

[Sidenote: melodious lay]

To muddy death.[5]

Laer. Alas then, is she drown'd? [Sidenote: she is]

Queen. Drown'd, drown'd.

Laer. Too much of water hast thou poore *Ophelia*,
And therefore I forbid my teares: but yet
It is our tricke,[6] Nature her custome holds,
Let shame say what it will; when these are gone
The woman will be out:[7] Adué my Lord,
I haue a speech of fire, that faine would blaze,
[Sidenote: speech a fire]
But that this folly doubts[8] it. *Exit.* [Sidenote: drownes it.[8]]

Kin. Let's follow, *Gertrude*:
How much I had to doe to calme his rage?
Now feare I this will giue it start againe;
Therefore let's follow. *Exeunt.*[9]

[10]Enter two *Clownes*.

Clown. Is she to bee buried in Christian buriall, [Sidenote: buriall, when she wilfully] that wilfully
seekes her owne saluation?[11]

Other. I tell thee she is, and therefore make her [Sidenote: is, therefore] Graue straight,[12] the
Crowner hath sate on her, and finds it Christian buriall.

Clo. How can that be, vnlesse she drowned her selfe in her owne defence?

Other. Why 'tis found so.[13]

Clo. It must be *Se offendendo*,[14] it cannot bee else:
[Sidenote: be so offended, it]

[Footnote 1: They were not lauds she was in the habit of singing, to judge by the snatches given.]

[Footnote 2: not able to take in, not understanding, not conscious of.]

[Footnote 3: clothed, endowed, fitted for. See *Sh. Lex.*]

[Footnote 4: *Could* the word be for *buoy*—'her clothes spread wide,' on which she floated singing—
therefore her melodious buoy or float?]

[Footnote 5: How could the queen know all this, when there was no one near enough to rescue her?
Does not the Poet intend the mode of her death given here for an invention of the queen, to hide the
girl's suicide, and by circumstance beguile the sorrow-rage of Laertes?]

[Footnote 6: 'I cannot help it.']

[Footnote 7: 'when these few tears are spent, all the woman will be out of me: I shall be a man
again.']

[Footnote 8: *douts*: 'this foolish water of tears puts it out.' See *Q. reading*.]

[Footnote 9: Here ends the Fourth Act, between which and the Fifth may interuene a day or two.]

[Footnote 10: Act V. This act *requires* only part of a day; the funeral and the catastrophe might be on
the same.]

[Footnote 11: Has this a confused connection with the fancy that salvation is getting to heaven?]

[Footnote 12: Whether this means *straightway*, or *not crooked*, I cannot tell.]

[Footnote 13: 'the coroner has settled it.']

[Footnote 14: The Clown's blunder for *defendendo*.]

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for heere lies the point; If I drowne my selfe wittingly, it argues an Act: and an Act hath three
branches. It is an Act to doe and to performe; [Sidenote: it is to act, to doe, to performe, or all: she]
argall[1] she drown'd her selfe wittingly.

Other. Nay but heare you Goodman Deluer. [Sidenote: good man deluer.]

Clown. Giue me leaue; heere lies the water; good: heere stands the man; good: If the man goe to this water and drowne himsele; it is will he nill he, he goes; marke you that? But if the water come to him and drowne him; hee drownes not himselfe. Argall, hee that is not guilty of his owne death, shortens not his owne life.

Other. But is this law?

Clo. I marry is't, Crowners Quest Law.

Other. Will you ha the truth on't: if this had [Sidenote: truth an't] not beene a Gentlewoman, shee should haue beene buried out of[2] Christian Buriall. [Sidenote: out a]

Clo. Why there thou say'st. And the more pittie that great folke should haue countenance in this world to drowne or hang themselues, more then their euen[3] Christian. Come, my Spade; there is no ancient Gentlemen, but Gardiners, Ditchers and Graue-makers; they hold vp *Adams* Profession.

Other. Was he a Gentleman?

Clo. He was the first that euer bore Armes. [Sidenote: A was]

[4]*Other.* Why he had none.

Clo. What, ar't a Heathen? how dost thou vnderstand the Scripture? the Scripture says *Adam* dig'd; could hee digge without Armes?[4] Ile put another question to thee; if thou answerest me not to the purpose, confesse thy selfe—

Other. Go too.

Clo. What is he that builds stronger then either the Mason, the Shipwright, or the Carpenter?

Other. The Gallowes-maker; for that Frame outliues a thousand Tenants. [Sidenote: that outliues]

[Footnote 1: *ergo*, therefore.]

[Footnote 2: *without*. The pleasure the speeches of the Clown give us, lies partly in the undercurrent of sense, so disguised by stupidity in the utterance; and partly in the wit which mainly succeeds in its end by the failure of its means.]

[Footnote 3: *equal*, that is *fellow* Christian.]

[Footnote 4: *From 'Other' to 'Armes' not in Quarto.*]

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Clo. I like thy wit well in good faith, the Gallowes does well; but how does it well? it does well to those that doe ill: now, thou dost ill to say the Gallowes is built stronger then the Church: Argall, the Gallowes may doe well to thee. Too't againe, Come.

Other. Who builds stronger then a Mason, a Shipwright, or a Carpenter?

Clo. I, tell me that, and vnyoake.[1]

Other. Marry, now I can tell.

Clo. Too't.

Other. Masse, I cannot tell.

Enter Hamlet and Horatio a farre off[2]

Clo. Cudgell thy braines no more about it; for your dull Asse will not mend his pace with beating, and when you are ask't this question next, say a Graue-maker: the Houses that he makes, lasts [Sidenote: houses hee makes] till Doomesday: go, get thee to *Yaughan*,[3] fetch [Sidenote: thee in, and fetch mee a soope of] me a stoupe of Liquor.

Sings.[4]

In youth when I did loue, did loue, [Sidenote: *Song*.]

me thought it was very sweete:

To contract O the time for a my behoue,

O me thought there was nothing meete[5]

[Sidenote: there a was nothing a meet.]

[Sidenote: *Enter Hamlet & Horatio*]

Ham. Ha's this fellow no feeling of his businesse, [Sidenote: busines? a sings in graue-making.] that he sings at Graue-making?[6]

Hor. Custome hath made it in him a property[7] of easinesse.

Ham. 'Tis ee'n so; the hand of little Imployment hath the daintier sense.

Clowne sings.[8]

But Age with his stealing steps [Sidenote *Clow. Song.*] *hath caught me in his clutch:* [Sidenote: hath clawed me]

[Footnote 1: 'unyoke your team'—as having earned his rest.]

[Footnote 2: *Not in Quarto.*]

[Footnote 3: Whether this is the name of a place, or the name of an innkeeper, or is merely an inexplicable corruption—some take it for a stage-direction to yawn—I cannot tell. See *Q.* reading.

It is said to have been discovered that a foreigner named Johan sold ale next door to the Globe.]

[Footnote 4: *Not in Quarto.*]

[Footnote 5: A song ascribed to Lord Vaux is in this and the following stanzas made nonsense of.]

[Footnote 6: Note Hamlet's mood throughout what follows. He has entered the shadow of death.]

[Footnote 7: *Property* is what specially belongs to the individual; here it is his *peculiar work*, or *personal calling*: 'custom has made it with him an easy duty.']

[Footnote 8: *Not in Quarto.*]

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And hath shipped me intill the Land, [Sidenote: into] *as if I had neuer beene such.*

Ham. That Scull had a tongue in it, and could sing once: how the knaue iowles it to th' grownd, [Sidenote: the] as if it were *Caines* Iaw-bone, that did the first [Sidenote: twere] murther: It might be the Pate of a Polititian which [Sidenote: murder, this might] this Asse o're Offices: one that could circumuent [Sidenote: asse now ore-reaches; one that would] God, might it not?

Hor. It might, my Lord.

Ham. Or of a Courtier, which could say, Good Morrow sweet Lord: how dost thou, good Lord? [Sidenote: thou sweet lord?] this might be my Lord such a one, that prais'd my Lord such a ones Horse, when he meant to begge [Sidenote: when a went to] it; might it not?[1]

Hor. I, my Lord.

Ham. Why ee'n so: and now my Lady Wormes,[2] Chaplesse,[3] and knockt about the Mazard[4] [Sidenote: Choples | the massene with] with a Sextons Spade; heere's fine Reuolution, if [Sidenote: and we had] wee had the tricke to see't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding, but to play at Loggets[5] with 'em? mine ake to thinke on't. [Sidenote: them]

Clowne sings.[6]

A Pickhaxe and a Spade, a Spade, [Sidenote: *Clow. Song.*]
for and a shrowding-Sheete:
O a Pit of Clay for to be made,
for such a Guest is meete.

Ham. There's another: why might not that bee the Scull of of a Lawyer? where be his [Sidenote: skull of a] Quiddits[7] now? his Quillets[7]? his Cases? his [Sidenote: quiddities] Tenures, and his Tricks? why doe's he suffer this rude knaue now to knocke him about the Sconce[8] [Sidenote: this madde knaue] with a dirty Shouell, and will not tell him of his Action of Battery? hum. This fellow might be in's time a great buyer of Land, with his Statutes, his Recognizances, his Fines, his double

[Footnote 1: To feel the full force of this, we must call up the expression on the face of 'such a one' as he begged the horse—probably imitated by Hamlet—and contrast it with the look on the face of the skull.]

[Footnote 2: 'now the property of my Lady Worm.']

[Footnote 3: the lower jaw gone.]

[Footnote 4: *the upper jaw*, I think—not *the head*.]

[Footnote 5: a game in which pins of wood, called loggats, nearly two feet long, were half thrown, half slid, towards a bowl. *Blount*: Johnson and Steevens.]

[Footnote 6: *Not in Quarto*.]

[Footnote 7: a lawyer's quirks and quibbles. See *Johnson and Steevens*.

1st Q.

now where is your
Quirkes and quillets now,]

[Footnote 8: Humorous, or slang word for *the head*. 'A fort—a head-piece—the head': *Webster's Dict.*]

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Vouchers, his Recoueries: [1] Is this the fine[2] of his Fines, and the recouery[3] of his Recoueries,[1] to haue his fine[4] Pate full of fine[4] Dirt? will his Vouchers [Sidenote: will vouchers] vouch him no more of his Purchases, and double [Sidenote: purchases & doubles then] ones too, then the length and breadth of a paire of Indentures? the very Conueyances of his Lands will hardly lye in this Boxe[5]; and must the Inheritor [Sidenote: scarcely iye; | th'] himselfe haue no more?[6] ha?

Hor. Not a iot more, my Lord.

Ham. Is not Parchment made of Sheep-skinnes?

Hor. I my Lord, and of Calue-skinnes too. [Sidenote: Calues-skinnes to]

Ham. They are Sheepe and Calues that seek [Sidenote: which seek] out assurance in that. I will speake to this fellow: whose Graue's this Sir? [Sidenote: this sirra?]

Clo. Mine Sir: [Sidenote: *Clow*. Mine sir, or a pit]

O a Pit of Clay for to be made, for such a Guest is meete.[7]

Ham. I thinke it be thine indeed: for thou liest in't.

Clo. You lye out on't Sir, and therefore it is not [Sidenote: tis] yours: for my part, I doe not lye in't; and yet it [Sidenote: in't, yet] is mine.

Ham. Thou dost lye in't, to be in't and say 'tis [Sidenote: it is] thine: 'tis for the dead, not for the quicke, therefore thou lyeest.

Clo. Tis a quicke lye Sir, 'twill away againe from me to you.[8]

Ham. What man dost thou digge it for?

Clo. For no man Sir.

Ham. What woman then?

Clo. For none neither.

Ham. Who is to be buried in't?

Clo. One that was a woman Sir; but rest her Soule, shee's dead.

[Footnote 1: *From 'Is' to 'Recoueries' not in Q.*]

[Footnote 2: the end.]

[Footnote 3: the property regained by his Recoveries.]

[Footnote 4: third and fourth meanings of the word *fine*.]

[Footnote 5: the skull.]

[Footnote 6: 'must the heir have no more either?']

1st Q.

and
must
The
honor
(owner?)
lie
there?]

[Footnote 7: *This line not in Q.*]

[Footnote 8: He *gives* the lie.]

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Ham. How absolute[1] the knaue is? wee must [Sidenote: 256] speake by the Carde,[2] or equiuocation will vndoe vs: by the Lord *Horatio*, these three yeares[3] I haue [Sidenote: this three] taken note of it, the Age is growne so picked,[4] [Sidenote: tooke] that the toe of the Pesant comes so neere the heeles of our Courtier, hee galls his Kibe.[5] How [Sidenote: the heele of the] long hast thou been a Graue-maker? [Sidenote: been Graue-maker?]

Clo. Of all the dayes i'th'yeare, I came too't [Sidenote: Of the dayes] that day[6] that our last King *Hamlet* o'recame [Sidenote: ouercame] *Fortinbras*.

Ham. How long is that since?

Clo. Cannot you tell that? euery foole can tell [Sidenote: 143] that: It was the very day,[6] that young *Hamlet* was [Sidenote: was that very] borne,[8] hee that was mad, and sent into England, [Sidenote: that is mad]

Ham. I marry, why was he sent into England?

Clo. Why, because he was mad; hee shall recouer [Sidenote: a was mad: a shall] his wits there; or if he do not, it's no great [Sidenote: if a do | tis] matter there.

Ham. Why?

Clo. 'Twill not be scene in him, there the men [Sidenote: him there, there] are as mad as he.

Ham. How came he mad?

Clo. Very strangely they say.

Ham. How strangely?[7]

Clo. Faith e'ene with loosing his wits.

Ham. Vpon what ground?

Clo. Why heere in Denmarke[8]: I haue bin sixeteene [Sidenote: Sexten] [Sidenote: 142-3] heere, man and Boy thirty yeares.[9]

Ham. How long will a man lie 'ith' earth ere he rot?

Clo. Ifaith, if he be not rotten before he die (as [Sidenote: Fayth if a be not | a die] we haue many pocky Coarses now adaies, that will [Sidenote: corses, that will] scarce hold the laying in) he will last you some [Sidenote: a will] eight yeare, or nine yeare. A Tanner will last you nine yeare.

[Footnote 1: 'How the knave insists on precision!']

[Footnote 2: chart: *Skeat's Etym. Dict.*]

[Footnote 3: Can this indicate any point in the history of English society?]

[Footnote 4: so fastidious; so given to *picking* and choosing; so choice.]

[Footnote 5: The word is to be found in any dictionary, but is not generally understood. Lord Byron, a very inaccurate writer, takes it to mean *heel*:

Devices quaint, and frolics ever new,
Tread on each others' kibes:

Childe Harold, Canto 1. St. 67.

It means a *chilblain*.]

[Footnote 6: Then Fortinbras *could* have been but a few months younger than Hamlet, and may have been older. Hamlet then, in the Quarto passage, could not by *tender* mean *young*.]

[Footnote 7: 'In what way strangely?'—*in what strange way?* Or the *How* may be *how much*, in retort to the *very*; but the intent would be the same—a request for further information.]

[Footnote 8: Hamlet has asked on what ground or provocation, that is, from what cause, Hamlet lost his wits; the sexton chooses to take the word *ground* materially.]

[Footnote 9: The Poet makes him say how long he had been sexton—but how naturally and informally—by a stupid joke!—in order a second time, and more certainly, to tell us Hamlet's age: he must have held it a point necessary to the understanding of Hamlet.

Note Hamlet's question immediately following. It looks as if he had first said to himself: 'Yes—I have been thirty years above ground!' and *then* said to the sexton, 'How long will a man lie i' th' earth ere he rot?' We might enquire even too curiously as to the connecting links.]

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Ham. Why he, more then another?

Clo. Why sir, his hide is so tan'd with his Trade, that he will keepe out water a great while. And [Sidenote: a will] your water, is a sore Decayer of your horson dead body. Heres a Scull now: this Scul, has laine in [Sidenote: now hath iyen you i'th earth 23. yeeres.] the earth three and twenty years.

Ham. Whose was it?

Clo. A whoreson mad Fellowes it was; Whose doe you thinke it was?

Ham. Nay, I know not.

Clo. A pestlence on him for a mad Rogue, a pou'rd a Flaggon of Renish on my head once. This same Scull Sir, this same Scull sir, was *Yoricks* [Sidenote: once; this same skull sir, was sir *Yoricks*] Scull, the Kings Iester.

Ham. This?

Clo. E'ene that.

Ham. Let me see. Alas poore *Yorick*, I knew [Sidenote: *Ham.* Alas poore] him *Horatio*, a fellow of infinite Iest; of most excellent fancy, he hath borne me on his backe a [Sidenote: bore] thousand times: And how abhorred[1] my Imagination [Sidenote: and now how | in my] is, my gorge rises at it. Heere hung those [Sidenote: it is:] lipps, that I haue kist I know not how oft. Where be your Iibes now? Your Gambals? Your Songs? Your flashes of Merriment that were wont to set the Table on a Rore? No one[2] now to mock your [Sidenote: not one] own Ieering? Quite chopfalne[3]? Now get you to [Sidenote: owne grinning,] my Ladies Chamber, and tell her, let her paint an [Sidenote: Ladies table,] inch thicke, to this fauour[4] she must come. Make her laugh at that: prythee *Horatio* tell me one thing.

Hor. What's that my Lord?

Ham. Dost thou thinke *Alexander* lookt o'this [Sidenote: a this] fashion i'th' earth?

Hor. E'ene so.

Ham. And smelt so? Puh.

[Footnote 1: If this be the true reading, *abhorred* must mean *horrified*; but I incline to the *Quarto*.]

[Footnote 2: 'Not one jibe, not one flash of merriment now?']

[Footnote 3: —chop indeed quite fallen off!]

[Footnote 4: *to this look*—that of the skull.]

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Hor. E'ene so, my Lord.

Ham. To what base vses we may returne *Horatio*. Why may not Imagination trace the Noble dust of *Alexander*, till he[1] find it stopping a [Sidenote: a find] bunghole.

Hor. 'Twere to consider: to curiously to consider [Sidenote: consider too curiously] so.

Ham. No faith, not a iota. But to follow him thether with modestie[2] enough, and likelielihood to lead it; as thus. *Alexander* died: *Alexander* was [Sidenote: lead it. *Alexander*] buried: *Alexander* returneth into dust; the dust is [Sidenote: to] earth; of earth we make Lome, and why of that Lome (whereto he was conuerted) might they not stopp a Beere-barrell?[3]

Imperiall *Caesar*, dead and turn'd to clay, [Sidenote: Imperious]
Might stop a hole to keepe the winde away.

Oh, that that earth, which kept the world in awe,
Should patch a Wall, t'expell the winters flaw.[4]

[Sidenote: waters flaw.]

But soft, but soft, aside; heere comes the King.

[Sidenote: , but soft awhile, here]

Enter King, Queene, Laertes, and a Coffin,

[Sidenote: *Enter K. Q. Laertes and the corse.*]

with Lords attendant.

The Queene, the Courtiers. Who is that they follow,

[Sidenote: this they]

And with such maimed rites? This doth betoken,

The Coarse they follow, did with disperate hand,

Fore do it owne life; 'twas some Estate.[5] [Sidenote: twas of some[5]]

Couch[6] we a while, and mark.

Laer. What Cerimony else?

Ham. That is *Laertes*, a very Noble youth:[7] Marke.

Laer. What Cerimony else?[8]

Priest. Her Obsequies haue bin as farre inlarg'd, [Sidenote: *Doct.*]

As we haue warrantis,[9] her death was doubtfull,[10]

[Sidenote: warrantie,]

And but that great Command, o're-swaies the order,[11]

[Footnote 1: Imagination personified.]

[Footnote 2: moderation.]

[Footnote 3: 'Loam, Lome—grafting clay. Mortar made of Clay and Straw; also a sort of Plaister used by Chymists to stop up their Vessels.'—*Bailey's Dict.*]

[Footnote 4: a sudden puff or blast of wind.]

Hamlet here makes a solemn epigram. For the right understanding of the whole scene, the student must remember that Hamlet is philosophizing—following things out, curiously or otherwise—on the brink of a grave, concerning the tenant for which he has enquired—'what woman then?'—but received no answer.]

[Footnote 5: 'the corpse was of some position.']

[Footnote 6: 'let us lie down'—behind a grave or stone.]

[Footnote 7: Hamlet was quite in the dark as to Laertes' character; he had seen next to nothing of him.]

[Footnote 8: The priest making no answer, Laertes repeats the question.]

[Footnote 9: *warrantise.*]

[Footnote 10: This casts discredit on the queen's story, 222. The priest believes she died by suicide, only calls her death doubtful to excuse their granting her so many of the rites of burial.]

[Footnote 11: 'settled mode of proceeding.'—*Schmidt's Sh. Lex.*—But is it not rather *the order* of the church?]

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She should in ground vnsanctified haue lodg'd,

[Sidenote: vnsanctified been lodged]

Till the last Trumpet. For charitable praier, [Sidenote: prayers,]

Shardes,[1] Flints, and Peebles, should be throwne on her:

Yet heere she is allowed her Virgin Rites,

[Sidenote: virgin Crants,[2]]

Her Maiden strewments,[3] and the bringing home

Of Bell and Buriall.[4]

Laer. Must there no more be done?

Priest. No more be done:[5] [Sidenote: *Doct.*]

We should prophane the seruice of the dead,

To sing sage[6] *Requiem*, and such rest to her

[Sidenote: sing a Requiem]

As to peace-parted Soules.

Laer. Lay her i'th' earth,

And from her faire and vnpolluted flesh,

May Violets spring. I tell thee (churlish Priest)

A Ministring Angell shall my Sister be,

When thou liest howling?

Ham. What, the faire *Ophelia*?[7]

Queene. Sweets, to the sweet farewell.[8]

[Sidenote: 118] I hop'd thou should'st haue bin my *Hamlets* wife:

I thought thy Bride-bed to haue deckt (sweet Maid)

And not t'haue strew'd thy Graue. [Sidenote: not haue]

Laer. Oh terrible woer,[9] [Sidenote: O treble woe]

Fall ten times trebble, on that cursed head [Sidenote: times double on]

Whose wicked deed, thy most Ingenioussence

Depriu'd thee of. Hold off the earth a while,

Till I haue caught her once more in mine armes:

Leaps in the graue.[10]

Now pile your dust, vpon the quicke, and dead,

Till of this flat a Mountaine you haue made,

To o're top old *Pelion*, or the skyish head [Sidenote: To'retop]

Of blew *Olympus*. [11]

Ham.[12] What is he, whose griefes [Sidenote: grieffe] Beares such an Emphasis? whose phrase of Sorrow

[Footnote 1: 'Shardes' *not in Quarto*. It means *potsherds*.]

[Footnote 2: chaplet—*German* krantz, used even for virginity itself.]

[Footnote 3: strewments with *white* flowers. (?)]

[Footnote 4: the burial service.]

[Footnote 5: as an exclamation, I think.]

[Footnote 6: Is the word *sage* used as representing the unfitness of a requiem to her state of mind? or is it only from its kindred with *solemn*? It was because she was not 'peace-parted' that they could not sing *rest* to her.]

[Footnote 7: *Everything* here depends on the actor.]

[Footnote 8: I am not sure the queen is not *apostrophizing* the flowers she is throwing into or upon

the coffin: 'Sweets, be my farewell to the sweet.']

[Footnote 9: The Folio *may* be right here:—'Oh terrible wooer!—May ten times treble thy misfortunes fall' &c.]

[Footnote 10: This stage-direction is not in the *Quarto*.

Here the *1st Quarto* has:—

Lear. Forbeare the earth a while: sister farewell:

Leartes leapes into the graue.

Now powre your earth on *Olympus* hie,

And make a hill to o're top olde *Pellon*:

Hamlet leapes in after Leartes

Whats he that coniures so?

Ham. Beholde tis I, *Hamlet* the Dane.]

[Footnote 11: The whole speech is bravado—the frothy grief of a weak, excitable effusive nature.]

[Footnote 12: He can remain apart no longer, and approaches the company.]

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Coniure the wandring Starres, and makes them stand [Sidenote: Coniues] Like wonder-wounded hearers? This is I, *Hamlet* the Dane.[1]

Laer. The deuill take thy soule.[2]

Ham. Thou prai'st not well,

I prythee take thy fingers from my throat;[3]

Sir though I am not Spleenatiue, and rash,

[Sidenote: For though | spleenatiue rash,]

Yet haue I something in me dangerous, [Sidenote: in me something]

Which let thy wisenesse feare. Away thy hand.

[Sidenote: wisedome feare; hold off they]

King. Pluck them asunder.

Qu. *Hamlet, Hamlet*. [Sidenote: *All*. Gentlemen.]

Gen. Good my Lord be quiet. [Sidenote: *Hora*. Good]

Ham. Why I will fight with him vppon this Theme, Vntill my eielids will no longer wag.[4]

Qu. Oh my Sonne, what Theame?

Ham. I lou'd *Ophelia*[5]; fortie thousand Brothers Could not (with all there quantitie of Loue) Make vp my summe. What wilt thou do for her?[6]

King. Oh he is mad *Laertes*.[7]

Qu. For loue of God forbeare him.

Ham. Come show me what thou'lt doe.

[Sidenote: *Ham* S'wounds shew | th'owt fight,
woo't fast, woo't teare]

Woo't weepe? Woo't fight? Woo't teare thy selfe?

Woo't drinke vp *Esile*, eate a Crocodile?[6]

Ile doo't. Dost thou come heere to whine; [Sidenote: doost come]

To outface me with leaping in her Graue?

Be[8] buried quicke with her, and so will I.

And if thou prate of Mountaines; let them throw

Millions of Akers on vs; till our ground

Sinding his pate against the burning Zone,

[Sidenote: 262] Make *Ossa* like a wart. Nay, and thoul't mouth,

Ile rant as well as thou.[9]

[Footnote 1: This fine speech is yet spoken in the character of madman, which Hamlet puts on once more the moment he has to appear before the king. Its poetry and dignity belong to Hamlet's feeling;

its extravagance to his assumed insanity. It must be remembered that death is a small affair to Hamlet beside his mother's life, and that the death of Ophelia may even be some consolation to him.

In the *Folio*, a few lines back, Laertes leaps into the grave. There is no such direction in the *Q*. In neither is Hamlet said to leap into the grave; only the *1st Q*. so directs. It is a stage-business that must please the *common* actor of Hamlet; but there is nothing in the text any more than in the margin of *Folio* or *Quarto* to justify it, and it would but for the horror of it be ludicrous. The coffin is supposed to be in the grave: must Laertes jump down upon it, followed by Hamlet, and the two fight and trample over the body?

Yet I take the '*Leaps in the grave*' to be an action intended for Laertes by the Poet. His 'Hold off the earth a while,' does not necessarily imply that the body is already in the grave. He has before said, 'Lay her i'th' earth': then it was not in the grave. It is just about to be lowered, when, with that cry of 'Hold off the earth a while,' he jumps into the grave, and taking the corpse, on a bier at the side of it, in his arms, calls to the spectators to pile a mountain on them—in the wild speech that brings out Hamlet. The quiet dignity of Hamlet's speech does not comport with his jumping into the grave: Laertes comes out of the grave, and flies at Hamlet's throat. So, at least, I would have the thing acted.

There is, however, nothing in the text to show that Laertes comes out of the grave, and if the manager insist on the traditional mode, I would suggest that the grave be represented much larger. In Mr. Jewitt's book on Grave-Mounds, I read of a 'female skeleton in a grave six feet deep, ten feet long, and eight feet wide.' Such a grave would give room for both beside the body, and dismiss the hideousness of the common representation.]

[Footnote 2: —*springing out of the grave and flying at Hamlet.*]

[Footnote 3: Note the temper, self-knowledge, self-government, and self-distrust of Hamlet.]

[Footnote 4: The eyelids last of all become incapable of motion.]

[Footnote 5: That he loved her is the only thing to explain the harshness of his behaviour to her. Had he not loved her and not been miserable about her, he would have been as polite to her as well bred people would have him.]

[Footnote 6: The gallants of Shakspeare's day would challenge each other to do more disagreeable things than any of these in honour of their mistresses.

'*Ésil*. s.m. Ancien nom du Vinaigre.' *Supplement to Academy Dict.*, 1847.—'Eisile, *vinegar*': Bosworth's *Anglo-Saxon Dict.*, from Somner's *Saxon Dict.*, 1659.—'Eisel (*Saxon*), *vinegar*; *verjuice*; *any acid*': Johnson's *Dict.*

1st Q. 'Wilt drinke vp vessels.' The word *up* very likely implies the steady emptying of a vessel specified—at a draught, and not by degrees.]

[Footnote 7: —pretending care over Hamlet.]

[Footnote 8: Emphasis on *Be*, which I take for the *imperative mood*.]

[Footnote 9: The moment it is uttered, he recognizes and confesses to the rant, ashamed of it even under the cover of his madness. It did not belong *altogether* to the madness. Later he expresses to Horatio his regret in regard to this passage between him and Laertes, and afterwards apologizes to Laertes. 252, 262.

Perhaps this is the speech in all the play of which it is most difficult to get into a sympathetic comprehension. The student must call to mind the elements at war in Hamlet's soul, and generating discords in his behaviour: to those comes now the shock of Ophelia's death; the last tie that bound him to life is gone—the one glimmer of hope left him for this world! The grave upon whose brink he has been bandying words with the sexton, is for *her*! Into such a consciousness comes the rant of Laertes. Only the forms of madness are free to him, while no form is too strong in which to repudiate indifference to Ophelia: for her sake, as well as to relieve his own heart, he casts the clear confession of his love into her grave. He is even jealous, over her dead body, of her brother's profession of love to her—as if any brother could love as he loved! This is foolish, no doubt, but human, and natural to a certain childishness in grief. 252.

Add to this, that Hamlet—see later in his speeches to Osricke—had a lively inclination to answer a fool according to his folly (256), to outherd Herod if Herod would rave, out-euphuize Euphuus himself if he would be ridiculous:—the digestion of all these things in the retort of meditation will result, I would fain think, in an understanding and artistic justification of even this speech of Hamlet: the more I

consider it the truer it seems. If proof be necessary that real feeling is mingled in the madness of the utterance, it may be found in the fact that he is immediately ashamed of its extravagance.]

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Kin.[1] This is meere Madnesse: [Sidenote: *Quee.*[1]]
And thus awhile the fit will worke on him: [Sidenote: And this]
Anon as patient as the female Doue,
When that her golden[2] Cuplet[3] are disclos'd[4];
 [Sidenote: cuplets[3]]
His silence will sit drooping.[5]

Ham. Heare you Sir:[6] What is the reason that you vse me thus? I loud' you euer:[7] but it is no matter:[8] Let *Hercules* himselfe doe what he may, The Cat will Mew, and Dogge will haue his day.[9]
Exit. [Sidenote: *Exit Hamlet and Horatio.*]

Kin. I pray you good Horatio wait vpon him,
 [Sidenote: pray thee good]
Strengthen you patience in our last nights speech, [Sidenote: your]
[Sidenote: 254] Wee'l put the matter to the present push:[10]
Good *Gertrude* set some watch ouer your Sonne,
This Graue shall haue a liuing[11] Monument:[12]
An houre of quiet shortly shall we see:[13]
 [Sidenote: quiet thirtie shall]
Till then, in patience our proceeding be. *Exeunt.*

[Footnote 1: I hardly know which to choose as the speaker of this speech. It would be a fine specimen of the king's hypocrisy; and perhaps indeed its poetry, lovely in itself, but at such a time sentimental, is fitter for him than the less guilty queen.]

[Footnote 2: 'covered with a yellow down' *Heath.*]

[Footnote 3: The singular is better: 'the pigeon lays no more than *two* eggs.' *Steevens.* Only, *couplets* might be used like *twins.*]

[Footnote 4: —*hatched*, the sporting term of the time.]

[Footnote 5: 'The pigeon never quits her nest for three days after her two young ones are hatched, except for a few moments to get food.' *Steevens.*]

[Footnote 6: Laertes stands eyeing him with evil looks.]

[Footnote 7: I suppose here a pause: he waits in vain some response from Laertes.]

[Footnote 8: Here he retreats into his madness.]

[Footnote 9: '—but I cannot compel you to hear reason. Do what he will, Hercules himself cannot keep the cat from mewing, or the dog from following his inclination!'—said in a half humorous, half contemptuous despair.]

[Footnote 10: 'into immediate train'—*to Laertes.*]

[Footnote 11: *life-like*, or *lasting*?]

[Footnote 12: —*again to Laertes.*]

[Footnote 13: —when Hamlet is dead.]

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Enter Hamlet and Horatio.

Ham. So much for this Sir; now let me see the other,[1] [Sidenote: now shall you see] You doe remember all the Circumstance.[2]

Hor. Remember it my Lord?[3]

Ham. Sir, in my heart there was a kinde of fighting,
That would not let me sleepe:[4] me thought I lay

[Sidenote: my thought]
Worse then the mutines in the Bilboes,[5] rashly, [Sidenote: bilbo]
(And praise be rashnesse for it)[6] let vs know, [Sidenote: prayed]
Our indiscretion sometimes serues vs well, [Sidenote: sometime]
When our deare plots do paule,[7] and that should teach vs,
[Sidenote: deepe | should learne us]
[Sidenote: 146, 181] There's a Diuinity that shapes our ends,[8]
Rough-hew them how we will.[9]

Hor. That is most certaine.

Ham. Vp from my Cabin
My sea-gowne scarfte about me in the darke,
Grop'd I to finde out them;[10] had my desire,
Finger'd their Packet[11], and in fine, withdrew
To mine owne roome againe, making so bold,
(My feares forgetting manners) to vnseale [Sidenote: to vnfold]
Their grand Commission, where I found *Horatio*,
Oh royall[12] knauery: An exact command, [Sidenote: A royall]
[Sidenote: 196] Larded with many seuerall sorts of reason;
[Sidenote: reasons,]
Importing Denmarks health, and Englands too,
With hoo, such Bugges[13] and Goblins in my life, [Sidenote: hoe]
That on the superuize[14] no leasure bated,[15]
No not to stay the grinding of the Axe,
My head shoud be struck off.

Hor. Ist possible?

Ham. Here's the Commission, read it at more leysure:

[Footnote 1: I would suggest that the one paper, which he has just shown, is a commission the king gave to himself; the other, which he is about to show, that given to Rosincrance and Guildensterne. He is setting forth his proof of the king's treachery.]

[Footnote 2: —of the king's words and behaviour, possibly, in giving him his papers, Horatio having been present; or it might mean, 'Have you got the things I have just told you clear in your mind?']

[Footnote 3: '—as if I could forget a single particular of it!']

[Footnote 4: The *Shaping Divinity* was moving him.]

[Footnote 5: The fetters called *bilboes* fasten a couple of mutinous sailors together by the legs.]

[Footnote 6: Does he not here check himself and begin afresh—remembering that the praise belongs to the Divinity?]

[Footnote 7: *pall*—from the root of *pale*—'come to nothing.' He had had his plots from which he hoped much; the king's commission had rendered them futile. But he seems to have grown doubtful of his plans before, probably through the doubt of his companions which led him to seek acquaintance with their commission, and he may mean that his 'dear plots' had begun to pall *upon him*. Anyhow the sudden 'indiscretion' of searching for and unsealing the ambassadors' commission served him as nothing else could have served him.]

[Footnote 8: —even by our indiscretion. Emphasis on *shapes*.]

[Footnote 9: Here is another sign of Hamlet's religion. 24, 125, 260. We start to work out an idea, but the result does not correspond with the idea: another has been at work along with us. We rough-hew—block out our marble, say for a Mercury; the result is an Apollo. Hamlet had rough-hewn his ends—he had begun plans to certain ends, but had he been allowed to go on shaping them alone, the result, even had he carried out his plans and shaped his ends to his mind, would have been failure. Another mallet and chisel were busy shaping them otherwise from the first, and carrying them out to a true success. For *success* is not the success of plans, but the success of ends.]

[Footnote 10: Emphasize *I* and *them*, as the rhythm requires, and the phrase becomes picturesque.]

[Footnote 11: 'got my fingers on their papers.']

[Footnote 12: Emphasize *royal*.]

[Footnote 13: A *bug* is any object causing terror.]

[Footnote 14: immediately on the reading.]

[Footnote 15: —no interval abated, taken off the immediacy of the order respite granted.]

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But wilt thou heare me how I did proceed? [Sidenote: heare now how]

Hor. I beseech you.

Ham. Being thus benetted round with Villaines,[1]
Ere I could make a Prologue to my braines, [Sidenote: Or I could]
They had begun the Play.[2] I sate me downe,
Deuis'd a new Commission,[3] wrote it faire,
I once did hold it as our Statists[4] doe,
A basenesse to write faire; and laboured much
How to forget that learning: but Sir now,
It did me Yeomans[5] seruice: wilt thou know [Sidenote: yemans]
The effects[6] of what I wrote? [Sidenote: Th'effect[6]]

Hor. I, good my Lord.

Ham. An earnest Coniuration from the King,
As England was his faithfull Tributary,
As loue betweene them, as the Palme should flourish,
[Sidenote: them like the | might florish,]
As Peace should still her wheaten Garland weare,
And stand a Comma 'twene their amities,[7]
And many such like Assis[8] of great charge,
[Sidenote: like, as sir of]
That on the view and know of these Contents, [Sidenote: knowing]
Without debatement further, more or lesse,
He should the bearers put to sodaine death, [Sidenote: those bearers]
Not shriuing time allowed.

Hor. How was this seal'd?

Ham. Why, euen in that was Heauen ordinate; [Sidenote: ordinant,]
I had my fathers Signet in my Purse,
Which was the Modell of that Danish Seale:
Folded the Writ vp in forme of the other,
[Sidenote: in the forme of th']
Subscrib'd it, gau't th'impression, plac't it safely,
[Sidenote: Subscribe it,]
The changeling neuer knowne: Now, the next day
Was our Sea Fight, and what to this was sement, [Sidenote: was sequent]
Thou know'st already.[9]

Hor. So *Guildesterne* and *Rosincrance*, go too't.

[Footnote 1: —the nearest, *Rosincrance* and *Guildesterne*: Hamlet was quite satisfied of their villainy.]

[Footnote 2: 'I had no need to think: the thing came to me at once.']

[Footnote 3: Note Hamlet's rapid practicality—not merely in devising, but in carrying out.]

[Footnote 4: statesmen.]

[Footnote 5: '*Yeomen of the guard of the king's body* were anciently two hundred and fifty men, of the best rank under gentry, and of larger stature than ordinary; every one being required to be six feet high.'—*E. Chambers' Cyclopaedia*. Hence '*yeoman's service*' must mean the very best of service.]

[Footnote 6: Note our common phrase: 'I wrote to this effect.']

[Footnote 7: 'as he would have Peace stand between their friendships like a comma between two words.' Every point has in it a conjunctive, as well as a disjunctive element: the former seems the one

regarded here—only that some amities require more than a comma to separate them. The *comma* does not make much of a figure—is good enough for its position, however; if indeed the fact be not, that, instead of standing for *Peace*, it does not even stand for itself, but for some other word. I do not for my part think so.]

[Footnote 8: Dr. Johnson says there is a quibble here with *asses* as beasts of *charge* or burden. It is probable enough, seeing, as Malone tells us, that in Warwickshire, as did Dr. Johnson himself, they pronounce *as* hard. In Aberdeenshire the sound of the *s* varies with the intent of the word: '*az* he said'; '*ass* strong *az* a horse.']

[Footnote 9: To what purpose is this half-voyage to England made part of the play? The action—except, as not a few would have it, the very action be delay—is nowise furthered by it; Hamlet merely goes and returns.

To answer this question, let us find the real ground for Hamlet's reflection, 'There's a Divinity that shapes our ends.' Observe, he is set at liberty without being in the least indebted to the finding of the commission—by the attack, namely, of the pirate; and this was not the shaping of his ends of which he was thinking when he made the reflection, for it had reference to the finding of the commission. What then was the ground of the reflection? And what justifies the whole passage in relation to the Poet's object, the character of Hamlet?

This, it seems to me:—

Although Hamlet could not have had much doubt left with regard to his uncle's guilt, yet a man with a fine, delicate—what most men would think, because so much more exacting than theirs—fastidious conscience, might well desire some proof more positive yet, before he did a deed so repugnant to his nature, and carrying in it such a loud condemnation of his mother. And more: he might well wish to have something to *show*: a man's conviction is no proof, though it may work in others inclination to receive proof. Hamlet is sent to sea just to get such proof as will not only thoroughly satisfy himself, but be capable of being shown to others. He holds now in his hand—to lay before the people—the two contradictory commissions. By his voyage then he has gained both assurance of his duty, and provision against the consequence he mainly dreaded, that of leaving a wounded name behind him. 272. This is the shaping of his ends—so exactly to his needs, so different from his rough-hewn plans—which is the work of the Divinity. The man who desires to know his duty that he may *do* it, who will not shirk it when he does know it, will have time allowed him and the thing made plain to him; his perplexity will even strengthen and purify his will. The weak man is he who, certain of what is required of him, fails to meet it: so never once fails Hamlet. Note, in all that follows, that a load seems taken off him: after a gracious tardiness to believe up to the point of action, he is at length satisfied. Hesitation belongs to the noble nature, to Hamlet; precipitation to the poor nature, to Laertes, the son of Polonius. Compare Brutus in *Julius Caesar*—a Hamlet in favourable circumstances, with Hamlet—a Brutus in the most unfavourable circumstances conceivable.]

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Ham. Why man, they did make loue to this imployment[1]

They are not neere my Conscience; their debate

[Sidenote: their defeat[2]]

Doth by their owne insinuation[3] grow:[4] [Sidenote: Dooes]

'Tis dangerous, when the baser nature comes

Betweene the passe, and fell incensed points

Of mighty opposites.[5]

Hor. Why, what a King is this?[6]

Ham. Does it not, thinkst thee,[7] stand me now vpon[8]

[Sidenote: not thinke thee[7] stand]

[Sidenote: 120] He that hath kil'd my King,[9] and whor'd my Mother,

[Sidenote: 62] Popt in betweene th'election and my hopes,

[Footnote 1: *This verse not in Q.*]

[Footnote 2: destruction.]

[Footnote 3: 'Their destruction they have enticed on themselves by their own behaviour;' or, 'they have *crept into* their fate by their underhand dealings.' The *Sh. Lex.* explains *insinuation* as *meddling.*]

[Footnote 4: With the concern of Horatio for the fate of Rosinrance and Guildensterne, Hamlet shows no sympathy. It has been objected to his character that there is nothing in the play to show them

privity to the contents of their commission; to this it would be answer enough, that Hamlet is satisfied of their worthlessness, and that their whole behaviour in the play shows them merest parasites; but, at the same time, we must note that, in changing the commission, he had no intention, could have had no thought, of letting them go to England without him: that was a pure shaping of their ends by the Divinity. Possibly his own 'dear plots' had in them the notion of getting help against his uncle from the king of England, in which case he would willingly of course have continued his journey; but whatever they may be supposed to have been, they were laid in connection with the voyage, not founded on the chance of its interruption. It is easy to imagine a man like him, averse to the shedding of blood, intending interference for their lives: as heir apparent, he would certainly have been listened to. The tone of his reply to Horatio is that of one who has been made the unwitting cause of a deserved fate: the thing having fallen out so, the Divinity having so shaped their ends, there was nothing in their character, any more than in that of Polonius, to make him regret their death, or the part he had had in it.]

[Footnote 5: The 'mighty opposites' here are the king and Hamlet.]

[Footnote 6: Perhaps, as Hamlet talked, he has been parenthetically glancing at the real commission. Anyhow conviction is growing stronger in Horatio, whom, for the occasion, we may regard as a type of the public.]

[Footnote 7: 'thinkst thee,' in the fashion of the Friends, or 'thinke thee' in the sense of 'bethink thee.']

[Footnote 8: 'Does it not rest now on me?—is it not now my duty?—is it not *incumbent on me* (with *lie* for *stand*)—"is't not perfect conscience"?']

[Footnote 9: Note '*my king*' not *my father*: he had to avenge a crime against the state, the country, himself as a subject—not merely a private wrong.]

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Throwne out his Angle for my proper life,[1]
And with such coozenage;[2] is't not perfect conscience,[3]
[Sidenote: conscience?]
[Sidenote: 120] To quit him with this arme?[4] And is't not to be
damn'd[5]
To let this Canker of our nature come
In further euill.[6]

Hor. It must be shortly knowne to him from England What is the issue of the businesse there.[7]

Ham. It will be short,
[Sidenote: 262] The *interim's* mine,[8] and a mans life's no more[9]
Then to say one:[10] but I am very sorry good *Horatio*,
[Sidenote: 245] That to *Laertes* I forgot my selfe;
For by the image of my Cause, I see
[Sidenote: 262] The Portraiture of his;[11] Ile count his fauours:[12]

[Footnote 1: Here is the charge at length in full against the king—of quality and proof sufficient now, not merely to justify, but to compel action against him.]

[Footnote 2: He was such a *fine* hypocrite that Hamlet, although he hated and distrusted him, was perplexed as to the possibility of his guilt. His good acting was almost too much for Hamlet himself. This is his 'coozenage.'

After 'coozenage' should come a dash, bringing '—is't not perfect conscience' (*is it not absolutely righteous*) into closest sequence, almost apposition, with 'Does it not stand me now upon—'.]

[Footnote 3: Here comes in the *Quarto*, '*Enter a Courtier*.' All from this point to 'Peace, who comes heere?' included, is in addition to the *Quarto* text—not in the *Q.*, that is.]

[Footnote 4: I would here refer my student to the soliloquy—with its *sea of troubles*, and *the taking of arms against it*. 123, n. 4.]

[Footnote 5: These three questions: 'Does it not stand me now upon?'—'Is't not perfect conscience?'—'Is't not to be damned?' reveal the whole relation between the inner and outer, the unseen and the seen, the thinking and the acting Hamlet. 'Is not the thing right?—Is it not my duty?—Would not the neglect of it deserve damnation?' He is satisfied.]

[Footnote 6: 'is it not a thing to be damned—to let &c.?' or, 'would it not be to be damned, (to be in a state of damnation, or, to bring damnation on oneself) to let this human cancer, the king, go on to further evil?']

[Footnote 7: '—so you have not much time.']

[Footnote 8: 'True, it will be short, but till then is mine, and will be long enough for me.' He is resolved.]

[Footnote 9: Now that he is assured of what is right, the Shadow that waits him on the path to it, has no terror for him. He ceases to be anxious as to 'what dreams may come,' as to the 'something after death,' as to 'the undiscovered country,' the moment his conscience is satisfied. 120. It cannot now make a coward of him. It was never in regard to the past that Hamlet dreaded death, but in regard to the righteousness of the action which was about to occasion his death. Note that he expects death; at least he has long made up his mind to the great risk of it—the death referred to in the soliloquy—which, after all, was not that which did overtake him. There is nothing about suicide here, nor was there there.]

[Footnote 10: 'a man's life must soon be over anyhow.']

[Footnote 11: The approach of death causes him to think of and regret even the small wrongs he has done; he laments his late behaviour to Laertes, and makes excuse for him: the similarity of their condition, each having lost a father by violence, ought, he says, to have taught him gentleness with him. The *1st Quarto* is worth comparing here:—

Enter Hamlet and Horatio

Ham. Beleeue mee, it greeues mee much *Horatio*,
That to *Leartes* I forgot my selfe:
For by my selfe me thinkes I feele his grieffe,
Though there's a difference in each others wrong.]

[Footnote 12: 'I will not forget,' or, 'I will call to mind, what merits he has,' or 'what favours he has shown me.' But I suspect the word '*count*' ought to be *court*.—He does court his favour when next they meet—in lovely fashion. He has no suspicion of his enmity.]

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[Sidenote: 242, 262] But sure the brauery[1] of his grieffe did put me
Into a Towing passion.[2]

Hor. Peace, who comes heere?

Enter young Osricke.[3] [Sidenote: *Enter a Courtier.*]

Osr. Your Lordship is right welcome back to [Sidenote: *Cour.*] Denmarke.

Ham. I humbly thank you Sir, dost know this [Sidenote: humble thank] waterflie?[4]

Hor. No my good Lord.

Ham. Thy state is the more gracious; for 'tis a vice to know him[5]: he hath much Land, and fertile; let a Beast be Lord of Beasts, and his Crib shall stand at the Kings Messe;[6] 'tis a Chowgh[7]; but as I saw spacious in the possession of dirt.[8] [Sidenote: as I say,]

Osr. Sweet Lord, if your friendship[9] were at [Sidenote: *Cour.* | Lordshippe[?]] leysure, I should impart a thing to you from his Maiesty.

Ham. I will receiue it with all diligence of [Sidenote: it sir with] spirit; put your Bonet to his right vse, 'tis for the [Sidenote: spirit, your] head.

Osr. I thanke your Lordship, 'tis very hot[10]
[Sidenote: *Cour.* | it is]

Ham. No, beleeue mee 'tis very cold, the winde is Northerly.

Osr. It is indifferent cold[11] my Lord indeed. [Sidenote: *Cour.*]

Ham. Mee thinkes it is very soultry, and hot [Sidenote: But yet me | sully and hot, or my] for my Complexion.[12]

Osr. Exceedingly, my Lord, it is very soultry, [Sidenote: *Cour.*] as 'twere I cannot tell how: but my Lord,[13] his [Sidenote: how: my Lord] Maiesty bad me signifie to you, that he ha's laid a [Sidenote: that a had] [Sidenote: 244] great wager on your head: Sir, this is the matter.[14]

Ham. I beseech you remember.[15]

Osr. Nay, in good faith, for mine ease in good [Sidenote: *Cour.* Nay good my Lord for my ease]

[Footnote 1: the great show; bravado.]

[Footnote 2: —with which fell in well the forms of his pretended madness. But that the passion was real, this reaction of repentance shows. It was not the first time his pretence had given him liberty to ease his heart with wild words. Jealous of the boastfulness of Laertes' affection, he began at once—in keeping with his assumed character of madman, but not the less in harmony with his feelings—to outrave him.]

[Footnote 3: One of the sort that would gather to such a king—of the same kind as Rosincrance and Guildensterne.

In the *1st Q.* '*Enter a Bragart Gentleman.*'

[Footnote 4: —to *Horatio.*]

[Footnote 5: 'Thou art the more in a state of grace, for it is a vice to know him.']

[Footnote 6: 'his manger shall stand where the king is served.' Wealth is always received by Rank—Mammon nowhere better worshipped than in kings' courts.]

[Footnote 7: '*a bird of the crow-family*'—as a figure, '*always applied to rich and avaricious people.*' A *chuff* is a surly *clown*. In Scotch a *coof* is 'a silly, dastardly fellow.']

[Footnote 8: land.]

[Footnote 9: 'friendship' is better than 'Lordshippe,' as euphuistic.]

[Footnote 10: 'I thanke your Lordship; (*puts on his hat*) 'tis very hot.']

[Footnote 11: 'rather cold.']

[Footnote 12: 'and hot—for *my* temperament.']

[Footnote 13: Not able to go on, he plunges into his message.]

[Footnote 14: —*takes off his hat.*]

[Footnote 15: —making a sign to him again to put on his hat.]

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faith[1]: Sir, [A] you are not ignorant of what excellence *Laertes* [B] is at his weapon.[2] [Sidenote: *Laertes* is.[2]]

Ham. What's his weapon?[3]

Osr. Rapier and dagger. [Sidenote: *Cour.*]

Ham. That's two of his weapons: but well.

Osr. The sir King ha's wag'd with him six [Sidenote: *Cour.* The King sir hath wagerd] Barbary Horses, against the which he impon'd[4] as I [Sidenote: hee has impaund] take it, sixe French Rapiers and Poniards, with

[Footnote A: *Here in the Quarto*:—

[5] here is newly com to Court *Laertes*, belieue me an absolute gentlemen, ful of most excellent differences,[6] of very soft society,[7] and great [Sidenote: 234] showing[8]: indeede to speake sellingly[9] of him, hee is the card or kalender[10] of gentry: for you shall find in him the continent of what part a Gentleman would see.[11]

[Sidenote: 245] *Ham.*[12] Sir, his definement suffers no perdition[13] in you, though I know to deuide him inuentorially,[14] would dosie[15] th'arithmaticke of memory, and yet but yaw[16] neither in respect of his quick saile, but in the veritie of extolment, I take him to be a soule of great article,[17] &

his infusion[18] of such dearth[19] and rarenesse, as to make true dixon of him, his semblable is his mirroure,[20] & who els would trace him, his vmbrage, nothing more.[21]

Cour. Your Lordship speakes most infallibly of him.[22]

Ham. The concernancy[23] sir, why doe we wrap the gentleman in our more rawer breath?[24]

Cour. Sir.[25]

Hora. Ist not possible to vnderstand in another tongue,[26] you will too't sir really.[27]

Ham. What imports the nomination of this gentleman.

Cour. Of *Laertes*.[28]

Hora. His purse is empty already, all's golden words are spent.

Ham. Of him sir.[29]

Cour. I know you are not ignorant.[30]

Ham. I would you did sir, yet in faith if you did, it would not much approoue me,[31] well sir.

Cour.]

[Footnote B: *Here in the Quarto*:—

Ham. I dare not confesse that, least I should compare with him in excellence, but to know a man wel, were to knowe himselfe.[32]

Cour. I meane sir for this weapon, but in the imputation laide on him,[33] by them in his meed, hee's vnfellowed.[34]]

[Footnote 1: 'in good faith, it is not for manners, but for my comfort I take it off.' Perhaps the hat was intended only to be carried, and would not really go on his head.]

[Footnote 2: The *Quarto* has not 'at his weapon,' which is inserted to take the place of the passage omitted, and connect the edges of the gap.]

[Footnote 3: So far from having envied *Laertes*' reputation for fencing, as the king asserts, Hamlet seems not even to have known which was *Laertes*' weapon.]

[Footnote 4: laid down—staked.]

[Footnote 5: This and the following passages seem omitted for curtailment, and perhaps in part because they were less amusing when the fashion of euphuism had passed. The good of holding up the mirror to folly was gone when it was no more the 'form and pressure' of 'the very age and body of the time.']

[Footnote 6: of great variety of excellence.]

[Footnote 7: gentle manners.]

[Footnote 8: fine presence.]

[Footnote 9: Is this a stupid attempt at wit on the part of *Osricke*—'to praise him as if you wanted to sell him'—stupid because it acknowledges exaggeration?]

[Footnote 10: 'the chart or book of reference.' 234.]

[Footnote 11: I think *part* here should be plural; then the passage would paraphrase thus:—'you shall find in him the sum of what parts (*endowments*) a gentleman would wish to see.']

[Footnote 12: Hamlet answers the fool according to his folly, but outdoes him, to his discomfiture.]

[Footnote 13: 'his description suffers no loss in your mouth.']

[Footnote 14: 'to analyze him into all and each of his qualities.']

[Footnote 15: dizzy.]

[Footnote 16: 'and yet *would* but yaw neither' *Yaw*, 'the movement by which a ship deviates from the line of her course towards the right or left in steering.' Falconer's *Marine Dictionary*. The meaning

seems to be that the inventorial description could not overtake his merits, because it would *yaw*—keep turning out of the direct line of their quick sail. But Hamlet is set on using far-fetched and absurd forms and phrases to the non-plussing of Osricke, nor cares much to be *correct*.]

[Footnote 17: I take this use of the word *article* to be merely for the occasion; it was never surely in use for *substance*.]

[Footnote 18: '—the infusion of his soul into his body,' 'his soul's embodiment.' The *Sh. Lex.* explains *infusion* as 'endowments, qualities,' and it may be right.]

[Footnote 19: scarcity.]

[Footnote 20: '—it alone can show his likeness.']

[Footnote 21: 'whoever would follow in his footsteps—copy him—is only his shadow.']

[Footnote 22: Here a pause, I think.]

[Footnote 23: 'To the matter in hand!'—recalling the attention of Osricke to the purport of his visit.]

[Footnote 24: 'why do we presume to talk about him with our less refined breath?']

[Footnote 25: The Courtier is now thoroughly bewildered.]

[Footnote 26: 'Can you only *speak* in another tongue? Is it not possible to *understand* in it as well?']

[Footnote 27: 'It is your own fault; you *will* court your fate! you *will* go and be made a fool of!']

[Footnote 28: He catches at the word he understands. The actor must here supply the meaning, with the baffled, disconcerted look of a fool who has failed in the attempt to seem knowing.]

[Footnote 29:—answering the Courtier.]

[Footnote 30: He pauses, looking for some out-of-the-way mode wherein to continue. Hamlet takes him up.]

[Footnote 31: 'your witness to my knowledge would not be of much avail.']

[Footnote 32: Paraphrase: 'for merely to know a man well, implies that you yourself *know*.' To know a man well, you must know his knowledge: a man, to judge his neighbour, must be at least his equal.]

[Footnote 33: faculty attributed to him.]

[Footnote 34: *Point thus*: 'laide on him by them, in his meed hee's unfellowed.' 'in his merit he is peerless.']

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their assignes,[1] as Girdle, Hangers or so[2]: three of [Sidenote: hanger and so.] the Carriages infaith are very deare to fancy,[3] very responsiue[4] to the hilts, most delicate carriages and of very liberall conceit.[5]

Ham. What call you the Carriages?[6]

[A]

Os. The Carriages Sir, are the hangers. [Sidenote: *Cour.* The carriage]

Ham. The phrase would bee more Germaine[7] to the matter: If we could carry Cannon by our sides; [Sidenote: carry a cannon] I would it might be Hangers till then; but on sixe [Sidenote: it be | then, but on, six] Barbary Horses against sixe French Swords: their Assignes, and three liberall conceited Carriages,[8] that's the French but against the Danish; why is [Sidenote: French bet] this impon'd as you call it[9]? [Sidenote: this all you[9]]

Os. The King Sir, hath laid that in a dozen [Sidenote: *Cour.* | layd sir, that] passes betweene you and him, hee shall not exceed [Sidenote: your selfe and him,] you three hits;[10] He hath one twelue for mine,[11] [Sidenote: hath layd on twelue for nine,] and that would come to imediate tryall, if your [Sidenote: and it would] Lordship would vouchsafe the Answer.[12]

Ham. How if I answer no?[13]

Osr. I meane my Lord,[14] the opposition of your [*Sidenote: Cour.*] person in tryall.

Ham. Sir, I will walke heere in the Hall; if it please his Maiestie, 'tis the breathing time of day [*Sidenote: it is*] with me[15]; let the Foyles bee brought, the Gentleman willing, and the King hold his purpose; I will win for him if I can: if not, Ile gaine nothing but [*Sidenote: him and I | I will*] my shame, and the odde hits.[16]

Osr. Shall I redeliuer you ee'n so?[17]

[*Sidenote: Cour.* Shall I deliuer you so?]

Ham. To this effect Sir, after what flourish your nature will.

Osr. I commend my duty to your Lordship. [*Sidenote: Cour.*]

Ham. Yours, yours [18]: hee does well to commend [*Sidenote: Ham.* Yours doo's well[18]] it himselfe, there are no tongues else for's tongue, [*Sidenote: turne.*]

[Footnote A: *Here in the Quarto*:—

Hora. I knew you must be edified by the margent[19] ere you had done.]

[Footnote 1: accompaniments or belongings; things *assigned* to them.]

[Footnote 2: the thongs or chains attaching the sheath of a weapon to the girdle; what the weapon *hangs* by. The '*or so*' seems to indicate that Osricke regrets having used the old-fashioned word, which he immediately changes for *carriages*.]

[Footnote 3: imagination, taste, the artistic faculty.]

[Footnote 4: 'corresponding to—going well with the hilts,'—in shape, ornament, and colour.]

[Footnote 5: bold invention.]

[Footnote 6: a new word, unknown to Hamlet;—court-slang, to which he prefers the old-fashioned, homely word.]

[Footnote 7: related; 'akin to the matter.']

[Footnote 8: He uses Osricke's words—with a touch of derision, I should say.]

[Footnote 9: I do not take the *Quarto* reading for incorrect. Hamlet says: 'why is this all—you call it —? —?' as if he wanted to use the word (*imposed*) which Osricke had used, but did not remember it: he asks for it, saying '*you call it*' interrogatively.]

[Footnote 10: *1st Q*

that yong Leartes in twelue venies 223 At Rapier
and Dagger do not get three oddes of you,]

[Footnote 11: In all printer's work errors are apt to come in clusters.]

[Footnote 12: the response, or acceptance of the challenge.]

[Footnote 13: Hamlet plays with the word, pretending to take it in its common meaning.]

[Footnote 14: 'By *answer*, I mean, my lord, the opposition &c.']

[Footnote 15: 'my time for exercise:' he treats the proposal as the trifle it seems—a casual affair to be settled at once—hoping perhaps that the king will come with like carelessness.]

[Footnote 16: the *three*.]

[Footnote 17: To Osricke the answer seems too direct and unadorned for ears royal.]

[Footnote 18: I cannot help here preferring the *Q*. If we take the *Folio* reading, we must take it thus: 'Yours! yours!' spoken with contempt;—'as if *you* knew anything of duty!'—for we see from what follows that he is playing with the word *duty*. Or we might read it, 'Yours commends yours,' with the same sense as the reading of the *Q*., which is, 'Yours,' that is, '*Your* lordship—does well to commend his duty himself—there is no one else to do it.' This former shape is simpler; that of the *Folio* is burdened with ellipsis—loaded with lack. And surely *turne* is the true reading!—though we may take the other to mean, 'there are no tongues else on the side of his tongue.']

[Footnote 19: —as of the Bible, for a second interpretative word or phrase.]

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Hor. This Lapwing runs away with the shell on his head.[1]

[Sidenote: 98] *Ham.* He did Compile[2] with his Dugge before [Sidenote: *Ham.* A did sir[2] with] hee suck't it: thus had he and mine more of the [Sidenote: a suckt has he | many more] same Beauty[3] that I know the drossie age dotes [Sidenote: same breede] on; only got the tune[4] of the time, and outward [Sidenote: and out of an habit of[5]] habite of encounter,[5] a kinde of yesty collection, [Sidenote: histy] which carries them through and through the most fond and winnowed opinions; and doe but blow [Sidenote: prophane and trennowed opinions] them to their tryalls: the Bubbles are out.[6] [Sidenote: their triall, the]

[A]

Hor. You will lose this wager, my Lord. [Sidenote: loose my Lord.]

Ham. I doe not thinke so, since he went into France, I haue beene in continuall practice; I shall [Sidenote: 265] winne at the oddes:[7] but thou wouldest not thinke [Sidenote: ods; thou] how all heere about my heart:[8] but it is no matter[9] [Sidenote: how ill all's heere]

Hor. Nay, good my Lord.

Ham. It is but foolery; but it is such a kinde of gain-giuing[10] as would perhaps trouble a woman, [Sidenote: gamgiuing.]

Hor. If your minde dislike any thing, obey.[11] [Sidenote: obey it.] I will forestall[12] their repaire hither, and say you are not fit.

Ham. Not a whit, we defie Augury[13]; there's a [Sidenote: there is speciall] [Sidenote: 24, 125, 247] speciall Prouidence in the fall of a sparrow.[14] If

[Footnote A: *Here in the Quarto:—*

Enter a Lord.[15]

Lord. My Lord, his Maiestie commended him to you by young Ostricke,[16] who brings backe to him that you attend him in the hall, he sends to know if your pleasure hold to play with *Laertes*, or that you will take longer time?[17]

Ham. I am constant to my purposes, they followe the Kings pleasure, if his fitnes speakes, mine is ready[18]: now or whensoever, prouided I be so able as now.

Lord. The King, and Queene, and all are comming downe.

Ham. In happy time.[19]

Lord. The Queene desires you to vse some gentle entertainment[20] *Laertes*, before you fall to play.

Ham. Shee well instructs me.]

[Footnote 1: 'Well, he *is* a young one!']

[Footnote 2: '*Com'ply*,' with accent on first syllable: *comply with* means *pay compliments to, compliment*. See *Q.* reading: 'A did sir with':—*sir* here is a verb—*sir with* means *say sir to*: 'he *sirred, complied* with his nurse's breast before &c.' Hamlet speaks in mockery of the affected court-modes of speech and address, the fashion of euphuism—a mechanical attempt at the poetic.]

[Footnote 3: *a flock of birds*—suggested by '*This Lapwing*.'

[Footnote 4: 'the mere mode.']

[Footnote 5: 'and external custom of intercourse.' But here too I rather take the *Q.* to be right: 'They have only got the fashion of the time; and, out of a habit of wordy conflict, (they have got) a collection of tricks of speech,—a yesty, frothy mass, with nothing in it, which carries them in triumph through the most foolish and fastidious (nice, choice, punctilious, whimsical) judgments.' *Yesty* I take to be right, and *prophane* (vulgar) to have been altered by the Poet to *fond* (foolish); of *trennowed* I can make nothing beyond a misprint.]

[Footnote 6: Hamlet had just blown Osricke to his trial in his chosen kind, and the bubble had burst. The braggart gentleman had no faculty to generate after the dominant fashion, no invention to support his ambition—had but a yesty collection, which failing him the moment something unconventional was wanted, the fool had to look a discovered fool.]

[Footnote 7: 'I shall win by the odds allowed me; he will not exceed me three hits.']

[Footnote 8: He has a presentiment of what is coming.]

[Footnote 9: Nothing in this world is of much consequence to him now. Also, he believes in 'a special Providence.']

[Footnote 10: 'a yielding, a sinking' at the heart? The *Sh. Lex.* says *misgiving*.]

[Footnote 11: 'obey the warning.']

[Footnote 12: 'go to them before they come here'—'*prevent* their coming.']

[Footnote 13: The knowledge, even, of what is to come could never, any more than ordinary expediency, be the *law* of a man's conduct. St. Paul, informed by the prophet Agabus of the troubles that awaited him at Jerusalem, and entreated by his friends not to go thither, believed the prophet, and went on to Jerusalem to be delivered into the hands of the Gentiles.]

[Footnote 14: One of Shakspere's many allusions to sayings of the Lord.]

[Footnote 15: Osricke does not come back: he has begged off but ventures later, under the wing of the king.]

[Footnote 16: May not this form of the name suggest that in it is intended the 'foolish' ostrich?]

[Footnote 17: The king is making delay: he has to have his 'union' ready.]

[Footnote 18: 'if he feels ready, I am.']

[Footnote 19: 'They are *well-come*.']

[Footnote 20: 'to be polite to Laertes.' The print shows where *to* has slipped out.

The queen is anxious; she distrusts Laertes, and the king's influence over him.]

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it[1] be now, 'tis not to come: if it bee not to come,

[Sidenote: be, tis]

it will bee now: if it be not now; yet it will come;

[Sidenote: it well come,]

[Sidenote: 54, 164] the readinesse is all,[2] since no man ha's ought of

[Sidenote: man of ought he leaues, knowes what ist

to leaue betimes, let be.]

[Sidenote: 252] what he leaues. What is't to leaue betimes?[3]

Enter King, Queene, Laertes and Lords, with other Attendants with Foyles, and Gauntlets, a Table and Flagons of Wine on it.

[Sidenote: *A table prepar'd, Trumpets, Drums and officers with cushion, King, Queene, and all the state, Foiles, Daggers, and Laertes.*]

Kin. Come *Hamlet* come, and take this hand from me.

[Sidenote: 245] *Ham*.[4] Giue me your pardon Sir, I'ue done you wrong,[5] [Sidenote: I haue]

But pardon't as you are a Gentleman.

This presence[6] knowes,

And you must needs haue heard how I am punisht

With sore distraction?[7] What I haue done [Sidenote: With a sore]

That might your nature honour, and exception

[Sidenote: 242, 252] Roughly awake,[8] heere proclaime was madnesse:[9]

Was't *Hamlet* wrong'd *Laertes*? Neuer *Hamlet*.

If *Hamlet* from himselfe be tane away: [Sidenote: fane away,]

And when he's not himselfe, do's wrong *Laertes*,
Then *Hamlet* does it not, *Hamlet* denies it:[10]
Who does it then? His Madnesse? If't be so,
Hamlet is of the Faction that is wrong'd,
His madnesse is poore *Hamlets* Enemy.[11]
Sir, in this Audience,[12]
Let my disclaiming from a purpos'd euill,[13]
Free me so farre[14] in your most generous thoughts,
That I haue shot mine Arrow o're the house, [Sidenote: my]
And hurt my Mother.[15] [Sidenote: brother.[15]]

[Footnote 1: 'it'—death, the end.]

[Footnote 2: His father had been taken unready. 54.]

[Footnote 3: *Point*: 'all. Since'; 'leaves, what'—'Since no man has anything of what he has left, those who left it late are in the same position as those who left it early.' Compare the common saying, 'It will be all the same in a hundred years.' The *Q.* reading comes much to the same thing—'knows of ought he leaves'—'has any knowledge of it, anything to do with it, in any sense possesses it.'

We may find a deeper meaning in the passage, however—surely not too deep for Shakspeare:—'Since nothing can be truly said to be possessed as his own which a man must at one time or another yield; since that which is *own* can never be taken from the owner, but solely that which is lent him; since the nature of a thing that has to be left is not such that it *could* be possessed, why should a man mind parting with it early?'—There is far more in this than merely that at the end of the day it will be all the same. The thing that ever was really a man's own, God has given, and God will not, and man cannot, take away. Note the unity of religion and philosophy in *Hamlet*: he takes the one true position. Note also his courage: he has a strong presentiment of death, but will not turn a step from his way. If Death be coming, he will confront him. He does not believe in chance. He is ready—that is willing. All that is needful is, that he should not go as one who cannot help it, but as one who is for God's will, who chooses that will as his own.

There is so much behind in Shakspeare's characters—so much that can only be hinted at! The dramatist has not the *word*-scope of the novelist; his art gives him little *room*; he must effect in a phrase what the other may take pages to. He needs good seconding by his actors as sorely as the composer needs good rendering of his music by the orchestra. It is a lesson in unity that the greatest art can least work alone; that the greatest *finder* most needs the help of others to show his *findings*. The dramatist has live men and women for the very instruments of his art—who must not be mere instruments, but fellow-workers; and upon them he is greatly dependent for final outcome.

Here the actor should show a marked calmness and elevation in *Hamlet*. He should have around him as it were a luminous cloud, the cloud of his coming end. A smile not all of this world should close the speech. He has given himself up, and is at peace.]

[Footnote 4: Note in this apology the sweetness of *Hamlet's* nature. How few are alive enough, that is unselfish and true enough, to be capable of genuine apology! The low nature always feels, not the wrong, but the confession of it, degrading.]

[Footnote 5: —the wrong of his rudeness at the funeral.]

[Footnote 6: all present.]

[Footnote 7: —true in a deeper sense than they would understand.]

[Footnote 8: 'that might roughly awake your nature, honour, and exception,':—consider the phrase —*to take exception at a thing.*]

[Footnote 9: It was by cause of madness, not by cause of evil intent. For all purpose of excuse it was madness, if only pretended madness; it was there of another necessity, and excused offence like real madness. What he said was true, not merely expedient, to the end he meant it to serve. But all passion may be called madness, because therein the mind is absorbed with one idea; 'anger is a brief madness,' and he was in a 'towering passion': he proclaims it madness and so abjures it.]

[Footnote 10: 'refuses the wrong altogether—will in his true self have nothing to do with it.' No evil thing comes of our true selves, and confession is the casting of it from us, the only true denial. He who will not confess a wrong, holds to the wrong.]

[Footnote 11: All here depends on the expression in the utterance.]

[Footnote 12: *This line not in Q.*]

[Footnote 13: This is Hamlet's summing up of the whole—his explanation of the speech.]

[Footnote 14: 'so far as this in your generous judgment—that you regard me as having shot &c.']

[Footnote 15: *Brother* is much easier to accept, though *Mother* might be in the simile.

To do justice to the speech we must remember that Hamlet has no quarrel whatever with Laertes, that he has expressed admiration of him, and that he is inclined to love him for Ophelia's sake. His apology has no reference to the fate of his father or his sister; Hamlet is not aware that Laertes associates him with either, and plainly the public did not know Hamlet killed Polonius; while Laertes could have no intention of alluding to the fact, seeing it would frustrate his scheme of treachery.]

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Laer. I am satisfied in Nature,[1]

Whose motiue in this case should stirre me most

To my Reuenge. But in my termes of Honor

I stand aloofe, and will no reconcilment,

Till by some elder Masters of knowne Honor,

I haue a voyce, and president of peace

To keepe my name vngorg'd.[2] But till that time,

[Sidenote: To my name vngord: but all that]

I do receiue your offer'd loue like loue,

And wil not wrong it.

Ham. I do embrace it freely, [Sidenote: I embrace] And will this Brothers wager frankely play. Giue vs the Foyles: Come on.[3]

Laer. Come one for me.[4]

Ham. Ile be your foile[5] *Laertes*, in mine ignorance, [Sidenote: 218] Your Skill shall like a Starre i'th'darkest night,[6] Sticke fiery off indeede.

Laer. You mocke me Sir.

Ham. No by this hand.[7]

King. Giue them the Foyles yong *Osricke*,[8] [Sidenote: *Ostricke*,[8]] Cousen *Hamlet*, you know the wager.

Ham. Verie well my Lord, Your Grace hath laide the oddes a'th'weaker side, [Sidenote: has]

King. I do not feare it,

I haue seene you both:[9]

But since he is better'd, we haue therefore oddes.[10]

[Sidenote: better, we]

[Footnote 1: 'in my own feelings and person.' Laertes does not refer to his father or sister. He professes to be satisfied in his heart with Hamlet's apology for his behaviour at the funeral, but not to be sure whether in the opinion of others, and by the laws of honour, he can accept it as amends, and forbear to challenge him. But the words 'Whose motiue in this case should stirre me most to my Reuenge' may refer to his father and sister, and, if so taken, should be spoken aside. To accept apology for them and not for his honour would surely be too barefaced! The point concerning them has not been started.

But why not receive the apology as quite satisfactory? That he would not seem to show a lingering regard to *real* honour. A downright villain, like the king, would have pretended its *thorough* acceptance—especially as they were just going to fence like friends; but he, as regards his honour, will not accept it until justified in doing so by the opinion of 'some elder masters,' receiving from them 'a voice and precedent of peace'—counsel to, and justification, or example of peace. He keeps the door of quarrel open—will not profess to be *altogether* friends with him, though he does not hint at his real ground of offence: that mooted, the match of skill, with its immense advantages for villainy, would have been impossible. He means treachery all the time; careful of his honour, he can, like most apes of fashion, let his honesty go; still, so complex is human nature, he holds his speech declining thorough reconciliation as a shield to shelter his treachery from his own contempt: he has taken care not to profess absolute friendship, and so left room for absolute villainy! He has had regard to his word! Relieved perhaps by the demoniacal quibble, he follows it immediately with an utterance of full-blown perfidy.]

[Footnote 2: Perhaps *ungorg'd* might mean *unthrottled*.]

[Footnote 3: 'Come on' *is not in the Q*.—I suspect this *Come on* but a misplaced shadow from the '*Come one*' immediately below, and better omitted. Hamlet could not say '*Come on*' before Laertes was ready, and '*Come one*' after 'Give us the foils,' would be very awkward. But it may be said to the attendant courtiers.]

[Footnote 4: He says this while Hamlet is still choosing, in order that a second bundle of foils, in which is the unbated and poisoned one, may be brought him. So 'generous and free from all contriving' is Hamlet, (220) that, even with the presentiment in his heart, he has no fear of treachery.]

[Footnote 5: As persons of the drama, the Poet means Laertes to be foil to Hamlet.—With the play upon the word before us, we can hardly help thinking of the *third* signification of the word *foil*.]

[Footnote 6: 'My ignorance will be the foil of darkest night to the burning star of your skill.' This is no flattery; Hamlet believes Laertes, to whose praises he has listened (218)—though not with the envy his uncle attributes to him—the better fencer: he expects to win only 'at the odds.' 260.]

[Footnote 7: —not '*by these pickers and stealers*,' his oath to his false friends. 154.]

[Footnote 8: Plainly a favourite with the king.—He is *Ostricke* always in the *Q*.]

[Footnote 9: 'seen you both play'—though not together.]

[Footnote 10: *Point thus*:

I do not fear it—I have seen you both!
But since, he is bettered: we have therefore odds.

'Since'—'*since the time I saw him*.'

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Laer. This is too heauy, Let me see another.[1]

Ham. This likes me well, These Foyles haue all a length.[2] *Prepare to play*.[3]

Osricke. I my good Lord. [Sidenote: *Ostr.*]

King. Set me the Stopes of wine vpon that Table:

If *Hamlet* giue the first, or second hit,
Or quit in answer of the third exchange,[4]
Let all the Battlements their Ordinance fire,
[Sidenote: 268] The King shal drinke to *Hamlets* better breath,
And in the Cup an vnion[5] shal he throw [Sidenote: an Vince]
Richer then that,[6] which foure successiue Kings
In Denmarkes Crowne haue worne.
Giue me the Cups,
And let the Kettle to the Trumpets speake, [Sidenote: trumpet]
The Trumpet to the Cannoneer without,
The Cannons to the Heauens, the Heauen to Earth,
Now the King drinks to *Hamlet*. Come, begin,
[Sidenote: *Trumpets the while*.]
And you the Iudges[7] beare a wary eye.

Ham. Come on sir.

Laer. Come on sir. *They play*.[8] [Sidenote: Come my Lord.]

Ham. One.

Laer. No.

Ham. Iudgement.[9]

Os. A hit, a very palpable hit. [Sidenote: *Ostrick*.]

Laer. Well: againe. [Sidenote: *Drum, trumpets and a shot. Florish, a peece goes off*.]

King. Stay, giue me drinke. *Hamlet*, this Pearle is thine, Here's to thy health. Giue him the cup,[10]

Trumpets sound, and shot goes off.[11]

Ham. Ile play this bout first, set by a-while.[12] [Sidenote: set it by] Come: Another hit; what say you?

Laer. A touch, a touch, I do confesse.[13] [Sidenote: *Laer.* | doe confest.]

King. Our Sonne shall win.

[Footnote 1: —to make it look as if he were choosing.]

[Footnote 2: —asked in an offhand way. The fencers must not measure weapons, because how then could the unbated point escape discovery? It is quite like Hamlet to take even Osricke's word for their equal length.]

[Footnote 3: *Not in Q.*]

[Footnote 4: 'or be quits with Laertes the third bout':—in any case, whatever the probabilities, even if Hamlet be wounded, the king, who has not perfect confidence in the 'unction,' will fall back on his second line of ambush—in which he has more trust: he will drink to Hamlet, when Hamlet will be bound to drink also.]

[Footnote 5: The Latin *unio* was a large pearl. The king's *union* I take to be poison made up like a pearl.]

[Footnote 6: —a well-known one in the crown.]

[Footnote 7: —of whom Osricke was one.]

[Footnote 8: *Not in Q.*]

[Footnote 9: —appealing to the judges.]

[Footnote 10: He throws in the *pearl*, and drinks—for it will take some moments to dissolve and make the wine poisonous—then sends the cup to Hamlet.]

[Footnote 11: *Not in Q.*]

[Footnote 12: He does not refuse to drink, but puts it by, neither showing nor entertaining suspicion, fearing only the effect of the draught on his play. He is bent on winning the wager—perhaps with further intent.]

[Footnote 13: Laertes has little interest in the match, but much in his own play.]

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[Sidenote: 266] *Qu.* He's fat, and scant of breath.[1]

Heere's a Napkin, rub thy browes,

[Sidenote: Heere *Hamlet* take my napkin]

The Queene Carowes to thy fortune, *Hamlet.*

Ham. Good Madam.[2]

King. *Gertrude*, do not drinke.

Qu. I will my Lord; I pray you pardon me.[3]

[Sidenote: 222]*King.* It is the poyson'd Cup, it is too late.[4]

Ham. I dare not drinke yet Madam, By and by.[5]

Qu. Come, let me wipe thy face.[6]

Laer. My Lord, Ile hit him now.

King. I do not thinke't.

Laer. And yet 'tis almost 'gainst my conscience.[7] [Sidenote: it is | against]

Ham. Come for the third. *Laertes*, you but dally, [Sidenote: you doe but] I pray you passe with your best violence, I am affear'd you make a wanton of me.[8] [Sidenote: I am sure you]

Laer. Say you so? Come on. *Play.*

Osr. Nothing neither way. [Sidenote: *Ostr.*]

Laer. Haue at you now.[9]

In scuffling they change Rapiers.[10]

King. Part them, they are incens'd.[11]

Ham. Nay come, againe.[12]

Osr. Looke to the Queene there hoa. [Sidenote: *Ostr.* | there howe.]

Hor. They bleed on both sides. How is't my [Sidenote: is it] Lord?

Osr. How is't *Laertes*? [Sidenote: *Ostr.*]

Laer. Why as a Woodcocke[13] To mine Sprindge, *Osricke*, [Sidenote: mine owne sprindge *Ostrick*,] I am iustly kill'd with mine owne Treacherie.[14]

Ham. How does the Queene?

King. She sounds[15] to see them bleede.

Qu. No, no, the drinke, the drinke[16]

[Footnote 1: She is anxious about him. It may be that this speech, and that of the king before (266), were fitted to the person of the actor who first represented Hamlet.]

[Footnote 2: —a simple acknowledgment of her politeness: he can no more be familiarly loving with his mother.]

[Footnote 3: She drinks, and offers the cup to Hamlet.]

[Footnote 4: He is too much afraid of exposing his villainy to be prompt enough to prevent her.]

[Footnote 5: This is not meant by the Poet to show suspicion: he does not mean Hamlet to die so.]

[Footnote 6: The actor should not allow her: she approaches Hamlet; he recoils a little.]

[Footnote 7: He has compunctions, but it needs failure to make them potent.]

[Footnote 8: 'treat me as an effeminate creature.']

[Footnote 9: He makes a sudden attack, without warning of the fourth bout.]

[Footnote 10: *Not in Q.*

The 1st Q. directs:—*They catch one anothers Rapiers, find both are wounded, &c.*

The thing, as I understand it, goes thus: With the words 'Have at you now!' Laertes stabs Hamlet; Hamlet, apprised thus of his treachery, lays hold of his rapier, wrenches it from him, and stabs him with it in return.]

[Footnote 11: 'they have lost their temper.']

[Footnote 12: —said with indignation and scorn, but without suspicion of the worst.]

[Footnote 13: —the proverbially foolish bird. The speech must be spoken with breaks. Its construction is broken.]

[Footnote 14: His conscience starts up, awake and strong, at the approach of Death. As the show of the world withdraws, the realities assert themselves. He repents, and makes confession of his sin, seeing it now in its true nature, and calling it by its own name. It is a compensation of the weakness of some that they cannot be strong in wickedness. The king did not so repent, and with his strength was the more to blame.]

[Footnote 15: *swounds, swoons.*]

[Footnote 16: She is true to her son. The maternal outlasts the adulterous.]

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Oh my deere *Hamlet*, the drinke, the drinke,

I am poyson'd.

Ham. Oh Villany! How? Let the doore be lock'd. Treacherie, seeke it out.[1]

Laer. It is heere *Hamlet*.[2]

Hamlet.[3] thou art slaine,

No Medicine in the world can do thee good.

In thee, there is not halfe an houre of life; [Sidenote: houres life,]

The Treacherous Instrument is in thy hand, [Sidenote: in my]

Vnbated and envenom'd: the foule practise[4]

Hath turn'd it selfe on me. Loe, heere I lye,

Neuer to rise againe: Thy Mothers poyson'd:

I can no more, the King, the King's too blame.[5]

Ham. The point envenom'd too, Then venome to thy worke.[6] *Hurts the King*.[7]

All. Treason, Treason.

King. O yet defend me Friends, I am but hurt.

Ham. Heere thou incestuous, murdrous,

[Sidenote: Heare thou incestious damned Dane,]

Damned Dane,

Drinke off this Potion: Is thy Vnion heere?

[Sidenote: of this | is the Onixe heere?]

Follow my Mother.[8] *King Dyes*.[9]

Laer. He is iustly seru'd.

It is a poyson temp'red by himselfe:

Exchange forgiuenesse with me, Noble *Hamlet*;

Mine and my Fathers death come not vpon thee,

Nor thine on me.[10] *Dyes*.[11]

Ham. Heauen make thee free of it,[12] I follow thee.

I am dead *Horatio*, wretched Queene adiew.

You that looke pale, and tremble at this chance,

That are but Mutes[13] or audience to this acte:

Had I but time (as this fell Sergeant death

Is strick'd in his Arrest) oh I could tell you. [Sidenote: strict]

[Footnote 1: The thing must be ended now. The door must be locked, to keep all in that are in, and all out that are out. Then he can do as he will.]

[Footnote 2: —laying his hand on his heart, I think.]

[Footnote 3: In Q. *Hamlet* only once.]

[Footnote 4: *scheme, artifice, deceitful contrivance*; in modern slang, *dodge*.]

[Footnote 5: He turns on the prompter of his sin—crowning the justice of the king's capital punishment.]

[Footnote 6: *Point*: 'too!'

1st Q. Then venome to thy venome, die damn'd villaine.]

[Footnote 7: *Not in Quarto*.

The true moment, now only, has at last come. Hamlet has lived to do his duty with a clear conscience, and is thereupon permitted to go. The man who asks whether this be poetic justice or no, is unworthy of an answer. 'The Tragedie of Hamlet' is *The Drama of Moral Perplexity*.]

[Footnote 8: A grim play on the word *Union*: 'follow my mother'. It suggests a terrible meeting below.]

[Footnote 9: *Not in Quarto*.]

[Footnote 10: His better nature triumphs. The moment he was wounded, knowing he must die, he began to change. Defeat is a mighty aid to repentance; and processes grow rapid in the presence of Death: he forgives and desires forgiveness.]

[Footnote 11: *Not in Quarto.*]

[Footnote 12: Note how heartily Hamlet pardons the wrong done to himself—the only wrong of course which a man has to pardon.]

[Footnote 13: *supernumeraries*. Note the other figures too—*audience, act*—all of the theatre.]

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But let it be: *Horatio*, I am dead,
Thou liu'st, report me and my causes right [Sidenote: cause a right]
To the vnsatisfied.[1]

Hor. Neuer beleuee it. [Sidenote: 134] I am more an Antike Roman then a Dane: [Sidenote: 135]
Heere's yet some Liquor left.[2]

Ham. As th'art a man, giue me the Cup.
Let go, by Heauen Ile haue't. [Sidenote: hate,]
[Sidenote: 114, 251] Oh good *Horatio*, what a wounded name,[3]
[Sidenote: O god *Horatio*,]
(Things standing thus vnknowne) shall liue behind me.
[Sidenote: shall I leaue behind me?]
If thou did'st euer hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicitie awhile,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in paine,[1]
[Sidenote: *A march a farre off.*]
To tell my Storie.[4]
March afarre off, and shout within.[5]
What warlike noyse is this?

Enter Osricke.

Osr. Yong *Fortinbras*, with conquest come from Poland To th'Ambassadors of England giues this
warlike volly.[6]

Ham. O I dye *Horatio*:
The potent poyson quite ore-crowes my spirit,
I cannot liue to heare the Newes from England,
[Sidenote: 62] But I do prophesie[7] th'election lights
[Sidenote: 276] On *Fortinbras*, he ha's my dying voyce,[8]
So tell him with the occursents more and lesse,[9] [Sidenote: th']
Which haue solicited.[10] The rest is silence. O, o, o, o.[11]
Dyes[12]

Hora. Now cracke a Noble heart: [Sidenote: cracks a]
Goodnight sweet Prince,
And flights of Angels sing thee to thy rest,
Why do's the Drumme come hither?

[Footnote 1: His care over his reputation with the people is princely, and casts a true light on his delay. No good man can be willing to seem bad, except the *being good* necessitates it. A man must be willing to appear a villain if that is the consequence of being a true man, but he cannot be indifferent to that appearance. He cannot be indifferent to wearing the look of the thing he hates. Hamlet, that he may be understood by the nation, makes, with noble confidence in his friendship, the large demand on Horatio, to live and suffer for his sake.]

[Footnote 2: Here first we see plainly the love of Horatio for Hamlet: here first is Hamlet's judgment of Horatio (134) justified.]

[Footnote 3: —for having killed his uncle:—what, then, if he had slain him at once?]

[Footnote 4: Horatio must be represented as here giving sign of assent.]

1st Q.

Ham. Vpon my loue I charge thee let it goe,
O fie *Horatio*, and if thou shouldst die,
What a scandale wouldst thou leaue behinde?
What tongue should tell the story of our deaths,

If not from thee?]

[Footnote 5: *Not in Q.*]

[Footnote 6: The frame is closing round the picture. 9.]

[Footnote 7: Shakspeare more than once or twice makes the dying prophesy.]

[Footnote 8: His last thought is for his country; his last effort at utterance goes to prevent a disputed succession.]

[Footnote 9: 'greater and less'—as in the psalm,

'The Lord preserves all, more and less,
That bear to him a loving heart.']

[Footnote 10: led to the necessity.]

[Footnote 11: *These interjections are not in the Quarto.*]

[Footnote 12: *Not in Q.*

All Shakspeare's tragedies suggest that no action ever ends, only goes off the stage of the world on to another.]

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[Sidenote: 190] *Enter Fortinbras and English Ambassador, with*

[Sidenote: *Enter Fortenbrasse, with the Embassadors.*]

Drumme, Colours, and Attendants.

Fortin. Where is this sight?

Hor. What is it ye would see; [Sidenote: you] If ought of woe, or wonder, cease your search.[1]

For. His quarry[2] cries on hauocke.[3] Oh proud death,

[Sidenote: This quarry]

What feast is toward[4] in thine eternall Cell.

That thou so many Princes, at a shoote, [Sidenote: shot]

So bloodily hast strooke.[5]

Amb. The sight is dismall,

And our affaires from England come too late,

The eares are senselesse that should giue vs hearing,[6]

To tell him his command'ment is fulfill'd,

That *Rosincrance* and *Guildesterne* are dead:

Where should we haue our thanks?[7]

Hor. Not from his mouth,[8]

Had it[9] th'abilitie of life to thanke you:

He neuer gaue command'ment for their death.

[Sidenote: 6] But since so iumpe[10] vpon this bloodie question,[11]

You from the Polake warres, and you from England

Are heere arriued. Giue order[12] that these bodies

High on a stage be placed to the view,

And let me speake to th'yet vnknowing world, [Sidenote: , to yet]

How these things came about. So shall you heare

Of carnall, bloudie, and vnnaturall acts,[13]

Of accidentall Judgements,[14] casuall slaughters[15]

Of death's put on by cunning[16] and forc'd cause,[17]

[Sidenote: deaths | and for no cause]

And in this vpshot, purposes mistooke,[18]

Falne on the Inuentors heads. All this can I [Sidenote: th']

Truly deliuer.

For. Let vs hast to heare it,

And call the Noblest to the Audience.

For me, with sorrow, I embrace my Fortune,

I haue some Rites of memory[19] in this Kingdome,

[Footnote 1: —for here it is.]

[Footnote 2: the heap of game after a hunt.]

[Footnote 3: 'Havoc's victims cry out against him.']

[Footnote 4: in preparation.]

[Footnote 5: All the real actors in the tragedy, except Horatio, are dead.]

[Footnote 6: This line may be taken as a parenthesis; then—'come too late' joins itself with 'to tell him.' Or we may connect 'hearing' with 'to tell him':—'the ears that should give us hearing in order that we might tell him' etc.]

[Footnote 7: They thus inquire after the successor of Claudius.]

[Footnote 8: —the mouth of Claudius.]

[Footnote 9: —even if it had.]

[Footnote 10: 'so exactly,' or 'immediately'—perhaps *opportunely—fittingly*.]

[Footnote 11: dispute, strife.]

[Footnote 12: —addressed to Fortinbras, I should say. The state is disrupt, the household in disorder; there is no head; Horatio turns therefore to Fortinbras, who, besides having a claim to the crown, and being favoured by Hamlet, alone has power at the moment—for his army is with him.]

[Footnote 13: —those of Claudius.]

[Footnote 14: 'just judgments brought about by accident'—as in the case of all slain except the king, whose judgment was not accidental, and Hamlet, whose death was not a judgment.]

[Footnote 15: —those of the queen, Polonius, and Ophelia.]

[Footnote 16: 'put on,' *indued*, 'brought on themselves'—those of Rosinrance, Guildensterne, and Laertes.]

[Footnote 17: —those of the king and Polonius.]

[Footnote 18: 'and in this result'—*pointing to the bodies*—'purposes which have mistaken their way, and fallen on the inventors' heads.' *I am mistaken* or *mistook*, means *I have mistaken*; 'purposes mistooke'—*purposes in themselves mistaken*:—that of Laertes, which came back on himself; and that of the king in the matter of the poison, which, by falling on the queen, also came back on the inventor.]

[Footnote 19: The *Quarto* is correct here, I think: '*rights of the past*'—'claims of descent.' Or 'rights of memory' might mean—'*rights yet remembered*.'

Fortinbras is not one to miss a chance: even in this shadowy 'person,' character is recognizably maintained.]

[Page 276]

Which are to claime,[1] my vantage doth [Sidenote: Which now to claime]
Inuite me,

Hor. Of that I shall haue alwayes[2] cause to speake,
[Sidenote: haue also cause[3]]

And from his mouth
[Sidenote: 272] Whose voyce will draw on more:[3]
[Sidenote: drawe no more,]

But let this same be presently perform'd,
Euen whiles mens mindes are wilde, [Sidenote: while]
Lest more mischance
On plots, and errors happen.[4]

For. Let foure Captaines
Beare *Hamlet* like a Soldier to the Stage,
For he was likely, had he beene put on[5]

To haue prou'd most royally:[6] [Sidenote: royall;]
And for his passage,[7]
The Souldiours Musicke, and the rites of Warre[8] [Sidenote: right of]
Speake[9] lowdly for him.
Take vp the body; Such a sight as this [Sidenote: bodies,]
Becomes the Field, but heere shewes much amis.
Go, bid the Souldiers shoote.[10]

Exeunt Marching: after the which, a Peale [Sidenote: Exeunt.] of Ordenance are shot off.

FINIS.

[Footnote 1: 'which must now be claimed'—except the *Quarto* be right here also.]

[Footnote 2: The *Quarto* surely is right here.]

[Footnote 3: —Hamlet's mouth. The message he entrusted to Horatio for Fortinbras, giving his voice, or vote, for him, was sure to 'draw on more' voices.]

[Footnote 4: 'lest more mischance happen in like manner, through plots and mistakes.']

[Footnote 5: 'had he been put forward'—*had occasion sent him out.*]

[Footnote 6: 'to have proved a most royal soldier:'—A soldier gives here his testimony to Hamlet's likelihood in the soldier's calling. Note the kind of regard in which the Poet would show him held.]

[Footnote 7: —the passage of his spirit to its place.]

[Footnote 8: —military mourning or funeral rites.]

[Footnote 9: *imperative mood*: 'let the soldier's music and the rites of war speak loudly for him.' 'Go, bid the souldiers shoote,' with which the drama closes, is a more definite initiatory order to the same effect.]

[Footnote 10: The end is a half-line after a riming couplet—as if there were more to come—as there must be after every tragedy. Mere poetic justice will not satisfy Shakspeare in a tragedy, for tragedy is *life*; in a comedy it may do well enough, for that deals but with life-surfaces—and who then more careful of it! but in tragedy something far higher ought to be aimed at. The end of this drama is reached when Hamlet, having attained the possibility of doing so, performs his work *in righteousness*. The common critical mind would have him left the fatherless, motherless, loverless, almost friendless king of a justifiably distrusting nation—with an eternal grief for his father weighing him down to the abyss; with his mother's sin blackening for him all womankind, and blasting the face of both heaven and earth; and with the knowledge in his heart that he had sent the woman he loved, with her father and her brother, out of the world—maniac, spy, and traitor. Instead of according him such 'poetic justice,' the Poet gives Hamlet the only true success of doing his duty to the end—for it was as much his duty not to act before, as it was his duty to act at last—then sends him after his Ophelia—into a world where true heart will find true way of setting right what is wrong, and of atoning for every ill, wittingly or unwittingly done or occasioned in this.

It seems to me most admirable that Hamlet, being so great, is yet outwardly so like other people: the Poet never obtrudes his greatness. And just because he is modest, confessing weakness and perplexity, small people take him for yet smaller than themselves who never confess anything, and seldom feel anything amiss with them. Such will adduce even Hamlet's disparagement of himself to Ophelia when overwhelmed with a sense of human worthlessness (126), as proof that he was no hero! They call it weakness that he would not, foolishly and selfishly, make good his succession against the king, regardless of the law of election, and careless of the weal of the kingdom for which he shows himself so anxious even in the throes of death! To my mind he is the grandest hero in fiction—absolutely human—so troubled, yet so true!]

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