SHAKESPEARE'S
KING LEAR

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THOMAS NELSON & SONS LTD
LONDON AND EDINBURGH

First published September 1926
Reprinted 1932, 1933, 1934, 1936, 1937, 1938 (twice), 1940, 1942

PREFACE

THIS series is planned with one simple aim in view—to make the reading of Shakespeare's plays as easy and straightforward as possible.

Notes are reduced to the smallest compass. First, in order that the reader's imagination may have definite material to work with, the list of the *dramatis personæ* is preceded by a suggestion of their dress and appearance: and when practicable, illustrations are given. Second, the text, which is presented without any further preliminary, is accompanied by footnotes which form a Glossary of obsolete or misleading words.

The play may therefore be read at first sight without let or hindrance—without even the delay and distraction which would be caused by turning to a later page for such merely necessary explanations. But there will be many for whom, if not at a first reading yet perhaps at a second, something further may be desirable—a bit of historical information, a paraphrase of a difficult passage, or the clearing up of a confused metaphor. To supply these, and to supply them at the right time, is the object of the brief notes placed immediately after the text.

Fourth, and last, comes a causerie in several divisions: offering, for any who are studiously inclined, a short commentary; marking the place of this particular drama in Shakespeare's career; tracing its importance in his poetic development; estimating its artistic value; and suggesting a number of other questions on which an intelligent student might reflect with pleasure.

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INTRODUCTION

APPEARANCE AND ENVIRONMENT OF THE PERSONS OF THE PLAY

ACCORDING to Holinshed, King Lear "was admitted Ruler ouer the Britaines in the yeare of the world 3105, at what time Ioas raigned as yet in Iuda." No modern historian would venture to fix a definite date to the legend, which must be regarded as one of the early Celtic period in Britain. As is often his way, Shakespeare has given the "atmosphere" of a far-off barbaric age, when human passions were violent and unrestrained, and men worshipped strange gods, together with circumstances of his own day, such as the conduct of the duel, and the place of the jester in the household of his master. It is obviously impossible to plan the setting of a play of this kind with a view to exact historical accuracy: all that an illustrator or stage artist can hope to do is to create an effect that will satisfy the imagination. In visualizing the appearance of the characters for ourselves in "the theatre of the mind," it seems best to base our ideas on what is known of Celtic dress, armour, and jewellery in bygone days.

Men wore a garment of homespun, reaching to the ankle or the knee, with a belt ornamented with heavy studs of gold or bronze. The loose hose, made of material of the same kind as that used for the body-garment, and fitting right over the foot, were bound with broad thongs from knee to ankle. Sometimes a long straight cloak was worn, fastened with a brooch

of the characteristic Celtic pattern, an open ring with a long pin thrust through it. Women's dress was a loose gown, sometimes with an upper tunic, and a belt studded with metal or adorned with jewels. Men wore their hair to their shoulders; women braided theirs and let it hang in long plaits. The fabrics from which the garments were made were often dyed with brilliant colours, red and blue, and striped and chequered patterns were used. Both sexes wore ornaments—necklets, armlets, bracelets, and brooches, made of gold or bronze, some in the form of serpents, with eyes of blue glass, some of plain metal, some enamelled or wrought with jewels. The Celtic design of curiously interlaced lines was used to decorate the borders of garments, jewellery, and weapons. The round shields, the conical helmets, and the short swords were made of bronze. The swords were two-edged, but pointless.

Many phrases in the play suggest the personality and appearance of the characters. The virility of Lear is hardly ever given its due on the stage. He is "every inch a king," and likes to think of the power of his royal regard—"When I do stare, see how the subject quakes." Kent, entering his service, speaks, perhaps to please him, of the authority in his countenance. He prides himself on his manhood. The terrible weakness of age creeps on him and is dashed away; he weeps, and would tear out his eyes for weeping; in prison, he kills the slave that hangs Cordelia; he opposes to his wrongs a fury of passionate suffering that, because he is an old man, drives him mad. This tremendous vigour never altogether leaves him until death seizes him: in the last scene of all he carries the dead Cordelia in his arms, and turns from his faint eager hope that she lives to curse the murderers and traitors who he imagines surround him. Much is suggested of the personality of the daughters by a few phrases. "Her eyes are fierce, but thine do comfort and not burn." "How far thine eyes may pierce I cannot tell." "I

would not see thy cruel nails pluck out his poor old eyes." " Her voice was ever soft, gentle and low, an excellent thing in woman." The quick contemptuous fierceness of Goneril is sharply contrasted with the slow gloating cruelty of Regan. Touches of description give the rough bluntness of Kent, the gentleness of Albany, the " fiery quality " of Cornwall, the good looks of Edmund. The neat pert precision of Oswald is summed up in Kent's apostrophe of him as a " wagtail."

The architecture and domestic furnishing of this early time must have been of the roughest, simplest character—though, when Shakespeare set a scene in the apartment or courtyard of a castle, he probably saw in his mind the dwellings of the nobles of his own day: castles like those at Warwick and Kenilworth in his native county. The imaginative suggestion of the fury and terror of the storm on the heath by night needs no comment. You will feel it as you read—the desolation of the place:

" Alack, the night comes on, and the bleak winds
Do sorely ruffle ; for many miles about
There's scarce a bush——"

the huge violence of the tempest challenged by the king. You will see how the surge of the storm through the heath scenes is kept before the imagination. Another impression given in detail is that of Dover cliff in Act IV.—one of the descriptions by which Shakespeare brought before the mind's eye of his audience what no painted scene attempted to show on his stage.

THE OPENING OF THE PLAY

Lear, King of Britain, growing old and weary of the burdens of state, divides his kingdom into three portions, which he intends to bestow upon his three

daughters according to their protestations of love for him. His youngest and dearest daughter disappoints him in this test of love, and, banishing her and a faithful courtier who pleads for her, he gives her share of the kingdom to her sisters, with whom he now intends to make his abode. The tragic consequences of this " hideous rashness " form the main plot of the play.

The Earl of Gloucester has an illegitimate son, who, knowing there is no prospect of succeeding to his father's lands, resolves to obtain them by foul means. He poisons the Earl's mind against the elder and legitimate son, who is forced to flee for his life and roam the countryside disguised as a Bedlam beggar. The fate of the Earl, the temporary success of the schemes of the evil son, and their final destruction, are told in the sub-plot of the play.

PERSONS OF THE PLAY

LEAR, *King of Britain*
KING OF FRANCE
DUKE OF BURGUNDY
DUKE OF ALBANY
DUKE OF CORNWALL
EARL OF KENT
EARL OF GLOUCESTER
EDGAR, *son to Gloucester*
EDMUND, *bastard son to Gloucester*
CURAN, *a courtier*
OLD MAN, *tenant to Gloucester*
DOCTOR
FOOL
OSWALD, *steward to Goneril*
A Captain employed by Edmund
Gentleman attendant on Cordelia
A Herald
Servants to Cornwall
GONERIL, REGAN, CORDELIA } *daughters to Lear*

Knights of Lear's train, Captains, Messengers, Soldiers, and Attendants

Scene : Britain

THE TRAGEDY OF KING LEAR

ACT I

SCENE I

King Lear's palace.

[*Enter* KENT, GLOUCESTER, *and* EDMUND.]

Kent. I thought the king had more affected the Duke of Albany than Cornwall.

Glou. It did always seem so to us: but now, in the division of the kingdom, it appears not which of the dukes he values most; for equalities are so weighed, that curiosity in neither can make choice of either's moiety.

Kent. Is not this your son, my lord?

Glou. His breeding, sir, hath been at my charge: I have so often blushed to acknowledge him, that now I am brazed to it. But I have, sir, a son by order of law, some year elder than this, who yet is no dearer in my account: though this knave came something saucily into the world before he was sent for, yet was his mother fair, and he must be acknowledged. Do you know this noble gentleman, Edmund?

Edm. No, my lord.

Glou. My lord of Kent: remember him hereafter as my honourable friend.

1. ***More affected***, Felt more affection for.
6. ***Curiosity***, The closest scrutiny. 7. ***Moiety***, Portion.

Edm. My services to your lordship.
Kent. I must love you, and sue to know you better.
Edm. Sir, I shall study deserving.
Glou. He hath been out nine years, and away he shall again. The king is coming.

[*Sennet. Enter* KING LEAR, CORNWALL, ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN, CORDELIA, *and* Attendants.]

Lear. Attend the lords of France and Burgundy, Gloucester.
Glou. I shall, my liege.
[*Exeunt* GLOUCESTER *and* EDMUND.
Lear. Meantime we shall express our darker purpose.
Give me the map there. Know we have divided
In three our kingdom: and 'tis our fast intent
To shake all cares and business from our age;
Conferring them on younger strengths, while we
Unburthen'd crawl toward death. Our son of Cornwall,
And you, our no less loving son of Albany,
We have this hour a constant will to publish
Our daughters' several dowers, that future strife
May be prevented now. The princes, France and Burgundy,
Great rivals in our youngest daughter's love,
Long in our court have made their amorous sojourn,
And here are to be answer'd. Tell me, my daughters,
Since now we will divest us both of rule,
Interest of territory, cares of state,
Which of you shall we say doth love us most?
That we our largest bounty may extend
Where nature doth with merit challenge. Goneril,
Our eldest-born, speak first.
Gon. Sir, I love you more than words can wield the matter;
Dearer than eye-sight, space, and liberty;

23. *Out*, Abroad. *Sennet*, Set of notes played on a trumpet.
29. *Fast intent*, Fixed intention. 35. *Several*, Separate.

Beyond what can be valued, rich or rare;
No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honour;
As much as child e'er loved, or father found;
A love that makes breath poor, and speech unable;
Beyond all manner of so much I love you.

Cor. [*Aside*] What shall Cordelia do? Love, and be silent.

Lear. Of all these bounds, even from this line to this,
With shadowy forests and with champains rich'd,
With plenteous rivers and wide skirted meads,
We make thee lady: to thine and Albany's issue
Be this perpetual. What says our second daughter,
Our dearest Regan, wife to Cornwall? Speak.

Reg. Sir, I am made
Of the self-same metal that my sister is,
And prize me at her worth. In my true heart
I find she names my very deed of love;
Only she comes too short: that I profess
Myself an enemy to all other joys,
Which the most precious square of sense possesses,
And find I am alone felicitate
In your dear highness' love.

Cor. [*Aside*] Then poor Cordelia!
And yet not so, since I am sure my love's
More richer than my tongue.

Lear. To thee, and thine, hereditary ever,
Remain this ample third of our fair kingdom;
No less in space, validity, and pleasure,
Than that conferr'd on Goneril. Now, our joy,
Although the last, not least; to whose young love
The vines of France and milk of Burgundy
Strive to be interess'd; what can you say to draw
A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak.

Cor. Nothing, my lord.

Lear. Nothing!

55. *Champains*, Plains.
66. *Most precious square*, Finest judgment. See page 189.
77. *Interess'd*, Bound together with, allied to.

Cor. Nothing.
Lear. (Nothing will come of nothing: speak again.)
Cor. Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave
My heart into my mouth: I love your majesty
According to my bond; nor more nor less.
Lear. How, how, Cordelia! mend your speech a little,
Lest it may mar your fortunes.
Cor. Good my lord,
You have begot me, bred me, loved me: I
Return those duties back as are right fit,
Obey you, love you, and most honour you.
Why have my sisters husbands, if they say
They love you all? Haply, when I shall wed,
That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry
Half my love with him, half my care and duty:
Sure, I shall never marry like my sisters,
To love my father all.
Lear. (But goes thy heart with this?)
Cor. Ay, good my lord.
Lear. So young, and so untender?
Cor. So young, my lord, and true.
Lear. Let it be so; thy truth then be thy dower:
For, by the sacred radiance of the sun,
The mysteries of Hecate and the night;
By all the operation of the orbs
From whom we do exist, and cease to be;
Here I disclaim all my paternal care,
Propinquity and property of blood,
And as a stranger to my heart and me
Hold thee from this for ever. The barbarous Scythian,

85. *Bond*, Obligation, duty.
102. *Hecate*, The goddess associated with the strange and fearful mysteries of night. Pronounce "Hec'at" in reading Shakespearean verse.
106. *Propinquity and property of blood*, Our blood-relationship, and the fact that you are mine, my daughter.
108. *Scythian*. Allusion is often made to the "barbarity" of this race.

Or he that makes his generation messes
To gorge his appetite shall to my bosom
Be as well neighbour'd, pitied and relieved,
As thou my sometime daughter.
Kent. Good my liege,
Lear. Peace, Kent!
Come not between the dragon and his wrath.
I loved her most, and thought to set my rest
On her kind nursery. Hence, and avoid my sight!
So be my grave my peace, as here I give
Her father's heart from her! Call France. Who stirs?
Call Burgundy. Cornwall and Albany,
With my two daughters' dowers digest this third:
Let pride, which she calls plainness, marry her.
I do invest you jointly with my power,
Pre-eminence and all the large effects
That troop with majesty. Ourself, by monthly course,
With reservation of an hundred knights,
By you to be sustain'd, shall our abode
Make with you by due turns. Only we still retain
The name and all the additions to a king; the sway,
Revenue, execution of the rest,
Beloved sons, be yours: which to confirm,
This coronet part betwixt you. [*Giving the crown.*
Kent. Royal Lear,
Whom I have ever honour'd as my king,
Loved as my father, as my master follow'd,
As my great patron thought on in my prayers,—
Lear. The bow is bent and drawn; make from the shaft.

109. *Generation*, Children. 109. *Messes*, Dishes of food.
115. *Set my rest*, A phrase from a card game, meaning "stake my all."
116. *Kind*, Used in its two senses—tender, and with the feelings natural to blood-relationship.
116. *Nursery*, Care. 120. *Digest*, Dispose of.
123. *Effects*, Manifestations of pomp and power
128. *Additions*, Titles.

Kent. Let it fall rather, though the fork invade
The region of my heart: be Kent unmannerly,
When Lear is mad. What wouldst thou do, old man?
Think'st thou that duty shall have dread to speak,
When power to flattery bows? To plainness honour's bound,
When majesty stoops to folly. Reverse thy doom;
And in thy best consideration check
This hideous rashness: answer my life my judgment,
Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least;
Nor are those empty-hearted whose low sound
Reverbs no hollowness.
Lear. Kent, on thy life, no more.
Kent. My life I never held but as a pawn
To wage against thy enemies; nor fear to lose it,
Thy safety being the motive.
Lear. Out of my sight!
Kent. See better, Lear, and let me still remain
The true blank of thine eye.
Lear. Now, by Apollo,—
Kent. Now, by Apollo, king,
Thou swear'st thy gods in vain.
Lear. O, vassal! miscreant!
[*Laying his hand on his sword.*
Alb. } Dear sir, forbear.
Corn. }
Kent. Do;
Kill thy physician, and the fee bestow
Upon the foul disease. Revoke thy doom;
Or, whilst I can vent clamour from my throat,
I'll tell thee thou dost evil.
Lear. Hear me, recreant!

141. *Doom*, Decree, judgment.
146. *Reverbs*, Reverberates, echoes. 147. *Pawn*, Pledge.
148. *Wage*, Stake as a wager.
151. *Blank*, The white mark in the centre of a target—hence "aim."
153. *Vassal*, Servant, here used contemptuously.
153. *Miscreant*, Wretch. 157. *Revoke*, Recall.
159. *Recreant*, Vile creature.

On thine allegiance hear me!
Since thou hast sought to make us break our vow,
Which we durst never yet, and with strain'd pride
To come betwéen our sentence and our power,
Which nor our nature nor our place can bear,
Our potency made good, take thy reward.
Five days we do allot thee, for provision
To shield thee from diseases of the world,
And on the sixth to turn thy hated back
Upon our kingdom: if, on the tenth day following,
Thy banish'd trunk be found in our dominions,
The moment is thy death. Away! By Jupiter,
This shall not be revoked.

Kent. Fare thee well, king; sith thus thou wilt appear,
Freedom lives hence, and banishment is here.
[*To Cordelia*] The gods to their dear shelter take thee, maid,
That justly think'st and hast most rightly said!
[*To Regan and Goneril*] And your large speeches may your deeds approve,
That good effects may spring from words of love.
Thus Kent, O princes, bids you all adieu;
He'll shape his old course in a country new. [*Exit.*

[*Flourish. Re-enter* GLOUCESTER, *with* FRANCE, BURGUNDY, *and* Attendants.]

Glou. Here's France and Burgundy, my noble lord.

Lear. My lord of Burgundy,
We first address towards you, who with this king
Hath rivall'd for our daughter: what, in the least,
Will you require in present dower with her,
Or cease your quest of love?

Bur. Most royal majesty
I crave no more than hath your highness offer'd,

167. *Diseases*, Troubles, discomforts. 173. *Sith*, Since.
175. *Dear*, Precious. 177. *Approve*, Prove.
185. *Present*, Immediate, to be given at once.

Nor will you tender less.

Lear. Right noble Burgundy,
When she was dear to us, we did hold her so;
But now her price is fall'n. Sir, there she stands:
If aught within that little seeming substance,
Or all of it, with our displeasure pieced,
And nothing more may fitly like your grace,
She's there, and she is yours.

Bur. I know no answer.

Lear. Will you, with those infirmities she owes,
Unfriended, new-adopted to our hate,
Dower'd with our curse and stranger'd with our oath
Take her, or leave her?

Bur. Pardon me, royal sir;
Election makes not up on such conditions.

Lear. Then leave her, sir; for, by the power that made me,
I tell you all her wealth. [*To France*] For you, great king,
I would not from your love make such a stray,
To match you where I hate; therefore beseech you
To avert your liking a more worthier way
Than on a wretch whom nature is ashamed
Almost to acknowledge hers.

France. This is most strange,
That she, that even but now was your best object,
The argument of your praise, balm of your age,
Most best, most dearest, should in this trice of time
Commit a thing so monstrous, to dismantle
So many folds of favour. Sure her offence
Must be of such unnatural degree,
That monsters it, or your fore-vouch'd affection
Fall'n into taint: which to believe of her,

193. *Like*, Please. 195. *Owes*, Possesses.
199. *Election*, Choice.
199. *Makes not up*, Does not determine, cannot be made.
207. *Your best object*, Your chief object of delight.
208. *Argument*, Subject-matter. 209. *Trice*, Moment.
214. *Taint*, Decay.

Must be a faith that reason without miracle
Could never plant in me.
Cor. I yet beseech your majesty,—
If for I want that glib and oily art,
To speak and purpose not, since what I well intend,
I'll do 't before I speak,—that you make known
It is no vicious blot, nor other foulness,
No unchaste action, or dishonour'd step,
That hath deprived me of your grace and favour:
But even for want of that for which I am richer,
A still-soliciting eye, and such a tongue
As I am glad I have not, though not to have it
Hath lost me in your liking.
Lear. Better thou
Hadst not been born than not to have pleased me better.
France. Is it but this,—a tardiness in nature,
Which often leaves the history unspoke
That it intends to do? My lord of Burgundy,
What say you to the lady? Love's not love
When it is mingled with regards that stand
Aloof from the entire point. Will you have her?
She is herself a dowry.
Bur. Royal Lear,
Give but that portion which yourself proposed,
And here I take Cordelia by the hand,
Duchess of Burgundy.
Lear. Nothing: I have sworn; I am firm.
Bur. I am sorry, then, you have so lost a father
That you must lose a husband.
Cor. Peace be with Burgundy!
Since that respects of fortune are his love,
I shall not be his wife.
France. Fairest Cordelia, that art most rich, being poor;

224. *Still-soliciting*, Always asking favour.
233. *Entire point*, All that really need be considered.
241. *Respects*, Considerations.

Most choice, forsaken ; and most loved, despised !
Thee and thy virtues here I seize upon :
Be it lawful I take up what's cast away.
Gods, gods ! 'tis strange that from their cold'st neglect
My love should kindle to inflamed respect.
Thy dowerless daughter, king, thrown to my chance,
Is queen of us, of ours, and our fair France :
Not all the dukes of watérish Burgundy
Can buy this unprized precious maid of me.
Bid them farewell, Cordelia, though unkind :
Thou losest here, a better where to find.

Lear. Thou hast her, France : let her be thine ; for we
Have no such daughter, nor shall ever see
That face of hers again. Therefore be gone
Without our grace, our love, our benison.
Come, noble Burgundy.

[*Flourish. Exeunt all but* FRANCE, GONERIL, REGAN, *and* CORDELIA.

France. Bid farewell to your sisters.

Cor. The jewels of our father, with wash'd eyes
Cordelia leaves you : I know you what you are ;
And, like a sister, am most loath to call
Your faults as they are named. Use well our father :
To your professed bosoms I commit him :
But yet, alas, stood I within his grace,
I would prefer him to a better place.
So farewell to you both.

Reg. Prescribe not us our duties.

Gon. Let your study
Be to content your lord, who hath received you
At fortune's alms. You have obedience scanted,
And well are worth the want that you have wanted.

Cor. Time shall unfold what plaited cunning hides :
Who cover faults, at last shame them derides.

252. *Unprized*, Not valued, with a play on another sense, "invaluable."
258. *Benison*, Blessing. 267. *Prefer*, Recommend.

Well may you prosper!

France. Come, my fair Cordelia.

[*Exeunt* FRANCE *and* CORDELIA.

Gon. Sister, it is not a little I have to say of what most nearly appertains to us both. I think our father will hence to-night.

Reg. That's most certain, and with you; next month with us.

Gon. You see how full of changes his age is; the observation we have made of it hath not been little: he always loved our sister most; and with what poor judgment he hath now cast her off appears too grossly.

Reg. 'Tis the infirmity of his age; yet he hath ever but slenderly known himself.

Gon. The best and soundest of his time hath been but rash; then must we look to receive from his age, not alone the imperfections of long-engraffed condition, but therewithal the unruly waywardness that infirm and choleric years bring with them.

Reg. Such unconstant starts are we like to have from him as this of Kent's banishment.

Gon. There is further compliment of leave-taking between France and him. Pray you, let's hit together: if our father carry authority with such dispositions as he bears, this last surrender of his will but offend us.

Reg. We shall further think on 't.

Gon. We must do something, and i' the heat.

[*Exeunt.*

285. *Grossly*, Obviously.
290. *Long-engraffed condition*, Qualities that, having been grafted for some time, have taken a firm root in the character.
293. *Unconstant starts*, Freakish impulses.
296. *Hit together*, Agree together to do the same thing.
299. *Offend*, Harm.

SCENE II

The Earl of Gloucester's castle.

[*Enter* EDMUND *with a letter.*]

Edm. Thou, nature, art my goddess; to thy law
My services are bound. Wherefore should I
Stand in the plague of custom, and permit
The curiosity of nations to deprive me,
For that I am some twelve or fourteen moonshines
Lag of a brother? Why bastard? wherefore base?
Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land:
Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund
As to the legitimate: fine word—legitimate!
Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed
And my invention thrive, Edmund the base
Shall top the legitimate. I grow; I prosper!
Now, gods, stand up for bastards!

[*Enter* GLOUCESTER.]

Glou. Kent banish'd thus! and France in choler parted!
And the king gone to-night! subscribed his power!
Confined to exhibition! All this done
Upon the gad! Edmund, how now! what news?
Edm. So please your lordship, none.
[*Putting up the letter.*
Glou. Why so earnestly seek you to put up that letter?
Edm. I know no news, my lord.
Glou. What paper were you reading?
Edm. Nothing, my lord.

4. ***Curiosity***, Over-fastidious feeling. For another use of the word, see page 13. 15. ***Subscribed***, Signed away, surrendered. 16. ***Exhibition***, Allowance.

Glou. No? What needed then that terrible dispatch of it into your pocket? the quality of nothing hath not such need to hide itself. Let's see: come, if it be nothing, I shall not need spectacles.

Edm. I beseech you, sir, pardon me: it is a letter from my brother, that I have not all o'er-read; and for so much as I have perused, I find it not fit for your o'er-looking.

Glou. Give me the letter, sir.

Edm. I shall offend, either to detain or give it. The contents, as in part I understand them, are to blame.

Glou. Let's see, let's see.

Edm. I hope, for my brother's justification, he wrote this but as an essay or taste of my virtue.

Glou. [*Reads*] "This policy and reverence of age makes the world bitter to the best of our times; keeps our fortunes from us till our oldness cannot relish them. I begin to find an idle and fond bondage in the oppression of aged tyranny; who sways, not as it hath power, but as it is suffered. Come to me, that of this I may speak more. If our father would sleep till I waked him, you should enjoy half his revenue for ever, and live the beloved of your brother, EDGAR." Hum!—Conspiracy!—"Sleep till I waked him, you should enjoy half his revenue,"—My son Edgar! Had he a hand to write this? a heart and brain to breed it in? When came this to you? who brought it?

Edm. It was not brought me, my lord; there's the cunning of it; I found it thrown in at the casement of my closet.

Glou. You know the character to be your brother's?

Edm. If the matter were good, my lord, I durst swear it were his; but, in respect of that, I would fain think it were not.

37. *Essay*, Trial. 37. *Taste*, Test.
41. *Fond*, Foolish. 55. *Character*, Handwriting.

Glou. It is his.

Edm. It is his hand, my lord; but I hope his heart is not in the contents.

Glou. Hath he never heretofore sounded you in this business?

Edm. Never, my lord: but I have heard him oft maintain it to be fit, that, sons at perfect age, and fathers declining, the father should be as ward to the son, and the son manage his revenue.

Glou. O villain, villain! His very opinion in the letter! Abhorred villain! Unnatural, detested, brutish villain! worse than brutish! Go, sirrah, seek him; I'll apprehend him: abominable villain! Where is he?

Edm. I do not well know, my lord. If it shall please you to suspend your indignation against my brother till you can derive from him better testimony of his intent, you shall run a certain course; where, if you violently proceed against him, mistaking his purpose, it would make a great gap in your own honour and shake in pieces the heart of his obedience. I dare pawn down my life for him that he hath wrote this to feel my affection to your honour, and to no further pretence of danger.

Glou. Think you so?

Edm. If your honour judge it meet, I will place you where you shall hear us confer of this, and by an auricular assurance have your satisfaction; and that without any further delay than this very evening.

Glou. He cannot be such a monster—

Edm. Nor is not, sure.

Glou. To his father, that so tenderly and entirely loves him. Heaven and earth! Edmund, seek him out: wind me into him, I pray you: frame the

71. *Apprehend*, Seize upon, arrest.
82. *Pretence*, Intention.

business after your own wisdom. I would unstate myself, to be in a due resolution.

Edm. I will seek him, sir, presently; convey the business as I shall find means, and acquaint you withal.

Glou. These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us: though the wisdom of nature can reason it thus and thus, yet nature finds itself scourged by the sequent effects: love cools, friendship falls off, brothers divide: in cities, mutinies; in countries, discord; in palaces, treason; and the bond cracked 'twixt son and father. This villain of mine comes under the prediction; there's son against father: the king falls from bias of nature; there's father against child. We have seen the best of our time: machinations, hollowness, treachery and all ruinous disorders follow us disquietly to our graves. Find out this villain, Edmund; it shall lose thee nothing; do it carefully. And the noble and true-hearted Kent banished! his offence, honesty! 'Tis strange. [*Exit.*

Edm. This is the excellent foppery of the world, that, when we are sick in fortune—often the surfeit of our own behaviour—we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon and the stars: as if we were villains by necessity; fools by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves and treachers, by spherical predominance; drunkards, liars and adulterers, by an enforced obedi-

94. *Unstate myself*, Give up my rank and possessions.
95. *A due resolution*, A proper assurance; to be in a due resolution, to know the truth for certain.
96. *Presently*, Instantly.
96. *Convey the business*, Manage the affair.
100. *Wisdom of nature*, Knowledge of the workings of nature can explain the causes of eclipses.
102. *Sequent*, Following. 103. *Mutinies*, Insurrections.
106. *Prediction*, *i.e.* of evil following the eclipses of sun and moon.
107. *Bias*, Inclination. Originally the word was used in the game of bowls, the *bias* being the weight fixed in the side of the bowl to make it incline a certain way.
119. *Treachers*, Traitors.

ence of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on. Edgar—

[*Enter* EDGAR.]

and pat he comes like the catastrophe of the old comedy: my cue is villanous melancholy, with a sigh like Tom o' Bedlam. O, these eclipses do portend these divisions! fa, sol, la, mi.

Edg. How now, brother Edmund! what serious contemplation are you in?

Edm. I am thinking, brother, of a prediction I read this other day, what should follow these eclipses.

Edg. Do you busy yourself about that?

Edm. I promise you, the effects he writ of succeed unhappily; as of unnaturalness between the child and the parent; death, dearth, dissolutions of ancient amities; divisions in state, menaces and maledictions against king and nobles; needless diffidences, banishment of friends, dissipation of cohorts, nuptial breaches, and I know not what.

Edg. How long have you been a sectary astronomical?

Edm. Come, come; when saw you my father last?

Edg. Why, the night gone by.

Edm. Spake you with him?

Edg. Ay, two hours together.

Edm. Parted you in good terms? Found you no displeasure in him by word or countenance?

Edg. None at all.

Edm. Bethink yourself wherein you may have offended him: and at my entreaty forbear his presence till some little time hath qualified the heat of his displeasure; which at this instant so rageth in him,

123. *Pat*, Exactly at the moment.
132. *Succeed*, Turn out, come to pass.
136. *Diffidences*, Suspicions.
137. *Dissipation of cohorts*, Dispersion of cohorts.
139. *Sectary astronomical*, One of the sect of astronomers.

that with the mischief of your person it would scarcely allay.

Edg. Some villain hath done me wrong.

Edm. That's my fear. I pray you, have a continent forbearance till the speed of his rage goes slower; and, as I say, retire with me to my lodging, from whence I will fitly bring you to hear my lord speak: pray ye, go; there's my key: if you do stir abroad, go armed.

Edg. Armed, brother!

Edm. Brother, I advise you to the best; go armed: I am no honest man if there be any good meaning towards you: I have told you what I have seen and heard; but faintly, nothing like the image and horror of it: pray you, away.

Edg. Shall I hear from you anon?

Edm. I do serve you in this business. [*Exit* EDGAR.
A credulous father, and a brother noble,
Whose nature is so far from doing harms
That he suspects none: on whose foolish honesty
My practices ride easy. I see the business.
Let me, if not by birth, have lands by wit:
All with me's meet that I can fashion fit. [*Exit.*

SCENE III

The Duke of Albany's palace.

[*Enter* GONERIL, *and* OSWALD, *her steward.*]

Gon. Did my father strike my gentleman for chiding of his fool?

Osw. Yes, madam.

Gon. By day and night he wrongs me; every hour
He flashes into one gross crime or other,
That sets us all at odds: I'll not endure it:
His knights grow riotous, and himself upbraids us

155. *Continent*, Controlled. 171. *Practices*, Plots.

On every trifle. When he returns from hunting,
I will not speak with him; say I am sick:
If you come slack of former services,
You shall do well; the fault of it I'll answer.
Osw. He's coming, madam; I hear him.
[*Horns within.*
Gon. Put on what weary negligence you please,
You and your fellows; I'ld have it come to question:
If he distaste it, let him to our sister,
Whose mind and mine, I know, in that are one,
Not to be over-ruled. Idle old man,
That still would manage those authorities
That he hath given away! Now, by my life,
Old fools are babes again; and must be used
With checks as flatteries, when they are seen abused.
Remember what I tell you.
Osw. Well, madam.
Gon. And let his knights have colder looks among you;
What grows of it, no matter; advise your fellows so:
I would breed from hence occasions, and I shall,
That I may speak: I'll write straight to my sister,
To hold my very course. Prepare for dinner.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV

A hall in the same.

[*Enter* KENT, *disguised.*]

Kent. If but as well I other accents borrow,
That can my speech defuse, my good intent
May carry through itself to that full issue

21. ***When they are seen abused.*** "They" may refer to "old fools," or to "flatteries."
2. ***Defuse,*** Disorder, so that it will not be recognized; so, disguise.

For which I razed my likeness. Now, banish'd Kent,
If thou canst serve where thou dost stand condemn'd,
So may it come, thy master, whom thou lovest,
Shall find thee full of labours.

[*Horns within. Enter* LEAR, Knights, *and* Attendants.]

Lear. Let me not stay a jot for dinner; go get it ready. [*Exit an* Attendant.] How now! what art thou?

Kent. A man, sir.

Lear. What dost thou profess? what wouldst thou with us?

Kent. I do profess to be no less than I seem; to serve him truly that will put me in trust; to love him that is honest; to converse with him that is wise, and says little; to fear judgment; to fight when I cannot choose; and to eat no fish.

Lear. What art thou?

Kent. A very honest-hearted fellow, and as poor as the king.

Lear. If thou be as poor for a subject as he is for a king thou art poor enough. What wouldst thou?

Kent. Service.

Lear. Who wouldst thou serve?

Kent. You.

Lear. Dost thou know me, fellow?

Kent. No, sir; but you have that in your countenance which I would fain call master.

Lear. What's that?

Kent. Authority.

Lear. What services canst thou do?

Kent. I can keep honest counsel, ride, run, mar a

4. ***Razed***, Erased.
12. ***What dost thou profess?*** What is your profession?
15. ***In trust***, In a position of trust.
16. ***To converse with***, To associate with.
17. ***Judgment***, Coming before a judge.

curious tale in telling it, and deliver a plain message bluntly: that which ordinary men are fit for, I am qualified in; and the best of me is diligence.

Lear. How old art thou?

Kent. Not so young, sir, to love a woman for singing, nor so old to dote on her for anything: I have years on my back forty eight.

Lear. Follow me; thou shalt serve me; if I like thee no worse after dinner, I will not part from thee yet. Dinner, ho, dinner! Where's my knave? my fool? Go you, and call my fool hither.

[*Exit an* Attendant.

[*Enter* OSWALD.]

You, you, sirrah, where's my daughter?

Osw. So please you, [*Exit.*

Lear. What says the fellow there? Call the clotpoll back. [*Exit a* Knight.] Where's my fool, ho? I think the world's asleep.

[*Re-enter* Knight.]

How now! where's that mongrel?

Knight. He says, my lord, your daughter is not well.

Lear. Why came not the slave back to me when I called him?

Knight. Sir, he answered me in the roundest manner, he would not.

Lear. He would not!

Knight. My lord, I know not what the matter is, but, to my judgment, your highness is not entertained with that ceremonious affection as you were wont; there's a great abatement of kindness appears as well in the general dependants as in the duke himself also and your daughter.

Lear. Ha! sayest thou so?

Knight. I beseech you, pardon me, my lord, if I be

34. *Curious*, Complicated, subtle.
47. *Clotpoll*, Clodpoll, blockhead.
53. *Knave*, Boy.
54. *Roundest*, Plainest.

mistaken; for my duty cannot be silent when I think your highness wronged.

Lear. Thou but rememberest me of mine own conception: I have perceived a most faint neglect of late; which I have rather blamed as mine own jealous curiosity than as a very pretence and purpose of unkindness: I will look further into 't. But where's my fool? I have not seen him this two days.

Knight. Since my young lady's going into France, sir, the fool hath much pined away.

Lear. No more of that; I have noted it well. Go you, and tell my daughter I would speak with her. [*Exit an* Attendant.] Go you, call hither my fool.

[*Exit an* Attendant.

[*Re-enter* OSWALD.]

O, you sir, you, come you hither, sir: who am I, sir?

Osw. My lady's father.

Lear. "My lady's father"! my lord's knave: you dog! you slave! you cur!

Osw. I am none of these, my lord; I beseech your pardon.

Lear. Do you bandy looks with me, you rascal?

[*Striking him.*

Osw. I'll not be struck, my lord.

Kent. Nor tripped neither, you base foot-ball player. [*Tripping up his heels.*

Lear. I thank thee, fellow; thou servest me, and I'll love thee.

Kent. Come, sir, arise, away! I'll teach you differences: away, away! If you will measure your lubber's length again, tarry: but away! go to; have you wisdom? so. [*Pushes* OSWALD *out.*

Lear. Now, my friendly knave, I thank thee; there's earnest of thy service. [*Giving* KENT *money.*

67. *Rememberest*, Remindest. 69. *Jealous*, Suspicious.
70. *Curiosity*, Over-particular notice.
84. *Bandy*, To exchange; the word was used in tennis.
95. *Earnest*, Money given as a pledge.

[*Enter* FOOL.]

Fool. Let me hire him too: here's my coxcomb.
[*Offering* KENT *his cap.*

Lear. How now, my pretty knave! how dost thou?

Fool. Sirrah, you were best take my coxcomb.

Kent. Why, fool?

Fool. Why, for taking one's part that's out of favour: nay, an thou canst not smile as the wind sits, thou 'lt catch cold shortly: there, take my coxcomb: why, this fellow has banished two on 's daughters, and did the third a blessing against his will; if thou follow him, thou must needs wear my coxcomb. How now, nuncle! Would I had two coxcombs and two daughters!

Lear. Why, my boy?

Fool. If I gave them all my living, I 'ld keep my coxcombs myself. There's mine; beg another of thy daughters.

Lear. Take heed, sirrah; the whip.

Fool. Truth's a dog must to kennel; he must be whipped out, when Lady the brach may stand by the fire and stink.

Lear. A pestilent gall to me!

Fool. Sirrah, I'll teach thee a speech.

Lear. Do.

Fool. Mark it, nuncle:

Have more than thou showest,
Speak less than thou knowest,
Lend less than thou owest,
Ride more than thou goest,

96. *Coxcomb*, The fool's cap, which was sometimes made of scarlet cloth shaped like a cock's comb.
102. *An*, If.
107. *Nuncle*. From *mine uncle*, a common form of address by the jester to his master.
115. *Brach*, A female hound. 123. *Owest*, Hast.

Learn more than thou trowest,
Set less than thou throwest;
And thou shalt have more
Than two tens to a score.

Kent. This is nothing, fool.

Fool. Then 'tis like the breath of an unfee'd lawyer; you gave me nothing for't. Can you make no use of nothing, nuncle?

Lear. Why, no, boy; nothing can be made out of nothing.

Fool. [*To Kent*] Prithee, tell him, so much the rent of his land comes to; he will not believe a fool.

Lear. A bitter fool!

Fool. Dost thou know the difference, my boy, between a bitter fool and a sweet fool?

Lear. No, lad; teach me.

Fool.
That lord that counsell'd thee
To give away thy land,
Come place him here by me,
Do thou for him stand:
The sweet and bitter fool
Will presently appear;
The one in motley here,
The other found out there.

Lear. Dost thou call me fool, boy?

Fool. All thy other titles thou hast given away; that thou wast born with.

Kent. This is not altogether fool, my lord.

Fool. No, faith, lords and great men will not let me; if I had a monopoly out, they would have part on't; and ladies too, they will not let me have all fool to myself; they'll be snatching. Give me an egg, nuncle, and I'll give thee two crowns.

126. *Set less than thou throwest.* The sense seems to be, stake less than you win in throws of the dice.

154. *Monopoly.* "Monopolies, *i.e.* grants giving an individual the exclusive right of practising a trade or manufacturing some article, were a great abuse of the time, hence a frequent object of satire" (Steevens).

Lear. What two crowns shall they be?

Fool. Why, after I have cut the egg i' the middle, and eat up the meat, the two crowns of the egg. When thou clovest thy crown i' the middle, and gavest away both parts, thou borest thy ass on thy back o'er the dirt: thou hadst little wit in thy bald crown, when thou gavest thy golden one away. If I speak like myself in this, let him be whipped that first finds it so.

[*Singing*] Fools had ne'er less wit in a year;
For wise men are grown foppish,
They know not how their wits to wear,
Their manners are so apish.

Lear. When were you wont to be so full of songs, sirrah?

Fool. I have used it, nuncle, ever since thou madest thy daughters thy mother: for when thou gavest them the rod,

[*Singing*] Then they for sudden joy did weep,
And I for sorrow sung,
That such a king should play bo-peep,
And go the fools among.

Prithee, nuncle, keep a schoolmaster that can teach thy fool to lie: I would fain learn to lie.

Lear. An you lie, sirrah, we'll have you whipped.

Fool. I marvel what kin thou and thy daughters are: they'll have me whipped for speaking true, thou'lt have me whipped for lying; and sometimes I am whipped for holding my peace. I had rather be any kind o' thing than a fool: and yet I would not be thee, nuncle; thou hast pared thy wit o' both sides, and left nothing i' the middle: here comes one o' the parings.

[*Enter* GONERIL.]

Lear. How now, daughter! what makes that frontlet on? Methinks you are too much of late i' the frown.

Fool. Thou wast a pretty fellow when thou hadst no

189. *Frontlet*, Frown.

need to care for her frowning; now thou art an O without a figure. I am better than thou art now; I am a fool, thou art nothing. [*To Gon.*] Yes, forsooth, I will hold my tongue; so your face bids me, though you say nothing. Mum, mum,

He that keeps not crust nor crum,
Weary of all, shall want some.

[*Pointing to Lear*] That's a sheal'd peascod.

Gon. Not only, sir, this your all-licensed fool,
But other of your insolent retinue
Do hourly carp and quarrel; breaking forth
In rank and not to be endured riots. Sir,
I had thought, by making this well known unto you,
To have found a safe redress; but now grow fearful,
By what yourself too late have spoke and done,
That you protect this course, and put it on
By your allowance; which if you should, the fault
Would not 'scape censure, nor the redresses sleep,
Which, in the tender of a wholesome weal,
Might in their working do you that offence,
Which else were shame, that then necessity
Will call discreet proceeding.

Fool. For, you know, nuncle,

The hedge-sparrow fed the cuckoo so long,
That it had it head bit off by it young.

So, out went the candle, and we were left darkling.

Lear. Are you our daughter?

Gon. Come, sir,
I would you would make use of that good wisdom,
Whereof I know you are fraught; and put away

199. *Sheal'd*, Shelled, empty. 208. *Allowance*, Approval.
210. *In the tender of a wholesome weal*, In the safeguarding of a sound, decently ordered community.
216. *It young*. "It" is occasionally used instead of the more general "his" for the neuter possessive in Elizabethan English.
217. *Darkling*, In the dark. 221. *Fraught*, Filled.

These dispositions, that of late transform you
From what you rightly are.

Fool. May not an ass know when the cart draws the horse?
Whoop, Jug! I love thee.

Lear. Doth any here know me? This is not Lear:
Doth Lear walk thus? speak thus? Where are his eyes?
Either his notion weakens, his discernings
Are lethargied—Ha! waking? 'tis not so.
Who is it that can tell me who I am?

Fool. Lear's shadow.

Lear. I would learn that; for, by the marks of sovereignty, knowledge, and reason, I should be false persuaded I had daughters.

Fool. Which they will make an obedient father.

Lear. Your name, fair gentlewoman?

Gon. This admiration, sir, is much o' the savour
Of other your new pranks. I do beseech you
To understand my purposes aright:
As you are old and reverend, you should be wise.
Here do you keep a hundred knights and squires;
Men so disorder'd, so debosh'd and bold,
That this our court, infected with their manners,
Shows like a riotous inn: epicurism and vice
Make it more like a tavern or an alehouse
Than a graced palace. The shame itself doth speak
For instant remedy: be then desired
By her, that else will take the thing she begs,
A little to disquantity your train;
And the remainder, that shall still depend,
To be such men as may besort your age,

222. *Dispositions*, Moods.
225. *Whoop . . . thee.* Probably the refrain of some popular song. Jug is the pet name of a woman, for Jane or Joan, or perhaps Judith.
228. *Notion*, Intellect.
237. *Admiration*, Wonder, astonishment.
246. *Graced*, Full of dignity.

And know themselves and you.
Lear. Darkness and devils!
Saddle my horses; call my train together.
Degenerate bastard! I'll not trouble thee:
Yet have I left a daughter.
Gon. You strike my people; and your disorder'd rabble
Make servants of their betters.

[*Enter* ALBANY.]

Lear. Woe, that too late repents,—[*To Alb.*] O, sir, are you come?
Is it your will? Speak, sir. Prepare my horses.
Ingratitude, thou marble-hearted fiend,
More hideous when thou show'st thee in a child
Than the sea-monster!
Alb. Pray, sir, be patient.
Lear. [*To Gon.*] Detested kite! thou liest:
My train are men of choice and rarest parts,
That all particulars of duty know,
And in the most exact regard support
The worships of their name. O most small fault,
How ugly didst thou in Cordelia show!
That, like an engine, wrench'd my frame of nature
From the fix'd place; drew from my heart all love,
And added to the gall. O Lear, Lear, Lear!
Beat at this gate, that let thy folly in,
[*Striking his head.*
And thy dear judgment out! Go, go, my people.
Alb. My lord, I am guiltless, as I am ignorant
Of what hath moved you.
Lear. It may be so, my lord.
Hear, nature, hear; dear goddess, hear!
Suspend thy purpose, if you didst intend
To make this creature fruitful;

267. *Worships*, Dignities.
269. *Engine*, An instrument of torture.
273. *Dear*, Precious.

Into her womb convey sterility;
Dry up in her the organs of increase;
And from her derogate body never spring
A babe to honour her! If she must teem,
Create her child of spleen; that it may live
And be a thwart disnatured torment to her!
Let it stamp wrinkles in her brow of youth;
With cadent tears fret channels in her cheeks;
Turn all her mother's pains and benefits
To laughter and contempt; that she may feel
How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child! Away, away! [*Exit.*

Alb. Now, gods that we adore, whereof comes this?

Gon. Never afflict yourself to know the cause;
But let his disposition have that scope
That dotage gives it.

[*Re-enter* LEAR.]

Lear. What, fifty of my followers at a clap!
Within a fortnight!

Alb. What's the matter, sir?

Lear. I'll tell thee: [*To Gon.*] Life and death! I am ashamed
That thou hast power to shake my manhood thus;
That these hot tears, which break from me perforce,
Should make thee worth them. Blasts and fogs upon thee!
The untented woundings of a father's curse
Pierce every sense about thee! Old fond eyes,
Beweep this cause again, I'll pluck ye out,
And cast you, with the waters that you lose,
To temper clay. Yea, is it come to this?
Let it be so: yet have I left a daughter,

283. *Spleen*, Bitterness.
284. *Disnatured*, Unnatural.
284. *Thwart*, Perverse.
286. *Cadent*, Falling.
286. *Fret*, Wear away.
301. *Untented*, Incurable. *To tent* is (a) to probe a wound, (b) to cure. A tent is the roll of linen used for probing.
302. *Fond*, Foolish.

Who, I am sure, is kind and comfortable:
When she shall hear this of thee, with her nails
She'll flay thy wolvish visage. Thou shalt find
That I'll resume the shape which thou dost think
I have cast off for ever: thou shalt, I warrant thee.
[*Exeunt* LEAR, KENT, *and* Attendants.

Gon. Do you mark that, my lord?

Alb. I cannot be so partial, Goneril,
To the great love I bear you,—

Gon. Pray you, content. What, Oswald, ho!
[*To the Fool*] You, sir, more knave than fool, after your master.

Fool. Nuncle Lear, nuncle Lear, tarry and take the fool with thee.

A fox, when one has caught her,
And such a daughter,
Should sure to the slaughter,
If my cap would buy a halter:
So the fool follows after. [*Exit.*

Gon. This man hath had good counsel:—a hundred knights!
'Tis politic and safe to let him keep
At point a hundred knights: yes, that, on every dream,
Each buzz, each fancy, each complaint, dislike,
He may enguard his dotage with their powers,
And hold our lives in mercy. Oswald, I say!

Alb. Well, you may fear too far.

Gon. Safer than trust too far:
Let me still take away the harms I fear,
Not fear still to be taken: I know his heart.
What he hath utter'd I have writ my sister:
If she sustain him and his hundred knights,
When I have show'd the unfitness,—

[*Re-enter* OSWALD.]

How now, Oswald!

307. *Comfortable*, Ready to comfort.
325. *Politic*, As we say, good policy. 326. *At point*, Always ready.

What, have you writ that letter to my sister?

Osw. Yes, madam.

Gon. Take you some company, and away to horse: Inform her full of my particular fear;
And thereto add such reasons of your own
As may compact it more. Get you gone;
And hasten your return. [*Exit* OSWALD.] No, no, my lord,
This milky gentleness and course of yours
Though I condemn not, yet, under pardon,
You are much more attask'd for want of wisdom
Than praised for harmful mildness.

Alb. How far your eyes may pierce I cannot tell: Striving to better, oft we mar what's well.

Gon. Nay, then—

Alb. Well, well; the event. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V

Court before the same.

[*Enter* LEAR, KENT, *and* Fool.]

Lear. Go you before to Gloucester with these letters. Acquaint my daughter no further with any thing you know than comes from her demand out of the letter. If your diligence be not speedy, I shall be there afore you.

Kent. I will not sleep, my lord, till I have delivered your letter. [*Exit.*

Fool. If a man's brains were in's heels, were't not in danger of kibes?

Lear. Ay, boy.

Fool. Then, I prithee, be merry; thy wit shall ne'er go slipshod.

345. *Attask'd*, Taken to task, blamed for.
9. *Kibes*, Sore places on the heels.

Lear. Ha, ha, ha!

Fool. Shalt see thy other daughter will use thee kindly; for though she's as like this as a crab's like an apple, yet I can tell what I can tell.

Lear. Why, what canst thou tell, my boy?

Fool. She will taste as like this as a crab does to a crab. Thou canst tell why one's nose stands i' the middle on's face?

Lear. No.

Fool. Why, to keep one's eyes of either side's nose; that what a man cannot smell out, he may spy into.

Lear. I did her wrong—

Fool. Canst tell how an oyster makes his shell?

Lear. No.

Fool. Nor I neither; but I can tell why a snail has a house.

Lear. Why?

Fool. Why, to put his head in; not to give it away to his daughters, and leave his horns without a case.

Lear. I will forget my nature. So kind a father! Be my horses ready?

Fool. Thy asses are gone about 'em. The reason why the seven stars are no more than seven is a pretty reason.

Lear. Because they are not eight?

Fool. Yes, indeed: thou wouldst make a good fool.

Lear. To take 't again perforce! Monster ingratitude!

Fool. If thou wert my fool, nuncle, I'ld have thee beaten for being old before thy time.

Lear. How's that?

Fool. Thou shouldst not have been old till thou hadst been wise.

36. *The seven stars*, The Pleiades, the seven daughters of Atlas, nymphs of Diana's train, who were turned into pigeons as they fled from the huntsman Orion, and made into a constellation.

Lear. O, let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven!
Keep me in temper: I would not be mad!

[*Enter* Gentleman.]

How now! are the horses ready?
Gent. Ready, my lord.
Lear. Come, boy. [*Exeunt.*

48. *Temper*, Calmness, moderation.

ACT II

SCENE I

The Earl of Gloucester's castle.

[*Enter* EDMUND, *and* CURAN *meets him.*]

Edm. Save thee, Curan.

Cur. And you, sir. I have been with your father, and given him notice that the Duke of Cornwall and Regan his duchess will be here with him this night.

Edm. How comes that?

Cur. Nay, I know not. You have heard of the news abroad; I mean the whispered ones, for they are yet but ear-kissing arguments?

Edm. Not I: pray you, what are they?

Cur. Have you heard of no likely wars toward, 'twixt the Dukes of Cornwall and Albany?

Edm. Not a word.

Cur. You may do then in time. Fare you well, sir. [*Exit.*

Edm. The duke be here to-night? The better! best!
This weaves itself perforce into my business.
My father hath set guard to take my brother;
And I have one thing, of a queasy question,

8. ***Ear-kissing arguments***, Whispered tales.
17. ***A queasy question***, Needing to be handled with most delicate care. ***Queasy***, literally squeamish, sick.

Which I must act: briefness and fortune, work!
Brother, a word; descend: brother, I say!

[*Enter* EDGAR.]

My father watches: O sir, fly this place;
Intelligence is given where you are hid;
You have now the good advantage of the night:
Have you not spoken 'gainst the Duke of Cornwall?
He's coming hither; now, i' the night, i' the haste,
And Regan with him: have you nothing said
Upon his party 'gainst the Duke of Albany?
Advise yourself.

Edg. I am sure on't, not a word.

Edm. I hear my father coming: pardon me,
In cunning I must draw my sword upon you:
Draw; seem to defend yourself; now quit you well.
Yield: come before my father. Light, ho, here!
Fly, brother. Torches, torches! So, farewell.
[*Exit* EDGAR.
Some blood drawn on me would beget opinion
[*Wounds his arm.*
Of my more fierce endeavour: I have seen drunkards
Do more than this in sport. Father, father!
Stop, stop! No help?

[*Enter* GLOUCESTER, *and* Servants *with torches.*]

Glou. Now, Edmund, where's the villain?

Edm. Here stood he in the dark, his sharp sword out,
Mumbling of wicked charms, conjuring the moon
To stand 's auspicious mistress.

Glou. But where is he?

Edm. Look, sir, I bleed.

Glou. Where is the villain, Edmund?

27. *Advise yourself*, Consider carefully.
35. *More than this.* Sometimes a young gallant would prick himself with point of sword or dagger that he might drink to his mistress in his own blood.

Edm. Fled this way, sir. When by no means he could—

Glou. Pursue him, ho! Go after. [*Exeunt some Servants.*] By no means what?

Edm. Persuade me to the murder of your lordship; But that I told him, the revenging gods 'Gainst parricides did all their thunders bend; Spoke, with how manifold and strong a bond The child was bound to the father; sir, in fine, Seeing how loathly opposite I stood To his unnatural purpose, in fell motion With his prepared sword he charges home My unprovided body, lanced mine arm: But when he saw my best alarum'd spirits, Bold in the quarrel's right, roused to the encounter, Or whether gasted by the noise I made, Full suddenly he fled.

Glou. Let him fly far: Not in this land shall he remain uncaught; And found—dispatch. The noble duke my master, My worthy arch and patron, comes to-night: By his authority I will proclaim it, That he which finds him shall deserve our thanks, Bringing the murderous caitiff to the stake; He that conceals him, death.

Edm. When I dissuaded him from his intent, And found him pight to do it, with curst speech I threatened to discover him: he replied, "Thou unpossessing bastard! dost thou think, If I would stand against thee, could the reposure Of any trust, virtue, or worth in thee Make thy words faith'd? No: what I should deny— As this I would; ay, though thou didst produce My very character—I'ld turn it all

50. *Fell*, Fierce.
53. *Alarum'd*, Roused for the conflict.
59. *Arch*, Chief.
62. *Caitiff*, Wretch.
65. *Pight*, Literally pitched; here, fixed, determined.
65. *Curst*, Angry.
72. *Character*, handwriting.

To thy suggestion, plot, and damned practice :
And thou must make a dullard of the world,
If they not thought the profits of my death
Were very pregnant and potential spurs
To make thee seek it."
Glou. Strong and fasten'd villain
Would he deny his letter ? I never got him.
[*Tucket within.*
Hark, the duke's trumpets ! I know not why he comes.
All ports I'll bar ; the villain shall not 'scape ;
The duke must grant me that : besides, his picture
I will send far and near, that all the kingdom
May have due note of him ; and of my land,
Loyal and natural boy, I'll work the means
To make thee capable.

[*Enter* CORNWALL, REGAN, *and* Attendants.]

Corn. How now, my noble friend ! since I came hither,
Which I can call but now, I have heard strange news.
Reg. If it be true, all vengeance comes too short
Which can pursue the offender. How dost, my lord ?
Glou. O, madam, my old heart is crack'd, is crack'd !
Reg. What, did my father's godson seek your life ?
He whom my father named ? your Edgar ?
Glou. O, lady, lady, shame would have it hid !
Reg. Was he not companion with the riotous knights
That tend upon my father ?
Glou. I know not, madam : 'tis too bad, too bad.
Edm. Yes, madam, he was of that consort.
Reg. No marvel, then, though he were ill affected :
'Tis they have put him on the old man's death,
To have the waste and spoil of his revénues.

73. *Suggestion*, Temptation. 73. *Practice*, Plot.
75. *The profits . . . seek it*, The advantages you would derive from my death were fully great enough to urge you to seek it.
Tucket, Set of notes played on the trumpet.
85. *Capable*, *i.e.* of inheriting my estate in spite of the bar of illegitimacy. 98. *Ill affected*, Evilly disposed

I have this present evening from my sister
Been well inform'd of them ; and with such cautions,
That if they come to sojourn at my house,
I'll not be there.
Corn. Nor I, assure thee, Regan.
Edmund, I hear that you have shewn your father
A child-like office.
Edm. 'Twas my duty, sir.
Glou. He did bewray his practice ; and received
This hurt you see, striving to apprehend him.
Corn. Is he pursued ?
Glou. Ay, my good lord.
Corn. If he be taken, he shall never more
Be feared of doing harm : make your own purpose,
How in my strength you please. For you, Edmund,
Whose virtue and obedience doth this instant
So much commend itself, you shall be ours :
Natures of such deep trust we shall much need :
You we first seize on.
Edm. I shall serve you, sir,
Truly, however else.
Glou. For him I thank your grace.
Corn. You know not why we came to visit you,—
Reg. Thus, out of season, threading dark-eyed night :
Occasions, noble Gloucester, of some poise,
Wherein we must have use of your advice :
Our father he hath writ, so hath our sister,
Of differences, which I least thought it fit
To answer from our home ; the several messengers
From hence attend dispatch. Our good old friend,
Lay comforts to your bosom ; and bestow
Your needful counsel to our business,
Which craves the instant use.
Glou. I serve you, madam :
Your graces are right welcome. [*Flourish. Exeunt*

107. *Bewray*, Reveal. 120. *Poise*, Weight.

SCENE II

Before GLOUCESTER'S *castle.*

[*Enter* KENT *and* OSWALD, *severally.*]

Osw. Good dawning to thee, friend; art of this house?

Kent. Ay.

Osw. Where may we set our horses?

Kent. I' the mire.

Osw. Prithee, if thou lovest me, tell me.

Kent. I love thee not.

Osw. Why, then, I care not for thee.

Kent. If I had thee in Lipsbury pinfold, I would make thee care for me.

Osw. Why dost thou use me thus? I know thee not.

Kent. Fellow, I know thee.

Osw. What dost thou know me for?

Kent. A knave; a rascal; an eater of broken meats; a base, proud, shallow, beggarly, three-suited, hundred-pound, filthy, worsted-stocking knave; a lily-livered, action-taking knave; a glass-gazing, superserviceable, finical rogue; one-trunk-inheriting slave; one that art nothing but the composition of a knave, beggar, and coward: one whom I will beat into clamorous

8. *Lipsbury.* The particular allusion is unknown.
8. *Pinfold,* Enclosure for stray cattle.
15. *Three-suited,* Perhaps the allowance for a gentleman's servant.
15. *Hundred-pound,* The lowest property qualification enabling a man to serve on a jury.
16. *Worsted-stocking.* At this time every one who could afford them wore silk stockings.
16. *Lily-livered,* White-livered, cowardly. The liver was supposed to be the seat of courage.
17. *Action-taking,* Rushing to the law for protection instead of fighting his own battles. 18. *Inheriting,* Possessing.

whining, if thou deniest the least syllable of thy addition.

Osw. Why, what a monstrous fellow art thou, thus to rail on one that is neither known of thee nor knows thee!

Kent. What a brazen-faced varlet art thou, to deny thou knowest me! Is it two days ago since I tripped up thy heels, and beat thee before the king? Draw, you rogue: for, though it be night, yet the moon shines; I'll make a sop o' the moonshine of you: draw, you cullionly barber-monger, draw.

[*Drawing his sword.*

Osw. Away! I have nothing to do with thee.

Kent. Draw, you rascal: you come with letters against the king; and take vanity the puppet's part against the royalty of her father: draw, you rogue, or I'll so carbonado your shanks: draw, you rascal; come your ways.

Osw. Help, ho! murder! help!

Kent. Strike, you slave; stand, rogue; stand, you neat slave, strike. [*Beating him.*

Osw. Help, ho! murder! murder!

[*Enter* EDMUND, *with his rapier drawn*, CORNWALL, REGAN, GLOUCESTER, *and* Servants.]

Edm. How now! What's the matter?

[*Parting them.*

Kent. With you, goodman boy, an you please: come I'll flesh ye; come on, young master.

Glou. Weapons! arms! What's the matter here?

Corn. Keep peace, upon your lives:

21. *Addition*, Title. 26. *Varlet*, Rascal.
30. *Sop o' the moonshine*. An old way of preparing eggs for the table was called "eggs in moonshine."
31. *Cullionly*, Contemptible.
31. *Barber-monger*, One who is for ever dealing with the barber.
34. *Vanity the puppet*. Vanity was a common character in the old "morality" plays, which taught some moral lesson by means of an allegory. 36. *Carbonado*, Cut across.
43. *An*, If. 44. *Flesh ye*, Give your sword its first taste of flesh.

He dies that strikes again. What is the matter?

Reg. The messengers from our sister and the king.

Corn. What is your difference? speak.

Osw. I am scarce in breath, my lord.

Kent. No marvel, you have so bestirred your valour. You cowardly rascal, nature disclaims in thee: a tailor made thee.

Corn. Thou art a strange fellow: a tailor make a man?

Kent. Ay, a tailor, sir: a stone-cutter or a painter could not have made him so ill, though he had been but two hours at the trade.

Corn. Speak yet, how grew your quarrel?

Osw. This ancient ruffian, sir, whose life I have spared at suit of his grey beard,—

Kent. Thou zed! thou unnecessary letter! My lord, if you will give me leave, I will tread this unbolted villain into mortar, and daub the walls with him. Spare my grey beard, you wagtail?

Corn. Peace, sirrah!
You beastly knave, know you no reverence?

Kent. Yes, sir; but anger hath a privilege.

Corn. Why art thou angry?

Kent. That such a slave as this should wear a sword,
Who wears no honesty. Such smiling rogues as these,
Like rats, oft bite the holy cords a-twain
Which are too intrinse t' unloose; smooth every passion
That in the natures of their lords rebel;
Bring oil to fire, snow to their colder moods;
Renege, affirm, and turn their halcyon beaks
With every gale and vary of their masters,
Knowing nought, like dogs, but following.

63. *Unbolted*, Unmitigated (literally unsifted)
73. *Intrinse*, Drawn tight. 73. *Smooth*, Smooth down, flatter.
76. *Renege*, Deny.
76. *Halcyon*, Kingfisher. It was supposed that the dead body of this bird, if hung up, would shift with the wind, acting as a weather-cock.

A plague upon your epileptic visage!
Smile you my speeches, as I were a fool?
Goose, if I had you upon Sarum plain,
I'ld drive ye cackling home to Camelot.
Corn. What, art thou mad, old fellow?
Glou. How fell you out? say that.
Kent. No contraries hold more antipathy
Than I and such a knave.
Corn. Why dost thou call him knave? What's his offence?
Kent. His countenance likes me not.
Corn. No more, perchance, does mine, nor his, nor hers.
Kent. Sir, 'tis my occupation to be plain:
I have seen better faces in my time
Than stands on any shoulder that I see
Before me at this instant.
Corn. This is some fellow,
Who, having been praised for bluntness, doth affect
A saucy roughness, and constrains the garb
Quite from his nature: he cannot flatter, he!
An honest mind and plain, he must speak truth!
An they will take it, so; if not, he's plain.
These kind of knaves I know, which in this plainness
Harbour more craft and more corrupter ends
Than twenty silly ducking observants
That stretch their duties nicely.
Kent. Sir, in good sooth, in sincere verity,
Under the allowance of your great aspect,
Whose influence, like the wreath of radiant fire

81. *Sarum*, Salisbury.
82. *Camelot*, where King Arthur kept his court. A story in the *Mort d'Arthur* tells of how the young knight Gareth, victorious in the encounters of his quest, sent his defeated enemies to do homage to the king.
88. *Likes*, Pleases.
101. *Observants*, Attendants who flatteringly observe their master's moods.
102. *Stretch*, Strain.
102. *Nicely*, With finicking perfection.
104. *Aspect*, The position of a planet in the heavens.

On flickering Phœbus' front,—

Corn. What mean'st by this?

Kent. To go out of my dialect, which you discommend so much. I know, sir, I am no flatterer: he that beguiled you in a plain accent was a plain knave; which for my part I will not be, though I should win your displeasure to entreat me to 't.

Corn. What was the offence you gave him?

Osw. I never gave him any:
It pleased the king his master very late
To strike at me, upon his misconstruction;
When he, conjunct, and flattering his displeasure,
Tripp'd me behind: being down, insulted, rail'd,
And put upon him such a deal of man,
That worthied him, got praises of the king
For him attempting who was self-subdued;
And, in the fleshment of this dread exploit,
Drew on me here again.

Kent. None of these rogues and cowards
But Ajax is their fool.

Corn. Fetch forth the stocks!
You stubborn ancient knave, you reverend braggart,
We'll teach you—

Kent. Sir, I am too old to learn:
Call not your stocks for me: I serve the king;
On whose employment I was sent to you:
You shall do small respect, show too bold malice
Against the grace and person of my master,
Stocking his messenger.

Corn. Fetch forth the stocks! As I have life and honour,
There shall he sit till noon.

106. *Phœbus*, The god of the sun.
116. *Conjunct*, In concert with.
121. *In the fleshment*, Being flushed with, having tasted blood.
123. *Ajax*, Type of the warrior mighty in arm and slow in wit. He was one of the Greek chieftains at the time of the war between the Greeks and the Trojans.

Reg. Till noon! till night, my lord; and all night too.

Kent. Why, madam, if I were your father's dog,
You should not use me so.

Reg. Sir, being his knave, I will.

Corn. This is a fellow of the self-same colour
Our sister speaks of. Come bring away the stocks!

[*Stocks brought out.*

Glou. Let me beseech your grace not to do so:
His fault is much, and the good king his master
Will check him for 't: your proposed low correction
Is such as basest and contemned'st wretches
For pilferings and most common trespasses
Are punished with: the king must take it ill,
That he so slightly valued in his messenger,
Should have him thus restrain'd.

Corn. I'll answer that.

Reg. My sister may receive it much more worse,
To have her gentleman abused, assaulted,
For following her affairs. Put in his legs.

[KENT *is put in the stocks.*

Come, my good lord, away.

[*Exeunt all but* GLOUCESTER *and* KENT.

Glou. I am sorry for thee, friend; 'tis the duke's pleasure,
Whose disposition, all the world well knows,
Will not be rubb'd nor stopp'd: I'll entreat for thee.

Kent. Pray, do not, sir: I have watched and travell'd hard;
Some time I shall sleep out, the rest I'll whistle.
A good man's fortune may grow out at heels:
Give you good morrow!

Glou. The duke's to blame in this; 'twill be ill taken. [*Exit.*

141. *Contemned'st*, Most despised.
152. *Rubb'd*, Another metaphor from bowls. The rub was any impediment in the green that caused the bowl to deviate from its course. 153. *Watched*, Been awake.

Kent. Good king, that must approve the common saw,
Thou out of heaven's benediction comest
To the warm sun!
Approach, thou beacon to this under globe,
That by thy comfortable beams I may
Peruse this letter! Nothing almost sees miracles
But misery: I know 'tis from Cordelia,
Who hath most fortunately been inform'd
Of my obscured course; and shall find time
From this enormous state, seeking to give
Losses their remedies. All weary and o'er-watch'd,
Take vantage, heavy eyes, not to behold
This shameful lodging.
Fortune, good night; smile once more; turn thy wheel! [*Sleeps.*

SCENE III

A wood.

[*Enter* EDGAR.]

Edg. I heard myself proclaim'd;
And by the happy hollow of a tree
Escaped the hunt. No port is free: no place,
That guard and most unusual vigilance,
Does not attend my taking. Whiles I may 'scape,
I will preserve myself: and am bethought
To take the basest and most poorest shape
That ever penury, in contempt of man,
Brought near to beast: my face I'll grime with filth,
Blanket my loins, elf all my hair in knots,

159, 160. *Thou . . . sun.* The saw (wise saying) "out of God's blessing into the warm sun" was used to describe a change from good to bad. 168. *O'er-watch'd*, Wakeful too long.
10. *Elf.* A fairy trick was to tangle hair, especially the manes of horses, in the night.

And with presented nakedness out-face
The wind and persecutions of the sky.
The country gives me proof and precedent
Of Bedlam beggars, who with roaring voices
Strike in their numb'd and mortified bare arms
Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary;
And with this horrible object, from low farms,
Poor pelting villages, sheep-cotes and mills,
Sometime with lunatic bans, sometime with prayers,
Enforce their charity. Poor Turlygod! poor Tom!
That's something yet: Edgar I nothing am. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV

Before GLOUCESTER'S *castle.* KENT *in the stocks.*

[*Enter* LEAR, Fool, *and* Gentleman.]

Lear. 'Tis strange that they should so depart from home,
And not send back my messenger.
Gent. As I learn'd,
The night before there was no purpose in them
Of this remove.
Kent. Hail to thee, noble master!
Lear. Ha!
Makest thou this shame thy pastime?
Kent. No, my lord.
Fool. Ha, ha! he wears cruel garters. Horses are

14. ***Bedlam beggars.*** These vagabonds either had been, or claimed to have been, discharged as harmless from the madhouse of Bedlam. 15. ***Mortified,*** Deadened by cold or disease.
17. ***Object,*** Appearance. 18. ***Pelting,*** Paltry.
18. ***Sheep-cotes,*** Shepherds' huts.
20. ***Turlygod.*** Turlygood was a common name for a Bedlam beggar. It seems to be connected with "Turlupin," the name of an old fanatical fraternity in France.
7. ***Cruel.*** There is a pun in allusion to "crewel," of which garters were made.

tied by the heads, dogs and bears by the neck, monkeys by the loins, and men by the legs: when a man's over-lusty at legs, then he wears wooden nether-stocks.

Lear. What's he that hath so much thy place mistook
To set thee here?

Kent. It is both he and she;
Your son and daughter.

Lear. No.

Kent. Yes.

Lear. No, I say.

Kent. I say, yea.

Lear. No, no, they would not.

Kent. Yes, they have.

Lear. By Jupiter, I swear, no.

Kent. By Juno, I swear, ay.

Lear. They durst not do 't;
They could not, would not do 't; 'tis worse than murder,
To do upon respect such violent outrage:
Resolve me, with all modest haste, which way
Thou mightst deserve, or they impose, this usage,
Coming from us.

Kent. My lord, when at their home
I did commend your highness' letters to them,
Ere I was risen from the place that show'd
My duty kneeling, came there a reeking post,
Stew'd in his haste, half breathless, panting forth
From Goneril his mistress salutations;
Deliver'd letters, spite of intermission,

10. *Nether-stocks*, Stockings, or hose, as distinguished from upper-stocks, or trunk hose.
20, 21. *Jupiter, Juno*, King and queen of the gods.
24. *Resolve*, Tell.
24. *Modest*, Moderate, possible in reason.
27. *Commend*, Deliver with commendations, generally used of verbal messages of remembrance, as we say "kind regards."
29. *Post*, Messenger.
32. *Spite of intermission*, In spite of the fact that he was breaking in, interrupting my delivery of my message.

Which presently they read: on whose contents
They summon'd up their meiny, straight took horse;
Commanded me to follow and attend
The leisure of their answer; gave me cold looks:
And meeting here the other messenger,
Whose welcome I perceived had poison'd mine—
Being the very fellow that of late
Display'd so saucily against your highness—
Having more man than wit about me, drew:
He raised the house with loud and coward cries.
Your son and daughter found this trespass worth
The shame which here it suffers.

Fool. Winter's not gone yet, if the wild-geese fly that way.

Fathers that wear rags
Do make their children blind;
But fathers that bear bags
Shall see their children kind.

But, for all this, thou shalt have as many dolours for thy daughters as thou canst tell in a year.

Lear. O, how this mother swells up toward my heart!
Hysterica passio, down, thou climbing sorrow,
Thy element's below! Where is this daughter?

Kent. With the earl, sir, here within.

Lear. Follow me not; stay here. [*Exit.*

Gent. Made you no more offence but what you speak of?

Kent. None.
How chance the king comes with so small a train?

Fool. An thou hadst been set i' the stocks for that question, thou hadst well deserved it.

Kent. Why, fool?

Fool. We'll set thee to school to an ant, to teach

33. *Presently*, At once. 34. *Meiny*, Retinue.
52. *Tell*, Count.
53, 54. *Mother . . . hysterica passio*, Two old names for hysteria. The manifestations of overwhelming grief may resemble those of this disease.

thee there's no labouring i' the winter. All that follow their noses are led by their eyes but blind men. Let go thy hold when a great wheel runs down a hill, lest it break thy neck with following it; but the great one that goes up the hill, let him draw thee after. When a wise man gives thee better counsel, give me mine again: I would have none but knaves follow it, since a fool gives it.

That sir which serves and seeks for gain,
And follows but for form,
Will pack when it begins to rain,
And leave thee in the storm.
But I will tarry; the fool will stay,
And let the wise man fly:
The knave turns fool that runs away:
The fool no knave, perdy.

Kent. Where learned you this, fool?

Fool. Not i' the stocks, fool.

[*Re-enter* LEAR, *with* GLOUCESTER.]

Lear. Deny to speak with me? They are sick? they are weary?
They have travell'd all the night? Mere fetches
The images of revolt and flying off.
Fetch me a better answer.

Glou. My dear lord,
You know the fiery quality of the duke;
How unremovable and fix'd he is
In his own course.

Lear. Vengeance! plague! death! confusion!
Fiery? what quality? Why, Gloucester, Gloucester,
I'ld speak with the Duke of Cornwall and his wife.

Glou. Well, my good lord, I have inform'd them so.

Lear. Inform'd them! Dost thou understand me, man?

Glou. Ay, my good lord.

81. *Perdy*, Par Dieu.
85. *Fetches*, Pretexts. 92. *Quality*, Character.

Lear. The king would speak with Cornwall; the dear father
Would with his daughter speak, commands her service:
Are they inform'd of this? My breath and blood!
Fiery? the fiery duke? Tell the hot duke that—
No, but not yet: may be he is not well:
Infirmity doth still neglect all office
Whereto our health is bound; we are not ourselves
When nature being oppress'd commands the mind
To suffer with the body: I'll forbear;
And am fall'n out with my more headier will,
To take the indisposed and sickly fit
For the sound man. [*Looking on Kent*] Death on my state! wherefore
Should he sit here? This act persuades me
That this remotion of the duke and her
Is practice only. Give me my servant forth.
Go tell the duke and 's wife I'ld speak with them,
Now, presently: bid them come forth and hear me,
Or at their chamber-door I'll beat the drum
Till it cry sleep to death.

Glou. I would have all well betwixt you. [*Exit.*

Lear. O me, my heart, my rising heart! But, down!

Fool. Cry to it, nuncle, as the cockney did to the eels when she put 'em i' the paste alive; she knapped 'em o' the coxcombs with a stick, and cried "Down, wantons, down!" 'Twas her brother that, in pure kindness to his horse, buttered his hay.

[*Re-enter* GLOUCESTER, *with* CORNWALL, REGAN, *and* Servants.]

Lear. Good morrow to you both.

102. *Still*, Always. 110. *Remotion*, Removal.
118. *Cockney*, Affected woman. The word has been used with the following meanings:—(*a*) a spoilt child; (*b*) an affected person; (*c*) a townsman, whose manners may seem affected to rural folk; (*d*) a native of *the* town, London.
119. *Knapped*, Rapped.

Corn. Hail to your grace!
[KENT *is set at liberty.*

Reg. I am glad to see your highness.

Lear. Regan, I think you are; I know what reason
I have to think so: if thou shouldst not be glad,
I would divorce me from my mother's tomb,
Sepúlchring an adultress. [*To* KENT] O, are you free?
Some other time for that. Beloved Regan,
Thy sister's naught: O Regan, she hath tied
Sharp-tooth'd unkindness, like a vulture, here:
[*Points to his heart.*
I can scarce speak to thee; thou'lt not believe
With how depraved a quality—O Regan!

Reg. I pray you, sir, take patience: I have hope
You less know how to value her desert
Than she to scant her duty.

Lear. Say, how is that?

Reg. I cannot think my sister in the least
Would fail her obligation: if, sir, perchance
She have restrain'd the riots of your followers,
'Tis on such ground and to such wholesome end
As clears her from all blame.

Lear. My curses on her!

Reg. O, sir, you are old;
Nature in you stands on the very verge
Of her confine: you should be ruled and led
By some discretion that discerns your state
Better than you yourself. Therefore I pray you
That to our sister you do make return;
Say you have wrong'd her, sir.

Lear. Ask her forgiveness?
Do you but mark how this becomes the house:
[*Kneeling*] "Dear daughter, I confess that I am old;
Age is unnecessary: on my knees I beg

131. *Like a vulture.* The Titan Prometheus, having incurred the wrath of the gods by giving fire to men, was chained to a rock, where he was tortured by an eagle, that, every night, tore and devoured his liver, which was renewed next day.

That you'll vouchsafe me raiment, bed and food."

Reg. Good sir, no more; these are unsightly tricks:
Return you to my sister.

Lear. [*Rising*] Never, Regan;
She hath abated me of half my train;
Look'd black upon me; struck me with her tongue,
Most serpent-like, upon the very heart:
All the stored vengeances of heaven fall
On her ingrateful top! Strike her young bones,
You taking airs, with lameness.

Corn. Fie, sir, fie!

Lear. You nimble lightnings, dart your blinding flames
Into her scornful eyes. Infect her beauty,
You fen-suck'd fogs, drawn by the powerful sun,
To fall and blast her pride.

Reg. O the blest gods! so will you wish on me,
When the rash mood is on.

Lear. No, Regan, thou shalt never have my curse:
Thy tender-hefted nature shall not give
Thee o'er to harshness: her eyes are fierce, but thine
Do comfort and not burn. 'Tis not in thee
To grudge my pleasures, to cut off my train,
To bandy hasty words, to scant my sizes,
And in conclusion to oppose the bolt
Against my coming in: thou better know'st
The offices of nature, bond of childhood,
Effects of courtesy, dues of gratitude;
Thy half o' the kingdom hast thou not forgot,
Wherein I thee endow'd.

Reg. Good sir, to the purpose.

Lear. Who put my man i' the stocks?

[*Tucket within.*

159. *Young bones*, A phrase for an unborn babe.
160. *Taking*, Bewitching, used of the enchantment of malignant supernatural powers.
168. *Heft*, Haft, handle. For the various possible meanings of tender-hefted, see page 190.
172. *Sizes*, Allowances.

Corn. What trumpet's that?
Reg. I know't; my sister's; this approves her letter,
That she would soon be here.

[*Enter* OSWALD.]

Is your lady come?
Lear. This is a slave, whose easy borrow'd pride
Dwells in the fickle grace of her he follows.
Out, varlet, from my sight!
Corn. What means your grace?
Lear. Who stock'd my servant? Regan, I have good hope
Thou did'st not know on 't. Who comes here?

[*Enter* GONERIL.]

O heavens,
If you do love old men, if your sweet sway
Allow obedience, if yourselves are old,
Make it your cause; send down, and take my part!
[*To* GON.] Art not ashamed to look upon this beard?
O Regan, wilt thou take her by the hand?
Gon. Why not by the hand, sir? How have I offended?
All's not offence that indiscretion finds
And dotage terms so.
Lear. O sides, you are too tough;
Will you yet hold? How came my man i' the stocks?
Corn. I set him there, sir: but his own disorders
Deserved much less advancement.
Lear. You! did you?
Reg. I pray you, father, being weak, seem so.
If, till the expiration of your month,
You will return and sojourn with my sister,
Dismissing half your train, come then to me:
I am now from home, and out of that provision

188. *Allow*, Approve of.

Which shall be needful for your entertainment.

Lear. Return to her, and fifty men dismiss'd?
No, rather I abjure all roofs, and choose
To wage against the enmity o' the air;
To be a comrade with the wolf and owl,—
Necessity's sharp pinch! Return with her?
Why, the hot-blooded France, that dowerless took
Our youngest born, I could as well be brought
To knee his throne, and, squire-like, pension beg
To keep base life afoot. Return with her?
Persuade me rather to be slave and sumpter
To this detested groom. [*Pointing at* OSWALD.

Gon. At your choice, sir.

Lear. I prithee, daughter, do not make me mad:
I will not trouble thee, my child; farewell:
We'll no more meet, no more see one another:
But yet thou art my flesh, my blood, my daughter;
Or rather a disease that's in my flesh,
Which I must needs call mine: thou art a boil,
A plague-sore, an embossed carbuncle,
In my corrupted blood. But I'll not chide thee;
Let shame come when it will, I do not call it:
I do not bid the thunder-bearer shoot,
Nor tell tales of thee to high-judging Jove:
Mend when thou can'st; be better at thy leisure:
I can be patient; I can stay with Regan,
I and my hundred knights.

Reg. Not altogether so:
I look'd not for you yet, nor am provided
For your fit welcome. Give ear, sir, to my sister;
For those that mingle reason with your passion
Must be content to think you old, and so—
But she knows what she does.

Lear. Is this well spoken?

Reg. I dare avouch it, sir: what, fifty followers?
Is it not well? What should you need of more?

213. *Sumpter*, Pack-horse. 221. *Embossed*, Swollen.

Yea, or so many, sith that both charge and danger
Speak 'gainst so great a number? How, in one house,
Should many people under two commands
Hold amity? 'Tis hard, almost impossible.

Gon. Why might not you, my lord, receive attendance
From those that she calls servants or from mine?

Reg. Why not, my lord? If then they chanced to slack you,
We could control them. If you will come to me,—
For now I spy a danger,—I entreat you
To bring but five and twenty: to no more
Will I give place or notice.

Lear. I gave you all—

Reg. And in good time you gave it.

Lear. Made you my guardians, my depositaries;
But kept a reservation to be follow'd
With such a number. What, must I come to you
With five and twenty, Regan? said you so?

Reg. And speak 't again, my lord; no more with me.

Lear. Those wicked creatures yet do look well-favour'd,
When others are more wicked; not being the worst
Stands in some rank of praise. [*To* GON.] I'll go with thee:
Thy fifty yet doth double five-and-twenty,
And thou art twice her love.

Gon. Hear me, my lord;
What need you five and twenty, ten, or five,
To follow in a house where twice so many
Have a command to tend you?

Reg. What need one?

Lear. O, reason not the need: our basest beggars
Are in the poorest thing superfluous:
Allow not nature more than nature needs,

236. *Sith that*, Since. 243. *Control*, Rebuke.
248. *Depositaries*, Persons entrusted with the care of valuable possessions. 253. *Well-favour'd*, Handsome.

Man's life's as cheap as beast's: thou art a lady;
If only to go warm were gorgeous,
Why, nature needs not what thou gorgeous wear'st,
Which scarcely keeps thee warm. But for true need,—
You heavens, give me that patience, patience I need!
You see me here, you gods, a poor old man,
As full of grief as age; wretched in both:
If it be you that stirs these daughters' hearts
Against their father, fool me not so much
To bear it tamely; touch me with noble anger,
And let not women's weapons, water-drops,
Stain my man's cheeks! No, you unnatural hags,
I will have such revenges on you both,
That all the world shall—I will do such things,—
What they are, yet I know not; but they shall be
The terrors of the earth. You think I'll weep;
No, I'll not weep:
I have full cause of weeping; but this heart
Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws,
Or ere I'll weep. O fool, I shall go mad!

[*Exeunt* LEAR, GLOUCESTER, KENT, *and* Fool. *Storm and tempest.*

Corn. Let us withdraw; 'twill be a storm.

Reg. This house is little: the old man and his people
Cannot be well bestow'd.

Gon. 'Tis his own blame; hath put himself from rest,
And must needs taste his folly.

Reg. For his particular, I'll receive him gladly,
But not one follower.

Gon. So am I purposed.
Where is my lord of Gloucester?

Corn. Follow'd the old man forth: he is return'd.

282. *Flaws*, Broken-off pieces.
283. *Or, ere*. Both are really the same word, O.E. *ær*, before. The two are often used together in Elizabethan English.
286. *Bestow'd*, Lodged here.

[*Re-enter* GLOUCESTER.]

Glou. The king is in high rage.
Corn. Whither is he going?
Glou. He calls to horse; but will I know not whither.
Corn. 'Tis best to give him way; he leads himself.
Gon. My lord, entreat him by no means to stay.
Glou. Alack, the night comes on, and the bleak winds
Do sorely ruffle; for many miles about
There's scarce a bush.
Reg. O, sir, to wilful men,
The injuries that they themselves procure
Must be their schoolmasters. Shut up your doors:
He is attended with a desperate train:
And what they may incense him to, being apt
To have his ear abused, wisdom bids fear.
Corn. Shut up your doors, my lord; 'tis a wild night:
My Regan counsels well: come out o' the storm.
[*Exeunt.*

303. *Incense*, Instigate, urge.
303. *Apt*, Ready. 304. *Abused*, Deceived.

ACT III

SCENE I

A heath.

[*Storm still. Enter* KENT *and a* Gentleman, *meeting.*]

Kent. Who's there, besides foul weather?
Gent. One minded like the weather, most unquietly.
Kent. I know you. Where's the king?
Gent. Contending with the fretful elements;
Bids the wind blow the earth into the sea,
Or swell the curled waters 'bove the main,
That things might change or cease; tears his white hair,
Which the impetuous blasts, with eyeless rage,
Catch in their fury, and make nothing of;
Strives in his little world of man to out-scorn
The to-and-fro-conflicting wind and rain.
This night, wherein the cub-drawn bear would couch,
The lion and the belly-pinched wolf
Keep their fur dry, unbonneted he runs,
And bids what will take all.
Kent. But who is with him?
Gent. None but the fool; who labours to outjest

6. *Main*, Mainland.
10. *Little world.* Ancient philosophers regarded man as a "microcosm" (little world), an epitome or model of the "macrocosm" (great world) of the universe.

His heart-struck injuries.

Kent. Sir, I do know you;
And dare, upon the warrant of my note,
Commend a dear thing to you. There is division,
Although as yet the face of it be cover'd
With mutual cunning, 'twixt Albany and Cornwall;
Who have (as who have not, that their great stars
Throned and set high?) servants, who seem no less,
Which are to France the spies and speculations
Intelligent of our state; what hath been seen,
Either in snuffs and packings of the dukes,
Or the hard rein which both of them have borne
Against the old kind king; or something deeper,
Whereof perchance these are but furnishings;
But, true it is, from France there comes a power
Into this scatter'd kingdom; who already,
Wise in our negligence, have secret feet
In some of our best ports, and are at point
To show their open banner. Now to you:
If on my credit you dare build so far
To make your speed to Dover, you shall find
Some that will thank you, making just report
Of how unnatural and bemadding sorrow
The king hath cause to plain.
I am a gentleman of blood and breeding,
And from some knowledge and assurance offer
This office to you.

Gent. I will talk further with you.

Kent. No, do not.
For confirmation that I am much more
Than my out-wall, open this purse, and take
What it contains. If you shall see Cordelia,—

18. *Warrant of my note*, Strength of my knowledge.
19. *Commend*, Entrust, confide. 19. *Dear*, Precious, important.
24. *Speculations*, Watchers.
25. *Intelligent of*, Giving information about.
26. *Snuffs*, Quarrels. 26. *Packings*, Plottings.
30. *Power*, Army. 32. *Have secret feet*, Have secretly landed.
35. *My credit*, Belief in what I say.

As fear not but you shall,—show her this ring ;
And she will tell you who your fellow is
That yet you do not know. Fie on this storm !
I will go seek the king.
Gent. Give me your hand : have you no more to say ?
Kent. Few words, but, to effect, more than all yet ;
That, when we have found the king,—in which your pain
That way, I'll this,—he that first lights on him
Holla the other. [*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II

Another part of the heath. Storm still.

[*Enter* LEAR *and* Fool.]

Lear. Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks ! rage ! blow !
You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout
Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the cocks !
You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,
Vaunt-couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts,
Singe my white head ! And thou, all-shaking thunder,
Smite flat the thick rotundity o' the world !
Crack nature's moulds, all germens spill at once,
That make ingrateful man !
Fool. O nuncle, court holy-water in a dry house is better than this rain-water out o' door. Good nuncle,

2. *Cataracts, hurricanoes*, Waterspouts, huge and rushing downpours of rain.
4. *Thought-executing*, Acting as swiftly as thought.
5. *Vaunt-couriers*, Forerunners.
8. *Nature's moulds*, The shapes in which the forms of nature are made.
8. *All germens spill*, Destroy all seeds of life in nature.
10. *Court holy-water*, Proverbial phrase for flattery.

in, and ask thy daughters' blessing: here's a night pities neither wise man nor fool.

Lear. Rumble thy bellyful! Spit, fire! spout, rain!
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters:
I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness;
I never gave you kingdom, call'd you children,
You owe me no subscription: then let fall
Your horrible pleasure; here I stand, your slave,
A poor, infirm, weak, and despised old man;
But yet I call you servile ministers,
That have with two pernicious daughters join'd
Your high-engender'd battles 'gainst a head
So old and white as this. O! O! 'tis foul!

Fool. He that has a house to put 's head in has a good head-piece.

The man that makes his toe
What he his heart should make
Shall of a corn cry woe,
And turn his sleep to wake.

For there was never yet fair woman but she made mouths in a glass.

Lear. No, I will be the pattern of all patience; I will say nothing.

[*Enter* KENT.]

Kent. Who's there?

Fool. Marry, here's a wise man and a fool.

Kent. Alas, sir, are you here? things that love night
Love not such nights as these; the wrathful skies
Gallow the very wanderers of the dark,
And make them keep their caves: since I was man,

18. *Subscription*, Obedience.
21. *Servile ministers*, Slavish servants.
36. *Marry*, A common exclamation (" By Mary ").
39. *Gallow*, Terrify.

Such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder,
Such groans of roaring wind and rain, I never
Remember to have heard: man's nature cannot carry
The affliction nor the fear.

Lear. Let the great gods,
That keep this dreadful pother o'er our heads,
Find out their enemies now. Tremble, thou wretch,
That hast within thee undivulged crimes,
Unwhipp'd of justice: hide thee, thou bloody hand;
Thou perjured, and thou simular man of virtue
That art incestuous: caitiff, to pieces shake,
That under covert and convenient seeming
Hast practised on man's life: close pent-up guilts,
Rive your concealing continents and cry
These dreadful summoners grace. I am a man
More sinn'd against than sinning.

Kent. Alack, bare-headed!
Gracious my lord, hard by here is a hovel;
Some friendship will it lend you 'gainst the tempest:
Repose you there; while I to this hard house—
More harder than the stones whereof 'tis raised;
Which even but now, demanding after you,
Denied me to come in—return, and force
Their scanted courtesy.

Lear. My wits begin to turn.
Come on, my boy: how dost, my boy? art cold?
I am cold myself. Where is this straw, my fellow?
The art of our necessities is strange,
That can make vile things precious. Come, your hovel.
Poor fool and knave, I have one part in my heart
That's sorry yet for thee.

Fool. [*Singing*] He that has and a little tiny wit,—

49. *Simular*, Counterfeit. 52. *Practised on*, Plotted against.
53. *Continents*, That which contains.
54. *Summoners*, Officers who summon offenders to appear at court.
69. *He that has . . . wit*, *cf.* the song of the Fool at the end of *Twelfth Night*.

With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,—
Must make content with his fortunes fit,
For the rain it raineth every day.

Lear. True, my good boy. Come, bring us to this hovel. [*Exit* LEAR *and* KENT.

Fool. I'll speak a prophecy ere I go:

When priests are more in word than matter;
When brewers mar their malt with water;
When nobles are their tailors' tutors;
No heretics burn'd, but wenches' suitors;
When every case in law is right;
No squire in debt, nor no poor knight;
When slanders do not live in tongues;
Nor cutpurses come not to throngs;
Then shall the realm of Albion
Come to great confusion:
Then comes the time, who lives to see 't,
That going shall be used with feet.

This prophecy Merlin shall make; for I live before his time. [*Exit.*

SCENE III

GLOUCESTER'S *castle.*

[*Enter* GLOUCESTER *and* EDMUND.]

Glou. Alack, alack, Edmund, I like not this unnatural dealing. When I desired their leave that I might pity him, they took from me the use of mine own house; charged me, on pain of their perpetual displeasure, neither to speak of him, entreat for him, nor any way sustain him.

74. *A prophecy.* These lines do not occur in the Quartos.
77. *Tailors' tutors, i.e.* teach them what the fashion is.
87. *Merlin,* The famous wizard who lent King Arthur the aid of his magic.

Edm. Most savage and unnatural!

Glou. Go to; say you nothing. There's a division betwixt the dukes; and a worse matter than that: I have received a letter this night; 'tis dangerous to be spoken; I have locked the letter in my closet: these injuries the king now bears will be revenged home; there's part of a power already footed: we must incline to the king. I will seek him, and privily relieve him: go you and maintain talk with the duke, that my charity be not of him perceived: if he ask for me, I am ill and gone to bed. Though I die for it, as no less is threatened me, the king my old master must be relieved. There is some strange thing toward, Edmund; pray you, be careful. [*Exit.*

Edm. This courtesy, forbid thee, shall the duke
Instantly know; and of that letter too:
This seems a fair deserving, and must draw me
That which my father loses; no less than all:
The younger rises when the old doth fall. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV

The heath. Before a hovel.

[*Enter* LEAR, KENT, *and* Fool.]

Kent. Here is the place, my lord; good my lord, enter:
The tyranny of the open night's too rough
For nature to endure. [*Storm still.*

Lear. Let me alone.

Kent. Good my lord, enter here.

Lear. Wilt break my heart?

Kent. I had rather break mine own. Good my lord, enter.

11. *Closet*, Private room. 14. *Privily*, Secretly.
23. *Fair deserving*, A good turn for which I may reasonably expect a reward.

Lear. Thou think'st 'tis much that this contentious storm
Invades us to the skin : so 'tis to thee :
But where the greater malady is fix'd,
The lesser is scarce felt. Thou'ldst shun a bear ;
But if thy flight lay toward the raging sea,
Thou'ldst meet the bear i' the mouth. When the mind's free,
The body's delicate : the tempest in my mind
Doth from my senses take all feeling else
Save what beats there. Filial ingratitude !
Is it not as this mouth should tear this hand
For lifting food to 't ? But I will punish home.
No, I will weep no more. In such a night
To shut me out ! Pour on ; I will endure.
In such a night as this ! O Regan, Goneril !
Your old kind father, whose frank heart gave you all,—
O, that way madness lies ; let me shun that ;
No more of that.

Kent. Good my lord, enter here.

Lear. Prithee, go in thyself ; seek thine own ease :
This tempest will not give me leave to ponder
On things would hurt me more. But I'll go in.
[*To the* Fool] In, boy ; go first. You houseless poverty,—
Nay, get thee in. I'll pray, and then I'll sleep.
[Fool *goes in.*
Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you
From seasons such as these ? O, I have ta'en
Too little care of this ! Take physic, pomp ;
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
That thou may'st shake the superflux to them,

35. *Superflux*, The surplus of your good things.

And show the heavens more just.

Edg. [*Within*] Fathom and half, fathom and half! Poor Tom! [*The* Fool *runs out from the hovel.*

Fool. Come not in here, nuncle, here's a spirit. Help me, help me!

Kent. Give me thy hand. Who's there?

Fool. A spirit, a spirit: he says his name's poor Tom.

Kent. What art thou that dost grumble there i' the straw? Come forth.

[*Enter* EDGAR *disguised as a madman.*]

Edg. Away! the foul fiend follows me!
Through the sharp hawthorn blows the cold wind.
Hum! go to thy cold bed, and warm thee.

Lear. Hast thou given all to thy two daughters? And art thou come to this?

Edg. Who gives anything to poor Tom? whom the foul fiend hath led through fire and through flame, and through ford and whirlipool, o'er bog and quagmire; that hath laid knives under his pillow, and halters in his pew; set ratsbane by his porridge; made him proud of heart, to ride on a bay trotting-horse over four-inched bridges, to course his own shadow for a traitor. Bless thy five wits! Tom's a-cold. O, do de, do de, do de. Bless thee from whirlwinds, star-blasting, and taking! Do poor Tom some charity, whom the foul fiend vexes. There could I have him now, and there, and there again, and there. [*Storm still.*

Lear. What, have his daughters brought him to this pass?

48. ***Go to thy cold bed and warm thee,*** Probably a line from an old ballad, quoted also in *The Taming of the Shrew.*
58. ***Five wits,*** "Common wit, imagination, fantasy, estimation, memory." 59. ***O, do de.*** He is shivering with cold.
60. ***Star-blasting,*** The evil influence of the stars.
60. ***Taking,*** Malignant enchantment.

Couldst thou save nothing? Didst thou give them all?

Fool. Nay, he reserved a blanket, else we had been all shamed.

Lear. Now, all the plagues in the pendulous air
Hang fated o'er men's faults light on thy daughters!

Kent. He hath no daughters, sir.

Lear. Death, traitor! nothing could have subdued nature
To such a lowness but his unkind daughters.
Is it the fashion that discarded fathers
Should have thus little mercy on their flesh?
Judicious punishment! 'twas this flesh begot
Those pelican daughters.

Edg. Pillicock sat on Pillicock-hill:
Halloo, halloo, loo, loo!

Fool. This cold night will turn us all to fools and madmen.

Edg. Take heed o' the foul fiend: obey thy parents; keep thy word justly; swear not; set not thy sweet heart on proud array. Tom's a-cold.

Lear. What hast thou been?

Edg. A serving-man, proud in heart and mind; that curled my hair; wore gloves in my cap; swore as many oaths as I spake words and broke them in the sweet face of heaven: wine loved I deeply, dice dearly, and in woman out-paramoured the Turk: false of heart, light of ear, bloody of hand; hog in sloth, fox in stealth, wolf in greediness, dog in madness, lion in prey. Let not the creaking of shoes nor the rustling of silks betray thy poor heart to woman, and defy the foul fiend.

75. *Pelican.* The belief was that the pelican would feed her young with the blood of her own breast. Lear thinks of his daughters as preying on his life.

76. *Pillicock,* A term of endearment. An old rhyme ran:

"Pillycock, Pillycock sat on a hill;
If he's not gone, he sits there still."

85. *Gloves in my cap,* Favours, things given as the pledge of a woman's favour.

Still through the hawthorn blows the cold wind :
Says suum, mun, ha, no, nonny.
Dolphin my boy, my boy, sessa ! let him trot by.
[*Storm still.*

Lear. Why, thou wert better in thy grave than to answer with thy uncovered body this extremity of the skies. Is man no more than this ? Consider him well. Thou owest the worm no silk, the beast no hide, the sheep no wool, the cat no perfume. Ha ! here's three on's are sophisticated ! Thou art the thing itself : unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal as thou art. Off, off, you lendings ! come, unbutton here. [*Tearing off his clothes.*

Fool. Prithee, nuncle, be contented ; 'tis a naughty night to swim in. Look, here comes a walking fire.

[*Enter* GLOUCESTER, *with a torch.*]

Edg. This is the foul fiend Flibbertigibbet : he begins at curfew and walks till the first cock ; he gives the web and the pin, squints the eye and makes the hare-lip ; mildews the white wheat and hurts the poor creature of earth.

S. Withold footed thrice the old ;
He met the night-mare and her nine-fold ;
Bid her alight,
And her troth plight,
And, aroint thee, witch, aroint thee !

96. *Dolphin*, Dauphin.
96. *Sessa !* Various meanings have been suggested—an urge to hurry on, a command to stop (Fr. *cessez*), or an exclamation like so, so ! implying "let be."
103. *Unaccommodated*, *i.e.* without any of the comforts and conveniences of civilization.
106. *Naughty*, Bad.
107. *Walking fire*, Like Jack-o'-Lanthorn or Will-o'-the-Wisp.
110. *Web and the pin*, Cataract of the eye.
113. *Saint Withold*, The protector from nightmare (St. Vitalis). "Swithold" is the Folio reading. This verse is an old popular charm against nightmare.
113. *Old*, Wold, down. 117. *Aroint*, Avaunt, get away !

Kent. How fares your grace ?
Lear. What's he ?
Kent. Who's there ? What is 't you seek ?
Glou. What are you there ? Your names ?
Edg. Poor Tom ; that eats the swimming frog, the toad, the tadpole, the wall-newt and the water ; that in the fury of his heart, when the foul fiend rages, eats cow-dung for sallets ; swallows the old rat and the ditch dog ; drinks the green mantle of the standing pool ; who is whipped from tithing to tithing, and stock-punished, and imprisoned ; who hath had three suits to his back, six shirts to his body, horse to ride, and weapon to wear ;

But mice and rats, and such small deer,
Have been Tom's food for seven long year.

Beware my follower. Peace, Smulkin ; peace, thou fiend !
Glou. What, hath your grace no better company ?
Edg. The prince of darkness is a gentleman :
Modo he's called, and Mahu.
Glou. Our flesh and blood is grown so vile, my lord,
That it doth hate what gets it.
Edg. Poor Tom 's a-cold.
Glou. Go in with me : my duty cannot suffer
To obey in all your daughters' hard commands :
Though their injunction be to bar my doors
And let this tyrannous night take hold upon you,
Yet have I ventured to come seek you out,
And bring you where both fire and food is ready.
Lear. First let me talk with this philosopher.
What is the cause of thunder ?
Kent. Good my lord, take his offer ; go into the house.
Lear. I'll talk a word with this same learned Theban.
What is your study ?

123. *Wall-newt*, Lizard. 125. *Sallets*, Salads.
127. *Tithing*, An old county subdivision, originally containing ten householders. 131. *Deer*, Animals.

Edg. How to prevent the fiend and to kill vermin.
Lear. Let me ask you one word in private.
Kent. Importune him once more to go, my lord;
His wits begin to unsettle.
Glou. Canst thou blame him? [*Storm still.*
His daughters seek his death: ah, that good Kent!
He said it would be thus, poor banish'd man!
Thou say'st the king grows mad; I'll tell thee, friend,
I am almost mad myself: I had a son,
Now outlaw'd from my blood; he sought my life,
But lately, very late: I loved him, friend;
No father his son dearer: truth to tell thee,
The grief hath crazed my wits. What a night's this
I do beseech your grace,—
Lear. O, cry you mercy, sir.
Noble philosopher, your company.
Edg. Tom's a-cold.
Glou. In, fellow, there, into the hovel: keep thee warm.
Lear. Come, let's in all.
Kent. This way, my lord.
Lear. With him;
I will keep still with my philosopher.
Kent. Good my lord, soothe him; let him take the fellow.
Glou. Take him you on.
Kent. Sirrah, come on; go along with us.
Lear. Come, good Athenian.
Glou. No words, no words: hush.
Edg. Child Rowland to the dark tower came,
His word was still,—Fie, foh, and fum,
I smell the blood of a British man. [*Exeunt.*

162. *Crazed*, Broken. 169. *Soothe*, Humour.
172. *Athenian*, The strangeness of Poor Tom's appearance suggests the cant term.
74. *Child*, Used in olden days as a title, meaning "young knight."

SCENE V

GLOUCESTER'S *castle.*

[*Enter* CORNWALL *and* EDMUND.]

Corn. I will have my revenge ere I depart his house.

Edm. How, my lord, I may be censured, that nature thus gives way to loyalty, something fears me to think of.

Corn. I now perceive, it was not altogether your brother's evil disposition made him seek his death: but a provoking merit, set a-work by a reproveable badness in himself.

Edm. How malicious is my fortune, that I must repent to be just! This is the letter he spoke of, which approves him an intelligent party to the advantages of France. O heavens! that this treason were not, or not I the detector!

Corn. Go with me to the duchess.

Edm. If the matter of this paper be certain, you have mighty business in hand.

Corn. True or false, it hath made thee Earl of Gloucester. Seek out where thy father is, that he may be ready for our apprehension.

Edm. [*Aside*] If I find him comforting the king, it will stuff his suspicion more fully.—I will persever in my course of loyalty, though the conflict be sore between that and my blood.

Corn. I will lay trust upon thee; and thou shalt find a dearer father in my love. [*Exeunt.*

2. *Censured*, Judged.
20. *Comforting* (Literally strengthening), aiding.

SCENE VI

A chamber in a farmhouse adjoining the castle.

[*Enter* GLOUCESTER, LEAR, KENT, Fool, *and* EDGAR.]

Glou. Here is better than the open air; take it thankfully. I will piece out the comfort with what addition I can: I will not be long from you.

Kent. All the power of his wits have given way to his impatience: the gods reward your kindness!

[*Exit* GLOUCESTER.

Edg. Frateretto calls me, and tells me Nero is an angler in the lake of darkness. Pray, innocent, and beware the foul fiend.

Fool. Prithee, nuncle, tell me whether a madman be a gentleman or a yeoman?

Lear. A king, a king!

Fool. No, he's a yeoman that has a gentleman to his son; for he's a mad yeoman that sees his son a gentleman before him.

Lear. To have a thousand with red burning spits Come hissing in upon 'em,—

Edg. The foul fiend bites my back.

Fool. He's mad that trusts in the tameness of a wolf, a horse's health, a boy's love, or a jade's oath.

Lear. It shall be done; I will arraign them straight. [*To* EDGAR] Come, sit thou here, most learned justicer; [*To the* Fool] Thou, sapient sir, sit here. Now, you she foxes!

Edg. Look, where he stands and glares! Wantest thou eyes at trial, madam?

10. *Yeoman*, A freeholder, considered rather below a "gentleman" in rank.

20. *Arraign*, Call to account.

23, 24. *Wantest . . . trial?* Do you want to attract attention even when standing on your trial?

Come o'er the bourn, Bessy, to me.

Fool. Her boat hath a leak,
And she must not speak
Why she dares not come over to thee.

Edg. The foul fiend haunts poor Tom in the voice of a nightingale. Hopdance cries in Tom's belly for two white herring. Croak not, black angel; I have no food for thee.

Kent. How do you, sir? Stand you not so amazed: Will you lie down and rest upon the cushions?

Lear. I'll see their trial first. Bring in the evidence. [*To* EDGAR] Thou robed man of justice, take thy place;
[*To the* Fool] And thou, his yoke-fellow of equity, Bench by his side. [*To* KENT] You are o' the commission,
Sit you too.

Edg. Let us deal justly.
Sleepest or wakest thou, jolly shepherd?
Thy sheep be in the corn;
And for one blast of thy minikin mouth,
Thy sheep shall take no harm.
Pur! the cat is gray.

Lear. Arraign her first; 'tis Goneril. I here take my oath before this honourable assembly, she kicked the poor king her father.

Fool. Come hither, mistress. Is your name Goneril?

Lear. She cannot deny it.

Fool. Cry you mercy, I took you for a joint-stool.

25. *Come . . . to me*, An old ballad between "the Queen's Majesty and England" begins:

> "Come over the born, Bessy, come over the born, Bessy,
> Swete Bessy, come over to me."

Bourn means "brook."
31. *White herring*, A kipper smoked in a certain way is still called "white" in the north.
40. *Sleepest . . . shepherd*, Another snatch of an old ballad.
42. *Minikin*, Pretty little.

Lear. And here's another, whose warp'd looks proclaim
What store her heart is made on. Stop her there!
Arms, arms, sword, fire! Corruption in the place!
False justicer, why hast thou let her 'scape?

Edg. Bless thy five wits!

Kent. O pity!—Sir, where is the patience now,
That you so oft have boasted to retain?

Edg. [*Aside*] My tears begin to take his part so much,
They'll mar my counterfeiting.

Lear. The little dogs and all,
Tray, Blanch, and Sweet-heart, see, they bark at me.

Edg. Tom will throw his head at them. Avaunt, you curs!
Be thy mouth or black or white,
Tooth that poisons if it bite;
Mastiff, greyhound, mongrel grim,
Hound or spaniel, brach or lym,
Or bobtail tike or trundle-tail,
Tom will make them weep and wail:
For, with throwing thus my head,
Dogs leap the hatch, and all are fled.
Do de, de, de. Sessa! Come, march to wakes and fairs and market-towns. Poor Tom, thy horn is dry.

Lear. Then let them anatomize Regan; see what breeds about her heart. Is there any cause in nature that makes these hard hearts? [*To* EDGAR] You, sir, I entertain for one of my hundred; only I do not like

67. *Lym*, A lime-hound, a sort of bloodhound used for stag-hunting (from M.E. *liam*, the leash in which the animal was held).
68. *Trundle-tail*, Curly-tailed mongrel.
71. *Hatch*, Half-door.
73. *Horn*. The Bedlam beggars carried a horn with a stopper. They used it to proclaim their arrival at a place, and to hold any meat or drink they might be given.
74. *Anatomize*, Dissect.
77. *Entertain*, Take into my service.

the fashion of your garments. You will say they are Persian attire; but let them be changed.

Kent. Now, good my lord, lie here and rest awhile.

Lear. Make no noise, make no noise; draw the curtains: so, so, so. We'll go to supper i' the morning. So, so, so.

Fool. And I'll go to bed at noon.

[*Re-enter* GLOUCESTER.]

Glou. Come, hither, friend: where is the king my master?

Kent. Here, sir; but trouble him not, his wits are gone.

Glou. Good friend, I prithee, take him in thy arms; I have o'erheard a plot of death upon him:
There is a litter ready; lay him in 't,
And drive toward Dover, friend, where thou shalt meet
Both welcome and protection. Take up thy master:
If thou shouldst dally half an hour his life,
With thine and all that offer to defend him,
Stand in assured loss. Take up, take up;
And follow me, that will to some provision
Give thee quick conduct.

Kent. Oppressed nature sleeps:
This rest might yet have balm'd thy broken sinews,
Which, if convenience will not allow,
Stand in hard cure. [*To the* Fool] Come, help to bear thy master;
Thou must not stay behind.

Glou. Come, come, away.

[*Exeunt all but* EDGAR.

Edg. When we our betters see bearing our woes,
We scarcely think our miseries our foes.

79. *Persian attire.* A Persian embassy had been sent to England early in James I.'s reign, and the dress of the foreigners would have seemed outlandish to Londoners.
92. *Dally*, Delay. 93. *Offer*, Attempt. 97. *Sinews*, Nerves.

Who alone suffers suffers most i' the mind,
Leaving free things and happy shows behind:
But then the mind much sufferance doth o'erskip,
When grief hath mates, and bearing fellowship.
How light and portable my pain seems now,
When that which makes me bend makes the king bow,
He childed as I father'd! Tom, away!
Mark the high noises, and thyself bewray,
When false opinion, whose wrong thought defiles thee,
In thy just proof repeals and reconciles thee.
What will hap more to-night, safe 'scape the king!
Lurk, lurk. [*Exit.*

SCENE VII

GLOUCESTER'S *castle.*

[*Enter* CORNWALL, REGAN, GONERIL, EDMUND, *and* Servants.]

Corn. [*To* GON.] Post speedily to my lord your husband; show him this letter: the army of France is landed.—Seek out the villain Gloucester.

[*Exeunt some of the* Servants.

Reg. Hang him instantly.

Gon. Pluck out his eyes.

Corn. Leave him to my displeasure.—Edmund, keep you our sister company: the revenges we are bound to take upon your traitorous father are not fit for your beholding. Advise the duke, where you are going, to a most festinate preparation: we are bound to the like. Our posts shall be swift and intelligent betwixt us.—Farewell, dear sister: farewell, my lord of Gloucester.

104. *Free things*, *i.e.* those clear from all pain and misfortune.
107. *Portable*, Endurable.
110. *Bewray*, Reveal.
112. *Repeals*, Recalls.
10. *Festinate*, Hasty.
11. *Posts*, Messengers.

[*Enter* OSWALD.]

How now! where's the king?

Osw. My lord of Gloucester hath convey'd him hence:
Some five or six and thirty of his knights,
Hot questrists after him, met him at gate;
Who, with some other of the lords dependants,
Are gone with him toward Dover; where they boast
To have well-armed friends.

Corn. Get horses for your mistress.

Gon. Farewell, sweet lord, and sister.

Corn. Edmund, farewell.

[*Exeunt* GONERIL, EDMUND, *and* OSWALD.

Go seek the traitor Gloucester,
Pinion him like a thief, bring him before us.

[*Exeunt other* Servants.

Though well we may not pass upon his life
Without the form of justice, yet our power
Shall do a courtesy to our wrath, which men
May blame but not control. Who's there? the traitor?

[*Enter* GLOUCESTER, *brought in by two or three.*]

Reg. Ingrateful fox! 'tis he.

Corn. Bind fast his corky arms.

Glou. What mean your graces? Good my friends, consider
You are my guests: do me no foul play, friends.

Corn. Bind him, I say. [Servants *bind him.*

Reg. Hard, hard. O filthy traitor!

Glou. Unmerciful lady as you are, I'm none.

Corn. To this chair bind him. Villain, thou shalt find— [REGAN *plucks his beard.*

Glou. By the kind gods, 'tis most ignobly done
To pluck me by the beard.

17. *Questrists*, Seekers. 29. *Corky*, Shrivelled, like cork-bark.

Reg. So white, and such a traitor!
Glou. Naughty lady,
These hairs, which thou dost ravish from my chin,
Will quicken, and accuse thee: I am your host:
With robbers' hands my hospitable favours
You should not ruffle thus. What will you do?
Corn. Come, sir, what letters had you late from France?
Reg. Be simple answerer, for we know the truth,
Corn. And what confederacy have you with the traitors
Late footed in the kingdom?
Reg. To whose hands have you sent the lunatic king? Speak.
Glou. I have a letter guessingly set down,
Which came from one that's of a neutral heart,
And not from one opposed.
Corn. Cunning.
Reg. And false.
Corn. Where hast thou sent the king?
Glou. To Dover.
Reg. Wherefore to Dover? Wast thou not charged at peril—
Corn. Wherefore to Dover? Let him first answer that.
Glou. I am tied to the stake, and I must stand the course.
Reg. Wherefore to Dover, sir?
Glou. Because I would not see thy cruel nails
Pluck out his poor old eyes, nor thy fierce sister
In his anointed flesh stick boarish fangs.
The sea, with such a storm as his bare head
In hell-black night endured, would have buoy'd up,
And quench'd the stelled fires:
Yet, poor old heart, he holp the heavens to rain.

37. *Naughty*, Evil. 39. *Quicken*, Come to life.
62. *Stelled*, Starry.

If wolves had at thy gate howl'd that stern time,
Thou shouldst have said, " Good porter, turn the key,"
All cruels else subscribe : but I shall see
The winged vengeance overtake such children.
Corn. See 't shalt thou never. Fellows, hold the chair.
Upon these eyes of thine I'll set my foot.
Glou. He that will think to live till he be old,
Give me some help ! O cruel ! O you gods !
Reg. One side will mock another ; the other too.
Corn. If you see vengeance—
First Serv. Hold your hand, my lord :
I have served you ever since I was a child ;
But better service have I never done you
Than now I bid you hold.
Reg. How now, you dog !
First Serv. If you did wear a beard upon your chin,
I'ld shake it on this quarrel. What do you mean ?
Corn. My villain ! [*They draw and fight.*
First Serv. Nay, then, come on, and take the chance of anger.
Reg. Give me thy sword. A peasant stand up thus !
[*Takes a sword and runs at him behind.*
First Serv. O, I am slain ! My lord, you have one eye left
To see some mischief on him. O ! [*Dies.*
Corn. Lest it see more, prevent it. Out, vile jelly !
Where is thy lustre now ?
Glou. All dark and comfortless. Where's my son Edmund ?
Edmund, enkindle all the sparks of nature,
To quit this horrid act.

66. *All cruels else subscribe*, Folio reading ; Quartos, subscribed. The best explanation is that of Schmidt, who takes "cruels" as "cruel creatures," and "subscribe" as meaning to declare oneself conquered by something, to yield, give in. Thus the passage means—" All other cruel creatures will (on occasion) adopt a course of conduct against their nature."

79. *Villain*, Bondman. 88. *Quit*, Requite, pay back.

Reg. Out, treacherous villain!
Thou call'st on him that hates thee: it was he
That made the overture of thy treasons to us;
Who is too good to pity thee.
Glou. O my follies! then Edgar was abused.
Kind gods, forgive me that, and prosper him!
Reg. Go thrust him out at gates, and let him smell
His way to Dover. [*Exit one with* GLOUCESTER.] How is't, my lord? how look you?
Corn. I have received a hurt: follow me, lady.
Turn out that eyeless villain; throw this slave
Upon the dunghill. Regan, I bleed apace:
Untimely comes this hurt: give me your arm.
[*Exit* CORNWALL, *led by* REGAN.
Sec. Serv. I'll never care what wickedness I do,
If this man come to good.
Third Serv. If she live long,
And in the end meet the old course of death,
Women will all turn monsters.
Sec. Serv. Let's follow the old earl, and get the Bedlam
To lead him where he would: his roguish madness
Allows itself to anything.
Third Serv. Go thou: I'll fetch some flax and whites of eggs
To apply to his bleeding face. Now, heaven help him!
[*Exeunt severally.*

90. *Overture*, Revelation. 92. *Abused*, Treated wrongly.
102. *Old*, Natural, usual.

ACT IV

SCENE I

The heath.

[*Enter* EDGAR.]

Edg. Yet better thus, and known to be contemn
Than still contemn'd and flattered. To be worst,
The lowest and most dejected thing of fortune,
Stands still in esperance, lives not in fear:
The lamentable change is from the best;
The worst returns to laughter. Welcome, then,
Thou unsubstantial air that I embrace!
The wretch that thou hast blown unto the worst
Owes nothing to thy blasts. But who comes here?

[*Enter* GLOUCESTER, *led by an Old Man.*]

My father, poorly led? World, world, O world!
But that thy strange mutations make us hate thee,
Life would not yield to age.

Old Man. O, my good lord, I have been your tenant, and your father's tenant, these fourscore years.

Glou. Away, get thee away; good friends, be gone:
Thy comforts can do me no good at all;
Thee they may hurt.

Old Man. Alack, sir, you cannot see your way.

3. *Dejected*, Cast down. 4. *Esperance*, Hope.
11. *Mutations*, Changes.

Glou. I have no way, and therefore want no eyes ;
I stumbled when I saw : full oft 'tis seen,
Our means secure us, and our mere defects
Prove our commodities. (Ah dear son Edgar,
The food of thy abused father's wrath !
Might I but live to see thee in my touch,
I'ld say I had eyes again !)
Old Man. How now ! Who's there ?
Edg. [*Aside*] O gods ! Who is't can say " I am at the worst " ?
I am worse than e'er I was.
Old Man. 'Tis poor mad Tom.
Edg. [*Aside*] And worse I may be yet : the worst is not
So long as we can say " This is the worst."
Old Man. Fellow, where goest ?
Glou. Is it a beggar man ?
Old Man. Madman and beggar too.
Glou. He has some reason, else he could not beg.
I' the last night's storm I such a fellow saw,
Which made me think a man a worm : my son
Came then into my mind, and yet my mind
Was then scarce friends with him : I have heard more since.
As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods ;
They kill us for their sport.
Edg. [*Aside*] How should this be ?
Bad is the trade that must play fool to sorrow,
Angering itself and others.—Bless thee, master !
Glou. Is that the naked fellow ?
Old Man. Ay, my lord.
Glou. Then, prithee, get thee gone : if for my sake
Thou wilt o'ertake us, hence a mile or twain,
I' the way toward Dover, do it for ancient love ;
And bring some covering for this naked soul,

21. *Secure*, Make over-confident. 22. *Commodities*, Benefits.
23. Abused, Deceived. 37. *Wanton*, Mischievous.

Who I'll entreat to lead me.

Old Man. Alack, sir, he is mad.

Glou. 'Tis the times' plague, when madmen lead the blind.

Do as I bid thee, or rather do thy pleasure ;
Above the rest, be gone.

Old Man. I'll bring him the best 'parel that I have,
Come on 't what will. [*Exit.*

Glou. Sirrah, naked fellow,—

Edg. Poor Tom's a-cold. [*Aside*] I cannot daub it further.

Glou. Come hither, fellow.

Edg. [*Aside*] And yet I must—Bless thy sweet eyes, they bleed.

Glou. Know'st thou the way to Dover ?

Edg. Both stile and gate, horse-way and footpath. Poor Tom hath been scared out of his good wits. Bless thee, good man's son, from the foul fiend ! Five fiends have been in poor Tom at once ; of lust, as Obidicut ; Hobbididence, prince of dumbness ; Mahu, of stealing ; Modo, of murder ; Flibbertigibbet, of mopping and mowing, who since possesses chamber-maids and waiting-women. So, bless thee, master !

Glou. Here, take this purse, thou whom the heaven's plagues
Have humbled to all strokes : that I am wretched
Makes thee the happier. Heavens, deal so still !
Let the superfluous and lust-dieted man,
That slaves your ordinance, that will not see
Because he doth not feel, feel your power quickly ;
So distribution should undo excess,
And each man have enough. Dost thou know Dover ?

Edg. Ay, master.

53. *Daub*, Maintain my disguise.
63. *Mopping and mowing*, Making grimaces.
68. *Superfluous*, Who has more than he needs.
69. *Slaves your ordinance*, Makes your ordinance his slave.
69. *Ordinance*, Established order of things, decree of the heavens.

Glou. There is a cliff whose high and bending head
Looks fearfully in the confined deep:
Bring me but to the very brim of it,
And I'll repair the misery thou dost bear
With something rich about me: from that place
I shall no leading need.
Edg. Give me thy arm:
Poor Tom shall lead thee. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II

Before the DUKE OF ALBANY'S *palace.*

[*Enter* GONERIL *and* EDMUND.]

Gon. Welcome, my lord: I marvel our mild husband
Not met us on the way.

[*Enter* OSWALD.]

Now, where's your master?
Osw. Madam, within; but never man so changed.
I told him of the army that was landed;
He smiled at it: I told him you were coming;
His answer was, "The worse": of Gloucester's treachery,
And of the loyal service of his son,
When I inform'd him, then he call'd me sot,
And told me I had turn'd the wrong side out:
What most he should dislike seems pleasant to him;
What like, offensive.
Gon. [*To* EDM.] Then shall you go no further.
It is the cowish terror of his spirit,
That dares not undertake: he'll not feel wrongs
Which tie him to an answer. Our wishes on the way
May prove effects. Back, Edmund, to my brother;

Hasten his musters and conduct his powers :
I must change arms at home, and give the distaff
Into my husband's hands. This trusty servant
Shall pass between us : ere long you are like to hear,
If you dare venture in your own behalf,
A mistress's command. Wear this ; spare speech ;
[*Giving a favour.*
Decline your head : this kiss, if it durst speak,
Would stretch thy spirits up into the air :
Conceive, and fare thee well.
Edm. Yours in the ranks of death.
Gon. My most dear Gloucester !
[*Exit* EDMUND.
O, the difference of man and man !
To thee a woman's services are due :
My fool usurps my body.
Osw. Madam, here comes my lord.
[*Exit.*

[*Enter* ALBANY.]

Gon. I have been worth the whistle.
Alb. O Goneril,
You are not worth the dust which the rude wind
Blows in your face. I fear your disposition :
That nature which contemns its origin
Cannot be border'd certain in itself ;
She that herself will sliver and disbranch
From her material sap, perforce must wither
And come to deadly use.
Gon. No more ; the text is foolish.
Alb. Wisdom and goodness to the vile seem vile :
Filths savour but themselves. What have you done ?
Tigers, not daughters, what have you perform'd ?
A father, and a gracious aged man,

16. *Musters*, Levies of troops. 16. *Powers*, Armies.
24. *Conceive*, Understand (all my feelings for you).
34. *Sliver*, Break off as a branch.
36. *Deadly use*, To the use found for a withered branch—some sort of destruction.

Whose reverence even the head-lugg'd bear would lick,
Most barbarous, most degenerate! have you madded.
Could my good brother suffer you to do it?
A man, a prince, by him so benefited!
If that the heavens do not their visible spirits
Send quickly down to tame these vile offences,
It will come,
Humanity must perforce prey on itself,
Like monsters of the deep.

Gon. Milk-liver'd man
That bear'st a cheek for blows, a head for wrongs;
Who has not in thy brows an eye discerning
Thine honour from thy suffering; that not know'st
Fools do those villains pity who are punish'd
Ere they have done their mischief,—where's thy drum?
France spreads his banners in our noiseless land,
With plumed helm thy state begins to threat;
Whiles thou, a moral fool, sit'st still and criest
"Alack, why does he so?"

Alb. See thyself, devil!
Proper deformity shows not in the fiend
So horrid as in woman.

Gon. O vain fool!

Alb. Thou changed and self-cover'd thing, for shame,
Be-monster not thy feature. Were 't my fitness
To let these hands obey my blood,
They are apt enough to dislocate and tear
Thy flesh and bones: howe'er thou art a fiend,
A woman's shape doth shield thee.

Gon. Marry, your manhood now—

58. *Moral*, Moralizing. 60. *Proper*, Belonging to.
62. *Self-cover'd*, Revealed as your own true self. Before this he has seen only her beauty.
63. *Feature*, The whole external appearance.
68. *Your manhood now.* The Quartos vary between "now" and "mew." The latter may be an expression of contempt, or it may mean "keep in," "restrain."

[*Enter a* Messenger.]

Alb. What news?

Mess. O, my good lord, the Duke of Cornwall's dead;
Slain by his servant, going to put out
The other eye of Gloucester.

Alb. Gloucester's eyes!

Mess. A servant that he bred, thrill'd with remorse,
Opposed against the act, bending his sword
To his great master; who, thereat enraged,
Flew on him, and amongst them fell'd him dead;
But not without that harmful stroke, which since
Hath pluck'd him after.

Alb. This shows you are above,
You justicers, that these our nether crimes
So speedily can venge! But, O poor Gloucester!
Lost he his other eye?

Mess. Both, both, my lord.
This letter, madam, craves a speedy answer;
'Tis from your sister.

Gon. [*Aside*] One way I like this well;
But being widow, and my Gloucester with her,
May all the building in my fancy pluck
Upon my hateful life: another way,
The news is not so tart.—I'll read, and answer. [*Exit.*

Alb. Where was his son when they did take his eyes?

Mess. Come with my lady hither.

Alb. He is not here.

Mess. No, my good lord; I met him back again.

Alb. Knows he the wickedness?

Mess. Ay, my good lord; 'twas he inform'd against him;
And quit the house on purpose, that their punishment
Might have the freer course.

73. *Remorse*, Pity.

Alb. Gloucester, I live
To thank thee for the love thou show'dst the king,
And to revenge thine eyes. Come hither, friend:
Tell me what more thou know'st. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III

The French camp near Dover.

[*Enter* KENT *and a* Gentleman.]

Kent. Why the King of France is so suddenly gone back know you the reason?

Gent. Something he left imperfect in the state, which since his coming forth is thought of; which imports to the kingdom so much fear and danger, that his personal return was most required and necessary.

Kent. Who hath he left behind him general?

Gent. The Marshal of France, Monsieur La Far.

Kent. Did your letters pierce the queen to any demonstration of grief?

Gent. Ay, sir; she took them, read them in my presence;
And now and then an ample tear trill'd down
Her delicate cheek: it seem'd she was a queen
Over her passion; who, most rebel-like,
Sought to be king o'er her.

Kent. O, then it moved her.

Gent. Not to a rage: patience and sorrow strove
Who should express her goodliest. You have seen
Sunshine and rain at once: her smiles and tears
Were like a better way: those happy smilets,
That play'd on her ripe lip, seem'd not to know
What guests were in her eyes; which parted thence
As pearls from diamonds dropp'd. In brief,

12. *Trill*, trickle.

Sorrow would be a rarity most beloved,
If all could so become it.
Kent. Made she no verbal question?
Gent. Faith, once or twice she heaved the name of "father"
Pantingly forth, as if it press'd her heart;
Cried "Sisters! sisters! Shame of ladies! sisters!
Kent! father! sisters! What, i' the storm? i' the night?
Let pity not be believed!" There she shook
The holy water from her heavenly eyes,
And clamour moisten'd: then away she started
To deal with grief alone.
Kent. It is the stars,
The stars above us, govern our conditions;
Else one self mate and mate could not beget
Such different issues. You spoke not with her since?
Gent. No.
Kent. Was this before the king return'd?
Gent. No, since.
Kent. Well, sir, the poor distress'd Lear's i' the town:
Who sometime in his better tune remembers
What we are come about, and by no means
Will yield to see his daughter.
Gent. Why, good sir?
Kent. A sovereign shame so elbows him: his own unkindness,
That stripp'd her from his benediction, turn'd her
To foreign casualties, gave her dear rights
To his dog-hearted daughters, these things sting
His mind so venomously, that burning shame
Detains him from Cordelia.
Gent. Alack, poor gentleman!
Kent. Of Albany's and Cornwall's powers you heard not?

33. *Conditions*, Dispositions.

Gent. 'Tis so, they are afoot.

Kent. Well, sir, I'll bring you to our master Lear,
And leave you to attend him: some dear cause
Will in concealment wrap me up awhile;
When I am known aright, you shall not grieve
Lending me this acquaintance. I pray you, go
Along with me. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV

The same. A tent.

[*Enter, with drums and colours,* CORDELIA, Doctor, *and* Soldiers.]

Cor. Alack, 'tis he: why, he was met even now
As mad as the vex'd sea; singing aloud;
Crown'd with rank fumiter and furrow-weeds,
With burdocks, hemlock, nettles, cuckoo-flowers,
Darnel, and all the idle weeds that grow
In our sustaining corn. A century send forth;
Search every acre in the high-grown field,
And bring him to our eye. [*Exit an* Officer.] What can man's wisdom
In the restoring his bereaved sense?
He that helps him take all my outward worth.

Doct. There is means, madam:
Our foster-nurse of nature is repose,
The which he lacks; that to provoke in him,
Are many simples operative, whose power
Will close the eye of anguish.

Cor. All blest secrets,
All you unpublish'd virtues of the earth,

51. *Dear cause*, Important cause. 3. *Fumiter*, Fumitory.
5. *Darnel*, A general name for harmful weeds, tares.
6. *Century*, Troop, properly, of a hundred men.
14. *Simples operative*, Herbs that will work (a cure), will be efficacious.

Spring with my tears! be aidant and remediate
In the good man's distress! Seek, seek for him:
Lest his ungovern'd rage dissolve the life
That wants the means to lead it.

[*Enter a* Messenger.]

Mess. News, madam;
The British powers are marching hitherward.
Cor. 'T is known before; our preparation stands
In expectation of them. O dear father,
It is thy business that I go about;
Therefore great France
My mourning and important tears hath pitied.
No blown ambition doth our arms incite,
But love, dear love, and our aged father's right:
Soon may I hear and see him! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V

GLOUCESTER'S *castle.*

[*Enter* REGAN *and* OSWALD.]

Reg. But are my brother's powers set forth?
Osw. Ay, madam.
Reg. Himself in person there?
Osw. Madam, with much ado:
Your sister is the better soldier.
Reg. Lord Edmund spake not with your lord at home?
Osw. No, madam.
Reg. What might import my sister's letter to him?
Osw. I know not, lady.
Reg. Faith, he is posted hence on serious matter.
It was great ignorance, Gloucester's eyes being out,
To let him live: where he arrives he moves

26. *Important*, Importunate.

All hearts against us: Edmund, I think, is gone,
In pity of his misery, to dispatch
His nighted life; moreover, to descry
The strength o' the enemy.

Osw. I must needs after him, madam, with my letter.

Reg. Our troops set forth to-morrow: stay with us;
The ways are dangerous.

Osw. I may not, madam:
My lady charged my duty in this business.

Reg. Why should she write to Edmund? Might not you
Transport her purposes by word? Belike,
Something—I know not what: I'll love thee much,
Let me unseal the letter.

Osw. Madam, I had rather—

Reg. I know your lady does not love her husband;
I am sure of that: and at her late being here
She gave strange œillades and most speaking looks
To noble Edmund. I know you are of her bosom.

Osw. I, madam?

Reg. I speak in understanding; you are, I know't;
Therefore I do advise you, take this note:
My lord is dead; Edmund and I have talk'd;
And more convenient is he for my hand
Than for your lady's; you may gather more.
If you do find him, pray you, give him this:
And when your mistress hears thus much from you,
I pray, desire her call her wisdom to her.
So, fare you well.
If you do chance to hear of that blind traitor,
Preferment falls on him that cuts him off.

Osw. Would I could meet him, madam! I should show
What party I do follow.

Reg. Fare thee well. [*Exeunt.*

25. *Œillades*, Amorous glances.
26. *Of her bosom*, In her close confidence.

SCENE VI

Fields near Dover.

[*Enter* GLOUCESTER, *and* EDGAR *dressed like a peasant.*]

Glou. When shall we come to the top of that same hill?
Edg. You do climb up it now: look, how we labour.
Glou. Methinks the ground is even.
Edg. Horrible steep.
Hark, do you hear the sea?
Glou. No, truly.
Edg. Why, then, your other senses grow imperfect
By your eyes' anguish.
Glou. So may it be indeed:
Methinks thy voice is alter'd; and thou speak'st
In better phrase and matter than thou didst.
Edg. You're much deceived; in nothing am I changed
But in my garments.
Glou. Methinks you're better spoken.
Edg. Come on, sir; here's the place: stand still.
How fearful
And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low!
The crows and choughs that wing the midway air
Show scarce so gross as beetles: half way down
Hangs one that gathers samphire, dreadful trade!
Methinks he seems no bigger than his head:
The fishermen, that walk upon the beach,
Appear like mice; and yond tall anchoring bark,
Diminish'd to her cock; her cock, a buoy

13. *Chough*, Jackdaw. The name, if pronounced with guttural *gh*, represents the sound made by the bird; the modern dictionary pronunciation "chuf" misses this.
14. *Gross*, Big.
19. *Cock*, Cock-boat.

Almost too small for sight: the murmuring surge,
That on the unnumber'd idle pebbles chafes,
Cannot be heard so high. I'll look no more;
Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight
Topple down headlong.

Glou. Set me where you stand.

Edg. Give me your hand: you are now within a foot
Of the extreme verge: for all beneath the moon
Would I not leap upright.

Glou. Let go my hand.
Here, friend, 's another purse; in it a jewel
Well worth a poor man's taking: fairies and gods
Prosper it with thee! Go thou farther off;
Bid me farewell, and let me hear thee going.

Edg. Now fare you well, good sir.

Glou. With all my heart.

Edg. Why I do trifle thus with his despair
Is done to cure it.

Glou. [*Kneeling*] O you mighty gods!
This world I do renounce, and, in your sights,
Shake patiently my great affliction off:
If I could bear it longer, and not fall
To quarrel with your great opposeless wills,
My snuff and loathed part of nature should
Burn itself out. (If Edgar live, O bless him)
Now, fellow, fare thee well. [*He falls forward*

Edg. Gone, sir: farewell.
And yet I know not how conceit may rob
The treasury of life, when life itself
Yields to the theft: had he been where he thought,
By this had thought been past. Alive or dead?
Ho, you sir! friend! Hear you, sir! speak!
Thus might he pass indeed: yet he revives.
What are you, sir?

38. *Opposeless*, Irresistible.
39. *Snuff*, The burnt-out wick of a candle.
42. *Conceit*, Imagination.

Glou. Away, and let me die.

Edg. Hadst thou been aught but gossamer, feathers, air,
So many fathom down precipitating,
Thou'dst shiver'd like an egg: but thou dost breathe;
Hast heavy substance; bleed'st not; speak'st; art sound.
Ten masts at each make not the altitude
Which thou hast perpendicularly fell:
Thy life's a miracle. Speak yet again.

Glou. But have I fall'n, or no?

Edg. From the dread summit of this chalky bourn.
Look up a-height; the shrill-gorged lark so far
Cannot be seen or heard: do but look up.

Glou. Alack, I have no eyes.
Is wretchedness deprived that benefit,
To end itself by death? 'Twas yet some comfort,
When misery could beguile the tyrant's rage,
And frustrate his proud will.

Edg. Give me your arm:
Up: so. How is 't? Feel you your legs? You stand.

Glou. Too well, too well.

Edg. This is above all strangeness.
Upon the crown o' the cliff, what thing was that
Which parted from you?

Glou. A poor unfortunate beggar

Edg. As I stood here below, methought his eyes
Were two full moons; he had a thousand noses,
Horns whelk'd and waved like the enridged sea:
It was some fiend; therefore, thou happy father,
Think that the clearest gods, who make them honours
Of men's impossibilities, have preserved thee.

Glou. I do remember now: henceforth I'll bear

57. ***Bourn***, Boundary.
58. ***Shrill-gorged***, Shrill-throated, in allusion to the high sweet notes of the lark's song.
71. ***Whelk'd***, Covered with whelks or protuberances.
73. ***Clearest***, Most radiant and divine.

Affliction till it do cry out itself
"Enough, enough," and die. That thing you speak of,
I took it for a man; often 'twould say
"The fiend, the fiend;" he led me to that place.

Edg. Bear free and patient thoughts. But who comes here?

[*Enter* LEAR, *fantastically dressed with wild flowers.*]

The safer sense will ne'er accommodate
His master thus.

Lear. No, they cannot touch me for coining; I am the king himself.

Edg. O thou side-piercing sight!

Lear. Nature's above art in that respect.—There's your press-money.—That fellow handles his bow like a crow-keeper: draw me a clothier's yard.—Look, look, a mouse! Peace, peace; this piece of toasted cheese will do 't.—There's my gauntlet: I'll prove it on a giant.—Bring up the brown bills.—O, well flown, bird!—i' the clout, i' the clout; hewgh!—Give the word.

Edg. Sweet marjoram.

Lear. Pass.

Glou. I know that voice.

Lear. Ha! Goneril, with a white beard! They flattered me like a dog; and told me I had white hairs in my beard ere the black ones were there. To say "ay" and "no" to every thing that I said! "Ay"

80. *Free*, *i.e.* from delusion and distress.
Enter . . . flowers, The stage direction is Theobald's, based on IV. iv. 3.
81, 82. *The safer . . . thus*, Sanity will not let a man deck himself in this way.
88. *Clothier's yard*. See *Chevy Chace*—

"An arrow of a cloth-yard long
Up to the head drew he."

91. *Bill*, A pike, which is a long weapon, the end of which is shaped like a battle-axe. Lear sees his soldiers before him, the pikemen and archers. 92. *Bird*, The feathered arrow.
92. *Clout*, The centre of the target.

and "no" too was no good divinity. When the rain came to wet me once, and the wind to make me chatter; when the thunder would not peace at my bidding; there I found 'em, there I smelt 'em out. Go to, they are not men o' their words: they told me I was every thing; 'tis a lie, I am not ague-proof.

Glou. The trick of that voice I do well remember: Is't not the king?

Lear. Ay, every inch a king:
When I do stare, see how the subject quakes.—
I pardon that man's life.—What was thy cause?—
Give me an ounce of civet, good apothecary, to sweeten my imagination: there's money for thee.

Glou. O, let me kiss that hand!

Lear. Let me wipe it first; it smells of mortality.

Glou. O ruin'd piece of nature! This great world
Shall so wear out to nought. Dost thou know me?

Lear. I remember thine eyes well enough. Dost thou squiny at me? No, do thy worst, blind Cupid; I'll not love. Read thou this challenge; mark but the penning on't.

Glou. Were all the letters suns, I could not see one.

Edg. I would not take this from report; it is,
And my heart breaks at it.

Lear. Read.

Glou. What, with the case of eyes?

Lear. O, ho, are you there with me? No eyes in your head, nor no money in your purse? Your eyes are in a heavy case, your purse in a light: yet you see how this world goes.

Glou. I see it feelingly.

Lear. What, art mad? A man may see how this world goes with no eyes. Look with thine ears: see how yond justice rails upon yond simple thief. Hark, in thine ear: change places; and, handy-dandy,

111. *Civet*, Musky perfume made from the civet-cat.
118. *Squiny at*, Squint at. 125. *Case of eyes*, The sockets.
126. *Are you there with me?* Is *that* your meaning?

which is the justice, which is the thief? Thou hast seen a farmer's dog bark at a beggar?

Glou. Ay, sir.

Lear. And the creature run from the cur? There thou mightst behold the great image of authority: a dog's obeyed in office.

The usurer hangs the cozener.

Through tatter'd clothes small vices do appear;
Robes and fur'd gowns hide all. Plate sin with gold,
And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks;
Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw does pierce it.
None does offend, none, I say, none; I'll able 'em:
Take that of me, my friend, who have the power
To seal the accuser's lips. Get thee glass eyes;
And, like a scurvy politician, seem
To see the things thou dost not.—
Now, now, now, now: pull off my boots: harder, harder: so.

Edg. O, matter and impertinency mix'd!
Reason in madness!

Lear. If thou wilt weep my fortunes, take my eyes.
I know thee well enough; thy name is Gloucester:
Thou must be patient; we came crying hither:
Thou know'st, the first time that we smell the air,
We wawl and cry. I will preach to thee: mark.

Glou. Alack, alack the day!

Lear. When we are born, we cry that we are come
To this great stage of fools.—This' a good block;
It were a delicate stratagem, to shoe
A troop of horse with felt: I'll put 't in proof;
And when I have stol'n upon these sons-in-law,
Then kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill!

141. *Cozener*, Cheat. 143. *Plate*, Cover up.
146. *Able 'em*, Give them the means to set everything right. He gives Gloucester money. 149. *Politician*, Crafty schemer.
153. *Matter and impertinency*, Sense and nonsense.
162. *Block*, The wood on which hats are made; the hat itself. It is not Lear's own hat that he takes off and examines, as he is meant to be wearing a crown of wild flowers. (See IV. iv.)

[*Enter a* Gentleman, *with* Attendants.]

Gent. O, here he is: lay hand upon him.—Sir,
Your most dear daughter—
Lear. No rescue? What, a prisoner? I am even
The natural fool of fortune. Use me well;
You shall have ransom. Let me have surgeons;
I am cut to the brains.
Gent. You shall have anything.
Lear. No seconds? all myself?
Why, this would make a man a man of salt,
To use his eyes for garden water-pots,
Ay, and laying autumn's dust.
Gent. Good sir,—
Lear. I will die bravely, like a smug bridegroom.
What!
I will be jovial: come, come; I am a king,
My masters, know you that.
Gent. You are a royal one, and we obey you.
Lear. Then there's life in 't. Nay, if you get it,
you shall get it with running. Sa, sa, sa, sa.
[*Exit running;* Attendants *follow.*
Gent. A sight most pitiful in the meanest wretch,
Past speaking of in a king! Thou hast one daughter,
Who redeems nature from the general curse
Which twain have brought her to.
Edg. Hail, gentle sir.
Gent. Sir, speed you; what's your will?
Edg. Do you hear aught, sir, of a battle toward?
Gent. Most sure and vulgar: every one hears that,
Which can distinguish sound.
Edg. But, by your favour,
How near 's the other army?
Gent. Near and on speedy foot; the main descry
Stands on the hourly thought.

178. *Smug*, Trim, spruce. 190. *Vulgar*, Spoken of by every one.
192. *The main descry*, The appearance of the main body of the army.

Edg. I thank you, sir; that's all.

Gent. Though that the queen on special cause is here,
Her army is moved on.

Edg. I thank you, sir. [*Exit* Gent.

Glou. You ever-gentle gods, take my breath from me;
Let not my worser spirit tempt me again
To die before you please!

Edg. Well pray you, father.

Glou. Now, good sir, what are you?

Edg. A most poor man, made tame to fortune's blows;
Who, by the art of known and feeling sorrows,
Am pregnant to good pity. Give me your hand,
I'll lead you to some biding.

Glou. Hearty thanks:
The bounty and the benison of heaven
To boot, and boot!

[*Enter* OSWALD.]

Osw. A proclaim'd prize! Most happy!
That eyeless head of thine was first framed flesh
To raise my fortunes.—Thou old unhappy traitor,
Briefly thyself remember: the sword is out
That must destroy thee.

Glou. Now let thy friendly hand
Put strength enough to 't. [EDGAR *interposes.*

Osw. Wherefore, bold peasant,
Darest thou support a publish'd traitor? Hence!
Lest that the infection of his fortune take
Like hold on thee. Let go his arm.

Edg. Chill not let go, zir, without vurther 'casion.

Osw. Let go, slave, or thou diest!

Edg. Good gentleman, go your gait, and let poor volk pass. An chud ha' bin zwaggered out of my life,

206. *To boot*, As well as (thanks).
209. *Thyself remember*, Think of your sins and repent.
215, 218. *Chill . . . chud*, I will . . . I would (*ch* is for Southern M.E. *ich*). Edgar now pretends to be a rustic, and uses the old dialect of the Southern counties—still familiar to dwellers in Somersetshire.

'twould not ha' bin zo long as 'tis by a vortnight. Nay,
come not near th' old man ; keep out, che vor ye, or
ise try whether your costard or my ballow be the
harder : chill be plain with you.

Osw. Out, dunghill ! [*They fight.*

Edg. Chill pick your teeth, zir : no matter vor your foins. [OSWALD *falls.*

Osw. Slave, thou hast slain me. Villain, take my purse :
If ever thou wilt thrive, bury my body ;
And give the letters which thou find'st about me
To Edmund earl of Gloucester ; seek him out
Upon the British party : O, untimely death !
[*Dies.*

Edg. I know thee well : a serviceable villain,
As duteous to the vices of thy mistress
As badness would desire.

Glou. What, is he dead ?

Edg. Sit you down, father ; rest you.
Let's see these pockets : the letters that he speaks of
May be my friends. He's dead : I am only sorry
He had no other deathsman. Let us see :
Leave, gentle wax ; and, manners, blame us not :
To know our enemies' minds, we'ld rip their hearts ;
Their papers, is more lawful.

[*Reads*] "Let our reciprocal vows be remembered. You have many opportunities to cut him off : if your will want not, time and place will be fruitfully offered. There is nothing done, if he return the conqueror : then am I the prisoner, and his bed my gaol ; from the loathed warmth whereof deliver me, and supply the place for your labour.

"Your—wife, so I would say—affectionate servant,
"GONERIL."

220. *Che vor ye*, I warn you. 221. *Costard*, Head.
221. *Ballow*, cudgel. 224. *Foins*, Thrusts.
242. *Fruitfully*, Abundantly.

O indistinguish'd space of woman's will!
A plot upon her virtuous husband's life;
And the exchange my brother! Here, in the sands,
Thee I'll rake up, the post unsanctified
Of murderous treachers: and in the mature time
With this ungracious paper strike the sight
Of the death-practised duke: for him 'tis well
That of thy death and business I can tell.
Glou. The king is mad: how stiff is my vile sense,
That I stand up, and have ingenious feeling
Of my huge sorrows! Better I were distract:
So should my thoughts be sever'd from my griefs,
And woes by wrong imaginations lose
The knowledge of themselves. [*Drum afar off.*
Edg. Give me your hand:
Far off, methinks, I hear the beaten drum:
Come, father, I'll bestow you with a friend. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII

A tent in the French camp. LEAR *on a bed asleep, soft music playing;* Gentleman, *and others attending.*

[*Enter* CORDELIA, KENT, *and* Doctor.]

Cor. O thou good Kent, how shall I live and work,
To match thy goodness? My life will be too short,
And every measure fail me.
Kent. To be acknowledged, madam, is o'er-paid.
All my reports go with the modest truth;
Nor more, nor clipp'd, but so.

249. *Indistinguish'd, i.e.* one cannot see how far it will extend, what it may desire. 249. *Space,* Scope, extent.
255. *Death-practised,* Whose death is plotted.
258. *Ingenious,* Conscious.
264. *Father,* A common form of address to an old man. Gloucester does not guess that his son is using it.
264. *Bestow,* Lodge. 5. *Modest,* Moderate.

Cor. Be better suited :
These weeds are memories of those worser hours :
I prithee, put them off.
Kent. Pardon me, dear madam ;
Yet to be known shortens my made intent :
My boon I make it, that you know me not
Till time and I think meet.
Cor. Then be 't so, my good lord. [*To the* Doctor]
How does the king ?
Doct. Madam, sleeps still.
Cor. O you kind gods,
Cure this great breach in his abused nature !
The untuned and jarring senses, O, wind up
Of this child-changed father !
Doct. So please your majesty
That we may wake the king : he hath slept long.
Cor. Be govern'd by your knowledge, and proceed
I' the sway of your own will. Is he array'd ?
Kent. Ay, madam ; in the heaviness of his sleep
We put fresh garments on him.
Doct. Be by, good madam, when we do awake him ;
I doubt not of his temperance.
Cor. Very well.
Doct. Please you, draw near. Louder the music there !
Cor. O my dear father ! Restoration hang
Thy medicine on my lips ; and let this kiss
Repair those violent harms that my two sisters
Have in thy reverence made !
Kent. Kind and dear princess !
Cor. Had you not been their father, these white flakes
Had challenged pity of them. Was this a face
To be opposed against the warring winds ?
To stand against the deep dread-bolted thunder ?

7. ***Weeds***, Garments.
9. ***My made intent***, The plan I have made.
24. ***Temperance***, Calm, normality.

In the most terrible and nimble stroke
Of quick, cross lightning ? to watch—poor perdu !—
With this thin helm ? Mine enemy's dog,
Though he had bit me, should have stood that night
Against my fire ; and wast thou fain, poor father
To hovel thee with swine, and rogues forlorn,
In short and musty straw ? Alack, alack !
'Tis wonder that thy life and wits at once
Had not concluded all. He wakes ; speak to him.
Doct. Madam, do you ; 'tis fittest.
Cor. How does my royal lord ? How fares your majesty ?
Lear. You do me wrong to take me out o' the grave :
Thou art a soul in bliss ; but I am bound
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
Do scald like molten lead.
Cor. Sir, do you know me ?
Lear. You are a spirit, I know : when did you die ?
Cor. Still, still, far wide !
Doct. He's scarce awake : let him alone awhile.
Lear. Where have I been ? Where am I ? Fair daylight ?
I am mightily abused. I should e'en die with pity,
To see another thus. I know not what to say.
I will not swear these are my hands : let's see ;
I feel this pin prick. Would I were assured
Of my condition !
Cor. O, look upon me, sir,
And hold your hands in benediction o'er me :
No, sir, you must not kneel.
Lear. Pray, do not mock me :
I am a very foolish fond old man,
Fourscore and upward, not an hour more or less ;
And, to deal plainly,

35. *Cross*, Zig-zag.
40. *Short*, Scanty.
35. *Perdu*, Lost one.
42. *Concluded all*, All come to an end.

I fear I am not in my perfect mind.
Methinks I should know you, and know this man;
Yet I am doubtful: for I am mainly ignorant
What place this is; and all the skill I have
Remembers not these garments; nor I know not
Where I did lodge last night. Do not laugh at me;
For, as I am a man, I think this lady
To be my child Cordelia.
Cor. And so I am, I am.
Lear. Be your tears wet? yes, 'faith. I pray, weep not;
If you have poison for me, I will drink it.
I know you do not love me, for your sisters
Have, as I do remember, done me wrong:
You have some cause, they have not.
Cor. No cause, no cause.
Lear. Am I in France?
Kent. In your own kingdom, sir.
Lear. Do not abuse me.
Doct. Be comforted, good madam: the great rage,
You see, is kill'd in him: and yet it is danger
To make him even o'er the time he has lost.
Desire him to go in; trouble him no more
Till further settling.
Cor. Will't please your highness walk?
Lear. You must bear with me; pray you now, forget and forgive: I am old and foolish.
[*Exeunt all but* KENT *and* Gentleman.
Gent. Holds it true, sir, that the Duke of Cornwall was so slain?
Kent. Most certain, sir.
Gent. Who is conductor of his people?
Kent. As 'tis said, the bastard son of Gloucester.
Gent. They say Edgar, his banished son, is with the Earl of Kent in Germany.
Kent. Report is changeable. 'Tis time to look about: the powers of the kingdom approach apace.

Gent. The arbitrement is like to be bloody. Fare you well, sir. [*Exit.*

Kent. My point and period will be throughly wrought,
Or well or ill, as this day's battle's fought. [*Exit.*

95. *Arbitrement*, Decision.
97. *Point and period*, The fulfilment of my aim.

ACT V

SCENE I

The British camp, near Dover.

[*Enter, with drum and colours,* EDMUND, REGAN, Gentleman, *and* Soldiers.]

Edm. Know of the duke if his last purpose hold,
Or whether since he is advised by aught
To change the course: he's full of alteration
And self-reproving: bring his constant pleasure.
[*To a* Gentleman *who goes out.*

Reg. Our sister's man is certainly miscarried.

Edm. 'Tis to be doubted, madam.

Reg. Now, sweet lord,
You know the goodness I intend upon you:
Tell me—but truly—but then speak the truth,
Do you not love my sister?

Edm. In honour'd love.

Reg. I am doubtful that you have been conjunct
And bosom'd with her, as far as we call hers.

Edm. No, by mine honour, madam.

Reg. I never shall endure her: dear my lord,
Be not familiar with her.

Edm. Fear me not:
She and the duke her husband!

4. *Constant pleasure*, Settled determination.
5. *Miscarried*, Come to some harm. 6. *Doubted*, Feared.

[*Enter, with drum and colours,* ALBANY, GONERIL, *and* Soldiers.]

Gon. [*Aside*] I had rather lose the battle than that sister
Should loosen him and me.
Alb. Our very loving sister, well be-met.
Sir, this I hear; the king is come to his daughter,
With others whom the rigour of our state
Forced to cry out. Where I could not be honest,
I never yet was valiant: for this business,
It toucheth us, as France invades our land,
Not bolds the king, with others, whom, I fear,
Most just and heavy causes make oppose.
Edm. Sir, you speak nobly.
Reg. Why is this reason'd?
Gon. Combine together 'gainst the enemy;
For these domestic and particular broils
Are not the question here.
Alb. Let's then determine
With the ancient of war on our proceedings.
Edm. I shall attend you presently at your tent.
Reg. Sister, you'll go with us?
Gon. No.
Reg. 'Tis most convenient; pray you, go with us.
Gon. [*Aside*] O, ho, I know the riddle.—I will go.

[*As they are going out, enter* EDGAR *disguised.*]

Edg. If e'er your grace had speech with man so poor,
Hear me one word.
Alb. I'll overtake you. Speak.
[*Exeunt all but* ALBANY *and* EDGAR.
Edg. Before you fight the battle, ope this letter.
If you have victory, let the trumpet sound
For him that brought it: wretched though I seem,
I can produce a champion that will prove

41. *Champion*, Knight who will defend my cause.

What is avouched there. If you miscarry,
Your business of the world hath so an end,
And machination ceases. Fortune love you!
Alb. Stay till I have read the letter.
Edg. I was forbid it.
When time shall serve, let but the herald cry,
And I'll appear again.
Alb. Why, fare thee well: I will o'erlook thy paper.
[*Exit* EDGAR.

[*Re-enter* EDMUND.]

Edm. The enemy's in view; draw up your powers.
Here is the guess of their true strength and forces
By diligent discovery; but your haste
Is now urged on you.
Alb. We will greet the time. [*Exit.*
Edm. To both these sisters have I sworn my love;
Each jealous of the other, as the stung
Are of the adder. Which of them shall I take?
Both? one? or neither? Neither can be enjoy'd,
If both remain alive: to take the widow
Exasperates, makes mad her sister Goneril;
And hardly shall I carry out my side,
Her husband being alive. Now then we'll use
His countenance for the battle; which being done,
Let her who would be rid of him devise
His speedy taking off. As for the mercy
Which he intends to Lear and to Cordelia,
The battle done, and they within our power
Shall never see his pardon; for my state
Stands on me to defend, not to debate. [*Exit.*

44. *Machination ceases*, Plots against you end.
54. *Jealous*, Suspicious.

SCENE II

A field between the two camps.

[*Alarum within. Enter, with drum and colours,* LEAR, CORDELIA, *and* Soldiers, *over the stage; and exeunt.*]

[*Enter* EDGAR *and* GLOUCESTER.]

Edg. Here, father, take the shadow of this tree
For your good host; pray that the right may thrive:
If ever I return to you again,
I'll bring you comfort.
Glou. Grace go with you, sir! [*Exit* EDGAR.

[*Alarum and retreat within. Re-enter* EDGAR.]

Edg. Away, old man; give me thy hand; away!
King Lear hath lost, he and his daughter ta'en:
Give me thy hand; come on.
Glou. No farther, sir; a man may rot even here.
Edg. What, in ill thoughts again? Men must endure
Their going hence, even as their coming hither:
Ripeness is all: come on.
Glou. And that's true too. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III

The British camp near Dover.

[*Enter, in conquest, with drum and colours,* EDMUND; LEAR *and* CORDELIA, *prisoners;* Captain, Soldiers, etc.]

Edm. Some officers take them away: good guard,
Until their greater pleasures first be known

11. *Ripeness*, Readiness.

That are to censure them.

Cor. We are not the first
Who, with best meaning, have incurred the worst.
For thee, oppressed king, am I cast down;
Myself could else out-frown false fortune's frown.
Shall we not see these daughters and these sisters?

Lear. No, no, no, no! Come, let's away to prison:
We two alone will sing like birds i' the cage:
When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down,
And ask of thee forgiveness: so we'll live,
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues
Talk of court news; and we'll talk with them too,
Who loses and who wins; who's in, who's out;
And take upon 's the mystery of things,
As if we were God's spies: and we'll wear out,
In a wall'd prison, packs and sects of great ones,
That ebb and flow by the moon.

Edm. Take them away.

Lear. Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia,
The gods themselves throw incense. Have I caught thee?
He that parts us shall bring a brand from heaven,
And fire us hence like foxes. Wipe thine eyes;
The good-years shall devour them, flesh and fell,
Ere they shall make us weep: we'll see 'em starve first.
Come. [*Exeunt* LEAR *and* CORDELIA, *guarded.*

Edm. Come hither, captain; hark.
Take thou this note [*giving a paper*]; go follow them to prison:
One step I have advanced thee; if thou dost
As this instructs thee, thou dost make thy way
To noble fortunes: know thou this, that men

3. *Censure*, Judge.
18. *Packs*, Confederacies, implying "for a bad purpose."
24. *Good-years*, From Fr. *goujère*, the name of a disease.
24. *Fell*, the hide of an animal, used contemptuously here.

Are as the time is: to be tender-minded
Does not become a sword: thy great employment
Will not bear question; either say thou'lt do 't,
Or thrive by other means.
Capt. I'll do 't, my lord.
Edm. About it; and write happy when thou hast done.
Mark; I say, instantly, and carry it so
As I have set it down.
Capt. I cannot draw a cart, nor eat dried oats;
If it be man's work, I'll do it. [*Exit.*

[*Flourish. Enter* ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN, *another* Captain, *and* Soldiers.]

Alb. Sir, you have shown to-day your valiant strain,
And fortune led you well; you have the captives
That were the opposites of this day's strife:
We do require them of you, so to use them
As we shall find their merits and our safety
May equally determine.
Edm. Sir, I thought it fit
To send the old and miserable king
To some retention and appointed guard;
Whose age has charms in it, whose title more,
To pluck the common bosom on his side,
And turn our impress'd lances in our eyes
Which do command them. With him I sent the queen;
My reason all the same; and they are ready
To-morrow, or at further space, to appear
Where you shall hold your session. At this time
We sweat and bleed: the friend hath lost his friend;
And the best quarrels, in the heat, are cursed
By those that feel their sharpness:
The question of Cordelia and her father

36. *Write happy*, Consider yourself a lucky man. He hints at the reward the captain will receive.
43. *Opposites*, Adversaries.
51. *Impress'd lances*, Spears of the men impressed into our service.

Requires a fitter place.
Alb. Sir, by your patience,
I hold you but a subject of this war,
Not as a brother.
Reg. That's as we list to grace him.
Methinks our pleasure might have been demanded,
Ere you had spoke so far. He led our powers;
Bore the commission of my place and person;
The which immediacy may well stand up,
And call itself your brother.
Gon. Not so hot:
In his own grace he doth exalt himself,
More than in your addition.
Reg. In my rights,
By me invested, he compeers the best.
Gon. That were the most, if he should husband you.
Reg. Jesters do oft prove prophets.
Gon. Holloa, holloa!
That eye that told you so look'd but a-squint.
Reg. Lady, I am not well; else I should answer
From a full-flowing stomach. General,
Take thou my soldiers, prisoners, patrimony;
Dispose of them, of me; the walls are thine:
Witness the world, that I create thee here
My lord and master.
Gon. Mean you to enjoy him?
Alb. The let-alone lies not in your good will.
Edm. Nor in thine, lord.
Alb. Half-blooded fellow, yes.
Reg. [*To* EDMUND] Let the drum strike, and prove my title thine.
Alb. Stay yet; hear reason. Edmund, I arrest thee
On capital treason; and, in thy attaint,

66. *Immediacy*, Position of authority.
69. *Addition*, Title. 70. *Compeers*, Equals.
73. *A-squint.* An old proverb runs, "Love being jealous makes a good eye look a-squint." 75. *Stomach*, anger.
80. *The let-alone . . . will*, It is not for you to give consent.
84. *Attaint*, Impeachment.

This gilded serpent [*pointing to* GONERIL]. For your claim, fair sister,
I bar it in the interest of my wife;
'Tis she is sub-contracted to this lord,
And I, her husband, contradict your bans.
If you will marry, make your loves to me;
My lady is bespoke.
Gon. An interlude!
Alb. Thou art arm'd, Gloucester: let the trumpet sound:
If none appear to prove upon thy head
Thy heinous, manifest, and many treasons,
There is my pledge [*throwing down a glove*]; I'll prove it on thy heart,
Ere I taste bread, thou art in nothing less
Than I have here proclaim'd thee.
Reg. Sick, O, sick!
Gon. [*Aside*] If not, I'll ne'er trust medicine.
Edm. [*Throwing down a glove*] There's my exchange: what in the world he is
That names me traitor, villain-like he lies:
Call by thy trumpet: he that dares approach,
On him, on you,—who not?—I will maintain
My truth and honour firmly.
Alb. A herald, ho!
Edm. A herald, ho, a herald!
Alb. Trust to thy single virtue; for thy soldiers,
All levied in my name, have in my name
Took their discharge.
Reg. My sickness grows upon me.
Alb. She is not well; convey her to my tent.
[*Exit* REGAN, *led.*

[*Enter a* Herald.]

Come hither, herald,—Let the trumpet sound,—
And read out this.

90. *Interlude*, Comedy performed in the interval of a banquet; any light, brief dramatic entertainment. 104. *Virtue*. Valour.

Capt. Sound, trumpet! [*A trumpet sounds.*

Her. [*Reads*] "If any man of quality or degree within the lists of the army will maintain upon Edmund, supposed Earl of Gloucester, that he is a manifold traitor, let him appear by the third sound of the trumpet: he is bold in his defence."

Edm. Sound! [*First trumpet.*

Her. Again! [*Second trumpet.*

Her. Again! [*Third trumpet.*

[*Trumpet answers within.*

[*Enter* EDGAR, *at the third sound, armed, with a trumpet before him.*]

Alb. Ask him his purposes, why he appears
Upon this call o' the trumpet.

Her. What are you?
Your name? your quality? and why you answer
This present summons?

Edg. Know, my name is lost;
By treason's tooth bare-gnawn and canker-bit:
Yet am I noble as the adversary
I come to cope.

Alb. Which is that adversary?

Edg. What's he that speaks for Edmund Earl of Gloucester?

Edm. Himself: what say'st thou to him?

Edg. Draw thy sword,
That, if my speech offend a noble heart,
Thy arm may do thee justice: here is mine.
Behold, it is the privilege of mine honours,
My oath, and my profession: I protest,
Maugre thy strength, youth, place and eminence,
Despite thy victor sword and fire-new fortune,
Thy valour and thy heart, thou art a traitor,
False to thy gods, thy brother, and thy father,
Conspirant 'gainst this high illustrious prince,

125. *Cope*, Encounter. 132. *Maugre*, In spite of.

And, from the extremest upward of thy head
To the descent and dust below thy foot,
A most toad-spotted traitor. Say thou "No,"
This sword, this arm and my best spirits are bent
To prove upon thy heart, whereto I speak,
Thou liest.

Edm. In wisdom I should ask thy name;
But, since thy outside looks so fair and warlike,
And that thy tongue some say of breeding breathes,
What safe and nicely I might well delay
By rule of knighthood, I disdain and spurn:
Back do I toss these treasons to thy head;
With the hell-hated lie o'erwhelm thy heart;
Which, for they yet glance by and scarcely bruise,
This sword of mine shall give them instant way,
Where they shall rest for ever. Trumpets, speak!

[*Alarums. They fight.* EDMUND *falls.*

Alb. Save him, save him!

Gon. This is practice, Gloucester:
By the law of arms thou wast not bound to answer
An unknown opposite; thou art not vanquish'd,
But cozen'd and beguiled.

Alb. Shut your mouth, dame,
Or with this paper shall I stop it:—Hold, sir;
Thou worse than any name, read thine own evil:—
No tearing, lady; I perceive you know it.

[*Gives the letter to* EDMUND.

Gon. Say, if I do,—the laws are mine, not thine:
Who can arraign me for 't?

Alb. Most monstrous! oh!
Know'st thou this paper?

Gon. Ask me not what I know. [*Exit.*

Alb. Go after her; she's desperate; govern her.

144. *Say*, Assay, taste.
145. *Nicely*, With the utmost exactness or accuracy.
152. *Practice*, A plot. 154. *Opposite*, Adversary.
155. *Cozen'd*, Cheated.

Edm. What you have charged me with, that have I done;
And more, much more; the time will bring it out:
'Tis past, and so am I. But what art thou
That hast this fortune on me? If thou'rt noble,
I do forgive thee.
Edg. Let's exchange charity.
I am no less in blood than thou art, Edmund;
If more, the more thou hast wrong'd me.
My name is Edgar, and thy father's son.
The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to plague us:
The dark and vicious place where thee he got
Cost him his eyes.
Edm. Thou hast spoken right, 'tis true;
The wheel is come full circle; I am here.
Alb. Methought the very gait did prophesy
A royal nobleness: I must embrace thee:
Let sorrow split my heart, if ever I
Did hate thee or thy father!
Edg. Worthy prince, I know 't.
Alb. Where have you hid yourself?
How have you known the miseries of your father?
Edg. By nursing them, my lord. List a brief tale;
And when 'tis told, O, that my heart would burst!
The bloody proclamation to escape,
That follow'd me so near,—O, our lives' sweetness!
That we the pain of death would hourly die
Rather than die at once!—taught me to shift
Into a madman's rags; to assume a semblance
That very dogs disdain'd; and in this habit
Met I my father with his bleeding rings,
Their precious stones new lost; became his guide,
Led him, begg'd for him, saved him from despair;
Never,—O, fault!—reveal'd myself unto him,
Until some half-hour past, when I was arm'd:

175. *Wheel, i.e.* of Fortune.

Not sure, though hoping, of this good success,
I ask'd his blessing, and from first to last
Told him my pilgrimage: but his flaw'd heart,—
Alack, too weak the conflict to support!—
'Twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief,
Burst smilingly.

Edm. This speech of yours hath moved me,
And shall perchance do good: but speak you on;
You look as you had something more to say.

Alb. If there be more, more woful, hold it in;
For I am almost ready to dissolve,
Hearing of this.

Edg. This would have seem'd a period
To such as love not sorrow; but another,
To amplify too much, would make much more,
And top extremity.
Whilst I was big in clamour came there in a man,
Who, having seen me in my worst estate,
Shunn'd my abhorr'd society; but then, finding
Who 'twas that so endured, with his strong arms
He fastened on my neck, and bellow'd out
As he'ld burst heaven; threw him on my father;
Told the most piteous tale of Lear and him
That ever ear received: which in recounting
His grief grew puissant, and the strings of life
Began to crack: twice then the trumpets sounded,
And there I left him tranced.

Alb. But who was this?

Edg. Kent, sir, the banish'd Kent; who in disguise
Follow'd his enemy king, and did him service
Improper for a slave.

[*Enter a* Gentleman *with a bloody knife.*]

Gent. Help, help, O, help!

Edg. What kind of help?

195. *Success*, Issue. 197. *Flaw'd*, Cracked, broken.
199. *Passion*, Strong emotion. 205. *Period*, Ending, climax.
217. *Puissant*, Powerful.

Alb. Speak, man.
Edg. What means that bloody knife?
Gent. 'Tis hot, it smokes:
It came even from the heart of—O, she's dead!
Alb. Who dead? speak, man.
Gent. Your lady, sir, your lady: and her sister
By her is poisoned; she hath confess'd it.
Edm. I was contracted to them both: all three
Now marry in an instant.
Edg. Here comes Kent.
Alb. Produce their bodies, be they alive or dead:
This judgment of the heavens, that makes us tremble,
Touches us not with pity. [*Exit* Gentleman.

[*Enter* KENT.]

O, is this he?
The time will not allow the compliment
Which very manners urges.
Kent. I am come
To bid my king and master aye good night:
Is he not here?
Alb. Great things of us forgot!
Speak, Edmund, where's the king? and where's Cordelia?
See'st thou this object, Kent?
[*The bodies of* GONERIL *and* REGAN *are brought in.*
Kent. Alack, why thus?
Edm. Yet Edmund was beloved:
The one the other poison'd for my sake,
And after slew herself.
Alb. Even so; cover their faces.
Edm. I pant for life: some good I mean to do,
Despite of mine own nature. Quickly send,
Be brief in it, to the castle; for my writ
Is on the life of Lear and on Cordelia:

231. *Produce*, Bring forth.
235. *Very manners*, True courtesy. 239. *Object*, Sight.

Nay, send in time.

Alb. Run, run, O, run!

Edg. To who, my lord? Who hath the office? send

Thy token of reprieve.

Edm. Well thought on: take my sword,
Give it the captain.

Alb. Haste thee, for thy life. [*Exit* EDGAR.

Edm. He hath commission from thy wife and me
To hang Cordelia in the prison, and
To lay the blame upon her own despair,
That she fordid herself.

Alb. The gods defend her! Bear him hence awhile.

[EDMUND *is borne off.*

[*Re-enter* LEAR, *with* CORDELIA *dead in his arms;* EDGAR, Captain, *and others following.*]

Lear. Howl, howl, howl, howl! O, you are men of stones:
Had I your tongues and eyes, I'ld use them so
That heaven's vault should crack. She's gone for ever!
I know when one is dead, and when one lives;
She's dead as earth. Lend me a looking-glass;
If that her breath will mist or strain the stone,
Why, then she lives.

Kent. Is this the promised end?

Edg. Or image of that horror?

Alb. Fall and cease!

Lear. This feather stirs; she lives! if it be so,
It is a chance which does redeem all sorrows
That ever I have felt.

Kent. [*Kneeling*] O my good master!

Lear. Prithee, away.

Edg. 'Tis noble Kent, your friend.

256. *Fordid*, Destroyed. 263. *Stone*, The crystal of the mirror.

Lear. A plague upon you, murderers, traitors all!
I might have saved her; now she's gone for ever!
Cordelia, Cordelia! stay a little. Ha!
What is 't thou say'st? Her voice was very soft,
Gentle, and low, an excellent thing in woman.
I kill'd the slave that was a-hanging thee.
Capt. 'Tis true, my lords, he did.
Lear. Did I not, fellow?
I have seen the day, with my good biting falchion
I would have made them skip: I am old now,
And these same crosses spoil me. Who are you?
Mine eyes are not o' the best: I'll tell you straight.
Kent. If fortune brag of two she loved and hated,
One of them we behold.
Lear. This is a dull sight. Are you not Kent?
Kent. The same,
Your servant Kent. Where is your servant Caius?
Lear. He's a good fellow, I can tell you that;
He'll strike, and quickly too: he's dead and rotten.
Kent. No, my good lord; I am the very man,—
Lear. I'll see that straight.
Kent. That from your first of difference and decay
Have follow'd your sad steps—
Lear. You are welcome hither.
Kent. Nor no man else: all's cheerless, dark, and deadly.
Your eldest daughters have fordone themselves,
And desperately are dead.
Lear. Ay, so I think.
Alb. He knows not what he says: and vain it is
That we present us to him.
Edg. Very bootless.

[*Enter a* Captain.]

Capt. Edmund is dead, my lord.

277. *Falchion*, Sword; properly a curved sword, like a scimitar.
289. *First of difference*, The beginning of misfortune.
295. *Bootless*, Useless

Alb. That's but a trifle here.
You lords and noble friends, know our intent.
What comfort to this great decay may come
Shall be applied: for us, we will resign,
During the life of this old majesty,
To him our absolute power: [*To* EDGAR *and* KENT] you, to your rights;
With boot, and such addition as your honours
Have more than merited. All friends shall taste
The wages of their virtue, and all foes
The cup of their deservings. O, see, see!
Lear. And my poor fool is hang'd! No, no, no life!
Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,
And thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more,
Never, never, never, never, never!
Pray you, undo this button: thank you, sir.
Do you see this? Look on her, look, her lips,
Look there, look there! [*Dies.*
Edg. He faints! My lord, my lord!
Kent. Break, heart; I prithee, break!
Edg. Look up, my lord.
Kent. Vex not his ghost: O, let him pass! he hates him much,
That would upon the rack of this tough world
Stretch him out longer.
Edg. He is gone, indeed.
Kent. The wonder is he hath endured so long:
He but usurp'd his life.
Alb. Bear them from hence. Our present business
Is general woe. [*To* KENT *and* EDGAR] Friends of my soul, you twain
Rule in this realm, and the gored state sustain.

302. *With boot*, With advantage, with more than that.
306. *My poor fool.* Fool was a term of endearment, and it is generally supposed that Lear refers to Cordelia. But it seems quite likely that his weakened and wandering mind may for a moment have returned to the thought of his "poor fool," even as he holds his dead child in his arms.

Kent. I have a journey, sir, shortly to go ;
My master calls me, I must not say no.

Alb. The weight of this sad time we must obey ;
Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.
The oldest hath borne most : we that are young
Shall never see so much, nor live so long.

[*Exeunt, with a dead march.*

HELPS TO FURTHER STUDY

LIFE OF SHAKESPEARE

(With special reference to the time of the composition of *King Lear* and the other great tragedies.)

To the early years of the seventeenth century belong Shakespeare's great tragedies. For a time his mind was engrossed with the dramatic representation of the sorrowful things of life: the struggle of man with a destiny which, whether it be shaped by his own free-will or by some mysterious force without his power, is hostile to him; the ruin of a noble spirit by some characteristic in which dwell at once its strength and weakness, its pride and its disgrace; the grievous dealings of human beings with one another; the problem of evil. The tragic themes of *Julius Cæsar*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, *Timon of Athens*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Coriolanus* follow one another in rapid succession between the years of 1601 and 1609. The other plays written during this period, *Troilus and Cressida* and *Measure for Measure*, cannot be called comedies: in them human follies and vices are exposed with contempt and distaste, rather than with the gay detachment or humorous appreciation that went to the creation of Shakespeare's great comic characters and episodes, and their "happy endings" seem forced, leaving the audience incredulous and unsatisfied.

Some biographers of Shakespeare say that, in a sense, we know little of him from his work, which, like that of every great dramatist, is "objective"—that is, his men and women speak, as it were, with their own voices, from their own minds and hearts, expressing their characters and opinions, not those of their creator. The anguish of Gloucester's terrible cry—

> "As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods,
> They kill us for their sport——"

is Gloucester's, not necessarily Shakespeare's; the serene confidence of Edgar's—

> "Think that the clearest gods, who make them honours
> Of men's impossibilities, have preserved thee——"

is Edgar's, and cannot be quoted to prove the optimism of his creator. And yet the dramatist *is* every one of his characters: to a certain extent, his heart must have experienced their emotions, his mind must have thought their thoughts. Others, again, have traced the fabric of the actual events of Shakespeare's life, built into his work. *The Tempest* has been shown to be an elaborate allegory based on his retirement from the theatre. The sonnets are the "key" with which he "unlocked his heart" to reveal his own experience of broken friendship and unhappy love. Mr. Frank Harris sees in his tragedies the physical and mental agony of a man nearly maddened by his passion for a bewitching woman, false and cruel, and analyses them in the light of his supposed love story in London, with the "dark lady" to whom many of the sonnets are addressed as the heroine, and the "worser spirit" of his life. Such theories are of interest, and one learns much of Shakespeare in investigating them. Another group have been puzzled and dismayed by the contrast between the spirit of

the man as it is revealed in his work and in certain known facts of his life. Can it be possible, they say, that Shakespeare, while meditating the problem of *Hamlet*, fussed over the recovery of a little debt of £7 from one John Clayton in London; that, with the misery of *Macbeth* and the madness of *Lear* in his mind, he sued a Stratford tradesman who hadn't paid a malt bill? There is a common notion that superior mentality should detach itself from small ordinary human concerns; that, "moving about in worlds not realized," the man of genius should be a nincompoop in his dealings with his fellow-men. What we know of Shakespeare certainly disproves it. His business transactions show him to have been just, sane, and level-headed, seeing that his debtors paid up what they owed him, making money and spending it wisely, providing for a comely and independent old age, as strength and sanity will.

Shakespeare was not unacquainted with poverty. For a short time during his young manhood his family suffered reverses of fortune, and his own livelihood was precarious; but by the early seventeenth century, when he devoted himself to the great themes of tragedy, his material prosperity was assured. He belonged to the company known after 1603 as the King's Servants, or the King's Men, and his salary as an actor was a good one. For his plays he was, according to the standard of the time, well paid, and he had shares in the Globe Theatre. Sir Sidney Lee calculated that his income would be over £600, and as the purchasing power of money at that period was eight times what it was in our century before the war, this stands for a very fair sum. In 1597 he had bought the Great House of Sir Hugh Clopton, in his native town of Stratford, renamed it New Place, and set about improving the building and the gardens. Here he was to settle on retirement from his profession. Early in the seventeenth century he purchased land

near and in Stratford, and on his father's death he inherited the two houses in Henley Street which, in the nineteenth century, were converted into the single dwelling now known as "Shakespeare's House." In Stratford, though he visited it seldom before settling there, he was a man of importance on account of the property he owned; in London, when members of his company were publicly honoured, he was among the number. He acted at Greenwich Palace before Elizabeth, and at Wilton House before James. When, in 1604, the king entered London after the cessation of the plague, he was one of the actors chosen to walk in the procession accompanying him, and granted cloaks of scarlet cloth for the occasion. His first published work, the poem *Venus and Adonis*, had been dedicated to the Earl of Southampton. Favoured by royalty, enjoying the patronage of the noble, blest with many friends among dramatists and actors, honoured before the close of the sixteenth century as "most excellent" in tragedy and comedy, able to repair the fortunes of his family and to purchase an estate in his native town, Shakespeare certainly did not undergo that neglect during lifetime and praise after death that have been described as the common lot of genius.

His personality seems to have been gentle and attractive, his character one worthy of respect. When he was a young man the publisher Chettle spoke of his "civil demeanour," and his "uprightness of dealing." After his death his friend and rival, Ben Jonson, declared, "I loved the man, and do honour his memory, on this side idolatry, as much as any. He was, indeed, honest, and of an open and free nature." Heming and Condell, two of his fellow-actors, who published his plays, speak, in their preface to the First Folio, of keeping alive the memory of "so worthy a friend and fellow as was our Shakespeare."

Chief Recorded Events of the Life of Shakespeare

(For Reference.)

1564. On 26th April, William Shakespeare is baptized at the parish church of Stratford-on-Avon. He is the first son and third child of John Shakespeare, a trader in agricultural produce, and holder of various important municipal offices in Stratford (four years after the poet's birth he was high bailiff, or mayor, of the town), and of Mary Arden, who came of good yeoman stock.

1582. At the age of eighteen Shakespeare marries Ann Hathaway, eight years older than himself, daughter of a farmer of Shottery, a little village near Stratford. It is generally supposed that the marriage was not a happy one. Much has been made of a passage in *Twelfth Night*, where the Duke gives advice to his page—

> " Then let thy love be younger than thyself
> Or thy affection cannot hold the bent;
> For women are as roses, whose fair flower
> Being once displayed, doth fall that very hour——"

and of the fact that Shakespeare's sole bequest to his wife in his will is the " second best bed with its furniture."

1583. Birth of Shakespeare's daughter Susanna.

1584. Birth of his twin children, Judith and Hamnet. The boy died at the age of eleven.

1592. The poet and dramatist, Robert Greene, in a pamphlet called *A Groatsworth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance*, attacks a young actor as " an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his tiger's heart wrapped in

a player's hide supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you; and being an absolute Johannes factotum is, in his own conceit, the only Shakescene in the country." Obviously Shakespeare is meant, and by this time he must have left Stratford for London and the theatre. Later, the publisher of this pamphlet apologizes for Greene's ill-natured attack, and speaks of Shakespeare as " excellent in the quality * he professes."

1593, 1594. Publication of the poems *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, both dedicated to the Earl of Southampton.

1594. Shakespeare mentioned as one of the actors of the Lord Chamberlain's company. He plays before the Queen at Greenwich.

1596. The College of Heralds grants John Shakespeare a coat-of-arms, obtained three years later. He is known to have been in financial difficulties before this date. It is thought likely that his son returned to Stratford in this year, and established the fortunes of the family on a firmer basis.

1597. Shakespeare buys New Place at Stratford.

1598. Francis Meres publishes his *Palladis Tamia* (Treasury of Wit), in which he praises Shakespeare as the greatest dramatist of the time. He mentions his narrative poems, his sonnets, six comedies (*Two Gentlemen of Verona, Errors, Love's Labour's Lost, Love's Labour's Won,*† *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Merchant of Venice*), and six tragedies (*Richard II., Richard III., Henry IV., King John, Titus, Romeo and Juliet*).

1599. Globe Theatre built. Shakespeare becomes a shareholder in the receipts of this theatre.

* Technical term for the actor's profession.
† Perhaps *All's Well that Ends Well.*

1601. Death of John Shakespeare, from whom his son inherits the houses in Henley Street now known as Shakespeare's House.

1602. Shakespeare purchases arable land near Stratford.

1603. The Lord Chamberlain's company receives its licence from James I., and is henceforth known as the King's Company or the King's Servants. Theatres closed on account of the plague, and the court leaves London.

1604. Shakespeare is one of the actors chosen to walk in the procession accompanying the king on his entry into London.

1605. He buys a moiety (portion) of the tithes of Stratford, but this investment does not prove a very satisfactory one.

1607. His elder daughter, Susanna, marries Dr. John Hall. Their daughter Elizabeth was the only grandchild Shakespeare lived to see. She was the last surviving direct descendant of the poet.

1609. The Burbages, who had leased the Blackfriars Theatre, bought out the lessee. Shakespeare is one of the players to obtain shares (profits much less than at the Globe).

1610. Shakespeare purchases pastoral land, to add to that bought in 1602.

1611. He settles at Stratford.

1616. His younger daughter, Judith, marries Thomas Quiney, son of one of his old friends. Of their three sons, one died in infancy, the other two in young manhood.

1616. Death of Shakespeare (23rd April). He is buried in Stratford Parish Church, and over his grave are inscribed these lines:

> " Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbeare
> To dig the dust enclosed heare;
> Bleste be the man that spares these stones,
> And curst be he that moves these bones."

THE WORK OF SHAKESPEARE

c. 1590–1600. Plays :—*Love's Labour's Lost ; The Two Gentlemen of Verona ; The Comedy of Errors ; Romeo and Juliet ; Henry VI. ; Richard III. ; Richard II. ; Titus Andronicus ; The Merchant of Venice ; King John ; A Midsummer Night's Dream ; The Taming of the Shrew ; Henry IV. ; Henry V. ; Much Ado About Nothing ; Julius Cæsar ; As You Like It ; Twelfth Night.*

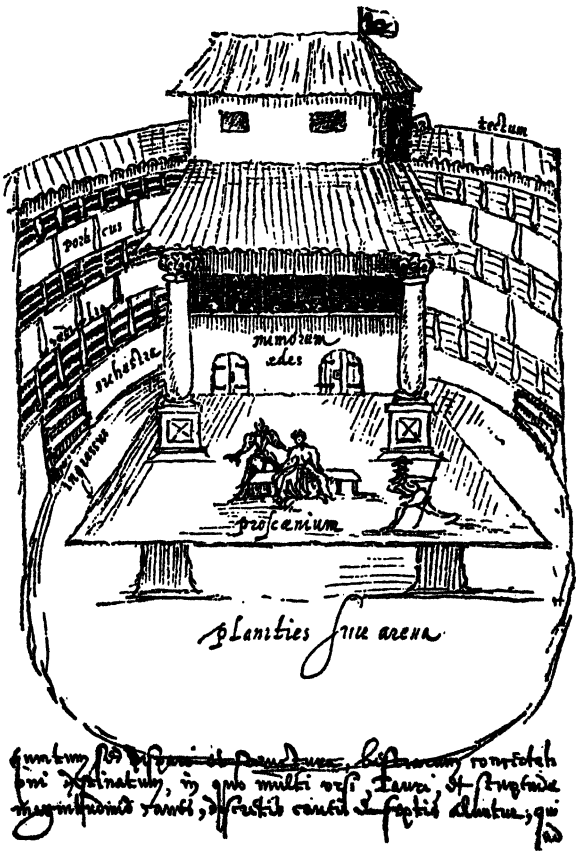
Poems :—*Venus and Adonis ; Lucrece ; The Sonnets.*

1600–1610. *Hamlet ; The Merry Wives of Windsor ; Troilus and Cressida ; All's Well that Ends Well ; Othello ; Measure for Measure ; Macbeth ; King Lear ; Timon of Athens ; Pericles ; Antony and Cleopatra ; Coriolanus.*

1610–1611. *Cymbeline ; The Winter's Tale ; The Tempest ; Henry VIII.*

THE ELIZABETHAN THEATRE

In 1598 the two sons of the late James Burbage, Richard and Cuthbert, with a sufficient number of helpers, repaired to the " Theater " put up two-and-twenty years previously by their father in Shoreditch, demolished the building, and carried off its fabric to a site in Bankside, where they erected a new playhouse, and called it the Globe, from its sign, which showed Hercules bearing the world on his shoulders. Here the company to which Shakespeare belonged, and for which he wrote, acted many of his plays, including *King Lear*, in which Richard Burbage, the greatest tragedian of his time, took the chief part. After fourteen years the famous playhouse was destroyed



THE SWAN THEATRE.
(From an old drawing.)

by fire, occasioned by the discharge of two cannons during the play of *Henry VIII.*—a splendidly produced performance, according to a contemporary account, " set forth with many circumstances of pomp and majesty, even to the matting on the stage." It was rebuilt, probably on the same general plan, though " in far finer manner than before." The exterior of this new theatre is included in a drawing made of part of London in 1616, and Shakespeare himself has given a hint as to the appearance of the original Globe. Those who have read *Henry V.* will remember how the Prologue speaks of the limitations of the theatre :

> " May we cram
> Within this wooden O the very casques
> That did affright the air at Agincourt."

The theatre in which the greatest drama of England was first acted was a very simple structure, reminiscent of the inn-yard where, before they had their own playing-places, actors would bring their " pageant," or movable wooden stage, and give their performance to the spectators thronging around them, or gathered at the windows or on the balconies above. The old names for the different parts of the playhouse indicate its origin : the pit is the " yard," and the boxes the " rooms." The theatre was only partially roofed, the spectators who stood in the rush-strewn pit being exposed to the weather. An hour or two before the performance, a flag, bearing the symbol of the theatre, was run up from a turret on the roof, and three trumpet blasts were sounded from this same point of vantage just as the play was about to begin. The afternoon was the time for dramatic entertainment, and it was fashionable for young gallants to go by way of the river to the theatres on the Bankside—the Globe, Rose, Swan, and Blackfriars.

The stage, or " scaffold," was what is called an *apron*

stage, differing from the *picture* stage common in present-day theatres in that it projected into the pit. Such a stage allows of no curtain, and the entrances and exits of the actors are not protected, as it were, by wings. There was no scenery in the modern sense, though a "painted cloth" or piece of arras was occasionally used. At the back of the stage was a wooden erection, hollowed out so that it might serve the purpose of a bed, or an arbour, or a prison, or a tomb, while its upper parts might be the city walls, or a balcony, or any place for which the direction "aloft" is given. There was a musicians' gallery in the rear of the stage, but its exact position is uncertain. Furniture, though not elaborate, was sufficient; thrones, benches, tables, mossy banks, cauldrons, chariots, and so on, seem to have been easily available. Little or no attempt was made to dress the play according to period, but the costume worn was magnificent, and fine effects were obtained in scenes where masques and torchlight processions are introduced. Of realistic noise there was no lack—storms, the galloping of horses' feet, alarums to battle, flourishes of trumpets, firing of cannon, are common stage directions, and there was much music. No actresses appeared on the stage before the Restoration, and all Shakespeare's women's parts were played by boys with their voices yet unbroken.

Although they would seem uncomfortable, barn-like structures to a modern audience, the first public playhouses, the "Theater," and the "Curtene," built in 1576 in Shoreditch, excited the admiration of Elizabethan Londoners for their "beauty" and "gorgeousness." There was a marked difference between the public and the private theatres, of which Blackfriars was one. The latter were more comfortable, being entirely roofed, while every part contained seating accommodation. Their prices of admission were naturally higher, ranging, as a general rule, from sixpence to

half a crown, while those of the public theatres were from a penny to a shilling.

Each company of actors was licensed to perform in the name of some royal or noble person. Thus we hear of Leicester's men, the Earl of Oxford's men, Nottingham's men, the Queen's players, and so on. From time to time a company would change its designation. The players to whose band Shakespeare belonged were called successively Leicester's, Lord Strange's, the Lord Chamberlain's, and the King's men. With the growth of the popularity of the theatre the salaries of actors grew greater, and their social importance increased. Their Puritan enemies would have it that they were "rogues and vagabonds," but they seem to have been "glorious vagabonds," with money enough to bring them "dignity and reputation," if they chose to save it and spend it wisely.

More interesting than to read an account of Shakespeare's stage is to come across references to it in his plays, and to discover what evidence they give of the stirring and beautiful effects that pleased his audience. Notice when you are reading how often music is introduced, and remember that the entrance of a procession, like that in the first scene of *Lear*, is more impressive on the Elizabethan apron stage than on the picture stage of to-day. If you have read *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* you will know where Shakespeare uses this procession effect in these plays. A duel like that between Edmund and Edgar would be an exhibition of skilful sword-play, thoroughly relished by an audience to whom fencing was not the accomplishment of a remote age, but an essential part of the training of a young man. Do you know of any other duels, serious or comic, in Shakespeare's plays?

You will find references to the custom of a boy acting the heroine's part in the epilogue to *As You Like It*, in *Antony and Cleopatra* (V. ii.), and in *Hamlet* (II. i.).

HELPS TO FURTHER STUDY

Read that great appeal to the imagination of an audience, the prologue to Act I. of *Henry V.*, and notice how the poor reality of the theatre is described there, and in the close of the prologue to Act IV. of the same play. Most interesting of all is what Shakespeare, actor and dramatist, has to say about the art of acting. Read Hamlet's instructions to the players (III. ii.), and see how profoundly he is moved by an exhibition of the actor's power (II. ii.).

Again and again pictures of the stage flash into Shakespeare's mind and suggest imagery for his thought. Perhaps the first passage of blank verse you learned was the famous "All the world's a stage." If you are at a performance of *As You Like It* you will realize that nearly all the people in the theatre know that passage, and welcome it with delight, as they do a favourite tune in grand opera. The *Merchant of Venice* has thought of the world in the same way. Look at *Richard II.* for the actor who must come in after the "well-graced" one (V. ii.); at *Coriolanus* (V. iii.) and at Sonnet xxiii. for one who is not word-perfect; and at *Troilus and Cressida* (I. iii.) for the bumptious fellow who takes pleasure in the mere sound of his strut across the stage. In your reading you will come across other illustrations drawn from the theatre. You will notice Shakespeare's sense of the impermanence of the art of the actor, even of the great actor. "The best in this kind are but shadows," says Theseus. One of the metaphors for life in the saddest soliloquy created by genius for man to speak—the very voice of despair—is drawn from

> "a poor player
> Who struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
> And then is heard no more." (*Macbeth*, V. v.)

Shakespeare himself acted well: according to a contemporary he was "excellent in the quality he

professes" (see page 140). Sometimes he seems bitterly to have resented his lot as an actor—

> "Alas, 'tis true I have gone here and there,
> And made myself a motley to the view,
> Gored mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most dear." (*Sonnet* cx.)

Fortune is to blame—

> "That did not better for my life provide
> Than public means which public manners breeds.
> Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,
> And almost thence my nature is subdued
> To what it works in, like the dyer's hand."
> (*Sonnet* cxi.)

But passionately expressed as they are, these may be but the feelings of a mood, like that of Sonnet xxix., where, mourning his "outcast state," he describes himself as "With what I most enjoy contented least."

"KING LEAR" IN THE THEATRE

Charles Lamb, in a criticism which has strongly influenced students of Shakespeare, declared: "The Lear of Shakespeare cannot be acted. The contemptible machinery by which they mimic the storm which he goes out in, is not more adequate to represent the horrors of the real elements, than any actor can be to represent Lear: they might more easily propose to personate the Satan of Milton upon a stage, or one of Michael Angelo's terrible figures. The greatness of Lear is not in corporal dimension, but in intellectual: the explosions of his passion are terrible as a volcano: they are storms turning up and disclosing to the bottom that sea his mind, with all its vast riches. The case of flesh and blood seems too insignificant to be thought on; even as he himself neglects it. On the stage we see nothing but corporal infirmities and

weakness, the impotence of rage; while we read it, we see not Lear, but we are Lear—we are in his mind, we are sustained by a grandeur which baffles the malice of daughters and storms: in the aberrations of his reason we discover a mighty irregular power of reasoning, immethodized from the ordinary purposes of life, but exerting its powers, as the wind blows where it listeth, at will upon the corruptions and abuses of mankind. What have looks, or tones, to do with the sublime identification of his age with that of the *heavens themselves*, when in his reproaches to them for conniving at the injustice of his children, he reminds them that 'they themselves are old'? What gestures shall we appropriate to this? What has the voice and eye to do with such things? But this play is beyond all art, as the tamperings with it show: it is too hard and stony; it must have love scenes, and a happy ending. It is not enough that Cordelia is a daughter, she must shine as a lover too. Tate has put his hook in the nostrils of this Leviathan, for Garrick and his followers, the showmen of scene, to draw the mighty beast about more easily. A happy ending!—as if the living martyrdom that Lear had gone through—the flaying of his feelings alive, did not make a fair dismissal from the stage of life the only decorous thing for him. If he is to live and be happy ever after, if he could sustain this world's burden after, why all this pudder and preparation; why torment us with all this unnecessary sympathy? As if the childish pleasure of getting his gilt robes and sceptre again could tempt him to act over again his misused station; as if, at his years, and with his experience, anything was left but to die!"

This was not written by a man to whom the theatre seemed contemptible, but by one to whom it was "the most delightful of recreations." Its truth, in a sense, is indisputable. And yet the fact remains that *Lear*, imperfectly shown as it may be by actors whose

art cannot fully compass Shakespeare's imaginative conception, is a great stage play. Bernard Shaw, a critic whose opinion is of particular value because he himself is a successful dramatist, has praised the dramatic quality of Shakespeare's language, a poetic language if ever there was one, rich in mighty polysyllables and strange imagery. He compares it with that of Henry James, a novelist who had an ambition to succeed as a playwright, and takes that great line from *Macbeth*, " The multitudinous seas incarnadine," to illustrate his point. " ' This my hand will rather the multitudinous seas incarnadine ' is such a polysyllabic monstrosity as was never spoken anywhere but on the stage ; but it is magnificently effective and perfectly intelligible in the theatre. James could have paraphrased it charmingly in words of one syllable and left the audience drearily wondering what on earth Macbeth was saying." It is a sound piece of criticism. Mr. Shaw might have gone on to say that this line, with many others Shakespeare wrote, does not gain its full poetic value immediately on the stage. There is a passage in *Othello*, spoken by Iago as he watches the man whose mind he has poisoned :

> " Not poppy, nor mandragora,
> Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
> Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
> Which thou owedst yesterday."

The action rushes on ; the minds of the spectators are swept with it ; the loveliness of those lines cannot hold the imagination spell-bound, as when they are read, and there is time to wait. The dramatic quality of Shakespeare's language is only *part* of its quality ; but there it is. The tragedy of *Lear*, acted by actors, is an *incomplete* presentation of Shakespeare's imaginative conception, but it holds the audience spell-bound, it is " magnificently effective " as a stage play.

Of Richard Burbage's Lear, in the Globe Theatre, we have no record. During the rule of the Commonwealth, in the seventeenth century, the theatres were closed. Stage history begins again with the Restoration of the Stuart kings and the reign of Charles II. At this period most of Shakespeare's plays were altered to suit contemporary taste, and *King Lear* fell into the hands of a certain Nahum Tate, who invented a love interest between Cordelia and Edgar, eliminated the part of the Fool, and gave the play a happy ending (see pages 172, 190). Early in Charles II.'s reign, before the plague broke out, a performance of which we have no further record of " the tragedy of *King Lear*, as Mr. Shakespeare wrote it, before it was altered by Mr. Tate," was given in the theatre of Lincoln's Inn's Fields; and a century later, a " new version " was acted, apparently without much success. With these exceptions, Tate's *Lear* held the stage until 1823, when, although retaining the Edgar and Cordelia love scenes, Kean restored Shakespeare's fifth act. Some years later, Macready restored the part of the Fool, which, in his production, was played by a woman.

Garrick was the greatest Lear of the eighteenth century. He seems to have been successful in rendering the pathos of the part, and its deep misery. He was " transformed into a feeble old man, still retaining an air of royalty." In his madness " he had no sudden starts, no violent gesticulation; his movements were slow and feeble; misery was depicted in his countenance; his eyes were fixed, or, if they turned to any one near him, he made a pause, and fixed his look on the person after much delay: his features, at the same time, telling what he was going to say before he uttered a word." He declared that he had copied this misery of madness from real life. An acquaintance of his, while playing with his little two-year-old girl at a window, let her fall. She was killed, and the

grief of the father drove him mad. Garrick would often visit him. Again and again the poor wretch would enact the scene, snatching at the child, breaking into a frenzy of grief, and turning with an expression of utter misery to the spectators. Many times Garrick watched this bitter anguish. "There it was that I learned to imitate madness; I copied nature, and to that owed my success in *King Lear*." Garrick's rival was Spranger Barry, whose splendid physique was to his advantage in giving a representation of the virile old king. A contemporary epigram neatly turned this fact to the favour of Garrick:

> "A king—nay, every inch a king,
> Such Barry doth appear;
> But Garrick's quite another thing;
> He's every inch King Lear."

During the time when King George III. was old and insane, *Lear* was not staged. After his death, Kean triumphed in the play. He constantly visited St. Luke's and Bethlehem hospitals in order to observe the details and manifestations of real insanity, declaring that he would make the audience mad as he himself would be. His rendering of the passionate violence of the old man was much praised. "Who that once heard can ever forget the terrors of that terrific curse, where, in the wild storm of his conflicting passion, he threw himself on his knees, lifted up his arms, like withered stumps, threw his head quite back, and, in that position, as if severed from all that held him to society, breathed a heart-struck prayer, like the figure of a man obtruncated." A contemporary account of his interpretation of the heath scenes is particularly interesting with reference to Lamb's criticism. "The Lear of Shakespeare—at least this part of it—requires to be made intelligible to the senses through the medium of the imagination. The gradual, and at last total, breaking of the waters from

the mighty deep of the human heart which takes place during these scenes would be intolerable in all the bareness, and with all the force, of reality. If it were possible to exhibit the actual Lear of Shakespeare on the stage, the performance must be forbidden by law. We really believe Mr. Kean felt something of this kind, and studied and performed these scenes accordingly. He did not give a *portrait*, but a *shadow* of them. They came upon us in their different aspects, not as animated images of Lear, but as dreamlike recollections of him." Kean appeared as Lear in 1820; in 1823 he restored its own ending to the tragedy. Some critics, including Hazlitt, were disappointed with his interpretation of Act V.; others did not know how to praise it enough. "There was no rant, no violence of action; all was characteristic only of the child-changed father. Stupefied with grief and years, he was dead to all but the corpse before him; and to this the last glimmerings of sense and feeling were directed. His first intent gaze upon the dead—his childish yet earnest action in watching for the motion of the feather which should denote that the vital spark still smouldered—his involuntary clasping of her hands—his address to her in the very dotage of despair—his familiar yet pathetic exclamation, 'Oh, thou wilt come no more, never, never,' as if he had caught up some household words and fitted them to the sad emergency—his last pointing to her lips with his finger trembling in death: description is set at defiance."

Irving's Lear was not ranked among the greatest of the Lyceum performances, and no one in this century has excelled in the part. The tragedy is played at the Old Vic, where, under the management of Miss Baylis, every one of Shakespeare's plays has been acted; and provincial theatre-goers have the opportunity of seeing it, as it is included in the repertory of Mr. Henry Baynton.

EARLY EDITIONS OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

Nowadays it is usual for a dramatist to publish his own works, often with elaborate prefaces, but such a practice was unknown during the life of Shakespeare. It was not until seven years after his death, in 1623, that two of his fellow-actors, Heming and Condell, collected his plays in one volume, grouping them into comedies, histories, and tragedies. This volume is called, from its size, the Folio Edition. During his life, however, many of the plays were piratically published by booksellers, in what are known as Quarto editions. It has been suggested that these were taken down in the theatre word for word as they were acted, but the text is sometimes so good that it seems likely that the publisher-bookseller (there was then no distinction between these trades) bribed an actor to let him see a copy of the play. Many of these Quartos were sold in St. Paul's Churchyard for sixpence each. The churchyard was then "like the close of a country cathedral, with a high and strong wall around it." There many booksellers had their shops and stalls, and the vaults of the old cathedral were used as storerooms for their reserve stock.

In 1608 was printed the first Quarto of *King Lear*, inscribed: "M. William Shak-speare, His True Chronicle Historie of the life and death of King Lear & his 3 Daughters. With the unfortunate life of Edgar, sonne & heire to the Earle of Gloster, & his sullen & assumed humor of Tom of Bedlam. As it was played before the Kings Maiestie at Whitehall upon S. Stephens night in Christmas Hollidayes. By his Maiesties seruants playing usually at the Gloabe on the Banckside. London, Printed for Nathaniel Butter, & are to be sold at his shop in Pauls Churchyard at the signe of the Pide Bull neare St. Austins Gate. 1608."

In the same year a second Quarto was published, with a similar title page, except that the last paragraph simply notes "Printed for Nathaniel Butter, 1608."

The Quarto and Folio editions of some of Shakespeare's plays do not differ greatly, but in the case of *King Lear* the variations in the text are very striking. The Quartos contain over two hundred lines that do not appear in the Folio at all. These include: in Act I. iii., Goneril's contemptuous description of her father, from "Idle old man" to "abused"; in Act III. vi., Edgar's speech, "When we our betters see bearing our woes," and vii., the conversation between the servants, from "I'll never care what wickedness I do" to the end of the scene; in Act IV. ii., Goneril's speech to her husband, from "That not know'st" to "Why does he so?" the whole of iii., in which the Gentleman describes Cordelia's grief to Kent, and vii., the conversation between Kent and the Gentleman about Cornwall's death and the impending war; in Act V. i., Albany's explanation of his attitude, from "Where I could not be honest" to "oppose," and iii., Edgar's description of his meeting with Kent, from "This would have seem'd a period" to "did him service improper for a slave." On the other hand, the Folio contains about fifty lines which are not to be found in the Quartos, the chief of which are: Act I. ii., the conversation of Edmund and Edgar, from "as of unnaturalness between the child and the parent" to "when saw you my father last," and iii., Goneril's words to her husband about her father, from "'Tis politic" to "I have showed the unfitness"; in Act III. i., Kent's speech, from "Who have—as who have not?" to "furnishings," and ii., the Fool's prophecy at the close of the scene; in Act IV., Lear's speech, from "Plate sin with gold" to "lips."

There has been much discussion among scholars as to the significance of these variations. The most

satisfactory view is that the Folio represents the acting edition of *Lear*, and the cuts of the passages that appear in the Quartos were made to shorten the play for representation on the stage. If you examine the passages concerned, you will find that there is much to justify this theory. Some of the variant readings in the Quartos and the Folio are given for comparison on page 186.

Three more Folio editions were printed during the seventeenth century. In the eighteenth century the work of editing the text began. Rowe, Pope, Hanmer, Capell, Theobald, Dr. Johnson, brought out editions which contain lists of *dramatis personæ*, indications of where the scene is supposed to take place, and emendations of passages where certain words or phrases appear to be corrupt. Some of these emendations have been found unnecessary, others have been accepted by later scholars and critics. For some of those made in the text of *King Lear*, see page 187. Where possible, students who are sufficiently advanced to be interested in text questions should examine facsimiles of the Folio and Quarto editions at first hand.

DATE OF THE COMPOSITION OF "KING LEAR"

In studying the development of the genius of Shakespeare it is inevitable that the question of the dates of his various plays should arise. Two kinds of evidence are considered in ascertaining the time when a play was written: *external evidence*, from dated records and references to the play; and *internal evidence*, supplied by allusions in the play itself to contemporary events, the date of which is known, and, what is more interesting though less definite, by the

choice of subject, the characterization, and the general style and thought of the play.

From the entry in the *Stationers' Register* * in 1607, it is known that *King Lear* was acted on December 26, 1606, at Whitehall, " before the King's majesty, by his majesty's servants playing usually at the Globe upon the Bankside." The question to be decided is how long before December 1606 it was written. Not before 1603, for in this year was published the *Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures*, by Archbishop Harsnet. Certain details in the play seem directly drawn from this book—the names of the fiends mentioned by Edgar, his allusion to the knives laid by evil spirits to tempt a man to suicide, and the comparison of the serving-man with the animals whose qualities resemble his own. The composition of the play, then, must have been between 1603 and 1606. At this point critics are divided into two camps. There is an old play, *King Leir and his Three Daughters*, which, in 1594, was entered on the *Stationers' Register* as a " Chronicle History " (which it is), but, when republished in May 1605, was entered as " *The Tragical History of King Leir and his Three Daughters &c., as it hath been divers and sundry times acted.*" Some scholars think that the publishers wanted to pass off this old play as Shakespeare's new one, which, if their theory is correct, must have been written before May 1605. Others, however, say that the changed description of the old chronicle history is not influenced by the nature of Shakespeare's play—that, even if it has not an " unhappy ending," it contains much that might be called " tragical." (Another point is that the " chronicle "

* Stationers originally sold books from " stations " or stands at various public places. The occupations of bookselling and publishing were not distinct in earlier times, and so it was naturally at the gild-hall of the stationers in London that the register of new publications was kept.

was out of date by the early seventeenth century, and tragic drama much in favour.) This group attach importance to Edmund's talk of the "late eclipses," and Gloucester's of how "machinations, hollowness, treachery, and all ruinous disorders follow us disquietly to our graves." In September 1605 was an eclipse of the moon, and a great solar eclipse, which excited much discussion and apprehension, took place a month later. In November came the Gunpowder Plot, which Gloucester's words might well describe. If these allusions are accepted, the play must have been completed late in 1605, or early in 1606.

SOURCES OF THE PLAY

The story of Lear and his daughters is a very old one, and it was told by mediæval and by Elizabethan writers before Shakespeare used it for the main plot of his play. The versions with which he was most probably familiar are: (1) the account given by Holinshed in his *Chronicle of England*, part of the *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, published in 1587; (2) an old play, *King Leir and His Three Daughters*, entered on the *Stationers' Register* in 1594; and (3) a brief passage in Book II. of Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (canto x., verses 27–32), published in 1590. An old ballad, included by Percy in his *Reliques*, was almost certainly of later date than Shakespeare's play.

It is likely that Shakespeare took the name of the youngest daughter from Spenser's account, where she is called "Cordelia," instead of "Cordeilla" or "Cordella" as in the Chronicle and the old play respectively. Holinshed describes the division of the kingdom, and the anger of the old king with his youngest daughter. Gonorilla and Regan marry two dukes, and Cordeilla the King of Gallia (see page 161). In time the dukes, who have already received half

the kingdom, desire the rest of their portion, and rising against the king, wrest the government from him, giving him an allowance on which to live. This is gradually reduced, and Gonorilla and Regan treat him so unkindly that at last he flees to Gallia, where Cordeilla comforts and honours him. The King of Gallia raises a mighty army, crosses to Britain, defeats and slays the dukes, and restores the kingdom to Lear. Cordeilla succeeds to the throne after her father, and rules well; but after her husband's death the sons of Gonorilla and Regan rise against her and throw her into prison, where she takes her own life.

In the old play the king resigns the whole of his kingdom, dividing it into marriage portions for his daughters. Gonorill and Ragan are to marry the kings of Cambria and Cornwall, and the disgraced Cordella plans to earn her living, when the King of Gallia arrives in Britain, disguised as a palmer, for thus he hopes to discover who is the best of Leir's fair daughters. Seeing Cordella, he immediately falls in love with her, and asks her the cause of her grief, and whether she would be willing to wed the King of Gallia. Her answer is that she loves a palmer better than any king on earth, and so she is betrothed to him, and Leir's three daughters are married on one day. Cordella leaves Britain for Gallia, and Gonorilla treats the old king unkindly, depriving him of half his pension, and threatening to withdraw the rest. With Perillus, a faithful courtier, he seeks Ragan, but she plans his assassination. The assassin, terrified by a storm, drops his daggers and flees, and the king and Perillus travel to Gallia. They land in Brittany, and suffer from hunger, but encountering Cordella and her husband, are given food and drink. The King of Gallia raises an army and invades Britain, and the play ends happily, with Leir restored to his throne.

In the *Arcadia*, a prose romance by Sir Philip

Sidney, published in 1590, is told a story which was the origin of that of Gloucester and his sons. A king of Paphlagonia, deceived by his illegitimate son, orders the death of the other, who, spared by those commanded to slay him, becomes a soldier in a neighbouring country. The wicked son usurps his father's kingdom, puts out his eyes, and turns him adrift. But the loyal and faithful son returns to protect the miserable father, and prevents his suicide.

The following passages from Holinshed and the old play should be compared with I. i. and IV. vii. of *King Lear*. They serve to show how small is Shakespeare's debt to the work of other men.

EXTRACT FROM HOLINSHED'S ACCOUNT OF "KING LEIR"

"It is written that he had by his wife three daughters without other issue, whose names were Gonorilla, Regan, and Cordeilla, which daughters he greatly loved, but specially Cordeilla the youngest far above the two elder. When this Leir therefore was come to great years, and began to wax unwieldly through age, he thought to understand the affections of his daughters towards him, and prefer her whom he best loved, to the succession over the kingdom. Whereupon he first asked Gonorilla the eldest how well she loved him, who calling her gods to record, protested that she loved him more than her own life, which by right and reason should be most dear unto her. With which answer the father being well pleased turned to the second, and demanded of her how well she loved him, who answered, (confirming her sayings with great oaths) that she loved him more than tongue could express, and far above all other creatures of the world.

"Then called he his youngest daughter Cordeilla

before him, and asked of her what account she made of him: unto whom she made this answer as followeth, 'Knowing the great love and fatherly zeal that you have always borne towards me (for the which I may not answer you otherwise than I think, and as my conscience leadeth me), I protest unto you, that I have loved you ever, and will continually, while I live, love you as my natural father. And if you would more understand of the love that I bear you, ascertain yourself, that so much as you have, so much you are worth, and so much I love you, and no more.' The father being nothing content with this answer, married his two eldest daughters, the one unto Henninus, the Duke of Cornwall, and the other unto Maglanus, the Duke of Albania, betwixt whom he willed and ordained that his land should be divided after his death, and the one half thereof immediately should be assigned to them in hand; but for the third daughter Cordeilla he reserved nothing.

"Nevertheless it fortuned that one of the princes of Gallia (which now is called France) whose name was Aganippus, hearing of the beauty, womanhood, and good conditions of the said Cordeilla, desired to have her in marriage, and sent over to her father, requiring that he might have her to wife: to whom answer was made, that he might have his daughter, but as for any dower he could have none, for all was promised and assured to her other sisters already. Aganippus notwithstanding this answer of denial to receive anything by way of dower with Cordeilla, took her to wife, only moved thereto, I say, for respect of her person and amiable virtues."

SCENE FROM THE OLD PLAY OF "KING LEIR"

Leir has been persuaded by the faithful Perillus to seek Cordella's court. The two land on the coast of Brittany, and suffer from hunger and thirst. The "Gallian" king and Cordella come across them, and give them food and drink. Leir, not recognizing them, tells them his story.

Leir. And now I am constrained to seek relief
Of her, to whom I have been so unkind;
Whose censure, if it do award me death,
I must confess she pays me but my due:
But if she show a loving daughter's part
It comes of God and her, not my desert.

Cordella. No doubt she will, I dare be sworn she will.

Leir. How know you that, not knowing what she is?

Cordella. Myself a father have a great way hence.
Used me as ill as ever you did her;
Yet, that his reverend age I once might see,
I'd creep along, to meet him on my knee.

Leir. O, no men's children are unkind but mine.

Cordella. Condemn not all, because of others' crime:
But look, dear father, look, behold and see
Thy loving daughter speaketh unto thee. [*She kneels.*

Leir. O stand thou up, it is my part to kneel,
And ask forgiveness for my former faults. [*He kneels.*

Cordella. O, if you wish I should enjoy my breath,
Dear father, rise, or I receive my death [*He riseth.*

Leir. Then I will rise, to satisfy your mind,
But kneel again, till pardon be resigned. [*He kneels.*

Cordella. I pardon you: the word beseems not me:
But I do say so, for to ease your knee;
You gave me life, you were the cause that I
Am what I am, who else had never been.

Leir. But you gave life to me and to my friend,
Whose days had else had an untimely end.
Cordella. You brought me up, when as I was but young,
And far unable for to help myself.
Leir. I cast thee forth, when as thou wast but young,
And far unable for to help thyself.
Cordella. God, world, and nature say I do you wrong
That can endure to see you kneel so long.
King. Let me break off this loving controversy,
Which doth rejoice my very soul to see.
Good father, rise, she is your loving daughter,
[*He riseth.*
And honours you with as respective duty,
As if you were the monarch of the world.
Cordella. But I will never rise from off my knee,
[*She kneels.*
Until I have your blessing, and your pardon
Of all my faults committed any way,
From my first birth until this present day.
Leir. The blessing, which the God of Abraham gave
Unto the tribe of Judah, light on thee,
And multiply thy days, that thou mayst see
Thy children's children prosper after thee.
Thy faults, which are just none that I do know,
God pardon on high, and I forgive below. [*She riseth.*
Cordella. Now is my heart at quiet, and doth leap
Within my breast, for joy at this good hap:
And now, dear father, welcome to our court,
And welcome, kind Perillus, unto me,
Mirror of virtue and true honesty.

ON THINKING IT OVER

FOR YOUNGER BOYS AND GIRLS

(After reading an Act, see if you have noticed and know these things.)

I

LEAR has divided his kingdom before he demands proof of his daughters' affection. How do you know this? What does his desire for the public avowal of their love show in his character? Which of the two elder daughters takes her cue from the other, and in what way? Why does Cordelia refuse to declare her love for her father? Has she any characteristic in common with him? Which of his daughters did Lear love most? How does he, in Scene i., show the "hideous rashness" which is to bring his tragedy upon him? How is the calamity which is to befall him suggested in the last lines of Scene i.? What plan does Edmund make to better his fortunes? Is his wickedness entirely inhuman? Show how Gloucester exhibits the curiosity, the credulity, and the superstition which are weaknesses in his character. How does Edmund regard the nobleness of his brother? Why does Goneril wish to arouse her father's anger? In what ways does she seek to do so? How does the banished Kent again enter the service of the king, and how does he at once help and please him? In another play, the heroine says of the court fool, "He must observe their mood on whom he

jests, the quality of persons and the time." Does Lear's Fool do this? What does Lear do when Goneril requests him to "disquantity his train"? Does Albany know of Goneril's plan against her father? What reason does she give him for having acted as she has done? How does she describe his unvoiced wish to let the king keep his followers? Where does the first suggestion of the king's coming madness occur?

Learn by heart the passages beginning:

"Sir, I love you more than words can wield the matter—" (page 14).

"Sir, I am made of the self-same metal as my sister is—" (page 15).

"Let it fall rather, though the fork invade the region of my heart—" (page 18).

"A credulous father, and a brother noble—" (page 29).

"O most small fault—" (page 39).

"Life and death! I am ashamed—" (page 40).

Think carefully of how these passages should be spoken, and speak them as well as you can.

Learn by heart the meanings of these words, which you will find in other plays of Shakespeare. Notice which of them are still used in modern English, though with a rather different meaning from the old one: Curiosity, affected, sennet, champains, additions, vassal, miscreant, owes, election, benison, fond, bias, practices, knave, earnest (noun), admiration, kibes.

Try to express the meaning of these passages in clear modern prose:

(*a*) Equalities are so weighed, that curiosity in neither can make choice of either's moiety.

(*b*) And the king gone to-night! subscribed his power!
Confined to exhibition!

(*c*) I promise you, the effects he write of succeed unhappily.

(*d*) I have perceived a most faint neglect of late, which I have rather blamed as mine own jealous curiosity than as a very pretence and purpose of unkindness.

II

How far have Edmund's plans succeeded, and in whose service is he employed? How does Kent out of his very loyalty do his master ill service? In what way does Regan's mocking cruelty show itself while Kent is being stocked? How is Gloucester's weakness of character shown in this scene? Describe Edgar's plan of disguise. What qualities of Lear's character appear in Scene iv.? Study the variations of his mood. What hints are given of his approaching madness? How do Regan and Goneril excuse themselves for their actions at the close of the scene?

Learn by heart:

"Such smiling rogues as these—" (page 52).

"No, Regan, thou shalt never have my curse—" (page 63).

"O, reason not the need—" (page 68).

Learn by heart the meanings of these words: Fell, alarum'd, caitiff, curst, tucket, suggestion, lily-livered, nicely, mortified, post, presently, meiny, cockney, taking, embossed, well-favoured.

Some of the above words are still common in modern English. Distinguish their present from their former use.

Explain: "sop o' the moonshine," "I'll carbonado your shanks," "ear-kissing arguments," "scant my sizes."

What do you know of Bedlam beggars, the stocks, a pinfold, the old belief in the influence of the stars on the fate of man, the game of bowls and the words "rub" and "bias" used in connection with it?

ON THINKING IT OVER

III

What plan has Cordelia made to help her father? With which of Lear's friends is she in communication? What qualities in Lear's character are revealed in his misery? What new thoughts suggest themselves to him? In whom does Gloucester confide his plan to relieve the king, and with what result? Why have the heath scenes been considered the most terrible, and the most difficult to represent on the stage, of all scenes in Shakespeare's plays? Why is Lear taken to Dover? What stage has Edmund's ambition now reached? How is the atrocious cruelty of Goneril and Regan further revealed in this Act? Which seems to you the more horrible? Is anything said or done to relieve the feelings of the audience in III. vii.?

Learn by heart:

"Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks!" (page 71).

"Poor naked wretches—" (page 76).

Learn by heart the meanings of these words: Power, gallow, arraign, minikin.

In what way does the Elizabethan differ from the modern use of the following words: Naughty, taking, practise, censured, sinews?

Express in your own words the thoughts of Edgar's speech at the end of III. vi., from "When we our betters see bearing our woes" to "he childed as I father'd."

IV

What terrible thought as to the dealings of the gods with men comes to Gloucester in his suffering? What idea comes into his mind similar to that expressed by Lear in his madness? What characteristics of Albany and of Goneril appear in Scene ii.? What belief as to the influence of the stars upon the destiny of man is expressed by Kent? Do you remember other refer-

ences to this belief in the play? How does Regan justify the attempt to take Gloucester's life? Is there any redeeming trait in the character of Oswald? How does Edgar try to inspire Gloucester with the will to live? Show how, in the intervals of his madness, Lear's old pride and his new self-knowledge are made evident. How does Edgar save Gloucester's life? What plot of Goneril's is revealed?

Learn IV. vi., page 104, "Come on, sir; here's the place."

Learn the meaning of these words as used by Shakespeare: Secure, abused, century, snuff, conceit, bourn, politician, modest.

Express in your own words:

(*a*) Plate sin with gold,
And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks;
Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw does pierce it.

(*b*) Better I were distract:
So should my thoughts be severed from my griefs,
And woes by wrong imaginations lose
The knowledge of themselves.

V

What words of Albany's show that Cordelia would have done well definitely to declare her purpose in invading Britain? In what difficulty does Edmund find himself? Show how the closing scene of the play brings out the characters of Goneril, Regan, Albany, Edmund, Edgar, and Kent. For what reasons do you think this scene was once considered too sad an ending for the play?

Who speaks the following words, and on what occasions?—

(*a*) Men must endure
Their going hence, even as their coming hither:
Ripeness is all.

(*b*) Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia,
The gods themselves throw incense.
(*c*) The wheel is come full circle ; I am here.
(*d*) I am come
To bid my king and master aye good night.
(*e*) All friends shall taste
The wages of their virtue, and all foes
The cup of their deservings.
(*f*) Vex not his ghost : O, let him pass ! he hates him
That would upon the rack of this tough world
Stretch him out further.

FOR OLDER STUDENTS

1. We often see the words " Terrible tragedy " on the newspaper bills ; we often use the phrase " What a tragedy ! " Generally the word suggests some sudden or dreadful form of death. The stories of the four greatest Shakespearean tragedies (*Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth*) are all terrible ones, and all end with death. And yet their tragedy does not lie alone in their " unhappy endings." (You know the story of *As You Like It.* Supposing the lion *had* killed Orlando in the forest, would the play have been a tragedy in the sense that any of these is tragic ?) When you have read *King Lear,* and thought over the presentation of human life and character in the play, try to describe to yourself what seems the essence of its tragedy.

2. Professor Bradley, analysing Shakespearean tragedy, says that the type of story chosen by Shakespeare is one of human actions producing exceptional calamity, and ending in the death of a man of high estate. Aristotle (see section 3) thought that the central figure of tragedy should be such a man. Shakespeare certainly did not consciously observe his " rule," but if you consider the heroes of his

tragedies, you will find that they are in accordance with it. Is there any particular effect in a story of the downfall of a man of high estate, as compared with a tragedy of humble life?

Bradley points out that in almost all the heroes of Shakespearean tragedy "we observe a marked one-sidedness, a predisposition in some particular direction; a total incapacity, in certain circumstances, of resisting the force which draws in this direction; a fatal tendency to identify the whole being with one interest, object, passion, or habit of mind. This, it would seem, is, for Shakespeare, the fundamental tragic trait." . . . "In the circumstances where we see the hero placed, his tragic trait, which is also his greatness, is fatal to him. To meet these circumstances something is required which a smaller man might have given, but which the hero cannot give."

Consider this description of the story, the "tragic trait," and the "circumstances" of the hero, with regard to *King Lear*.

3. What the Greek philosopher Aristotle (384–322 B.C.) said of Greek tragedy has been, and probably will be, discussed in every theory of tragedy put forward by any critic of drama in the western world. This is his "definition," as translated by the English poet Dryden in the seventeenth century:

"Tragedy is the imitation of one entire, great, and probable action, not told but represented, which, by moving in us fear and pity, is conducive to the purging of those two passions in our minds."

The description is comprehensible, but probably a good deal of experience in life and in the emotions excited by the dramatic representation of the tragedy of life is necessary before it is *realized*. Keep it in mind if you are interested in the substance of tragedy —and in the fact that its representation, whether in the "theatre of the mind" or that of reality, does give pleasure.

4. Read and consider this fine description of the impression of Shakespearean tragedy:

"A Shakespearean tragedy is never, like some miscalled tragedies, depressing. No one ever closes the book with the feeling that man is a poor mean creature. He may be wretched and he may be awful, but he is not small. His lot may be heart-rending and mysterious, but it is not contemptible. The most confirmed of cynics ceases to be a cynic while he reads these plays. And with this greatness of the tragic hero (which is not always confined to him) is connected what I venture to describe as the centre of the tragic impression. This central feeling is the impression of waste. With Shakespeare, at any rate, the pity and fear which are stirred by the tragic story seem to unite with, and even to merge in, a profound sense of sadness and mystery, which is due to this impression of waste." (Bradley.)

5. "The gods are just," says Edgar, "and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to plague us."

At the end of the play Albany says:

"All friends shall taste
The wages of their virtue, and all foes
The cup of their deservings—"

and then he breaks off, silenced by the death of Lear. His is the desire of the normal human being for "poetic justice"—by which characters are rewarded according to their deserts. Give instances of this "justice" from novels and plays you have read.

Thackeray laughed at Dickens for his delight in rewarding the good and punishing the bad. "Anything you like happens in Fable-land. Wicked folk die apropos, annoying folk are got out of the way; the poor are rewarded, the upstarts are set down in Fable-land—the frog bursts with wicked rage, the fox is caught in his trap, the lamb is rescued from the wolf, and so forth, just in the nick of time. And the poet

of Fable-land rewards and punishes absolutely. He splendidly deals out bags of sovereigns, which won't buy anything; belabours wicked backs with awful blows, which do not hurt; endows heroines with preternatural beauty, and creates heroes, who if ugly sometimes, yet possess a thousand good qualities, and usually end by being immensely rich; makes the hero and heroine happy at last, and happy ever after. Ah! happy, harmless Fable-land, where these things are." Does he, however, observe "poetic justice" in his own novels? Have you read any of the novels of Thomas Hardy? If you have, discuss how far the characters of his saddest books may be said to "deserve" their fate.

Do you think that this "justice" is in accordance with the usual facts of life?

6. Of all tamperings with Shakespearean drama, that of Nahum Tate in remodelling *Lear* and giving the play a "happy ending" (see page 190), has aroused most scorn and condemnation. And yet we cannot deny the exceptional bitterness and pathos of the play. Think over and describe this tragedy of old age, the old age of a king, his attempts to retain his virility, his dignity and power, his collapse from proud self-assertion to pitiful weakness, his curses and his prayers to which the only answer is Goneril's mocking voice or the dreadful noise of the storm. The longer you live, and the more often you read certain scenes of this play, the more poignant they become. The desire to set things right, the desire of Albany and Edgar, may not spring from a deep understanding of life, but it is a very natural and human desire, and it explains why Tate's version of the play held the stage so long.

And yet the "pity and terror" of the tragedy *are* bearable. We do not find ourselves turning from it because our feelings are too much harrowed, as we turn from certain newspaper records of human wretch-

edness. There is no tragedy, I think, which so fully accomplishes the Aristotelian " purging "—the clearing of the emotions of those who watch and feel. Terrible picture of life as it is, it is filled with a beauty which defeats the power of words. Think over those two scenes in I. and IV.—contrast the arrogant king who takes a fatuous pleasure in the speciousness of a declaration of love of which he knows nothing, being unable to distinguish the true from the false, with the old man who comes at last to the truth, too much wearied with what he has suffered to use it (and yet " too late " seem mere words), and kneels to his child Cordelia. You will remember other parts of the play that have this profound significance and beauty—have the evil and suffering of it so much power to hurt as these things to bless?

7. Perhaps you have read a Greek tragedy. If you are interested in the study of the drama, and are on the " modern side," you should read a good English translation of one of the dramas of Æschylus, Sophocles, or Euripides. You will be struck by the dominance of the idea of fate in the tragedy of the Greeks—the hero is predestined, and the interest of the play lies in watching his behaviour while " struggling in vain with ruthless destiny." Critics have often compared Shakespearean tragedy in this respect, saying that in it " character is destiny," that the man himself is responsible for his tragedy, and that the element of blind chance, whatever " moves in worlds not realized," is absent. You will be able to illustrate this from your knowledge of Shakespearean tragedy. Is it altogether true?

8. Make a study of the behaviour of Lear in the first act, showing the indication of madness that there is in his " hideous rashness," as Kent calls it. Is there truth in Goneril and Regan's comments on his character, callous as these are? Is he himself conscious and fearful of the possibility that he may become insane?

Edgar's behaviour while disguised as Poor Tom represents the common idea of a madman. Contrast his grotesque antics and babble with the actions and talk of the man who is " cut to the brains." Notice the persistence of one emotional idea, gaining strength until it overwhelms Lear's mind. (This is, of course, a characteristic of mental disease—to be observed in nervous breakdown and delirium as well as in actual insanity.) At what juncture does Lear become quite mad ? Does this madness persist to the end of his life ?

Coleridge has a fine comment on the " world's convention of agonies " in III. iv. : " All external nature in a storm, all moral nature convulsed,—the real madness of Lear, the feigned madness of Edgar, the babbling of the Fool, the desperate fidelity of Kent —surely such a scene was never conceived before or since ! Take it but as a picture for the eye only, it is more terrific than any which a Michel Angelo, inspired by a Dante, could have conceived, and which none but a Michel Angelo could have executed." He speaks, too, of the dreadful convincingness of the madness of Lear, and contrasts it with the assumed madness of Edgar. " In every attempt at representing madness throughout the whole range of dramatic literature, with the single exception of Lear, it is mere lightheadedness. . . . In Edgar's ravings Shakespeare all the while lets you see a fixed purpose, a practical end in view. In Lear's, there is only the brooding of the one anguish, an eddy without progression."

9. In Shakespeare's plays one often finds what is known as " dramatic irony." A character uses a phrase which has for the audience some special significance over and above that which it has for the speaker (or, sometimes, for those who listen to him). For instance, the bound Gloucester, questioned by Regan as to why he has sent the king to Dover, answers :

> Because I would not see thy cruel nails
> Pluck out his poor old eyes——"

little knowing that this is to be his torture, suggested by Goneril a few minutes before.

Have you noticed other instances of this dramatic irony in the play?

10. In *King Lear* evil is extraordinarily potent, and yet it does not prevail. There is a passage in Milton's *Comus* describing the wasting away of evil:

> "But evil on itself shall back recoil,
> And mix no more with goodness, when at last
> Gathered like scum, and settled to itself,
> It shall be in eternal restless change
> Self-fed, and self-consumed."

What is the fate of the evil characters in this play? Notice what Albany says of the dreadful deaths of Goneril and Regan:

> "This judgment of the heavens, that makes us tremble,
> Touches us not with pity——"

and contrast this with the emotion aroused by the fate of Lear and Cordelia.

11. In no other Shakespearean play do men speak so often of the gods, and their dealings with humanity. What do they say of this mystery? Consider the various fears and beliefs expressed in connection with the characters of those who express them, and what they have known and suffered.

12. "Four things have struck us in reading *Lear*:

"(1) That poetry is an interesting study, for this reason, that it relates to whatever is most interesting in human life. Whoever therefore has a contempt for poetry, has a contempt for himself and humanity.

"(2) That the language of poetry is superior to the language of painting; because the strongest of our recollections relate to feelings, not to faces.

"(3) That the greatest strength of genius is shown in describing the strongest passions; for the power of the imagination, in works of invention, must be in proportion to the force of the natural impressions, which are the subject of them.

"(4) That the circumstance which balances the pleasure against the pain in tragedy is, that in proportion to the greatness of the evil, is our sense and desire of the opposite good excited; and that our sympathy with actual suffering is lost in the strong impulse given to our natural affections, and carried away with the swelling tide of passion, that gushes from and relieves the heart." (Hazlitt.)

Discuss the truth of these assertions.

13. It has been said that Shakespeare dwells on the irony of kingship. Where is this irony made apparent in *King Lear*?

14. "There is nothing more noble and beautiful in literature than Shakespeare's exposition of the effect of suffering in reviving the greatness and eliciting the sweetness of Lear's nature. . . . Should we not be . . . near the truth if we called this poem *The Redemption of King Lear*, and declared that the business of 'the gods' with him was neither to torment him, nor to teach him a 'noble anger,' but to lead him to attain through apparently hopeless failure the very end and aim of life? One can believe that Shakespeare had been tempted at times to feel misanthropy and despair, but it is quite impossible that he can have been mastered by such feelings at the time when he produced this conception." (Bradley.)

Discuss this passage.

15. Those who love Lear most—Cordelia, Kent, and the Fool—in a sense do him disservice. Show how the Fool, in I. iv., gives Goneril the opening she wants, and how Kent (who, he says, has more man than wit about him) provides Goneril and Regan with pretexts for their treatment of their father. It is the

tragedy of Cordelia that a demand is made upon her which she cannot fulfil.

> " Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave
> My heart into my mouth——"

Does she give a true impression of her feelings for her father ? Show how this failure of hers helps to bring about the tragedy.

16. If you look at the scenes in which Cordelia appears, and the number of lines she speaks, you will be surprised to find how few they are. Can you account for the strength of the impression made by her personality in the play ?

17. There are characters which seem to contain the quintessence of manhood, or of womanhood. Kent is one of these : courageous, loyal, outspoken, with a sarcastic humour, a noble rashness, he has the qualities of which men are proud. In what scenes do these appear ?

18. Albany is the type of man who means well, but has not enough strength of character to put his intentions into practice. Describe his character as it is revealed in his conversations with Goneril. When does he assert himself and speak his mind ? Study his behaviour in Act V., and notice that he speaks the last words in the play.

19. Edgar's is the character opposite to the tragic type—that of the practical, resourceful man who can make the best of misfortunes and finally triumph over them. He is perhaps too easily deceived by Edmund —though his first impression on hearing of his father's displeasure is the right one (see page 29). Describe his behaviour throughout the play, bringing out his resolute optimism and his common sense. Notice that he has the limitations of his kind—his sympathy is quick but not intellectual. He does not realize that it is contact with his " madness " that Lear becomes quite mad ; he does not know when greater powers

" This fellow is wise enough to play the fool ;
And to do that well craves a kind of wit :
He must observe their mood on whom he jests,
The quality of persons, and the time,
And, like the haggard, check at every feather
That comes before his eye. This is a practice
As full of labour as a wise man's art ;
For folly that he wisely shows is fit ;
But wise men, folly-fall'n, quite taint their wit."

Feste, whose skill calls forth this soliloquy, is the cleverest of Shakespeare's fools—a singer and a mimic, able to adapt himself to all sorts of company. If you have read *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*, you will know that jesters had a common stock of amusing stuff—or, rather, of stuff that formerly seemed amusing. The fashion of fun changes, and the false logic, the puns, and the catchwords of the professional jester often miss fire nowadays. It is in their individual wit and wisdom that Shakespeare's fools give pleasure—phrases such as " much virtue in If," " an ill-favoured thing, sir, but mine own," " God give them wisdom that have it, and those that are fools, let them use their talents," are not likely to lose their pith while human nature is as it is.

It is interesting, if you know Feste and Touchstone, as well as Lear's Fool, to write a comparison of these three. Make a special study of the capacity of Lear's Fool with reference to Viola's description quoted above.

28. Debate the truth of Ruskin's description of " Shakespeare's testimony to the position and character of women in human life." He says : " He represents them as infallibly faithful and wise counsellors —incorruptibly just and pure examples—strong always to sanctify, even when they cannot save." With reference to *King Lear*, he says : " The catastrophe of every play is caused always by the folly or fault of a man ; the redemption, if there be any, is by the wisdom and virtue of a woman, and, failing that,

there is none. The catastrophe of King Lear is owing to his own want of judgment, his impatient vanity, his misunderstanding of his children; the virtue of his one true daughter would have saved him from all the injuries of the others, unless he had cast her away from him; as it is, she all but saves him." He mentions Lady Macbeth, Regan, and Goneril as three wicked women among the principal figures, but does not let them interfere with his theory, for "they are felt at once to be frightful exceptions to the ordinary laws of life; fatal in their influence also, in proportion to the power for good which they have abandoned."

29. A play, like a story, must have a beginning, middle, and end. The technical terms for these, with regard to a tragedy, are the *exposition*, the *conflict* (which rises to a *crisis*), and the *catastrophe*. Sometimes that part of the play between the crisis and the catastrophe is called the *counteraction*.

The exposition introduces the chief personages of the play, suggests their dominant characteristics and their relation to one another, and conveys enough of their history to make what is to come intelligible. Some conflict is foreshadowed. Coleridge points out that the first scene strikes a spiritual keynote, giving the "atmosphere" of the play. This is most clearly seen in the tragedies of *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*.

Illustrate these characteristics of the "exposition" from the opening scenes of *King Lear*.

The conflict is in many ways the most interesting part of the tragedy. The central figure, the "protagonist," is brought into contact with some enemy—sometimes, as in the case of Othello, so subtly that he does not realize it until defenceless against him. This "external conflict," as it is technically called, speedily manifests itself in *Lear*. Trace its course, both in the main and the sub-plot.

Where do you think the crisis, or turning-point of the play, occurs? After it, in tragedy, the fortunes

of the hero are on the downward grade. You know that he will be unable to prevail, to build the fabric of his life firmly again, to achieve "success."

Show the fluctuations of the conflict from the crisis to the catastrophe.

30. Of Shakespeare's great tragedies, *Lear* is the only one which contains a sub-plot. Where two parallel plots, or a main and a sub-plot, occur in Shakespearean drama, they are often in contrast with one another. Think of the different stories in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Much Ado*, and *Twelfth Night*. But in *Lear* Shakespeare has used two stories extraordinarily alike. Very shortly, in a few lines if possible, describe these in such a way as to bring out their similarity. Some critics have thought this repetition a fault. Others declare that the tragic effect is more poignant because of the resemblance of the two stories. With which do you agree? After you have read the whole play, show how the main and sub-plots are linked together.

31. Aristotle (see page 170), discussing tragedy, laid down certain "rules" which have exercised critics more or less ever since. These "rules" were not, of course, propounded as deliberate recipes for writing plays: they were based on the examination of a very great drama, that of Greece. Whatever ideas of culture one may have, no Greek theory of art is negligible. As you study drama and what has been written about it, you will come across Aristotle again and again, and the ruling with regard to construction that will be of most frequent occurrence is that of the *Unities*—of action, place, and time. According to the first, a drama should deal with the development of a single action (which excludes the use of "sub-plot"). The second insists on an unchanged scene; the third, that the time of the action of the play should be about equivalent to that of its representation on the stage. Can you see what artistic idea underlies these unities?

Did Shakespeare usually observe them? If you have begun to read French classical drama, compare him with Corneille and Racine in this respect. Which of the unities seems most important? Is any one of them observed in *King Lear*? Notice the practice of modern dramatists (who no longer discuss the unities) in this respect.

32. It has been said that Shakespeare often uses "two clocks"—that is, that two time impressions are given; (1) when the play is read quickly, or watched in the theatre, the action generally seems swift and uninterrupted (*A Winter's Tale* is the noticeable exception), and (2) on a leisurely consideration some time is found to elapse between the scenes. The action of *Lear* occupies about a month. Notice such indications as "And the king gone to-night," "without further delay than this very evening," "within a fortnight," etc., and make a time scheme of the play.

33. Study I. i. and IV. vii. of *King Lear* in connection with the extracts from Holinshed and the old play quoted on pages 160–163.

34. There is much of the fairy-tale element in the old story of *Lear*. Consider what Coleridge says about Shakespeare's use of it. "Improbable as the conduct of Lear is in the first scene, yet it was an old story rooted in the popular faith—a thing taken for granted already, and consequently without any of the effects of improbability. Secondly, it is merely the canvas for the characters and passions, a mere occasion for the incidents and emotions. Let the first scene of this play have been lost, and let it only be understood that a fond father had been duped by hypocritical professions of love and duty on the part of two daughters to disinherit the third, previously, and deservedly, more dear to him;—and all the rest of the tragedy would retain its interest undiminished, and be perfectly intelligible. The accidental is nowhere the groundwork of the passions, but that which is

catholic, native to the heart of man,—parental anguish from filial ingratitude, the genuineness of worth, and the execrable vileness of a smooth iniquity."

35. In your English language lessons :

(1) Comment on the uses of the following words in Elizabethan and in modern English : Abuse, addition, admiration, advise, alarum, approve, censure, cockney, conceit, comfort, continent, curious, curiosity, cope, curst, deer, doom, diseases, dejected, election, entertain, engine, exhibition, fond, incensed, inherit, knave, ministers, modest, mutiny, naughty, notion, nicely, out, owe, passion, post, pretence, practice, politician, quality, remorse, repeal, secure, several, smug, spill, succeed, suggestion, subscribed, taking, virtues, vulgar.

(2) Look up the meaning and derivation of : Moiety, sennet, rival, champain, argument, recall, miscreant, trice, benison, gad (noun), essay, taste, character, razed, disaster, pat, catastrophe, cue, bias, motley, spleen, caitiff, tucket, gasted, bewray, poise, pinfold, cullionly, carbonado, unbolted, renege, halcyon, saw, bedlam, meiny, sizes, sumpter, embossed, main, cataracts, hurricanoes, vaunt-courtiers, germens, gallow, aroint, sallets, crazed, arraign, quit, daub, mopping and mowing, sliver, trill, œillades, 'em, gossamer, impertinency, costard, foins, weeds, goodyears, attaint, puissant, produce, falchion.

(3) The following words are of different origin and meanings—look up their derivations and distinguish their meanings :

(*a*) The summit of this chalky *bourn*.

(*b*) Come o'er the *bourn*, Bessy, to me.

(*c*) What hath been seen
Either in *snuffs* and packings of the dukes.

(*d*) My *snuff* and loathed part of nature should
Burn itself out.

(*e*) Time shall unfold what *plighted* cunning hides.

(*f*) That lord whose hand must take my *plight* shall carry

Half my love with him.

(*g*) I arrest thee
On capital treason, and, in thine *attaint*,
This gilded serpent.

(*h*) Your fore-vouched affection
Fallen into *taint*.

(*i*) St. Withold footed thrice the *old*.

(*j*) If she . . .
Meet the *old* course of death,
Women will all turn monsters.

(4) Look up the derivation of each of these pairs or groups of words, and comment on their forms and meaning: Benison, benediction; gasted, ghastly; caitiff, captive; eft, newt; sizes, assizes, sizar; minikin, minion, minx.

(5) Show how the following words have deteriorated in meaning: Varlet, vassal, villain, knave, smug.

(6) Give the exact meaning of these words: Aspect, influence, disaster. Do you know of any other words in common use to-day originally connected with the "science" of astrology?

36. The words and phrases in italics in the following lines allude to various games and athletic exercises. What are these?

(*a*) See better, Lear, and let me still remain
The true *blank* of thine eye.

(*b*) Do you *bandy* looks with me, you rascal?

(*c*) The king falls from *bias* of nature.

(*d*) (He) bids what will *take all*.

(*e*) The *hard rein* which both of them have borne
Against the old kind king.

(*f*) 'Tis the duke's pleasure,
Whose disposition, all the world well knows,
Will not be *rubbed* or stopped.

37. The following are variant readings of the same passages in Folio I. and the Quartos. Which seem to you the better?

FOLIO 1	QUARTOS
I. i., page 14.	
We our largest bounty may extend	We . . . extend
Where *nature doth with merit* challenge.	Where *merit doth most* challenge it.
I. i., page 15.	
I am made *of that selfe-mettle as my sister.*	I am made *of the self-same metal that my sister is.*
I. i., page 18.	
Reserve thy state.	*Reverse thy doom.*
II. i., page 49.	
Occasions of some *prize* (F. and Q. 2) (*i.e.* estimation).	Occasions of some *poise* (*i.e.* weight).
II. ii., page 50.	
Good *dawning* to thee, friend.	Good *even* to thee, friend.
II. ii., page 52.	
Such smiling rogues as these,	Such . . .
Like rats, oft bite the holy cords a-twain	
That are *t'intrince* to unloose.	That are *to intrench* to unloose.
II. ii., page 63.	
Thy *tender-hefted* nature.	Thy *tender-hested* nature (*i.e.* governed by tender "hests").
III. vii., page 90.	
If wolves had at thy gate howled that *stern* time	If wolves had at thy gate howled that *dearne* (*i.e.* gloomy) time . . .
Thou shouldst have said, Good porter, turn the key,	
All cruels else *subscribe.*	All cruels else *subscribed.*
V. iii., page 128.	
O our lives' sweetness!	O our lives' sweetness!
That *we* the pain of death would hourly die	That *with* the pain . . .
Rather than die at once!	. . . once!
V. iii., page 131.	
Take my sword,	Take my sword,
Give it the captain.	*The captain—give it the captain* (Q. 1).

ON THINKING IT OVER

38. The following are emendations of various passages by Shakespearean editors. Discuss the value of these.

FOLIO AND QUARTOS	EMENDATIONS
I. i., page 22.	
The jewels of our father.	*Ye* jewels of our father (Steevens).
II. i., page 47.	
But *when* he saw my best alarum'd spirits . . .	But *wher'r* . . . fled.
Or whether gasted by the noise I made,	(*Wher'r* is a common contraction of *whether*)
Full suddenly he fled.	(Staunton).
II. iv., page 63.	
Thy *tender-hefted* nature(F.).	Thy *tender-hearted* nature
Thy *tender-hested* nature (Qs.).	(Rowe).
III. vi., page 83.	
Nero is an angler in the lake of darkness.	*Trajan* is . . . darkness. (According to Rabelais, who makes Nero a fiddler, Trajan an angler in Hell.) (Upton.)
IV. vi., page 109.	
Place sin with gold,	*Plate* sin with gold,
And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks.	. . . breaks (Theobald).
IV. vi., page 109.	
This' a good *block*.	This a good *plot* (Malone).
IV. vi., page 107.	
The *safer* sense will ne'er accommodate	The *saner* sense will ne'er accommodate.
His master thus.	His master thus (Johnson).
V. iii., page 132.	
This a dull *sight*.	This a dull *light* (Collier).

39. Compare these stage directions, given in the First Folio, with those of various eighteenth century editors that have been generally adopted since :

(1) II. iv., page 63.

Regan. Good sir, to the purpose. [*Tucket within.*

Lear. Who put my man i' the stocks ?
[*Enter* Steward.]
Cornwall. What trumpet's that ?

(2) II. iv., page 67.
Lear. No, I'll not weep, I have full cause of weeping.
[*Storm and tempest.*
But this heart shall break into a hundred thousand flaws
Or ere I'll weep. O fool, I shall go mad. [*Exeunt.*

(3) IV. vii., pages 113, 114.
[*Enter with drum and colours,* CORDELIA, Gentleman, *and* Soldiers.]

After Cordelia asks, " Is he arrayed ? "
[*Enter* LEAR *in a chair carried by servants.*]

40. Study the effect of onomatopœia (the sound echoing the sense) in the following lines :
(*a*) Smite flat the thick rotundity o' the world !
(*b*) Through the sharp hawthorn blows the cold wind.
(*c*) Now all the plagues in the pendulous air
Hang fated o'er men's faults light on thy daughters !
(*d*) The murmuring surge
That on the unnumbered idle pebble chafes.*

41. Contrast the structure of the blank verse in the two following passages, one from *Titus Andronicus,* an early play, one from *King Lear.*

(*a*) Titus is offered the robe in which he may appear as candidate for the empery of Rome.

Titus. A better head her glorious body fits
Than his that shakes for age and feebleness :
What should I don this robe, and trouble you ?
Be chosen with proclamations to-day,

* (*d*) is omitted in Tate's version of the passage.

To-morrow yield up rule, resign my life,
And set abroad new business for you all ?
Rome, I have been thy soldier forty years,
And led my country's strength successfully,
And buried one and twenty valiant sons,
Knighted in field, slain manfully in arms,
In right and service of their noble country :
Give me a staff of honour for mine age,
But not a sceptre to control the world :
Upright he held it, lords, that held it last."

(*T.A.*, I. i.)

(*b*) Lear announces the division of his kingdom :

" Meantime we shall express our darker purpose.
Give me the map there. Know that we have divided
In three our kingdom : and 'tis our fast intent
To shake all cares and business from our age ;
Conferring them on younger strengths, while we
Unburdened crawl toward death. Our son of Cornwall,
And you, our no less loving son of Albany,
We have this hour a constant will to publish
Our daughters' several dowers, that future strife
May be prevented now. The princes, France and Burgundy,
Great rivals in our youngest daughter's love,
Long in our court have made their amorous sojourn,
And here are to be answered."

42. In what scenes of this play is prose used ? Notice if there is any similarity between the prose scenes of other Shakespearean plays you have read, and those of *King Lear*. Where does rhyme occur ?

43. Various meanings have been suggested for these passages. Discuss them, and decide upon what you consider the best.

(*a*) I. i., page 15.

The most precious square of sense.

i. Square : the four nobler senses—sight, hearing, taste, smell.

ii. Square : estimate. (Sense unusual, but the verb " to square " elsewhere used to mean " to judge.")

(*b*) II. iv., page 63.

Thy tender-hefted nature.

i. *Hefted* comes from heft, an old form of haft, handle, and tender-hefted means set in a delicate handle, *or* to be handled tenderly.

ii. Read *tender-hested* (Qs.), which may mean governed by tender hests or controlling influences.

iii. Emend to *tender-hearted.*

(*c*) III. vii., page 90.

All cruels else subscribe.

i. Include with command to porter, closing inverted commas after "subscribe." Take *subscribe* in the sense of "yield," and paraphrase "yield to all other cruel animals"—*i.e.* allow them entrance.

ii. Close inverted commas after "key," and consider subscribe as a verb in the indicative mood. Paraphrase "all other cruel creatures will (sometimes) yield (to dictates against their nature)"—*i.e.* act mercifully.

iii. Adopt Q. reading "subscribed," include with command to porter, and paraphrase "all the cruel acts done at other times by the wolves being forgiven," the sense of subscribed being extended from "to yield, to assent to," to "to condone, to forgive."

(*d*) IV. iii., page 100.

And clamour moistened: then away she started
To deal with grief alone.

i. Clamour: expressions of grief. Moistened: bedewed with tears. She added tears to her expressions of grief.

ii. Take clamour-moistened as a participle, qualifying "eyes" or "she."

iii. Adopt the Q. reading, "and clamour moistened her," which most editors reject, regarding "her" as an accidental repetition from the previous line.

44. Nahum Tate's *Lear* (see page 172) was not universally admired in the days it held the stage.

Addison, writing in the early eighteenth century, says: "*King Lear* is an admirable tragedy, as Shakespeare wrote it; but as it is reformed according to the chimerical notion of poetical justice, in my opinion it has lost half its beauty."

Discuss these changes made by Tate:

(*a*) The introduction of a love story between Edgar and Cordelia. (Cordelia's replies to her father are prompted by the desire to avoid marriage with Burgundy.)

(*b*) The substitution of his own blank verse for a phrase or a passage from Shakespeare. For instance, Gloucester's "Wind me into him" (page 26) becomes:

> "Wind me into him,
> That I may bite the traitor's heart, and fold
> His bleeding entrails on my vengeful arm."

Lear's answer to Regan, "O, reason not the need" (page 66), is cut for

> "Blood! Fire! here—Leprosies and bluest plagues!
> Room, room for Hell to belch her horrors up
> And drench the Circes in a stream of fire;
> Hark how th' Infernals echo to my rage
> Their whips and snakes."

(*c*) The part of the Fool is cut.

(*d*) The last scene of the play tells how, when the captain and officers come in with cords to hang Lear and Cordelia, the old king draws his sword and kills two of them, almost exhausting himself with the effort (Garrick is said to have done this very finely). Then Albany and Edgar rush in to the rescue, and Albany commands:

> "Take off their chains. Thou injured majesty,
> The wheel of fortune now has made her circle,
> And blessings yet stand 'twixt thy grave and thee."

An apologist for this happy ending (Davies) says "Who could possibly think of depriving an audience, almost exhausted with the feelings of so many terrible scenes, of the inexpressible delight which they enjoyed, when the old king in rapture cried out:

'Old Lear shall be a king again!'"

THE END.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN AT
THE PRESS OF THE PUBLISHERS.
1912