

## \* English. \*

Edited by Fred. H. Sykes, M.A., EDUCATIONAL JOURNAL, Toronto, to whom communications respecting this department should be addressed.

### AIDS TO THE STUDY OF MACBETH.

BY J. W. TUPPER, B.A.

WHEN Shakespeare is read for recreation merely, it is not well that the text should be accompanied by a host of critical and explanatory notes, or that the mind of the reader should be burdened with the work of commentators. In the case of the careful student the situation is, however, different; while the casual reader may grasp the general meaning of a play, he cannot by unaided reading form such a clear conception of the workings of the grandest mind in English literature, as does the person who, availing himself of the productions of the many critical students of Shakespeare, investigates the smallest details of the play. Hence I have thought it expedient that a few of the many works on *Macbeth* should be laid before the readers of the Educational Journal, that they may have an opportunity to consult them as occasion requires.

Among the editions of the play that can be strongly recommended, the following may be mentioned:—The *New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare*, Vol. II, edited by H. H. Furness, is undoubtedly the best. It is published by Lippincotts, Philadelphia, and is sold for \$4.00. In this volume are contained the text of the play of *Macbeth*, with critical notes, selected from all the commentators, up to date of publication, articles on the sources of the plot, the date of the play, the characters, the witches, etc. For ordinary class use Rolfe's edition of *Macbeth*, published by Harper Bros., N. Y., containing, besides the text, good explanatory notes, and short notices dealing with historical and critical subjects in connection with the plot and characters, is very suitable. Hudson's edition of Shakespeare, published by Ginn & Co., is also valuable for its notes and comments. Of the English editions, for school purposes the Clarendon Press copy of Clark & Wright is very good. Macmillan & Co. also publish a neat copy of *Macbeth*, edited by K. Deighton. Of late years one or two Ontario High School teachers have used Sprague's edition with success, but Rolfe's edition is, as far as I know, that most in use in Canada and the United States.

The origin of the play is most fully given in the *New Variorum Edition*. Quite a lengthy extract from Holinshed, Shakespeare's principal authority, is given, being fifteen pages in this edition. By the side of this account, which is, of course, not to be regarded as the unvarnished truth, Furness gives a condensation of Chambers' *Caledonia*, Bk. III, ch. VII. Thus a very interesting comparison may be made between the truth of history and the fiction of tradition as given in Holinshed, and the magnificent working up of the plot as we have in the tragedy before us. In the same volume is also given an extract from Wintownis' *Cronykil*, Bk VI, ch. XVIII, which is a metrical rendering of the story of *Macbeth* and *Macduff*.

In regard to the date of the play, as determined both by external and internal evidences, besides what Mr. Furness says, Prof. Dowden's *Shakespeare Primer*, and Mr. Fleay's *Shakespeare Manual* furnish all the necessary information. In the two last mentioned works particular emphasis is laid on the internal evidences, such as the verse texts, and the general style of the plays. The relation of all plays to one another has been determined with considerable accuracy, and in either of these works is clearly set forth. For ordinary use the *Primer* is the more convenient.

For the verbal interpretation of the text with regard to grammatical forms, Abbot's *Shakesperian Grammar* is a necessary reference book for every student of Shakespeare. In other respects almost every well edited copy of *Macbeth* will furnish sufficient notes for a clear understanding of obsolete and difficult forms. In this connection Clarke's *Concordance to Shakespeare* might be mentioned as affording opportunity for the comparative study of the words and phrases in the play.

The critical works on the play are very numerous. To be able to intelligently teach any one of Shake-

speare's works a person should have a good general knowledge of the mind of Shakespeare as revealed in his other works. A very valuable work in this connection is Swinburne's *A Study of Shakespeare*. This volume is a splendid example of high æsthetic criticism and brilliant writing. The work is divided into three chapters dealing with the three periods of Shakespeare's authorship, (1) First Period—Lyric and Fantastic, (2) Second Period—Comic and Historic, (3) Third Period—Tragic and Romantic. The inter-relation of all these plays to one another, so well shown by the author, makes this book particularly valuable. Another work of a somewhat similar purpose is Prof. Dowden's *Shakespeare—His Mind and Art*. In this, besides the general survey of the growth of Shakespeare's mind, is a fine analysis of various typical plays, among which is *Macbeth*. The course which the soul of *Macbeth* takes in its downward career, and his relations with the witches and his wife, are clearly and eloquently presented. This is one of the best books that can be read on the development of the poet's mind, and it will be found helpful in any æsthetic study of Shakespeare.

In Prof. Corson's *Introduction to Shakespeare* are two articles, one dealing with the witch agency in the play, the other with Lady *Macbeth's* relations to her lord. The former essay is an argument that the witches are not the original instigators of the tragic event of the play, but that they were welcomed first as guests to his bosom, and that they have done their duty by him as agents of the devil. In the latter paper the author says, "that the part played by Lady *Macbeth* was in the service of a wifely sympathy with her husband's o'ermastering desire for sovereignty, and not of an independent ambition; a desire with which, as far as the evidence goes in the play, she had originally nothing to do."

J. C. Bueknill, in his work, *The Mad Folk of Shakespeare*, makes a psychological study of the character of *Macbeth* and Lady *Macbeth*. The progress of the man in his criminal career, and the frightful effect on his burdened mind, form the principal subject of his treatment of the play. In the course of his remarks he says, "Macbeth descends from the light a fearful example of a noble mind depraved by yielding to the tempter; a terrible evidence of the fires of hell lighted in the breast of a living man by his own act." "The character of Lady *Macbeth*," says Bueknill, "is less interesting to the psychological student than that of her husband. It is less complex; drawn with a classic simplicity of outline it presents us with none of those balancing and contending emotions which make the character of *Macbeth* so wide and varied a field of study." The turning point of her madness is shown to have been the "state of inactivity into which she fell when her husband broke away from her support into that bloody, bold and resolute career which followed the murder of Banquo." The dramatic character of her end, so full of interest to the student of psychology, is well presented. A pretty picture of Lady *Macbeth*, as she would appear in the flesh, is given in this connection. A plea is made against representing her as a large woman, of coarse, masculine features, and his argument that she is a small, delicate woman of fiery temperament seems to be well borne out by the many gentle references to her throughout the play.

Hazlitt's *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* has some pertinent suggestions on the structure of this play. He says: "*Macbeth* is done upon a stronger and more systematic principle of contrast than any other of Shakespeare's plays." This idea he develops and shows how far the various personages conduce to this effect. The faithfulness of Shakespeare to nature is pointed out in the person of this hero.

Moulton in his work on *The Ancient Classical Drama* has a chapter, in which, for the benefit of English readers of Greek tragedy, he puts the play of *Macbeth* in the form of the old Athenian drama. Although the essential features of the play remain the same, the setting is completely changed. This treatment of our play is of not much interest to others than those acquainted with the form of the Greek tragedy, but it is instructive as showing how universal is genius, and how immaterial is the form in which a work of art is cast, so long as a grand mind is its creator. The same writer has another valuable book entitled *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist*.

In the *Notes and Essays on Shakespeare*, J. W. Hales has an article on the Porter in this play. He combats the theory that the Porter scene is an interpolation, and makes the following points:—(1) That the Porter speech is an integral part of the play, (2) That it is necessary as a relief to the surrounding horror, (3) That it is necessary according to the law of contrast elsewhere obeyed, (4) That the speech we have is dramatically relevant, (5) That its style and language are Shakesperian.

Mrs. Jameson's *Characteristics of Women* contains a sketch of Lady *Macbeth*, along with the rest of Shakesperian heroines. Other books of reference are Hudson's *Life, Art, and Characters of Shakespeare*, Ulrici's *Shakespeare Dramatic Art*, Coleridge's *Lectures*, a work not altogether reliable for he often goes sadly astray, and Uze's *Essays on Shakespeare*.

In the Reviews there are many papers dealing with various subjects connected with the play. In *Fraser's Magazine* of Nov., 1840, March and October, 1841, and Jan., 1842, are four papers written by "an apprentice of the law." The writer treats of the tragedy generally, and goes into an elaborate consideration of the character of *Macbeth* and his lady, and of the source and characterization of the play. He also devotes a chapter to a comparison between *Macbeth*, Satan and Sylla—a rather forced effort it seems to me. In *Macmillan's Magazine*, vols. 16 and 17, are a couple of articles, one on the characters in *Macbeth*, the other on that of Lady *Macbeth*. In vol. 41 of the *Westminster* is a review of Knight's Cabinet Edition of *Macbeth*, and at the same time a criticism of the play. In the *Fortnightly* of 1867 is an article on *Macbeth* and Lady *Macbeth*. P. W. Clayden, the writer, says, "Macbeth and his wife were well mated; she had in her the making of a heroine and he the making of a hero. Ambition destroyed them both." The *Dublin University Magazine*, vol. 65, has an article of interest to the student of philosophy, on the "ethics of *Macbeth*."

### CORRESPONDENCE.

INEXPERIENCE.—(1) The lines in the "Cloud,"  
"An eagle alit one moment may sit  
In the light of its golden wings,"

find their interpretation through the nature of the simile. The sun with "his" burning plumes sailing on the cloud is like the eagle with "its" golden wings outspread—not folded, for it does not settle to rest.

(2) The gerundial infinitive is the infinitive denoting purpose, intention; as in "He went there to see you"; "There is bread to eat." It was distinguished by a special form in Old English from the simple infinitive.

(3) Spencer in his *Philosophy of Style*, to which you no doubt refer, presents the subject of economic order as follows: "A reader or listener has at each moment but a limited amount of mental power available. To recognize and interpret the symbols presented him, requires part of this power; to arrange and combine the images suggested by them requires a further part, and only that part which remains can be used for framing the thought expressed. Hence the more time and attention it takes to receive and understand each sentence, the less time and attention can be given to the contained idea; and the less vividly will that idea be conceived. \* \* \* Let us inquire whether economy of the recipient's attention is not the secret of effect, alike in the right choice and collocation of words, in the best arrangement of clauses in a sentence, in the proper order of its principal and subordinate propositions, in the judicious use of simile, metaphor, and other figures of speech, and even in the rhythmical sequence of syllables."—*Essays*, II., pp. 335-6.

The following letter speaks for itself. We should be glad to find this appeal on behalf of the weaker brethren answered:—

"I wish very much that some of the best English teachers in the Province could be induced to give us, through the JOURNAL, one or two lessons on Wordsworth; I am sure they would be valued by inexperienced teachers like myself.

I should like to see the following questions discussed:

1. Wordsworth is the poet of the few, Tenny-