

# The Port Tobacco Times.



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## Selected Miscellany.

### SECRET FACTS IN HISTORY.

Who Was The Real Lay Macbeth?

Little is known of the real personalities of the characters moving through Shakespeare's most powerful tragedy "Macbeth," by the average readers and spectators of the play—except so much as is conveyed by the play itself, or the notes appended to it by one or another of the dramatist's many commentators. And it may be said that the tragedy does not hold place in the public mind as a historical one, in the same manner as "Henry IV." or "King Lear" do. It takes rank with the "Othello," and yet more mythical "Othello," of neither of which can the leading persons intended to be represented, be discovered with any certainty, while their locations are doubtful or general. It is the fact, meanwhile, known to a certain proportion of the reading world, but unknown to others, that "Macbeth" is so truly historical as to deserve rank in that regard with the other plays of that class, while it holds place infinitely in advance of them in intensity of interest and wealth of imagination. A certain proportion of the traveled world are also aware that the location of the old Castle of Inverness, and some of the ruins of that very antique stronghold in which the scene of Duncan's murder is laid, are still to be seen at a short distance from the town of the same name, on the wooded highland shore of the Ness; and even more are aware, from travel books and personal observations, that a portrait of Macbeth, as King of Scotland, is among the number filling the long line of the great chamber in Holyrood House at Edinburgh, made doubly famous by Scott as the scene of the Hunters' Balls of Charles Edward Stuart during his brief occupation of that palace in 1745. Even a certain portion, though fewer, have made themselves acquainted with the fact, that portraits of Duncan, and of Malcolm Canmore (or Canmore), son of Fiance and consequently grandson of Banquo, are to be found in the same connection, with the face of Duncan looking far more dangerous and violent even than that of Macbeth, suggesting that his murder in sleep may have been a very wise precaution, as such a man would have been found difficult to deal with in his waking hours. There is, of course, a certain amount of discredit thrown upon the authenticity of all these portraits, which have the fault of running back too far, and with too little interruption, to command confidence; but one may certainly be taken as well as another, and they have the merit of at least supplying some notion of what the actors in those tragic scenes were believed to have been, by persons of their own race long preceding our time, and in possession of rude pictures and legends to guide them in their representations.

The supposed era of "Macbeth" is within the eleventh century, when the darkness enveloping all the history of Europe had begun to give way before the light, however flickering and doubtful, poured in by chivalry and its marvelous later development, the Crusades. At about the time of the tragic occurrences involved, 1045 to 1055, Harold, the last of the Saxon kings of England, was enjoying that brief time of repose before his great and crowning misfortune; and William, Duke of Normandy, was training himself, through many toils and privations, for the great work which he was so soon to undertake and accomplish, in the conquest of England by the Norman arms. At a period so comparatively late, there could not have been any dearth of absolute records of all the affairs involved, touching, as they did, the welfare of the whole Scottish monarchy, consolidated into one, and made a strength in the succeeding history of the world, by Kenneth II., some two hundred years before. Where, then, are those records? and why can not they be authoritatively referred to, as can those of England or France at a corresponding period? The answer is to be found in the melancholy quarrel between Bruce and Balliol, the intervention of Edward I. of England, and the burning by that monarch of most of the records of the kingdom, which he believed that he had reduced to be thenceforth a province of his own. Fortunately foreign writers, the French especially, had dealt with those important events occurring on Scottish soil which chanced to bear some relation to their own countries; and the lips of tradition (nowhere else so fluent as of old in Scotland), could not be made entirely silent as to that past which Edward desired to bury. From these sources were gathered, eventually, the materials for such a history of earlier Scottish times, as at least embodied their more important events; and among those events was the story of Duncan and Macbeth, which was ignored by the dramatist, has been generally passed over by historians, and only comes to light and observation through late study and collation of the early chronicles.

The received foundation of the tragedy of "Macbeth" (accepting the supernatural parts entirely to the

genius of Shakespeare), is believed to be from Hollinshed, following Hector Boethius; and the story, as given by those chroniclers, is briefly (and unsatisfactorily) as follows: Crynion (otherwise Crinan, from which latter name the appellation of an old Scottish town and modern canal), Lord of the Isles, and father of Duncan, married the eldest daughter of Malcolm the Second, King of Scotland. Sine, Thane of Glamis and father of Macbeth, married the second daughter of the same king, giving to that family a claim to the throne approaching that of Crynion. On the death of Malcolm without male issue, Duncan ascended the throne, marrying the sister of Sward, Earl of Northumberland. Macbeth was one of his principal warriors—indeed his leading commander,—crushed for him the rebellion of Macdonwald (progenitor of the Macdonalds, afterwards successfully and continuously Lords of the Isles), and defeated Sueno, King of Norway, in a bloody battle in Fife. Within a few months following, Macbeth, raised to ambition by his successes in arms and his rival claim to the crown, killed Duncan in Inverness Castle, usurped the throne, and was later slain by Macduff, Thane of Fife, the succession eventually passing to the descendant of Banquo (who is not mentioned by the chroniclers as murdered by Macbeth), Malcolm, son of Fiance.

Such is the received story upon which Shakespeare founded unquestionably the greatest of his tragedies, commencing the action immediately after the defeat of Sueno by Macbeth, and blending, for some of his purposes, that earlier rebel Macdonwald.—Throughout the tragedy the moving spirit, however, is Lady Macbeth, whose cruel ambition, goading on her husband to crimes half-hallowed by her evident tender love for and pride in him, supplies one of the strangest and most absorbing studies in all literature—infinity more fascinating, however horrible, than the character of the ambitious but hesitating Thane. Without Lady Macbeth, the great tragedy would be robbed of more than half its vitality; and such a Lady Macbeth, otherwise circumstanced than she is, and lacking the single redeeming trait of a love which sought honors for her husband more than for herself, would be simply horrible and repulsive. And yet this Lady Macbeth is entirely a thing of Shakespeare's own creation—is not only not found in the chronicles, but could not have been in that or in tradition, from the fact that she never existed!

Had Macbeth, then, no wife? Up to a certain time, and that time involving much of the tragedy, he had none. At a period following the death of Duncan, he indeed became possessed of one, so burdened with crime as few women have come to the arms of the most guilty husband. For (the allusions of John de Fordun, of the fourteenth century, have now been fully explained by the discovery of the account of Lampert of Arles, of the twelfth) the woman who assisted, in whatever degree, at the murder of Duncan in his own (not Macbeth's) castle of Inverness, about the middle of the eleventh century, was the wife of Duncan and consequently the Queen of Scotland, who thereafter married the partner of her crime, of whom she may or may not have been the temptress,—shared with him in his brief career of royalty (the space disputed), and died very nearly at the same time when the sword of Macduff (who did not lose wife and children at Macbeth's hands) put an end to the usurpation. Unfortunately for the possibilities of exactitude, neither de Fordun, in his ambiguous allusions, Lampert, in his clear and succinct statements, nor the records bearing on the same subject, still existing and so easily read by the light of the others, in the council chamber at Edinburgh—unfortunately none of these give any clew to the family of the murderous and twice-wedded queen; but, following the laws of probability, and taking into consideration the fact that in none of those records is any allusion made to a marriage of Duncan other than his first already named, with the sister of Sward, Earl of Northumberland, the conclusion becomes an irresistible one that she was not Scottish by blood, but belonged to that family of known violence in temper as well as undimmed bravery and power in arms, having their origin and abode south of the Tweed, and their blood still traceable in some of the most distinguished families of the British peerage.

Instantly the question occurs: Why did Shakespeare, who undoubtedly knew this important fact, ignore it in the tragedy, when he might have even intensified the character of the murderer by showing her in that additional character of the murderous wife? To this the answer is obvious, and the study involved one of the most interesting in all literature. "Macbeth" was one of his latest works, as one of his most powerful. Years before he had written and given to the world "Hamlet," in which (then evidently with no thought of the after-use of his materials) he had used the character of the murderous queen so forcibly and so clearly as to debar his doing so again in any similar connection. Well was it for his great fame,

perhaps, and for the interests of dramatic literature, that this bar existed; for he was under no obligation to the world to write veritable history in the drama (indeed he had been too wise to make the experiment, in dealing with the English Richards and Henrys, a Tudor on the throne); and there is no doubt whatever that in the imaginary wife whom he was thus literally driven to create, from his previous abduction and transference of the original, he gave to mankind a character as much more generally commending itself to both reader and spectator than the real woman could have been in any of her possibilities, as Lady Macbeth transcends in force and interest the comparatively shadowy drawing from the original, Queen Gertrude of Denmark. Possessed, in his own creation of her, of a creature "of imagination all compact," in a different sense from his own use of that phrase, the great dramatist was able to blend the woman of bloody and boundless ambition and cruelty with the madly and even tenderly loving wife—the temptress with power to touch the heart as well as spur the passions,—as he could not possibly have done with the wife of the man foredoomed to murder, with no bond existing between the two great plotting criminals, except the single one of guilt, and ambition out of the question for the woman who had no crown to win and could secure no gain except a change of royal partners. In this view, a knowledge of identity of the person who became the ever-living Lady Macbeth becomes of the highest importance in understanding the master-tragedy, as well as once more measuring the creative genius of the master-dramatist.—*The Aldine for February.*

### USEFUL RECEIPTS.

**Molasses Cake.**—Take two cups molasses, one cup butter, one cup sweet milk, teaspoon of saleratus, tablespoon of ginger, three eggs, five cups of sifted flour.

**Ginger Nuts.**—One pound of flour, three-quarters pound of lard and butter mixed, three-quarters pound of sugar, one-quarter pound of ginger, two ounces of allspice, one ounce of caraway seed and one pint of molasses.

**Cream Pie Crust.**—Take equal quantities Graham and white flour, wet with thin, sweet cream, roll thin, bake in a hot oven, as common pie crust. Or take a piece of bread dough, after it has risen, and roll in a small piece butter, roll out as pie crust.

**Bolting Destroyer.**—Although these pests do not annoy one in winter, still it is well to look after them. Boil in one gallon of water one half pound of alum. Wash the bedsteads with this mixture while hot, two or three times during the season and you will exterminate them.

**To Renew Wrinkled Crepe.**—Stretch over a basin of boiling water, holding it smooth but not tight, over the top, and shifting as the steam fairly penetrates it. Fold, while damp, in the original creases, and lay under a heavy book to dry. It will look almost as well as new.

**Pumpkin Pie.**—Stew, sift, add as much boiling milk as will make it about one-third thicker than for common pumpkin pie; sweeten with sugar or molasses, bake in a hot oven. Or add rolled cracker or flour to the sifted pumpkin; add milk to the thickness of common pumpkin pie. Squash and sweet potato pies are made in the same way.

**Chestnut Pudding.**—Take clean-boiled chestnut kernels and pound them in a mortar or rub them through a sieve. To one cup of this add three cups of chopped apple, one cup chopped raisins, and one-half cup of sugar, and one cup of water. Mix thoroughly and bake one-half hour, or until the apple is tender. Serve cool.

**Tomatoes—A New Dish.**—Slice ripe tomatoes as thin as you can conveniently, dip them in flour, both sides, with pepper and salt; have some boiling lard ready in a pan and fry them a nice brown; then add a little butter if you like, and serve hot for breakfast. Some prefer the green ones done in the same way; both are a substitute for eggplants.

**Sausage Meat.**—The proportions for sausage meat are a pound of lean fresh veal and a pound of lean fresh pork, a clove and piece of nutmeg. Chop the meat fine, or run it through a chopping machine; grate in a little nutmeg and clove, also a small piece of cinnamon, if liked; mix them, and also salt and pepper, with the meat; two yolks of eggs may also be added, if handy. You then know with what kind of meat your sausage is made. More veal and less pork may be used, and vice versa, according to taste.

**To Shoe An Unruly Horse.**—A gentleman long resident in Mexico says that a good way to manage a horse that will not be shod is to take a cord the size of a common bedcord; put it into the mouth of the horse like a bit, and tie it tightly on the animal's head, passing his left ear under the string, not painfully tight, but tight enough to keep the ear down and the cord in its place. This done, pat the horse gently on the side of the head and command him to follow. It subdues any horse, and he becomes as gentle and obedient as a dog.

**Care of Fowls.**  
A correspondent from Canada asks: "For health and cleanliness, what is the best to apply to the inside walls of my henry? What is the best feed; how fed, and what amount is requisite for about forty fowls per day?" We consider whitewash to be the best. It should not be tinted. Feed with variety. Always use the heaviest corn; it is the best and cheapest. Fine bran is better combined with whole grain, and when mashed is very nutritious; or if mixed with equal parts of boiled potato or Indian meal scalded, it forms a superior food. Scalded feed should be made so stiff that it will break when thrown on the ground. Oats and barley are good occasionally. Buckwheat is a good winter feed; it is very warm-heating; it is also the best feed to make hens lay early. Hemp seed is good for the moulting season. A little chopped vegetables of some kind should be given every day. To supply the place of summer insects, a little meat or scrap cake is good during winter. Supply lime rubbish or bones. Never use a dish or trough except for water. Keep the feeding room clean, and throw the feed on the ground. There is no positive rule as to quantity. Hens rarely ever over-feed. Never stint in variety or quality. The best is always the most economical.

**TO MAKE PEACH TREES LONG LIVED.**  
—In the essay Lloyd Balderston read before the December meeting of Experimental Farm Club he stated that he had peach trees twenty years old which still bore well. He recommended in order to make such fruit trees long lived that soil be allowed to grow around them for a few years in order to retard their growth, before cultivation of the ground was commenced. In our report of the essay the name pear had been substituted for peach in this particular. Mr. Balderston is an experienced and successful orchardist and his statements are entitled to much consideration.—*Oxford Press.*

**JOHNNY'S ESSAY ON "THE TODE."**  
—Todes is like frogs, but more dignity, and you you come to think of it, frogs is wetter. The warts with todes is noted for cant be cured, for they are croneik, but if I could get wet I'd stay in the house. My grandfather knew a tode which some body had tamed till it was folks. When its master wished it would come for flies. They cetches em with their tongue which is some like a long red worm, but more like littenin, only littenin haint got no gum onto it. The fi will be a standin a rubbin its hind legs to gether and a thinking wat a fine fi it is, and the tode a settin some distance away like it was a sleep. Wile you are seen the fi as plane as you ever see any thing, all to once it aint there. Then the tode he looks up at you sollem, out of his eyes, like he said wa's become of that fi? but you kno he et it.

**Friction impedes the progress of the railway train, and yet it is only through friction that it makes any progress. This apparent paradox is explained when we remember that by reason of the frictional "bite" of the drivers upon the track they draw the train. The bearings of the wheels upon the rails are a mere line where they come in contact, iron and iron, yet this slight and almost imperceptible hold is sufficient to move hundreds of tons of dead weight with the speed of the wind.**

**Two colored men took refuge under a tree in a violent thunder shower.**  
"Julius, can you pray?" said one. "No, Sam," was the reply, "nebber prayed in my life."  
"Well, see heah, honey, sunfin 'ligions is got to be done heah mighty sudden. S'pose you pass de contribution box."

**A Sacramento lawyer remarked to the court: "It is my candid opinion, Judge, that you are an old fool." The Judge allowed his mildly beaming eye to fall upon the lawyer a brief moment, then, in a voice husky with suppressed emotion, said: "It's my candid opinion that you are fined \$100."**

**A Rochester flirt had an offer of marriage the other evening, and rushing to the hall she called upstairs: "Mother! am I engaged to anybody now?"**

**Nothing recalls to the mind of the married man the joys of his single life so vividly as to find that the baby has been eating crackers in bed.**

**A wretched Danbury boy being asked if he would live away, replied that he would live part of the way, and go the rest on the train.**

**Men who traveled barefooted around a newly carpeted bed room often find themselves on the wrong tack.**

**A cow died in Springfield, Ohio, from eating too many apples, which gave rise to some trouble in cider.**

**The best way to keep a lady's hands "free from chaps" is to start a report that she has no money.**

**Drunkenness makes some men fools, some beasts, and some devils.**

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