

## THE ENEMY'S PORTRAIT

He saw the portrait of his enemy, offered  
At auction in a street he journeyed nigh,  
That enemy, now late dead, who in his life-time  
Had injured deeply him the passer-by.

"To get that picture, pleased be God, I'll try,  
And utterly destroy it; and no more  
Shall be inflicted on man's mortal eye  
A countenance so sinister and sore!"

And so he bought the painting. Driving homeward,  
"The frame will come in useful," he declared,  
"The rest is fuel." On his arrival, weary,  
Asked what he bore with him, and how he fared,  
He said he had bid for a picture, though he cared  
For the frame only: on the morrow he  
Would burn the canvas, which could well be spared,  
Seeing that it portrayed his enemy.

Next day some other duty found him busy;  
The foe was laid his face against the wall;  
But on the next he set himself to loosen  
The straining-strips. And then a casual call

Prevented his proceeding therewithal;  
And thus the picture waited, day by day,  
Its owner's pleasure, like a wretched thrall,  
Until a month and more had slipped away.

And then upon a morn he found it shifted,  
Hung in a corner by a servitor.

"Why did you take on you to hang that picture?  
You know it was the frame I bought it for."

"It stood in the way of every visitor,  
And I just hitched it there."--"Well, it must go:  
I don't commemorate men whom I abhor.  
Remind me 'tis to do. The frame I'll stow."

But things become forgotten. In the shadow  
Of the dark corner hung it by its string,  
And there it stayed--once noticed by its owner,  
Who said, "Ah me--I must destroy that thing!"  
But when he died, there, none remembering,  
It hung, till moved to prominence, as one sees;  
And comers pause and say, examining,  
"I thought they were the bitterest enemies?"