

ACT III.]

HAMLET.

[SCENE IV

III.

QUEEN. O, speak to me no more!
 These words, like daggers, enter in mine ears;
 No more, sweet Hamlet!

HAM. A murderer and a villain!
 A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe
 Of your precedent lord;—a vice* of kings!
 A cutpurse of the empire and the rule,
 That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,
 And put it in his pocket!

QUEEN. No more!

HAM. A king of shreds and patches!—

Enter Ghost.

Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,
 You heavenly guards!—What would your* gra-
 cious figure?

QUEEN. Alas, he's mad!

HAM. Do you not come your tardy son to chide,
 That, laps'd in time and passion, lets go by
 The important acting of your dread command?
 O, say!

GHOST. Do not forget: this visitation
 Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.
 But, look! amazement on thy mother sits:
 O, step between her and her fighting soul,—
 Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works,—
 Speak to her, Hamlet.

HAM. How is it with you, lady?

QUEEN. Alas, how is't with you,
 That you do† bend your eye on vacancy,
 And with the incorporeal‡ air do hold discourse?
 Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep;
 And, as the sleeping soldiers in the alarm,
 Your bedded hair, like life in excrements,
 Starts up, and stands on end. O, gentle son,
 Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper
 Sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look?

HAM. On him! on him!—Look you, how pale
 he glares!
 His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,
 Would make them capable.^b—Do not look upon me;

(*) First folio, *you*. (+) First folio omits, *do*.
 (†) First folio, *their corporall*.

^a — a vice of kings! A "vice" was the buffoon or clown of the older drama.

^b — capable.] *Susceptible*.

^c — effects:] For "effects," Mr. Singer reads, *affects*, quoting in support of his emendation,—

" — the young affects
 In me defunct—" &c.

^d — ecstasy—] *Madness*. The quarto, 1603, exhibits this speech of the Queen very differently to the after copies; and the peculiarity is interesting in connexion with the question of her participation in the murder of her first husband:—

" Alas, it is the weakness of thy braine,
 Which makes thy tongue to blazon thy hearts griefe:
 But as I have a soule, I swear by heaven,
 I never knew of this most horrid murder:
 But Hamlet, this is onely fantasie,
 And for my love forget these idle fits."

^e — do not spread the compost on the weeds,—] The folio has,—
 "— or the weeds;" the poet's manuscript probably read, "o'er the weeds," &c.

^f — Forgive me this, my virtue; &c.] Although the modern

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Lest with this piteous action you convert
 My stern effects:° then what I have to do
 Will want true colour; tears perchance for blood!

QUEEN. To whom do you speak this?

HAM. Do you see nothing there*?

QUEEN. Nothing at all; yet all that is I see.

HAM. Nor did you nothing hear?

QUEEN. No, nothing but ourselves.

HAM. Why, look you there! look, how it steals
 away!

My father, in his habit as he liv'd!

Look, where he goes, even now, out at the portal!

[*Exit Ghost*

QUEEN. This is the very coinage of your brain:
 This bodiless creation ecstasy^d
 Is very cunning in.

HAM. *Ecstasy!*

My pulse as yours doth temperately keep time,
 And makes as healthful music: it is not madness
 That I have utter'd: bring me to the test.
 And I the matter will re-word, which madness
 Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace,
 Lay not that* flattering unction to your soul.

That not your trespass, but my madness speaks:
 It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,
 Whiles† rank corruption, mining all within,
 Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven;
 Repent what's past; avoid what is to come:
 And do not spread the compost on° the weeds,
 To make them ranker.‡—[*Aside.*] Forgive me^e
 this, my virtue;†

For in the fatness of these§ pursy times,
 Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg;

Yea, curb* and woo for leave to do him good.

QUEEN. O, Hamlet! thou hast cleft my heart
 in twain.

HAM. O, throw away the worsè part of it.
 And live the purer with the other half.
 Good night: but go not to mine uncle's bed.
 Assume a virtue, if you have it not.
 That monster, Custom, who all sense doth eat,
 Oft habits' devil, is angel yet in this,—^b

(*) First folio, *a*.

(†) First folio, *ranke*.

(+) First folio, *What's*

(§) First folio, *like*

editors uniformly print this as if Hamlet addressed it to the Queen, nothing can be more evident than that it is an expression to his own virtue.

^g — curb—] *Bow*, or *truckle*: from the French *courber*

^h *That monster, Custom, who all sense doth eat.*

Oft habits' devil, &c.]

The reading of the old text is,—

" That monster custome, who all sense doth eat

Of habits' devill," &c.;

Which has been variously modified to,—

" — who all sense doth eat

Of habits' devill," &c.

" — who all sense doth eat.

If habit's devil," &c.;

and

" — who all sense doth eat.

Or habit's devil," &c.

The trifling change we have taken the liberty to make, while doing little violence to the original, may be thought, it is hoped, to give at least as good a meaning as any other which has been proposed.

That to the use of actions fair and good
He likewise gives a frock or livery,
That aptly is put on.* Refrain to-night:
And that shall lend a kind of easiness
To the next abstinence: the next more easy;
For use almost can change the stamp of nature,
And master^b the devil, or throw him out
With wondrous potency.^c Once more, good
night:

And when you are desirous to be bless'd,
I'll blessing beg of you.—For this same lord,

[Pointing to POLONIUS.]

I do repent: but heaven hath pleas'd it so,
To punish me with this, and this with me,
That I must be their scourge and minister.
I will bestow him, and will answer well
The death I gave him. So, again, good night.—
I must be cruel, only to be kind:
Thus bad begins, and worse remains behind.—
One word more, good lady.^d

QUEEN. What shall I do?

HAM. Not this, by no means, that I bid you
do:

Let the bloated^e king tempt you again to bed;
Pinch wanton on your cheek; call you his mouse;
And let him, for a pair of recchy kisses,
Or paddling in your neck with his damn'd fingers,
Make you to ravel all this matter out,
That I essentially am not in madness,
But mad in craft. 'T were good you let him
know;

For who, that's but a queen, fair, sober, wise,
Would from a paddock, from a bat, a gib,^f

(*) First folio, *blunt*.

^a That aptly is put on.] The passage from "That monster" to "put on" inclusive, is not in the folio.

^b And master the devil, or throw him out.—] The quartos, 1604 and 1605, present this line, "And either the devill," &c.; the after ones read as above, which, as it affords sense, though destructive to the metre, we retain, not, however, without acknowledging a preference for Malone's conjecture, "And either curb the devil," &c.

Such dear concernings hide? who would do so?
No, in despite of sense and secrecy,
Unpeg the basket on the house's top,
Let the birds fly, and, like the famous ape,
To try conclusions,^g in the basket creep,
And break your own neck down.

QUEEN. Be thou assur'd, if words be made of
breath,

And breath of life, I have no life to breathe
What thou hast said to me.

HAM. I must to England; you know that?

QUEEN. Alack.

I had forgot 't is so concluded on.

HAM. There's letters seal'd: and my two
schoolfellows,—

Whom I will trust as I will adders fang'd,—
They bear the mandate; they must sweep my
way,

And marshal me to knavery. Let it work!
For 't is the sport to have the engineer
Hoist with his own petar: and 't shall go hard,
But I will delve one yard below their mines,
And blow them at the moon. O, 't is most sweet,
When in one line two crafts directly meet.—^h

This man shall set me packing:
I'll lug the guts into the neighbour room:—
Mother, good night.—Indeed, this counsellor
Is now most still, most secret, and most grave,
Who was in life a foolish prating knave.
Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you.—
Good night, mother.

[Exit severally; HAMLET dragging out^h
the body of POLONIUS.(6)]

^c With wondrous potency.] This and what precedes, from "the next more easy" inclusive, is only in the quarto copies.

^d One word more, good lady.] Not in the folio.

^e — a paddock—a gib.—] A "paddock" is a *toad*; for "gib,"

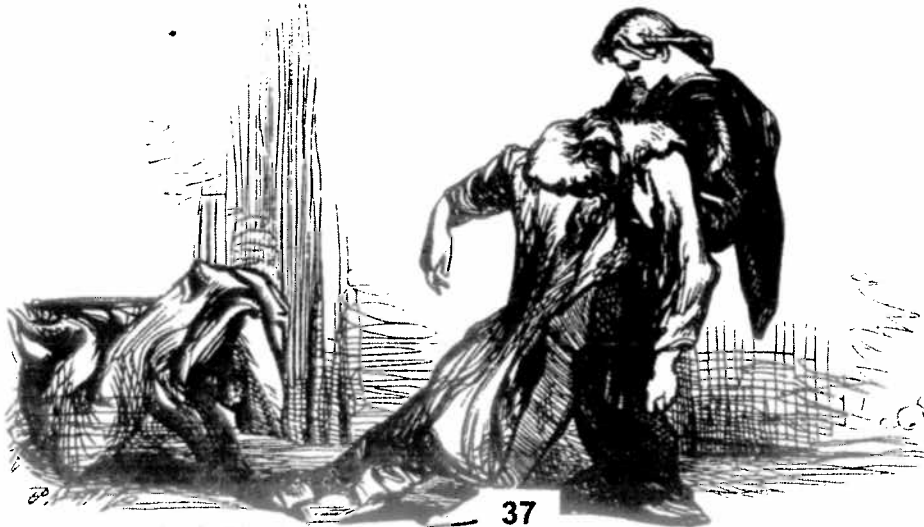
"a cat," see note (b), p. 512, Vol. I.

^f — conclusions.—] *Experiments*.

^g — directly meet.—] This, as well as the eight preceding lines,

are only in the quartos.

^h — dragging out.—] The folio direction reads, "lugging in."



Re-enter HORATIO with OPHELIA.*

OPH. Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?

QUEEN. How now, Ophelia?

OPH. [Sings.]

*How should I your true love know
From another one?
By his cockle hat and staff,
And his sandal shoon.*

QUEEN. Alas, sweet lady! what imports this song?

OPH. Say you? nay, pray you, mark!

[Sings.] *He is dead and gone, lady,
He is dead and gone;
At his head a grass-green turf,
At his heels a stone.*

QUEEN. Nay, but Ophelia,—

OPH. Pray you, mark!

[Sings.] *White his shroud as the mountain snow,*

Enter KING.

QUEEN. Alas, look here, my lord.

OPH. [Sings.]

Larded all with sweet flowers;
Which bewept to the grave did † go,
With true-love showers.*

KING. How do you, pretty lady?

OPH. Well, God 'ield you! They say, the owl was a baker's daughter.⁽¹⁾ Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be. God be at your table!

KING. Conceit upon her father.

OPH. Pray you, let 's have no words of this; but when they ask you what it means, say you this:

[Sings.] *To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day,
All in the morning betime,
And I a maid at your window,
To be your Valentine.*

* First folio omits, all.

(†) Old copies, did not go.

a — with OPHELIA.] The quaint direction of the quarto, 1603, is entitled to consideration from future representatives of this lovely creation, since in all probability it indicates the manner in which the author himself designed she should appear in this her greatest scene.—"Enter Ophelia playing on a Lute, and her haire downe hanging."

b — donn'd—] To don = to do on, or put on.

*Then up he rose, and donn'd^b his clothes,
And dupp'd^c the chamber door;
Let in the maid, that out a maid
Never departed more.*

KING. Pretty Ophelia!

OPH. Indeed, la, without an oath, I'll make an end on't:

[Sings.] *By Gis, and by Saint Charity,
Alack, and fie for shame!
Young men will do't, if they come to't;
By cock they are to blame.*

*Quoth she, before you tumbled me,
You promis'd me to wed.
So would I ha' done, by yonder sun,
An thou hadst not come to my bed.*

KING. How long hath she been thus?*

OPH. I hope, all will be well. We must be patient; but I cannot choose but weep, to think they should lay him i' the cold ground.—My brother shall know of it; and so I thank you for your good counsel.—Come, my coach!—Good night, ladies; good night, sweet ladies; good night, good night.

[Exit.

KING. Follow her close; give her good watch, I pray you. [Exit HORATIO.]
O, this is the poison of deep grief; it springs All from her father's death. O, Gertrude, Gertrude,

When sorrows come, they come not single spies,
But in battalions! First, her father slain;
Next, your son gone; and he most violent author
Of his own just remove; the people muddied,
Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts and
whispers,
For good Polonius' death; and we have done but
greenly,^d

In hugger-mugger^e to inter him; poor Ophelia,
Divided from herself and her fair judgment,
Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts:
Last, and as much containing as all these,
Her brother is in secret come from France;
Feeds † on his wonder, keeps himself in clouds,
And wants not buzzers to infect his ear
With pestilent speeches of his father's death;
Wherein necessity, of matter beggar'd,
Will nothing stick our person ‡ to arraign

(*) First folio, this.

(†) First folio, Keeps.

(‡) First folio, persons.

c — dupp'd—] A contraction of do up; to lift the latch. Johnson suggested, "And op'd;" but compare, "What devell! iche weene the porters are drunke, wil they not dup the gate to-day!" —Damon and Pythias, 1552.

d — greenly,—] Immaturely, unwisely.

e — hugger-mugger—] An old word signifying secretly, by stealth.

In ear and ear. O, my dear Gertrude, this,
Like to a murdering-piece,* in many places
Gives me superfluous death. [A noise without.]

QUEEN. Alack! what noise is this?

KING. Where are my Switzers? Let them
guard the door:

Enter another Gentleman.

What is the matter?

GENT. Save yourself, my lord!

The ocean, overpeering of his list,
Eats not the flats with more impetuous* haste,
Than young Laertes, in a riotous head,
O'erbears your officers. The rabble call him lord;
And, as the world were now but to begin,
Antiquity forgot, custom not known,
The ratifiers and props of every word,
They cry, *Choose we! Laertes shall be king!*
Caps, hands, and tongues, applaud it to the clouds,
Laertes shall be king, Laertes king!

QUEEN. How cheerfully on the false trail they
cry!

O, this is counter,^b you false Danish dogs.

[Noise without.]

KING. The doors are broke!

Enter LAERTES, armed; Danes following.

LAER. Where is this † king?—Sirs, stand you
all without.

DANES. No, let's come in.

LAER. I pray you, give me leave.

DANES. We will, we will.

[They retire without the door.]

LAER. I thank you:—keep the door.—O, thou
vile king,
Give me my father!

QUEEN. Calmly, good Laertes.

LAER. That drop of blood that's calm ‡ pro-
claims me bastard;

Cries cuckold to my father; brands the harlot
Even here, between the chaste unsmirched brow
Of my true mother!

KING. What is the cause, Laertes,
That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?—
Let him go, Gertrude; do not fear our person;

(*) First folio, *impititious*. (†) First folio, *the*.
(‡) First folio, *that calmes*.

* — a murdering-piece,—] A piece of artillery with several barrels, which discharged a hail of missiles composed of bullets, nails, old iron, and the like.

^b — this is counter,—] To hunt *counter* is explained at p. 150, Vol. I. "to follow on a false scent;" it should have been added, "or to retrace the scent." A hound which, instead of going forward, turns and pursues the backward trail, was in the old language of the chase said to *hunt counter*.

^c That treason can but peep to what it would,
Acts little of his will.]

There's such divinity doth hedge a king,
That treason can but peep to what it would,
Acts little of his will.^c—Tell me, Laertes,
Why thou art thus incensed:—let him go, Ger-
trude;—

Speak, man.

LAER. Where is my father?

KING. Dead.

QUEEN. But not by him.^d

KING. Let him demand his fill.

LAER. How came he dead? I'll not be jug-
gled with;

To hell, allegiance! vows, to the blackest devil!
Conscience and grace, to the profoundest pit!
I dare damnation: to this point I stand,
That both the worlds I give to negligence,
Let come what comes; only I'll be reveng'd
Most thoroughly for my father.

KING. Who shall stay you?

LAER. My will, not all the world:
And for my means, I'll husband them so well,
They shall go far with little.

KING. Good Laertes,

If you desire to know the certainty
Of your dear father's death, is't* writ in your
revenge,

That, swoopstake, you will draw both friend and
foe,

Winner and loser?

LAER. None but his enemies.

KING. Will you know them, then?

LAER. To his good friends thus wide I'll ope
my arms;

And, like the kind life-rend'ring pelican, †
Repat them with my blood.

KING. Why, now you speak

Like a good child and a true gentleman.
That I am guiltless of your father's death,
And am most sensible in grief for it,
It shall as level to your judgment pierce,
As day does to your eye.

DANES. [Without.] Let her come in.

LAER. How now! what noise is that?—

Re-enter OPHELIA.

O, heat, dry up my brains! tears seven-times salt,
Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye!—

(*) First folio, *if*. (†) First folio, *Politician*.

This is passed by the critics without comment; but we shrewdly suspect it has undergone some deprivation at the hands of transcribers or compositors.
^d But not by him.] In the 1603 quarto the dialogue proceeds,—

"Laer. Speake, say, where's my father?

King. Dead.

Laer. Who hath murthered him? speake, he not

Be juggled with, for he is murthered.

Queene. True, but not by him."



By heaven, thy madness shall be paid by weight,
Till our scale turn the beam! O, rose of May!
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!—
O, heavens! is't possible, a young maid's wits
Should be as mortal as an old man's life?
Nature is fine in love: and, where 'tis fine,
It sends some precious instance of itself
After the thing it loves.

OPH. [Sings.]

*They bore him barefac'd on the bier;
Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny;
And on his grave rains many a tear;—*

Fare you well, my dove!

LAER. Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade
revenge,

It could not move thus.

OPH. [Sings.]

*You must sing, a-down a-down,
An you call him a-down-a.*

O, how the wheel^a becomes it! It is the false steward, that stole his master's daughter.

LAER. This nothing's more than matter.

OPH. There's rosemary, that's for remembrance;

[Sings.] *Pray, love, remember :*

and there is pansies,* that's for thoughts.

LAER. A document in madness! thoughts and remembrance fitted.

OPH. There's fennel for you, and columbines:—there's rue for you; and here's some for me:—we may call it herb-grace o' Sundays:—O, you must wear your rue with a difference.—There's a daisy:(2)—I would give you some violets, but they withered all when my father died:—they say he made a good end,—

[Sings.] *For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy,—*

LAER. Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself,
She turns to favour and to prettiness.

OPH. [Sings.] *And will he not come again?
And will he not come again?
No, no, he is dead,
Go to thy death-bed,
He never will come again.*

*His beard as white as snow,
All flaxen was his poll:
He is gone, he is gone,
And we cast away moan:
Gramercy on his soul!*

And of all christian souls, I pray God.—God be wi' you. [Exit.]

LAER. Do you see this, O God?†

KING. Laertes, I must commune^b with your grief,

Or you deny me right. Go but apart,
Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will,
And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me:
If by direct or by collateral hand
They find us touch'd, we will our kingdom give,
Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours,
To you in satisfaction; but if not,
Be you content to lend your patience to us,

(*) First folio, *Paconcies.*

(†) First folio, *you Gods.*

^a — the wheel—] The "wheel" = *rota*, is another name for the burden or refrain of a ballad: it was perhaps the practice on the old stage for Ophelia to play the "wheel" upon her lute before these words.

And we shall jointly labour with your soul
To give it due content.

LAER. Let this be so;
His means of death, his obscure burial—
No trophy, sword, nor hatchment, o'er his bones,
No noble rite nor formal ostentation,—
Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,
That I must call't* in question.

KING. So you shall;
And where the offence is let the great axe fall.
I pray you, go with me. [Exit.]

SCENE VI.—*Another Room in the same.*

Enter HORATIO and a Servant.(3)

HOR. What are they that would speak with me?
SERV. Sailors, sir; they say, they have letters for you.

HOR. Let them come in.— [Exit Servant.]
I do not know from what part of the world
I should be greeted, if not from lord Hamlet.

Enter Sailors.†

1 SAIL. God bless you, sir.

HOR. Let him bless thee too.

1 SAIL. He shall, sir, an't please him. There's a letter for you, sir,—it comes from the ambassador that was bound for England,—if your name be Horatio, as I am let to know it is.

HOR. [Reads.] *HORATIO, when thou shalt have overlooked this, give these fellows some means to the king; they have letters for him. Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us chase. Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put on a compelled valour; in the grapple I boarded them; on the instant they got clear of our ship; so I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me like thieves of mercy; but they knew what they did; I am to do a good turn for them. Let the king have the letters I have sent; and repair thou to me with as much haste as thou wouldst fly death. I have words to speak in thine‡ ear, will make thee dumb: yet are they much too light for the bore of the matter. These good fellows will bring thee*

(*) First folio, *call.*

(†) First folio, *Saylor.*

(‡) First folio, *your.*

^b — *I must commune with your grief.*—] The folio alone reads "common," which is only the more ancient orthography of the same word.

ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS.

"Julius Caesar," Act V. Sc. 5. Brutus' body. (End of play):—

"Oct. Within my tent his bones to-night shall lie,
Most like a soldier, order'd honourably."

"Antony and Cleopatra," Act IV. Sc. 9. Death of Enobarbus:—

"1 Sold. The hand of death hath raught him. Hark, the drums
penurely wake the sleepers. Let us bear him
To the court of guard; he is of note: our hour
is fully out.
3 Sold. Come on then,
He may recover yet. [Exeunt with body."

"Antony and Cleopatra," Act IV. Sc. 12. The dying Antony:—

"Take me up,
I have led you oft; carry me now, good friends,
And have my thanks for all. [Exeunt with ANTONY."

These instances from Shakespeare alone, and they could easily be multiplied, will suffice to bring into view one of the inconveniences to which the elder dramatists were subject through the paucity of actors; and, at the same time, by exhibiting the mode in which they endeavoured to obviate the difficulty, may afford a key to many passages and incidents that before appeared anomalous.

ACT IV.

(1) SCENE V.—*They say, the owl was a baker's daughter.* This alludes to a tradition still current in some parts of England: "Our Saviour went into a baker's shop where they were baking, and asked for some bread to eat. The mistress of the shop immediately put a piece of dough into the oven to bake for him; but was reprimanded by her daughter, who, insisting that the piece of dough was too large, reduced it to a very small size. The dough, however, immediately afterwards began to swell, and presently became of a most enormous size. Whereupon the baker's daughter cried out, 'Heugh, heugh, heugh,' which owl-like noise probably induced our Saviour, for her wickedness, to transform her into that bird."

(2) SCENE V.—*There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; * * * and there is pansies, that's for thoughts. * * * * There's fennel for you, and columbines:—there's rue for you;—&c. &c.]* There is method in poor Ophebe's distribution. She presents to each the herb popularly appropriate to his age or disposition. To Laertes, whom in her distraction she probably confounds with her lover, she gives "rosemary" as an emblem of his faithful remembrance:—

"Rosemarie is for remembrance
Betweene us daie and night,
Wishing that I might alwaies have
You present in my sight."

A Handefull of Pleasant Delites, &c. 1584.

And "pansies," to denote love's "thoughts" or troubles:—

"I pray what flowers are these?
The pansie this;
O, that's for lovers' thoughts."

All Fools, Act II. Sc. 1.

For the King she has "fennel," signifying *flattery* and *lust*; and "columbines," which marked *ingratitude*; while for the Queen and for herself she reserves the herb of sorrow, "rue," which she reminds her Majesty may be worn by her "with a difference," i.e. not as an emblem of grief alone, but to indicate *contrition*:—"some of them smil'd and said, *Rue* was called *Herbe grace*, which though they scorned in their youth, they might wear in their age, and that it was never too late to say *Miserere*."—GREENE'S *Quip for an Upstart Courtier*.

(3) SCENE VI.—*Enter HORATIO and a Servant.]* In the quarto, 1603, at this period of the action there is a scene between the Queen and Horatio, not a vestige of which is retained in the after copies. Like every other part of that curious edition, it is grievously deformed by misprints and mal-arrangement of the verse; but, as exhibiting the poet's earliest conception of the Queen's character, is much too precious to be lost.

"Enter HORATIO and the QUEENE.

Hor. Madame, your sonne is safe arriv'de in Denmarke,
This letter I even now receiv'd of him,
Whereas he writes how he escap't the danger,
And subtle treason that the king had plotted,
Being crossed by the contention of the windes,
He found the Packet sent to the king of England,
Wherein he saw himselfe betray'd to death,
As at his next conversion with your grace,
He will relate the circumstance at full.

Queene. Then I perceive there's treason in his lookes
That seem'd to sugar o're his villanie:
But I will soethe and please him for a time,
For murderous mindes are alwayes jealous,
But know not you Horatio where he is?
Hor. Yes, Madame, and he hath appointed me
To meeete him on the east side of the Cittie
To morrow morning.

Queene. O faile not, good Horatio, and withall, commend me
A mothers care to him, bid him a while
Be wary of his presence, lest that he
Faile in that he goes about.

Hor. Madam, never make doubt of that:
I thinke by this the news be come to court:
He is arriv'de, observe the king, and you shall
Quickely finde, Hamlet being here,
Things fell not to his minde.

Queene. But what became of Gilderstone and Rossecraft?

Hor. He being set ashore, they went for England,
And in the Packet there writ down that doome
To be perform'd on them poynted for him:
And by great chance he had his father's Seale,
So all was done without discoverie.

Queene. Thankes be to heaven for blessing of the prince,
Horatio once againe I take my leave,
With thousand mothers blessings to my sonne.
Horat. Madam adue."