

Count Filippo, or, The Unequal Marriage,¹ a drama in five acts, was published by Heavysege at his own risk, in 1860. The play, while from a technical point of view, in its phraseology, versification, etc., it marks an advance upon the earlier additions of *Saul*; in *motif*, dramatic power, and psychological analysis it is vastly inferior to that drama. One realizes, in fact, by a comparison of these two, the insufficiency of mere propriety of form or phrase to overcome radical weaknesses in thought and conception.

The play is founded upon the old problem of an unnatural and ill-omened union between youth and age. Count Filippo, an elderly nobleman, and Chief Minister of State to the Duke of Pereza, marries a beautiful young girl named Volina. The Duke, Tremohla, who feels his end approaching, has, on the advice of Filippo, arranged a marriage between his son Hylas and the daughter of the Duke of Arno—much to Hylas' disgust. The young prince bitterly resents what he takes to be Filippo's interference with his private affairs, and, at the instance of Gallantio, a disreputable noble—who also has a grievance against the old nobleman—determines to revenge himself upon Filippo by corrupting his young wife, hitherto carefully guarded from the temptations of the court. Hylas meets Volina, during Filippo's absence at Arno, and falls desperately in love with her. His better nature prevails for a time, and he repents of the wrong he would have committed against Volina. His evil genius, Gallantio, is, however, ever at his elbow with specious sophistry, which is strongly reinforced by the prince's own strong passions. Poor Volina withstands him for a time, but she is inexperienced, in love for the first time, and her would-be lover furnishes an all too attractive contrast to the ancient Filippo. She weakens, and Hylas has his way. Like Paola and Francesca they wander together in the garden, and Volina has lost that which may never be regained. Volina's pitiful appeal to Hylas to take her away to some forsaken spot where she may be forgotten, furnishes one of the most effective passages in the book:

I cannot look the daylight in the face ;
How shall I meet my husband's angry eyes ?
Snatch me from Filippo or ere he come,—
Hide me where night perpetually reigns.
. . . . Pity me,

Whom thou hast ruined, help whom thou hast hurt.

Hylas comforts her, and promises to take her to a place of safety. After he leaves her her bitter grief and remorse break out once more, and she

¹ *Count Filippo; or, The Unequal Marriage. A Drama in Five Acts. By the Author of "Saul."* Montreal: Printed for the Author; and for sale at the Booksellers. 1860. pp. 153.