

Goose, if I had you upon Sarum plain,
I'd drive ye cackling home to Camelot.²⁰

Corn. What, art thou mad, old fellow?

Glos. How fell you out? say that.

Kent. No contraries hold more antipathy
Than I and such a knave.²¹

Corn. Why dost thou call him knave? What's his of-
fence?

Kent. His countenance likes me not.

Corn. No more, perchance, does mine, nor his, nor hers.

Kent. Sir, 'tis my occupation to be plain:
I have seen better faces in my time
Than stands on any shoulder that I see
Before me at this instant.

Corn. This is some fellow,
Who, having been praised for bluntness, doth affect
A saucy roughness, and constrains the garb,
Quite from his nature:²² he cannot flatter, he;
An honest mind and plain, he must speak truth!

²⁰ *Sarum* is an old contraction of *Salisbury*. Salisbury plain is the largest piece of flat surface in England, and used to be much noted as a lonely and desolate region.—*Camelot* is said to be a place in Somersetshire where large numbers of geese were bred. Old romances also make it the place where King Arthur kept his Court in the West. "Here, therefore," says Dyce, "there is perhaps a double allusion,—to Camelot as famous for its geese, and to those knights who were vanquished by the Knights of the Round Table being sent to Camelot to yield themselves as vassals to King Arthur."

²¹ The Steward should be placed in exact antithesis to Kent, as the only character of utter irredeemable baseness in Shakespeare. Even in this the judgment and invention of the Poet are very observable: for what else could the willing tool of a Goneril be? Not a vice but this of baseness was left open to him.—COLERIDGE.

²² Forces his outside, or his appearance, to something totally *different* from his natural disposition.—*Garb* is used repeatedly by Shakespeare in the sense of *style* or *manner*.

An they will take it, so; if not, he's plain.
These kind of knaves I know, which in this plainness
Harbour more craft and more corrupter ends
Than twenty silly-ducking observants
That stretch their duties nicely.²³

Kent. Sir, in good sooth, in sincere verity,
Under th' allowance of your great aspect,
Whose influence, like the wreath of radiant fire
On flickering Phœbus' front,—

Corn. What mean'st by this?

Kent. To go out of my dialect, which you discommend
so much. I know, sir, I am no flatterer: he that beguiled
you in a plain accent was a plain knave; which, for my part,
I will not be, though I should win your displeasure to entreat
me to't.

Corn. What was the offence you gave him?

Osw. I never gave him any.

It pleased the King his master very late
To strike at me, upon his misconstruction;
When he, conjunct, and flattering his displeasure,
Tripp'd me behind; being down, insulted, railed,
And put upon him such a deal of man,
That worthied him, got praises of the King
For him attempting who was self-subdued;²⁴

²³ *Nicely* is *punctiliously*, with *over-strained nicety*.—Coleridge has a just remark upon this speech: "In thus placing these profound general truths in the mouths of such men as Cornwall, Edmund, Iago, &c., Shakespeare at once gives them utterance, and yet shows how indefinite their application is." I may add, that an inferior dramatist, instead of making his villains use any such vein of original and profound remark, would probably fill their mouths with something either shocking or absurd; which is just what real villains, if they have any wit, never do.

²⁴ By "him who was self-subdued," Oswald means himself, pretending that the poor figure he made was the result of virtuous self-control, and not

And, in the fleshment of this dread exploit,
Drew on me here again.

Kent. None of these rogues and cowards
But Ajax is their fool.²⁵

Corn. Fetch forth the stocks! —
You stubborn ancient knave, you reverend braggart,
We'll teach you —

Kent. Sir, I am too old to learn:
Call not your stocks for me: I serve the King;
On whose employment I was sent to you:
You shall do small respect, show too bold malice
Against the grace and person of my master,
Stocking his messenger.

Corn. Fetch forth the stocks! — As I have life and hon-
our,
There shall he sit till noon.

Reg. Till noon! till night, my lord; and all night too.

Kent. Why, madam, if I were your father's dog,
You should not use me so.

Reg. Sir, being his knave, I will.

Corn. This is a fellow of the self-same colour
Our sister speaks of. — Come, bring away the stocks!

[*Stocks brought out.*]

Glos. Let me beseech your Grace not to do so:
His fault is much, and the good King his master
Will check him for't: your purposed low correction
Is such as basest and contemned'st wretches

of imbecility or fear. — *Fleshment* here means *pride* or *elation*; as explained in note 10 of this scene.

²⁵ Ajax is a fool to them. "These rogues and cowards talk in such a boasting strain that, if we were to credit their account of themselves, Ajax would appear a person of no prowess when compared to them."

For pilferings and most common trespasses
Are punish'd with. The King must take it ill,
That he, so slightly valued in his messenger,
Should have him thus restrain'd.

Corn. I'll answer that.

Reg. My sister may receive it much more worse,
To have her gentleman abused, assaulted,
For following her affairs. — Put in his legs. —

[*KENT is put in the stocks.*]

Come, my good lord, away.

[*Exeunt all but GLOSTER and KENT.*]

Glos. I'm sorry for thee, friend; 'tis the Duke's pleasure,
Whose disposition, all the world well knows,
Will not be rubb'd²⁶ nor stopp'd: I will entreat for thee.

Kent. Pray, do not, sir: I've watch'd, and travell'd hard;
Some time I shall sleep out, the rest I'll whistle.
A good man's fortune may grow out at heels:²⁷
Give you good morrow!

Glos. The Duke's to blame in this; 'twill be ill taken.

[*Exit.*]

Kent. Good King, that must approve²⁸ the common
saw, —

Thou out of Heaven's benediction comest
To the warm sun!²⁹ —

²⁶ *Rubb'd* is *impeded* or *hindered*. So in Hamlet's well-known phrase, "Ay, there's the rub." A rub in a bowling-alley is something that obstructs or deflects the ball.

²⁷ A man set in the stocks was said to be "punished by the heels"; and Kent probably alludes to this. He also means, apparently, that the fortune even of a good man may have holes in the heels of its shoes; or, as we say, may be "out at the toes," or "out at the elbows."

²⁸ Here, again, to *approve* is to *make good*, to *prove true*, to *confirm*. See page 63, note 37.

²⁹ The *saw*, that is, the *saying* or *proverb*, alluded to is, "Out of God's

Approach, thou beacon to this under globe,
 That by thy comfortable beams I may
 Peruse this letter! — Nothing, almost, sees miracles
 But misery.³⁰ I know 'tis from Cordelia;
 Who hath most fortunately been inform'd
 Of my obscurèd course; and shall find time,
 From this enormous state, seeking, to give
 Losses their remedies.³¹ — All weary and o'erwatch'd,

blessing into the warm sun"; which was used to signify the state of one cast out from the comforts and charities of home, and left exposed to the social inclemencies of the world. The proverbial phrase is well illustrated by a passage in Wilson's *Arte of Rhetoric*, 1585: "Undoubtedly the lawyer never dyeth a beggar; and no marvail. For an hundred begger for him, and make away all that they have, to get that of him, the which the oftener he bestoweth the more still he getteth. So that he gaineth always, as wel by increase of learning as by storing his purse with money; whereas the other *get a warm sun* often-times, and a flap with a fox-tail for all that ever they have spent." Lyly, in his *Euphues*, has an apt instance of the proverb reversed: "Therefore, if thou wilt follow my advice, and prosecute thine owne determination, thou shalt come out of a warme Sunne into God's blessing." For the foregoing explanation I am indebted, immediately, to Mr. Joseph Crosby, of Zanesville, Ohio.

³⁰ That is, hardly any but the miserable see miracles. Here *see* probably means *experience*, — a sense in which it is often used. Kent appears to be thinking of the supernatural cures and acts of beneficence recorded in the Gospels, where indeed miracles are almost never wrought but in behalf of the wretched; and upon this thought he seems to be building a hope of better times, both for himself and the old King; while, on the other hand, nothing short of a miraculous providence seems able to turn their course of misfortune.

³¹ I here adopt the arrangement and explanation proposed to me by Mr. Joseph Crosby. The verbs *know* and *shall find* are in the same construction: "I know, and I shall find." *Enormous* is used in its proper Latin sense of *abnormal*, *anomalous*, or *out of rule*; and refers to Kent's own situation, his "obscurèd course." So, in the Shakespeare portion of *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, v. 1, Mars is addressed, — "O great corrector of *enormous* times, shaker of o'er-rank States!" So that the meaning comes thus: "From this anomalous state of mine, I shall gain time to communicate and

Take vantage, heavy eyes, not to behold
 This shameful lodging. —

Fortune, good night: smile once more; turn thy wheel!³²

[*He sleeps.*]

SCENE III. — *The open Country.*

Enter EDGAR.

Edg. I heard myself proclaim'd;
 And by the happy¹ hollow of a tree
 Escaped the hunt. No port is free; no place,
 That guard, and most unusual vigilance,
 Does not attend my taking. While I may 'scape,
 I will preserve myself; and am bethought

co-operate with Cordelia in her endeavour to restore the kingdom to its former condition; 'to give losses their remedies,' that is, to reinstate Lear on the throne, Cordelia in his favour, and myself in his confidence, and in my own rights and titles." All this Kent utters in a disjointed way, because half-asleep; and then, having viewed the situation as hopefully as he can, he puts up a prayer to Fortune, and drops off to sleep.

³² I suspect Professor Dowden rather overstrains Kent's faith in Fortune; nevertheless I like his remarks: "Kent's loyalty to right has something in it of a desperate instinct, which persists in spite of the appearances presented by the world. Kent, who has seen the vicissitude of things, knows of no higher power presiding over the events of the world than fortune. Therefore, all the more, he clings to the passionate instinct of right-doing, and to the hardy temper, the fortitude which makes evil, when it happens to come, endurable. It is Kent who utters his thought in the words, 'Nothing, almost, sees miracles but misery.' And the miracle he sees, in his distress, is the approaching succour from France, and the loyalty of Cordelia's spirit. It is Kent, again, who, characteristically making the best of an unlucky chance, exclaims, as he settles himself to sleep in the stocks, 'Fortune, good night: smile once more; turn thy wheel.' Accordingly there is an exquisite tenderness in Kent's nature, and also a certain roughness and hardness, needful to protect, from the shocks of life, the tenderness of one who finds no refuge in communion with the higher powers."

¹ Here, as often, *happy* is *propitious* or *lucky*; like the Latin *felix*.

To take the basest and most poorest shape
That ever penury, in contempt of man,
Brought near to beast: my face I'll grime with filth,
Blanket my loins, elf all my hair in knots;²
And with presented nakedness outface
The winds and persecutions of the sky.
The country gives me proof and precedent
Of Bedlam beggars,³ who, with roaring voices,
Strike in their numb'd and mortified bare arms
Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary;
And with this horrible object, from low farms,
Poor pelting⁴ villages, sheep cotes, and mills,
Sometime with lunatic bans,⁵ sometime with prayers,
Enforce their charity. *Poor Turlygood!*⁶ *Poor Tom!*
That's something yet: Edgar I nothing am.

² The entangling and knotting of the hair was supposed to be done by elves and fairies in the night; hence called *elf knots*.

³ In *The Bell-Man of London*, by Dekker, 1640, is an account of one of these characters, under the title of *Abraham Man*: "He sweares he hath been in Bedlam, and will talke frantickely of purpose: you see *pinnes* stuck in sundry places of his naked flesh, especially in his *armes*, which paine he gladly puts himselfe to, only to make you believe he is out of his wits. He calls himselfe by the name of *Poore Tom*, and, coming near any body, cries out, *Poor Tom is a-cold*."

⁴ *Pelting* is *paltry* or *insignificant*. See *Richard II.*, page 70, note 10.

⁵ *Bans* is *curses*. The Poet had no doubt often seen such lunatics roving about in obscure places, and extorting pittances here and there, sometimes by loud execrations, sometimes by petitionary whinings.

⁶ *Turlygood* appears to have been a corruption of *Turlupin*, a name applied to a fanatical sect that overran France, Italy, and Germany in the 13th and 14th centuries. "Their manners and appearance," says Douce, "exhibited the strongest indications of lunacy and distraction. The common people called them Turlupins. Their subsequent appellation of the fraternity of poor men might have been the cause why the wandering rogues called Bedlam beggars, one of whom Edgar personates, assumed or obtained the title of *Turlupins* or *Turlygoods*."

SCENE IV.—*Before GLOSTER'S Castle. KENT in the Stocks.*

Enter LEAR, the FOOL, and a Gentleman.

Lear. 'Tis strange that they should so depart from home,
And not send back my messenger.

Gent. As I learn'd,
The night before there was no purpose in them
Of this remove.

Kent. Hail to thee, noble master!

Lear. Ha!
Makest thou this shame thy pastime?

Kent. No, my lord.

Fool. Ha, ha! he wears cruel¹ garters. Horses are tied
by the head, dogs and bears by the neck, monkeys by the
loins, and men by the legs: when a man's over-lusty at legs,
then he wears wooden nether-stocks.²

Lear. What's he that hath so much thy place mistook
To set thee here?

Kent. It is both he and she;
Your son and daughter.

Lear. No.

Kent. Yes.

Lear. No, I say.

Kent. I say, yea.

Lear. No, no, they would not.

Kent. Yes, they have.

Lear. By Jupiter, I swear, no.

Kent. By Juno, I swear, ay.

Lear. They durst not do't;

¹ A quibble between *cruel* and *crewel*; the latter being worsted.

² *Nether-stocks* is the old word for what we call *stockings*.

They could not, would not do't: 'tis worse than murder,
To do upon respect³ such violent outrage.
Resolve me,⁴ with all modest haste, which way
Thou mightst deserve, or they impose, this usage,
Coming from us.

Kent. My lord, when at their home
I did commend your Highness' letters to them,
Ere I was risen from the place that show'd
My duty kneeling, came there a reeking post,
Stew'd in his haste, half breathless, panting forth
From Goneril his mistress salutations;
Deliver'd letters, spite of intermission,⁵
Which presently they read: on whose contents,⁶
They summon'd up their meiny,⁷ straight took horse;
Commanded me to follow, and attend
The leisure of their answer; gave me cold looks:
And, meeting here the other messenger,
Whose welcome, I perceived, had poison'd mine,
(Being the very fellow that of late
Display'd so saucily against your Highness,)

³ The meaning probably is, to do *deliberately*, or upon *consideration*. *Respect*, with that sense, occurs in the first scene of this play, and such was the common meaning. Mr. Crosby, however, thinks the meaning here is, "to do outrage to the respect that is due to the King." And he adds, "*Respect* is a sort of semi-personification, and stands for that which commands respect, namely, the King, as represented in his messenger."

⁴ "*Resolve me*" is *inform me or assure me*. A frequent usage.

⁵ That is, *in spite of the interruption or delay* naturally consequent upon what Kent was himself doing. In other words, the "reeking post" did not heed Kent's action at all, nor allow himself to be interrupted by it. *Intermission* occurs both in *The Merchant* and in *Macbeth* for *pause or delay*, which is nearly its meaning here.

⁶ "On *reading* the contents of *which*" is the meaning.

⁷ *Meiny* is from a French word meaning *household*, or *retinue*.

Having more man than wit about me, drew:⁸
He raised the house with loud and coward cries.
Your son and daughter found this trespass worth
The shame which here it suffers.

Fool. Winter's not gone yet, if the wild geese fly that way.⁹

Fathers that wear rags
Do make their children blind;
But fathers that bear bags
Shall see their children kind. —

But, for all this, thou shalt have as many dolours¹⁰ for thy daughters as thou canst tell in a year.

Lear. O, how this mother¹¹ swells up toward my heart!

Hysterica passio, down, thou climbing sorrow,
Thy element's below! — Where is this daughter?

Kent. With the Earl, sir, here within.

Lear. Follow me not; stay here.

[*Exit.*

Gent. Made you no more offence but what you speak of?

Kent. None.

How chance the King comes with so small a train?

Fool. An thou hadst been set i' the stocks for that question, thou hadst well deserved it.

Kent. Why, Fool?

Fool. We'll set thee to school to an ant, to teach thee there's no labouring i' the Winter.¹² All that follow their

⁸ The pronoun *I* is understood here from the fourth line above.

⁹ "If such is their behaviour, the King's troubles are not over yet."

¹⁰ A quibble between *dolours* and *dollars*. — *Tell*, in the next line, is *count*, and refers to *dollars*. See *Macbeth*, page 59, note 23.

¹¹ Lear affects to pass off the swelling of his heart, ready to burst with grief and indignation, for the disease called the *mother*, or *hysterica passio*, which, in the Poet's time, was not thought peculiar to women.

¹² Referring to Proverbs, vi. 6-8: "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the Summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest." And the

noses are led by their eyes but blind men ; and there's not a nose among twenty but can smell him that's stinking.¹³ Let go thy hold when a great wheel runs down a hill, lest it break thy neck with following it ; but the great one that goes up the hill, let him draw thee after. When a wise man gives thee better counsel, give me mine again : I would have none but knaves follow it, since a fool gives it.

That sir which serves and seeks for gain,
And follows but for form,
Will pack when it begins to rain,
And leave thee in the storm.
But I will tarry ; the Fool will stay,
And let the wise man fly :
The knave turns fool that runs away,
The Fool no knave, perdy.¹⁴

Kent. Where learn'd you this, Fool?

Fool. Not i' the stocks, fool.

Re-enter LEAR, with GLOSTER.

Lear. Deny to speak with me? They're sick? they're weary?

They've travell'd hard to-night? Mere fetches ;¹⁵

application is, "If you had learned of the ant, you would have known that the King's train are too shrewd to be making hay in cloudy weather, or to think of providing their meat where the Winter of adversity has set in."

¹³ All but blind men are led by their eyes, though they follow their noses ; and these, seeing the King's forlorn condition, have forsaken him ; while even of the blind, who have nothing but their noses to guide them, there is not one in twenty but can smell him who, being "muddy in Fortune's mood, smells somewhat strong of her displeasure."

¹⁴ Here the Fool may be using the trick of suggesting a thing by saying its opposite. Or perhaps he is playing upon the two senses of *knave*, one of which is *servant*. This would infer who the real fools in the world are. Coleridge says "a knave is a fool with a circumbendibus."

¹⁵ *Fetch* was often used for *device*, *pretext*, or *stratagem*.

The images of revolt and flying off.

Fetch me a better answer.

Glos. My dear lord,
You know the fiery quality of the Duke ;
How unremovable and fix'd he is
In his own course.

Lear. Vengeance ! plague ! death ! confusion !—
Fiery? what quality? Why, Gloster, Gloster,
I'd speak wi' th'¹⁶ Duke of Cornwall and his wife.

Glos. Well, my good lord, I have inform'd them so.

Lear. Inform'd them ! Dost thou understand me, man?

Glos. Ay, my good lord.

Lear. The King would speak with Cornwall ; the dear
father

Would with his daughter speak ; commands her service :¹⁷
Are they inform'd of this?— My breath and blood !
Fiery? the fiery Duke? Tell the hot Duke that—
No, but not yet : may be he is not well :
Infirmity doth still neglect all office
Whereto our health is bound ; we're not ourselves
When nature, being oppress'd, commands the mind
To suffer with the body : I'll forbear ;
And am fall'n out with my more headier will,
To take¹⁸ the indisposed and sickly fit

¹⁶ Here we have an instance of double elision, *wi' th'* for *with the*, that the two words may coalesce into one syllable. The Poet has many such. Still oftener a single elision for the same purpose, such as *by th'*, *for th'*, *from th'*, *on th'*, *to th'* ; and in the second scene of this play we have "Shall *top th'* legitimate."

¹⁷ Lear is here asserting something of the regal authority which he has abdicated ; and his meaning depends somewhat on an emphasizing of the words *King*, *commands*, and *service*.

¹⁸ The infinitive to *take* is here used *gerundively*, or like the Latin *gerund*, and so is equivalent to *in taking*. See *Macbeth*, page 86, note 26.—Here

For the sound man. — [Looking on KENT.

Death on my state! wherefore

Should he sit here? This act persuades me
That this remotion¹⁹ of the Duke and her
Is practice only. Give me my servant forth.
Go tell the Duke and's wife I'd speak with them,
Now, presently: bid them come forth and hear me,
Or at their chamber-door I'll beat the drum
Till it cry sleep to death.²⁰

Glos. I would have all well betwixt you. [Exit.

Lear. O me, my heart, my rising heart! — but, down!

Fool. Cry to it, nuncle, as the cockney²¹ did to the eels
when she put 'em i' the paste alive; she knapp'd 'em o' the
coxcombs with a stick, and cried, *Down, wantons, down!*
'Twas her brother that, in pure kindness to his horse, butter'd
his hay.

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, GLOSTER, and Servants.

Lear. Good morrow to you both.

Corn.

Hail to your Grace!

[KENT is set at liberty.

the Poet follows a well-known Latin idiom, using the comparative, *more headier*, in the sense of *too* heady, that is, *too headstrong*. He has the same usage repeatedly. For this use of the double comparative, see page 59, note 18.

¹⁹ *Remotion* for *removal*; referring to Cornwall and Regan's action in departing from home.

²⁰ That is, till it kills sleep with noise and clamour.

²¹ The etymology, says Nares, seems most probable, which derives *cockney* from *cookery*. *Le pays de cocagne*, or *coquaine*, in old French, means a country of good cheer. This *Lubberland*, as Florio calls it, seems to have been proverbial for the simplicity or gullibility of its inhabitants. A *cockney* and a *ninny-hammer*, or *simpleton*, were convertible terms. Dekker, in his *Newes from Hell*, says, "'Tis not our fault; but our mothers, our cockering mothers, who for their labour made us to be called cockneys."

Reg. I am glad to see your Highness.

Lear. Regan, I think you are; I know what reason
I have to think so: if thou shouldst not be glad,
I would divorce me from thy mother's tomb,
Sepulchring an adultress. — [To KENT.] O, are you free?
Some other time for that. — Belovèd Regan,
Thy sister's naught: O Regan, she hath tied
Sharp-tooth'd unkindness, like a vulture, here, —

[Points to his heart.

I can scarce speak to thee; thou'lt not believe
Of how depraved a quality — O Regan!

Reg. I pray you, sir, take patience: I have hope
You less know how to value her desert
Than she to scant her duty.²²

Lear. Say, how is that?

Reg. I cannot think my sister in the least
Would fail her obligation: if, sir, perchance
She have restrain'd the riots of your followers,
'Tis on such ground, and to such wholesome end,
As clears her from all blame.

Lear. My curses on her!

Reg. O, sir, you are old;

Nature in you stands on the very verge
Of her confine: you should be ruled, and led

²² There is something of perplexity here. Taken strictly, the passage can only mean, "She knows *better* how to *be wanting* in her duty than you know how to value her desert"; which is clearly the reverse of the sense intended. The difficulty grows from putting a positive and a negative clause together in a comparison. Change the positive clause into a negative, and the sense comes right; thus: "You know *not* how to value her desert, *rather than* she knows how to be wanting in her duty." Still better, perhaps, if we change the negative clause into a positive: "You less know how to value her desert than she knows how to *do* her duty."

By some discretion that discerns your state
Better than you yourself. Therefore, I pray you,
That to our sister you do make return ;
Say you have wrong'd her, sir.²³

Lear. Ask her forgiveness?

Do you but mark how this becomes the House :²⁴

Dear daughter, I confess that I am old ;

Age is unnecessary :²⁵ on my knees I beg [Kneeling.

That you'll vouchsafe me raiment, bed, and food.

Reg. Good sir, no more ; these are unsightly tricks :
Return you to my sister.

Lear. [Rising.] Never, Regan :

She hath abated me of half my train ;

Look'd black upon me ; struck me with her tongue,

Most serpent-like, upon the very heart.

All the stored vengeance of Heaven fall

On her ingrateful top ! Strike her young bones,

You taking airs, with lameness !

Corn. Fie, sir, fie !

Lear. You nimble lightnings, dart your blinding flames

²³ Nothing is so heart-cutting as a cold, unexpected defence or palliation of a cruelty passionately complained of, or so expressive of thorough hard-heartedness. And feel the excessive horror of Regan's "O, sir, you are old!" and then her drawing from that universal object of reverence and indulgence the very reason for her frightful conclusion, "Say you have wrong'd her." All Lear's faults increase our pity for him. We refuse to know them otherwise than as means of his sufferings, and aggravations of his daughters' ingratitude. — COLERIDGE.

²⁴ How it comports with the order of the family or of the domestic relations, that the father should be a kneeling suppliant to the child.

²⁵ *Unnecessary*, here, is commonly explained as meaning *necessitous*, or *without the necessaries of life*. But the more probable explanation takes Lear as giving an ironical apology for the uselessness of his existence. "An old man, such as I am, can be of no use to any one, and so must be content to live upon alms."

Into her scornful eyes ! Infect her beauty,
You fen-suck'd fogs, drawn by the powerful Sun,
To fall²⁶ and blast her pride !

Reg. O the blest gods ! so will you wish on me,
When the rash mood is on.

Lear. No, Regan, thou shalt never have my curse :

Thy tender-hefted²⁷ nature shall not give

Thee o'er to harshness : her eyes are fierce ; but thine

Do comfort, and not burn. 'Tis not in thee

To grudge my pleasures, to cut off my train,

To bandy hasty words, to scant my sizes,²⁸

And, in conclusion, to oppose the bolt

Against my coming in : thou better know'st

The offices of nature, bond of childhood,

Effects of courtesy, dues of gratitude ;

Thy half of the kingdom hast thou not forgot,

Wherein I thee endow'd.

Reg. Good sir, to th' purpose.

Lear. Who put my man i' the stocks ? [Tucket within.

Corn. What trumpet's that ?

Reg. I know't, — my sister's : this approves her letter,
That she would soon be here. —

²⁶ *Fall* is here a transitive verb, meaning *take down* or *abase*.

²⁷ The best explanation of this is given in *The Edinburgh Review*, July, 1869: "*Heft* is a well-known older English word for *handle*, that which holds or contains; and *tender-hefted* is simply *delicately housed*, *finely sheathed*. *Heft* was in this way applied proverbially to the body; and Howell has a phrase, quoted by Halliwell, which is a good example of its graphic use, — 'loose in the heft,' — to designate an ill habit of body, a person of dissipated ways. *Tender-hefted* is, therefore, *tender-bodied*, *delicately organized*, or, more literally, *finely-fleshed*."

²⁸ A *size* is a *portion* or *allotment* of food. The term *sizer* is still used at the English universities for one of the lowest rank of students, living on a stated allowance.

Enter OSWALD.

Is your lady come?

Lear. This is a slave, whose easy-borrow'd pride
Dwells in the fickle grace of her he follows.²⁹—
Out, varlet, from my sight!

Corn. What means your Grace?

Lear. Who stock'd my servant? Regan, I have good
hope
Thou didst not know on't. — Who comes here? O Heavens,

Enter GONERIL.

If you do love old men, if your sweet sway
Allow³⁰ obedience, if yourselves are old,
Make it your cause; send down, and take my part! —
[*To GON.*] Art not ashamed to look upon this beard? —
O Regan, wilt thou take her by the hand?

Gon. Why not by th' hand, sir? How have I offended?
All's not offence that indiscretion finds
And dotage terms so.

Lear. O sides, you are too tough!
Will you yet hold? — How came my man i' the stocks?

Corn. I set him there, sir: but his own disorders
Deserved much less advancement.

Lear. You! did you?

Reg. I pray you, father, being weak, seem so.³¹

²⁹ Whose pride depends upon, or *comes and goes* with the shifting favour of his mistress; who puts on airs or falls his crest according as she smiles or frowns upon him.

³⁰ To *allow* in its old sense of *approve*. So in the 117th Psalm of *The Psalter*: "The Lord *alloweth* the righteous." Also in St. Luke, xi. 48: "Truly ye bear witness that ye *allow* the deeds of your fathers." See, also, page 86, note 21.

³¹ "Since you are weak, be content to think yourself so."

If, till the expiration of your month,
You will return and sojourn with my sister,
Dismissing half your train, come then to me:
I'm now from home, and out of that provision
Which shall be needful for your entertainment.

Lear. Return to her, and fifty men dismiss'd?
No, rather I abjure all roofs, and choose
To wage against the enmity o' the air;
To be a comrade with the wolf, and howl
Necessity's sharp pinch!³² Return with her?
Why, the hot-blooded France, that dowerless took
Our youngest-born, I could as well be brought
To knee his throne, and, squire-like, pension beg
To keep base life afoot. Return with her?
Persuade me rather to be slave and sumpter³³
To this detested groom. [*Pointing at OSWALD.*]

Gon. At your choice, sir.

Lear. I pr'ythee, daughter, do not make me mad:
I will not trouble thee, my child; farewell:
We'll no more meet, no more see one another.
But yet thou art my flesh, my blood, my daughter;
Or rather a disease that's in my flesh,
Which I must needs call mine: thou art a boil,
A plague-sore, an embossèd³⁴ carbuncle,
In my corrupted blood. But I'll not chide thee;
Let shame come when it will, I do not call it:
I do not bid the Thunder-bearer shoot,

³² "Necessity's sharp pinch" is, of course, the pinch, or the *pang*, of hunger, or of cold, or of both.

³³ *Sumpter* is used along with *horse* or *mule*, to signify one that carries provisions or other necessities.

³⁴ *Embossèd* is *swollen* or *protuberant*, like the boss of a shield.

Nor tell tales of thee to high-judging Jove :³⁵
Mend when thou canst ; be better at thy leisure :
I can be patient ; I can stay with Regan,
I and my hundred knights.

Reg. Not altogether so :
I look'd not for you yet, nor am provided
For your fit welcome. Give ear, sir, to my sister ;
For those that mingle reason with your passion
Must be content to think you old, and so —
But she knows what she does.

Lear. Is this well spoken ?
Reg. I dare avouch it, sir. What, fifty followers?
Is it not well? What should you need of more?
Yea, or so many, sith³⁶ that both charge and danger
Speak 'gainst so great a number? How, in one house,
Should many people, under two commands,
Hold amity? 'Tis hard ; almost impossible.

Gon. Why might not you, my lord, receive attendance
From those that she calls servants, or from mine ?

Reg. Why not, my lord? If then they chanced to slack
you,
We could control them. If you will come to me, —
For now I spy a danger, — I entreat you
To bring but five-and-twenty : to no more
Will I give place or notice.

Lear. I gave you all, —

Reg. And in good time you gave it.³⁷

³⁵ "The Thunder-bearer" is the same as Jove the Thunderer. So that *Nor* connects "do not bid" and "tell tales."

³⁶ *Sith* and *sithence* were old forms just falling out of use in the Poet's time, and now entirely superseded by *since*.

³⁷ This spurt of malice, snapped in upon Lear's pathetic appeal, is the *ne plus ultra* of human fiendishness. In the Introduction, page 17, I have

Lear. — Made you my guardians, my depositaries ;
But kept a reservation to be follow'd
With such a number. What, must I come to you
With five-and-twenty, Regan? said you so?

Reg. And speak't again, my lord ; no more with me.

Lear. Those wicked creatures yet do look well-favour'd,
When others are more wicked : not being the worst
Stands in some rank of praise. — [*To Gon.*] I'll go with
thee :

Thy fifty yet doth double five-and-twenty,
And thou art twice her love.

Gon. Hear me, my lord :
What need you five-and-twenty, ten, or five,
To follow in a house where twice so many
Have a command to tend you?

Reg. What need one?

Lear. O, reason not the need : our basest beggars
Are in the poorest thing superfluous :
Allow not nature more than nature needs,

remarked somewhat upon the scarce-credible sameness of these two she-tigers. Professor Dowden discriminates them very happily in the following : "The two terrible creatures are distinguishable. Goneril is the calm wielder of a pitiless force, the resolute initiator of cruelty. Regan is a smaller, shriller, fiercer, more eager piece of malice. The tyranny of the elder sister is a cold, persistent pressure, as little affected by tenderness or scruple as the action of some crushing hammer ; Regan's ferocity is more unmeasured, and less abnormal or monstrous. Regan would avoid her father ; and, while she confronts him alone, quails a little as she hears the old man's curse pronounced against her sister : 'O the blest gods ! so will you wish on me when the rash mood is on.' But Goneril knows that a helpless old man is only a helpless old man, that words are merely words. When, after Lear's terrible malediction, he rides away with his train, Goneril, who would bring things to an issue, pursues her father, determined to see matters out to the end. To complete the horror they produce in us, these monsters are amorous. Their love is even more hideous than their hate."

Man's life is cheap as beast's. Thou art a lady :
 If only to go warm were gorgeous,
 Why, nature needs not what thou gorgeous wear'st,
 Which scarcely keeps thee warm.³⁸ But, for true need, --
 You Heavens, give me patience, — patience I need ! —
 You see me here, you gods, a poor old man,
 As full of grief as age ; wretched in both !
 If it be you that stir these daughters' hearts
 Against their father, fool me not so much
 To bear it tamely ; touch me with noble anger ;
 And let not women's weapons, water-drops,
 Stain my man's cheeks ! — No, you unnatural hags,
 I will have such revenges on you both,
 That all the world shall — I will do such things, —
 What they are, yet I know not ; but they shall be
 The terrors of the Earth. You think I'll weep ;
 No, I'll not weep :
 I have full cause of weeping ; but this heart
 Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws,³⁹
 Or e'er I'll weep. — O Fool, I shall go mad !

[*Exeunt* LEAR, GLOSTER, KENT, and the FOOL.

Storm heard at a distance.

Corn. Let us withdraw ; 'twill be a storm.

Reg. This house is little : th' old man and his people
 Cannot be well bestow'd.

Gon. 'Tis his own blame ; 'hath put himself from rest,

³⁸ The scope of this reasoning seems to be, "You need clothing only for warmth ; yet you pile up expense of dress for other ends, while your dress, after all, hardly meets that natural want ; which shows that you would rather suffer lack of warmth than of personal adornment."

³⁹ *Flaws* anciently signified *fragments*, as well as mere *cracks*. The word, as Bailey observes, was "especially applied to the breaking off *shivers* or thin pieces from precious stones."

And must needs taste his folly.

Reg. For his particular, I'll receive him gladly,
 But not one follower.

Gon. So am I purposed.

Where is my lord of Gloster ?

Corn. Follow'd the old man forth : — he is return'd.

Re-enter GLOSTER.

Glos. The King is in high rage.

Corn. Whither is he going ?

Glos. He calls to horse ; but will I know not whither.

Corn. 'Tis best to give him way ; he leads himself.

Gon. My lord, entreat him by no means to stay.⁴⁰

Glos. Alack ! the night comes on, and the bleak winds
 Do sorely ruffle ;⁴¹ for many miles about
 There's scarce a bush.

Reg. O, sir, to wilful men,
 The injuries that they themselves procure
 Must be their schoolmasters. Shut up your doors :
 He is attended with a desperate train ;
 And what they may incense him to, being apt
 To have his ear abused, wisdom bids fear.

Corn. Shut up your doors, my lord ; 'tis a wild night :
 My Regan counsels well. Come out o' the storm.

[*Exeunt.*

⁴⁰ "Do not by any means entreat him to stay," is the meaning.

⁴¹ Are very *boisterous* or *blustering*. A stronger sense than *ruffle* now has.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Heath. A Storm, with Thunder and Lightning**Enter KENT and a Gentleman, meeting.**Kent.* Who's here, besides foul weather?*Gent.* One minded, like the weather, most unquietly.*Kent.* I know you. Where's the King?*Gent.* Contending with the fretful elements ;

Bids the wind blow the earth into the sea,

Or swell the curlèd waters 'bove the main,¹

That things might change or cease ; tears his white hair,

Which the impetuous blasts, with eyeless rage,

Catch in their fury, and make nothing of ;

Strives in his little world of man t' out-scorn

The to-and-fro-conflicting wind and rain.

This night, wherein the cub-drawn bear would couch,

The lion and the belly-pinched wolf²

Keep their fur dry, unbonnetted he runs,

And bids what will take all.

Kent. But who is with him?*Gent.* None but the Fool ; who labours to out-jest
His heart-struck injuries.*Kent.* Sir, I do know you ;
And dare, upon the warrant of my note,³

¹ Lear wishes for the destruction of the world, either by the winds blowing the land into the water, or raising the waters so as to overwhelm the land.

² A bear made fierce by suckling her cubs ; a wolf enraged by the gnawings of hunger.

³ Note for notice, knowledge, or observation ; referring to " I do know you." Shakespeare repeatedly uses note thus.

Commend a dear thing to you. There's division,
 Although as yet the face of it be cover'd
 With mutual cunning, 'twixt Albany and Cornwall ;
 Who have — as who have not, that their great stars
 Throne and set high ? — servants, who seem no less,
 Which are to France the spies and speculators
 Intelligent of our State ;⁴ what hath been seen,
 Either in snuffs and packings of the Dukes ;⁵
 Or the hard rein which both of them have borne
 Against the old kind King ; or something deeper,
 Whereof perchance these are but furnishings.⁶
 But, true it is, from France there comes a power
 Into this scatter'd kingdom ;⁷ who already,
 Wise in our negligence, have secret feet⁸
 In some of our best ports, and are at point
 To show their open banner. Now to you :
 If on my credit you dare build so far
 To make your speed to Dover, you shall find
 Some that will thank you, making just report
 Of how unnatural and bemadding sorrow
 The King hath cause to plain.
 I am a gentleman of blood and breeding,

⁴ " Who seem the servants of Albany and Cornwall, but are really engaged in the service of France as spies, gathering and conveying information of all that is done here." *Intelligent* here carries the sense not only of *knowing*, but also of *giving intelligence* ; *intelligencers*. — *Speculator* in the Latin sense of *observer* or *looker-on*.

⁵ *Snuffs* are dislikes, and *packings* underhand contrivances.

⁶ That is, whereof these things are but the trimmings or appendages ; not the thing itself, but only the circumstances or *furniture* of the thing.

⁷ That is, having its *military force* scattered ; or, perhaps, *distracted* by the feud between Albany and Cornwall.

⁸ Have *secret footing* ; have landed *secretly*. — *At point*, next line, is *ready* or *prepared* ; on the *point* of showing, as we should say.

And from some knowledge and assurance offer
This office to you.

Gent. I will talk further with you.

Kent. No, do not.
For confirmation that I am much more
Than my out-wall, open this purse, and take
What it contains. If you shall see Cordelia, —
As fear not but you shall, — show her this ring;
And she will tell you who your fellow⁹ is
That yet you do not know. Fie on this storm!
I will go seek the King.

Gent. Give me your hand: have you no more to say?

Kent. Few words, but, to effect, more than all yet, —
That, when we've found the King, — in which your pain
That way, I'll this,¹⁰ — he that first lights on him
Holla the other. [*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE II. — *Another part of the Heath. Storm still.*

Enter LEAR and the FOOL.

Lear. Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow!
You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout
Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the cocks!
You sulphurous and thought-executing¹ fires,
Vaunt-couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts,
Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking thunder,
Strike flat the thick rotundity o' the world!

⁹ *Fellow* was often used for *companion*.

¹⁰ "In which search you take pains in that direction, and I will in this."

¹ *Thought-executing* may mean acting with the swiftness of thought, or executing the thoughts of Jupiter *Tonans*. — *Vaunt-couriers* originally meant the foremost scouts of an army, as lightning foreruns thunder.

Crack Nature's moulds, all germens spill at once,²
That make ingrateful man!

Fool. O nuncle, court holy-water³ in a dry house is better
than this rain-water out o' door. Good nuncle, in, and ask
thy daughter's blessing: here's a night pities neither wise
men nor fools.

Lear. Rumble thy bellyful! Spit, fire! spout, rain!
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters:
I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness;
I never gave you kingdom, call'd you children,
You owe me no subscription:⁴ then let fall
Your horrible pleasure; here I stand, your slave,
A poor, infirm, weak, and despised old man:
But yet I call you servile ministers,
That have with two pernicious daughters join'd
Your high-engender'd battles 'gainst a head
So old and white as this. O! O! 'tis foul!

Fool. He that has a house to put's head in has a good
head-piece.

The man that makes his toe
What he his heart should make
Shall of a corn cry woe,⁵
And turn his sleep to wake.

² There is a parallel passage in *The Winter's Tale*: "Let Nature crush the sides o' the Earth together, and mar the seeds within."

³ *Court holy-water* is fair words and flattering speeches. So Chillingworth, in one of his sermons: "Can any man think so unworthily of our Saviour, as to esteem these words of His for no better than *compliment*? for nothing but *court holy-water*?"

⁴ Are under no oath or obligation of service of kindness to me. Referring to the binding force of one's signature. See page 70, note 6.

⁵ A covert allusion to the King, who has set his children above himself, and now they are trampling on him. Making the heart and the toe change