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The "Teaching of English" Series

General Editor—SIR HENRY NEWBOLT

SHAKESPEARE'S
KING JOHN



KING JOHN HUNTING

*From a drawing of the early fourteenth century.
(Cotton MS., Claudius D. II., fol. 113)*

SHAKESPEARE'S
KING JOHN

822.33

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EDITED BY
JOHN HAMPDEN, B.A.

*"The reader acts the play
himself in the theatre of
his own mind"*

THOMAS NELSON & SONS, LTD.
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GENERAL EDITOR'S 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 followed 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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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

KING JOHN.

PRINCE HENRY, *son to the king.*

ARTHUR, *Duke of Bretagne, nephew to the king.*

THE EARL OF PEMBROKE.

THE EARL OF ESSEX.

THE EARL OF SALISBURY.

THE LORD BIGOT.

HUBERT DE BURGH.

ROBERT FAULCONBRIDGE, *son to Sir Robert Faulconbridge.*

PHILIP THE BASTARD, *his half-brother.*

JAMES GURNEY, *servant to Lady Faulconbridge.*

PETER OF POMFRET, *a prophet.*

PHILIP, *King of France.*

LEWIS, *the Dauphin.*

LYMOGES, *Duke of Austria.*

CARDINAL PANDULPH, *the Pope's legate.*

MELUN, *a French lord.*

CHATILLON, *ambassador from France to King John.*

QUEEN ELINOR, *mother to King John.*

CONSTANCE, *mother to Arthur.*

BLANCH OF SPAIN, *niece to King John.*

LADY FAULCONBRIDGE.

Lords, Citizens of Angiers, Sheriff, Heralds, Officers,
Soldiers, Messengers, and other Attendants.

Scene : Partly in England, and partly in France.

Time : 1199—1216.

The text of this edition is that of the *Globe Shakespeare*, with slight omissions. A number of stage-directions and descriptions of scenes have been added, so that the reader may see the action of the play more easily. All these additions are enclosed in *round* brackets, to distinguish them from the stage-directions of the *Globe* edition—many of which are not Shakespeare's, but have been added by his editors.

INTRODUCTION

It is a troubled England upon which the curtain rises, in the year 1199. A few months have elapsed since Richard the Lion Heart fell at the siege of Chalus, with the fatal arrow in his shoulder, and his brother John has been hailed as king by the barons of Normandy and England, but his throne is by no means secure. He has inherited his brother's feud with Philip of France, his own French provinces are quarrelling among themselves, and his English subjects are growing steadily more unwilling to fight abroad and more discontented with strict government and heavy taxation at home. He is at the head of the unstable Angevin Empire—built up by his father, the great law-giver Henry II.—which stretches from the frontier of Scotland to the frontier of Spain, and claims the overlordship of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. If John were as able a statesman as his father he might keep his inheritance together, at least during his own lifetime, but he is no statesman though occasionally he can prove himself a cunning and energetic leader.

These are difficulties grave enough, and in addition he is threatened by immediate danger. His elder brother Geoffrey has left a son, Arthur, Duke of Brittany, who is regarded by many as the rightful king. Anjou, Brittany, Maine, and Touraine have declared for Arthur, and King Philip of France may support him. John has a strong ally in his mother, Queen Elinor, and the barons have elected him king, preferring a man to a boy, but their allegiance is none too

INTRODUCTION

secure, for some of them already know him in his true character, as a man almost wholly evil—cowardly, treacherous, brutal, and inefficient. The action which



Royal Costume, about 1190.

King Philip makes may decide the fate not only of the Angevin Empire, but of England and of John, and when the curtain rises the English court is tense with restrained excitement; Philip's ambassador has arrived.

Let us look for a moment at the scene, in which the gay dresses of men and women alike suggest a holiday mood which none of them feels. King John himself is the outstanding figure, and we may picture him as his body was found when his tomb in Worcester Cathedral was opened in 1797. He is thirty-three years old, a man of middle height, thick-

set and strong. His cruel face is curiously broad, he has a small beard and moustache, and his long reddish hair is surmounted by a trefoiled crown of gold, set with gems. His mantle, flowing from his shoulders

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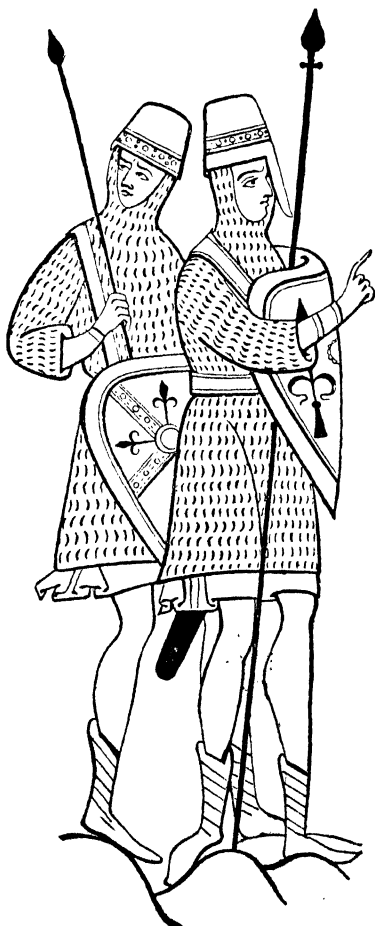
almost to the ground, is of finest cloth of gold, lined with green, and beautifully embroidered along the edges. Under the mantle he wears a long tunic of crimson silk, with collar, girdle, and hem of gold set with jewels, and a longer under-tunic of cloth of gold. His gloves are white, with rings worn outside them. His close-fitting red hose are almost hidden by the tunics. His black shoes are crossed by the light blue straps of his golden spurs. Truly, we cannot wonder that he is held to be "the most extravagant prince in the world."

Beside him sits his mother, the famous Queen Elinor of Aquitaine, whose eighty years have not quenched her strong, ambitious spirit. She is dressed as splendidly as her son—in a long mantle of blue silk, decorated with golden crescents and lined with rose, and a loosely fitting white gown which is heavily embroidered with gold and gathered at the waist by a jewelled belt. Her hair is covered by a flowing *couvrechef* and a *barbette*, a piece of fine linen fastened under the chin in a fashion which she introduced; her crown is a circlet bearing eight points set with precious stones and pearls. Like her son, she masks with regal confidence a tense concern to hear the French king's embassy, and she must be too conscious of John's weaknesses and difficulties to be free from anxiety.

The English nobles, and the ambassador and his train rival in extravagance of dress the king himself. Their flowing hair is bound by a coronet or a circlet of gold, about the temples. Their long mantles and tunics are of the richest silks and brocades and cloth of gold, embroidered with many patterns and gleaming with jewels. All wear elaborately finished gloves, and shoes or boots of silk or soft leather, and no doubt the younger nobles have their tunics slit up the front, so that they may display tight-fitting hose of brilliant colours, cross-gartered from foot to thigh with bands of gold.

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This is the garb of peace. When the next scene



takes us to France, and the armies of Philip and John confront each other under the walls of Angiers, the kings and their nobles are clad from head to foot in close-fitting chain-mail, with helmets which protect head and nose, and white surcoats which reach the knee. Their long, pointed shields are brightly blazoned with their coats-of-arms, and square pennons fluttering from their lances also reveal to the keen eyes of heralds the identity of the knights who bear them, while a further glow of colour is added to the scene by the gay trappings of the horses. Behind their leaders are massed the soldiers, wearing steel cap and shirt of mail, or in some cases only the tunic and hose of peace

time, and armed with pike and sword and bow.

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Here before Angiers we meet the other leading actors in our drama. King Philip Augustus, Philip II., is (historically) a good soldier, and a splendid statesman, who is shortly to realize the dominant ambition of his life, by breaking up the Angevin Empire. To meet him comes the proud and passionate Constance of Brittany, whose ambition has joined with Philip's to make a tool of her son Prince Arthur. The boy himself has made no claim to the English throne, and, appearing to us even younger than he was in reality, he is the innocent and helpless victim of the warring forces of his time. And now, with the stage set, we leave the other actors to speak for themselves, while Philip Faulconbridge, one of the most notable (and least historical) of them all, speaks not only for himself but for England.

THE HISTORY OF THE LIFE AND DEATH OF KING JOHN

ACT I

SCENE I

King John's palace (a lofty hall, with timbered roof and tapestried walls).

[*Enter King John, Queen Elinor, Pembroke, Essex, Salisbury, and others, with Chatillon.*] (*The King takes his place on the throne, with his mother, Queen Elinor, beside him. His nobles group themselves about the hall, drawing away with barely-concealed hostility from the French Ambassador, Chatillon, who confronts the King defiantly.*)

K. John. Now, say, Chatillon, what would France with us ?

Chatillon. Thus, after greeting, speaks the King of France

In my behaviour to the majesty,
The borrow'd majesty, of England here.

Elinor. A strange beginning : " borrow'd majesty ! "

K. John. Silence, good mother ; hear the embassy.

Chatillon. Philip of France, in right and true behalf
Of thy deceased brother Geffrey's son,
Arthur Plantagenet, lays most lawful claim

3. *In my behaviour,* Through my conduct as ambassador.

4. *Borrow'd* implies " usurped."

10 To this fair island and the territories,
 To Ireland, Poitiers, Anjou, Touraine, Maine,
 Desiring thee to lay aside the sword
 Which sways usurpingly these several titles,
 And put the same into young Arthur's hand,
 Thy nephew and right royal sovereign.

K. John (sternly). What follows if we disallow of this ?

Chatillon. The proud control of fierce and bloody war,
 To enforce these rights so forcibly withheld.

K. John. Here have we war for war, and blood for blood,

20 Controlment for controlment : so answer France.

Chatillon. Then take my king's defiance from my mouth,

The farthest limit of my embassy.

K. John (rising). Bear mine to him, and so depart in peace :

Be thou as lightning in the eyes of France ;

For ere thou canst report I will be there,

The thunder of my cannon shall be heard :

So hence ! Be thou the trumpet of our wrath

And sullen presage of your own decay.

An honourable conduct let him have :

30 Pembroke, look to't. Farewell, Chatillon.

[*Exeunt Chatillon and Pembroke.*]

Elinor. What now, my son ! (*he sits*) have I not ever said

How that ambitious Constance would not cease

Till she had kindled France and all the world,

Upon the right and party of her son ?

This might have been prevented and made whole

With very easy arguments of love,

Which now the manage of two kingdoms must

With fearful bloody issue arbitrate.

(*Enter a Sheriff, who speaks to the Earl of Essex.*)

K. John (loudly). Our strong possession and our right for us.

40 *Elinor (quietly)*. Your strong possession much more
than your right,

Or else it must go wrong with you and me :
So much my conscience whispers in your ear,
Which none but heaven and you and I shall hear.

Essex (coming forward). My liege, here is the strang-
est controversy

Come from the country to be judged by you
That e'er I heard : shall I produce the men ?

K. John. Let them approach.

(Exit the Sheriff. The King addresses the Court.)

Our abbeys and our priories shall pay

This expedition's charge.

[Enter Robert Faulconbridge and Philip his brother.]

(Robert is slightly built and sharp-featured, but Philip, who does not resemble him at all, is of splendid build and evidently of great physical strength. Both bow low to the King. Queen Elinor looks at Philip with keen interest.)

K. John. What men are you ?

50 *Philip*. Your faithful subject I, a gentleman

Born in Northamptonshire and eldest son,

As I suppose, to Robert Faulconbridge,

A soldier, by the honour-giving hand

Of Cœur-de-lion knighted in the field.

K. John. What art thou ?

Robert. The son and heir to that same Faulcon-
bridge.

K. John. Is that the elder, and art thou the heir ?

You came not of one mother then, it seems.

Philip. Most certain of one mother, mighty king ;

60 That is well known ; and, as I think, one father :

But for the certain knowledge of that truth

I put you o'er to heaven and to my mother.

That is my brother's plea and none of mine ;

The which if he can prove, a' pops me out.

40. *Your strong possession, etc.* Elinor evidently thinks that John
has no right to the crown.

At least from fair five hundred pound a year.

K. John. A good blunt fellow. Why, being younger born,

Doth he lay claim to thine inheritance ?

Philip (with cheerful contempt for Robert). I know not why, except to get the land.

Compare our faces and be judge yourself.

70 If old Sir Robert did beget us both

And were our father and this son like him,

O old Sir Robert, father, on my knee

I give heaven thanks I was not like to thee !

K. John. Why, what a madcap hath heaven lent us here !

Elinor (to the King). He hath a trick of Cœur-de-lion's face ;

The accent of his tongue affecteth him.

Do you not read some tokens of my son

In the large composition of this man ?

K. John. Mine eye hath well examined his parts,

80 And finds them perfect Richard. *(To Robert)* Sirrah, speak,

What doth move you to claim your brother's land ?

Philip. Because he hath a half-face, like my father.

With half that face would he have all my land :

A half-faced groat five hundred pound a year !

Robert. My gracious liege, when that my father [died],

Upon his death-bed he by will bequeath'd

His lands to me, and took it on his death

That this my mother's son was none of his ;

Then, good my liege, let me have what is mine,

90 My father's land, as was my father's will.

K. John. Sirrah, your brother is legitimate :

Your father's heir must have your father's land.

78. *Composition, build.*

80. *Finds them perfect Richard, "He looks exactly like Richard."*

82. *Half-face, Thin, wretched face. A groat (fourpenny piece) bore a "half-face"—the king's head in profile.*

87. *Took it on his death, Swore solemnly.*

Robert. Shall then my father's will be of no force
To dispossess that child which is not his ?

Elinor (to Philip). Whether hadst thou rather be a
Faulconbridge

And like thy brother, to enjoy thy land,
Or the reputed son of Cœur-de-lion,
Lord of thy presence and no land beside ?

Philip. Madam, an if my brother had my shape,
100 And I had his, Sir Robert's his, like him ;
And if my legs were two such riding-rods,
My arms such eel-skins stuff'd, my face so thin
That in mine ear I durst not stick a rose
Lest men should say, " Look, where three-farthings
goes ! "

And, to his shape, were heir to all this land,
Would I might never stir from off this place,
I would give it every foot to have this face ;
I would not be Sir Nob in any case.

Elinor. I like thee well : wilt thou forsake thy
fortune,
110 Bequeath thy land to him and follow me ?

I am a soldier and now bound to France

Philip (smiting his brother on the shoulder). Brother,
take you my land, I'll take my chance.

Your face hath got five hundred pound a year,
Yet sell your face for five pence and 'tis dear.

(Bowing to the Queen) Madam, I'll follow you unto the
death.

Elinor. Nay, I would have you go before me thither.

Philip. Our country manners give our betters way.

K. John. What is thy name ?

Philip. Philip, my liege, so is my name begun ;
120 Philip, good old Sir Robert's wife's eldest son.

K. John. From henceforth bear his name whose
form thou bear'st :

(Motioning a noble to give him a sword.)

Kneel thou down Philip, but rise more great,
*(Standing, he strikes Philip lightly across the shoulders
 with the sword.)*

Arise Sir Richard and Plantagenet.

Philip. Brother by the mother's side, give me your hand :

My father gave me honour, yours gave land.

Elinor (delighted). The very spirit of Plantagenet !
 I am thy grandam, Richard ; call me so.

K. John (to Robert). Go, Faulconbridge : now hast thou thy desire ;

A landless knight makes thee a landed squire.

130 [*Rising*] Come, madam, and come, Richard, we must speed

For France, for France, for it is more than need.

Philip. Brother, adieu : good fortune come to thee !
*(Taking the Queen's hand, the King leads her out,
 and is followed by all except Philip. He stands
 looking after them for a moment, and then drops
 on to a bench, to think over his sudden change of
 fortune.)*

Philip. A foot of honour better than I was ;
 But many a many foot of land the worse.

Well, now can I make any Joan a lady.

"Good den, Sir Richard!"—"God-a-mercy, fellow!"—

And if his name be George, I'll call him Peter ;

For new-made honour doth forget men's names ;

'Tis too respective and too sociable

140 For your conversion. Now your traveller,

He and his toothpick at my worship's mess,

And when my knightly stomach is sufficed,

Why then I suck my teeth and catechize

My picked man of countries : " My dear sir,"

Thus, leaning on mine elbow, I begin,

124. *Give me your hand,* Grasping it, but not shaking it.

135. *Joan* was a common name among peasants.

136. *Good den,* Good-evening. *God-a-mercy,* God reward you.

144. *Picked,* Affected, spruce.

"I shall beseech you"—that is question now ;
 And then comes answer like an Absey book :
 "O sir," says answer, "at your best command ;
 At your employment ; at your service, sir :"
 150 "No, sir," says question, "I, sweet sir, at yours :"
 And so, ere answer knows what question would,
 Saving in dialogue of compliment,
 And talking of the Alps and Apennines,
 The Pyrenean and the river Po,
 It draws toward supper in conclusion so.
 But this is worshipful society
 And fits the mounting spirit like myself,
 For he is but a bastard to the time
 That doth not smack of observation ;
 160 And so am I, whether I smack or no
 And not alone in habit and device,
 Exterior form, outward accoutrement,
 But from the inward motion to deliver
 Sweet, sweet, sweet poison for the age's tooth :
 Which, though I will not practise to deceive,
 Yet, to avoid deceit, I mean to learn ;
 For it shall strew the footsteps of my rising.

(He rises and looks out through the great door of the hall.)

But who comes in such haste in riding-ropes ?
 What woman-post is this ? hath she no husband
 170 That will take pains to blow a horn before her ?

[Enter Lady Faulconbridge and James Gurney.]

O me ! it is my mother. How now, good lady !
 What brings you here to court so hastily ?

Lady F. Where is that slave, thy brother ? where
 is he ?

Philip. My brother Robert ? old Sir Robert's son ?

147. *Absey*, A.B.C.

158-167. *For he is but . . .* "For he is not a true son of the present age who will not flatter men deceitfully, so I am not. But I will learn to flatter, not to deceive others, but to avoid being deceived myself when men flatter me, as they will now that I am rising in the world."

Colbrand the giant, that same mighty man ?

Is it Sir Robert's son that you seek so ?

Lady F. Sir Robert's son ! Ay, thou unreverend boy,

Sir Robert's son ! why scorn'st thou at Sir Robert ?

Philip. James Gurney, wilt thou give us leave awhile ?

180 *Gurney.* Good leave, good Philip.

Philip (imitating him). Philip ! sparrow : James, There's toys abroad : anon I'll tell thee more.

[*Exit Gurney.*]

Madam, I was not old Sir Robert's son :

Sir Robert might have eat his part in me

Upon Good Friday and ne'er broke his fast.

Lady F. Hast thou conspired with thy brother too ?

What means this scorn, thou most untoward knave ?

Philip. Knight, knight, good mother, Basilisco-like.

What ! I am dubb'd ! I have it on my shoulder.

But, mother, I am not Sir Robert's son ;

180 I have disclaimed Sir Robert and my land ;

Legitimation, name and all is gone :

Then, good my mother, let me know my father ;

Some proper man, I hope : who was it, mother ?

Lady F. Hast thou denied thyself a Faulconbridge ?

Philip. As faithfully as I deny the devil.

Lady F. King Richard Cœur-de-lion was thy father.

Philip. Madam, I would not wish a better father,

Against whose fury and unmatched force

The aweless lion could not wage the fight,

200 Nor keep his princely heart from Richard's hand.

Come, lady ; I will show thee to my kin.

(*He leads her out.*)

175. *Colbrand*, A Danish champion, said to have been defeated by Guy of Warwick.

180. *Sparrow* was often called Philip or Phip, from its chirp.

181. *Toys*, Rumours, strange reports.

187. *Basilisco* was a character in an Elizabethan play, *Soliman and Perseda*, who insisted upon being called knight.

ACT II

SCENE I

France. Before Angiers.

(The gates of the town are closed, and armed sentries along the walls show that an attack is expected. Drums and trumpets sound. From one direction enters the Duke of Austria at the head of his army, and from the other enter the King of France ; Prince Lewis, the Dauphin ; Prince Arthur and his mother, Constance ; and their followers. The King and nobles are clad in full armour, and their gaily-coloured pennons flutter in the wind above them. The lion-skin which Austria wears over his armour makes him a conspicuous figure.)

Lewis. Before Angiers well met, brave Austria.

Arthur, that great forerunner of thy blood,

Richard, that robb'd the lion of his heart

And fought the holy wars in Palestine,

By this brave duke came early to his grave :

And for amends to his posterity,

At our importance hither is he come,

To spread his colours, boy, in thy behalf,

And to rebuke the usurpation

¹⁰Of thy unnatural uncle, English John :

Embrace him, love him, give him welcome hither.

Arthur. God shall forgive you Cœur-de-lion's death

7. *Importance*, Importance, urgent request.

9. *Rebuke*, Put down.

The rather that you give his offspring life,
 Shadowing their right under your wings of war ;
 I give you welcome with a powerless hand,
 But with a heart full of unstained love :
 Welcome before the gates of Angiers, duke.

Lewis. A noble boy ! Who would not do thee right ?

Austria. Upon thy cheek I lay this zealous kiss,
 20 As seal to this indenture of my love,
 That to my home I will no more return,
 Till Angiers and the right thou hast in France,
 Together with that pale, that white-faced shore,
 Whose foot spurns back the ocean's roaring tides
 And coops from other lands her islanders,
 Even till that England, hedged in with the main,
 That water-walled bulwark, still secure
 And confident from foreign purposes,
 Even till that utmost corner of the west
 30 Salute thee for her king : till then, fair boy,
 Will I not think of home, but follow arms.

Constance. O, take his mother's thanks, a widow's
 thanks,

Till your strong hand shall help to give him strength
 To make a more requital to your love !

Austria. The peace of heaven is theirs that lift their
 swords

In such a just and charitable war.

K. Philip. Well then, to work : our cannon shall be
 bent

Against the brows of this resisting town.

Call for our chiefest men of discipline,

40 To cull the plots of best advantages :

We'll lay before this town our royal bones,

Wade to the market-place in Frenchmen's blood,

But we will make it subject to this boy.

Constance. Stay for an answer to your embassy,
 Lest unadvised you stain your swords with blood :

My Lord Chatillon may from England bring
That right in peace which here we urge in war,
And then we shall repent each drop of blood
That hot rash haste so indirectly shed.

[*Enter Chatillon.*]

50 *K. Philip.* A wonder, lady ! lo, upon thy wish,
Our messenger Chatillon is arrived !
What England says, say briefly, gentle lord ;
We coldly pause for thee ; Chatillon, speak.

Chatillon. Then turn your forces from this paltry
siege

And stir them up against a mightier task.
England, impatient of your just demands,
Hath put himself in arms : the adverse winds,
Whose leisure I have stay'd, have given him time
To land his legions all as soon as I ;

60 His marches are expedient to this town,
His forces strong, his soldiers confident.
With him along is come the mother-queen,
An *Atè*, stirring him to blood and strife ;
With her her niece, the Lady Blanch of Spain ;
With them a bastard of the king's deceased ;
And all the unsettled humours of the land,
Rash, inconsiderate, fiery voluntaries,
With ladies' faces and fierce dragons' spleens,
Have sold their fortunes at their native homes,
70 Bearing their birthrights proudly on their backs,
To make a hazard of new fortunes here :
In brief, a braver choice of dauntless spirits
Than now the English bottoms have waft o'er
Did never float upon the swelling tide,
To do offence and scath in Christendom.

[*Drum beats.*]

The interruption of their churlish drums

53. *Coldly*, Coolly, calmly.

63. *Atè*, Greek goddess of revenge and discord.

66. *Unsettled humours*, Men of unsettled humour.

67. *Voluntaries*, Volunteers.

Cuts off more circumstance : they are at hand,
To parley or to fight ; therefore prepare.

K. Philip. How much unlook'd for is this expedition !

80 *Austria.* By how much unexpected, by so much
We must awake endeavour for defence ;
For courage mounteth with occasion :
Let them be welcome then ; we are prepared.

(The French and Austrian forces draw together.)

[Enter King John, Elinor, Blanch, Philip Faulconbridge, Lords, and forces.]

K. John. Peace be to France, if France in peace
permit

Our just and lineal entrance to our own ;
If not, bleed France, and peace ascend to heaven,
Whiles we, God's wrathful agent, do correct
Their proud contempt that beats His peace to heaven.

K. Philip. Peace be to England, if that war return
90 From France to England, there to live in peace.
England we love ; and for that England's sake
With burden of our armour here we sweat.

This toil of ours should be a work of thine ;
But thou from loving England art so far,
That thou hast under-wrought his lawful king,
Cut off the sequence of posterity.

Look here upon thy brother Geoffrey's face ;
These eyes, these brows, were moulded out of his :
This little abstract doth contain that large
100 Which died in Geoffrey, and the hand of time
Shall draw this brief into as huge a volume.
That Geoffrey was thy elder brother born,
And this his son ; England was Geoffrey's right
And this is Geoffrey's : in the name of God
How comes it then that thou art call'd a king,
When living blood doth in these temples beat,

77. *Circumstance*, Details.

85. *Lineal*, By right of inheritance.

97. *Geoffrey*, Geoffrey, Duke of Brittany, Arthur's father.

Which owe the crown that thou o'ermasterest ?

K. John. From whom hast thou this great commission, France,

To draw my answer from thy articles ?

110 *K. Philip.* From that supernal judge, that stirs good thoughts

In any breast of strong authority,

To look into the blots and stains of right :

That judge hath made me guardian to this boy :

Under whose warrant I impeach thy wrong,

And by whose help I mean to chastise it.

K. John. Alack, thou dost usurp authority.

K. Philip. Excuse ; it is to beat usurping down.

Elinor. Who is it thou dost call usurper, France ?

Constance. Let me make answer ; thy usurping son.

120 *Austria.* Peace !

Philip. Hear the crier.

Austria. What the devil art thou ?

Philip. One that will play the devil, sir, with you,

An a' may catch your hide and you alone :

125 You are the hare of whom the proverb goes,

Whose valour plucks dead lions by the beard :

I'll smoke your skin-coat, an I catch you right ;

Sirrah, look to 't ; i' faith, I will, i' faith.

Blanch. O, well did he become that lion's robe

That did disrobe the lion of that robe !

Philip. It lies as sightly on the back of him

130 As great Alcides' shows upon an ass :

But, ass, I'll take that burthen from your back,

Or lay on that shall make your shoulders crack.

Austria. What cracker is this same that deafs our ears

With this abundance of superfluous breath ?

107. *Owe*, Own.

109. *Draw my answer from thy articles*, Probably, "compel me to answer thy list of questions."

110. *Supernal*, Reigning on high. 125. *Smoke*, Beat (slang).

130. *Alcides*, Hercules, wore a lion's skin. See note.

133. *Cracker*, Boaster.

King Philip, determine what we shall do straight.

K. Philip. Women and fools, break off your conference.

King John, this is the very sum of all ;
England and Ireland, Anjou, Touraine, Maine,
In right of Arthur do I claim of thee :

140 Wilt thou resign them and lay down thy arms ?

K. John. My life as soon : I do defy thee, France.
Arthur of Bretagne, yield thee to my hand ;
And out of my dear love I'll give thee more
Than e'er the coward hand of France can win :
Submit thee, boy.

Elinor (coaxing him). Come to thy grandam, child.

Constance (mockingly). Do, child, go to it grandam,
child ;

Give grandam kingdom, and it grandam will
Give it a plum, a cherry, and a fig :
There's a good grandam.

Arthur (in great distress). Good my mother, peace !
150 I would that I were low laid in my grave :

I am not worth this coil that's made for me.

Elinor. His mother shames him so, poor boy, he
weeps.

Constance. Now shame upon you, whether she does
or no !

His grandam's wrongs, and not his mother's shames,
Draw those heaven-moving pearls from his poor eyes,
Which heaven shall take in nature of a fee ;
Ay, with these crystal beads heaven shall be bribed
To do him justice and revenge on you.

Elinor (furiously). Thou monstrous slanderer of
heaven and earth !

160 *Constance (equally angry).* Thou monstrous injurer
of heaven and earth !

Call not me slanderer ; thou and thine usurp
The dominations, royalties and rights

KING JOHN

[ACT II, SCENE I

Of this oppressed boy : this is thy eld'st son's son,
 Infortunate in nothing but in thee :
 Thy sins are visited in this poor child ;
 The canon of the law is laid on him,
 Being but the second generation.

K. John. Bedlam, have done.

Constance.

I have but this to say,

That he is not only plagued for her sin,
 170 But God hath made her sin and her the plague
 On this removed issue, plagued for her
 And with her plague ; her sin his injury,
 Her injury the beadle to her sin,
 All punish'd in the person of this child,
 And all for her ; a plague upon her !

Elinor. Thou unadvised scold, I can produce
 A will that bars the title of thy son.

Constance. Ay, who doubts that ? a will ! a wicked
 will ;

A woman's will ; a canker'd grandam's will !

K. Philip. Peace, lady ! pause, or be more tem-
 perate :

It ill beseems this presence to cry aim

To these ill-tuned repetitions.

Some trumpet summon hither to the walls

These men of Angiers : let us hear them speak

Whose title they admit, Arthur's or John's.

[*Trumpet sounds. Enter certain Citizens upon the
 walls.*]

First Citizen. Who is it that hath warn'd us to the
 walls ?

K. Philip. 'Tis France, for England.

K. John. England, for itself.

166. *Canon of the law*, The Mosaic law, "visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation."

168. *Bedlam*, Lunatic (from Bedlam lunatic asylum, in London).

176. *Unadvised*, Rash, reckless.

177. *A will*. Richard I., by will, left his crown to John. *Constance puns angrily.*

181. *Cry aim*, Encourage (archery term).

You men of Angiers, and my loving subjects,—

K. Philip (interrupting). You loving men of Angiers, Arthur's subjects,

190 Our trumpet call'd you to this gentle parle—

K. John (interrupting in turn). For our advantage ; therefore hear us first. (*Stepping forward.*)

These flags of France, that are advanced here

Before the eye and prospect of your town,

Have hither march'd to your endamagement :

The cannons have their bowels full of wrath,

And ready mounted are they to spit forth

Their iron indignation 'gainst your walls :

All preparation for a bloody siege

And merciless proceeding by these French

200 Confronts your city's eyes, your winking gates ;

And but for our approach those sleeping stones,

That as a waist doth girdle you about,

By the compulsion of their ordinance

By this time from their fixed beds of lime

Had been dishabited, and wide havoc made

For bloody power to rush upon your peace.

But on the sight of us your lawful king,

Who painfully with much expedient march

Have brought a countercheck before your gates,

210 To save unscratch'd your city's threatened cheeks,

Behold, the French amazed vouchsafe a parle ;

And now, instead of bullets wrapp'd in fire,

To make a shaking fever in your walls,

They shoot but calm words folded up in smoke,

To make a faithless error in your ears :

Which trust accordingly, kind citizens,

And let us in, your king, whose labour'd spirits,

Forwearied in this action of swift speed,

Crave harbourage within your city walls.

190. *Parle*, Parley.

200. *Winking*, Shut.

208. *Expedient*, Speedy.

218. *Forwearied*, Wearied out.

220 *K. Philip* (*offering his right hand to Arthur, and leading him forward*). When I have said, make answer to us both.

Lo, in this right hand, whose protection
 Is most divinely vow'd upon the right
 Of him it holds, stands young Plantagenet,
 Son to the elder brother of this man,
 And king o'er him and all that he enjoys :
 For this down-trodden equity, we tread
 In earlike march these greens before your town,
 Being no further enemy to you
 Than the constraint of hospitable zeal
 In the relief of this oppressed child
 Religiously provokes. Be pleased, then,
 To pay that duty which you truly owe
 To him that owes it, namely, this young prince :
 And then our arms, like to a muzzled bear,
 Save in aspect, hath all offence seal'd up ;
 Our cannons' malice vainly shall be spent
 Against the invulnerable clouds of heaven ;
 And with a blessed art unvex'd retire,
 With unhack'd swords and helmets all unbruised,
 240 We will bear home that lusty blood again
 Which here we came to spout against your town,
 And leave your children, wives and you in peace.
 But if you fondly pass our proffer'd offer,
 'Tis not the roundure of your old-faced walls
 Can hide you from our messengers of war,
 Though all these English and their discipline
 Were harbour'd in their rude circumference.
 Then tell us, shall your city call us lord,
 In that behalf which we have challenged it ?
 250 Or shall we give the signal to our rage
 And stalk in blood to our possession ?

First Citizen. In brief, we are the king of England's subjects :

For him, and in his right, we hold this town.

K. John. Acknowledge then the king, and let me in.

First Citizen. That can we not ; but he that proves
the king,

To him will we prove loyal : till that time

Have we ramm'd up our gates against the world.

K. John. Doth not the crown of England prove the
king ?

And if not that, I bring you witnesses,

260 Twice fifteen thousand hearts of England's breed,

To verify our title with their lives.

K. Philip. As many and as well-born bloods as
those,

Stand in his face to contradict his claim.

First Citizen. Till you compound whose right is
worthiest,

We for the worthiest hold the right from both.

K. John. Then God forgive the sin of all those souls

That to their everlasting residence,

Before the dew of evening fall, shall flcet,

In dreadful trial of our kingdom's king !

270 *K. Philip.* Amen, amen ! Mount, chevaliers ! to
arms !

Philip. Saint George, that swinged the dragon, and
e'er since

Sits on his horse' back at mine hostess' door,

Teach us some fence ! (*To Austria*) Sirrah, were I
at home,

At your den, sirrah, with your lioness,

I would set an ox-head to your lion's hide,

And make a monster of you.

Austria.

Peace ! no more.

Philip. O, tremble, for you hear the lion roar.

K. John. Up higher to the plain ; where we'll set
forth

271. *Scenced, Whipped, thrashed.*

272. *At mine hostess' door.* "St. George and the Dragon" was a com-
mon image in Shakespeare's day. 273. *Fence, Fencing.*

In best appointment all our regiments.

280 *Philip*. Speed then, to take advantage of the field.

K. Philip. It shall be so ; and at the other hill
Command the rest to stand. (*Drawing his sword*)
God and our right !

(*The two armies withdraw, trumpets sound for the on-slaughter, and soon all the tumult of the battle is heard, while the citizens of Angiers watch in great excitement from the walls. Parties of men, fighting fiercely hand to hand, pass the city gates, but the issue appears uncertain, for now the French and now the English are victorious. Then the Herald of France appears ; his trumpeters blow a summons, and he makes a bold appeal to the men on the battlements.*)

French Herald. You men of Angiers, open wide your gates,

And let young Arthur, Duke of Bretagne, in,
Who by the hand of France this day hath made
Much work for tears in many an English mother,
Whose sons lie scattered on the bleeding ground ;
Many a widow's husband grovelling lies,
Coldly embracing the discolour'd earth ;
290 And victory, with little loss, doth play
Upon the dancing banners of the French,
Who are at hand, triumphantly display'd,
To enter conquerors and to proclaim
Arthur of Bretagne England's king and yours.

(*Enter the English Herald and his trumpeter.*)

English Herald (*proclaiming loudly*). Rejoice, you
men of Angiers, ring your bells ;
King John, your king and England's, doth approach,
Commander of this hot malicious day :
Their armours, that march'd hence so silver-bright,
Hither return all gilt with Frenchmen's blood ;
300 There stuck no plume in any English crest
That is removed by a staff of France ;
Our colours do return in those same hands

That did display them when we first march'd forth ;
 And, like a jolly troop of huntsmen, come
 Our lusty English, all with purpled hands,
 Dyed in the dying slaughter of their foes :
 Open your gates and give the victors way.

First Citizen. Heralds, from off our towers we might
 behold,

From first to last, the onset and retire
 310 Of both your armies ; whose equality
 By our best eyes cannot be censured :
 Blood hath bought blood and blows have answered
 blows ;
 Strength match'd with strength, and power confronted
 power :

Both are alike ; and both alike we like.
 One must prove greatest : while they weigh so even,
 We hold our town for neither, yet for both.

[*Re-enter the two Kings with their powers severally.*]

K. John. France, hast thou yet more blood to cast
 away ?

Say, shall the current of our right run on ?
 Whose passage, vex'd with thy impediment,
 320 Shall leave his native channel and o'erswell
 With course disturb'd even thy confining shores,
 Unless thou let his silver water keep
 A peaceful progress to the ocean.

K. Philip. England, thou hast not saved one drop
 of blood,

In this hot trial, more than we of France ;
 Rather, lost more. And by this hand I swear,
 That sways the earth this climate overlooks,
 Before we will lay down our just-borne arms,
 We'll put thee down, 'gainst whom these arms we
 bear,

330 Or add a royal number to the dead,
 Gracing the scroll that tells of this war's loss

s.d. *Severally*, Separately.

327. *Climate*, Here means region of the sky.

KING JOHN

[ACT II, SCENE I

With slaughter coupled to the name of kings.

Philip. Ha, majesty ! how high thy glory towers,
When the rich blood of kings is set on fire !

O, now doth Death line his dead chaps with steel ;

The swords of soldiers are his teeth, his fangs ;

And now he feasts, mousing the flesh of men,

In undetermined differences of kings.

Why stand these royal fronts amazed thus ?

846 Cry, " havoc ! " kings ; back to the stained field,

You equal potents, fiery kindled spirits !

Then let confusion of one part confirm

The other's peace ; till then, blows, blood and
death !

K. John. Whose party do the townsmen yet admit ?

K. Philip. Speak, citizens, for England ; who's
your king ?

First Citizen. The king of England, when we know
the king.

K. Philip. Know him in us, that here hold up his
right.

K. John. In us, that are our own great deputy,

And bear possession of our person here,

350 Lord of our presence, Angiers, and of you.

First Citizen. A greater power than we denies all
this ;

And till it be undoubted, we do lock

Our former scruple in our strong-barr'd gates ;

King'd of our fears, until our fears, resolved,

Be by some certain king purged and deposed.

(*Philip Faulconbridge thrusts forward and addresses
the two kings. The citizens listen intently.*)

Philip. By heaven, these scroyles of Angiers flout
you, kings,

And stand securely on their battlements,

340. " Havoc ! " " No quarter ! "

341. *Potents*, Potentates, monarchs.

354. *King'd of our fears*, Ruled by our fears. But see page 150.

356. *Scroyles*, Scurvy rascals.

As in a theatre, whence they gape and point
At your industrious scenes and acts of death.

360 Your royal presences be ruled by me :

Do like the mutines of Jerusalem,
Be friends awhile and both conjointly bend
Your sharpest deeds of malice on this town :
By east and west let France and England mount
Their battering cannon charged to the mouths,
Till their soul-fearing clamours have bra'ld down
The flinty ribs of this contemptuous city :
I 'ld play incessantly upon these jades,
Even till unfenced desolation

370 Leave them as naked as the vulgar air.

That done, dissever your united strengths,
And part your mingled colours once again ;
Turn face to face and bloody point to point ;
Then, in a moment, Fortune shall cull forth
Out of one side her happy minion,
To whom in favour she shall give the day,
And kiss him with a glorious victory.
How like you this wild counsel, mighty states ?
Smacks it not something of the policy ?

380 *K. John.* Now, by the sky that hangs above our
heads,

I like it well. (*The First Citizen turns in evident alarm
to consult the men about him.*)

France, shall we knit our powers
And lay this Angiers even with the ground ;
Then after fight who shall be king of it ?

Philip. An if thou hast the mettle of a king,
Being wrong'd as we are by this peevish town,
Turn thou the mouth of thy artillery,
As we will ours, against these saucy walls ;
And when that we have dash'd them to the ground,
Why then defy each other, and pell-mell

380 Make work upon ourselves, for heaven or hell.

361. *Mutines*, Mutineers.

375. *Mimon*, Favourite.

379. *The policy*, Political cunning.

KING JOHN

[ACT II, SCENE I

K. Philip. Let it be so. Say, where will you assault ?

K. John. We from the west will send destruction
Into this city's bosom.

Austria. I from the north.

K. Philip. Our thunder from the south
Shall rain their drift of bullets on this town.

Philip (aside). O prudent discipline ! From north
to south :

Austria and France shoot in each other's mouth :
I'll stir them to it. (*Aloud*) Come, away, away !

(*All make a movement to go, but the First Citizen stops
them with a sudden appeal.*)

First Citizen. Hear us, great kings : vouchsafe
awhile to stay,

400 And I shall show you peace and fair-faced league
Win you this city without stroke or wound ;
Rescue those breathing lives to die in beds,
That here come sacrifices for the field :
Perséver not, but hear me, mighty kings.

K. John. Speak on with favour ; we are bent to
hear.

First Citizen. That daughter there of Spain, the
Lady Blanch,

Is niece to England : look upon the years
Of Lewis the Dauphin and that lovely maid :
If lusty love should go in quest of beauty,
410 Where should he find it fairer than in Blanch ?
If zealous love should go in search of virtue,
Where should he find it purer than in Blanch ?
If love ambitious sought a match of birth,
Whose veins bound richer blood than Lady Blanch ?
Such as she is, in beauty, virtue, birth,
Is the young Dauphin every way complete :
If not complete of, say he is not she ;

396. *Discipline*, Military science.

406. *Daughter there of Spain.* See page 107.

417. *Complete of*, Possibly means "full of" (beauty, virtue, birth).

And she again wants nothing, to name want,
 If want it be not that she is not he :
 420 He is the half part of a blessed man,
 Left to be finished by such a she ;
 And she a fair divided excellence,
 Whose fulness of perfection lies in him.
 O, two such silver currents, when they join,
 Do glorify the banks that bound them in ;
 And two such shores to two such streams, made one,
 Two such controlling bounds shall you be, kings,
 To these two princes, if you marry them.
 This union shall do more than battery can
 430 To our fast-closed gates ; for at this match,
 With swifter spleen than powder can enforce,
 The mouth of passage shall we fling wide ope,
 And give you entrance : but without this match,
 The sea enraged is not half so deaf,
 Lions more confident, mountains and rocks
 More free from motion, no, not Death himself
 In mortal fury half so peremptory,
 As we to keep this city.

(King Philip, Austria, and their friends begin to discuss this eagerly.)

Philip. Here's a stay
 That shakes the rotten carcass of old Death
 440 Out of his rags ! Here's a large mouth, indeed,
 That spits forth death and mountains, rocks and seas,
 Talks as familiarly of roaring lions
 As maids of thirteen do of puppy-dogs !
 What cannoneer begot this lusty blood ?
 He speaks plain cannon fire, and smoke and bounce ;
 He gives the bastinado with his tongue :
 Our ears are cudgell'd ; not a word of his
 But buffets better than a fist of France :
 Zounds ! I was never so bethump'd with words
 450 Since I first call'd my brother's father dad.

437. *Peremptory*, Determined.446. *Bastinado*, Cudgelling.

Elinor (aside to John). Son, list to this conjunction,
make this match ;

Give with our niece a dowry large enough :
For by this knot thou shalt so surely tie
Thy now unsured assurance to the crown,
That yon green boy shall have no sun to ripe
The bloom that promiseth a mighty fruit.
I see a yielding in the looks of France ;
Mark, how they whisper : urge them while their souls
Are capable of this ambition,

460 Lest zeal, now melted by the windy breath
Of soft petitions, pity and remorse,
Cool and congeal again to what it was.

First Citizen. Why answer not the double majesties
This friendly treaty of our threaten'd town ?

K. Philip. Speak England first, that hath been
forward first

To speak unto this city : what say you ?

K. John. If that the Dauphin there, thy princely
son,

Can in this book of beauty read " I love,"

Her dowry shall weigh equal with a queen :

470 For Anjou and fair Touraine, Maine, Poictiers,
And all that we upon this side the sea,
Except this city now by us besieged,
Find liable to our crown and dignity,
Shall gild her bridal bed and make her rich
In titles, honours and promotions,
As she in beauty, education, blood,
Holds hand with any princess of the world.

K. Philip. What say'st thou, boy ? look in the
lady's face.

Lewis. I do, my lord ; and in her eye I find

480 A wonder, or a wondrous miracle,
The shadow of myself form'd in her eye ;
Which, being but the shadow of your son,

Becomes a sun and makes your son a shadow :
 I do protest I never loved myself
 Till now infixed I beheld myself
 Drawn in the flattering table of her eye.

[*Whispers with Blanch.*]

Philip. Drawn in the flattering table of her eye !

Hang'd in the frowning wrinkle of her brow !

And quarter'd in her heart ! he doth espy

490 Himself love's traitor : this is pity now,

That, hang'd and drawn and quarter'd, there
 should be

In such a love so vile a lout as he.

Blanch. My uncle's will in this respect is mine :

If he see aught in you that makes him like,

That anything he sees, which moves his liking,

I can with ease translate it to my will ;

Or if you will, to speak more properly,

I will enforce it easily to my love.

Further I will not flatter you, my lord,

500 That all I see in you is worthy love,

Than this ; that nothing do I see in you,

Though churlish thoughts themselves should be your
 judge,

That I can find should merit any hate.

K. John. What say these young ones ? What say
 you, my niece ?

Blanch. That she is bound in honour still to do
 What you in wisdom still vouchsafe to say.

K. John. Speak then, prince Dauphin ; can you
 love this lady ?

Lewis. Nay, ask me if I can refrain from love ;
 For I do love her most unfeignedly.

510 *K. John.* Then do I give Volquessen, Touraine,
 Maine,

Poitiers and Anjou, these five provinces,

With her to thee ; and this addition more,

KING JOHN

[ACT II, SCENE I

Full thirty thousand marks of English coin.
Philip of France, if thou be pleased withal,
Command thy son and daughter to join hands.

K. Philip. It likes us well ; young princes, close
your hands.

Austria. And your lips too ; for I am well assured
That I did so when I was first assured.

K. Philip. Now, citizens of Angiers, ope your
gates,

520 Let in that amity which you have made ;
For at Saint Mary's chapel presently
The rites of marriage shall be solemnized.
Is not the Lady Constance in this troop ?
I know she is not, for this match made up
Her presence would have interrupted much :
Where is she and her son ? tell me, who knows.

Lewis. She is sad and passionate at your highness'
tent.

K. Philip. And, by my faith, this league that we
have made

Will give her sadness very little cure.

530 Brother of England, how may we content
This widow lady ? In her right we came ;
Which we, God knows, have turn'd another way,
To our own vantage.

K. John. We will heal up all ;
For we'll create young Arthur Duke of Bretagne
And Earl of Richmond ; and this rich fair town
We make him lord of. Call the Lady Constance :
Some speedy messenger bid her repair
To our solemnity : I trust we shall,
If not fill up the measure of her will,
640 Yet in some measure satisfy her so
That we shall stop her exclamation.
Go we, as well as haste will suffer us,
To this unlook'd for, unprepared pomp.

(*All troop away except Philip Faulconbridge, who remains to laugh at the humour of the situation.*)

Philip. Mad world! mad kings! mad composition!

John, to stop Arthur's title in the whole,
 Hath willingly departed with a part,
 And France, whose armour conscience buckled on,
 Whom zeal and charity brought to the field
 As God's own soldier, rounded in the ear
 550 With that same purpose-changer, that sly devil,
 That broker, that still breaks the pate of faith,
 That daily break-vow, he that wins of all,
 Of kings, of beggars, old men, young men, maids,
 Who, having no external thing to lose
 But the word "maid," cheats the poor maid of that,
 That smooth-faced gentleman, tickling Commodity,
 Commodity, the bias of the world,
 The world, who of itself is peised well,
 Made to run even upon even ground,
 560 Till this advantage, this vile-drawing bias,
 This sway of motion, this Commodity,
 Makes it take head from all indifferency,
 From all direction, purpose, course, intent:
 And this same bias, this Commodity,
 Clapp'd on the outward eye of fickle France,
 Hath drawn him from his own determined aid,
 From a resolved and honourable war,
 To a most base and vile-concluded peace.
 And why rail I on this Commodity?
 570 But for because he hath not woo'd me yet:
 Not that I have the power to clutch my hand,
 When his fair angels would salute my palm;

546. *Departed with*, Parted with. 549. *Rounded*, Whispered.

556. *Tickling Commodity*, Flattering expediency (self-interest).

565. *Eye*, Aperture containing the *bias* (l. 564) or weight which makes the bowl run in a curve. *Peised* (l. 558) is "weighted."

570. *But for*, Because.

572. *Angels*. An "angel" was a gold coin, worth 10s. in Shakespeare's time, which bore the figure of the Archangel Michael.

KING JOHN

[ACT II, SCENE I

But for my hand, as unattempted yet,
Like a poor beggar, raileth on the rich.
Well, whiles I am a beggar, I will rail
And say there is no sin but to be rich ;
And being rich, my virtue then shall be
To say there is no vice but beggary.
Since kings break faith upon commodity,
580 Gain, be my lord, for I will worship thee.

[*Exit.*]

ACT III

SCENE I

The French King's pavilion.

[*Enter Constance, Arthur, and Salisbury.*]

Constance (vehemently). Gone to be married ! gone
to swear a peace !

False blood to false blood join'd ! gone to be friends !
Shall Lewis have Blanch, and Blanch those provinces ?

(*Turning on Salisbury.*)

It is not so ; thou hast misspoke, misheard ;

Be well advised, tell o'er thy tale again :

It cannot be ; thou dost but say 'tis so :

I trust I may not trust thee ; for thy word

Is but the vain breath of a common man :

Believe me, I do not believe thee, man ;

10 I have a king's oath to the contrary.

Thou shalt be punish'd for thus frightening me,

For I am sick and capable of fears,

Oppress'd with wrongs and therefore full of fears,

A widow, husbandless, subject to fears,

A woman, naturally born to fears ;

And though thou now confess thou didst but jest,

With my vex'd spirits I cannot take a truce,

But they will quake and tremble all this day.

What dost thou mean by shaking of thy head ?

20 Why dost thou look so sadly on my son ?

What means that hand upon that breast of thine ?

Why holds thine eye that lamentable rheum,

Like a proud river peering o'er his bounds ?
 Be these sad signs confirmers of thy words ?
 Then speak again ; not all thy former tale,
 But this one word, whether thy tale be true.

Salisbury. As true as I believe you think them false
 That give you cause to prove my saying true.

Constance. O, if thou teach me to believe this
 sorrow,
 30 Teach thou this sorrow how to make me die,
 And let belief and life encounter so
 As doth the fury of two desperate men
 Which in the very meeting fall and die.

(Turning away distractedly.)
 Lewis marry Blanch ! *[To Arthur]* O boy, then
 where art thou ?

France friend with England, what becomes of me ?
(To Salisbury) Fellow, be gone : I cannot brook thy
 sight :

This news hath made thee a most ugly man.

Salisbury. What other harm have I, good lady,
 done,

But spoke the harm that is by others done ?

40 *Constance.* Which harm within itself so heinous is
 As it makes harmful all that speak of it.

Arthur (going to her). I do beseech you, madam, be
 content.

Constance (with growing violence). If thou, that
 bid'st me be content, wert grim,
 Full of unpleasing blots and sightless stains,
 Lame, foolish, crooked, swart, prodigious,
 Patch'd with foul moles and eye-offending marks,
 I would not care. I then would be content,
 For then I should not love thee, no, nor thou
 Become thy great birth nor deserve a crown.
 50 But thou art fair, and at thy birth, dear boy,
 Nature and Fortune join'd to make thee great :
 Of Nature's gifts thou mayst with lilies boast
 And with the half-blown rose. But Fortune, O,

She is corrupted, changed, and won from thee ;
 She adulterates hourly with thine uncle John,
 And with her golden hand hath pluck'd on France
 To tread down fair respect of sovereignty.
 Tell me, thou fellow, is not France forsworn ?
 Envenom him with words, or get thee gone
 60 And leave those woes alone which I alone
 Am bound to under-bear.

Salisbury (quietly persistent). Pardon me, madam,
 I may not go without you to the kings.

Constance. Thou mayst, thou shalt ; I will not go
 with thee :

I will instruct my sorrows to be proud ;
 For grief is proud and makes his owner stoop.
 To me and to the state of my great grief
 Let kings assemble ; for my grief's so great
 That no supporter but the huge firm earth
 Can hold it up : here I and sorrows sit ;
 70 Here is my throne, bid kings come bow to it.

[*Sits herself on the ground.*]

[*Enter King John, King Philip, Lewis, Blanch,
 Elinor, Philip, Austria, and Attendants.*] (*The
 two Kings come hand in hand, in sign of their
 newly-sworn friendship.*)

K. Philip. 'Tis true, fair daughter ; and this
 blessed day

Ever in France shall be kept festival :
 To solemnize this day the glorious sun
 Stays in his course and plays the alchemist,
 Turning with splendour of his precious eye
 The meagre cloddy earth to glittering gold :
 The yearly course that brings this day about
 Shall never see it but a holiday.

Constance. A wicked day, and not a holy day !

80 What hath this day deserved ? what hath it done,
 [*Rising.*]

74. *Alchemist*, One who tried to turn baser metals into gold.

That it in golden letters should be set
 Among the high tides in the calendar ?
 Nay, rather turn this day out of the week,
 This day of shame, oppression, perjury.
 But on this day let seamen fear no wreck ;
 No bargains break that are not this day made :
 This day, all things begun come to ill end,
 Yea, faith itself to hollow falsehood change !

K. Philip. By heaven, lady, you shall have no cause
 90 To curse the fair proceedings of this day :
 Have I not pawn'd to you my majesty ?

Constance (with fierce scorn). You have beguiled me
 with a counterfeit

Resembling majesty, which, being touch'd and tried,
 Proves valueless : you are forsworn, forsworn ;
 You came in arms to spill mine enemies' blood,
 But now in arms you strengthen it with yours :
 The grappling vigour and rough frown of war
 Is cold in amity and painted peace,
 And our oppression hath made up this league.

(In frenzied appeal.)

100 Arm, arm, you heavens, against these perjured
 kings !

A widow cries ; be husband to me, heavens !
 Let not the hours of this ungodly day
 Wear out the day in peace ; but, ere sunsét,
 Set armed discord 'twixt these perjured kings !
 Hear me, O, hear me !

Austria. Lady Constance, peace !

Constance (more wildly still). War ! war ! no peace !
 peace is to me a war.

O Lymoges ! O Austria ! thou dost shame
 That bloody spoil : thou slave, thou wretch, thou
 coward !

Thou little valiant, great in villany !
 110 Thou ever strong upon the stronger side !

Thou Fortune's champion that dost never fight
 But when her humorous ladyship is by
 To teach thee safety ! thou art perjured too,
 And sooth'st up greatness. What a fool art thou,
 A ramping fool, to brag and stamp and swear
 Upon my party ! Thou cold-blooded slave,
 Hast thou not spoke like thunder on my side,
 Been sworn my soldier, bidding me depend
 Upon thy stars, thy fortune and thy strength,
 120 And dost thou now fall over to my foes ?
 Thou wear a lion's hide ! doff it for shame,
 And hang a calf's-skin on those recreant limbs.

Austria (angrily). O, that a man should speak those words to me !

Philip. And hang a calf's-skin on those recreant limbs.

Austria. Thou darest not say so, villain, for thy life.

Philip (confronting him). And hang a calf's-skin on those recreant limbs.

K. John (to Philip). We like not this ; thou dost forget thyself.

[*Enter Pandulph*] (*in the scarlet robes of the Cardinal.*)

K. Philip. Here comes the holy legate of the pope.

Pandulph. Hail, you anointed deputies of heaven !
 130 To thee, King John, my holy errand is.

I Pandulph, of fair Milan cardinal,
 And from Pope Innocent the legate here,
 Do in his name religiously demand
 Why thou against the church, our holy mother,
 So wilfully dost spurn ; and force perforce
 Keep Stephen Langton, chosen archbishop
 Of Canterbury, from that holy see ?
 This, in our foresaid holy father's name,
 Pope Innocent, I do demand of thee.

140 *K. John (angered)*. What earthy name to interrogatories

122. *Calf's skin* was worn by fools (jesters). *Recreant*, Cowardly.

140. *Interrogatories*, Questions a witness was bound to answer.

Can task the free breath of a sacred king ?
 Thou canst not, cardinal, devise a name
 So slight, unworthy and ridiculous,
 To charge me to an answer, as the pope.
 Tell him this tale ; and from the mouth of England
 Add thus much more, that no Italian priest
 Shall tithe or toll in our dominions ;
 But as we, under heaven, are supreme head,
 So under Him that great supremacy,
 150 Where we do reign, we will alone uphold,
 Without the assistance of a mortal hand :
 So tell the pope, all reverence set apart
 To him and his usurp'd authority.

K. Philip (protesting uneasily). Brother of England,
 you blaspheme in this.

K. John. Though you and all the kings of Christen-
 dom

Are led so grossly by this meddling priest,
 Dreading the curse that money may buy out ;
 And by the merit of vile gold, dross, dust,
 Purchase corrupted pardon of a man,
 160 Who in that sale sells pardon from himself,
 Though you and all the rest so grossly led
 This juggling witchcraft with revenue cherish,
 Yet I alone, alone do me oppose
 Against the pope and count his friends my foes.

Pandulph (very sternly). Then, by the lawful power
 that I have,

Thou shalt stand cursed and excommunicate :
 And blessed shall he be that doth revolt
 From his allegiance to an heretic ;
 And meritorious shall that hand be call'd,
 170 Canonized and worshipp'd as a saint,
 That takes away by any secret course
 Thy hateful life.

Constance. Oh, lawful let it be

That I have room with Rome to curse awhile !
 Good father cardinal, cry thou amen
 To my keen curses ; for without my wrong
 There is no tongue hath power to curse him right.

Pandulph. There's law and warrant, lady, for my
 curse.

Constance. And for mine too : when law can do no
 right,

Let it be lawful that law bar no wrong :

180 Law cannot give my child his kingdom here,
 For he that holds his kingdom holds the law ;
 Therefore, since law itself is perfect wrong,
 How can the law forbid my tongue to curse ?

*(Pandulph turns now on King Philip, who is still
 clasping John's hand.)*

Pandulph. Philip of France, on peril of a curse,
 Let go the hand of that arch-heretic ;
 And raise the power of France upon his head,
 Unless he do submit himself to Rome.

Elinor. Look'st thou pale, France ? do not let go
 thy hand.

Constance. Look to that, devil ; lest that France
 repent,

190 And by disjoining hands, hell lose a soul.

Austria. King Philip, listen to the cardinal.

Philip. And hang a calf's-skin on his recreant
 limbs.

Austria. Well, ruffian, I must pocket up these
 wrongs,

Because—

Philip. Your breeches best may carry them.

K. John. Philip, what say'st thou to the cardinal ?

Constance. What should he say, but as the cardinal ?

Lewis. Bethink you, father ; for the difference

Is purchase of a heavy curse from Rome,

200 Or the light loss of England for a friend :

Forego the easier.

Blanch.

That's the curse of Rome.

KING JOHN

[ACT III, SCENE I

Constance. O Lewis, stand fast ! the devil tempts thee here

In likeness of a new untrimmed bride.

Blanch. The Lady Constance speaks not from her faith,

But from her need.

Constance. O, if thou grant my need,

Which only lives but by the death of faith,

That need must needs infer this principle,

That faith would live again by death of need.

O then, tread down my need, and faith mounts up ;

210 Keep my need up, and faith is trodden down !

K. John. The king is moved, and answers not to this.

Constance. O, be removed from him, and answer well !

Austria. Do so, King Philip ; hang no more in doubt.

Philip. Hang nothing but a calf's-skin, most sweet lout.

K. Philip. I am perplex'd, and know not what to say.

Pandolph. What canst thou say but will perplex thee more,

If thou stand excommunicate and cursed ?

K. Philip. Good reverend father, make my person yours,

And tell me how you would bestow yourself.

220 This royal hand and mine are newly knit,

And the conjunction of our inward souls

Married in league, coupled and link'd together

With all religious strength of sacred vows ;

The latest breath that gave the sound of words

Was deep-sworn faith, peace, amity, true love

Between our kingdoms and our royal selves,

And even before this truce, but new before,

No longer than we well could wash our hands

To clap this royal bargain up of peace,

230 Heaven knows, they were besmear'd and over-
stain'd

With slaughter's pencil, where revenge did paint
The fearful difference of incensed kings :
And shall these hands, so lately purged of blood,
So newly join'd in love, so strong in both,
Unyoke this seizure and this kind regret ?
Play fast and loose with faith ? so jest with heaven,
Make such unconstant children of ourselves,
As now again to snatch our palm from palm,
Unswear faith sworn, and on the marriage-bed

240 Of smiling peace to march a bloody host,
And make a riot on the gentle brow
Of true sincerity ? O, holy sir,
My reverend father, let it not be so !
Out of your grace, devise, ordain, impose
Some gentle order ; and then we shall be blest
To do your pleasure and continue friends.

Pandolph. All form is formless, order orderless,
Save what is opposite to England's love.

Therefore to arms ! be champion of our church,
250 Or let the church, our mother, breathe her curse,
A mother's curse, on her revolting son.
France, thou mayst hold a serpent by the tongue,
A chafed lion by the mortal paw,
A fasting tiger safer by the tooth,
Than keep in peace that hand which thou dost
hold.

K. Philip (still holding John's hand). I may disjoin
my hand, but not my faith.

Pandolph. So makest thou faith an enemy to
faith ;

And like a civil war sett'st oath to oath,
Thy tongue against thy tongue. O, let thy vow
260 First made to heaven, first be to heaven perform'd,
That is, to be the champion of our church !

What since thou sworest is sworn against thyself,
 And may not be performed by thyself,
 For that which thou hast sworn to do amiss
 Is not amiss when it is truly done,
 And being not done, where doing tends to ill,
 The truth is then most done not doing it :
 The better act of purposes mistook
 Is to mistake again ; though indirect,
 270 Yet indirection thereby grows direct,
 And falsehood falsehood cures, as fire cools fire
 Within the scorched veins of one new-burn'd.
 It is religion that doth make vows kept ;
 But thou hast sworn against religion,
 By what thou swear'st against the thing thou swear'st,
 And makest an oath the surety for thy truth
 Against an oath ; the truth thou art unsure
 To swear, swears only not to be forsworn ;
 Else what a mockery should it be to swear !
 280 But thou dost swear only to be forsworn ;
 And most forsworn, to keep what thou dost swear.
 Therefore thy later vows against thy first
 Is in thyself rebellion to thyself ;
 And better conquest never canst thou make
 Than arm thy constant and thy nobler parts
 Against these giddy loose suggestions :
 Upon which better part our prayers come in,
 If thou vouchsafe them. But if not, then know
 The peril of our curses light on thee
 290 So heavy as thou shalt not shake them off,
 But in despair die under their black weight.

262-267. *What since thou sworest . . . doing it.* "What you have sworn since then is sworn against yourself, and cannot be performed by you, for what wrong you have sworn to do is not wrong if truly performed, and if you do it not, because the doing of it would be wrong, then you are most truly performing it by not doing it." (IVOR JOHN.)

277-278. *The truth thou art unsure . . . forsworn ;* "When you are asked to take an oath of which you are not sure of the consequences, you only swear not to be forsworn, i.e., on condition that it is not contrary to some greater oath." (IVOR JOHN.)

Austria. Rebellion, flat rebellion !

Philip. Will't not be ?

Will not a calf's-skin stop that mouth of thine ?

Lewis. Father, to arms !

Blanch (clinging to him). Upon thy wedding-day ?
Against the blood that thou hast married ?

What, shall our feast be kept with slaughter'd men ?

Shall braying trumpets and loud churlish drums,

Clamours of hell, be measures to our pomp ?

O husband, hear me ! ay, alack, how new

300 Is husband in my mouth ! even for that name,

Which till this time my tongue did ne'er pronounce,

Upon my knee I beg, go not to arms

Against mine uncle.

Constance. O, upon my knee,
Made hard with kneeling, I do pray to thee,
Thou virtuous Dauphin, alter not the doom
Forethought by heaven !

Blanch. Now shall I see thy love : what motive
may

Be stronger with thee than the name of wife ?

Constance. That which upholdeth him that thee
upholds,

310 His honour : O, thine honour, Lewis, thine honour !

Lewis. I muse your majesty doth seem so cold,
When such profound respects do pull you on.

Pandolph. I will denounce a curse upon his head.

K. Philip. Thou shalt not need. England, I will
fall from thee. (*He snatches his hand away.*)

Constance. O fair return of banish'd majesty !

Elinor. O foul revolt of French inconstancy !

K. John. France, thou shalt rue this hour within
this hour.

Philip. Old Time the clock-setter, that bald sexton
Time,

Is it as he will ? well then, France shall rue.

298. *Measures, Music.*

311. *Muse, Marvel.*

312. *Respects, Considerations.*

KING JOHN

[ACT III, SCENE II

320 *Blanch.* The sun's o'ercast with blood : fair day,
adieu !

Which is the side that I must go withal ?

I am with both : each army hath a hand ;

And in their rage, I having hold of both,

They whirl asunder and dismember me.

Husband, I cannot pray that thou mayst win ;

Uncle, I needs must pray that thou mayst lose ;

Father, I may not wish the fortune thine ;

Grandam, I will not wish thy wishes thrive :

Whoever wins, on that side shall I lose ;

330 Assured loss before the match be play'd.

Lewis (drawing her to him). Lady, with me, with me
thy fortune lies.

Blanch. There where my fortune lives, there my life
dies.

K. John (to Philip). Cousin, go draw our puissance
together.

(Exit Philip. John turns angrily on the French King.)

France, I am burn'd up with inflaming wrath ;

A rage whose heat hath this condition,

That nothing can allay, nothing but blood,

The blood, and dearest-valued blood, of France.

K. Philip. Thy rage shall burn thee up, and thou
shalt turn

To ashes, ere our blood shall quench that fire :

340 Look to thyself, thou art in jeopardy.

K. John. No more than he that threatens. To arms
let's hie ! [Exeunt.]

SCENE II

France. Plains near Angiers.

*(The noise of the battle is heard.) [Enter Philip,
with Austria's head.]*

Philip. Now, by my life, this day grows wondrous hot ;

333. *Puissance, Forces.*

Some airy devil hovers in the sky
 And pours down mischief. Austria's head lie there,
(He throws it down) While Philip breathes.

[Enter King John, Arthur, and Hubert.]

K. John. Hubert, keep this boy. Philip, make up :
 My mother is assailed in our tent,
 And ta'en, I fear.

Philip. My lord, I rescued her ;
 Her highness is in safety, fear you not :
 But on, my liege ; for very little pains
 10 Will bring this labour to an happy end. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE III

The Same.

*(The battle is still raging. but it is going against the
 French, whose trumpets are sounding for retreat.)*

*[Enter King John, Elinor, Arthur, Philip, Hubert,
 and Lords.]*

K. John. *[To Elinor]* So shall it be ; your grace
 shall stay behind
 So strongly guarded. *[To Arthur]* Cousin, look not
 sad :

Thy grandam loves thee ; and thy uncle will
 As dear be to thee as thy father was.

Arthur. O, this will make my mother die with grief !

K. John *[To Philip]*. Cousin, away for England !
 haste before :

And, ere our coming, see thou shake the bags
 Of hoarding abbots ; imprisoned angels
 Set at liberty ; the fat ribs of peace
 10 Must by the hungry now be fed upon :
 Use our commission in his utmost force.

4. *Breathes*, Takes breath.

8. *Angels*, The coins again.

KING JOHN

[ACT III, SCENE iii

Philip. Bell, book, and candle shall not drive me
back,

When gold and silver beck me to come on.
I leave your highness. Grandam, I will pray,
If ever I remember to be holy,
For your fair safety ; so, I kiss your hand.

Elinor. Farewell, gentle cousin.

K. John.

Coz, farewell.

[*Exit Philip.*]

Elinor. Come hither, little kinsman ; hark, a word.
(*She draws Arthur aside and whispers to him.*)

K. John. Come hither, Hubert. O my gentle
Hubert,

20 We owe thee much ! within this wall of flesh
There is a soul counts thee her creditor
And with advantage means to pay thy love :
And, my good friend, thy voluntary oath
Lives in this bosom, dearly cherished.
Give me thy hand. (*Grasps his hand and hesitates.*) I
had a thing to say,
But I will fit it with some better time.

(*Shaking his hand again.*)

By heaven, Hubert, I am almost ashamed
To say what good respect I have of thee.

Hubert (eyeing him fixedly). I am much bounden to
your majesty.

30 *K. John.* Good friend, thou hast no cause to say so
yet,

But thou shalt have ; and creep time ne'er so slow,
Yet it shall come for me to do thee good.

I had a thing to say, but let it go :
The sun is in the heaven, and the proud day,
Attended with the pleasures of the world,
Is all too wanton and too full of gawds
To give me audience : if the midnight bell
Did, with his iron tongue and brazen mouth,

12. *Bell, book, and candle* were used in the rite of excommunication.

36. *Gawds*, Toys, amusements.

Sound on into the drowsy ear of night ;

40 If this same were a churchyard where we stand,

And thou possessed with a thousand wrongs,

Or if that surly spirit, melancholy,

Had baked thy blood and made it heavy-thick,

Which else runs tickling up and down the veins,

Making that idiot, laughter, keep men's eyes

And strain their cheeks to idle merriment,

A passion hateful to my purposes,

Or if that thou couldst see me without eyes,

Hear me without thine ears, and make reply

50 Without a tongue, using conceit alone,

Without eyes, ears and harmful sound of words ;

Then, in despite of brooded watchful day,

I would into thy bosom pour my thoughts :

But, ah, I will not ! yet I love thee well ;

And, by my troth, I think thou lovest me well.

Hubert (with great earnestness). So well, that what
you bid me undertake,

Though that my death were adjunct to my act,

By heaven, I would do it.

K. John (resolved). Do not I know thou wouldst ?

Good Hubert, Hubert, Hubert, throw thine eye

60 On yon young boy : I'll tell thee what, my friend,

He is a very serpent in my way ;

And wheresoe'er this foot of mine doth tread,

He lies before me : dost thou understand me ?

Thou art his keeper.

Hubert. And I'll keep him so,

That he shall not offend your majesty.

K. John.

Death.

Hubert (starting). My lord ? (*He understands at last.*)

K. John.

A grave.

Hubert.

He shall not live.

K. John (seizing his hand).

Enough.

50. *Conceit*, Here, mental powers.

52. *Brooded watchful*, Probably, as watchful as a watchful parent-bird.

KING JOHN

[ACT III, SCENE IV

I could be merry now. Hubert, I love thee ;
 Well, I'll not say what I intend for thee :
 Remember. (*Going to Elinor*) Madam, fare you well :
 70 I'll send those powers o'er to your majesty.

Elinor. My blessing go with thee !

K. John (to Arthur). For England, cousin, go :
 Hubert shall be your man, attend on you
 With all true duty. On toward Calais, ho !

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV

France. The French King's tent.

[*Enter King Philip, Lewis, Pandulph and Attendants.*]

K. Philip (in despair). So, by a roaring tempest on
 the flood,

A whole armado of convicted sail
 Is scatter'd and disjoin'd from fellowship.

Pandulph. Courage and comfort ! all shall yet go
 well.

K. Philip. What can go well, when we have run so
 ill ?

Are we not beaten ? Is not Angiers lost ?
 Arthur ta'en prisoner ? divers dear friends slain ?
 And bloody England into England gone,
 O'erbearing interruption, spite of France ?

10 *Lewis.* What he hath won, that hath he fortified :
 So hot a speed with such advice disposed,
 Such temperate order in so fierce a cause,
 Doth want example : who hath read or heard
 Of any kindred-action like to this ?

K. Philip. Well could I bear that England had this
 praise,

2. *Armado*, Armed fleet. *Convicted*, Discomfited.

13. *Want example*, Lack precedent.

So we could find some pattern of our shame.

[*Enter Constance.*]

Look, who comes here ! a grave unto a soul ;
Holding the eternal spirit, against her will,
In the vile prison of afflicted breath.

20 I prithee, lady, go away with me.

Constance. Lo, now ! now see the issue of your
peace.

K. Philip. Patience, good lady ! comfort, gentle
Constance !

Constance (wildly). No, I defy all counsel, all
redress,

But that which ends all counsel, true redress,
Death, death ; O amiable lovely death !
Thou odoriferous stench ! sound rottenness !
Arise forth from the couch of lasting night,
Thou hate and terror to prosperity,
And I will kiss thy détestable bones

30 And put my eyeballs in thy vaulty brows
And ring these fingers with thy household worms
And stop this gap of breath with fulsome dust
And be a carrion monster like thyself :
Come, grin on me, and I will think thou smilest,
And buss thee as thy wife. Misery's love,
O, come to me !

K. Philip. O fair affliction, peace !

Constance. No, no, I will not, having breath to cry :
O, that my tongue were in the thunder's mouth !
Then with a passion would I shake the world ;

40 And rouse from sleep that fell anatomy
Which cannot hear a lady's feeble voice,
Which scorns a modern invocation.

Pandolph. Lady, you utter madness, and not
sorrow.

Constance. Thou art not holy to belie me so ;

23. *Defy*, Renounce.

35. *Buss*, Kiss.

32. *Fulsome*, Loathsome.

40. *Fell anatomy*, Terrible skeleton (death).

42. *Modern*, Commonplace.

I am not mad : this hair I tear is mine ;
 My name is Constance ; I was Geoffrey's wife ;
 Young Arthur is my son, and he is lost :

I am not mad : I would to heaven I were !

For then, 'tis like I should forget myself :

60 O, if I could, what grief should I forget !

Preach some philosophy to make me mad,

And thou shalt be canonized, cardinal ;

For being not mad but sensible of grief,

My reasonable part produces reason

How I may be delivered of these woes,

And teaches me to kill or hang myself :

If I were mad, I should forget my son,

Or madly think a babe of clouts were he :

I am not mad ; too well, too well I feel

The different plague of each calamity.

K. Philip. Bind up those tresses. O, what love I
 note

In the fair multitude of those her hairs !

Where but by chance a silver drop hath fallen,

Even to that drop ten thousand wiry friends

Do glue themselves in sociable grief,

Like true, inseparable, faithful loves,

Sticking together in calamity.

Constance. To England, if you will.

K. Philip.

Bind up your hairs.

Constance. Yes, that I will ; and wherefore will I
 do it ?

70 I tore them from their bonds and cried aloud

“ O that these hands could so redeem my son,

As they have given these hairs their liberty ! ”

But now I envy at their liberty,

And will again commit them to their bonds,

Because my poor child is a prisoner.

And, father cardinal, I have heard you say

That we shall see and know our friends in heaven :

If that be true, I shall see my boy again ;
 For since the birth of Cain, the first male child,
 80 To him that did but yesterday suspire,
 There was not such a gracious creature born.
 But now will canker sorrow eat my bud
 And chase the native beauty from his cheek
 And he will look as hollow as a ghost,
 As dim and meagre as an ague's fit,
 And so he'll die ; and, rising so again,
 When I shall meet him in the court of heaven
 I shall not know him : therefore never, never
 Must I behold my pretty Arthur more.

90 *Pandulph.* You hold too heinous a respect of
 grief.

Constance. He talks to me that never had a son.

K. Philip. You are as fond of grief as of your
 child.

Constance. Grief fills the room up of my absent
 child,

Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me,
 Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,
 Remembers me of all his gracious parts,
 Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form ;
 Then, have I reason to be fond of grief ?
 Fare you well : had you such a loss as I,
 100 I could give better comfort than you do.

I will not keep this form upon my head,
 When there is such disorder in my wit.

O Lord ! my boy, my Arthur, my fair son !

My life, my joy, my food, my all the world !

My widow-comfort, and my sorrows' cure ! *[Exit.]*

K. Philip. I fear some outrage, and I'll follow her.

Lewis (dropping heavily into a chair). There's noth-
 ing in this world can make me joy :

Life is as tedious as a twice-told tale

KING JOHN

[ACT III, SCENE IV

Vexing the dull ear of a drowsy man ;
 110 And bitter shame hath spoil'd the sweet world's
 taste,

That it yields nought but shame and bitterness.

Pandulph (eyeing him shrewdly). Before the curing
 of a strong disease,

Even in the instant of repair and health,
 The fit is strongest ; evils that take leave,
 On their departure most of all show evil :
 What have you lost by losing of this day ?

Lewis. All days of glory, joy and happiness.

Pandulph. If you had won it, certainly you had.
 No, no ; when Fortune means to men most good,
 120 She looks upon them with a threatening eye.
 'Tis strange to think how much King John hath lost
 In this which he accounts so clearly won :

Are not you grieved that Arthur is his prisoner ?

Lewis. As heartily as he is glad he hath him.

Pandulph. Your mind is all as youthful as your
 blood. (*Approaching, and standing over him.*)

Now hear me speak with a prophetic spirit ;
 For even the breath of what I mean to speak
 Shall blow each dust, each straw, each little rub,
 Out of the path which shall directly lead
 130 Thy foot to England's throne ; (*Lewis looks up at
 him sharply*) and therefore mark.

John hath seized Arthur ; and it cannot be
 That, whiles warm life plays in that infant's veins,
 The misplaced John should entertain an hour,
 One minute, nay, one quiet breath of rest.
 A sceptre snatch'd with an unruly hand
 Must be as boisterously maintain'd as gain'd ;
 And he that stands upon a slippery place
 Makes nice of no vile hold to stay him up :
 That John may stand, then Arthur needs must fall ;
 140 So be it, for it cannot be but so.

128. Rub, Obstacle.

138. Makes nice of, Scruples to seize.

Lewis. But what shall I gain by young Arthur's fall?

Pandulph. You, in the right of Lady Blanch your wife,

May then make all the claim that Arthur did.

Lewis (turning away). And lose it, life and all, as Arthur did.

Pandulph. How green you are and fresh in this old world!

John lays you plots; the times conspire with you;

For he that steeps his safety in true blood

Shall find but bloody safety and untrue.

This act so evilly born shall cool the hearts

150 Of all his people and freeze up their zeal,

That none so small advantage shall step forth

To check his reign, but they will cherish it;

No natural exhalation in the sky,

No scope of nature, no distemper'd day,

No common wind, no customèd event,

But they will pluck away his natural cause

And call them meteors, prodigies and signs,

Abortives, presages and tongues of heaven,

Plainly denouncing vengeance upon John.

160 *Lewis (looking up at him again).* May be he will not touch young Arthur's life,

But hold himself safe in his prisonment.

Pandulph. O, sir, when he shall hear of your approach,

If that young Arthur be not gone already,

Even at that news he dies; and then the hearts

Of all his people shall revolt from him

And kiss the lips of unacquainted change

And pick strong matter of revolt and wrath

Out of the bloody fingers' ends of John.

Methinks I see this hurly all on foot:

146. *John lays you plots,* John lays plots by which you, not he, will benefit.

153. *Exhalation,* Meteor.

169. *Hurly,* Tumult.

170 And, O, what better matter breeds for you
 Than I have named ! The bastard Faulconbridge
 Is now in England, ransacking the church,
 Offending charity : if but a dozen French
 Were there in arms, they would be as a call
 To train ten thousand English to their side,
 Or as a little snow, tumbled about,
 Anon becomes a mountain. O noble Dauphin,
 Go with me to the king : 'tis wonderful
 What may be wrought out of their discontent,
 180 Now that their souls are topfull of offence.
 For England go : I will whet on the king.

Lewis (rising). Strong reasons make strong actions :
 let us go :

If you say ay, the king will not say no. [Excunt.]

174. *Call*, Decoy-bird.

175. *Train*, Draw, attract.

180. *Topfull of offence*, Brimful of displeasure.

ACT IV

SCENE I

A room in a castle (a dark and cheerless room, hung with arras. There is no furniture except a heavy stool and table.)

(Enter Hubert, followed by the executioners, carrying a brazier of glowing charcoal and instruments of torture.)

Hubert. Heat me these irons hot ; and look thou stand

Within the arras : when I strike my foot
Upon the bosom of the ground, rush forth,
And bind the boy which you shall find with me
Fast to the chair : be heedful : hence, and watch.

First Exec. I hope your warrant will bear out the deed.

Hubert. Uncleanly scruples ! fear not you : look to 't.

(He sees that the executioners are hidden by the arras, and then turns and calls to Arthur.)

Hubert. Young lad, come forth ; I have to say with you.

[Enter Arthur.]

Arthur. Good-morrow, Hubert.

Hubert. Good-morrow, little prince.

10 *Arthur.* As little prince, having so great a title

To be more prince, as may be. You are sad.

Hubert. Indeed, I have been merrier.

Arthur.

Mercy on me !

Methinks nobody should be sad but I :

Yet, I remember, when I was in France,

Young gentlemen would be as sad as night,

Only for wantonness. By my christendom,

So I were out of prison and kept sheep,

I should be as merry as the day is long ;

And so I would be here, but that I doubt

20 My uncle practises more harm to me :

He is afraid of me and I of him :

Is it my fault that I was Geoffrey's son ?

No, indeed, is't not ; and I would to heaven

I were your son, so you would love me, Hubert.

Hubert [aside]. If I talk to him, with his innocent
prate

He will awake my mercy which lies dead :

Therefore I will be sudden and dispatch.

Arthur. Are you sick, Hubert ? you look pale
to-day :

In sooth, I would you were a little sick,

30 That I might sit all night and watch with you :

I warrant I love you more than you do me.

Hubert [aside]. His words do take possession of my
bosom.

Read here, young Arthur. [*Showing a paper.*]

[*Aside*] How now, foolish rheum !

Turning despiteous torture out of door !

I must be brief, lest resolution drop

Out at mine eyes in tender womanish tears.

Can you not read it ? is it not fair writ ?

Arthur (in horror). Too fairly, Hubert, for so foul
effect :

Must you with hot irons burn out both mine eyes ?

16. *Wantonness*, affectation. *Christendom*, Here baptism.

20. *Practises*, Plots.

25. *Prate*. Prattle.

34. *Dispiteous*, Merciless.

38. *Foul effect*, Horrible meaning.

40 *Hubert.* Young boy, I must.

Arthur. And will you ?

Hubert. And I will.

Arthur (appealing to him piteously). Have you the heart ? When your head did but ache, I knit my handkercher about your brows, The best I had, a princess wrought it me, And I did never ask it you again ; And with my hand at midnight held your head, And like the watchful minutes to the hour, Still and anon cheer'd up the heavy time, Saying, " What lack you ? " and " Where lies your grief ? "

Or " What good love may I perform for you ? "

50 Many a poor man's son would have lien still
And ne'er have spoke a loving word to you ;
But you at your sick service had a prince.
Nay, you may think my love was crafty love
And call it cunning : do, an if you will :
If heaven be pleased that you must use me ill,
Why then you must. Will you put out mine eyes ?
These eyes that never did nor never shall
So much as frown on you.

Hubert. I have sworn to do it ;
And with hot irons must I burn them out.

60 *Arthur.* Ah, none but in this iron age would do it !
The iron of itself, though heat red-hot,
Approaching near these eyes, would drink my tears
And quench his fiery indignation
Even in the matter of mine innocence ;
Nay, after that, consume away in rust,
But for containing fire to harm mine eye.
Are you more stubborn-hard than hammer'd iron ?
An if an angel should have come to me
And told me Hubert should put out mine eyes,

46. *Like the watchful minutes to the hour,* Like the minutes which watch the hour, mark its progress.

50. *Lien, Lain.*

KING JOHN

[ACT IV, SCENE I

70 I would not have believed him,—no tongue but
Hubert's.

*Hubert (knowing that if he does not act at once he will
give way).* Come forth. [Stamps.]

[*Re-enter Executioners, with a cord, irons, etc.*]

Hubert. Do as I bid you.

Arthur (clinging to him in terror). O save me,
Hubert, save me ! my eyes are out
Even with the fierce looks of these bloody men.

Hubert (roughly). Give me the iron, I say, and bind
him here.

Arthur. Alas, what need you be so boisterous-
rough ?

I will not struggle, I will stand stone-still.

For heaven sake, Hubert, let me not be bound !

Nay, hear me, Hubert, drive these men away,

80 And I will sit as quiet as a lamb ;

I will not stir, nor wince, nor speak a word,

Nor look upon the iron angrily :

Thrust but these men away, and I'll forgive you,

Whatever torment you do put me to.

Hubert. Go, stand within ; let me alone with
him.

First Excc. I am best pleased to be from such a
deed. [Exeunt Executioners.]

Arthur. Alas, I then have chid away my friend !

He hath a stern look, but a gentle heart :

Let him come back, that his compassion may

90 Give life to yours.

Hubert. Come, boy, prepare yourself.

Arthur. Is there no remedy ?

Hubert. None, but to lose your eyes.

Arthur (clinging to him again). O heaven, that there
were but a mote in yours,

A grain, a dust, a gnat, a wandering hair,

Any annoyance in that precious sense !

Then feeling what small things are boisterous there ;

Your vile intent must needs seem horrible.

Hubert. Is this your promise? go to, hold your tongue.

Arthur (desperately). Hubert, the utterance of a brace of tongues

Must needs want pleading for a pair of eyes :

100 Let me not hold my tongue, let me not, Hubert ;

Or, Hubert, if you will, cut out my tongue,

So I may keep mine eyes : O, spare mine eyes,

Though to no use but still to look on you !

Lo, by my troth, the instrument is cold

And would not harm me.

Hubert.

I can heat it, boy.

Arthur. No, in good sooth ; the fire is dead with grief,

Being create for comfort, to be used

In undeserved extremes : see else yourself ;

There is no malice in this burning coal :

110 The breath of heaven hath blown his spirit out

And strew'd repentant ashes on his head.

Hubert. But with my breath I can revive it, boy.

Arthur. An if you do, you will but make it blush

And glow with shame of your proceedings, Hubert :

Nay, it perchance will sparkle in your eyes ;

And like a dog that is compell'd to fight,

Snatch at his master that doth tarre him on.

All things that you should use to do me wrong

Deny their office : only you do lack

120 That mercy which fierce fire and iron extends,

Creatures of note for mercy-lacking uses.

Hubert (yielding). Well, see to live ; I will not touch thine eye

For all the treasure that thine uncle owes :

Yet am I sworn and I did purpose, boy,

With this same very iron to burn them out.

Arthur (overcome with joy and relief). O, now you look like Hubert ! all this while

KING JOHN

[ACT IV, SCENE II

You were disguised.

Hubert (freeing himself). Peace : no more. Adieu.
Your uncle must not know but you are dead ;
I'll fill these dogged spies with false reports :
130 And, pretty child, sleep doubtless and secure,
That Hubert, for the wealth of all the world,
Will not offend thee.

Arthur. O heaven ! I thank you, Hubert.

Hubert. Silence ; no more : go closely in with me :
Much danger do I undergo for thee. [Exeunt.]

SCENE II

King John's palace (as in Act I., Scene I.)

[Enter King John, Pembroke, Salisbury, and other
Lords.]

K. John (taking his place upon the throne). Here
once again we sit, once again crown'd,
And looked upon, I hope, with cheerful eyes.

Pembroke. This "once again," but that your high-
ness pleased,
Was once superfluous : you were crown'd before,
And that high royalty was ne'er pluck'd off,
The faiths of men ne'er stained with revolt ;
Fresh expectation troubled not the land
With any long'd-for change or better state.

Salisbury. Therefore, to be possessed with double
pomp,
10 To guard a title that was rich before,
To gild refined gold, to paint the lily,
To throw a perfume on the violet,
To smooth the ice, or add another hue
Unto the rainbow, or with taper-light

10. *Guard, Adorn.*

14-15. *With taper-light, etc., "To hold a candle to the sun."*

To seek the beauteous eye of heaven to garnish,
Is wasteful and ridiculous excess.

Pembroke. But that your royal pleasure must be
done,

This act is as an ancient tale new told,
And in the last repeating troublesome,
20 Being urged at a time unseasonable.

Salisbury. In this the antique and well-noted
face

Of plain old form is much disfigured ;
And, like a shifted wind unto a sail,
It makes the course of thoughts to fetch about,
Startles and frights consideration,
Makes sound opinion sick and truth suspected,
For putting on so new a fashion'd robe.

Pembroke. When workmen strive to do better than
well,

They do confound their skill in covetousness ;
30 And oftentimes excusing of a fault
Doth make the fault the worse by the excuse,
32 As patches set upon a little breach
Discredit more in hiding of the fault
Than did the fault before it was so patch'd.

Salisbury. To this effect, before you were new
crown'd,

We breathed our counsel : but it pleased your highness
To overbear it, and we are all well pleased,
Since all and every part of what we would
Doth make a stand at what your highness will.

40 *K. John.* Some reasons of this double coronation
I have possess'd you with and think them strong ;
And more, more strong, then lesser is my fear,
I shall indue you with : meantime but ask
What you would have reform'd that is not well,

24. *Fetch about, Veer round.*

42. *And more, more strong, etc.,* Appears to mean, " More reasons,
more strong in proportion as my fear is less" (reading
" then " as " than ").

And well shall you perceive how willingly
I will both hear and grant you your requests.

Pembroke (going to the foot of the throne). Then I, as
one that am the tongue of these
To sound the purposes of all their hearts,
Both for myself and them, but, chief of all,
50 Your safety, for the which myself and them
Bend their best studies, heartily request
The enfranchisement of Arthur ; whose restraint
Doth move the murmuring lips of discontent
To break into this dangerous argument,—
If what in rest you have in right you hold,
Why then your fears, which, as they say, attend
The steps of wrong, should move you to mew up
Your tender kinsman and to choke his days
With barbarous ignorance and deny his youth
60 The rich advantage of good exercise ?
That the time's enemies may not have this
To grace occasions, let it be our suit
That you have bid us ask his liberty ;
Which for our goods we do no further ask
Than whereupon our weal, on you depending,
Counts it your weal he have his liberty.

[*Enter Hubert.*]

K. John. Let it be so : I do commit his youth
To your direction. (*Rising*) Hubert, what news with
you ? [*Taking him apart.*]

Pembroke (quietly). This is the man should do the
bloody deed ;
70 He show'd his warrant to a friend of mine :
The image of a wicked heinous fault
Lives in his eye ; that close aspect of his
Does show the mood of a much troubled breast ;
And I do fearfully believe 'tis done,
What we so fear'd he had a charge to do.

55. *In rest.* In peace, security. This line needs "unright" in place of "in right," or "hold not" instead of "hold," to make sense of lines 55-60.

Salisbury (in the same tone). The colour of the king
doth come and go

Between his purpose and his conscience,
Like heralds 'twixt two dreadful battles set :
His passion is so ripe, it needs must break.

80 *Pembroke.* And when it breaks, I fear will issue
thence

The foul corruption of a sweet child's death.

K. John (aloud). We cannot hold mortality's strong
hand : *(Turning to the nobles.)*

Good lords, although my will to give is living,
The suit which you demand is gone and dead :
He tells us Arthur is deceased to-night.

Salisbury (meaningly). Indeed we fear'd his sickness
was past cure.

Pembroke (with growing anger). Indeed we heard how
near his death he was

Before the child himself felt he was sick :

This must be answer'd either here or hence.

90 *K. John.* Why do you bend such solemn brows on
me ?

Think you I bear the shears of destiny ?

Have I commandment on the pulse of life ?

Salisbury. It is apparent foul play ; and 'tis shame
That greatness should so grossly offer it :
So thrive it in your game ! and so, farewell.

(He turns to go.)

Pembroke. Stay yet, Lord Salisbury ; I'll go with
thee,

And find the inheritance of this poor child,

His little kingdom of a forced grave.

That blood which owed the breadth of all this
isle,

100 Three foot of it doth hold : bad world the while !

This must not be thus borne : this will break out

To all our sorrows, and ere long I doubt.

78. *Battles, Armies in battle array.*

89. *Answered, Atoned for.*

93. *Apparent, Plainly evident.*

KING JOHN

[ACT IV, SCENE II

(Pembroke strides out angrily, and is followed by all the Lords except Hubert, who stands silently watching the miserable King.)

K. John. They burn in indignation. I repent :
There is no sure foundation set on blood,
No certain life achieved by others' death.

(Enter a Messenger in haste.)

K. John (anxiously). A fearful eye thou hast : where
is that blood

That I have seen inhabit in those cheeks ?
So foul a sky clears not without a storm :
Pour down thy weather : how goes all in France ?

110 *Messenger.* From France to England. Never such a
power

For any foreign preparation
Was levied in the body of a land.
The copy of your speed is learn'd by them ;
For when you should be told they do prepare,
The tidings comes that they are all arrived.

K. John. O, where hath our intelligence been
drunk ?

Where hath it slept ? Where is my mother's care,
That such an army could be drawn in France,
And she not hear of it ?

Messenger. My liege, her ear

120 Is stopp'd with dust ; the first of April died
Your noble mother : and, as I hear, my lord,
The lady Constance in a frenzy died
Three days before : but this from rumour's tongue
I idly heard ; if true or false I know not.

K. John. Withhold thy speed, dreadful occasion !
O, make a league with me, till I have pleased
My discontented peers ! What ! mother dead !
How wildly then walks my estate in France !
Under whose conduct came those powers of France

130 That thou for truth givest out are landed here ?

Messenger. Under the Dauphin.

K. John. Thou hast made me giddy

With these ill tidings.

(Heavily he goes to the throne and takes his seat.)

[Enter Philip Faulconbridge and Peter of Pomfret.]

Now, what says the world
To your proceedings? do not seek to stuff
My head with more ill news, for it is full.

Philip. But if you be afraid to hear the worst,
Then let the worst unheard fall on your head.

K. John. Bear with me, cousin; for I was
amazed

Under the tide: but now I breathe again
Aloft the flood, and can give audience

140 To any tongue, speak it of what it will.

Philip. How I have sped among the clergymen,
The sums I have collected shall express.

But as I travell'd hither through the land,
I find the people strangely fantasied;
Possess'd with rumours, full of idle dreams,
Not knowing what they fear, but full of fear:

And here's a prophet, that I brought with me
From forth the streets of Pomfret, whom I found
With many hundreds treading on his heels;

150 To whom he sung, in rude harsh-sounding rhymes,
That, ere the next Ascension-day at noon,
Your highness should deliver up your crown.

K. John (savagely). Thou idle dreamer, wherefore
didst thou so?

Peter. Foreknowing that the truth will fall out
so.

K. John. Hubert, away with him; imprison him;
And on that day at noon, whereon he says
I shall yield up my crown, let him be hang'd.
Deliver him to safety; and return,

For I must use thee. *(Exit Hubert with Peter.)*

O my gentle cousin,
160 Hear'st thou the news abroad, who are arriv'd?

KING JOHN

[ACT IV, SCENE ii

Philip. The French, my lord ; men's mouths are full of it :

Besides, I met Lord Bigot and Lord Salisbury,
With eyes as red as new-enkindled fire,
And others more, going to seek the grave
Of Arthur, whom they say is kill'd to-night
On your suggestion.

K. John. Gentle kinsman, go,
And thrust thyself into their companies :
I have a way to win their loves again ;
Bring them before me.

Philip. I will seek them out.

170 *K. John (rising).* Nay, but make haste ; the better
foot before.

O, let me have no subject enemies,
When adverse foreigners affright my towns
With dreadful pomp of stout invasion !
Be Mercury, set feathers to thy heels,
And fly like thought from them to me again.

Philip. The spirit of the time shall teach me speed.
[*Exit.*]

K. John. Spoke like a sprightful noble gentleman.
(*To the Messenger*) Go after him ; for he perhaps
shall need

Some messenger betwixt me and the peers ;
180 And be thou he.

Messenger. With all my heart, my liege. [*Exit.*]

K. John (sinking into his seat). My mother dead !

[*Re-enter Hubert.*]

Hubert. My lord, they say five moons were seen to-
night ;

Four fixed, and the fifth did whirl about
The other four in wondrous motion.

K. John. Five moons !

Hubert. Old men and beldams in the streets

174. *Mercury*, Messenger of the gods, had winged heels.

177. *Sprightful*, Spirited.

185. *Beldams*, Old women, hags (from *belle dame*, grandmother).

Do prophesy upon it dangerously :

Young Arthur's death is common in their mouths :

And when they talk of him, they shake their heads

And whisper one another in the ear ;

190 And he that speaks doth gripe the hearer's wrist,

Whilst he that hears makes fearful action

With wrinkled brows, with nods, with rolling eyes.

I saw a smith stand with his hammer thus.

The whilst his iron did on the anvil cool,

With open mouth swallowing a tailor's news ;

Who, with his shears and measure in his hand,

Standing on slippers, which his nimble haste

Had falsely thrust upon contrary feet,

Told of a many thousand warlike French

200 That were embattailed and rank'd in Kent :

Another lean unwash'd artificer

Cuts off his tale and talks of Arthur's death.

K. John (railing at him). Why seek'st thou to possess
me with these fears ?

Why urgest thou so oft young Arthur's death ?

Thy hand hath murder'd him : I had a mighty cause

To wish him dead, but thou hadst none to kill him.

Hubert. No had, my lord ! why, did you not provoke
me ?

K. John (starting up). It is the curse of kings to be
attended

By slaves that take their humours for a warrant

210 To break within the bloody house of life,

And on the winking of authority

To understand a law, to know the meaning

Of dangerous majesty, when perchance it frowns

More upon humour than advised respect.

Hubert (showing his warrant). Here is your hand and
seal for what I did.

K. John (snatching it). O, when the last account
'twixt heaven and earth

200. *Embattailed*, Drawn up in battle array, .

201. *Artificer*, Artisan.

Is to be made, then shall this hand and seal
Witness against us to damnation !

(Tearing the warrant to pieces.)

How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds

220 Make deeds ill done! *(Rounding on him fiercely)* Hadst
not thou been by,

A fellow by the hand of nature mark'd,
Quoted and sign'd to do a deed of shame,
This murder had not come into my mind ;
But taking note of thy abhorr'd aspect,
Finding thee fit for bloody villany,
Apt, liable to be employ'd in danger,
I faintly brook with thee of Arthur's death ;
And thou, to be endeared to a king,
Made it no conscience to destroy a prince.

230 *Hubert (in angry protest).* My lord,—

K. John (with growing violence). Hadst thou but
shook thy head or made a pause

When I spake darkly what I purposed,
Or turn'd an eye of doubt upon my face,
As bid me tell my tale in express words,
Deep shame had struck me dumb, made me break off,
And those thy fears might have wrought fears in me :
But thou didst understand me by my signs,
And didst in signs again parley with sin ;
Yea, without stop, didst let thy heart consent,

240 And consequently thy rude hand to act
The deed, which both our tongues held vile to name.
(Raving at him.) Out of my sight, and never see me
more !

My nobles leave me ; and my state is braved,
Even at my gates, with ranks of foreign powers :
Nay, *(laying his hand on his breast)* in the body of this
fleshy land,

This kingdom, this confine of blood and breath,
Hostility and civil tumult reigns
Between my conscience and my cousin's death.

(He throws himself down upon the throne.)

Hubert. Arm you against your other enemies,
 250 I'll make a peace between your soul and you.
 Young Arthur is alive : this hand of mine
 Is yet a maiden and an innocent hand,
 Not painted with the crimson spots of blood.
 Within this bosom never enter'd yet
 The dreadful motion of a murderous thought ;
 And you have slander'd nature in my form,
 Which, howsoever rude exteriorly,
 Is yet the cover of a fairer mind
 Than to be butcher of an innocent child.

260 *K. John.* Doth Arthur live ? (*Springing to his feet.*)

O, haste thee to the peers,
 Throw this report on their incensed rage,
 And make them tame to their obedience !
 Forgive the comment that my passion made
 Upon thy feature ; for my rage was blind,
 And foul imaginary eyes of blood
 Presented thee more hideous than thou art.
 O, answer not, but to my closet bring
 The angry lords with all expedient haste.
 I conjure thee but slowly ; run more fast.

(*Hubert hurries out, followed by the King.*)

SCENE III

Before the castle

(*Arthur appears on the battlements. He is disguised in the rough clothes of a sailor-boy, and moves cautiously, for he is making a desperate attempt to escape.*)

Arthur. The wall is high, and yet will I leap down !
 Good ground, be pitiful and hurt me not !
 There's few or none do know me : if they did,
 This ship-boy's semblance hath disguised me quite.

I am afraid ; and yet I'll venture it.
 If I get down, and do not break my limbs,
 I'll find a thousand shifts to get away :
 As good to die and go, as die and stay.

[Leaps down.]

O me ! my uncle's spirit is in these stones :
 10 Heaven take my soul, and England keep my bones !

[Dies.]

[Enter Pembroke, Salisbury, and Bigot] (at the foot of
 the castle wall.)

Salisbury. Lords, I will meet him at Saint Edmunds-
 bury :

It is our safety, and we must embrace
 This gentle offer of the perilous time.

Pembroke. Who brought that letter from the car-
 dinal ?

Salisbury. The Count Melun, a noble lord of France ;
 Whose private with me of the Dauphin's love
 Is much more general than these lines import.

Bigot. To-morrow morning let us meet him then.

Salisbury. Or rather then set forward ; for 'twill be
 20 Two long days' journey, lords, or ere we meet.

[Enter Philip Faulconbridge.]

Philip. Once more to-day well met, distemper'd
 lords !

The king by me requests your presence straight.

(They draw away from him.)

Salisbury. The king hath dispossess'd himself of us :
 We will not line his thin bestain'd cloak
 With our pure honours, nor attend the foot
 That leaves the print of blood where'er it walks.
 Return and tell him so : we know the worst.

Philip. Whate'er you think, good words, I think
 were best.

15. *Melun*, Meloone, the First Folio spelling, gives the pronunciation.

16. *Private*, Private communication.

17. *General*, Probably comprehensive.

21. *Distemper'd*, Ill-tempered.

Salisbury. Our griefs, and not our manners, reason
now.

30 *Philip.* But there is little reason in your grief ;
Therefore 'twere reason you had manners now.

Pembroke. Sir, sir, impatience hath his privilege.

Philip. 'Tis true, to hurt his master, no man else.

Salisbury (turning). This is the prison. [Seeing
Arthur] What is he lies here ?

(*They all approach the boy's dead body and bend over
it.*)

Pembroke (deeply moved). O death, made proud with
pure and princely beauty !

The earth had not a hole to hide this deed.

Salisbury. Murder, as hating what himself hath done,
Doth lay it open to urge on revenge.

Bigot. Or, when he doom'd this beauty to a grave,
40 Found it too precious-princely for a grave.

Salisbury (turning on Philip). Sir Richard, what
think you ? have you beheld,

Or have you read or heard ? or could you think ?

Or do you almost think, although you see,

That you do see ? could thought, without this object,

Form such another ? (*With growing anger*) This is
the very top,

The height, the crest, or crest unto the crest,

Of murder's arms : this is the bloodiest shame,

The wildest savagery, the vilest stroke,

That ever wall-eyed wrath or staring rage

50 Presented to the tears of soft remorse.

Pembroke. All murders past do stand excused in
this :

And this, so sole and so unmatchable,

Shall give a holiness, a purity,

To the yet unbegotten sin of times ;

And prove a deadly bloodshed but a jest,

Exempl'd by this heinous spectacle.

Philip. It is a damned and a bloody work ;

The graceless action of a heavy hand,

If that it be the work of any hand.

60 *Salisbury.* If that it be the work of any hand !

We had a kind of light what would ensue :

It is the shameful work of Hubert's hand ;

The practice and the purpose of the king :

From whose obedience I forbid my soul,

(He kneels beside the body, and Pembroke and Bigot do the same, to make a solemn vow of vengeance.

Philip stands uneasily looking on.)

Kneeling before this ruin of sweet life,

And breathing to his breathless excellence

The incense of a vow, a holy vow,

Never to taste the pleasures of the world,

Never to be infected with delight,

70 Nor conversant with ease and idleness,

(Lifting his right hand.)

Till I have set a glory to this hand,

By giving it the worship of revenge.

Pembroke.

Bigot.

} Our souls religiously confirm thy words.

[Enter Hubert.]

Hubert. Lords, I am hot with haste in seeking you :

(They spring to their feet, and confront Hubert angrily.)

Arthur doth live ; the king hath sent for you.

Salisbury. O, he is bold and blushes not at death.

Avaunt, thou hateful villain, get thee gone !

Hubert. I am no villain.

Salisbury [drawing his sword]. Must I rob the law ?

Philip (stepping forward). Your sword is bright, sir ;

put it up again.

80 *Salisbury.* Not till I sheathe it in a murderer's skin.

Hubert (his hand on his sword). Stand back, Lord

Salisbury, stand back, I say ;

By heaven, I think my sword's as sharp as yours :

I would not have you, lord, forget yourself,

Nor tempt the danger of my true defence ;

Lest I, by marking of your rage, forget

Your worth, your greatness and nobility.

Bigot. Out, dunghill ! darest thou brave a nobleman ?

Hubert. Not for my life : but yet I dare defend My innocent life against an emperor.

⁹⁰ *Salisbury.* Thou art a murderer.

Hubert. Do not prove me so ;
Yet I am none : whose tongue soe'er speaks false,
Not truly speaks ; who speaks not truly, lies.

Pembroke. Cut him to pieces.

Philip (coming between them). Keep the peace, I say.

Salisbury. Stand by, or I shall gall you, Faulconbridge.

Philip. Thou wert better gall the devil, Salisbury :
If thou but frown on me, or stir thy foot,
Or teach thy hasty spleen to do me shame,
I'll strike thee dead. Put up thy sword betime ;
Or I'll so maul you and your toasting-iron,
¹⁰⁰ That you shall think the devil is come from hell.

Bigot. What wilt thou do, renowned Faulconbridge ?
Second a villain and a murderer ?

Hubert. Lord Bigot, I am none.

Bigot (indicating the body). Who kill'd this prince ?
(*With a movement of horror Hubert realizes that Arthur is lying dead almost at his feet. For a moment his grief robs him of speech.*)

Hubert (faltering). 'Tis not an hour since I left him well :

I honour'd him, I loved him, and will weep
My date of life out for his sweet life's loss.

Salisbury. Trust not those cunning waters of his eyes,
For villany is not without such rheum ;
And he, long traded in it, makes it seem
¹¹⁰ Like rivers of remorse and innocency.

Away with me, all you whose souls abhor
The uncleanly savours of a slaughter-house ;
For I am stifled with this smell of sin.

KING JOHN

[ACT IV, SCENE iii]

Bigot. Away toward Bury, to the Dauphin there !
Pembroke (to Hubert). There tell the king he may
 inquire us out. [Exeunt Lords.]

Philip. Here's a good world ! Knew you of this
 fair work ? (*Taking him roughly by the shoulder.*)

Beyond the infinite and boundless reach
 Of mercy, if thou didst this deed of death,
 Art thou damn'd, Hubert.

Hubert. Do but hear me, sir.

120 *Philip.* Ha ! I'll tell thee what ;
 Thou'rt damn'd as black—nay, nothing is so black ;
 Thou art more deep damn'd than Prince Lucifer :
 There is not yet so ugly a fiend of hell
 As thou shalt be, if thou didst kill this child.

Hubert. Upon my soul—

Philip. If thou didst but consent
 To this most cruel act, do but despair ;
 And if thou want'st a cord, the smallest thread
 That ever spider twisted from her womb
 Will serve to strangle thee ; a rush will be a beam
 130 To hang thee on ; or wouldst thou drown thyself,
 Put but a little water in a spoon,
 And it shall be as all the ocean,
 Enough to stifle such a villain up.
 I do suspect thee very grievously.

Hubert. If I in act, consent, or sin of thought,
 Be guilty of the stealing that sweet breath
 Which was embounded in this beauteous clay,
 Let hell want pains enough to torture me.
 I left him well.

Philip (releasing him). Go, bear him in thine arms.
 140 I am amazed, methinks, and lose my way
 Among the thorns and dangers of this world.
 (*Hubert takes up Arthur's body tenderly in his arms.*)
 How easy dost thou take all England up !
 From forth this morsel of dead royalty,

The life, the right and truth of all this realm
Is fled to heaven ; and England now is left
To tug and scramble and to part by the teeth
The unowed interest of proud-swelling state.
Now for the bare-pick'd bone of majesty
Doth dogged war bristle his angry crest
150 And snarleth in the gentle eyes of peace :
Now powers from home and discontents at home
Meet in one line ; and vast confusion waits,
As doth a raven on a sick-fall'n beast,
The imminent decay of wrested pomp.
Now happy he whose cloak and cincture can
Hold out this tempest. Bear away that child
And follow me with speed : I'll to the king :
A thousand businesses are brief in hand,
And heaven itself doth frown upon the land.

*(Philip hurries away. Hubert follows sadly, carrying
the dead child.)*

146. *Scamble*, Scramble for.

147. *Unowed*, Unowned.

ACT V

SCENE I

King John's Palace

(The throne is occupied now by Pandulph, resplendent in the scarlet robes of the Cardinal, and King John is kneeling at his feet.)

K. John. Thus have I yielded up into your hand
The circle of my glory. *[Giving the crown.]*

Pandulph (*placing it on John's head*). Take again
From this my hand, as holding of the pope
Your sovereign greatness and authority.

K. John (*rising*). Now keep your holy word : go
meet the French,

And from his holiness use all your power
To stop their marches 'fore we are inflamed.

Our discontented counties do revolt ;

Our people quarrel with obedience,

10 Swearing allegiance and the love of soul

To stranger blood, to foreign royalty.

This inundation of mistemper'd humour

Rests by you only to be qualified :

Then pause not ; for the present time's so sick,

That present medicine must be minister'd,

Or overthrow incurable ensues.

Pandulph. It was my breath that blew this tem-
pest up,

Upon your stubborn usage of the pope ;

But since you are a gentle convertite,

20 My tongue shall hush again this storm of war
 And make fair weather in your blustering land.
 On this Ascension-day, remember well,
 Upon your oath of service to the pope,
 Go I to make the French lay down their arms. [*Exit.*]

K. John. Is this Ascension-day? Did not the
 prophet

Say that before Ascension-day at noon
 My crown I should give off? Even so I have:
 I did suppose it should be on constraint;
 But, heaven be thank'd, it is but voluntary.

[*Enter Philip Faulconbridge.*]

30 *Philip.* All Kent hath yielded; nothing there holds
 out

But Dover castle: London hath received,
 Like a kind host, the Dauphin and his powers:
 Your nobles will not hear you, but are gone
 To offer service to your enemy,
 And wild amazement hurries up and down
 The little number of your doubtful friends.

K. John. Would not my lords return to me again
 After they heard young Arthur was alive?

Philip. They found him dead and cast into the
 streets,

40 An empty casket, where the jewel of life
 By some damn'd hand was robb'd and ta'en away.

K. John. That villain Hubert told me he did live.

Philip. So, on my soul, he did, for aught he knew.

But wherefore do you droop? why look you sad?

Be great in act, as you have been in thought;

Let not the world see fear and sad distrust

Govern the motion of a kingly eye:

Be stirring as the time; be fire with fire;

Threaten the threatener and outface the brow

50 Of bragging horror: so shall inferior eyes,

That borrow their behaviours from the great,

Grow great by your example and put on

The dauntless spirit of resolution.

Away, and glisten like the god of war,
 When he intendeth to become the field :
 Show boldness and aspiring confidence.
 What, shall they seek the lion in his den,
 And fright him there ? and make him tremble there ?
 O let it not be said : forage, and run

60 To meet displeasure farther from the doors,
 And grapple with him ere he come so nigh.

K. John. The legate of the pope hath been with me,
 And I have made a happy peace with him ;
 And he hath promised to dismiss the powers
 Led by the Dauphin.

Philip. O inglorious league !
 Shall we, upon the footing of our land,
 Send fair-play orders and make compromise,
 Insinuation, parley and base truce
 To arms invasive ? shall a beardless boy,
 70 A cocker'd silken wanton, brave our fields,
 And flesh his spirit in a warlike soil,
 Mocking the air with colours idly spread,
 And find no check ? Let us, my liege, to arms :
 Perchance the cardinal cannot make your peace ;
 Or if he do, let it at least be said
 They saw we had a purpose of defence.

K. John. Have thou the ordering of this present
 time.

Philip. Away, then, with good courage ! yet, I
 know,
 Our party may well meet a prouder foe. [Exeunt.]

54. *Glisten*, Glisten.

70. *Cocker'd silken wanton*, Pampered effeminate wanton.

SCENE II

The Dauphin's camp at St. Edmundsbury

[*Enter, in arms, Lewis, Salisbury, Melun, Pembroke, Bigot, and Soldiers.*] (*The Dauphin has just signed a solemn compact with the rebellious English Nobles, and now gives the document to Melun.*)

Lewis. My Lord Melun, let this be copied out,
And keep it safe for our remembrance :
Return the precedent to these lords again ;
That, having our fair order written down,
Both they and we, perusing o'er these notes,
May know wherefore we took the sacrament
And keep our faiths firm and inviolable.

Salisbury. Upon our sides it never shall be broken.
And, noble Dauphin, albeit we swear
10 A voluntary zeal and an unurged faith
To your proceedings : yet believe me, prince,
I am not glad that such a sore of time
Should seek a plaster by contemn'd revolt,
And heal the inveterate canker of one wound
By making many. O, it grieves my soul,
That I must draw this metal from my side
(*He puts his hand on his sword.*)

To be a widow-maker ! O, and there
Where honourable rescue and defence
Cries out upon the name of Salisbury !
20 But such is the infection of the time,
That, for the health and physic of our right,
We cannot deal but with the very hand
Of stern injustice and confused wrong.
And is't not pity, O my grieved friends,
That we, the sons and children of this isle,
Were born to see so sad an hour as this ;

- Wherein we step after a stranger, march
 Upon her gentle bosom, and fill up
 Her enemies' ranks,—I must withdraw and weep
 30 Upon the spot of this enforced cause,—
 To grace the gentry of a land remote,
 And follow unacquainted colours here ?
 What, here ? O nation, that thou couldst remove !
 That Neptune's arms, who clippeth thee about,
 Would bear thee from the knowledge of thyself,
 And grapple thee unto a pagan shore ;
 Where these two Christian armies might combine
 The blood of malice in a vein of league,
 And not to spend it so unneighbourly !
- 40 *Lewis*. A noble temper dost thou show in this ;
 And great affections wrestling in thy bosom
 Doth make an earthquake of nobility.
 O, what a noble combat hast thou fought
 Between compulsion and a brave respect !
 Let me wipe off this honourable dew,
 That silverly doth progress on thy cheeks :
 My heart hath melted at a lady's tears,
 Being an ordinary inundation ;
 But this effusion of such manly drops,
 50 This shower, blown up by tempest of the soul,
 Startles mine eyes, and makes me more amazed
 Than had I seen the vaulty top of heaven
 Figured quite ~~over~~ with burning meteors.
 Lift up thy brow, renowned Salisbury,
 And with a great heart heave away this storm :
 Commend these waters to those baby eyes
 That never saw the giant world enraged ;
 Nor met with fortune other than at feasts,
 Full of warm blood, of mirth, of gossiping.
- 60 Come, come ; for thou shalt thrust thy hand as deep
 Into the purse of rich prosperity

34. *Clippeth*, Embraceth.44. *Between compulsion, etc.*, "Between the necessity of acting as you have done, and honourable regard for your country."

As Lewis himself : so, nobles, shall you all,
That knit your sinews to the strength of mine.

[*Enter Pandulph.*]

And even there, methinks, an angel spake :
Look, where the holy legate comes apace,
To give us warrant from the hand of heaven,
And on our actions set the name of right
With holy breath.

Pandulph. Hail, noble prince of France !
The next is this, King John hath reconciled
70 Himself to Rome ; his spirit is come in,
That so stood out against the holy church,
The great metropolis and see of Rome :
Therefore thy threatening colours now wind up ;
And tame the savage spirit of wild war,
That, like a lion foster'd up at hand,
It may lie gently at the foot of peace,
And be no further harmful than in show.

Lewis. Your grace shall pardon me, I will not back :
I am too high-born to be propertied,
80 To be a secondary at control,
Or useful serving-man and instrument,
To any sovereign state throughout the world.
Your breath first kindled the dead coal of wars
Between this chastised kingdom and myself,
And brought in matter that should feed this fire ;
And now 'tis far too huge to be blown out
With that same weak wind which enkindled it.
You taught me how to know the face of right,
Acquainted me with interest to this land,
90 Yea, thrust this enterprize into my heart ;
And come ye now to tell me John hath made
His peace with Rome ? What is that peace to me ?
I, by the honour of my marriage-bed,
After young Arthur, claim this land for mine ;
And, now it is half-conquer'd, must I back

Because that John hath made his peace with Rome ?
 Am I Rome's slave ? What penny hath Rome borne,
 What men provided, what munition sent,
 To underprop this action ? Is't not I
 100 That undergo this charge ? who else but I,
 And such as to my claim are liable,
 Sweat in this business and maintain this war ?
 Have I not heard these islanders shout out
 " Vive le roi ! " as I have bank'd their towns ?
 Have I not here the best cards for the game,
 To win this easy match play'd for a crown ?
 And shall I now give o'er the yielded set ?
 No, no, on my soul, it never shall be said.

Pandulph. You look but on the outside of this
 work.

110 *Lewis.* Outside or inside, I will not return
 Till my attempt so much be glorified
 As to my ample hope was promised
 Before I drew this gallant head of war,
 And cull'd these fiery spirits from the world,
 To outlook conquest and to win renown
 Even in the jaws of danger and of death.

[*Trumpet sounds.*]

What lusty trumpet thus doth summon us ?

[*Enter Philip Faulconbridge, attended.*]

Philip [*to Lewis*]. According to the fair play of the
 world,

Let me have audience ; I am sent to speak :
 120 (*To Pandulph*) My holy lord of Milan, from the king
 I come, to learn how you have dealt for him ;
 And, as you answer, I do know the scope
 And warrant limited unto my tongue.

Pandulph. The Dauphin is too wilful-opposite,
 And will not temporize with my entreaties ;
 He flatly says he'll not lay down his arms.

Philip. By all the blood that ever fury breathed,

The youth says well. [*To Lewis*] Now hear our English king ;

For thus his royalty doth speak in me.

130 He is prepared, and reason too he should :

This apish and unmannerly approach,

This harness'd masque and unadvised revel,

This unhair'd sauciness and boyish troops,

The king doth smile at ; and is well prepared

To whip this dwarfish war, these pigmy arms,

From out the circle of his territories.

That hand which had the strength, even at your door,

To cudgel you and make you take the hatch,

To dive like buckets in concealed wells,

140 To crouch in litter of your stable planks,

To lie like pawns lock'd up in chests and trunks,

To hug with swine, to seek sweet safety out

In vaults and prisons, and to thrill and shake

Even at the crying of your nation's crow,

Thinking his voice an armed Englishman ;

Shall that victorious hand be feebled here,

That in your chambers gave you chastisement ?

No : know the gallant monarch is in arms

And like an eagle o'er his aery towers,

150 To souse annoyance that comes near his nest.

(*To the English nobles*) And you degenerate, you ingrate revolts,

You bloody Neroes, ripping up the womb

Of your dear mother England, blush for shame ;

For your own ladies and pale-visaged maids

Like Amazons come tripping after drums,

Their thimbles into armed gauntlets change,

Their needles to lances, and their gentle hearts

To fierce and bloody inclination.

132. *Harness'd*, Armoured.

133. *Unhair'd*, Beardless, boyish.

138. *Take the hatch*, Leap over the lower part of the door, instead of stopping to open it.

152. *Nero*, The cruel Emperor of Rome, A.D. 54-68, who murdered his mother.

KING JOHN

[ACT V, SCENE iii]

Lewis. There end thy brave, and turn thy face in
peace ;

150 We grant thou canst outscold us : fare thee well ;
We hold our time too precious to be spent
With such a brabblor.

Pandulph. Give me leave to speak.

Philip. No, I will speak.

Lewis. We will attend to neither.
Strike up the drums ; and let the tongue of war
Plead for our interest and our being here.

Philip. Indeed, your drums, being beaten, will cry
out ;

And so shall you, being beaten : do but start
An echo with the clamour of thy drum,
And even at hand a drum is ready braced
170 That shall reverberate all as loud as thine ;
Sound but another, and another shall
As loud as thine rattle the welkin's ear
And mock the deep-mouth'd thunder : for at hand,
Not trusting to this halting legate here,
Whom he hath used rather for sport than need,
Is warlike John ; and in his forehead sits
A bare-ribb'd death, whose office is this day
To feast upon whole thousands of the French.

Lewis. Strike up our drums, to find this danger out.

180 *Philip.* And thou shalt find it, Dauphin, do not
doubt. [Exeunt.]

SCENE III

The field of battle

*(Again we hear the sound of trumpets and the clamour
of the battle. King John and Hubert enter, fully
armed. The King is ill and weak.)*

K. John. How goes the day with us ? O, tell me,
Hubert.

159. *Brave, Bravado.*

Hubert. Badly, I fear. How fares your majesty ?

K. John. This fever, that hath troubled me so long,
Lies heavy on me ; O, my heart is sick !

(Enter a Messenger in haste.)

Messenger. My lord, your valiant kinsman, Faulconbridge,

Desires your majesty to leave the field
And send him word by me which way you go.

K. John. Tell him, toward Swinstead, to the abbey there.

Messenger. Be of good comfort ; for the great supply
10 That was expected by the Dauphin here,
Are wreck'd three nights ago on Goodwin Sands.
This news was brought to Richard but even now :
The French fight coldly, and retire themselves.

K. John (reeling). Ay me ! this tyrant fever burns
me up,

And will not let me welcome this good news.
Set on toward Swinstead : to my litter straight ;
Weakness possesseth me, and I am faint.

(Supported by Hubert and the Messenger, he goes out.)

SCENE IV

Another part of the field

(Enter Salisbury, Pembroke, and Bigot, who have been driven back by King John's forces.)

Salisbury. I did not think the king so stored with friends.

Pembroke. Up once again ; put spirit in the French :
If they miscarry, we miscarry too.

Salisbury. That misbegotten devil, Faulconbridge,
In spite of spite, alone upholds the day.

KING JOHN

[ACT V, SCENE IV

Pembroke. They say King John sore sick hath left
the field.

(Enter Melun, wounded and barely able to stand.)

Melun. Lead me to the revolts of England here.

Salisbury. When we were happy we had other
names.

Pembroke. It is the Count Melun.

(Melun reels and is falling; Salisbury saves him.)

Salisbury.

Wounded to death.

10 *Melun.* Fly, noble English, you are bought and
sold;

Unthread the rude eye of rebellion

And welcome home again discarded faith.

Seek out King John and fall before his feet;

For if the French be lords of this loud day,

He means to recompense the pains you take

By cutting off your heads: thus hath he sworn

And I with him, and many moe with me,

Upon the altar at Saint Edmundsbury;

Even on that altar where we swore to you

20 Dear amity and everlasting love.

Salisbury. May this be possible? may this be true?

Melun (with painful difficulty) Have I not his
death within my view,

Retaining but a quantity of life,

Which bleeds away, even as a form of wax

Resolveth from his figure 'gainst the fire?

What in the world should make me now deceive,

Since I must lose the use of all deceit?

Why should I then be false, since it is true

That I must die here and live hence by truth?

30 I say again, if Lewis do win the day,

He is forsworn, if e'er those eyes of yours

Behold another day break in the east:

But even this night, whose black contagious breath

Already smokes about the burning crest

Of the old, feeble and day-wearied sun,
 Even this ill night, your breathing shall expire,
 Paying the fine of rated treachery
 Even with a treacherous fine of all your lives,
 If Lewis by your assistance win the day.

40 Commend me to one Hubert with your king :

The love of him, and this respect besides,
 For that my grandsire was an Englishman,
 Awakes my conscience to confess all this.
 In lieu whereof, I pray you, bear me hence
 From forth the noise and rumour of the field,
 Where I may think the remnant of my thoughts
 In peace, and part this body and my soul
 With contemplation and devout desires.

Salisbury. We do believe thee : and beshrew my
 soul

50 But I do love the favour and the form

Of this most fair occasion, by the which
 We will untread the steps of damned flight,
 And like a bated and retired flood,
 Leaving our rankness and irregular course,
 Stoop low within those bounds we have o'erlook'd
 And calmly run on in obedience
 Even to our ocean, to our great King John.

My arm shall give thee help to bear thee hence ;
 For I do see the cruel pangs of death

60 Right in thine eye. Away, my friends ! New flight ;
 And happy newness, that intends old right.

[*Exeunt, leading off Melun.*]

61. *Happy newness, etc.*, " Happy new course, which takes us back
 to the right path we have left."

SCENE V

The French camp[*Enter Lewis and his train.*]

Lewis. The sun of heaven methought was loath to set,

But stay'd and made the western welkin blush,
 When English measure backward their own ground
 In faint retire. O, bravely came we off,
 When with a volley of our needless shot,
 After such bloody toil, we bid good-night ;
 And wound our tattering colours clearly up,
 Last in the field, and almost lords of it !

[*Enter a Messenger.*]

Messenger. Where is my prince, the Dauphin ?

Lewis. Here : what news ?

10 *Messenger.* The Count Melun is slain ; the English lords

By his persuasion are again fall'n off ;
 And your supply, which you have wish'd so long,
 Are cast away and sunk on Goodwin Sands.

Lewis. Ah, foul shrewd news ! beshrew thy very heart !

I did not think to be so sad to-night
 As this hath made me. Who was he that said
 King John did fly an hour or two before
 The stumbling night did part our weary powers ?

Messenger. Whoever spoke it, it is true, my lord.

20 *Lewis.* Well ; keep good quarter and good care to-night :

The day shall not be up so soon as I,
 To try the fair adventure of to-morrow. [*Exeunt.*]

2. *Welkin, Sky.*

SCENE VI

An open place in the neighbourhood of Swinstead Abbey. (It is dark.)

[*Enter Philip and Hubert, severally.*]

Hubert (stopping short and challenging). Who's there? speak, ho! speak quickly, or I shoot.

Philip (halting). A friend. What art thou?

Hubert. Of the part of England.

Philip. Whither dost thou go?

Hubert. What's that to thee? why may not I demand

Of thine affairs, as well as thou of mine?

Philip. Hubert, I think?

Hubert (approaching him). Thou hast a perfect thought:

I will upon all hazards well believe

Thou art my friend, that know'st my tongue so well.

Who art thou?

Philip. Who thou wilt: and if thou please,
10 Thou mayst befriend me so much as to think

I come one way of the Plantagenets.

Hubert. Unkind remembrance! thou and eyeless
night

Have done me shame: brave soldier, pardon me,

That any accent breaking from thy tongue

Should 'scape the true acquaintance of mine ear.

Philip. Come, come; sans compliment, what news
abroad?

Hubert. Why, here walk I in the black brow of
night,

To find you out.

Philip. Brief, then; and what's the news?

Hubert. O, my sweet sir, news fitting to the night,
20 Black, fearful, comfortless and horrible.

KING JOHN

[ACT V, SCENE vii]

Philip. Show me the very wound of this ill news :
I am no woman, I'll not swoon at it.

Hubert. The king, I fear, is poison'd by a monk :
I left him almost speechless ; and broke out
To acquaint you with this evil, that you might
The better arm you to the sudden time,
Than if you had at leisure known of this.

Philip. How did he take it ? who did taste to him ?

Hubert. A monk, I tell you ; a resolved villain,
30 Whose bowels suddenly burst out : the king
Yet speaks and peradventure may recover.

Philip. Who didst thou leave to tend his majesty ?

Hubert. Why, know you not ? the lords are all come
back,

And brought Prince Henry in their company ;
At whose request the king hath pardon'd them,
And they are all about his majesty.

Philip. Withhold thine indignation, mighty heaven,
And tempt us not to bear above our power !
I'll tell thee, Hubert, half my power this night,
40 Passing these flats, are taken by the tide ;
These Lincoln Washes have devoured them ;
Myself, well mounted, hardly have escaped.
Away before : conduct me to the king ;
I doubt he will be dead or ere I come. [Exeunt.]

SCENE VII

*The orchard in Swinstead Abbey (a quiet garden
between high walls. The sky is flushed with dawn).*

[Enter Prince Henry, Salisbury and Bigot.]

P. Henry. It is too late : the life of all his blood
Is touch'd corruptibly, and his pure brain,

38. *And tempt us not . . .* Do not try us beyond our strength.
S.D. Orchard, Garden.

Which some suppose the soul's frail dwelling-house,
Doth by the idle comments that it makes
Foretell the ending of mortality.

[*Enter Pembroke.*]

Pembroke. His highness yet doth speak, and holds
belief

That, being brought into the open air,
It would allay the burning quality
Of that fell poison which assaileth him.

10 *P. Henry.* Let him be brought into the orchard here.
Doth he still rage? [*Exit Bigot.*]

Pembroke. He is more patient
Than when you left him; even now he sung.

P. Henry. O vanity of sickness! fierce extremes
In their continuance will not feel themselves.
Death, having prey'd upon the outward parts,
Leaves them invisible, and his siege is now
Against the mind, the which he pricks and wounds
With many legions of strange fantasies,
Which, in their throng and press to that last hold,
20 Confound themselves. 'Tis strange that death should
sing.

I am the cygnet to this pale faint swan,
Who chants a doleful hymn to his own death,
And from the organ-pipe of frailty sings
His soul and body to their lasting rest.

Salisbury. Be of good comfort, prince; for you are
born

To set a form upon that indigest
Which he hath left so shapeless and so rude.

[*Enter Attendants, and Bigot, carrying King John in
a chair.*]

K. John (faintly). Ay, marry, now my soul hath
elbow-room;

It would not out at windows nor at doors.

30 There is so hot a summer in my bosom,

26. *Indigest*, Chaos.

28. *Marry*, Originally an invocation of the Virgin *Mary*.

That all my bowels crumble up to dust :
I am a scribbled form, drawn with a pen
Upon a parchment, and against this fire
Do I shrink up.

P. Henry (bending over him). How fares your
majesty ?

K. John (with great difficulty). Poison'd,—ill fare—
dead, forsook, cast off :

And none of you will bid the winter come
To thrust his icy fingers in my maw,
Nor let my kingdom's rivers take their course
Through my burn'd bosom, nor entreat the north
40 To make his bleak winds kiss my parched lips
And comfort me with cold. I do not ask you much,
I beg cold comfort ; and you are so strait
And so ingrateful, you deny me that.

P. Henry. O that there were some virtue in my
tears,
That might relieve you !

K. John. The salt in them is hot,
Within me is a hell ; and there the poison
Is as a fiend confined to tyrannize
On unreprieveable condemned blood.

[*Enter Philip Faulconbridge.*]

Philip. O, I am scalded with my violent motion,
50 And spleen of speed to see your majesty !

K. John (writhing in pain). O cousin, thou art come
to set mine eye :

The tackle of my heart is crack'd and burn'd,
And all the shrouds wherewith my life should sail
Are turned to one thread, one little hair :
My heart hath one poor string to stay it by,
Which holds but till thy news be uttered ;
And then all this thou seest is but a clod
And module of confounded royalty.

Philip. The Dauphin is preparing hitherward,

35. *Ill fare.* Note the pun here and in line 42.

42. *Strait, Mean.*

50. *Spleen, Eagerness.*

58. *Module, Model.*

60 Where heaven He knows how we shall answer him ;
 For in a night the best part of my power,
 As I upon advantage did remove,
 Were in the Washes all unwarily
 Devoured by the unexpected flood. [*The king dies.*]

Salisbury. You breathe these dead news in as dead
 an ear.

My liege ! my lord ! but now a king, now thus.

P. Henry. Even so must I run on, and even so stop.
 What surety of the world, what hope, what stay,
 When this was now a king, and now a clay ?

70 *Philip.* Art thou gone so ? I do but stay behind

To do the office for thee of revenge,
 And then my soul shall wait on thee to heaven,
 As it on earth hath been thy servant still.

(*Turning on Salisbury and his friends*) Now, now, you
 stars that move in your right spheres,

Where be your powers ? show now your mended
 faiths,

And instantly return with me again,
 To push destruction and perpetual shame
 Out of the weak door of our fainting land.
 Straight let us seek, or straight we shall be sought ;

80 The Dauphin rages at our very heels.

Salisbury. It seems you know not, then, so much
 as we :

The Cardinal Pandulph is within at rest,
 Who half an hour since came from the Dauphin,
 And brings from him such offers of our peace
 As we with honour and respect may take,
 With purpose presently to leave this war.

Philip. He will the rather do it when he sees
 Ourselves well sinewed to our defence.

Salisbury. Nay, it is in a manner done already ;
 90 For many carriages he hath dispatch'd
 To the sea-side, and put his cause and quarrel

74. *You stars,* The nobles who had revolted and repented.

To the disposing of the cardinal :
 With whom yourself, myself and other lords,
 If you think meet, this afternoon will post
 To consummate this business happily.

Philip. Let it be so : and you, my noble prince,
 With other princes that may best be spared,
 Shall wait upon your father's funeral.

P. Henry. At Worcester must his body be interr'd ;
 100 For so he will'd it.

Philip. Thither shall it then :
 And happily may your sweet self put on
 The lineal state and glory of the land !

(He kneels to the new King.)

To whom, with all submission, on my knee
 I do bequeath my faithful services
 And true subjection everlastingly.

Salisbury (as all kneel). And the like tender of our
 love we make,
 To rest without a spot for evermore.

P. Henry. I have a kind soul that would give you
 thanks,
 And knows not how to do it but with tears.

(They rise to their feet.)

110 *Philip.* O, let us pay the time but needful woe,
 Since it hath been beforehand with our griefs.

*(In a sudden glow of new confidence and hope he draws
 his sword, and the rest draw theirs as his voice rings
 out in proud declaration of his faith in England.)*

This England never did, nor never shall,
 Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror,
 But when it first did help to wound itself.
 Now these her princes are come home again,
 Come the three corners of the world in arms,
 And we shall shock them. Naught shall make us rue,
 If England to itself do rest but true.

*(Sword in hand, he leads them out. Attendants bear
 away the dead body of King John. The garden is
 left silent, bright with the morning sun.)*

Notes are often necessary, but they are necessary evils. Let him that is yet unacquainted with the powers of Shakespeare, and who desires to feel the highest pleasure that the drama can give, read every play from the first scene to the last, with utter negligence of all his commentators. When his fancy is once on the wing, let it not stoop at correction or explanation. . . . Let him read on through brightness and obscurity, through integrity and corruption; let him preserve his comprehension of the dialogue and his interest in the fable. And when the pleasures of novelty have ceased, let him attempt exactness, and read the commentators.

SAMUEL JOHNSON

Preface to Shakespeare, 1765.

*I dreamt last night that Shakespeare's ghost
Sat for a Civil Service post.
The English papers of the year
Contained a question on King Lear,
Which Shakespeare answered very badly
Because he hadn't studied Bradley.*

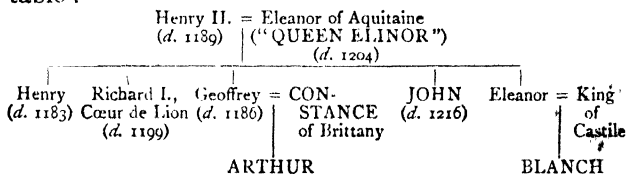
GUY BOAS

Lays of Learning, 1926.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

ACT I., SCENE i

Line 8. *Deceased brother Geoffrey's son.* The relationship can be shown most clearly by a genealogical table :



Arthur had the better claim to the throne according to modern ideas, but John had been recognized as heir by Richard, and elected king by the English and Norman barons ; he cannot be regarded as a usurper.

II. *Poitiers, Anjou, etc.* Find these on a map of France, or better still on a map of the Angevin Empire in a historical atlas.

John lost nearly all his French possessions, and at the time this was regarded as a great disgrace, although ultimately it was very much to England's benefit.

Chatillon is not a historical person, and there is no historical warrant for his embassy. Philip would not have demanded Anjou, Maine, and Touraine, for, according to Holinshed, "by generall consent of the nobles and peeres of the countries of Anjou, Maine, and Touraine, Arthur was received as the liege and soueraigne lord of the same countries."

KING JOHN

26. *Thunder of my cannon.* Like the reference to groats in line 84, this is an anachronism, for cannon were not used until two centuries after John's reign. Shakespeare does not trouble about such unimportant details as this.

103. *A rose . . . three farthings.* Three-farthing pieces, made of silver and extremely thin, were coined for the first and last time in Elizabeth's reign. They bore a rose, or rosette, behind the queen's head. Philip evidently despises his brother very heartily, and would not resemble him at any price.

141. *Toothpick.* The use of a toothpick was a foreign fashion, and regarded as an affectation in Shakespeare's time. As in many other passages in his plays, he is here making fun of the absurd, affected ways which some Englishmen adopted when they returned from travelling abroad.

199. *The aweless lion.* There was a legend that the "King of Almain," having taken King Richard prisoner, planned to kill him by turning a hungry lion into his cell. When the beast opened its mouth to roar at him, Richard thrust his arm down its throat and tore out its heart—which he afterwards ate in the presence of the whole court !

ACT II., SCENE i

5. *By this brave duke.* In making this mistake Shakespeare is following the old play, *The Troublesome Raigne*, which confuses the Duke of Austria with the Count of Limoges. It was Leopold, Duke of Austria, who imprisoned Richard I. in 1192-93, but the duke died in 1195, before this siege of Angiers took place. He was not concerned in the death of Richard, who was killed in 1199 while besieging the Castle of Chalus, which belonged to Vidomar, Viscount of Limoges.

70. *Bearing their birthrights, etc.* They have sold

ADDITIONAL NOTES

the property they inherited to buy fine clothes and armour.

117. *Excuse* may mean "Pardon me" or "My excuse is that I do it to beat down usurpation." Which is more likely? (See page 149.)

120. *Peace*.—*Hear the crier*. Criers in courts of justice cried "Peace" to secure silence. Philip loses no opportunity of insulting Austria.

130. *As great Alcides shows upon an ass*. "Shows" may be a noun and refer to the lion's skin; or a verb, meaning "appears" (= would appear). Other explanations are possible; see the textual note on page 149.

142. *Bretagne*, the modern form, has been inserted by editors. The Folios have "Britain," which Shakespeare used for Brittany or for England.

146. *Go to it grandam*. Students of the English language will be interested in this genitive use of "it." In Old English the genitive neuter pronoun was the same as the masculine, *his*. This was found to be inconvenient, and *it* (*hit*) came more and more into use from the fourteenth century. *Its* was apparently used for the first time by Florio in 1598, and became general during the seventeenth century, but does not appear in any play of Shakespeare's which was published during his lifetime, or in the Bible of 1611.

170-175. *But God hath made her sin, etc.* "God hath made her sin and herself to be a plague to this distant child, who is punished for her and with a punishment which she inflicts: her sin bringing injury upon Arthur, and her injurious deeds executing (upon him) the punishment incurred by her sin;—all which (viz., both her sin and her present injurious deeds) are punished in his person." This appears to be the meaning of this difficult passage, a part of which may possibly have been lost.

304-305. *A jolly troop of huntsmen, etc.* Huntsmen used to stain their hands with the blood of the deer

KING JOHN

they had killed. Does this remind you of any incident in *Julius Cæsar*?

333. *Towers, soars*; one of the hawking terms which Shakespeare uses frequently. It reminds us that in his time hawking (setting trained birds to bring down other birds) was still esteemed as a very noble sport.

361. *Mutines of Jerusalem*; the rival parties of Jews, who stopped fighting each other to fight the Romans when the latter besieged the city in A.D. 70.

491. *Hang'd and drawn and quarter'd*. Traitors were executed thus.

492. *So vile a lout*. Quite unfair to Louis.

487-492. It has been suggested that in this stanza Shakespeare is making fun of the extravagant love-poetry of his day.

510. *Volquessen* was a part of Normandy.

ACT III., SCENE i

129. *Deputies of heaven*. It was the belief of the time that God delegated power over temporal matters to kings, and over spiritual matters to the Pope.

132. *Innocent III.*, one of the most able of the Popes, did a great deal to increase the temporal power of the papacy. *Legate*, official representative of the Pope. There was a legate at every court in Europe.

136. *Stephen Langton* had been appointed Archbishop of Canterbury by the Pope, but King John had ordered that John Gray, Bishop of Norwich, was to be appointed, and had refused to recognize Langton.

146. *Not Italian priest, etc.* This denial of the Pope's right to interfere in English political affairs must have appealed very strongly to Shakespeare's Protestant audiences; but it confuses the whole play, for King John, whose treatment of Arthur makes him the villain of the play, now becomes the hero also, as champion of England against papal tyranny. Elizabethan

ADDITIONAL NOTES

Englishmen hated and feared the papacy, and Pandulph's threat to excommunicate John (line 166) must have raised great indignation, for Queen Elizabeth had been excommunicated in 1570, and there had been many Catholic plots to murder her.

173. *Room . . . Rome.* Rome was pronounced "room." Shakespeare is very fond of making such puns, which the Elizabethans regarded as very witty. Have you noticed any other puns in the play?

257. *So makest thou faith, etc.* Notice how cleverly and persistently Pandulph seeks to persuade Philip to break his word.

333. *Cousin*, in Elizabethan English, was not limited to its present meaning, but applied to relatives generally.

ACT III., SCENE iii

(See the Appendix, pages 164-165, 175-176.)

5. *O, this will make my mother die of grief.* Arthur thinks of his mother, not of himself.

19. *Come hither, Hubert.* Notice how vaguely and cunningly the miserable king speaks at first, until he has made sure that Hubert can be trusted. The horror of the scene is increased by the fact that Arthur, as unsuspecting as he is innocent, is on the stage all the time.

42. *That surly spirit, melancholy.* Like many other passages in Shakespeare's plays, this refers to the old medical theory that the composition of the human body included four "humours" (fluids or "spirits")—blood, phlegm, cholera (or yellow bile), and melancholy (or black bile). Predominance of one of these caused a man's temperament to be sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric, or melancholy, and excess of any "humour" caused disease.

KING JOHN

65-66. *Death.—A grave.* Speaking plainly at last, the king jerks out his commands in these terrible monosyllables.

ACT III., SCENE iv

125-181. *Your mind is all as youthful, etc.* Notice how cleverly Pandulph, the experienced politician, foresees the death of Arthur and the way in which the people of England will turn against King John.

ACT IV., SCENE i

(See the Appendix, pages 165-169, 176-177.)

1. *Heat me these irons hot.* Having seen the executioners and their horrible instruments, we fear all the more for Arthur. This is well known as one of Shakespeare's most moving scenes.

2. *Arras*, a kind of tapestry (so named because it was originally made at Arras, in France) which was used to cover the walls of mediæval rooms. To keep it from the damp stone it was hung on a wooden frame, so there was between it and the wall a space in which the executioners could hide.

15. *Young gentlemen would be as sad as night.* In Shakespeare's time, as in other times, young gentlemen affected melancholy. Jaques describes various kinds of melancholy (*As You Like It*, IV. i. 10).

60. *Iron age.* Legend divided history into the golden age (the first age, of complete innocence), the silver age, the brazen age, and the iron age, each being worse than the one before.

61-66. *The iron of itself, etc.* Such quaint fancies as this, called "conceits," are common in Elizabethan writings, and Shakespeare was very fond of them in

ADDITIONAL NOTES

his early days. They show his cleverness in perceiving resemblances, but they are very much out of place in such a scene as this, and from the boy Arthur. What is the objection to them ?

ACT IV., SCENE ii

91. *The shears of destiny.* A reference to the classical myth that three Fates controlled the thread of human life, which was spun by Clotho, assigned to the man or woman by Lachesis, and cut (at death) by Atropos—"the blind fury with the abhorred shears."

182. *Five moons.* "About the moneth of December [1200] there were scene in the province of Yorke five moones, one in the east, the second in the west, the third in the north, the fourth in the south, and the fift as it were set in the middest of the other ; having manie stars about it, and went five or six times incompassing the other, as it were in the space of one houre, and shortlie after vanished awaie."—HOLINSHED.

It was believed that great disasters were often heralded by signs in the heavens. Does this remind you of any passages in *Julius Cæsar* and *Hamlet* ?

In *The Troublesome Raigne* the five moons are supposed to be shown on the stage ; we are left wondering how it was to be done !

207. *No had, my lord !* Had not, my lord ! "This peculiar form of repeating interrogatively a negative assertion was common in Shakespeare's time. Compare *Ralph Roister Doister*, I. iv. 34 : 'No is ?' and II. iv. 17 : 'No did ?' "—IVOR B. JOHN.

ACT IV., SCENE iii

121. *Damn'd as black.* In the old Mystery plays, which Shakespeare must have seen as a boy, the souls of the damned were represented by actors who were

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blackened. A bill for one of the Coventry plays includes five shillings "paid to three black souls" and sixpence "paid for blacking the souls' faces"!

ACT V., SCENE i

31. *Dover Castle* was held against the French for four months by Hubert de Burgh. Historically he was one of the leading nobles of the time, and he became Henry III.'s chief minister.

ACT V., SCENE ii

64. *And even there, methinks, an angel spake.* A number of explanations of this obscure passage have been offered. The following seem to be the best. Which do you think is the more likely of the two?

"Lewis, seeing the legate approach as he was speaking, regards his coming as a confirmation of his words, which now seem to him to have been uttered by a kind of divine inspiration," says Wright.

The *Cambridge Shakespeare*, however, explains it as an aside by Lewis, spoken with the contemptuous suggestion that it is really his money (an "angel" was a ten-shilling piece) which has won over the nobles. (A noble was a gold coin worth 6s. 8d. The pun is a favourite one of Shakespeare's.)

104. *Bank'd*, usually explained as "passed by the banks of" on the analogy of "coasted," because the parallel passage in *The Troublesome Raigne* reads:

"And from the hollow holes of Thamesis
Echo apace replide *Vive la Roy.*"

Vaughan suggests that it means "set up banks around" (for siege purposes). The text is suspect, however, and perhaps it should read "pass'd" (Gould) or "hail'd" (John). Which meaning makes the best sense?

ADDITIONAL NOTES

ACT V., SCENE iv

14-15. *For if the French be lords . . . he means . . .* Perhaps "French" should be taken as singular, in which case "lords" should be "lord": perhaps a line between these two has been lost.

24-25. *Even as a form of wax, etc.* It was believed that if a wax image of any one were prepared with magic rites and then put in front of a fire, the person would waste away as the image melted.

ACT V., SCENE v

I. *Methought.* "It seemed to me," not "I thought." The two verbs come from the Old English *thencan*, to think, and *thyncan*, to seem.

ACT V., SCENE vi

(See the Appendix, pages 169-175, 177-179.)

28. *Who did taste to him?* A king often had a "taster" who tasted dishes to safeguard him against poison. The monk deliberately sacrificed his own life to ensure the king's death.

ACT V., SCENE vii

22. *Chants a doleful hymn.* There are many references in poetry to the old belief that swans sang when they were dying, which gives us the proverbial use of "swan song."

HELPS TO FURTHER STUDY

I.—SHAKESPEARE'S THEATRE

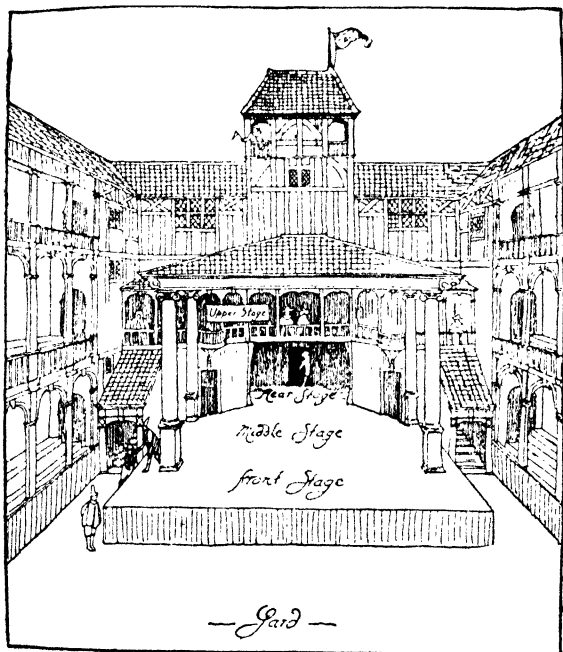
THE first permanent theatre in England was built in 1576 in Shoreditch, outside the City of London, and was known as *The Theatre*. For many years before this, however, travelling companies of actors had been giving public performances, and generally these were given in the courtyards of inns. The stage was a temporary platform, or merely the yard itself; the audience stood round the "stage" or sat in the galleries of the inn, which surrounded the yard on all four sides. So it is not surprising that when public theatres were built they were modelled upon the familiar improvised theatre of the inn-yard.

Unfortunately no exact description or drawing of an Elizabethan theatre survives, and there has been much discussion on the subject, but patient research has collected a good deal of information from old plays and diaries and other documents. In addition, a rough drawing of the Swan Theatre (made by a Dutch visitor to London about 1600) has been found at Utrecht, a few pictures of stages and of the outside of theatres have survived, and among the very interesting papers left by Philip Henslowe, a rich Elizabethan theatre manager, are builders' contracts for theatres. One of these contracts was the basis for Mr. W. H. Godfrey's reconstruction of the Fortune Theatre, which is here reproduced, and we may take this theatre

HELPS TO FURTHER STUDY

as typical, except that it was square instead of being round or polygonal like the others.

The picture shows us at first glance how closely the theatre resembled the central courtyard or quadrangle



THE FORTUNE THEATRE

of the old inn, and how different it was from the theatres of the present day. The flag which flew from the little tower bore the emblem of the theatre. From the tower a trumpet was blown three times at intervals, to announce that a play was about to begin. The rooms under the tower, behind the stage, were

KING JOHN

used as dressing-rooms for the actors, and stores for properties and dresses. Richer members of the audience occupied the galleries, the best of these, known as the "Lords' Room," being part of the "upper stage" shown in the picture. (This was used also by the actors and musicians.) In the later days of the Elizabethan theatre young gallants sometimes paid sixpence extra to occupy stools on the stage itself, where they could display their fine clothes and make themselves a nuisance to actors and spectators.

Poorer people paid a penny to stand in the yard, whence they were called "groundlings," and were exposed to the weather, for it will be seen that only the galleries and part of the stage were roofed. Performances were given in daylight, and began about 3 p.m., lasting two or three hours.

When we look at the stage itself we see that it was in three divisions—the upper stage, or gallery, at the rear; the inner stage, a recess under the gallery which could be hidden by curtains drawn in front of it; and the main stage, which projected into the auditorium, and is now known as an apron stage. The inner stage has its own entrances, and on either side of it are the entrances to the main stage.

It is evident that on such a stage as this the arts of acting and production must have differed considerably from those of our own day, when the players are seen as in a picture remote from the audience. Scenery was unknown on the early Elizabethan stage, and though it probably appeared by the end of the sixteenth century, it must have been crude in form—a painted canvas under the gallery for instance, or at one side a light structure representing "the sittie of Rome." One very important result of the absence of scenery was that dramatists wrote their plays in any number of scenes, which were played without intervals, one group of actors entering by another door as the preceding group left the stage. Nowadays a dramatist has to

HELPS TO FURTHER STUDY

limit the number of his scenes, to avoid expense in staging and delay in performance, and this means that plays are very different in structure and have quite a different kind of unity.

Full use was made of the inner and upper stages. The former often represented interiors—of bedchambers or tombs, for example—and in *King John* it may have been used for the “ French king’s pavilion ” in Act III., Scene i. The gallery was used for high places, such as bedroom windows and castle walls : no doubt the citizens of Angiers appeared upon it in Act II., Scene i., of this play, and it was from the gallery that Arthur leapt to his death.

The inner stage could be set while the curtain was drawn, but the main stage had no curtain behind which properties could be introduced or taken off, so they were moved in full view of the audience. Many properties were used—trees to represent a forest, bedsteads, tombs, cauldrons, “ grassy ” banks, thrones, canopies, and so forth—and there is no doubt that properties used, say for an outdoor scene, were sometimes left unregarded on one part of the stage while an interior scene was being played on another part. And since daylight was the illuminant, darkness could not be represented, but only symbolized by the introduction of a lighted lantern or a blazing torch.

At first sight these things may seem to us startling crudities which must have made artistic productions impossible, but we must not assume this. Though the Elizabethan stage was so different it was not necessarily inferior to our own. It appealed much more to the imagination of the spectator, and relied much more upon the power of the actor. In one respect at least the deficiencies in scenery and lighting worked to our great gain, for some of the finest poetic passages in the plays of Shakespeare and of his contemporaries are those in which the characters describe their imaginary surroundings, or the approach of darkness or dawn.

KING JOHN

It is easy to find instances of such descriptions, and of characters announcing where they are and indirectly introducing each other to the audience—for there were no programmes, though there were printed posters. Turn to Act V., Scene vi., of *King John*, and the first line of Act II., Scene i., for examples of this.

Costumes were very important, and often expensive and magnificent. They served to indicate rank and sex (for women's parts were played by boys until the Restoration), but not historical period: Shakespeare's plays were always given "in modern dress" in his own day, and *King John*, like *Julius Cæsar*, appeared in Elizabethan doublet and hose. The modern idea of historical accuracy in dress and properties developed during the nineteenth century.

For the producer,* the conventional use of the three stages must have been a great convenience; it meant that hilltops or battlements or bedroom windows, inner room or arras or door, were always available, while on the main stage more than one "location" could be represented at the same time, and a character made to journey, say from Rome to Venice, by simply walking round the stage. This is a question almost entirely of what the audience will accept. The Elizabethan convention is not in itself more absurd than the convention of our modern realistic methods, by which the stage "becomes" various places in turn, while the front curtain and the orchestra discreetly mask the activities of scene-shifters and the muffled thudding of scenery. It is all a game of pretence; the question is which kind of pretence we are to choose.

For the actor, the most important point was that the spectators were on every side of him and close at hand, so that his relationship with them was much more in-

* It is worth remembering that Shakespeare "produced" his own plays, which is one reason why his stage directions are so scanty. He is traditionally reputed to have been more successful as a trainer of actors than as an actor.

HELPS TO FURTHER STUDY

imate than is that of the modern actor, and in this the fact that he was wearing ordinary Elizabethan dress must have helped,—must have made him a more real person to the audience. It was this intimacy which made possible the liberal use of soliloquy and the aside, so noticeable in Shakespeare. They seem clumsily artificial when the modern actor shouts them through the picture-frame proscenium to the auditorium, but the Elizabethan actor had only to *speak* them quietly to spectators who were almost beside him. There is no doubt that the art of acting was highly developed, and a number of actors made great reputations, notably two members of Shakespeare's company, Richard Burbage the tragedian, and Will Kemp the comedian. Critics have maintained—but of course they cannot prove—that the best Elizabethan actors have never been surpassed.

It was, then, under these conditions that Shakespeare was trained as actor and playwright; it was to such a theatre that he went down one day with the manuscript of *King John* under his arm; and a knowledge of his theatre will help us to appreciate his plays more fully. They were frequently acted at court, and at the Blackfriars "private" theatre, in which he held shares, and this meant indoor performance by artificial light on a stage a little more like our own; but they were written primarily for the public theatres, and we rightly associate Shakespeare's name mainly with the Globe, which was built in 1599, from the materials of The Theatre, and burnt down during a performance of *Henry VIII.* in 1613.

II.—THE ELIZABETHAN HISTORY PLAY

When Shakespeare's friends and fellow-actors, Heminge and Condell, gathered his plays together for publication in the "First Folio" of 1623, they divided

KING JOHN

them into three classes: Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies. Let us look at the titles of the ten "Histories"—arranged here in the probable order in which they were written.

*Henry VI., Parts I., II., and III.**

*Richard III.**

King John.

Richard II.

Henry IV., Parts I. and II.

Henry V.

*Henry VIII.**

It is obvious enough that each play deals with the reign of an English king, but is this sufficient reason for putting the plays in a class by themselves, apart from comedy and tragedy? When we read *Richard II.* and *Richard III.* we are doubtful, because these plays are almost purely tragic—that is, their interest lies in the character and tragic fate of the king as a man, rather than in the procession of historical events, or the display of political cause and effect, or the pageantry of court and battlefield.

But when we turn to the others we realize that here is a *different kind of play*, which must be separated from Comedy and Tragedy, not only because it often consists of humorous and serious incidents intermingled, but because it is constructed in a different way: it is not based on a consciously shaped plot, but is simply a series of scenes (sometimes very loosely connected) which give the history of a certain period, or the life of an historical person. If you compare *King John* with, say, *The Merchant of Venice*, or *Twelfth Night* or *Macbeth*, you will see the difference in construction, and the cause of that difference is obvious: however freely the dramatist may select and rearrange the

* The three parts of *Henry VI.* are largely the work of other writers, revised by Shakespeare. *Richard III.* may be only partly Shakespeare's. *Henry VIII.* was most probably completed by Fletcher.

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material of his chronicle-play, he is bound to follow the main facts of history, and the fate of his important characters is preordained. These limitations of hard fact can be escaped only in the case of incidents and characters which are not exactly historical in themselves, though they have an historical background. Like the historical novelists of later times, Shakespeare gave his chronicles a fresh human interest and humorous relief by bringing into prominence characters of his own creation—notably Sir John Falstaff, in *Henry IV., Parts I. and II.*

Shakespeare did not invent the History play, however: it had already developed in its first crude form when he began his apprenticeship to the theatre. Nor was he the first to give this type of play artistic distinction and great popularity; that was accomplished by Christopher Marlowe, the greatest of Shakespeare's predecessors, who taught him many things. When Marlowe was killed in a tavern brawl in 1593, at the age of twenty-nine, England lost a poet and dramatist of noble promise, cut off when his work had only just begun. In 1587 he had written two very popular plays on the barbarian conqueror Tamburlaine, and in 1590 the first great play of this type, *Edward II.* These definitely established the "History" or "Chronicle" play, and the reasons for its popularity are not difficult to discover. When the Spanish invasion threatened, England was swept by a great wave of patriotic feeling, and men of all ranks, rejoicing in the victories of Drake and his fellow-seamen, were delighted to see on the stage the doings of great Englishmen of the past, and were interested too in the doings of heroes of other nations.* So it is not surprising that at least one hundred and fifty "Histories," good and bad, and written by many different dramatists, were performed between 1586 and 1606, especi-

* "Dramatic poetry is like History made visible, and is an image of past actions as if they were present."—FRANCIS BACON.

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ally when we realize how much Elizabethan audiences liked the things which the "Histories" offered—bloodshed, poetry and horseplay, bustle and excitement and pageantry, and the free intermingling of tragic and comic incidents. Shakespeare himself wrote a number of plays on historical subjects besides the histories named above, the most notable being his Roman tragedies, *Julius Cæsar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Coriolanus*.

As national taste and feeling changed at the close of the sixteenth century, the vogue of the history plays declined, and the last of note in Elizabethan drama was John Ford's *Chronicle History of Perkin Warbeck*, written in 1634.

III.—DATE AND SOURCES OF THE PLAY

1. *The Date.* *King John* was most probably written between 1593 and 1595. The evidence available does not enable us to be more definite than this, or even to be absolutely certain of these dates.

The date of composition of a play of Shakespeare's has to be decided by examining the evidence, which falls into two divisions: (a) External, from references to the play in contemporary documents; and (b) Internal, from references in the play to contemporary literature and events; and from the style of the play, which helps us to decide whether it was written early or late in Shakespeare's career.

(a) *External evidence* as to the date of *King John*.

So far as we know, the play was not published until it appeared in 1623, in the first collected edition of Shakespeare's plays, which is known as the First Folio; but it must have been written before 1598, because it is mentioned in a much-quoted passage in *Palladis*

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Tamia, Wits Treasury, by Francis Meres, which was published in 1598 :

“ As the Greeke tongue is made famous and eloquent by *Homer, Hesiod, Euripides, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Pindarus, Phocylides*, and *Aristophanes*; and the Latine tongue by *Virgill, Ovid, Horace, Silius Italicus, Lucanus, Lucretius, Ausonius*, and *Claudianus*, so the English tongue is mightily enriched and gorgeously invested in rare ornaments and resplendent abilmments by *Sir Philip Sydney, Spenser, Daniel, Drayton, Warner, Shakespeare, Marlowe*, and *Chapman*.—As the soule of Euphorbus was thought to live in Pythagoras; so the sweete wittie soule of *Ovid* lives in mellifluous and hony-tongued *Shakespeare*, witnes his *Venus and Adonis*, his *Lucrece*, his sugred Sonnets among his private friends, &c.—As *Plautus* and *Seneca* are accounted the best for Comedy and Tragedy among the Latins: so *Shakespeare* among ye English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage; for Comedy, witnes his *Gentlemen of Verona*, his *Errors*, his *Love Labors Lost*, his *Love Labors Wonne*, his *Midsummers night dreame*, and his *Merchant of Venice*: for Tragedy his *Richard the 2, Richard the 3, Henry the 4, King John, Titus Andronicus*, and his *Romeo and Juliet*. As Epius Stolo said that the Muses would speake with Plautus tongue if they would speak Latin: so I say that the Muses would speak with *Shakespeare's* fine filed phrase if they would speak English. . . .”

On the other hand, *The Troublesome Raigne* (see the next section) cannot have been written earlier than 1587, because it is so obviously inspired by the work of Christopher Marlowe, whose first play was produced in that year.

This gives us the time limits 1587 and 1598.

(b) *Internal evidence.*

The reference in Act I., Scene i., line 188, to the play *Soliman and Perseda*, which was published in 1592,

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suggests but certainly does not prove that *King John* was written later than 1592, and various critics have found dubious references to contemporary events which cannot be accepted as proved.

Next, we have to turn to the evidence of style, less tangible but within limits very convincing. First of all there can be no doubt that *King John* is an early play of Shakespeare's, because it has all the characteristics of his early work: the long speeches, for instance, the absence of prose, the more stiff and inelastic verse, the many plays on words, and the number of rhymes, double-endings and light-endings, and unstopped lines. As Shakespeare's power developed his verse constantly improved in freedom, flexibility, variety, and melody. The decrease in the use of rhyme was accompanied by an increase in the number of unstopped lines,* light-endings,† and double-endings.‡ A careful study of the verse of *King John*, and of the structure and characterization, show that it must have been written just before or just after *Richard II.* (? 1594), and most critics agree that *King John* should be dated 1593-95.

2. *Sources.* Shakespeare did not invent the plots of his plays; he took stories, characters, and incidents from any source which appealed to him—older plays, for instance, or English chronicles, Plutarch's *Lives*, or Italian stories—and like other dramatists of the age he seems often to have preferred subjects which were familiar to his audience. Nowadays this would be condemned as intolerable plagiarism, but in Shakespeare's time it was the accepted custom, and it does

* Lines in which there is no pause at the end, the sense running on unbroken into the next line. This running on is called *enjambement*.

† The use of weak unstressed monosyllables such as *if* or *and* at the end of a line.

‡ The use of a redundant syllable at the end of a line; e.g. *The Tempest*, III. ii. 143:

"Be not afraid: the isle is full of noises
Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt/not."

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not detract from his excellence as a poet and dramatist, for comparison between his plays and his "sources" makes his indebtedness appear unimportant beside his wonderful transmutation of the raw material.

In all his plays which deal with English history Shakespeare is greatly indebted, directly or indirectly, to *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, compiled by Raphael Holinshed. They first appeared in 1577, were republished, "newlie augmented," in 1586-87, and were very popular at the time.

For *King John*, however, Shakespeare did not go to Holinshed himself: he took all his material from an earlier play (based on Holinshed), which was published anonymously, in 1591, as *The Troublesome Raigne of Iohn King of England, with the discoverie of King Richard Cordelions Base sonne (vulgarly named, The Bastard Fawconbridge), also the death of King Iohn at Swinestead Abbey. As it was (sundry times) publikely acted by the Queenes Maiesties Players, in the honourable Citie of London.*

The play was divided into two parts, the second bearing the sub-title of *The second part of the troublesome Raigne of King Iohn, containing the death of Arthur Plantaginet, the landing of Lewes, and the poysning of King Iohn at Swinestead Abbey.*

The second edition of this play, 1611, claims that it was "written by W. Sh.," and the third, 1612, states boldly that it is "by W. Shakespeare," but most critics agree that the play cannot be Shakespeare's, and that the later title-pages are merely a dishonest attempt to make the public believe that this play was *King John*. Such attempts were not infrequent.

The Troublesome Raigne has little interest for us apart from its connection with *King John*, but it is not without merit, and Shakespeare was content to follow the main outlines of its structure and characterization, however he improved upon it in detailed treatment. Its chief defects are a violent perversion of Holinshed

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for the sake of arousing feeling against the Pope,* looseness of construction, and lapses into doggerel and coarse humour.

The unknown author took great liberties with the historical facts. For instance, "he invented the part played by the Bastard Faulconbridge; he combined in one person the Archduke of Austria . . . with the Viscount of Limoges [see page 108]; he made Arthur younger than he was, and kept Constance a widow, for purposes of dramatic effectiveness, and he omitted all mention of Magna Charta, and with it of the constitutional element in the quarrel between John and his barons." It is because Shakespeare retained all these alterations that his *King John* is farther from historical truth than any other of his English chronicle plays. But it is impossible for a dramatist to follow history exactly if his play is to have any dramatic interest at all, and many (though not all) of the alterations made in *The Troublesome Raigne* are justified by their effectiveness.

*There is no *proof* that Shakespeare took material from any other sources for *King John*, though there is a possibility that for some very minor details he was indebted to Stow's *Annals* (1580) and Rastell's *Chronicle* (1529).

If we examine the way in which Shakespeare adapted the earlier play in *King John*, we find that he has made great improvements, of which the chief are these:

The 3,081 lines of *The Troublesome Raigne* have been reduced to 2,715 lines in *King John*, Part I. of the

*It is not alone in this anti-papal bias. There is a curious old play, *Kynge Johan*, by John Bale, which was evidently intended to support the Reformation and malign the Pope. The chief characters include not only King John, Pope Innocent III., and Pandulph, but "Nobility," "Treason," "England," and other personifications. It is dull, coarse, and very untrue to history. There is no record of its ever having been acted, and it was not printed until 1838. There is no indication that it is connected in any way with *The Troublesome Raigne* or *King John*.

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former play having been expanded because it is the more vigorous and interesting, and Part II. compressed because it is slow-moving. Many dull passages have been omitted, and the more moving scenes have been developed and improved,—notably the famous scene between Arthur and Hubert. On the other hand, a very crudely humorous scene, in which Faulconbridge ransacks a monastery and convent, is left out, and so are three other scenes which contribute nothing of interest. No complete scene is added, though there are several new parts of scenes, such as the conversation between Hubert and Faulconbridge at the end of Act IV.

Of the dialogue of the original play, only three or four lines survive in *King John*, the verse of which, unequal though it is, has a vigour and poetic power which the original hardly ever approaches. And the whole tone of the play has been raised, to its great gain in dignity and impressiveness. The difference can be appreciated in part if the powerful scene in which Constance laments the loss of Arthur (*King John*, Act III., Scene iv.) is compared with the seven lines in *The Troublesome Raigne* upon which it is founded :

“ My tongue is tuned to story forth mishap :
When did I breathe to tell a pleasing tale ?
Must Constance speak ? Let tears prevent her talk.
Must I discourse ? Let Dido sigh, and say
She weeps again to hear the wrack of Troy :
Two words will serve, and then my tale is done—
Elinor’s proud brat hath robbed me of my son ! ”

A similar comparison should be made between the patriotic speeches by Faulconbridge with which the plays conclude. (See pages 105 and 175.) Moreover, the old play has no tenderness or pathos.

In characterization, too, Shakespeare has made vast improvements, depicting the chief actors in the drama much more fully, subtly, and convincingly. John becomes a very human figure, with his vices clearly

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overriding his few virtues ; Pandulph's diplomatic skill and "sinister wisdom" are elaborated fully ; Hubert and Salisbury are given prominence, and individuality ; Arthur is made more boyish still, to increase the pathos of his situation ; and Constance is transformed from a mere shrew to an outraged mother terribly personified. But it is in Philip Faulconbridge that Shakespeare has wrought his most wonderful transformation. We must indeed give due credit to the author of *The Troublesome Raigne* for developing the character from a very brief mention of him in Holinshed, but Shakespeare has done far more ; from the crude original sketch he has made Philip a living human being, one of the most memorable of his creations and "the very salt of the play."

When we turn to the other side of the question we can find very few points at which *The Troublesome Raigne* is superior to *King John*, but there are some obscurities due to Shakespeare's compression of the play. The original makes it plain that Philip is hostile to Austria from their first meeting, because he wants to revenge Austria's cruelty to his father, Richard I., whose famous lionskin Austria is wearing : but this is not plain in *King John*, where we are apt to assume that Philip is bullying Austria from a love of bullying. Again, Philip's annoyance at the betrothal of Blanch and Lewis is puzzling because we are not told, as in the original, that Elinor had half promised Blanch to Philip. There is confusion in *King John* (but not in *The Troublesome Raigne*) with regard to Hubert's warrant ; did it direct him to blind Arthur (Act IV., Scene i., line 39) or to kill him (IV. ii. 69-70) ?

Finally, Shakespeare does not give the monk's motive in poisoning John—and motivation is of great importance in drama—while *The Troublesome Raigne* states it clearly : the monk expected to be canonized for poisoning the king that did "contemn the Pope" and "never loved a friar."

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But when the most has been made of these points, it will be seen that they are of very minor importance compared with the great improvements which Shakespeare made.

A comparison of Holinshed with *The Troublesome Raigne* and of the latter with *King John* is an interesting study, and extracts are given in the Appendix to this edition, so that the student may, in part at least, make the comparison for himself.

IV.—THE TIME OF ACTION, DRAMATIC AND HISTORICAL

1. *Dramatic Time of Action.*

The time occupied by the action in *King John* appears from the play to be seven days, with intervals, comprising about four months in all.

Time Analyses of Shakespeare's plays were published by P. A. Daniel in *The New Shakespeare Society's Transactions, 1877-79*, and these have been reprinted by many editors since.

For *King John* the time-scheme is as follows :

- Day 1. Act I., Scene i.
An interval. Return of the French ambassador, and arrival of John in France.
- Day 2. Act II., Scene i.
Act III., Scene i.
Act III., Scenes ii.
and iii.
An Interval.
- Day 3. Act III., Scene iv. Some time after the battle, since the French know that John has fortified the places he has won and has returned to England: from whence they also have news that the Bas-

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- tard is ransacking the Church.
- An interval. Deaths of Constance, 28th March, and Elinor, 1st April.
- Day 4. Act IV., Scene i.
Act IV., Scene ii. Hubert announces that "Arthur is deceased to-night" (=last night).
- Act IV., Scene iii.
An interval.
- Day 5. Act V., Scene i. The arrival of Ascension Day, the presence of Pandulph, and the news of the Dauphin's success, demand an interval before this Act. On the other hand, the Bastard has only now returned from his mission to the nobles, and the king now hears first of Arthur's actual death. These facts would connect the scene closely with the preceding.
- An interval. For Pandulph's return to the Dauphin, the Bastard's preparation for defence, and the march to St. Edmundsbury.
- Day 6. Act V., Scenes ii.-v.
Day 7. Act V., Scenes vi. and vii.

An "interval" means at least a clear twenty-four hours.

2. *Historical Time of Action.*

This covers the whole of King John's reign (1199-1216). The extent to which the play departs from the chronological order of events is shown below (Shakespeare followed his original in this), and important events which are not mentioned at all in *King John* are given in italics.

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1199. *John crowned at Westminster. Arthur takes refuge at French court.*
 Act I. Philip II. of France supports Arthur's claim to the English crown.
1200. Act II. War with France.
 Marriage of Lewis and Blanch.
 (Several historical events combined.) Philip acknowledges John as king, and compels Arthur, as Duke of Brittany, to do homage to him.
 Act IV., Scene ii. The "five moons" reported to be seen in England.
1201. Reported in Act IV., Scene ii. Death of Constance.
1202. *War breaks out again in Poitou. Arthur besieges Queen Elinor in Mirabeau.*
 Act III., Scenes ii. and iii. John captures Arthur.
 Act IV., Scene i. Arthur is imprisoned:
 Reported in Act IV., Scene ii. John's second coronation.
1203. Act IV., Scene iv. Death of Arthur at Rouen.
(He is supposed to have been murdered by John, or drowned in the Seine while trying to escape.)
1204. *Loss of Normandy, Maine, Anjou, and Touraine.*
 Reported in Act IV., Scene ii. Queen Elinor dies and the Angevin Empire begins to break up.
1206. *Stephen Langton is elected Archbishop of Canterbury by order of Pope Innocent III.*
1208. Act III., Scene i. John refuses to accept Langton.
Pope places England under an Interdict.
 Act III., Sc. iii., and Act IV., Sc. ii. John seizes Church property.

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1209. *Pope excommunicates John, who seizes the bishops' property in revenge.*
1211. *Pope calls upon Philip of France to depose John, and Philip prepares to invade England.*
1212. Act IV., Scene ii. Peter of Pomfret preaches.
Act III., Scene iv. Pandulph in France.
1213. Act V., Scene i. John surrenders his crown to Pandulph, and receives it back on taking an oath of fealty as the Pope's vassal. He accepts Langton, who joins the barons against him. John invades France. The barons who have refused to follow him decide to demand a charter.
1214. *Battle of Bouvines, at which Philip defeats John's allies, Otto the Emperor, etc. John is compelled to make peace and returns to England.*
1215. *The barons march on London and compel John to sign Magna Charta at Runnymede. Pandulph excommunicates the chief barons; they offer the crown to Lewis.*
1216. Act IV., Scene ii., and Act V., Scenes i. and ii. Lewis lands in England and is joined by nearly all the barons.
Act V., Scene iv. Lewis's intended treachery is revealed to his English allies by Melun.
Act V., Scene vii. John dies at Newark. Loyal Englishmen begin to support the boy king Henry.
1217. *Henry III. defeats Lewis, who returns to France.*

ON 'THINKING IT OVER

1. IF we read with mind and imagination fully alert, the study of Shakespeare's plays brings to us not only a steadily increasing enjoyment and appreciation of them, but the quickening of spirit, the deeper insight into human life and destiny, which are the greatest boons of art. But this certainly does not mean a blind worship of the dramatist. If our appreciation is to be sincere and real, it must be critical, perceiving and rejecting what is bad as well as enjoying what is good. However profound may be our admiration for Shakespeare, we must remember that his work varies greatly in merit. Sometimes he was careless, sometimes his inspiration flagged, sometimes he was weary and compelled to work in haste—for he had to earn his living; and, above all, he had to learn. To realize how much he did learn, how wonderful was his progress as poet and dramatist, we have only to compare one of his early plays, such as *Love's Labour's Lost*, with one of his great tragedies, *Hamlet* or *Macbeth*, or with his last great comedy, *The Tempest*. To follow his progress through the plays, studying dramatic structure and characterization and dialogue, is one of the most fascinating and profitable of literary studies: it is a humane education.

2. There can be no doubt that *King John* was written fairly early in Shakespeare's career, when he had still a great deal to learn, for its immaturities are so obvious, especially in construction.

If you have read the play with attention or seen

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it well acted, you must have felt that though some of the scenes were excellent and held you fascinated, the play as a whole leaves you confused and uncertain, and trying to answer such questions as these :

Who is the hero,—that is, the central figure with whose fortunes we are most concerned ?

Is the same person the central figure in every act ?

Is King John himself the hero or the villain ?

Where does the tragedy lie ?

Is the idea of the play to show the punishment of a wicked ruler ? And if so, why do some scenes and the concluding lines of the play indicate that the tragedy is due not to John but to those who have plotted against him ?

What is the main question at issue, or is there no main question ? (The best way of dealing with this is to take the play scene by scene. For instance, the first scene suggests as the main question, Is John or Arthur to be king ?)

3. To these questions may be added others which are more general.

Would you say that *King John* has a connected plot ? (And what is a "plot," in fiction and drama ?)

If so, how and why does the plot of a comedy or tragedy, such as *The Merchant of Venice*, or *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or *Macbeth*, differ from the plot of *King John* ?

Is the plot natural and convincing ? If not, what are the weak points ? Does it hold your interest ? Is it properly motivated ?—that is, is it carried on by the characters behaving consistently and reasonably ?

4. Consider these questions carefully, discuss them if you can, and then write four or five paragraphs on "The Dramatic Structure of *King John*."

5. It has already been pointed out, in the section on the sources of the play, that the structure of *King John* closely resembles that of *The Troublesome Raigne*, and we may well ask why Shakespeare did not improve on

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his original in this respect as much as in the characterization and dialogue. Lack of skill may partly account for this, but we must blame the difficulties of the subject as well. King John, who should be the central figure, is alternately a nonentity and a scoundrel. His crime against Arthur is so abominable that we lose all sympathy with him; but even as a criminal he has never anything great or terrible in him to hold our interest, as there is in King Richard III. The latter is as evil as John, but never petty, and the desperate courage of his last stand wrings from us some respect for him, while John merely disgusts us with his cowardice. Such strength and unity of construction as the old play possessed were due to its dominating idea—hatred of the Pope and the Church of Rome; and it has been remarked that although Shakespeare has greatly improved the play from the literary point of view, by moderating the bitter fanaticism of this anti-papal feeling, he has weakened its structure at the same time.

6. But if *King John* reveals so many faults when considered as an artistic whole, why does it make so powerful an impression on reader or spectator, and why has it always been one of the most popular of Shakespeare's lesser plays? The answer is that the weakness of the whole is almost forgotten in the greatness of the parts. "The wild and whirling words of Constance and the boyish pathos of Arthur's struggle against death" would alone have been sufficient to keep the play on the stage, but these are not all. Review the play in your mind, and ask yourself which characters have taken up a permanent abode in your memory, and what revelations of the working of human passions Shakespeare has given you, and which scenes have left the most profound impression. Whatever the play's faults, the imaginative power with which the chief characters and the most moving scenes are presented makes them great and memorable.

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7. To most people nowadays the outstanding event of John's reign is his sealing of Magna Charta. (He did not *sign* it: he could not write.) This incident, and the constitutional struggle which led up to it, are recorded by Holinshed, but omitted (with many of John's misdeeds) by the author of *The Troublesome Raigne*, no doubt because they did not at all agree with his plan of presenting John as the champion of Protestantism and of English liberty. He does mention the assembly of the barons at St. Edmundsbury (Bury St. Edmunds), where they swore to resist John, but he makes them go there to take an oath of allegiance to Lewis. It is quite clear that in Elizabethan popular opinion Magna Charta had not the tremendous importance with which it was later invested, during the struggles between King and Parliament, and it may be noted that present-day historians do not regard it as so all-important as some of their predecessors have done.

Shakespeare followed his original in omitting Magna Charta, but, except perhaps in the early part of the play, he did not follow so closely the Elizabethan idea of John as "the first of the Protestants." In a time when the Church of Rome was still hated and feared by many Englishmen, they easily ignored the crimes of a king who seemed to have heroically defied the Pope, but Shakespeare's play must have done a good deal to show them the true character of the "hero."

In the most successful modern revival of the play, given by H. Beerbohm Tree at the Haymarket Theatre in September 1899, a Magna Charta tableau was introduced before the last Act—and was naturally much criticized as an unnecessary intrusion.

8. An attempt to estimate a character in a play is an interesting and profitable exercise. In making it, your general impression should always be taken into account, but a reasoned estimate can be formed only after full consideration of:

(a) What the character does.

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(b) What he says.

(c) What other characters say about him.

Under the last heading it is essential that the speaker's feelings towards him should also be considered. Sincere praise from an enemy, for instance, is of more value than sincere praise from a friend, while an enemy's detraction is always open to suspicion.

When you are writing a character-sketch it is of the very greatest importance that you should support your statements by exact references to the play, or by brief quotations. The use of quotations is an art worth cultivating.

9. Bearing in mind what has been said in the previous section, collect material for a character-sketch of King John, group your ideas carefully, and then write your sketch. Consider the criticisms often made: that he is not a great man although Shakespeare has tried to treat him as one, and that his character is not consistent, which means that in some scenes he reveals a character different from that revealed in other scenes.

Before you write your character-sketch you should study carefully Dr. F. S. Boas's "character" of Constance, which by his kind permission is quoted in the next section. Consider the way in which Dr. Boas has built up his material into an organic whole, so that although part of a chapter on *King John* it is really a complete essay, and notice that he makes constant reference to the play, and not only quotes two passages but weaves brief phrases of Shakespeare's into his own sentences.

10. "Constance is drawn with far more delicate insight than any of the women in [Shakespeare's earlier 'history'] *Richard III.*, and is the most highly elaborated female figure in the historical plays. She is another of that numerous company in Shakespeare's earlier dramas whose sensibilities are developed to an extravagant degree. Her instinct of maternal affection is not chastened by reason into a moral principle,

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but is inflamed by an imagination of hectic brilliance into an abnormal passion that swallows up every thought and energy. It is this exaggerated imagination, as Mrs. Jameson has rightly insisted, that is the controlling force in the nature of Constance. The impetuous ardour of her fancy gives a special quality to her maternal love. The very attribute that is wont to be the source of all that is tenderest in womanhood breeds in her ambition, scorn, and hysterical passion till at last it consumes her in its fires.

“But her imaginative sensibility, though the deepest element in her nature, is not made prominent at first. In the quarrel scene between her and Elinor she figures as a genuine vixen, whose bitter rush of invective amply earns the abusive epithets of her foes, and even irritates her friends. Her imperious temper on this occasion augurs ill for her future bearing in the event of fortune favouring her cause, but the disappointment of her hopes turns her emotion into a more seductive, though no less vehement course. When she hears from Salisbury that Philip has been false to his oath, there sweeps over her the overwhelming sense of her powerlessness, shaking her as a reed before the wind :

‘ For I am sick, and capable of fears ;
Oppressed with wrongs, and therefore full of fears ;
A widow, husbandless, subject to fears.’

“Yet out of this weakness is born a strange grandeur. The imagination of Constance playing upon her misery wraps her, as it were, in a haze whence she looms large upon our view. The ‘unadvised scold’ of the earlier scene rises to wellnigh tragic stature as she flings herself upon the ground and cries aloud :

‘ To me, and to the state of my great grief,
Let kings assemble ; for my grief’s so great
That no supporter but the huge firm earth
Can hold it up : here I and sorrows sit :
Here is my throne, bid kings come bow to it.’

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"In a similar vein, half-tragic, half-grandiose, is her appeal to the heavens to be the widow's husband, and to arm against the perjured kings. And when the heavens are deaf to her cries, with still more daring luxuriance of imagery she invokes 'amiable lovely Death' to be her mate, whom she may 'buss' as wife.

"It is remarkable throughout these speeches how seldom the thoughts of Constance are turned directly towards Arthur; it is her own widowed lot which forms the centre of her exuberant riot of fancy. This is in itself proof that her maternal impulse does not well up, pure and strong, from unfathomable depths in her being. How largely it is fed from merely æsthetic sources is shown by her own declaration, that had Arthur been ugly she would not have loved him, or deemed him worthy of a crown. And when the fortune of war tears him from her arms, her grief at his loss is strangely mingled with the fantastic thought that sorrow will so despoil him of his beauty that she will not know him when they meet in heaven. King Philip's rebuke, 'You are as fond of grief as of your child,' is well deserved, but Constance catches in self-defence at the implicit personification of sorrow, and expands it, with pathetic rhetoric, into the picture of grief filling up the room of her absent child, and acting his every part. But the vehemence of her passion, powerless against others, reacts with deadly shock upon her frail nature, and the spectral bridegroom, whom she has so passionately invoked, claims her as his own."—F. S. BOAS: *Shakspeare and his Predecessors*.

II. The Constance of the play is certainly not the Constance of history, who was not a pathetic widow: she had divorced her second husband and married a third at the time of her first appearance in the play—and at the time of her last appearance she was (historically) dead! If Shakespeare knew the facts he did

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not trouble about them, for his aim was to make the part dramatically effective. He succeeded so well that Constance has always received a disproportionate amount of attention, partly, perhaps, because of the power with which her part was played by several actresses in the great age of emotional acting—the eighteenth century. The greatest of these, indeed the greatest of all English actresses, Mrs. Siddons, played Constance at Drury Lane Theatre in December 1783, and there is much of interest in the accounts of her performance :

“ As to the Constance of Mrs. Siddons, the taunts to Austria were the special favourites. But I am clearly of opinion that among the finest things she ever did are to be numbered the majestic sorrows—the look—the mode of taking the earth as a throne—the pride of soul with which she prepared, deserted and devoted as she found herself, to shame the assembled sovereigns who had so basely deserted her cause. The lines of Shakespeare, it is true, suggest it all ; but never did the grand conceptions of a poet find more congenial imagination, never perhaps *equal* powers to embody the creation of his fancy. . . .

“ The lamentation for her ‘ pretty Arthur ’ was, as might be imagined, one of the most affecting things in the world.”—JAMES BOADEN: *Memoirs of John Philip Kemble.*

“ What could equal her impression while exclaiming as she rises, ‘ A wicked day and not a holy day ! ’ again, ‘ A widow cries be husband to me, Heavens ! ’ After the furious demand of ‘ WAR—no peace,’ and the withering contempt that clogged the very *name* of Lymoges, who can remember her look, her action, and her tone, and not be sure that in real life such a Constance *prepared* the victim for the future sword of Faulconbridge ? ”

In her last scene, Act III., Scene iv., “ Constance is too impassioned for *hope* : she sees the future in an

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instant : Arthur, in the power of her enemy, is already dead to her ; it is in *another* world that, worn down with early sorrow, she fears that she shall not know him. Her prophetic soul has disposed of him in this. She therefore does not linger in expectation, but expires of frenzy before his own rashness rather than his uncle's violence has ended her ' pretty Arthur.' . . . However vehement in her exclamations, Constance has meaning in her language—this was truly given by Mrs. Siddons, and not an inarticulate yell, the grief of a merely savage nature."—JAMES BOADEN : *Memoirs of Mrs. Siddons*.

To this may be added Mrs. Siddons's own account : " Whenever I was called upon to personate the character of Constance, I never, from the beginning of the play to the end of my part in it, once suffered my dressing-room door to be closed, in order that my attention might be constantly fixed on those distressing events, which by this means I could plainly hear going on upon the stage, the terrible effects of which progress were to be represented by me. Moreover, I never omitted to place myself with Arthur in my hand to hear the march when, upon the reconciliation of England and France, they enter the gates of Angiers to ratify the contract of marriage between the Dauphin and the lady Blanch : because the sickening sounds of that march would usually cause the bitter tears of rage, disappointment, betrayed confidence, baffled emotion, and above all the agonized feelings of maternal affection to gush into my eyes. In short, the spirit of the whole drama took possession of my mind and frame by my attention being incessantly riveted to the passing scene."

12. Prince Arthur is deservedly the most famous as well as the most pathetic of Shakespeare's boy characters. His complete innocence and complete helplessness make him a very appealing figure, who desires peace and not a throne. " I am not worth

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this coil that's made for me," is his most revealing comment on the situation into which the ambition of his mother has forced him.

Many critics have praised Shakespeare's good judgment in making Arthur not eighteen years old, as he was in fact, but much younger. What is the effect of this change?

13. Contrast the character of Arthur as he appears in *Holinshed* (see page 175) with his character in this play.

14. Make a careful comparison between the "Blinding Scene" in *The Troublesome Raigne* (see the Appendix, pages 165-169) and the corresponding scene in *King John*, and then write an essay comparing the two scenes, pointing out how Shakespeare has improved or failed to improve upon his original, and concluding with an "appreciation" of Shakespeare's scene. You might consider, and accept or reject, the chief adverse criticisms which have been passed upon Shakespeare's scene: that it is too sentimental, that it deals too much in merely *physical* horror (which is alien to real tragedy), and that some of Hubert's speeches are marred by "conceits" (see page 112). When well acted the scene is always very moving and very memorable.

15. The other minor characters in the play, especially Pandulph, Hubert, Elinor, and Lymoges-Austria, are sufficiently individualized for the purpose of their part in the action and no more, but there remains the one great figure, historically the least important and dramatically the least concerned in the action, who is the outstanding character in the play: Philip Faulconbridge.

It was the great weakness of the story that it had no real hero, no important and popular person for whom the audience would be constantly concerned, and it must have been in the attempt to remedy this defect that the author of *The Troublesome Raigne*

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made, from a mere hint in Holinshed, the crude figure of his Faulconbridge. Shakespeare, feeling the need even more acutely, breathed into him the breath of life and created one of the most memorable of all his characters.

16. From his very first appearance on the scene, Faulconbridge is full of vitality—brusque, outspoken, honest, humorous, clear-sighted, and intensely patriotic. We can well believe that, like Falstaff, he ran away with his creator and took charge of his own destiny, and we can well appreciate the zest with which great actors have undertaken his part. He has been hailed by many critics as a representative of England, “the man who ought to have been king, the man fitted by nature to rule the English, the man without intellect but with a rough capacity.” In this man, says Mr. John Masefield, Shakespeare personified “what he found most significant in the common English character. . . . He is the Englishman neither at his best nor at his worst, but at his commonest. The Englishman was never so seen before, nor since. An entirely honest, robust, hearty person, contemptuous of the weak . . . fond of fighting, extremely able when told what to do, fond of plain measures—the plainer the better, an honest servant, easily impressed by intellect when found on his own side, but utterly incapable of perceiving intellect in a foreigner, fond of those sorts of humour which generally lead to blows, very kind when not fighting, fond of the words ‘fair play,’ and nobly and exquisitely moved to deep, true poetical feeling by a cruel act done to something helpless and little.”

17. Illustrate and criticize what has been said above about Faulconbridge, or discuss Mr. Masefield’s estimate of him as a typical Englishman.

18. What claims has Philip Faulconbridge to be considered the hero of the play?

19. What differences would it make in the *action* of

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the play if Faulconbridge were to be omitted entirely? Does he owe his prominence to his share in the action or to the power with which his character is drawn?

20. The editors of the *New Hudson Shakespeare* have calculated that King John speaks 430 lines, Prince Arthur 120, Salisbury 151, Hubert 135, Philip Faulconbridge 520, King Philip 189, Pandulph 164, Lewis 149, and Constance 264. Comment on these figures.

21. Choose two characters in the play who are strikingly different, and write a short essay contrasting them.

22. Do you agree that at the beginning of the play English national feeling is represented by King John and at the conclusion by Philip Faulconbridge? If so, in which Act does the change from one to the other take place?

23. To what extent is it true that the play is a study in treachery?

24. Compare *King John* with *Richard III.*, or with *Henry IV., Parts I. and II.*

25. The old chronicler, Edward Hall, who died in 1547, said that he wrote his chronicles "so that all men, more clearer than the sun, may apparently perceive that as by discord great things decay and fall to ruin, so the same by concord be revived and erected."

How does *King John* illustrate the same principle?

26. Much has been written on the subject of Shakespeare's patriotism, for it is very evident from his plays, and from the "histories" in particular, that he shared to the full that passionate love for their native land which marked many of the Elizabethans. He has been adversely criticized for praising the Tudor dictatorship, but he did so because he saw that it had rescued England from the chaos of the Wars of the Roses and given her a high place among the nations of Europe.

The popular demand, to which reference has already been made in the section on "The Elizabethan History

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Play," must have combined with Shakespeare's personal interest in prompting him to write his great dramatic chronicle. If we arrange the plays in historical order we find that *King John* comes first, a prologue ending in 1216; then there is a continuous series of plays, covering the Yorkist and Lancastrian period, from 1397 to 1485; and finally, by way of epilogue, comes *Henry VIII*.

So Shakespeare presented to his audiences the making of the age in which they lived. The record is full of mistakes in detail, but as an interpretation of national character and human nature it is in its own kind unequalled.

27. Patriotic feeling inspires much of the fine rhetoric of Shakespeare's history plays. His most famous passage in praise of England is Gaunt's death-bed speech in *Richard II* :

" This royal throne of kings, this scepter'd isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-paradise;
This fortress built by Nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of war;
This happy breed of men, this little world,
This precious stone set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall,
Or as a moat defensive to a house,
Against the envy of less happier lands;
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England,
This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings,
Fear'd by their breed and famous by their birth,
Renowned for their deeds as far from home,
For Christian service and true chivalry,
As is the sepulchre in stubborn Jewry
Of the world's ransom, blessed Mary's Son "

What passages can you find in *King John* which are inspired by the same feeling?

28. Write an essay on "The Patriotism of *King John*." Do not forget that patriotism may be at its best when—as in many passages of Shakespeare and in

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much of English literature—it is implied rather than expressed, an unconscious motive rather than a self-conscious pride. If you can get Sir Arthur Quiller Couch's delightful *Studies in Literature*, you should certainly read his two essays on *Patriotism in English Literature*.

29. Write an essay on "Patriotism, True and False," or on Nurse Cavell's saying, "Patriotism is not enough."

30. The Duke of Marlborough is said to have learned English history from Shakespeare's historical plays. What would be the chief advantages and disadvantages of this method, and the chief defects in his knowledge of King John's reign?

31. "If Marlowe was the first English dramatist who commanded the language of impetuous passion, Shakespeare was the first master of the language of polished and astute debate, of high-bred conversation, of courtly ceremony."—C. H. HERFORD.

Find examples of this mastery of Shakespeare's in *King John*, and write a paragraph on the subject.

32. One of the great weaknesses of *King John* is that there is no single character upon whom our interest is mainly focused.

Illustrate this weakness by dividing the play into sections according to the characters who, in turn, are of dominant interest to us; for example, Act III., Scene iv., first part, Constance.

33. Which passages in this play must have appealed most strongly to (a) the patriotism, (b) the Protestantism, and (c) the anti-French feeling in the Elizabethan audiences?

34. "The part of Constance, like that, almost contemporary, of the unkinged Richard the Second, affords an ideal mouthpiece for the flood of splendid emotional declamation, which is one of the finest and most enduring qualities of the Elizabethan stage."
—Sir EDMUND K. CHAMBERS.

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Which do you think is the finest passage of "splendid emotional declamation" spoken by Constance?

Can you find any passages spoken by other characters which are as fine?

35. Find passages in which Shakespeare shows his love of (a) puns, (b) "conccits" (see page 112), and (c) playing with metaphors.

36. Like many others of Shakespeare's plays, *King John* was not published at all during his lifetime. It made its first appearance in print when Shakespeare's friends and fellow-actors, Heminge and Condell, collected his plays and published them in the volume which is known as the First Folio, in 1623—seven years after the dramatist's death.

There are a number of mistakes in this first edition of *King John*, though it is more accurate than some of the other plays, and later editors have offered various emendations, of which examples are given below. The First Folio readings are given exactly as in the original, except that where the long "s" occurs it is replaced by the modern "s." The names in the second column are those of editors.

Study each of the emendations carefully, *in its context*, and say whether you think it correct.

FIRST FOLIO READINGS	SUGGESTED EMENDATIONS
M. i. 63. Ace.	Ate (Rowe).
II. i. 117. Excuse it is . . .	Excuse; it is . . . (Malone).
II. i. 130. Alcides shooes . . .	Alcides' shows . . .
"A most senseless confusion" (Ivor B. John).	(Theobald).
"A simple and natural sense"	(Shows = lion's skin.)
(G. C. Moore Smith).	Alcides' shows . . .
(Perhaps Shakespeare had	(Worrall).
	(= Alcides' lion-skin would appear.)

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FIRST FOLIO READINGS

SUGGESTED EMENDATIONS

a vague recollection of a passage in Gosson's *Schoole of Abuse*, 1579: "Too draw the Lyons skin upon Aesops Asse, Hercules shoes on a childes fecte.")

II. i. 170.

And with her plague her sinne : his iniury

Her iniurie the Beadle to her sinne,

All punish'd . . .

II. i. 354.

Kings of our feare.

II. i. 417.

If not compleat of, say he is not shee,

II. i. 460.

Least zeale, now melted by . . .

III. iii. 8, 9.

Imprisoned angells

Set at libertie.

(Note the metre.)

III. iv. 110.

The sweet words taste . . .

IV. ii. 42.

And more, more strong, then lesser is my fear.

('Then' often means 'than' in Elizabethan English).

Alcides' shoes . . .

(G. C. Moore Smith).

And with her plague ; her sin his injury,

Her injury the beadle to her sin,

All punish'd . . . (Roby).

King'd of our fears

(Tyrwhitt).

If not complete, oh say he is not she (Hanmer).

. . . complete so, say . . .

(Kinnear).

(Conjecturing that "so" was misprinted "of," with "f" for "long s.")

Lest zeal, now . . .

(Fourth Folio).

Lest zeal now melted by . . . (Hanmer).

Set at liberty.

Imprisoned angells

(Walker).

The sweet world's taste . . .

(Pope).

. . . then lesse . . .

(Folios 2, 3, 4).

. . . than lesser . . .

(Herford).

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SUGGESTED EMENDATIONS

<p>V. i. 3. Take againe From this my hand, as holding of the Pope Your Soueraigne greatnesse and authoritie.</p>	<p>. . . when lesser . . . (Tyrwhitt). Take't again . . . (Lettsom). . . . This from my hand . . . (Heath). . . . as holding of the Pope, Your sovereign, . . .</p>
<p>V. ii. 36. And cripple thee vnto a Pagan shore.</p>	<p>. . . grapple thee . . . (Pope).</p>
<p>V. vi. 3-6. <i>Hub.</i> Of the part of Eng- land. <i>Bast.</i> Whether doest thou go? <i>Hub.</i> What's that to thee? Why may not I demand of thine affaires, As well as thou of mine? (Note the defect in metre, and Hubert's unreason- able question, lines 4, 5).</p>	<p><i>Hub.</i> Of the part of Eng- land. Whither dost thou go? <i>Bast.</i> What is that to thee? <i>Hub.</i> What's that to thee? —Why may not I . . . (Vaughan). <i>Bast.</i> A friend. <i>Hub.</i> What art thou? <i>Bast.</i> Of the part of Eng- land. Whither goest thou? <i>Hub.</i> What is that to thee? <i>Bast.</i> Why . . . mine? Hubert, I think. (Watkiss Lloyd). <i>Hub.</i> Of the part of Eng- land, etc. (as in this edition) (Capell).</p>

37. "If we are to indulge our imaginations, we had rather do it upon an imaginary theme; if we are to find subjects for the exercise of our pity and terror, we prefer seeking them in fictitious danger and fictitious distress. It gives a *soreness* to our feelings of indignation or sympathy, when we know that in tracing the progress of sufferings and crimes, we are treading upon

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real ground, and recollect that the poet's dream 'denoted a foregone conclusion'—irrevocable ills, not conjured up by fancy, but placed beyond the reach of poetical justice. That the treachery of King John, the death of Arthur, the grief of Constance, had a real truth in history, sharpens the sense of pain, while it hangs a leaden weight on the heart and the imagination. Something whispers us that we have no right to make a mock of calamities like these, or to turn the truth of things into the puppet and plaything of our fancies. 'To consider thus' may be 'to consider too curiously'; but we still think that the actual truth of the particular events, in proportion as we are conscious of it, is a drawback on the pleasure as well as the dignity of tragedy."—WILLIAM HAZLITT: *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*.

Do you agree with this opinion? Are Arthur and King John more "real" to you than, say, Macbeth or Shylock? Do *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet* seem more "fictitious" than *King John*?

A further question: Does Hazlitt imply that tragedy, to be great, must not be too painful? If so, what do you think of this?

38. Perhaps you have heard of the "Baconian controversy"—the reference being to Sir Francis Bacon (1561–1626), the great Elizabethan essayist and philosopher. The controversy arose from the attempts which a number of writers have made, quite unconvincingly, to prove that Bacon wrote the plays and poems which are attributed to Shakespeare, though it is obvious from his prose writings that he could not have written work so entirely different from his own. Neither Bacon nor any of his contemporaries made any such claim, which is a modern invention.

39. "Now I just want you to tell me, did you ever hear anybody talk poetry? I never did—that is, only once," and Maria paused conscientiously, "when I was taken over a lunatic asylum by the wife of a doctor

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who lived there. She pointed out a little old woman who thought she was Bacon—I mean, of course, the man who thought he wrote Shakespeare," Maria explained with some forbearance, as I looked puzzled, "and she recited very nice poetry to us, quite as good as Shakespeare I thought," she added critically; "she said a good deal in poetry about the porridge she had for breakfast always being burnt, and I couldn't help thinking how much better it would have sounded in prose, poor thing. And I must say even when I hear Shakespeare he doesn't sound natural, and I can't really say I like him unless he is covered by scenery. But what I do feel is he's so respectable—nearly as respectable as the Bible. That is the reason I always take Diana to Shakespeare; he is so safe. One always knows what he is going to say. And then, too, one is always so glad when he's over, and quite ready to go home, and one never really cares if they get each other in the end or not, and that makes it so nice about one's wraps and things, for one can begin to put them on before the end. But I can't make Samuel go to Shakespeare. He got him as a prize at school, and he used to have to read him to his father of an evening when he was sleepy—that is, when Samuel was sleepy—and he's hated him ever since. Still, I can't imagine what schools and children would do without Shakespeare, can you?"—Mrs. JOHN LANE.

Say what you think of the style and of the ideas of this passage. If you would like to hear more of Maria's opinions you will find them in Mrs. John Lane's book, *According to Maria*.

40. One of the best ways of getting to know and love a play of Shakespeare's is to act in a full-dress performance of it, or even better perhaps, to produce it. Failing this, a great deal of enjoyment may be had from more or less impromptu form-room acting, which certainly gives players and audience an opportunity of using their imaginations in Elizabethan fashion.

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Another way is to imagine yourself playing "Philip Faulconbridge" say, or another leading character in one of the important scenes, and decide exactly how you would speak your "lines," what movements and gestures would be most natural and expressive, and what would be your attitude and position with regard to the other characters at various stages of the action.

In this, as indeed in all silent reading of poetry, you should "read aloud in your mind"—hear the sound of the words as well as follow the thought—because it is impossible to appreciate all the beauty and meaning of poetry unless you hear the sound.

If you would rather be producer than actor, erect the stage in your mind, picture your stage setting, and then let the play go forward. At first you may have to treat the players like puppets, showing them where to stand and when to move, but after you have had practice at this they will sometimes come to life and play out a scene without your help. This gives a new and vivid reality to the play, and is much more interesting and exciting than the cinema.

FURTHER READING

41. *For Comparison :*

Shakespeare : *Richard III., Richard II., Henry IV., Parts I. and II.* Teaching of English Series.

Bernard Shaw : *St. Joan.* Constable, 6s.

John Drinkwater : *Oliver Cromwell.* Sidgwick and Jackson, 3s. 6d.

42. *For Criticism :*

F. S. Boas : *Shakspeare and his Predecessors.* Murray, 7s. 6d.

W. Hazlitt : *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays.* Everyman Library, 2s., etc.

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- John Masfield: *Shakespeare*. Home University Library, 2s.
- G. H. Crump: *A Guide to the Study of Shakespeare's Plays*. Harrap, 2s.
43. For "Comic Relief":
D. F. A.: *King John completed* (in *Four Fragments*). Heffer, 3s. 6d. A short burlesque play in which King John signs Magna Charta.
44. For *Stage Conditions*:
Lamborn and Harrison: *Shakespeare, the Man and his Stage*. Oxford Press, 2s. 6d.
E. K. Chambers: *The Elizabethan Stage*. The standard work. Oxford Press, four vols., 70s.
45. For the *Literary Background*:
Allardyce Nicoll: *British Drama*. Harrap, 12s. 6d.
46. For the *Historical Background*:
C. R. L. Fletcher; *An Introductory History of England*, Vol. I. A short and spirited account of the reign of Richard I. and John.
Herbert Norris: *Costume and Fashion*, Vol. II., 1066-1485. Dent, 31s. 6d. The present editor is greatly indebted to this delightful book, which reveals much of the life of the time.
47. For a *Method of Studying Plays*:
A. J. J. Ratcliff: *English in Upper Forms*. The Teaching of English Series, 2s. 6d. A valuable book for the teacher or the private student.

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EXERCISES

I

ACT I

48. What have you learned from this Act about King John and Queen Elinor?

49. What do you think of Philip Faulconbridge's reply to the queen: "Our country manners give our betters way"?

50. Imagine that you are Chatillon, and write a short dispatch to your master, King Philip of France, describing your interview with King John. Invent an elaborate beginning and ending for the dispatch if you can.

51. What do you learn about the character of Philip Faulconbridge from his soliloquy? Do you like him?

52. Make a copy of the frontispiece, and colour it in flat tints.

53. Draw a map of the Angevin Empire—you will find one in any good history of the time—and mark the places mentioned in this Act. Keep the map by you, and add to it as the play goes on.

ACT II

54. Why is the shore of England called "pale" and "whitefaced" (line 23)?

55. Does anything in this Act seem to you very improbable?

56. Compare King Philip's conduct at the end of this Act with what he says at the beginning about his motives for supporting Arthur and his determination to make the boy king. Then express your opinion of him.

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57. Again we have Faulconbridge commenting on what has just taken place. Re-read his soliloquy carefully, and then try to express in three or four sentences of your own the meaning of what he says.

58. Make a drawing of a Norman castle or a Norman knight from a history or encyclopædia, or from some such book as *A History of Everyday Things in England or Costume and Fashion*. (See page 155.)

ACT III., SCENE i

59. What do you imagine to be Pandulph's feelings towards Constance when she claims "room with Rome to curse awhile"? How would he say the line "There's law and warrant, lady, for my curse"?

60. Is King Philip right or wrong in obeying Pandulph? Why does he do so? Compare his conduct now with his conduct in Act II.

61. Express in one sentence your opinion of the Duke of Austria.

62. Imagine that you are Blanch, and describe briefly the happenings of Act II. and of this scene, showing how you feel about them.

ACT III., SCENE iii

63. Describe what Queen Elinor and Prince Arthur are doing while the king talks to Hubert. How does this scene alter your opinion of King John?

ACT III., SCENE iv

64. "Lady, you utter madness, and not sorrow," says Pandulph to Constance. Do you agree with him?

65. In what way does Pandulph show his cleverness in this scene? Do you admire him for it?

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ACT IV., SCENE i

66. Compare this with the scene from the old play which is given on pages 165-169, and then say which you prefer, and why.

67. On the professional stage the part of Arthur is usually played, not by a boy, but by a young actress. What do you think are the reasons for this?

68. How does this scene alter your opinion of Hubert?

ACT IV., SCENE ii

69. Say what you think of King John's "repentance" (line 103).

70. Write a short conversation between the smith, the tailor, and the "artificer" whom Hubert describes in lines 193-202.

71. This scene is regarded as the turning-point in the play. Can you see why?

ACT IV., SCENE iii

72. Is this castle in France or in England? Explain how you decide.

73. What does Arthur mean by "O me! my uncle's spirit is in these stones"?

74. Why does Salisbury call Philip Faulconbridge, "Sir Richard"?

75. What does Hubert mean when he says, "Do not prove me so" (line 90)? Do you like him for his behaviour here?

76. In what way does Faulconbridge reveal another side of his character in this scene?

ACT V., SCENE i

77. What would the Elizabethan audience think of

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John after this scene? What are Faulconbridge's feelings?

78. Who is the hero of the play now?

ACT V., SCENE ii

79. Say what you think of Salisbury and his friends.

80. Do you sympathize with Lewis in his refusal to give way to Pandolph?

81. Is Lewis right in describing Faulconbridge's speech as "brave," that is mere boasting intended to frighten the French (line 159)?

ACT V., SCENE iv

82. Why are Salisbury and the other rebels glad to return to their old allegiance?

ACT V., SCENE vi

83. Although this scene takes place at night, in an Elizabethan public theatre it had to be acted by daylight. Show how Shakespeare tries to make his audience realize that it is dark.

ACT V., SCENE vii

84. Even in this scene Shakespeare cannot resist the temptation of a play upon words (lines 41, 42). Why is it so unnatural and out of place?

85. Faulconbridge must know John's true character. Can you explain why he treats him with such devotion and respect?

86. Are you sorry for King John?

87. Henry is now acknowledged as king. Why should not he, instead of Faulconbridge, speak the concluding lines?

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II

88. Choose three adjectives to describe each of the following : King John, Prince Arthur, Hubert, Philip Faulconbridge, King Philip, Austria, Pandulph, and Constance.

89. Write down a title for each Act of the play.

90. What good qualities can you find in King John ?

91. Is King John the hero or the villain of the play, or is he each in turn ?

92. If you have read *Twelfth Night* or *Henry IV., Part I.*, compare Philip Faulconbridge with Sir Toby Belch or Sir John Falstaff.

93. Who is the cleverest person in the play, who is the most honourable, and who is the most treacherous ? Give reasons for your choice in each case.

94. Describe in your own words the incident in the play which you think is most amusing, or the scene which has most impressed you.

95. Picture in your mind the appearance and dress of Faulconbridge, Austria, Pandulph, Constance, or Arthur, and *then* describe the picture. (You cannot describe it well unless you have seen it clearly.)

96. Compare *King John* with any other play of Shakespeare's, saying which of the two you prefer, and why.

97. Cast the play from your own form or dramatic society—that is, choose actors for all the parts. This needs careful thought if you are to give each actor the most suitable part. Small parts may be "doubled," two or more characters being played by the same actor—provided that they are not to be on the stage at the same time !

98. If you were acting in a performance of the play, which part would you like to take and why ?

99. Imagine that your form or school is going to give a performance of *King John* and that you have been

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asked to design simple scenery for one of the scenes. When you have chosen the scene, study it carefully and make a picture of the setting in your mind. Then try to put the picture on paper, either in words or in pencil and water-colours.

100. Make a copy of the picture of the Elizabethan theatre which appears on page 117, and paint it.

FORM-ROOM ACTING

When you have read the whole of *King John*, and studied it a little, you may like to try this way of acting some of the scenes.

Elect leaders from the form, and make each of them responsible for one of the scenes which you wish to act—say Act II., Scene i.; Act III., Scene i.; Act III., Scene iii., and Act IV., Scene i.; Act V., Scenes vi. and vii. The choice will be determined partly by the number of characters needed. It is a good plan to "double" small parts. Having decided how many players they need, the leaders, taking turns, choose their companies from the form, and then each company prepares a "performance" of its scene, to be given with the rest of the form as audience. The leader should act as "producer" in the preliminary rehearsal or rehearsals, and assign parts and positions on the "stage," and suggest movements, etc.; and before the "performance" he should give a brief account of what has happened in the earlier scenes which are not being given.

The performances can be very simple, with all the actors reading their parts, or they can be more elaborate, with some or all of the parts learned by heart and costumes improvised or borrowed. In any case it is a very good thing to have a few simple properties, such as wooden swords, a chair for the king's throne (it may be draped with a curtain), a dais, and a

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“brazier” and iron bars for Act IV., Scene i. Scenes acted in this way can be very enjoyable.

MODEL THEATRES

If you like making models you would enjoy constructing a model theatre of wood and cardboard. It can be as simple or as elaborate as you please, and may be of two kinds.

1. *A Modern Stage*, with a painted stage-setting for any scene in *King John*, and painted cut-out figures—and electric lighting from “pea bulbs” and a pocket-lamp battery if you wish!

2. *An Elizabethan Public Theatre*. This is more difficult and much more interesting, and will enable you to realize more clearly than anything else the conditions under which Shakespeare and his company usually worked. The necessary information can be collected from such learned volumes as *Shakespeare's England*, or can be found ready to hand, with full instructions and diagrams, in a book which makes a useful addition to the school library: *The Bankside Stage Book*, by H. W. Whanslaw. (Wells Gardner, Darton, and Co., 5s.)

A NOTE FOR AMATEUR DRAMATIC SOCIETIES

How to Produce Amateur Plays. Barrett H. Clark. Harrap, 5s.

A practical book which covers the whole ground from organization and rehearsal to staging and make-up, and is especially useful to beginners. Illustrated.

Shakespeare for Community Players. Roy Mitchell. Dent, 6s.

An excellent book with many illustrations.

ON THINKING IT OVER

A List of Plays for Young Players. Village Drama Society.

This list, compiled by the Society's Junior Plays Committee, contains the titles of 350 plays which have been carefully selected, classified, and annotated. They are arranged in sections according to their suitability for performance by players of various ages under eighteen, and they range from nursery-rhyme playlets to the work of Shaw, Molière, and Euripides. There are full bibliographies and indexes.

Stage Lighting for "Little" Theatres. C. Harold Ridge. Heffer, 5s.

Every dramatic society should possess this book. For amateurs with a small stage and limited resources, lighting is the most artistic and most easily available aid in production.

The Bankside Costume Book. Melicent Stone. Wells Gardner, Darton, and Co., 3s.

Full instructions for making all dresses needed for Shakespeare's plays, with diagrams.

Costume and Fashion, Vol. II., 1066-1485. Herbert Norris. Dent, 3rs. 6d.

Likely to become the standard work. Full of excellent illustrations (many coloured), and clear, detailed, practical descriptions.

All amateurs will find it well worth while to get into touch with the British Drama League, 8 Adelphi Terrace, London, W.C.1, if only for its excellent lending library, and with the Village Drama Society, 15 Peckham Road, Camberwell, London, S.E.5, which gives special attention to village and school companies and has costumes for hire at an exceptionally low charge.

APPENDIX

I.—EXTRACTS FROM “THE TROUBLESOME RAIGNE OF IOHN KING OF ENGLAND”

(The extracts from this play and from Holinshed's *Chronicles* are printed as in the originals, except that the long “s” is replaced by the modern “s”).

Enter *John, Elianor, and Arthur* prisoner, *Bastard, Pembroke, Salisbury, and Hubert de Burgh.*

John. Thus right triumphs, and Iohn triumphs in right :

Arthur thou scest, Fraunce cannot bolster thee :
Thy Mothers pride hath brought thee to this fall.
But if at last Nephew thou yeeld thy selfe
Into the gardance of thine Unckle Iohn,
Thou shalt be vsed as becomes a Prince.

Arth. Unckle, my Grandame taught her Nephew
this,

To beare captivitie with patience.
Might hath preuayld, not right, for I am King
Of England, though thou weare the Diadem.

Q. El. Sonne Iohn, soone shall wee teach him to
forget

These proud presumptiouns, and to know himselfe.

Iohn. Mother, he neuer will forget his claime,
I would he liude not to remember it.
But leauing this, we will to England now,
And take some order with our Popelings there,
That swell with pride and fat of lay mens lands.

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Philip, I make thee chiefe in this affaire,
 Ransack the Abbeyes, Cloysters, Pories,
 Conuert their coyne vnto my souldiers vse :
 And whatsoere he be within my Land,
 That goes to Rome for iustice and for law,
 While he may have his right within the Realme,
 Let him be iudge a traitor to the state,
 And suffer as an enimie to England.

Mother, we leaue you here beyond the seas,
 As Regent of our Prouinces in Fraunce,
 While we to England take a speedie course,
 And thanke our God that gaue us victorie.
 Hubert de Burgh take Arthur here to thee,
 Be he thy prisoner : Hubert keepe him safe,
 For on his life doth hang thy Soueraignes Crowne,
 But in his death consists thy Soueraignes blisse :
 Then Hubert, as thou shortly hearst from me,
 So vse the prisoner I have giuen in charge.

Hub. Frolick yong Prince, though I your keeper be,
 Yet shall your keeper liue at your commaund.

Arth. As please my God, so shall become of me.

Q. El. My Sonne, to England, I will see thee shipt,
 And pray to God to send thee safe ashore.

Bast. Now warres are done, I long to be at home,
 To diue into the Monkes and Abbots bags,
 To make some sport among the smooth skin Nunnes,
 And keepe some reuell with the fauzen Friers.

Iohn. To England Lords, each looke vnto your
 charge,
 And arme yourselues against the Romane pride.

[Exeunt.]

Enter Hubert de Burgh with three men.

Hub. My masters, I haue shewed you what warrant
 I haue for this attempt ; I perceiue by your heauie
 countenances, you had rather be otherwise employed,
 and for my owne part, I would the King had made
 choyce of some other executioner : onely this is my

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comfort, that a King commaunds, whose precepts neglected or omitted threatneth torture for the default. Therefore in brieft, leaue me, and be readie to attend the aduerture : stay within that entry, and when you hear me crie, God save the King, issue sodainly forth, lay handes on Arthur, set him in his chayre, wherein (once fast bound) leaue him with me to finish the rest.

Attendants. We goe, though loath. [Exeunt.

Hub. My Lord, will it please your Honour to take the benefite of the faire euening ?

Enter Arthur to Hubert de Burgh.

Arth. Gramercie Hubert for thy care of me,
In or to whom restraint is newly knowen,
The ioy of walking is small benefit,
Yet will I take thy offer with small thanks,
I would not loose the pleasure of the eye.
But tell me curteous Keeper if you can,
How long the King will haue me tarrie here.

Hub. I know not Prince, but as I gesse, not long.
God send you freedome, and God saue the King.

[They issue forth.

Arth. Why now sirs, what may this outrage meane ?
O help me Hubert, gentle Keeper helpe ;
God send this sodaine mutinous approach
Tend not to reauue a wretched guiltless life.

Hub. So sirs, depart, and leaue the rest for me.

Arth. Then Arthur yeeld, death frowneth in thy
face,
What meaneth this ? Good Hubert plead the case.

Hub. Patience yong Lord, and listen words of woe.
Harmfull and harsh, hells horror to be heard ;
A dismall tale fit for a furies tongue.
I faint to tell, deepe sorrow is the sound.

Arth. What, must I die ?

Hub. No newes of death, but tidings of more hate,
A wrathfull doome, and most vnluckie fate :
Deaths dish were daintie at so fell a feast,
Be deafe, heare not, its hell to tell the rest.

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Arth. Alas, thou wrongst my youth with words of feare,

Tis hell, tis horror, not for one to heare :

What is it man if needes be don,

Act it, and end it, that the paine were gon.

Hub. I will not chaunt such dolour with my tongue,
Yet must I act the outrage with my hand.

My heart, my head, and all my powers beside,

To aide the office haue at once denide.

Peruse this Letter, lines of treble woe,

Reade ore my charge, and pardon when you know.

Hubert, these are to commaund thee, as thou tendrest our quiet in minde, and the estate of our person, that presently vpon the receipt of our commaund, thou put out the eise of Arthur Plantaginet.

Arth. Ah monstrous damned man ! his very breath infects the elements.

Contagious venyme dwelleth in his heart,

Effecting meanes to poyson all the world.

Unreuerent may I be to blame the heauens

Or great iniustice, and the miscreant

Liues to oppresse the innocents with wrong.

Ah Hubert ! makes he thee his instrument,

To sound the tromp that causeth hells triumph ?

Heaven weepes, the Saints do shed celestiall teares,

They fear thy fall, and cyte thee with remorse,

They knock thy conscience, inoouing pitie there,

Willing to fence thee from the rage of hell.

Hell, Hubert, trust me all the plagues of hell,

Hangs on performance of this damned deede.

This seale, the warrant of the bodies blisse,

Ensureth Satan chieftaine of thy soule :

Subscribe not, Hubert, giue not Gods part away,

I speake not only for eyes priuiledge,

The chiefe exterior that I would enjoy :

But for thy perill, farre beyond my paine,

Thy sweete soules losse, more than my eyes vaine
lack :

KING JOHN

A cause internall, and eternall too.
Advise thee Hubert, for the case is hard,
To loose saluation for a Kings reward.

Hub. My Lord, a subiect dwelling in the land
Is tyed to execute the Kings commaund.

Arth. Yet God commands whose power reacheth
further,

That no commaund should stand in force to murder.

Hub. But that same essence hath ordained a law,
A death for guilt, to keepe the world in awe.

Arth. I pleade, not guiltie, treasonlesse and free.

Hub. But that appeale, my Lord, concernes not me.

Arth. Why thou art he that maist omit the perill.

Hub. I, if my Soueraigne would remit his quarrell.

Arth. His quarrell is vnhalloved false and wrong.

Hub. Then be the blame to whom it doth belong.

Arth. Why thats to thee if thou'as they proccede,
Conclude their iudgement with so vile a deede.

Hub. Why then no execution can be lawfull,
If Iudges doomes must be reputed doubtfull.

Arth. Yes where in forme of Lawe in place and time,
The offender is conuicted of the crime.

Hub. My Lord, my Lord, this long expostulation,
Heapes vp more grieffe, than promise of redresse ;
For this I know, and so resolute I end,
That subiects liues on Kings commaunds depend.
I must not reason why he is your foe,
But doo his charge since he commaunds it so.

Arth. Then doo thy charge, and charged be thy soule
With wrongfull persecution done this day.

You rowling eyes, whose superficialities yet
I doo behold with eyes that Nature lent :
Send forth the terror of your Moouers frowne,
To wreake my wrong vpon the murderers
That rob me of your faire reflecting view :
Let hell to them (as earth they wish to mee)
Be darke and direfull guerdon for their guylt,
And let the black tormenters of deepe Tartary

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Uphraide them with this damned enterprise,
 Inflicting change of tortures on their soules.
 Delay not Hubert, my orisons are ended,
 Begin I pray thee, reauē me of my sight :
 But to perform a tragedie indeede,
 Conclude the period with a mortal stab.
 Constance farewell, tormenter come away,
 Make my dispatch the Tyrants feasting day.

Hub. I faint, I feare, my conscience bids desist :
 Faint did I say ? feare was it that I named ?
 My King commaunds, that warrant sets me free :
 But God forbids, and he commaundeth Kings,
 That great Commaunder counterchecks my charge,
 He stayes my hand, he maketh soft my heart.
 Go cursed tooles, your office is exempt,
 Cheere thee young Lord, thou shalt not loose an eye,
 Though I should purchase it with losse of life.
 Ile to the King, and say his will is done,
 And of the langor tell him thou art dead,
 Goe in with me, for Hubert was not borne
 To blinde those lampes that nature pollisht so.

Arth. Hubert, if euer Arthur be in state,
 Looke for amends of this receiued gift,
 I tooke my eyesight by thy curtesie,
 Thou lentst them me, I will not be ingrate.
 But now procrastination may offend
 The issue that thy kindness vndertakes :
 Depart we, Hubert, to preuent the worst.

[Exeunt.

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Enter two Friers laying a cloth.

Frier. Dispatch, dispatch, the King desires to eate.
 Would a might eate his last for the loue hee bears to
 Churchmen.

Frier. I am of thy minde too, and so it should be
 and we might be our owne caruers. I meruaile why
 they dine here in the Orchard.

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Frier. I know not, nor I care not. The King comes.

John. Come on Lord Abbot, shall we sit together ?

Abb. Pleaseth your Grace sit downe.

John. Take your places, sirs, no pomp in penury, all beggers and friends may come, where Necessitie keeps the house, curtesie is bard the table, sit downe, Philip.

Bast. My Lord, I am loth to allude so much to ye prouerb, honors change manners : a King is a King, though Fortune do her worst, & we as dutifull in despite of her frowne, as if your highnesse were now in the highest type of dignitie.

John. Come, no more ado, and you will tell me much of dignitie, youle mar my appetite in a surfet of sorrow. What cheere Lord Abbot, me thinks ye frowne like an host that knowes his guest hath no money to pay the reckning ?

Abb. No, my Liege, if I frowne at all, it is for I feare this cheere too homely to entertaine so mighty a guest as your Maiestie.

Bast. I thinke, rather, my Lord Abbot, you remember my last being heere, when I went in progresse for powtches, and the rancor of his heart breakes out in his countenance, to show he hath not forgot me.

Abb. Not so my Lord, you, and the meanest follower of his Maiesty, are hartily welcome to me.

Monk. Wassell my Liege, and as a poore Monke may say, welcome to Swinsted.

John. Begin Monke, and report hereafter thou wast taster to a King.

Monk. As much helth to your Highness as to my own hart.

John. I pledge thee kinde Monke.

Monk. The meriest draught yt euer was drunk in England.

Am I not too bold with your Highnesse ?

John. Not a whit, all friendes and fellows for a time.

Monk. If the inwards of a Toad be a compound of any proofe : why so it workes.

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John. Stay Philip, wheres the Monke ?

Bast. He is dead my Lord.

John. Then drinke not Philip for a world of wealth.

Bast. What cheere my liege ? your cullor begins to change.

John. So doth my life. O Philip, I am poysond.
The Monke, the Divill, the poyson gins to rage,
It will depose my selfe a King from raigne.

Bast. This Abbot hath an interest in this act.
At all aduentures take thou that from me.
There lye the Abbot, Abbey, Lubber, Diuill—
March with the Monke vnto the gates of hell.
How fares my Lord ?

John. Philip, some drinke, oh for the frozen Alpes,
To tumble on and cool this inward heate,
That rageth as the fornace seuenfold hote,
To burne the holy three in Babylon,
Power after power forsake their proper power,
Only the hart impugnes with faint resist
The fierce inuade of him that conquers Kings,
Help God, O payne ! dye John, O plague
Inflicted on thee for thy grieuous sinnes.
Philip, a chayre, and by and by a graue,
My legges disdaine the carriage of a King.

Bast. A good my Liege, with patience conquer grieffe,
And beare this paine with kingly fortitude.

John. Me thinkes I see a cattalogue of sinne,
Wrote by a fiend in Marble characters,
The least enough to loose my part in heauen.
Me thinkes the Diuill whispers in mine eares,
And tels me, tis in vayne to hope for grace,
I must be damned for Arthurs sodaine death,
I see I see a thousand thousand men
Come to accuse me for my wrong on earth,
And there is none so mercifull a God
That will forgiue the number of my sinnes.
How have I liu'd, but by anothers losse ?
What have I loud, but wracke of others weale ?

KING JOHN

Where have I vowd, and not infring'd mine oath ?
Where have I done a deede deseruing well ?
How, what, when, and where, have I bestow'd a day,
That tended not to some notorious ill ?
My life repleat with rage and tyranie,
Craues little pittie for so strange a death,
Or, who will say that Iohn deceased too soone ?
Who will not say, he rather liud too long ?
Dishonor did attaynt me in my life,
And shame attendeth Iohn vnto his death.
Why did I scape the fury of the French,
And dyde not by the temper of their swords ?
Shamelesse my life, and shamefully it ends,
Scornd by my foes, disdained of my friends.

Bast. Forgive the world and all your earthly foes,
And call on Christ, who is your latest friend.

Iohn. My tongue doth falter: Philip, I tell thee
man :

Since Iohn did yeeld vnto the Priest of Rome,
Nor he nor his have prospred on the earth :
Curst are his blessings, and his curse is blisse.
But in the spirit I cry vnto my God,
As did the Kingly Prophet Dauid cry,
(Whose hands, as mine, with murder were attaint)
I am not he shall build the Lord a house,
Or roote these Locusts from the face of earth :
But if my dying heart deceiue me not,
From out these loynes shall spring a Kingly braunch
Whose armes shall reach vnto the gates of Rome,
And with his feete treads downe the Strumpets pride,
That sits vpon the chaire of Babylon.
Philip, my heart strings breake, the poysons flame
Hath ouercome in me weake Natures power,
And in the faith of Iesu Iohn doth dye.

Bast. See how he striues for life, vnhappy Lord,
Whose bowels are diuided in themselves.
This is the fruite of Poperie, when true Kings
Are slaine and shouldred out by Monkes and Friers.

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Enter a messenger.

Mess. Please it your Grace, the Barons of the Land,
Which all this while bare armes against the King,
Conducted by the Legate of the Pope,
Together with the Prince his highnes Sonne,
Do craue to be admitted to the presence of the King.

Bast. Your Sonne, my Lord, Yong Henry craves to
see

Your Maiestic, and brings with him beside
The Barons that reuolted from your Grace.
O piercing sight, he fumbleth in the mouth,
His speech doth faile : lift up your selfe my Lord,
And see the Prince to comfort you in death.

Enter *Pandulph*, yong *Henry*, the Barons with
daggers in their hands.

Prince. O let me see my Father ere he dye :
O Uncle, were you here, and sufferd him
To be thus poysned by a damned Monke ?
Ah, he is dead, Father, sweet Father speake.

Bast. His speech doth faile, he hasteth to his end.

Pan. Lords, giue me leaue to joy the dying King,
With sight of these his Nobles kneeling here
With daggers in their hands, who offer vp
Their liues for ransome of their foule offence.
Then good my Lord, if you forgiue them all,
Lift vp your hand in token you forgiue.

Salis. We humbly thanke your royall Maiestic,
And vow to fight for England and her King :
And in the sight of Iohn our soueraigne Lord,
In spite of the Lewes and the power of Fraunce,
Who hetherward are marching in all hast,
We crowne yong Henry in his fathers sted.

Hen. Help, help, he dyes ; ah Father ! looke on mee.

Legat. K. Iohn, farewell ; in token of thy faith,
And signe thou dyest the seruant of the Lord,
Lift vp thy hand, that we may witnes here,
Thou dyedst the seruant of our Sauour Christ.
Now ioy betide thy soule : what noyse is this ?

KING JOHN

A parle sounded. Enter *Lewes*, etc.

Pan. Lewes of Fraunce, yong Henry Englands
King,

Requires to know the reason of the claime
That thou canst make to any thing of his.
King Iohn that did offend, is dead and gone,
See where his breathles trunk in presence lyes,
And he as heire apparant to the crowne
Is now succeeded to his Fathers roome.

Hen. Lewes, what law of Armes doth lead thee
thus,

To keepe possession of my lawfull right ?
Answer ; in fine, if thou wilt take a peace,
And make surrender of my right againe,
Or trie thy title with the dint of sword :
I tell thee Dolphin, Henry feares thee not,
For now the Barons cleaue vnto their King,
And what thou hast in England they did get.

Lewes. Henry of England, now that Iohn is dead,
That was the chieftest enimie to Fraunce,
I may the rather be inducde to peace.
But Salsbury, and you Barons of the Realme,
This strange reuolt agrees not with the oath
That you on Bury Altare lately sware.

Sals. Nor did the oath your Highnes there did take
Agree with honour of the prince of Fraunce.

Bast. My Lord, what answere make you to the King?

Dolphin. Faith Philip this I say : it bootes not me,
Nor any Prince nor power of Christendome,
To seeke to win this Island Albion,
Vnlesse he haue a partie in the Realme
By treason for to help him in his warres.
The Peeres which were the partie on my side,
Are fled from me : then bootes not me to fight,
But on conditions, as mine honour wills,
I am contented to depart the realme.

Hen. On what conditions will your Highnes yeeld ?

Lewes. That shall we thinke vpon by more aduice.

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Bast. Then Kings & Princes, let these broils haue
end,

And at more leasure talke vpon the League.
Meanwhile to Worster let vs beare the King,
And there interre his bodie, as besecmes.
But first, in sight of Lewes, heire of Fraunce,
Lords take the crowne and set it on his head,
That by succession is our lawfull King.

They crown yong *Henry*.

Thus Englands peace begins in Henryes Raigne,
And bloody warres are closde with happie league.
Let England liue but true within it selfe,
And all the world can neuer wrong her State.
Lewes, thou shalt be brauely shipt to Fraunce,
For neuer Frenchmen got of English ground
The twentieth part that thou hast conquered.
Dolphin, thy hand ; to Worster we will march :
Lords all, lay hands to beare your Soueraigne
With obsequies of honor to his graue :
If Englands Peeres and people ioyne in one,
Nor Pope, nor Fraunce, nor Spaine can doo them wrong.

II.—EXTRACTS FROM “THE CHRONICLES OF ENGLAND, SCOTLANDE, AND IRE- LANDE . . . FAITHFULLY GATHERED AND SET FORTH BY RAPHAELL HOLINSHED”

It is said that king Iohn caused his nephue Arthur to be brought before him at Falais, and there went about to persuade him all that he could to forsake his freendship and aliance with the French king, and to leane and sticke to him, being his naturall vncle. But Arthur, like one that wanted good counsell, and abounding too much in his owne wilfull opinion, made

KING JOHN

a presumptuous answer ; not onelic denieng so to doo, but also commanding king Iohn to restore vnto him the realme of England, with all those other lands and possessions which king Richard had in his hand at the houre of his death. For, sith the same appertained to him by right of inheritance, he assured him, except restitution were made the sooner, he should not long continue quiet. King Iohn, being sore mouued with such words thus yttred by his nephue, appointed (as before is said) that he should be straitlie kept in prison, as first in Falais, and after at Roan within the new castell there. Thus by means of this good successe, the countries of Poictou, Touraine, and Aniou were recouered.

Shortlie after, king Iohn, comming ouer into England, caused himselfe to be crowned againe at Canturburic by the hands of Hubert the archbishop there, on the fourteenth day of Aprill, and then went backe againe into Normandie, where, immediatlie vpon his arriuell, a rumour was sprèd through all France, of the death of his nephue Arthur. True it is that great suit was made to have Arthur set at libertie, as well by the French king, as by William de Riches, a valiant baron of Poictou, and diuerse other Noble men of the Britains, who when they could not preuaile in their suit, they banded themselues together, and, ioining in confederacie with Robert earle of Alanson, the vicount Beaumont, William de Fulgiers, and other, they began to leuie sharpe wars against king Iohn in diuerse places, insomuch (as it was thought) that, so long as Arthur liued, there would be no quiet in those parts : wherevpon it was reported that king Iohn, through persuasion of his counsellors, appointed certeine persons to go vnto Falais, where Arthur was kepte in prison, vnder the charge of Hubert de Burgh, and there to put out the yong gentlemans eies.

But through such resistance as he made agaunst one of the tormentors that came to execute the kings com-

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mandement (for the other rather forsooke their prince and countrie, than they would consent to obeie the kings authoritie heerein) and such lamentable words as he vttered, Hubert de Burgh did preserue him from that iniurie ; not doubting but rather to have thanks than displeasure at the kings hands, for deliuering him of such infamie as would have redounded vnto his highnesse, if the yoong gentleman had beene so cruellie dealt withall. For he considered, that king Iohn had resolued vpon this point onelie in his heat and furie (which moueth men to vndertake manie an inconuenient enterprise, vnbeseeing the person of a common man, much more reprochfull to a prince, all men in that mood being meere foolish and furious, and prone to accomplish the peruerse conceits of their ill possessed heart; . . .) and that afterwards, vpon better aduisement, he would both repent himselfe so to haue commanded, and giue them small thanke that should see it put in execution. Howbeit, to satisfie his mind for the time, and to stajie the rage of the Britains, he caused it to be bruted abroad through the countrie, that the kings commandement was fulfilled ; and that Arthur also through sorrow and greefe was departed out of this life. For the space of fiftene daies this rumour incessantlie ran through both the realmes of England and France, and there was ringing for him through townes and villages, as it had beene for his funerals.

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Thus, the countrie being wasted on each hand, the king hasted forward till he came to Wellestreme sands, where passing the washes he lost a great part of his armie, with horssees and carriages ; so that it was iudged to be a punishment appointed by God, that the spoile, which had beene gotten and taken out of churches, abbeies, and other religious houses, should perish, and be lost by such means together with the spoilers. Yet the kinge himselfe, and a few other,

KING JOHN

escaped the violence of the waters, by following a good guide. But, as some haue written, he tooke such greefe for the losse sustained at this passage, that immediatlie therevpon he fell into an ague; the force and heat whereof, together with his immoderate feeding on rawe peaches, and drinking of new sider, so increased his sicknesse, that he was not able to ride, but was faine to be carried in a litter presentlie made of twigs, with a couch of strawe vnder him, without any bed or pillow, thinking to haue gone to Lincolne; but the disease still so raged and grew vpon him, that he was inforced to staie one night at the castell of Laford, and, on the next day with great paine, caused himselfe to be caried vnto Newarke, where, in the castell, through anguish of mind, rather than through force of sicknesse, he departed this life the night before the nineteenth day of October, in the yeare of his age fiftie and one, and after he had reigned seauen teene yeares, six moneths, and seauen and twentie daies.

There be which haue written, that, after he had lost his armie, he came to the abbeie of Swineshead in Lincolnshire, and, there vnderstanding the cheapnesse and plentie of corne, shewed himselfe greatlie displeased therewith, as he that for the hatred which he bare to the English people, that had so traitorouslie reuolted from him vnto his aduersarie Lewes, wished all miserie to light vpon them; and therevpon said in his anger, that he would cause all kind of graine to be at a farre higher price, yer manie daies should passe. Wherevpon a moonke, that heard him speake such words, being moued with zeale for the oppression of his countrie, gaue the king poison in a cup of ale, whereof he first tooke the assaie, to cause the king not to suspect the matter, and so they both died in manner at one time. . . .

The men of warre that serued vnder his ensignes, being for the more part hired souldiers and strangers,

APPENDIX

came together, and marching forth with his bodie, each man with his armour on his backe, in warlike order, conueied it vnto Worcester, where he was pompouslie buried in the cathedrall church before the high altar. . . .

THE END

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