

THE
DEATH OF MARLOWE.

A Tragedy,

IN ONE ACT.

BY

R. H. HORNE,

AUTHOR OF

"Orion;" *the Tragedies of "Cosmo de' Medici," "Gregory VII,"*
"Judas Iscariot, a Mystery Play," "Ballad Romances,"
&c., &c.

"He was a Man, fiery-real, from the great fire-bosom of Nature herself."

CARLYLE'S *French Revolution.*

"Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss!"

* * * *

Now hast thou but one bare hour to live."

MARLOWE'S *Faustus.*

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DEDICATION.

THIS brief Tragedy, long since out of print, was originally published in London (by Messrs. Saunders and Otley), and was inscribed to the author's friend, LEIGH HUNT, happily living at that time ; and it is now Dedicated to his dear Memory—deservedly dear to all who knew him, and to a world of others who know his books.

R. W. W.

London, Christmas, 1869.

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THE DEATH OF MARLOWE.

WRITTEN AFTER READING "THE DEATH OF MARLOWE,"
BY R. H. HORNE, Esq.

A dream of Life and Death—a passionate dream !
Genius, self-borne in fierce and wild career,
Unconscious of the gulf that yawneth near,
Black, rayless, save with life's last flickering gleam,
Lost child of Pride and Power ! may none redeem ?
With fixed eye and with outstretched hands,
Lo ! on the lightning-rifted rock he stands
That sternly shadows Lethe's sluggard stream.

A moment ! and strange sorrow fills the air—
Grief hath no sadder voice—a woman's wail !
And in that cry there is no vulgar tale ;
"Tis not the outburst of a passing care :
He dies who lifted from her soul its veil,
And life to her henceforth is fathomless despair.

J. W. DALBY.

Amersham, Bucks.

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Dramatis Personæ.

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE..... }
THOMAS HEYWOOD..... } *Dramatists and Actors.*

THOMAS MIDDLETON *Dramatist.*

CECILIA } *Runaway Wife of the
Drunkard, Bengough.*

JACCONOT, alias JACK-O-NIGHT } *A Tavern Pander and
Swashbuckler.*

Gentlemen, Officers, Servants, &c.

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THE DEATH OF MARLOWE.

SCENE FIRST.—*Public Gardens—Liberty of the Clink,
Southwark.*

Enter MARLOWE and HEYWOOD, R.

HEYWOOD. Be sure of it.

MARLOWE. I am ; but not by your light.

HEY. I speak it not in malice, nor in envy

Of your good fortune with so bright a beauty ;
But I have heard such things !

MARL. Good Master Heywood,
I prithee plague me not with what thou'st heard ;
I've seen, and I do love her—and, for hearing,
The music of her voice is in my soul,
And holds a rapturous jubilee 'midst dreams
That melt the day and night into one bliss.

HEY. Beware the waking hour !

MARL. In lovely radiance,
Like all that's fabled of Olympus' queen,
She moves—as if the earth were undulant clouds,
And all its flowers her subject stars.

HEY. Proceed.

MARL. Smile not ; for 'tis most true : the very air
With her sweet presence is impregnate richly.
As in a mead, that's fresh with youngest green,
Some fragrant shrub, some secret herb, exhales
Ambrosial odours ; or in lonely bower,
Where one may find the musk-plant, heliotrope,
Geranium, or grape-hyacinth, confers
A ruling influence, charming present sense,
And sure of memory ; so, her person bears
A natural balm, obedient to the rays
Of heaven—or to her own, which glow within,

Distilling incense by their own sweet power.
 The dew at sunrise on a ripen'd peach
 Was never more delicious than her neck.
 Such forms are Nature's favourites.

HEY. Come, come—
 Pygmalion and Prometheus dwell within you!
 You poetize her rarely, and exalt
 With goddess-attributes, and chastity
 Beyond most goddesses: be not thus serious!
 If for a passing paramour thou'dst love her,
 Why, so, it may be well; but never place
 Thy full heart in her hand.

MARL. I have—I do—
 And I will lay it bleeding at her feet.
 Reason no more, for I do love this woman:
 To me she's chaste, whatever thou hast heard.
 Whatever I may hear, know, find, or fancy,
 I must possess her constantly, or die.

HEY. Nay, if't be thus, I'll fret thine ear no more
 With raven voice; but aid thee all I can.

MARL. Cecilia!—Go, dear friend—good Master Heywood,
 Leave me alone—I see her coming hither!

HEY. Bliss wait thy wooing; peace of mind its end!
 (aside) His knees shake, and his face and hands are
 wet,

As with a sudden fall of dew—God speed him!
 This is a desperate fancy!

Exit, R.

Enter CECILIA, L.

CECILIA. Thoughtful sir,
 How fare you? Thou'st been reading much of late,
 By the moon's light, I fear me?

MARL. Why so, lady?

CECIL. The reflex of the page is on thy face.

MARL. But in my heart the spirit of a shrine
 Burns, with immortal radiation crown'd.

CECIL. Nay, primrose gentleman, think'st me a saint?

MARL. I feel thy power.

CECIL. I exercise no arts—
 Whence is my influence?

MARL. From heaven, I think.

Madam, I love you—ere to-day you've seen it,
 Although my lips ne'er breathed the word before ;
 And seldom as we've met, and briefly spoken,
 There are such spiritual passings to and fro
 'Twixt thee and me—though I alone may suffer—
 As make me know this love blends with my life ;
 Must branch with it, bud, blossom, put forth fruit,
 Nor end e'en when its last husks strew the grave,
 Whence we together shall ascend to bliss.

CECIL. Continued from this world ?

MARL. Thy hand,—both hands !—
 I kiss them from my soul !

CECIL. Nay, sir, you burn me—
 Let loose my hands !

MARL. I loose them—half my life has thus gone from me !—
 That which is left can scarce contain my heart,
 Now grown too full with the high tide of joy,
 Whose ebb, retiring, fills the caves of sorrow,
 Where Syrens sing beneath their dripping hair,
 And raise the mirror'd fate.

CECIL. Then, gaze not in it,
 Lest thou should'st see thy passing funeral.
 I would not—I might chance to see far worse.

MARL. Thou art too beautiful ever to die !
 I look upon thee, and can ne'er believe it.
 CECIL. O, sir—but passion, circumstance, and fate,
 Can do far worse than kill : they can dig graves,
 And make the future owners dance above them,
 Well knowing how 'twill end. Why look you sad ?
 'Tis not your case ; you are a man in love—
 At least, you say so—and should therefore feel
 A constant sunshine, wheresoe'er you tread,
 Nor think of what's beneath. But speak no more :
 I see a volume gathering in your eye
 Which you would fain have printed in my heart ;
 But you were better cast it in the fire.
 Enough you've said, and I enough have listened.

MARL. I have said naught.

CECIL. You have spoken very plain—
 So, Master Marlowe, please you, break we off ;
 And, since your mind is now relieved—good day !

MARL. Leave me not thus!—forgive me!

CECIL. For what offence?

MARL. The expression of my love.

CECIL. Tut! that's a trifle.

— Think'st thou I ne'er saw men in love before?

Unto the summer of beauty they are common

As grasshoppers.

MARL. And to its winter, lady?

CECIL. There is no winter in my thoughts—adieu!

Exit, R.

MARL. She's gone!—How leafless is my life!—My strength

Seems melted—my breast vacant—and in my brain

I hear the sound of a retiring sea.

Exit, R.

SCENE SECOND.—*Gravel Lane; Bankside.*

Enter HEYWOOD and MIDDLETON, L.

MIDDLETON. And yet it may end well, after his fit is over.

HEY. But he is earnest in it.

MIDDLE. 'Tis his habit: a little thunder clears the atmosphere. At present he is spell-bound, and smouldereth in a hot cloud of passion; but when he once makes his way, he will soon disperse his free spirit abroad over the inspired heavens.

HEY. I fear me she will sow quick seed of feverish fancies in his mind that may go near to drive him mad.

MIDDLE How so? He knoweth her for what she is, as well as for what she was;—the high spirited and once virtuous wife of the drunkard Bengough. You remember him?

HEY. I have seen him i' the mire. 'Twas his accustomed bed o' nights—and mornings, too—many a time. He preferred *that* to the angel he left at home. Some men do. 'Tis a sorrow to think upon.

MIDDLE. And one that tears cannot wash! But Master Marlowe hath too deep a reading i' the books of nature to nail his heart upon a gilded weathercock. He is only desperate after the fashion of a pearl diver. When he hath enough, he will desist—breathe freely, polish the shells, and build Circean grottoes.

HEY. Nay, he persisteth in *not* knowing her for a courtezan—talks of her purity in burning words, that seem to glow and enhance his love from his convictions of her virtue; then suddenly falls into silent abstraction, looking like a man whose eyes are filled with visions of Paradise. No pains takes she to deceive him; for he supersedes the chance by deceiving himself beyond measure. He either listens not at all to intimation, or insists the contrary.

MIDDLE. This is his passionate aggravation or self will: he *must* know it.

HEY. 'Tis my belief; but her beauty blinds him with its beams, and drives his exiled reason into darkness.

MIDDLE. Here comes one that could enlighten his perception, methinks.

HEY. Who's he? (*looking off*) Jack-o'-night, the tavern pander and swashbuckler.

Enter JACCONOT, R.

JACCONOT. Save ye, my masters; lusty thoughts go with ye, and a jovial full cup wait on your steps: so shall your blood rise, and honest women pledge ye in their dreams!

MIDDLE. Your weighty-pursed knowledge of women, balanced against your squinting knowledge of honesty, Master Jack-o'-night, would come down to earth, methinks, as rapid as a fall from a gallows-tree.

JACCO. Well said, Master Middleton—a merry devil and a long-lived one run monkey-wise up your backbone! May your days be as happy as they're sober, and your nights full of applause! May no brawling mob pelt you, or your friends, when throned, nor hoot down your plays when your soul's pinned like a cockchafer on public opinion! May no learned or unlearned calf write against your knowledge and wit, and no brother paper-stainer pilfer your pages, and then call you a general thief! Am I the only rogue and vagabond in the world?

MIDDLE. I' faith, not: nay, an' thou wert, there would be no lack of them i' the next generation. Thou might'st be the father of the race, being now the bodily

type of it. The phases of thy villany are so numerous that, were they embodied, they would break down the fatal tree which is thine inheritance, and cause a lack of cords for the Thames shipping !

JACCO. Don't choke me with compliments !

HEY. (*to MIDDLETON*) He seems right proud of this multiplied idea of his latter end.

JACCO. Ay ; hanging's of high antiquity, and, thereto, of broad modern repute. The flag, the sign, the fruit, the felon, and other high and mighty game, all hang ; though the sons of ink and sawdust try to stand apart, smelling civet, as one should say,—faugh ! Jewelled caps, ermined cloaks, powdered wigs, church bells, *bona-roba* bed-gowns, gilded bridles, spurs, shields, swords, harness, holly relics and salted hogs, all hang in glory ! Pictures, too, of rare value ! Also music's ministrants,—the lute, the horn, the fiddle, the pipe, the gong, the viol, the salt-box, the tambourine and the triangle, make a dead-wall dream of festive harmonies !

MIDDLE. Infernal discords, thou would'st say !

JACCO. (*rapidly*) These are but few things among many ! for 'scutcheons, scarecrows, proclamations, the bird in a cage, the target for fools' wit, *hic jacet* tablets (that is, lying ones), the King's Head and the Queen's Arms, ropes of onions, dried herbs, smoked fish, holly boughs, hall lanthorns, framed piety texts, and adored frights of family portraits, all hang ! Likewise corkscrews, cat-skins, glittering trophies, sausage links, shining icicles, the crucifix, and the skeleton in chains. There, we all swing, my masters ! Tut ! hanging's a high Act of Parliament privilege !—a Star-Chamber Garter-right !

MIDDLE. (*to HEYWOOD laughingly*) The devil's seed germinates with reptile rapidity, and blossoms and fructifies in the vinous fallows of this bully's brain !

JACCO. I tell thee what—(*looking off, L.*) another time ! *Exit JACCONOT, hastily, L.*

HEY. I breathe fresh air !

MIDDLE. Look !—said I not so ? See whom 'tis he meets ; And with a lounging, loose, familiar air, Cocking his cap, and setting his hand on's hip,

Salutes with such free language as his action
And attitude explain!

HEY. I grieve for Marlowe:
The more, since 'tis as certain he must have
Full course of passion, as that its object's full
Of most unworthy elements.

MIDDLE. Unworthy,
Indeed, of such a form, if all be base.
But Nature, methinks, doth seldom so belie
The inward by the outward; seldom frame
A cheat so finish'd to ensnare the senses,
And break our faith in all substantial truth. *Exeunt, R.*

Enter CECILIA, L., followed by JACCONOT.

JACCO. Well, well, Mistress St. Cecil; the money is
all well enough—I object nothing to the money.

CECIL. Then, go your ways.

JACCO. My ways are your ways—a murrain on your
beauties—has your brain shot forth skylarks as your
eyes do sparks?

CECIL. Go!—here is my purse.

JACCO. I'll no more oft!—I have a mind to fling
back what thou'st already given me for my services.

CECIL. Master Jacconot, I would have no further
services from thee. If thou art not yet satisfied, fetch
the weight and scales, and I will cast my gold into it,
and my dross besides—so shall I be doubly relieved.

JACCO. I say again—and the devil bear me fierce
witness!—it is not gold I want, but rightful favour; not
silver, but sweet civility; not dross, but due respect to my
nonpareil value! Bethink thee, Cecil—bethink thee of
many things! Ay! am not I the true gallant of my time?
the great Glowworm and Will-o'-the-wisp—the life, the
fortune, and the favourite of the brightest among ye!

CECILIA. Away!

JACCO. Whither?

CECIL. Anywhere, so it be distant. (*crosses, L.*)

JACCO. What mean'st by discarding me, and why is it?
'Slud! is this the right sort of return for all my skilful
activities, my adroit fascinations of young lords in drink,
my tricks at dice, cards, and dagger-play, not to speak too

loudly of bets on bear-baits, soap-bubbles, and Shrovetide cocks; or my lies about your beauty and temper? Have I not brought dukes and earls and reverend seniors, on tip-toe, and softly whispering, for fear of "the world," right under the balcony of your window?—O, don't beat the dust with your fine foot! These be good services, I think!

CECIL. (*half aside*) Alas! alas!—the world sees us only as bright, though baleful stars, little knowing our painful punishments in the dark—our anguish in secret.

JACCO. Are you thinking of me?

CECIL. Go!

JACCO. Go!—a death's-head crown your pillow! May you dream of love, and wake and see that!

CECIL. I had rather see't than you.

JACCO. What's i' the wind,—nobleman, or gentleman, or a brain fancy—am not I at hand? Are you mad?

CECIL. (*overcome*) I'd gladly believe I have been so.

JACCO. Good. I'm content you see me aright once more, and acknowledge yourself wrong.

CECIL. (*half aside, and tearfully*) Oh, wrong indeed—very wrong—to my better nature—my better nature.

JACCO. And to me, too! Bethink thee, I say, when last year, after the dance at Hampton, thou wert enraged against the noble that slighted thee; and, flushed with wine, thou took'st me by the ear, and mad'st me hand thee into thy coach, and get in beside thee, with a drawn sword in my hand and a dripping trencher on my head, singing such songs, until—

CECIL. Earthworms and stone walls!

JACCO. Hey! what of them?

CECIL. I would that as the corporal Past they cover,

They could, at earnest bidding of the will,

Entomb in walls of darkness and devour

The hated retrospections of the mind. (*crosses, R.*)

JACCO. (*aside*) Oho!—the lamps and saw-dust!—Here's foul play

And mischief in the market. Preaching varlet!

I'll find him out—I'll dog him! *Exit, L.*

CECIL. Self disgust

Gnaws at the roots of being, and doth hang

A heavy sickness on the beams of day,
 Making the atmosphere, which should exalt
 Our contemplations, press us down to earth,
 As though our breath had made it thick with plague.
 Cursed ! accursed be the freaks of Nature,
 That mar us from ourselves, and make our acts
 The scorn and loathing of our afterthoughts—
 The finger-mark of Conscience, who, most treacherous,
 Wakes to accuse, but slumber'd o'er the sin. *Exit, R.*

SCENE THIRD.—*A Room in the Triple Tun, Blackfriars.*
 MARLOWE, MIDDLETON, and GENTLEMEN.

A GENTLEMAN. I do rejoice to find myself among
 The choicest spirits of the age : health, sirs !
 I would commend your fame to future years,
 But that I know ere this ye must be old
 In the conviction, and that ye full oft
 With sure posterity have shaken hands
 Over the unstable bridge of present time.

MARL. Not so : we write from the full heart within,
 And leave posterity to find her own.

Health, sir !—your good deeds laurel you in heaven.

MIDDLE. 'Twere best men left their fame to chance and
 fashion,

As birds bequeath their eggs to the sun's hatching,
 Since Genius can make no will.

MARL. Troth, can it !

But for the consequences of the deed,
 What fires of blind fatality may catch them !
 Say, you do love a woman—do adore her—
 You may embalm the memory of her worth
 And chronicle her beauty to all time,
 In words whereat great Jove himself might flush,
 And feel Olympus tremble at his thoughts ;
 Yet where is your security ? Some clerk
 Wanting a foolscap, or some boy a kite,
 Some housewife fuel, or some sportsman wadding
 To wrap a ball (which hits the poet's brain
 By merest accident) seizes your record,
 And to the winds thus scatters all your will,

Or, rather, your will's object. Thus, our pride
 Swings like a planet by a single hair,
 Obedient to God's breath. More wine! more wine!
 I preach—and I grow melancholy—wine!

Enter DRAWER, with a tankard, R. U. E.

A GENTLEMAN. (*rising*). We're wending homeward—
 gentlemen, good night!

MARL. Not yet—not yet—the night has scarce begun—
 Nay, Master Heywood—Middleton, you'll stay!
 Bright skies to those who go—high thoughts go
 with ye,

And constant youth!

GENTLEMEN. We thank you, sir—good night!

Exeunt GENTLEMEN, L.

HEY. Let's follow—'tis near morning.

MARL. Do not go.

I'm ill at ease, touching a certain matter
 I've taken to heart—don't speak of't—and besides
 I have a sort of horror of my bed.
 Last night a squadron charged me in a dream,
 With Isis and Osiris at the flanks,
 Towering and waving their colossal arms,
 While in the van a fiery chariot roll'd,
 Wherein a woman stood—I knew her well—
 Who seem'd but newly risen from the grave!
 She whirl'd a javelin at me, and methought
 I woke; when, slowly at the foot o' the bed
 The mist-like curtains parted, and upon me
 Did learned Faustus look! He shook his head
 With grave reproof, but more of sympathy,
 As though his past humanity came o'er him—
 Then went away with a low, gushing sigh,
 That startled his own death-cold breast, and seem'd
 As from a marble urn where passion's ashes
 Their sleepless vigil keep. Well—perhaps they do.
 (after a pause)
 Lived he not greatly? Think what was his power!
 All knowledge at his beck—the very Devil
 His common slave. And, oh! brought he not back,

Through the thick-million'd catacombs of ages,
Helen's unsullied loveliness to his arms ?

MIDDLE. So—let us have more wine, then !

HEY. Spirit enough

Springs from thee, Master Marlowe—what need
more ?

MARL. Drawer! lift up thy leaden poppy-head !

Up man!—where art ? The night seems wondrous
hot !

(MARLOWE throws open a window, L. C., that reaches
down to the floor, and stands there, looking out)

HEY. (to MIDDLETON) The air flows in upon his heated
face,

And he grows pale with looking at the stars;
Thinking the while of many things in heaven.

MIDDLE. And some one on the earth—as fair to him—
For, lo you!—is't not she ?

(pointing towards the open window)

HEY. The lady, folded
In the long mantle, coming down the street ?

MIDDLE. Let be ; we cannot help him.

(HEYWOOD and MIDDLETON retire apart—CECILIA
is passing by the open window, R. to L.)

MARL. Stay awhile!—

One moment stay !

CECIL. (pausing) That is not much to ask.

(she steps in through the window)

MARL. Nor much for you to grant; but oh, to me
That moment is a circle without bounds,—

Because I see no end to my delight !

CECIL. Oh, sir, you make me very sad at heart;
Let's speak no more of this. I am on my way
To walk beside the river.

MARL. May I come ?

CECIL. Ah, no; I'll go alone.

MARL. 'Tis dark and dismal—
Nor do I deem it safe !

CECIL. What can harm me ?

If not above, at least I am beyond

All common dangers. No, you shall not come.

I have some questions I would ask myself;
 And in the sullen, melancholy flow
 O' the unromantic Thames, that has been witness
 Of many tragical realities,
 Bare of adornment as its cold stone stairs,
 I may find sympathy, if not response.

MARL. You find both here. I know thy real life;
 We do not see the truth—or, O, how little!
 Pure light sometimes through painted windows
 streams;
 And, when all's dark around thee, thou art fair!
 Thou bear'st within an ever-burning lamp,
 To me more sacred than a vestal's shrine;
 For she may be of heartless chastity,
 False in all else, and proud of her poor ice,
 As though 'twere fire suppress'd; but thou art good
 For goodness' sake;—true-hearted, loveable,
 For truth and honour's sake; and such a woman,
 That man who wins, the gods themselves may envy.

CECIL. (*going*) Considering all things, this is bitter sweet.

MARL. And I may come? (*following her*)

CECILIA. (*firmly*) You shall not.

MARL. I obey you.

CECIL. (*tenderly*) Ah! Kit Marlowe,—

You think too much of me—and of yourself
 Too little!

MARL. Then I may—(*advancing*)

CECIL. (*firmly*) No—no!

MARL. Wilt promise

To see me for one “good night” ere you sleep?

CECIL. On my way home, I will.

(she turns to look at him—then steps through the
 window—*Exit to L.*)

MARL. Be sure—be sure!

(HEYWOOD and MIDDLETON approach)

HEY. Now, Marlowe!—you desert us!

MARL. Say not so;—

Or, saying so, add—that I have lost myself!

Nay, but I have; yonder I go in the dark!

(pointing after CECILIA)

Street Music.—JACCONOT, singing outside.

Ram out the link, boys; ho, boys !*

There's daylight in the sky !

While the trenchers strew the floor,

And the worn-out grey beards snore,

Jolly throats continue dry !

Ram out the link, boys, &c.

MIDDLE. What voice is that ?

MARL. (*through his teeth*) From one of the hells.

HEY. The roystering singer approaches.

Enter JACCONOT, with a full tankard, L.

JACCO. Ever awake and shining, my masters ! and here am I, your twin lustre, always ready to herald and anoint your pleasures, like a true Master of the Revels. I ha' just stepped over the drawer's body, laid nose and heels together on the door-mat, asleep, and here's wherewith to continue the glory !

MIDDLE. We need not your help.

HEY. We thank you, Jack-o'-night : we would be alone.

JACCO. What say *you*, Master Marlowe ? you look as grim as a sign-painter's first sketch on a tavern bill after his ninth tankard.

MIDDLE. Cease your death-rattle, night-hawk !

MARL. That's well said.

JACCO. Is it ? So 'tis, my gallants—a night-bird like yourselves, am I.

MARL. Beast!—we know you.

JACCO. Your merry health, Master Kit Marlowe ! I'll bring a loud pair of palms to cheer your soul the next time you strut in red paint with a wooden weapon at your thigh.

MARL. Who sent for *you*, dorr-hawk ?—go !

JACCO. Go ! Aha!—I remember the word—same tone, same gesture—or as like as the two profiles of a monkey, or as two squeaks for one pinch. Go!—not I—here's to all your healths ! One pull more ! There, I've done—

* The inverted iron horns or tubes, a few of which still remain on lamp-posts and gates, were formerly used as extinguishers to the torches, which were thrust into them.

take it, Master Marlowe ; and pledge me as the true knight of London's rarest beauties !

MARL. (l.) I will! (*dashes the tankard at his head*)

JACCO. (*stooping quickly*). A miss, 'fore-gad !—the wall has got it ! See where it trickles down like the long robe of some dainty fair one ! And look you here—and there again, look you !—what make you of the picture he hath presented ?

MARL. (*staggers as he stares at the wall*) O subtle Nature ! who hath so compounded

Our senses, playing into each other's wheels,
That feeling oft acts substitute for sight,
As sight becomes obedient to the thought—
How canst thou place such wonders at the mercy
Of every wretch that crawls ? I feel—I see !

(*Street Music as before, but farther off*)

JACCO. (*singing*).

Ram out the link, boys ; ho, boys !

The blear-eyed morning's here ;
Let us wander through the streets,
And kiss whoe'er one meets ;

St. Cecil is my dear !

Ram out the link, boys, &c.

MARL. (*drawing*) Lightning come up from hell and strangle thee !

MIDDLE. and HEY. Nay, Marlowe ! Marlowe ! (*they hold him back*)

MIDDLE. (*to JACCONOT*) Away, thou bestial villain !

JACCO. (*singing at MARLOWE*).

St. Cecil is my dear !

MARL. (*furiously*) Blast ! blast and scatter Thy body to ashes ! Off ! I'll have his ghost !

(*rushes at JACCONOT—they fight—MARLOWE disarms him ; but JACCONOT wrests MARLOWE'S own sword from his hand, and stabs him—MARLOWE falls*)

MIDDLE. See ! see !

MARL. (*clasping his forehead*) Who's down ?—answer me, friends—is't I ?—

Or in the maze of some delirious trance,
 Some realm unknown, or passion newly born—
 Ne'er felt before—am I transported thus?
 My fingers paddle, too, in blood—is't mine?

JACCO. Oh, content you, Master Marplot—'tis you that's down, drunk or sober; and that's your own blood on your fingers, running from a three-inch groove in your ribs for the devil's imps to slide into you. Ugh! cry gramercy! for it's all over with your rhyming!

HEY. O, heartless mischief!

MIDDLE. Hence, thou rabid cur!

MARL. What demon in the air with unseen arm

Hath turn'd my unchain'd fury against myself?
 Recoiling dragon! thy resistless force
 Scatters thy mortal master in his pride,
 To teach him, with self-knowledge, to fear thee.
 Forgetful of all corporal conditions,
 My passion hath destroy'd me!

JACCO. No such matter; it was *my* doing. You shouldn't ha' ran at me in that fashion with a real sword—I thought it had been one o' your sham ones.

MIDDLE. Away!

HEY. See! his face changes—lift him up!

(they raise and support him)

Here—place your hand upon his side—here, here—
 Close over mine, and staunch the flowing wound!

MARL. (delirious) Bright is the day—the air with glory
 teems—

And eagles wanton in the smile of Jove:
 Can these things be, and Marlowe live no more!
 Oh, Heywood! Heywood! I had a world of hopes
 About that woman—now in my heart they rise
 Confused, as flames from my life's coloured map,
 That burns until with wrinkling agony
 Its ashes flatten, separate, and drift
 Through gusty darkness. Hold me fast by the arm!
 A little aid will save me:—See! she's here!
 I clasp thy form—I feel thy breath, my love—
 And know thee for a sweet saint come to save me!
 Save!—is it death I feel—it cannot be death?

JACCO. (*half aside*) Marry, but it can!—or else your sword's a foolish dog that dar'n't bite his owner.

MARL. Oh, friends—dear friends—this is a sorry end—
A most unworthy end! To think—oh, God!
To think that I should fall by the hand of one
Whose office, like his nature, is all baseness,
Gives Death ten thousand stings, and to the Grave
A damning victory! Fame sinks with life!
A galling—shameful—ignominious end! (*sinks down*)
Oh, mighty heart! Oh, full and orbed heart,
Flee to thy kindred sun, rolling on high!
Or let the hoary and eternal sea
Sweep me away, and swallow body and soul!

JACCO. There'll be no "encore" to either, I wot; for thou'st led an ill life, Master Marlowe; and so the sweet Saint thou spok'st of, will remain my fair game—behind the scenes.

MARL. Liar! slave! sla— Kind Master Heywood,
You will not see me die thus!—thus by the hand
And maddening tongue of such a beast as that!
Haste, if you love me—fetch a leech to help me—
Here—Middleton—sweet friend—a bandage here—
I cannot die by such a hand—I will not—
I say I will not die by that vile hand!
Go bring Cecilia to me—bring the leech—
Close—close this wound—you know I did it myself—
Bring sweet Cecilia—haste—haste—instantly—
Bring life and time—bring heaven!—Oh, I am
dying!—
Some water—stay beside me—maddening death,
By such a hand! Oh villain! from the grave
I constantly will rise—to curse! curse! curse thee!

(*rises—and falls dead*)

MIDDLE. Terrible end!

HEY. Oh, God!—he is quite gone!

JACCO. (*aghast*) 'Twas dreadful—'twas! Christ help us!
and lull him to sleep in's grave. I stand up for mine
own nature none the less. (*voices without*) What noise
is that?

Enter OFFICERS, L.

CHIEF OFFICER. This is our man—ha ! murder has been here ! You are our prisoner—the gallows waits you !

JACCO. What have I done to be hung up like a miracle ? The hemp's not sown nor the ladder-wood grown, that shall help fools to finish me ! He did it himself ! He said so with his last words !—there stand his friends and brother players—put them to their Testament if he said not he did it himself ?

CHIEF O. Who is it lies here ?—methinks that I should know him,

But for the fierce distortion of his face !

MIDDLE. He who erewhile wrote with a brand of fire,
Now, in his passionate blood, floats tow'rds the grave !
The present time is ever ignorant—
We lack clear vision in our self-love's maze ;
But Marlowe in the future will stand great,
Whom this—the lowest caitiff in the world—
A nothing, save in grossness, hath destroy'd.

JACCO. “Caitiff” back again in your throat ! and “gross nothing” to boot—may you have it to live upon for a month, and die mad and starving ! Would’st swear my life away so lightly ? Tut ! who was he ? I could always find the soundings of a quart tankard, or empty a pasty in half his time, and swear as rare oaths between whiles—who was he ? I too ha’ writ my odes and Pindar jigs with the twinkling of a bedpost, to the sound of the harp and hurdygurdy, while Capricornus wagged his fiery beard ; I ha’ sung songs to the faint moon’s echoes at daybreak, and danced here away and there away, like the lightning through a forest ! As to your sword and dagger play, I’ve got the trick o’ the eye and wrist—who was he ? What’s all his gods—his goddesses and lies ?—the first a’nt worth a word ; and for the two last, I was always a prince of both ! “Caitiff !” and “beast !” and “nothing !”—who was he ?

CHIEF O. You’re ours, for sundry villanies committed,
Sufficient each to bring your vice to an end :
The law hath got you safely in its grasp !

JACCO. (*after a pause*) Then may Vice and I sit crown'd in heaven—while Law and Honesty stalk damned through hell ! Now do I see the thing very plain!—treachery—treachery, my masters ! I know the jade that hath betrayed me—I know her. 'Slud ! who cares ? She was a fine woman, too—a rare person—and a good spirit ; but there's an end of all now—she's turned foolish and virtuous, and a tell-tale, and I am to be turned to dust through it—long, long before my time ; and these princely limbs must go make a dirt-pie—build up a mud hut—or fatten an alderman's garden ! There ! calf-heads—there's a lemon for your mouths ! Heard'st ever such a last dying speech and confession ! Write it in red ochre on a sheet of Irish, and send it to Mistress Cecily for a death-winder. I know what you've got against me—and I know you all deserve just the same yourselves—but lead on, my masters !

Exeunt JACCONOT and OFFICERS, L.

MIDDLE. Oh, Marlowe ! canst thou rise with power no more ?

Can greatness die thus ?

HEY. (*bending over the body*) Miserable sight !

(*a shriek outside the house*)

MIDDLE. That cry !—what may that mean ?

HEY. (*as if awaking*) I hear no cry.

MIDDLE. What is't comes hither, like a gust of wind ?

CECILIA rushes in, L.

CECIL. Where—where ? Oh, then, 'tis true—and he is dead !

All's over now—there's nothing in the world—

For he who raised my heart up from the dust,

And show'd me noble lights in mine own soul,

Has fled my gratitude and growing love—

I never knew how deep it was till now !

Through me, too !—do not curse me !—I was the cause—

Yet do not curse me—No ! no ! not the cause,

But that it happen'd so. This the reward

Of Marlowe's love !—why, why did I delay ?

Oh, gentlemen, pray for me ! I have been

Lifted in heavenly air—and suddenly

The arm that placed me, and with strength sustain'd
me,
Is snatch'd up, starward : I can neither follow,
Nor can I touch the gross earth any more !
Pray for me, gentlemen !—but breathe no blessings—
Let not a blessing sweeten your dread prayers—
I wish no blessings—nor could bear their weight ;
For I am left I know not where or how :
But, pray for me—my soul is buried here.

(sinks down upon the body)

MIDDLE. “Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight,
“And burned is Apollo's laurel bough !”

(Solemn Music)

Dark Curtain.

COSTUMES.—*Period, 1593.*

MARLOWE.—A grey doublet and trunks, slashed with black ; grey hose, buff shoes, black and grey cloak, trencher cap, sword and belt, hair rather short, and moustache.

HEYWOOD. The same, of a different colour.

MIDDLETON.—Brown hose, trunks, and doublet, long overcoat, with slashed and falling sleeves, trencher cap.

JACCONOT.—Old red doublet and trunks, black hose, and short boots, hair rather long (the whole appearance that of a poor and careless vagabond and bully), long rusty sword.

CECILIA.—White dress, tight sleeves (full and puffed from the elbow), Mary Stuart cap, square-cut body.

OPINIONS OF LITERATI ON MR. R. H. HORNE'S DRAMATIC GENIUS.

[*The Publisher begs to state that, although all the following Opinions do not refer especially to the present Tragedy, he could greatly have added to the number with respect to this production.*]

It is a masterly specimen of the concentration of a world of life, passion, and sympathy. If the old Globe, or Blackfriars Theatre, could suddenly be raised out of the ground, with those who just remembered the days of Marlowe for spectators, this were a piece to fill up an hour for them, to the content of their stout and truly refined souls;—souls that minced no matters in which humanity was discernible. We have to thank Mr. HORNE for a great honour done to us, by the inscription of the work to our name.—LEIGH HUNT.

In my humble opinion it contains the very salt of the Old Drama. I was delighted and surprised.—LORD LYTTON.

Mr. HORNE is unlucky not to have lived in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. His dramas then would have been acted; and they now might have been reprinted, with notes and illustrations. No critic, in that case, would have objected that his language was so like that of the old dramatists: the critic would only have admired.—W. J. FOX.

There are finer things to be found in his writings than in any dramatist since the age of Elizabeth.—ROBERT BELL.

No one after reading his *Gregory VII.*, will doubt Mr. R. H. HORNE's capacity for the loftiest description of dramatic writing.—JOHN FORSTER. (*Examiner.*)

Mr. R. H. HORNE is a man of the most unquestionable genius.—G. H. LEWES. (*Westminster Review*, 184.)

Mr. R. H. HORNE's noble dramas are not the mere wordy imitation of the elder dramatists, but kindred productions; inspired by a like vigorous and splendid imagination; alike guided by the instincts of a lofty genius; at once penetrating and universal.—F. G. TOMLINS' *Brief View of the Drama*.

The Death of Marlowe haunted me long after reading it, as though the actual scene of passion had really taken place in my own room, before my own eyes. It has extraordinary power.—ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

It is equally beautiful, dreadful, and pathetic. I read it through at a blow. DOUGLAS JERROLD.

It seems to me very much what Kit Marlowe himself might have written of the violent death of some other great and wayward genius, under similar circumstances, had the idea struck him.—MARY RUSSELL MITFORD.

The Death of Marlowe is condensed to the utmost point. It is the very essence and sublimation of a tragedy; not a sketch or outline, be it observed, but the germ of gigantic nature. If lengthened, which it might be, all additions would ramify outwards from the vital spirit within.—THE AUTHOR of *Spirit of Modern Tragedy*.

There is fire in it: you must fight and wrestle as for life, till you get it purified into "fire of the stars." Fight and conquer.—THOMAS CARLYLE.

I had redd it already, and with greater delight than any dramatic or other poetical work of the last twenty years.—WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

If the stage shall fall to decay, I shall deplore it, if it be only for the sake of what we shall lose in Mr. R. H. HORNE, and in the younger genius (1844) of ROBERT BROWNING—a genius only yet dimly perceived, but deeply felt. And I am not sanguine for the cause of dramatic authors unless a race of actors shall arise to help them.—SIR THOMAS TALFOURD.