

however vilified in modern judgment by the crimes of some unworthy members, were yet, in those dark times, the best, the bravest, and the holiest agents, to whom God ever delegated the power to resist the oppressor, to feed the hungry, to minister to woe; and who, alone, amid that fiery pestilence (looked, as it were, a demon from the abyss, to shiver into atoms all that binds the world to virtue and to law), seemed to waken, as by the sound of an angel's trumpet, to that noblest chivalry of the cross: whose faith is the scorn of self, whose hope is beyond the Lazar house, whose feet, already winged for immortality, trample with conqueror's march upon the graves of death!"

In the two Chapters of Book VI, "We obtain what we seek, and know it not," and "The Error," there is as much of the pathos and constancy of love as in the whole of "Evangeline." I do not mean that Bulwer makes no mistakes. Any sensitive reader, whose own heart has felt will be able to tell when the glow of a real emotion is dashed by some wretched climax or antithesis—the device of the conscious workman.

The following scenes and situations are particularly striking:—

(1.) The sunset scene (Chapter VIII, Book II), in which Rienzi, refusing the kingship, accepts the title of Tribune, and by this choice links his movement to the heroic days of the Roman Republic. It is given by no means all to portray fittingly the accompanying circumstances of a noble scene. Were it not for the sad and infinite distance between the Roman populace and the sturdy Swiss, we might institute a comparison between this scene and the famous Rutli scene in Schiller's "Wilhelm Tell." "The setting sun poured his full glory over the spot: the bared heads—the animated faces of the crowd—the gray and vast mass of the capitol: and, not far from the side of Rienzi, it brought into a strange and startling light the sculptured form of a colossal lion of basalt, which gave its name to a stair-case leading to the capitol. It was an old Egyptian relic—vast, worn, and grim:

some symbol of a vanished creed, etc."

(2.) The combination of circumstances that led Adrian di Castello to take the oath of allegiance to the new constitution is effected skilfully enough to rouse the admiration of the most fastidious of orators, to say nothing of bookmen. (See the whole of the last paragraph of Book II. It ends thus: "Mechanically, and as if in a dream, Adrian ascended to the platform, and, to complete the triumph of the Tribune, the sun's last ray beheld the flower of the Colonna—the best and bravest of the barons of Rome—confessing his authority, and subscribing to his laws!")

(3.) The entire scene on the moonlit shores of Terracina. (Book III, Chapter III.)

(4.) Chapter I of Book V, in toto. It is hard to keep from quoting the magnanimous speech in which the Tribune restores the patricians to liberty.

(5.) The lofty and impassioned interview between Alborno and Nina in Chapter IX of Book VII.

Bulwer had certainly gone to school to Shakspeare.

(1.) The "rank breath of the garlic-chewing mobs" that he places on the lips of one of his characters will at once recall Coriolanus.

(2.) Is not this Shakspearean? Walter de Montreal has despatched a follower to ask of the Tribune admittance to Rome. The fellow returns. "Well," said Montreal, impatiently, "you have the order, I suppose? Shall we bid them open the gates?"

"Bid them open the gates," replied the Saxon, bluntly. "I trust my next heraldry will be to a more friendly court."

"How! What mean you?"

"Briefly this: I found the new governor, or whatever his title, in the palace of the capitol, surrounded by guards and councillors, and in the finest suit of armor I ever saw out of Milan."

"Pest on his armor: give us his answer!"

His citizen scenes are throughout quite on the model of Shakspeare.

(3.) There is much more than mere co-