

ACT I. SCENE III.

25.

Banquo. New honours come upon him,
Like our strange garments, cleave not to their mould
But with the aid of use. 144-145

Macbeth. [*Aside.*] Come what come may,
Time and the hour runs through the roughest day. 146-147

Banquo. Worthy Macbeth, we stay upon your leisure. 148

Macbeth. Give me your favour: my dull brain was
wrought 149

With things forgotten. *Kind gentlemen, your pains* 150

Are register'd where every day I turn 151

The leaf to read them. Let us toward the king.— 152

Think upon what hath chanced, and at more time, 153

The interim having weigh'd it, let us speak 154

Our free hearts each to other. 155

Banquo. *Very gladly.*

Macbeth, Till then, enough.—*Come, friends. Exeunt.* 156

144. *Without my stir.* Just as in the case of Cawdor, where mere silence had been the only requirement. Even Duncan expresses *surprise* that Cawdor proved a traitor; Macbeth and Banquo say *nothing*, beyond asking how it was possible for Macbeth to succeed a prosperous nobleman still living. Yet the editors ask us to believe that Cawdor was guilty and that Macbeth had defeated him in open rebellion.

150-153. Macbeth's profuse thanks to these men are not adequately explained on the mere ground that they had brought Duncan's message.

153. "*What hath chanced.*" Without my stir.

155. *Very gladly.* Banquo's mind is corrupted: he struggles hard to be honourable but he never frees himself from the power of evil hopes. In the act that follows he remains a passive murderer while Macbeth becomes a brutal assassin. Perhaps there is no instance even in these plays where two characters are discriminated with differences so miraculously drawn. Both are brave, even honourable, both are infirm of purpose; with children Macbeth might have resembled Banquo much more closely than he does; (too much cannot be made of the fact that Macbeth has no heir; it is the very cause why Lady Macbeth would make up to him in public life what is lacking in their domestic life;) but Macbeth is less conscientious and more violent; he cares less for his conscience than for his horrible imagination, and when goaded by his wife he does what Banquo without such a goad and with a more remote ambition could never have done.

156. *Come friends.* In massing the speeches of a scene Shakespeare never forgets the emphasis of the final words.