

*Macbeth* strikes an altogether different note. Shakespeare here reverts to an earlier type in which the protagonist is a villain-hero overthrown at the end, life returns to normal and moral justice ultimately prevails. Here the last words are spoken by Malcolm, the rightful heir, who is proclaimed King of Scotland, and, in the usual manner of Shakespeare's successful men, quickly takes charge of the situation and issues necessary orders for establishment of a new order. Nothing is here for tears, nothing to bewail. The one regret felt is on account of the death of young Siward, but it is counterbalanced by two considerations. First, that 'some must go off'—that a sacrifice has to be made that evil may be rooted out and justice may reign. Secondly, that young Siward 'hath quit himself' worthily and proved a 'God's

soldier'. A reference to the fate of young Siward was not perhaps very necessary from the standpoint of plot-structure, but this must have been done to emphasise the intent and purpose of the play. And it is done just after Macbeth has for the last time left the stage, fighting against Macduff, the champion of right and justice. The contrast is obvious. Young Siward has served God in his life and in death, and Macbeth only 'juggling fiends'. Macbeth is referred to as a usurper, a tyrant, a butcher. It might be said that this is done by his opponents, but has anybody in the play a kind word for Macbeth since he starts on his career of crime? In support of the view that Macbeth has the qualifications of a tragic hero critics have pointed out that throughout his career as depicted in the play Macbeth distinctly shows that he has a moral conscience and a poetic imagination. So had Hamlet, but with this difference that while Hamlet knew that it was proper to kill the guilty and yet hesitated, Macbeth knew that it was improper to kill the innocent and rushed to murder and wholesale slaughter in spite of the dissuasions of his conscience and the warnings of his imagination. He dies a brave death but only when he finds that all is lost. 'Nothing in his life became him like the leaving of it.' His fate strikes us indeed with horror, but do we feel any pity? Does Shakespeare mean us to feel any sympathy for Macbeth on account of his efforts to hide the 'struggling pangs of conscious truth'? There is no such suggestion at the end of the play.