

**COLLINS' SCHOOLS AND COLLEGE  
CLASSICS. SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDY OF  
MACBETH. WITH INTRODUCTORY,  
REMARKS; EXPLANATORY,  
GRAMMATICAL AND PHILOLOGICAL  
NOTES; ET. BY SAMUEL NEIL**

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Collins' Schools and College Classics. Shakespeare's tragedy of Macbeth. With Introductory, Remarks; Explanatory, Grammatical and Philological Notes; Et. By Samuel Neil by William Shakespeare

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**WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

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**MACBETH.**

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SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDY

OF

MACBETH.

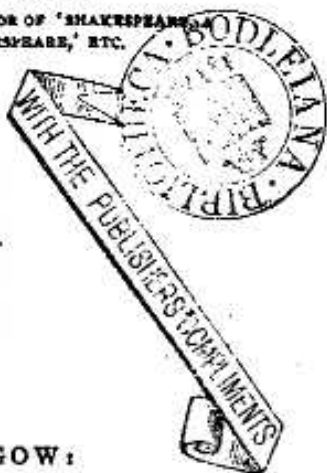
With Introductory Remarks; Explanatory, Grammatical,  
and Philological Notes; etc.

BY

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## CONTENTS.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION, . . . . .	7
SECTION I.—THE LITERATURE OF THE STORY OF MACBETH, . . . . .	7
SECTION II.—THE GEOGRAPHY OF SCOTLAND IN THE ELEVENTH CENTURY, . . . . .	11
SECTION III.—THE EARLY HISTORY OF SCOTLAND, .	13
SECTION IV.—THE TRUE STORY OF MACBETH, . . .	14
SECTION V.—THE SOURCES OF THE MACBETH MYTH,	16
SECTION VI.—THE DATE OF THE COMPOSITION OF 'MACBETH,' . . . . .	35
SECTION VII.—HISTORICAL NOTES ON THE DRAMATIS PERSONÆ, . . . . .	38
THE ARGUMENT, . . . . .	42
PERSONS REPRESENTED, . . . . .	44
TEXT, . . . . .	45
NOTES, . . . . .	105
QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION, . . . . .	147
GENEALOGY OF THE REIGNING ROYAL FAMILY FROM 'THE GRACIOUS DUNCAN,' . . . . .	152

## INTRODUCTION.

### SECTION I.

#### THE LITERATURE OF THE STORY OF MACBETH.

THE earliest references made to 'Macbeth, King of Scotland,' are found in the *Chronicle* of Marianus Scotus of Cologne (1028-1086), a contemporary of that sovereign, whose historical record extends from the commencement of the Christian era till 1083, and in the *Irish Annals* of Tighernach of Cloinmacnois (died 1072), also a contemporary, in which several notices of events in the history of Scotland occur. In neither of these is Macbeth, Maormor of Moray, though represented as a regicide, stigmatised as a murderer, while his reign is characterised as one of great prosperity and fertility, and himself as a just, wise, and firm sovereign. In John of Fordun's *Chronicle of the Scottish Nation*, compiled apparently between 1363, when Ralph Higden the English chronicler died, and the date of his own death, 1385, we are, however, told that Duncan 'was murdered through the wickedness of a family, the murderers of both his grandfather and his great-grandfather, the head of which was Machabeus, son of Finele; by whom he was privily wounded unto death at Bothgognane [the smith's hut]; and being carried to Elgin, he died there, and was buried a few days after in the island of Iona.' Fordun details some cruel oppressions practised by him; but relates no marvels of witchcraft concerning him. In the *Cronykill* of Andrew of Wyntoun (1425) a mythical parentage is bestowed upon Macbeth, and the snares of Satan having been practised on his mother, the wiles of witchcraft are exercised upon himself, though, as becomes poetry, they are represented as having been employed 'in his dremyng.' By enchantments his ambition was aroused; he slew his uncle, and took his uncle's widow, Dame Gruoch, to wife, regardless of the degrees of affinity.



Plenty abounded on land and sea in his time. He was an able administrator and a just legislator, bountiful to the Church, and, when he went to Rome, so kindly that he distributed with his own hand much alms to the poor. We hear nothing from him, however, of the murder of Banquo, or the flight of Fleance. Macbeth's haughty bearing enrages Macduff, and he proceeds to England to induce Malcolm, Duncan's son, to fight for the crown. He consents, the invasion is made, Macbeth retreats to 'the wode Lumfinnan,' and there 'a knycht not born of woman' slew him and carried his head to Malcolm, at Kincardine, who was thereafter speedily crowned at Scone. Our next authority is that of the credulous, if not inventive, Hector Boece, whose *Scotorum Historia* was first issued in 1526, but was reprinted in Lausanne and published at Paris, 1574. He gave dramatic form to the interview with the witches, and hints of a second consultation with these mysterious sisters of destiny. He supplies the story, in fact, pretty much in the state in which Buchanan referred to it, in 1582, as 'better fitted for the theatre or Milesian fables than history.' Buchanan, however, tells the story much after the same fashion, except that he tones down and passes rapidly over the 'fabulous' portions. Of the *History* of Boece, Maister John Bellenden, Archdeacon of Moray and Dean of Ross, at the command of James V., made a translation from the felicitous Latin of the learned principal of the College of Aberdeen, into the vulgar tongue of the people of Scotland, which was completed in 1533. This version was in some parts condensed and in others extended, but it curtails the Macbeth portion a little in the marvellous parts. At a later time, Raphael Holinshed freely translated Hector Boece for insertion in his *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, 1577. Though there seem to be signs in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, that during the composition of that play, the author consulted Bellenden and Buchanan, it is pretty certain that Holinshed was his main authority, as in all the material elements of the story he follows the *Chronicles* of that popular and painstaking Cheshire compiler of the records of the past—taking suggestions for scenes and passages in the play from different portions of the book, and laying under contribution to its interests the narrative of the reigns of several monarchs. In 1557, Jerome Cardan published, at Basle, his *De Rerum Varietate*, in the 16th Book of which, under the title of 'Historia Mira Demonum,' he relates (chap. 93), on the authority of Boece, the story of Macbeth, adding

(*Aliud pene simile de eodem Macabedo narrat.*): 'he relates another almost similar story regarding this same Macbeth — (See Cardan's *Opera Omnia*, Vol. III, p. 324, edition 1663). The same narrative is given in a tract entitled *Magica de Spectris, et Apparitionibus, de Vaticiniis, Divinationibus*, etc., 1596. On 27th August of that same year a *Ballad of Macdobeth*, along with one entitled *The Taming of a Shrew*, was entered on the Stationers' Registers, and in Kemp's *Nine Dais Wonders Performed in a Dance from London to Norwich*, published April 1600, we have reference made to a ballad whose author was 'found about the Bankside sitting at a play'—'a proper upright youth, onely for a little stooping in the shoulders, all harte to the heele, a penny Poet, whose first making was the miserable stolen story of Macdoel, or Macdobeth, or Macsomewhat, for I am sure a Mac it was, though I never had the maw to see it.' This author he admonishes to 'leave writing these beastly ballets, make not good wenches prophetesses for litle or no profit.' In 1606 William Warner added to his *Albion's England* three books 14-16, and in book fifteenth, chap. 94, he succinctly relates, in about 200 long lines of verse, the 'Historie of Makbeth.\* Peter Heylin, 'the Spagnolet of

\* We are indebted for our knowledge of this reference to the late George Lillie Craik, Professor of English Literature in Queen's College, Belfast; and for the transcription of the passage from the old copy in the British Museum, to the kindness of David Masson, LL.D., Professor of English Literature in the University of Edinburgh. Our extract is made from *Albion's England: a continued Historie . . .* first penned and published by William Warner, and now revised and newly enlarged a little before his death: London, printed for G[eorge] P[otter], and are to be sold by Richard Moore at his Shop in St. Dunstan's Churchyard and in Fleet Street, 1612, and runs as follows:—

'One *Macbeth*, who had traitronly his sometimes sovereigne slaine,  
And like a Master not a Man, usurt, in *Scotland*, raigne,  
Whose guiltie Conscience did it selfe so feelingly accuse  
As nothinge not applide by him against himselfe he vewes,  
No whispering but to him, 'gainst him, all weapons feares he borne  
All Beings jointly to revenge his Murthers thinks he sworne  
Wherefore (for such are ever such in self-tormenting mind)  
But to proceed in blood, he thought no safetie to find.  
All Greatnesse therefore save his own his driftings (*banquetings*) did infest;  
Wit so is wisdomes' excremente, and dangerously transgrest.  
But, Pompe nor Policie, the poore in spirit shall be blest,  
When at the general Doome our souls and Satan shall contest.  
One Banquho, powerfulst of the Peers, in popular affection,  
And prowess great, was murdered by his tyrannous direction.  
Fleance therefore this Banquho's sonne, fled thence to *Wales* for fear  
Whome Gruffyth kindly did receive and cherisht nobly there.'

Here he fell in love with Gruffyth's daughter, 'a pargon for bewtie

History,' in his *Microcosmus, or History of the World*, 1622, Book I., in which he gives a History of Britain, supplies a brief epitome of Macbeth's story, evidently tinged with Shakespearean elements.\* In 1623 the first folio edition of Shakespeare's *Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies* appeared, and in the last division, between *Julius Cæsar* and *Hamlet*, at pp. 131-151, *Macbeth* was, so far as is known, first printed: though we have signs of its earlier existence in (1) an interlude performed on the visit of James I., his Queen, and the young Prince Henry to Oxford in 1605; † (2) in *The Puritan*, 1607, where, besides several other allusions to *Macbeth*, Sir

and for wit,' and she with him. In the course of conversation she says:—

'I prece thee *Fleance*, tell quoth she, what I have heard in part  
The storie of the *Fairies* that foretold thy father's fate?  
For why? I know not why, but sure it throbs my heart of late.  
Throb may it, so it thrive, quoth he, in you to that event  
Devised by them, nor hope I you can Destinie prevent  
But, howsoever, thus it was: King *Duncane* when alive  
To *Macbeth* and my father did great Dignities derive  
As chiefest for their births, their wit, their valour; also they  
Held friendship long, and luckily as *Scotts* affairs did sway.  
Three *Fairies* in a private walk to them appeared who  
Saluted *Macbeth* king, and gave him other titles too:  
To whom my father, laughing, said they dealte unequalle dole  
Behighting nought thereof to him, but to his Friend the whole.  
When of the *weird-sisters*, one of them replying, said that he  
Should not be king, but of his Stemme a many kings should be  
So vanish they: and what they said of *Macbeth* was, we see—  
But murdered is my father, and, of him remains but me,  
Nor shall what they divined effect, unless sweet sweet by thee.  
What blush you, Lady! prece thee, let me busses that blush away  
He said and did it, she to rocke even of a woman's way.'

Against her father's will they are united. Gruffyth in a rage slays Fleance, but a son is born who is named Walter, whom Gruffyth brings up and educates carefully. He becomes a handsome youth. On the question of good birth he quarrels, kills his antagonist, and flees to Scotland. There he raises an insurrection as Banquo's son and grandson of the King of Wales. He is made 'Lord Stewart of the Land,' which honour all inherit—

'Of him descended to this day: which borae are and which strens [race]  
Hath blest the *Scotts* with princes eight, ours also numbers neene [nine]  
Great *monarchs* of Great Britain now, so amply never any  
Long may he live a happy king, of him may kings be many.'

\* See Argument, p. 42.

† This was written by Dr. Matthew Gwynne, M.D., author of *Nero*, a tragedy, published 1603; *Vertumnus*, a Latin Comedy, performed before the king in 1605, and printed in 1607, with the lines delivered as if by the three weird sisters annexed, and several other learned works. Dr. Gwynne died 1627.