

SCENE IV. *Forres. The palace.*

*Flourish. Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN,
LENNOX, and Attendants.*

*Duncan. Is execution done on Cawdor? Are not
Those in commission yet return'd?* 1
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*Malcolm. My liege,
They are not yet come back. But I have spoke
With one that saw him die, who did report
That very frankly he confess'd his treasons,
Implored your highness' pardon and set forth
A deep repentance: nothing in his life
Became him like the leaving it; he died
As one that had been studied in his death,
To throw away the dearest thing he owed
As 'twere a careless trifle.* 3
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*Duncan. There's no art
To find the mind's construction in the face:* 11
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1-2. The king is impatient and troubled about news of Cawdor. In moments of reflection he has been weighing the testimony on which he condemned the noble thane.

2. *Those in commission.* Ross and Angus had this commission (Sc. 2, i. 64).

2-11. In every word of this speech there is evidence that Ross has acutely supposed that Duncan would have qualms of conscience about his summary conviction of Cawdor and that the intriguer has sent such a report as would best tend to soothe the gentle old king's misgivings. In effect Malcolm has learned that though Cawdor was an atrocious hypocrite and traitor, yet he confessed his guilt and died in such a way as to make his death almost a pleasure for Duncan to hear of. His speech means "My liege, there is no direct report of the execution; Ross and Angus have not returned; but I have heard from an eye-witness that Cawdor confessed his treasons and expressed deep repentance: all through his life he was a villain but he died like an honourable gentleman: indeed his death seems to have been inconsistent with his character as reported to us, but I suppose he made a study of dying handsomely."