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THE NEW TEMPLE SHAKESPEARE



Edited by M. R. Ridley, M.A.

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF
KING JOHN
by William Shakespeare



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Editor's General Note

The Text. The editor has kept before him the aim of presenting to the modern reader the nearest possible approximation to what Shakespeare actually wrote. The text is therefore conservative, and is based on the earliest reliable printed text. But to avoid distraction (*a*) the spelling is modernised, and (*b*) a limited number of universally accepted emendations is admitted without comment. Where a Quarto text exists as well as the First Folio the passages which occur only in the Quarto are enclosed in square brackets [] and those which occur only in the Folio in brace brackets { }.

Scene Division. The rapid continuity of the Elizabethan curtainless production is lost by the 'traditional' scene divisions. Where there is an essential difference of place these scene divisions are retained. Where on the other hand the change of place is insignificant the scene division is indicated only by a space on the page. For ease of reference, however, the 'traditional' division is retained at the head of the page and in line numbering.

Notes. Passages on which there are notes are indicated by a † in the margin.

Punctuation adheres more closely than has been usual to the 'Elizabethan' punctuation of the early texts. It is often therefore more indicative of the way in which the lines were to be delivered than of their syntactical construction.

Glossaries are arranged on a somewhat novel principle, not alphabetically, but in the order in which the words or phrases occur. The editor is much indebted to Mr J. N. Bryson for his collaboration in the preparation of the glossaries.

Preface

The Text. The play as we have it appeared for the first time in print in the First Folio. The text is good; there is very little mislineation, and few merely typographical errors. There is a certain number of fairly obvious misprints, and a very considerable number of passages which make one long for a Quarto by which to check them, passages from which some kind of meaning can usually be wrenched by the determined conservative, which tempt the more audaciously self-confident editors into the wildest displays of kill-or-cure surgery, and which leave the ordinary reader with the uncomfortable sensation that he is indeed seeing the meaning, but, whether by Shakespeare's fault, or the transcriber's (if there was one), or the compositor's, he is only seeing it through a glass darkly.

Date of Composition. The only two certain dates are 1598 (when Meres mentions the play in *Palladis Tamia*) and that of the appearance of *Soliman and Perseda* (cf. I. i. 244), and even of these the second 'admits a wide latitude' (1589-92). The internal evidence of allusions is, if possible, even more flimsy than usual, and one is thrown back on internal evidence of style and 'temper.' Sir Edmund Chambers would put it in the winter of 1596-97, after both *Richard II* and *Midsummer Night's Dream*. I should agree that stylistically the play seems later than the more 'lyric' *Richard II*, but in the matter of 'temper' I feel the straightforward 'chronicling' of John less mature than the more psychological study of Richard; but this may no doubt be due not to a development in Shakespeare but to an intrinsic difference in the characters depicted.

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Source. One would expect the source, as with Shakespeare's other English histories, to be Holinshed, but in fact it is not, or only at a remove. In 1591 appeared two Quartos, (i) *THE / TROUBLESOME RAIGNE / of Iohn King of England, with the dis- / covery of King Richard Cordelion's / Base sone (vulgarly named, the Ba- / stard of Fawconbridge): also the / death of King Iohn at Swinestead / Abbey. / As it was (sundry times) publikly acted by the / Queenes Maiesties Players, in the ho- / nourable Citie of / London. / Imprinted at London for Sampson Clarke, and are to be solde at his shop, on the backside of the Royall Exchange. 1591.* (ii) *THE SECOND PART OF the troublesome Raigne of King Iohn, containing the death of Arthur Plantaginet, the landing of Lewis, and the poysning of King Iohn at Swinestead Abbey. (With the rest of the title-page as for Part I.) In 1611 and 1622 The Troublesome Raigne was reprinted in one volume, and the play attributed in 1611 to W. Sb. and in 1622 without reserve to W. Shakespeare.* Whoever wrote the play clearly drew upon Holinshed, but equally clearly showed the most cavalier disregard for historical sequence of events. And on this earlier play our *King John* is manifestly based. But the relations of the two are a good deal of a puzzle. *King John* omits some episodes of *The Troublesome Raigne* (not by any means always for the better) and compresses others. But on the whole it adheres very closely to the general structure of the earlier play, as also not only to the general line of development of individual scenes but to the logical sequence of thought and argument in individual speeches. On the other hand the verbal debt to the earlier play is almost negligible. There is only one identical line, and some 150 places where a few words are picked up. This absence of verbal identity is often taken as conclusive proof that Shakespeare did not write the earlier play; but I am

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not at all sure that, so far as such negative evidence points anywhere, it does not point in the opposite direction. Sir Edmund Chambers says: "The writing itself is all new, but Shakespeare must have kept the old book before him." That seems to me just precisely what Shakespeare must not have done. If he had, the verbal debt must, I think, inevitably have been greater. It seems to me that *King John* must have been written by someone to whom the bones, the anatomical structure, even to the minor articulations, of the old play were thoroughly familiar, so familiar that he did not need to look at the book, and so could clothe them in completely new flesh. I think that any reader who has ever, while his manner of expression was still comparatively fluid and developing, had occasion to recast any bit of his earlier work, must have found that the points to be made, and the logical sequence of their presentation, remained more or less constant, but that the manner of their presentation had changed out of recognition. I am not arguing that Shakespeare did write *The Troublesome Raigne*, but only that those who deny that he can have written it are ill-advised to put in as evidence the observable relations between it and *King John*. As to who did write it, there has been abundance of conjecture. The attribution on the title-pages of the Second and Third Quartos is of no importance at all; it may have been no more than an obvious and dishonest publisher's trick to sell his inferior wares. Pope said that it was by Shakespeare and Rowley; others have attributed it to Peele, Greene, or Lodge, singly or in collaboration. Marlowe has also been suggested. This I think is demonstrably the wildest of all the suggestions. The diction of the play is often 'Marlowesque,' but the play, as the 'address to the Gentlemen readers' proves, succeeded *Tamburlaine*, and it is surely inconceivable that Marlowe should have followed up the

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soaring, if immature, splendours of that play with so flaccid and weak-winged an imitation of his own style. There are those who support Shakespeare's authorship, and I am not at all clear that their position is so untenable as some derisory critics would have us suppose. Since *Henry VI* is itself in dispute we have no satisfactory criterion by which to determine what kind of stuff Shakespeare may have been writing in 1590 or thereabouts. The style of *The Troublesome Raigne* is certainly unlike any Shakespeare that we know as his; but I think that one does well to pay attention to a wise remark of Sir Edmund Chambers, apropos *Henry VI*, "I do not think that we have adequate *criteria* for distinguishing with any assurance from the style of his contemporaries that of a young writer still under their influence." In any case, seeing that we cannot determine the premises for its solution with any certainty, the problem is of only academic interest, and all that concerns us is *King John* as it appeared in the Folio.

Duration of Action. The historical time dealt with is some sixteen years, which is compressed into a stage-time of some four months. The exact determination of the stage-time, especially when the historical events are so jumbled, transposed, and inverted, is of small importance.

Criticism.

Hazlitt.¹—The accompaniment of the comic character of the Bastard was well chosen to relieve the poignant agony of suffering, and the cold, cowardly policy of behaviour in the principal characters of this play. Its spirit, invention, volubility of tongue, and forwardness in action, are unbounded. *Aliquando sufflaminandus*

¹ *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays.*

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erat, says Ben Jonson of Shakespear. But we should be sorry if Ben Jonson had been his licenser. We prefer the heedless magnanimity of his wit infinitely to all Jonson's laborious caution. The character of the Bastard's comic humour is the same in essence as that of other comic characters in Shakespear; they always run on with good things and are never exhausted; they are always daring and successful. They have words at will and a flow of wit, like a flow of animal spirits. The difference between Falconbridge and the others is that he is a soldier, and brings his wit to bear upon action, is courageous with his sword as well as tongue, and stimulates his gallantry by his jokes, his enemies feeling the sharpness of his blows and the sting of his sarcasms at the same time.

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 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 still we 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.

King John has all the beauties of language and all the richness of the imagination to relieve the painfulness of the subject. The character of King John himself is kept pretty much in the back-

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ground; it is only marked in by comparatively slight indications. The crimes he is tempted to commit are such as are thrust upon him rather by circumstances and opportunity than of his own seeking: he is here represented as more cowardly than cruel, and as more contemptible than odious. The play embraces only a part of his history. There are, however, few characters on the stage that excite more disgust and loathing. He has no intellectual grandeur or strength of character to shield him from the indignation which his immediate conduct provokes: he stands naked and defenceless, in that respect, to the worst we can think of him: and besides, we are impelled to put the very worst construction on his meanness and cruelty by the tender picture of the beauty and helplessness of the object of it, as well as by the frantic and heart-rending pleadings of maternal despair. We do not forgive him the death of Arthur because he had too late revoked his doom and tried to prevent it, and perhaps because he has himself repented of his black design, our *moral sense* gains courage to hate him the more for it. We take him at his word, and think his purposes must be odious indeed, when he himself shrinks back from them. The scene in which King John suggests to Hubert the design of murdering his nephew is a masterpiece of dramatic skill, but it is still inferior, very inferior to the scene between Hubert and Arthur, when the latter learns the orders to put out his eyes. If anything ever was penned, heart-piercing, mixing the extremes of terror and pity, of that which shocks and that which soothes the mind, it is this scene.

Swinburne.¹—In two scenes the figure of King John rises indeed

¹ Reprinted by permission of the Publishers, W. Heinemann Ltd., from *A Study of Shakespeare*.

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to the highest height even of Shakespearian tragedy; for the rest of the play the lines of his character are cut no deeper, the features of his personality stand out in no sharper relief, than those of Eleanor of the French king; but the scene in which he tempts Hubert to the edge of the pit of hell sounds a deeper note and touches a subtler string in the tragic nature of man than had been struck by any poet, save Dante alone, since the reign of the Greek tragedians. The cunning and profound simplicity of the few last weighty words which drop like flakes of poison that blister where they fall from the deadly lips of the king is a new quality in our tragic verse; there was no foretaste of such a thing in the passionate imagination which clothed itself in the mighty music of Marlowe's burning song. . . . Webster alone of all our tragic poets has had strength to emulate in this darkest line of art the handiwork of his master. We find nowhere such an echo or reflection of the spirit of this scene as in the last tremendous dialogue of Bosola with Ferdinand in the house of murder and madness, while their spotted souls yet flutter between conscience and distraction, hovering for an hour as with broken wings on the confines of either province of hell. One pupil at least could put to this awful profit the study of so great a model; but with the single and sublime exception of that other design from the same great hand, which bares before us the mortal anguish of Bracciano, no copy or imitation of the scene in which John dies by poison has ever come near enough to evade the sentence it provokes. The shrill tremulous agony of Fletcher's Valentinian is to the sullen and slow death-pangs of Shakespeare's tyrant as the babble of a suckling to the accents of a man. As far beyond the reach of any but his maker's hand is the pattern of a perfect English warrior, set once for all before the eyes of all ages in the figure of the noble

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Bastard. The national side of Shakespeare's genius, the heroic vein of patriotism that runs like a thread of living fire through the world-wide range of his omnipresent spirit, has never, to my thinking, found vent or expression to such glorious purpose as here. Not even in Hotspur or Prince Hal has he mixed with more godlike sleight of hand all the lighter and graver good qualities of the national character, or compounded of them all so lovable a nature as this.

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF KING JOHN

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.*

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF KING JOHN

Act First

SCENE I

King John's palace

*Enter King John, Queen Elinor, Pembroke, Essex,
Salisbury, and others, with Chatillon*

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

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

In my behaviour to the majesty,

The borrowed majesty, of England here.

Q.E. A strange beginning : ' borrow'd majesty ? '

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

Cha. Philip of France, in right and true behalf

Of thy deceased brother Geffrey's son,

Arthur Plantagenet, lays most lawful claim

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,

KING JOHN

And put the same into young Arthur's hand,
Thy nephew, and right royal sovereign.

K.J. What follows if we disallow of this ?

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

K.J. Here have we war for war, and blood for blood,
Controlment for controlment : so answer France. 20

Cha. Then take my king's defiance from my mouth,
The farthest limit of my embassy.

K.J. 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 :
Pembroke, look to 't. Farewell, Chatillon. 30

Exeunt Chatillon and Pembroke

Q.E. What now, my son ? 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.

K.J. Our strong possession and our right for us.

Q.E. Your strong possession much more than your right, 40

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.

Enter a Sheriff

Ess. My liege, here is the strangest controversy

Come from the country to be judg'd by you,

That e'er I heard : shall I produce the men ?

K.J. Let them approach.

Our abbeyes and our priories shall pay

This expedition's charge.

*Enter Robert Faulconbridge, and Philip
his bastard brother*

What men are you ?

Bas. Your faithful subject I, a gentleman, 50

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.J. What art thou ?

Fau. The son and heir to that same Faulconbridge.

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

You came not of one mother then, it seems.

KING JOHN

Bas. Most certain of one mother, mighty king ;
That is well known ; and, as I think, one father : 60
But for the certain knowledge of that truth,
I put you o'er to heaven, and to my mother :
Of that I doubt, as all men's children may.

Q.E. Out on thee, rude man, thou dost shame thy mother,
And wound her honour with this diffidence.

Bas. I, madam ? no, I have no reason for it ;
That is my brother's plea, and none of mine ;
The which if he can prove, a' pops me out
At least from fair five hundred pounds a year :
Heaven guard my mother's honour, and my land ! 70

K.J. A good blunt fellow. Why, being younger born,
Doth he lay claim to thine inheritance ?

Bas. I know not why, except to get the land.
But once he slander'd me with bastardy :
But whe'er I be as true begot or no,
That still I lay upon my mother's head ;
But that I am as well begot, my liege,
(Fair fall the bones that took the pains for me !)
Compare our faces, and be judge yourself
If old Sir Robert did beget us both, 80
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.J. Why, what a madcap hath heaven lent us here !

Q.E. 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.J. Mine eye hath well examined his parts

And finds them perfect Richard. Sirrah, speak, 90

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

Bas. Because he has 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 !

Fau. My gracious liege, when that my father liv'd,

Your brother did employ my father much,—

Bas. Well, sir, by this you cannot get my land :

Your tale must be how he employ'd my mother.

Fau. And once dispatch'd him in an embassy

To Germany, there with the emperor 100

To treat of high affairs touching that time.

The advantage of his absence took the king,

And in the mean time sojourn'd at my father's ;

Where how he did prevail I shame to speak ;

But truth is truth : large lengths of seas and shores

Between my father and my mother lay,

As I have heard my father speak himself,

When this same lusty gentleman was got :

KING JOHN

Upon his death-bed he by will bequeath'd
His lands to me, and took it on his death 110
That this my mother's son was none of his ;
And if he were, he came into the world
Full fourteen weeks before the course of time :
Then, good my liege, let me have what is mine,
My father's land, as was my father's will.

K.J. Sirrah, your brother is legitimate ;
Your father's wife did after wedlock bear him,
And if she did play false, the fault was hers,
Which fault lies on the hazards of all husbands
That marry wives. Tell me, how if my brother, 120
Who, as you say, took pains to get this son,
Had of your father claim'd this son for his ?
In sooth, good friend, your father might have kept
This calf, bred from his cow, from all the world ;
In sooth he might ; then, if he were my brother's,
My brother might not claim him, nor your father,
Being none of his, refuse him : this concludes ;
My mother's son did get your father's heir,
Your father's heir must have your father's land.

Fau. Shall then my father's will be of no force 130
To dispossess that child which is not his ?

Bas. Of no more force to dispossess me, sir,
Than was his will to get me, as I think.

Q.E. Whe'er 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 ?

Bas. Madam, an if my brother had my shape,
 And I had his, sir Robert's his, like him,
 And if my legs were two such riding-rods, 140
 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.

Q.E. I like thee well : wilt thou forsake thy fortune,
 Bequeath thy land to him, and follow me ?
 I am a soldier, and now bound to France. 150

Bas. 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.
 Madam, I'll follow you unto the death.

Q.E. Nay, I would have you go before me thither.

Bas. Our country manners give our betters way.

K.J. What is thy name ?

KING JOHN

Bas. Philip, my liege, so is my name begun,

Philip, good old sir Robert's wife's eldest son.

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

160

Kneel thou down Philip, but rise more great,

Arise Sir Richard, and Plantagenet.

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

My father gave me honour, yours gave land.

Now blessed be the hour, by night or day,

When I was got, sir Robert was away !

Q.E. The very spirit of Plantagenet !

I am thy grandam, Richard, call me so.

Bas. Madam, by chance but not by truth ; what
though ?

Something about, a little from the right,

170

In at the window, or else o'er the hatch :

Who dares not stir by day must walk by night,

And have is have, however men do catch :

Near or far off, well won is still well shot,

And I am I, howe'er I was begot.

K.J. Go, Faulconbridge, now hast thou thy desire ;

A landless knight makes thee a landed squire.

Come, madam, and come, Richard, we must speed

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

Bas. Brother, adieu : good fortune come to thee !

180

For thou wast got i' the way of honesty.

Exeunt all but Bastard

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

†

For your conversion. Now your traveller,

He and his toothpick at my worship's mess,

190

And when my knightly stomach is suffic'd,

When then I suck my teeth, and catechize

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

Thus leaning on mine elbow I begin,

' 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 : '

' No, sir,' says question, ' I, sweet sir, at yours : '

And so, ere answer knows what question would,

200

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.

KING JOHN

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;
And so am I, whether I smack or no;
And not alone in habit and device, 210
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.
But who comes in such haste in riding-ropes?
What woman-post is this? hath she no husband
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, 220
What brings you here to court so hastily?

L.F. Where is that slave, thy brother? where is he,
That holds in chase mine honour up and down?

Bas. My brother Robert? old sir Robert's son?
Colbrand the giant, that same mighty man? †
Is it sir Robert's son that you seek so?

L.F. Sir Robert's son? Ay thou unreverend boy,
Sir Robert's son? why scorn'st thou at sir Robert?

He is sir Robert's son, and so art thou.

Bas. James Gurney, wilt thou give us leave awhile? 230

Gur. Good leave, good Philip.

Bas. 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:

Sir Robert could do well: marry, to confess,

Could he get me? Sir Robert could not do it:

We know his handiwork: therefore, good mother,

To whom am I beholding for these limbs?

Sir Robert never help to make this leg. 240

L.F. Hast thou conspired with thy brother too,

That for thine own gain shouldst defend mine honour?

What means this scorn, thou most untoward knave?

Bas. 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;

I have disclaim'd 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? 250

L.F. Hast thou denied thyself a Faulconbridge?

KING JOHN

Bas. As faithfully as I deny the devil.

L.F. King Richard Cœur-de-lion was thy father :

By long and vehement suit I was seduc'd
To make room for him in my husband's bed :
Heaven lay not my transgression to my charge ! †
Thou art the issue of my dear offence,
Which was so strongly urged past my defence.

Bas. Now, by this light, were I to get again,

Madam, I would not wish a better father : 260

Some sins do bear their privilege on earth,
And so doth yours ; your fault was not your folly :
Needs must you lay your heart at his dispose,
Subjected tribute to commanding love,
Against whose fury and unmatched force
The aweless lion could not wage the fight, †
Nor keep his princely heart from Richard's hand.

He that perforce robs lions of their hearts

May easily win a woman's : ay, my mother, 270

With all my heart I thank thee for my father !
Who lives and dares but say thou didst not well
When I was got, I'll send his soul to hell.

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

And they shall say, when Richard me begot,
If thou hadst said him nay, it had been sin : †

Who says it was, he lies ; I say 'twas not. *Exeunt*

Act Second

SCENE I

France. Before Angiers

Enter Austria and forces, drums, &c. on one side : on the other King Philip of France and his power ; Lewis, Arthur, Constance, and Attendants

Dau. 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
 Of thy unnatural uncle, English John : 10
 Embrace him, love him, give him welcome hither.

Art. God shall forgive you Cœur-de-lion's death
 The rather that you give his offspring life,
 Shadowing their right under your wings of war :
 I give you welcome with a powerless hand,

KING JOHN

But with a heart full of unstained love :
Welcome before the gates of Angiers, duke.

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

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

Con. 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 !

Aus. The peace of heaven is theirs that lift their swords
In such a just and charitable war.

Pbi. Well then, to work : our cannon shall be bent
Against the brows of this resisting town.
Call for our chiefest men of discipline,
To cull the plots of best advantages : 40

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.

Con. Stay for an answer to your embassy,
 Lest unadvis'd 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

Pbi. A wonder, lady ! lo, upon thy wish, 50
 Our messenger Chatillon is arriv'd !
 What England says, say briefly, gentle lord ;
 We coldly pause for thee ; Chatillon, speak.

Cha. 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 ;
 His marches are expedient to this town, 60
 His forces strong, his soldiers confident :
 With him along is come the mother-queen,
 An Ate, stirring him to blood and strife ; †
 With her her niece, the Lady Blanch of Spain,

KING JOHN

With them a bastard of the king's deceas'd,
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,
Bearing their birthrights proudly on their backs, 70
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
Cuts off more circumstance, they are at hand,
To parley or to fight, therefore prepare.

Phi. How much unlook'd for is this expedition !

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

*Enter King John, Elinor, Blanch, the Bastard, Lords,
and Forces*

K.J. 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.

- Pbi.* Peace be to England, if that war return
 From France to England, there to live in peace. 90
 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,
 Out-faced infant state, and done a rape †
 Upon the maiden virtue of the crown.
 Look here upon thy brother Geffrey's face ;
 These eyes, these brows, were moulded out of his : 100
 This little abstract doth contain that large
 Which died in Geffrey ; and the hand of time
 Shall draw this brief into as huge a volume.
 That Geffrey was thy elder brother born,
 And this his son ; England was Geffrey's right,
 And this is Geffrey'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,
 Which owe the crown that thou o'ermasterest ?
- K.J.* From whom hast thou this great commission, France, 110
 To draw my answer from thy articles ? †

KING JOHN

Pbi. 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.J. Alack, thou dost usurp authority.

Pbi. Excuse, it is to beat usurping down.

Q.E. Who is it thou dost call usurper, France ? 120

Con. Let me make answer ; thy usurping son.

Q.E. Out, insolent ! thy bastard shall be king,
That thou mayst be a queen, and check the world !

Con. My bed was ever to thy son as true
As thine was to thy husband, and this boy
Liker in feature to his father Geoffrey
Than thou and John, in manners, being as like
As rain to water, or devil to his dam.
My boy a bastard ? By my soul, I think
His father was never so true begot : 130
It cannot be, an if thou wert his mother.

Q.E. There 's a good mother, boy, that blots thy father.

Con. There 's a good grandam, boy, that would blot thee.

Aus. Peace !

Bas. Hear the crier.

Aus. What the devil art thou ?

- Bas.* One that will play the devil, sir, with you,
 An a' may catch your hide and you alone :
 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. 140
- Bla.* O, well did he become that lion's robe
 That did disrobe the lion of that robe !
- Bas.* It lies as sightly on the back of him
 As great Alcides' shoes upon an ass : †
 But, ass, I'll take that burthen from your back,
 Or lay on that shall make your shoulders crack.
- Aus.* What cracker is this same that deafs our ears
 With this abundance of superfluous breath ?
 King Philip, determine what we shall do straight.
- Pbi.* Women and fools, break off your conference. 150
 King John, this is the very sum of all ;
 England and Ireland, Anjou, Touraine, Maine,
 In right of Arthur do I claim of thee :
 Wilt thou resign them, and lay down thy arms ?
- K.J.* 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.

KING JOHN

Q.E. Come to thy grandam, child.

Con. Do, child, go to it grandam, child ; 160
Give grandam kingdom, and it grandam will
Give it a plum, a cherry, and a fig,
There 's a good grandam.

Art. Good my mother, peace !

I would that I were low laid in my grave :
I am not worth this coil that 's made for me.

Q.E. His mother shames him so, poor boy, he weeps.

Con. Now shame upon you, whe'er she does or no !
His grandam's wrongs, and not his mother's shames,
Draws those heaven-moving pearls from his poor eyes,
Which heaven shall take in nature of a fee ; 170
Ay, with these crystal beads heaven shall be brib'd
To do him justice, and revenge on you.

Q.E. Thou monstrous slanderer of heaven and earth !

Con. Thou monstrous injurer of heaven and earth !
Call not me slanderer ; thou and thine usurp
The dominations, royalties, and rights
Of this oppress'd 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, 180
Being but the second generation
Removed from thy sin-conceiving womb.

. - a 24

K.J. Bedlam, have done.

Con. I have but this to say,
That he is not only plagued for her sin,
But God hath made her sin and her the plague
On this removed issue, plagu'd 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 !

190

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

Con. Ay, who doubts that ? a will ! a wicked will,
A woman's will, a canker'd grandam's will !

Phi. Peace, lady ! pause, or be more temperate :
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.

†

200

*Trumpet sounds. Enter certain Citizens upon
the walls*

1.C. Who is it that hath warn'd us to the walls ?

Phi. 'Tis France, for England.

K.J. England, for itself.
You men of Angiers, and my loving subjects,—

KING JOHN

Pbi. You loving men of Angiers, Arthur's subjects,
Our trumpet call'd you to this gentle parle,—

K.J. For our advantage ; therefore hear us first.

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, 210

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

Confront 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 220

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,

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

Behold, the French amaz'd 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 : 230
 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.

Phi. 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 : 240
 For this down-trodden equity, we tread
 In warlike 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 ; 250
 Our cannons' malice vainly shall be spent
 Against the invulnerable clouds of heaven,
 And with a blessed and unvex'd retire,

KING JOHN

With unhack'd swords, and helmets all unbruise'd,
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-fac'd walls
Can hide you from our messengers of war, 260
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 challeng'd it ?
Or shall we give the signal to our rage,
And stalk in blood to our possession ?

1.C. In brief, we are the king of England's subjects :
For him, and in his right, we hold this town.

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

1.C. That can we not ; but he that proves the king, 270
To him will we prove loyal : till that time
Have we ramm'd up our gates against the world.

K.J. Doth not the crown of England prove the king ?
And if not that, I bring you witnesses,
Twice fifteen thousand hearts of England's breed,—

Bas. Bastards and else.

K.J. To verify our title with their lives.

Pbi. As many and as well-born bloods as those—

Bas. Some bastards too.

Pbi. Stand in his face to contradict his claim. 280

I.C. Till you compound whose right is worthiest,
We for the worthiest hold the right from both.

K.J. Then God forgive the sin of all those souls
That to their everlasting residence,
Before the dew of evening fall, shall fleet,
In dreadful trial of our kingdom's king !

Pbi. Amen, amen ! Mount, chevaliers ! to arms !

Bas. Saint George, that swing'd the dragon, and e'er
since

Sits on his horse back at mine hostess' door,
Teach us some fence ! (*to Aus.*) Sirrah, were I at
home, 290

At your den, sirrah, with your lioness,
I would set an ox-head to your lion's hide,
And make a monster of you.

Aus. Peace ! no more.

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

K.J. Up higher to the plain, where we 'll set forth
In best appointment all our regiments.

Bas. Speed then, to take advantage of the field.

Pbi. It shall be so, and at the other hill
Command the rest to stand. God and our right !

Exeunt

KING JOHN

*Here after excursions, enter the Herald of France,
with trumpets, to the gates*

F.H.You men of Angiers, open wide your gates, 300
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 discoloured earth,
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 310
Arthur of Bretagne England's king and yours.

Enter English Herald, with trumpet

E.H.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 ;
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 ; 320
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.

- 1.C. Heralds, from off our towers we might behold, †
 From first to last, the onset and retire
 Of both your armies, whose equality
 By our best eyes cannot be censured :
 Blood hath bought blood, and blows have answer'd
 blows ;
 Strength match'd with strength, and power con-
 fronted power : 330
 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.J. 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,
 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. 340
 Phi. England, thou hast not sav'd one drop of blood,
 In this hot trial, more than we of France ;
 Rather, lost more. And by this hand I swear,

KING JOHN

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,

Or add a royal number to the dead,
Gracing the scroll that tells of this war's loss
With slaughter coupled to the name of kings.

Bas. Ha, majesty ! how high thy glory towers, 350

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 undetermin'd differences of kings.

Why stand these royal fronts amazed thus ?
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 ! 360

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

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

I.C. The king of England, when we know the king.

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

K.J. In us, that are our own great deputy,
And bear possession of our person here,

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

I.C. 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 ; 370
 King'd of our fears, until our fears, resolv'd,
 Be by some certain king purg'd and depos'd.

Bas. By heaven, these scroyles of Angiers flout you, kings,
 And stand securely on their battlements,
 As in a theatre, whence they gape and point
 At your industrious scenes and acts of death.
 Your royal presences be rul'd by me :
 Do like the mutines of Jerusalem, †
 Be friends awhile, and both conjointly bend
 Your sharpest deeds of malice on this town : 380
 By east and west let France and England mount
 Their battering cannon charged to the mouths,
 Till their soul-fearing clamours have brawl'd down
 The flinty ribs of this contemptuous city,
 I 'ld play incessantly upon these jades,
 Even till unfenced desolation
 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 ; 390
 Then, in a moment, Fortune shall cull forth

KING JOHN

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 ?

K.J. Now, by the sky that hangs above our heads,
I like it well. France, shall we knit our powers
And lay this Angiers even with the ground,
Then after fight who shall be king of it ? 400

Bas. 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
Make work upon ourselves, for heaven or hell.

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

K.J. We from the west will send destruction
Into this city's bosom. 410

Aus. I from the north.

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

Bas. O prudent discipline ! From north to south :
Austria and France shoot in each other's mouth :
I'll stir them to it. Come, away, away !

1.C. Hear us, great kings : vouchsafe awhile to stay,
 And I shall show you peace, and fair-fac'd league ;
 Win you this city without stroke or wound,
 Rescue those breathing lives to die in beds,
 That here come sacrifices for the field : 420
 Persever not, but hear me, mighty kings.

K.J. Speak on with favour, we are bent to hear.

1.C. 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,
 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, 430
 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 ;
 And she again wants nothing, to name want,
 If want it be not that she is not he :
 He is the half part of a blessed man,
 Left to be finished by such as she,
 And she a fair divided excellence,
 Whose fulness of perfection lies in him. 440

KING JOHN

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
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, 450
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.

Bar. Here 's a stay †
That shakes the rotten carcass of old Death
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 ! 460
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
 Since I first call'd my brother's father dad.

Q.E. 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 470
 Thy now unsur'd 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,
 Lest zeal, now melted by the windy breath
 Of soft petitions, pity and remorse,
 Cool and congeal again to what it was.

I.C. Why answer not the double majesties 480
 This friendly treaty of our threaten'd town ?

Phi. Speak England first, that hath been forward first
 To speak unto this city : what say you ?

K.J. 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 :
 For Anjou, and fair Touraine, Maine, Poitiers,
 And all that we upon this side the sea,
 (Except this city now by us besieg'd)

KING JOHN

Find liable to our crown and dignity, 490
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.

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

Dau. I do, my lord, and in her eye I find
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 : 500
I do protest I never lov'd myself
Till now infixed I beheld myself
Drawn in the flattering table of her eye.

Whispers with Blanch

Bas. 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
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.

Bla. My uncle's will in this respect is mine : 510
If he see aught in you that makes him like,
That any thing 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,
 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. 520

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

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

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

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

K.J. Then do I give Volquessen, Touraine, Maine,
 Poitiers, and Anjou, these five provinces,
 With her to thee, and this addition more,
 Full thirty thousand marks of English coin. 530
 Philip of France, if thou be pleas'd withal,
 Command thy son and daughter to join hands.

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

Aus. And your lips too, for I am well assur'd
 That I did so when I was first assur'd.

Pbi. Now, citizens of Angiers, ope your gates,
 Let in that amity which you have made,

KING JOHN

For at Saint Mary's chapel presently
The rites of marriage shall be solemniz'd.
Is not the Lady Constance in this troop ? 540
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.

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

Pbi. And, by my faith, this league that we have made
Will give her sadness very little cure.
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.J. We will heal up all, 550
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,
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. 560

Exeunt all but the Bastard

Bas. 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
 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, 570
 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,
 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 : 580
 And this same bias, this Commodity,
 This bawd, this broker, this all-changing word,
 Clapp'd on the outward eye of fickle France,
 Hath drawn him from his own determin'd aid,
 From a resolv'd and honourable war,

KING JOHN

To a most base and vile-concluded peace.
And why rail I on this Commodity ?
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, 590
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,
Gain, be my lord, for I will worship thee. *Exit*

Act Third

SCENE I

The French King's Pavilion

Enter Constance, Arthur, and Salisbury

Con. 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 ?

It is not so, thou hast misspoke, misheard,
 Be well advis'd, 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 ;
 I have a king's oath to the contrary. 10
 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 ?
 Why dost thou look so sadly on my son ? 20
 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.

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

KING JOHN

Con. O, if thou teach me to believe this sorrow,
Teach thou this sorrow how to make me die, 30
And let belief and life encounter so
As doth the fury of two desperate men,
Which in the very meeting fall and die.
Lewis marry Blanch? O boy, then where art
thou?

France friend with England, what becomes of me?
Fellow, be gone: I cannot brook thy sight,
This news hath made thee a most ugly man.

Sal. What other harm have I, good lady, done,
But spoke the harm that is by others done?

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

Art. I do beseech you, madam, be content.

Con. If thou, that bid'st me be content, wert grim,
Ugly, and slanderous to thy mother's womb,
Full of displeasing 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,
Sal. Nature and Fortune join'd to make thee great:

KING JOHN

*Enter King John, King Philip, Lewis, Blanch, Elinor,
the Bastard, Austria, and Attendants*

Pbi. '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 holy day.

80

Con. A wicked day, and not a holy day ! *Rising*
What hath this day deserv'd ? what hath it done,
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.
Or, if it must stand still, let wives with child
Pray that their burthens may not fall this day,
Lest that their hopes prodigiously be cross'd :
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 !

90

Pbi. By heaven, lady, you shall have no cause
To curse the fair proceedings of this day :

Have I not pawn'd to you my majesty ?

Con. You have beguil'd me with a counterfeit
 Resembling majesty, which, being touch'd and tried, 100
 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.
 Arm, arm, you heavens, against these perjur'd 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 sunset, 110
 Set armed discord 'twixt these perjur'd kings !
 Hear me, O, hear me !

Aus. Lady Constance, peace !

Con. 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,
 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 perjur'd too, 120

KING JOHN

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,
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.

Aus. O, that a man should speak those words to me ! 130

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

Aus. Thou dar'st not say so, villain, for thy life.

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

K.J. We like not this, thou dost forget thyself.

Enter Pandulph

Pbi. Here comes the holy legate of the pope.

Pan. Hail, you anointed deputies of heaven !

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 140

Why thou against the church, our holy mother,

So wilfully doth 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.

K.J. What earthy name to interrogatories
Can task the free breath of a sacred king ?
Thou canst not, cardinal, devise a name
So slight, unworthy, and ridiculous, 150
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 God, are supreme head, †
So under Him that great supremacy,
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. 160

Pbi. Brother of England, you blaspheme in this.

K.J. Though you, and all the kings of Christendom,
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,
Who in that sale sells pardon from himself ;
Though you and all the rest so grossly led
This juggling witchcraft with revenue cherish,

KING JOHN

Yet I alone, alone do me oppose 170
Against the pope, and count his friends my foes.

Pan. Then, by the lawful power that I have,
Thou shalt stand curs'd and excommunicate,
And blessed shall he be that doth revolt
From his allegiance to an heretic,
And meritorious shall that hand be call'd,
Canonized and worshipp'd as a saint,
That takes away by any secret course
Thy hateful life.

Con. O, lawful let it be
That I have room with Rome to curse awhile ! †
Good father cardinal, cry thou amen 181
To my keen curses ; for without my wrong
There is no tongue hath power to curse him right.

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

Con. And for mine too, when law can do no right,
Let it be lawful that law bar no wrong :
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 ? 190

Pan. 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.

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

Con. Look to that, devil, lest that France repent,

And by disjoining hands, hell lose a soul.

Aus. King Philip, listen to the cardinal.

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

Aus. Well, ruffian, I must pocket up these wrongs, 200
Because—

Bas. Your breeches best may carry them.

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

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

Dau. Bethink you, father, for the difference

Is purchase of a heavy curse from Rome,

Or the light loss of England for a friend:

Forgo the easier.

Bla. That's the curse of Rome.

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

In likeness of a new untrimmed bride. †

Bla. The Lady Constance speaks not from her faith, 210
But from her need.

Con. 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;

KING JOHN

Keep my need up, and faith is trodden down!

K.J. The king is mov'd, and answers not to this.

Con. O, be remov'd from him, and answer well!

Aus. Do so, King Philip, hang no more in doubt.

Bas. Hang nothing but a calf's-skin, most sweet lout. 220

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

Pan. What canst thou say but will perplex thee more,
If thou stand excommunicate and curs'd?

Pbi. Good reverend father, make my person yours,
And tell me how you would bestow yourself.
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 230
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,
Heaven knows, they were besmear'd and overstrain'd
With slaughter's pencil, where revenge did paint
The fearful difference of incensed kings :
And shall these hands, so lately purg'd of blood,
So newly join'd in love, so strong in both, 240

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
 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 250
 Some gentle order, and then we shall be blest
 To do your pleasure, and continue friends.

Pan. All form is formless, order orderless,
 Save what is opposite to England's love.
 Therefore to arms ! be champion of our church,
 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, 260
 Than keep in peace that hand which thou dost hold.

Pbi. I may disjoin my hand, but not my faith.

Pan. So mak'st thou faith an enemy to faith,
 And like a civil war set'st oath to oath,
 Thy tongue against thy tongue. O, let thy vow

KING JOHN

First made to heaven, first be to heaven perform'd,
That is, to be the champion of our church.
What since thou swor'st is sworn against thyself
And may not be performed by thyself,
For that which thou hast sworn to do amiss 270
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,
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, 280
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 !
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 290

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
 So heavy, as thou shalt not shake them off,
 But in despair die under their black weight.

Aus. Rebellion, flat rebellion !

Bas. Will 't not be ?

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

Dau. Father, to arms !

Bla. Upon thy wedding-day ? 300

Against the blood that thou hast married ;
 What, shall our feast be kept with slaughtered men ?
 Shall braying trumpets, and loud churlish drums,
 Clamours of hell, be measures to our pomp ?
 O husband, hear me ! ay, alack, how new
 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.

Con. O, upon my knee,
 Made hard with kneeling, I do pray to thee, 310
 Thou virtuous Dauphin, alter not the doom
 Forethought by heaven !

KING JOHN

Bla. Now shall I see thy love : what motive may
Be stronger with thee than the name of wife ?

Con. That which upholdeth him that thee upholds,
His honour : O, thine honour, Lewis, thine honour !

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

Pan. I will denounce a curse upon his head.

Pbi. Thou shalt not need. England, I will fall from thee. 320

Con. O fair return of banish'd majesty !

Q.E. O foul revolt of French inconstancy !

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

Bas. Old Time the clock-setter, that bald sexton Time,
Is it as he will ? well then, France shall rue.

Bla. The sun's o'er-cast 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.

330

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 ;
Assured loss, before the match be play'd.

Dau. Lady, with me, with me thy fortune lies.

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

K.J. Cousin, go draw our puissance together.

Exit Bastard

France, I am burn'd up with inflaming wrath, 340

A rage whose heat hath this condition,

That nothing can allay, nothing but blood,

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

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

To ashes, ere our blood shall quench that fire :

Look to thyself, thou art in jeopardy.

K.J. No more than he that threats. To arms let 's hie !

Exeunt

SCENE II

The same. Plains near Angiers

*Alarums, excursions. Enter the Bastard, with
Austria's head*

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

Some airy devil hovers in the sky,

And pours down mischief. Austria's head lie there,

While Philip breathes.

Enter King John, Arthur, and Hubert

K.J. Hubert, keep this boy. Philip, make up :

My mother is assailed in our tent,

KING JOHN

And ta'en, I fear.

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

SCENE III

The same

*Alarums, excursions, retreat. Enter King John, Elinor,
Arthur, the Bastard, Hubert, and Lords*

K.J. (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.

Art. O, this will make my mother die with grief ?

K.J. (to the Bastard) Cousin, away for England ! haste
before,

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

Bas. 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.

Q.E. Farewell, gentle cousin.

K.J. Coz, farewell. *Exit Bastard*

Q.E. Come hither, little kinsman ; hark, a word.

K.J. Come hither, Hubert. O my gentle Hubert,
 We owe thee much ! within this wall of flesh 20
 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 ; I had a thing to say,
 But I will fit it with some better time.
 By heaven, Hubert, I am almost asham'd
 To say what good respect I have of thee.

Hub. I am much bounden to your majesty.

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

KING JOHN

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,
Sound on into the drowsy ear of night ; †
If this same were a churchyard where we stand, 40
And thou possessed with a thousand wrongs ;
Or if that surly spirit, melancholy,
Had bak'd 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 checks 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
Without a tongue, using conceit alone, 50
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 lov'st me well.

Hub. So well, that what you bid me undertake,
Though that my death were adjunct to my act,
By heaven, I would do it.

K.J. Do not I know thou wouldst ?
Good Hubert, Hubert, Hubert, throw thine eye

On yon young boy : I'll tell thee what, my friend, 6c
 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.

Hub. And I'll keep him so,
 That he shall not offend your majesty.

K.J. Death.

Hub. My lord ?

K.J. A grave.

Hub. He shall not live.

K.J. Enough.

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

Q.E. My blessing go with thee !

K.J. For England, cousin, go :
 Hubert shall be your man, attend on you
 With all true duty. On toward Calais, ho ! *Exeunt*

KING JOHN

SCENE IV

The same. The French King's tent

Enter King Philip, Lewis, Pandulph, and Attendants

Pbi. So, by a roaring tempest on the flood,
A whole armado of convicted sail

Is scattered and disjoin'd from fellowship.

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

Pbi. 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 ?

Dau. What he hath won, that hath he fortified :

10

So hot a speed, with such advice dispos'd,

Such temperate order in so fierce a cause,

Doth want example : who hath read or heard

Of any kindred action like to this ?

Pbi. Well could I bear that England had this praise,

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.

I prithee, lady, go away with me. 20

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

Pbi. Patience, good lady ! comfort, gentle Constance !

Con. 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 detestable bones,
 And put my eyeballs in thy vaulty brows, 30
 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 smil'st,
 And buss thee as thy wife. Misery's love,
 O, come to me !

Pbi. O fair affliction, peace !

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

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

KING JOHN

Con. Thou art not holy to belie me so,

I am not mad : this hair I tear is mine,
My name is Constance, I was Geffrey'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 :
O, if I could, what grief should I forget !
Preach some philosophy to make me mad,
And thou shalt be canoniz'd, cardinal ;
For, being not mad, but sensible of grief,
My reasonable part produces reason
How I may be deliver'd 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 cloutes were he :
I am not mad ; too well, too well I feel
The different plague of each calamity.

50

Phi. 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.

60

Con. To England, if you will.

Phi.

Bind up your hairs.

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

I tore them from their bonds, and cried aloud,

70

‘ 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,

To him that did but yesterday suspire,

80

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.

Pan. You hold too heinous a respect of grief.

90

Con. He talks to me that never had a son.*Phi.* You are as fond of grief as of your child.

KING JOHN

- Con.* 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,
I could give better comfort than you do. 100
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*
- Pbi.* I fear some outrage, and I'll follow her. *Exit*
- Dau.* There's nothing in this world can make me joy ;
Life is as tedious as a twice-told tale
Vexing the dull ear of a drowsy man ;
And bitter shame hath spoil'd the sweet world's taste,
That it yields nought but shame and bitterness. 111
- Pan.* 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 ?
- Dau.* All days of glory, joy, and happiness.

Pan. If you had won it, certainly you had.

No, no ; when Fortune means to men most good,
She looks upon them with a threatening eye. 120

'Tis strange to think how much King John hath lost
In this which he accounts so clearly won :

Are not you griev'd that Arthur is his prisoner ?

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

Pan. Your mind is all as youthful as your blood.

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
Thy foot to England's throne. And therefore mark :
John hath seiz'd Arthur, and it cannot be 131

That whiles warm life plays in that infant's veins,
The misplac'd 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 ;
So be it, for it cannot be but so. 140

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

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

KING JOHN

May then make all the claim that Arthur did.

Dau. And lose it, life and all, as Arthur did.

Pan. 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

Of all his people, and freeze up their zeal,

150

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 custom'd 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.

Dau. May be he will not touch young Arthur's life,

160

But hold himself safe in his prisonment.

Pan. 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 ;
 And, O, what better matter breeds for you 170
 Than I have nam'd ! 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,
 Now that their souls are topful of offence, 180
 For England go : I will whet on the king.

Dau. Strong reasons make strong actions : let us go : †
 If you say ay, the king will not say no. *Exeunt*

KING JOHN

Act Fourth

SCENE I

A room in a castle

Enter Hubert and Executioners

Hub. 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.

1.E. I hope your warrant will bear out the deed.

Hub. Uncleanly scruples fear not you : look to 't.

Exeunt Executioners

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

Enter Arthur

Art. Good morrow, Hubert.

Hub. Good morrow, little prince.

Art. As little prince, having so great a title

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

Hub. Indeed, I have been merrier.

Art. Mercy on me !

Methinks no body 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
 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.

20

Hub. (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.

Art. Are you sick, Hubert ? you look pale to-day :
 In sooth, I would you were a little sick,
 That I might sit all night and watch with you :
 I warrant I love you more than you do me.

30

Hub. (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 ?

KING JOHN

Art. Too fairly, Hubert, for so foul effect :

Must you with hot irons burn out both mine eyes ?

Hub. Young boy, I must.

Art. And will you ?

Hub. And I will. 40

Art. 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 ? '

Many a poor man's son would have lien still 50

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 pleas'd 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.

Hub. I have sworn to do it ;

And with hot irons must I burn them out.

Art. Ah, none but in this iron age would do it! 60

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,

I would not have believ'd him,—no tongue but

Hubert's.

70

Hub. Come forth.

Stamps

Re-enter Executioners, with a cord, irons, &c.

Do as I bid you do.

Art. O, save me, Hubert, save me ! my eyes are out

Even with the fierce looks of these bloody men.

Hub. Give me the iron, I say, and bind him here.

Art. 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,

And I will sit as quiet as a lamb ;

80

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

KING JOHN

Nor look upon the iron angerly :
Thrust but these men away, and I'll forgive you,
Whatever torment you do put me to.

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

1.E. I am best pleas'd to be from such a deed.

Exeunt Executioners

Art. 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
Give life to yours.

Hub. Come, boy, prepare yourself. 90

Art. Is there no remedy ?

Hub. None, but to lose your eyes.

Art. 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.

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

Art. Hubert, the utterance of a brace of tongues
Must needs want pleading for a pair of eyes :
Let me not hold my tongue, let me not, Hubert, 100
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.

Hub. I can heat it, boy.

Art. No, in good sooth ; the fire is dead with grief,
Being create for comfort, to be us'd
In undeserv'd extremes : see else yourself ;
There is no malice in this burning coal,
The breath of heaven hath blown his spirit out, 110
And strew'd repentant ashes on his head.

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

Art. 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
That mercy which fierce fire and iron extends, 120
Creatures of note for mercy-lacking uses.

Hub. 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.

Art. O, now you look like Hubert ! all this while
You were disguised.

KING JOHN

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

Art. O heaven ! I thank you, Hubert.

Hub. Silence ; no more : go closely in with me :
Much danger do I undergo for thee. *Exeunt*

SCENE II

King John's palace

Enter King John Pembroke, Salisbury, and other Lords

K.J. Here once again we sit, once again crown'd,
And look'd upon, I hope, with cheerful eyes.

Pem. This ' once again ' (but that your highness pleas'd)
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.

Sal. Therefore, to be possess'd with double pomp,
To guard a title that was rich before, 10

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

Pem. But that your royal pleasure must be done,
 This act is as an ancient tale new told,
 And, in the last repeating, troublesome,
 Being urged at a time unseasonable. 20

Sal. 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.

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

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

KING JOHN

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

K.J. Some reasons of this double coronation 40
I have possess'd you with, and think them strong ;
And more, more strong, than lesser is my fear, †
I shall indue you with : meantime, but ask
What you would have reform'd that is not well,
And well shall you perceive how willingly
I will both hear, and grant you your requests.

Pem. 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,
Your safety, for the which myself and them 50
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
The rich advantage of good exercise ; 60

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.J. Let it be so : I do commit his youth
 To your direction. Hubert, what news with you ?

Taking him apart

Pem. This is the man should do the bloody deed ;
 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.

70

Sal. 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.

Pem. And when it breaks, I fear will issue thence
 The foul corruption of a sweet child's death.

80

K.J. We cannot hold mortality's strong hand :
 Good lords, although my will to give is living,

KING JOHN

The suit which you demand is gone, and dead :
He tells us Arthur is deceas'd to-night.

Sal. Indeed we fear'd his sickness was past cure.

Pem. 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.

K.J. 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 ?

90

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

Pem. 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 ow'd the breadth of all this isle,
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.

100

Exeunt Lords

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

Enter a Messenger

A fearful eye thou hast : where is that blood

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

Mes. From France to England, never such a power 110

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 arriv'd.

K.J. 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 ?

Mes. My liege, her ear
 Is stopp'd with dust ; the first of April died 120

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.J. Withhold thy speed, dreadful occasion !
 O, make a league with me, till I have pleas'd
 My discontented peers ! What ? mother dead ?
 How wildly then walks my estate in France !
 Under whose conduct came those powers of France
 That thou for truth giv'st out are landed here ? 130

KING JOHN

Mes. Under the Dauphin.

K.J. Thou hast made me giddy
With these ill tidings.

Enter the Bastard 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.

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

K.J. Bear with me, cousin, for I was amaz'd
Under the tide : but now I breathe again
Aloft the flood, and can give audience
To any tongue, speak it of what it will.

140

Bas. How I have sped among the clergy-men,
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 ;
To whom he sung, in rude harsh-sounding rhymes, 150
That, ere the next Ascension-day at noon,
Your highness should deliver up your crown.

K.J. Thou idle dreamer, wherefore didst thou so ?

Pet. Foreknowing that the truth will fall out so.

K.J. 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,

Hear'st thou the news abroad, who are arriv'd ? 160

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

Bas. I will seek them out.

K.J. Nay, but make haste ; the better foot before. 170
 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,

KING JOHN

And fly like thought from them to me again.

Bas. The spirit of the time shall teach me speed. *Exit*

K.J. Spoke like a sprightful noble gentleman.

Go after him ; for he perhaps shall need
Some messenger betwixt me and the peers,
And be thou he.

Mes. With all my heart, my liege. *Exit* 180

K.J. My mother dead ?

Re-enter Hubert

Hub. 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.J. Five moons ?

Hub. Old men and beldams in the streets
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 ;
And he that speaks doth gripe the hearer's wrist, 190
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,
 That were embattailed and rank'd in Kent : 200
 Another lean unwash'd artificer
 Cuts off his tale, and talks of Arthur's death.

K.J. 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.

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

K.J. It is the curse of kings to be attended
 By slaves that take their humours for a warrant
 To break within the bloody house of life, 210
 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 advis'd respect.

Hub. Here is your hand and seal for what I did.

K.J. O, when the last account 'twixt heaven and earth
 Is to be made, then shall this hand and seal
 Witness against us to damnation !
 How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds
 Make deeds ill done ! Hadst not thou been by, 220
 A fellow by the hand of nature mark'd,

KING JOHN

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 broke with thee of Arthur's death ;
And thou, to be endeared to a king,
Made it no conscience to destroy a prince.

Hub. My lord,—

230

K.J. Hadst thou but shook thy head, or made a pause
When I spake darkly what I purpos'd ;
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,
And consequently, thy rude hand to act
The deed, which both our tongues held vile to name.
Out of my sight, and never see me more !
My nobles leave me, and my state is brav'd,
Even at my gates, with ranks of foreign powers :
Nay, in the body of this fleshly land,
This kingdom, this confine of blood and breath,

240

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

Hub. Arm you against your other enemies ;
I'll make a peace between your soul and you. 250

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.

K.J. Doth Arthur live ? O, haste thee to the peers, 260

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.

Exeunt

KING JOHN

SCENE III

Before the castle

Enter Arthur, on the walls

Art. 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 disguis'd 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 :
Heaven take my soul, and England keep my bones ! 10

Dies

Enter Pembroke, Salisbury, and Bigot

Sal. Lords, I will meet him at Saint Edmundsbury :
It is our safety, and we must embrace
This gentle offer of the perilous time.
Pem. Who brought that letter from the cardinal ?
Sal. 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.
Big. To-morrow morning let us meet him then.

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

Enter the Bastard

Bas. Once more to-day well met, distemper'd lords !
The king by me requests your presence straight.

Sal. The king hath dispossess'd himself of us :
We will not line his thin bestained 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.

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

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

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

Pem. Sir, sir, impatience hath his privilege.

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

Sal. This is the prison. What is he lies here ?

Seeing Arthur

Pem. O death, made proud with pure and princely beauty !
The earth had not a hole to hide this deed.

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

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

Sal. Sir Richard, what think you ? have you beheld,

KING JOHN

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 ? 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-ey'd wrath or staring rage
Presented to the tears of soft remorse. 50

Pem. All murders past do stand excus'd 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.

Bas. It is a damned and a bloody work,
The graceless action of a heavy hand,
If that it be the work of any hand.

Sal. If that it be the work of any hand ? 60
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,
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,
 Nor conversant with ease and idleness, 70
 Till I have set a glory to this hand,
 By giving it the worship of revenge.

Pem. } Our souls religiously confirm thy words.
Big. }

Enter Hubert

Hub. Lords, I am hot with haste in seeking you,
 Arthur doth live, the king hath sent for you.

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

Avaunt, thou hateful villain, get thee gone !

Hub. I am no villain.

Must I rob the law ? *Drawing his sword*

Bas. Your sword is bright, sir ; put it up again. 80

Sal. Not till I sheathe it in a murderer's skin.

Hub. 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.

Big. Out, dunghill ! dar'st thou brave a nobleman ?

Hub. Not for my life : but yet I dare defend

KING JOHN

My innocent life against an emperor.

90

Sal. Thou art a murderer.

Hub. Do not prove me so ;

Yet I am none : whose tongue soe'er speaks false. †

Not truly speaks ; who speaks not truly, lies.

Pem. Cut him to pieces.

Bas. Keep the peace, I say.

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

Bas. 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.

Big. What wilt thou do, renowned Faulconbridge ?

Second a villain and a murderer ?

Hub. Lord Bigot, I am none.

Big. Who kill'd this prince ?

Hub. 'Tis not an hour since I left him well :

I honour'd him, I lov'd him, and will weep

My date of life out for his sweet life's loss.

Sal. 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 stifed with this smell of sin.

Big. Away toward Bury, to the Dauphin there !

Pem. There tell the king he may inquire us out.

Exeunt Lords

Bas. Here 's a good world ! Knew you of this fair work ?
 Beyond the infinite and boundless reach
 Of mercy, if thou didst this deed of death,
 Art thou damn'd, Hubert.

Hub. Do but hear me, sir. 120

Bas. 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.

Hub. Upon my soul—

Bas. 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,

KING JOHN

Enough to stifle such a villain up.

I do suspect thee very grievously.

Hub. 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.

Bas. Go, bear him in thine arms. 140

I am amaz'd, methinks, and lose my way

Among the thorns and dangers of this world.

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 unow'd 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-fallen beast,

The imminent decay of wrested pomp.

How 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. 160

Exeunt

Act Fifth

SCENE I

King John's palace

Enter King John, Pandulph, and Attendants

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

Pan. Take again
 From this my hand, as holding of the pope,
 Your sovereign greatness and authority.

K.J. Now keep your holy word, go meet the French,
 And from his holiness use all your power
 To stop their marches 'fore we are inflam'd.
 Our discontented counties do revolt ;
 Our people quarrel with obedience,
 Swearing allegiance and the love of soul
 To stranger blood, to foreign royalty. 10

KING JOHN

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.

Pan. It was my breath that blew this tempest up,
Upon your stubborn usage of the pope ;
But since you are a gentle convertite,
My tongue shall hush again this storm of war, 20
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.J. 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 the Bastard

Bas. All Kent hath yielded ; nothing there holds out 30
But Dover Castle : London hath receiv'd,
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.J. Would not my lords return to me again,
After they heard young Arthur was alive ?

Bar. They found him dead, and cast into the streets,
An empty casket, where the jewel of life 40
By some damn'd hand was robb'd and ta'en away.

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

Bar. 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
Of bragging horror : so shall inferior eyes, 50
That borrow their behaviours from the great,
Grow great by your example, and put on
The dauntless spirit of resolution.
Away, and glister 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
To meet displeasure farther from the doors, 60

KING JOHN

And grapple with him ere he come so nigh.

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

Bas. 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,
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.J. Have thou the ordering of this present time.

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

SCENE II

The Dauphin's camp at St Edmundsbury

*Enter, in arms, Lewis, Salisbury, Melun, Pembroke,
Bigot, and Soldiers*

Dau. 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.

Sal. Upon our sides it never shall be broken.
And, noble Dauphin, albeit we swear
A voluntary zeal, and an unurg'd 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
To be a widow-maker ! O, and there
Where honourable rescue and defence
Cries out upon the name of Salisbury !

10

KING JOHN

But such is the infection of the time, 20
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
Upon the spot of this enforced cause,— 30
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 !

Dau. A noble temper dost thou show in this, 40
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,
 This shower, blown up by tempest of the soul, 50
 Startles mine eyes, and makes me more amaz'd
 Than had I seen the vaulty top of heaven
 Figur'd quite o'er 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 enrag'd ;
 Nor met with fortune other than at feasts,
 Full of warm blood, of mirth, of gossiping.
 Come, come ; for thou shalt thrust thy hand as deep 60
 Into the purse of rich prosperity
 As Lewis himself : so, nobles, shall you all,
 That knit your sinews to the strength of mine.
 And even there, methinks, an angel spake : †

Enter Pandulph

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.

KING JOHN

Pan.

Hail, noble prince of France !

The next is this, King John hath reconcil'd
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.

70

Dau. Your grace shall pardon me, I will not back :

I am too high-born to be propertied,
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 chastis'd 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,
Yea, thrust this enterprise into my heart,
And come ye now to tell me John hath made
His peace with Rome ? What is that peace to me ?

80

90

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
 That undergo this charge ? who else but I, 100
 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.

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

Dau. Outside or inside, I will not return 110
 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

KING JOHN

What lusty trumpet thus doth summon us ?

Enter the Bastard, attended

Bas. According to the fair-play of the world,
Let me have audience ; I am sent to speak :
My holy lord of Milan, from the king 120
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.

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

Bas. By all the blood that ever fury breath'd,
The youth says well. Now hear our English king,
For thus his royalty doth speak in me :
He is prepar'd, and reason too he should ; 130
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 prepar'd
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,
To crouch in litter of your stable planks, 140

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 acry towers,
 To souse annoyance that comes near his nest. 150
 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-visag'd maids,
 Like Amazons come tripping after drums ;
 Their thimbles into armed gauntlets change,
 Their needls to lances, and their gentle hearts
 To fierce and bloody inclination.

Dau. There end thy brave, and turn thy face in peace ;
 We grant thou canst outscold us : fare thee well ; 160
 We hold out time too precious to be spent
 With such a brabblor.

Pan. Give me leave to speak.

Bas. No, I will speak.

Dau. We will attend to neither.

KING JOHN

Strike up the drums, and let the tongue of war
Plead for our interest and our being here.

Bas. 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 brac'd
That shall reverberate all as loud as thine ; 170
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 us'd 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.

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

Bas. And thou shalt find it, Dauphin, do not doubt. 180

Exeunt

SCENE III

The field of battle

Alarums. Enter King John and Hubert

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

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

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

Enter a Messenger

Mes. My lord, your valiant kinsman, Faulconbridge,
Desires your majesty to leave the field,
And send him word by me which way you go.

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

Mes. Be of good comfort ; for the great supply
That was expected by the Dauphin here, 10
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.J. 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. *Exeunt*

SCENE IV

Another part of the field

Enter Salisbury, Pembroke, and Bigot

Sal. I did not think the king so stor'd with friends.

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

KING JOHN

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

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

Enter Melun, wounded

Mel. Lead me to the revolts of England here.

Sal. When we were happy we had other names.

Pem. It is the Count Melun.

Sal. Wounded to death.

Mel. Fly, noble English, you are bought and sold, 10

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

Dear amity and everlasting love. 20

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

Mel. Have I not hideous 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 ?
 I say again, if Lewis do win the day, 30
 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.
 Commend me to one Hubert, with your king : 40
 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.

Sal. We do believe thee, and beshrew my soul
 But I do love the favour and the form 50
 Of this most fair occasion, by the which

KING JOHN

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
Right in thine eye. Away, my friends! New flight, 6c
And happy newness, that intends old right.

Exeunt, leading off Melun

SCENE V

The French camp

Enter Lewis and his train

Dau. 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 tottering colours clearly up,
Last in the field, and almost lords of it!

†

Enter a Messenger

Mes. Where is my prince, the Dauphin ?

Dau. Here : what news ?

Mes. The Count Melun is slain ; the English lords 10
 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.

Dau. 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 ?

Mes. Whoever spoke it, it is true, my lord.

Dau. Well ; keep good quarter and good care to-night : 20
 The day shall not be up so soon as I,
 To try the fair adventure of to-morrow. *Exeunt*

SCENE VI

*An open place in the neighbourhood of
 Swinstead Abbey*

Enter the Bastard and Hubert, severally

Hub. Who 's there ? speak, ho ! speak quickly, or I shoot.

Bas. A friend. What art thou ?

KING JOHN

Hub. Of the part of England.

Bas. Whither dost thou go ?

Hub. What 's that to thee ? why may not I demand
Of thine affairs, as well as thou of mine ?

Bas. Hubert, I think.

Hub. 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 ?

Bas. Who thou wilt : and if thou please,
Thou mayst befriend me so much as to think 10
I come one way of the Plantagenets.

Hub. 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.

Bas. Come, come ; sans compliment, what news abroad ?

Hub. Why, here walk I in the black brow of night,
To find you out.

Bas. Brief, then ; and what's the news ?

Hub. O, my sweet sir, news fitting to the night,
Black, fearful, comfortless and horrible. 20

Bas. Show me the very wound of this ill news,
I am no woman, I'll not swoon at it.

Hub. 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.

Bas. How did he take it ? who did taste to him ?

Hub. A monk, I tell you, a resolved villain,
 Whose bowels suddenly burst out : the king 30
 Yet speaks and peradventure may recover.

Bas. Who didst thou leave to tend his majesty ?

Hub. 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.

Bas. Withhold thine indignation, mighty heaven,
 And tempt us not to bear above our power !
 I'll tell thee, Hubert, half my power this night,
 Passing these flats, are taken by the tide ; 40
 These Lincoln Washes have devoured them,
 Myself, well mounted, hardly have escap'd.
 Away before : conduct me to the king,
 I doubt he will be dead or ere I come. *Exeunt*

KING JOHN

SCENE VII

The orchard at Swinstead Abbey

Enter Prince Henry, Salisbury, and Bigot

Hen. It is too late, the life of all his blood
Is touch'd corruptibly, and his pure brain
(Which some suppose the soul's frail dwelling-house)
Doth by the idle comments that it makes
Foretell the ending of mortality.

Enter Pembroke

Pem. 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.

Hen. Let him be brought into the orchard here. 10
Doth he still rage? *Exit Bigot*

Pem. He is more patient.
Than when you left him; even now he sung.

Hen. 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,
 Confound themselves. 'Tis strange that death should
 sing. 20

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.

Sal. 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.J. Ay, marry, now my soul hath elbow-room ;
 It would not out at windows nor at doors.
 There is so hot a summer in my bosom, 30
 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.

Hen. How fares your majesty ?
K.J. 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

KING JOHN

To make his bleak winds kiss my parched lips, 40
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.

Hen. O that there were some virtue in my tears,
That might relieve you !

K.J. The salt in them is hot.
Within me is a hell, and there the poison
Is as a fiend, confin'd to tyrannize
On unreprieveable condemned blood.

Enter the Bastard

Bar. O, I am scalded with my violent motion,
And spleen of speed, to see your majesty ! 50

K.J. O cousin, thou art come to set mine eye :
The tackle of my heart is crack'd and burnt,
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.

Bas. The Dauphin is preparing hitherward,
Where heaven He knows how we shall answer him, 60
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*

Sal. You breathe these dead news in as dead an ear.
 My liege ! my lord ! but now a king, now thus.

Hen. 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 is clay ?

Bas. Art thou gone so ? I do but stay behind 70
 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.
 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,
 The Dauphin rages at our very heels. 80

Sal. 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.

KING JOHN

Bas. He will the rather do it when he sees
Ourselves well sinewed to our defence.

Sal. Nay, it is in a manner done already,
For many carriages he hath dispatch'd
To the sea-side, and put his cause and quarrel
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.

90

Bas. Let it be so, and you, my noble prince,
With other princes that may best be spar'd,
Shall wait upon your father's funeral.

Hen. At Worcester must his body be interr'd,
For so he will'd it.

Bas. Thither shall it then,
And happily may your sweet self put on
The lineal state and glory of the land !
To whom, with all submission, on my knee
I do bequeath my faithful services
And true subjection everlastingly.

100

Sal. And the like tender of our love we make,
To rest without a spot for evermore.

Hen. I have a kind soul that would give you thanks,
And knows not how to do it, but with tears.

†

Bas. O, let us pay the time but needful woe,

110

Since it hath been beforehand with our griefs,
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. Nought shall make us rue,
If England to itself do rest but true. *Exeunt*

Notes

(I have annotated this play in a slightly different way from others in the edition, since it seems to me rather peculiarly full of a type of passage which well illustrates certain problems that face both the reader and the editor of Shakespeare.)

I. i. 143. *three-farthings*; coins of this value (coined for the first time in Elizabeth's reign) had a rose behind the head of the queen.

I. i. 188. *'Tis too respective . . .*; there is an ellipse here. He means that *remembering* (not forgetting) men's names implies too much regard for people's identity to be suitable for the elevation in rank.

I. i. 207. *For he is but a bastard . . .*; I think this means 'he is no true son of occasion (*i.e.* no true opportunist) who does not watch the fashion,' but it may mean 'the age despises (as it would despise the illegitimate) one who does not conform to fashion.' The difficulties are not lessened by the fact that F reads *smoake* for the first *smack*.

I. i. 225. *Colbrand the giant*; imported by the Danes from Africa to act as their champion, and conquered by Guy of Warwick. Cf. *Henry VIII*, V. iv. 21, *I am not Samson, nor Sir Guy, nor Colbrand, To mow 'em down before me.*

I. i. 231. *Philip I sparrow*; *Philip* was the traditional name of a sparrow; cf. Skelton's *Boke of Phyllip Sparowe*.

I. i. 244. *Knight . . .*; a more or less certain allusion (without which, indeed, the phrase has little point) to Kyd's *Soliman and Perseda*:

Bas. I, *the aforesaid Basilisco*,—
Knight, good fellow, Knight, Knight,—
 Pist. *Knave, good fellow, Knave, Knave*.

I. i. 256. *my charge! Thou art*; if we read F 4's *Thou* for the *That* of the first three Folios, this reading will serve; but it would give at least as good sense to retain *That* with F 1 and read *thy* for *my*.

I. i. 266. *The aweless lion . . .*; it is related in the early romances that Richard, in combat with a lion, first almost felled it with his fist, and then thrust an arm down its throat and tore out its heart.

I. i. 275. *If thou hadst said him nay . . .*; a comment and emendation of Vaughan (as a rule an emender of both ingenuity and sense) is worth recording as an example of how not to read Shakespeare. "The stanza is nonsense as the last line now stands. Shakespeare unquestionably wrote :

*If thou hadst said him 'nay' it had been sin.
 Who says 'ay' was, he lies; I say 'twas not."*

But is the passage nonsense to anyone who is not prompted to think it so by an urge to emend? If one is to be solemnly syntactical I suppose that one says that *it* in the first of the two lines means the hypothetical situation which did not arise, and *it* in the second line means the actual situation as in fact it was; the first would have been sin, the second was not. But the reader arrives at that sense without thinking twice about it. And it is a sound general rule that when any commentator states that Shakespeare 'unquestionably' did or wrote anything his statement should be accepted with caution.

KING JOHN

II. i. 63. *Ate*; so Rowe, for the *Ace* of F. The emendation would be made almost as a matter of routine by a modern editor, but is worth drawing attention to as illustrating the ease of confusion, in *Elizabethan* script, between *c* and *t*.

II. i. 97. *Outfaced infant state*; how, asks a solemn modern editor, can the state or majesty that belongs to an infant be brow-beaten? And he follows up the query by conjecturing *outraced*. But all that Shakespeare meant was surely 'tried to bluff an infant out of his rights.'

II. i. 106. *And this is Geffrey's*; this has caused all sorts of pother. It is another admirable instance of the necessity of running when reading Shakespeare. The sense is clear.

II. i. 111. *To draw my answer . . .*; this is clearly a legal technicality, but its exact meaning is not too clear, probably 'to insist on my answering to the different heads of your formal indictment.'

II. i. 144. *As great Alcides' shoes upon an ass*; this is the reading of F. Most editors accept Theobald's emendation *shows*. If Theobald is right there are two possible interpretations: 'as great Alcides' robe looks on an ass,' or 'as great Alcides' trappings would look on an ass' (i.e. *shows* may be either verb or noun). But John (Arden edition) quotes from Gosson, 'To draw the Lyon's skin upon *Æsop's* Ass, Hercules shoes on a childes feete,' and this seems to me to make it clear that, whatever else may be supposed corrupt, *shoes* is right, though no doubt there is some confusion, and I suspect a dropped line.

II. i. 198. *Some trumpet*; Craig makes the very acceptable suggestion *Sound, trumpet*. That, in spite of appearances in print, is no more than a dropped minim and the very common *e:d* error.

II. i. 325. From here on F gives *Hubert* as speech heading in-

stead of *First Cit.* There is no particular reason why the first citizen should not be Hubert, and indeed he seems on the whole to work for John in the rôle of a citizen of Angiers as he does in other capacities later; but there is little doubt that we have here an indication from the playhouse of the doubling of two parts, the actor who played the first citizen later playing Hubert.

II. i. 335. *run on*; I have kept the usual reading for F's *rome*; but it is worth comment that this same word occurs in *Hamlet*, I. iii. 109, *Roaming it thus*, and I am not clear that instead of putting both readings down to error we should not be wiser to accept the word in both places, even at the cost of an addition to N.E.D.

II. i. 367. *Lord of our presence*; whatever this may mean, the one thing which seems to me certain, in spite of commentators, is that it must be connected with I. i. 137, *Lord of thy presence and no land beside*. It almost looks as though *Lord of — presence* was a current phrase. In the one case it seems to me to mean 'you yourself, just as you are,' and in the other 'King of England, just as I am.'

II. i. 378. *mutines of Jerusalem*; the reference appears to be to the leaders of the factions in Jerusalem (see Josephus) who patched up a truce to fight against the Romans. But this is a somewhat unusual meaning for *mutines*.

II. i. 455. *Here's a stay*; no one, from Johnson downwards, has been satisfied with *stay*. Conjectures have been *flaw*, *say*, *story*, *storm*, *bray*, *style*, *sway*, *slave*. One editor makes the odd comment, 'We must assume that *stay* or the word it represents means a sudden check or hindrance.' That illustrates a not uncommon confusion of thought which misleads a good deal of emendation. If *stay* is right, then no doubt it must mean check or hindrance; but if *stay* is wrong there is no sort of reason why

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the word it has displaced should have any connection at all with the meaning of *stay*. And, in fact, a sudden check is not in the least the meaning that is wanted. Why should a sudden check shake Death or anything else out of its rags? The bastard means 'Here 's spate of words.'

III. i. 68-74. This is a puzzling passage and has caused much comment. I think that there is confusion of two lines of thought, and possibly of the drafts in which those two lines of thought were expressed: (i) 'grief is proud and makes its owner (*i.e.* the person who feels it) stoop under its weight, and therefore I shall sit upon the ground,' and (ii) I will make my grief proud so that even kings must come and bow to it.

III. i. 155. *God*; F reads *heaven*, but as this toning down is common throughout F, and the personal word is badly needed by the next line, one may reasonably make the change.

III. i. 180. *room . . . Rome*; the pronunciations were identical; cf. *Julius Cæsar*, I. i. 156, *Now is it Rome indeed and room enough*.

III. i. 209. *untrimmed bride*; apart from a great variety of conjectures, the explanations all try to make sense of the meaning of 'unadorned' or 'dishevelled,' with no very convincing explanation of why a newly-married bride should be either one or the other, nor why, even if either, she should therefore be a particularly tempting bait for the devil to use. The meaning, whether it is to be arrived at by emendation or not, is surely 'unbedded.' And one colloquial sense of 'trim,' *i.e.* 'to get the better of,' is not far from the required sense.

III. i. 258. *serpent by the tongue . . .*; serpents were supposed to poison by their tongues; F reads *cased lion*, which is just interpretable, but Theobald's emendation is generally accepted.

III. iii. 8. *imprison'd angels*; the rhythm of the lines would be

vastly improved by Walker's transposition of this phrase and *Set at liberty* in the next line, but it is not easy to justify.

III. iii. 39. *ear*; F reads *race*. *Race* for *ear* is not an impossible error, but it is an odd one when the word *ear* is so naturally expected, and the emendation is a trifle suspect from its very convincingness.

III. iii. 52. *brooded*; Pope's *broad-eyed* has much to commend it.

III. iv. 78. *If that be true . . .*; the line has been suspected on the ground of 'irregularity.' If we are to suspect every line in Shakespeare that makes this slight departure from the decasyllabic norm there will be no end to our excisions and emendations, conducted in the pursuit of monotony. But whatever the metre may be, the sense of the passage is not satisfactory. This line in itself is well enough in connection with the line before it, but not at all well in connection with what follows, notably l. 88. We can argue that l. 88 merely says that she will not *know* him, not that she will not *see* him, and can justify any lack of logic by Constance's state of mind. But if we want to be more heroic we shall conjecture the dropping of a whole line, namely :

But I shall never know my boy again,

which, with emphasis on *see* and *know*, picks up from the line before and leads up to what follows.

III. iv. 182. *Strong reasons make strong actions*; F reads *strange* for the second *strong*. It is odd that if the compositor had the same word in front of him in script he should set it differently the second time it occurred.

IV. ii. 42. *than lesser is my fear*; F reads *then* (the common spelling of *than*), and in spite of attempts to retain it as *then* this must be the meaning (unless there is corruption), difficult though

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the meaning is; *i.e.* 'as much stronger as my fear is less,' or, to be quite correct, 'the increase in the strength of my reasons is greater than the decrease of my fear.'

IV. iii. 39, 40. *grave . . . grave*; editors mostly seem to acquiesce without restive comment in this awkward repetition. But though repetitions of somewhat the same kind are to be found in Shakespeare the emphasis does not here seem to me to fall so as to make the repetition effective. Any emendation is, of course, purely conjectural. We can try *to the ground* or *to de cease* for *to a grave*, or *to be hid* for *for a grave*. But the only one of those that is the least probable graphically is the weakest in sense.

IV. iii. 92. *Yet I am none*; not 'nevertheless I am none,' but 'up to now I am none' (and do not force me to become one; *prove* almost = 'make').

IV. iii. 122. *dam'd as black*; the damned souls in the Mysteries were black. Staunton quotes the amusing entry from the Coventry accounts, "Item, paid to three white souls, 5s. Item, paid to three black souls, 5s. Item, for making and mending of the black souls' hose, 6d. Paid for blacking of the black souls' faces, 6d."

V. ii. 64. *And even there . . .*; a mysterious remark, not satisfactorily explained. The Cambridge editors explain as a contemptuous aside of Lewis' with the old 'angel-noble' (coins) pun. If only Lewis had already mentioned Pandulph or Rome one might suspect some adaptation of 'talk of the devil,' to fit Pandulph's entry.

V. ii. 104. *bank'd*; though this is explained as 'sailed past the banks of,' the only reasonable explanation of the word, if it is right, seems to be Vaughan's 'thrown banks round' (*i.e.* 'besieged').

V. iv. 15. *He means . . .*; *He*, in spite of syntax, must mean Lewis. *Cf.* l. 30, which rather suggests that *the French* is an alteration (or corruption) of a more personal subject.

NOTES

V. v. 7. *clearly*; the emendation *cleanly* (i.e. 'neatly,' 'in good order') is tempting, and graphically very easy.

V. vii. 108. *kind soul that would give you thanks*; this is the accepted reading, but I see no particular point in the Prince saying that his soul is kind (in the ordinary sense) nor (speaking to the lords) that it is 'kindred' (in the Elizabethan sense). And, since F omits *you*, I would rather read *kind of soul that would give thanks*.

Glossary

MANY words and phrases in Shakespeare require glossing, not because they are in themselves unfamiliar, but for the opposite reason, that Shakespeare uses in their Elizabethan and unfamiliar sense a large number of words which seem so familiar that there is no incentive to look for them in the glossary. It is hoped that a glossary arranged as below will make it easy to see at a glance what words and phrases in any particular scene require elucidation. A number of phrases are glossed by what seems to be, in their context, the modern equivalent rather than by lexicographical glosses on the words which compose them.

Act First

SCENE I

<i>line</i>		<i>line</i>	
37	MANAGE, government	193	PICKED MAN OF COUNTRIES, selected traveller
42	CONSCIENCE, conviction	196	ABSEY BOOK, ABC book
65	DIFFIDENCE, doubt	218	WOMAN-POST, woman-messenger
86	AFFECTETH, suggests	232	TOYS, tricks
94	HALF-FACED GROAT, coin with head in profile		

Act Second

SCENE I

7	IMPORTANCE, importunity	66	UNSETTLED HUMOURS, 'people wanting novelty'
49	INDIRECTLY, causelessly	73	BOTTOMS, ships
60	EXPEDIENT, quick	95	UNDER-WROUGHT, undermined
63	ATE, goddess of vengeance		

GLOSSARY

Act II Sc. i—*continued*

<i>line</i>	<i>line</i>
101 ABSTRACT, epitome	431 BOUND, contain
LARGE, full text	462 BOUNCE, 'bang'
103 DRAW, expand	463 BASTINADO, flogging
109 OWE, OWN	468 CONJUNCTION, proposal for union
O'ERMASTEREST, usurpest	471 UNSUR'D, unassured
119 EXCUSE, my justification is	486 QUEEN, <i>s.e.</i> queen's
139 SMOKE, beat	504 TABLE, drawing-tablet
147 CRACKER, boaster	544 SAD AND PASSIONATE, in an agony of sorrow
160 IT, its	561 COMPOSITION, agreement
165 COIL, ado	563 DEPARTED, parted
196 CRY AIM, encourage	566 ROUNDED, whispered
218 ORDINANCE, cannon	568 BROKER, agent
220 DISHABITED, dislodged	573 COMMODITY, 'main chance'
259 ROUNDURE, circle	575 PEISED WELL, symmetrical (<i>prop.</i> equally balanced)
272 RAMM'D, blocked	579 TAKE HEAD, go headlong
288 SWING'D, whipped	FROM ALL INDIFFERENCY, away from all impartiality
328 CENSURED, estimated	590 ANGELS, gold coins
352 CHAPS, jaws	
354 MOUSING, tearing	
373 SCROYLES, 'scabs'	
392 MINION, darling	
396 THE POLICY, statesmanship	

Act Third

SCENE I

119 HUMOROUS, tricky | 254 OPPOSITE, in opposition

SCENE III

36 GAWDS, distractions | 50 CONCERT, understanding

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SCENE IV

<i>line</i>		<i>line</i>	
2	ARMADO OF CONVICTED SAIL, fleet of defeated ships	42	MODERN, trite
30	VAULTY BROWS, arched eye- sockets	80	SUSPIRE, breathe
32	FULSOM, loathsome ('staw- some')	138	MAKES NICE OF NO VILE HOLD, is finicky about no hold how- ever vile
35	BUSS, kiss	154	NO SCOPE OF NATURE, nothing within nature's range
40	FELL ANATOMY, grim skeleton		

Act Fourth

SCENE I

2	ARRAS, tapestry	52	SICK SERVICE, service in sickness
16	WANTONNESS, contrariness	99	WANT PLEADING, come short of (necessary) pleading
20	PRACTISES, plots	117	TARRE, incite
33	RHEUM, tears	121	USES, habits
46	WATCHFUL MINUTES TO THE HOUR, (?) the minutes that watch the hour	123	OWES, owns
		130	DOUBTLESS, without fear

SCENE II

57	MEW, cage	214	HUMOUR THAN ADVIS'D RESPECT, mood than considered judg- ment
106	FEARFUL, frightened	222	QUOTED, appointed SIGN'D, stamped
177	SPRIGHTFUL, spirited		
185	BELDAMS, old women		

SCENE III

16	PRIVATE, private communication	56	EXAMPLED BY, compared with
21	DISTEMPER'D, disaffected	63	PRACTICE, plot
47	ARMS, <i>i.e.</i> coat of arms	69	INFECTED WITH, affected by

GLOSSARY

Act IV Sc. iii—*continued*

<i>line</i> 95 GALL, wound 107 DATE, span 116 INQUIRE, seek 138 EMBOUNDED, enclosed 141 AMAZ'D, bewildered	<i>line</i> 147 SCAMBLE, scramble for 148 UNOW'D, with no owner 156 CINCTURE, belt 159 BRIEF IN HAND, pressing
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Act Fifth

SCENE I

12 MISTEMPER'D HUMOUR, moody discontent 18 UPON, as result of 55 BECOME, adorn	70 COCKER'D, pampered WANTON, trifler (<i>here very little</i> ' <i>moral</i> ' connotation) 71 FLESH, ' blood.'
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SCENE II

2 FOR OUR REMEMBRANCE, to re- mind us 3 PRECEDENT, original 34 CLIPPETH, embraceth 44 BRAVE RESPECT, regard for your reputation 79 PROPRTIED, made a tool of 107 SET, ' rubber '	128 TAKE THE HATCH, leap out over the half-door 141 PAWNS, pledges 149 AERY, eyrie 150 SOUSE, swoop down on 157 NEEDLS, needles 162 BRABBLER, brawler 172 WELKIN, sky
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SCENE III

9 SUPPLY, reinforcement

SCENE IV

17 MOE, more (<i>Elis. plur.</i>) 25 RESOLVETH, melts	37 RATED, duly estimated 50 FAVOUR, external appearance
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SCENE V

line

2 WELKIN, sky

line

SCENE VI

28 DID TASTE, was his 'taster' (*i.e.*
one who tasted food to test
for poison)

SCENE VII

26 INDIGEST, chaos
51 SET, close
58 MODULE, image
CONFOUNDED, ruined

62 UPON ADVANTAGE, taking my
chance
REMOVE, shift
64 FLOOD, flood-tide

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