

Osric. Sweet lord, if your lordship were at leisure, I should impart a thing to you from his Majesty.

Ham. I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit. Put your bonnet to his right use; 'tis for the head.

Osric. I thank your lordship, it is very hot.

Ham. No, believe me, 'tis very cold; the wind is north-erly.

Osric. It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed.

Ham. But yet methinks it is very sultry and hot for my complexion.

Osric. Exceedingly, my lord; it is very sultry,—as 'twere,—I cannot tell how. But, my lord, his Majesty bade me signify to you that he has laid a great wager on your head. Sir, this is the matter,—

Ham. I beseech you, remember²⁴—

[HAMLET moves him to put on his hat.

Osric. Nay, in good faith; for mine ease, in good faith. Sir, here is newly come to Court Laertes; believe me, an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences,²⁵ of very soft society and great showing: indeed, to speak feelingly of him, he is the card or calendar of gentry; for you

owner of large herds of cattle, and he shall be the King's bosom friend, and feed at his table.—In what follows, *chough* is a bird of the jackdaw sort; and *Osric* is aptly so called because he chatters euphuistic jargon by rote.

²⁴ The full phrase occurs in *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. 1: "I do beseech thee, remember *thy courtesy*; I beseech thee, apparel thy head." Aptly explained by Dr. Ingleby: "If any one, from ill-breeding or over politeness, stood uncovered a longer time than was necessary to perform the simple act of courtesy, the person saluted reminded him of the fact, that the removal of the hat was a courtesy; and this was expressed by the euphemism, 'Remember thy courtesy,' which thus implied, 'Complete your courtesy and replace your hat.'"

²⁵ In the affected phrase-making of this euphuist, *excellent differences* probably means *distinctive excellences*.

shall find in him the continent of what part a gentlemen would see.

Ham. Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you;²⁶ though, I know, to divide him inventorially would dizzy the arithmetic of memory,²⁷ and yet but yaw²⁸ neither, in respect of his quick sail.²⁹ But, in the verity of extolment, I take him to be a soul of great article; and his infusion of such dearth and rareness, as, to make true diction of him, his semblable is his mirror; and who else would trace him, his umbrage,³⁰ nothing more.

Osric. Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him.

Ham. The concernancy,³¹ sir? why do we wrap the gentleman in our more rawer breath?

²⁶ "He suffers no loss in your description of him."

²⁷ "To distinguish all his good parts, and make a schedule or inventory of them, would be too much for the most mathematical head."

²⁸ This word occurs as a substantive in Massinger's *Very Woman*: "O, the yaws that she will make! Look to your stern, dear mistress, and steer right." Where Gifford notes "A yaw is that unsteady motion which a ship makes in a great swell, when, in steering, she inclines to the right or left of her course." Scott also has the word in the *The Antiquary*, "Thus escorted, the Antiquary moved along full of his learning, like a lordly man-of-war, and every now and then yawing to starboard and larboard to discharge a broadside upon his followers."—In the text, *yaw* is a verb, and is in the same construction with *dizzy*; "and yet would do nothing but yaw"; that is, *vacillate*, or *reel hither and thither*, instead of going straight ahead.

²⁹ *In respect of* is equivalent to *in comparison with*. Such is the common meaning of the phrase in old writers. So that the sense of the passage comes thus: "To discriminate the good parts of Laertes, and make a full catalogue of them, would dizzy the head of an arithmetician, and yet would be but a slow and staggering process, compared to his swift sailing." Hamlet is running *Osric's* hyperbolic euphuism into the ground, and is purposely obscure, in order to bewilder the poor fop.

³⁰ To trace is to track, or keep pace with. *Umbrage*, from the Latin *umbra*, is shadow. So that the meaning here is, "The only resemblance to him is in his mirror; and nothing but his shadow can keep up with him."

³¹ That is, "How does this concern us?"

Osric. Sir?

Hora. Is't not possible to understand in another tongue?³²
You will do't, sir, really.

Ham. What imports the nomination of this gentleman?

Osric. Of Laertes?

Hora. [*Aside to HAMLET.*] His purse is empty already:
all's golden words are spent.

Ham. Of him, sir.

Osric. I know you are not ignorant —

Ham. I would you did, sir; yet, in faith, if you did, it
would not much approve me. Well, sir?

Osric. You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes
is —

Ham. I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with
him in excellence: but to know a man well, were to know
himself.³³

Osric. I mean, sir, for his weapon; but in the imputation
laid on him by them, in his meed he's unfellow'd.³⁴

Ham. What's his weapon?

Osric. Rapier and dagger.

Ham. That's two of his weapons; but, well?

* ³² Horatio means to imply, that what with Osric's euphuism, and what with Hamlet's catching of Osric's style, they are not speaking in a tongue that can be understood; and he hints that they try *another* tongue, that is the common one.

³³ The meaning is, that he will not claim to appreciate the excellence of Laertes, as this would imply equal excellence in himself; on the principle that a man cannot understand that which exceeds his own measure. Hamlet goes into these subtleties on purpose to maze Osric. — The words, "*but to know*," mean "*only to know*."

³⁴ *Unfellow'd* is *unequalled*. *Fellow* for *equal* is very frequent. — *Meed* for *merit*; also a frequent usage. — *Imputation*, also, for *reputation*. So in *Troilus and Cressida*, i. 3: "Our *imputation* shall be oddly poised in this wild action."

Osric. The King, sir, hath wager'd with him six Barbary horses; against the which he has imponed,³⁵ as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hangers, and so. Three of the carriages, in faith, are very dear to fancy, very responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages, and of very liberal conceit.

Ham. What call you the carriages?

Hora. [*Aside to HAMLET.*] I knew you must be edified by the margent³⁶ ere you had done.

Osric. The carriages, sir, are the hangers.

Ham. The phrase would be more germane³⁷ to the matter, if we could carry cannon by our sides: I would it might be hangers till then. But, on: Six Barbary horses against six French swords, their assigns, and three liberal-conceited carriages; that's the French bet against the Danish. Why is this *imponed*, as you call it?

Osric. The King, sir, hath laid, that in a dozen passes between yourself and him he shall not exceed you three hits: he hath laid, on twelve for nine; and it would come to immediate trial, if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer.³⁸

Ham. How, if I answer no?

Osric. I mean, my lord, the opposition of your person in trial.

³⁵ *Imponed* is probably meant as an Osrician form of *impawned*. To *impawn* is to *put in pledge*, to *stake* or *wager*.

³⁶ "I knew you *would have to be* instructed by a marginal commentary." The allusion is to the printing of comments in the margin of books. So in *Romeo and Juliet*, i. 3: —

And what obscured in this fair volume lies,
Find written in the margent of his eyes.

³⁷ *Germane* is *kindred* or *akin*; hence, *appropriate*.

³⁸ That is, vouchsafe to *accept the proposition*. Hamlet chooses to take it in another sense, because he likes to quiz Osric.

Ham. Sir, I will walk here in the hall: if it please his Majesty, 'tis the breathing-time³⁹ of day with me; let the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the King hold his purpose, I will win for him if I can; if not, I will gain nothing but my shame and the odd hits.

Osric. Shall I re-deliver you e'en so?

Ham. To this effect, sir; after what flourish your nature will.

Osric. I commend my duty to your lordship.

Ham. Yours, yours. [*Exit OSRIC.*]—He does well to commend it himself; there are no tongues else for's turn.

Hora. This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head.⁴⁰

Ham. He did comply with his dug,⁴¹ before he suck'd it. Thus has he—and many more of the same bevy that I know the drossy age dotes on—only got the tune of the time and outward habit of encounter; a kind of yesty collection,⁴² which carries them through and through the most fond and winnowed opinions;⁴³ and do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out.

Enter a Lord.

Lord. My lord, his Majesty commended him to you by

³⁹ "The *breathing-time*" is the time for *exercise*. The use of to *breathe* for to *exercise* occurs repeatedly in Shakespeare. It was common.

⁴⁰ Meaning that Osric is a raw, unfledged, foolish fellow. It was a common comparison for a forward fool. Thus in Meres's *Wits Treasury*, 1598: "As the lapwing runneth away with the shell on her head, as soon as she is hatched."

⁴¹ *Comply* is used in the same sense here as in note 59, page 113. In Fulwel's *Art of Flatterie*, 1579, the same idea occurs: "The very sucking babes hath a kind of adulation towards their nurses for the dug."

⁴² *Yesty* is *frothy*. A *gathering* of mental and lingual froth.

⁴³ Here, *fond* is *affected*. The passage is well explained in the Clarendon edition: "Osric, and others like him, are compared to the chaff which mounts higher than the sifted wheat, and to the bubbles which rise to the surface through the deeper water."

young Osric, who brings back to him, that you attend him in the hall: he sends to know if your pleasure hold to play with Laertes, or that you will take longer time.

Ham. I am constant to my purposes; they follow the King's pleasure: if his fitness speaks, mine is ready; now or whensoever, provided I be so able as now.

Lord. The King and Queen and all are coming down.

Ham. In happy time.⁴⁴

Lord. The Queen desires you to use some gentle entertainment to Laertes before you fall to play.

Ham. She well instructs me.

[*Exit Lord.*]

Hora. You will lose this wager, my lord.

Ham. I do not think so: since he went into France, I have been in continual practice; I shall win at the odds. But thou wouldst not think how ill all's here about my heart; but it is no matter.

Hora. Nay, good my lord,—

Ham. It is but foolery; but it is such a kind of gain-giving⁴⁵ as would perhaps trouble a woman.

Hora. If your mind dislike any thing, obey it: I will forestall their repair hither, and say you are not fit.

Ham. Not a whit; we defy⁴⁶ augury: there is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come: the readiness is all. Since no man knows aught of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes?⁴⁷

⁴⁴ That is, in *fitting* time; like the French *a la bonne heure*.

⁴⁵ *Gain-giving* probably means *misgiving*; formed in the same way as *gainsay* and *gainstrive*.

⁴⁶ To *defy*, here, is to *renounce* or *disclaim*. Often so.

⁴⁷ Johnson interprets the passage thus: "Since *no man knows aught* of the state which *he leaves*; since he cannot judge what other years may produce; why should we be afraid of *leaving* life betimes?"

Enter the KING, the QUEEN, LAERTES, Lords, OSRIC, and Attendants with foils, &c.

King. Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.

[The KING puts LAERTES'S hand into HAMLET'S]

Ham. Give me your pardon, sir: I've done you wrong; But pardon't, as you are a gentleman.

This presence knows,
And you must needs have heard, how I am punish'd
With sore distraction. What I have done,
That might your nature, honour, and exception
Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.
Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never Hamlet:
If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,
And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes,
Then Hamlet does it not; Hamlet denies it.
Who does it, then? His madness. If't be so,
Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd;
His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.
Sir, in this audience,
Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil
Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,
That I have shot mine arrow o'er the house,
And hurt my brother.

Laer. I am satisfied in nature,
Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most
To my revenge: but in my terms of honour
I stand aloof; and will no reconciliation
Till by some elder masters, of known honour,
I have a voice and precedent of peace,⁴⁸

⁴⁸ The meaning probably is, "till some experts in the code of honour give me the warrant of custom and usage for standing on peaceful terms

To keep my name ungored. But, till that time,
I do receive your offer'd love like love,
And will not wrong it.

Ham. I embrace it freely;
And will this brother's wager frankly play. —
Give us the foils. — Come on.

Laer. Come, one for me.

Ham. I'll be your foil, Laertes:⁴⁹ in mine ignorance
Your skill shall, like a star i' the darkest night,
Stick fiery off indeed.

Laer. You mock me, sir.

Ham. No, by this hand.

King. Give them the foils, young Osric. — Cousin Hamlet,
You know the wager?

Ham. Very well, my lord;
Your Grace hath laid the odds⁵⁰ o' the weaker side.

King. I do not fear it; I have seen you both:
But, since he's better'd, we have therefore odds.⁵¹

Laer. This is too heavy; let me see another.

Ham. This likes me well. — These foils have all a length?

with you." Laertes thinks, or pretends to think, that the laws of honour require him to insist on a stern vindication of his manhood. Hamlet has before spoken of Laertes as "a very noble youth." In this part of the scene, he has his faculties keenly on the alert against Claudius; but it were a sin in him even to suspect Laertes of any thing so unfathomably base as the treachery now on foot.

⁴⁹ Hamlet plays on the word *foil*; which here has the sense of *contrast*, or that which *sets off* a thing, and makes it show to advantage; as a dark night sets off a star, "when only one is shining in the sky."

⁵⁰ The *odds* here referred to is the value of the stakes, the King having wagered six Barbary horses against a few rapiers, poniards, &c.; which was about as twenty to one.

⁵¹ Here the reference is to the *three odd hits* in Hamlet's favour, the numbers being nine and twelve. The King affects to regard this as a fair offset for Laertes's improved skill in the handling of his weapon.

Osric. Ay, my good lord. [*They prepare to play.*
King. Set me the stoups of wine upon that table.—
 If Hamlet give the first or second hit,
 Or quit⁵² in answer of the third exchange,
 Let all the battlements their ordnance fire :
 The King shall drink to Hamlet's better breath ;
 And in the cup an union⁵³ shall he throw,
 Richer than that which four successive kings
 In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the cups ;
 And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,
 The trumpet to the cannoneer without,
 The cannons to the heavens, the heavens to earth,
Now the King drinks to Hamlet! — Come, begin ; —
 And you, the judges,⁵⁴ bear a wary eye.

Ham. Come on, sir.
Laer. Come, my lord. [*They play.*
Ham. One.
Laer. No.
Ham. Judgment.
Osric. A hit, a very palpable hit.
Laer. Well ; — again.
King. Stay ; give me drink. — Hamlet, this pearl is thine ;
 Here's to thy health. —

[*Trumpets sound, and cannon shot off within.*
 Give him the cup.

⁵² *Quit*, again, for *requite*, or *retaliate*. See page 216, note 16.

⁵³ *Union* was a name for the largest and finest pearls, such as were worn in crowns and coronets. So in Florio's *Italian Dictionary*, 1598 : "Also a faire, great, orient pearle, called an *union*." A rich gem thus put into a cup of wine was meant as present to the drinker of the wine. Of course the *union* in this case was a preparation of poison.

⁵⁴ These *judges* were the umpires appointed beforehand, with *Osric* at their head, to decide in case of any dispute arising between the fencers.

Ham. I'll play this bout first ; set it by awhile. —
 Come. [*They play.*] Another hit ; what say you ?
Laer. A touch, a touch, I do confess.
King. Our son shall win.
Queen. He's hot, and scant of breath. —
 Here, Hamlet, take my napkin,⁵⁵ rub thy brows :
 The Queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.
Ham. Good madam !⁵⁶
King. Gertrude, do not drink.
Queen. I will, my lord ; I pray you, pardon me.
King. [*Aside.*] It is the poison'd cup ; it is too late.
Ham. I dare not drink yet, madam ; by-and-by.⁵⁷
Queen. Come, let me wipe thy face.
Laer. My lord, I'll hit him now.
King. I do not think't.
Laer. [*Aside.*] And yet 'tis almost 'gainst my conscience.
Ham. Come, for the third, Laertes : you but dally :
 I pray you, pass with your best violence ;
 I am afeard you make a wanton of me.⁵⁸
Laer. Say you so ? come on. [*They play.*
Osric. Nothing, neither way.

⁵⁵ *Napkin* was continually used for *handkerchief*.

⁵⁶ This exclamation is probably meant to hint that Hamlet suspects, or more than suspects, the contents of that cup. The same appears more clearly just after in "I dare not drink yet."

⁵⁷ Hamlet now sees, or judges, that his time has come: the playing done, he will attend to that cup, and *invite Claudius to drink it*. Such is evidently his purpose.

⁵⁸ To make a wanton of a man, as the phrase is here used, is to treat him as a child, to avoid playing your best with him, or rather to play the game into his hands. — This is a quiet, but very significant stroke of delineation. Laertes is not playing his best, and it is the conscience of what is at the point of his foil that keeps him from doing so ; and the effects are perceptible to Hamlet, though he dreams not of the reason.

Laer. Have at you now !

[*LAERTES wounds HAMLET ; then, in scuffling, they change rapiers, and HAMLET wounds LAERTES.*⁵⁹

King. Part them ; they are incensed.

Ham. Nay, come, again. [*The QUEEN falls.*

Osric. Look to the Queen there, ho !

Hora. They bleed on both sides. — How is it, my lord ?

Osric. How is't, Laertes ?

Laer. Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe, Osric ;
I'm justly kill'd with mine own treachery.

Ham. How does the Queen ?

King. She swoons to see them bleed.

Queen. No, no, the drink, the drink, — O my dear Hamlet, —

The drink, the drink ! I am poison'd ! [*Dies.*

Ham. O villainy ! — Ho ! let the door be lock'd ! —
Treachery ! seek it out !

Laer. It is here, Hamlet. Hamlet, thou art slain ;
No medicine in the world can do thee good ;
In thee there is not half an hour of life :
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,
Unbated and envenom'd. The foul practice
Hath turn'd itself on me : lo, here I lie,
Never to rise again. Thy mother's poison'd ; —
I can no more. The King, — the King's to blame.

⁵⁹ Up to this moment Hamlet has not put forth his strength ; he has been *merely* playing : now, on being unexpectedly pierced, he is instantly stung into fiery action ; and he is a terrible man with the sword, when his blood is up. — The exchanging of foils takes place well in Mr. Edwin Booth's ordering of the matter on the stage. There Hamlet, in a rapture of energy and adroitness, strikes the foil out of Laertes's hand, picks it up, and throws down his own, which, again, is presently picked up by Laertes.

Ham. The point envenom'd too ! —

Then, venom, to thy work ! [*Stabs the KING.*

All. Treason ! treason !

King. O, yet defend me, friends ! I am but hurt.

Ham. Here, thou incestuous, murderous, damn'd Dane,
Drink off this potion ! Is thy union here ?

Follow my mother ! [*KING dies.*⁶⁰

Laer. He is justly served ;

It is a poison temper'd by himself. —

Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet ;

Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,

Nor thine on me ! [*Dies.*⁶¹

Ham. Heaven make thee free of it ! I follow thee. —

I'm dead, Horatio. — Wretched Queen, adieu ! —

You that look pale and tremble at this chance,

That are but mutes or audience to this act,

Had I but time, — as this fell sergeant,⁶² Death,

Is strict in his arrest, — O, I could tell you, —

But let it be. — Horatio, I am dead ;

Thou livest : report me and my cause aright

To the unsatisfied.

Hora. Never believe it :

I am more an antique Roman than a Dane :

Here's yet some liquor left.

Ham. As thou'rt a man,

Give me the cup : let go ; by Heaven, I'll have't.

⁶⁰ Of course the King dies of the wound, — dies without drinking the poison. Hamlet, instantly seeing the way clear for the avenging stroke, and having a free thrust at Claudius, can hardly be supposed to leave any thing for poison to do.

⁶¹ Laertes also dies of the *wound*, not of the *venom*.

⁶² *Sergeant* was the title of a sheriff's officer, whose business it was to make arrests and execute warrants.

O God, Horatio ! what a wounded name,
 Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me !
 If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
 Absent thee from felicity awhile,
 And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
 To tell my story. — [March afar off, and shot within.

What warlike noise is this ?

Osric. Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from Poland,
 To the ambassadors of England gives
 This warlike volley.

Ham. O, I die, Horatio ;
 The potent poison quite o'er-crows⁶³ my spirit :
 I cannot live to hear the news from England ;
 But I do prophesy th' election lights
 On Fortinbras : he has my dying voice ;
 So tell him, with th' occurrents, more and less,
 Which have solicited⁶⁴ — [Dies.

Hora. The rest is silence :
 Now cracks a noble heart. — Good night, sweet Prince ;
 And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest ! —
 Why does the drum come hither. [March within.

Enter FORTINBRAS, the English Ambassadors, and others.

Fortin. Where is this sight ?

Hora. What is it ye would see ?
 If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search.

⁶³ To *overcrow* is to *overcome*, to *subdue*. The word was borrowed from the cock-pit ; the victorious cock crowing in triumph over the vanquished.

⁶⁴ *Occurrents* was much used in the Poet's time for *events* or *occurrences*. — *Solicited* is *prompted* or *excited* ; as "this supernatural *soliciting*" in *Macbeth*. — "*More and less*" is *greater and smaller* ; a common usage with the old writers.

Fortin. This quarry cries on havoc.⁶⁵ — O proud Death,
 What feast is toward⁶⁶ in thine eternal cell,
 That thou so many princes at a shot
 So bloodily hast struck ?

I Amba. The sight is dismal ;
 And our affairs from England come too late :
 The ears are senseless that should give us hearing,
 To tell him his commandment is fulfill'd ;
 That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead.
 Where should we have our thanks ?

Hora. Not from his mouth,
 Had it th' ability of life to thank you ;
 He never gave commandment for their death.
 But since, so jump⁶⁷ upon this bloody question,
 You from the Polack wars, and you from England,
 Are here arrived, give order that these bodies
 High on a stage be placèd to the view ;
 And let me speak to th'⁶⁸ yet unknowing world
 How these things came about : so shall you hear
 Of carnal,⁶⁹ bloody, and unnatural acts ;
 Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters ;
 Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause ;⁷⁰

⁶⁵ *Quarry*, a term of the chase, was used for a *heap of dead game*. To *cry on*, as before noted, is to *exclaim*, or *cry out*, against. *Havoc* here means *indiscriminate slaughter*. To shout *havoc* ! in a battle, was a signal for giving no quarter to the enemy. So that the meaning in the text is, "This pile of corpses cries out against indiscriminate slaughter."

⁶⁶ *Toward*, again, for *forthcoming*, or *at hand*. See page 50, note 19.

⁶⁷ As before noted, *jump* was used for *just* or *exactly*.

⁶⁸ The Poet often thus elides *the*, so as to make it coalesce with the preceding word into one syllable. So he has *for th'*, *by th'*, *from th'*, *on th'*, &c.

⁶⁹ *Carnal*, here, probably means *sanguinary*, *cruel*, or *inhuman* ; referring to the murder of Hamlet's father.

⁷⁰ The phrase *put on* here means *instigated* or *set on foot*. *Cunning*, re-

And, in this upshot, purposes mistook
Fall'n on th' inventors' heads : all this can I
Truly deliver.

Fortin. Let us haste to hear it,
And call the noblest to the audience.
For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune :
I have some rights of memory⁷¹ in this kingdom,
Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me.

Hora. Of that I shall have also cause to speak,
And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more : ⁷²
But let this same be presently perform'd,
Even while men's minds are wild, lest more mischance,
On plots and errors, happen.

Fortin. Let four captains
Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage ;
For he was likely, had he been put on,
T' have proved most royally : and, for his passage,
The soldiers' music and the rites of war
Speak loudly for him. —
Take up the bodies. — Such a sight as this
Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss. —
Go, bid the soldiers shoot.

[*A dead march. Exeunt, bearing off the dead bodies ;
after which a peal of ordnance is shot off.*

ers, apparently, to Hamlet's action touching "the packet," and *forced cause*, to the "compelling occasion," which moved him to that piece of practice.

⁷¹ *Rights of memory* appears to mean rights founded in prescription or the order of inheritance.

⁷² Whose vote will induce others to vote the same way. Horatio refers to Hamlet saying of Fortinbras, "he has my dying voice."

CRITICAL NOTES ON HAMLET.

ACT I., SCENE I.

Page 51. "As, by the same *co-mart*,
And carriage of the article *design'd*,
His fell to Hamlet."

In the first of these lines, the folio has *cov'nant* instead of *co-mart*, which is the reading of the quartos. Shakespeare elsewhere uses to *mart* for to *trade* or to *bargain*. — In the second line, I give the reading of the second folio; the earlier editions having, with various spelling, *designe* instead of *design'd*. The confounding of final *d* and final *e* is among the commonest of misprints.

P. 52. "The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets :
So, stars with trains of fire ; and dews of blood ;
Disasters in the Sun ; and the moist star," &c.

This passage is not in the folio. The quartos have no point after *streets*, and they have "*As* starres with trains of fire," &c. The passage has troubled the commentators vastly, and a great many changes have been proposed, all quite unsatisfactory. Dyce pronounces it "hopelessly mutilated," and I once thought so too. But it rather seems to me now that a just and fitting sense may be got by merely changing *As* to *So*. See foot-note 33.

P. 52. "Unto our *climature* and countrymen."

So Dyce. The quartos have *climates*. Not in the folio.