

JOAN OF ARC.

—41—

From all around the square a thousand eyes
Look down upon the tragedy; the roof
Of every house a theatre of sighs;
In windows waving kerchiefs men give proof
That Rouen in her heart loves Joan. To move
Was death, so massed were men. Up in the air
Trees are alive with boys fearing reproof,
Who love the Maid and from their vantage stare
Down on the hecatomb, infernoing the square.

—42—

And now the tumult and fanfare have ceased.
Along the cobbled street the felon's cart
Has rumbling rolled; the sun high in the east.
The English guard with measured step the mart
At last reached and as cordon held apart
The sobbing multitude. Ere they arrived
The judges' mantles glistening with rich art,
Burned like pure gold, for Phoebus had connived.
Oh! that Jove's thunderbolts, had these stone creatures
rived!

—43—

"Now go in peace, the Church abandons you,"
Was Midi's peroration. Then they placed
The Maid apart, in high noon's garish view;
Who once the battlefields of France had graced.
As fallen from the faith she's now debased
And made a symbol of abandonment.
The scene they acted with barbaric haste;
Yet women fainted with emotions spent
To see these English wolves, on Joan, rare lamb, so bent.

—44—

This symbolism base charged men with dread;
Resentment leaped his banks in every eye.
Judge Cauchon rose, while all hearts broke and bled
To read the abjuration. But the lie
Might not be politic: she might deny
Her words by torture wrung, and so disgrace
And damn him now, and cause history to sigh.
He merely said: "Thy name we do efface
From scroll of Holy Church, and from her ranks all trace."