BOOKSTACKS CLASSICS

King Henry VI, Part 3

William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

English EDITION

BOOKSTACKS EDITION

Publication record

Title	King Henry VI, Part 3
Author	William Shakespeare (1564-1616)
Edition	Bookstacks TEI edition, based on the source electronic edition
Published	22 August 2026
Edition ID	shakespeare-king-henry-vi-part-3
Canonical URI	bookstacks.org

Rights and availability

This derived TEI file is made available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License; source rights remain as recorded in sourceDesc. View the canonical license terms.

No ISBN has been assigned. The stable Bookstacks edition identifier and canonical URI above serve as the publication record for this digital edition. Bookstacks asserts no additional restriction over this generated PDF beyond the canonical source terms.

Contents

Dramatis Personae 1

Act I 3

Act II 29

Act III 55

Act IV 79

Act V 104

Dramatis Personae

[*SCENE: England and France*]

KING HENRY the Sixth
QUEEN MARGARET
PRINCE EDWARD, Prince of Wales, his son
DUKE OF SOMERSET
DUKE OF EXETER
EARL OF OXFORD
EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND
EARL OF WESTMORELAND
LORD CLIFFORD
RICHARD PLANTAGENET, Duke of York
EDWARD, Earl of March, afterwards King Edward IV., his son
GEORGE, afterwards Duke of Clarence, his son
RICHARD, afterwards Duke of Gloucester, his son
EDMUND, Earl of Rutland, his son
DUKE OF NORFOLK
MARQUESS OF MONTAGUE
EARL OF WARWICK
EARL OF PEMBROKE
LORD HASTINGS
LORD STAFFORD

SIR JOHN MORTIMER, uncle to the Duke of York
SIR HUGH MORTIMER, uncle to the Duke of York
LADY GREY, afterwards Queen Elizabeth to Edward IV
EARL RIVERS, brother to Lady Grey
HENRY, Earl of Richmond, a youth
SIR WILLIAM STANLEY
SIR JOHN MONTGOMERY
SIR JOHN SOMERVILLE
KING LEWIS the Eleventh, King of France
BONA, sister to the French Queen
Tutor to Rutland
Mayor of York
Lieutenant of the Tower
A Nobleman
Two Keepers
A Huntsman
A Son that has killed his father
A Father that has killed his son
Soldiers, Attendants, Messengers, Watchmen, etc.

Act I

Scene I. London. The Parliament House

[*Alarum. Enter* DUKE OF YORK, EDWARD, RICHARD, NORFOLK, MONTAGUE, WARWICK *and Soldiers, all wearing the white rose.*]

WARWICK
I wonder how the King escaped our hands.

YORK
While we pursued the horsemen of the north,
He slyly stole away and left his men;
Whereat the great Lord of Northumberland,
Whose warlike ears could never brook retreat,
Cheered up the drooping army; and himself,
Lord Clifford, and Lord Stafford, all abreast,
Charged our main battle's front, and breaking in,
Were by the swords of common soldiers slain.

EDWARD
Lord Stafford's father, Duke of Buckingham,
Is either slain or wounded dangerous;
I cleft his beaver with a downright blow.
That this is true, father, behold his blood.

[*Showing his bloody sword.*]

MONTAGUE
And, brother, here's the Earl of Wiltshire's blood,

[*To* YORK*, showing his.*]

Whom I encountered as the battles joined.

RICHARD
Speak thou for me, and tell them what I did.

[*Throwing down the* DUKE OF SOMERSET'S *head.*]

YORK
Richard hath best deserved of all my sons.
But is your Grace dead, my Lord of Somerset?

NORFOLK
Such hope have all the line of John of Gaunt!

RICHARD
Thus do I hope to shake King Henry's head.

WARWICK
And so do I. Victorious Prince of York,
Before I see thee seated in that throne
Which now the house of Lancaster usurps,
I vow by heaven these eyes shall never close.
This is the palace of the fearful king,
And this the regal seat. Possess it, York,
For this is thine, and not King Henry's heirs'.

YORK
Assist me, then, sweet Warwick, and I will;
For hither we have broken in by force.

NORFOLK
We'll all assist you; he that flies shall die.

YORK
Thanks, gentle Norfolk. Stay by me, my lords;
And, soldiers, stay and lodge by me this night.

WARWICK
And when the King comes, offer him no violence,

Unless he seek to thrust you out perforce.

[*They retire.*]

YORK
The Queen this day here holds her parliament,
But little thinks we shall be of her council.
By words or blows here let us win our right.

RICHARD
Armed as we are, let's stay within this house.

WARWICK
The bloody parliament shall this be called,
Unless Plantagenet, Duke of York, be king,
And bashful Henry deposed, whose cowardice
Hath made us bywords to our enemies.

YORK
Then leave me not, my lords; be resolute.
I mean to take possession of my right.

WARWICK
Neither the King, nor he that loves him best,
The proudest he that holds up Lancaster,
Dares stir a wing if Warwick shake his bells.
I'll plant Plantagenet, root him up who dares.
Resolve thee, Richard; claim the English crown.

[WARWICK *leads* YORK *to the throne, who seats himself.*]

[*Flourish. Enter* KING HENRY, CLIFFORD, NORTHUMBERLAND, WESTMORELAND, EXETER *and the rest, all wearing the red rose.*]

KING HENRY
My lords, look where the sturdy rebel sits,
Even in the chair of state! Belike he means,
Backed by the power of Warwick, that false peer,
To aspire unto the crown and reign as king.
Earl of Northumberland, he slew thy father,
And thine, Lord Clifford; and you both have vowed revenge

On him, his sons, his favourites, and his friends.

NORTHUMBERLAND
If I be not, heavens be revenged on me!

CLIFFORD
The hope thereof makes Clifford mourn in steel.

WESTMORELAND
What, shall we suffer this? Let's pluck him down.
My heart for anger burns. I cannot brook it.

KING HENRY
Be patient, gentle Earl of Westmoreland.

CLIFFORD
Patience is for poltroons, such as he.
He durst not sit there had your father lived.
My gracious lord, here in the parliament
Let us assail the family of York.

NORTHUMBERLAND
Well hast thou spoken, cousin. Be it so.

KING HENRY
Ah, know you not the city favours them,
And they have troops of soldiers at their beck?

EXETER
But when the Duke is slain, they'll quickly fly.

KING HENRY
Far be the thought of this from Henry's heart,
To make a shambles of the Parliament House!
Cousin of Exeter, frowns, words, and threats
Shall be the war that Henry means to use.

[*They advance to the* DUKE.]

Thou factious Duke of York, descend my throne, And kneel for grace and mercy at my feet; I am thy sovereign.

YORK
I am thine.

EXETER
For shame, come down. He made thee Duke of York.

YORK
'Twas my inheritance, as the earldom was.

EXETER
Thy father was a traitor to the crown.

WARWICK
Exeter, thou art a traitor to the crown
In following this usurping Henry.

CLIFFORD
Whom should he follow but his natural king?

WARWICK
True, Clifford, that's Richard, Duke of York.

KING HENRY
And shall I stand, and thou sit in my throne?

YORK
It must and shall be so. Content thyself.

WARWICK
Be Duke of Lancaster. Let him be king.

WESTMORELAND
He is both King and Duke of Lancaster;
And that the Lord of Westmoreland shall maintain.

WARWICK
And Warwick shall disprove it. You forget
That we are those which chased you from the field
And slew your fathers, and with colours spread
Marched through the city to the palace gates.

NORTHUMBERLAND
Yes, Warwick, I remember it to my grief;
And, by his soul, thou and thy house shall rue it.

WESTMORELAND
Plantagenet, of thee and these thy sons,
Thy kinsmen, and thy friends, I'll have more lives

Than drops of blood were in my father's veins.

CLIFFORD
Urge it no more; lest that, instead of words,
I send thee, Warwick, such a messenger
As shall revenge his death before I stir.

WARWICK
Poor Clifford, how I scorn his worthless threats!

YORK
Will you we show our title to the crown?
If not, our swords shall plead it in the field.

KING HENRY
What title hast thou, traitor, to the crown?
Thy father was, as thou art, Duke of York;
Thy grandfather, Roger Mortimer, Earl of March.
I am the son of Henry the Fifth,
Who made the Dauphin and the French to stoop,
And seized upon their towns and provinces.

WARWICK
Talk not of France, sith thou hast lost it all.

KING HENRY
The Lord Protector lost it, and not I.
When I was crowned I was but nine months old.

RICHARD
You are old enough now, and yet, methinks, you lose.
Father, tear the crown from the usurper's head.

EDWARD
Sweet father, do so; set it on your head.

MONTAGUE
Good brother, as thou lov'st and honourest arms,
Let's fight it out and not stand cavilling thus.

RICHARD
Sound drums and trumpets, and the King will fly.

YORK
Sons, peace!

KING HENRY
Peace thou, and give King Henry leave to speak.

WARWICK
Plantagenet shall speak first. Hear him, lords,
And be you silent and attentive too,
For he that interrupts him shall not live.

KING HENRY
Think'st thou that I will leave my kingly throne,
Wherein my grandsire and my father sat?
No. First shall war unpeople this my realm;
Ay, and their colours, often borne in France,
And now in England, to our heart's great sorrow,
Shall be my winding-sheet. Why faint you, lords?
My title's good, and better far than his.

WARWICK
Prove it, Henry, and thou shalt be king.

KING HENRY
Henry the Fourth by conquest got the crown.

YORK
'Twas by rebellion against his king.

KING HENRY
[*Aside.*] I know not what to say; my title's weak.
Tell me, may not a king adopt an heir?

YORK
What then?

KING HENRY
An if he may, then am I lawful king;
For Richard, in the view of many lords,
Resigned the crown to Henry the Fourth,
Whose heir my father was, and I am his.

YORK
He rose against him, being his sovereign,

And made him to resign his crown perforce.

WARWICK
Suppose, my lords, he did it unconstrained,
Think you 'twere prejudicial to his crown?

EXETER
No, for he could not so resign his crown
But that the next heir should succeed and reign.

KING HENRY
Art thou against us, Duke of Exeter?

EXETER
His is the right, and therefore pardon me.

YORK
Why whisper you, my lords, and answer not?

EXETER
My conscience tells me he is lawful king.

KING HENRY
[*Aside.*] All will revolt from me and turn to him.

NORTHUMBERLAND
Plantagenet, for all the claim thou lay'st,
Think not that Henry shall be so deposed.

WARWICK
Deposed he shall be, in despite of all.

NORTHUMBERLAND
Thou art deceived. 'Tis not thy southern power,
Of Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk, nor of Kent,
Which makes thee thus presumptuous and proud,
Can set the Duke up in despite of me.

CLIFFORD
King Henry, be thy title right or wrong,
Lord Clifford vows to fight in thy defence.
May that ground gape and swallow me alive,
Where I shall kneel to him that slew my father!

KING HENRY
O Clifford, how thy words revive my heart!

YORK
Henry of Lancaster, resign thy crown.
What mutter you, or what conspire you, lords?

WARWICK
Do right unto this princely Duke of York,
Or I will fill the house with armed men,
And over the chair of state where now he sits,
Write up his title with usurping blood.

[*He stamps with his foot, and the Soldiers show themselves.*]

KING HENRY
My Lord of Warwick, hear but one word:
Let me for this my lifetime reign as king.

YORK
Confirm the crown to me, and to mine heirs,
And thou shalt reign in quiet while thou liv'st.

KING HENRY
I am content. Richard Plantagenet,
Enjoy the kingdom after my decease.

CLIFFORD
What wrong is this unto the Prince your son!

WARWICK
What good is this to England and himself!

WESTMORELAND
Base, fearful, and despairing Henry!

CLIFFORD
How hast thou injured both thyself and us!

WESTMORELAND
I cannot stay to hear these articles.

NORTHUMBERLAND
Nor I.

CLIFFORD
Come, cousin, let us tell the Queen these news.

WESTMORELAND
Farewell, faint-hearted and degenerate king,
In whose cold blood no spark of honour bides.

NORTHUMBERLAND
Be thou a prey unto the house of York,
And die in bands for this unmanly deed!

CLIFFORD
In dreadful war mayst thou be overcome,
Or live in peace abandoned and despised!

[*Exeunt* WESTMORELAND, NORTHUMBERLAND *and* CLIFFORD.]

WARWICK
Turn this way, Henry, and regard them not.

EXETER
They seek revenge, and therefore will not yield.

KING HENRY
Ah, Exeter!

WARWICK
Why should you sigh, my lord?

KING HENRY
Not for myself, Lord Warwick, but my son,
Whom I unnaturally shall disinherit.
But be it as it may, [*To* YORK.] I here entail
The crown to thee and to thine heirs for ever;
Conditionally, that here thou take an oath
To cease this civil war, and whilst I live,
To honour me as thy king and sovereign,
And neither by treason nor hostility
To seek to put me down and reign thyself.

YORK
This oath I willingly take and will perform.

[*Coming from the throne.*]

WARWICK
Long live King Henry! Plantagenet, embrace him.

KING HENRY
And long live thou, and these thy forward sons!

YORK
Now York and Lancaster are reconciled.

EXETER
Accursed be he that seeks to make them foes!

[*Sennet. Here they come down.*]

YORK
Farewell, my gracious lord. I'll to my castle.

WARWICK
And I'll keep London with my soldiers.

NORFOLK
And I to Norfolk with my followers.

MONTAGUE
And I unto the sea from whence I came.

[*Exeunt* YORK *and his* SONS, WARWICK, NORFOLK, MONTAGUE *and their Soldiers.*]

KING HENRY
And I with grief and sorrow to the court.

[*Enter* QUEEN MARGARET *and* THE PRINCE OF WALES.]

EXETER
Here comes the Queen, whose looks bewray her anger.
I'll steal away.

KING HENRY
Exeter, so will I.

[*Going.*]

QUEEN MARGARET
Nay, go not from me; I will follow thee.

KING HENRY
Be patient, gentle Queen, and I will stay.

QUEEN MARGARET
Who can be patient in such extremes?
Ah, wretched man, would I had died a maid,
And never seen thee, never borne thee son,
Seeing thou hast proved so unnatural a father.
Hath he deserved to lose his birthright thus?
Hadst thou but loved him half so well as I,
Or felt that pain which I did for him once,
Or nourished him as I did with my blood,
Thou wouldst have left thy dearest heart-blood there,
Rather than have made that savage duke thine heir
And disinherited thine only son.

PRINCE EDWARD
Father, you cannot disinherit me.
If you be king, why should not I succeed?

KING HENRY
Pardon me, Margaret; pardon me, sweet son.
The Earl of Warwick and the Duke enforced me.

QUEEN MARGARET
Enforced thee! Art thou King, and wilt be forced?
I shame to hear thee speak. Ah, timorous wretch,
Thou hast undone thyself, thy son, and me,
And given unto the house of York such head
As thou shalt reign but by their sufferance.
To entail him and his heirs unto the crown,
What is it but to make thy sepulchre
And creep into it far before thy time?
Warwick is Chancellor and the lord of Calais;
Stern Falconbridge commands the narrow seas;
The Duke is made Protector of the realm;
And yet shalt thou be safe? Such safety finds
The trembling lamb environed with wolves.
Had I been there, which am a silly woman,

The soldiers should have tossed me on their pikes
Before I would have granted to that act.
But thou prefer'st thy life before thine honour.
And seeing thou dost, I here divorce myself
Both from thy table, Henry, and thy bed,
Until that act of parliament be repealed
Whereby my son is disinherited.
The northern lords that have forsworn thy colours
Will follow mine if once they see them spread;
And spread they shall be, to thy foul disgrace
And utter ruin of the house of York.
Thus do I leave thee. Come, son, let's away:
Our army is ready; come, we'll after them.

KING HENRY
Stay, gentle Margaret, and hear me speak.

QUEEN MARGARET
Thou hast spoke too much already. Get thee gone.

KING HENRY
Gentle son Edward, thou wilt stay with me?

QUEEN MARGARET
Ay, to be murdered by his enemies.

PRINCE EDWARD
When I return with victory from the field
I'll see your Grace. Till then I'll follow her.

QUEEN MARGARET
Come, son, away; we may not linger thus.

[*Exeunt* QUEEN MARGARET *and the* PRINCE.]

KING HENRY
Poor queen! How love to me and to her son
Hath made her break out into terms of rage!
Revenged may she be on that hateful Duke,
Whose haughty spirit, winged with desire,
Will cost my crown, and like an empty eagle
Tire on the flesh of me and of my son.
The loss of those three lords torments my heart.

I'll write unto them and entreat them fair.
Come, cousin, you shall be the messenger.

EXETER
And I, I hope, shall reconcile them all.

[*Flourish. Exeunt.*]

Scene II. Sandal Castle

[*Enter* EDWARD, RICHARD *and* MONTAGUE.]

RICHARD
Brother, though I be youngest, give me leave.

EDWARD
No, I can better play the orator.

MONTAGUE
But I have reasons strong and forcible.

[*Enter the* DUKE OF YORK.]

YORK
Why, how now, sons and brother, at a strife?
What is your quarrel? How began it first?

EDWARD
No quarrel, but a slight contention.

YORK
About what?

RICHARD
About that which concerns your Grace and us:
The crown of England, father, which is yours.

YORK
Mine, boy? Not till King Henry be dead.

RICHARD
Your right depends not on his life or death.

EDWARD
Now you are heir, therefore enjoy it now.
By giving the house of Lancaster leave to breathe,
It will outrun you, father, in the end.

YORK
I took an oath that he should quietly reign.

EDWARD
But for a kingdom any oath may be broken.
I would break a thousand oaths to reign one year.

RICHARD
No; God forbid your Grace should be forsworn.

YORK
I shall be, if I claim by open war.

RICHARD
I'll prove the contrary if you'll hear me speak.

YORK
Thou canst not, son; it is impossible.

RICHARD
An oath is of no moment, being not took
Before a true and lawful magistrate
That hath authority over him that swears.
Henry had none, but did usurp the place;
Then, seeing 'twas he that made you to depose,
Your oath, my lord, is vain and frivolous.
Therefore, to arms! And, father, do but think
How sweet a thing it is to wear a crown,
Within whose circuit is Elysium
And all that poets feign of bliss and joy.
Why do we linger thus? I cannot rest
Until the white rose that I wear be dyed
Even in the lukewarm blood of Henry's heart.

YORK
Richard, enough; I will be king, or die.
Brother, thou shalt to London presently,
And whet on Warwick to this enterprise.
Thou, Richard, shalt to the Duke of Norfolk
And tell him privily of our intent.
You, Edward, shall unto my Lord Cobham,
With whom the Kentishmen will willingly rise.
In them I trust; for they are soldiers,
Witty, courteous, liberal, full of spirit.
While you are thus employed, what resteth more
But that I seek occasion how to rise,
And yet the King not privy to my drift,
Nor any of the house of Lancaster?

[*Enter a* MESSENGER.]

But stay. What news? Why com'st thou in such post?

MESSENGER
The Queen, with all the northern earls and lords
Intend here to besiege you in your castle.
She is hard by with twenty thousand men;
And therefore fortify your hold, my lord.

YORK
Ay, with my sword. What, think'st thou that we fear them?
Edward and Richard, you shall stay with me;
My brother Montague shall post to London.
Let noble Warwick, Cobham, and the rest,
Whom we have left protectors of the King,
With powerful policy strengthen themselves,
And trust not simple Henry nor his oaths.

MONTAGUE
Brother, I go; I'll win them, fear it not.
And thus most humbly I do take my leave.

[*Exit.*]

[*Enter* SIR JOHN *and* SIR HUGH MORTIMER.]

YORK
Sir John and Sir Hugh Mortimer, mine uncles,
You are come to Sandal in a happy hour;
The army of the Queen mean to besiege us.

SIR JOHN
She shall not need; we'll meet her in the field.

YORK
What, with five thousand men?

RICHARD
Ay, with five hundred, father, for a need.
A woman's general; what should we fear?

[*A march afar off.*]

EDWARD
I hear their drums. Let's set our men in order,
And issue forth and bid them battle straight.

YORK
Five men to twenty! Though the odds be great,
I doubt not, uncle, of our victory.
Many a battle have I won in France
Whenas the enemy hath been ten to one.
Why should I not now have the like success?

[*Alarum. Exeunt.*]

Scene III. Plains near Sandal Castle

[*Alarums. Enter* RUTLAND *and his* TUTOR.]

RUTLAND
Ah, whither shall I fly to scape their hands?
Ah, tutor, look where bloody Clifford comes.

[*Enter* CLIFFORD *and Soldiers.*]

CLIFFORD
Chaplain, away! Thy priesthood saves thy life.
As for the brat of this accursed duke
Whose father slew my father, he shall die.

TUTOR
And I, my lord, will bear him company.

CLIFFORD
Soldiers, away with him!

TUTOR
Ah, Clifford, murder not this innocent child,
Lest thou be hated both of God and man.

[*Exit, dragged off by Soldiers.*]

CLIFFORD
How now? Is he dead already? Or is it fear
That makes him close his eyes? I'll open them.

RUTLAND
So looks the pent-up lion o'er the wretch
That trembles under his devouring paws;
And so he walks, insulting o'er his prey,
And so he comes to rend his limbs asunder.
Ah, gentle Clifford, kill me with thy sword,
And not with such a cruel threat'ning look.
Sweet Clifford, hear me speak before I die.
I am too mean a subject for thy wrath;
Be thou revenged on men, and let me live.

CLIFFORD
In vain thou speak'st, poor boy; my father's blood
Hath stopped the passage where thy words should enter.

RUTLAND
Then let my father's blood open it again;
He is a man, and, Clifford, cope with him.

CLIFFORD
Had I thy brethren here, their lives and thine
Were not revenge sufficient for me.

No, if I digged up thy forefathers' graves
And hung their rotten coffins up in chains,
It could not slake mine ire nor ease my heart.
The sight of any of the house of York
Is as a fury to torment my soul;
And till I root out their accursed line
And leave not one alive, I live in hell.
Therefore—

[*Lifting his hand.*]

RUTLAND
O, let me pray before I take my death!
To thee I pray; sweet Clifford, pity me!

CLIFFORD
Such pity as my rapier's point affords.

RUTLAND
I never did thee harm; why wilt thou slay me?

CLIFFORD
Thy father hath.

RUTLAND
But 'twas ere I was born.
Thou hast one son; for his sake pity me,
Lest in revenge thereof, sith God is just,
He be as miserably slain as I.
Ah, let me live in prison all my days,
And when I give occasion of offence
Then let me die, for now thou hast no cause.

CLIFFORD
No cause? Thy father slew my father; therefore die.

[CLIFFORD *stabs him.*]

RUTLAND
Di faciant laudis summa sit ista tuae!

[*Dies.*]

CLIFFORD
Plantagenet! I come, Plantagenet!
And this thy son's blood cleaving to my blade
Shall rust upon my weapon till thy blood,
Congealed with this, do make me wipe off both.

[*Exit.*]

Scene IV. The Same

[*Alarum. Enter* RICHARD, DUKE OF YORK.]

YORK
The army of the Queen hath got the field.
My uncles both are slain in rescuing me;
And all my followers to the eager foe
Turn back and fly like ships before the wind,
Or lambs pursued by hunger-starved wolves.
My sons, God knows what hath bechanced them;
But this I know, they have demeaned themselves
Like men born to renown by life or death.
Three times did Richard make a lane to me,
And thrice cried "Courage, father, fight it out!"
And full as oft came Edward to my side
With purple falchion painted to the hilt
In blood of those that had encountered him;
And when the hardiest warriors did retire,
Richard cried "Charge, and give no foot of ground!"
And cried "A crown, or else a glorious tomb!
A sceptre, or an earthly sepulchre!"
With this we charged again; but, out, alas!
We budged again, as I have seen a swan
With bootless labour swim against the tide
And spend her strength with over-matching waves.

[*A short alarum within.*]

Ah, hark, the fatal followers do pursue, And I am faint and cannot fly their fury; And were I strong, I would not shun their fury. The sands

are numbered that makes up my life; Here must I stay, and here my life must end.

[*Enter* QUEEN MARGARET, CLIFFORD, NORTHUMBERLAND, *the young* PRINCE EDWARD *and Soldiers.*]

Come, bloody Clifford, rough Northumberland, I dare your quenchless fury to more rage. I am your butt, and I abide your shot.

NORTHUMBERLAND
Yield to our mercy, proud Plantagenet.

CLIFFORD
Ay, to such mercy as his ruthless arm
With downright payment showed unto my father.
Now Phaëthon hath tumbled from his car,
And made an evening at the noontide prick.

YORK
My ashes, as the phoenix, may bring forth
A bird that will revenge upon you all;
And in that hope I throw mine eyes to heaven,
Scorning whate'er you can afflict me with.
Why come you not? What, multitudes, and fear?

CLIFFORD
So cowards fight when they can fly no further;
So doves do peck the falcon's piercing talons;
So desperate thieves, all hopeless of their lives,
Breathe out invectives 'gainst the officers.

YORK
O Clifford, but bethink thee once again,
And in thy thought o'errun my former time;
And, if thou canst for blushing, view this face,
And bite thy tongue, that slanders him with cowardice
Whose frown hath made thee faint and fly ere this.

CLIFFORD
I will not bandy with thee word for word,
But buckle with thee blows twice two for one.

QUEEN MARGARET
Hold, valiant Clifford; for a thousand causes
I would prolong awhile the traitor's life.
Wrath makes him deaf; speak thou, Northumberland.

NORTHUMBERLAND
Hold, Clifford, do not honour him so much
To prick thy finger, though to wound his heart.
What valour were it, when a cur doth grin,
For one to thrust his hand between his teeth,
When he might spurn him with his foot away?
It is war's prize to take all vantages,
And ten to one is no impeach of valour.

[*They lay hands on* YORK, *who struggles.*]

CLIFFORD
Ay, ay, so strives the woodcock with the gin.

NORTHUMBERLAND
So doth the cony struggle in the net.

[YORK *is taken prisoner.*]

YORK
So triumph thieves upon their conquered booty;
So true men yield, with robbers so o'ermatched.

NORTHUMBERLAND
What would your Grace have done unto him now?

QUEEN MARGARET
Brave warriors, Clifford and Northumberland,
Come, make him stand upon this molehill here,
That raught at mountains with outstretched arms,
Yet parted but the shadow with his hand.
What, was it you that would be England's king?
Was 't you that revelled in our parliament
And made a preachment of your high descent?
Where are your mess of sons to back you now,
The wanton Edward and the lusty George?
And where's that valiant crook-back prodigy,

Dicky your boy, that with his grumbling voice
Was wont to cheer his dad in mutinies?
Or, with the rest, where is your darling Rutland?
Look, York, I stained this napkin with the blood
That valiant Clifford with his rapier's point
Made issue from the bosom of the boy;
And if thine eyes can water for his death,
I give thee this to dry thy cheeks withal.
Alas, poor York, but that I hate thee deadly
I should lament thy miserable state.
I prithee grieve to make me merry, York;
Stamp, rave, and fret, that I may sing and dance.
What, hath thy fiery heart so parched thine entrails
That not a tear can fall for Rutland's death?
Why art thou patient, man? Thou shouldst be mad;
And I, to make thee mad, do mock thee thus.
Stamp, rave, and fret, that I may sing and dance.
Thou would'st be fee'd, I see, to make me sport;
York cannot speak unless he wear a crown.
A crown for York! And, lords, bow low to him.
Hold you his hands whilst I do set it on.

[*Putting a paper crown on his head.*]

Ay, marry, sir, now looks he like a king. Ay, this is he that took King Henry's chair, And this is he was his adopted heir. But how is it that great Plantagenet Is crowned so soon and broke his solemn oath? As I bethink me, you should not be king Till our King Henry had shook hands with Death. And will you pale your head in Henry's glory, And rob his temples of the diadem, Now in his life, against your holy oath? O, 'tis a fault too too unpardonable. Off with the crown, and, with the crown, his head; And whilst we breathe, take time to do him dead.

CLIFFORD
That is my office, for my father's sake.

QUEEN MARGARET
Nay, stay; let's hear the orisons he makes.

YORK
She-wolf of France, but worse than wolves of France,
Whose tongue more poisons than the adder's tooth!

How ill-beseeming is it in thy sex
To triumph like an Amazonian trull
Upon their woes whom Fortune captivates!
But that thy face is vizard-like, unchanging,
Made impudent with use of evil deeds,
I would assay, proud queen, to make thee blush.
To tell thee whence thou cam'st, of whom derived,
Were shame enough to shame thee, wert thou not shameless.
Thy father bears the type of King of Naples,
Of both the Sicils, and Jerusalem,
Yet not so wealthy as an English yeoman.
Hath that poor monarch taught thee to insult?
It needs not, nor it boots thee not, proud queen;
Unless the adage must be verified,
That beggars mounted run their horse to death.
'Tis beauty that doth oft make women proud;
But God he knows thy share thereof is small.
'Tis virtue that doth make them most admired;
The contrary doth make thee wondered at.
'Tis government that makes them seem divine;
The want thereof makes thee abominable.
Thou art as opposite to every good
As the Antipodes are unto us,
Or as the south to the Septentrion.
O tiger's heart wrapped in a woman's hide!
How couldst thou drain the life-blood of the child,
To bid the father wipe his eyes withal,
And yet be seen to bear a woman's face?
Women are soft, mild, pitiful, and flexible;
Thou stern, obdurate, flinty, rough, remorseless.
Bid'st thou me rage? Why, now thou hast thy wish:
Wouldst have me weep? Why, now thou hast thy will;
For raging wind blows up incessant showers,
And when the rage allays, the rain begins.
These tears are my sweet Rutland's obsequies,
And every drop cries vengeance for his death
'Gainst thee, fell Clifford, and thee, false Frenchwoman.

NORTHUMBERLAND
Beshrew me, but his passion moves me so
That hardly can I check my eyes from tears.

YORK
That face of his the hungry cannibals
Would not have touched, would not have stained with blood;
But you are more inhuman, more inexorable,
O, ten times more than tigers of Hyrcania.
See, ruthless queen, a hapless father's tears.
This cloth thou dipped'st in blood of my sweet boy,
And I with tears do wash the blood away.
Keep thou the napkin, and go boast of this;
And if thou tell'st the heavy story right,
Upon my soul, the hearers will shed tears;
Yea, even my foes will shed fast-falling tears
And say "Alas, it was a piteous deed."
There, take the crown, and with the crown my curse;
And in thy need such comfort come to thee
As now I reap at thy too cruel hand!
Hard-hearted Clifford, take me from the world,
My soul to heaven, my blood upon your heads!

NORTHUMBERLAND
Had he been slaughter-man to all my kin,
I should not for my life but weep with him,
To see how inly sorrow gripes his soul.

QUEEN MARGARET
What, weeping-ripe, my Lord Northumberland?
Think but upon the wrong he did us all,
And that will quickly dry thy melting tears.

CLIFFORD
Here's for my oath, here's for my father's death.

[*Stabbing him.*]

QUEEN MARGARET
And here's to right our gentle-hearted king.

[*Stabbing him.*]

YORK
Open thy gate of mercy, gracious God!
My soul flies through these wounds to seek out Thee.

[*Dies.*]

QUEEN MARGARET
Off with his head, and set it on York gates;
So York may overlook the town of York.

[*Flourish. Exeunt.*]

Act II

Scene I. A plain near Mortimer's Cross in Herefordshire

[*A march. Enter* EDWARD *and* RICHARD *and their power.*]

EDWARD
I wonder how our princely father scaped,
Or whether he be scaped away or no
From Clifford's and Northumberland's pursuit.
Had he been ta'en, we should have heard the news;
Had he been slain, we should have heard the news;
Or had he scaped, methinks we should have heard
The happy tidings of his good escape.
How fares my brother? Why is he so sad?

RICHARD
I cannot joy until I be resolved
Where our right valiant father is become.
I saw him in the battle range about,
And watched him how he singled Clifford forth.
Methought he bore him in the thickest troop
As doth a lion in a herd of neat;
Or as a bear, encompassed round with dogs,
Who having pinched a few and made them cry,
The rest stand all aloof and bark at him.
So fared our father with his enemies;

So fled his enemies my warlike father.
Methinks 'tis pride enough to be his son.
See how the morning opes her golden gates
And takes her farewell of the glorious sun.
How well resembles it the prime of youth,
Trimmed like a younker prancing to his love!

EDWARD
Dazzle mine eyes, or do I see three suns?

RICHARD
Three glorious suns, each one a perfect sun;
Not separated with the racking clouds,
But severed in a pale clear-shining sky.
See, see, they join, embrace, and seem to kiss,
As if they vowed some league inviolable.
Now are they but one lamp, one light, one sun.
In this the heaven figures some event.

EDWARD
'Tis wondrous strange, the like yet never heard of.
I think it cites us, brother, to the field,
That we, the sons of brave Plantagenet,
Each one already blazing by our meeds,
Should notwithstanding join our lights together,
And overshine the earth, as this the world.
Whate'er it bodes, henceforward will I bear
Upon my target three fair shining suns.

RICHARD
Nay, bear three daughters: by your leave I speak it,
You love the breeder better than the male.

[*Enter a* MESSENGER*, blowing.*]

But what art thou, whose heavy looks foretell Some dreadful story hanging on thy tongue?

MESSENGER
Ah, one that was a woeful looker-on
When as the noble Duke of York was slain,
Your princely father and my loving lord.

EDWARD
O, speak no more, for I have heard too much!

RICHARD
Say how he died, for I will hear it all.

MESSENGER
Environed he was with many foes,
And stood against them as the hope of Troy
Against the Greeks that would have entered Troy.
But Hercules himself must yield to odds;
And many strokes, though with a little axe,
Hews down and fell the hardest-timbered oak.
By many hands your father was subdued,
But only slaughtered by the ireful arm
Of unrelenting Clifford and the Queen,
Who crowned the gracious duke in high despite,
Laughed in his face; and when with grief he wept,
The ruthless Queen gave him to dry his cheeks
A napkin steeped in the harmless blood
Of sweet young Rutland, by rough Clifford slain.
And after many scorns, many foul taunts,
They took his head, and on the gates of York
They set the same; and there it doth remain,
The saddest spectacle that e'er I viewed.

EDWARD
Sweet Duke of York, our prop to lean upon,
Now thou art gone, we have no staff, no stay.
O Clifford, boisterous Clifford, thou hast slain
The flower of Europe for his chivalry;
And treacherously hast thou vanquished him,
For hand to hand he would have vanquished thee.
Now my soul's palace is become a prison.
Ah, would she break from hence, that this my body
Might in the ground be closed up in rest!
For never henceforth shall I joy again;
Never, O, never, shall I see more joy!

RICHARD
I cannot weep, for all my body's moisture
Scarce serves to quench my furnace-burning heart;

Nor can my tongue unload my heart's great burthen,
For selfsame wind that I should speak withal
Is kindling coals that fires all my breast
And burns me up with flames that tears would quench.
To weep is to make less the depth of grief:
Tears, then, for babes; blows and revenge for me!
Richard, I bear thy name; I'll venge thy death,
Or die renowned by attempting it.

EDWARD
His name that valiant duke hath left with thee;
His dukedom and his chair with me is left.

RICHARD
Nay, if thou be that princely eagle's bird,
Show thy descent by gazing 'gainst the sun;
For chair and dukedom, throne and kingdom say,
Either that is thine, or else thou wert not his.

[*March. Enter* WARWICK*,* MARQUESS MONTAGUE *and their army.*]

WARWICK
How now, fair lords! What fare? What news abroad?

RICHARD
Great Lord of Warwick, if we should recount
Our baleful news, and at each word's deliverance
Stab poniards in our flesh till all were told,
The words would add more anguish than the wounds.
O valiant lord, the Duke of York is slain!

EDWARD
O, Warwick, Warwick, that Plantagenet
Which held thee dearly as his soul's redemption
Is by the stern Lord Clifford done to death.

WARWICK
Ten days ago I drowned these news in tears,
And now, to add more measure to your woes,
I come to tell you things sith then befall'n.
After the bloody fray at Wakefield fought,

Where your brave father breathed his latest gasp,
Tidings, as swiftly as the posts could run,
Were brought me of your loss and his depart.
I, then in London, keeper of the King,
Mustered my soldiers, gathered flocks of friends,
And very well appointed, as I thought,
Marched toward Saint Albans to intercept the Queen,
Bearing the King in my behalf along;
For by my scouts I was advertised
That she was coming with a full intent
To dash our late decree in Parliament
Touching King Henry's oath and your succession.
Short tale to make, we at Saint Albans met,
Our battles joined, and both sides fiercely fought.
But, whether 'twas the coldness of the King,
Who looked full gently on his warlike Queen,
That robbed my soldiers of their heated spleen,
Or whether 'twas report of her success;
Or more than common fear of Clifford's rigour,
Who thunders to his captives blood and death,
I cannot judge; but, to conclude with truth,
Their weapons like to lightning came and went;
Our soldiers', like the night-owl's lazy flight,
Or like an idle thresher with a flail,
Fell gently down, as if they struck their friends.
I cheered them up with justice of our cause,
With promise of high pay and great rewards,
But all in vain; they had no heart to fight,
And we in them no hope to win the day;
So that we fled: the King unto the Queen;
Lord George your brother, Norfolk, and myself,
In haste, post-haste, are come to join with you;
For in the Marches here we heard you were,
Making another head to fight again.

EDWARD
Where is the Duke of Norfolk, gentle Warwick?
And when came George from Burgundy to England?

WARWICK
Some six miles off the Duke is with the soldiers;

And for your brother, he was lately sent
From your kind aunt, Duchess of Burgundy,
With aid of soldiers to this needful war.

RICHARD
'Twas odds, belike, when valiant Warwick fled.
Oft have I heard his praises in pursuit,
But ne'er till now his scandal of retire.

WARWICK
Nor now my scandal, Richard, dost thou hear;
For thou shalt know this strong right hand of mine
Can pluck the diadem from faint Henry's head
And wring the awful sceptre from his fist,
Were he as famous and as bold in war
As he is famed for mildness, peace, and prayer.

RICHARD
I know it well, Lord Warwick; blame me not.
'Tis love I bear thy glories makes me speak.
But in this troublous time what's to be done?
Shall we go throw away our coats of steel
And wrap our bodies in black mourning gowns,
Numbering our Ave-Maries with our beads?
Or shall we on the helmets of our foes
Tell our devotion with revengeful arms?
If for the last, say ay, and to it, lords.

WARWICK
Why, therefore Warwick came to seek you out,
And therefore comes my brother Montague.
Attend me, lords. The proud insulting Queen,
With Clifford and the haught Northumberland,
And of their feather many moe proud birds,
Have wrought the easy-melting King like wax.
He swore consent to your succession,
His oath enrolled in the Parliament;
And now to London all the crew are gone,
To frustrate both his oath and what beside
May make against the house of Lancaster.
Their power, I think, is thirty thousand strong.
Now, if the help of Norfolk and myself,

With all the friends that thou, brave Earl of March,
Amongst the loving Welshmen canst procure,
Will but amount to five and twenty thousand,
Why, *via*, to London will we march amain,
And once again bestride our foaming steeds,
And once again cry "Charge upon our foes!"
But never once again turn back and fly.

RICHARD
Ay, now methinks I hear great Warwick speak.
Ne'er may he live to see a sunshine day
That cries "Retire," if Warwick bid him stay.

EDWARD
Lord Warwick, on thy shoulder will I lean;
And when thou fail'st—as God forbid the hour!—
Must Edward fall, which peril heaven forfend!

WARWICK
No longer Earl of March, but Duke of York.
The next degree is England's royal throne;
For King of England shalt thou be proclaimed
In every borough as we pass along,
And he that throws not up his cap for joy
Shall for the fault make forfeit of his head.
King Edward, valiant Richard, Montague,
Stay we no longer dreaming of renown,
But sound the trumpets and about our task.

RICHARD
Then, Clifford, were thy heart as hard as steel,
As thou hast shown it flinty by thy deeds,
I come to pierce it, or to give thee mine.

EDWARD
Then strike up, drums! God and Saint George for us!

[*Enter a* MESSENGER.]

WARWICK
How now, what news?

MESSENGER
The Duke of Norfolk sends you word by me,
The Queen is coming with a puissant host,
And craves your company for speedy counsel.

WARWICK
Why then it sorts; brave warriors, let's away.

[*Exeunt.*]

Scene II. Before York

[*Flourish. Enter* KING HENRY, QUEEN MARGARET, THE PRINCE OF WALES, CLIFFORD *and* NORTHUMBERLAND *with drums and trumpets.*]

QUEEN MARGARET
Welcome, my lord, to this brave town of York.
Yonder's the head of that arch-enemy
That sought to be encompassed with your crown.
Doth not the object cheer your heart, my lord?

KING HENRY
Ay, as the rocks cheer them that fear their wrack!
To see this sight, it irks my very soul.
Withhold revenge, dear God! 'Tis not my fault,
Nor wittingly have I infringed my vow.

CLIFFORD
My gracious liege, this too much lenity
And harmful pity must be laid aside.
To whom do lions cast their gentle looks?
Not to the beast that would usurp their den.
Whose hand is that the forest bear doth lick?
Not his that spoils her young before her face.
Who scapes the lurking serpent's mortal sting?
Not he that sets his foot upon her back.
The smallest worm will turn, being trodden on,
And doves will peck in safeguard of their brood.

Ambitious York did level at thy crown,
Thou smiling while he knit his angry brows.
He, but a duke, would have his son a king,
And raise his issue like a loving sire;
Thou, being a king, blest with a goodly son,
Didst yield consent to disinherit him,
Which argued thee a most unloving father.
Unreasonable creatures feed their young;
And though man's face be fearful to their eyes,
Yet, in protection of their tender ones,
Who hath not seen them, even with those wings
Which sometime they have used with fearful flight,
Make war with him that climbed unto their nest,
Offering their own lives in their young's defence?
For shame, my liege, make them your precedent.
Were it not pity that this goodly boy
Should lose his birthright by his father's fault,
And long hereafter say unto his child,
"What my great-grandfather and grandsire got,
My careless father fondly gave away?"
Ah, what a shame were this! Look on the boy,
And let his manly face, which promiseth
Successful fortune, steel thy melting heart
To hold thine own and leave thine own with him.

KING HENRY
Full well hath Clifford played the orator,
Inferring arguments of mighty force.
But, Clifford, tell me, didst thou never hear
That things ill got had ever bad success?
And happy always was it for that son
Whose father for his hoarding went to hell?
I'll leave my son my virtuous deeds behind,
And would my father had left me no more;
For all the rest is held at such a rate
As brings a thousand-fold more care to keep
Than in possession any jot of pleasure.
Ah, cousin York, would thy best friends did know
How it doth grieve me that thy head is here!

QUEEN MARGARET
My lord, cheer up your spirits; our foes are nigh,
And this soft courage makes your followers faint.
You promised knighthood to our forward son.
Unsheathe your sword and dub him presently.—
Edward, kneel down.

KING HENRY
Edward Plantagenet, arise a knight;
And learn this lesson: draw thy sword in right.

PRINCE EDWARD
My gracious father, by your kingly leave,
I'll draw it as apparent to the crown,
And in that quarrel use it to the death.

CLIFFORD
Why, that is spoken like a toward prince.

[*Enter a* MESSENGER.]

MESSENGER
Royal commanders, be in readiness;
For with a band of thirty thousand men
Comes Warwick, backing of the Duke of York,
And in the towns, as they do march along,
Proclaims him king, and many fly to him.
Darraign your battle, for they are at hand.

CLIFFORD
I would your highness would depart the field.
The Queen hath best success when you are absent.

QUEEN MARGARET
Ay, good my lord, and leave us to our fortune.

KING HENRY
Why, that's my fortune too; therefore I'll stay.

NORTHUMBERLAND
Be it with resolution then to fight.

PRINCE EDWARD
My royal father, cheer these noble lords,
And hearten those that fight in your defence.
Unsheathe your sword, good father; cry "Saint George!"

[*March. Enter* EDWARD, GEORGE, RICHARD, WARWICK, NORFOLK, MONTAGUE *and Soldiers.*]

EDWARD
Now, perjured Henry, wilt thou kneel for grace
And set thy diadem upon my head,
Or bide the mortal fortune of the field?

QUEEN MARGARET
Go rate thy minions, proud insulting boy!
Becomes it thee to be thus bold in terms
Before thy sovereign and thy lawful king?

EDWARD
I am his king, and he should bow his knee.
I was adopted heir by his consent.
Since when, his oath is broke; for, as I hear,
You that are king, though he do wear the crown,
Have caused him by new act of Parliament
To blot out me and put his own son in.

CLIFFORD
And reason too:
Who should succeed the father but the son?

RICHARD
Are you there, butcher? O, I cannot speak!

CLIFFORD
Ay, crook-back; here I stand, to answer thee,
Or any he, the proudest of thy sort.

RICHARD
'Twas you that killed young Rutland, was it not?

CLIFFORD
Ay, and old York, and yet not satisfied.

RICHARD
For God's sake, lords, give signal to the fight.

WARWICK
What sayst thou, Henry, wilt thou yield the crown?

QUEEN MARGARET
Why, how now, long-tongued Warwick, dare you speak?
When you and I met at Saint Albans last,
Your legs did better service than your hands.

WARWICK
Then 'twas my turn to fly, and now 'tis thine.

CLIFFORD
You said so much before, and yet you fled.

WARWICK
'Twas not your valour, Clifford, drove me thence.

NORTHUMBERLAND
No, nor your manhood that durst make you stay.

RICHARD
Northumberland, I hold thee reverently.
Break off the parley; for scarce I can refrain
The execution of my big-swoln heart
Upon that Clifford, that cruel child-killer.

CLIFFORD
I slew thy father; call'st thou him a child?

RICHARD
Ay, like a dastard and a treacherous coward,
As thou didst kill our tender brother Rutland,
But ere sunset I'll make thee curse the deed.

KING HENRY
Have done with words, my lords, and hear me speak.

QUEEN MARGARET
Defy them then, or else hold close thy lips.

KING HENRY
I prithee, give no limits to my tongue.
I am a king, and privileged to speak.

CLIFFORD
My liege, the wound that bred this meeting here
Cannot be cured by words; therefore be still.

RICHARD
Then, executioner, unsheathe thy sword.
By Him that made us all, I am resolved
That Clifford's manhood lies upon his tongue.

EDWARD
Say, Henry, shall I have my right, or no?
A thousand men have broke their fasts today
That ne'er shall dine unless thou yield the crown.

WARWICK
If thou deny, their blood upon thy head;
For York in justice puts his armour on.

PRINCE EDWARD
If that be right which Warwick says is right,
There is no wrong, but everything is right.

RICHARD
Whoever got thee, there thy mother stands;
For well I wot thou hast thy mother's tongue.

QUEEN MARGARET
But thou art neither like thy sire nor dam,
But like a foul misshapen stigmatic,
Marked by the Destinies to be avoided,
As venom toads or lizards' dreadful stings.

RICHARD
Iron of Naples, hid with English gilt,
Whose father bears the title of a king,
As if a channel should be called the sea,
Sham'st thou not, knowing whence thou art extraught,
To let thy tongue detect thy base-born heart?

EDWARD
A wisp of straw were worth a thousand crowns
To make this shameless callet know herself.
Helen of Greece was fairer far than thou,
Although thy husband may be Menelaus;
And ne'er was Agamemnon's brother wronged
By that false woman as this king by thee.
His father revelled in the heart of France,
And tamed the King, and made the Dauphin stoop;
And had he matched according to his state,
He might have kept that glory to this day;
But when he took a beggar to his bed
And graced thy poor sire with his bridal day,
Even then that sunshine brewed a shower for him
That washed his father's fortunes forth of France
And heaped sedition on his crown at home.
For what hath broached this tumult but thy pride?
Hadst thou been meek, our title still had slept;
And we, in pity of the gentle king,
Had slipped our claim until another age.

GEORGE
But when we saw our sunshine made thy spring,
And that thy summer bred us no increase,
We set the axe to thy usurping root;
And though the edge hath something hit ourselves,
Yet know thou, since we have begun to strike,
We'll never leave till we have hewn thee down
Or bathed thy growing with our heated bloods.

EDWARD
And in this resolution I defy thee;
Not willing any longer conference,
Since thou deniest the gentle King to speak.
Sound trumpets! Let our bloody colours wave;
And either victory or else a grave!

QUEEN MARGARET
Stay, Edward.

EDWARD
No, wrangling woman, we'll no longer stay.

These words will cost ten thousand lives this day.

[*Exeunt.*]

Scene III. A field of battle between Towton and Saxton, in Yorkshire

[*Alarums. Excursions. Enter* WARWICK.]

WARWICK
Forspent with toil, as runners with a race,
I lay me down a little while to breathe;
For strokes received, and many blows repaid,
Have robbed my strong-knit sinews of their strength,
And spite of spite, needs must I rest awhile.

[*Enter* EDWARD, *running.*]

EDWARD
Smile, gentle heaven, or strike, ungentle death;
For this world frowns and Edward's sun is clouded.

WARWICK
How now, my lord, what hap? What hope of good?

[*Enter* GEORGE.]

GEORGE
Our hap is loss, our hope but sad despair;
Our ranks are broke and ruin follows us.
What counsel give you? Whither shall we fly?

EDWARD
Bootless is flight, they follow us with wings;
And weak we are and cannot shun pursuit.

[*Enter* RICHARD.]

RICHARD
Ah, Warwick, why hast thou withdrawn thyself?
Thy brother's blood the thirsty earth hath drunk,
Broached with the steely point of Clifford's lance;
And in the very pangs of death he cried,
Like to a dismal clangor heard from far,
"Warwick, revenge! Brother, revenge my death!"
So, underneath the belly of their steeds,
That stained their fetlocks in his smoking blood,
The noble gentleman gave up the ghost.

WARWICK
Then let the earth be drunken with our blood;
I'll kill my horse because I will not fly.
Why stand we like soft-hearted women here,
Wailing our losses whiles the foe doth rage,
And look upon, as if the tragedy
Were played in jest by counterfeiting actors?
Here on my knee I vow to God above
I'll never pause again, never stand still,
Till either death hath closed these eyes of mine,
Or Fortune given me measure of revenge.

EDWARD
O Warwick, I do bend my knee with thine,
And in this vow do chain my soul to thine!
And, ere my knee rise from the earth's cold face,
I throw my hands, mine eyes, my heart to Thee,
Thou setter up and plucker down of kings,
Beseeching Thee, if with Thy will it stands
That to my foes this body must be prey,
Yet that Thy brazen gates of heaven may ope,
And give sweet passage to my sinful soul.
Now, lords, take leave until we meet again,
Where'er it be, in heaven or in earth.

RICHARD
Brother, give me thy hand; and, gentle Warwick,
Let me embrace thee in my weary arms.
I, that did never weep, now melt with woe
That winter should cut off our spring-time so.

WARWICK
Away, away! Once more, sweet lords, farewell.

GEORGE
Yet let us all together to our troops,
And give them leave to fly that will not stay,
And call them pillars that will stand to us;
And if we thrive, promise them such rewards
As victors wear at the Olympian games.
This may plant courage in their quailing breasts,
For yet is hope of life and victory.
Forslow no longer; make we hence amain.

[*Exeunt.*]

Scene IV. Another Part of the Field

[*Excursions. Enter* RICHARD *and* CLIFFORD.]

RICHARD
Now, Clifford, I have singled thee alone.
Suppose this arm is for the Duke of York,
And this for Rutland; both bound to revenge,
Wert thou environed with a brazen wall.

CLIFFORD
Now, Richard, I am with thee here alone.
This is the hand that stabbed thy father York,
And this the hand that slew thy brother Rutland;
And here's the heart that triumphs in their death
And cheers these hands that slew thy sire and brother
To execute the like upon thyself;
And so have at thee!

[*They fight.* WARWICK *comes;* CLIFFORD *flies.*]

RICHARD
Nay, Warwick, single out some other chase;
For I myself will hunt this wolf to death.

[*Exeunt.*]

Scene V. Another Part of the Field

[*Enter* KING HENRY.]

KING HENRY
This battle fares like to the morning's war,
When dying clouds contend with growing light,
What time the shepherd, blowing of his nails,
Can neither call it perfect day nor night.
Now sways it this way, like a mighty sea
Forced by the tide to combat with the wind;
Now sways it that way, like the selfsame sea
Forced to retire by fury of the wind.
Sometime the flood prevails, and then the wind;
Now one the better, then another best,
Both tugging to be victors, breast to breast,
Yet neither conqueror nor conquered.
So is the equal poise of this fell war.
Here on this molehill will I sit me down.
To whom God will, there be the victory!
For Margaret my queen, and Clifford too,
Have chid me from the battle, swearing both
They prosper best of all when I am thence.
Would I were dead, if God's good will were so;
For what is in this world but grief and woe?
O God! Methinks it were a happy life
To be no better than a homely swain;
To sit upon a hill, as I do now,
To carve out dials quaintly, point by point,
Thereby to see the minutes how they run:
How many make the hour full complete,
How many hours brings about the day,
How many days will finish up the year,
How many years a mortal man may live.
When this is known, then to divide the times:
So many hours must I tend my flock;

So many hours must I take my rest;
So many hours must I contemplate;
So many hours must I sport myself;
So many days my ewes have been with young;
So many weeks ere the poor fools will ean;
So many years ere I shall shear the fleece.
So minutes, hours, days, months, and years,
Passed over to the end they were created,
Would bring white hairs unto a quiet grave.
Ah, what a life were this! How sweet, how lovely!
Gives not the hawthorn bush a sweeter shade
To shepherds looking on their silly sheep
Than doth a rich embroidered canopy
To kings that fear their subjects' treachery?
O, yes, it doth; a thousand-fold it doth.
And to conclude, the shepherd's homely curds,
His cold thin drink out of his leather bottle,
His wonted sleep under a fresh tree's shade,
All which secure and sweetly he enjoys,
Is far beyond a prince's delicates—
His viands sparkling in a golden cup,
His body couched in a curious bed,
When care, mistrust, and treason waits on him.

[*Alarum. Enter a* SON *that hath killed his* FATHER*, bringing in the dead body.*]

SON
Ill blows the wind that profits nobody.
This man, whom hand to hand I slew in fight,
May be possessed with some store of crowns;
And I, that haply take them from him now,
May yet ere night yield both my life and them
To some man else, as this dead man doth me.
Who's this? O God! It is my father's face,
Whom in this conflict I unwares have killed.
O heavy times, begetting such events!
From London by the King was I pressed forth;
My father, being the Earl of Warwick's man,
Came on the part of York, pressed by his master;
And I, who at his hands received my life,

Have by my hands of life bereaved him.
Pardon me, God, I knew not what I did;
And pardon, father, for I knew not thee.
My tears shall wipe away these bloody marks,
And no more words till they have flowed their fill.

KING HENRY
O piteous spectacle! O bloody times!
Whiles lions war and battle for their dens,
Poor harmless lambs abide their enmity.
Weep, wretched man, I'll aid thee tear for tear;
And let our hearts and eyes, like civil war,
Be blind with tears and break o'ercharged with grief.

[*Enter a* FATHER *who has killed his* SON*, with the body in his arms.*]

FATHER
Thou that so stoutly hath resisted me,
Give me thy gold, if thou hast any gold,
For I have bought it with an hundred blows.
But let me see: is this our foeman's face?
Ah, no, no, no; it is mine only son!
Ah, boy, if any life be left in thee,
Throw up thine eye! See, see what showers arise,
Blown with the windy tempest of my heart
Upon thy wounds, that kill mine eye and heart!
O, pity, God, this miserable age!
What stratagems, how fell, how butcherly,
Erroneous, mutinous, and unnatural,
This deadly quarrel daily doth beget!
O boy, thy father gave thee life too soon,
And hath bereft thee of thy life too late!

KING HENRY
Woe above woe, grief more than common grief!
O that my death would stay these ruthful deeds!
O pity, pity, gentle heaven, pity!
The red rose and the white are on his face,
The fatal colours of our striving houses;
The one his purple blood right well resembles,
The other his pale cheeks, methinks, presenteth.

Wither one rose, and let the other flourish!
If you contend, a thousand lives must wither.

SON
How will my mother for a father's death
Take on with me and ne'er be satisfied!

FATHER
How will my wife for slaughter of my son
Shed seas of tears and ne'er be satisfied!

KING HENRY
How will the country for these woeful chances
Misthink the King and not be satisfied!

SON
Was ever son so rued a father's death?

FATHER
Was ever father so bemoaned his son?

KING HENRY
Was ever king so grieved for subjects' woe?
Much is your sorrow, mine ten times so much.

SON
I'll bear thee hence, where I may weep my fill.

[*Exit with the body.*]

FATHER
These arms of mine shall be thy winding-sheet;
My heart, sweet boy, shall be thy sepulchre,
For from my heart thine image ne'er shall go.
My sighing breast shall be thy funeral bell;
And so obsequious will thy father be,
Even for the loss of thee, having no more,
As Priam was for all his valiant sons.
I'll bear thee hence; and let them fight that will,
For I have murdered where I should not kill.

[*Exit with the body.*]

KING HENRY
Sad-hearted men, much overgone with care,
Here sits a king more woeful than you are.

[*Alarums. Excursions. Enter* QUEEN MARGARET, PRINCE OF WALES *and* EXETER.]

PRINCE EDWARD
Fly, father, fly, for all your friends are fled,
And Warwick rages like a chafed bull.
Away, for death doth hold us in pursuit.

QUEEN MARGARET
Mount you, my lord; towards Berwick post amain.
Edward and Richard, like a brace of greyhounds
Having the fearful flying hare in sight,
With fiery eyes sparkling for very wrath,
And bloody steel grasped in their ireful hands,
Are at our backs; and therefore hence amain.

EXETER
Away, for vengeance comes along with them.
Nay, stay not to expostulate; make speed,
Or else come after; I'll away before.

KING HENRY
Nay, take me with thee, good sweet Exeter;
Not that I fear to stay, but love to go
Whither the Queen intends. Forward; away!

[*Exeunt.*]

Scene VI. Another Part of the Field

[*A loud alarum. Enter* CLIFFORD*, wounded.*]

CLIFFORD
Here burns my candle out; ay, here it dies,
Which whiles it lasted gave King Henry light.

O Lancaster, I fear thy overthrow
More than my body's parting with my soul!
My love and fear glued many friends to thee;
And, now I fall, thy tough commixtures melts,
Impairing Henry, strengthening misproud York.
The common people swarm like summer flies;
And whither fly the gnats but to the sun?
And who shines now but Henry's enemies?
O Phoebus, hadst thou never given consent
That Phaëthon should check thy fiery steeds,
Thy burning car never had scorched the earth!
And, Henry, hadst thou swayed as kings should do,
Or as thy father and his father did,
Giving no ground unto the house of York,
They never then had sprung like summer flies;
I, and ten thousand in this luckless realm
Had left no mourning widows for our death,
And thou this day hadst kept thy chair in peace.
For what doth cherish weeds but gentle air?
And what makes robbers bold but too much lenity?
Bootless are plaints, and cureless are my wounds;
No way to fly, nor strength to hold out flight.
The foe is merciless and will not pity,
For at their hands I have deserved no pity.
The air hath got into my deadly wounds,
And much effuse of blood doth make me faint.
Come, York and Richard, Warwick, and the rest;
I stabbed your fathers' bosoms, split my breast.

[*He faints.*]

[*Alarum and retreat. Enter* EDWARD, GEORGE, RICHARD, MONTAGUE, WARWICK *and Soldiers.*]

EDWARD
Now breathe we, lords. Good fortune bids us pause
And smooth the frowns of war with peaceful looks.
Some troops pursue the bloody-minded Queen
That led calm Henry, though he were a king,
As doth a sail, filled with a fretting gust,

Command an argosy to stem the waves.
But think you, lords, that Clifford fled with them?

WARWICK
No, 'tis impossible he should escape;
For, though before his face I speak the words,
Your brother Richard marked him for the grave,
And whereso'er he is, he's surely dead.

[CLIFFORD *groans and dies.*]

RICHARD
Whose soul is that which takes her heavy leave?
A deadly groan, like life and death's departing.

EDWARD
See who it is; and, now the battle's ended,
If friend or foe, let him be gently used.

RICHARD
Revoke that doom of mercy, for 'tis Clifford,
Who, not contented that he lopped the branch
In hewing Rutland when his leaves put forth,
But set his murdering knife unto the root
From whence that tender spray did sweetly spring,
I mean our princely father, Duke of York.

WARWICK
From off the gates of York fetch down the head,
Your father's head, which Clifford placed there;
Instead whereof let this supply the room.
Measure for measure must be answered.

EDWARD
Bring forth that fatal screech-owl to our house,
That nothing sung but death to us and ours;
Now death shall stop his dismal threatening sound,
And his ill-boding tongue no more shall speak.

[*Soldiers bring the body forward.*]

WARWICK
I think his understanding is bereft.
Speak, Clifford, dost thou know who speaks to thee?
Dark cloudy death o'ershades his beams of life,
And he nor sees nor hears us, what we say.

RICHARD
O, would he did, and so, perhaps, he doth!
'Tis but his policy to counterfeit,
Because he would avoid such bitter taunts
Which in the time of death he gave our father.

GEORGE
If so thou think'st, vex him with eager words.

RICHARD
Clifford, ask mercy, and obtain no grace.

EDWARD
Clifford, repent in bootless penitence.

WARWICK
Clifford, devise excuses for thy faults.

GEORGE
While we devise fell tortures for thy faults.

RICHARD
Thou didst love York, and I am son to York.

EDWARD
Thou pitied'st Rutland, I will pity thee.

GEORGE
Where's Captain Margaret to fence you now?

WARWICK
They mock thee, Clifford; swear as thou wast wont.

RICHARD
What, not an oath? Nay then, the world goes hard
When Clifford cannot spare his friends an oath.
I know by that he's dead; and, by my soul,
If this right hand would buy but two hours' life,

That I in all despite might rail at him,
This hand should chop it off, and with the issuing blood
Stifle the villain whose unstaunched thirst
York and young Rutland could not satisfy.

WARWICK
Ay, but he's dead. Off with the traitor's head,
And rear it in the place your father's stands.
And now to London with triumphant march,
There to be crowned England's royal king;
From whence shall Warwick cut the sea to France,
And ask the Lady Bona for thy queen.
So shalt thou sinew both these lands together,
And, having France thy friend, thou shalt not dread
The scattered foe that hopes to rise again;
For though they cannot greatly sting to hurt,
Yet look to have them buzz to offend thine ears.
First will I see the coronation,
And then to Brittany I'll cross the sea
To effect this marriage, so it please my lord.

EDWARD
Even as thou wilt, sweet Warwick, let it be;
For in thy shoulder do I build my seat,
And never will I undertake the thing
Wherein thy counsel and consent is wanting.
Richard, I will create thee Duke of Gloucester;
And George, of Clarence. Warwick, as ourself,
Shall do and undo as him pleaseth best.

RICHARD
Let me be Duke of Clarence, George of Gloucester,
For Gloucester's dukedom is too ominous.

WARWICK
Tut, that's a foolish observation.
Richard, be Duke of Gloucester. Now to London,
To see these honours in possession.

[*Exeunt.*]

Act III

Scene I. A Forest in the North of England

[*Enter two* KEEPERS *with crossbows in their hands.*]

1 KEEPER
Under this thick-grown brake we'll shroud ourselves,
For through this laund anon the deer will come;
And in this covert will we make our stand,
Culling the principal of all the deer.

2 KEEPER
I'll stay above the hill, so both may shoot.

1 KEEPER
That cannot be; the noise of thy crossbow
Will scare the herd, and so my shoot is lost.
Here stand we both, and aim we at the best;
And, for the time shall not seem tedious,
I'll tell thee what befell me on a day
In this self place where now we mean to stand.

2 KEEPER
Here comes a man; let's stay till he be past.

[*Enter* KING HENRY*, disguised, with a prayer-book.*]

KING HENRY
From Scotland am I stolen, even of pure love,
To greet mine own land with my wishful sight.
No, Harry, Harry, 'tis no land of thine;
Thy place is filled, thy sceptre wrung from thee,
Thy balm washed off wherewith thou wast anointed.
No bending knee will call thee Caesar now,
No humble suitors press to speak for right,
No, not a man comes for redress of thee;
For how can I help them and not myself?

1 KEEPER
Ay, here's a deer whose skin's a keeper's fee.
This is the quondam king; let's seize upon him.

KING HENRY
Let me embrace thee, sour adversity,
For wise men say it is the wisest course.

2 KEEPER
Why linger we? Let us lay hands upon him.

1 KEEPER
Forbear awhile; we'll hear a little more.

KING HENRY
My queen and son are gone to France for aid;
And, as I hear, the great commanding Warwick
Is thither gone to crave the French King's sister
To wife for Edward. If this news be true,
Poor queen and son, your labour is but lost,
For Warwick is a subtle orator,
And Lewis a prince soon won with moving words.
By this account, then, Margaret may win him,
For she's a woman to be pitied much.
Her sighs will make a batt'ry in his breast,
Her tears will pierce into a marble heart;
The tiger will be mild whiles she doth mourn,
And Nero will be tainted with remorse
To hear and see her plaints, her brinish tears.
Ay, but she's come to beg, Warwick to give;
She on his left side craving aid for Henry;

He on his right asking a wife for Edward.
She weeps and says her Henry is deposed;
He smiles and says his Edward is installed;
That she, poor wretch, for grief can speak no more;
Whiles Warwick tells his title, smooths the wrong,
Inferreth arguments of mighty strength,
And in conclusion wins the King from her
With promise of his sister, and what else,
To strengthen and support King Edward's place.
O Margaret, thus 'twill be; and thou, poor soul,
Art then forsaken, as thou went'st forlorn.

2 KEEPER
Say, what art thou, that talk'st of kings and queens?

KING HENRY
More than I seem, and less than I was born to:
A man at least, for less I should not be;
And men may talk of kings, and why not I?

2 KEEPER
Ay, but thou talk'st as if thou wert a king.

KING HENRY
Why, so I am, in mind; and that's enough.

2 KEEPER
But, if thou be a king, where is thy crown?

KING HENRY
My crown is in my heart, not on my head;
Not decked with diamonds and Indian stones,
Not to be seen. My crown is called content;
A crown it is that seldom kings enjoy.

2 KEEPER
Well, if you be a king crowned with content,
Your crown content and you must be contented
To go along with us; for, as we think,
You are the king King Edward hath deposed;
And we his subjects, sworn in all allegiance,
Will apprehend you as his enemy.

KING HENRY
But did you never swear, and break an oath?

2 KEEPER
No, never such an oath; nor will not now.

KING HENRY
Where did you dwell when I was King of England?

2 KEEPER
Here in this country, where we now remain.

KING HENRY
I was anointed king at nine months old;
My father and my grandfather were kings,
And you were sworn true subjects unto me.
And tell me, then, have you not broke your oaths?

1 KEEPER
No, for we were subjects but while you were king.

KING HENRY
Why, am I dead? Do I not breathe a man?
Ah, simple men, you know not what you swear.
Look, as I blow this feather from my face,
And as the air blows it to me again,
Obeying with my wind when I do blow,
And yielding to another when it blows,
Commanded always by the greater gust,
Such is the lightness of you common men.
But do not break your oaths; for of that sin
My mild entreaty shall not make you guilty.
Go where you will, the King shall be commanded;
And be you kings; command, and I'll obey.

1 KEEPER
We are true subjects to the King, King Edward.

KING HENRY
So would you be again to Henry
If he were seated as King Edward is.

1 KEEPER
We charge you, in God's name and the King's
To go with us unto the officers.

KING HENRY
In God's name, lead; your king's name be obeyed,
And what God will, that let your king perform;
And what he will, I humbly yield unto.

[*Exeunt.*]

Scene II. The Palace

[*Enter* KING EDWARD*,* RICHARD (DUKE OF GLOUCESTER*),* GEORGE (DUKE OF CLARENCE*) and* LADY GREY.]

KING EDWARD
Brother of Gloucester, at Saint Albans field
This lady's husband, Sir John Grey, was slain,
His land then seized on by the conqueror.
Her suit is now to repossess those lands,
Which we in justice cannot well deny,
Because in quarrel of the house of York
The worthy gentleman did lose his life.

RICHARD
Your Highness shall do well to grant her suit;
It were dishonour to deny it her.

KING EDWARD
It were no less; but yet I'll make a pause.

RICHARD
[*Aside to* GEORGE.] Yea, is it so?
I see the lady hath a thing to grant
Before the King will grant her humble suit.

GEORGE
[*Aside to* RICHARD.] He knows the game; how true he keeps the wind!

RICHARD
[*Aside to* GEORGE.] Silence!

KING EDWARD
Widow, we will consider of your suit,
And come some other time to know our mind.

LADY GREY
Right gracious lord, I cannot brook delay.
May it please your Highness to resolve me now,
And what your pleasure is shall satisfy me.

RICHARD
[*Aside to* GEORGE.] Ay, widow? Then I'll warrant you all your lands,
An if what pleases him shall pleasure you.
Fight closer, or, good faith, you'll catch a blow.

GEORGE
[*Aside to* RICHARD.] I fear her not, unless she chance to fall.

RICHARD
[*Aside to* GEORGE.] God forbid that, for he'll take vantages.

KING EDWARD
How many children hast thou, widow? Tell me.

GEORGE
[*Aside to* RICHARD.] I think he means to beg a child of her.

RICHARD
[*Aside to* GEORGE.] Nay, whip me then; he'll rather give her two.

LADY GREY
Three, my most gracious lord.

RICHARD
[*Aside to* GEORGE.] You shall have four if you'll be ruled by him.

KING EDWARD
'Twere pity they should lose their father's lands.

LADY GREY
Be pitiful, dread lord, and grant it then.

KING EDWARD
Lords, give us leave; I'll try this widow's wit.

RICHARD
[*Aside to* GEORGE.] Ay, good leave have you; for you will have leave
Till youth take leave and leave you to the crutch.

[RICHARD *and* GEORGE *stand aside.*]

KING EDWARD
Now tell me, madam, do you love your children?

LADY GREY
Ay, full as dearly as I love myself.

KING EDWARD
And would you not do much to do them good?

LADY GREY
To do them good I would sustain some harm.

KING EDWARD
Then get your husband's lands to do them good.

LADY GREY
Therefore I came unto your majesty.

KING EDWARD
I'll tell you how these lands are to be got.

LADY GREY
So shall you bind me to your Highness' service.

KING EDWARD
What service wilt thou do me if I give them?

LADY GREY
What you command that rests in me to do.

KING EDWARD
But you will take exceptions to my boon.

LADY GREY
No, gracious lord, except I cannot do it.

KING EDWARD
Ay, but thou canst do what I mean to ask.

LADY GREY
Why, then, I will do what your Grace commands.

RICHARD
[*Aside to* GEORGE.] He plies her hard; and much rain wears the marble.

GEORGE
[*Aside to* RICHARD.] As red as fire! Nay, then her wax must melt.

LADY GREY
Why stops my lord? Shall I not hear my task?

KING EDWARD
An easy task; 'tis but to love a king.

LADY GREY
That's soon performed, because I am a subject.

KING EDWARD
Why, then, thy husband's lands I freely give thee.

LADY GREY
I take my leave with many thousand thanks.

RICHARD
[*Aside to* GEORGE.] The match is made; she seals it with a curtsy.

KING EDWARD
But stay thee; 'tis the fruits of love I mean.

LADY GREY
The fruits of love I mean, my loving liege.

KING EDWARD
Ay, but, I fear me, in another sense.
What love, thinkst thou, I sue so much to get?

LADY GREY
My love till death, my humble thanks, my prayers;
That love which virtue begs, and virtue grants.

KING EDWARD
No, by my troth, I did not mean such love.

LADY GREY
Why, then, you mean not as I thought you did.

KING EDWARD
But now you partly may perceive my mind.

LADY GREY
My mind will never grant what I perceive
Your Highness aims at, if I aim aright.

KING EDWARD
To tell thee plain, I aim to lie with thee.

LADY GREY
To tell you plain, I had rather lie in prison.

KING EDWARD
Why, then thou shalt not have thy husband's lands.

LADY GREY
Why, then mine honesty shall be my dower,
For by that loss I will not purchase them.

KING EDWARD
Therein thou wrong'st thy children mightily.

LADY GREY
Herein your Highness wrongs both them and me.
But, mighty lord, this merry inclination
Accords not with the sadness of my suit.
Please you dismiss me either with ay or no.

KING EDWARD
Ay, if thou wilt say ay to my request;
No, if thou dost say no to my demand.

LADY GREY
Then no, my lord. My suit is at an end.

RICHARD
[*Aside to* GEORGE.] The widow likes him not, she knits her brows.

GEORGE
[*Aside to* RICHARD.] He is the bluntest wooer in Christendom.

KING EDWARD
[*Aside.*] Her looks doth argue her replete with modesty;
Her words doth show her wit incomparable;
All her perfections challenge sovereignty.
One way or other, she is for a king,
And she shall be my love, or else my queen.—
Say that King Edward take thee for his queen?

LADY GREY
'Tis better said than done, my gracious lord.
I am a subject fit to jest withal,
But far unfit to be a sovereign.

KING EDWARD
Sweet widow, by my state I swear to thee,
I speak no more than what my soul intends;
And that is to enjoy thee for my love.

LADY GREY
And that is more than I will yield unto.
I know I am too mean to be your queen,
And yet too good to be your concubine.

KING EDWARD
You cavil, widow; I did mean my queen.

LADY GREY
'Twill grieve your Grace my sons should call you father.

KING EDWARD
No more than when my daughters call thee mother.
Thou art a widow, and thou hast some children;
And, by God's mother, I, being but a bachelor,
Have other some. Why, 'tis a happy thing
To be the father unto many sons.
Answer no more, for thou shalt be my queen.

RICHARD
[*Aside to* GEORGE.] The ghostly father now hath done his shrift.

GEORGE
[*Aside to* RICHARD.] When he was made a shriver, 'twas for shift.

KING EDWARD
Brothers, you muse what chat we two have had.

[RICHARD *and* GEORGE *come forward.*]

RICHARD
The widow likes it not, for she looks very sad.

KING EDWARD
You'd think it strange if I should marry her.

GEORGE
To whom, my lord?

KING EDWARD
Why, Clarence, to myself.

RICHARD
That would be ten days' wonder at the least.

GEORGE
That's a day longer than a wonder lasts.

RICHARD
By so much is the wonder in extremes.

KING EDWARD
Well, jest on, brothers. I can tell you both
Her suit is granted for her husband's lands.

[*Enter a* NOBLEMAN.]

NOBLEMAN
My gracious lord, Henry your foe is taken,
And brought your prisoner to your palace gate.

KING EDWARD
See that he be conveyed unto the Tower.
And go we, brothers, to the man that took him,
To question of his apprehension.
Widow, go you along. Lords, use her honourably.

[*Exeunt all but* RICHARD.]

RICHARD
Ay, Edward will use women honourably.
Would he were wasted, marrow, bones, and all,
That from his loins no hopeful branch may spring,
To cross me from the golden time I look for!
And yet, between my soul's desire and me—
The lustful Edward's title buried—
Is Clarence, Henry, and his son young Edward,
And all the unlooked-for issue of their bodies,
To take their rooms ere I can place myself.
A cold premeditation for my purpose!
Why then I do but dream on sovereignty;
Like one that stands upon a promontory
And spies a far-off shore where he would tread,
Wishing his foot were equal with his eye,
And chides the sea that sunders him from thence,
Saying he'll lade it dry to have his way.
So do I wish the crown, being so far off,
And so I chide the means that keeps me from it;
And so I say I'll cut the causes off,
Flattering me with impossibilities.
My eye's too quick, my heart o'erweens too much,
Unless my hand and strength could equal them.
Well, say there is no kingdom then for Richard,
What other pleasure can the world afford?
I'll make my heaven in a lady's lap,
And deck my body in gay ornaments,
And 'witch sweet ladies with my words and looks.
O miserable thought, and more unlikely
Than to accomplish twenty golden crowns.
Why, Love forswore me in my mother's womb,
And, for I should not deal in her soft laws,
She did corrupt frail Nature with some bribe
To shrink mine arm up like a withered shrub;
To make an envious mountain on my back,
Where sits Deformity to mock my body;
To shape my legs of an unequal size;
To disproportion me in every part,

Like to a chaos, or an unlicked bear-whelp
That carries no impression like the dam.
And am I then a man to be beloved?
O monstrous fault to harbour such a thought!
Then, since this earth affords no joy to me
But to command, to check, to o'erbear such
As are of better person than myself,
I'll make my heaven to dream upon the crown,
And, whiles I live, t' account this world but hell
Until my misshaped trunk that bear this head
Be round impaled with a glorious crown.
And yet I know not how to get the crown,
For many lives stand between me and home;
And I, like one lost in a thorny wood,
That rents the thorns, and is rent with the thorns,
Seeking a way, and straying from the way,
Not knowing how to find the open air,
But toiling desperately to find it out,
Torment myself to catch the English crown.
And from that torment I will free myself,
Or hew my way out with a bloody axe.
Why, I can smile, and murder while I smile,
And cry "Content!" to that which grieves my heart,
And wet my cheeks with artificial tears,
And frame my face to all occasions.
I'll drown more sailors than the mermaid shall,
I'll slay more gazers than the basilisk;
I'll play the orator as well as Nestor,
Deceive more slyly than Ulysses could,
And, like a Sinon, take another Troy.
I can add colours to the chameleon,
Change shapes with Proteus for advantages,
And set the murderous Machiavel to school.
Can I do this, and cannot get a crown?
Tut, were it farther off, I'll pluck it down.

[*Exit.*]

Scene III. France. The King's Palace

[*Flourish. Enter* LEWIS, *the French* KING, *his sister the* LADY BONA, *his Admiral called* BOURBON, PRINCE EDWARD, QUEEN MARGARET, *and the* EARL OF OXFORD. LEWIS *sits, and riseth up again.*]

KING LEWIS
Fair Queen of England, worthy Margaret,
Sit down with us. It ill befits thy state
And birth that thou shouldst stand while Lewis doth sit.

QUEEN MARGARET
No, mighty King of France. Now Margaret
Must strike her sail and learn awhile to serve
Where kings command. I was, I must confess,
Great Albion's queen in former golden days;
But now mischance hath trod my title down
And with dishonour laid me on the ground,
Where I must take like seat unto my fortune
And to my humble seat conform myself.

KING LEWIS
Why, say, fair queen, whence springs this deep despair?

QUEEN MARGARET
From such a cause as fills mine eyes with tears
And stops my tongue, while heart is drowned in cares.

KING LEWIS
Whate'er it be, be thou still like thyself,
And sit thee by our side. Yield not thy neck

[*Seats her by him.*]

To Fortune's yoke, but let thy dauntless mind Still ride in triumph over all mischance. Be plain, Queen Margaret, and tell thy grief; It shall be eased if France can yield relief.

QUEEN MARGARET
Those gracious words revive my drooping thoughts
And give my tongue-tied sorrows leave to speak.

Now, therefore, be it known to noble Lewis
That Henry, sole possessor of my love,
Is, of a king, become a banished man
And forced to live in Scotland a forlorn;
While proud ambitious Edward, Duke of York,
Usurps the regal title and the seat
Of England's true-anointed lawful king.
This is the cause that I, poor Margaret,
With this my son, Prince Edward, Henry's heir,
Am come to crave thy just and lawful aid;
And if thou fail us, all our hope is done.
Scotland hath will to help, but cannot help;
Our people and our peers are both misled,
Our treasure seized, our soldiers put to flight,
And, as thou seest, ourselves in heavy plight.

KING LEWIS
Renowned queen, with patience calm the storm
While we bethink a means to break it off.

QUEEN MARGARET
The more we stay, the stronger grows our foe.

KING LEWIS
The more I stay, the more I'll succour thee.

QUEEN MARGARET
O, but impatience waiteth on true sorrow.
And see where comes the breeder of my sorrow.

[*Enter* WARWICK.]

KING LEWIS
What's he approacheth boldly to our presence?

QUEEN MARGARET
Our Earl of Warwick, Edward's greatest friend.

KING LEWIS
Welcome, brave Warwick. What brings thee to France?

[*He descends.* QUEEN MARGARET *rises.*]

QUEEN MARGARET
Ay, now begins a second storm to rise,
For this is he that moves both wind and tide.

WARWICK
From worthy Edward, king of Albion,
My lord and sovereign, and thy vowed friend,
I come, in kindness and unfeigned love,
First, to do greetings to thy royal person,
And then to crave a league of amity,
And lastly, to confirm that amity
With nuptial knot, if thou vouchsafe to grant
That virtuous Lady Bona, thy fair sister,
To England's king in lawful marriage.

QUEEN MARGARET
[*Aside.*] If that go forward, Henry's hope is done.

WARWICK
[*To* BONA.] And, gracious madam, in our king's behalf,
I am commanded, with your leave and favour,
Humbly to kiss your hand, and with my tongue
To tell the passion of my sovereign's heart,
Where fame, late entering at his heedful ears,
Hath placed thy beauty's image and thy virtue.

QUEEN MARGARET
King Lewis and Lady Bona, hear me speak
Before you answer Warwick. His demand
Springs not from Edward's well-meant honest love,
But from deceit, bred by necessity;
For how can tyrants safely govern home
Unless abroad they purchase great alliance?
To prove him tyrant this reason may suffice,
That Henry liveth still; but were he dead,
Yet here Prince Edward stands, King Henry's son.
Look therefore, Lewis, that by this league and marriage
Thou draw not on thy danger and dishonour;
For though usurpers sway the rule awhile,
Yet heavens are just, and time suppresseth wrongs.

WARWICK
Injurious Margaret!

PRINCE EDWARD
And why not Queen?

WARWICK
Because thy father Henry did usurp,
And thou no more art prince than she is queen.

OXFORD
Then Warwick disannuls great John of Gaunt,
Which did subdue the greatest part of Spain;
And after John of Gaunt, Henry the Fourth,
Whose wisdom was a mirror to the wisest;
And after that wise prince, Henry the Fifth,
Who by his prowess conquered all France.
From these our Henry lineally descends.

WARWICK
Oxford, how haps it in this smooth discourse
You told not how Henry the Sixth hath lost
All that which Henry the Fifth had gotten?
Methinks these peers of France should smile at that.
But for the rest: you tell a pedigree
Of threescore and two years, a silly time
To make prescription for a kingdom's worth.

OXFORD
Why, Warwick, canst thou speak against thy liege,
Whom thou obeyed'st thirty and six years,
And not bewray thy treason with a blush?

WARWICK
Can Oxford, that did ever fence the right,
Now buckler falsehood with a pedigree?
For shame! Leave Henry, and call Edward king.

OXFORD
Call him my king by whose injurious doom
My elder brother, the Lord Aubrey Vere,
Was done to death? And more than so, my father,
Even in the downfall of his mellowed years,

When nature brought him to the door of death?
No, Warwick, no; while life upholds this arm,
This arm upholds the house of Lancaster.

WARWICK
And I the house of York.

KING LEWIS
Queen Margaret, Prince Edward, and Oxford,
Vouchsafe at our request to stand aside
While I use further conference with Warwick.

[*They stand aloof.*]

QUEEN MARGARET
Heavens grant that Warwick's words bewitch him not!

KING LEWIS
Now, Warwick, tell me, even upon thy conscience,
Is Edward your true king? For I were loath
To link with him that were not lawful chosen.

WARWICK
Thereon I pawn my credit and mine honour.

KING LEWIS
But is he gracious in the people's eye?

WARWICK
The more that Henry was unfortunate.

KING LEWIS
Then further, all dissembling set aside,
Tell me for truth the measure of his love
Unto our sister Bona.

WARWICK
Such it seems
As may beseem a monarch like himself.
Myself have often heard him say and swear
That this his love was an eternal plant,
Whereof the root was fixed in virtue's ground,
The leaves and fruit maintained with beauty's sun,

Exempt from envy, but not from disdain,
Unless the Lady Bona quit his pain.

KING LEWIS
Now, sister, let us hear your firm resolve.

BONA
Your grant or your denial shall be mine.
[*To* WARWICK] Yet I confess that often ere this day,
When I have heard your king's desert recounted,
Mine ear hath tempted judgment to desire.

KING LEWIS
Then, Warwick, thus: our sister shall be Edward's.
And now forthwith shall articles be drawn
Touching the jointure that your king must make,
Which with her dowry shall be counterpoised.
Draw near, Queen Margaret, and be a witness
That Bona shall be wife to the English king.

PRINCE EDWARD
To Edward, but not to the English king.

QUEEN MARGARET
Deceitful Warwick, it was thy device
By this alliance to make void my suit.
Before thy coming Lewis was Henry's friend.

KING LEWIS
And still is friend to him and Margaret.
But if your title to the crown be weak,
As may appear by Edward's good success,
Then 'tis but reason that I be released
From giving aid which late I promised.
Yet shall you have all kindness at my hand
That your estate requires and mine can yield.

WARWICK
Henry now lives in Scotland, at his ease,
Where, having nothing, nothing can he lose.
And as for you yourself, our quondam queen,
You have a father able to maintain you,
And better 'twere you troubled him than France.

QUEEN MARGARET
Peace, impudent and shameless Warwick,
Proud setter up and puller down of kings!
I will not hence till with my talk and tears,
Both full of truth, I make King Lewis behold
Thy sly conveyance and thy lord's false love;
For both of you are birds of selfsame feather.

[POST *blowing a horn within.*]

KING LEWIS
Warwick, this is some post to us or thee.

[*Enter the* POST.]

POST
My lord ambassador, these letters are for you.
Sent from your brother, Marquess Montague.
These from our king unto your Majesty.
And, madam, these for you, from whom I know not.

[*They all read their letters.*]

OXFORD
I like it well that our fair Queen and mistress
Smiles at her news while Warwick frowns at his.

PRINCE EDWARD
Nay, mark how Lewis stamps as he were nettled.
I hope all's for the best.

KING LEWIS
Warwick, what are thy news? And yours, fair Queen?

QUEEN MARGARET
Mine, such as fill my heart with unhoped joys.

WARWICK
Mine, full of sorrow and heart's discontent.

KING LEWIS
What, has your king married the Lady Grey,
And now, to soothe your forgery and his,

Sends me a paper to persuade me patience?
Is this th' alliance that he seeks with France?
Dare he presume to scorn us in this manner?

QUEEN MARGARET
I told your majesty as much before;
This proveth Edward's love and Warwick's honesty.

WARWICK
King Lewis, I here protest in sight of heaven,
And by the hope I have of heavenly bliss,
That I am clear from this misdeed of Edward's—
No more my king, for he dishonours me,
But most himself, if he could see his shame.
Did I forget that by the house of York
My father came untimely to his death?
Did I let pass th' abuse done to my niece?
Did I impale him with the regal crown?
Did I put Henry from his native right?
And am I guerdoned at the last with shame?
Shame on himself, for my desert is honour;
And to repair my honour lost for him,
I here renounce him and return to Henry.
My noble Queen, let former grudges pass,
And henceforth I am thy true servitor.
I will revenge his wrong to Lady Bona,
And replant Henry in his former state.

QUEEN MARGARET
Warwick, these words have turned my hate to love;
And I forgive and quite forget old faults,
And joy that thou becom'st King Henry's friend.

WARWICK
So much his friend, ay, his unfeigned friend,
That if King Lewis vouchsafe to furnish us
With some few bands of chosen soldiers,
I'll undertake to land them on our coast
And force the tyrant from his seat by war.
'Tis not his new-made bride shall succour him;
And as for Clarence, as my letters tell me,
He's very likely now to fall from him

For matching more for wanton lust than honour,
Or than for strength and safety of our country.

BONA
Dear brother, how shall Bona be revenged
But by thy help to this distressed queen?

QUEEN MARGARET
Renowned prince, how shall poor Henry live
Unless thou rescue him from foul despair?

BONA
My quarrel and this English queen's are one.

WARWICK
And mine, fair Lady Bona, joins with yours.

KING LEWIS
And mine with hers, and thine, and Margaret's.
Therefore, at last I firmly am resolved
You shall have aid.

QUEEN MARGARET
Let me give humble thanks for all at once.

KING LEWIS
Then, England's messenger, return in post
And tell false Edward, thy supposed king,
That Lewis of France is sending over maskers
To revel it with him and his new bride.
Thou seest what's past; go fear thy king withal.

BONA
Tell him, in hope he'll prove a widower shortly,
I'll wear the willow garland for his sake.

QUEEN MARGARET
Tell him my mourning weeds are laid aside,
And I am ready to put armour on.

WARWICK
Tell him from me that he hath done me wrong,
And therefore I'll uncrown him ere 't be long.
There's thy reward; be gone.

[*Exit* POST.]

KING LEWIS
But, Warwick,
Thou and Oxford, with five thousand men,
Shall cross the seas and bid false Edward battle;
And, as occasion serves, this noble Queen
And prince shall follow with a fresh supply.
Yet, ere thou go, but answer me one doubt:
What pledge have we of thy firm loyalty?

WARWICK
This shall assure my constant loyalty:
That if our Queen and this young prince agree,
I'll join mine eldest daughter and my joy
To him forthwith in holy wedlock bands.

QUEEN MARGARET
Yes, I agree, and thank you for your motion.
Son Edward, she is fair and virtuous,
Therefore delay not, give thy hand to Warwick,
And with thy hand thy faith irrevocable
That only Warwick's daughter shall be thine.

PRINCE EDWARD
Yes, I accept her, for she well deserves it;
And here, to pledge my vow, I give my hand.

[*He gives his hand to* WARWICK.]

KING LEWIS
Why stay we now? These soldiers shall be levied,
And thou, Lord Bourbon, our High Admiral,
Shall waft them over with our royal fleet.
I long till Edward fall by war's mischance
For mocking marriage with a dame of France.

[*Exeunt all but* WARWICK.]

WARWICK
I came from Edward as ambassador,
But I return his sworn and mortal foe.

Matter of marriage was the charge he gave me,
But dreadful war shall answer his demand.
Had he none else to make a stale but me?
Then none but I shall turn his jest to sorrow.
I was the chief that raised him to the crown,
And I'll be chief to bring him down again:
Not that I pity Henry's misery,
But seek revenge on Edward's mockery.

[*Exit.*]

Act IV

Scene I. London. The Palace

[*Enter* RICHARD (DUKE OF GLOUCESTER*),* GEORGE (DUKE OF CLARENCE*),* SOMERSET *and* MONTAGUE.]

RICHARD
Now tell me, brother Clarence, what think you
Of this new marriage with the Lady Grey?
Hath not our brother made a worthy choice?

GEORGE
Alas, you know 'tis far from hence to France!
How could he stay till Warwick made return?

SOMERSET
My lords, forbear this talk; here comes the King.

[*Flourish. Enter* KING EDWARD*, attended;* LADY GREY *as* QUEEN ELIZABETH*;* PEMBROKE*,* STAFFORD*,* HASTINGS *and others. Four stand on one side, and four on the other.*]

RICHARD
And his well-chosen bride.

GEORGE
I mind to tell him plainly what I think.

KING EDWARD
Now, brother of Clarence, how like you our choice,
That you stand pensive as half malcontent?

GEORGE
As well as Lewis of France or the Earl of Warwick,
Which are so weak of courage and in judgment
That they'll take no offence at our abuse.

KING EDWARD
Suppose they take offence without a cause,
They are but Lewis and Warwick; I am Edward,
Your King and Warwick's, and must have my will.

RICHARD
And shall have your will, because our King.
Yet hasty marriage seldom proveth well.

KING EDWARD
Yea, brother Richard, are you offended too?

RICHARD
Not I.
No, God forbid that I should wish them severed
Whom God hath joined together. Ay, and 'twere pity
To sunder them that yoke so well together.

KING EDWARD
Setting your scorns and your mislike aside,
Tell me some reason why the Lady Grey
Should not become my wife and England's queen.
And you too, Somerset and Montague,
Speak freely what you think.

GEORGE
Then this is mine opinion: that King Lewis
Becomes your enemy for mocking him
About the marriage of the Lady Bona.

RICHARD
And Warwick, doing what you gave in charge,
Is now dishonoured by this new marriage.

KING EDWARD
What if both Lewis and Warwick be appeased
By such invention as I can devise?

MONTAGUE
Yet to have joined with France in such alliance
Would more have strengthened this our commonwealth
'Gainst foreign storms than any home-bred marriage.

HASTINGS
Why, knows not Montague that of itself
England is safe, if true within itself?

MONTAGUE
But the safer when 'tis backed with France.

HASTINGS
'Tis better using France than trusting France.
Let us be backed with God and with the seas
Which He hath giv'n for fence impregnable,
And with their helps only defend ourselves.
In them and in ourselves our safety lies.

GEORGE
For this one speech Lord Hastings well deserves
To have the heir of the Lord Hungerford.

KING EDWARD
Ay, what of that? It was my will and grant;
And for this once my will shall stand for law.

RICHARD
And yet, methinks, your Grace hath not done well
To give the heir and daughter of Lord Scales
Unto the brother of your loving bride.
She better would have fitted me or Clarence;
But in your bride you bury brotherhood.

GEORGE
Or else you would not have bestowed the heir
Of the Lord Bonville on your new wife's son,
And leave your brothers to go speed elsewhere.

KING EDWARD
Alas, poor Clarence, is it for a wife
That thou art malcontent? I will provide thee.

GEORGE
In choosing for yourself you showed your judgment,
Which being shallow, you shall give me leave
To play the broker in mine own behalf;
And to that end I shortly mind to leave you.

KING EDWARD
Leave me or tarry, Edward will be king,
And not be tied unto his brother's will.

QUEEN ELIZABETH
My lords, before it pleased his Majesty
To raise my state to title of a queen,
Do me but right, and you must all confess
That I was not ignoble of descent,
And meaner than myself have had like fortune.
But as this title honours me and mine,
So your dislikes, to whom I would be pleasing,
Doth cloud my joys with danger and with sorrow.

KING EDWARD
My love, forbear to fawn upon their frowns.
What danger or what sorrow can befall thee
So long as Edward is thy constant friend
And their true sovereign, whom they must obey?
Nay, whom they shall obey, and love thee too,
Unless they seek for hatred at my hands;
Which if they do, yet will I keep thee safe,
And they shall feel the vengeance of my wrath.

RICHARD
[*Aside.*] I hear, yet say not much, but think the more.

[*Enter a* POST.]

KING EDWARD
Now, messenger, what letters or what news
From France?

POST
My sovereign liege, no letters, and few words,
But such as I, without your special pardon,
Dare not relate.

KING EDWARD
Go to, we pardon thee. Therefore, in brief,
Tell me their words as near as thou canst guess them.
What answer makes King Lewis unto our letters?

POST
At my depart these were his very words:
"Go tell false Edward, thy supposed king,
That Lewis of France is sending over maskers
To revel it with him and his new bride."

KING EDWARD
Is Lewis so brave? Belike he thinks me Henry.
But what said Lady Bona to my marriage?

POST
These were her words, uttered with mild disdain:
"Tell him, in hope he'll prove a widower shortly,
I'll wear the willow garland for his sake."

KING EDWARD
I blame not her; she could say little less;
She had the wrong. But what said Henry's queen?
For I have heard that she was there in place.

POST
"Tell him," quoth she "my mourning weeds are done,
And I am ready to put armour on."

KING EDWARD
Belike she minds to play the Amazon.
But what said Warwick to these injuries?

POST
He, more incensed against your Majesty
Than all the rest, discharged me with these words:
"Tell him from me that he hath done me wrong,
And therefore I'll uncrown him ere 't be long."

KING EDWARD
Ha! Durst the traitor breathe out so proud words?
Well, I will arm me, being thus forewarned.
They shall have wars and pay for their presumption.
But say, is Warwick friends with Margaret?

POST
Ay, gracious sovereign, they are so linked in friendship
That young Prince Edward marries Warwick's daughter.

GEORGE
Belike the elder; Clarence will have the younger.
Now, brother king, farewell, and sit you fast,
For I will hence to Warwick's other daughter;
That, though I want a kingdom, yet in marriage
I may not prove inferior to yourself.
You that love me and Warwick, follow me.

[*Exit* GEORGE *and* SOMERSET *follows.*]

RICHARD
[*Aside.*] Not I. My thoughts aim at a further matter;
I stay not for the love of Edward, but the crown.

KING EDWARD
Clarence and Somerset both gone to Warwick!
Yet am I armed against the worst can happen,
And haste is needful in this desperate case.
Pembroke and Stafford, you in our behalf
Go levy men and make prepare for war;
They are already, or quickly will be, landed.
Myself in person will straight follow you.

[*Exeunt* PEMBROKE *and* STAFFORD.]

But, ere I go, Hastings and Montague, Resolve my doubt. You twain, of all the rest, Are near to Warwick by blood and by alliance. Tell me if you love Warwick more than me. If it be so, then both depart to him. I rather wish you foes than hollow friends. But if you mind to hold your true obedience, Give me assurance with some friendly vow, That I may never have you in suspect.

MONTAGUE
So God help Montague as he proves true!

HASTINGS
And Hastings as he favours Edward's cause!

KING EDWARD
Now, brother Richard, will you stand by us?

RICHARD
Ay, in despite of all that shall withstand you.

KING EDWARD
Why, so! Then am I sure of victory.
Now, therefore, let us hence, and lose no hour
Till we meet Warwick with his foreign power.

[*Exeunt.*]

Scene II. A Plain in Warwickshire

[*Enter* WARWICK *and* OXFORD *in England, with French Soldiers.*]

WARWICK
Trust me, my lord, all hitherto goes well;
The common people by numbers swarm to us.

[*Enter* GEORGE (DUKE OF CLARENCE*) and* SOMERSET.]

But see where Somerset and Clarence comes. Speak suddenly, my lords: are we all friends?

GEORGE
Fear not that, my lord.

WARWICK
Then, gentle Clarence, welcome unto Warwick;
And welcome, Somerset. I hold it cowardice
To rest mistrustful where a noble heart
Hath pawned an open hand in sign of love;
Else might I think that Clarence, Edward's brother,

Were but a feigned friend to our proceedings.
But welcome, sweet Clarence; my daughter shall be thine.
And now what rests but, in night's coverture,
Thy brother being carelessly encamped,
His soldiers lurking in the towns about,
And but attended by a simple guard,
We may surprise and take him at our pleasure?
Our scouts have found the adventure very easy;
That, as Ulysses and stout Diomede
With sleight and manhood stole to Rhesus' tents,
And brought from thence the Thracian fatal steeds,
So we, well covered with the night's black mantle,
At unawares may beat down Edward's guard,
And seize himself. I say not, slaughter him,
For I intend but only to surprise him.
You that will follow me to this attempt,
Applaud the name of Henry with your leader.

[*They all cry "*HENRY*!"*]

Why then, let's on our way in silent sort, For Warwick and his friends,
God and Saint George!

[*Exeunt.*]

Scene III. Edward's Camp near Warwick

[*Enter three* WATCHMEN *to guard the* KING*'s tent.*]

1 WATCHMAN
Come on, my masters, each man take his stand.
The King by this is set him down to sleep.

2 WATCHMAN
What, will he not to bed?

1 WATCHMAN
Why, no; for he hath made a solemn vow
Never to lie and take his natural rest
Till Warwick or himself be quite suppressed.

2 WATCHMAN
Tomorrow, then, belike shall be the day,
If Warwick be so near as men report.

3 WATCHMAN
But say, I pray, what nobleman is that
That with the King here resteth in his tent?

1 WATCHMAN
'Tis the Lord Hastings, the King's chiefest friend.

3 WATCHMAN
O, is it so? But why commands the King
That his chief followers lodge in towns about him,
While he himself keeps in the cold field?

2 WATCHMAN
'Tis the more honour, because more dangerous.

3 WATCHMAN
Ay, but give me worship and quietness;
I like it better than dangerous honour.
If Warwick knew in what estate he stands,
'Tis to be doubted he would waken him.

1 WATCHMAN
Unless our halberds did shut up his passage.

2 WATCHMAN
Ay, wherefore else guard we his royal tent
But to defend his person from night-foes?

[*Enter* WARWICK, GEORGE (DUKE OF CLARENCE), OXFORD, SOMERSET *and French Soldiers, silent all.*]

WARWICK
This is his tent; and see where stand his guard.
Courage, my masters! Honour now or never!
But follow me, and Edward shall be ours.

1 WATCHMAN
Who goes there?

2 WATCHMAN
Stay, or thou diest.

[WARWICK *and the rest cry all, "*WARWICK*!* WARWICK*!" and set upon the guard, who fly, crying "Arm! Arm!"* WARWICK *and the rest following them.*]

[*The drum playing and trumpet sounding, enter* WARWICK*,* SOMERSET*, and the rest, bringing the* KING *out in his gown, sitting in a chair.* RICHARD (DUKE OF GLOUCESTER*) and* HASTINGS *fly over the stage.*]

SOMERSET
What are they that fly there?

WARWICK
Richard and Hastings.
Let them go. Here is the Duke.

KING EDWARD
The Duke? Why, Warwick, when we parted,
Thou call'dst me king?

WARWICK
Ay, but the case is altered.
When you disgraced me in my embassade,
Then I degraded you from being king,
And come now to create you Duke of York.
Alas, how should you govern any kingdom
That know not how to use ambassadors,
Nor how to be contented with one wife,
Nor how to use your brothers brotherly,
Nor how to study for the people's welfare,
Nor how to shroud yourself from enemies?

KING EDWARD
Yea, brother of Clarence, art thou here too?
Nay, then I see that Edward needs must down.
Yet, Warwick, in despite of all mischance
Of thee thyself and all thy complices,
Edward will always bear himself as king.
Though Fortune's malice overthrow my state,

My mind exceeds the compass of her wheel.

WARWICK
Then for his mind be Edward England's king;

[*Takes off his crown.*]

But Henry now shall wear the English crown And be true king indeed, thou but the shadow. My lord of Somerset, at my request, See that forthwith Duke Edward be conveyed Unto my brother, Archbishop of York. When I have fought with Pembroke and his fellows, I'll follow you and tell what answer Lewis and the Lady Bona send to him. Now, for a while farewell, good Duke of York.

[*They begin to lead him out forcibly.*]

KING EDWARD
What fates impose, that men must needs abide;
It boots not to resist both wind and tide.

[*Exit* KING EDWARD*, led out;* SOMERSET *with him.*]

OXFORD
What now remains, my lords, for us to do,
But march to London with our soldiers?

WARWICK
Ay, that's the first thing that we have to do,
To free King Henry from imprisonment
And see him seated in the regal throne.

[*Exeunt.*]

Scene IV. London. The Palace

[*Enter* QUEEN ELIZABETH *and* RIVERS.]

RIVERS
Madam, what makes you in this sudden change?

QUEEN ELIZABETH
Why, brother Rivers, are you yet to learn
What late misfortune is befall'n King Edward?

RIVERS
What, loss of some pitched battle against Warwick?

QUEEN ELIZABETH
No, but the loss of his own royal person.

RIVERS
Then is my sovereign slain?

QUEEN ELIZABETH
Ay, almost slain, for he is taken prisoner,
Either betrayed by falsehood of his guard
Or by his foe surprised at unawares;
And, as I further have to understand,
Is new committed to the Bishop of York,
Fell Warwick's brother and by that our foe.

RIVERS
These news, I must confess, are full of grief;
Yet, gracious madam, bear it as you may.
Warwick may lose that now hath won the day.

QUEEN ELIZABETH
Till then, fair hope must hinder life's decay;
And I the rather wean me from despair
For love of Edward's offspring in my womb.
This is it that makes me bridle passion
And bear with mildness my misfortune's cross,
Ay, ay, for this I draw in many a tear
And stop the rising of blood-sucking sighs,
Lest with my sighs or tears I blast or drown
King Edward's fruit, true heir to th' English crown.

RIVERS
But, madam, where is Warwick then become?

QUEEN ELIZABETH
I am informed that he comes towards London
To set the crown once more on Henry's head.

Guess thou the rest: King Edward's friends must down.
But to prevent the tyrant's violence—
For trust not him that hath once broken faith—
I'll hence forthwith unto the sanctuary
To save at least the heir of Edward's right.
There shall I rest secure from force and fraud.
Come, therefore, let us fly while we may fly.
If Warwick take us, we are sure to die.

[*Exeunt.*]

Scene V. A park near Middleham Castle in Yorkshire

[*Enter* RICHARD (DUKE OF GLOUCESTER*),* LORD HASTINGS*,* SIR WILLIAM STANLEY *and others.*]

RICHARD
Now, my Lord Hastings and Sir William Stanley,
Leave off to wonder why I drew you hither
Into this chiefest thicket of the park.
Thus stands the case: you know our King, my brother,
Is prisoner to the Bishop here, at whose hands
He hath good usage and great liberty,
And often but attended with weak guard,
Comes hunting this way to disport himself.
I have advertised him by secret means
That if about this hour he make this way,
Under the colour of his usual game,
He shall here find his friends with horse and men
To set him free from his captivity.

[*Enter* KING EDWARD *and a* HUNTSMAN *with him.*]

HUNTSMAN
This way, my lord, for this way lies the game.

KING EDWARD
Nay, this way, man. See where the huntsmen stand.
Now, brother of Gloucester, Lord Hastings, and the rest,
Stand you thus close to steal the Bishop's deer?

RICHARD
Brother, the time and case requireth haste;
Your horse stands ready at the park corner.

KING EDWARD
But whither shall we then?

HASTINGS
To Lynn, my lord, and shipped from thence to Flanders.

RICHARD
Well guessed, believe me, for that was my meaning.

KING EDWARD
Stanley, I will requite thy forwardness.

RICHARD
But wherefore stay we? 'Tis no time to talk.

KING EDWARD
Huntsman, what sayst thou? Wilt thou go along?

HUNTSMAN
Better do so than tarry and be hanged.

RICHARD
Come then, away! Let's ha' no more ado.

KING EDWARD
Bishop, farewell; shield thee from Warwick's frown,
And pray that I may repossess the crown.

[*Exeunt.*]

Scene VI. London. The Tower

[*Enter* KING HENRY, GEORGE (DUKE OF CLARENCE), WARWICK, SOMERSET, *young* RICHMOND, OXFORD, MONTAGUE, *and* LIEUTENANT *of the Tower.*]

KING HENRY
Master Lieutenant, now that God and friends
Have shaken Edward from the regal seat
And turned my captive state to liberty,
My fear to hope, my sorrows unto joys,
At our enlargement what are thy due fees?

LIEUTENANT
Subjects may challenge nothing of their sovereigns;
But if an humble prayer may prevail,
I then crave pardon of your Majesty.

KING HENRY
For what, lieutenant? For well using me?
Nay, be thou sure I'll well requite thy kindness,
For that it made my imprisonment a pleasure;
Ay, such a pleasure as incaged birds
Conceive when, after many moody thoughts,
At last by notes of household harmony
They quite forget their loss of liberty.
But, Warwick, after God thou sett'st me free,
And chiefly therefore I thank God and thee;
He was the author, thou the instrument.
Therefore, that I may conquer Fortune's spite,
By living low where Fortune cannot hurt me,
And that the people of this blessed land
May not be punished with my thwarting stars,
Warwick, although my head still wear the crown,
I here resign my government to thee,
For thou art fortunate in all thy deeds.

WARWICK
Your Grace hath still been famed for virtuous,
And now may seem as wise as virtuous
By spying and avoiding Fortune's malice,
For few men rightly temper with the stars;
Yet in this one thing let me blame your Grace,

For choosing me when Clarence is in place.

GEORGE
No, Warwick, thou art worthy of the sway,
To whom the heavens in thy nativity
Adjudged an olive branch and laurel crown,
As likely to be blest in peace and war;
And therefore I yield thee my free consent.

WARWICK
And I choose Clarence only for Protector.

KING HENRY
Warwick and Clarence, give me both your hands.
Now join your hands, and with your hands your hearts,
That no dissension hinder government.
I make you both Protectors of this land,
While I myself will lead a private life
And in devotion spend my latter days,
To sin's rebuke and my Creator's praise.

WARWICK
What answers Clarence to his sovereign's will?

GEORGE
That he consents, if Warwick yield consent,
For on thy fortune I repose myself.

WARWICK
Why, then, though loath, yet I must be content.
We'll yoke together, like a double shadow
To Henry's body, and supply his place;
I mean, in bearing weight of government,
While he enjoys the honour and his ease.
And, Clarence, now then it is more than needful
Forthwith that Edward be pronounced a traitor
And all his lands and goods be confiscate.

GEORGE
What else? And that succession be determined.

WARWICK
Ay, therein Clarence shall not want his part.

KING HENRY
But with the first of all your chief affairs
Let me entreat—for I command no more—
That Margaret your Queen and my son Edward
Be sent for to return from France with speed;
For till I see them here, by doubtful fear
My joy of liberty is half eclipsed.

GEORGE
It shall be done, my sovereign, with all speed.

KING HENRY
My Lord of Somerset, what youth is that
Of whom you seem to have so tender care?

SOMERSET
My liege, it is young Henry, Earl of Richmond.

KING HENRY
Come hither, England's hope. If secret powers

[*Lays his hand on his head.*]

Suggest but truth to my divining thoughts, This pretty lad will prove our country's bliss. His looks are full of peaceful majesty, His head by nature framed to wear a crown, His hand to wield a sceptre, and himself Likely in time to bless a regal throne. Make much of him, my lords, for this is he Must help you more than you are hurt by me.

[*Enter a* POST.]

WARWICK
What news, my friend?

POST
That Edward is escaped from your brother
And fled, as he hears since, to Burgundy.

WARWICK
Unsavoury news! But how made he escape?

POST
He was conveyed by Richard, Duke of Gloucester
And the Lord Hastings, who attended him

In secret ambush on the forest side
And from the Bishop's huntsmen rescued him,
For hunting was his daily exercise.

WARWICK
My brother was too careless of his charge.
But let us hence, my sovereign, to provide
A salve for any sore that may betide.

[*Exeunt all but* SOMERSET, RICHMOND *and* OXFORD.]

SOMERSET
My lord, I like not of this flight of Edward's,
For doubtless Burgundy will yield him help,
And we shall have more wars before 't be long.
As Henry's late presaging prophecy
Did glad my heart with hope of this young Richmond,
So doth my heart misgive me, in these conflicts
What may befall him, to his harm and ours.
Therefore, Lord Oxford, to prevent the worst,
Forthwith we'll send him hence to Brittany
Till storms be past of civil enmity.

OXFORD
Ay, for if Edward repossess the crown,
'Tis like that Richmond with the rest shall down.

SOMERSET
It shall be so. He shall to Brittany.
Come therefore, let's about it speedily.

[*Exeunt.*]

Scene VII. Before York

[*Flourish. Enter* KING EDWARD, RICHARD (DUKE OF GLOUCESTER), HASTINGS *and Soldiers.*]

KING EDWARD
Now, brother Richard, Lord Hastings, and the rest,
Yet thus far Fortune maketh us amends,
And says that once more I shall interchange
My waned state for Henry's regal crown.
Well have we passed and now repassed the seas,
And brought desired help from Burgundy.
What then remains, we being thus arrived
From Ravenspurgh haven before the gates of York,
But that we enter as into our dukedom?

RICHARD
The gates made fast! Brother, I like not this;
For many men that stumble at the threshold
Are well foretold that danger lurks within.

KING EDWARD
Tush, man, abodements must not now affright us.
By fair or foul means we must enter in,
For hither will our friends repair to us.

HASTINGS
My liege, I'll knock once more to summon them.

[*Enter on the walls, the* MAYOR *of* YORK *and his Brethren.*]

MAYOR
My lords, we were forewarned of your coming
And shut the gates for safety of ourselves,
For now we owe allegiance unto Henry.

KING EDWARD
But, master Mayor, if Henry be your king,
Yet Edward, at the least, is Duke of York.

MAYOR
True, my good lord, I know you for no less.

KING EDWARD
Why, and I challenge nothing but my dukedom,
As being well content with that alone.

RICHARD
[*Aside.*] But when the fox hath once got in his nose,
He'll soon find means to make the body follow.

HASTINGS
Why, master Mayor, why stand you in a doubt?
Open the gates; we are King Henry's friends.

MAYOR
Ay, say you so? The gates shall then be opened.

[*He descends.*]

RICHARD
A wise, stout captain, and soon persuaded.

HASTINGS
The good old man would fain that all were well,
So 'twere not long of him; but, being entered,
I doubt not, I, but we shall soon persuade
Both him and all his brothers unto reason.

[*Enter the* MAYOR *and two* ALDERMEN *below.*]

KING EDWARD
So, master Mayor, these gates must not be shut
But in the night or in the time of war.
What, fear not, man, but yield me up the keys;

[*Takes his keys.*]

For Edward will defend the town and thee And all those friends that deign to follow me.

[*March. Enter* MONTGOMERY *with drum and Soldiers.*]

RICHARD
Brother, this is Sir John Montgomery,
Our trusty friend unless I be deceived.

KING EDWARD
Welcome, Sir John! But why come you in arms?

MONTGOMERY
To help King Edward in his time of storm,
As every loyal subject ought to do.

KING EDWARD
Thanks, good Montgomery; but we now forget
Our title to the crown, and only claim
Our dukedom till God please to send the rest.

MONTGOMERY
Then fare you well, for I will hence again.
I came to serve a king, and not a duke.
Drummer, strike up, and let us march away.

[*The drum begins to march.*]

KING EDWARD
Nay, stay, Sir John, a while, and we'll debate
By what safe means the crown may be recovered.

MONTGOMERY
What talk you of debating? In few words,
If you'll not here proclaim yourself our king,
I'll leave you to your fortune and be gone
To keep them back that come to succour you.
Why shall we fight if you pretend no title?

RICHARD
Why, brother, wherefore stand you on nice points?

KING EDWARD
When we grow stronger, then we'll make our claim.
Till then 'tis wisdom to conceal our meaning.

HASTINGS
Away with scrupulous wit! Now arms must rule.

RICHARD
And fearless minds climb soonest unto crowns.
Brother, we will proclaim you out of hand;
The bruit thereof will bring you many friends.

KING EDWARD
Then be it as you will; for 'tis my right,
And Henry but usurps the diadem.

MONTGOMERY
Ay, now my sovereign speaketh like himself,
And now will I be Edward's champion.

HASTINGS
Sound, trumpet; Edward shall be here proclaimed.
Come, fellow soldier, make thou proclamation.

[*Gives him a paper. Flourish.*]

SOLDIER
[*Reads.*] *Edward the Fourth, by the Grace of God, King of England and France, and Lord of Ireland, etc.*

MONTGOMERY
And whoso'er gainsays King Edward's right,
By this I challenge him to single fight.

[*Throws down his gauntlet.*]

ALL
Long live Edward the Fourth!

KING EDWARD
Thanks, brave Montgomery, and thanks unto you all.
If Fortune serve me, I'll requite this kindness.
Now for this night let's harbour here in York,
And when the morning sun shall raise his car
Above the border of this horizon
We'll forward towards Warwick and his mates;
For well I wot that Henry is no soldier.
Ah, froward Clarence, how evil it beseems thee
To flatter Henry and forsake thy brother!
Yet, as we may, we'll meet both thee and Warwick.
Come on, brave soldiers; doubt not of the day,
And, that once gotten, doubt not of large pay.

[*Exeunt.*]

Scene VIII. London. The Palace

[*Flourish. Enter* KING HENRY, WARWICK, MONTAGUE, GEORGE (DUKE OF CLARENCE), OXFORD *and* EXETER.]

WARWICK
What counsel, lords? Edward from Belgia,
With hasty Germans and blunt Hollanders,
Hath passed in safety through the Narrow Seas,
And with his troops doth march amain to London;
And many giddy people flock to him.

KING HENRY
Let's levy men and beat him back again.

GEORGE
A little fire is quickly trodden out,
Which, being suffered, rivers cannot quench.

WARWICK
In Warwickshire I have true-hearted friends,
Not mutinous in peace, yet bold in war.
Those will I muster up; and thou, son Clarence,
Shalt stir up in Suffolk, Norfolk, and in Kent
The knights and gentlemen to come with thee.
Thou, brother Montague, in Buckingham,
Northampton, and in Leicestershire shalt find
Men well inclined to hear what thou command'st.
And thou, brave Oxford, wondrous well beloved,
In Oxfordshire shalt muster up thy friends.
My sovereign, with the loving citizens,
Like to his island girt in with the ocean,
Or modest Dian circled with her nymphs,
Shall rest in London till we come to him.
Fair lords, take leave and stand not to reply.
Farewell, my sovereign.

KING HENRY
Farewell, my Hector, and my Troy's true hope.

GEORGE
In sign of truth, I kiss your Highness' hand.

KING HENRY
Well-minded Clarence, be thou fortunate.

MONTAGUE
Comfort, my lord; and so I take my leave.

OXFORD
And thus [*kissing* HENRY*'s hand*] I seal my truth, and bid adieu.

KING HENRY
Sweet Oxford, and my loving Montague,
And all at once, once more a happy farewell.

WARWICK
Farewell, sweet lords; let's meet at Coventry.

[*Exeunt all but* KING HENRY *and* EXETER.]

KING HENRY
Here at the palace will I rest a while.
Cousin of Exeter, what thinks your lordship?
Methinks the power that Edward hath in field
Should not be able to encounter mine.

EXETER
The doubt is that he will seduce the rest.

KING HENRY
That's not my fear; my meed hath got me fame.
I have not stopped mine ears to their demands,
Nor posted off their suits with slow delays;
My pity hath been balm to heal their wounds,
My mildness hath allayed their swelling griefs,
My mercy dried their water-flowing tears.
I have not been desirous of their wealth
Nor much oppressed them with great subsidies,
Nor forward of revenge, though they much erred.
Then why should they love Edward more than me?
No, Exeter, these graces challenge grace;
And when the lion fawns upon the lamb,

The lamb will never cease to follow him.

[*Shout within "A* YORK*! A* YORK*!"*]

EXETER
Hark, hark, my lord, what shouts are these?

[*Enter* KING EDWARD*,* RICHARD (DUKE OF GLOUCESTER*) and Soldiers.*]

KING EDWARD
Seize on the shame-faced Henry, bear him hence,
And once again proclaim us King of England.
You are the fount that makes small brooks to flow.
Now stops thy spring; my sea shall suck them dry
And swell so much the higher by their ebb.
Hence with him to the Tower. Let him not speak.

[*Exeunt some with* KING HENRY.]

And, lords, towards Coventry bend we our course, Where peremptory Warwick now remains. The sun shines hot, and, if we use delay, Cold biting winter mars our hoped-for hay.

RICHARD
Away betimes, before his forces join,
And take the great-grown traitor unawares.
Brave warriors, march amain towards Coventry.

[*Exeunt.*]

Act V

Scene I. Coventry

[*Enter,* WARWICK, THE MAYOR OF COVENTRY, TWO MESSENGERS *and others, upon the walls.*]

WARWICK
Where is the post that came from valiant Oxford?
How far hence is thy lord, mine honest fellow?

1 MESSENGER
By this at Dunsmore, marching hitherward.

WARWICK
How far off is our brother Montague?
Where is the post that came from Montague?

2 MESSENGER
By this at Daintry, with a puissant troop.

[*Enter* SIR JOHN SOMERVILLE.]

WARWICK
Say, Somerville, what says my loving son?
And, by thy guess, how nigh is Clarence now?

SOMERVILLE
At Southam I did leave him with his forces
And do expect him here some two hours hence.

[*Drum heard.*]

WARWICK
Then Clarence is at hand; I hear his drum.

SOMERVILLE
It is not his, my lord; here Southam lies.
The drum your honour hears marcheth from Warwick.

WARWICK
Who should that be? Belike, unlooked-for friends.

SOMERVILLE
They are at hand, and you shall quickly know.

[*March. Flourish. Enter* KING EDWARD, RICHARD (DUKE OF GLOUCESTER*) and Soldiers.*]

KING EDWARD
Go, trumpet, to the walls and sound a parle.

RICHARD
See how the surly Warwick mans the wall.

WARWICK
O, unbid spite! Is sportful Edward come?
Where slept our scouts, or how are they seduced,
That we could hear no news of his repair?

KING EDWARD
Now, Warwick, wilt thou ope the city gates,
Speak gentle words and humbly bend thy knee?
Call Edward King and at his hands beg mercy,
And he shall pardon thee these outrages.

WARWICK
Nay, rather, wilt thou draw thy forces hence,
Confess who set thee up and plucked thee down,
Call Warwick patron and be penitent,
And thou shalt still remain the Duke of York.

RICHARD
I thought, at least, he would have said the King;

Or did he make the jest against his will?

WARWICK
Is not a dukedom, sir, a goodly gift?

RICHARD
Ay, by my faith, for a poor earl to give;
I'll do thee service for so good a gift.

WARWICK
'Twas I that gave the kingdom to thy brother.

KING EDWARD
Why, then, 'tis mine, if but by Warwick's gift.

WARWICK
Thou art no Atlas for so great a weight;
And, weakling, Warwick takes his gift again;
And Henry is my King, Warwick his subject.

KING EDWARD
But Warwick's king is Edward's prisoner;
And, gallant Warwick, do but answer this:
What is the body when the head is off?

RICHARD
Alas, that Warwick had no more forecast,
But, whiles he thought to steal the single ten,
The king was slily fingered from the deck!
You left poor Henry at the Bishop's palace,
And ten to one you'll meet him in the Tower.

KING EDWARD
'Tis even so; yet you are Warwick still.

RICHARD
Come, Warwick, take the time; kneel down, kneel down.
Nay, when? Strike now, or else the iron cools.

WARWICK
I had rather chop this hand off at a blow
And with the other fling it at thy face,
Than bear so low a sail to strike to thee.

KING EDWARD
Sail how thou canst, have wind and tide thy friend,
This hand, fast wound about thy coal-black hair,
Shall, whiles thy head is warm and new cut off,
Write in the dust this sentence with thy blood:
"Wind-changing Warwick now can change no more."

[*Enter* OXFORD *with drum and colours.*]

WARWICK
O cheerful colours! See where Oxford comes!

OXFORD
Oxford, Oxford, for Lancaster!

[*He and his forces enter the city.*]

RICHARD
The gates are open; let us enter too.

KING EDWARD
So other foes may set upon our backs.
Stand we in good array, for they no doubt
Will issue out again and bid us battle;
If not, the city being but of small defence,
We'll quietly rouse the traitors in the same.

WARWICK
O, welcome, Oxford, for we want thy help.

[*Enter* MONTAGUE *with drum and colours.*]

MONTAGUE
Montague, Montague, for Lancaster!

[*He and his forces enter the city.*]

RICHARD
Thou and thy brother both shall buy this treason
Even with the dearest blood your bodies bear.

KING EDWARD
The harder matched, the greater victory.
My mind presageth happy gain and conquest.

[*Enter* SOMERSET *with drum and colours.*]

SOMERSET
Somerset, Somerset, for Lancaster!

[*He and his forces enter the city.*]

RICHARD
Two of thy name, both Dukes of Somerset,
Have sold their lives unto the House of York;
And thou shalt be the third if this sword hold.

[*Enter* GEORGE (DUKE OF CLARENCE*) with drum and colours.*]

WARWICK
And lo, where George of Clarence sweeps along,
Of force enough to bid his brother battle;
With whom an upright zeal to right prevails
More than the nature of a brother's love.

[RICHARD *and* GEORGE *whisper.*]

Come, Clarence, come; thou wilt if Warwick call.

GEORGE
Father of Warwick, know you what this means?

[*Taking the red rose from his hat and throws the rose at* WARWICK.]

Look here, I throw my infamy at thee. I will not ruinate my father's house, Who gave his blood to lime the stones together, And set up Lancaster. Why, trowest thou, Warwick, That Clarence is so harsh, so blunt, unnatural, To bend the fatal instruments of war Against his brother and his lawful King? Perhaps thou wilt object my holy oath. To keep that oath were more impiety Than Jephthah's when he sacrificed his daughter. I am so sorry for my trespass made That, to deserve well at my brother's hands, I here proclaim myself thy mortal foe, With resolution, whereso'er I meet thee— As I will meet thee if thou stir abroad— To plague thee for thy foul misleading me. And so,

proud-hearted Warwick, I defy thee, And to my brother turn my blushing cheeks. Pardon me, Edward, I will make amends. And, Richard, do not frown upon my faults, For I will henceforth be no more unconstant.

KING EDWARD
Now, welcome more, and ten times more beloved,
Than if thou never hadst deserved our hate.

RICHARD
Welcome, good Clarence; this is brother-like.

WARWICK
O passing traitor, perjured and unjust!

KING EDWARD
What, Warwick, wilt thou leave the town and fight?
Or shall we beat the stones about thine ears?

WARWICK
Alas! I am not cooped here for defence!
I will away towards Barnet presently
And bid thee battle, Edward, if thou dar'st.

KING EDWARD
Yes, Warwick, Edward dares, and leads the way.
Lords, to the field! Saint George and victory!

[*Exeunt. March.* WARWICK *and his company follows.*]

Scene II. A Field of Battle near Barnet

[*Alarum and excursions. Enter* KING EDWARD *bringing forth* WARWICK *wounded.*]

KING EDWARD
So, lie thou there. Die thou, and die our fear,
For Warwick was a bug that feared us all.
Now, Montague, sit fast; I seek for thee,
That Warwick's bones may keep thine company.

[*Exit.*]

WARWICK
Ah, who is nigh? Come to me, friend or foe,
And tell me who is victor, York or Warwick?
Why ask I that? My mangled body shows,
My blood, my want of strength, my sick heart shows
That I must yield my body to the earth
And, by my fall, the conquest to my foe.
Thus yields the cedar to the axe's edge,
Whose arms gave shelter to the princely eagle,
Under whose shade the ramping lion slept,
Whose top branch overpeered Jove's spreading tree,
And kept low shrubs from winter's pow'rful wind.
These eyes, that now are dimmed with death's black veil,
Have been as piercing as the midday sun,
To search the secret treasons of the world;
The wrinkles in my brows, now filled with blood,
Were likened oft to kingly sepulchres,
For who lived King but I could dig his grave?
And who durst smile when Warwick bent his brow?
Lo, now my glory smeared in dust and blood!
My parks, my walks, my manors that I had,
Even now forsake me; and of all my lands
Is nothing left me but my body's length.
Why, what is pomp, rule, reign, but earth and dust?
And live we how we can, yet die we must.

[*Enter* OXFORD *and* SOMERSET.]

SOMERSET
Ah, Warwick, Warwick, wert thou as we are,
We might recover all our loss again.
The Queen from France hath brought a puissant power;
Even now we heard the news. Ah, couldst thou fly!

WARWICK
Why, then I would not fly. Ah, Montague!
If thou be there, sweet brother, take my hand
And with thy lips keep in my soul awhile.
Thou lov'st me not; for, brother, if thou didst,
Thy tears would wash this cold congealed blood
That glues my lips and will not let me speak.

Come quickly, Montague, or I am dead.

SOMERSET
Ah, Warwick, Montague hath breathed his last,
And to the latest gasp cried out for Warwick,
And said "Commend me to my valiant brother."
And more he would have said, and more he spoke,
Which sounded like a cannon in a vault,
That mought not be distinguished; but at last
I well might hear, delivered with a groan,
"O farewell, Warwick!"

WARWICK
Sweet rest his soul! Fly, lords, and save yourselves,
For Warwick bids you all farewell, to meet in heaven.

[*He dies.*]

OXFORD
Away, away, to meet the Queen's great power!

[*Here they bear away his body. Exeunt.*]

Scene III. Another Part of the Field

[*Flourish. Enter* KING EDWARD *in triumph, with* RICHARD, GEORGE *and the rest.*]

KING EDWARD
Thus far our fortune keeps an upward course,
And we are graced with wreaths of victory.
But in the midst of this bright-shining day,
I spy a black, suspicious, threat'ning cloud
That will encounter with our glorious sun
Ere he attain his easeful western bed.
I mean, my lords, those powers that the Queen
Hath raised in Gallia have arrived our coast
And, as we hear, march on to fight with us.

GEORGE
A little gale will soon disperse that cloud
And blow it to the source from whence it came;
Thy very beams will dry those vapours up,
For every cloud engenders not a storm.

RICHARD
The Queen is valued thirty thousand strong,
And Somerset, with Oxford, fled to her.
If she have time to breathe, be well assured
Her faction will be full as strong as ours.

KING EDWARD
We are advertised by our loving friends
That they do hold their course toward Tewkesbury.
We, having now the best at Barnet field,
Will thither straight, for willingness rids way;
And, as we march, our strength will be augmented
In every county as we go along.
Strike up the drum! cry "Courage!" and away.

[*Exeunt.*]

Scene IV. Plains near Tewkesbury

[*Flourish. March. Enter* QUEEN MARGARET, PRINCE EDWARD, SOMERSET, OXFORD *and Soldiers.*]

QUEEN MARGARET
Great lords, wise men ne'er sit and wail their loss,
But cheerly seek how to redress their harms.
What though the mast be now blown overboard,
The cable broke, the holding-anchor lost,
And half our sailors swallowed in the flood?
Yet lives our pilot still. Is 't meet that he
Should leave the helm and, like a fearful lad,
With tearful eyes add water to the sea
And give more strength to that which hath too much,
Whiles in his moan the ship splits on the rock,

Which industry and courage might have saved?
Ah, what a shame, ah, what a fault were this!
Say Warwick was our anchor; what of that?
And Montague our topmast; what of him?
Our slaughtered friends the tackles; what of these?
Why, is not Oxford here another anchor?
And Somerset another goodly mast?
The friends of France our shrouds and tacklings?
And, though unskilful, why not Ned and I
For once allowed the skilful pilot's charge?
We will not from the helm to sit and weep,
But keep our course, though the rough wind say no,
From shelves and rocks that threaten us with wrack.
As good to chide the waves as speak them fair.
And what is Edward but a ruthless sea?
What Clarence but a quicksand of deceit?
And Richard but a ragged fatal rock?
All these the enemies to our poor bark?
Say you can swim: alas, 'tis but a while!
Tread on the sand: why, there you quickly sink;
Bestride the rock: the tide will wash you off,
Or else you famish; that's a threefold death.
This speak I, lords, to let you understand,
If case some one of you would fly from us,
That there's no hoped-for mercy with the brothers
More than with ruthless waves, with sands, and rocks.
Why, courage then! What cannot be avoided
'Twere childish weakness to lament or fear.

PRINCE EDWARD
Methinks a woman of this valiant spirit
Should, if a coward heard her speak these words,
Infuse his breast with magnanimity
And make him, naked, foil a man at arms.
I speak not this as doubting any here;
For did I but suspect a fearful man,
He should have leave to go away betimes,
Lest in our need he might infect another
And make him of the like spirit to himself.
If any such be here, as God forbid!
Let him depart before we need his help.

OXFORD
Women and children of so high a courage,
And warriors faint! Why, 'twere perpetual shame.
O, brave young Prince, thy famous grandfather
Doth live again in thee. Long mayst thou live
To bear his image and renew his glories!

SOMERSET
And he that will not fight for such a hope,
Go home to bed and, like the owl by day,
If he arise, be mocked and wondered at.

QUEEN MARGARET
Thanks, gentle Somerset. Sweet Oxford, thanks.

PRINCE EDWARD
And take his thanks that yet hath nothing else.

[*Enter a* MESSENGER.]

MESSENGER
Prepare you, lords, for Edward is at hand
Ready to fight; therefore be resolute.

OXFORD
I thought no less. It is his policy
To haste thus fast, to find us unprovided.

SOMERSET
But he's deceived; we are in readiness.

QUEEN MARGARET
This cheers my heart, to see your forwardness.

OXFORD
Here pitch our battle; hence we will not budge.

[*Flourish and march. Enter* KING EDWARD, RICHARD, GEORGE *and Soldiers.*]

KING EDWARD
Brave followers, yonder stands the thorny wood
Which by the heaven's assistance and your strength

Must by the roots be hewn up yet ere night.
I need not add more fuel to your fire,
For, well I wot, ye blaze to burn them out.
Give signal to the fight, and to it, lords!

QUEEN MARGARET
Lords, knights, and gentlemen, what I should say
My tears gainsay; for every word I speak
Ye see I drink the water of my eye.
Therefore, no more but this: Henry, your sovereign,
Is prisoner to the foe, his state usurped,
His realm a slaughter-house, his subjects slain,
His statutes cancelled, and his treasure spent;
And yonder is the wolf that makes this spoil.
You fight in justice. Then, in God's name, lords,
Be valiant and give signal to the fight.

[*Alarum, retreat, excursions. Exeunt both armies*]

Scene V. Another part of the Field

[*Flourish. Enter* KING EDWARD, RICHARD, GEORGE *and Soldiers; with* QUEEN MARGARET, OXFORD *and* SOMERSET *as prisoners.*]

KING EDWARD
Now here a period of tumultuous broils.
Away with Oxford to Hames Castle straight.
For Somerset, off with his guilty head.
Go, bear them hence; I will not hear them speak.

OXFORD
For my part, I'll not trouble thee with words.

SOMERSET
Nor I, but stoop with patience to my fortune.

[*Exeunt* OXFORD *and* SOMERSET, *guarded.*]

QUEEN MARGARET
So part we sadly in this troublous world,
To meet with joy in sweet Jerusalem.

KING EDWARD
Is proclamation made that who finds Edward
Shall have a high reward, and he his life?

RICHARD
It is, and lo where youthful Edward comes.

[*Enter soldiers with* PRINCE EDWARD.]

KING EDWARD
Bring forth the gallant; let us hear him speak.
What, can so young a man begin to prick?
Edward, what satisfaction canst thou make
For bearing arms, for stirring up my subjects,
And all the trouble thou hast turned me to?

PRINCE EDWARD
Speak like a subject, proud, ambitious York.
Suppose that I am now my father's mouth;
Resign thy chair, and where I stand kneel thou,
Whilst I propose the selfsame words to thee
Which, traitor, thou wouldst have me answer to.

QUEEN MARGARET
Ah, thy father had been so resolved!

RICHARD
That you might still have worn the petticoat
And ne'er have stol'n the breech from Lancaster.

PRINCE EDWARD
Let Aesop fable in a winter's night;
His currish riddle sorts not with this place.

RICHARD
By heaven, brat, I'll plague you for that word.

QUEEN MARGARET
Ay, thou wast born to be a plague to men.

RICHARD
For God's sake, take away this captive scold.

PRINCE EDWARD
Nay, take away this scolding crookback rather.

KING EDWARD
Peace, wilful boy, or I will charm your tongue.

GEORGE
Untutored lad, thou art too malapert.

PRINCE EDWARD
I know my duty; you are all undutiful.
Lascivious Edward, and thou perjured George,
And thou misshapen Dick, I tell ye all
I am your better, traitors as ye are,
And thou usurp'st my father's right and mine.

KING EDWARD
Take that, the likeness of this railer here.

[*Stabs him.*]

RICHARD
Sprawl'st thou? Take that to end thy agony.

[*Stabs him.*]

GEORGE
And there's for twitting me with perjury.

[*Stabs him.*]

QUEEN MARGARET
O, kill me too!

RICHARD
Marry, and shall.

[*Offers to kill her.*]

KING EDWARD
Hold, Richard, hold; for we have done too much.

RICHARD
Why should she live to fill the world with words?

KING EDWARD
What, doth she swoon? Use means for her recovery.

RICHARD
Clarence, excuse me to the King my brother.
I'll hence to London on a serious matter.
Ere ye come there, be sure to hear some news.

GEORGE
What? What?

RICHARD
The Tower, the Tower!

[*Exit.*]

QUEEN MARGARET
O Ned, sweet Ned, speak to thy mother, boy.
Canst thou not speak? O traitors, murderers!
They that stabbed Caesar shed no blood at all,
Did not offend, nor were not worthy blame,
If this foul deed were by to equal it.
He was a man; this, in respect, a child,
And men ne'er spend their fury on a child.
What's worse than murderer, that I may name it?
No, no, my heart will burst an if I speak;
And I will speak, that so my heart may burst.
Butchers and villains, bloody cannibals!
How sweet a plant have you untimely cropped!
You have no children, butchers; if you had,
The thought of them would have stirred up remorse.
But if you ever chance to have a child,
Look in his youth to have him so cut off
As, deathsmen, you have rid this sweet young prince!

KING EDWARD
Away with her; go bear her hence perforce.

QUEEN MARGARET
Nay, never bear me hence, dispatch me here.
Here sheathe thy sword; I'll pardon thee my death.
What, wilt thou not? Then, Clarence, do it thou.

GEORGE
By heaven, I will not do thee so much ease.

QUEEN MARGARET
Good Clarence, do; sweet Clarence, do thou do it.

GEORGE
Didst thou not hear me swear I would not do it?

QUEEN MARGARET
Ay, but thou usest to forswear thyself.
'Twas sin before, but now 'tis charity.
What, wilt thou not? Where is that devil's butcher, Richard,
Hard-favoured Richard? Richard, where art thou?
Thou art not here. Murder is thy alms-deed;
Petitioners for blood thou ne'er putt'st back.

KING EDWARD
Away, I say! I charge ye, bear her hence.

QUEEN MARGARET
So come to you and yours as to this prince!

[*She is taken out.*]

KING EDWARD
Where's Richard gone?

GEORGE
To London all in post, and, as I guess,
To make a bloody supper in the Tower.

KING EDWARD
He's sudden if a thing comes in his head.
Now march we hence. Discharge the common sort
With pay and thanks, and let's away to London

And see our gentle Queen how well she fares.
By this, I hope, she hath a son for me.

[*Exeunt.*]

Scene VI. London. The Tower

[*Enter* KING HENRY *and* RICHARD, *with the* LIEUTENANT *on the walls.*]

RICHARD
Good day, my lord. What, at your book so hard?

KING HENRY
Ay, my good lord—my lord, I should say rather.
'Tis sin to flatter; "good" was little better:
"Good Gloucester" and "good devil" were alike,
And both preposterous; therefore, not "good lord".

RICHARD
Sirrah, leave us to ourselves; we must confer.

[*Exit* LIEUTENANT.]

KING HENRY
So flies the reckless shepherd from the wolf;
So first the harmless sheep doth yield his fleece,
And next his throat unto the butcher's knife.
What scene of death hath Roscius now to act?

RICHARD
Suspicion always haunts the guilty mind;
The thief doth fear each bush an officer.

KING HENRY
The bird that hath been limed in a bush
With trembling wings misdoubteth every bush;
And I, the hapless male to one sweet bird,
Have now the fatal object in my eye
Where my poor young was limed, was caught, and killed.

RICHARD
Why, what a peevish fool was that of Crete
That taught his son the office of a fowl!
And yet, for all his wings, the fool was drowned.

KING HENRY
I, Daedalus; my poor boy, Icarus;
Thy father, Minos, that denied our course;
The sun that seared the wings of my sweet boy,
Thy brother Edward; and thyself, the sea
Whose envious gulf did swallow up his life.
Ah, kill me with thy weapon, not with words!
My breast can better brook thy dagger's point
Than can my ears that tragic history.
But wherefore dost thou come? Is 't for my life?

RICHARD
Think'st thou I am an executioner?

KING HENRY
A persecutor I am sure thou art.
If murdering innocents be executing,
Why, then thou art an executioner.

RICHARD
Thy son I killed for his presumption.

KING HENRY
Hadst thou been killed when first thou didst presume,
Thou hadst not lived to kill a son of mine.
And thus I prophesy: that many a thousand
Which now mistrust no parcel of my fear,
And many an old man's sigh, and many a widow's,
And many an orphan's water-standing eye,
Men for their sons', wives for their husbands',
Orphans for their parents' timeless death,
Shall rue the hour that ever thou wast born.
The owl shrieked at thy birth, an evil sign;
The night-crow cried, aboding luckless time;
Dogs howled, and hideous tempest shook down trees;
The raven rooked her on the chimney's top,
And chatt'ring pies in dismal discord sung;

Thy mother felt more than a mother's pain,
And yet brought forth less than a mother's hope,
To wit, an indigested and deformed lump,
Not like the fruit of such a goodly tree.
Teeth hadst thou in thy head when thou wast born,
To signify thou cam'st to bite the world;
And, if the rest be true which I have heard,
Thou cam'st—

RICHARD
I'll hear no more. Die, prophet, in thy speech.

[*Stabs him.*]

For this, amongst the rest, was I ordained.

KING HENRY
Ay, and for much more slaughter after this.
O God, forgive my sins, and pardon thee!

[*Dies.*]

RICHARD
What, will the aspiring blood of Lancaster
Sink in the ground? I thought it would have mounted.
See how my sword weeps for the poor King's death.
O, may such purple tears be always shed
From those that wish the downfall of our house!
If any spark of life be yet remaining,
Down, down to hell; and say I sent thee thither—

[*Stabs him again.*]

I that have neither pity, love, nor fear. Indeed, 'tis true that Henry told me of, For I have often heard my mother say I came into the world with my legs forward. Had I not reason, think ye, to make haste And seek their ruin that usurped our right? The midwife wondered, and the women cried "O, Jesus bless us, he is born with teeth!" And so I was, which plainly signified That I should snarl, and bite, and play the dog. Then, since the heavens have shaped my body so, Let hell make crooked my mind to answer it. I have no brother, I am like no brother; And this word "love," which greybeards call divine, Be resident in men like one another, And not in me. I am myself alone. Clarence, beware;

thou keep'st me from the light, But I will sort a pitchy day for thee; For I will buzz abroad such prophecies That Edward shall be fearful of his life; And then, to purge his fear, I'll be thy death. King Henry and the Prince his son are gone; Clarence, thy turn is next, and then the rest, Counting myself but bad till I be best. I'll throw thy body in another room, And triumph, Henry, in thy day of doom.

[*Exit with the body.*]

Scene VII. London. The Palace

[*Flourish. Enter* KING EDWARD, QUEEN ELIZABETH, GEORGE, RICHARD, HASTINGS, NURSE, *carrying infant* PRINCE EDWARD, *and Attendants.*]

KING EDWARD
Once more we sit in England's royal throne,
Repurchased with the blood of enemies.
What valiant foemen, like to autumn's corn,
Have we mowed down in tops of all their pride!
Three Dukes of Somerset, threefold renowned
For hardy and undoubted champions;
Two Cliffords, as the father and the son;
And two Northumberlands; two braver men
Ne'er spurred their coursers at the trumpet's sound;
With them the two brave bears, Warwick and Montague,
That in their chains fettered the kingly lion
And made the forest tremble when they roared.
Thus have we swept suspicion from our seat
And made our footstool of security.
Come hither, Bess, and let me kiss my boy.
Young Ned, for thee thine uncles and myself
Have in our armours watched the winter's night,
Went all afoot in summer's scalding heat,
That thou mightst repossess the crown in peace;
And of our labours thou shalt reap the gain.

RICHARD
[*Aside.*] I'll blast his harvest, if your head were laid;
For yet I am not looked on in the world.
This shoulder was ordained so thick to heave,
And heave it shall some weight or break my back.
Work thou the way, and that shall execute.

KING EDWARD
Clarence and Gloucester, love my lovely Queen;
And kiss your princely nephew, brothers both.

GEORGE
The duty that I owe unto your Majesty
I seal upon the lips of this sweet babe.

QUEEN ELIZABETH
Thanks, noble Clarence; worthy brother, thanks.

RICHARD
And, that I love the tree from whence thou sprang'st,
Witness the loving kiss I give the fruit.
[*Aside.*] To say the truth, so Judas kissed his master
And cried "All hail!" when as he meant all harm.

KING EDWARD
Now am I seated as my soul delights,
Having my country's peace and brothers' loves.

GEORGE
What will your Grace have done with Margaret?
Reignier, her father, to the King of France
Hath pawned the Sicils and Jerusalem,
And hither have they sent it for her ransom.

KING EDWARD
Away with her and waft her hence to France.
And now what rests but that we spend the time
With stately triumphs, mirthful comic shows,
Such as befits the pleasure of the court?
Sound drums and trumpets! Farewell, sour annoy!
For here, I hope, begins our lasting joy.

[*Exeunt.*]

This offline edition was generated from the canonical TEI text.

bookstacks.org