

Oppos'd against the act, bending his sword  
To his great master; who, thereat enrag'd,  
Flew on him, and amongst them fell'd him  
dead; 76  
But not without that harmful stroke, which  
since

Hath pluck'd him after.  
*Alb.* This shows you are above,  
You justicers, that these our nether crimes  
So speedily can venge! But, O poor Gloucester!  
Lost he his other eye?

*Mess.* Both, both, my lord. 81  
This letter, madam, craves a speedy answer;  
'Tis from your sister.

*Gon.* [*Aside.*] One way I like this well;  
But being widow, and my Gloucester with her,  
May all the building in my fancy pluck 85  
Upon my hateful life: another way,

This news is not so tart. [*To Messenger.*] I'll  
read and answer. [*Exit.*]

*Alb.* Where was his son when they did take  
his eyes? 88

*Mess.* Come with my lady hither.  
*Alb.* He is not here.

*Mess.* No, my good lord; I met him back  
again.

*Alb.* Knows he the wickedness?

*Mess.* Ay, my good lord; 'twas he inform'd  
against him, 92

And quit the house on purpose that their punish-  
ment

Might have the freer course.

*Alb.* Gloucester, I live  
To thank thee for the love thou show'dst the  
king, 94

And to revenge thine eyes. Come hither, friend:  
Tell me what more thou knowest. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*The French Camp, near Dover.*

*Enter KENT and a Gentleman.*

*Kent.* Why the King of France is so suddenly  
gone back know you the reason?

*Gent.* Something he left imperfect in the  
state, which since his coming forth is thought  
of; which imports to the kingdom so much fear  
and danger, that his personal return was most  
required and necessary. 7

*Kent.* Who hath he left behind him general?

*Gent.* The Marshal of France, Monsieur la  
Far.

*Kent.* Did your letters pierce the queen to  
any demonstration of grief? 12

*Gent.* Ay, sir; she took them, read them in  
my presence;

And now and then an ample tear trill'd down  
Her delicate cheek; it seem'd she was a queen  
Over her passion; who, most rebel-like, 16  
Sought to be king o'er her.

*Kent.* O! then it mov'd her.

*Gent.* Not to a rage; patience and sorrow  
strove

Who should express her goodliest. You have  
seen

Sunshine and rain at once; her smiles and tears  
Were like a better way; those happy smilets 21

That play'd on her ripe lip seem'd not to know  
What guests were in her eyes; which parted  
thence,

As pearls from diamonds dropp'd. In brief, 24  
Sorrow would be a rarity most belov'd,  
If all could so become it.

*Kent.* Made she no verbal question?

*Gent.* Faith, once or twice she heav'd the  
name of 'father'

Pantingly forth, as if it press'd her heart; 28  
Cried, 'Sisters! sisters! Shame of ladies! sisters!  
Kent! father! sisters! What, i' the storm? i' the  
night?

Let pity not be believed!' There she shook  
The holy water from her heavenly eyes, 32  
And clamour-moisten'd, then away she started  
To deal with grief alone.

*Kent.* It is the stars,  
The stars above us, govern our conditions;  
Else one self mate and make could not beget 36  
Such different issues. You spoke not with her  
since?

*Gent.* No.

*Kent.* Was this before the king return'd?

*Gent.* No, since.

*Kent.* Well, sir, the poor distress'd Lear's  
i' the town, 40

Who sometime, in his better tune, remembers  
What we are come about, and by no means  
Will yield to see his daughter.

*Gent.* Why, good sir?

*Kent.* A sovereign shame so elbows him: his  
own unkindness, 44

That stripp'd her from his benediction, turn'd  
her

To foreign casualties, gave her dear rights  
To his dog-hearted daughters,—these things  
sting

His mind so venomously that burning shame  
Detains him from Cordelia.

*Gent.* Alack! poor gentleman. 49

*Kent.* Of Albany's and Cornwall's powers  
you heard not?

*Gent.* 'Tis so, they are afoot.

*Kent.* Well, sir, I'll bring you to our master  
Lear, 52

And leave you to attend him. Some dear cause  
Will in concealment wrap me up awhile;  
When I am known aright, you shall not grieve  
Lending me this acquaintance. I pray you, go  
Along with me. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.—*The Same. A Tent.*

*Enter with drum and colours, CORDELIA, Doctor,  
and Soldiers.*

*Cor.* Alack! 'tis he: why, he was met even now  
As mad as the vex'd sea; singing aloud;  
Crown'd with rank fumiter and furrow weeds,  
With burdocks, hemlock, nettles, cuckoo-  
flowers, 4

Darnel, and all the idle weeds that grow  
In our sustaining corn. A century send forth;  
Search every acre in the high-grown field,  
And bring him to our eye. [*Exit an Officer.*]

What can man's wisdom 8

In the restoring his bereaved sense?  
He that helps him take all my outward worth.

*Doc.* There is means, madam;  
Our foster-nurse of nature is repose, 12  
The which he lacks; that to provoke in him,  
Are many simples operative, whose power  
Will close the eye of anguish.

*Cor.* All bless'd secrets,  
All you unpublish'd virtues of the earth, 16  
Spring with my tears! be aidant and remediate  
In the good man's distress! Seek, seek for him,  
Lest his ungovern'd rage dissolve the life  
That wants the means to lead it.

*Enter a Messenger.*

*Mess.* News, madam; 20  
The British powers are marching hitherward.

*Cor.* 'Tis known before; our preparation  
stands

In expectation of them. O dear father!  
It is thy business that I go about; 24  
Therefore great France  
My mourning and important tears hath pitied,  
No blown ambition doth our arms incite,  
But love, dear love, and our ag'd father's right,  
Soon may I hear and see him! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.—*A Room in GLOUCESTER'S Castle.*

*Enter REGAN and OSWALD.*

*Reg.* But are my brother's powers set forth?

*Osw.* Ay, madam.

*Reg.* Himself in person there?

*Osw.* Madam, with much ado:  
Your sister is the better soldier.

*Reg.* Lord Edmund spake not with your lord  
at home? 4

*Osw.* No, madam.

*Reg.* What might import my sister's letter  
to him?

*Osw.* I know not, lady.

*Reg.* Faith, he is posted hence on serious  
matter. 8

It was great ignorance, Gloucester's eyes being  
out,

To let him live; where he arrives he moves  
All hearts against us. Edmund, I think, is gone,  
In pity of his misery, to dispatch 12  
His nighted life; moreover, to descry  
The strength o' the enemy.

*Osw.* I must needs after him, madam, with  
my letter.

*Reg.* Our troops set forth to-morrow; stay  
with us, 16

The ways are dangerous.

*Osw.* I may not, madam;  
My lady charg'd my duty in this business.

*Reg.* Why should she write to Edmund?  
Might not you

Transport her purposes by word? Belike, 20  
Something—I know not what. I'll love thee  
much,

Let me unseal the letter.

*Osw.* Madam, I had rather—

*Reg.* I know your lady does not love her  
husband;

I am sure of that; and at her late being here 24  
She gave strange ceiliades and most speaking  
looks

To noble Edmund. I know you are of her bosom.

*Osw.* I, madam!

*Reg.* I speak in understanding; you are, I  
know't: 28

Therefore I do advise you, take this note:  
My lord is dead; Edmund and I have talk'd,  
And more convenient is he for my hand  
Than for your lady's. You may gather more. 32  
If you do find him, pray you, give him this,  
And when your mistress hears thus much from  
you,

I pray desire her call her wisdom to her:  
So, fare you well. 36

If you do chance to hear of that blind traitor,  
Preferment falls on him that cuts him off.  
*Osw.* Would I could meet him, madam: I  
would show

What party I do follow.

*Reg.* Fare thee well. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI.—*The Country near Dover.*

*Enter GLOUCESTER, and EDGAR dressed like a  
peasant.*

*Glo.* When shall I come to the top of that  
same hill?

*Edg.* You do climb up it now; look how we  
labour.

*Glo.* Methinks the ground is even.

*Edg.* Horrible steep:  
Hark! do you hear the sea? 4

*Glo.* No, truly.

*Edg.* Why, then your other senses grow im-  
perfect

By your eyes' anguish.

*Glo.* So may it be, indeed.

Methinks thy voice is alter'd, and thou speak'st  
In better phrase and matter than thou didst. 8

*Edg.* Y'are much deceiv'd; in nothing am I  
chang'd

But in my garments.

*Glo.* Methinks you're better spoken.

*Edg.* Come on, sir; here's the place: stand  
still.

How fearful 12

And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low!

The crows and choughs that wing the midway air  
Show scarce so gross as beetles; half way down  
Hangs one that gathers samphire, dreadful  
trade! 16

Methinks he seems no bigger than his head.

The fishermen that walk upon the beach  
Appear like mice, and yond tall anchoring bark  
Diminish'd to her cock, her cock a buoy 20  
Almost too small for sight. The murmuring  
surge,

That on the unnumber'd idle pebbles chafes,  
Cannot be heard so high. I'll look no more,  
Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight 24  
Topple down headlong.

*Glo.* Set me where you stand.

*Edg.* Give me your hand; you are now within  
a foot



Of the extreme verge: for all beneath the moon  
Would I not leap upright.

*Glo.* Let go my hand. 28  
Here, friend, 's another purse; in it a jewel  
Well worth a poor man's taking: fairies and  
gods

Prosper it with thee! Go thou further off;  
Bid me farewell, and let me hear thee going. 32  
*Edg.* Now fare you well, good sir.

*Glo.* With all my heart.  
*Edg.* Why I do trifle thus with his despair  
Is done to cure it.

*Glo.* O you mighty gods!  
This world I do renounce, and, in your sights, 36  
Shake patiently my great affliction off;  
If I could bear it longer, and not fall

To quarrel with your great opposeless wills,  
My snuff and loathed part of nature should 40  
Burn itself out. If Edgar live, O, bless him!  
Now fellow, fare thee well. [*He falls forward.*]

*Edg.* Gone, sir: farewell.  
[*Aside.*] And yet I know not how conceit may  
rob

The treasury of life when life itself 44  
Yields to the theft; had he been where he thought  
By this had thought been past. Alive or dead?  
[*To Gloucester.*] Ho, you sir! friend! Hear  
you, sir? speak!

Thus might he pass indeed; yet he revives. 48  
What are you, sir?

*Glo.* Away and let me die.  
*Edg.* Hadst thou been aught but gossamer,  
feathers, air,

So many fathom down precipitating,  
Thou'dst shiver'd like an egg; but thou dost  
breathe, 52

Hast heavy substance, bleed'st not, speak'st, art  
sound.

Ten masts at each make not the altitude  
Which thou hast perpendicularly fell:  
Thy life's a miracle. Speak yet again. 56

*Glo.* But have I fallen or no?  
*Edg.* From the dread summit of this chalky  
bourn.

Look up a-height; the shrill-gorg'd lark so far  
Cannot be seen or heard: do but look up. 60

*Glo.* Alack! I have no eyes.  
Is wretchedness depriv'd that benefit  
To end itself by death? 'Twas yet some comfort,  
When misery could beguile the tyrant's rage, 64  
And frustrate his proud will.

*Edg.* Give me your arm:  
Up: so. How is't? Feel you your legs? You  
stand.

*Glo.* Too well, too well.  
*Edg.* This is above all strangeness.  
Upon the crown o' the cliff, what thing was that  
Which parted from you?

*Glo.* A poor unfortunate beggar. 69  
*Edg.* As I stood here below methought his  
eyes

Were two full moons; he had a thousand noses,  
Horns whelk'd and wav'd like the enridged sea:  
It was some fiend; therefore, thou happy father,  
Think that the clearest gods, who make them  
honours

Of men's impossibilities, have preserv'd thee.  
*Glo.* I do remember now; henceforth I'll bear  
Affliction till it do cry out itself 77

'Enough, enough,' and die. That thing you  
speak of

I took it for a man; often 'twould say  
'The fiend, the fiend:' he led me to that place.  
*Edg.* Bear free and patient thoughts. But  
who comes here? 81

*Enter LEAR, fantastically dressed with  
flowers.*

The safer sense will ne'er accommodate  
His master thus.

*Lear.* No, they cannot touch me for coining;  
I am the king himself. 85

*Edg.* O thou side-piercing sight!  
*Lear.* Nature's above art in that respect.  
There's your press-money. That fellow handles  
his bow like a crow-keeper: draw me a clothier's  
yard. Look, look! a mouse. Peace, peace! 89

this piece of toasted cheese will do't. There's  
my gauntlet; I'll prove it on a giant. Bring  
up the brown bills. O! well flown, bird; i' the  
clout, i' the clout: hewgh! Give the word.

*Edg.* Sweet marjoram.  
*Lear.* Pass. 96

*Glo.* I know that voice.  
*Lear.* Ha! Goneril, with a white beard!  
They flatter'd me like a dog, and told me I had  
white hairs in my beard ere the black ones were  
there. To say 'ay' and 'no' to everything  
I said! 'Ay' and 'no' too was no good divi-  
nity. When the rain came to wet me once and  
the wind to make me chatter, when the thunder  
would not peace at my bidding, there I found  
'em, there I smelt 'em out. Go to, they are not  
men o' their words: they told me I was every  
thing; 'tis a lie, I am notague-proof. 108

*Glo.* The trick of that voice I do well re-  
member:

Is't not the king?

*Lear.* Ay, every inch a king:  
When I do stare, see how the subject quakes.  
I pardon that man's life. What was thy cause? 112  
Adultery?

Thou shalt not die: die for adultery! No:  
The wren goes to't, and the small gilded fly  
Does lecher in my sight. 116

Let copulation thrive; for Gloucester's bastard  
son

Was kinder to his father than my daughters  
Got 'twix the lawful sheets.

To't luxury, pell-mell! for I lack soldiers. 120  
Behold yond simpering dame,  
Whose face between her forks presageth snow;  
That minces virtue, and does shake the head  
To hear of pleasure's name; 124

The fitchew nor the soiled horse goes to't  
With a more riotous appetite.  
Down from the waist they are Centaurs,  
Though women all above: 128

But to the girdle do the gods inherit,  
Beneath is all the fiends':

There's hell, there's darkness, there is the sul-  
phurous pit, 131

Burning, scalding, stench, consumption; fie, fie,  
fie! pah, pah! Give me an ounce of civet, good  
apothecary, to sweeten my imagination: there's  
money for thee.

*Glo.* O! let me kiss that hand! 136  
*Lear.* Let me wipe it first; it smells of mor-  
tality.

*Glo.* O ruin'd piece of nature! This great  
world

Shall so wear out to nought. Dost thou know  
me? 139

*Lear.* I remember thine eyes well enough.  
Dost thou squiny at me? No, do thy worst,  
blind Cupid; I'll not love. Read thou this  
challenge; mark but the penning of it.

*Glo.* Were all the letters suns, I could not see.  
*Edg.* [*Aside.*] I would not take this from re-  
port; it is, 145

And my heart breaks at it.  
*Lear.* Read.

*Glo.* What! with the case of eyes? 148  
*Lear.* O, ho! are you there with me? No  
eyes in your head, nor no money in your purse?  
Your eyes are in a heavy case, your purse in a  
light: yet you see how this world goes. 152

*Glo.* I see it feelingly.  
*Lear.* What! art mad? A man may see how  
this world goes with no eyes. Look with thine  
ears: see how yond justice rails upon yon simple  
thief. Hark, in thine ear: change places; and,  
handy-dandy, which is the justice, which is the  
thief? Thou hast seen a farmer's dog bark at a  
beggar? 160

*Glo.* Ay, sir.  
*Lear.* And the creature run from the cur?  
There thou mightst behold the great image of  
authority; a dog's obey'd in office. 164

Thou rascal beadle, hold thy bloody hand!  
Why dost thou lash that whore? Strip thine  
own back;

Thou hotly lust'st to use her in that kind  
For which thou whipp'st her. The usurer hangs  
the cozener. 168

Through tatter'd clothes small vices do appear;  
Robes and furr'd gowns hide all. Plate sin with  
gold,

And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks;  
Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw doth pierce it.  
None does offend, none, I say none; I'll able  
'em: 173

Take that of me, my friend, who have the power  
To seal the accuser's lips. Get thee glass eyes;  
And, like a scurvy politician, seem 176

To see the things thou dost not. Now, now,  
now, now;

Pull off my boots; harder, harder; so.  
*Edg.* [*Aside.*] O! matter and impertinency  
mix'd; 180

Reason in madness!  
*Lear.* If thou wilt weep my fortunes, take  
my eyes;

I know thee well enough; thy name is Glouce-  
ster:

Thou must be patient; we came crying hither:  
Thou know'st the first time that we smell the air 184

We waul and cry. I will preach to thee: mark.

*Glo.* Alack! alack the day!  
*Lear.* When we are born, we cry that we are  
come

To this great stage of fools. This' a good block!  
It were a delicate stratagem to shoe 189

A troop of horse with felt; I'll put it in proof,  
And when I have stol'n upon these sons-in-law,  
Then, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill! 192

*Enter Gentleman, with Attendants.*  
*Gent.* O! here he is; lay hand upon him. Sir,  
Your most dear daughter—

*Lear.* No rescue? What! a prisoner? I am  
even

The natural fool of fortune. Use me well; 196  
You shall have ransom. Let me have surgeons;  
I am cut to the brains.

*Gent.* You shall have any thing.  
*Lear.* No seconds? All myself?  
Why this would make a man a man of salt, 200  
To use his eyes for garden water-pots,  
Ay, and laying autumn's dust.

*Gent.* Good sir,—  
*Lear.* I will die bravely as a bridegroom.  
What!

I will be jovial: come, come; I am a king, 204  
My masters, know you that?

*Gent.* You are a royal one, and we obey you.  
*Lear.* Then there's life in it. Nay, an you  
get it, you shall get it by running. Sa, sa, sa, sa.  
[*Exit. Attendants follow.*]

*Gent.* A sight most pitiful in the meanest  
wretch, 209

Past speaking of in a king! Thou hast one  
daughter,

Who redeems nature from the general curse  
Which twain have brought her to. 212

*Edg.* Hail, gentle sir!  
*Gent.* Sir, speed you: what's your will?  
*Edg.* Do you hear aught, sir, of a battle  
toward?

*Gent.* Most sure and vulgar; every one hears  
that,

Which can distinguish sound.  
*Edg.* But, by your favour, 216

How near's the other army?  
*Gent.* Near, and on speedy foot; the main  
descry

Stands on the hourly thought.  
*Edg.* I thank you, sir: that's all.  
*Gent.* Though that the queen on special cause  
is here, 220

Her army is mov'd on.  
*Edg.* I thank you, sir.  
[*Exit Gentleman.*]

*Glo.* You ever-gentle gods, take my breath  
from me:

Let not my worsser spirit tempt me again  
To die before you please!

*Edg.* Well pray you, father. 224  
*Glo.* Now, good sir, what are you?  
*Edg.* A most poor man, made tame to for-  
tune's blows;

Who, by the art of known and feeling sorrows,  
Am pregnant to good pity. Give me your hand  
I'll lead you to some biding.



*Glo.* The bounty and the benison of heaven  
To boot, and boot!

*Enter OSWALD.*

*Osw.* A proclaim'd prize! Most happy!  
That eyeless head of thine was first fram'd flesh  
To raise my fortunes. Thou old unhappy  
traitor,  
Briefly thyself remember: the sword is out  
That must destroy thee.

*Glo.* Now let thy friendly hand  
Put strength enough to 't. [*EDGAR interposes.*]  
*Osw.* Wherefore, bold peasant, 236  
Darest thou support a publish'd traitor? Hence;  
Lest that infection of his fortune take  
Like hold on thee. Let go his arm.

*Edg.* Chill not let go, zur, without vurther  
'casion. 241

*Osw.* Let go, slave, or thou diest.  
*Edg.* Good gentleman, go your gait, and let  
poor volk pass. An chud ha' bin zwaggered  
out of my life, 'twould not ha' bin zo long as  
'tis by a vortnight. Nay, come not near th' old  
man; keep out, che vor ye, or ise try whether  
your costard or my ballow be the harder. Chill  
be plain with you. 249

*Osw.* Out, dunghill!  
*Edg.* Chill pick your teeth, zur. Come; no  
matter vor your foins. 252

[*They fight and EDGAR knocks him down.*]  
*Osw.* Slave, thou hast slain me. Villain, take  
my purse.

If ever thou wilt thrive, bury my body;  
And give the letters which thou find'st about me  
To Edmund Earl of Gloucester; seek him out  
Upon the English party: O! untimely death. 257

[*Dies.*]  
*Edg.* I know thee well: a serviceable villain;  
As duteous to the vices of thy mistress  
As badness would desire.

*Glo.* What! is he dead? 260  
*Edg.* Sit you down, father; rest you.  
Let's see his pockets: these letters that he speaks  
of

May be my friends. He's dead; I am only sorry  
He had no other deaths-man. Let us see: 264  
Leave, gentle wax; and, manners, blame us not:  
To know our enemies' minds, we'd rip their  
hearts;  
Their papers, is more lawful.

Let our reciprocal vows be remembered. You  
have many opportunities to cut him off; if  
your will want not, time and place will be  
fruitfully offered. There is nothing done if he  
return the conqueror; then am I the prisoner,  
and his bed my goal; from the loathed warmth  
whereof deliver me, and supply the place for  
your labour.

Your—wife, so I would say—  
Affectionate servant, 276

*GONERIL.*  
O undistinguish'd space of woman's will!  
A plot upon her virtuous husband's life, 280  
And the exchange my brother! Here, in the  
sands,

Thee I'll rake up, the post unsanctified  
Of murderous lechers; and in the mature time  
With this ungracious paper strike the sight 284  
Of the death-practis'd duke. For him 'tis well  
That of thy death and business I can tell.

*Glo.* The king is mad: how stiff is my vile  
sense,  
That I stand up, and have ingenious feeling 288  
Of my huge sorrows! Better I were distract:  
So should my thoughts be sever'd from my  
griefs,

And woes by wrong imaginations lose  
The knowledge of themselves. [*Drums afar off.*]  
*Edg.* Give me your hand: 292  
Far off, methinks, I hear the beaten drum.  
Come, father, I'll bestow you with a friend.  
[*Exeunt.*]

#### SCENE VII.—A Tent in the French Camp.

*Enter CORDELIA, KENT, Doctor, and Gentleman.*

*Cor.* O thou good Kent! how shall I live and  
work  
To match thy goodness? My life will be too  
short,  
And every measure fail me.

*Kent.* To be acknowledg'd, madam, is o'er-  
paid. 4

All my reports go with the modest truth,  
Nor more nor clipp'd, but so.

*Cor.* Be better suited:  
These weeds are memories of those worser  
hours:

I prithee, put them off.  
*Kent.* Pardon me, dear madam; 8  
Yet to be known shortens my made intent:  
My boon I make it that you know me not  
Till time and I think meet.

*Cor.* Then be't so, my good lord.—[*To the  
Doctor.*] How does the king? 12

*Doc.* Madam, sleeps still.  
*Cor.* O you kind gods,

Cure this great breach in his abused nature!  
The untun'd and jarring senses, O! wind up 16  
Of this child-changed father!

*Doc.* So please your majesty  
That we may wake the king? he hath slept long.

*Cor.* Be govern'd by your knowledge, and  
proceed  
I' the sway of your own will. Is he array'd? 20

*Enter LEAR in his chair, carried by  
Servants.*

*Gent.* Ay, madam; in the heaviness of sleep,  
We put fresh garments on him.

*Doc.* Be by, good madam, when we do awake  
him;

I doubt not of his temperance.

*Cor.* Very well. [*Music.*]  
*Doc.* Please you, draw near. Louder the  
music there. 25

*Cor.* O my dear father! Restoration, hang  
Thy medicine on my lips, and let this kiss  
Repair those violent harms that my two sisters  
Have in thy reverence made!

*Kent.* Kind and dear princess! 29

*Cor.* Had you not been their father, these  
white flakes

Had challeng'd pity of them. Was this a face  
To be expos'd against the warring winds? 32  
To stand against the deep dread-bolted thunder?  
In the most terrible and nimble stroke  
Of quick cross lightning? to watch—poor  
perdu!

With this thin helm? Mine enemy's dog, 36  
Though he had bit me, should have stood that  
night

Against my fire. And wast thou fain, poor  
father,

To hovel thee with swine and rogues forlorn,  
In short and musty straw? Alack, alack! 40  
'Tis wonder that thy life and wits at once  
Had not concluded all. He wakes; speak to  
him.

*Doc.* Madam, do you; 'tis fittest.

*Cor.* How does my royal lord? How fares  
your majesty? 44

*Lear.* You do me wrong to take me out o'  
the grave;

Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound  
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears  
Do scald like molten lead.

*Cor.* Sir, do you know me? 48

*Lear.* You are a spirit, I know; when did  
you die?

*Cor.* Still, still, far wide.

*Doc.* He's scarce awake; let him alone awhile.

*Lear.* Where have I been? Where am I? Fair  
day-light? 52

I am mightily abus'd. I should even die with  
pity

To see another thus. I know not what to say.  
I will not swear these are my hands: let's see;  
I feel this pin prick. Would I were assur'd 56  
Of my condition!

*Cor.* O! look upon me, sir,  
And hold your hands in benediction o'er me.

No, sir, you must not kneel.

*Lear.* Pray, do not mock me:  
I am a very foolish fond old man, 60

Fourscore and upward, not an hour more or  
less;

And, to deal plainly,  
I fear I am not in my perfect mind.

Methinks I should know you and know this  
man; 64

Yet I am doubtful: for I am mainly ignorant  
What place this is, and all the skill I have  
Remembers not these garments; nor I know not  
Where I did lodge last night. Do not laugh at  
me; 68

For, as I am a man, I think this lady  
To be my child Cordelia.

*Cor.* And so I am, I am.

*Lear.* Be your tears wet? Yes, faith. I pray,  
weep not:

If you have poison for me, I will drink it. 72  
I know you do not love me; for your sisters  
Have, as I do remember, done me wrong:  
You have some cause, they have not.

*Cor.* No cause, no cause.

*Lear.* Am I in France?

*Kent.* In your own kingdom, sir.

*Lear.* Do not abuse me. 77

*Doc.* Be comforted, good madam; the great  
rage,

You see, is kill'd in him; and yet it is danger  
To make him even o'er the time he has lost. 80  
Desire him to go in; trouble him no more  
Till further settling.

*Cor.* Will't please your highness walk?

*Lear.* You must bear with me.  
Pray you now, forget and forgive: I am old and  
foolish. [*Exeunt LEAR, CORDELIA, DOC-  
tor, and Attendants.*]

*Gent.* Holds it true, sir, that the Duke of  
Cornwall was so slain?

*Kent.* Most certain, sir.

*Gent.* Who is conductor of his people? 88

*Kent.* As 'tis said, the bastard son of Gloucester.

*Gent.* They say Edgar, his banished son, is  
with the Earl of Kent in Germany.

*Kent.* Report is changeable. 'Tis time to  
look about; the powers of the kingdom  
approach apace. 94

*Gent.* The arbitrement is like to be bloody.  
Fare you well, sir. [*Exit.*]

*Kent.* My point and period will be thoroughly  
wrought, 97

Or well or ill, as this day's battle's fought.  
[*Exit.*]

#### ACT V

##### SCENE I.—The British Camp near Dover.

*Enter, with drum and colours, EDMUND, REGAN,  
Officers, Soldiers, and Others.*

*Edm.* Know of the duke if his last purpose  
hold,

Or whether since he is advis'd by aught  
To change the course; he's full of alteration  
And self-reproving; bring his constant pleasure.

[*To an Officer, who goes out.*]  
*Reg.* Our sister's man is certainly miscarried.

*Edm.* 'Tis to be doubted, madam.

*Reg.* Now, sweet lord,  
You know the goodness I intend upon you:

Tell me, but truly, but then speak the truth, 8  
Do you not love my sister?

*Edm.* In honour'd love.

*Reg.* But have you never found my brother's  
way

To the forefended place?

*Edm.* That thought abuses you.

*Reg.* I am doubtful that you have been con-  
junct 12

And bosom'd with her, as far as we call hers.

*Edm.* No, by mine honour, madam.

*Reg.* I never shall endure her: dear my lord,  
Be not familiar with her.

*Edm.* Fear me not. 16  
She and the duke her husband!

*Enter with drums and colours, ALBANY,  
GONERIL, and Soldiers.*

*Gon.* [*Aside.*] I had rather lose the battle  
than that sister



Should loosen him and me.

*Alb.* Our very loving sister, well be-met. 20  
Sir, this I heard, the king is come to his daughter,  
With others; whom the rigour of our state  
Forc'd to cry out. Where I could not be honest  
I never yet was valiant: for this business, 24  
It toucheth us, as France invades our land,  
Not bolds the king, with others, whom, I fear,  
Most just and heavy causes make oppose.

*Edm.* Sir, you speak nobly.

*Reg.* Why is this reason'd? 28

*Gon.* Combine together 'gainst the enemy;  
For these domestic and particular broils  
Are not the question here.

*Alb.* Let's then determine  
With the ancient of war on our proceeding. 32

*Edm.* I shall attend you presently at your tent.

*Reg.* Sister, you'll go with us?

*Gon.* No.

*Reg.* 'Tis most convenient; pray you, go  
with us. 36

*Gon.* [*Aside.*] O, ho! I know the riddle.  
[*Aloud.*] I will go.

*Enter EDGAR, disguised.*

*Edg.* If e'er your Grace had speech with man  
so poor,  
Hear me one word.

*Alb.* I'll overtake you. Speak.  
[*Exeunt EDMUND, REGAN, GONERIL, Officers,  
Soldiers, and Attendants.*]

*Edg.* Before you fight the battle, ope this  
letter. 40

If you have victory, let the trumpet sound  
For him that brought it: wretched though I  
seem,

I can produce a champion that will prove  
What is avouched there. If you miscarry, 44  
Your business of the world hath so an end,  
And machination ceases. Fortune love you!

*Alb.* Stay till I have read the letter.

*Edg.* I was forbid it.  
When time shall serve, let but the herald cry, 48  
And I'll appear again.

*Alb.* Why, fare thee well: I will o'erlook thy  
paper. [*Exit EDGAR.*]

*Re-enter EDMUND.*

*Edm.* The enemy's in view; draw up your  
powers.

Here is the guess of their true strength and  
forces 52

By diligent discovery; but your haste  
Is now urg'd on you.

*Alb.* We will greet the time. [*Exit.*]

*Edm.* To both these sisters have I sworn my  
love;

Each jealous of the other, as the stung 56  
Are of the adder. Which of them shall I take?  
Both? one? or neither? Neither can be enjoy'd  
If both remain alive: to take the widow

Exasperates, makes mad her sister Goneril; 60  
And hardly shall I carry out my side,  
Her husband being alive. Now then, we'll use  
His countenance for the battle; which being done  
Let her who would be rid of him devise 64

His speedy taking off. As for the mercy  
Which he intends to Lear, and to Cordelia,  
The battle done, and they within our power,  
Shall never see his pardon; for my state 68  
Stands on me to defend, not to debate. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.—*A Field between the two Camps.*

*Alarum within. Enter, with drum and colours,  
LEAR, CORDELIA, and their Forces; and exeunt.*

*Enter EDGAR and GLOUCESTER.*

*Edg.* Here, father, take the shadow of this  
tree

For your good host; pray that the right may thrive.  
If ever I return to you again,

I'll bring you comfort.

*Glo.* Grace go with you, sir! 4  
[*Exit EDGAR.*]

*Alarum; afterwards a retreat. Re-enter*

*EDGAR.*

*Edg.* Away, old man! give me thy hand:  
away!

King Lear hath lost, he and his daughter ta'en.  
Give me thy hand; come on.

*Glo.* No further, sir; a man may rot even  
here. 8

*Edg.* What! in ill thoughts again? Men must  
endure

Their going hence, even as their coming hither:  
Ripeness is all. Come on.

*Glo.* And that's true too.  
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*The British Camp, near Dover.*

*Enter, in conquest, with drum and colours,  
EDMUND; LEAR and CORDELIA, prisoners;  
Officers, Soldiers, &c.*

*Edm.* Some officers take them away: good  
guard,

Until their greater pleasures first be known  
That are to censure them.

*Cor.* We are not the first  
Who, with best meaning, have incurr'd the  
worst. 4

For thee, oppressed king, am I cast down;  
Myself could else out-frown false Fortune's  
frown.

Shall we not see these daughters and these  
sisters?

*Lear.* No, no, no, no! Come, let's away to  
prison; 8

We two alone will sing like birds i' the cage:  
When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down,  
And ask of thee forgiveness: so we'll live,  
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and  
laugh 12

At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues  
Talk of court news; and we'll talk with them  
too,

Who loses and who wins; who's in, who's out;  
And take upon's the mystery of things, 16

As if we were God's spies; and we'll wear out,  
In a wall'd prison, packs and sets of great ones  
That ebb and flow by the moon.

*Edm.*

Take them away. In his own grace he doth exalt himself 68  
*Lear.* Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia, 20  
The gods themselves throw incense. Have I  
caught thee?

He that parts us shall bring a brand from heaven,  
And fire us hence like foxes. Wipe thine eyes;  
The gowjeres shall devour them, flesh and fell, 24  
Ere they shall make us weep: we'll see 'em starve  
first.

*Come. [Exeunt LEAR and CORDELIA, guarded.*

*Edm.* Come hither, captain; hark,  
Take thou this note; [*Giving a paper.*] go follow  
them to prison: 28

One step I have advanc'd thee; if thou dost  
As this instructs thee, thou dost make thy way  
To noble fortunes; know thou this, that men  
Are as the time is; to be tender-minded 32

Does not become a sword; thy great employ-  
ment

Will not bear question; either say thou'lt do't,  
Or thrive by other means.

*Offi.*

I'll do't, my lord.  
*Edm.* About it; and write happy when thou  
hast done. 36

*Mark.*—I say, instantly, and carry it so  
As I have set it down.

*Offi.* I cannot draw a cart nor eat dried oats;  
If it be man's work I will do it. [*Exit.*]

*Flourish.*

*Enter ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN,  
Officers, and Attendants.*

*Alb.* Sir, you have show'd to-day your valiant  
strain, 41

And fortune led you well; you have the captives  
Who were the opposites of this day's strife;

We do require them of you, so to use them 44  
As we shall find their merits and our safety  
May equally determine.

*Edm.* Sir, I thought it fit  
To send the old and miserable king  
To some retention, and appointed guard; 48

Whose age has charms in it, whose title more,  
To pluck the common bosom on his side,  
And turn our impress'd lances in our eyes  
Which do command them. With him I sent the  
queen; 52

My reason all the same; and they are ready  
To-morrow, or at further space, to appear  
Where you shall hold your session. At this time  
We sweat and bleed; the friend hath lost his  
friend, 56

And the best quarrels, in the heat, are curs'd  
By those that feel their sharpness;

The question of Cordelia and her father  
Requires a fitter place.

*Alb.* Sir, by your patience, 60  
I hold you but a subject of this war,  
Not as a brother.

*Reg.* That's as we list to grace him:  
Methinks our pleasure might have been de-  
manded,

Ere you had spoke so far. He led our powers, 64  
Bore the commission of my place and person;  
The which immediacy may well stand up,  
And call itself your brother.

*Gon.* Not so hot;

Take them away. In his own grace he doth exalt himself 68  
More than in your addition.

*Reg.* In my rights,  
By me invested, he compeers the best.

*Gon.* That were the most, if he should hus-  
band you.

*Reg.* Jesters do oft prove prophets.  
*Gon.* Holla, holla! 72

That eye that told you so look'd but a-squint.  
*Reg.* Lady, I am not well; else I should  
answer

From a full-flowing stomach. General,  
Take thou my soldiers, prisoners, patrimony; 76  
Dispose of them, of me; the walls are thine;  
Witness the world, that I create thee here  
My lord and master.

*Gon.* Mean you to enjoy him?  
*Alb.* The let-alone lies not in your good  
will. 80

*Edm.* Nor in thine, lord.  
*Alb.* Half-blooded fellow, yes.

*Reg.* [*To EDMUND.*] Let the drum strike, and  
prove my title thine.

*Alb.* Stay yet; hear reason. Edmund, I arrest  
thee

On capital treason; and, in thy arrest, 84  
This gilded serpent. [*Pointing to GONERIL.*] For  
your claim, fair sister,  
I bar it in the interest of my wife;  
'Tis she is sub-contracted to this lord,  
And I, her husband, contradict your bans. 88  
If you will marry, make your love to me,  
My lady is bespoke.

*Gon.* An interlude!

*Alb.* Thou art arm'd, Gloucester; let the  
trumpet sound:

If none appear to prove upon thy person 92  
Thy heinous, manifest, and many treasons,  
There is my pledge; [*Throws down a glove.*] I'll  
prove it on thy heart,

Ere I taste bread, thou art in nothing less  
Than I have here proclaim'd thee.

*Reg.* Sick! O sick! 96

*Gon.* [*Aside.*] If not, I'll ne'er trust medicine.  
*Edm.* There's my exchange: [*Throws down  
a glove.*] what in the world he is

That names me traitor, villain-like he lies.  
Call by thy trumpet: he that dares approach,  
On him, on you, who not? I will maintain 101  
My truth and honour firmly.

*Alb.* A herald, ho!

*Edm.* A herald, ho! a herald!

*Alb.* Trust to thy single virtue; for thy sol-  
diers, 104

All levied in my name, have in my name  
Took their discharge.

*Reg.* My sickness grows upon me.

*Alb.* She is not well; convey her to my tent.  
[*Exit REGAN, led.*]

Come hither, herald,

*Enter a Herald.*

Let the trumpet sound,— 108  
And read out this.

*Offi.* Sound, trumpet! [*A trumpet sounds.*]



Her. If any man of quality or degree within the lists of the army will maintain upon Edmund, supposed Earl of Gloucester, that he is a manifold traitor, let him appear at the third sound of the trumpet. He is bold in his defence.

Edm. Sound!

Her. Again!

Her. Again!

[First Trumpet.

Her. Again!

[Third Trumpet.

[Trumpet answers within.

Enter EDGAR, armed, with a Trumpet before him.

Alb. Ask him his purposes, why he appears Upon this call o' the trumpet.

Her. What are you? 121  
Your name? your quality? and why you answer This present summons?

Edg. Know, my name is lost;  
By treason's tooth bare-gnawn and canker-bit:  
Yet am I noble as the adversary 125  
I come to cope.

Alb. Which is that adversary?

Edg. What's he that speaks for Edmund Earl of Gloucester?

Edm. Himself: what sayst thou to him?

Edg. Draw thy sword, 128  
That, if my speech offend a noble heart,  
Thy arm may do thee justice; here is mine:  
Behold, it is the privilege of mine honours,  
My oath, and my profession: I protest, 132  
Maugre thy strength, youth, place, and eminence,

Despite thy victor sword and fire-new fortune,  
Thy valour and thy heart, thou art a traitor,  
False to thy gods, thy brother, and thy father,  
Conspirant 'gainst this high illustrious prince,  
And, from the extremest upward of thy head  
To the descent and dust below thy foot,  
A most toad-spotted traitor. Say thou 'No,' 140  
This sword, this arm, and my best spirits are bent

To prove upon thy heart, whereto I speak,  
Thou liest.

Edm. In wisdom I should ask thy name;  
But since thy outside looks so fair and war-like,  
And that thy tongue some say of breeding breathes, 145

What safe and nicely I might well delay  
By rule of knighthood, I disdain and spurn;  
Back do I toss these treasons to thy head, 148  
With the hell-hated lie o'erwhelm thy heart,  
Which, for they yet glance by and scarcely bruise,

This sword of mine shall give them instant way,  
Where they shall rest for ever. Trumpets, speak! 152

[Alarums. They fight. EDMUND falls.

Alb. Save him, save him!

Gon. This is practice, Gloucester:

By the law of arms thou wast not bound to answer

An unknown opposite; thou art not vanquish'd,  
But cozen'd and beguil'd.

Alb. Shut your mouth, dame, 156

Or with this paper shall I stop it. Hold, sir;

Thou worse than any name, read thine own evil:  
No tearing, lady; I perceive you know it.

[Gives the letter to EDMUND.

Gon. Say, if I do, the laws are mine, not thine: 160

Who can arraign me for't?

Most monstrous!

Know'st thou this paper?

Edm. Ask me not what I know.

Alb. Go after her: she's desperate; govern her.

[Exit an Officer.

Edm. What you have charg'd me with, that have I done, 164

And more, much more; the time will bring it out:

'Tis past, and so am I. But what art thou  
That hast this fortune on me? If thou'rt noble,  
I do forgive thee.

Edg. Let's exchange charity. 168

I am no less in blood than thou art, Edmund;  
If more, the more thou hast wrong'd me.

My name is Edgar, and thy father's son.

The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices 172  
Make instruments to plague us:

The dark and vicious place where thee he got  
Cost him his eyes.

Edm. Thou hast spoken right, 'tis true;  
The wheel is come full circle; I am here. 176

Alb. Methought thy very gait did prophesy  
A royal nobleness: I must embrace thee:

Let sorrow split my heart, if ever I  
Did hate thee or thy father.

Edg. Worthy prince, I know't. 180

Alb. Where have you hid yourself?  
How have you known the miseries of your father?

Edg. By nursing them, my lord. List a brief tale;

And, when 'tis told, O! that my heart would burst, 184

The bloody proclamation to escape  
That follow'd me so near,—O! our lives' sweet-

ness,  
That we the pain of death would hourly die  
Rather than die at once!—taught me to shift 188

Into a madman's rags, to assume a semblance  
That very dogs disdain'd: and in this habit

Met I my father with his bleeding rings,  
Their precious stones new lost; became his

guide, 192  
Led him, begg'd for him, sav'd him from despair;

Never,—O fault!—reveal'd myself unto him,  
Until some half hour past, when I was arm'd;

Not sure, though hoping, of this good success,  
I ask'd his blessing, and from first to last 197

Told him my pilgrimage: but his flaw'd heart,—  
Alack! too weak the conflict to support;

'Twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief,  
Burst smilingly.

Edm. This speech of yours hath mov'd me,  
And shall perchance do good; but speak you on;

You look as you had something more to say.  
Alb. If there be more, more woeful, hold it in; 204

For I am almost ready to dissolve,  
Hearing of this.

Edg. This would have seem'd a period  
To such as love not sorrow; but another,

To amplify too much, would make much more,  
And top extremity. 209

Whilst I was big in clamour came there a man,  
Who, having seen me in my worst estate,

Shunn'd my abhor'd society; but then, finding  
Who 'twas that so endur'd, with his strong arms

He fasten'd on my neck, and bellow'd out  
As he'd burst heaven; threw him on my father;

Told the most piteous tale of Lear and him 216  
That ever ear receiv'd; which in recounting  
His grief grew puissant, and the strings of life

Began to crack: twice then the trumpet sounded,  
And there I left him tranc'd.

Alb. But who was this? 220

Edg. Kent, sir, the banish'd Kent; who in  
disguise

Follow'd his enemy king, and did him service  
Improper for a slave.

Enter a Gentleman, with a bloody knife.

Gent. Help, help! O help!

Edg. What kind of help?

Alb. Speak, man. 224

Edg. What means that bloody knife?

Gent. 'Tis hot, it smokes;

It came even from the heart of—O! she's dead.  
Alb. Who dead? speak, man.

Gent. Your lady, sir, your lady: and her sister 228

By her is poison'd; she confesses it.  
Edm. I was contracted to them both: all three

Now marry in an instant.

Edg. Here comes Kent.  
Alb. Produce the bodies, be they alive or dead: 232

This judgment of the heavens, that makes us tremble,

Touches us not with pity. [Exit Gentleman.

Enter KENT.

O! is this he?

The time will not allow the compliment  
Which very manners urges.

Kent. I am come 236  
To bid my king and master aye good-night;  
Is he not here?

Alb. Great thing of us forgot!  
Speak, Edmund, where's the king? and where's

Cordelia?

Seest thou this object, Kent? 240

[The bodies of GONERIL and REGAN are brought in.

Kent. Alack! why thus?

Edm. Yet Edmund was belov'd:  
The one the other poison'd for my sake,

And after slew herself.

Alb. Even so. Cover their faces. 244

Edm. I pant for life: some good I mean to do  
Despite of mine own nature. Quickly send,  
Be brief in it, to the castle; for my writ  
Is on the life of Lear and on Cordelia. 248

Nay, send in time.

Alb. Run, run! O run!

Edg. To whom, my lord? Who has the office?

send  
Thy token of reprieve.

Edm. Well thought on: take my sword, 252

Give it the captain.

Alb. Haste thee, for thy life.

[Exit EDGAR.

Edm. He hath commission from thy wife and me

To hang Cordelia in the prison, and  
To lay the blame upon her own despair, 256

That she fordid herself.

Alb. The gods defend her! Bear him hence  
awhile. [EDMUND is borne off.

Enter LEAR, with CORDELIA dead in his arms:  
EDGAR, Officer, and Others.

Lear. Howl, howl, howl, howl! O! you are  
men of stones:

Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so  
That heaven's vaults should crack. She's gone

for ever. 261

I know when one is dead, and when one lives;  
She's dead as earth. Lend me a looking-glass;

If that her breath will mist or stain the stone,  
Why, then she lives.

Kent. Is this the promis'd end? 265

Edg. Or image of that horror?

Alb. Fall and cease!

Lear. This feather stirs; she lives! if it be so,  
It is a chance which does redeem all sorrows 268

That ever I have felt.

Kent. [Kneeling.] O, my good master!

Lear. Prithce, away.

Edg. 'Tis noble Kent, your friend.

Lear. A plague upon you, murderers, traitors  
all!

I might have sav'd her; now, she's gone for ever!  
Cordelia, Cordelia! stay a little. Ha! 273

What is't thou sayst? Her voice was ever soft,  
Gentle and low, an excellent thing in woman.

I kill'd the slave that was a hanging thee. 276  
Off. 'Tis true, my lord, he did.

Lear. Did I not, fellow?

I have seen the day, with my good biting falchion  
I would have made them skip: I am old now,

And these same crosses spoil me. Who are you?  
Mine eyes are not o' the best: I'll tell you

straight. 281

Kent. If fortune brag of two she lov'd and  
hated,

One of them we behold.

Lear. This is a dull sight. Are you not Kent?

Kent. The same, 284

Your servant Kent. Where is your servant  
Caius?

Lear. He's a good fellow, I can tell you that;  
He'll strike, and quickly too. He's dead and

rotten.

Kent. No, my good lord; I am the very  
man— 288

Lear. I'll see that straight.

Kent. That, from your first of difference and  
decay,



Have follow'd your sad steps.

*Lear.* You are welcome hither.

*Kent.* Nor no man else; all 's cheerless, dark,  
and deadly: 292

Your eldest daughters have fordone themselves,  
And desperately are dead.

*Lear.* Ay, so I think.

*Alb.* He knows not what he says, and vain  
it is

That we present us to him.

*Edg.* Very bootless. 296

*Enter an Officer.*

*Off.* Edmund is dead, my lord.

*Alb.* That's but a trifle here.

You lords and noble friends, know our intent;

What comfort to this great decay may come

Shall be applied: for us, we will resign, 300

During the life of this old majesty,

To him our absolute power:—[*To EDGAR and*

*KENT.*] You, to your rights;

With boot and such addition as your honours

Have more than merited. All friends shall taste

The wages of their virtue, and all foes 305

The cup of their deservings. O! see, see!

*Lear.* And my poor fool is hang'd! No, no,  
no life!

Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life, 308

And thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no

more,

Never, never, never, never!

Pray you, undo this button: thank you, sir.

Do you see this? Look on her, look, her lips, 312

Look there, look there! [*Dies.*]

*Edg.* He faints!—my lord, my lord!

*Kent.* Break, heart; I prithee, break.

*Edg.* Look up, my lord.

*Kent.* Vex not his ghost: O! let him pass;

he hates him

That would upon the rack of this tough world

Stretch him out longer.

*Edg.* He is gone, indeed. 317

*Kent.* The wonder is he hath endur'd so long:

He but usurp'd his life.

*Alb.* Bear them from hence. Our present

business 320

Is general woe. [*To KENT and EDGAR.*] Friends

of my soul, you twain

Rule in this realm, and the gor'd state sustain.

*Kent.* I have a journey, sir, shortly to go;

My master calls me, I must not say no. 324

*Alb.* The weight of this sad time we must

obey;

Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.

The oldest hath borne most: we that are young,

Shall never see so much, nor live so long. 328

[*Exeunt, with a dead march.*]

## OTHELLO THE MOOR OF VENICE

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

DUKE OF VENICE.

BRABANTIO, a Senator. Other Senators.

GRATIANO, Brother to Brabantio.

LODOVICO, Kinsman to Brabantio.

OTHELLO, a noble Moor; in the service of the Venetian

State.

CASSIO, his Lieutenant.

IAGO, his Ancient.

RODERIGO, a Venetian Gentleman.

MONTANO, Othello's predecessor in the Government

of Cyprus.

Clown, Servant to Othello.

DESDEMONA, Daughter to Brabantio, and Wife to

Othello.

EMILIA, Wife to Iago.

BIANCA, Mistress to Cassio.

Sailor, Officers, Gentlemen, Messengers, Musicians,

Heralds, Attendants.

SCENE.—For the first Act, in Venice; during the rest of the Play, at a Sea-Port in Cyprus.

### ACT I

#### SCENE I.—Venice. A Street.

*Enter RODERIGO and IAGO.*

*Rod.* Tush! Never tell me; I take it much  
unkindly

That thou, Iago, who hast had my purse  
As if the strings were thine, shouldst know of  
this.

*Iago.* 'Sblood, but you will not hear me: 4

If ever I did dream of such a matter,

Abhor me.

*Rod.* Thou told'st me thou didst hold him in

thy hate.

*Iago.* Despise me if I do not. Three great 8

ones of the city,

In personal suit to make me his lieutenant,

Off-capp'd to him; and, by the faith of man,

I know my price, I am worth no worse a place;

But he, as loving his own pride and purposes, 12

Evades them, with a bombast circumstance

Horribly stuff'd with epithets of war;

And, in conclusion,

Nonsuits my mediators; for, 'Certes,' says he, 16

'I have already chose my officer.'

And what was he?

Forsooth, a great arithmetician, 20

One Michael Cassio, a Florentine,

A fellow almost damn'd in a fair wife;

That never set a squadron in the field,

Nor the division of a battle knows

More than a spinster; unless the bookish theoric, 25

Wherein the toged consuls can propose

As masterly as he: mere prattle, without prac-

tice,

Is all his soldiership. But he, sir, had the elec-

tion;

And I—of whom his eyes had seen the proof 28

At Rhodes, at Cyprus, and on other grounds

Christian and heathen—must be be-lee'd and

calm'd

By debtor and creditor; this counter-caster,  
He, in good time, must his lieutenant be, 32

And I—God bless the mark!—his Moorship's

ancient.

*Rod.* By heaven, I rather would have been

his hangman.

*Iago.* Why, there's no remedy: 'tis the curse

of the service,

Preferment goes by letter and affection, 36

Not by the old gradation, where each second

Stood heir to the first. Now, sir, be judge your-

self,

Whe'r I in any just term am affin'd

To love the Moor.

*Rod.* I would not follow him then. 40

*Iago.* O! sir, content you;

I follow him to serve my turn upon him;

We cannot all be masters, nor all masters

Cannot be truly follow'd. You shall mark 44

Many a duteous and knee-crooking knave,

That, doting on his own obsequious bondage,

Wears out his time, much like his master's ass,

For nought but provender, and when he's old, 48

cashier'd;

Whip me such honest knaves. Others there are

Who, trimm'd in forms and visages of duty,

Keep yet their hearts attending on themselves,

And, throwing but shows of service on their 52

lords,

Do well thrive by them, and when they have

lin'd their coats

Do themselves homage: these fellows have

some soul;

And such a one do I profess myself. For, sir, 56

It is as sure as you are Roderigo,

Were I the Moor, I would not be Iago:

In following him, I follow but myself;

Heaven is my judge, not I for love and duty, 60

But seeming so, for my peculiar end:

For when my outward action doth demonstrate

The native act and figure of my heart