

TO A FRIEND.

ON HIS REQUEST THAT I SHOULD WRITE A SATIRE.

No, though the manners of our time
Fester for lack of caustic rhyme—
That old heroic operation
Which often saved a gangrened nation,
Even when the torpor overcame
All but a lingering sense of shame—
I have no numbers at command
To stay corruption's master-hand.

My youthful zeal begins to tire.
Alas ! the former Magian fire
Of wrath and love, of scorn and pride
Has into dust and ashes died !
'Twould take, indeed, a giant wrong
To challenge one satiric song.

Let factious pens distil their gall,
Let slanderer blab and bigot bawl,
Let dire anathemas be hurled
In some poor hierarch's pigmy world,—
Beyond the curtain and the pall
I've seen the nothingness of all !
Though conscious of the fact, alas !
That vice pervades the general mass,
That theft prevails in every rank
And honesty alone is lank,