

ACT I. SCENE II.

13

For brave Macbeth—well he deserves that name— 16
Disdaining fortune, with his brandish'd steel, 17
Which smok'd with bloody execution, 18
Like valour's minion, carved out his passage 19
Till he faced the slave ; 20
Which ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him, 21
Till he unseam'd him from the nave to the chaps, 22
And fix'd his head upon our battlements. 23

Duncan. O valiant cousin ! worthy gentleman ! 24

Sergeant. As whence the sun 'gins his reflection 25
Shipwrecking storms and direful thunders break, 26
So from that spring whence comfort seem'd to come 27
Discomfort swells. Mark, king of Scotland, mark : 28
No sooner justice had, with valour arm'd, 29
Compell'd these skipping kerns to trust their heels, 30
But the Norwegian lord, surveying vantage, 31
With furbish'd arms and new supplies of men, 32
Began a fresh assault.

Duncan. Dismay'd not this 33
Our captains, Macbeth and Banquo ? 34

Sergeant. Yes ;
As sparrows eagles, or the hare the lion. 35
If I say sooth, I must report they were 36
As cannons overcharged with double cracks, so they 37
Doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe : 38
Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds, 39
Or memorize another Golgotha, 40

22-23. This terrible feat is so noteworthy that it is incredible that Ross should not have known it when he speaks to the king a few moments later. Even in a great modern battle the incident by which a prominent leader was killed would rapidly spread, how much more in the compact hand to hand struggle of Duncan's day. Yet Ross says nothing of Macdonwald. "*Fix'd his head upon our battlements,*" greatly emphasizes the publicity of the incident. This is the only "personal venture" of Macbeth's referred to by the sergeant.

29-33. It appeared a great gain to overcome Macdonwald but when Norway saw Duncan's generals pursuing the rebels he saw a good opportunity of attacking them in the rear.