

Vol. Now the red pestilence strike all trades
in Rome,¹³
And occupations perish!

Cor. What, what, what!
I shall be lov'd when I am lack'd. Nay, mother,
Resume that spirit, when you were wont to say,
If you had been the wife of Hercules,¹⁷
Six of his labours you'd have done, and sav'd
Your husband so much sweat. Cominius,
Droop not; adieu. Farewell, my wife! my
mother!²⁰

I'll do well yet. Thou old and true Menenius,
Thy tears are saltier than a younger man's.
And venomous to thine eyes. My sometime
general,
I have seen thee stern, and thou hast oft beheld
Heart-hardening spectacles; tell these sad
women²⁵

'Tis fond to wail inevitable strokes
As 'tis to laugh at them. My mother, you wot
well

My hazards still have been your solace; and²⁸
Believe 't not lightly,—though I go alone
Like to a lonely dragon, that his fen
Makes fear'd and talk'd of more than seen,—
your son
Will or exceed the common or be caught³²
With cautelous baits and practice.

Vol. My first son,
Whither wilt thou go? Take good Cominius
With thee awhile: determine on some course,
More than a wild exposure to each chance³⁶
That starts i' the way before thee.

Cor. O the gods!
Com. I'll follow thee a month, devise with
thee

Where thou shalt rest, that thou mayst hear of us,
And we of thee: so, if the time thrust forth⁴⁰
A cause for thy repeal, we shall not send
O'er the vast world to seek a single man,
And lose advantage, which doth ever cool
I' the absence of the needer.

Cor. Fare ye well:⁴⁴
Thou hast years upon thee; and thou art too full
Of the wars' surfeits, to go rove with one
That's yet unbruised: bring me but out at gate.
Come, my sweet wife, my dearest mother, and⁴⁸
My friends of noble touch, when I am forth,
Bid me farewell, and smile. I pray you, come.
While I remain above the ground you shall
Hear from me still; and never of me aught⁵²
But what is like me formerly.

Men. That's worthily
As any ear can hear. Come, let's not weep.
If I could shake off but one seven years
From these old arms and legs, by the good gods,
I'd with thee every foot.

Cor. Give me thy hand:⁵⁷
Come.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*The Same. A Street near
the Gate.*

Enter SICINIUS, BRUTUS, and an Ædile.

Sic. Bid them all home; he's gone, and we'll
no further.

The nobility are vex'd, whom we see have sided
In his behalf.

Bru. Now we have shown our power,
Let us seem humbler after it is done⁴
Than when it was a-doing.

Sic. Bid them home;
Say their great enemy is gone, and they
Stand in their ancient strength.

Bru. Dismiss them home.
[*Exit Ædile.*]

Enter VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA, and MENENIUS.

Here comes his mother.
Sic. Let's not meet her.

Bru. Why?

Sic. They say she's mad.

Bru. They have ta'en note of us: keep on
your way.

Vol. O! you're well met. The hoarded plague
o' the gods

Requite your love!

Men. Peace, peace! be not so loud.

Vol. If that I could for weeping, you should
hear,—¹³

Nay, and you shall hear some. [To BRUTUS.]
Will you be gone?

Vir. [To SICINIUS.] You shall stay too. I
would I had the power

To say so to my husband.

Sic. Are you mankind?¹⁶

Vol. Ay, fool; is that a shame? Note but
this fool.

Was not a man my father? Hadst thou foxship
To banish him that struck more blows for Rome
Than thou hast spoken words?

Sic. O blessed heavens!

Vol. More noble blows than ever thou wise
words;²¹

And for Rome's good. I'll tell thee what; yet
go:

Nay, but thou shalt stay too: I would my son
Were in Arabia, and thy tribe before him,²⁴
His good sword in his hand.

Sic. What then?

Vir. What then!
He'd make an end of thy posterity.

Vol. Bastards and all.

Good man, the wounds that he does bear for
Rome!²⁸

Men. Come, come: peace!

Sic. I would be had continu'd to his country
As he began, and not unknit himself

The noble knot he made.

Bru. I would he had.³²

Vol. 'I would he had!' 'Twas you incens'd
the rabble:

Cats, that can judge as fitly of his worth
As I can of those mysteries which heaven

Will not have earth to know.

Bru. Pray, let us go.³⁶

Vol. Now, pray, sir, get you gone:
You have done a brave deed. Ere you go, hear
this:

As far as doth the Capitol exceed

The meanest house in Rome, so far my son,—⁴⁰

This lady's husband here, this, do you see,—

Whom you have banish'd, does exceed you all.
Bru. Well, well, we'll leave you.

Sic. Why stay we to be baited
With one that wants her wits?

Vol. Take my prayers with you.
[*Exeunt Tribunes.*]

I would the gods had nothing else to do⁴⁵
But to confirm my curses! Could I meet 'em
But once a day, it would unclog my heart

Of what lies heavy to't.

Men. You have told them home,
And, by my troth, you have cause. You'll sup

with me?⁴⁹

Vol. Anger's my meat; I sup upon myself,
And so shall starve with feeding. Come, let's

go.
Leave this faint puling and lament as I do,⁵²
In anger, Juno-like. Come, come, come.

Men. Fie, fie, fie!
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*A Highway between Rome and
Antium.*

Enter a Roman and a Volsc, meeting.

Rom. I know you well, sir, and you know
me: your name I think is Adrian.

Vol. It is so, sir: truly, I have forgot you.

Rom. I am a Roman; and my services are,
as you are, against 'em: know you me yet?⁵

Vol. Nicanor? No.

Rom. The same, sir.

Vol. You had more beard, when I last saw
you; but your favour is well approved by your
tongue. What's the news in Rome? I have a
note from the Volscian state to find you out
there: you have well saved me a day's journey.

Rom. There hath been in Rome strange in-
surrections: the people against the senators,
patricians, and nobles.¹⁵

Vol. Hath been! Is it ended then? Our
state thinks not so; they are in a most war-like
preparation, and hope to come upon them in
the heat of their division.¹⁹

Rom. The main blaze of it is past, but a small
thing would make it flame again. For the nobles
receive so to heart the banishment of that
worthy Coriolanus, that they are in a ripe ap-
tiness to take all power from the people and to
pluck from them their tribunes for ever. This
lies glowing, I can tell you, and is almost
mature for the violent breaking out.

Vol. Coriolanus banished!²⁸

Rom. Banished, sir.

Vol. You will be welcome with this intelli-
gence, Nicanor.³¹

Rom. The day serves well for them now. I
have heard it said, the fittest time to corrupt a
man's wife is when she's fallen out with her
husband. Your noble Tullus Aufidius will
appear well in these wars, his great opposer,
Coriolanus, being now in no request of his
country.³⁸

Vol. He cannot choose. I am most for-
tunate, thus accidentally to encounter you: you
have ended my business, and I will merrily
accompany you home.⁴²

Rom. I shall, between this and supper, tell
you most strange things from Rome; all tending
to the good of their adversaries. Have you an
army ready, say you?⁴⁶

Vol. A most royal one: the centurions and
their charges distinctly billeted, already in the
entertainment, and to be on foot at an hour's
warning.⁵⁰

Rom. I am joyful to hear of their readiness,
and am the man, I think, that shall set them in
present action. So, sir, heartily well met, and
most glad of your company.

Vol. You take my part from me, sir; I have
the most cause to be glad of yours.⁵⁶

Rom. Well, let us go together. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.—*Antium. Before AUFIDIUS' House.*

*Enter CORIOLANUS, in mean apparel,
disguised and muffled.*

Cor. A goodly city is this Antium. City,
'Tis I that made thy widows: many an heir
Of these fair edifices 'fore my wars
Have I heard groan and drop: then, know me⁴
not,

Lest that thy wives with spits and boys with
stones

In puny battle slay me.

Enter a Citizen.

Save you, sir.

Cit. And you.

Cor. Direct me, if it be your will,
Where great Aufidius lies. Is he in Antium?⁸

Cit. He is, and feasts the nobles of the state
At his house this night.

Cor. Which is his house, beseech you?

Cit. This, here before you.

Cor. Thank you, sir. Farewell.
[*Exit Citizen.*]

O world! thy slippery turns. Friends now fast
sworn,¹²

Whose double bosoms seem to wear one heart,
Whose hours, whose bed, whose meal, and
exercise,

Are still together, who twin, as 'twere, in love
Unseparable, shall within this hour,¹⁶

On a dissension of a doit, break out
To bitterest enmity: so, fellest foes,

Whose passions and whose plots have broke
their sleep

To take the one the other, by some chance,²⁰
Some trick not worth an egg, shall grow dear

friends

And interjoin their issues. So with me:
My birth-place hate I, and my love's upon

This enemy town. I'll enter: if he slay me,²⁴
He does fair justice; if he give me way,

I'll do his country service. [*Exit.*]

SCENE V.—*The Same. A Hall in AUFIDIUS'
House.*

Music within. Enter a Servingman.

First Serv. Wine, wine, wine! What service
is here! I think our fellows are asleep. [*Exit.*]

Enter a Second Servingman.

Sec. Serv. Where's Cotus? my master calls for him. Cotus! [Exit.]

Enter CORIOLANUS.

Cor. A goodly house: the feast smells well; but I
Appear not like a guest.

Re-enter the First Servingman.

First Serv. What would you have, friend? Whence are you? Here's no place for you: pray, go to the door. [Exit.]

Cor. I have deserv'd no better entertainment, In being Coriolanus.

Re-enter Second Servingman.

Sec. Serv. Whence are you, sir? Has the porter his eyes in his head, that he gives entrance to such companions? Pray, get you out.

Cor. Away!

Sec. Serv. 'Away!' Get you away.

Cor. Now, thou art troublesome.

Sec. Serv. Are you so brave? I'll have you talked with anon.

Enter a Third Servingman. Re-enter the First.

Third Serv. What fellow's this?

First Serv. A strange one as ever I looked on: I cannot get him out o' the house: prithee, call my master to him.

Third Serv. What have you to do here, fellow? Pray you, avoid the house.

Cor. Let me but stand; I will not hurt your hearth.

Third Serv. What are you?

Cor. A gentleman.

Third Serv. A marvellous poor one.

Cor. True, so I am.

Third Serv. Pray you, poor gentleman, take up some other station; here's no place for you; pray you, avoid: come.

Cor. Follow your function; go, and batten on cold bits. [Pushes him away.]

Third Serv. What, you will not? Prithee, tell my master what a strange guest he has here.

Sec. Serv. And I shall. [Exit.]

Third Serv. Where dwell'st thou?

Cor. Under the canopy.

Third Serv. 'Under the canopy!'

Cor. Ay.

Third Serv. Where's that?

Cor. 'P the city of kites and crows.

Third Serv. 'P the city of kites and crows!' What an ass it is! Then thou dwell'st with daws too?

Cor. No; I serve not thy master.

Third Serv. How sir! Do you meddle with my master?

Cor. Ay; 'tis an honest service than to meddle with thy mistress.

Thou prat'st, and prat'st: serve with thy trencher. Hence. [Beats him away.]

Enter AUFIDIUS and First Servingman.

Auf. Where is this fellow?

Sec. Serv. Here, sir: I'd have beaten him like a dog, but for disturbing the lords within.

Auf. Whence com'st thou? what wouldst thou? Thy name?

Why speak'st not? Speak, man: what's thy name?

Cor. [Unmuffling.] If, Tullus, Not yet thou know'st me, and, seeing me, dost not

Think me for the man I am, necessity Commands me name myself.

Auf. What is thy name? [Servants retire.]

Cor. A name unmusical to the Volscians' ears, And harsh in sound to thine.

Auf. Say, what's thy name?

Thou hast a grim appearance, and thy face Bears a command in't; though thy tackle's torn,

Thou show'st a noble vessel. What's thy name?

Cor. Prepare thy brow to frown. Know'st thou me yet?

Auf. I know thee not. Thy name?

Cor. My name is Caius Marcius, who hath done

To thee particularly, and to all the Volscies, Great hurt and mischief; thereto witness may

My surname, Coriolanus: the painful service, The extreme dangers, and the drops of blood

Shed for my thankless country, are requited But with that surname; a good memory,

And witness of the malice and displeasure Which thou shouldst bear me: only that name

remains; The cruelty and envy of the people,

Permitted by our dastard nobles, who Have all forsook me, hath devour'd the rest;

And suffer'd me by the voice of slaves to be Whoop'd out of Rome. Now this extremity

Hath brought me to thy hearth; not out of hope, Mistake me not, to save my life; for if

I had fear'd death, of all the men i' the world I would have voided thee; but in mere spite,

To be full quit of those my banishers, Stand I before thee here. Then if thou hast

A heart of wreak in thee, that will revenge Thine own particular wrongs and stop those

maims

Of shame seen through thy country, speed thee straight,

And make my misery serve thy turn: so use it, That my revengful services may prove

As benefits to thee, for I will fight Against my canker'd country with the spleen

Of all the under fiends. But if so be Thou dar'st not this, and that to prove more

fortunes Thou art tir'd, then, in a word, I also am

Longer to live most weary, and present My throat to thee and to thy ancient malice;

Which not to cut would show thee but a fool, Since I have ever follow'd thee with hate, Drawn tuns of blood out of thy country's breast,

And cannot live but to thy shame, unless It be to do thee service.

Auf. O Marcius, Marcius! Each word thou hast spoke hath weeded from

my heart

A root of ancient envy. If Jupiter Should from yond cloud speak divine things,

And say, 'Tis true,' I'd not believe them more Than thee, all noble Marcius. Let me twine

Mine arms about that body, where against Mine grained ash a hundred times hath broke,

And scarr'd the moon with splinters: here I clip The anvil of my sword, and do contest

As hotly and as nobly with thy love As ever in ambitious strength I did

Contend against thy valour. Know thou first, I lov'd the maid I married; never man

Sigh'd truer breath; but that I see thee here, Thou noble thing! more dances my rapt heart

Than when I first my wedded mistress saw Bestride my threshold. Why, thou Mars! I tell

thee, We have a power on foot; and I had purpose

Once more to hew thy target from thy brawn, Or lose mine arm for't. Thou hast beat me out

Twelve several times, and I have nightly since Dream'd of encounters 'twixt thyself and me;

We have been down together in my sleep, Unbuckling helms, fisting each other's throat,

And wak'd half dead with nothing. Worthy Marcius,

Had we no quarrel else to Rome, but that Thou art thence banish'd, we would muster all

From twelve to seventy, and, pouring war Into the bowels of ungrateful Rome,

Like a bold flood o'er-bear. O! come; go in, And take our friendly senators by the hands,

Who now are here, taking their leaves of me, Who am prepar'd against your territories,

Though not for Rome itself.

Cor. You bless me, gods!

Auf. Therefore, most absolute sir, if thou wilt have

The leading of thine own revenges, take The one half of my commission, and set down,

As best thou art experienc'd, since thou know'st Thy country's strength and weakness, thine own

ways; Whether to knock against the gates of Rome,

Or rudely visit them in parts remote, To fright them, ere destroy. But come in:

Let me commend thee first to those that shall Say yea to thy desires. A thousand welcomes!

And more a friend than e'er an enemy; Yet, Marcius, that was much. Your hand:

most welcome! [Exit CORIOLANUS and AUFIDIUS.]

First Serv. [Advancing.] Here's a strange alteration!

Sec. Serv. By my hand, I had thought to have stricken him with a cudgel; and yet my

mind gave me his clothes made a false report of him.

First Serv. What an arm he has! He turned me about with his finger and his thumb, as one would set up a top.

Sec. Serv. Nay, I knew by his face that there was something in him: he had, sir, a kind of face,

methought,—I cannot tell how to term it.

First Serv. He had so; looking as it were,—would I were hanged but I thought there was

more in him than I could think.

Sec. Serv. So did I, I'll be sworn: he is simply the rarest man i' the world.

First Serv. I think he is; but a greater soldier than he you wot on.

Sec. Serv. Who? my master?

First Serv. Nay, it's no matter for that.

Sec. Serv. Worth six on him.

First Serv. Nay, not so neither; but I take him to be the greater soldier.

Sec. Serv. Faith, look you, one cannot tell how to say that: for the defence of a town our general is excellent.

First Serv. Ay, and for an assault too.

Re-enter Third Servingman.

Third Serv. O slaves! I can tell you news; news, you rascals.

First Serv. What, what, what? let's partake.

Sec. Serv. I would not be a Roman, of all nations; I had as lief be a condemned man.

Third Serv. Wherefore? wherefore?

Sec. Serv. Why, here's he that was wont to thwack our general, Caius Marcius.

First Serv. Why do you say 'thwack our general?'

Third Serv. I do not say, 'thwack our general;' but he was always good enough for him.

Sec. Serv. Come, we are fellows and friends: he was ever too hard for him; I have heard him

say so himself.

First Serv. He was too hard for him,—directly to say the truth on't: before Corioli he scotched him and notched him like a carbonado.

Sec. Serv. An he had been cannibally given, he might have broiled and eaten him too.

First Serv. But, more of thy news.

Third Serv. Why, he is so made on here within, as if he were son and heir to Mars; set

at upper end o' the table; no question asked him by any of the senators, but they stand bald

before him. Our general himself makes a mistress of him; sanctifies himself with's hand, and turns

up the white o' the eye to his discourse. But the bottom of the news is, our general is cut i' the

middle, and but one half of what he was yesterday, for the other has half, by the entreaty and

grant of the whole table. He'll go, he says, and sowle the porter of Rome gates by the ears: he

will mow down all before him, and leave his passage polled.

Sec. Serv. And he's as like to do't as any man I can imagine.

Third Serv. Do't! he will do't; for—look you, sir—he has as many friends as enemies;

which friends, sir—as it were—durst not—look you, sir—show themselves—as we term it—his

friends, whilst he's in directitude.

First Serv. Directitude! what's that?

Sec. Serv. But when they shall see, sir, his crest up again, and the man in blood, they will out of their burrows, like conies after rain, and revel all with him. 228

First Serv. But when goes this forward?

Third Serv. To-morrow; to-day; presently. You shall have the drum struck up this afternoon; 'tis, as it were, a parcel of their feast, and to be executed ere they wipe their lips. 233

Sec. Serv. Why, then we shall have a stirring world again. This peace is nothing but to rust iron, increase tailors, and breed ballad-makers.

First Serv. Let me have war, say I; it exceeds peace as far as day does night; it's spritely, waking, audible, and full of vent. Peace is a very apoplexy, lethargy; muffled, deaf, sleepy, insensible; a getter of more bastard children than war's a destroyer of men. 242

Sec. Serv. 'Tis so: and as war, in some sort, may be said to be a ravisher, so it cannot be denied but peace is a great maker of cuckolds.

First Serv. Ay, and it makes men hate one another. 247

Third Serv. Reason: because they then less need one another. The wars for my money. I hope to see Romans as cheap as Volscians. They are rising, they are rising. 251

All. In, in, in, in! [Exeunt.]

SCENE VI.—Rome. A Public Place.

Enter SICINIUS and BRUTUS.

Sic. We hear not of him, neither need we fear him;

His remedies are tame i' the present peace And quietness o' the people, which before Were in wild hurry. Here do we make his friends 4

Blush that the world goes well, who rather had, Though they themselves did suffer by't, behold Dissentious numbers pestering streets, than see Our tradesmen singing in their shops and going About their functions friendly. 9

Enter MENENIUS.

Bru. We stood to't in good time. Is this Menenius?

Sic. 'Tis he, 'tis he. O! he is grown most kind Of late. Hail, sir!

Men. Hail to you both! 12

Sic. Your Coriolanus is not much miss'd But with his friends: the commonwealth doth stand,

And so would do, were he more angry at it.

Men. All's well; and might have been much better, if 16

He could have temporiz'd.

Sic. Where is he, hear you?

Men. Nay, I hear nothing: his mother and his wife

Hear nothing from him.

Enter three or four Citizens.

Citizens. The gods preserve you both!

Sic. Good den, our neighbours. 20

Bru. Good den to you all, good den to you all.

First Cit. Ourselves, our wives, and children, on our knees,

Are bound to pray for you both.

Sic. Live, and thrive!

Bru. Farewell, kind neighbours: we wish'd

Coriolanus 24

Had lov'd you as we did.

Citizens. Now the gods keep you!

Sic. Farewell, farewell. [Exeunt Citizens.]

Bru. This is a happier and more comely time

Than when these fellows ran about the streets

Crying confusion.

Bru. Caius Marcius was 29

A worthy officer i' the war; but insolent,

O'ercome with pride, ambitious past all think-

ing,

Self-loving,—

Sic. And affecting one sole throne, 32

Without assistance.

Men. I think not so.

Sic. We should by this, to all our lamentation,

If he had gone forth consul, found it so.

Bru. The gods have well prevented it, and

Rome 36

Sits safe and still without him.

Enter an Ædile.

Æd. Worthy tribunes,

There is a slave, whom we have put in prison,

Reports, the Volscies with two several powers

Are enter'd in the Roman territories, 40

And with the deepest malice of the war

Destroy what lies before them.

Men. 'Tis Aufidius,

Who, hearing of our Marcius' banishment,

Thrusts forth his horns again into the world; 44

Which were inshell'd when Marcius stood for

Rome,

And durst not once peep out.

Sic. Come, what talk you of Marcius?

Bru. Go see this rumourer whipp'd. It can-

not be 48

The Volscies dare break with us.

Men. Cannot be!

We have record that very well it can,

And three examples of the like have been

Within my age. But reason with the fellow, 52

Before you punish him, where he heard this,

Lest you shall chance to whip your information,

And beat the messenger who bids beware

Of what is to be dreaded.

Sic. Tell not me: 56

I know this cannot be.

Bru. Not possible.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. The nobles in great earnestness are

going

All to the senate-house: some news is come,

That turns their countenances.

Sic. 'Tis this slave.—60

Go whip him 'fore the people's eyes: his raising;

Nothing but his report.

Mess. Yes, worthy sir,

The slave's report is seconded; and more,

More fearful, is deliver'd.

Sic. What more fearful? 64

Mess. It spoke freely out of many mouths—

How probable I do not know—that Marcius,

Join'd with Aufidius, leads a power 'gainst

Rome,

And vows revenge as spacious as between 68

The young'st and oldest thing.

Sic. This is most likely.

Bru. Rais'd only, that the weaker sort may

wish

Good Marcius home again.

Sic. The very trick on't.

Men. This is unlikely: 72

He and Aufidius can no more atone,

Than violentest contrariety.

Enter another Messenger.

Sec. Mess. You are sent for to the senate:

A fearful army, led by Caius Marcius, 76

Associated with Aufidius, rages

Upon our territories; and have already

O'erborne their way, consum'd with fire, and

took 80

What lay before them.

Enter COMINIUS.

Com. O! you have made good work!

Men. What news? what news?

Com. You have help to ravish your own

daughters, and

To melt the city leads upon your pates,

To see your wives dishonour'd to your noses,—

Men. What's the news? what's the news? 85

Com. Your temples burned in their cement,

and

Your franchises, whereon you stood, confin'd

Into an auger's bore.

Men. Pray now, your news?—88

You have made fair work, I fear me. Pray, your

news?

If Marcius should be join'd with Volscians,—

Com. If! 91

He is their god: he leads them like a thing

Made by some other deity than Nature, 92

That shapes man better; and they follow him,

Against us brats, with no less confidence

Than boys pursuing summer butterflies,

Or butchers killing flies.

Men. You have made good work, 96

You, and your apron-men; you that stood so

much

Upon the voice of occupation and

The breath of garlic-eaters!

Com. He will shake

Your Rome about your ears.

Men. As Hercules 100

Did shake down mellow fruit. You have made

fair work!

Bru. But is this true, sir?

Com. Ay; and you'll look pale

Before you find it other. All the regions 104

Do smilingly revolt; and who resist

Are mock'd for valiant ignorance,

And perish constant fools. Who is't can blame

him?

Your enemies, and his, find something in him.

Men. We are all undone unless 108

The noble man have mercy.

Com. Who shall ask it?

The tribunes cannot do't for shame; the people

Deserve such pity of him as the wolf

Does of the shepherds: for his best friends, if

they 112

Should say, 'Be good to Rome,' they charg'd

him even

As those should do that had deserv'd his hate,

And therein show'd like enemies.

Men. 'Tis true:

If he were putting to my house the brand 116

That should consume it, I have not the face

To say, 'Beseech you, cease.'—You have made

fair hands,

You and your crafts! you have crafted fair!

Com. You have brought

A trembling upon Rome, such as was never 120

So incapable of help.

Sic. Say not we brought it.

Bru. How! Was it we? We lov'd him; but,

like beasts

And cowardly nobles, gave way unto your

clusters,

Who did hoot him out o' the city.

Com. But I fear 124

They'll roar him in again. Tullus Aufidius,

The second name of men, obeys his points

As if he were his officer: desperation

Is all the policy, strength, and defence, 128

That Rome can make against them.

Enter a troop of Citizens.

Men. Here come the clusters.

And is Aufidius with him? You are they

That made the air unwholesome, when you

cast

Your stinking greasy caps in hooting at 132

Coriolanus' exile. Now he's coming;

And not a hair upon a soldier's head

Which will not prove a whip: as many cox-

combs

As you threw caps up will he tumble down, 136

And pay you for your voices. 'Tis no matter;

If he could burn us all into one coal,

We have deserv'd it.

Citizens. Faith, we hear fearful news.

First Cit. For mine own part,

When I said banish him, I said 'twas pity. 141

Sec. Cit. And so did I.

Third Cit. And so did I; and, to say the

truth, so did very many of us. That we did we

did for the best; and though we willingly con-

sented to his banishment, yet it was against our

will.

Com. You're goodly things, you voices!

Men. You have made

Good work, you and your cry! Shall's to the

Capitol? 149

Com. O! ay; what else?

[Exeunt COMINIUS and MENENIUS.]

Sic. Go, masters, get you home; be not dis-

may'd:

A a

These are a side that would be glad to have 152
This true which they so seem to fear. Go home,
And show no sign of fear.

First Cit. The gods be good to us! Come,
masters, let's home. I ever said we were i' the
wrong when we banished him. 157

Sec. Cit. So did we all. But come, let's home.
[*Exeunt Citizens.*]

Bru. I do not like this news.

Sic. Nor I. 160

Bru. Let's to the Capitol. Would half my
wealth

Would buy this for a lie!

Sic. Pray let us go. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VII.—*A Camp at a small distance
from Rome.*

Enter AUFIDIUS and his Lieutenant.

Auf. Do they still fly to the Roman?
Lieu. I do not know what witchcraft's in
him, but

Your soldiers use him as the grace 'fore meat,
Their talk at table, and their thanks at end; 4
And you are darken'd in this action, sir,
Even by your own.

Auf. I cannot help it now,
Unless, by using means, I lame the foot
Of our design. He bears himself more proudlier,
Even to my person, than I thought he would 9
When first I did embrace him; yet his nature
In that's no changeling, and I must excuse
What cannot be amended.

Lieu. Yet, I wish, sir,— 12
I mean for your particular,—you had not
Join'd in commission with him; but either
Had borne the action of yourself, or else
To him had left it solely. 16

Auf. I understand thee well; and be thou
sure,
When he shall come to his account, he knows
not

What I can urge against him. Although it
seems,
And so he thinks, and is no less apparent 20
To the vulgar eye, that he bears all things fairly,
And shows good husbandry for the Volsian
state,
Fights dragon-like, and does achieve as soon
As draw his sword; yet he hath left undone 24
That which shall break his neck or hazard mine,
Whene'er we come to our account.

Lieu. Sir, I beseech you, think you he'll carry
Rome?

Auf. All places yield to him ere he sits down;
And the nobility of Rome are his: 29
The senators and patricians love him too:
The tribunes are no soldiers; and their people
Will be as rash in the repeal as hasty 32
To expel him thence. I think he'll be to Rome
As is the osprey to the fish, who takes it
By sovereignty of nature. First he was
A noble servant to them, but he could not 36
Carry his honours even; whether 'twas pride,
Which out of daily fortune ever taints
The happy man; whether defect of judgment,

To fail in the disposing of those chances 40
Which he was lord of; or whether nature,
Not to be other than one thing, not moving
From the casque to the cushion, but command-
ing peace

Even with the same austerity and garb 44
As he controll'd the war; but one of these,
As he hath spices of them all, not all,
For I dare so far free him, made him fear'd,
So hated, and so banish'd: but he has a merit 48
To choke it in the utterance. So our virtues
Lie in the interpretation of the time;
And power, unto itself most commendable,
Hath not a tomb so evident as a chair 52
To extol what it hath done.

One fire drives out one fire; one nail, one nail;
Rights by rights falter, strengths by strengths
do fail.

Come, let's away. When Caius, Rome is thine,
Thou art poor'st of all; then shortly art thou
mine. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT V

SCENE I.—*Rome. A Public Place.*

*Enter MENENIUS, COMINIUS, SICINIUS, BRUTUS,
and Others.*

Men. No, I'll not go: you hear what he hath
said
Which was sometime his general; who lov'd
him

In a most dear particular. He call'd me father:
But what o' that? Go, you that banish'd him; 4
A mile before his tent fall down, and knee
The way into his mercy. Nay, if he coy'd
To hear Cominius speak, I'll keep at home.
Com. He would not seem to know me.

Men. Do you hear? 8
Com. Yet one time he did call me by my
name.

I urg'd our old acquaintance, and the drops
That we have bled together. Coriolanus
He would not answer to; forbad all names; 12
He was a kind of nothing, titleless,
Till he had forg'd himself a name o' the fire
Of burning Rome.

Men. Why, so: you have made good work!
A pair of tribunes that have rack'd for Rome, 16
To make coals cheap: a noble memory!

Com. I minded him how royal 'twas to
pardon

When it was less expected: he replied,
It was a bare petition of a state 20
To one whom they had punish'd.

Men. Very well.
Could he say less?

Com. I offer'd to awaken his regard
For's private friends: his answer to me was, 24
He could not stay to pick them in a pile
Of noisome musty chaff: he said 'twas folly,
For one poor grain or two, to leave unburnt,
And still to nose the offence.

Men. For one poor grain or two! 28
I am one of those: his mother, wife, his child,
And this brave fellow too, we are the grains:
You are the musty chaff, and you are smelt

Above the moon. We must be burnt for you. 32
Sic. Nay, pray, be patient: if you refuse your
aid

In this so-never-needed help, yet do not
Upbraid's with our distress. But, sure, if you
Would be your country's pleader, your good
tongue, 36

More than the instant army we can make,
Might stop our countryman.

Men. No; I'll not meddle.

Sic. Pray you, go to him.

Men. What should I do? 40

Bru. Only make trial what your love can do

For Rome, towards Marcius.

Men. Well; and say that Marcius

Return me, as Cominius is return'd, 44

Unheard; what then?

But as a discontented friend, grief-shot

With his unkindness? say 't be so?

Sic. Yet your good will

Must have that thanks from Rome, after the

measure

As you intended well.

Men. I'll undertake it: 48

I think he'll hear me. Yet, to bite his lip,

And hum at good Cominius, much unhearts me.

He was not taken well; he had not din'd:

The veins unfill'd, our blood is cold, and then 52

We pout upon the morning, are unapt

To give or to forgive; but when we have stuff'd

These pipes and these conveyances of our blood

With wine and feeding, we have suppler souls 56

Than in our priest-like fasts: therefore, I'll

watch him

Till he be dieted to my request,

And then I'll set upon him.

Bru. You know the very road into his kind-
ness, 60

And cannot lose your way.

Men. Good faith, I'll prove him,
Speed how it will. I shall ere long have know-
ledge

Of my success. [*Exit.*]

Com. He'll never hear him.

Sic. Not?

Com. I tell you he does sit in gold, his eye 64

Red as 'twould burn Rome, and his injury

The gaoler to his pity. I kneel'd before him;

'Twas very faintly he said 'Rise;' dismiss'd me

Thus, with his speechless hand: what he would
do 68

He sent in writing after me; what he would not,

Bound with an oath to yield to his conditions:

So that all hope is vain

Unless his noble mother and his wife, 72

Who, as I hear, mean to solicit him

For mercy to his country. Therefore let's hence,

And with our fair entreaties haste them on. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*The Volsian Camp before Rome.
The Guards at their stations.*

Enter to them, MENENIUS.

First Guard. Stay! whence are you?

Sec. Guard. Stand! and go back.

Men. You guard like men; 'tis well; but, by
your leave,

I am an officer of state, and come
To speak with Coriolanus.

First Guard. From whence?

Men. From Rome.

First Guard. You may not pass; you must
return: our general 5

Will no more hear from thence.

Sec. Guard. You'll see your Rome embrac'd
with fire before

You'll speak with Coriolanus.

Men. Good my friends,

If you have heard your general talk of Rome, 9

And of his friends there, it is lots to blanks

My name hath touch'd your ears: it is Mene-
nius.

First Guard. Be it so; go back: the virtue of
your name 12

Is not here passable.

Men. I tell thee, fellow,

Thy general is my lover: I have been

The book of his good acts, whence men have
read

His fame unparallel'd, haply amplified; 16

For I have ever glorified my friends—

Of whom he's chief—with all the size that verity

Would without lapsing suffer: nay, sometimes,

Like to a bowl upon a subtle ground, 20

I have tumbled past the throw, and in his praise

Have almost stamp'd the leasing. Therefore,
fellow,

I must have leave to pass.

First Guard. Faith, sir, if you had told as
many lies in his behalf as you have uttered words
in your own, you should not pass here; no,
though it were as virtuous to lie as to live
chastely. Therefore go back. 28

Men. Prithee, fellow, remember my name is
Menenius, always factionary on the party of
your general.

Sec. Guard. Howsoever you have been his
liar—as you say you have—I am one that,
telling true under him, must say you cannot
pass. Therefore go back. 35

Men. Has he din'd, canst thou tell? for I
would not speak with him till after dinner.

First Guard. You are a Roman, are you?

Men. I am as thy general is. 39

First Guard. Then you should hate Rome, as
he does. Can you, when you have pushed out
your gates the very defender of them, and, in a
violent popular ignorance, given your enemy
your shield, think to front his revenges with the
easy groans of old women, the virginal palms of
your daughters, or with the palsied intercession
of such a decayed dotant as you seem to be?
Can you think to blow out the intended fire your
city is ready to flame in with such weak breath
as this? No, you are deceived; therefore, back
to Rome, and prepare for your execution: you
are condemned, our general has sworn you out
of reprieve and pardon. 53

Men. Sirrah, if thy captain knew I were here,
he would use me with estimation.

Sec. Guard. Come, my captain knows you not.

Men. I mean, thy general. 57
First Guard. My general cares not for you.
 Back, I say: go, lest I let forth your half-pint of
 blood; back, that's the utmost of your having:
 back. 61

Men. Nay, but, fellow, fellow,—

Enter CORIOLANUS and AUFIDIUS.

Cor. What's the matter?

Men. Now, you companion, I'll say an errand
 for you: you shall know now that I am in
 estimation; you shall perceive that a Jack
 guardant cannot office me from my son Corio-
 lanus: guess, but by my entertainment with
 him, if thou standest not i' the state of hanging,
 or of some death more long in spectatorship,
 and crueller in suffering; behold now presently,
 and swound for what's to come upon thee. [To
 CORIOLANUS.] The glorious gods sit in hourly
 synod about thy particular prosperity, and love
 thee no worse than thy old father Menenius
 does! O my son! my son! thou art preparing
 fire for us; look thee, here's water to quench it.
 I was hardly moved to come to thee; but being
 assured none but myself could move thee, I
 have been blown out of your gates with sighs;
 and conjure thee to pardon Rome, and thy
 petitionary countrymen. The good gods assuage
 thy wrath, and turn the dregs of it upon this
 varlet here; this, who, like a block, hath denied
 my access to thee. 85

Cor. Away!

Men. How! away!

Cor. Wife, mother, child, I know not. My
 affairs 88
 Are servanted to others: though I owe
 My revenge properly, my remission lies
 In Volscian breasts. That we have been familiar,
 Ingrate forgetfulness shall poison, rather 92
 Than pity note how much. Therefore, be gone:
 Mine ears against your suits are stronger than
 Your gates against my force. Yet, for I lov'd
 thee,

Take this along; I writ it for thy sake, 96
 [Gives a paper.]
 And would have sent it. Another word, Mene-
 nius,

I will not hear thee speak. This man, Aufidius,
 Was my belov'd in Rome: yet thou behold'st!
Auf. You keep a constant temper. 100

[*Exeunt CORIOLANUS and AUFIDIUS.*]
First Guard. Now, sir, is your name Menenius?
Sec. Guard. 'Tis a spell, you see, of much
 power. You know the way home again.

First Guard. Do you hear how we are shent
 for keeping your greatness back? 105
Sec. Guard. What cause, do you think, I
 have to swound?

Men. I neither care for the world, nor your
 general: for such things as you, I can scarce
 think there's any, ye're so slight. He that hath
 a will to die by himself fears it not from another.
 Let your general do his worst. For you, be that
 you are, long; and your misery increase with
 your age! I say to you, as I was said to, Away!
 [Exit.]

First Guard. A noble fellow, I warrant him.
Sec. Guard. The worthy fellow is our general:
 he is the rock, the oak not to be wind-shaken.
 [Exeunt.]

SCENE III.—The Tent of CORIOLANUS.

Enter CORIOLANUS, AUFIDIUS, and Others.

Cor. We will before the walls of Rome to-
 morrow
 Set down our host. My partner in this action,
 You must report to the Volscian lords, how
 plainly
 I have borne this business.

Auf. Only their ends 4
 You have respected; stopp'd your ears against
 The general suit of Rome; never admitted
 A private whisper; no, not with such friends
 That thought them sure of you.

Cor. This last old man, 8
 Whom with a crack'd heart I have sent to Rome,
 Lov'd me above the measure of a father;
 Nay, godded me indeed. Their latest refuge
 Was to send him; for whose old love I have, 12
 Though I show'd sourly to him, once more
 offer'd

The first conditions, which they did refuse,
 And cannot now accept, to grace him only
 That thought he could do more. A very little 16
 I have yielded to; fresh embassies and suits,
 Nor from the state, nor private friends, here-
 after

Will I lend ear to. [Shout within.] Ha! what
 shout is this?
 Shall I be tempted to infringe my vow 20
 In the same time 'tis made? I will not.

*Enter, in mourning habits, VIRGILIA, VOLUMNIA,
 leading young MARCIUS, VALERIA, and Atten-
 dants.*

My wife comes foremost; then the honour'd
 mould
 Wherein this trunk was fram'd, and in her hand
 The grandchild to her blood. But out, affec-
 tion! 24

All bond and privilege of nature, break!
 Let it be virtuous to be obstinate.
 What is that curtsy worth? or those doves' eyes,
 Which can make gods forsworn? I melt, and
 am not 28

Of stronger earth than others. My mother
 bows,

As if Olympus to a molehill should
 In supplication nod; and my young boy
 Hath an aspect of intercession, which 32
 Great nature cries, 'Deny not.' Let the Volscies
 Plough Rome, and harrow Italy; I'll never
 Be such a gosling to obey instinct, but stand
 As if a man were author of himself 36
 And knew no other kin.

Vir. My lord and husband!
Cor. These eyes are not the same I wore in
 Rome.

Vir. The sorrow that delivers us thus chang'd
 Makes you think so.

Cor. Like a dull actor now, 40
 I have forgot my part, and I am out,
 Even to a full disgrace. Best of my flesh,
 Forgive my tyranny; but do not say
 For that, 'Forgive our Romans.' O! a kiss 44
 Long as my exile, sweet as my revenge!
 Now, by the jealous queen of heaven, that kiss
 I carried from thee, dear, and my true lip
 Hath virgin'd it e'er since. You gods! I prate,
 And the most noble mother of the world 49
 Leave unsaluted. Sink, my knee, i' the earth;

[*Kneels.*]
 Of thy deep duty more impression show
 Than that of common sons.

Vol. O! stand up bless'd; 52
 Whilst, with no softer cushion than the flint,
 I kneel before thee, and unproperly
 Show duty, as mistaken all this while
 Between the child and parent. [Kneels.]

Cor. What is this? 56
 Your knees to me! to your corrected son!
 Then let the pebbles on the hungry beach
 Fillip the stars; then let the mutinous winds
 Strike the proud cedars 'gainst the fiery sun, 60
 Murd'ring impossibility, to make
 What cannot be, slight work.

Vol. Thou art my warrior;
 I help to frame thee. Do you know this lady?

Cor. The noble sister of Publicola, 64
 The moon of Rome; chaste as the icicle
 That's curdied by the frost from purest snow,
 And hangs on Dian's temple: dear Valeria!

Vol. This is a poor epitome of yours, 68
 [Pointing to the Child.]
 Which by the interpretation of full time
 May show like all yourself.

Cor. The god of soldiers,
 With the consent of supreme Jove, inform
 Thy thoughts with nobleness; that thou mayst
 prove 72
 To shame invulnerable, and stick i' the wars
 Like a great sea-mark, standing every flaw,
 And saving those that eye thee!

Vol. Your knee, sirrah.
Cor. That's my brave boy! 76
Vol. Even he, your wife, this lady, and my-
 self.

Are suitors to you.
Cor. I beseech you, peace:
 Or, if you'd ask, remember this before:
 The things I have forsworn to grant may never
 Be held by you denials. Do not bid me 81
 Dismiss my soldiers, or capitulate
 Again with Rome's mechanics: tell me not
 Wherein I seem unnatural: desire not 84
 To allay my rages and revenges with
 Your colder reasons.

Vol. O! no more, no more;
 You have said you will not grant us any thing;
 For we have nothing else to ask but that 88
 Which you deny already: yet we will ask;
 That, if you fail in our request, the blame
 May hang upon your hardness. Therefore,
 hear us.

Cor. Aufidius, and you Volscies, mark; for 92
 we'll

Hear nought from Rome in private. Your re-
 quest?
Vol. Should we be silent and not speak, our
 raiment

And state of bodies would bewray what life
 We have led since thy exile. Think with thyself
 How more unfortunate than all living women
 Are we come hither: since that thy sight, which 98
 should

Make our eyes flow with joy, hearts dance with
 comforts,
 Constrains them weep, and shake with fear and
 sorrow; 100

Making the mother, wife, and child to see
 The son, the husband, and the father tearing
 His country's bowels out. And to poor we
 Thine enmity's most capital: thou barr'st us 104
 Our prayers to the gods, which is a comfort
 That all but we enjoy; for how can we,
 Alas! how can we for our country pray,
 Whereto we are bound, together with thy vic-
 tory, 108

Whereto we are bound? Alack! or we must lose
 The country, our dear nurse, or else thy person,
 Our comfort in the country. We must find
 An evident calamity, though we had 112
 Our wish, which side should win; for either thou
 Must, as a foreign recreant, be led

With manacles through our streets, or else
 Triumphantly tread on thy country's ruin, 116
 And bear the palm for having bravely shed
 Thy wife and children's blood. For myself, son,
 I purpose not to wait on Fortune till

These wars determine: if I cannot persuade
 thee 120

Rather to show a noble grace to both parts
 Than seek the end of one, thou shalt no sooner
 March to assault thy country than to tread—
 Trust to't, thou shalt not—on thy mother's
 womb, 124

That brought thee to this world.
Vir. Ay, and mine,
 That brought you forth this boy, to keep your
 name
 Living to time.

Boy. A' shall not tread on me:
 I'll run away till I am bigger, but then I'll fight. 128

Cor. Not of a woman's tenderness to be,
 Requires nor child nor woman's face to see.
 I have sat too long. [Rising.]

Vol. Nay, go not from us thus.
 If it were so, that our request did tend 132
 To save the Romans, thereby to destroy
 The Volscies whom you serve, you might con-
 demn us,

As poisonous of your honour: no; our suit
 Is, that you reconcile them: while the Volscies
 May say, 'This mercy we have show'd;' the
 Romans, 137

'This we receiv'd;' and each in either side
 Give the all-hail to thee, and cry, 'Be bless'd
 For making up this peace!' Thou know'st, 140
 great son,

The end of war's uncertain; but this certain,
 That, if thou conquer Rome, the benefit
 Which thou shalt thereby reap is such a name