

# **MISCELLANEOU S ESSAYS**

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Miscellaneous essays by Thomas De Quincey

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**THOMAS DE QUINCEY**

**MISCELLANEOU  
S ESSAYS**



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MISCELLANEOUS ESSAYS.

BY

THOMAS DE QUINCEY,

AUTHOR OF

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## MISCELLANEOUS ESSAYS.

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ON

### THE KNOCKING AT THE GATE

IN MACBETH.

FROM my boyish days I had always felt a great perplexity on one point in Macbeth. It was this: the knocking at the gate, which succeeds to the murder of Duncan, produced to my feelings an effect for which I never could account. The effect was, that it reflected back upon the murder a peculiar awfulness and a depth of solemnity; yet, however obstinately I endeavored with my understanding to comprehend this, for many years I never could see *why* it should produce such an effect.

Here I pause for one moment to exhort the reader never to pay any attention to his understanding, when it stands in opposition to any other faculty of his mind. The mere understanding, however useful and indispensable, is the meanest faculty in the human mind, and the most to be distrusted; and yet the great majority