

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 memory<sup>71</sup> 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 : <sup>72</sup>  
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.

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

<sup>72</sup> 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.



## ACT I., SCENE II.

- P. 56. "Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature,  
That we with *wiser* sorrow think on him," &c.

The old copies have *wisest* instead of *wiser*, which I think the context fairly requires.

- P. 60. "Together with all forms, *modes*, shows of grief," &c.  
The old copies have *moodes* and *moods*, which appear to be only old ways of spelling *modes*. At all events, *moods*, in its present meaning, does not suit the context, as Hamlet here refers entirely to the outward marks of sadness.

- P. 61. "You are the most immediate to our throne;  
And with *no less nobility* of love  
Than that which dearest father bears his son  
Do I impart toward you."

Dr. Badham would read "And with *nobility no less* of love," &c. This would give a definite object to *impart*, which now has no object expressed. So that the change is at least plausible. On the other hand, with this reading, *nobility* would have to be understood as meaning the honour of being heir-presumptive. But it may well be doubted whether Shakespeare would have used *nobility* with this meaning; and nobility, in the proper sense of the term, Hamlet has already by birth. If we could read "With *this* nobility no less of love," &c., the sense would come right, but that would perhaps be an unwarrantable change. See foot-note 24.

- P. 64. "I would not *hear* your enemy say so."

So the quartos after that of 1603. Instead of *hear*, the folio has *have*, which some editors prefer. But surely *hear* accords much better with what follows.

- P. 65. "Season your admiration for a while  
With an *attentive* ear, till I deliver," &c.

The second and third quartos, and the folio, have "an *attent* eare"; the first, fourth, and fifth quartos have *attentive*. All the old copies read "till I *may* deliver." Pope omits *may*.

- P. 65. "In the dead *vast* and middle of the night."

So the first quarto, and the fifth. The other quartos and the folio have *vast* and *waste* instead of *vast*.

- P. 65. "Whilst they, *distill'd*  
Almost to jelly with the act of fear," &c.

So the quartos. Instead of *distill'd*, the folio has *bestil'd*, which Collier's second folio alters to *bechill'd*. In support of *distill'd*, Dyce aptly quotes from Sylvester's *Du Bartas*, 1641: "Melt thee, *distill* thee, turne to wax or snow." See foot-note 42.

- P. 66. "But answer made it none; yet once methought  
It lifted up *its* head," &c.

The old copies have "lifted up *it* head." So, again, in v. i, of this play: "The corse they follow did with desperate hand fordo *it* own life." The Poet has as many as fourteen other instances of *it* thus used possessively; which is at least curious, as showing his reluctance to admit *its*, which was then just creeping into use. Some insist on keeping strictly to the old letter in all such cases; but this, it seems to me, is conservatism in *it* dotage.

- P. 67. "Let it be *tenable* in your silence still."

So the quartos. The folio has *treble* instead of *tenable*.

## ACT I., SCENE III.

- P. 69. "For on his choice depends  
The safety and *the* health of the whole State."

The quartos read "The safety and health"; the folio, "The *sanctity* and health." Probably, as Malone thought, *safety* was altered to *sanctity* merely because a trisyllable was wanted to complete the verse; the editor not perceiving that the article had dropped out before *health*. Hammer reads, "The *sanity* and health." The reading in the text is Warburton's.

- P. 69. "As he in his *particular act* and *place*  
May give his saying deed."

So the quartos. The folio reads "in his *peculiar Sect* and *force*."



- P. 70. "*Th' unchariest* maid is prodigal enough,  
If she unmask her beauty to the Moon."

The old copies read "*The chariest* maid." This gives a very weak sense, and one, it seems to me, not at all suited to the occasion or the character. "*The chary* maid" would be far better; but Laertes is apt to be superlative in thought and speech; and surely nothing less than *unchariest* would be intense enough for him here.

- P. 71. "And they in France of the best rank and station  
Are most select and generous, chief in that."

The first quarto reads "Are of a most select and generall chiefe in that." The other quartos have "Are of a most select and generous, chiefe in that"; the folio, "generous cheff in that." A great variety of changes has been made or proposed. The reading in the text is Rowe's, and is adopted by many of the best editors.

- P. 73. "Or — not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,  
*Running* it thus — you'll tender me a fool."

Instead of *Running*, the quartos have *Wrong*, and the folio *Roaming*. *Running* was conjectured by both Dyce and Collier independently, and is also the reading of Collier's second folio.

- P. 74. "For they are brokers, —  
Not of *that dye* which their investments show,  
But mere implorators of unholy suits,  
Breathing like sanctified and pious *bawds*,  
The better to beguile."

In the second of these lines, the quartos, after 1603, have "Not of *that die*"; the folio, "Not of *the eye*." Some editors have strongly insisted on *eye*; whereupon Dyce asks, — "though our early writers talk of 'an *eye of green*,' 'an *eye of red*,' 'an *eye of blue*,' &c., do they ever use *eye* by itself to denote colour?" — In the fourth line, again, the old copies have *bonds* instead of *bawds*, which is the reading of Theobald, Pope, and Collier's second folio. The context, and especially the word *brokers*, is decisive that a noun signifying persons, and not things, is required. *Broker* was often used as a synonym of *barwd*, and so it is here.

## ACT I., SCENE IV.

- P. 77. "By *the* o'ergrowth of some complexion."

All this speech, after "More honour'd in the breach than the observance," is wanting in the quarto of 1603 and the folio. The other quartos have "By *their* ore-grow'th"; an error which the context readily corrects.

- P. 77. "*Their* virtues else — be they as pure as grace,  
As infinite as man may undergo —  
Shall in the general censure take corruption  
From that particular fault; the dram of *leav'n*  
Doth all the noble substance of 'em *sour*,  
To his own scandal."

Not in the first quarto or the folio. In the first of these lines, the other quartos have *His* instead of *Their*; another error which the context readily corrects. In the fourth and fifth lines, the quartos of 1604 and 1605 read "the dram of *eale* Doth all the noble substance of *a doubt*." The later quartos have the same, except that they substitute *ease* for *eale*. This dreadful passage may, I think, be fairly said to have baffled all the editors and commentators. The Cambridge edition notes upwards of forty different readings which have been printed or proposed, all of them so unsatisfactory that the editors reject them, and give the old text, apparently regarding the corruption as hopeless. There is surely no possibility of making any sense out of it as it stands; and so far, I believe, all are agreed. Lettsom, I think, was the first to perceive the reference to St. Paul's proverbial saying: "Shakespeare's meaning," says he, "evidently is, that a little leaven leavens the whole lump"; and the same thought occurred to me before I lighted on his remark. This clew was not long in guiding me to the two other changes I have made: in fact, the present reading was suggested to me by the passage from Bacon quoted in foot-note 11, which see. It gives a sense, I hope a natural and fitting one. And the language is in just accordance with what Hamlet says a little before, — "that too much o'er-leavens the form of plausible manners." Nor was *leaven*, especially if written in the shortened form *lev'n*, unlikely to be corrupted into



*eale*: at all events, we have many undoubted misprints much more emphatic than that. I was at one time minded to substitute *yeast* for *eale*; but I doubt whether *yeast* was ever used for *leaven* in Shakespeare's time: certainly he does not use it so anywhere else.

P. 81. "And each particular hair to stand *on* end."

So the first quarto. The other old copies have "stand *an* end."

P. 81. "List, list, O list!"

So the quartos, after 1603. The folio reads "List *Hamlet*, oh list."

P. 82. "That *roots* itself in ease on Lethe wharf."

So the quartos. The folio has *rots* instead of *roots*.

P. 82. "With witchcraft of his *wit*, with traitorous gifts," &c.

The old copies have *wits* instead of *wit*. Corrected by Pope.

P. 84. "Cut off even in the *blossom* of my *sins*."

The old copies read "the *Blossomes* of my *sinne*." Dyce conjectured *blossom*: the reading in the text is Mr. P. A. Daniel's. The misprinting of plurals and singulars for each other occurs very often.

P. 84. "With all my imperfections on my head.

*Ham.* O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!

*Ghost.* If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not;" &c.

The old copies, except the first quarto, give nothing to Hamlet here, but print all three of these lines as spoken by the Ghost. The first quarto makes Hamlet exclaim "O God!" It was suggested to Johnson, by "a very learned lady," that the second line should be given to Hamlet; and Garrick is said to have adopted that arrangement on the stage. Rann first printed as in the text. And surely so it ought to be.

P. 85. "And shall I couple Hell? O, fie! — Hold, *hold*, my heart;" &c.

So the second and third quartos. The fourth and fifth quartos and the folio omit the second *hold*.

P. 89. "There are more things in Heaven and Earth,  
Horatio,  
Than are dreamt of in *your* philosophy."

So all the quartos. The folio has *our* instead of *your*. The latter has at least as good authority, and is, I think, the better reading of the two, inasmuch as it conveys a mild sneer, which is well in keeping with Hamlet's temper and cast of mind. Of course the stress is on *philosophy*, not on *your*.

#### ACT II., SCENE I.

P. 91. "And finding,  
By this encompassment and drift of question,  
That they do know my son, come you more nearer  
Than your particular demands will touch it."

There is some doubt whether, in the last of these lines, we ought to print *Than* or *Then*. The old copies have *Then*; but this determines nothing, as that form was continually used in both senses. It seemed to me very clear, at one time, that we ought to read "come you more nearer; *Then* your particular demands," &c.; on the ground that particular inquiries would come to the point faster than general ones. If this notion be wrong, as it probably is, I am indebted to Mr. H. H. Furness for having set me right. See foot-note 3.

P. 91. "You must not put another scandal on him  
Than he is open to incontinency."

The old copies have *That* instead of *Than*. This is nowise reconcilable with the context, and involves a contradiction too palpable, surely, to be put into the mouth of Polonius. Yet "another scandal than he is open," &c., sounds rather harsh: perhaps we should read "Than *that* he's open," &c. And it appears that, where two consecutive words begin with the same letters, as *than* and *that*, one of them is apt to drop out in the printing or transcribing. The reading in the text is Keightley's.



- P. 94. "He falls to such perusal of my face  
As he would draw it. Long *time* stay'd he so."

So Pope. The old copies are without *time*, thus untuning the rhythm.

ACT II., SCENE II.

- P. 102. "You know, sometimes he walks *for* hours together  
Here in the lobby."

So Hanmer and Collier's second folio. The old copies read "walkes *four* heures together."

- P. 104. "For if the Sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being  
a *good* kissing carrion," &c.

So all the old copies, and rightly, I have no doubt. Warburton substituted *god* for *good*, and the change was most extravagantly praised by Johnson. I not only believe the old text to be right, but can get no fitting sense out of the modern reading. The latter, however, has been adopted by nearly all the leading editors: even the Cambridge editors adopt it. I understand the meaning of the old text to be, "a dead dog, which is a good carrion for the Sun to kiss, and thus impregnate with new life." "A good kissing person" for a person good to kiss, or good for kissing, is a very common form of speech, and one often used by Shakespeare. See foot-note 27.

- P. 107. "And sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear *at*  
a halfpenny."

So Hanmer. The old copies read "too deare a halfpenny."

- P. 108. "What a piece of work is man!"

So the quarto of 1637. The earlier quartos have the *a* misplaced: "What peece of worke is *a* man." The folios have the *a* in both places: "What a piece of work is *a* man!"

- P. 109. "The clown shall make those laugh whose lungs  
are *tickle* o' the sear."

This is not in the quartos, and the folio has *tickled* instead of *tickle*. The correction (and it is of the first class) was proposed by Staunton.

- P. 110. "I think their *innovation* comes by the means of  
the late *inhibition*."

In the old text, *innovation* and *inhibition* change places with each other. Johnson notes upon the passage as follows: "Hamlet inquires not about an 'inhibition,' but an 'innovation': the answer probably was, — 'I think their innovation,' that is, their new practice of strolling, 'comes by means of the late inhibition.'" See foot-note 47.

- P. 111. "These are now the fashion; and so *berattle* the  
common stages," &c.

So the second folio. The first has *be-ratted* instead of *berattle*. — Of this and the six following speeches there are no traces in any of the quartos, except the first, and but slight traces there.

- P. 111. "If they should grow themselves to common play-  
ers, — as it is *most like*," &c.

The folio reads "as it is *like most*." See preceding note.

- P. 114. "O Jephtha, what a treasure hadst thou!  
*Polo*. What treasure had he, my lord?"

So Walker. The old copies read "What *a* treasure had he." Probably the *a* got repeated accidentally from the line above. Walker says, "*What treasure*, surely, for grammar's sake."

- P. 115. "For look where my *abridgements come*."

So the folio. The quartos, "my *abridgement comes*."

- P. 115. "You are welcome, masters; welcome, all. I am  
glad to see *ye* well; welcome, good friends."

The old copies read "I am glad to see *thee* well." An error which the context rectifies.

- P. 117. "Nor no matter in the phrase that might indict the  
author of *affectation*."

So the folio. Instead of *affectation*, the quartos have *affection*, which was sometimes used for *affectation*.



P. 123. "That I, the son of a dear *father* murder'd," &c.

So the fourth, fifth, and sixth quartos. The other quartos and the folio omit *father*.

ACT III., SCENE I.

P. 125. "*Most free* of question, but of our demands  
*Niggard* in his reply."

The old text has *Most free* and *Niggard* transposed; which nowise accords with the course of the dialogue referred to, nor with the first speech of Guildenstern in this scene. The correction is Warburton's, who notes upon the old reading thus: "This is given as the description of the conversation of a man whom the speaker *found not forward to be sounded*; and who *kept aloof* when they would *bring him to confession*. Shakespeare certainly wrote it just the other way." It has been suggested that perhaps "a correct account of the interview" was not intended. But I can see no reason why Rosencrantz should wish to misrepresent it. See foot-note 2.

P. 126. "And, for your part, Ophelia, I do wish  
That your good *beauty* be the happy cause," &c.

So Walker. Instead of *beauty*, the old copies have *Beauties*; an easy misprint when the word was written *beautie*.

P. 127. "The *slings* and arrows of outrageous fortune."

Walker says that "*stings* is undoubtedly the true reading." Perhaps he is right; but *slings* and arrows were often spoken of together in the language of ancient warfare. And the line, as it stands, is so much a household word, that it seems hardly well to make any change.

P. 127. "The pangs of *disprized* love, the law's delay," &c.

So the folio. The quartos have *despiz'd* instead of *disprized*. The folio reading is the stronger; for if a love *unprized* be hard to bear, a love *scorned* must be much harder.

P. 128. "When he himself might his quietus make  
With a bare bodkin? *who'd these fardels bear*," &c.

The quartos read "who *would fardels beare*"; the folio, "who *would*

*these fardles beare*." The contraction of *who would* to *who'd* is Walker's. I prefer the folio reading, because it makes what follows more continuous with what precedes; and it seems more natural that Hamlet should still keep his mind on the crosses already mentioned.

P. 129. "My honour'd lord, *I* know right well you did."

So the folio. The quartos have "*you know*." The folio reading has, I think, more delicacy, and at least equal feeling.

P. 130. "With more offences at my *beck* than I have thoughts  
to put them in," &c.

Collier's second folio changes *beck* to *back*, and Walker would make the same change.

P. 131. "The courtier's, *scholar's*, *soldier's*, eye, tongue,  
sword."

Such is the order of the words in the first quarto. The other old copies transpose *scholar's* and *soldier's*. This naturally connects *tongue* with *soldier*, and *sword* with *scholar*; which is certainly not the meaning.

ACT III., SCENE II.

P. 134. "Now, this overdone, or come tardy *of*, though it  
make the unskilful laugh," &c.

So the sixth quarto. The other old copies read "*tardy off*." Mason conjectured "*tardy of*"; and Walker proposed the same. See foot-note 5.

P. 134. "Nor the gait of Christian, Pagan, nor *Turk*."

So the first quarto. Instead of *Turk*, the other quartos have *man*, and the folio *Norman*.

P. 134. "That I have thought some of Nature's journey-  
men had made *them*, and not made them well," &c.

The old copies read "had made *men*." Theobald conjectured *them*, and so Rann printed. Farmer proposed *the men*, which may be bet



ter, but gives the same sense. Surely, at all events, *men* cannot be right; for that must mean *all* men, or men *in general*; whereas the context fairly requires the meaning to be limited to *the* men that "imitated humanity so abominably."

P. 138. "Nay, then let the Devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of *sabell*."

The old copies read "a suite of *Sables*." As *sable* is itself a mourning colour, the oppugnancy of the two clauses is evident. Warburton saw the discrepancy, and changed *for* to *'fore*. This makes the meaning to be, "let the Devil put on mourning before I will." The reading in the text was proposed by a writer in *The Critic*, 1854, page 317. It seems to me to give just the sense wanted. See foot-note 16.

P. 143. "Gonzago is the *King's* name."

Here, instead of *King*, the old copies have *Duke*. But in the stage-directions for the dumb-show the same person is repeatedly called *King*, as he also is a little after: "This is one Lucianus, nephew to the *King*." Probably the error crept in somehow from the first quarto, where the King and Queen of the interlude are called *Duke* and *Duchess*.

P. 148. "*Rosen*. My lord, you once did love me.  
*Ham*. So I do still, by these pickers and stealers."

So the folio. The quartos have "*And* do still." I think the former gives a characteristic shade of meaning which is lost in the latter. See foot-note 51.

P. 150. "And do such *bitter business* as the day  
Would quake to look on."

So the folio. The quartos read "such business as the *bitter day*."

## ACT III., SCENE IV.

P. 156. "I'll *sconce* me even here.  
Pray you be round with him."

So Hamner and Collier's second folio. The old copies, after 1603, have *silence* instead of *sconce*. The corresponding passage of the first quarto reads "I'll *shrowde* myselfe behinde the Arras." In *The Merry Wives*, iii., 3, Falstaff says, "I will *ensconce* me behind the arras."

P. 156. *Queen*. "Why, how now, Hamlet! what's the matter now?  
Have you forgot me?"

The old copies print these clauses as so many distinct speeches, assigning the second, "what's the matter now?" to Hamlet. Walker says "Perhaps all this belongs to the Queen"; whereupon Dyce notes, "I do not think so." Nevertheless I am satisfied that Walker's conjecture is right.

P. 162. "Your bedded *hairs*, like life in excrements,  
*Start* up and *stand* on end."

The second and third quartos and the folio have "*start* up and *stand*"; the later quartos, "*starts* up and *stands*"; while all the old copies, except the first, where the passage is not found, have *haire*, instead of *hairs*, which is Rowe's reading.

P. 162. "Lest with this piteous action you convert  
My stern *affects*."

Instead of *affects*, the old copies have *effects*. The correction is Singer's; who justly observes that "the 'piteous action' of the Ghost could not alter things *effected*, but might move Hamlet to a less stern mood of mind." The same error occurs elsewhere.

P. 164. "That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat  
Of habits *evil*, is angel yet in this," &c.

So Thirlby proposed, and Theobald printed. The quartos have



*devill* instead of *evil*. The passage is not in the folio. With *devil*, the text seems to me quite insusceptible of any fair or fitting explanation; and the hard shifts that have been resorted to for the purpose of making sense out of it, are to me strong argument of corruption. See foot-note 28.

- P. 165. "For use almost can change the stamp of nature,  
And either *shame* the Devil or throw him out  
With wondrous potency."

Not in the folio. The second and third quartos read "And *either* the devil"; the later quartos, "And *master* the devil"; thus leaving both sense and metre defective. Some editors combine the two readings,—"And *either master* the devil"; but this, again, makes the line unmetrical. Pope and Capell read "And master *even* the devil"; Malone, "And either *curb* the devil." But the Poet seems to have intended the alternative sense of either making the Devil glad to leave or compelling him to leave. And the phrase, "*shame* the Devil," was part of an old proverb, which Shakespeare quotes elsewhere. So in *1 Henry IV.*, iii., 1:—

"And I can teach thee, coz, to shame the Devil  
By telling truth; tell truth, and shame the Devil:  
If thou have power to raise him, bring him hither,  
And I'll be sworn I've power to shame him hence."

ACT III., SCENE V.

- P. 167. SCENE V. — *Another Room in the Castle.*

Modern editions, generally, make the fourth Act begin here. None of the old copies have any marking of the Acts and Scenes, after the second Scene of the second Act; and it seems very clear that there is no sufficient interval or pause in the action to warrant the beginning of a new Act in this place. I therefore agree with Caldecott and Elze that Act IV., ought to begin with the fourth Scene after.

- P. 168. "O'er whom his very madness, like *fine* ore  
Among a mineral of metals base," &c.

So Walker. The old text has *some* instead of *fine*. As *some* would naturally be written with the long *s*, such a misprint might easily occur.

- P. 168. "But we will ship him hence; and this *vile* deed  
We must, with all our majesty and skill,  
Both countenance and excuse."

The quartos have "this *vile* deed," the folio, "this *vilde* deed." I strongly suspect it ought to be "this *wild* deed"; that is, *mad* or *crazy*. The epithet *wild* just suits the case: and, as the King knows that the Queen fully believes Hamlet to be mad, is it likely that in speaking to her of the act he would use the epithet *vile*? And the King himself says, a little after, "Hamlet *in madness* hath Polonius slain." The two words *vilde* and *wilde* were often confounded.

- P. 169. "And let them know both what we mean to do  
And what's untimely done: *so, haply, slander* —  
Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter," &c.

So Capell. The words *so, haply, slander* are wanting in all the old copies. This leaves the sentence without any subject; and some insertion is imperatively required. Theobald reads "*for, haply, slander.*" Malone reads "So viperous slander," as the Poet has, in *Cymbeline* iii., 4, "the secrets of the grave this *viperous* slander enters." But in the present passage the sense of *viperous* is given in "*poison'd* shot."

ACT III., SCENE VI.

- P. 170. "He keeps them, *as an ape doth nuts* in the corner of his jaw."

The words *as an ape doth nuts* are from the corresponding passage of the first quarto. The other quartos read "he keeps them like an apple in the corner," &c.; the folio, "He keeps them like an Ape in the corner."



## ACT III., SCENE VII.

- P. 174. "And thou must cure me : till I know 'tis done,  
Howe'er my haps, my joys *were* ne'er begun."

So the folio. The quartos read "my joyes *will* nere *begin*." The change was doubtless made in the folio in order to have the scene end with a rhyme. But is the rhyme worth the breach of grammar which it costs? I should certainly read with the quartos, but that Walker, Dyce, the Cambridge editors, Singer, Staunton, and White all prefer the folio reading.

## ACT IV., SCENE I.

- P. 175. "Truly to speak, *sir*, and with no addition,  
We go to gain a little patch of ground," &c.

So Capell. The old copies lack *sir* in the first line. Pope reads "Truly to speak *it*," &c.

## ACT IV., SCENE II.

- P. 178. "'Twere good she were spoken with ; for she may  
strew

Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds.

*Queen.* Let her come in."

The quartos assign all this to Horatio ; the folio gives it all to the Queen. The first two lines clearly ought not to be spoken by the Queen ; and there can be little doubt that, as Hammer judged, her speech ought to begin with "Let her come in" ; which of course marks her final yielding to Horatio's urgent request.

- P. 179. "*Which bewept to the grave did go  
With true-love showers.*"

So Pope, and most editors since. The old copies all read "to the grave did *not* go" ; which is manifestly against all reason both of metre and of sense.

- P. 182. "Even here, between the chaste unsmirched *brows*  
Of my true mother."

Instead of *brows*, the old copies have *browe* and *brow*.

- P. 184. "It shall *as* level to your judgment *pierce*  
As day does to your eye."

So the folio. Instead of *pierce*, the quartos have *peare*, which Dyce strangely prefers, printing it *'pear*.

- P. 185. "Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade revenge,  
It could not move *me* thus."

So Walker. The old copies are without *me*.

- P. 186. "*No, no, he is dead,  
Gone to his death-bed ;  
He never will come again.*"

So Collier's second folio. The old copies have "go to *thy* Death-bed." The correction is well approved by a similar passage in *Eastward Ho*, written by Jonson, Marston, and Chapman : —

"But now he is dead, *and lain in his bed,*  
And never will come again."

## ACT IV., SCENE IV.

- P. 192. "Will you be ruled by me?  
*Laer.* I *will*, my lord,  
So you will not o'errule me to a peace."

So Capell. Not in the folio. The quartos, except the first, read "I my lord." *I* was commonly printed for the affirmative *ay*, as well as for the pronoun ; and so modern editors generally print *Ay*. But this leaves an ugly gap in the metre. The probability is, that *will* dropt out in the printing or the transcribing.

- P. 193. "Upon my life, *Lamond*."

So Pope. The quartos have *Lamord* ; the folio, *Lamound*.



P. 194.

"Sir, this report of his  
Did Hamlet so envenom with *your* envy," &c.

The old copies read "with *his* envy"; *his* having probably slipped in by mistake from the line above. At all events, as Walker observes, the old text can hardly have any meaning but that "Hamlet did envenom this report"; which I cannot easily believe to have been the Poet's thought. Of course, with *your*, the meaning is, "this report did so envenom Hamlet with envy of *you*." See foot-note 21.

P. 195. "And then this *should* is like a *spendthrift* sigh,  
That hurts by easing."

So the quarto of 1637. The earlier quartos have "a *spend-thrifts* sigh." The passage is not in the folio.

P. 197. "How *now*, sweet Queen!"

So the second folio. The first omits *now*; accidentally, no doubt. The quartos, after 1603, have "but stay, what noyse."

P. 198. "I have a speech of fire, that fain would blaze,  
But that this folly *drowns* it."

So the quartos. Instead of *drowns*, the folio has *doubts*, which Knight changes to *douts*.

## ACT V., SCENE I.

P. 206. "I have been sexton here, man and boy, *thirty* years."

"This skull has lain in the earth *three-and-twenty* years."

These statements, taken together with a preceding speech, infer Hamlet's age to be thirty years; which cannot well be reconciled with what Laertes and Polonius say of him in i., 3. Mr. Halliwell substitutes *dozen* for *three-and-twenty*, and quotes from the first quarto, "Here's a skull hath bin here this dozen yeare." But, as Mr. Furness observes, it is by no means certain that the Clown refers to the same skull there as here: he may have just turned up another. I cannot help suspecting that the Poet wrote "20 yeares," and "3 & 10 yeares,"

and that the 2 and 1 got corrupted into 3 and 2. It would be not unlike the Clown's manner, to put *three-and-ten* for *thirteen*. This, of course, would make Hamlet twenty years old; which is just about the age wanted.

P. 206. "This same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the King's jester."

So the quartos, except that they have "*sir* Yorick's," *sir* being doubtless repeated by mistake. The folio reads "This same Scull *sir*, was Yoricks Scull." What should be the use or sense of this repetition, does not appear.

P. 208. "Yet here she is allow'd her virgin *crants*,  
Her maiden strewments," &c.

So the quartos. The folio has *rites* instead of *crants*.

P. 210. "Woo't drink up *Esill*? eat a crocodile?"

So read all the quartos except the first, which has *vessels*. The folio has *Esile*, printed in Italic, as if to mark it as a proper name. This would naturally infer that some stream or body of water was meant. Theobald, and some others after him, read *eisel*, which is an old word for *vinegar*. With that word, we must take *drink up* as simply equivalent to *drink*: and would Hamlet in such a case be likely to mention such a thing as drinking vinegar? Surely not much of a feat to be coupled with eating a crocodile. So that I cannot reconcile myself to the reading *eisel*. See foot-note 29.

## ACT V., SCENE II.

P. 212. "Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,  
When our deep plots do *pall*."

So the second quarto. The other quartos have *fall* instead of *pall*. The folio has *paule*, which is probably but another spelling of *pall*. Pope substituted *fail*, and some editors have followed him. But what need of change? See foot-note 4.



P. 213. "Being thus be-netted round with *villainies*," &c.

The old copies have *villaines*. Corrected by Capell.

P. 214. "And stand a *cement* 'tween their amities."

Instead of *cement*, which is Hanmer's reading, the old copies have *comma*. The image of peace standing as a comma between two persons, to hold them friends, goes rather hard. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, iii., 2, Caesar speaks to Antony of Octavia, as "the piece of virtue which is set betwixt us as the *cement* of our love, to keep it builded."

P. 216. "Does it not, *think'st thou*, stand me now upon?"

The quartos have *thinke thee*; the folio, *thinkst thee*. Rowe corrected *thee* to *thou*.

P. 217. "For by the image of my cause I see

The portraiture of his: I'll *court* his favours."

This is not in the quartos, and the folio has *count* instead of *court*. Corrected by Rowe.

P. 219. "To divide him inventorially would dizzy the arithmetic of memory, and yet but *yaw* neither," &c.

So the quarto of 1604. The other quartos have *raw* instead of *yaw*. The context shows *yaw* to be right. Dyce undertakes to help the sense by substituting *it* for *yet*; which, to my thinking, just defeats the sense. Staunton proposes to substitute *wit*; which would have the same effect. See foot-notes 28 and 29.—The speech is not in the folio; nor has the first quarto any traces of it.

P. 222. "A kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through the most *fond* and *winnowed* opinions;" &c.

So the folio. The second and third quartos have "most *prophane* and *trennowed* opinions;" the later quartos the same, except that they substitute *trennowed* for *trennowed*. Warburton changed the folio reading to "most *fanned* and *winnowed* opinions," which several editors have adopted. But surely *fond* gives a natural and fitting sense,—

*affected* or *conceited*; while the sense of *fanned* is fully expressed by *winnowed*. See foot-note 43.

P. 223. "The readiness is all: since no man knows aught of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes?"

So Johnson. The quartos read "The readines is all, since no man of ought he leaves, knowes what ist to leave betimes, let be." The folio reads "The readinesse is all, since no man ha's aught of what he leaves. What is't to leave betimes?" Modern editors differ a good deal in their readings of the passage. The Cambridge editors print as follows: "The readiness is all; since no man has aught of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes? Let be."

P. 227. "He's *hot*, and scant of breath."

Instead of *hot*, the old text has *fat*; which seems decidedly out of place here, as a word is required signifying something peculiar to Hamlet in his present situation or at the present moment. The reading in the text was lately proposed by Plehwe, a German Shakespearian, who justly quotes in support of it from iv., 4: "When in your motion you are *hot* and dry." It has also been proposed, by "Mr. H. Wyeth, of Winchester," to read *faint*, which is perhaps better in itself, but does not infer so easy a misprint.—For this reading and reference I am indebted, immediately, to Mr. Furness's variorum edition.

P. 230. "*Hora*."

The rest is silence:

Now cracks a noble heart.—Good night, sweet Prince."

The old editions print "The rest is silence" as the close of Hamlet's preceding speech. The words are evidently quite out of place there: it is simply incredible that the dying Prince should so spend his last breath. This has, apparently, been felt by some others; but I am not aware that any one has made the change. I saw the need of it long ago.



