

## Study on *Henry the Fifth*

### I.

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At the very beginning of the play, two bishops appear to make a hasty description of Henry's miraculous conversion. Their dramatic function is simply to wipe off the image of madcap Prince Hal, to which many of the audience would have been attached. Their dialogue runs as follows;

*Cant.* The king is full of grace and fair regard.

*Ely.* And a true lover of the holy church.

*Cant.* The courses of his youth promis'd it not.

The breath no sonner left his father's body,

But that his wildness, mortified in him,

Seem'd to die too; yea, at that very moment,

Consideration like an angel came,

And whipp'd th' offending Adam out of him,

Leaving his body as a Paradise,

T'envelop and contain celestial spirits.<sup>1)</sup>

The first difficulty which Shakespeare had in moulding the character of Henry was to unbind the spell of Henry the Fourth, as is figuratively shown in the rejection of Falstaff in plots. Here, Shakespeare seems to ask the audience to accept this conversion as a literal truth. But we should be careful not to neglect the underlying connection between Henry the Fifth and Henry the Fourth, as some critics are apt to. For instance, E. M. W. Tillyard complains, referring to Henry's request for the advice of the archbishop.

The perfect courtier in whom intellect and activity was finely balanced has given way to the pure man of action, whose thinking is done for him by his counsellors<sup>2)</sup>.

Tillyard is apparently wrong. Henry is, by no means, persuaded by the archbishop to invade France. It is rather Henry that takes the advantage of the

archbishop. He is determined to make war against France even before he meets the archbishop. He follows his father's last advice to him.

Therefore, my Harry,

Be it thy course to busy giddy minds

With foreign quarrels, that action, hence borne out,

May waste the memory of the former days<sup>3)</sup>.

Although Henry gives a merciless sentence to Sir John, at the end of *Henry the Fourth, Part II*<sup>4)</sup>, calling him 'the tutor and the feeder of my riots,' this is absolutely unfair, as A. C. Bradley pointed out in his affectionate defense of Falstaff<sup>5)</sup>. He has never been misled by Falstaff. At the beginning of *Henry the Fourth, Part I*, Henry says to himself.

Yet herein will I imitate the sun,

Who doth permit the base contagious clouds

To smother up his beauty from the world,

That, when he please again to be himself,

Being wanted, he may be more wond'ring at

By breaking through the soul and ugly mists

Of vapors that did seem to strangle him.<sup>6)</sup>

There may still remain some question how far we should take it seriously. But, there may be little doubt that he is not a kind of person to be dependent upon the opinion of others. He is always independent and strong. It is rather Henry that enjoyed himself at the cost of Falstaff.

In all his great decisions, for instance, the rejection of Falstaff, and keeping of the chief justice in his position, he never asked another's advice. He pushes forwards with a set purpose, and never fails. All his behavior is consistent with his aim to build 'the best-governed nation,'<sup>7)</sup> and there are

no irrelevancies. He never fails as does Richard the Second, a typically Plantagenet king, capricious, self-indulgent, and ineffectual, though noble. Henry is rather the son of his father, Bolingbroke, whom Hotspur called 'this vile politician.'<sup>8)</sup> A. C. Bradley's comment that Henry is 'the most efficient character drawn by Shakespeare'<sup>9)</sup> is perhaps right.

In this archiepiscopal advice, also Henry is independent and efficient. I cannot agree with Tillyard's opinion above that Henry's 'thinking is done for him by his counsellors.' It is not because he is at a loss what to do that he calls for the archbishop. Such a Hotspur-like figure is far from Shakespeare's description of Henry, as is evident from the preceding dialogue of the bishops.

Hear him but reason in divinity,  
 And, all-admiring, with an inward wish  
 You would desire the king were made a prelates:  
 Hear him debate of commonwealth affairs,  
 You would say it hath been all in all his study:  
 List his discourse of war, and you shall hear  
 A fearful battle render'd you in music:  
 Turn him to any cause of policy,  
 The Gordian knot of it he will unloose,  
 Familiar as his garter;.....<sup>10)</sup>

This is the sketch of Shakespeare's proposed character of Henry. Shakespeare wishes the audience to take it as it is, and I have no doubt but the audience did. As I have said before, Henry has been fully resolved to make war against France before he meets the archbishop. It is not so much to be convinced of the justice of his claim to the French throne, himself, as to make his subjects convinced of it. This shrewdness to make the others say what he would like to, once appeared when he had the chief justice stay in his position, in *Henry the Fourth, Part II*. In both cases, he anticipates what the chief justice or archbishop will say, and makes the most of it. He never loses the initiative.

But it is not before the close examinations of *Henry the Fourth*, and the following scenes of this play, that this efficiency and shrewdness becomes intelligible. It is clear that Shakespeare's intention that the first impression of the audience at the be-

ginning of this play is that of a young king, miraculously converted from an outlaw prince to a faithful Christian king. Shakespeare demonstrates it through the bishops' dialogue, and through Henry's eagerness to administer justice. The long, tedious discussion of the archbishop about the Salic Law simply emphasizes Henry's desire to do nothing unjustified. Shakespeare stresses it in this line:

May I with right and conscience make this  
 claim?<sup>11)</sup>

It seems clear that Shakespeare wished to elicit the following response from his audience. I have little doubt that the general impression of the audience, through the bishops' dialogue and the archiepiscopal advice, is that of an ideal Christian king which the Elizabethans wanted to believe in.

Hazlitt, for whom Henry was like 'a panther or a young lion in their cages,' attacks Henry because of his selfishness. He writes:

Another characteristic instance of the blindness of human nature to everything but its own interests, is the complaint made by 'the ill neighbourhood' of the Scot in attacking England when she was attacking France.<sup>12)</sup>

Apart from the problem to whom this speech should be assigned,<sup>13)</sup> Henry's selfishness of this kind cannot be denied in this play. Hazlitt goes on to say.

'the eagle England' has a right 'to be in prey,' but 'the weasel Scot' has none 'to come sneaking to her nest,' which she has left to pounce upon others. Might was right, without equivocation or disguise, in that heroic and chivalrous age. The substitution of right for might, even in theory, is among the refinements and abuses of modern philosophy.<sup>14)</sup>

Here, as he himself admits, Hazlitt is criticizing Henry according to what he calls 'modern philosophy'. It is, doubtlessly, a mistake to interpret and judge Shakespeare's works or characters according to one's own social or political point of view.

Most people will think that to blame the famous phrase 'we few, we happy few' because of the 'lack of democracy,'<sup>15)</sup> is not only beside the mark, but also ridiculous. But all views which are not based on an accurate knowledge of Elizabethan life and attitudes and only the difference of degree in their mistake.

Henry's view is egocentric, as Hazlitt says. But this kind of egocentricity is an attribute of patriotism. All the characters in *Henry the Fifth* are patriotic, as most of the Elizabethans should have been. It is worth remembering that even the traitors are, in the end, glad to lose their heads for their country's sake.

Never did faithful subject more rejoice  
At the discovery of most dangerous treason  
Than I do this hour joy o'er myself,  
Prevented from a manned enterprise.  
My fault, but no my body, pardon, sovereign.<sup>16)</sup>

It is superficial to comment on the political situation of England and the general feeling of the public at the time of Shakespeare. What they wished for was a king who would make England the strongest country. Strength was the proof of God's grace. Such was the idea of the ideal king for the Elizabethans. This may throw a light to the character which Shakespeare wished to give to Henry.

Dover Wilson quotes the following passages from Hall's Chronicle, in order to reject the view that Henry is the 'embodiment of worldly success.'

This Henry was king whose life was immaculate and his living without spot. This king was a prince whom all men loved and none dis-dained.....He was the blazing comet and apparent lantern in his days; he was the flower of kings past, and a glass to them that should succeed. No emperor in magnanimity ever him excelled.<sup>17)</sup>

In *Henry the Fifth*, as in his other plays, is writing in accordance with the idea of the public. He finds a theme of overwhelming interest to the public of his day: the theme of kingship, the ideal Christian king. He writes every action of Henry with what they expect in mind. We may easily suppose

that, in writing a play about Henry the Fifth, who was a national hero, Shakespeare had less freedom than in writing other chronicle plays. E. M. W. Tillyard referred to this difficulty as 'two obligations.'

Here then were two obligations; and they were both impossible of worthy fulfilment. In creating his epic of England Shakespeare had set himself an exacting standard. His political hero, to be worthy of the standard just set, must be the symbol of some great political principle. And there was no principle he could symbolize.<sup>18)</sup>

I think there is much good sense in what Tillyard says. I can follow him on this point. But, Tillyard goes further to say that.

Shakespeare came to terms with this hopeless situation by jettisoning the character he had created and substituting one which, though lacking all consistency, satisfied the requirements both of the chroniclers and popular tradition. No wonder if the play constructed round him shows a great falling off in quality.<sup>19)</sup>

It is true that Shakespeare had to jettison the attractive character of the madcap prince Hal. 'The tide of blood' in him must 'turn and ebb back to the sea,' and flow now 'in formal majesty.'<sup>20)</sup> Complexity of character permitted in a prince should not be retained in a king. This is the true meaning of the rejection of Falstaff. This 'formal majesty' John Palmer calls 'the artificial simplicity.'<sup>21)</sup> But, I cannot think this artificial simplicity will necessarily cause 'a great falling off in quality,' as Tillyard takes for granted.

Shakespeare loses no chance of stressing the idea of the Christian king. In the scene of the audience of the French ambassadors, Henry himself professes that

We are no tyrant, but a Christian king;  
Unto whose grace our passion is subject  
As is our wretches fetter'd in our prisons:<sup>22)</sup>

In fact, the reference to 'God's grace,' is rarely omitted from the official statements of Henry.

The gift of tennis-balls from the Dauphin touches his weakest point. To this insult, Henry retorts:

But I will rise there with so full a glory  
That I will dazzle all the eyes of France,  
Yea, strike the Dauphin blind to look on us.  
And tell the pleasant prince this mock of his  
Hath turn'd his balls to gun-stones: and his soul  
Shall stand sore charged for the wasteful ven-  
geance  
That shall fly with them: for many a thousand  
widows  
Shall this his mock mock out of their dear hus-  
bands;  
Mock mothers from their sons, mock castles  
down;<sup>23)</sup>

There is something of 'astounding inflation' in such speeches, which Mark Van Doren cannot abide.<sup>24)</sup> D. A. Traversio gives the following comment on these lines.

Henry's reaction, in spite of an opining affirmation of self-control, takes the form of one of those out-bursts which are habitual with him whenever his will is crossed.<sup>25)</sup>

Traversi thinks that Henry's indignation is a fitful one, against his self-imposed control. I cannot agree with Traversi. I do not think that Henry's self-control, — I have no doubt there is, — is shaken even for a moment in this scene. He is just playing to the gallery as the ideal king, in the Elizabethan sense. For the audience, this indignation of Henry, I am sure, is quite justified and worthy of the ideal king. They must have been excited to see their king argue down the French ambassadors into silence. So, the impression the audience collect from the indignation of Henry is not the recurring of his old temper, but the resolution of a monarch. Van Doren's observation, that Henry is 'stretched until he is strutting at the last insignificant exit,' is nearer to the truth, than Traversi's.

So there is no alienation between this indignation and the faithful words to God, which immediately follow.

But this lies all within the will of God,  
To whom I do appeal;<sup>26)</sup>

This is not to be taken as a gesture for covering his confusion after having been upset against his will. All through Act I, the character of Henry, which Shakespeare is trying to convey to the audience, is that of an ideal king, thoughtful and resolute, who is going to invade France with fully justified cause. I have no doubt that it was successfully conveyed to the original audience in the wooden O. When the Chorus sang as follows, it would have been the feeling of the audience, as well:

Now all the youth of England are on fire,  
And silken dalliance in the wardrobe lies:  
Now thrive the armourers, and honour's thought  
Reigns solely in the breast of every man.  
They sell the pasture now to buy the horse,  
Following the mirror of all Christian kings,  
With winged heel, as English Mercuries.<sup>27)</sup>

In Act II, the French intrigue to assassinate Henry is revealed. This is historical, but Shakespeare adds to it the incident of the drunkard who reviles Henry, and the commissions which are presented to the conspirators. This incident provides a nice dramatic effect, and permits Henry a slight touch of his old playfulness. And I think this addition means even more than that.

The traitors must die because they endangered the country. He emphasizes that he is free from private spite.

Touching our person seek we no revenge;  
But we our kingdom's safety must so tender,  
Whose ruin you have sought, that to her laws  
We do deliver you.<sup>28)</sup>

In fact, his reproaches to the traitors are pathetic and full of sympathy height, Henry is speaking almost between sobs.

Though that didst bear the key of all my counsels,  
 That knew'st the very bottom of my soul,  
 That almost might'st have coin'd into gold  
 Would'st though have practis'd on me for thy use,  
 May it be possible that foreign hire  
 Could out of thee extract one spark of evil  
 That might annoy my finger?<sup>29)</sup>

And the following contemplation on human error, and the repetition of 'Why, so didst thou.....?' are permeated with sorrow, not indignation. His speech ends in,

I will weep for thee;  
 For this revolt of thine, methinks, is like  
 Another fall of man.<sup>30)</sup>

But justice must be done, for the sake of the country. He sentences the conspirators to death. Yet his mercy is shown by pardoning the drunkard. Both aspects of a monarch are impressively shown to the audience, and they are satisfied and filled with admiration for the great king. This is what Shakespeare means by adding an incident which is not found in Holinshed. The theme of an ideal king is developed throughout this scene. Like most of Henry's scenes in this play, this scene also ends in faith and laudation to God.

Since God so graciously hath brought to light  
 This dangerous treason lurking in our way  
 To hinder our beginnings. We doubt not now  
 But every rub is smoothed on our way.  
 Then forth, dear countrymen: let us deliver  
 Our puissance into the hand of God,  
 Putting it straight in expedition.  
 Cheerly to sea; the signs of war advance:  
 No king of England, if not king of France.<sup>31)</sup>

In Act III, Henry's character reaches its first climax. Dover Wilson says that,

Up to the taking of Harfleur, Henry is what John Bailey calls 'the most royal, masteful, and victorious of Shakespeare's kings.' And the impression has been so firmly established that it remains with

us for the rest of the play. Yet Harfleur is a turning point.<sup>32)</sup>

Indeed, Henry at Harfleur is completely a king at war, and no man is found to remain in him. He says, cheering up the soldiers:

In peace there's nothing so becomes a man  
 As modest stillness and humility:  
 But when the blast of war blows in our ears,  
 Then imitate the action of the tiger;  
 Stiffen the sinews, conjure up the blood,  
 Disguise fair nature with hard-favour'd rage;  
 Then lend the eye a terrible aspect;<sup>33)</sup>

As he says himself, Henry, in this scene, casts away the 'modest stillness and humility,' and 'bends up every spirit to his full height.' This artificiality which has offended so many critics reaches its climax in this scene. Van Doren's comment that

The style strains itself to bursting, the hero is stretched until he struts on tiptoe and is still strutting at the last insignificant exit.<sup>34)</sup>

is most true at Harfleur. In fact, Henry's words are exaggerated, extravagant, and sometimes even a little absurd. It is followed and strengthened in Henry's address to the governor and citizens of Harfleur. He speaks like an angry tiger, almost like Tamburlaine. His pictures of war is one of the most horrible passages of Shakespeare.

If not, why, in a moment look to see  
 The blind and bloody soldier with foul hand  
 Defile the locks of your shrill-shrieking daughters;  
 Your fathers taken by the silver beards,  
 And their most reverend heads dash'd to the walls;  
 Your naked infants spitted upon pikes,  
 Whiles the mad mothers with their howls confus'd  
 Do break the clouds, as did the wives of Jewry  
 At Herod's bloody-hunting slaughtermen.<sup>35)</sup>

His soldiers, he warns the governor, are still held uneasily in check, but 'licentious wickedness' and 'the filthy and contagious clouds' of 'heady murders' threaten to break at any moment. J.H.

Walter shows that the merciless address of Henry in Harfleur is 'in accordance with military law' of his days, saying that,

there is a point of time in a siege after which no surrender is possible, and whether the defender lay down their arms or not makes no difference, the city falls by assault and is sacked.<sup>36)</sup>

It may be true. But I doubt if this is the right way to justify it. I doubt if Shakespeare could expect that his audience were all so well acquainted with the principles of war, that they might not have shocked at this speech. To justify these horrible words, it seems to me more helpful, or perhaps enough, to remember that the audience to whom Shakespeare is writing is not a squeamish modern audience, but the robust Elizabethan audience, who are excited at bear-baiting, and who can stand seeing Tamburlaine gouge the eyes of Bajazeth and crush them under his feet. The most important point, and it is undoubtedly the point Shakespeare wishes to convey to us, is the bravery and resolution of Henry. I am sure this fierceness did not spoil the figure of an ideal king, no matter how distasteful it might be to the modern critics and audience.

One may also see that this fierceness is his pretense of quickening the surrender; it displays his usual effectiveness, or almost expedience. Immediately after the surrender he quickly resumes his former 'modest stillness and humility,' throwing off the imitation of a tiger. He is no longer a Tamburlaine.

We have almost the same problem in Agincourt. Henry gives an order to kill all the prisoners, at the height of war.

Then every soldier kill his prisoners!  
Give the word through.<sup>37)</sup>

And once again, in the following scene, we must find Henry threatening the French nobles.

Besides, we'll cut the throats of those we have,  
And not a man of them, that we shall take

shall taste our mercy.<sup>38)</sup>

This order has vexed the critics much more than the address at Harfleur. John Bailey says that Henry is a 'typical Englishman, yet he kills the prisoners and casts off his friends.'<sup>39)</sup> Traversi calls it 'merciless reprisals.'<sup>40)</sup> Many critics seem to prefer to take it as one of those outbursts which used to be habitual with Prince Hal whenever his will was crossed. They are, it seems to me, too much obsessed with the following words of Henry, which precede the threat to the French nobles.

I was not angry since I came to France  
Until this instant.<sup>41)</sup>

Dr. Johnson is, perhaps, the chief representative of this view. He says:

The king is in a very bloody disposition. He has already cut the throats of his prisoners, and threatens now to cut them again.<sup>42)</sup>

We have enough reason to suppose that this view of Henry's outburst was contemporary with Shakespeare. For instance, Holinshed's description is apologetic. It reads that the king's 'dolorous decree' is 'contrary to his accustomed gentleness.'<sup>43)</sup>

It is also Dover Wilson, as in many other problems, who first made an effective defence of this order. Admitting that Shakespeare 'could have omitted the incident,' he writes in defense of the order.

The whole situation is dominated by the fact that the English are 'enrounded' by an army which outnumbered them five to one. ....In any case an encumbrance, since it is not possible for the same soldiers to guard and to fight, prisoners become a grave embarrassment under attack. Moreover, if rescued, they would add dangerously, if not totally, to the enemy's already excessive numbers.<sup>44)</sup>

Shakespeare, carefully, stresses this critical situa-

tion in Orlean's speech.  
We are now yet living in the field  
To smother up the English in our throngs,  
If any order might be thought upon.<sup>45)</sup>

And Henry's comments, which precede the very order, show his alarm:

But, hark! what new alarm is this same?  
The French have reinforc'd their scatter'd men.<sup>46)</sup>

Shakespeare expends every effort to justify this order, lest it should be taken a brutal one unworthy of the Christian king. Immediately following it, Fluellen and Gower appear on the stage to say that it is the French who first broke the discipline of war although unintelligible in the preceding scene.

*Fluc.* Kills the poys and the luggage! 'tis expressly against the law of arms: 'tis as arrant a piece of knavery, mark you now, as can be offer't; in your conscience now, is it not?

*Gow.* .....wherefore the king most worthily hath caused every soldier to cut his prisoner's throat.  
O, 'tis a gallant king.<sup>47)</sup>

I have already pointed out above that Shakespeare's audience was not so squeamish as modern audience. I cannot believe that his audience, with these considerable justifications, failed to take the order pertinent or, at least, necessary, in this situation. We may agree with Dover Wilson's comment that the general impression which Shakespeare intends to convey to the audience is not one of brutality at all, but of a great commander's strength, decision, and presence of mind at the crisis of the battle. Most critics seem to be persuaded by Dover Wilson, and are not worried much about this order any longer, except for Traversi.<sup>48)</sup>

I have tried to justify the two scenes which, at the superficial reading, may seem unworthy of the Christian king; one, Henry's address to the governor and citizens of Harfleur, and the other, his order to kill the prisoners. I think I may go a little further in interpreting the scenes. Here, we may see Henry as a politician, again. I have pointed

out that the archiepiscopal advice is not a sign of the lack of his confidence, as Tillyard complains, but his ingenious scheme to make others say what he wants to, and thus to discharge himself from any responsibility. He also imputed the cause of the outbreak of war to the Dauphin. So, he does the same thing in Harfleur and Agincourt. We must be very careful about his use of 'if,' 'if not,' or 'when.' Notice that his words 'we'll cut the throats of those we have,' is preceded by 'if they'll do neither.'<sup>49)</sup> To the governor of Harfleur, he says:

What is it then to me, if impious war,  
Array'd in flames like to the prince of fiends,  
Do, with his smirched complexion, all fell feats  
Enlink'd to waste and desolations?  
*What is't to me, when you yourselves are cause,*  
If your pure maidens fall into the hand  
Of hot and forcing violation?<sup>50)</sup>

We are apparently wrong, if we take this irresponsibility merely as a sign of the 'vile politician.' We must notice that it is closely related to the sense of the tragedy of kingship, which he himself relates in his conversation with soldiers in Act IV. There he first appears as a thinking reed, far from a simple hearty undergraduate with enormous initials on his chest.

—End—

Notes:

※All the quotations from *Henry the Fifth* are based on *the New Arden Edition*. Walter, J.H., ed. by, King Henry V, Cambridge, Mass., 1954.

※List of books referred to in this paper.  
Abbrev.

Bradley Bradley, A. C., *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*, London, 1941.

Dover Wilson. Dover Wilson, John., King Henry V, (New Shakespeare), Cambridge, 1947

Hazlitt. Hazlitt, William, *Lectures on the Literature of the Age of Elizabeth*, London, 1900

H4A. Saaber, M. A. ed. by, *The First Part of King Henry the Fourth*, (The Pelican Shakespeare), Baltimore, 1957

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- Traversi. Traversi, D. A., *An Approach to Shakespeare*, (Doubleday Anchor Book), New York, 1954
- Van Doren. Van Doren, Markl, *Shakespeare*, (Doubleday Anchor Book), New York, 1939
- 1) I, i, 22—23.
  - 2) Tillyard, p. 310
  - 3) H4B, IV, v, 21—215
  - 4) H4B, V, v, 63.
  - 5) Bradley, A. C., *The Rejection of Falstaff*, in *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*, London, 1942
  - 6) H4A, I ii, 185—191.
  - 7) H4B, V, ii, 137.
  - 8) H4A, I, iii, 240.
  - 6) Bradley, p. 256.
  - 10) I, i, 38—47.
  - 11) I, ii, 96.
  - 12) Hazlitt, p. 147.
  - 13) Hazlitt has no doubt that this complaint is made by Henry. But modern editors agree either in retaining the Folio reading which assigns it to Ely, or in changing it to Westmoreland according to Holinshed. There is no justification in Hazlitt's assignment of this phrase to Henry. This shows what an important part the textual criticism has in the interpretation of the work and the character.
  - 14) Hazlitt, p. 148.
  - 15) Pelican, p. 16.
  - 16) II, ii, 161—165.
  - 17) Dover Wilson, p. xviii.
  - 18) Tillyard, p. 305.
  - 19) Tillyard, p. 306.
  - 20) H4B, V, ii, 133.
  - 21) Palmer, p. 218.
  - 22) I, ii, 241—243.
  - 23) I, ii, 278—286.
  - 24) Van Doren, p. 145.
  - 25) Traversi, p. 37.
  - 26) I, ii, 289.
  - 27) II, Prol., 1—7.
  - 28) II, i, 174—177.
  - 29) II, ii, 96—102.
  - 30) II, ii, 140—142.
  - 31) II, ii, 185—193.
  - 32) Dover Wilson, p. xxvi.
  - 33) III, i, 3—9.
  - 34) Van Doren, p. 144.
  - 35) III, iii, 33—41.
  - 36) New Arden, p. 66, Note to III, iii, 1—43.
  - 37) IV, vi, 37—8.
  - 38) IV, vii, 65—67.
  - 39) Ralli, p. 456.
  - 40) Traversi, p. 46.
  - 41) IV, vii, 57—58.
  - 42) Quoted from Dover Wilson, p. xxxvi.
  - 43) Quoted from Dover Wilson, p. xxxiii.
  - 44) Dover Wilson, p. xxxiii—xxxiv.
  - 45) IV, vi, 19—21.
  - 46) IV, vi, 35—36.
  - 47) IV, vii, 1—11.
  - 48) In 1938, Traversi found 'something sardonic' in Gower's comment above, 'O, 'tis a gallant king.' Despite his acknowledgement to Dover Wilson in the preface, this view is adopted without any change in his latest edition. Traversi, Derek, *Shakespeare, From Richard II to Henry V*, Stanford, 1957.
  - 49) IV, vii, 62.
  - 50) III, iii, 15—21. My italic.