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NOTE ON THE TEXT

THE text of this edition conforms generally to that of the Globe edition of Shakespeare. In a few places (indicated in the notes) I have adopted readings that are closer to the text of the First Folio than those of the Globe editors. The stage directions have also been brought closer to the original stage directions of the First Folio. Wherever the actual words of the original stage directions are used they are given in inverted commas.

V. DE S P.

INTRODUCTION

I. SHAKESPEARE AND PLUTARCH

THE book that appears to have influenced Shakespeare more than any other was the great collection of *Lives* of the most eminent Greeks and Romans written at the beginning of the second century A.D. by Plutarch of Chaeronea, one of the last of the great Greek prose writers. Plutarch lived at the very end of the period of ancient classical civilisation, and was thus able to look back at the whole of Greek and Roman history, and to make a survey of the achievements of all the great men of classical antiquity. His *Lives* are among the most delightful of ancient books. He takes us, as it were, behind the scenes of history, and gives us intimate human portraits of the great Greek and Roman statesmen and soldiers. It is not therefore surprising that Plutarch's *Lives* became a favourite book at the time of the Renaissance, when the men of Western Europe were turning away from the Middle Ages, and trying with passionate ardour to recapture the spirit of the great days of Greece and Rome. To sixteenth-century minds the heroes of antiquity appeared like figures of colossal dignity and grandeur looming up in the distance across the mists of centuries of medieval ignorance and superstition. In Plutarch's biographies they were able to find out

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intimate personal details of these great men whom they regarded as unapproachable models of wisdom and valour and moral nobility. Jacques Amyot, a fine French scholar, published an excellent French version of the *Lives* in 1559. It was from this version that Sir Thomas North, a Cambridgeshire knight, made his famous English translation, which appeared in 1579. It may seem strange to call a book that is a translation of a translation a masterpiece, but North's Plutarch thoroughly deserves that title. It is distinguished by a fire, a vigour, and a lofty poetic quality which are unsurpassed even in that age of great English translations, and which, curiously enough, are not found either in the original Greek or in Amyot's pure and elegant French. North's Plutarch, *The Lives of Noble Grecians and Romanes*, was Shakespeare's Plutarch. He must have acquired the book early in his career and read it again and again. He founded three great plays, *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Coriolanus* directly on North's translation, and in many places in them he uses North's own words with little alteration beyond the changes necessary for transforming prose into blank verse. This is a compliment that he pays to no other author. In the words of the late Professor Sir Walter Raleigh : " North's Plutarch did more than supply Shakespeare with matter for his plays ; it excited his imagination and possessed his thought."

2. THE TRAGEDY OF " CORIOLANUS "

Coriolanus is the third and last of Shakespeare's Roman plays. It was not published until it appeared in the Folio or collected edition of Shakespeare's

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plays in 1623, but it was probably written and acted in about 1608, at the same time as Shakespeare's last great tragedies, *Macbeth* and *King Lear*. Its style is that of the later part of Shakespeare's career. The blank verse has the abrupt and unusual rhythms that we find in such plays as *Cymbeline* and *A Winter's Tale*, forming a strong contrast with the smooth, end-stopped lines of the earlier plays. The style also is of the closely packed and highly allusive kind that is only found in Shakespeare's later works. It is no longer the style of a young man who enjoys himself in playing with beautiful words ; it is the style of a great master who has complete control of a marvellous instrument capable of expressing almost infinite shades of meaning. The structure too is characteristic of the last phase of Shakespeare's art. It is loose and flowing like that of *Antony and Cleopatra* and *A Winter's Tale*, and quite unlike the compact stagecraft of such works as *Julius Cæsar* and *Hamlet*. Shakespeare's later plays are like Turner's later pictures. All unessential details are roughly sketched in, and the artist concentrates solely on the production of a general imaginative effect of overwhelming power and splendour.

3. TRAGEDY AND HISTORY

Tragedy is the kind of drama that purifies and elevates the mind by arousing pity and terror. Shakespearian tragedy performs this function by showing the fall of a great man from high estate to misery and death through some fatal flaws in his character which are inextricably connected with his best qualities. Othello's credulity and passionate anger are inevitable accompaniments of his noble

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simplicity of mind and his poetic ardour ; Lear's pride and injustice are simply the exaggerations of his strong will and his kingly dignity. Coriolanus, as presented by Plutarch, is a man of this kind. He is nobly brave and self-willed, and his aristocratic pride and hatred of restraint, which lead to his downfall, are at once the fatal flaws in his character and the indispensable adjuncts of his courage and loftiness of spirit. The man who cannot be restrained by fear of the enemy cannot be restrained by the advice of his friends. There is another element of Shakespearian tragedy which is also found in the life of Coriolanus. This is the element of conflict, a conflict between great spiritual forces producing in the reader what A. C. Bradley * calls "an impression of waste" leading to "a profound sense of sadness and mystery." In the greatest of the tragedies, such as *Hamlet* and *Othello*, the conflict is both external and internal, a conflict in the mind of the hero, and a conflict between opposing forces in the world outside, as between Claudius and Hamlet, and Iago and Cassio. In the story of Coriolanus Shakespeare found a tragic conflict, but it was mainly an external one. It is the conflict between the Roman patricians or nobles and the plebeians or common people. Shakespeare's sympathies are aristocratic on the whole. He likes and understands the common people, but he knows their faults and detests the demagogues who lead them. Yet he shows us the infant Roman democracy as a tremendous power, and he makes us feel that it has some justice on its side. Its clash with the patrician spirit incarnate in Coriolanus brings misery to Rome, and exile and finally death to Coriolanus himself. We

* Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy*, p. 23.

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are made to feel that this is more than a conflict between men. It is a conflict between two principles that crushes noble spirits mercilessly in its terrible and inhuman ferocity.

4. THE CHARACTERS

Caius Martius

Caius Martius is shown at the very opening of the play as "chief enemy of the people," "a very dog to the commonalty," who advocates forcible repression of the starving mob. Then we see him in his true element with the army striking "Corioli like a planet," enduring wounds and hardships with invincible fortitude till the field is won. He shows his greatness not only in his bravery, but in his genuine modesty when he is praised by the Consul. Shakespeare adds a fine and subtle touch to the pleasant story told by Plutarch that, when the Consul offered Martius "a mercenary reward," he refused it, but asked instead that one of the Volscian prisoners who had formerly been kind to him should be released. Shakespeare's Coriolanus makes the same request, but, when Titus Lartius asks for the name of the prisoner, the answer is "By Jupiter! forgot." Could any satire on the futility of noble intentions without intelligence be more effective?

The ideal of Coriolanus is the greatness of the aristocratic caste to which he belongs. For him the patricians are the State, and the plebeians merely exist in order to work and to fight for them. This is a narrow ideal, but it is a genuine one. He is not selfish and does not seek his own aggrandisement at all. But the constitutional development which was giving the plebeians a share in the government through the

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creation of tribunes was quite beyond his comprehension. For him it was a mere betrayal which would end by handing Rome over to a mutinous, fickle, unwashed rabble, the "rats" of the city.

Yet there is nothing base in his character. He is magnificently loyal to the patrician caste and to his mother, who in his eyes is the incarnation of all its virtues. It is his mother who persuades him to undergo the humiliating ceremonies attendant on the consular election, and it is significant that her argument is that by stooping to these indignities, he will be merely using craft to deceive his enemies just as he might "take in a town with gentle words." For his mother's sake he consents to endure what is to him the terrible humiliation of asking a favour at the hands of the despised plebeians. But his fiery spirit will not allow him to play the part of a suitor for long, nor has he the subtlety to defeat the machinations of the Tribunes. All his pent-up hatred of the mob and its leaders burst out in his flaming replies to the accusations of his enemies. They decree his banishment, and he replies by banishing them :—

You common cry of curs ! whose breath I hate
As reek o' the rotten fens, whose loves I prize
As the dead carcasses of unburied men
That do corrupt my air, I banish you.

They can drive him out of the city, but they cannot banish him, for they are not the true Rome. The true Rome is the patrician Rome, the ideal in the mind of Coriolanus that is banishing its unworthy foes. Coriolanus's political views are short-sighted and mistaken, but he towers over his opponents like a giant over pigmies.

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A. C. Bradley has written of Coriolanus's "self-ignorance," * and the part of the play that follows his banishment shows how completely he misunderstands his own character. In his anger at the worthlessness and ingratitude of the Romans he resolves to take a terrible revenge on Rome, and his method is characteristically simple, fearless, and unsophisticated. He goes straight to his old enemy Aufidius at Antium. No scene in Shakespeare is more impressive than that in which he walks into Aufidius's house alone "in mean apparel, disguised and muffled," and by sheer force of character obtains an interview with his old opponent, and wins his confidence. There is a touch of mystery in this scene that is rare in the play and reminds us of *Hamlet* or *Lear*. It is to be found for instance in such words as those of the grim and pregnant answer of the haughty, muffled stranger to the servingman who asks him where he dwells: "i' the city of kites and crows." Now that he is with the Volscians his anger against Rome grows to a mad pitch. It is not only the plebeians whom he hates, but the patricians too, who have abandoned the true patrician ideal. He vows

revenge as spacious as between
The young'st and oldest thing.

Everything goes down before the attack, and he can think of nothing but destruction. Plutarch's Coriolanus does not want to destroy Rome, but only to humiliate it. But Shakespeare's hero appears to have "grown from a man into a dragon," and he wants to see Rome in flames. He rejects all the appeals of his

* "Coriolanus," in *A Miscellany* by A. C. Bradley, p. 89.

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fellow countrymen, and even refuses to listen to his old friend Menenius. He thinks that he can

Stand

As if a man were author of himself
And knew no other kin.

But he is profoundly ignorant of his own nature, which is really tender and affectionate. When he is faced by his mother, his wife, and his son, all his fierceness vanishes. When Nature (in his own words, "great Nature") speaks he yields almost at once. In Bradley's words, we witness "the conquest of passion by simple human feelings." Coriolanus himself knows that, when he yields to his mother and his wife, he has signed his own death-warrant, but the events that lead up to his murder by Aufidius and the Volscian conspirators seem hardly to matter. The spiritual climax of the play is to be found at the moment when Coriolanus allows his pride to be overcome by three women and a child. Coriolanus is the simplest of all Shakespeare's tragic heroes. Bradley has well described him as "a huge boy." His faults are his self-ignorance, his lack of subtlety, and his fiery and ungovernable passion. But we remember him for his splendid vitality, his love for his mother and his wife, and his poetry. The finest lines in the play are put into his mouth, and there is nothing lovelier in Shakespearian drama than his description of Valeria:—

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

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This is not merely great poetry ; it is great *dramatic* poetry. It reveals the deepest and noblest elements in Coriolanus's character : his exquisite chivalry and his reverence for womanhood.

Menenius Agrippa

The weakness of Plutarch's *Life of Coriolanus* regarded as material for drama is the fact that Coriolanus himself is the only interesting and clearly drawn character in the story. Cominius, Titus Lartius, the Tribunes, and Tullus Aufidius are mere shadows. Shakespeare knew that historical records must be treated freely if they were to be used for dramatic purposes. His chief departure from Plutarch is to be found in the character of Menenius Agrippa. This senator is only mentioned in the *Life of Coriolanus* as the tactful ambassador who goes to the Plebs when they secede to the Mons Sacer, and persuades them to return by means of the parable of the different parts of the body. Plutarch does not even mention that Menenius was acquainted with Coriolanus. The character of Menenius in the play is thus an original creation of Shakespeare, who turns him into "a humorous patrician," a genial old man, fond of good living and of a joke, the friend and wise counsellor of Coriolanus. He has a character which forms a centre of stability and sanity amid the tragic passions of the play, like Horatio in *Hamlet* and Kent in *Lear*. Like Coriolanus he is an aristocrat, and loyal to the ideals of his caste, but, unlike Coriolanus, he does not allow this loyalty to stand in the way of his friendly relations with the common people. The plebeians like him and respect him, not because he favours the demands of their leaders, but because he speaks to

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them kindly, and treats them like friends and fellow citizens instead of drudges and enemies. Even the tribunes, to whom he tells many bitter home-truths, trust him. They call him "noble Menenius" and consent that he should act as the "people's officer." He loves Coriolanus as though the headstrong young soldier were his son. Coriolanus loves him too, and it is only by a tremendous effort of will that he resists the entreaties of his "old father Menenius" when he comes to the Volscian army to beg for mercy for Rome. Shakespeare knew that humour and wisdom are closely allied. If Coriolanus could have been endowed with a grain of Menenius's humour, he would have understood both his own character and those of his enemies better, and would probably have been saved from destruction.

Volumnia, Virgilia, and Young Martius

Coriolanus's mother and wife do not appear in Plutarch's narrative until he is encamped before Rome at the head of the Volscian army, when, at the request of Valeria, they go with her to move compassion in the general. Shakespeare humanises his plot by making the women play an important part from the very beginning. Volumnia, in particular, becomes one of the most significant characters in the drama. She is a woman of great strength of character and her influence over her son has been supreme from childhood. It is she who has given him the conception of military "honour" that dominates his whole life. "I," she says, "considering how honour would become such a person—that it was no better than picture-like to hang by the wall, if renown made it not stir—was pleased to let him seek danger where he

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was like to find fame. To a cruel war I sent him ; from whence he returned, his brows bound with oak." It was she who taught him to despise the common people,

To call them woollen vassals, things created
To buy and sell with groats, to show bare heads
In congregations. . . .

In fact she may be said to have made Coriolanus what he is. She is as fiercely patriotic as he is, and as intensely loyal to her caste, but, as Bradley points out, he has a higher sense of personal honour than she has. She would have him deceive the common people by stooping to seek their favour. His spirit is too lofty and generous to carry such a plan through. He cannot teach his mind "a most inherent baseness." Her supreme value in the drama is that we are enabled to see Coriolanus through her eyes as a beloved, wayward child. There is no subtler picture of human relationships in Shakespeare than the great scene (Act V. Scene III.) in which she reasserts her dominion over her son. She begins her famous speech by appealing to Coriolanus and ends it by defying him :—

Come, let us go :
This fellow had a Volscian to his mother ;
His wife is in Corioli and his child
Like him by chance.

It is then and then only that he yields. It is the method of a clever mother with a "difficult" but affectionate boy.

Virgilia, that "most gracious silence," forms a striking contrast with her eloquent and energetic

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mother-in-law. Ruskin described her as "perhaps the loveliest of Shakespeare's female characters." Her silences, like those of Cordelia, are as significant as her speeches. It should be observed, however, that she is no mere shrinking nonentity, although she dislikes wounds and fighting. She can argue with the formidable Volumnia and even refuse to obey her, and she can accompany her to the Volscian tents and play an important part in the work of softening Coriolanus's heart and saving Rome. She is beautiful, and Coriolanus's words envelop her with a kind of spiritual radiance that makes us think of Perdita and Miranda :—

What is that curt'sy worth ? or those doves' eyes,
Which can make gods forsworn ? I melt and am not
Of stronger earth than others.

Plutarch only mentions vaguely Coriolanus's "young children." Shakespeare by a fine stroke of art substitutes the particular for the general, and gives Coriolanus a son who is shown as inheriting his father's character in a way that makes Coriolanus's military glory appear boyish and almost ludicrous. After all, we may ask, is not the elder Martius storming Corioli merely a repetition on a large scale of the younger Martius pursuing the "gilded butterfly" and "mammocking it" ? * Shakespeare is using almost the same method as that used by Swift when he gave his readers a miniature reproduction of the European wars of his day in the great struggle between the kingdoms of Lilliput and Blefuscu. Young

* Notice that in Act IV. Scene vi. Cominius actually compares Coriolanus and his Volscian army to "boys pursuing summer butterflies" (l. 94).

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Martius is one of the most delightfully natural children in Shakespeare. His sturdy contradiction of his grandmother, when she calls up the picture of Coriolanus "treading" on his family, is couched in the very words of a living boy :—

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

The Tribunes and the People

The two tribunes, Sicinius and Brutus, are the most unpleasant characters in the play. They are types that Shakespeare thoroughly dislikes, mean, petty minds that judge everyone by their own low standards. It is noticeable that they misunderstand Coriolanus completely. Nothing could be further from the truth than the attribution of base motives to him when he consented to serve under Cominius. Their accusation that he aimed at tyranny or kingship is equally unjust. They are incapable of understanding that Coriolanus's pride was mingled with genuine humility with regard to his own character and achievements.

If Shakespeare dislikes the demagogues, he gives a kindly if critical picture of the common people. We must not be misled by the abuse which he puts into Coriolanus's mouth. This abuse is dramatically appropriate, and may be compared to the sentiments with regard to democracy that a modern dramatist would put into the mouth of a fire-eating colonel. If we want to find out Shakespeare's view of the common people, we must take note of their own words and actions. They are certainly drawn from the common people of Elizabethan England whom Shakespeare

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knew very well indeed. They are fickle, ignorant, and easily led by anyone with a glib tongue. But they have shrewdness and humour, and they will listen to reason when they are approached tactfully, as Menenius knows how to approach them. They are brave soldiers too when they are well led. Martius reviles them as cowards, but he owes his victories to them, and, when he appears bleeding on the battlements of Corioli, they respond nobly to Lartius's appeal and rush to his rescue. Notice also that Shakespeare puts some very wise remarks into their mouths. No better advice was ever given to Coriolanus than that implied in the words of the unnamed citizen who, when asked the price of the Consulship, replied, "To ask it kindly."

5. THE TEXT OF "CORIOLANUS"

The First Folio * or collected edition of Shakespeare's plays appeared in 1623. *Coriolanus* is one of eighteen out of the thirty-six plays in that volume that had not (as far as we know) been printed before. Shakespeare died in 1616, and the First Folio thus appeared seven years after his death. It was edited by John Heminge and Henry Condell, two of his fellow actors. They did their work honestly, but they were not trained scholars, and the manuscript copies which they had to work on (in the case of the plays

* Folio is a bookbinder's term. In a *folio* volume the sheets of paper are folded twice so as to give two large *leaves* or four *pages*. In a *quarto* volume they are folded four times, and in an *octavo* (the usual modern size) eight times. A folio is thus a large volume. Folios are rarely produced now, but they were commonly used in the seventeenth century for large and important works.

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that had not been printed before) were probably unsatisfactory in many respects. The usual custom of Elizabethan dramatists was to sell manuscript copies of their plays to companies of actors. It is likely that after a number of years had elapsed such copies would often be in a very bad condition. Thus in dealing with *Coriolanus* we must remember that we have a text, the printing of which was never supervised by the author, and it is possible also that the copy from which it is printed was not Shakespeare's own manuscript but a copy made for the actors. Hence there are a number of difficulties that can only be explained on the hypothesis that Shakespeare's words have been mangled or lost by careless copying or printing. One of the great merits of the Folio text of this play is to be found in its very full stage directions,* which are among the most vivid and valuable in any of the original editions of Shakespeare's plays. Thus we have a complete picture of Act I. Scene III. suggested by the stage direction concerning Volumnia and Virgilia : "*they set them down on two low stools and sew*" ; and an unforgettable image of Coriolanus in exile in the direction at the head of Act IV. Scene IV. "*Enter Coriolanus in mean apparel, disguised and muffled.*" It cannot be doubted that these stage directions are from Shakespeare's own pen.

* In this edition the stage directions of the First Folio are given in inverted commas. The directions which are not in inverted commas are those which have been added by later editors.

CORIOLOANUS

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

CAIUS MARTIUS, afterwards CAIUS MARTIUS CORIOLANUS.

TITUS LARTIUS	} generals against the Vol- scians.
COMINIUS	

MENENIUS AGRIPPA, friend to Coriolanus.

SICINIUS	} tribunes of the people.
VELUTUS	
JUNIUS BRUTUS	

Young MARTIUS, son to Coriolanus.

A Roman Herald.

TULLUS AUFIDIUS, general of the Volscians.

Lieutenant to Aufidius.

Conspirators with Aufidius.

A Citizen of Antium.

Two Volscian Guards.

VOLUMNIA, mother to Coriolanus.

VIRGILIA, wife to Coriolanus.

VALERIA, friend to Virgilia.

Gentlewoman, attending on Virgilia.

Roman and Volscian Senators, Patricians, Ædiles, Lictors, Soldiers, Citizens, Messengers, Servants to Aufidius, and other Attendants.

SCENE : *Rome and the neighbourhood ; Corioli and the neighbourhood ; Antium.*

ACT I

SCENE I. *Rome. A street. "Enter a company of mutinous Citizens, with staves, clubs, and other weapons."*

First Cit. Before we proceed any further, hear me speak.

All. Speak, speak.

First Cit. You are all resolved rather to die than to famish ?

All. Resolved, resolved.

First Cit. First, you know Caius Martius is chief enemy to the people.

All. We know't, we know't.

First Cit. Let us kill him, and we'll have corn at our own price. Is't a verdict ? 11

All. No more talking on't ; let it be done : away, away !

Sec. Cit. One word, good citizens.

First Cit. We are accounted poor citizens, the patricians good. What authority surfeits on would relieve us : if they would yield us but the superfluity, while it were wholesome, we might guess they relieved us humanely ; but they think we are too dear : the leanness that afflicts us, the object of our misery, is as an inventory to particularize their abundance ; our sufferance is a gain to them. Let us revenge this with our pikes, ere we become rakes : for the gods

know I speak this in hunger for bread, not in thirst for revenge.

Sec. Cit. Would you proceed especially against Caius Martius?

All. Against him first : he's a very dog to the commonalty.

Sec. Cit. Consider you what services he has done for his country ? 31

First Cit. Very well ; and could be content to give him good report for't, but that he pays himself with being proud.

Sec. Cit. Nay, but speak not maliciously.

First Cit. I say unto you, what he hath done famously, he did it to that end : though soft-conscienced men can be content to say it was for his country, he did it to please his mother, and to be partly proud ; which he is, even to the altitude of his virtue. 41

Sec. Cit. What he cannot help in his nature, you account a vice in him. You must in no way say he is covetous.

First Cit. If I must not, I need not be barren of accusations ; he hath faults, with surplus, to tire in repetition. [*"Shouts within."*] What shouts are these ? The other side o' the city is risen : why stay we prating here ? to the Capitol !

All. Come, come. 50

First Cit. Soft ! who comes here ?

“ *Enter MENENIUS AGRIPPA.* ”

Sec. Cit. Worthy Menenius Agrippa ; one that hath always loved the people.

First Cit. He's one honest enough : would all the rest were so !

Men. What work's, my countrymen, in hand ?
where go you

With bats and clubs ? The matter ? speak, I pray you.

First Cit. Our business is not unknown to the senate;
they have had inkling this fortnight what we intend to
do, which now we'll show 'em in deeds. They say
poor suitors have strong breaths : they shall know we
have strong arms too. 62

Men. Why, masters, my good friends, mine honest
neighbours,

Will you undo yourselves ?

First Cit. We cannot, sir, we are undone already.

Men. I tell you, friends, most charitable care
Have the patricians of you. For your wants,
Your suffering in this dearth, you may as well
Strike at the heaven with your staves as lift them
Against the Roman state, whose course will on 70
The way it takes, cracking ten thousand curbs
Of more strong link asunder than can ever
Appear in your impediment. For the dearth,
The gods, not the patricians, make it, and
Your knees to them, not arms, must help. Alack,
You are transported by calamity
Thither where more attends you, and you slander
The helms o' the state, who care for you like fathers,
When you curse them as enemies. 79

First Cit. Care for us ! True, indeed ! They ne'er
cared for us yet : suffer us to famish, and their store-
houses crammed with grain ; make edicts for usury,
to support usurers ; repeal daily any wholesome act
established against the rich, and provide more piercing
statutes daily, to chain up and restrain the poor. If
the wars eat us not up, they will ; and there's all the
love they bear us.

Men. Either you must
‘Confess yourselves wondrous malicious,
Or be accused of folly. I shall tell you 90
A pretty tale : it may be you have heard it ;
But, since it serves my purpose, I will venture
To stale’t a little more.

First Cit. Well, I’ll hear it, sir : yet you must not
think to fob off our disgrace with a tale : but, an’t
please you, deliver.

Men. There was a time when all the body’s members
Rebell’d against the belly ; thus accused it :
That only like a gulf it did remain
I’ the midst o’ the body, idle and unactive, 100
Still cupboarding the viand, never bearing
Like labour with the rest, where the other instruments
Did see and hear, devise, instruct, walk, feel,
And, mutually participate, did minister
Unto the appetite and affection common
Of the whole body. The belly answer’d—

First Cit. Well, sir, what answer made the belly ?

Men. Sir, I shall tell you. With a kind of smile,
Which ne’er came from the lungs, but even thus—
For, look you, I may make the belly smile 110
As well as speak—it tauntingly replied
To the discontented members, the mutinous parts
That envied his receipt ; even so most fitly
As you malign our senators for that
They are not such as you.

First Cit. Your belly’s answer ? What !
The kingly-crowned head, the vigilant eye,
The counsellor heart, the arm our soldier,
Our steed the leg, the tongue our trumpeter,
With other muniments and petty helps
In this our fabric, if that they—

Men.

What then ? 120

'Fore me, this fellow speaks ! What then ? what then ?

First Cit. Should by the cormorant belly be restrain'd,

Who is the sink o' the body,—

Men.

Well, what then ?

First Cit. The former agents, if they did complain,
What could the belly answer ?

Men.

I will tell you ;

If you'll bestow a small—of what you have little—
Patience awhile, you'll hear the belly's answer.

First Cit. Ye're long about it.

Men.

Note me this, good friend ;

Your most grave belly was deliberate,
Not rash like his accusers, and thus answer'd : 130

“ True is it, my incorporate friends,” quoth he,

“ That I receive the general food at first,

Which you do live upon ; and fit it is,

Because I am the store-house and the shop

Of the whole body : but, if you do remember,

I send it through the rivers of your blood,

Even to the court, the heart, to the seat o' the brain ;

And, through the cranks and offices of man,

The strongest nerves and small inferior veins

From me receive that natural competency 140

Whereby they live : and though that all at once,

You, my good friends,”—this says the belly, mark me,—

First Cit. Ay, sir ; well, well.

Men.

“ Though all at once cannot

See what I do deliver out to each,

Yet I can make my audit up, that all

From me do back receive the flour of all,

And leave me but the bran." What say you to't ?

First Cit. It was an answer : how apply you this ?

Men. The senators of Rome are this good belly,
And you the mutinous members ; for examine 150
Their counsels and their cares, digest things rightly
Touching the weal o' the common, you shall find
No public benefit which you receive

But it proceeds or comes from them to you
And no way from yourselves. What do you think,
You, the great toe of this assembly ?

First Cit. I the great toe ! why the great toe ?

Men. For that, being one o' the lowest, basest,
poorest,
Of this most wise rebellion, thou go'st foremost :
Thou rascal, that art worst in blood to run, 160
Lead'st first to win some vantage.

But make you ready your stiff bats and clubs :
Rome and her rats are at the point of battle ;
The one side must have bale.

“ *Enter CAIUS MARTIUS.* ”

Hail, noble Martius !

Mar. Thanks. What's the matter, you dissentious
rogues
That, rubbing the poor itch of your opinion,
Make yourselves scabs ?

First Cit. We have ever your good word.

Mar. He that will give good words to thee will
flatter

Beneath abhorring. What would you have, you curs,
That like nor peace nor war ? the one affrights you,
The other makes you proud. He that trusts to you,
Where he should find you lions, finds you hares ; 172
Where foxes, geese : you are no surer, no,

Than is the coal of fire upon the ice,
Or hailstone in the sun. Your virtue is
To make him worthy whose offence subdues him
And curse that justice did it. Who deserves greatness
Deserves your hate ; and your affections are
A sick man's appetite, who desires most that
Which would increase his evil. He that depends 180
Upon your favours swims with fins of lead
And hews down oaks with rushes. Hang ye ! Trust
ye ?

With every minute you do change a mind,
And call him noble that was now your hate,
Him vile that was your garland. What's the matter,
That in these several places of the city
You cry against the noble senate, who,
Under the gods, keep you in awe, which else
Would feed on one another ? What's their seeking ?

Men. For corn at their own rates ; whereof, they
say, 190

The city is well stored.

Mar. Hang 'em ! They say !

They'll sit by the fire, and presume to know
What's done i' the Capitol ; who's like to rise,
Who thrives and who declines ; side factions and
give out

Conjectural marriages ; making parties strong
And feebling such as stand not in their liking
Below their cobbled shoes. They say there's grain
enough !

Would the nobility lay aside their ruth,
And let me use my sword, I'd make a quarry
With thousands of these quarter'd slaves, as high 200
As I could pick my lance.

Men. Nay, these are almost thoroughly persuaded ;

For though abundantly they lack discretion,
Yet are they passing cowardly. But, I beseech you,
What says the other troop ?

Mar. They are dissolved : hang 'em !
They said they were an-hungry ; sigh'd forth proverbs,
That hunger broke stone walls, that dogs must eat,
That meat was made for mouths, that the gods sent not
Corn for the rich men only : with these shreds
They vented their complainings ; which being
answer'd, 210

And a petition granted them, a strange one—
To break the heart of generosity,
And make bold power look pale—they threw their
caps

As they would hang them on the horns o' the moon,
Shouting their emulation.

Men. What is granted them ?

Mar. Five tribunes to defend their vulgar wisdoms,
Of their own choice : one's Junius Brutus,
Sicinius Velutus, and I know not—'Sdeath!
The rabble should have first unroof'd the city,
Ere so prevail'd with me : it will in time 220
Win upon power and throw forth greater themes
For insurrection's arguing.

Men. This is strange.

Mar. Go, get you home, you fragments !

“ *Enter a Messenger, hastily.* ”

Mess. Where's Caius Martius ?

Mar. Here : what's the matter ?

Mess. The news is, sir, the Volsces are in arms.

Mar. I am glad on't : then we shall ha' means to
vent

Our musty superfluity. See, our best elders.

“ *Enter SICINIUS VELUTUS, JUNIUS BRUTUS,
COMINIUS, TITUS LARTIUS, with other Senators.*”

First Sen. Martius, 'tis true that you have lately
told us ;

The Volsces are in arms.

Mar. They have a leader,
Tullus Aufidius, that will put you to't. 230
I sin in envying his nobility,
And were I any thing but what I am,
I would wish me only he.

Com. You have fought together.

Mar. Were half to half the world by the ears and he
Upon my party, I'd revolt, to make
Only my wars with him : he is a lion
That I am proud to hunt.

First Sen. Then, worthy Martius,
Attend upon Cominius to these wars.

Com. It is your former promise.

Mar. Sir, it is ;
And I am constant. Titus Lartius, thou 240
Shalt see me once more strike at Tullus' face.
What, art thou stiff ? stand'st out ?

Tit. No, Caius Martius ;
I'll lean upon one crutch and fight with t'other,
Ere stay behind this business.

Men. O, true-bred !

First Sen. Your company to the Capitol ; where, I
know,
Our greatest friends attend us.

Tit. [To *Com.*] Lead you on.
[To *Mar.*] Follow Cominius ; we must follow you ;
Right worthy you priority.

Com. Noble Martius !

First Sen. [*To the Citizens.*] Hence to your homes ;
be gone !

Mar. Nay, let them follow :
The Volsces have much corn ; take these rats thither
To gnaw their garner. Worshipful mutiners, 251
Your valour puts well forth : pray, follow.

[*“ Citizens steal away.” Exeunt all but
Sicinius and Brutus.*

Sic. Was ever man so proud as is this Martius ?

Bru. He has no equal.

Sic. When we were chosen tribunes for the people,—

Bru. Mark’d you his lip and eyes ?

Sic. Nay, but his taunts.

Bru. Being moved, he will not spare to gird the gods.

Sic. Be-mock the modest moon.

Bru. The present wars devour him ! he is grown
Too proud to be so valiant.

Sic. Such a nature, 260
Tickled with good success, disdains the shadow
Which he treads on at noon : but I do wonder
His insolence can brook to be commanded
Under Cominius.

Bru. Fame, at the which he aims,
In whom already he’s well graced, can not
Better be held nor more attain’d than by
A place below the first : for what miscarries
Shall be the general’s fault, though he perform
To the utmost of a man, and giddy censure
Will then cry out of Martius “ O, if he 270
Had borne the business ! ”

Sic. Besides, if things go well,
Opinion that so sticks on Martius shall
Of his demerits rob Cominius.

Bru. Come :

Half all Cominius' honours are to Martius,
Though Martius earn'd them not, and all his faults
To Martius shall be honours, though indeed
In aught he merit not.

Sic. Let's hence, and hear
How the dispatch is made, and in what fashion,
More than his singularity, he goes
Upon this present action.

Bru. Let's along. [*"Exeunt."* 280]

SCENE II. *Corioli. The Senate-house.* "*Enter TULLUS
AUFIDIUS with Senators of Corioli.*"

First Sen. So, your opinion is, Aufidius,
That they of Rome are enter'd in our counsels
And know how we proceed.

Auf. Is it not yours ?
What ever have been thought on in this state,
That could be brought to bodily act ere Rome
Had circumvention ? 'Tis not four days gone
Since I heard thence ; these are the words : I think
I have the letter here ; yes, here it is.
[*Reads*] " They have press'd a power, but it is not
known

Whether for east or west : the dearth is great ; 10
The people mutinous ; and it is rumour'd,
Cominius, Martius your old enemy,
Who is of Rome worse hated than of you,
And Titus Lartius, a most valiant Roman,
These three lead on this preparation
Whither 'tis bent : most likely 'tis for you :
Consider of it."

First Sen. Our army's in the field :
We never yet made doubt but Rome was ready

To answer us.

Auf. Nor did you think it folly
To keep your great pretences veil'd till when 20
They needs must show themselves ; which in the
hatching,

It seem'd, appear'd to Rome. By the discovery
We shall be shorten'd in our aim, which was
To take in many towns ere almost Rome
Should know we were afoot.

Sec. Sen. Noble Aufidius,
Take your commission ; hie you to your bands :
Let us alone to guard Corioli :
If they set down before's, for the remove
Bring up your army ; but, I think, you'll find
They've not prepared for us.

Auf. O, doubt not that ; 30
I speak from certainties. Nay, more,
Some parcels of their power are forth already,
And only hitherward. I leave your honours.
If we and Caius Martius chance to meet,
'Tis sworn between us we shall ever strike
Till one can do no more.

All. The gods assist you !

Auf. And keep your honours safe !

First Sen. Farewell !

Sec. Sen. Farewell !

All. Farewell. [“*Exeunt omnes.*”]

SCENE III. *Rome. A room in Martius' house. “ Enter
VOLUMNIA and VIRGILIA ” : “ they set them down on
two low stools, and sew.”*

Vol. I pray you, daughter, sing ; or express yourself
in a more comfortable sort : if my son were my

husband, I should freelier rejoice in that absence wherein he won honour than in the embracements of his bed where he would show most love. When yet he was but tender-bodied and the only son of my womb, when youth with comeliness plucked all gaze his way, when for an hour of kings' entreaties a mother should not sell him a day from her beholding, I—considering how honour would become such a person ; that it was no better than picture-like to hang by the wall, if renown made it not stir—was pleased to let him seek danger where he was like to find fame. To a cruel war I sent him ; from whence he returned, his brows bound with oak. I tell thee, daughter, I sprang not more in joy at first hearing he was a man-child than now in first seeing he had proved himself a man.

Vir. But had he died in the business, madam ; how then ? 20

Vol. Then his good report should have been my son ; I therein would have found issue. Hear me profess sincerely : had I a dozen sons, each in my love alike and none less dear than thine and my good Martius, I had rather had eleven die nobly for their country than one voluptuously surfeit out of action.

“ Enter a Gentlewoman.”

Gent. Madam, the Lady Valeria is come to visit you.

Vir. Beseech you, give me leave to retire myself.

Vol. Indeed, you shall not.

Methinks I hear hither your husband's drum, 30
See him pluck Aufidius down by the hair,
As children from a bear, the Volsces shunning him :
Methinks I see him stamp thus, and call thus :
“ Come on, you cowards ! you were got in fear,

Though you were born in Rome ” : his bloody brow
With his mail'd hand then wiping, forth he goes,
Like to a harvest-man that's task'd to mow
Or all or lose his hire.

Vir. His bloody brow ! O Jupiter, no blood !

Vol. Away, you fool ! it more becomes a man 40
Than gilt his trophy : the breasts of Hecuba,
When she did suckle Hector, look'd not lovelier
Than Hector's forehead when it spit forth blood
At Grecian sword, contemning. Tell Valeria,
We are fit to bid her welcome. *[Exit Gent.]*

Vir. Heavens bless my lord from fell Aufidius !

Vol. He'll beat Aufidius' head below his knee
And tread upon his neck.

“ *Enter VALERIA, with an Usher and a Gentlewoman.* ”

Val. My ladies both, good day to you.

Vol. Sweet madam. 50

Vir. I am glad to see your ladyship.

Val. How do you both ? you are manifest house-keepers.

What are you sewing here ? A fine spot, in good faith.

How does your little son ?

Vir. I thank your ladyship ; well, good madam.

Vol. He had rather see the swords, and hear a drum,
than look upon his schoolmaster.

Val. O' my word, the father's son : I'll swear, 'tis a
very pretty boy. O' my troth, I looked upon him o'
Wednesday half an hour together : has such a confirmed countenance. I saw him run after a gilded butterfly ; and when he caught it, he let it go again ; and after it again ; and over and over he comes, and up again ; caught it again ; or whether his fall

enraged him, or how 'twas, he did so set his teeth and tear it ; O, I warrant, how he mammocked it !

Vol. One on's father's moods.

Val. Indeed, la, 'tis a noble child.

Vir. A crack, madam.

Val. Come, lay aside your stitchery ; I must have you play the idle huswife with me this afternoon. 71

Vir. No, good madam ; I will not out of doors.

Val. Not out of doors !

Vol. She shall, she shall.

Vir. Indeed, no, by your patience ; I'll not over the threshold till my lord return from the wars.

Val. Fie, you confine yourself most unreasonably : come, you must go visit the good lady that lies in.

Vir. I will wish her speedy strength, and visit her with my prayers ; but I cannot go thither. 80

Vol. Why, I pray you ?

Vir. 'Tis not to save labour, nor that I want love.

Val. You would be another Penelope : yet, they say, all the yarn she spun in Ulysses' absence did but fill Ithaca full of moths. Come ; I would your cambric were sensible as your finger, that you might leave pricking it for pity. Come, you shall go with us.

Vir. No, good madam, pardon me ; indeed, I will not forth.

Val. In truth, la, go with me ; and I'll tell you excellent news of your husband. 91

Vir. O, good madam, there can be none yet.

Val. Verily, I do not jest with you ; there came news from him last night.

Vir. Indeed, madam ?

Val. In earnest, it's true ; I heard a senator speak it. Thus it is : the Volsces have an army forth ; against whom Cominius the general is gone, with one

part of our Roman power : your lord and Titus Lartius are set down before their city Corioli ; they nothing doubt prevailing and to make it brief wars. This is true, on mine honour ; and so, I pray, go with us. 103

Vir. Give me excuse, good madam ; I will obey you in every thing hereafter.

Vol. Let her alone, lady : as she is now, she will but disease our better mirth.

Val. In troth, I think she would. Fare you well, then. Come, good sweet lady. Prithee, Virgilia, turn thy solemnness out o' door, and go along with us.

Vir. No, at a word, madam ; indeed, I must not. I wish you much mirth. 112

Val. Well, then, farewell. ["*Exeunt Ladies.*"]

SCENE IV. *Before Corioli.* "*Enter MARTIUS, TITUS LARTIUS, with drum and colours, with Captains and Soldiers. To them a Messenger.*"

Mar. Yonder comes news. A wager they have met.

Lart. My horse to yours, no.

Mar. 'Tis done.

Lart. Agreed.

Mar. Say, has our general met the enemy ?

Mess. They lie in view ; but have not spoke as yet.

Lart. So, the good horse is mine.

Mar. I'll buy him of you.

Lart. No, I'll nor sell nor give him : lend you him I will

For half a hundred years. Summon the town.

Mar. How far off lie these armies ?

Mess. Within this mile and half.

Mar. Then shall we hear their 'larum, and they ours.

Now, Mars, I prithee, make us quick in work 10
That we with smoking swords may march from hence,
To help our fielded friends ! Come, blow thy blast.

“ *They sound a parley. Enter two Senators with others
on the walls of Corioli.*”

Tullus Aufidius, is he within your walls ?

First Sen. No, nor a man that fears you less than he,
That’s lesser than a little. [“ *Drums afar off.*”] Hark !
our drums

Are bringing forth our youth. We’ll break our walls,
Rather than they shall pound us up : our gates,
Which yet seem shut, we have but pinn’d with rushes ;
They’ll open of themselves. [“ *Alarum afar off.*”]

Hark you, far off !

There is Aufidius ; list, what work he makes 20
Amongst your cloven army.

Mar. O, they are at it !

Lart. Their noise be our instruction. Ladders, ho !

“ *Enter the army of the Volsces.*”

Mar. They fear us not, but issue forth their city.
Now put your shields before your hearts, and fight
With hearts more proof than shields. Advance, brave
Titus :

They do disdain us much beyond our thoughts,
Which makes me sweat with wrath. Come on, my
fellows :

He that retires, I’ll take him for a Volsce,
And he shall feel mine edge.

“ *Alarum. The Romans are beat back to their trenches.*”
Re-enter “ MARTIUS, cursing.”

Mar. All the contagion of the south light on you, 30

You shames of Rome ! you herd of—Boils and plagues
Plaster you o'er, that you may be abhorr'd
Further than seen and one infect another
Against the wind a mile ! You souls of geese,
That bear the shapes of men, how have you run
From slaves that apes would beat ! Pluto and hell !
All hurt behind ; backs red, and faces pale
With flight and agued fear ! Mend and charge home,
Or, by the fires of heaven, I'll leave the foe
And make my wars on you : look to't : come on ; 40
If you'll stand fast, we'll beat them to their wives,
As they us to our trenches followed.

“ *Another alarum.*” *The Volsces fly, “ and MARTIUS
follows them to the gates.”*

So, now the gates are ope : now prove good seconds :
'Tis for the followers fortune widens them,
Not for the fliers : mark me, and do the like.

[“ *Enters the gates.*”

First Sol. Fool-hardiness ; not I.

Sec. Sol. Nor I. [*Martius is shut in.*

First Sol. See, they have shut him in.

All. To the pot, I warrant him.
[“ *Alarum continues.*”

Re-enter TITUS LARTIUS

Lart. What is become of Martius ?

All. Slain, sir, doubtless.

First Sol. Following the fliers at the very heels,
With them he enters ; who, upon the sudden, 50
Clapp'd to their gates : he is himself alone,
To answer all the city.

Lart. O noble fellow !
Who sensibly outdares his senseless sword,

And, when it bows, stands up. Thou art left, Martius :
 A carbuncle entire, as big as thou art,
 Were not so rich a jewel. Thou wast a soldier
 Even to Cato's wish, not fierce and terrible
 Only in strokes ; but, with thy grim looks and
 The thunder-like percussion of thy sounds,
 Thou madest thine enemies shake, as if the world 60
 Were feverous and did tremble.

“ *Re-enter MARTIUS, bleeding, assaulted by the enemy.*”

First Sol. Look, sir.

Lart. O, 'tis Martius !
 Let's fetch him off, or make remain alike.
 [“ *They fight, and all enter the city.*”

SCENE V. *Corioli. A street. Enter certain Romans,
 with spoils.*

First Rom. This will I carry to Rome.

Sec. Rom. And I this.

Third Rom. A murrain on't ! I took this for silver.
 [“ *Alarum continues still afar off.*”

“ *Enter MARTIUS and TITUS LARTIUS with a trumpet.*”

Mar. See here these movers that do prize their hours
 At a crack'd drachma ! Cushions, leaden spoons,
 Irons of a doit, doublets that hangmen would
 Bury with those that wore them, these base slaves,
 Ere yet the fight be done, pack up : down with them !
 And hark, what noise the general makes ! To him !
 There is the man of my soul's hate, Aufidius, 10
 Piercing our Romans : then, valiant Titus, take
 Convenient numbers to make good the city ;
 Whilst I, with those that have the spirit, will haste

To help Cominius.

Lart. Worthy sir, thou bleed'st ;
Thy exercise hath been too violent
For a second course of fight.

Mar. Sir, praise me not ;
My work hath yet not warm'd me : fare you well :
The blood I drop is rather physical
Than dangerous to me : to Aufidius thus
I will appear, and fight.

Lart. Now the fair goddess, Fortune, 20
Fall deep in love with thee ; and her great charms
Misguide thy opposers' swords ! Bold gentleman,
Prosperity be thy page !

Mar. Thy friend no less
Than those she placeth highest ! So, farewell.

Lart. Thou worthiest Martius ! [*Exit Martius.*
Go sound thy trumpet in the market-place ;
Call thither all the officers o' the town,
Where they shall know our mind : away ! [*"Exeunt."*

SCENE VI. *Near the camp of Cominius.* "*Enter COMINIUS,
as it were in retire, with soldiers.*"

Com. Breathe you, my friends : well fought ; we
are come off
Like Romans, neither foolish in our stands,
Nor cowardly in retire : believe me, sirs,
We shall be charged again. Whiles we have struck,
By interims and conveying gusts we have heard
The charges of our friends. Ye Roman gods !
Lead their successes as we wish our own,
That both our powers, with smiling fronts en-
countering,
May give you thankful sacrifice.

“ *Enter a Messenger.* ”

Thy news ?

Mess. The citizens of Corioli have issued, 10
And given to Lartius and to Martius battle :
I saw our party to their trenches driven,
And then I came away.

Com. Though thou speak'st truth,
Methinks thou speak'st not well. How long is't since ?

Mess. Above an hour, my lord.

Com. 'Tis not a mile ; briefly we heard their drums:
How couldst thou in a mile confound an hour,
And bring thy news so late ?

Mess. Spies of the Volsces
Held me in chase, that I was forced to wheel
Three or four miles about, else had I, sir, 20
Half an hour since brought my report.

Com. Who's yonder,
That does appear as he were flay'd ? O gods !
He has the stamp of Martius ; and I have
Before-time seen him thus.

Mar. [Within] Come I too late ?

Com. The shepherd knows not thunder from a tabor
More than I know the sound of Martius' tongue
From every meaner man.

“ *Enter MARTIUS.* ”

Mar. Come I too late ?

Com. Ay, if you come not in the blood of others,
But mantled in your own.

Mar. O, let me clip ye
In arms as sound as when I woo'd, in heart 30
As merry as when our nuptial day was done,
And tapers burned to bedward !

Com. Flower of warriors,
How is't with Titus Lartius ?

Mar. As with a man busied about decrees :
Condemning some to death, and some to exile ;
Ransoming him, or pitying, threatening the other ;
Holding Corioli in the name of Rome,
Even like a fawning greyhound in the leash,
To let him slip at will.

Com. Where is that slave
Which told me they had beat you to your trenches ? 40
Where is he ? call him hither.

Mar. Let him alone ;
He did inform the truth : but for our gentlemen,
The common file—a plague ! tribunes for them !—
The mouse ne'er shunn'd the cat as they did budge
From rascals worse than they.

Com. But how prevail'd you ?

Mar. Will the time serve to tell ? I do not think.
Where is the enemy ? are you lords o' the field ?
If not, why cease you till you are so ?

Com. Martius,
We have at disadvantage fought and did
Retire to win our purpose. 50

Mar. How lies their battle ? know you on which side
They have placed their men of trust ?

Com. As I guess, Martius,
Their band i' the vaward are the Antiates,
Of their best trust ; o'er them Aufidius,
Their very heart of hope.

Mar. I do beseech you,
By all the battles wherein we have fought,
By the blood we have shed together, by the vows
We have made to endure friends, that you directly
Set me against Aufidius and his Antiates ;

SCENE VII. *The gates of Corioli.* "TITUS LARTIUS, having set a guard upon Corioli, going with drum and trumpet toward COMINIUS and CAIUS MARTIUS, enters with a Lieutenant, other Soldiers, and a Scout."

Lart. So, let the ports be guarded : keep your duties,
As I have set them down. If I do send, dispatch
Those centuries to our aid : the rest will serve
For a short holding : if we lose the field,
We cannot keep the town.

Lieu. Fear not our care, sir.

Lart. Hence, and shut your gates upon's.
Our guider, come ; to the Roman camp conduct us.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VIII. *A field of battle.* "Alarum as in battle.
Enter MARTIUS and AUFIDIUS, at several doors."

Mar. I'll fight with none but thee ; for I do hate
thee
Worse than a promise breaker.

Auf. We hate alike :
Not Afric owns a serpent I abhor
More than thy fame I envy. Fix thy foot.

Mar. Let the first budger die the other's slave,
And the gods doom him after !

Auf. If I fly, Martius,
Holloa me like a hare.

Mar. Within these three hours, Tullus,
Alone I fought on your Corioli walls,
And made what work I pleased : 'tis not my blood
Wherein thou seest me mask'd : for thy revenge 10
Wrench up thy power to the highest.

Auf. Wert thou the Hector

That was the whip of your bragg'd progeny,
Thou should'st not scape me here.

" They fight, and certain Volsces come in the aid of Aufidius. Martius fights till they be driven in breathless."

Officious, and not valiant, you have shamed me
In your condemned seconds. [Exeunt.]

SCENE IX. *The Roman Camp. " Flourish. Alarum. A retreat is sounded. Flourish. Enter, at one door, COMINIUS with the Romans ; at the other door, MARTIUS, with his arm in a scarf."*

Com. If I should tell thee o'er this thy day's work,
Thou'dst not believe thy deeds : but I'll report it
Where senators shall mingle tears with smiles,
Where great patricians shall attend and shrug,
I' the end admire, where ladies shall be frighted,
And, gladly quaked, hear more ; where the dull
tribunes,

That, with the fusty plebeians, hate thine honours,
Shall say against their hearts " We thank the gods
Our Rome hath such a soldier."

Yet camest thou to a morsel of this feast, 10
Having fully dined before.

" Enter TITUS LARTIUS, with his power, from the pursuit."

Lart.

O general,

Here is the steed, we the caparison :
Hadst thou beheld—

Mar.

Pray now, no more : my mother,
Who has a charter to extol her blood,
When she does praise me grieves me. I have done
As you have done ; that's what I can ; induced
As you have been ; that's for my country :

He that has but effected his good will
Hath overta'en mine act.

Com. You shall not be
The grave of your deserving ; Rome must know 20
The value of her own : 'twere a concealment
Worse than a theft, no less than a traducement,
To hide your doings ; and to silence that,
Which, to the spire and top of praises vouch'd,
Would seem but modest : therefore I beseech you—
In sign of what you are, not to reward
What you have done—before our army hear me.

Mar. I have some wounds upon me, and they smart
To hear themselves remember'd.

Com. Should they not,
Well might they fester 'gainst ingratitude, 30
And tent themselves with death. Of all the horses,
Whereof we have ta'en good and good store, of all
The treasure in this field achieved and city,
We render you the tenth, to be ta'en forth,
Before the common distribution, at
Your only choice.

Mar. I thank you, general ;
But cannot make my heart consent to take
A bribe to pay my sword : I do refuse it ;
And stand upon my common part with those
That have beheld the doing. 40

[“ *A long flourish. They all cry ‘ Martius ! Martius ! ’
cast up their caps and lances : Cominius and Lartius
stand bare.*”]

Mar. May these same instruments, which you pro-
fane,
Never sound more ! when drums and trumpets shall
I' the field prove flatterers, let courts and cities be
Made all of false-faced soothing !

When steel grows soft as the parasite's silk,
Let him be made an armature for the wars !
No more, I say ! For that I have not wash'd
My nose that bled, or foil'd some debile wretch,—
Which, without note, here's many else have done,—
You shout me forth 50
In acclamations hyperbolical ;
As if I loved my little should be dieted
In praises sauced with lies.

Com. Too modest are you ;
More cruel to your good report than grateful
To us that give you truly : by your patience,
If 'gainst yourself you be incensed, we'll put you,
Like one that means his proper harm, in manacles,
Then reason safely with you. Therefore, be it known,
As to us, to all the world, that Caius Martius
Wears this war's garland : in token of the which, 60
My noble steed, known to the camp, I give him,
With all his trim belonging ; and from this time,
For what he did before Corioli, call him,
With all the applause and clamour of the host,
CAIUS MARTIUS CORIOLANUS ! Bear
The addition nobly ever !

[*"Flourish. Trumpets sound, and drums."*]

All. Caius Martius Coriolanus !

Cor. I will go wash ;
And when my face is fair, you shall perceive
Whether I blush or no : howbeit, I thank you. 70
I mean to stride your steed, and at all times
To undercrest your good addition
To the fairness of my power.

Com. So, to our tent ;
Where, ere we do repose us, we will write
To Rome of our success. You, Titus Lartius,

Must to Corioli back : send us to Rome
The best, with whom we may articulate,
For their own good and ours.

Lart. I shall, my lord.

Cor. The gods begin to mock me. I, that now
Refused most princely gifts, am bound to beg 80
Of my lord general.

Com. Take't ; 'tis yours. What is't ?

Cor. I sometime lay here in Corioli
At a poor man's house ; he used me kindly :
He cried to me ; I saw him prisoner ;
But then Aufidius was within my view,
And wrath o'erwhelm'd my pity : I request you
To give my poor host freedom.

Com. O, well begg'd
Were he the butcher of my son, he should
Be free as is the wind. Deliver him, Titus.

Lart. Martius, his name ?

Cor. By Jupiter ! forgot. 90
I am weary ; yea, my memory is tired.
Have we no wine here ?

Com. Go we to our tent :
The blood upon your visage dries ; 'tis time
It should be look'd to : come. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE X. *The Camp of the Volsces.* "A flourish.
Cornets. Enter TULLUS AUFIDIUS, bloody, with two
or three Soldiers."

Auf. The town is ta'en !

First Sol. 'Twill be deliver'd back on good condition.

Auf. Condition !

I would I were a Roman ; for I cannot,
Being a Volsce, be that I am. Condition !

What good condition can a treaty find
 I' the part that is at mercy? Five times, Martius,
 I have fought with thee : so often hast thou beat me,
 And wouldst do so, I think, should we encounter
 As often as we eat. By the elements, 10
 If e'er again I meet him beard to beard,
 He's mine, or I am his : mine emulation
 Hath not that honour in't it had ; for where
 I thought to crush him in an equal force,
 True sword to sword, I'll potch at him some way
 Or wrath or craft may get him.

First Sol. He's the devil.

Auf. Bolder, though not so subtle. My valour's
 poison'd

With only suffering stain by him ; for him
 Shall fly out of itself : nor sleep nor sanctuary,
 Being naked, sick, nor fane nor Capitol, 20
 The prayers of priests nor times of sacrifice,
 Embarquements all of fury, shall lift up
 Their rotten privilege and custom 'gainst
 My hate to Martius : where I find him, were it
 At home, upon my brother's guard, even there,
 Against the hospitable canon, would I
 Wash my fierce hand in's heart. Go you to the city ;
 Learn how 'tis held ; and what they are that must
 Be hostages for Rome.

First Sol. Will not you go ?

Auf. I am attended at the cypress grove : I pray
 you— 30

'Tis south the city mills—bring me word thither
 How the world goes, that to the pace of it
 I may spur on my journey.

First Sol. I shall, sir. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT II

SCENE I. *Rome. A public place. "Enter MENENIUS with the two Tribunes of the people, SICINIUS and BRUTUS."*

Men. The augurer tells me we shall have news to-night.

Bru. Good or bad ?

Men. Not according to the prayer of the people, for they love not Martius.

Sic. Nature teaches beasts to know their friends.

Men. Pray you, who does the wolf love ?

Sic. The lamb.

Men. Ay, to devour him ; as the hungry plebeians would the noble Martius. 10

Bru. He's a lamb indeed, that baes like a bear.

Men. He's a bear indeed, that lives like a lamb. You two are old men : tell me one thing that I shall ask you.

Both. Well, sir.

Men. In what enormity is Martius poor in, that you two have not in abundance ?

Bru. He's poor in no one fault, but stored with all.

Sic. Especially in pride.

Bru. And topping all others in boasting. 20

Men. This is strange now : do you two know how you are censured here in the city, I mean of us o' the right-hand file ? do you ?

Both. Why, how are we censured ?

Men. Because you talk of pride now,—will you not be angry ?

Both. Well, well, sir, well.

Men. Why, 'tis no great matter ; for a very little thief of occasion will rob you of a great deal of patience : give your dispositions the reins, and be angry at your pleasures ; at the least, if you take it as a pleasure to you in being so. You blame Martius for being proud ?

33

Bru. We do it not alone, sir.

Men. I know you can do very little alone ; for your helps are many, or else your actions would grow wondrous single : your abilities are too infant-like for doing much alone. You talk of pride : O that you could turn your eyes toward the napes of your necks, and make but an interior survey of your good selves ! O that you could !

41

Bru. What then, sir ?

Men. Why, then you should discover a brace of unmeriting, proud, violent, testy magistrates, alias fools, as any in Rome.

Sic. Menenius, you are known well enough too.

Men. I am known to be a humorous patrician, and one that loves a cup of hot wine with not a drop of allaying Tiber in't ; said to be something imperfect in favouring the first complaint ; hasty and tinder-like upon too trivial motion ; one that converses more with the buttock of the night than with the forehead of the morning : what I think I utter, and spend my malice in my breath. Meeting two such wealsmen as you are—I cannot call you Lycurguses—if the drink you give me touch my palate adversely, I make a crooked face at it. I can't say your worships have

delivered the matter well, when I find the ass in compound with the major part of your syllables : and though I must be content to bear with those that say you are reverend grave men, yet they lie deadly that tell you you have good faces. If you see this in the map of my microcosm, follows it that I am known well enough too ? what harm can your bisson conspectuities glean out of this character, if I be known well enough too ? 66

Bru. Come, sir, come, we know you well enough.

Men. You know neither me, yourselves, nor any thing. You are ambitious for poor knaves' caps and legs : you wear out a good wholesome forenoon in hearing a cause between an orange-wife and a fosset-seller ; and then rejourn the controversy of three pence to a second day of audience. When you are hearing a matter between party and party, if you chance to be pinched with the colic, you make faces like mummers ; set up the bloody flag against all patience ; and dismiss the controversy bleeding, the more entangled by your hearing : all the peace you make in their cause is, calling both the parties knaves. You are a pair of strange ones. 80

Bru. Come, come, you are well understood to be a perfecter giber for the table than a necessary bencher in the Capitol.

Men. Our very priests must become mockers, if they shall encounter such ridiculous subjects as you are. When you speak best unto the purpose, it is not worth the wagging of your beards ; and your beards deserve not so honourable a grave as to stuff a botcher's cushion, or to be entombed in an ass's pack-saddle. Yet you must be saying, Martius is proud ; who, in a cheap estimation, is worth all your predecessors since

Deucalion, though peradventure some of the best of 'em were hereditary hangmen. God-den to your worships : more of your conversation would infect my brain, being the herdsmen of the beastly plebeians : I will be bold to take my leave of you.

[“ *Brutus and Sicinius* ” go “ *aside.*”]

“ *Enter VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA, and VALERIA.*”

How now, my as fair as noble ladies,—and the moon, were she earthly, no nobler,—whither do you follow your eyes so fast ? 99

Vol. Honourable Menenius, my boy Martius approaches ; for the love of Juno, let's go.

Men. Ha ! Martius coming home !

Vol. Ay, worthy Menenius ; and with most prosperous approbation.

Men. Take my cap, Jupiter, and I thank thee. Hoo ! Martius coming home !

Vol. Vir. Nay, 'tis true.

Vol. Look, here's a letter from him : the state hath another, his wife another ; and, I think, there's one at home for you. 110

Men. I will make my very house reel to-night : a letter for me !

Vir. Yes, certain, there's a letter for you ; I saw't.

Men. A letter for me ! it gives me an estate of seven years' health ; in which time I will make a lip at the physician : the most sovereign prescription in Galen is but empiricute, and, to this preservative, of no better report than a horse-drench. Is he not wounded ? he was wont to come home wounded.

Vir. O, no, no, no. 120

Vol. O, he is wounded ; I thank the gods for't.

Men. So do I too, if it be not too much : brings a' victory in his pocket ? the wounds become him.

Vol. On's brows : Menenius, he comes the third time home with the oaken garland.

Men. Has he disciplined Aufidius soundly ?

Vol. Titus Lartius writes, they fought together, but Aufidius got off. 128

Men. And 'twas time for him too, I'll warrant him that : an he had stayed by him, I would not have been so fidiused for all the chests in Corioli, and the gold that's in them. Is the senate possessed of this ?

Vol. Good ladies, let's go. Yes, yes, yes ; the senate has letters from the general, wherein he gives my son the whole name of the war : he hath in this action outdone his former deeds doubly.

Val. In troth, there's wondrous things spoke of him.

Men. Wondrous ! ay, I warrant you, and not without his true purchasing. 140

Vir. The gods grant them true !

Vol. True ! pow, wow.

Men. True ! I'll be sworn they are true. Where is he wounded ? [*To the Tribunes*] God save your good worships ! Martius is coming home : he has more cause to be proud. Where is he wounded ?

Vol. I' the shoulder and i' the left arm : there will be large cicatrices to show the people, when he shall stand for his place. He received in the repulse of Tarquin seven hurts i' the body. 150

Men. One i' the neck, and two i' the thigh,—there's nine that I know.

Vol. He had, before this last expedition, twenty-five wounds upon him.

Men. Now it's twenty-seven : every gash was an

enemy's grave. [*"A shout and flourish."*] Hark ! the trumpets.

Vol. These are the ushers of Martius : before him he carries noise, and behind him he leaves tears :

Death, that dark spirit, in's nervy arm doth lie :
Which, being advanced, declines, and then men
die. 161

"A sennet. Trumpets sound. Enter COMINIUS the general, and TITUS LARTIUS ; between them, CORIOLANUS, crowned with an oaken garland ; with Captains and Soldiers, and a Herald."

Her. Know, Rome, that all alone Martius did fight
Within Corioli gates : where he hath won,
With fame, a name to Caius Martius ; these
In honour follows Coriolanus.

Welcome to Rome, renowned Coriolanus !

[*"Flourish."*]

All. Welcome to Rome, renowned Coriolanus !

Cor. No more of this ; it does offend my heart :
Pray now, no more.

Com. Look, sir, your mother !

Cor. O,

You have, I know, petition'd all the gods 170
For my prosperity ! [*"Kneels."*]

Vol. Nay, my good soldier, up ;
My gentle Caius, worthy Martius, and
By deed-achieving honour newly named,—
What is it ?—Coriolanus must I call thee ?—
But, O, thy wife !

Cor. My gracious silence, hail !
Wouldst thou have laugh'd had I come coffin'd home,
That weep'st to see me triumph ? Ah, my dear,
Such eyes the widows in Corioli wear,
And mothers that lack sons.

Men. Now, the gods crown thee !

Cor. And live you yet ? [*To Valeria*] O my sweet lady, pardon. 180

Vol. I know not where to turn : O, welcome home : And welcome, general : and ye're welcome all.

Men. A hundred thousand welcomes. I could weep And I could laugh, I am light and heavy. Welcome. A curse begin at very root on's heart, That is not glad to see thee ! You are three That Rome should dote on : yet, by the faith of men, We have some old crab-trees here at home that will not Be grafted to your relish. Yet welcome, warriors : We call a nettle but a nettle and 190 The faults of fools but folly.

Com. Ever right.

Cor. Menenius ever, ever.

Herald. Give way there, and go on !

Cor. [*To Volumnia and Virgilia*] Your hand, and yours :

Ere in our own house I do shade my head,
The good patricians must be visited ;
From whom I have received not only greetings,
But with them change of honours.

Vol. I have lived

To see inherited my very wishes
And the buildings of my fancy : only 200
There's one thing wanting, which I doubt not but
Our Rome will cast upon thee.

Cor. Know, good mother,
I had rather be their servant in my way,
Than sway with them in theirs.

Com. On, to the Capitol !

[*"Flourish. Cornets. Exeunt in state, as before."*
Brutus and Sicinius come forward.

Bru. All tongues speak of him, and the bleared sights

Are spectacl'd to see him : your prattling nurse
Into a rapture lets her baby cry
While she chats of him : the kitchen malkin pins
Her richest lockram 'bout her reechy neck,
Clambering the walls to eye him : stalls, bulks,
 windows, 210

Are smother'd up, leads fill'd, and ridges horsed
With variable complexions, all agreeing
In earnestness to see him : seld-shown flamens
Do press among the popular throngs and puff
To win a vulgar station : our veil'd dames
Commit the war of white and damask in
Their nicely-gawded cheeks to the wanton spoil
Of Phœbus' burning kisses : such a pothor
As if that whatsoever god who leads him
Were slily crept into his human powers 220
And gave him graceful posture.

Sic. On the sudden,
I warrant him consul.

Bru. Then our office may,
During his power, go sleep.

Sic. He cannot temperately transport his honours
From where he should begin and end, but will
Lose those he hath won.

Bru. In that there's comfort.

Sic. Doubt not
The commoners, for whom we stand, but they
Upon their ancient malice will forget
With the least cause these his new honours, which
That he will give them make I as little question 230
As he is proud to do't.

Bru. I heard him swear,

Were he to stand for consul, never would he
Appear i' the market-place nor on him put
The napless vesture of humility ;
Nor, showing, as the manner is, his wounds
To the people, beg their stinking breaths.

Sic. 'Tis right.

Bru. It was his word : O, he would miss it rather
Than carry it but by the suit of the gentry to him
And the desire of the nobles.

Sic. I wish no better
Than have him hold that purpose and to put it 240
In execution.

Bru. 'Tis most like he will.

Sic. It shall be to him then as our good wills,
A sure destruction.

Bru. So it must fall out
To him or our authorities. For an end,
We must suggest the people in what hatred
He still hath held them ; that to's power he would
Have made them mules, silenced their pleaders and
Dispropertied their freedoms, holding them,
In human action and capacity,
Of no more soul nor fitness for the world 250
Than camels in the war, who have their provand
Only for bearing burdens, and sore blows
For sinking under them.

Sic. This, as you say, suggested
At some time when his soaring insolence
Shall touch the people—which time shall not want,
If he be put upon't : and that's as easy
As to set dogs on sheep—will be his fire
To kindle their dry stubble ; and their blaze
Shall darken him for ever.

“ *Enter a Messenger.* ”

Bru. What’s the matter ?

Mess. You are sent for to the Capitol. ’Tis thought
That Martius shall be consul : 261

I have seen the dumb men throng to see him and
The blind to hear him speak : matrons flung gloves,
Ladies and maids their scarfs and handkerchers,
Upon him as he pass’d : the nobles bended,
As to Jove’s statue, and the commons made
A shower and thunder with their caps and shouts :
I never saw the like.

Bru. Let’s to the Capitol :
And carry with us ears and eyes for the time,
But hearts for the event.

Sic. Have with you. 270
[“ *Exeunt.* ”]

SCENE II. *The same. The Capitol.* “ *Enter two
Officers, to lay cushions.* ”

First Off. Come, come, they are almost here. How
many stand for consulships ?

Sec. Off. Three, they say : but ’tis thought of every
one Coriolanus will carry it.

First Off. That’s a brave fellow ; but he’s vengeance
proud, and loves not the common people.

Sec. Off. Faith, there have been many great men
that have flattered the people, who ne’er loved them ;
and there be many that they have loved, they know
not wherefore : so that, if they love they know not
why, they hate upon no better a ground : therefore,
for Coriolanus neither to care whether they love or
hate him manifests the true knowledge he has in their

disposition : and out of his noble carelessness lets them plainly see't. 15

First Off. If he did not care whether he had their love or no, he waved indifferently 'twixt doing them neither good nor harm : but he seeks their hate with greater devotion than they can render it him ; and leaves nothing undone that may fully discover him their opposite. Now, to seem to affect the malice and displeasure of the people is as bad as that which he dislikes, to flatter them for their love. 23

Sec. Off. He hath deserved worthily of his country : and his ascent is not by such easy degrees as those who, having been supple and courteous to the people, bonneted, without any further deed to have them at all into their estimation and report : but he hath so planted his honours in their eyes, and his actions in their hearts, that for their tongues to be silent, and not confess so much, were a kind of ingrateful injury ; to report otherwise, were a malice, that, giving itself the lie, would pluck reproof and rebuke from every ear that heard it. 34

First Off. No more of him ; he's a worthy man : make way, they are coming.

A sennet. “ *Enter the Patricians and the Tribunes of the People, Lictors before them. CORIOLANUS, MENE- NIUS, COMINIUS the consul : SICINIUS and BRUTUS take their places by themselves. CORIOLANUS stands.*”

Men. Having determined of the Volsces and To send for Titus Lartius, it remains
As the main point of this our after-meeting,
To gratify his noble service that 40
Hath thus stood for his country : therefore, please you,
Most reverend and grave elders, to desire

The present consul, and last general
In our well-found successes, to report
A little of that worthy work perform'd
By Caius Martius Coriolanus, whom
We met here both to thank and to remember
With honours like himself.

First Sen. Speak, good Cominius :
Leave nothing out for length, and make us think
Rather our state's defective for requital 50
Than we to stretch it out. [*To the Tribunes*] Masters
o' the people,
We do request your kindest ears, and after,
Your loving motion toward the common body,
To yield what passes here.

Sic. We are convented
Upon a pleasing treaty, and have hearts
Inclinable to honour and advance
The theme of our assembly.

Bru. Which the rather
We shall be blest to do, if he remember
A kinder value of the people than
He hath hereto prized them at.

Men. That's off, that's off ; 60
I would you rather had been silent. Please you
To hear Cominius speak ?

Bru. Most willingly ;
But yet my caution was more pertinent
Than the rebuke you give it.

Men. He loves your people ;
But tie him not to be their bedfellow.
Worthy Cominius, speak. [*"Coriolanus rises and offers
to go away".*] Nay, keep your place.

First Sen. Sit, Coriolanus ; never shame to hear
What you have nobly done.

Cor. Your honour's pardon :
I had rather have my wounds to heal again
Than hear say how I got them.

Bru. Sir, I hope 70
My words disbench'd you not.

Cor. No, sir : yet oft,
When blows have made me stay, I fled from words.
You soothed not, therefore hurt not : but your people,
I love them as they weigh.

Men. Pray now, sit down.

Cor. I had rather have one scratch my head i' the
sun.
When the alarum were struck than idly sit
To hear my nothings monster'd. [“*Exit.*”

Men. Masters of the people,
Your multiplying spawn how can he flatter—
That's thousand to one good one—when you now see
He had rather venture all his limbs for honour 80
Than one on's ears to hear it? Proceed, Cominius.

Com. I shall lack voice : the deeds of Coriolanus
Should not be utter'd feebly. It is held
That valour is the chiefest virtue and
Most dignifies the haver : if it be,
The man I speak of cannot in the world
Be singly counterpoised. At sixteen years,
When Tarquin made a head for Rome, he fought
Beyond the mark of others : our then dictator,
Whom with all praise I point at, saw him fight, 90
When with his Amazonian chin he drove
The bristled lips before him : he bestrid
An o'erpress'd Roman and i' the consul's view
Slew three opposers : Tarquin's self he met,
And struck him on his knee : in that day's feats,
When he might act the woman in the scene,

He proved best man i' the field, and for his meed
 Was brow-bound with the oak. His pupil age
 Man-enter'd thus, he waxed like a sea,
 And in the brunt of seventeen battles since 100
 He lurch'd all swords of the garland. For this last,
 Before and in Corioli, let me say,
 I cannot speak him home : he stopp'd the fliers ;
 And by his rare example made the coward
 Turn terror into sport : as weeds before
 A vessel under sail, so men obey'd
 And fell below his stem : his sword, death's stamp,
 Where it did mark, it took ; from face to foot
 He was a thing of blood, whose every motion
 Was timed with dying cries : alone he enter'd 110
 The mortal gate of the city, which he painted
 With shunless destiny ; aidless came off,
 And with a sudden re-inforcement struck
 Corioli like a planet : now all's his :
 When, by and by, the din of war gan pierce
 His ready sense ; then straight his doubled spirit
 Re-quicken'd what in flesh was fatigate,
 And to the battle came he ; where he did
 Run reeking o'er the lives of men, as if
 'Twere a perpetual spoil : and till we call'd 120
 Both field and city ours, he never stood
 To ease his breast with panting.

Men.

Worthy man !

First Sen. He cannot but with measure fit the
honours

Which we devise him.

Com.

Our spoils he kick'd at,
 And look'd upon things precious as they were
 The common muck of the world : he covets less
 Than misery itself would give ; rewards

His deeds with doing them, and is content
To spend the time to end it.

Men.

He's right noble :

Let him be call'd for.

First Sen.

Call Coriolanus. 130

Off. He doth appear.

Re-enter CORIOLANUS.

Men. The senate, Coriolanus, are well pleased
To make thee consul.

Cor.

I do owe them still

My life and services.

Men.

It then remains

That you do speak to the people.

Cor.

I do beseech you,

Let me o'erleap that custom, for I cannot

Put on the gown, stand naked and entreat them,

For my wounds' sake, to give their suffrage : please
you

That I may pass this doing.

Sic.

Sir, the people

Must have their voices ; neither will they bate 140

One jot of ceremony.

Men.

Put them not to't :

Pray you, go fit you to the custom and

Take to you, as your predecessors have,

Your honour with your form.

Cor.

It is a part

That I shall blush in acting, and might well

Be taken from the people.

Bru.

Mark you that ?

Cor. To brag unto them, thus I did, and thus ;
Show them the unaching scars which I should hide,
As if I had received them for the hire

Of their breath only !

Men. Do not stand upon't. 150

We recommend to you, tribunes of the people,
Our purpose to them : and to our noble consul
Wish we all joy and honour.

Senators. To Coriolanus come all joy and honour !
[“ *Flourish of cornets.*” *Exeunt all but Sicinius and Brutus.*

Bru. You see how he intends to use the people.

Sic. May they perceive's intent ! He will require
them,

As if he did condemn what he requested
Should be in them to give.

Bru. Come, we'll inform them
Of our proceedings here : on the market-place,
I know, they do attend us. [Exeunt. 160

SCENE III. *The same. The Forum. “ Enter
seven or eight Citizens.”*

First Cit. Once, if he do require our voices, we ought
not to deny him.

Sec. Cit. We may, sir, if we will.

Third Cit. We have power in ourselves to do it, but
it is a power that we have no power to do ; for if he
show us his wounds and tell us his deeds, we are
to put our tongues into those wounds and speak for
them ; so, if he tell us his noble deeds, we must also
tell him our noble acceptance of them. Ingratitude
is monstrous, and for the multitude to be ingrateful,
were to make a monster of the multitude ; of the
which we being members, should bring ourselves to
be monstrous members. 13

First Cit. And to make us no better thought of, a

little help will serve ; for once we stood up about the corn, he himself stuck not to call us the many-headed multitude.

Thrd Cit. We have been called so of many ; not that our heads are some brown, some black, some auburn, some bald, but that our wits are so diversely coloured : and truly I think if all our wits were to issue out of one skull, they would fly east, west, north, south, and their consent of one direct way should be at once to all the points o' the compass. 24

Sec. Cit. Think you so ? Which way do you judge my wit would fly ?

Thrd Cit. Nay, your wit will not so soon out as another man's will ; 'tis strongly wedged up in a block-head, but if it were at liberty, 'twould, sure, southward. 30

Sec. Cit. Why that way ?

Thrd Cit. To lose itself in a fog, where being three parts melted away with rotten dews, the fourth would return for conscience sake, to help to get thee a wife.

Sec. Cit. You are never without your tricks : you may, you may.

Thrd Cit. Are you all resolved to give your voices ? But that's no matter, the greater part carries it. I say, if he would incline to the people, there was never a worthier man. 40

“ *Enter CORIOLANUS in a gown of humility, with
MENENIUS.*”

Here he comes, and in the gown of humility : mark his behaviour. We are not to stay all together, but to come by him where he stands, by ones, by twos, and by threes. He's to make his requests by particulars ; wherein every one of us has a single honour, in giving

in our own voices with our own tongues : therefore follow me, and I'll direct you how you shall go by him.

All. Content, content. [*Exeunt Citizens.*]

Men. O sir, you are not right : have you not known the worthiest men have done't ?

Cor. What must I say ? 50
I pray, sir,"—Plague upon't ! I cannot bring
my tongue to such a pace :—" Look, sir, my wounds !
I got them in my country's service, when
I was certain of your brethren roar'd and ran
from the noise of our own drums."

Men. O me, the gods !
You must not speak of that : you must desire them
to think upon you.

Cor. Think upon me ! hang 'em !
would they would forget me, like the virtues
which our divines lose by 'em.

Men. You'll mar all :
I'll leave you : pray you, speak to 'em, I pray you, 60
in wholesome manner. [*Exit.*]

Cor. Bid them wash their faces
and keep their teeth clean. [*Re-enter two of the*
Citizens.] So, here comes a brace.

[*Re-enter a third Citizen.*]
You know the cause, sir, of my standing here.

Third Cit. We do, sir ; tell us what brought you to't.

Cor. Mine own desert.

Sec. Cit. Your own desert !

Cor. Ay, but not mine own desire.

Third Cit. How not your own desire ?

Cor. No, sir, 'twas never my desire yet to trouble
a poor with begging. 70

Third Cit. You must think, if we give you any thing,
I hope to gain by you.

Cor. Well then, I pray, your price o' the consulship ?

First Cit. The price is to ask it kindly.

Cor. Kindly ! Sir, I pray, let me ha't : I have wounds to show you, which shall be yours in private. Your good voice, sir ; what say you ?

Sec. Cit. You shall ha't, worthy sir.

Cor. A match, sir. There's in all two worthy voices begged. I have your alms : adieu. 80

Third Cit. But this is something odd.

Sec. Cit. An 'twere to give again,—but 'tis no matter. [Exeunt the three Citizens.]

Re-enter two other Citizens.

Cor. Pray you now, if it may stand with the tune of your voices that I may be consul, I have here the customary gown.

Fourth Cit. You have deserved nobly of your country, and you have not deserved nobly.

Cor. Your enigma ? 89

Fourth Cit. You have been a scourge to her enemies, you have been a rod to her friends ; you have not indeed loved the common people.

Cor. You should account me the more virtuous that I have not been common in my love. I will, sir, flatter my sworn brother, the people, to earn a dearer estimation of them ; 'tis a condition they account gentle : and since the wisdom of their choice is rather to have my hat than my heart, I will practise the insinuating nod and be off to them most counterfeitedly ; that is, sir, I will counterfeit the bewitchment of some popular man and give it bountiful to the desirers. Therefore, beseech you, I may be consul. 102

Fifth Cit. We hope to find you our friend ; and therefore give you our voices heartily.

Fourth Cit. You have received many wounds for your country.

Cor. I will not seal your knowledge with showing them. I will make much of your voices, and so trouble you no further.

Both Cit. The gods give you joy, sir, heartily ! 110
[*Exeunt.*]

Cor. Most sweet voices !
Better it is to die, better to starve,
Than crave the hire which first we do deserve.
Why in this woolvish toge should I stand here,
To beg of Hob and Dick, that do appear,
Their needless vouches ? Custom calls me to't :
What custom wills, in all things should we do't,
The dust on antique time would lie unswept,
And mountainous error be too highly heapt
For truth to o'er-peer. Rather than fool it so, 120
Let the high office and the honour go
To one that would do thus. I am half through ;
The one part suffer'd, the other will I do.

Re-enter three Citizens more.

Here come more voices.

Your voices : for your voices I have fought ;
Watch'd for your voices ; for your voices bear
Of wounds two dozen odd ; battles thrice six
I have seen and heard of ; for your voices have
Done many things, some less, some more : your voices :
Indeed, I would be consul. 130

Sixth Cit. He has done nobly, and cannot go without any honest man's voice.

Seventh Cit. Therefore let him be consul : the gods give him joy, and make him good friend to the people.

CORIOLANUS

[ACT II

All Cit. Amen, amen. God save thee, noble consul,
[*Exeunt.*

Cor. Worthy voices !

Re-enter " MENENIUS, with BRUTUS and SICINIUS."

Men. You have stood your limitation ; and the
tribunes

Endue you with the people's voice : remains
That, in the official marks invested, you
Anon do meet the senate.

Cor. Is this done ? 140

Sic. The custom of request you have discharged :
The people do admit you and are summon'd
To meet anon, upon your approbation.

Cor. Where ? at the senate-house ?

Sic. There, Coriolanus.

Cor. May I change these garments ?

Sic. You may, sir.

Cor. That I'll straight do ; and, knowing myself
again,

Repair to the senate-house.

Men. I'll keep you company. Will you along ?

Bru. We stay here for the people.

Sic. Fare you well.

["*Exeunt Coriolanus and Menenius.*"]

He has it now, and by his looks methinks 150
'Tis warm at's heart.

Bru. With a proud heart he wore his humble weeds.
Will you dismiss the people ?

" *Enter the Plebeians.*"

Sic. How now, my masters ! have you chose this
man ?

First Cit. He has our voices, sir.

Bru. We pray the gods he may deserve your loves.

Sec. Cit. Amen, sir : to my poor unworthy notice,
He mock'd us when he begg'd our voices.

Third Cit. Certainly

He flouted us downright.

First Cit. No, 'tis his kind of speech : he did not
mock us. 160

Sec. Cit. Not one amongst us, save yourself, but says
He used us scornfully : he should have show'd us
His marks of merit, wounds received for's country.

Sec. Why, so he did, I am sure.

Citizens. No, no ; no man saw 'em.

Thrd Cit. He said he had wounds, which he could
show in private ;

And with his hat, thus waving it in scorn,

" I would be consul," says he : " aged custom,

But by your voices, will not so permit me ;

Your voices therefore." When we granted that, 169

Here was " I thank you for your voices : thank you :
Your most sweet voices : now you have left your
voices,

I have no further with you." Was not this mockery ?

Sec. Why either were you ignorant to see't,
Or, seeing it, of such childish friendliness
To yield your voices ?

Bru. Could you not have told him
As you were lesson'd, when he had no power,
But was a petty servant to the state,
He was your enemy, ever spake against
Your liberties and the charters that you bear
I' the body o' the weal ; and now, arriving 180
A place of potency and sway o' the state,
If he should still malignantly remain
Fast foe to the plebeii, your voices might

Be curses to yourselves ? You should have said
That as his worthy deeds did claim no less
Than what he stood for, so his gracious nature
Would think upon you for your voices and
Translate his malice towards you into love,
Standing your friendly lord.

Sic. Thus to have said,

As you were fore-advised, had touch'd his spirit 190
And tried his inclination ; from him pluck'd
Either his gracious promise, which you might,
As cause had call'd you up, have held him to ;
Or else it would have gall'd his surly nature,
Which easily endures not article
Tying him to aught ; so putting him to rage,
You should have ta'en the advantage of his choler
And pass'd him unelected.

Bru. Did you perceive

He did solicit you in free contempt
When he did need your loves, and do you think 200
That his contempt shall not be bruising to you,
When he hath power to crush ? Why, had your
bodies

No heart among you ? or had you tongues to cry
Against the rectorship of judgement ?

Sic. Have you

Ere now denied the asker ? and now again
Of him that did not ask, but mock, bestow
Your sued-for tongues ?

Third Cit. He's not confirm'd ; we may deny him
yet.

Sec. Cit. And will deny him :

I'll have five hundred voices of that sound. 210

First Cit. I twice five hundred and their friends to
piece 'em.

Bru. Get you hence instantly, and tell those friends,
They have chose a consul that will from them take
Their liberties : make them of no more voice
Than dogs that are as often beat for barking
As therefore kept to do so.

Sic. Let them assemble,
And on a safer judgement all revoke
Your ignorant election ; enforce his pride,
And his old hate unto you ; besides, forget not
With what contempt he wore the humble weed, 220
How in his suit he scorn'd you ; but your loves,
Thinking upon his services, took from you
The apprehension of his present portance,
Which most gibingly, ungravely, he did fashion
After the inveterate hate he bears you.

Bru. Lay
A fault on us, your tribunes ; that we labour'd,
No impediment between, but that you must
Cast your election on him.

Sic. Say, you chose him
More after our commandment than as guided
By your own true affections, and that your minds,
Pre-occupied with what you rather must do 231
Than what you should, made you against the grain
To voice him consul : lay the fault on us.

Bru. Ay, spare us not. Say we read lectures to you,
How youngly he began to serve his country,
How long continued, and what stock he springs of
The noble house o' the Martians, from whence came
That Ancus Martius, Numa's daughter's son,
Who, after great Hostilius, here was king ;
Of the same house Publius and Quintus were, 240
That our best water brought by conduits hither ;
[And Censorinus, who was so surnamed]

And nobly named so, twice being censor,
Was his great ancestor.

Sic. One thus descended,
That hath beside well in his person wrought
To be set high in place, we did commend
To your remembrances : but you have found,
Scaling his present bearing with his past,
That he's your fixed enemy, and revoke
Your sudden approbation.

Bru. Say, you ne'er had done't—
Harp on that still—but by our putting on : 251
And presently, when you have drawn your number,
Repair to the Capitol.

All. We will so : almost all
Repent in their election. [*Exeunt Citizens.*]

Bru. Let them go on ;
This mutiny were better put in hazard,
Than stay, past doubt, for greater :
If, as his nature is, he fall in rage
With their refusal, both observe and answer
The vantage of his anger.

Sic. To the Capitol, come :
We will be there before the stream o' the people ;
And this shall seem, as partly 'tis, their own, 261
Which we have goaded onward. [*“ Exeunt.”*]

ACT III

SCENE I. *Rome. A street. "Cornets. Enter CORIOLANUS, MENENIUS, all the Gentry, COMINIUS, TITUS LARTIUS, and other Senators."*

Cor. Tullus Aufidius then had made new head ?

Lart. He had, my lord ; and that it was which caused

Our swifter composition.

Cor. So then the Volscres stand but as at first,
Ready, when time shall prompt them, to make road
Upon's again.

Com. They are worn, lord consul, so,
That we shall hardly in our ages see
Their banners wave again.

Cor. Saw you Aufidius ?

Lart. On safe-guard he came to me ; and did curse
Against the Volscres, for they had so vilely 10
Yielded the town : he is retired to Antium.

Cor. Spoke he of me ?

Lart. He did, my lord,

Cor. How ? what ?

Lart. How often he had met you, sword to sword ;
That of all things upon the earth he hated
Your person most, that he would pawn his fortunes
To hopeless restitution, so he might
Be call'd your vanquisher.

Cor. At Antium lives he ?

Lart. At Antium.

Cor. I wish I had a cause to seek him there,
To oppose his hatred fully. Welcome home. 20

“ *Enter SICINIUS and BRUTUS.* ”

Behold, these are the tribunes of the people,
The tongues o’ the common mouth : I do despise
 them ;

For they do prank them in authority,
Against all noble sufferance.

Sic. Pass no further.

Cor. Ha ! what is that ?

Bru. It will be dangerous to go on : no further.

Cor. What makes this change ?

Men. The matter ?

Com. Hath he not pass’d the noble and the common ?

Bru. Cominius, no.

Cor. Have I had children’s voices ?

First Sen. Tribunes, give way ; he shall to the
 market-place. 31

Bru. The people are incensed against him.

Sic. Stop,

Or all will fall in broil.

Cor. Are these your herd ?

Must these have voices, that can yield them now
And straight disclaim their tongues ? What are your
 offices ?

You being their mouths, why rule you not their teeth ?
Have you not set them on ?

Men. Be calm, be calm.

Cor. It is a purposed thing, and grows by plot,
To curb the will of the nobility :
Suffer’t, and live with such as cannot rule 40
Nor ever will be ruled.

Bru. Call't not a plot :
The people cry you mock'd them, and of late,
When corn was given them gratis, you repined ;
Scandal'd the suppliants for the people, call'd them
Time-pleasers, flatterers, foes to nobleness.

Cor. Why, this was known before.

Bru. Not to them all.

Cor. Have you inform'd them sithence ?

Bru. How ! I inform them !

Com. You are like to do such business.

Bru. Not unlike,
Each way, to better yours.

Cor. Why then should I be consul ? By yond
clouds, 50
Let me deserve so ill as you, and make me
Your fellow tribune.

Sic. You show too much of that
For which the people stir : if you will pass
To where you are bound, you must inquire your way,
Which you are out of, with a gentler spirit,
Or never be so noble as a consul,
Nor yoke with him for tribune.

Men. Let's be calm.

Com. The people are abused ; set on. This
paltering
Becomes not Rome, nor has Coriolanus
Deserved this so dishonour'd rub, laid falsely 60
I' the plain way of his merit.

Cor. Tell me of corn !
This was my speech, and I will speak't again—

Men. Not now, not now.

First Sen. Not in this heat, sir, now.

Cor. Now, as I live, I will. My nobler friends,
I crave their pardons :

For the mutable, rank-scented many, let them
 Regard me as I do not flatter, and
 Therein behold themselves : I say again,
 In soothing them, we nourish 'gainst our senate
 The cockle of rebellion, insolence, sedition, 70
 Which we ourselves have plough'd for, sow'd, and
 scatter'd,

By mingling them with us, the honour'd number,
 Who lack not virtue, no, nor power, but that
 Which they have given to beggars.

Men. Well, no more.

First Sen. No more words, we beseech you.

Cor. How ! no more !

As for my country I have shed my blood,
 Not fearing outward force, so shall my lungs
 Coin words till their decay against those measles,
 Which we disdain should tetter us, yet sought
 The very way to catch them.

Bru. You speak o' the people,
 As if you were a god to punish, not 81
 A man of their infirmity.

Sic. 'Twere well
 We let the people know't.

Men. What, what ? his choler ?

Cor. Choler !
 Were I as patient as the midnight sleep,
 By Jove, 'twould be my mind !

Sic. It is a mind
 That shall remain a poison where it is,
 Not poison any further.

Cor. Shall remain !
 Hear you this Triton of the minnows ? mark you
 His absolute " shall " ?

Com. 'Twas from the canon.

Cor.

“ Shall ” ?

O good but most unwise patricians ! why, 91
You grave but reckless senators, have you thus
Given Hydra here to choose an officer,
That with his peremptory “ shall,” being but
The horn and noise o’ the monster’s wants not spirit
To say he’ll turn your current in a ditch,
And make your channel his ? If he have power,
Then vail your ignorance ; if none, awake
Your dangerous lenity. If you are learn’d,
Be not as common fools ; if you are not, 100
Let them have cushions by you. You are plebeians,
If they be senators : and they are no less,
When, both your voices blended, the great’st taste
Most palates theirs. They choose their magistrate,
And such a one as he, who puts his “ shall,”
His popular “ shall,” against a graver bench
Than ever frown’d in Greece. By Jove himself !
It makes the consuls base : and my soul aches
To know, when two authorities are up,
Neither supreme, how soon confusion 110
May enter ’twixt the gap of both and take
The one by the other.

Com.

Well, on to the market-place.

Cor. Whoever gave that counsel, to give forth
The corn o’ the storehouse gratis, as ’twas used
Sometime in Greece,—

Men.

Well, well, no more of that.

Cor. Though there the people had more absolute
power,

I say, they nourish’d disobedience, fed
The ruin of the state.

Bru.

Why, shall the people give

One that speaks thus their voice ?

Cor. I'll give my reasons,
More worthier than their voices. They know the corn
Was not our recompense, resting well assured 121
They ne'er did service for't : being press'd to the war,
Even when the navel of the state was touch'd,
They would not thread the gates. This kind of service
Did not deserve corn gratis. Being i' the war,
Their mutinies and revolts, wherein they show'd
Most valour, spoke not for them : the accusation
Which they have often made against the senate,
All cause unborn, could never be the motive
Of our so frank donation. Well, what then ? 130
How shall this bosom multiplied digest
The senate's courtesy ? Let deeds express
What's like to be their words : " We did request it ;
We are the greater poll, and in true fear
They gave us our demands." Thus we debase
The nature of our seats and make the rabble
Call our cares fears ; which will in time
Break ope the locks o' the Senate and bring in
The crows to peck the eagles.

Men. Come, enough.

Bru. Enough, with over-measure.

Cor. No, take more :
What may be sworn by, both divine and human, 141
Seal what I end withal ! This double worship,—
Where one part does disdain with cause, the other
Insult without all reason, where gentry, title, wisdom,
Cannot conclude but by the yea and no
Of general ignorance,—it must omit
Real necessities, and give way the while
To unstable slightness : purpose so barr'd, it follows,
Nothing is done to purpose. Therefore, beseech
you,—

You that will be less fearful than discreet, 150
 That love the fundamental part of state
 More than you doubt the change on't, that prefer
 A noble life before a long, and wish
 To jump a body with a dangerous physic
 That's sure of death without it, at once pluck out
 The multitudinous tongue ; let them not lick
 The sweet which is their poison : your dishonour
 Mangles true judgement and bereaves the state
 Of that integrity which should become't,
 Not having the power to do the good it would, 160
 For the ill which doth control't.

Bru. Has said enough.

Sic. Has spoken like a traitor, and shall answer
 As traitors do.

Cor. Thou wretch, despite o'erwhelm thee !
 What should the people do with these bald tribunes ?
 On whom depending, their obedience fails
 To the greater bench : in a rebellion,
 When what's not meet, but what must be, was law,
 Then were they chosen : in a better hour,
 Let what is meet be said it must be meet, 170
 And throw their power i' the dust.

Bru. Manifest treason !

Sic. This a consul ? no.

Bru. The ædiles, ho !

“ *Enter an Ædile.* ”

Let him be apprehended.

Sic. Go, call the people : [*Exit Ædile*] in whose
 name myself

Attach thee as a traitorous innovator,
 A foe to the public weal : obey, I charge thee,
 And follow to thine answer.

Cor. Hence, old goat !

Senators, &c. We'll surety him.

Com. Aged sir, hands off.

Cor. Hence, rotten thing ! or I shall shake thy bones
Out of thy garments.

Sic. Help, ye citizens ! 180

" Enter a rabble of Plebeians with the Ædiles."

Men. On both sides more respect.

Sic. Here's he that would take from you all your
power.

Bru. Seize him, ædiles !

Citizens. Down with him ! down with him !

Senators, &c. Weapons, weapons, weapons !

[" They all bustle about Coriolanus," crying
" Tribunes ! " " Patricians ! " " Citizens ! " " What,
ho ! " "

" Sicinius ! " " Brutus ! " " Coriolanus ! " " Citi-
zens ! " "

" Peace, peace, peace ! " " Stay, hold, peace ! " "

Men. What is about to be ? I am out of breath ;
Confusion's near ; I cannot speak. You, tribunes
To the people ! Coriolanus, patience ! 191
Speak, good Sicinius.

Sic. Hear me, people ; peace !

Citizens. Let's hear our tribune : peace ! Speak,
speak, speak.

Sic. You are at point to lose your liberties :
Martius would have all from you ; Martius,
Whom late you have named for consul.

Men. Fie, fie, fie !
This is the way to kindle, not to quench.

First Sen. To unbuild the city and to lay all flat.

Sic. What is the city but the people ?

Citizens. True,
The people are the city. 200

Bru. By the consent of all, we were establish'd
The people's magistrates.

Citizens. You so remain.

Men. And so are like to do.

Com. That is the way to lay the city flat ;
To bring the roof to the foundation,
And bury all, which yet distinctly ranges,
In heaps and piles of ruin.

Sic. This deserves death.

Bru. Or let us stand to our authority,
Or let us lose it. We do here pronounce,
Upon the part o' the people, in whose power 210
We were elected theirs, Martius is worthy
Of present death.

Sic. Therefore lay hold of him ;
Bear him to the rock Tarpeian, and from thence
Into destruction cast him.

Bru. Ædiles, seize him !

Citizens. Yield, Martius, yield !

Men. Hear me one word ;
Beseech you, tribunes, hear me but a word.

Æd. Peace, peace !

Men. [*To Brutus*] Be that you seem, truly your
country's friend,
And temperately proceed to what you would
Thus violently redress.

Bru. Sir, those cold ways, 220
That seem like prudent helps, are very poisonous
Where the disease is violent. Lay hands upon him,
And bear him to the rock.

Cor. No, I'll die here.

[*" Coriolanus draws his sword."*]

There's some among you have beheld me fighting :
Come, try upon yourselves what you have seen me.

Men. Down with that sword ! Tribunes, withdraw
awhile.

Bru. Lay hands upon him.

Men. Help Martius, help,
You that be noble ; help him, young and old !

Citizens. Down with him, down with him !

[*“ In this mutiny, the Tribunes, the Ædiles,
and the People, are beat in.”*]

Men. Go, get you to your house ; be gone, away !
All will be naught else.

Sec. Sen. Get you gone.

Com. Stand fast ;

We have as many friends as enemies. 232

Men. Shall it be put to that ?

First Sen. The gods forbid !
I prithee, noble friend, home to thy house ;
Leave us to cure this cause.

Men. For 'tis a sore upon us,
You cannot tent yourself : be gone, beseech you.

Com. Come, sir, along with us.

Cor. I would they were barbarians—as they are,
Though in Rome litter'd—not Romans—as they are
not,

Though calved i' the porch o' the Capitol—

Men. Be gone ;
Put not your worthy rage into your tongue ; 241
One time will owe another.

Cor. On fair ground
I could beat forty of them.

Men. I could myself
Take up a brace o' the best of them ; yea, the two
tribunes.

Com. But now 'tis odds beyond arithmetic ;
And manhood is call'd foolery, when it stands
Against a falling fabric. Will you hence,
Before the tag return ? whose rage doth rend
Like interrupted waters and o'erbear
What they are used to bear.

Men. Pray you, be gone : 250
I'll try whether my old wit be in request
With those that have but little : this must be patch'd
With cloth of any colour.

Com. Nay, come away.

[“ *Exeunt Coriolanus, Cominus,*” and others.

A Patrician. This man has marr'd his fortune.

Men. His nature is too noble for the world :
He would not flatter Neptune for his trident,
Or Jove for's power to thunder. His heart's his
mouth :

What his breast forges, that his tongue must vent ;
And, being angry, does forget that ever
He heard the name of death. [“ *A noise within.*”
Here's goodly work !

Sec. Pat. I would they were a-bed ! 261

Men. I would they were in Tiber ! What, the
vengeance !
Could he not speak 'em fair ?

Re-enter “ *BRUTUS and SICINIUS, with the rabble again.*”

Sic. Where is this viper
That would depopulate the city and
Be every man himself ?

Men. You worthy tribunes,—

Sic. He shall be thrown down the Tarpeian rock
With rigorous hands : he hath resisted law,
And therefore law shall scorn him further trial

Than the severity of the public power
Which he so sets at nought.

First Cit. He shall well know 270

The noble tribunes are the people's mouths,
And we their hands.

Citizens. He shall, sure on't.

Men. Sir, sir,—

Sic. Peace !

Men. Do not cry havoc, where you should but hunt
With modest warrant.

Sic. Sir, how comes't that you
Have help to make this rescue ?

Men. Hear me speak :
As I do know the consul's worthiness,
So can I name his faults,—

Sic. Consul ! what consul ?

Men. The consul Coriolanus.

Bru. He consul ! 280

Citizens. No, no, no, no, no.

Men. If, by the tribunes' leave, and yours, good
people,
I may be heard, I would crave a word or two ;
The which shall turn you to no further harm
Than so much loss of time.

Sic. Speak briefly then ;
For we are peremptory to despatch
This viperous traitor : to eject him hence
Were but our danger, and to keep him here
Our certain death : therefore it is decreed
He dies to-night.

Men. Now the good gods forbid 290
That our renowned Rome, whose gratitude
Towards her deserved children is enroll'd
In Jove's own book, like an unnatural dam

Should now eat up her own !

Sic. He's a disease that must be cut away.

Men. O, he's a limb that has but a disease ;
Mortal, to cut it off ; to cure it, easy.
What has he done to Rome that's worthy death ?
Killing our enemies, the blood he hath lost—
Which, I dare vouch, is more than that he hath, 300
By many an ounce—he dropp'd it for his country ;
And what is left, to lose it by his country,
Were to us all, that do't and suffer it,
A brand to the end o' the world.

Sic. This is clean kam.

Bru. Merely awry : when he did love his country,
It honour'd him.

Men. The service of the foot
Being once gangrened, is not then respected
For what before it was.

Bru. We'll hear no more.
Pursue him to his house, and pluck him thence ;
Lest his infection, being of catching nature, 310
Spread further.

Men. One word more, one word.
This tiger-footed rage, when it shall find
The harm of unscann'd swiftness, will too late
Tie leaden pounds to's heels. Proceed by process ;
Lest parties, as he is beloved, break out,
And sack great Rome with Romans.

Bru. If it were so,—

Sic. What do ye talk ?
Have we not had a taste of his obedience ?
Our ædiles smote ? Ourselves resisted ? Come.

Men. Consider this : he has been bred i' the wars
Since he could draw a sword, and is ill-school'd 321
In bolted language ; meal and bran together

He throws without distinction. Give me leave,
I'll go to him, and undertake to bring him
Where he shall answer, by a lawful form,
In peace, to his utmost peril.

First Sen.

Noble tribunes,

It is the humane way : the other course
Will prove too bloody, and the end of it
Unknown to the beginning.

Sic.

Noble Menenius,

Be you then as the people's officer.

330

Masters, lay down your weapons.

Bru.

Go not home.

Sic. Meet on the market-place. We'll attend you
there :

Where, if you bring not Martius, we'll proceed
In our first way.

Men.

I'll bring him to you.

[*To the Senators*] Let me desire your company : he
must come,

Or what is worst will follow.

First Sen.

Pray you, let's to him.

[*"Exeunt omnes."*]

SCENE II. *A room in Coriolanus's house.* "*Enter*
CORIOLANUS *with Nobles.*"

Cor. Let them pull all about mine ears, present me
Death on the wheel or at wild horses' heels,
Or pile ten hills on the Tarpeian rock,
That the precipitation might down stretch
Below the beam of sight, yet will I still
Be thus to them.

A Patrician. You do the nobler.

Cor. I muse my mother

Does not approve me further, who was wont
 To call them woollen vassals, things created 10
 To buy and sell with groats, to show bare heads
 In congregations, to yawn, be still and wonder,
 When one but of my ordinance stood up
 To speak of peace or war.

“ *Enter VOLUMNIA.* ”

I talk of you :
 Why did you wish me milder ? would you have me
 False to my nature ? Rather say I play
 The man I am.

Vol. O, sir, sir, sir,
 I would have had you put your power well on,
 Before you had worn it out.

Cor. Let go.

Vol. You might have been enough the man you are,
 With striving less to be so : lesser had been 21
 The thwartings of your dispositions, if
 You had not show'd them how you were disposed
 Ere they lack'd power to cross you.

Cor. Let them hang.

Vol. Ay, and burn too.

“ *Enter MENENIUS with the Senators.* ”

Men. Come, come, you have been too rough, some-
 thing too rough ;
 You must return and mend it.

First Sen. There's no remedy ;
 Unless, by not so doing, our good city
 Cleave in the midst, and perish.

Vol. Pray, be counsell'd :
 I have a heart as little apt as yours, 30
 But yet a brain that leads my use of anger

To better vantage.

Men. Well said, noble woman !

Before he should thus stoop to the herd, but that
The violent fit o' the time craves it as physic
For the whole state, I would put mine armour on,
Which I can scarcely bear.

Cor. What must I do ?

Men. Return to the tribunes.

Cor. Well, what then ? what then ?

Men. Repent what you have spoke.

Cor. For them ! I cannot do it to the gods ;
Must I then do't to them ?

Vol. You are too absolute ; 40
Though therein you can never be too noble,
But when extremities speak. I have heard you say,
Honour and policy, like unsever'd friends,
I' the war do grow together : grant that, and tell me,
In peace what each of them by the other lose,
That they combine not there.

Cor. Tush, tush !

Men. A good demand.

Vol. If it be honour in your wars to seem
The same you are not, which, for your best ends,
You adopt your policy, how is it less or worse,
That it shall hold companionship in peace 50
With honour, as in war, since that to both
It stands in like request ?

Cor. Why force you this ?

Vol. Because that now it lies you on to speak
To the people ; not by your own instruction,
Nor by the matter which your heart prompts you,
But with such words that are but roted in
Your tongue, though but bastards and syllables
Of no allowance to your bosom's truth.

Now, this no more dishonours you at all
Than to take in a town with gentle words, 60
Which else would put you to your fortune and
The hazard of much blood.

I would dissemble with my nature where
My fortunes and my friends at stake required
I should do so in honour : I am, in this,
Your wife, your son, these senators, the nobles ;
And you will rather show our general louts
How you can frown than spend a fawn upon 'em,
For the inheritance of their loves and safeguard
Of what that want might ruin.

Men. Noble lady ! 70

Come, go with us ; speak fair : you may salve so,
Not what is dangerous present, but the loss
Of what is past.

Vol. I prithee now, my son,
Go to them, with this bonnet in thy hand ;
And thus far having stretch'd it—here be with them—
Thy knee bussing the stones—for in such business
Action is eloquence, and the eyes of the ignorant
More learned than the ears—waving thy head,
Which often thus correcting thy stout heart,
Now humble as the ripest mulberry 80
That will not hold the handling,—say to them,
Thou art their soldier, and being bred in broils
Hast not the soft way which, thou dost confess,
Were fit for thee to use as they to claim,
In asking their good loves, but thou wilt frame
Thyself, forsooth, hereafter theirs, so far
As thou hast power and person.

Men. This but done,
Even as she speaks, why, their hearts were yours ;
For they have pardons, being ask'd, as free

As words to little purpose.

Vol. Prithee now, 90
Go, and be ruled : although I know thou hadst rather
Follow thine enemy in a fiery gulf
Than flatter him in a bower. Here is Cominius.

“ *Enter COMINIUS.* ”

Com. I have been i' the market-place ; and, sir,
'tis fit

You make strong party, or defend yourself
By calmness, or by absence : all's in anger.

Men. Only fair speech.

Com. I think 'twill serve, if he
Can thereto frame his spirit.

Vol. He must, and will.
Prithee now, say you will, and go about it.

Cor. Must I go show them my unbarbed sconce ?
Must I with base tongue give my noble heart 101
A lie that it must bear ? Well, I will do't :
Yet, were there but this single plot to lose,
This mould of Martius, they to dust should grind it
And throw't against the wind. To the market-place !
You have put me now to such a part which never
I shall discharge to the life.

Com. Come, come, we'll prompt you.

Vol. I prithee now, sweet son, as thou hast said
My praises made thee first a soldier, so,
To have my praise for this, perform a part 110
Thou hast not done before.

Cor. Well, I must do't :
Away, my disposition, and possess me
Some harlot's spirit ! my throat of war be turn'd,
Which quired with my drum, into a pipe
Small as an eunuch, or the virgin voice

That babies lulls asleep ! the smiles of knaves
Tent in my cheeks, and schoolboys' tears take up
The glasses of my sight ! a beggar's tongue
Make motion through my lips, and my arm'd knees,
Who bow'd but in my stirrup, bend like his 120
That hath received an alms ! I will not do't,
Lest I surcease to honour mine own truth
And by my body's action teach my mind
A most inherent baseness.

Vol. At thy choice, then :

To beg of thee, it is my more dishonour
Than thou of them. Come all to ruin ; let
Thy mother rather feel thy pride than fear
Thy dangerous stoutness, for I mock at death
With as big heart as thou. Do as thou list.
Thy valiantness was mine, thou suck'dst from me, 130
But owe thy pride thyself.

Cor. Pray, be content :

Mother, I am going to the market-place ;
Chide me no more. I'll mountebank their loves,
Cog their hearts from them, and come home beloved
Of all the trades in Rome. Look, I am going :
Commend me to my wife. I'll return consul ;
Or never trust to what my tongue can do
I' the way of flattery further.

Vol. Do your will. [*"Exit Volumnia."*]

Com. Away ! the tribunes do attend you : arm
yourself

To answer mildly ; for they are prepared 140
With accusations, as I hear, more strong
Than are upon you yet.

Cor. The word is "mildly." Pray you, let us go :
Let them accuse me by invention, I
Will answer in mine honour.

Men. Ay, but mildly.
Cor. Well, mildly be it then. Mildly ! [*“ Exeunt.”*]

SCENE III. *The same. The Forum.* “ *Enter SICINIUS and BRUTUS.*”

Bru. In this point charge him home, that he affects
Tyrannical power : if he evade us there,
Enforce him with his envy to the people,
And that the spoil got on the Antiates
Was ne’er distributed.

“ *Enter an Ædile.*”

What, will he come ?

Æd. He’s coming.

Bru. How accompanied ?

Æd. With old Menenius, and those senators
That always favour’d him.

Sic. Have you a catalogue
Of all the voices that we have procured
Set down by the poll ?

Æd. I have ; ’tis ready. 10

Sic. Have you collected them by tribes ?

Æd. I have.

Sic. Assemble presently the people hither ;
And when they hear me say “ It shall be so
I’ the right and strength o’ the commons,” be it either
For death, for fine, or banishment, then let them,
If I say fine, cry “ Fine ” ; if death, cry “ Death.”
Insisting on the old prerogative
And power i’ the truth o’ the cause.

Æd. I shall inform them.

Bru. And when such time they have begun to cry,
Let them not cease, but with a din confused 20

Enforce the present execution
Of what we chance to sentence.

Æd. Very well.

Sic. Make them be strong and ready for this hint,
When we shall hap to give't them.

Bru. Go about it. [*Exit Ædile.*]

Put him to choler straight : he hath been used
Ever to conquer, and to have his worth
Of contradiction : being once chafed, he cannot
Be rein'd again to temperance ; then he speaks
What's in his heart ; and that is there which looks
With us to break his neck.

Sic. Well, here he comes. 30

“ *Enter CORIOLANUS, MENENIUS, and COMINIUS,*” *with*
Senators and Patricians.

Men. Calmly, I do beseech you.

Cor. Ay, as an ostler, that for the poorest piece
Will bear the knave by the volume. The honour'd
gods

Keep Rome in safety, and the chairs of justice
Supplied with worthy men ! plant love among's !
Throng our large temples with the shows of peace,
And not our streets with war !

First Sen. Amen, amen.

Men. A noble wish.

Re-enter “ Ædile, with the Plebeians.”

Sic. Draw near, ye people.

Æd. List to your tribunes. Audience ! peace, I say !

Cor. First, hear me speak.

Both Tri. Well, say. Peace, ho ! 41

Cor. Shall I be charged no further than this present?
Must all determine here ?

Sic. I do demand,
If you submit you to the people's voices,
Allow their officers and are content
To suffer lawful censure for such faults
As shall be proved upon you ?

Cor. I am content.

Men. Lo, citizens, he says he is content :
The warlike service he has done, consider ; think
Upon the wounds his body bears, which show 50
Like graves i' the holy churchyard.

Cor. Scratches with briars,
Scars to move laughter only.

Men. Consider further,
That when he speaks not like a citizen,
You find him like a soldier : do not take
His rougher accents for malicious sounds,
But, as I say, such as become a soldier,
Rather than envy you.

Com. Well, well, no more.

Cor. What is the matter
That being pass'd for consul with full voice,
I am so dishonour'd that the very hour 60
You take it off again ?

Sic. Answer to us.

Cor. Say, then : 'tis true, I ought so.

Sic. We charge you, that you have contrived to take
From Rome all season'd office and to wind
Yourself into a power tyrannical ;
For which you are a traitor to the people.

Cor. How ! traitor !

Men. Nay, temperately ; your promise.

Cor. The fires i' the lowest hell fold-in the people !
Call me their traitor ! Thou injurious tribune !
Within thine eyes sat twenty thousand deaths, 70

In thy hands clutch'd as many millions, in
Thy lying tongue both numbers, I would say
"Thou liest" unto thee with a voice as free
As I do pray the gods.

Sic. Mark you this, people ?

Citizens. To the rock, to the rock with him !

Sic. Peace !

We need not put new matter to his charge :
What you have seen him do and heard him speak,
Beating your officers, cursing yourselves,
Opposing laws with strokes and here defying
Those whose great power must try him ; even this, 80
So criminal and in such capital kind,
Deserves the extremest death.

Bru. But since he hath

Served well for Rome,—

Cor. What do you prate of service ?

Bru. I talk of that, that know it.

Cor. You ?

Men. Is this the promise that you made your
mother ?

Com. Know, I pray you,—

Cor. I'll know no further :

Let them pronounce the steep Tarpeian death,
Vagabond exile, flaying, pent to linger
But with a grain a day, I would not buy 90
Their mercy at the price of one fair word ;
Nor check my courage for what they can give,
To have't with saying " Good morrow."

Sic. For that he has,

As much as in him lies, from time to time
Envied against the people, seeking means
To pluck away their power, as now at last
Given hostile strokes, and that not in the presence

Of dreaded justice, but on the ministers
That do distribute it ; in the name o' the people
And in the power of us the tribunes, we, 100
Even from this instant, banish him our city,
In peril of precipitation
From off the rock Tarpeian, never more
To enter our Rome gates : i' the people's name,
I say it shall be so.

Citizens. It shall be so, it shall be so ; let him away :
He's banish'd, and it shall be so.

Com. Hear me, my masters, and my common
friends,—

Sic. He's sentenced ; no more hearing.

Com. Let me speak :
I have been consul, and can show for Rome 110
Her enemies' marks upon me. I do love
My country's good with a respect more tender,
More holy and profound, than mine own life,
My dear wife's estimate, her womb's increase,
And treasure of my loins ; then if I would
Speak that,—

Sic. We know your drift : speak what ?

Bru. There's no more to be said, but he is banish'd,
As enemy to the people and his country :
It shall be so.

Citizens. It shall be so, it shall be so.

Cor. You common cry of curs ! whose breath I hate
As reek o' the rotten fens, whose loves I prize 121
As the dead carcasses of unburied men
That do corrupt my air, I banish you ;
And here remain with your uncertainty !
Let every feeble rumour shake your hearts !
Your enemies, with nodding of their plumes,
Fan you into despair ! Have the power still

To banish your defenders ; till at length
Your ignorance, which finds not till it feels,
Making not reservation of yourselves, 130
Still your own foes, deliver you as most
Abated captives to some nation
That won you without blows ! Despising,
For you, the city, thus I turn my back :
There is a world elsewhere.

[“ *Exeunt Coriolanus, Cominius,” Menenius,
Senators, and Patricians.*]

Æd. The people’s enemy is gone, is gone !

Citizens. Our enemy is banish’d ! he is gone ! Hoo !
hoo !

[“ *They all shout and throw up their caps.*”]

Sic. Go, see him out at gates, and follow him,
As he hath follow’d you, with all despite ;
Give him deserved vexation. Let a guard 140
Attend us through the city.

Citizens. Come, come ; let’s see him out at gates ;
come.

The gods preserve our noble tribunes ! Come.
[“ *Exeunt.*”]

ACT IV

SCENE I. *Rome. Before a gate of the city. "Enter CORIOLANUS, VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA, MENENIUS, COMINIUS, with the young Nobility of Rome."*

Cor. Come, leave your tears : a brief farewell : the
beast

With many heads butts me away. Nay, mother,
Where is your ancient courage ? you were used
To say extremity was the trier of spirits ;
That common chances common men could bear ;
That when the sea was calm all boats alike
Show'd mastership in floating ; fortune's blows,
When most struck home, being gentle wounded, craves
A noble cunning : you were used to load me
With precepts that would make invincible 10
The heart that conn'd them.

Vir. O heavens ! O heavens !

Cor. Nay, I prithee, woman,—

Vol. Now the red pestilence strike all trades in
Rome,

And occupations perish !

Cor. What, what, what !

I shall be loved when I am lack'd. Nay, mother,
Resume that spirit, when you were wont to say,
If you had been the wife of Hercules,
Six of his labours you'd have done, and saved
Your husband so much sweat. Cominius,

Droop not ; adieu. Farewell, my wife, my mother :
 I'll do well yet. Thou old and true Menenius, 21
 Thy tears are salter than a younger man's,
 And venomous to thine eyes. My sometime general,
 I have seen thee stern, and thou hast oft beheld
 Heart-hardening spectacles ; tell these sad women
 'Tis fond to wail inevitable strokes, 26
 As 'tis to laugh at 'em. My mother, you wot well
 My hazards still have been your solace : and
 Believe't not lightly—though I go alone,
 Like to a lonely dragon, that his fen 30
 Makes fear'd and talk'd of more than seen—your son
 Will or exceed the common or be caught
 With cautelous baits and practice.

Vol.

My first son,

Whither wilt thou go ? Take good Cominius
 With thee awhile : determine on some course,
 More than a wild exposture to each chance
 That starts i' the way before thee.

Cor.

O the gods !

Com. I'll follow thee a month, devise with thee
 Where thou shalt rest, that thou mayst hear of us
 And we of thee : so if the time thrust forth 40
 A cause for thy repeal, we shall not send
 O'er the vast world to seek a single man,
 And lose advantage, which doth ever cool
 I' the absence of the needer.

Cor.

Fare ye well :

Thou hast years upon thee ; and thou art too full
 Of the wars' surfeits to go rove with one
 That's yet unbruised : bring me but out at gate,
 Come, my sweet wife, my dearest mother, and
 My friends of noble touch, when I am forth,
 Bid me farewell, and smile. I pray you, come. 50

While I remain above the ground, you shall
Hear from me still, and never of me aught
But what is like me formerly.

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

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

SCENE II. *The same. A street near the gate. Enter the two Tribunes, SICINIUS, BRUTUS, with the Ædile.*

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

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

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

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

Bru. Dismiss them home. [*Exit Ædile.*]
Here comes his mother.

Sic. Let's not meet her.

Bru. Why ?

Sic. They say she's mad.

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

“ *Enter VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA, and MENENIUS.* ”

Vol. O, ye're well met : the hoarded plague o' the
gods

Requite your love !

Men. Peace, peace ; be not so loud.

Vol. If that I could for weeping, you should hear,—
Nay, and you shall hear some. [*To Brutus*] Will you
be gone ?

Vir. [*To Sicinius*] You shall stay too : I would I had
the power
To say so to my husband.

Sic. Are you mankind ?

Vol. Ay, fool ; is that a shame ? Note but this fool.
Was not a man my father ? Hadst thou foxship
To banish him that struck more blows for Rome
Than thou hast spoken words ?

Sic. O blessed heavens ! 20

Vol. More noble blows than ever thou wise words ;
And for Rome's good. I'll tell thee what ; yet go :
Nay, but thou shalt stay too : I would my son
Were in Arabia, and thy tribe before him,
His good sword in his hand.

Sic. What then ?

Vir. What then !

He'd make an end of thy posterity.

Vol. Bastards and all.

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

Men. Come, come, peace.

Sic. I would he had continued to his country 30
As he began, and not unknit himself
The noble knot he made.

Bru. I would he had.

Vol. " I would he had ! " 'Twas you incensed the
rabble :

Cats, that can judge as fitly of his worth
As I can of those mysteries which heaven
Will not have earth to know.

Bru. Pray, let us go.

Vol. Now, pray, sir, get you gone :

You have done a brave deed. Ere you go, hear this :—
As far as doth the Capitol exceed
The meanest house in Rome, so far my son— 40
This lady's husband here, this, do you see—
Whom you have banish'd, does exceed you all.

Bru. Well, well, we'll leave you.

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

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

I would the gods had nothing else to do
But to confirm my curses ! Could I meet 'em
But once a-day, it would unclog my heart
Of what lies heavy to't.

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

Vol. Anger's my meat ; I sup upon myself, 50
And so shall starve with feeding. Come, let's go :
Leave this faint puling, and lament as I do,
In anger, Juno-like. Come, come, come.

Men. Fie, fie, fie ! [“*Exeunt.*”]

SCENE III. *A highway between Rome and Antium.*
“*Enter a Roman and a Volsce,*” meeting.

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

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

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

Vols. Nicanor ? no.

Rom. The same, sir.

Vols. You had more beard when I last saw you ; but your favour is well appeared by your tongue. What's the news in Rome ? I have a note from the Volscian state, to find you out there : you have well saved me a day's journey. 12

Rom. There hath been in Rome strange insurrections ; the people against the senators, patricians, and nobles.

Vols. Hath been ! is it ended, then ? Our state thinks not so : they are in a most warlike preparation, and hope to come upon them in the heat of their division. 19

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

Vols. Coriolanus banished !

Rom. Banished, sir.

Vols. You will be welcome with this intelligence, Nicanor. 30

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

Vols. He cannot choose. I am most fortunate, thus accidentally to encounter you : you have ended my business, and I will merrily accompany you home.

Rom. I shall, between this and supper, tell you most

strange things from Rome ; all tending to the good of their adversaries. Have you an army ready, say you ? 43

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

Rom. I am joyful to hear of their readiness, and am the man, I think, that shall set them in present action. So, sir, heartily well met, and most glad of your company. 50

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

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

SCENE IV. *Antium. Before Aufidius's house. "Enter CORIOLANUS in mean apparel, disguised and muffled."*

Cor. A goodly city is this Antium. City,
'Tis I that made thy widows : many an heir
Of these fair edifices 'fore my wars
Have I heard groan and drop : then know me not,
Lest that thy wives with spits and boys with stones
In puny battle slay me.

"Enter a Citizen."

Save you, sir.

Cit. And you.

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

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

Cor. Which is his house, beseech you ? 10

Cit. This, here before you.

Cor. Thank you, sir : farewell.
[Exit Citizen.]

O world, thy slippery turns ! Friends now fast sworn,
 Whose double bosoms seem to wear one heart,
 Whose hours, whose bed, whose meal, and exercise,
 Are still together, who twin, as 'twere, in love
 Unseparable, shall within this hour,
 On a dissension of a doit, break out
 To bitterest enmity : so, fellest foes,
 Whose passions and whose plots have broke their sleep
 To take the one the other, by some chance, ²⁰
 Some trick not worth an egg, shall grow dear friends
 And interjoin their issues. So with me :
 My birth-place hate I, and my love's upon
 This enemy town. I'll enter : if he slay me,
 He does fair justice ; if he give me way,
 I'll do his country service. [Exit.

SCENE V. *The same. A hall in Aufidius's house. " Music plays. Enter a Servingman."*

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

" Enter another Servingman."

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

" Enter CORIOLANUS."

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

" Enter the first Servingman."

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

Cor. I have deserved no better entertainment, 10
In being Coriolanus.

“ *Enter second Servingman.* ”

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

Cor. Away !

Sec. Serv. Away ! get you away.

Cor. Now thou’rt troublesome.

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

“ *Enter a third Servingman. The first meets him.* ”

Third Serv. What fellow’s this ? 20

First Serv. A strange one as ever I looked on : I cannot get him out o’ the house : prithee, call my master to him. [“ *Retires.* ”]

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

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

Thurd Serv. What are you ?

Cor. A gentleman.

Third Serv. A marvellous poor one.

Cor. True, so I am. 30

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

Cor. Follow your function, go, and batten on cold bits. [“ *Pushes him away from him.* ”]

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

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

Third Serv. Where dwellest thou ?

Cor. Under the canopy.

40

Thrd Serv. Under the canopy !

Cor. Ay.

Thrd Serv. Where's that ?

Cor. I' the city of kites and crows.

Thrd Serv. I' the city of kites and crows ! ~~What~~ an ass it is ! Then thou dwellest with daws too ?

Cor. No, I serve not thy master.

Thrd Serv. How, sir ! do you meddle with my master ?

Cor. Thou pratest, and pratest ; serve with thy trencher, hence !

50

[“ *Beats him away. Exit thrd Servingman.*”]

“ *Enter AUFIDIUS with the second Servingman.*”

Auf. Where is this fellow ?

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

Auf. Whence comest thou ? what wouldst thou ? thy name ?

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

Cor. If, Tullus, [*Unmuffling.*]

Not yet thou knowest me, and, seeing me, dost not Think me for the man I am, necessity Commands me name myself.

Auf. What is thy name ?

Cor. A name unmusical to the Volscians' ears, 60 And harsh in sound to thine.

Auf. Say, what's thy name Thou hast a grim appearance, and thy face Bears a command in't ; though thy tackle's torn, Thou show'st a noble vessel : what's thy name ?

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

Auf. I know thee not : thy name ?

Cor. My name is Caius Martius, who hath done
To thee particularly and to all the Volsces
Great hurt and mischief ; thereto witness may
My surname, Coriolanus ; the painful service, 70
The extreme dangers and the drops of blood
Shed for my thankless country are requited
But with that surname ; a good memory,
And witness of the malice and displeasure
Which thou shouldst bear me : only that name
remains ;

The cruelty and envy of the people,
Permitted by our dastard nobles, who
Have all forsook me, hath devour'd the rest ?
And suffer'd me by the voice of slaves to be
Hoop'd out of Rome. Now this extremity 80
Hath brought me to thy hearth ; not out of hope—
Mistake me not—to save my life, for if
I had fear'd death, of all the men i' the world
I would have 'voided thee, but in mere spite,
To be full quit of those my banishers,
Stand I before thee here. Then if thou hast
A heart of wreak in thee, that wilt revenge
Thine own particular wrongs and stop those maims
Of shame seen through thy country, speed thee
straight,

And make my misery serve thy turn : so use it 90
That my revengeful services may prove
As benefits to thee, for I will fight
Against my canker'd country with the spleen
Of all the under fiends. But if so be
Thou darest not this and that to prove more fortunes
Thou'rt tired, then, in a word, I also am
Longer to live most weary, and present

My throat to thee and to thy ancient malice ;
Which not to cut would show thee but a fool,
Since I have ever follow'd thee with hate, 100
Drawn tuns of blood out of thy country's breast,
And cannot live but to thy shame, unless
It be to do thee service.

Auf. O Martius, Martius !
Each word thou hast spoke hath weeded from my
heart
A root of ancient envy. If Jupiter
Should from yond cloud speak divine things,
And say " 'Tis true," I'd not believe them more
Than thee, all noble Martius. Let me twine
Mine arms about that body, where against
My grained ash an hundred times hath broke, 110
And scarr'd the moon with splinters : here I clip
The anvil of my sword, and do contest
As hotly and as nobly with thy love
As ever in ambitious strength I did
Contend against thy valour. Know thou first,
I loved the maid I married ; never man
Sigh'd truer breath ; but that I see thee here,
Thou noble thing ! more dances my rapt heart
Than when I first my wedded mistress saw
Bestride my threshold. Why, thou Mars ! I tell thee,
We have a power on foot ; and I had purpose 121
Once more to hew thy target from thy brawn,
Or lose mine arm for't : thou hast beat me out
Twelve several times, and I have nightly since
Dreamt of encounters 'twixt thyself and me ;
We have been down together in my sleep,
Unbuckling helms, fisting each other's throat,
And waked half dead with nothing. Worthy Martius,
Had we no quarrel else to Rome, but that

Thou art thence banish'd, we would muster all 130
From twelve to seventy, and pouring war
Into the bowels of ungrateful Rome,
Like a bold flood o'er-bear. O, come, go in,
And take our friendly senators by the hands ;
Who now are here, taking their leaves of me,
Who am prepared against your territories,
Though not for Rome itself.

Cor. You bless me, gods !

Auf. Therefore, most absolute sir, if thou wilt have
The leading of thine own revenges, take
The one half of my commission ; and set down— 140
As best thou art experienced, since thou know'st
Thy country's strength and weakness,—thine own
ways ;

Whether to knock against the gates of Rome,
Or rudely visit them in parts remote,
To fright them, ere destroy. But come in :
Let me commend thee first to those that shall
Say yea to thy desires. A thousand welcomes !
And more a friend than e'er an enemy ;
Yet, Martius, that was much. Your hand : most
welcome ! [*Exeunt Coriolanus and Aufidius. The
two Servingmen come forward.*]

First Serv. Here's a strange alteration ! 150

Sec. Serv. By my hand, I had thought to have
strucken him with a cudgel ; and yet my mind gave
me his clothes made a false report of him.

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

Sec. Serv. Nay, I knew by his face that there was
something in him : he had, sir, a kind of face, me-
thought,—I cannot tell how to term it.

First Serv. He had so ; looking as it were—would I were hanged, but I thought there was more in him than I could think. 162

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

First Serv. I think he is : but a greater soldier than he, you wot one.

Sec. Serv. Who, my master ?

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

Sec. Serv. Worth six on him.

First Serv. Nay, not so neither : but I take him to be the greater soldier. 171

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

First Serv. Ay, and for an assault too.

“ *Enter the third Servingman.* ”

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

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

Third Serv. I would not be a Roman, of all nations ; I had as lieve be a condemned man. 181

First and Sec. Serv. Wherefore ? wherefore ?

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

First Serv. Why do you say “ thwack our general ” ?

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

Sec. Serv. Come, we are fellows and friends : he was ever too hard for him ; I have heard him say so himself. 190

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

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

First Serv. But, more of thy news ?

Third Serv. Why, he is so made on here within, as if he were son and heir to Mars ; set at upper end o' the table ; no question asked him by any of the senators, but they stand bald before him ; our general himself makes a mistress of him ; sanctifies himself with's hand and turns up the white o' the eye to his discourse. But the bottom of the news is, our general is cut i' the middle and but one half of what he was yesterday ; for the other has half, by the entreaty and grant of the whole table. He'll go, he says, and sowl the porter of Rome gates by the ears : he will mow all down before him, and leave his passage polled.

Sec. Serv. And he's as like to do't as any man I can imagine. 210

Thurd Serv. Do't ! he will do't ; for, look you, sir, he has as many friends as enemies ; which friends, sir, as it were, durst not, look you, sir, show themselves, as we term it, his friends whilst he's in directitude.

Furst Serv. Directitude ! what's that ?

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

First Serv. But when goes this forward ? 219

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

Sec. Serv. Why, then, we shall have a stirring world

again. This peace is nothing, but to rust iron, increase tailors, and breed ballad-makers.

First Serv. Let me have war, say I ; it exceeds peace as far as day does night ; it's sprightly walking, audible, and full of vent. Peace is a very apoplexy, lethargy ; mulled, deaf, sleepy, insensible. Ay, and it makes men hate one another. 231

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

All. In, in, in, in !

[“ *Exeunt.*”]

SCENE VI. *Rome. A public place.* “ *Enter the two Tribunes, SICINIUS and BRUTUS.*”

Sic. We hear not of him, neither need we fear him ; His remedies are tame i' the present peace And quietness of the people, which before Were in wild hurry. Here do we make his friends Blush that the world goes well, who rather had, Though they themselves did suffer by't, behold Dissentious numbers pestering streets than see Our tradesmen singing in their shops and going About their functions friendly.

Bru. We stood to't in good time. [“ *Enter Menenius.*”]

Is this Menenius ?

10

Sic. 'Tis he, 'tis he : O, he is grown most kind of late.

Both Tri. Hail, sir !

Men.

Hail to you both !

Sic.

Your Coriolanus

Is not much miss'd, but with his friends :

The commonwealth doth stand, and so would do,

Were he more angry at it.

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

He could have temporized.

Sic. Where is he, hear you ?

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

“ *Enter three or four Citizens.* ”

Citizens. The gods preserve you both !

Sic. God-den, our neighbours.

Bru. God-den to you all, god-den to you all. 21

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

Are bound to pray for you both.

Sic. Live, and thrive !

Bru. Farewell, kind neighbours : we wish'd Corio-
lanus

Had loved you as we did.

Citizens. Now the gods keep you !

Both Tri. Farewell, farewell. [“ *Exeunt Citizens.* ”]

Sic. This is a happier and more comely time
Than when these fellows ran about the streets,
Crying confusion.

Bru. Caius Martius was
A worthy officer i' the war ; but insolent, 30
O'ercome with pride, ambitious past all thinking,
Self-loving,—

Sic. And affecting one sole throne,
Without assistance.

Men. I think not so.

Sic. We should by this, to all our lamentation,
If he had gone forth consul, found it so.

Bru. The gods have well prevented it, and Rome

Sits safe and still without him.

“ *Enter an Ædile,*”

Æd.

Worthy tribunes.

There is a slave, whom we have put in prison,
Reports, the Volsces with two several powers
Are enter'd in the Roman territories, 40
And with the deepest malice of the war
Destroy what lies before 'em.

Men.

'Tis Aufidius,

Who, hearing of our Martius' banishment,
Thrusts forth his horns again into the world ;
Which were inshell'd when Martius stood for Rome,
And durst not once peep out.

Sic.

Come, what talk you

Of Martius ?

Bru. Go see this rumourer whipp'd. It cannot be
The Volsces dare break with us.

Men.

Cannot be !

We have record that very well it can, 50
And three examples of the like have been
Within my age. But reason with the fellow,
Before you punish him, where he heard this,
Lest you shall chance to whip your information
And beat the messenger who bids beware
Of what is to be dreaded.

Sic.

Tell not me :

I know this cannot be.

Bru.

Not possible. ·

“ *Enter a Messenger.*”

Mess. The nobles in great earnestness are going
All to the senate-house : some news is come
That turns their countenances.

Sic. 'Tis this slave ;— 60
Go whip him 'fore the people's eyes :—his raising ;
Nothing but his report.

Mess. Yes, worthy sir,
The slave's report is seconded ; and more,
More fearful, is deliver'd.

Sic. What more fearful ?

Mess. It is spoke freely out of many mouths—
How probable I do not know—that Martius,
Join'd with Aufidius, leads a power 'gainst Rome,
And vows revenge as spacious as between
The young'st and oldest thing.

Sic. This is most likely !

Bru. Raised only, that the weaker sort may wish
Good Martius home again.

Sic. The very trick on't. 71

Men. This is unlikely :
He and Aufidius can no more atone
Than violentest contrariety.

Enter a second Messenger.

Sec. Mess. You are sent for to the senate :
A fearful army, led by Caius Martius
Associated with Aufidius, rages
Upon our territories ; and have already
O'erborne their way, consumed with fire, and took
What lay before them. 80

“ Enter COMINIUS.”

Com. O, you have made good work !

Men. What news? what news?

Com. You have help to ravish your own daughters
and
To melt the city leads upon your pates,

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

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

Com. Your temples burned in their cement, and
Your franchises, whereon you stood, confined
Into an auger's bore.

Men. Pray now, your news ?

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

If Martius should be join'd with Volscians,—

Com. If ! 90

He is their god : he leads them like a thing
Made by some other deity than nature,
That shapes man better ; and they follow him,
Against us brats, with no less confidence
Than boys pursuing summer butterflies,
Or butchers killing flies.

Men. You have made good work,
You and your apron-men ; you that stood so much
Upon the voice of occupation and
The breath of garlic-eaters !

Com. He will shake
Your Rome about your ears.

Men. As Hercules 100
Did shake down mellow fruit. You have made fair
work !

Bru. But is this true, sir ?

Com. Ay ; and you'll look pale
Before you find it other. All the regions
Do smilingly revolt ; and who resist
Are mock'd for valiant ignorance,
And perish constant fools. Who is't can blame him ?
Your enemies and his find something in him.

Men. We are all undone, unless
The noble man have mercy.

Com. Who shall ask it ?

The tribunes cannot do't for shame ; the people 110
Deserve such pity of him as the wolf
Does of the shepherds : for his best friends, if they
Should say " Be good to Rome," they charged him
even

As those should do that had deserved his hate,
And therein show'd like enemies.

Men 'Tis true :

If he were putting to my house the brand
That should consume it, I have not the face
To say " Beseech you, cease." You have made fair
hands,

You and your crafts ! you have crafted fair !

Com. You have brought
A trembling upon Rome, such as was never 120
So incapable of help.

Both Tri. Say not we brought it.

Men. How ! Was it we ? we loved him ; but, like
beasts

And cowardly nobles, gave way unto your clusters,
Who did hoot him out o' the city.

Com. But I fear
They'll roar him in again. Tullus Aufidius,
The second name of men, obeys his points
As if he were his officer : desperation
Is all the policy, strength and defence,
That Rome can make against them.

" *Enter a troop of Citizens.*"

Men. Here come the clusters.
And is Aufidius with him ? You are they 130
That made the air unwholesome, when you cast
Your stinking greasy caps in hooting at

Coriolanus' exile. Now he's coming ;
 And not a hair upon a soldier's head
 Which will not prove a whip : as many coxcombs
 As you threw caps up will he tumble down,
 And pay you for your voices. 'Tis no matter ;
 If he could burn us all into one coal,
 We have deserved it.

Citizens. Faith, we hear fearful news.

First Cit. For mine own part, 140
 When I said, banish him, I said, 'twas pity.

Sec. Cit. And so did I.

Third Cit. And so did I ; and, to say the truth, so
 did very many of us : that we did, we did for the
 best ; and though we willingly consented to his
 banishment, yet it was against our will.

Com. Ye're goodly things, you voices !

Men. You have made
 Good work, you and your cry ! Shall's to the Capitol ?

Com. O, ay, what else ?

[*Exeunt Cominius and Menenius.*

Sic. Go, masters, get you home ; be not dismay'd :
 These are a side that would be glad to have 151
 This true which they so seem to fear. Go home,
 And show no sign of fear.

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

Sec. Cit. So did we all. But, come, let's home.

[*Exeunt Citizens.*

Bru. I do not like this news.

Sic. Nor I. 159

Bru. Let's to the Capitol. Would half my wealth
 Would buy this for a lie !

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

SCENE VII. *A camp, at a small distance from Rome.*

“ *Enter AUFIDIUS with his Lieutenant.*”

Auf. Do they still fly to the Roman ?

Lieu. I do not know what witchcraft's in him, but
Your soldiers use him as the grace 'fore meat,
Their talk at table, and their thanks at end ;
And you are darken'd in this action, sir,
Even by your own.

Auf. I cannot help it now,
Unless, by using means, I lame the foot
Of our design. He bears himself more proudlier,
Even to my person, than I thought he would
When first I did embrace him : yet his nature 10
In that's no changeling ; and I must excuse
What cannot be amended.

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

Auf. I understand thee well ; and be thou sure,
When he shall come to his account, he knows not
What I can urge against him. Although it seems,
And so he thinks, and is no less apparent 20
To the vulgar eye, that he bears all things fairly,
And shows good husbandry for the Volscian state,
Fights dragon-like, and does achieve as soon
As draw his sword ; yet he hath left undone
That which shall break his neck or hazard mine,
Whene'er we come to our account.

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

Auf. All places yield to him ere he sits down ;

And the nobility of Rome are his :
The senators and patricians love him too : 30
The tribunes are no soldiers ; and their people
Will be as rash in the repeal, as hasty
To expel him thence. I think he'll be to Rome
As is the osprey to the fish, who takes it
By sovereignty of nature. First he was
A noble servant to them ; but he could not
Carry his honours even : whether 'twas pride,
Which out of daily fortune ever taints
The happy man ; whether defect of judgement,
To fail in the disposing of those chances 40
Which he was lord of ; or whether nature,
Not to be other than one thing, not moving
From the casque to the cushion, but commanding
peace
Even with the same austerity and garb
As he controll'd the war ; but one of these—
As he hath spices of them all, not all,
For I dare so far free him—made him fear'd,
So hated, and so banish'd : but he has a merit,
To choke it in the utterance. So our virtues
Lie in the interpretation of the time : 50
And power, unto itself most commendable,
Hath not a tomb so evident as a chair
To extol what it hath done.
One fire drives out one fire ; one nail, one nail ;
Rights by rights falter, strengths by strengths do fail.
Come, let's away. When, Caius, Rome is thine,
Thou art poor'st of all ; then shortly art thou mine.
[“ *Exeunt.*”]

ACT V

SCENE I. *Rome. A public place. "Enter MENENIUS, COMINIUS, SICINIUS, BRUTUS, with others."*

Men. No, I'll not go : you hear what he hath said
Which was sometime his general ; who loved him
In a most dear particular. He call'd me father :
But what o' that ? Go, you that banish'd him ;
A mile before his tent fall down, and knee
The way into his mercy : nay, if he coy'd
To hear Cominius speak, I'll keep at home.

Com. He would not seem to know me.

Men. Do you hear ?

Com. Yet one time he did call me by my name :
I urged our old acquaintance, and the drops 10
That we have bled together. Coriolanus
He would not answer to : forbad all names ;
He was a kind of nothing, titleless,
Till he had forged himself a name o' the fire
Of burning Rome.

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

Com. I minded him how royal 'twas to pardon
When it was less expected : he replied,
It was a bare petition of a state 20
To one whom they had punish'd.

Men. Very well :

Could he say less ?

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

Men. For one poor grain or two !
I am one of those ; his mother, wife, his child,
And this brave fellow too, we are the grains : 30
You are the musty chaff ; and you are smelt
Above the moon : we must be burnt for you.

Sic. Nay, pray, be patient : if you refuse your aid
In this so never-needed help, yet do not
Upbraid's with our distress. But, sure, if you
Would be your country's pleader, your good tongue,
More than the instant army we can make,
Might stop our countryman.

Men. No, I'll not meddle.

Sic. Pray you, go to him.

Men. What should I do ?

Bru. Only make trial what your love can do 40
For Rome, towards Martius.

Men. Well, and say that Martius
Return me, as Cominius is return'd,
Unheard ; what then ?
But as a discontented friend, grief-shot
With his unkindness ? say't be so ?

Sic. Yet your good will
Must have that thanks from Rome, after the measure
As you intended well.

Men. I'll undertake't :
I think he'll hear me. Yet, to bite his lip
And hum at good Cominius, much unhearts me.

He was not taken well ; he had not dined : 50
The veins unfill'd, our blood is cold, and then
We pout upon the morning, are unapt
To give or to forgive ; but when we have stuff'd
These pipes and these conveyances of our blood
With wine and feeding, we have suppler souls
Than in our priest-like fasts : therefore I'll watch him
Till he be dieted to my request,
And then I'll set upon him.

Bru. You know the very road into his kindness,
And cannot lose your way.

Men. Good faith, I'll prove him, 60
Speed how it will. I shall ere long have knowledge
Of my success. [“ *Exit.*”

Com. He'll never hear him.

Sic. Not ?

Com. I tell you, he does sit in gold, his eye
Red as 'twould burn Rome ; and his injury
The gaoler to his pity. I kneel'd before him ;
'Twas very faintly he said “ Rise ” ; dismiss'd me
Thus, with his speechless hand : what he would do,
He sent in writing after me ; what he would not ;
Bound with an oath to yield to his conditions :
So that all hope is vain, 70
Unless his noble mother, and his wife ;
Who, as I hear, mean to solicit him
For mercy to his country. Therefore, let's hence,
And with our fair entreaties haste them on.
[“ *Exeunt.*”

SCENE II. *Entrance of the Volscian camp before Rome.*
Two Sentinels on guard. Enter to them, MENENIUS.

First Sen. Stay : whence are you ?

Sec. Sen. Stand, and go back.

Men. You guard like men ; 'tis well : but, by your leave, I am an officer of state, and come To speak with Coriolanus.

First Sen. From whence ?

Men. From Rome.

First Sen. You may not pass, you must return : our general

Will no more hear from thence.

Sec. Sen. You'll see your Rome embraced with fire before

You'll speak with Coriolanus.

Men. Good my friends,

If you have heard your general talk of Rome,
And of his friends there, it is lots to blanks 10
My name hath touch'd your ears : it is Menenius.

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

Is not here passable.

Men. I tell thee, fellow,

Thy general is my lover : I have been
The book of his good acts, whence men have read
His fame unparallel'd, haply amplified ;
For I have ever magnified my friends,
Of whom he's chief, with all the size that verity
Would without lapsing suffer : nay, sometimes,
Like to a bowl upon a subtle ground, 20
I have tumbled past the throw : and in his praise
Have almost stamp'd the leasing : therefore, fellow,
I must have leave to pass.

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

Men. Prithee, fellow, remember my name is

Menenius, always factionary on the party of your general. 30

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

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

First Sen. You are a Roman, are you?

Men. I am, as thy general is.

First Sen. Then you should hate Rome, as he does. Can you, when you have pushed out your gates the very defender of them, and, in a violent popular ignorance, given your enemy your shield, think to front his revenges with the easy groans of old women, the virginal palms of your daughters, or with the palsied intercession of such a decayed dotant as you seem to be? Can you think to blow out the intended fire your city is ready to flame in, with such weak breath as this? No, you are deceived; therefore, back to Rome, and prepare for your execution: you are condemned, our general has sworn you out of reprieve and pardon. 50

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

First Sen. Come, my captain knows you not.

Men. I mean, thy general.

First Sen. My general cares not for you. Back, I say, go; lest I let forth your half-pint of blood; back,—that's the utmost of your having: back.

Men. Nay, but, fellow, fellow,—

“*Enter CORIOLANUS with AUFIDIUS.*”

Cor. What's the matter? 59

Men. Now, you companion, I'll say an errand for

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

Cor. Away !

Men. How ! away !

80

Cor. Wife, mother, child, I know not. My affairs
Are servanted to others : though I owe
My revenge properly, my remission lies
In Volscian breasts. That we have been familiar,
Ingrate forgetfulness shall poison, rather
Than pity note how much. Therefore, be gone.
Mine ears against your suits are stronger than
Your gates against my force. Yet, for I loved thee,
Take this along ; I writ it for thy sake, [*Gives a letter.*
And would have sent it. Another word, Menenius,
I will not hear thee speak. This man, Aufidius, 91
Was my beloved in Rome : yet thou behold'st !

Auf. You keep a constant temper.

[*Exeunt Coriolanus and Aufidius.*]

First Sen. Now, sir, is your name Menenius ?

Sec. Sen. 'Tis a spell, you see, of much power : you know the way home again.

First Sen. Do you hear how we are shent for keeping your greatness back ? 98

Sec. Sen. What cause, do you think, I have to swoon ?

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

First Sen. A noble fellow, I warrant him.

Sec. Sen. The worthy fellow is our general : he's the rock, the oak not to be wind-shaken. [Exeunt.

SCENE III. *The tent of Coriolanus.* “ Enter CORIOLANUS and AUFIDIUS.”

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

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

Cor. This last old man, Whom with a crack'd heart I have sent to Rome, Loved me above the measure of a father ; 10 Nay, godded me, indeed. Their latest refuge Was to send him ; for whose old love I have,

Though I show'd sourly to him, once more offer'd
 The first conditions, which they did refuse
 And cannot now accept ; to grace him only
 That thought he could do more, a very little
 I have yielded to : fresh embassies and suits,
 Nor from the state nor private friends, hereafter
 Will I lend ear to. Ha ! what shout is this ?

[*Shout within.*

Shall I be tempted to infringe my vow 20
 In the same time 'tis made ? I will not.

*Enter, in mourning habits, VIRGILIA, VOLUMNIA, leading
 young MARTIUS, VALERIA, and Attendants.*

My wife comes foremost ; then the honour'd mould
 Wherein this trunk was framed, and in her hand
 The grandchild to her blood. But, out, affection !
 All bond and privilege of nature, break !

Let it be virtuous to be obstinate.

What is that curt'sy worth ? or those doves' eyes,
 Which can make gods forsworn ? I melt, and am not
 Of stronger earth than others. My mother bows ;
 As if Olympus to a molehill should 30

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

Vir. My lord and husband !

Cor. These eyes are not the same I wore in Rome.

Vir. The sorrow that delivers us thus changed
 Makes you think so.

Cor. Like a dull actor now, 40

I have forgot my part, and I am out,
Even to a full disgrace. Best of my flesh,
Forgive my tyranny ; but do not say
For that " Forgive our Romans." O, a kiss
Long as my exile, sweet as my revenge !
Now, by the jealous queen of heaven, that kiss
I carried from thee, dear ; and my true lip
Hath virgin'd it e'er since. You gods ! I prate,
And the most noble mother of the world
Leave unsaluted : sink, my knee, i' the earth ; [*Kneels.*
Of thy deep duty more impression show 51
Than that of common sons.

Vol. O, stand up blest !
Whilst, with no softer cushion than the flint,
I kneel before thee ; and improperly
Show duty, as mistaken all this while
Between the child and parent. [*Kneels.*

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

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

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

Vol. This is a poor epitome of yours,
Which by the interpretation of full time
May show like all yourself.

Cor. The god of soldiers, 70

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

Vol. Your knee, sirrah.

Cor. That's my brave boy !

Vol. Even he, your wife, this lady, and myself,
Are suitors to you.

Cor. I beseech you, peace :
Or, if you'd ask, remember this before :
The things I have forsworn to grant may never 80
Be held by your denials. Do not bid me
Dismiss my soldiers, or capitulate
Again with Rome's mechanics : tell me not
Wherein I seem unnatural : desire not
To allay my rages and revenges with
Your colder reasons.

Vol. O, no more, no more !
You have said you will not grant us any thing ;
For we have nothing else to ask, but that
Which you deny already : yet we will ask ;
That, if we fail in our request, the blame 90
May hang upon your hardness : therefore hear us.

Cor. Aufidius, and you Volscres, mark ; for we'll
Hear nought from Rome in private. Your request ?

Vol. Should we be silent and not speak, our raiment
And state of bodies would bewray what life
We have led since thy exile. Think with thyself
How more unfortunate than all living women
Are we come hither : since that thy sight, which
should
Make our eyes flow with joy, hearts dance with
comforts,

Constrains them weep and shake with fear and sorrow;
Making the mother, wife and child to see
The son, the husband and the father tearing
His country's bowels out. And to poor we
Thine enmity's most capital : thou barr'st us
Our prayers to the gods, which is a comfort
That all but we enjoy : for how can we,
Alas, how can we for our country pray,
Whereto we are bound, together with thy victory,
Whereto we are bound ? alack, or we must lose
The country, our dear nurse, or else thy person, 110
Our comfort in the country. We must find
An evident calamity, though we had
Our wish, which side should win : for either thou
Must, as a foreign recreant, be led
With manacles thorough our streets, or else
Triumphantly tread on thy country's ruin,
And bear the palm for having bravely shed
Thy wife and children's blood. For myself, son,
I purpose not to wait on fortune till
These wars determine : if I cannot persuade thee 120
Rather to show a noble grace to both parts
Than seek the end of one, thou shalt no sooner
March to assault thy country than to tread—
Trust to't, thou shalt not—on thy mother's womb,
That brought thee to this world.

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

Young Mar. A' shall not tread on me ;
I'll run away till I am bigger, but then I'll fight.

Cor. Not of a woman's tenderness to be, 130
Requires nor child nor woman's face to see.
I have sat too long.

[*Rising.*

Vol.

Nay, go not from us thus.

If it were so that our request did tend
To save the Romans, thereby to destroy
The Volsces whom you serve, you might condemn us,
As poisonous of your honour : no ; our suit
Is, that you reconcile them : while the Volsces
May say " This mercy we have show'd " ; the

Romans,

" This we received " ; and each in either side
Give the all-hail to thee, and cry " Be blest 140
For making up this peace ! " Thou know'st, great son,
The end of war's uncertain, but this certain,
That, if you conquer Rome, the benefit
Which thou shalt thereby reap is such a name,
Whose repetition will be dogg'd with curses ;
Whose chronicle thus writ : " The man was noble,
But with his last attempt he wiped it out ;
Destroy'd his country, and his name remains
To the ensuing age abhorr'd." Speak to me, son :
Thou hast affected the fine strains of honour, 150
To imitate the graces of the gods ;
To tear with thunder the wide cheeks o' the air,
And yet to charge thy sulphur with a bolt
That should but rive an oak. Why dost not speak ?
Think'st thou it honourable for a noble man
Still to remember wrongs ? Daughter, speak you :
He cares not for your weeping. Speak thou, boy :
Perhaps thy childishness will move him more
Than can our reasons. There's no man in the world
More bound to's mother ; yet here he lets me prate 160
Like one i' the stocks. Thou hast never in thy life
Show'd thy dear mother any courtesy,
When she, poor hen, fond of no second brood,
Has cluck'd thee to the wars and safely home,

Loaden with honour. Say my request's unjust,
And spurn me back : but if it be not so,
Thou are not honest ; and the gods will plague thee,
That thou restrain'st from me the duty which
To a mother's part belongs. He turns away :
Down, ladies ; let us shame him with our knees. 170
To his surname Coriolanus 'longs more pride
Than pity to our prayers. Down : an end ;
This is the last : so we will home to Rome,
And die among our neighbours. Nay, behold's :
This boy, that cannot tell what he would have,
But kneels and holds up hands for fellowship,
Does reason our petition with more strength
Than thou hast to deny't. Come, let us go :
This fellow had a Volscian to his mother ;
His wife is in Corioli and his child 180
Like him by chance. Yet give us our despatch :
I am hush'd until our city be afire,
And then I'll speak a little.

[*He " holds her by the hand, silent."*]

Cor.

O mother, mother !

What have you done ? Behold, the heavens do ope,
The gods look down, and this unnatural scene
They laugh at. O my mother, mother ! O !
You have won a happy victory to Rome ;
But, for your son,—believe it, O, believe it,
Most dangerously you have with him prevail'd,
If not most mortal to him. But, let it come. 190
Aufidius, though I cannot make true wars,
I'll frame convenient peace. Now, good Aufidius,
Were you in my stead, say would you have heard
A mother less ? or granted less, Aufidius ?

Auf. I was moved withal.

Cor.

I dare be sworn you were :

And, sir, it is no little thing to make
 Mine eyes to sweat compassion. But, good sir,
 What peace you'll make, advise me : for my part,
 I'll not to Rome, I'll back with you ; and pray you,
 Stand to me in this cause. O mother ! wife ! 200

Auf [*Aside.*] I am glad thou hast set thy mercy and
 thy honour

At difference in thee : out of that I'll work
 Myself a former fortune.

[*The Ladies make signs to Coriolanus.*

Cor. Ay, by and by ;
 [*To Volumnia, Virgilia, &c.*

But we will drink together ; and you shall bear
 A better witness back than words, which we,
 On like conditions, will have counter-seal'd.
 Come, enter with us. Ladies, you deserve
 To have a temple built you : all the swords
 In Italy, and her confederate arms,
 Could not have made this peace. ["*Exeunt.*" 210

SCENE IV. *Rome. A public place.* "*Enter MENENIUS
 and SICINIUS.*"

Men. See you yon coign o' the Capitol, yon corner-
 stone ?

Sic. Why, what of that ?

Men. If it be possible for you to displace it with
 your little finger, there is some hope the ladies of
 Rome, especially his mother, may prevail with him.
 But I say there is no hope in't : our throats are
 sentenced and stay upon execution.

Sic. Is't possible that so short a time can alter the
 condition of a man ? 10

Men. There is differency between a grub and a butterfly ; yet your butterfly was a grub. This Martius is grown from man to dragon : he has wings ; he's more than a creeping thing.

Sic. He loved his mother dearly.

Men. So did he me : and he no more remembers his mother now than an eight-year-old horse. The tartness of his face sours ripe grapes : when he walks, he moves like an engine, and the ground shrinks before his treading : he is able to pierce a corslet with his eye ; talks like a knell, and his hum is a battery. He sits in his state, as a thing made for Alexander. What he bids be done is finished with his bidding. He wants nothing of a god but eternity and a heaven to throne in.

Sic. Yes, mercy, if you report him truly.

Men. I paint him in the character. Mark what mercy his mother shall bring from him : there is no more mercy in him than there is milk in a male tiger ; that shall our poor city find : and all this is long of you. 31

Sic. The gods be good unto us !

Men. No, in such a case the gods will not be good unto us. When we banished him, we respected not them ; and, he returning to break our necks, they respect not us.

“ *Enter a Messenger.* ”

Mess. Sir, if you'd save your life, fly to your house :
The plebeians have got your fellow-tribune
And hale him up and down, all swearing, if
The Roman ladies bring not comfort home, 40
They'll give him death by inches.

“ Enter another Messenger.”

Sic. What’s the news ?

Sec. Mess. Good news, good news ; the ladies have prevail’d,

The Volscians are dislodged, and Martius gone :
A merrier day did never yet greet Rome,
No, not the expulsion of the Tarquins.

Sic. Friend,
Art thou certain this is true ? is it most certain ?

Sec. Mess. As certain as I know the sun is fire :
Where have you lurk’d, that you make doubt of it ?
Ne’er through an arch so hurried the blown tide,
As the recomforted through the gates. Why, hark you!

[“ Trumpets ; hautboys ; drums beat ; all together.”
The trumpets, sackbuts, psalteries and fifes, 51
Tabors and cymbals and the shouting Romans,
Make the sun dance. Hark you ! *[“ A shout within.”*

Men. This is good news .
I will go meet the ladies. This Volumnia
Is worth of consuls, senators, patricians,
A city full ; of tribunes, such as you,
A sea and land full. You have pray’d well to-day :
This morning for ten thousand of your throats
I’d not have given a doit. Hark, how they joy !

[“ Sound still, with the shouts,”

Sic. First, the gods bless you for your tidings ; next.
Accept my thankfulness.

Sec. Mess. Sir, we have all 61
Great cause to give great thanks,

Sic. They are near the city ?

Sec. Mess. Almost at point to enter.

Sic. We will meet them,
And help the joy. *[“ Exeunt.”*

SCENE V. *The same. A street near the gate. "Enter two Senators" with VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA, VALERIA, &c., passing over the stage, followed by Patricians, and others.*

First Sen. Behold our patroness, the life of Rome !
Call all your tribes together, praise the gods,
And make triumphant fires ; strew flowers before
them :

Unshout the noise that banish'd Martius,
Repeal him with the welcome of his mother ;
Cry " Welcome, ladies, welcome ! "

All. Welcome, ladies,
Welcome ! [*" A flourish with drums and trumpets."*
Exeunt.

SCENE VI. *Antium. A public place. "Enter TULLUS AUFIDIUS, with Attendants."*

Auf. Go tell the lords o' the city I am here :
Deliver them this paper : having read it,
Bid them repair to the market-place ; where I,
Even in theirs and in the commons' ears,
Will vouch the truth of it. Him I accuse
The city ports by this hath enter'd and
Intends to appear before the people, hoping
To purge himself with words : dispatch.
[*Exeunt Attendants.*

" *Enter three or four Conspirators of AUFIDIUS' faction.*"

Most welcome !

First Con. How is it with our general ?

Auf. Even so 10
As with a man by his own alms empoison'd,
And with his charity slain.

Sec. Con. Most noble sir,
 If you do hold the same intent wherein
 You wish'd us parties, we'll deliver you
 Of your great danger.

Auf. Sir, I cannot tell :
 We must proceed as we do find the people.

Third Con. The people will remain uncertain whilst
 'Twixt you there's difference ; but the fall of either
 Makes the survivor heir of all.

Auf. I know it ;
 And my pretext to strike at him admits 20
 A good construction. I raised him, and I pawn'd
 Mine honour for his truth : who being so heighten'd,
 He water'd his new plants with dews of flattery,
 Seducing so my friends ; and, to this end,
 He bow'd his nature, never known before
 But to be rough, unswayable and free.

Third Con. Sir, his stoutness
 When he did stand for consul, which he lost
 By lack of stooping,—

Auf. That I would have spoke of :
 Being banish'd for't, he came unto my hearth ; 30
 Presented to my knife his throat : I took him ;
 Made him joint-servant with me ; gave him way
 In all his own desires ; nay, let him choose
 Out of my files, his projects to accomplish,
 My best and freshest men, served his designments
 In mine own person ; help to reap the fame
 Which he did end all his ; and took some pride
 To do myself this wrong ; till, at the last,
 I seem'd his follower, not partner, and
 He waged me with his countenance, as if 40
 I had been mercenary.

First Con. So he did, my lord :

The army marvell'd at it, and, in the last,
When he had carried Rome and that we look'd
For no less spoil than glory,—

Auf.

There was it :

For which my sinews shall be stretch'd upon him.
At a few drops of women's rheum, which are
As cheap as lies, he sold the blood and labour
Of our great action : therefore shall he die,
And I'll renew me in his fall. But, hark !

[*“ Drums and trumpets sound, with great shouts
of the People.”*]

First Con. Your native town you enter'd like a post,
And had no welcomes home, but he returns, 51
Splitting the air with noise.

Sec. Con.

And patient fools,

Whose children he hath slain, their base throats tear
With giving him glory.

Third Con.

Therefore, at your vantage,

Ere he express himself, or move the people
With what he would say, let him feel your sword,
Which we will second. When he lies along,
After your way his tale pronounced shall bury
His reasons with his body.

Auf.

Say no more :

Here come the lords.

60

[*“Enter the Lords of the city.”*]

All the Lords. You are most welcome home.

Auf.

I have not deserved it.

But, worthy lords, have you with heed perused
What I have written to you ?

Lords.

We have.

First Lord.

And grieve to hear't.

What faults he made before the last, I think

Might have found easy fines : but there to end
 Where he was to begin and give away
 The benefit of our levies, answering us
 With our own charge, making a treaty where
 There was a yielding,—this admits no excuse.

Auf. He approaches : you shall hear him. 70

“ *Enter CORIOLANUS, marching with drum and colours ;
 the Commoners being with him.*”

Cor. Hail, lords ! I am return'd your soldier,
 No more infected with my country's love
 Than when I parted hence, but still subsisting
 Under your great command. You are to know
 That prosperously I have attempted and
 With bloody passage led your wars even to
 The gates of Rome. Our spoils we have brought home
 Do more than counterpoise a full third part
 The charges of the action. We have made peace
 With no less honour to the Antiates 80
 Than shame to the Romans : and we here deliver,
 Subscribed by the consuls and patricians,
 Together with the seal o' the senate, what
 We have compounded on.

Auf. Read it not, noble lords ;
 But tell the traitor in the high'st degree
 He hath abused your powers.

Cor. Traitor ! how now !

Auf. Ay, traitor, Martius !

Cor. Martius !

Auf. Ay, Martius, Caius Martius : dost thou think
 I'll grace thee with that robbery, thy stol'n name
 Coriolanus in Corioli ? 90

You lords and heads o' the state, perfidiously
 He has betray'd your business, and given up,

For certain drops of salt, your city Rome,
I say "your city," to his wife and mother ;
Breaking his oath and resolution like
A twist of rotten silk, never admitting
Counsel o' the war, but at his nurse's tears
He whined and roar'd away your victory,
That pages blush'd at him and men of heart
Look'd wondering each at other.

Cor. Hear'st thou, Mars ? 100

Auf. Name not the god, thou boy of tears !

Cor. Ha !

Auf. No more.

Cor. Measureless liar, thou hast made my heart
Too great for what contains it. Boy ! O slave !
Pardon me, lords, 'tis the first time that ever
I was forced to scold. Your judgements, my grave
lords,

Must give this cur the lie : and his own notion—
Who wears my stripes impress'd upon him ; that
Must bear my beating to his grave—shall join
To thrust the lie unto him.

110

First Lord. Peace, both, and hear me speak.

Cor. Cut me to pieces, Volscies ; men and lads,
Stain all your edges on me. Boy ! false hound !
If you have writ your annals true, 'tis there,
That, like an eagle in a dove-cote, I
Flutter'd your Volscians in Corioli :
Alone I did it. Boy !

Auf. Why, noble lords,
Will you be put in mind of his blind fortune,
Which was your shame, by this unholy braggart,
'Fore your own eyes and ears ?

All Consps. Let him die for't. 120

All the People. "Tear him to pieces." "Do it

presently.” “He killed my son.” “My daughter.”
“He killed my cousin Marcus.” “He killed my
father.”

Sec. Lord. Peace, ho ! no outrage : peace !
The man is noble and his fame folds-in
This orb o’ the earth. His last offences to us
Shall have judicious hearing. Stand, Aufidius,
And trouble not the peace.

Cor. O that I had him,
With six Aufidiuses, or more, his tribe, 130
To use my lawful sword !

Auf. Insolent villain !

All Consp. Kill, kill, kill, kill, kill him !

[*The Conspirators draw, and kill Martius :*
“*Aufidius stands on him.*”

Lords. Hold, hold, hold, hold !

Auf. My noble masters, hear me speak.

First Lord. O Tullus,—

Sec. Lord. Thou hast done a deed whereat valour
will weep.

Third Lord. Tread not upon him. Masters all, be
quiet ;

Put up your swords.

Auf. My lords, when you shall know—as in this rage,
Provoked by him, you cannot—the great danger
Which this man’s life did owe you, you’ll rejoice
That he is thus cut off. Please it your honours 140
To call me to your senate, I’ll deliver
Myself your loyal servant, or endure
Your heaviest censure.

First Lord. Bear from hence his body ;
And mourn you for him : let him be regarded
As the most noble corse that ever herald
Did follow to his urn.

Sec. Lord. His own impatience
Takes from Aufidius a great part of blame.
Let's make the best of it.

Auf. My rage is gone ;
And I am struck with sorrow. Take him up.
Help, three o' the chiefest soldiers ; I'll be one. 150
Beat thou the drum, that it speak mournfully :
Trail your steel pikes. Though in this city he
Hath widow'd and unchilded many a one,
Which to this hour bewail the injury,
Yet he shall have a noble memory.
Assist. [“ *Exeunt, bearing the body of Martius. A dead
march sounded.*”]

NOTES

Act I

Scene 1

This scene is typical of the opening of a Shakespearian tragedy. It not only gives us the necessary information about Caius Martius, his contempt for the plebeians, his quarrel with the tribunes, and his friendship with Menenius Agrippa ; it also suggests at once the atmosphere of violence, suspicion and turbulence which is to pervade the whole play. The action of this scene would take place on the front part of the Elizabethan platform stage (called "proscenium" in the De Witt drawing of the Swan Theatre, see p. 148) with the curtains drawn across the "inner stage." Scene II, representing the Volscian Senators talking in the Senate-house at Corioli, would probably be acted "above" on the gallery or upper stage, and for Scene III the curtains hiding the inner stage would be drawn, and reveal Volumnia and Virgilia in a room in Martius's house.

1. 16. *Patricians* : the Roman nobles, as opposed to the plebs or common people.

What authority surfeits on : the excessive amount of food consumed by the patricians. "Authority" = "those in authority," abstract standing for concrete.

1. 17. *Superfluous* : the food that they cannot eat.
11. 20-21. *Is as an inventory to particularize their abundance* : serves to remind them of their own prosperity ; each detail of our want, like the items in an inventory, corresponds to some part of their abundance.
1. 22. *Sufferance* : suffering.
1. 23. *Pikes . . . rakes* : a "pike" meant a pitchfork ; a rake is the proverbial image of leanness.
1. 29. *Commonalty* : the common people.

CORIOLANUS

[ACT I

- ll. 37-41. *He did it . . . virtue* : Shakespeare knew that the common people often form shrewd estimates of the characters of their superiors. It is characteristic that he should put this pithy summary of Coriolanus's motives into the mouth of a nameless plebeian.
- ll. 40-41. *Even to the altitude of his virtue* : his pride is as high as his virtue (= courage or manliness, Lat. *virtus*).
- l. 63. Notice the change from prose to verse. Menenius speaks in verse here, because he represents the majesty of the Senate and the Roman State. Prose in Shakespearean drama is used for familiar conversation or by unpoetical (not necessarily "low-class") characters.
- l. 119. *Muniments* : furnishings.
- l. 145. *Audit* : account.
- l. 146. *Flour* : the best part of the meal. It is the same word as "flower." The belly is speaking as though he were a miller who had received meal to grind, and honestly renders up the flour and retains only the bran.
- l. 164. *Bale* : injury.
- ll. 175-177. *Your virtue . . . justice did it* : you excel in praising the man who has been ruined by his own faults, and in reviling the justice that punishes them.
- l. 185. *Your garland* : the man whom you honoured.
- l. 198. *Ruth* : pity.
- ll. 226-227. *To vent our musty superfluity* : to get rid of the worthless and unnecessary part of our population.
- l. 279. *More than his singularity* : apart from his usual proud and impetuous manner.

Scene II

- ll. 4-6. *What ever . . . had circumvention* : what plan has ever been laid in this country which could be carried out before Rome outwitted us ?
- l. 32. *Parcels* : parts.

Scene III

It should be noticed that when Volumnia, Virgilia, and Valeria are speaking intimately together, the dialogue is in prose. When they speak of Coriolanus and the wars before the gentlewoman, the emotional pitch of

the conversation rises and verse is used. The rapid transitions from prose to verse and *vice versa* are among the great beauties of Shakespearian drama. They are always full of subtle significance.

1. 15. *Brows bound with oak* : the honour given to a Roman soldier who had saved a comrade's life in battle and killed an opponent. Coriolanus obtained this honour at the battle of Lake Regillus, 498 B.C.
1. 26. *Voluptuously surfeit out of action* : live a life of lazy self-indulgence.
1. 53. *Spot* : embroidered pattern.
1. 66. *Mammocked* : tore into "mammocks" or small fragments.
1. 69. *Crack* : a roguish or pert little boy.
11. 83-85. *Penelope . . . Ulysses . . . Ithaca* : a reference to the story of Penelope, the faithful wife of the Greek hero Ulysses, who, when he was at the siege of Troy, was troubled by suitors. She told them that she would choose a new husband when she had finished the web that she was weaving. But every night she undid the work done during the day, and thus kept the suitors at bay till her husband returned. The story is told in Homer's *Odyssey*.

Scene iv

The curtains of the inner stage would now be drawn. During the rest of the Act the "proscenium" would be used for the plain before Corioli, while the "inner stage" would represent the interior of the town with the curtains as the gates. The upper stage would represent the battlements of the city.

1. 9. *'Larum* : for "alarum," the same word as "alarm," but used in the specialised sense of a call to arms.
1. 30. *Contagion of the south* : the south wind was supposed to be pestilential in Shakespeare's time.
1. 47. *To the pot* : to destruction.
1. 57. *Even to Cato's wish* : exactly such as Cato would have wished. Plutarch makes the remark concerning Coriolanus, but he makes it in his own person. Shakespeare commits a glaring anachronism in placing it in

the mouth of Titus Lartius, who lived centuries before either of the Catos was born.

Scene v

- l. 3. *Murrain* : a disease of cattle : a common Elizabethan oath.
- l. 5. *Drachma* : a small Greek silver coin.
- l. 6. *Dout* : a small Dutch copper coin
- l. 18. *Physical* : health-giving, medicinal.

Scene vi

- l. 5. *By interims and conveying gusts* : at intervals through the agency of gusts of wind.
- l. 25. *Tabor* : a small drum used in country dances.
- l. 29. *Clip* : embrace.
- l. 43. *Tribunes for them!* : a scornful exclamation : "Fancy giving such fellows tribunes !"
- l. 62. *We prove this very hour* : we test our valour at once.

Scene vii

- l. 1. *Ports* : gates.

Scene viii

(Stage Direction) "*At several doors*" : i.e. from doors leading on to the stage

- l. 4. *Fix your foot* : stand fast.
- l. 5. *Budger* : he who budges or flinches
- l. 7. *Halloa me* : pursue me with cries like a hunter.
- ll. 11-12. *Hector, that was the whip of your bragg'd progeny* : by progeny Shakespeare means race or ancestors. The Romans claimed to be descended from the Trojans through Aeneas who was supposed to have settled in Italy. Hector was the great Trojan hero. The word "whip" here has never been satisfactorily explained. Dr. Johnson's interpretation is the best : "the whip with which the Trojans scourged the Greeks."
- l. 14. *Officious* : offering meddling, unnecessary help.

- l. 15. *In your condemned seconds* : in your odious way of seconding or helping me.

Scene IX

- l. 7. *Fusty* : mouldy, a reference to the unwashed condition of the plebeians.
 l. 12. *Steed . . . Caparison* : Lartius means that Coriolanus has worked like a war-horse and the rest have only been the "caparison" or ornamental trappings.
 ll. 19-20. *You shall not . . . deserving* : you shall not bury your merits away through your modesty.
 l. 31. *Tent themselves with death* : probe themselves with deadly effect.
 l. 48. *Debile* : weak.
 l. 51. *Hyperbolical* : exaggerated.
 l. 72. *To undercrest your good addition* : to wear as a crest the honourable title that you have given me.

Scene X

- l. 15. *Potch* : thrust. A form of "poke."
 l. 22. *Embarquements* : hindrances.
 l. 26. *Hospitable canon* : the law of hospitality.

Act II

The First Act showed the glory of Coriolanus in war. In the Second Act one sees the beginning of failure as a politician. He is no match for the wily, unscrupulous demagogues who have resolved to ruin him. Now the forces in Rome which he had defied at the beginning of Act I are shown gathering like thunderclouds which are finally to burst over his head in Act III.

Scene I

- l. 1. *Augurer* : religious officials in Rome who foretold future events. The Latin word is *augur*.
 l. 22-23. *Us o' the right-hand file* : Apparently Shakespeare means the patricians or aristocrats by this phrase,

which is a curious anticipation of the modern use of the "right" for conservative parties in politics.

- l. 47. *Humorous* : whimsical, eccentric. In the old medical phraseology the "humours" were fluids in the body supposed to be the causes of various mental characteristics. This theory has given the English language such words as "sanguine" (in the condition of possessing plenty of "red humour" or blood, hence hopeful or confident), melancholy (the condition of possessing too much of the "black humour," hence sad), choleric (in the condition of possessing too much choler, the humour that made men angry), etc. In Elizabethan English the word "humour" was used to denote any strong mental disposition, hence a caprice or eccentricity. Ben Jonson's comedies, "Every Man in his Humour" (1598) and "Every Man out of his Humour" (1599), made the word and the theory fashionable.
- l. 49. *Allaying Tiber* : water from the Tiber to "allay" or weaken the wine.
- ll. 51-53. *One that converses more with the buttock of the night than the forehead of the morning* : "Rather a late liar down than an early riser" (Dr Johnson).
- l. 54. *Wealsmen* : commonwealth's men, men who govern the State.
- l. 55. *Lycurguses* : Lycurgus was the famous lawgiver of ancient Sparta whose life Shakespeare must have read in North's "Plutarch."
- ll. 58-59. *The ass in compound with the major part of your syllables* : folly mixed with most of your conversation.
- l. 63. *The map of my microcosm* : according to an old philosophical theory man was supposed to be a *microcosm* or little world corresponding to the *macrocosm* or great world. Menenius means the map of my mind or personality as revealed in my face.
- l. 64. *Bisson* : purblind.
Conspicuities : a humorous word coined apparently by Shakespeare from Latin *conspicetus* (=sight) ; "conspicuities" seems to mean power of vision.
- l. 71. *Orange-wife . . . fosset-seller* : Shakespeare as usual is picturing Ancient Rome in terms of Elizabethan England. His tribunes are shown here as occupied

with the same business as that of Elizabethan justices. A fosset-seller is a seller of "faucets" or taps for drawing wine out of barrels.

- l. 75. *Mummers* : maskers, buffoons.
- ll. 82-83. *Benchers in the Capitol* : member of the Senate which met in the Capitol or citadel of Rome.
- l. 88. *Botcher* : one who mends or patches old garments or boots.
- l. 92. *Deucalion* : the survivor from the universal deluge and father of mankind in Greek mythology. Shakespeare would have read of him in Golding's translation of Ovid's "Metamorphoses."
- l. 93. *God-den* : good evening : a contraction for "God give you good even."
- l. 116. *Galen* : famous Greek physician who, like Cato, flourished centuries after Coriolanus's death (cf. I. iv. 57 and note).
- l. 117. *Empiricute* : like the prescription of an empiric or quack doctor : perhaps another humorous word coined by Menenius.
- l. 118. *Horse-drench* : medicine for horses.
- l. 148. *Cicatrices* : scars.
- ll. 148-149. *When he shall stand for his place* : when he shall stand for election as consul (see Scene III. of this Act).
- l. 161. (Stage Direction) *Sennet* : notes played on a trumpet to announce the arrival or departure of a procession.
- l. 208. *Malkin* : untidy wench, slattern.
- l. 209. *Lockram* : cheap linen material.
Reechy : dirty.
- l. 210. *Stalls, bulks* : stalls were tables set out in the street to display merchandise. Bulks were pieces of projecting framework in front of Elizabethan shops used for the same purpose.
- l. 211. *Ridges* : the ridges of the roofs, housetops.
- l. 213. *Flamens* : the Roman priests.
- l. 217. *Nicely gawded* : delicately adorned.
- l. 218. *Pother* : commotion.
- l. 251. *Provand* : provender.

Scene II

(Stage Direction) *Lictors* : Roman guards who carried the "fasces" or rods and axes symbolical of the consul's authority.

- l. 54. *Convented* : summoned together.
- l. 76. *When the alarum were struck* : when the signal is given for battle.
- l. 79. *That's thousand to one good one* : in which there is one good one to a thousand worthless.
- l. 91. *Amazonian chin* : his boyish, unbearded chin like that of an Amazon or female warrior.
- l. 101. *Lurched* : cheated.
- ll. 113-114. *Struck Corioli like a planet* : this simile can only be understood by reference to the astrological beliefs of Shakespeare's day. According to these beliefs the heavenly bodies had a strong influence on human affairs. Planets, when they were in certain positions, were supposed to "strike" or bring ill luck or disaster. Martius is thus said to have "struck" Corioli with the terrible force of a planet from which there was no escape.

Scene III

- ll. 58-59. *Like the virtues . . . lose by them* : like the virtues which our priests preach to them in vain.
- l. 114. *Woolvish toge* : the first Folio has "woolvish tongue" which makes no sense. "Toge" was the suggestion of Steevens, an eighteenth-century editor. It is the Elizabethan English form of "toga," the garment worn by the ancient Romans. "Woolvish" would seem to be an ironical reference to the story of the wolf in sheep's clothing.
- l. 124. *Moe* : more in number.
- ll. 222-223. *Took from you . . . present portance* : prevented you from taking note of his present bearing.
- II. III. 241 : after "by conduits hither," the first Folio reads :—

"And Nobly nam'd, so twice being Censor
Was his great Ancestor."

It is clear that the copyist or the printer has omitted

some words referring to Censorinus, a member of the same family as Coriolanus. North's Plutarch has the following words on the passage corresponding to these lines : "*Censorinus* also came of that family, that was so surnamed, because the people had chosen him *Censor* twice." The most probable explanation is that one line has been omitted. That which is inserted in brackets in the text was suggested by Delius, a German scholar. It has the great merit of being close to North's Plutarch, and also of enabling us to retain the next line as it appears in the Folio with the very slight change involved by moving the comma.

1. 248. *Scaling* : weighing.

Act III

Scene 1

1. 1. *Made new head* : assembled a new army.
11. 2-3. *Caused our swifter composition* : made us come more swiftly to terms.
1. 5. *Make road* : make an attack or foray. "Road" here is the same as the modern "raid."
1. 6. *Worn* : worn out, exhausted.
1. 47. *Sithence* : since.
1. 78. *Measles* : an insulting term applied to the plebeians as diseases of the State.
1. 79. *Tetter* : affect with an eruption of the skin like that of measles.
1. 83. *Choler* : anger ; originally one of the "humours" supposed to cause anger. See note to II. i. 47.
1. 89. *Triton of the minnows* : Triton was one of the ancient sea gods. Coriolanus calls Sicinius a god of the little fishes. The phrase has become proverbial in the sense of one who lords it over poor, insignificant people and boasts of his authority.
1. 90. *From the canon* : against the rule. Cominius means that Sicinius had no right to vote Coriolanus's election before the people had come to a decision.
1. 93. *Hydra* : the many-headed monster killed by Hercules. Coriolanus applies the name insultingly to the plebeians.

1. 95. *O' the monster's* : double genitive, common in Elizabethan English.
1. 98. *Vail your ignorance* : one of the many elliptical phrases in this play. "Vail" means to bow as to a superior. Coriolanus means "If this man has power, then let the ignorance of the Senators which gave it to him bow down before him."
11. 101-104. *You are . . . palates theirs* : if the people have the authority of Senators, then you (the Senators) are mere plebeians : the people have in fact in this authority when the voices of the Senate and the people being blended together the mixture smacks more of the plebeians than the Senators. The word "palates" seems to be used here in the unusual sense of "smacks" or "savours of."
1. 131. *Bosom multiplied* : the multitudinous bosoms or minds of the common people. This is the reading of the Folios. Some editors have quite unnecessarily changed it to "bisson multitude" meaning "purblind crowd."
1. 154. *Jump* : risk.
1. 173. *Ædiles* : Roman officers of State.
1. 175. *Attach* : arrest.
1. 213. *Rock Tarpeian* : a steep place on the Capitoline hill down which malefactors used to be flung in ancient Rome.
1. 236. *Tent* : See note to I. ix. 31.
1. 248. *Tag* : rabble.
1. 275. *Cry havoc* : originally a phrase that meant "give the signal to plunder and allow no quarter to a defeated enemy."
1. 304. *Clean kam* : quite wrong.
1. 305. *Merely* : not in the modern sense of "only," but with the old meaning of "entirely."
1. 322. *Bolted* : refined, sifted. A metaphor from milling, continued in "meal and bran."

Scene II

11. 47-70. Volumnia's advice is in effect that Coriolanus should treat the plebeians as he would treat an enemy

that could not be conquered by force. He is to deceive them with fair promises and thus win his ends.

- l. 76. *Bussing* : kissing.
- l. 100. *Unbarbed sconce* : unhelmeted head.
- l. 117. *Tent* : encamp, lodge.
- l. 134. *Cog* : wheedle.

Scene III

- l. 4. *Antiates* : the inhabitants of the Volscian town of Antium.
- l. 25. *Choler* : See note to III. i. 83.
- l. 29. *Looks to* : tends to.
- ll. 32-33. *As an ostler . . . volume* : like a servant who looks after the horses in an inn and for a small piece of money is willing to be called " knave " to any extent.
- l. 132. *Abated* : humbled.

Act IV

The tension which has increased steadily from the beginning of play up to crisis of Coriolanus's defiance and banishment is now relaxed in the opening scenes of Act IV. In the latter part of the Act it begins to rise again with the new theme of Coriolanus's vengeance leading up to the second turning-point of the tragedy in Act V, Scene III. when Coriolanus yields to the entreaties of the Roman ladies.

Scene I

- ll. 1-2. *The beast with many heads* : the people. Coriolanus is thinking again of the Hydra ; cf. note to III. i. 93.
- l. 26. *Fond* : foolish.
- ll. 31-33. *Your son . . . practice* : your son will show that he is something greater than ordinary men unless he be caught by cunning wiles or treachery.
- l. 33. *Cautelous* : suspicious, shifty.
Practice : deceitful contrivance, treason.

- l. 33. *First* : perhaps " noblest."
- l. 36. *Exposure* : exposure.

Scene II

- l. 18. *Foxship* : cunning.
- l. 48. *Told them home* : told them home truths in forcible fashion.

Scene III

- l. 9. *Favour* : appearance, identity.
Is well appeared : is made fully manifest.
- ll. 45-46. *In the entertainment* : engaged to serve.

Scene IV

- l. 17. *A dissension of a dot* : a dispute over a trifle.
- l. 22. *Interjoin their issues* : made their children intermarry.

Scene V

In this scene the "proscænium" would represent the "hall" of Aufidius's house where the servants are passing to and fro, while a banquet is in progress in an inner chamber represented by the inner stage of the Elizabethan theatre with its curtains drawn. Music and sounds of revelry would proceed from the banqueting room. After l. 50 Aufidius would come out from behind the curtains, and after l. 149 he would take Coriolanus in with him.

- ll. 13-14. *Companions* : in a bad sense : low fellows, scoundrels.
- l. 40. *Canopy* : Coriolanus is punning on two senses of the word. One is that of the canopy held over great persons on state occasions in Elizabethan England, and the other that of the canopy of the heavens or the open sky.

- l. 80. *Hoop'd out* : driven out with " whoops " or derisive shouts.
- l. 87. *Heart of wreak* : heart that desires vengeance.
- l. 111. *Clip* : See note to I. vi. 29.
- l. 112. *The anvil of my sword* : the man on whom my sword has beaten like a blacksmith's hammer on the anvil.
- l. 192. *Scotched* : slashed.
- l. 193. *Carbonado* : a Spanish word meaning a piece of meat cut up by the cook for broiling.
- l. 206. *Sowl* : drag.
- l. 208. *Polled* : " bared, cleared " (Dr. Johnson).
- l. 214. *Directitude* : the serving-man probably means " discredit " Shakespeare delights in the comedy of simple minds which love to use long words, and often use them incorrectly. Dogberry in "*Much Ado About Nothing*" is the most famous example. Notice that the third servingman does not answer when he is asked for the meaning of " directitude." He suspects that he has made a blunder and hurries on to another topic.
- ll. 228-229. *Sprightly walking, audible and full of vent* : this is the reading of the First Folio. " Full of vent " was a hunting term applied to hounds, meaning full of pluck or energy. War is thus personified as a hound on the track of its quarry. Some editors have changed " walking " to " waking " and placed a comma after " sprightly," reading " sprightly, waking, audible and full of vent." " Full of vent " is then explained as full of effervescence, a term applied to wine-casks and thus forming an antithesis to " mulled," the epithet applied to peace. However here, as elsewhere, it is better to retain the Folio reading if sense can possibly be made of it.
- l. 230. *Mulled* : dulled, softened.
- l. 234. *They are rising* : the servingman hears the guests rising from the banquet.

At the end of the scene all the servants leave the "proscenium" and disappear behind the curtains into the inner stage.

Scene VI

- l. 45. *Inshell'd* : drawn into a shell like the horns of a snail.
- l. 68. *As spacious as between* : as wide as the gap between.
- l. 97. *Apron-men* : artisans.
- l. 98. *Occupation* : mechanics, workmen.
- l. 126. *Points* : directions, orders.
- ll. 145-146. *And though . . . our will* : like many of the common people in Shakespeare, the third citizen expresses an important truth in absurd language.

Scene VII

- l. 8. *More proudlier* : Double comparatives and superlatives are common in Elizabethan English.
- l. 13. *For your particular* : for what concerns you in particular with regard to your own interest.
- l. 34. *Osprey* : a seabird which was believed to have the power of fascinating fish so that they became its helpless prey.
- l. 43. *From the casque to the cushion* : from the military commander to the peaceful councillor.

Act V

Scene I

- l. 6. *Coy'd* : disdained, showed himself reluctant.
- l. 20. *Bare* : generally taken here as meaning "mere," though this does not make very good sense. It has been suggested that it may mean bare in the sense of "poor," or again the sense of "barefaced."

Scene II

- l. 10. *Lots to blanks* : a metaphor from a lottery. Lots means the total number of tickets, and blanks the great majority of them which carry no prize. Hence "lots to blanks" means "more than equal chances."
- l. 20. *Subtle* : smooth, level. A technical term applied to bowling greens.

- l. 21. *Throw* : the distance which the bowl had to be bowled.
- l. 22. *Stamped the leasing* : placed the stamp of truth on a lie.
- l. 29. *Factionary* : an active partisan or adherent.
- l. 62. *Jack guardant* : common fellow on guard. Cf. Jack-in-office.
- ll. 82-83. *Though I owe . . . properly* : though I owe revenge on Rome in my own private capacity.
- l. 97. *Shent* : scolded.

Scene III

- l. 59. *Fillip* : strike.
- l. 68. *Epitome* : a miniature version. Volumnia indicates Coriolanus's little son, perhaps by laying her hand on his head or shoulder.
- l. 103. *We* : this would, of course, be "us" in modern English, but Shakespearean English is full of such irregularities.
- l. 104. *Capital* : deadly.
- l. 128. *A'* : common Elizabethan form of "he"
- l. 161. *Like one i' the stocks* : like a poor prisoner in the stocks who implores passers-by for mercy in vain. This must have been a common sight in Shakespeare's England, where confinement to the stocks was the common punishment for petty offences.

Scene IV

- l. 1. *Coign* : the corner stone of a building.
- l. 22. *A thing made for Alexander* : a statue made to represent Alexander.
- l. 41. *Death by inches* : a lingering death.
- l. 59. *Doit* : See note to I. v. 6.

Scene v

- l. 5. *Repeal* : call back, revoke the sentence of banishment.

Scene VI

1. 5. *Him* : for " he whom."
1. 40. *Waged me with his countenance* : He gave me patronising looks as wages, just as if I were a mercenary employed by him.
1. 50. *Post* : messenger.
1. 65. *Fines* : punishments.
11. 66-68. *Give away . . . yielding* : to throw away the advantage of the army that we had raised, to reward us with our own expenses, to make peace when the enemy was ready to yield
1. 110. Notice that Coriolanus loses his temper here, and bursts into a torrent of abuse, just as he did when he was confronted by the tribunes in Act III, Scene 1. His allusion to his former triumphs over the Volscians is as recklessly unwise as his attack on the constitutional rights of the people on that occasion. Now, as then, he plays into the hands of his enemies, and renders the efforts of his friends unavailing.

APPENDIX

1. THE LIFE OF SHAKESPEARE

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE was born in 1564 at Stratford-on-Avon. His father, one of the leading citizens of the town, was a glover who also traded in agricultural produce and possibly did some farming. It is assumed that he gave his son the ordinary education of a boy of his class at the local grammar school. Nothing is definitely known of the early life of the dramatist, however, until his marriage at the age of eighteen to Anne Hathaway, a woman some eight years older than himself. About 1584 he left Stratford and came to London. Here he must soon have joined a company of players, but there is no record of his activities until 1592, in which year it appears from a satirical comment made on him by Robert Greene that he was becoming well known as a playwright. His first published work, the poem *Venus and Adonis*, appeared in 1593 ; it was followed by *Lucrece* in the next year. Both these poems were dedicated to the Earl of Southampton. We next hear of him as a member of the Lord Chamberlain's Company of actors (who became " the King's men " after James's accession), and he probably remained in association with them for the rest of his working life. From 1599 the company occupied the Globe Theatre on the Bankside in Southwark. As an actor Shakespeare is said to have taken the parts of Adam in *As You Like It* and the Ghost in *Hamlet*. As a playwright he was the mainstay of the company ; for about fifteen years he provided them on the average with two plays a year. His growing prosperity was indicated by his purchase, in 1597, of New Place, one of the largest houses in Stratford. About 1610 he left London and went to live as a retired gentleman at his Stratford home. He died there in 1616.

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2. THE ORDER OF THE PLAYS

In the collected edition of Shakespeare's plays published in 1623 no indication was given of the dates when they were first produced. Even in the case of the previously issued Quartos of some of the separate plays the dates on the title-pages are not to be taken as those of the earliest productions. The dating of Shakespeare's works is therefore a matter for conjecture based on such indirect evidence as is available. The following list gives an order which would be generally accepted :—

1590-1596

Henry VI, Pts. I, II, and III
Richard III
Comedy of Errors
Titus Andronicus
Taming of the Shrew
Two Gentlemen of Verona
Love's Labour's Lost
Romeo and Juliet
Richard II
Midsummer-Night's Dream

1596-1600

King John
Merchant of Venice
Henry IV, Pts. I and II
Much Ado About Nothing
Henry V
Julius Cæsar
Merry Wives of Windsor
As You Like It
Twelfth Night

1600-1608

Hamlet
Troilus and Cressida
All's Well that Ends Well
Measure for Measure

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Othello
Macbeth
King Lear
Antony and Cleopatra
Coriolanus
Timon of Athens

1608-1613

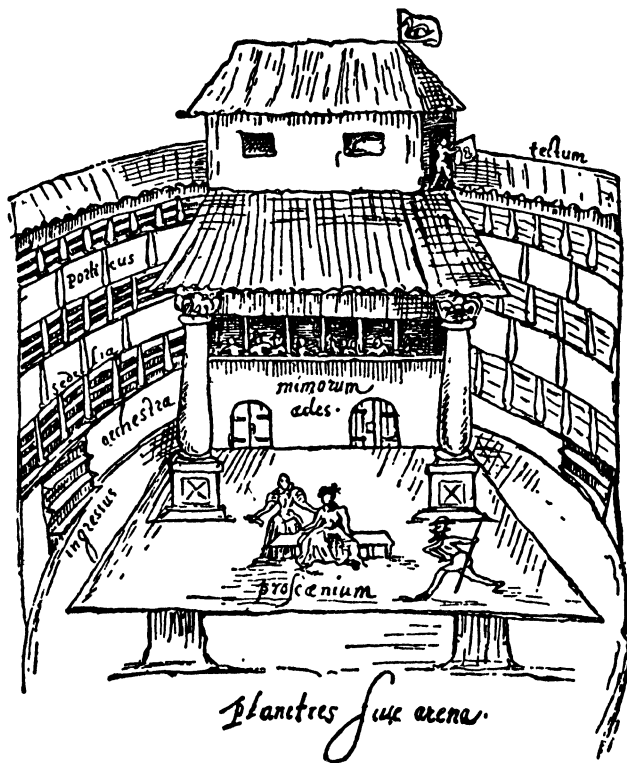
Pericles
Cymbeline
Winter's Tale
Tempest
Henry VIII
Two Noble Kinsmen

3. THE ELIZABETHAN THEATRE

Shakespeare's plays were originally acted under conditions very different from those of to-day. Playhouses were new institutions—the first of them had been built in Shoreditch in 1576—and the technique of play-production was in its infancy. Moreover, as the first theatres were by no means like those we know in plan and construction, the dramatists necessarily employed methods that would seem strange to their present-day successors.

In general form the public theatres of Shakespeare's time resembled the galleried inn-yards in which companies of actors had previously set up a temporary stage for their performances. The stage was a rectangular platform projecting into the "yard," which was open to the sky. There were no seats on the floor around the stage: the "groundlings" stood and enclosed the actors on three sides. More expensive accommodation was provided in tiers of galleries running right round the building. The topmost gallery had a thatched roof. Fashionable young gallants were allowed seats on the stage itself. The plays were performed in daylight, usually in the afternoon. There were some differences between the "public" and the "private" theatres: the private theatres, like the Blackfriars, were roofed, used artificial light, and were attended by a better-class audience. No painted scenery was used; but some indication of the

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THE DE WITT DRAWING OF THE SWAN THEATRE

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place represented might be given by such movable properties as a bed or a single small tree symbolising a wood. The stage itself was sheltered by a roof. In the floor there was a trap-door through which ghosts and apparitions rose and descended. This is the explanation of the stage direction "Descends" in connection with the apparitions in *Macbeth*, IV. 1. The main stage could not, of course, be curtained off.

At the back of the platform were two doors through which the actors entered. In the space between these doors was hung a curtain which, when drawn, revealed an inner stage. In this recess Ferdinand and Miranda would have been shown playing their game of chess, and the play-scene in *Hamlet* would have been performed. It could serve also for Lear's hovel, Prospero's cell, or the tomb of the Capulets.

Above the inner stage was a balcony forming part of the lowest gallery running round the house. This upper space could be used for the sleeping rooms of Macbeth's castle, for Juliet's balcony, or the room in Shylock's house from which Jessica throws down the casket to Lorenzo. The stage direction "Enter Above" frequently found in the old texts means that the actors are to come on to this gallery.

The De Witt drawing of the Swan Theatre, here reproduced, is the only clear contemporary pictorial evidence of what one of the Elizabethan playhouses looked like. Even this is probably incorrect in some of the details. The original rough sketch of the theatre made by John de Witt for his *Observationes Londinenses* is lost, but a copy of it made by Arend van Buchell of Utrecht survives.

With regard to the actors who performed on the Elizabethan stage, all that need be said is that they included no women in their companies. Female parts were played by boys. At one time a company consisting entirely of boys—members of the choir of the Chapel Royal—was very popular.

The peculiar conditions of the Elizabethan theatre must be taken into account when we are examining Shakespeare's stage-craft. They explain, for instance, the frequent change of scene which is a characteristic of the plays of the time. The audiences did not demand realism: they were prepared to use their imagination and accept the simplest symbolism as a means of suggesting the place of action. The extreme example of Shakespeare's free treatment of

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place and time is seen in *Antony and Cleopatra*, where he has a succession of very short scenes located in a variety of widely separated places. The typical modern dramatist would not deal with his material in this way. He works with the knowledge that a change in the supposed place demands a change in scenery, which takes time and may cause an undesirable break in the action. Moreover, every additional "set" required adds considerably to the expense of production. There is good reason, therefore, why a modern play should differ considerably in shape from an Elizabethan play.

The absence of scenery and lighting had other minor but interesting results. The dramatist was compelled, for example, to introduce into the dialogue indications of time and place that would now be superfluous. A famous instance occurs in *Julius Cæsar*. In the Orchard Scene the audience is to suppose that it is night. Brutus therefore opens with the remark :—

I cannot, by the progress of the stars,
Give guess how near to day.

And throughout the scene the darkness of night is insisted on by the speakers. Similarly, the second act of *Macbeth* begins at night. Hence, when Banquo enters, he is preceded by a torch-bearer, and he talks about the moon and the stars. Again, the description of Macbeth's castle put into the mouth of Duncan and Banquo is introduced not merely for the sake of the lyrical touch very welcome at this point, but in order to give the spectators information which could not be conveyed to the eye by a stage-picture of a castle.

Since the actors were playing on an open platform-stage, they had to aim at different effects of grouping from those obtained in the modern theatre, where the proscenium acts like a picture-frame entirely separating performers from spectators. Processions and dancing were freely introduced, and the elaborate costumes worn by the actors gave colour to the scene. The fact that the performers were immediately surrounded by spectators obviated to some extent the difficulty experienced nowadays in speaking the soliloquies and the asides that were a regular part of the old stage convention. There was an intimacy between players and audience

APPENDIX

that made it seem not unnatural for a character to allow his private thoughts to be overheard.

Owing to the absence of a curtain for the main stage, the dramatist had to take special measures when he required a scene to end with a definite break in the action. He had to arrange for all his characters to leave the stage. The problem was most serious at the end of the play. The final scene of *Hamlet* illustrates the difficulty. A modern playwright would bring down the curtain at the climax, that is, when Horatio, bending over the body of his dead friend, says :—

Good night, sweet prince,
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.

But, on the Elizabethan stage, if the play had ended here, the dead would have had to rise and walk off. To obviate this absurdity, Fortinbras and the English ambassadors are brought in, and the scene is prolonged for Fortinbras to say :—

Let four captains
Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage . . .

There is a dead march, and the soldiers carry the bodies of Hamlet and the other dead off the stage.

It may be noted, finally, that the first theatres were used not only for dramatic performances but also for bear-baiting, cock-fighting, and athletic contests. The public liking for exhibitions of bodily skill to some extent influenced the fare provided by the playwrights. Shakespeare, for example, indulged his audiences with the wrestling match in *As You Like It*. This was a genuine contest. Similarly, the broadsword fight at the conclusion of *Macbeth* was a real trial of skill between combatants accustomed to their weapons.

QUESTIONS

Act I

1. Give a detailed description of an imaginary performance of this Act in an Elizabethan theatre, showing how the changes of scene are adapted to the structure of the stage of Shakespeare's day.

2. Compare and contrast the characters of Coriolanus and Menenius Agrippa as they appear in this Act.

3. Discuss Shakespeare's use of verse and prose for dramatic purposes in this Act.

4. "What he says of them [the people] is very true ; what he says of their betters, is also very true, though he dwells less upon it" (Hazlitt). Discuss this account of Shakespeare's attitude towards the common people with reference to Act I of Coriolanus.

5. Explain the meaning of the following passage in your own words and discuss its dramatic significance :—

May these same instruments which you profane
Never sound more ! When drums and trumpets shall
I' the field prove flatterers, let courts and cities be
Made all of false-faced soothing !
When steel grows soft as the parasite's silk,
Let him be made an armature for the wars !
No more I say ! For that I have not wash'd
My nose that bled, or foiled some debile wretch,—
Which, without note, here's many else have done,—
You shout me forth
In acclamations hyperbolical ;
As if I loved my little should be dieted
In praises sauced with lies.

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Act II

1. "He is the devil." "Bolder but not so subtle." Discuss these words of the Volscian soldier and Aufidius with reference to Coriolanus's conduct in Act II.

2. Examine Cominius's speech in praise of Coriolanus (II. ii. 79-119) as a piece of poetical oratory, and illustrate from it the characteristics of Shakespeare's later style and versification.

3. Describe as vividly as you can in your own words the happenings in the Forum when Coriolanus solicits the citizens for the consulship.

4. "They are fundamentally good-natured . . . and have a humorous consciousness of their own weaknesses" (Bradley). Discuss this description of the common people as they appear in Act II of *Coriolanus*.

Act III

1. What light is thrown on Coriolanus's character by his quarrel with the tribunes in the First Scene of this Act, and by his conversation with his mother and Menenius in the Second ?

2. Compare the character of Volumnia, as it appears in this Act, with that of her son

3. Give the context of the following passage and explain its meaning .—

I am, in this,
Your wife, your son, these senators, the nobles ;
And you will rather show our general louts
How you can frown and spend a fawn upon 'em,
For the inheritance of their loves and safeguard
Of what that want might ruin.

4. Discuss the justice of Brutus's charge against Coriolanus, that "he affects tyrannical power."

Act IV

1. What purpose is served in the development of the plot by the introduction of the conversation between the Roman and the Volscian in the highway (IV. iii.) ?

QUESTIONS

2. Summarise in two hundred words the happenings in Aufidius's house from the entry of Coriolanus up to the moment when Aufidius takes him into the banqueting-room.
3. Why does Shakespeare let us hear so much of the talk of the serving-men in the house of Aufidius?
4. Compare the character of Coriolanus with that of Aufidius.

Act V

1. Discuss with reference to this Act Herford's statement that the career of Coriolanus as represented by Shakespeare is "a satire on militarism."
2. Compare Volumnia's treatment of Coriolanus in Scene III. of this Act with her attitude towards him at the earlier crisis of his life when he was seeking election as consul (Act III. Scene II.).
3. Write from memory a detailed account of Volumnia's appeal to her son on behalf of Rome, giving as many of her own words as you can remember.
4. "The conquest of passion by simple human feelings" (Bradley). Discuss the truth of this description of the scene in which Coriolanus yields to the Roman ladies (V. III.).
5. Show how Coriolanus's "self-ignorance" is displayed in this Act.
6. Give an account of the appearances of Menenius in Act V. and quote from memory as many of his sayings as you can remember.
7. Compare the impressions of Virgilia and the younger Martius which you obtain from this Act with what you have learnt about them in the rest of the play.

