

him in the composite sense—at once imaginative and erudite—in which he succeeds in reconstructing the life of a distant time. The secret of his success is that he was animated not only by the flush of the romancist, but by the scientific passion of the scholar. The energy he was ready to expend before he would consent to paint an epoch or sketch a figure, the conscientiousness that led him to consult original sources with the care of a relic-hunter before he would dilute his message for the masses, these constitute at once his literary value and his moral helpfulness. Then, too, those who, like myself, are persuaded that there is some good in the mere sensuous effect of words themselves will be interested to note that above most men Bulwer had the happy, because largely intuitive, ability to write cadenced and musical prose. The specimens of *Rienzi's* eloquence scattered throughout the novel are abundant proof of this. I know no passage that combines in a greater degree the charms of lofty conception, of manly, and, at the same time, skilful prose than the lines from Chapter III of Book II, in which he dilates upon the difficulties of the position of Adrian as the lover of Irene, and a scion of the nobility.

The special purpose of this study in *Rienzi*, as simply one representative of high-class fiction, will justify both the large amount of quotation that may figure in what follows, and the somewhat fragmentary character of the whole.

First of all, *Rienzi* has some faults.

Perhaps only once, certainly not more than twice, throughout the course of the novel, does affectation spoil a sentence, or the man forget himself in the Pedant. "The March of that awful year, 1348, which saw Europe, and Italy in especial, desolated by the direst pestilence which history has recorded, accursed alike by the numbers and the celebrity of its victims, and yet strangely connected with some not unpleasing images by the grace of Boccaccio and the pathetic eloquence of Petrarch." This isn't a sentence, either, by the way. The second example is not far from the first. "So fair a group and

so graceful a scene *Adrian* never beheld but once, and that was in the midst of the ghastly pestilence of Italy! Such group and such scene our closest indolence may yet revive in the pages of the bright Boccaccio!" The close of both these sentences is open to the charge of pedantry.

I could willingly see expunged from a book that I admire the remarkable and uncalled for chapter of Book V: "The Flowers Amid the Tombs." Not that the man always besmirches his own garments in whose way it falls to paint a scene of sin. But, in the third paragraph from the close, there is a note of decidedly doubtful morality.

The artistic wisdom of the whole of the Florence scenes—and they occupy a whole book—is open to impeachment. Why approach the plague spot? The whole question of the admissibility of the ugly is before us. At any rate, beginning at least with Spencer, a line of illustrious worthies lend it the sanction of their names. Lytton draws not the veil even before the charnel-house, where the later victims of the plague are nothing less than dumped. Does he hope that the image of the sought and beautiful Irene, hovering before our eyes as before those of the despairing Adrian, will be enough to warrant an almost unequalled revelling in details? "It was a large, deep and circular space, like the bottom of an exhausted well. In niches cut into the walls of earth around, lay, duly confined, those who had been the earliest victims of the plague, when the beccchini's market was not yet glutted, and priest followed, and friend mourned the dead. But on the floor below, there was the loathsome horror! Huddled and—" but I will not follow his lead. Suffice it to say he paints a picture that can scarcely be banished from the fancy.

There are a few passages that are especially fine, to which I should like to call attention.

Though a disproportioned member of the sentence in which it occurs, the tribute to the Churchly Orders is in the best style of Lytton's cadenced oratory:—"—those heroic brotherhoods, who,