

PREFACE.

The main purpose of this work is to vindicate the reading of the Folio by establishing the belief that Cawdor died unjustly, that he was no traitor, but an honorable gentleman, sacrificed to ambition by Macbeth, Banquo, and Ross. The establishment of this view will affect the meaning of the play in a great many respects.

No apology is offered for the publication of this contribution to Shakespearian criticism.

The views of the characters of Ross and Cawdor are thought to be original ; they are the result of some years of study and teaching ; and they clear up so large a majority of the well-known obscurities of the play that their publication has been undertaken mainly to the end that other students of the tragedy more experienced, more competent, and more happily situated with reference to the best sources of information, may have an opportunity of confirming their truth or of exposing their error.

The notes of Clarke and Wright, Rolfe, Paton, Daniel, Marshall, Flathe, Hudson, White, Furness, and others, have been freely consulted, but only such notes as have seemed entirely new have been printed. As the new notes are rather generic than specific for the most part, special acknowledgments should be gratefully made to the broad, strong grasp of Dowden, Gervinus, Ulrici, and Swinburne. The facsimile of the Folio of 1623 has proved most useful.

In the single case of Flathe it will appear, in one or two instances, that his views have been appropriated, so exactly does his estimate of Banquo coincide with that arrived at here by an entirely different line of observation.