

P R O P O S A L S

For Printing a New EDITION of the

P L A Y S

O F

WILLIAM SHAKESPEAR,

W I T H

NOTES CRITICAL and EXPLANATORY,

I N W H I C H

The TEXT will be corrected : The VARIOUS READINGS remarked : The CONJECTURES of former EDITORS examin'd, and their OMISSIONS supply'd.

By the AUTHOR of the

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS on the Tragedy of *MACBETH*.

I.

THIS WORK will be printed in TEN small Volumes, of the same Paper and Print with the following Specimen.

II.

THE Price to Subscribers will be one Pound five Shillings in Sheets, of which half a Guinea is to be paid at the Time of Subscribing.

Note, It is hoped the Undertakers of this Edition will be thought entitled to some Regard, when it is considered that the Price of Mr *Pope's* was six Guineas, Mr *Theobald's* two, and Sir *T. H.'s* three Guineas.

M A C B E T H. 11

ACT III. SCENE II.

Manent Macbeth and a servant.

Sirrah,
A word with you. Attend those men our pleasure ?

Ser. They are, my lord, without the palace gate.
Macb. Bring them before us—To be thus is nothing, [Exit *ser.*

But to be safely thus.—Our fears in Banquo Stick deep, and in his royalty of nature Reigns that which should be fear'd.'Tis much he And to that dauntless temper of his mind [dares, He hath a wisdom, that doth guide his valour To act in safety ; there is none but he, Whose being I do fear, and under him My genius is rebuk'd ; (1) as it is said Anthony's was by Cæsar. He chid the sisters, When first they put the name of king upon me, And bad them speak to him ; then, prophet-like,

(1) — As it is said Anthony's was by Cæsar—

Though I would not often assume the critic's privilege of being confident where certainty cannot be obtain'd, nor indulge myself too far in departing from the establish'd reading ; yet I cannot but propose the rejection of this passage, which I believe was an insertion of some player, who, having so much learning as to discover to what Shakespear alluded, was not willing that his audience should be less knowing than himself, and has

therefore weakened the author's sense by the intrusion of a remote and useless image into a speech bursting from a man wholly possess'd with his own present condition, and therefore not at leisure to explain his own allusions to himself. If these words are taken away, by which not only the thought but the numbers are injured, the lines of Shakespear close together without any traces of a breach.

My genius is rebuk'd. He chid the sisters.

12 M A C B E T H.

They hail'd him father to a line of kings.
Upon my head they plac'd a fruitless crown,
And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,
Thence to be wrench'd with an unlinical hand,
No son of mine succeeding. If 'tis so,
For Banquo's issue have I 'fil'd my mind,
For them the gracious Duncan have I murder'd,
Put rancours in the vessel of my peace
Only for them, and mine eternal jewel
Giv'n to (1) the common enemy of man,
To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings—
Rather than so, (2) come, fate, into the lists,
And champion me to th' utterance !—Who's there ?

(1) — The common enemy of man.

It is always an entertainment to an inquisitive reader to trace a sentiment to its original source, and therefore, though the term *enemy of man* applied to the devil is in itself natural and obvious, yet some may be pleas'd with being inform'd, that Shakespear probably borrowed it from the first lines of the *Destruction of Troy*, a book which he is known to have read.

That this remark may not appear too trivial, I shall take occasion from it to point out a beautiful passage of Milton, evidently copied from a book of no greater authority. In describing the gates of hell, book 2. v. 8. 79. he says,

— On a sudden open fly,
With impetuous recoil, and jarring sound,

Th' infernal doors, and on their hinges grate

Harsh thunder.

In the history of don Belianis, when one of the knights approaches, as I remember, the castle of Brandezar, the gates are said to open *grating harsh thunder upon their brazen hinges.*

(2) — Come, fate, into the lists,

And champion me to th' utterance.—

This passage will be best explained by translating it into the language from whence the only word of difficulty in it is borrowed. *Que la destinée se rende en lice, et qu'elle me donne un défi a l'outrance.* A challenge or a combat a l'outrance, to extremity, was a fixed term in the law of arms, used when the combatants engaged with an

SUBSCRIPTIONS are taken in, and Receipts signed by E. CAVE at *St John's Gate* ; and by the Editor.

Shakespeare, William, and Samuel Johnson. *Proposals for printing a new edition of the plays of William Shakespear, with notes critical and explanatory, In Which The Text will be corrected: The Various Readings remarked: The Conjectures of former Editors examin'd, and their Omissions supply'd. By the author of the Miscellaneous observations on the tragedy of Macbeth.* Printed for E. Cave, [1745]. Eighteenth Century Collections Online, link.gale.com/apps/doc/CW0115652961/ECCO?u=iulib_fw&sid=bookmark-ECCO&pg=1. Accessed 15 Aug. 2023.