

SCENES FROM "POLITIAN."

AN UNPUBLISHED DRAMA.

I.

ROME.--A Hall in a Palace. ALESSANDRA and CASTIGLIONE

Alessandra. Thou art sad, Castiglione.

Castiglione. Sad!--not I.

Oh, I'm the happiest, happiest man in Rome!  
A few days more, thou knowest, my Alessandra,  
Will make thee mine. Oh, I am very happy!

Aless. Methinks thou hast a singular way of showing  
Thy happiness--what ails thee, cousin of mine?  
Why didst thou sigh so deeply?

Cas. Did I sigh?  
I was not conscious of it. It is a fashion,  
A silly--a most silly fashion I have  
When I am very happy. Did I sigh? (sighing.)

Aless. Thou didst. Thou art not well. Thou hast indulged

Too much of late, and I am vexed to see it.  
Late hours and wine, Castiglione,--these  
Will ruin thee! thou art already altered--  
Thy looks are haggard--nothing so wears away  
The constitution as late hours and wine.

Cas. (musing ). Nothing, fair cousin, nothing--

Not even deep sorrow--  
Wears it away like evil hours and wine.  
I will amend.

Aless. Do it! I would have thee drop  
Thy riotous company, too--fellows low born  
Ill suit the like of old Di Broglio's heir  
And Alessandra's husband.

Cas. I will drop them.

Aless. Thou wilt--thou must. Attend thou also more  
To thy dress and equipage--they are over plain  
For thy lofty rank and fashion--much depends  
Upon appearances.

Cas. I'll see to it.

Aless. Then see to it!--pay more attention, sir,

To a becoming carriage--much thou wantest  
In dignity.

Cas.        Much, much, oh, much I want  
              In proper dignity.

Aless.

(haughtily).    Thou mockest me, sir!

Cos.

(abstractedly). Sweet, gentle Lalage!

Aless.        Heard I aright?

              I speak to him--he speaks of Lalage?

              Sir Count!

(places her hand on his shoulder)

                  what art thou dreaming?

              He's not well!

              What ails thee, sir?

Cas.(starting). Cousin! fair cousin!--madam!

              I crave thy pardon--indeed I am not well--

              Your hand from off my shoulder, if you please.

              This air is most oppressive!--Madam--the Duke!

Enter Di Broglio.

Di Broglio. My son, I've news for thee!--hey!

--what's the matter?

(observing Alessandra).

I' the pouts? Kiss her, Castiglione! kiss her,  
You dog! and make it up, I say, this minute!  
I've news for you both. Politian is expected  
Hourly in Rome--Politian, Earl of Leicester!  
We'll have him at the wedding. 'Tis his first visit  
To the imperial city.

Aless. What! Politian  
Of Britain, Earl of Leicester?

Di Brog. The same, my love.  
We'll have him at the wedding. A man quite young  
In years, but gray in fame. I have not seen him,  
But Rumor speaks of him as of a prodigy  
Pre-eminent in arts, and arms, and wealth,  
And high descent. We'll have him at the wedding.

Aless. I have heard much of this Politian.  
Gay, volatile and giddy--is he not,  
And little given to thinking?

Di Brog. Far from it, love.

No branch, they say, of all philosophy  
So deep abstruse he has not mastered it.  
Learned as few are learned.

Aless. 'Tis very strange!  
I have known men have seen Politian  
And sought his company. They speak of him  
As of one who entered madly into life,  
Drinking the cup of pleasure to the dregs.

Cas. Ridiculous! Now I have seen Politian  
And know him well--nor learned nor mirthful he.  
He is a dreamer, and shut out  
From common passions.

Di Brog. Children, we disagree.  
Let us go forth and taste the fragrant air  
Of the garden. Did I dream, or did I hear  
Politian was a melancholy man?

(Exeunt.)

II.

ROME.--A Lady's Apartment, with a window open and looking into a garden.  
LALAGE, in deep mourning, reading at a table on which lie some books and  
a hand-mirror. In the background JACINTA (a servant maid) leans  
carelessly upon a chair.

Lalage.        Jacinta! is it thou?

Jacinta  
(pertly).        Yes, ma'am, I'm here.

Lal.            I did not know, Jacinta, you were in waiting.  
                  Sit down!--let not my presence trouble you--  
                  Sit down!--for I am humble, most humble.

Jac. (aside).   'Tis time.

(Jacinta seats herself in a side-long manner upon the chair, resting  
her elbows upon the back, and regarding her mistress with a contemptuous  
look. Lalage continues to read.)

Lal.            "It in another climate, so he said,  
                  Bore a bright golden flower, but not i' this soil!"

(pauses--turns over some leaves and resumes.)

"No lingering winters there, nor snow, nor shower--  
But Ocean ever to refresh mankind  
Breathes the shrill spirit of the western wind"  
Oh, beautiful!--most beautiful!--how like  
To what my fevered soul doth dream of Heaven!  
O happy land! (pauses) She died!--the maiden died!  
O still more happy maiden who couldst die!  
Jacinta!

(Jacinta returns no answer, and Lalage presently resumes.)

Again!--a similar tale  
Told of a beauteous dame beyond the sea!  
Thus speaketh one Ferdinand in the words of the play--  
"She died full young"--one Bossola answers him--  
"I think not so--her infelicity  
Seemed to have years too many"--Ah, luckless lady!  
Jacinta! (still no answer.)  
Here's a far sterner story--  
But like--oh, very like in its despair--  
Of that Egyptian queen, winning so easily  
A thousand hearts--losing at length her own.  
She died. Thus endeth the history--and her maids  
Lean over her and keep--two gentle maids  
With gentle names--Eiros and Charmion!

Rainbow and Dove!--Jacinta!

Jac.

(pettishly). Madam, what is it?

Lal. Wilt thou, my good Jacinta, be so kind  
As go down in the library and bring me  
The Holy Evangelists?

Jac. Pshaw!

(Exit)

Lal. If there be balm  
For the wounded spirit in Gilead, it is there!  
Dew in the night time of my bitter trouble  
Will there be found--"dew sweeter far than that  
Which hangs like chains of pearl on Hermon hill."

(re-enter Jacinta, and throws a volume on the table.)

There, ma'am, 's the book.

(aside.) Indeed she is very troublesome.

Lal.

(astonished). What didst thou say, Jacinta?



Have I done aught  
To grieve thee or to vex thee?--I am sorry.  
For thou hast served me long and ever been  
Trustworthy and respectful.

(resumes her reading.)

Jac. (aside.) I can't believe

She has any more jewels--no--no--she gave me all.

Lal. What didst thou say, Jacinta? Now I bethink me

Thou hast not spoken lately of thy wedding.

How fares good Ugo?--and when is it to be?

Can I do aught?--is there no further aid

Thou needest, Jacinta?

Jac. (aside.) Is there no further aid!

That's meant for me. I'm sure, madam, you need not

Be always throwing those jewels in my teeth.

Lal. Jewels! Jacinta,--now indeed, Jacinta,

I thought not of the jewels.

Jac. Oh, perhaps not!

But then I might have sworn it. After all,

There's Ugo says the ring is only paste,

For he's sure the Count Castiglione never

Would have given a real diamond to such as you;  
And at the best I'm certain, madam, you cannot  
Have use for jewels now. But I might have sworn it.

(Exit)

(Lalage bursts into tears and leans her head upon the table--after a short pause raises it.)

Lal.        Poor Lalage!--and is it come to this?  
Thy servant maid!--but courage!--'tis but a viper  
Whom thou hast cherished to sting thee to the soul!  
(taking up the mirror)  
Ha! here at least's a friend--too much a friend  
In earlier days--a friend will not deceive thee.  
Fair mirror and true! now tell me (for thou canst)  
A tale--a pretty tale--and heed thou not  
Though it be rife with woe. It answers me.  
It speaks of sunken eyes, and wasted cheeks,  
And beauty long deceased--remembers me,  
Of Joy departed--Hope, the Seraph Hope,  
Inurned and entombed!--now, in a tone  
Low, sad, and solemn, but most audible,  
Whispers of early grave untimely yawning  
For ruined maid. Fair mirror and true!--thou liest not!  
Thou hast no end to gain--no heart to break--

Castiglione lied who said he loved----

Thou true--he false!--false!--false!

(While she speaks, a monk enters her apartment and approaches unobserved)

Monk.       Refuge thou hast,  
Sweet daughter! in Heaven. Think of eternal things!  
Give up thy soul to penitence, and pray!

Lal.  
(arising hurriedly). I cannot pray!--My soul is at war with God!  
The frightful sounds of merriment below;  
Disturb my senses--go! I cannot pray--  
The sweet airs from the garden worry me!  
Thy presence grieves me--go!--thy priestly raiment  
Fills me with dread--thy ebony crucifix  
With horror and awe!

Monk.       Think of thy precious soul!

Lal.        Think of my early days!--think of my father  
And mother in Heaven! think of our quiet home,  
And the rivulet that ran before the door!  
Think of my little sisters!--think of them!  
And think of me!--think of my trusting love

And confidence--his vows--my ruin--think--think  
Of my unspeakable misery!----begone!  
Yet stay! yet stay!--what was it thou saidst of prayer  
And penitence? Didst thou not speak of faith  
And vows before the throne?

Monk.        I did.

Lal.        'Tis well.  
There is a vow 'twere fitting should be made--  
A sacred vow, imperative and urgent,  
A solemn vow!

Monk.        Daughter, this zeal is well!

Lal.        Father, this zeal is anything but well!  
Hast thou a crucifix fit for this thing?  
A crucifix whereon to register  
This sacred vow? (he hands her his own.)  
Not that--Oh! no!--no!--no (shuddering.)  
Not that! Not that!--I tell thee, holy man,  
Thy raiments and thy ebony cross affright me!  
Stand back! I have a crucifix myself,--  
I have a crucifix! Methinks 'twere fitting  
The deed--the vow--the symbol of the deed--  
And the deed's register should tally, father!

(draws a cross-handled dagger and raises it on high.)

Behold the cross wherewith a vow like mine  
Is written in heaven!

Monk. Thy words are madness, daughter,  
And speak a purpose unholy--thy lips are livid--  
Thine eyes are wild--tempt not the wrath divine!  
Pause ere too late!--oh, be not--be not rash!  
Swear not the oath--oh, swear it not!

Lal. 'Tis sworn!

III.

An Apartment in a Palace. POLITIAN and BALDAZZAR.

Baldazzar. Arouse thee now, Politian!  
Thou must not--nay indeed, indeed, thou shalt not  
Give way unto these humors. Be thyself!  
Shake off the idle fancies that beset thee  
And live, for now thou diest!

Politian. Not so, Baldazzar!

Surely I live.

Bal. Politian, it doth grieve me

To see thee thus!

Pol. Baldazzar, it doth grieve me

To give thee cause for grief, my honored friend.

Command me, sir! what wouldst thou have me do?

At thy behest I will shake off that nature

Which from my forefathers I did inherit,

Which with my mother's milk I did imbibe,

And be no more Politian, but some other.

Command me, sir!

Bal. To the field then--to the field--

To the senate or the field.

Pol. Alas! alas!

There is an imp would follow me even there!

There is an imp hath followed me even there!

There is--what voice was that?

Bal. I heard it not.

I heard not any voice except thine own,

And the echo of thine own.

Pol. Then I but dreamed.

Bal. Give not thy soul to dreams: the camp--the court  
Befit thee--Fame awaits thee--Glory calls--  
And her the trumpet-tongued thou wilt not hear  
In hearkening to imaginary sounds  
And phantom voices.

Pol. It is a phantom voice!  
Didst thou not hear it then?

Bal I heard it not.

Pol. Thou heardst it not!--Baldazzar, speak no more  
To me, Politian, of thy camps and courts.  
Oh! I am sick, sick, sick, even unto death,  
Of the hollow and high-sounding vanities  
Of the populous Earth! Bear with me yet awhile  
We have been boys together--school-fellows--  
And now are friends--yet shall not be so long--  
For in the Eternal City thou shalt do me  
A kind and gentle office, and a Power--  
A Power august, benignant, and supreme--  
Shall then absolve thee of all further duties  
Unto thy friend.

Bal.       Thou speakest a fearful riddle  
              I will not understand.

Pol.        Yet now as Fate  
              Approaches, and the Hours are breathing low,  
              The sands of Time are changed to golden grains,  
              And dazzle me, Baldazzar. Alas! alas!  
              I cannot die, having within my heart  
              So keen a relish for the beautiful  
              As hath been kindled within it. Methinks the air  
              Is balmier now than it was wont to be--  
              Rich melodies are floating in the winds--  
              A rarer loveliness bedecks the earth--  
              And with a holier lustre the quiet moon  
              Sitteth in Heaven.--Hist! hist! thou canst not say  
              Thou hearest not now, Baldazzar?

Bal.        Indeed I hear not.

Pol.        Not hear it!--listen--now--listen!--the faintest sound  
              And yet the sweetest that ear ever heard!  
              A lady's voice!--and sorrow in the tone!  
              Baldazzar, it oppresses me like a spell!  
              Again!--again!--how solemnly it falls  
              Into my heart of hearts! that eloquent voice



Surely I never heard--yet it were well  
Had I but heard it with its thrilling tones  
In earlier days!

Bal. I myself hear it now.  
Be still!--the voice, if I mistake not greatly,  
Proceeds from yonder lattice--which you may see  
Very plainly through the window--it belongs,  
Does it not? unto this palace of the Duke.  
The singer is undoubtedly beneath  
The roof of his Excellency--and perhaps  
Is even that Alessandra of whom he spoke  
As the betrothed of Castiglione,  
His son and heir.

Pol. Be still!--it comes again!

Voice

(very faintly). "And is thy heart so strong [1]

As for to leave me thus,  
That have loved thee so long,  
In wealth and woe among?  
And is thy heart so strong  
As for to leave me thus?  
Say nay! say nay!"

Bal.           The song is English, and I oft have heard it  
                  In merry England--never so plaintively--  
                  Hist! hist! it comes again!

Voice

(more loudly). "Is it so strong  
                  As for to leave me thus,  
                  That have loved thee so long,  
                  In wealth and woe among?  
                  And is thy heart so strong  
                  As for to leave me thus?  
                  Say nay! say nay!"

Bal.           'Tis hushed and all is still!

Pol.           All is not still.

Bal.           Let us go down.

Pol.           Go down, Baldazzar, go!

Bal.           The hour is growing late--the Duke awaits us,--  
                  Thy presence is expected in the hall  
                  Below. What ails thee, Earl Politian?

Voice

(distinctly). "Who have loved thee so long,  
In wealth and woe among,  
And is thy heart so strong?  
Say nay! say nay!"

Bal. Let us descend!--'tis time. Politian, give  
These fancies to the wind. Remember, pray,  
Your bearing lately savored much of rudeness  
Unto the Duke. Arouse thee! and remember!

Pol. Remember? I do. Lead on! I do remember.  
(going).  
Let us descend. Believe me I would give,  
Freely would give the broad lands of my earldom  
To look upon the face hidden by yon lattice--  
"To gaze upon that veiled face, and hear  
Once more that silent tongue."

Bal. Let me beg you, sir,  
Descend with me--the Duke may be offended.  
Let us go down, I pray you.

Voice (loudly). Say nay!--say nay!

Pol. (aside). 'Tis strange!--'tis very strange--methought

the voice

Chimed in with my desires and bade me stay!

(Approaching the window)

Sweet voice! I heed thee, and will surely stay.

Now be this fancy, by heaven, or be it Fate,

Still will I not descend. Baldazzar, make

Apology unto the Duke for me;

I go not down to-night.

Bal. Your lordship's pleasure

Shall be attended to. Good-night, Politian.

Pol. Good-night, my friend, good-night.

IV.

The Gardens of a Palace--Moonlight. LALAGE and POLITIAN.

Lalage. And dost thou speak of love

To me, Politian?--dost thou speak of love

To Lalage?--ah woe--ah woe is me!

This mockery is most cruel--most cruel indeed!

Politian. Weep not! oh, sob not thus!--thy bitter tears  
Will madden me. Oh, mourn not, Lalage--  
Be comforted! I know--I know it all,  
And still I speak of love. Look at me, brightest,  
And beautiful Lalage!--turn here thine eyes!  
Thou askest me if I could speak of love,  
Knowing what I know, and seeing what I have seen  
Thou askest me that--and thus I answer thee--  
Thus on my bended knee I answer thee. (kneeling.)  
Sweet Lalage, I love thee--love thee--love thee;  
Thro' good and ill--thro' weal and woe, I love thee.  
Not mother, with her first-born on her knee,  
Thrills with intenser love than I for thee.  
Not on God's altar, in any time or clime,  
Burned there a holier fire than burneth now  
Within my spirit for thee. And do I love?  
(arising.)  
Even for thy woes I love thee--even for thy woes--  
Thy beauty and thy woes.

Lal. Alas, proud Earl,  
Thou dost forget thyself, remembering me!  
How, in thy father's halls, among the maidens  
Pure and reproachless of thy princely line,  
Could the dishonored Lalage abide?

Thy wife, and with a tainted memory--  
My seared and blighted name, how would it tally  
With the ancestral honors of thy house,  
And with thy glory?

Pol. Speak not to me of glory!  
I hate--I loathe the name; I do abhor  
The unsatisfactory and ideal thing.  
Art thou not Lalage, and I Politian?  
Do I not love--art thou not beautiful--  
What need we more? Ha! glory! now speak not of it:  
By all I hold most sacred and most solemn--  
By all my wishes now--my fears hereafter--  
By all I scorn on earth and hope in heaven--  
There is no deed I would more glory in,  
Than in thy cause to scoff at this same glory  
And trample it under foot. What matters it--  
What matters it, my fairest, and my best,  
That we go down unhonored and forgotten  
Into the dust--so we descend together?  
Descend together--and then--and then perchance--

Lal. Why dost thou pause, Politian?

Pol. And then perchance  
Arise together, Lalage, and roam

The starry and quiet dwellings of the blest,  
And still--

Lal. Why dost thou pause, Politian?

Pol. And still together--together.

Lal. Now, Earl of Leicester!  
Thou lovest me, and in my heart of hearts  
I feel thou lovest me truly.

Pol. O Lalage!  
(throwing himself upon his knee.)  
And lovest thou me?

Lal. Hist! hush! within the gloom  
Of yonder trees methought a figure passed--  
A spectral figure, solemn, and slow, and noiseless--  
Like the grim shadow Conscience, solemn and noiseless.  
(walks across and returns.)  
I was mistaken--'twas but a giant bough  
Stirred by the autumn wind. Politian!

Pol. My Lalage--my love! why art thou moved?  
Why dost thou turn so pale? Not Conscience self,  
Far less a shadow which thou likenest to it,

Should shake the firm spirit thus. But the night wind  
Is chilly--and these melancholy boughs  
Throw over all things a gloom.

Lal. Politian!

Thou speakest to me of love. Knowest thou the land  
With which all tongues are busy--a land new found--  
Miraculously found by one of Genoa--  
A thousand leagues within the golden west?  
A fairy land of flowers, and fruit, and sunshine,--  
And crystal lakes, and over-arching forests,  
And mountains, around whose towering summits the winds  
Of Heaven untrammelled flow--which air to breathe  
Is Happiness now, and will be Freedom hereafter  
In days that are to come?

Pol. Oh, wilt thou--wilt thou

Fly to that Paradise--my Lalage, wilt thou  
Fly thither with me? There Care shall be forgotten,  
And Sorrow shall be no more, and Eros be all.  
And life shall then be mine, for I will live  
For thee, and in thine eyes--and thou shalt be  
No more a mourner--but the radiant Joys  
Shall wait upon thee, and the angel Hope  
Attend thee ever; and I will kneel to thee  
And worship thee, and call thee my beloved,



My own, my beautiful, my love, my wife,  
My all;--oh, wilt thou--wilt thou, Lalage,  
Fly thither with me?

Lal. A deed is to be done--  
Castiglione lives!

Pol. And he shall die!

(Exit.)

Lal.

(after a pause). And--he--shall--die!--alas!

Castiglione die? Who spoke the words?  
Where am I?--what was it he said?--Politian!  
Thou art not gone--thou art not gone, Politian!  
I feel thou art not gone--yet dare not look,  
Lest I behold thee not--thou couldst not go  
With those words upon thy lips--oh, speak to me!  
And let me hear thy voice--one word--one word,  
To say thou art not gone,--one little sentence,  
To say how thou dost scorn--how thou dost hate  
My womanly weakness. Ha! ha! thou art not gone--  
Oh, speak to me! I knew thou wouldst not go!  
I knew thou wouldst not, couldst not, durst not go.  
Villain, thou art not gone--thou mockest me!

And thus I clutch thee--thus!--He is gone, he is gone--  
Gone--gone. Where am I?--'tis well--'tis very well!  
So that the blade be keen--the blow be sure,  
'Tis well, 'tis very well--alas! alas!

V.

The Suburbs. POLITIAN alone.

Politian.     This weakness grows upon me. I am fain  
And much I fear me ill--it will not do  
To die ere I have lived!--Stay--stay thy hand,  
O Azrael, yet awhile!--Prince of the Powers  
Of Darkness and the Tomb, oh, pity me!  
Oh, pity me! let me not perish now,  
In the budding of my Paradisal Hope!  
Give me to live yet--yet a little while:  
'Tis I who pray for life--I who so late  
Demanded but to die!--What sayeth the Count?

Enter Baldazzar.

Baldazzar. That, knowing no cause of quarrel or of feud  
Between the Earl Politian and himself,  
He doth decline your cartel.

Pol. What didst thou say?  
What answer was it you brought me, good Baldazzar?  
With what excessive fragrance the zephyr comes  
Laden from yonder bowers!--a fairer day,  
Or one more worthy Italy, methinks  
No mortal eyes have seen!--what said the Count?

Bal. That he, Castiglione, not being aware  
Of any feud existing, or any cause  
Of quarrel between your lordship and himself,  
Cannot accept the challenge.

Pol. It is most true--  
All this is very true. When saw you, sir,  
When saw you now, Baldazzar, in the frigid  
Ungential Britain which we left so lately,  
A heaven so calm as this--so utterly free  
From the evil taint of clouds?--and he did say?

Bal. No more, my lord, than I have told you:  
The Count Castiglione will not fight.  
Having no cause for quarrel.

Pol. Now this is true--  
All very true. Thou art my friend, Baldazzar,  
And I have not forgotten it--thou'lt do me  
A piece of service: wilt thou go back and say  
Unto this man, that I, the Earl of Leicester,  
Hold him a villain?--thus much, I pr'ythee, say  
Unto the Count--it is exceeding just  
He should have cause for quarrel.

Bal. My lord!--my friend!--

Pol. (aside). 'Tis he--he comes himself!

(aloud.) Thou reasonest well.

I know what thou wouldst say--not send the message--

Well!--I will think of it--I will not send it.

Now pr'ythee, leave me--hither doth come a person

With whom affairs of a most private nature

I would adjust.

Bal. I go--to-morrow we meet,  
Do we not?--at the Vatican.

Pol. At the Vatican.

(Exit Bal.)

Enter Castiglione.

Cas.       The Earl of Leicester here!

Pol.       I am the Earl of Leicester, and thou seest,  
Dost thou not, that I am here?

Cas.       My lord, some strange,  
Some singular mistake--misunderstanding--  
Hath without doubt arisen: thou hast been urged  
Thereby, in heat of anger, to address  
Some words most unaccountable, in writing,  
To me, Castiglione; the bearer being  
Baldazzar, Duke of Surrey. I am aware  
Of nothing which might warrant thee in this thing,  
Having given thee no offence. Ha!--am I right?  
'Twas a mistake?--undoubtedly--we all  
Do err at times.

Pol.       Draw, villain, and prate no more!

Cas.       Ha!--draw?--and villain? have at thee then at once,  
Proud Earl!

(Draws.)

Pol.

(drawing.) Thus to the expiatory tomb,  
Untimely sepulchre, I do devote thee  
In the name of Lalage!

Cas. (letting fall his sword and recoiling to the extremity of the  
stage.)

Of Lalage!  
Hold off--thy sacred hand!--avaunt, I say!  
Avaunt--I will not fight thee--indeed I dare not.

Pol. Thou wilt not fight with me didst say, Sir Count?  
Shall I be baffled thus?--now this is well;  
Didst say thou darest not? Ha!

Cas. I dare not--dare not--  
Hold off thy hand--with that beloved name  
So fresh upon thy lips I will not fight thee--  
I cannot--dare not.

Pol. Now, by my halidom,  
I do believe thee!--coward, I do believe thee!

Cas. Ha!--coward!--this may not be!

(clutches his sword and staggers towards Politian, but his purpose is  
changed before reaching him, and he falls upon his knee at the feet of

the Earl.)

Alas! my lord,

It is--it is--most true. In such a cause

I am the veriest coward. Oh, pity me!

Pol.

(greatly softened). Alas!--I do--indeed I pity thee.

Cas.       And Lalage--

Pol.       Scoundrel!--arise and die!

Cas.       It needeth not be--thus--thus--Oh, let me die  
Thus on my bended knee. It were most fitting  
That in this deep humiliation I perish.  
For in the fight I will not raise a hand  
Against thee, Earl of Leicester. Strike thou home--  
(baring his bosom.)

Here is no let or hindrance to thy weapon--

Strike home. I will not fight thee.

Pol.       Now's Death and Hell!

Am I not--am I not sorely--grievously tempted

To take thee at thy word? But mark me, sir:

Think not to fly me thus. Do thou prepare

For public insult in the streets--before

The eyes of the citizens. I'll follow thee--  
Like an avenging spirit I'll follow thee  
Even unto death. Before those whom thou lovest--  
Before all Rome I'll taunt thee, villain,--I'll taunt  
thee,  
Dost hear? with cowardice--thou wilt not fight me?  
Thou liest! thou shalt!

(Exit.)

Cas.        Now this indeed is just!  
              Most righteous, and most just, avenging Heaven!

[Footnote 1: By Sir Thomas Wyatt.--Ed.]

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## NOTE ON POLITIAN

20. Such portions of "Politian" as are known to the public first saw the light of publicity in the 'Southern Literary Messenger' for December 1835 and January 1836, being styled "Scenes from Politian; an unpublished drama." These scenes were included, unaltered, in the 1845 collection of Poems by Poe. The larger portion of the original draft subsequently became the property of the present editor, but it is not considered just to the poet's memory to publish it. The work is a hasty and unrevised production of its author's earlier days of literary labor; and, beyond the scenes already known, scarcely calculated to enhance his reputation. As a specimen, however, of the parts unpublished, the following fragment from the first scene of Act II. may be offered. The Duke, it should be premised, is uncle to Alessandra, and father of Castiglione her betrothed.

Duke.           Why do you laugh?

Castiglione.   Indeed.

I hardly know myself. Stay! Was it not  
On yesterday we were speaking of the Earl?  
Of the Earl Politian? Yes! it was yesterday.  
Alessandra, you and I, you must remember!

We were walking in the garden.

Duke.        Perfectly.

I do remember it--what of it--what then?

Cas.        O nothing--nothing at all.

Duke.        Nothing at all!

It is most singular that you should laugh

At nothing at all!

Cas.        Most singular--singular!

Duke.        Look yon, Castiglione, be so kind

As tell me, sir, at once what 'tis you mean.

What are you talking of?

Cas.        Was it not so?

We differed in opinion touching him.

Duke.        Him!--Whom?

Cas.        Why, sir, the Earl Politian.

Duke.        The Earl of Leicester! Yes!--is it he you mean?

We differed, indeed. If I now recollect

The words you used were that the Earl you knew  
Was neither learned nor mirthful.

Cas.        Ha! ha!--now did I?

Duke.        That did you, sir, and well I knew at the time  
You were wrong, it being not the character  
Of the Earl--whom all the world allows to be  
A most hilarious man. Be not, my son,  
Too positive again.

Cas.        'Tis singular!  
Most singular! I could not think it possible  
So little time could so much alter one!  
To say the truth about an hour ago,  
As I was walking with the Count San Ozzo,  
All arm in arm, we met this very man  
The Earl--he, with his friend Baldazzar,  
Having just arrived in Rome. Ha! ha! he is altered!  
Such an account he gave me of his journey!  
'Twould have made you die with laughter--such tales he  
told  
Of his caprices and his merry freaks  
Along the road--such oddity--such humor--  
Such wit--such whim--such flashes of wild merriment  
Set off too in such full relief by the grave

Demeanor of his friend--who, to speak the truth  
Was gravity itself--

Duke. Did I not tell you?

Cas. You did--and yet 'tis strange! but true, as strange,  
How much I was mistaken! I always thought  
The Earl a gloomy man.

Duke. So, so, you see!  
Be not too positive. Whom have we here?  
It cannot be the Earl?

Cas. The Earl! Oh no!  
Tis not the Earl--but yet it is--and leaning  
Upon his friend Baldazzar. Ah! welcome, sir!  
(Enter Politian and Baldazzar.)  
My lord, a second welcome let me give you  
To Rome--his Grace the Duke of Broglio.  
Father! this is the Earl Politian, Earl  
Of Leicester in Great Britain.  
[Politian bows haughtily.]  
That, his friend  
Baldazzar, Duke of Surrey. The Earl has letters,  
So please you, for Your Grace.

Duke.        Ha! ha! Most welcome  
To Rome and to our palace, Earl Politian!  
And you, most noble Duke! I am glad to see you!  
I knew your father well, my Lord Politian.  
Castiglione! call your cousin hither,  
And let me make the noble Earl acquainted  
With your betrothed. You come, sir, at a time  
Most seasonable. The wedding--

Politian.    Touching those letters, sir,  
Your son made mention of--your son, is he not?--  
Touching those letters, sir, I wot not of them.  
If such there be, my friend Baldazzar here--  
Baldazzar! ah!--my friend Baldazzar here  
Will hand them to Your Grace. I would retire.

Duke.        Retire!--so soon?

Cas.         What ho! Benito! Rupert!  
His lordship's chambers--show his lordship to them!  
His lordship is unwell.

(Enter Benito.)

Ben.         This way, my lord!

(Exit, followed by Politian.)

Duke.       Retire! Unwell!

Bal.        So please you, sir. I fear me  
          'Tis as you say--his lordship is unwell.  
          The damp air of the evening--the fatigue  
          Of a long journey--the--indeed I had better  
          Follow his lordship. He must be unwell.  
          I will return anon.

Duke.       Return anon!  
          Now this is very strange! Castiglione!  
          This way, my son, I wish to speak with thee.  
          You surely were mistaken in what you said  
          Of the Earl, mirthful, indeed!--which of us said  
          Politian was a melancholy man?

(Exeunt.)

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