

Cawdor should not prosper. Where then is the *prima facie* evidence of Cawdor's guilt? Why, surely, it will be said it lies in the fact that he was put to death for treason. But is even this phase of the case made prominent in the play. By no means; the execution of Cawdor is remarkable for the vagueness of the report which announces it, and so, (though of course the fact of the execution is not questioned), the guilt of Cawdor is not impressed upon us by Shakespeare through any vivid or even clear account of the execution itself. What follows this dark transaction? The King is told by the inexperienced Malcolm that Cawdor died (according to the reports sent to the palace by the commissioners) like a man of honour. Does the King question this? By no means; Duncan contradicts Malcolm's bad estimate of Cawdor's general course of life, by telling him Cawdor was a man whose bearing was so unimpeachable that his fall might well shake and destroy confidence in the human race. Dogmatism, though alas too common among editors of these plays, is unpardonable, but it is surely dogmatic to tell us that this is a *prima facie* case against Cawdor. Were not the fear of this same dogmatism before us, we might venture to express the opinion that, if the present generation of Shakespeare readers had been told from the beginning and without argument, that Cawdor was innocent and Ross an intriguer, they would not only have accepted that view without question, but they would have scouted with much scorn the view of Cawdor's conduct which they at present hold as the true one. And on the strength of this opinion we may hope that some at least of those who may study the argument and who may perceive its vital importance to the character of Banquo, to the full significance of the words of the witches, to the mysterious parts of the tragedy, to the character grouping and shading of Macbeth, Banquo and Ross, (all of whom it implicates in a great and complex study, infinitely subtle and minute, of murder and intrigue, and all of whom, together with the more brutal assassins, it grades and classifies on grounds of courage, purpose and mental powers in relation to murder), to the sound-