

for the mastery of Rome." The following dramatic lines portray the final meeting between the two on the night of Mont-real's banquet: "And there, as these two men, each so celebrated, so proud, able and ambitious, stood, front to front—it was literally as if the rival spirits of force and intellect, order and strife, of the falchion and the fasces—the antagonist principles by which empires are ruled and empires overthrown, had met together, incarnate and opposed. They stood, both silent—as if fascinated by each other's gaze—loftier in stature, and nobler in presence than all around."

(7.) It was the accident to the couch that saved Rienzi's life the night of his vigil in the church of the Lateran. Talk as we will of the remorseless sequence of events that must mark the successful drama or the successful fiction, it is as idle after all to try to quite eliminate chance from either as from life itself. Morally there is no such thing as chance, practically there is. None will impeach the fatal sequence of "Macbeth," and yet, even there, had it not been for Macduff's thoughtless abandonment, the sword of the tyrant would probably never have fallen on the hapless wife. And observe that in that tragedy this very failure to take possible contingencies into consideration results in a crime on the usurper's part that really becomes a motive, since at the last it steels Macduff's heart and nerves his arm.

(8.) The reader will do well to note the rationale of the division into books. I will at least touch the question:—

Book I—The time, the place, the scene—Expository.

Book II—The revolution closing, with climactic effect in the adhesion of Adrian.

Book III—Episodical, yet elaborated with loving care, and devoted wholly to the guilty loves of Walter and Adeline.

Book IV—The structural climax of the novel like the highly elaborated scene in "Macbeth"—The Triumph and the Pomp! If it be true—what I have said—that this fourth book of Lytton's novel corresponds to the fourth scene of the third act of Shakspeare's tragedy, a comparison between the length of the two will

give an idea of the enforced compression of the drama, i. e., of the relative scale on which drama and novel must be constructed. If Book IV is, as I said, the climax of the novel, certainly the challenge of Rienzi to the northern powers is the climax of the Book. But he, too, had his Banquo. Of the feast that followed the throwing down of the gauntlet, Bulwer says: "Amid the swell of the minstrelsy and the pomp of the crowd, he felt that treason scowled beside him: and the image of the skeleton obtruding, as of old, its grim thought of death upon the feast, darkened the ruby of the wine, and chilled the glitter of the scene."

Book V—The crisis. So far as the headings of the chapters (IV, V and VI) devoted to it are concerned, the fall of the Tribune is treated under a figure. The Hollowness of the Base, the Rottemness of the Edifice, the Fall of the Temple. Sudden and lamentable as was that fall, Lytton amply accounts for it. The array of causes—notably an estranged Pontiff, and a dastardly populace—recalls the able biographer of Harold and historian of the Norman Conquest. Passing over intervening books, let me say a word in reference to Books IX and X.

To the one who has seen Rienzi excommunicated by the Pope, deserted by the people, a prisoner at Avignon, the fear of his ultimate failure has increased to conviction. In view of this Book IX, or "The Return," retarding as it does the catastrophe, become what Freytag calls for the drama, "Ein moment der letzten spannung"—a moment of the final suspense. On the other hand, over "The Lion of Basalt," the book of the catastrophe, the Nemesis of tragedy herself presides.

In conclusion, let me say that the placing of certain works in the highest class must largely remain matter of personal opinion. There are broad principles that govern literary judgment, but in specific cases taste rules. All will not agree with me in the place here given to "Rienzi." Each may choose for himself. It has been used simply as a specimen. One main point is that there is a great storehouse of literature, whose place is irre-