Parallelism with לֹֽאָמְרָם and לֹֽאָמְרָם might lead us to expect לֹֽאָמְרָה. The plural has indeed the support of the Tg. and Pesh. (לֹֽאָמְרָה, לֹֽאָמְרָה), and is read by some scholars 1). Possibly here is an abbreviation (לֹֽאָמְרָה). In cases where the masculine plural is abbreviated in the M.T., only the final mem as a rule disappears, while the yodh remains 2). The disappearance of both consonants is, however, not unknown 3).

I 11:

The adoption of לֹֽאָמְרָה לֹֽאָמְרָה לֹֽאָמְרָה “lurk” 5)—and לֹֽאָמְרָה לֹֽאָמְרָה is used here, as elsewhere 6), of groundless hostility or attack. The adoption of לֹֽאָמְרָה לֹֽאָמְרָה “perfect” 7) for לֹֽאָמְרָה also seems difficult to justify, since the phrase לֹֽאָמְרָה לֹֽאָמְרָה occurs elsewhere in Proverbs (e.g., i 18, xii 6), and moreover לֹֽאָמְרָה לֹֽאָמְרָה has the support of the ancient versions.


1) E.g., N. Schloegel, Rev. Bibl. ix (1900), p. 520.
2) For examples see F. Perles, Anal. zur Textkritik des A.T., 1895, p. 29; R. Gordin, The Song of Songs, p. 94 f.
3) See Perles, op. cit., p. 28 f.
4) So Beer, ad loc. Frank., p. 21, supplies לֹֽאָמְרָה “net” as object of לֹֽאָמְרָה.
5) For the intransitive meaning of לֹֽאָמְרָה, see BDB, p. 860.
6) Ibid., p. 336.
7) E.g., by Toy, p. 19; Wild., p. 3; Gems., p. 14.
The text seems to express the mounting glee of the blood-seekers as they contemplate, in a crescendo of delight, their groundless attack on those who have done nothing to deserve it. The sense may be brought out thus —

“Let us lie in wait for blood!
Let us lurk—for the innocent!!
Though we have no cause against them!!!”

I 17: כְּרִיתָם מִהלָּה הָרְשָׁת

The word מֵהלָּה has been explained in several different ways—as ptp. Pu. of הָלָה “scatter” ²; as ptp. pass. Qal of מָלַח “spread out” (read as מָלַח)³; and as ptp. Pu. of רו “draw tight” ⁴. The prover is sometimes taken to mean that it is to no purpose that a net is spread out in the sight of a bird, for the Fowler will gain nothing, since the bird will take fright and avoid the net ⁶. EHRLICH ⁶, however, following Rashi, argues, with much probability, that מֵהלָּה here refers to the sprinkling of a net with grain as bait. Rashi’s comment is as follows:

וכָה הָאֵין עֲנָנֵי מַעְרִים עַל מַה הָאֵין מַהְרִידֵךְ וְהָאֵיךְ

“When the birds see wheat and small grain strewn upon the net, to no purpose is it in their eyes, because they do not realize why it is strewn with grain, and so they alight upon it and eat.” The birds, that is to say, are lured on by the bait and caught in the net, even though the net was baited in full sight of them—they see the bait prepared, but it is to no purpose, for they do not see the danger, and so meet their death ⁷. Neither Rashi nor EHRLICH, however, indicate how the meaning “strewn with grain” for מֵהלָּה is obtained. This

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¹ For the use of מֵהָל in connection with blood shed without good cause, see especially 1 Sam. xxv 31, 1 Reg. ii 31. Pesh. here has חֲמָל “deceitfully”.


³ G. R. DRIVER, Biblica 32 (1951), p. 173, who thinks the root מָלָח is also possible. FRANK., p. 22, reads מָלַח מָרָס as “spread”; cf. TOY, p. 20. The versions render as follows—LXX κεκρυμένα; Tg. מַרְס; Pesh. פָּרָס; Vulg. jacitur; Pal. Syr. מִשְׁלָמֵי “spread” (A Palestinian Syriac Lectionary, ed. A. S. LEWIS, p. 104).

⁴ So, e.g., FRANK., p. 22.

⁵ P. 13.

⁶ Similarly Ibn Ezra—לא יְרָאֵהוּ הָרְשָׁת וְלָא יְהַבֵּהוּ מֵהָלָּה עַל שְׁעֵתָה בּוֹ יִדְרַא— (“the bird) does not see the net and is not afraid of it, until it alights on it; it sees the bait which is on it, but not the net.” Cf. further GEMS., p. 14; TOY, p. 17; WILD., p. 4.