

K. Phi. I am perplex'd, and know not what to say.
Pand. What canst thou say but will perplex thee more,
 If thou stand excommunicate and curs'd?
K. Phi. Good reverend father, make my person yours, 224
 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; 229
 The latest breath that gave the sound of words
 Was deep-sworn faith, peace, amity, true love,
 Between our kingdoms and our royal selves; 232
 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 over-
 stain'd 236
 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, 248
 My reverend father, let it not be so!
 Out of your grace, devise, ordain, impose
 Some gentle order, and then we shall be bless'd
 To do your pleasure and continue friends. 252
Pand. 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. 257
 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.
K. Phi. I may disjoin my hand, but not my
 faith.
Pand. So mak'st thou faith an enemy to
 faith:
 And like a civil war sett'st oath to oath, 264
 Thy tongue against thy tongue. O! let thy vow
 First made to heaven, first be to heaven per-
 form'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; 269
 For that which thou hast sworn to do amiss
 Is not amiss when it is truly done;
 And being not done, where doing tends to ill,
 The truth is then most done not doing it. 273
 The better act of purposes mistook
 Is to mistake again; though indirect,
 Yet indirection thereby grows direct, 276
 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 mak'st an oath the surety for thy truth
 Against an oath: the truth thou art unsure
 To swear, swears only not to be forsworn; 284
 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 288
 Is in thyself rebellion to thyself;
 And better conquest never canst thou make
 Than arm thy constant and thy nobler parts
 Against these giddy loose suggestions: 292
 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, 296
 But in despair die under their black weight.
Aust. Rebellion, flat rebellion!
Bast. Will't not be?
 Will not a calf's-skin stop that mouth of thine?
Lew. Father, to arms!
Blanch. Upon thy wedding-day? 300
 Against the blood that thou hast married?
 What! shall our feast be kept with slaughter'd
 men?
 Shall braying trumpets and loud churlish drums,
 Clamours of hell, be measures to our pomp? 304
 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 pro-
 nounce,
 Upon my knee I beg, go not to arms 308
 Against mine uncle.
Const. O! upon my knee,
 Made hard with kneeling, I do pray to thee,
 Thou virtuous Dauphin, alter not the doom
 Forethought by heaven. 312
Blanch. Now shall I see thy love: what
 motive may
 Be stronger with thee than the name of wife?
Const. That which upholdeth him that thee
 upholds,
 His honour: O! thine honour, Lewis, thine
 honour. 316
Lew. I muse your majesty doth seem so cold,
 When such profound respects do pull you on.
Pand. I will denounce a curse upon his head.
K. Phi. Thou shalt not need. England, I'll
 fall from thee. 320
Const. O fair return of banish'd majesty!
Eli. O foul revolt of French inconstancy!
K. John. France, thou shalt rue this hour
 within this hour.
Bast. Old Time the clock-setter, that bald
 sexton Time, 324
 Is it as he will? well then, France shall rue.
Blanch. The sun's o'ercast with blood: fair
 day, adieu!
 Which is the side that I must go withal?
 I am with both: each army hath a hand; 328
 And in their rage, I having hold of both,

They whirl asunder and dismember me.
 Husband, I cannot pray that thou mayst win;
 Uncle, I needs must pray that thou mayst lose;
 Father, I may not wish the fortune thine; 333
 Grandam, I will not wish thy wishes thrive:
 Whoever wins, on that side shall I lose;
 Assured loss before the match be play'd. 336
Lew. Lady, with me; with me thy fortune lies.
Blanch. There where my fortune lives, there
 my life dies.
K. John. Cousin, go draw our puissance to-
 gether. [Exit BASTARD.
 France, I am burn'd up with inflaming wrath;
 A rage whose heat hath this condition, 341
 That nothing can allay, nothing but blood,
 The blood, and dearest-valu'd blood of France.
K. Phi. Thy rage shall burn thee up, and
 thou shalt turn 344
 To ashes, ere our blood shall quench that fire:
 Look to thyself, thou art in jeopardy.
K. John. No more than he that threatens. To
 arms let's hie! [Exeunt.

SCENE II.—The Same. Plains near Angiers.

Alarums; excursions. Enter the BASTARD, with
 the DUKE OF AUSTRIA'S head.

Bast. Now, by my life, this day grows won-
 drous hot;
 Some airy devil hovers in the sky
 And pours down mischief. Austria's head lie
 there,
 While Philip breathes. 4

Enter KING JOHN, ARTHUR, and HUBERT.

K. John. Hubert, keep this boy. Philip, make
 up,
 My mother is assailed in our tent,
 And ta'en, I fear.
Bast. My lord, I rescu'd her;
 Her highness is in safety, fear you not: 8
 But on, my liege; for very little pains
 Will bring this labour to a happy end. [Exeunt.

SCENE III.—The Same.

Alarums; excursions; retreat. Enter KING JOHN,
 ELINOR, ARTHUR, the BASTARD, HUBERT, and
 Lords.

K. John. [To ELINOR.] So shall it be; your
 grace shall stay behind
 So strongly guarded. [To ARTHUR.] Cousin,
 look not sad:
 Thy grandam loves thee; and thy uncle will
 As dear be to thee as thy father was. 4
Arth. O! this will make my mother die with
 grief.
K. John. [To the BASTARD.] Cousin, away for
 England! haste before;
 And, ere our coming, see thou shake the bags
 Of hoarding abbots; set at liberty 8
 Imprison'd angels: the fat ribs of peace
 Must by the hungry now be fed upon:
 Use our commission in his utmost force.

Bast. Bell, book, and candle shall not drive
 me back 12
 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. 16
Eli. Farewell, gentle cousin.
K. John. Coz, farewell.
 [Exit BASTARD.
Eli. Come hither, little kinsman; hark, a
 word. [She takes ARTHUR aside.
K. John. 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. 24
 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. 28
Hub. I am much bounden to your majesty.
K. John. Good friend, thou hast no cause
 to say so yet;
 But thou shalt have; and creep time ne'er so slow,
 Yet it shall come for me to do thee good. 32
 I had a thing to say, but let it go:
 The sun is in the heaven, and the proud day,
 Attended with the pleasures of the world,
 Is all too wanton and too full of gawds 36
 To give me audience: if the midnight bell
 Did, with his iron tongue and brazen mouth,
 Sound one into the drowsy race of night;
 If this same were a churchyard where we stand,
 And thou possessed with a thousand wrongs; 41
 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 45
 And strain their cheeks to idle merriment,
 A passion hateful to my purposes;
 Or if that thou couldst see me without eyes, 48
 Hear me without thine ears, and make reply
 Without a tongue, using conceit alone,
 Without eyes, ears, and harmful sound of words;
 Then, in despite of brooded watchful day, 52
 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 under-
 take, 56
 Though that my death were adjunct to my act,
 By heaven, I would do it.
K. John. Do not I know thou wouldst?
 Good Hubert! Hubert, Hubert, throw thine eye
 On yon young boy: I'll tell thee what, my
 friend, 60
 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 64
 That he shall not offend your majesty.
K. John. Death.
Hub. My lord?

K. John. A grave.
Hub. He shall not live.
K. John. Enough.
 I could be merry now. Hubert, I love thee;
 Well, I'll not say what I intend for thee: 68
 Remember. Madam, fare you well:
 I'll send those powers o'er to your majesty.
Eli. My blessing go with thee!
K. John. For England, cousin; go:
 Hubert shall be your man, attend on you 72
 With all true duty. On toward Calais, ho!
 [Exeunt.]

SCENE IV.—*The Same. The French King's Tent.*

Enter KING PHILIP, LEWIS, PANDULPH, and Attendants.

K. Phi. So, by a roaring tempest on the flood,
 A whole armada of convicted sail
 Is scatter'd and disjoin'd from fellowship.
Pand. Courage and comfort! all shall yet go
 well. 4
K. Phi. 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, 8
 O'erbearing interruption, spite of France?
Lew. What he hath won that hath he fortified:

So hot a speed with such advice dispos'd,
 Such temperate order in so fierce a cause, 12
 Doth want example: who hath read or heard
 Of any kindred action like to this?

K. Phi. Well could I bear that England had
 this praise,
 So we could find some pattern of our shame. 16

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

Const. Lo now! now see the issue of your
 peace.
K. Phi. Patience, good lady! comfort, gentle
 Constance!

Const. No, I defy all counsel, all redress,
 But that which ends all counsel, true redress, 24
 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, 28
 And I will kiss thy detestable bones,
 And put my eyeballs in thy vaulty brows,
 And ring these fingers with thy household worms,
 And stop this gap of breath with fulsome dust,
 And be a carrion monster like thyself: 32
 Come, grin on me; and I will think thou smil'st
 And buss thee as thy wife! Misery's love,
 O! come to me.

K. Phi. O fair affliction, peace! 36
Const. 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.

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

Const. Thou art not holy to belie me so; 44
 I am not mad; this hair I tear is mine;
 My name is Constance; I was Geoffrey's wife;
 Young Arthur is my son, and he is lost!
 I am not mad: I would to heaven I were! 48
 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; 52
 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: 56
 If I were mad, I should forget my son,
 Or madly think a babe of clouts were he.
 I am not mad: too well, too well I feel
 The different plague of each calamity. 60

K. 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 64
 Do glue themselves in sociable grief;
 Like true, inseparable, faithful loves,
 Sticking together in calamity.

Const. To England, if you will.
K. Phi. Bind up your hairs. 68
Const. Yes, that I will; and wherefore will I
 do it?

I tore them from their bonds, and cried aloud
 'O! that these hands could so redeem my son,
 As they have given these hairs their liberty!' 72
 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 76
 That we shall see and know our friends in heaven.

If that be true, I shall see my boy again;
 For since the birth of Cain, the first male child, 80
 To him that did but yesterday suspire,

There was not such a gracious creature born.
 But now will canker-sorrow eat my bud
 And chase the native beauty from his cheek,
 And he will look as hollow as a ghost, 84
 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 88
 Must I behold my pretty Arthur more.

Pand. You hold too heinous a respect of
 grief.

Const. He talks to me, that never had a son.

K. Phi. You are as fond of grief as of your
 child. 92

Const. 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, 96
 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! 104
 My widow-comfort, and my sorrows' cure!

K. Phi. I fear some outrage, and I'll follow
 her. [Exit.]

Lew. There's nothing in this world can make
 me joy: [Exit.]

Life is as tedious as a twice-told tale, 108
 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.
Pand. Before the curing of a strong disease,
 Even in the instant of repair and health, 112
 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? 116
Lew. All days of glory, joy, and happiness.

Pand. 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?

Lew. As heartily as he is glad he hath him.
Pand. Your mind is all as youthful as your
 blood. 125

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 129
 Thy foot to England's throne; and therefore
 mark.

John hath seiz'd Arthur; and it cannot be,
 That whiles warm life plays in that infant's
 veins 132

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 137
 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
Lew. But what shall I gain by young Arthur's
 fall?

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

May then make all the claim that Arthur did.
Lew. And lose it, life and all, as Arthur did.

Pand. How green you are and fresh in this
 old world! 145

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. 148

This act so evilly borne shall cool the hearts
 Of all his people and freeze up their zeal,

That none so small advantage shall step forth
 To check his reign, but they will cherish it; 152
 No natural exhalation in the sky,
 No scope of nature, no distemper'd day,
 No common wind, no customary event,
 But they will pluck away his natural cause 156
 And call them meteors, prodigies, and signs,
 Abortives, presages, and tongues of heaven,
 Plainly denouncing vengeance upon John.

Lew. May be he will not touch young
 Arthur's life, 160

But hold himself safe in his prisonment.
Pand. 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 165
 And kiss the lips of unacquainted change,
 And pick strong matter of revolt and wrath
 Out of the bloody fingers' ends of John. 168

Methinks I see this hurly all on foot:
 And, O! what better matter breeds for you
 Than I have nam'd. The bastard Faulconbridge
 Is now in England ransacking the church, 172
 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, 176
 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.

Lew. Strong reasons make strong actions.
 Let us go:

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

ACT IV

SCENE I.—*Northampton. A Room in the Castle.*

Enter HUBERT and Two Attendants.

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.

First Attend. I hope your warrant will bear
 out the deed. 6

Hub. Uncleanly scruples! fear not you: look
 to't. [Exeunt Attendants.]

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

Enter ARTHUR.

Arth. Good morrow, Hubert.
Hub. Good morrow, little prince.

Arth. As little prince,—having so great a title
 To be more prince,—as may be. You are sad.

Hub. Indeed, I have been merrier.
Arth. Mercy on me! 12

Methinks nobody should be sad but I:
 Yet I remember, when I was in France,
 Young gentlemen would be as sad as night,

Only for wantonness. By my christendom, 16
 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: 20
 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.
 Hub. [Aside.] If I talk to him with his inno-
 cent prate 25
 He will awake my mercy which lies dead:
 Therefore I will be sudden and dispatch.
 Arth. Are you sick, Hubert? you look pale
 to-day: 28
 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.
 Hub. [Aside.] His words do take possession
 of my bosom. 32
 Read here, young Arthur. [Showing a paper.
 [Aside.] How now, foolish rheum!
 Turning spiteous torture out of door!
 I must be brief, lest resolution drop
 Out at mine eyes in tender womanish tears. 36
 Can you not read it? is it not fair writ?
 Arth. Too fairly, Hubert, for so foul effect.
 Must you with hot irons burn out both mine
 eyes?
 Hub. Young boy, I must.
 Arth. And will you?
 Hub. And I will. 40
 Arth. 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; 44
 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?' 48
 Or, 'What good love may I perform for you?'
 Many a poor man's son would have lain still,
 And ne'er have spoke a loving word to you;
 But you at your sick-service had a prince. 52
 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? 56
 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.
 Arth. 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 this fiery indignation
 Even in the matter of mine innocence; 64
 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 68
 And told me Hubert should put out mine eyes,
 I would not have believ'd him; no tongue but
 Hubert's.
 Hub. [Stamps.] Come forth.
 Re-enter Attendants, with cord, irons, &c.
 Do as I bid you do. 72
 Arth. 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.
 Arth. Alas! what need you be so boisterous-
 rough? 76
 I will not struggle; I will stand stone-still.
 For heaven's 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,
 Nor look upon the iron angrily.
 Thrust but these men away, and I'll forgive you,
 Whatever torment you do put me to. 84
 Hub. Go, stand within: let me alone with him.
 First Attend. I am best pleas'd to be from
 such a deed. [Exeunt Attendants.
 Arth. Alas! I then have chid away my friend:
 He hath a stern look, but a gentle heart. 88
 Let him come back, that his compassion may
 Give life to yours.
 Hub. Come, boy, prepare yourself.
 Arth. Is there no remedy?
 Hub. None, but to lose your eyes.
 Arth. O heaven! that there were but a mote
 in yours, 92
 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. 96
 Hub. Is this your promise? go to, hold your
 tongue.
 Arth. 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:
 Or Hubert, if you will, cut out my tongue, 100
 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 104
 And would not harm me.
 Hub. I can heat it, boy.
 Arth. 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; 108
 There is no malice in this burning coal;
 The breath of heaven hath blown his spirit out
 And strew'd repentant ashes on his head.
 Hub. But with my breath I can revive it,
 boy. 112
 Arth. 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, 116

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,
 Creatures of note for mercy-lacking uses. 121
 Hub. Well, see to live; I will not touch thine
 eyes
 For all the treasure that thine uncle owes:
 Yet am I sworn and I did purpose, boy, 124
 With this same very iron to burn them out.
 Arth. O! now you look like Hubert, all this
 while
 You were disguised.
 Hub. Peace! no more. Adieu.
 Your uncle must not know but you are dead;
 I'll fill these dogged spies with false reports: 129
 And, pretty child, sleep doubtless and secure,
 That Hubert for the wealth of all the world
 Will not offend thee.
 Arth. O heaven! I thank you, Hubert.
 Hub. Silence! no more, go closely in with
 me: 133
 Much danger do I undergo for thee. [Exeunt.

SCENE II.—The Same. A Room of State in
 the Palace.

Enter KING JOHN, crowned; PEMBROKE, SALIS-
 BURY, and other Lords. The KING takes his
 state.

K. John. 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 high-
 ness pleas'd,
 Was once superfluous: you were crown'd before,
 And that high royalty was ne'er pluck'd off, 5
 The faiths of men ne'er stained with revolt;
 Fresh expectation troubled not the land
 With any long'd-for change or better state. 8
 Sal. Therefore, to be possess'd with double
 pomp,
 To guard a title that was rich before,
 To gild refined gold, to paint the lily,
 To throw a perfume on the violet, 12
 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. 16
 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, 25
 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 28
 They do confound their skill in covetousness;
 And oftentimes excusing of a fault

Doth make the fault the worse by the excuse:
 As patches set upon a little breach 32
 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,
 We breath'd our counsel: but it pleas'd your
 highness 36
 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. John. Some reasons of this double coro-
 nation 40
 I have possess'd you with and think them strong;
 And more, more strong,—when lesser is my
 fear,—
 I shall induce you with: meantime but ask
 What you would have reform'd that is not well;
 And well shall you perceive how willingly 45
 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,— 48
 Both for myself and them,—but, chief of all,
 Your safety, for the which myself and them
 Bend their best studies,—heartily request
 The enfranchisement of Arthur; whose restraint
 Doth move the murmuring lips of discontent 53
 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 64
 Than whereupon our weal, on you depending,
 Counts it your weal he have his liberty.

Enter HUBERT.

K. John. Let it be so: I do commit his youth
 To your direction. Hubert, what news with
 you? [Taking him apart.
 Pem. This is the man should do the bloody
 deed; 69
 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 72
 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.
 Sal. The colour of the king doth come and go
 Between his purpose and his conscience, 77
 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 80
 The foul corruption of a sweet child's death.
 K. John. We cannot hold mortality's strong
 hand:
 Good lords, although my will to give is living,
 The suit which you demand is gone and dead:
 He tells us Arthur is deceas'd to-night. 85

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: 88
This must be answer'd, either here or hence.

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

Think you I bear the shears of destiny?
Have I commandment on the pulse of life? 92

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, 96

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! 100

This must not be thus borne: this will break out
To all our sorrows, and ere long I doubt.

[*Exeunt Lords.*]
K. John. They burn in indignation. I repent:
There is no sure foundation set on blood, 104
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 cheeks?

So foul a sky clears not without a storm: 108
Pour down thy weather: how goes all in France?

Mess. From France to England. Never such a power

For any foreign preparation
Was levied in the body of a land. 112

The copy of your speed is learn'd by them;
For when you should be told they do prepare,

The tidings come that they are all arriv'd.

K. John. O! where hath our intelligence been drunk? 116

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?

Mess. 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. 124

K. John. 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! 128
Under whose conduct came those powers of France

That thou for truth giv'st out are landed here?

Mess. Under the Dauphin.
K. John. Thou hast made me giddy
With these ill tidings.

Enter the BASTARD, and PETER OF POMFRET.

Now, what says the world 132
To your proceedings? do not seek to stuff
My head with more ill news, for it is full.

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

K. John. Bear with me, cousin, for I was amaz'd 137

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

Bast. How I have sped among the clergy-men,

The sums I have collected shall express.
But as I travell'd hither through the land, 144

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 148

With many hundreds treading on his heels;
To whom he sung, in rude harsh-sounding rimes,

That, ere the next Ascension-day at noon,
Your highness should deliver up your crown. 152

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

Peter. Foreknowing that the truth will fall out so.

K. John. Hubert, away with him; imprison him:

And on that day at noon, whereon, he says, 156
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?
Bast. The French, my lord; men's mouths 161

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 164
Of Arthur, whom they say is kill'd to-night

On your suggestion.

K. John. Gentle kinsman, go,
And thrust thyself into their companies.

I have a way to win their loves again; 168
Bring them before me.

Bast. I will seek them out.

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

O! let me have no subject enemies
When adverse foreigners affright my towns 172

With dreadful pomp of stout invasion.
Be Mercury, set feathers to thy heels,

And fly like thought from them to me again.

Bast. The spirit of the time shall teach me speed. 176

K. John. Spoke like a sprightly noble gentleman. [*Exit BASTARD.*]

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

Mess. With all my heart, my liege. [*Exit.*]
K. John. 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. 184

K. John. 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 188

And whisper one another in the ear;
And he that speaks, doth gripe the hearer's wrist

Whilst he that hears makes fearful action,
With wrinkled brows, with nods, with rolling 192

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 embattail'd and rank'd in Kent. 200

Another lean unwash'd artificer
Cuts off his tale and talks of Arthur's death.

K. John. 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 205

cause

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

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

K. John. It is the curse of kings to be attended 208

By slaves that take their humours for a warrant
To break within the bloody house of life,

And on the winking of authority
To understand a law, to know the meaning 212

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. John. O! when the last account 'twixt heaven and earth 216

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
Makes ill deeds done! Hadst not thou been by,

A fellow by the hand of nature mark'd, 221
Quoted and sign'd to do a deed of shame,

This murder had not come into my mind;
But taking note of thy abhor'd aspect, 224

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, 228

Made it no conscience to destroy a prince.

Hub. My lord,—
K. John. Hadst thou but shook thy head or made a pause
When I spake darkly what I purposed, 232

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: 236

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 240

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, 245

This kingdom, this confine of blood and breath,
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.

Young Arthur is alive: this hand of mine
Is yet a maiden and an innocent hand, 252

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, 256

Which, howsoever rude exteriorly,
Is yet the cover of a fairer mind

Than to be butcher of an innocent child.

K. John. 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, 264

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. 268

I conjure thee but slowly; run more fast.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*The Same. Before the Castle.*

Enter ARTHUR, on the Walls.

Arth. 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. 4

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. 8

[*Leaps down.*]
O me! my uncle's spirit is in these stones:

Heaven take my soul, and England keep my bones! [*Dies.*]

Enter PEMBROKE, SALISBURY, and BIGOT.

Sal. Lords, I will meet him at Saint Edmundsbury.

It is our safety, and we must embrace 12
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, 16 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 e'er we meet.

Enter the BASTARD.

Bast. Once more to-day well met, distemper'd lords! 21

The king by me requests your presence straight.

Sal. The king hath disposess'd himself of us: We will not line his thin bestained cloak 24 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.

Bast. Whate'er you think, good words, I think, were best. 28

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

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

Pem. Sir, sir, impatience hath his privilege.

Bast. 'Tis true; to hurt his master, no man else. 33

Sal. This is the prison. [Seeing ARTHUR. What is he lies here?]

Pem. O death, made proud with pure and princely beauty!

The earth had not a hole to hide this deed. 36

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,

Found it too precious-princely for a grave. 40

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

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

Or do you almost think, although you see,

That you do see? could thought, without this object, 44

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, 48

That ever wall-eyed wrath or staring rage Presented to the tears of soft remorse.

Pem. All murders past do stand excus'd in this:

And this, so sole and so unmatchable, 52

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. 56

Bast. It is a damned and a bloody work;

From whose obedience I forbid my soul, 64

Kneeling before this ruin of sweet life,

And breathing to his breathless excellence

The incense of a vow, a holy vow, 68

Never to taste the pleasures of the world,

Never to be infected with delight,

Nor conversant with ease and idleness,

Till I have set a glory to this hand,

By giving it the worship of revenge. 72

Pem. Our souls religiously confirm thy

Big. words.

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. 77

Hub. I am no villain.

Sal. [Drawing his sword.] Must I rob the law?

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

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

Hub. Stand back, Lord Salisbury, stand back, I say: 81

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; 84

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 My innocent life against an emperor. 89

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. 92

Pem. Cut him to pieces.

Bast. Keep the peace, I say.

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

Bast. Thou wert better gall the devil, Salisbury:

If thou but frown on me, or stir thy foot, 96

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,

That you shall think the devil is come from hell.

Big. What wilt thou do, renowned Faulconbridge? 101

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 105

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; 108

And he, long traded in it, makes it seem

Like rivers of remorse and innocence.

Away with me, all you whose souls abhor

The uncleanly savours of a slaughter-house;

For I am stifled with this smell of sin. 113

Big. Away toward Bury; to the Dauphin there!

Pem. There tell the king he may inquire us out. [Exeunt Lords.]

Bast. Here's a good world! Knew you of this fair work? 116

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.

Bast. Ha! I'll tell thee what; 120

Thou art 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. 124

Hub. Upon my soul,—

Bast. 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 128

Will serve to strangle thee; a rush will be a beam

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, 132

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 136

Which was embounded in this beauteous clay,

Let hell want pains enough to torture me.

I left him well.

Bast. Go, bear him in thine arms.

I am amaz'd, methinks, and lose my way 140

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 144

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 148

Doth dogged war bristle his angry crest,

And snarleth in the gentle eyes of peace:

Now powers from home and discontents at home

Meet in one line; and vast confusion waits,— 152

As doth a raven on a sick-fallen beast,—

The imminent decay of wrested pomp.

Now happy he whose cloak and ceinture can

Hold out this tempest. Bear away that child

And follow me with speed: I'll to the king: 157

A thousand businesses are brief in hand,

And heaven itself doth frown upon the land. [Exeunt.]

ACT V

SCENE I.—The Same. A Room in the Palace.

Enter KING JOHN, PANDULPH with the crown, and Attendants.

K. John. Thus have I yielded up into your hand

The circle of my glory.

Pand. [Giving JOHN the crown.] Take again

From this my hand, as holding of the pope,

Your sovereign greatness and authority. 4

K. John. 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, 8

Our people quarrel with obedience,

Swearing allegiance and the love of soul

To stranger blood, to foreign royalty.

This inundation of mistemper'd humour 12

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. 16

Pand. 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. John. Is this Ascension-day? Did not the prophet 25

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; 28

But, heaven be thank'd, it is but voluntary.

Enter the BASTARD.

Bast. All Kent hath yielded; nothing there holds out

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 33

To offer service to your enemy;

And wild amazement hurries up and down

The little number of your doubtful friends. 36

K. John. Would not my lords return to me again

After they heard young Arthur was alive?

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

Bast. 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; 45

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; 48

Threaten the threatener, and outface the brow

Of bragging horror: so shall inferior eyes,

That borrow their behaviours from the great,

Grow great by your example and put on 52

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. 56