

The enemy's horse are heard approaching. Saul lifts himself with a last expiring effort and falls on his sword.

It is obvious that Heavysege laboured under many disadvantages in attempting such a tremendous subject as *Saul*—one which would have taxed the genius of even the greatest of modern poets, for any rendering of the mighty tragedy must perforce submit to a comparison with the faultless Biblical narrative. The chief defects of the drama, as Heavysege has given it to us, are its prolixity, its often defective versification, and the presence of anachronisms and other errors of fact or grammar, resulting from his lack of general culture. All these weaknesses were, however, to some extent rectified in the third edition of *Saul*. The merits of the drama have already been sufficiently indicated. It would have been a creditable performance for any, short of the few greatest names, and when we remember the circumstances under which it was actually written, one feels inclined to claim for Heavysege at least some measure of that genius which distinguishes the born poet from the product merely of contemporary culture.¹

¹ "It must rank above every dramatic poem written in the English language during the present century, nor do we think that an exception to this judgment will be taken, except by some of Browning's admirers. Heavysege's blank verse is brilliantly expressive, and his imagination has capacities shewn by no other in our day. The author is richest in the greater qualities of the poet. In creative power and in the various range of imagination, in vigor, clearness, and variety of conception, and in force and subtlety of characterization, and in expressiveness of language he excels, and so much excels as to approach the performance of the greatest poets."—*The Commonwealth* (Boston).

"Though very long, no lover of genius can read the first act of the drama without reading to the last page; and numerous as are the scenes and characters portrayed, the unity of its purpose will be apparent, and the artistic yet simple management of the whole cannot but elicit admiration. Many passages remind me of the older English dramatists, and since the appearance of "Philip Van Artevelde" and "Ion," I have met with nothing in modern dramatic literature which has afforded me the real enjoyment I have derived from "Saul." It is not wanting in dramatic effect, though some conventional critics might find fault with certain passages on this score, and it is remarkably free from the mannerism and egotism so common in similar productions. The author displays a most delicate appreciation of inanimate nature, has a strong feeling for the ordinary feelings of humanity; and there is no sameness or monotony in his delineations of human character. He seems to have emulated the master minds of the past, and gives us lessons of deepest import without sanctimonious pretensions on his part. . . .

"The general scope of this drama is in keeping with the Bible history of Saul and the leading personages associated with him; but of course the filling up, as it might be termed, is all original. The boldest attempt of our poet, perhaps, is that of introducing supernatural characters; and in manner of telling it, have a strange power over the reader."—(Charles Lanman, *Haphazard Personalities*, p. 271.)