

ALEXANDER.

Banish thy fears,
 Since if thy words bear truth upon their front,
 Small hope have I to win—nor would I win,
 Could such success hold higher thoughts in thrall;
 For never, good Lysimachus, believe
 The melting music of the soft toned lute
 Can thrill my soul with such extatic joy,
 As the shrill blast which pierces serried ranks,
 When war's the game, and conquest hovers near.

Exeunt.

The studio of Apelles—The Painter engaged at his easel.—He pauses and turns towards a youth, occupied at a distant table, in drawing from a cast.

APELLES, *(throwing aside his pencil.)*

How impotent my art!
 I chid thee thoughtlessly, Amyntus,
 Deeming thy hand its cunning had forgot
 To mix and blend the colours, artist-like,
 In true and just degrees. No hues of earth
 Stamp on the canvass aught resembling her!
 Nature's bright master-piece! Diviner skill
 Than I have yet attained, must limn that face
 For Alexander's gaze; my hand foregoes
 The task.

AMYNTUS.

And wherefore, sir, I pray?
 Already thou hast caught the very look,
 The smile, the glance, of the young Syrian maid.
 Nought could be finer,—sure some mystic film
 Must cloud thine eye, or thou would'st own thy art
 Had ne'er been more triumphant.

APELLES.

It may seem so to thee,—
 Doubtless it doth; thine eye is satisfied
 With harmony of colour, and of shape.
 I yearn to meet in those dark pictured eyes,
 And in the heavenly smile of those bright lips,
 The changeful light, the glow of life and soul,
 Which lends celestial beauty to the face
 Of this divine Campaspe. She is here,
 Yet not her living self, her breathing face,
 With all its sweet mutations, swift and bright,—
 Each change more exquisite, as glancing thoughts
 Rise fast within, diffusing radiance soft,
 Like rays of light, that, with a thousand tints,
 Stream through a chrysal vase.

AMYNTUS.

Thou bad'st me note thee,
 When the dial told the hour of noon.
 It points already there,—she will be here
 Ere long.

APELLES.

Ha! say'st thou so?

(Tis her last sitting—Ah! my heart, her last!)

[aside.]

Haste, boy, and place this cushioned seat beside
 Yon porphyry vase, filled with fresh gathered flowers,
 Whose rich aroma, mingling with her breath,
 Shall fold us in an atmosphere of sweets.
 Take now this lute—she touches it divinely,—
 Lay it gently there, on the pure marble,
 Where Lysippus' art, in breathing sculpture
 Pictures the soft tale of young Endymion,
 And his heavenly love. 'Twill be a study
 Meet for eyes like hers, and spare my heart
 The danger of their beams. List! list! that step!
 'Tis hers—quick, then, begone!

[Exit Amyntus.]

Now aid me, gods!

This last temptation to resist, unscathed.
 Yet ah! how mighty for my aching heart
 The trial stern. But hush! I feel her presence,
 Though unseen!

[Campaspe enters unattended, and, with a silent inclination of her head, advances to the seat prepared for her. Apelles, with a mute gesture of reverence, recognises her presence; but when she raises her veil, his colour varies, and he turns with agitation towards the canvass. He pursues his task diligently for a few moments; then, suspending it, timidly addresses her.]

APELLES.

Maiden, the lute!

Wilt thou not touch its chords? 'T is the King's
 wish

Thou should'st be so pourtrayed. And oh! thy song
 Might win my heart from thoughts that mock
 control,—

Sweet thoughts, but fatal—fatal to indulge.

[Campaspe blushes and takes the lute. Fixing her earnest gaze upon the sculptured table, she strikes the instrument, and, after a short prelude, sings.]

Look on thy Endymion,
 Queen of starry night;
 Shed upon his asking gaze,
 Smiles of heavenly light.

Look on thy Endymion,
 Watching silently;
 Look, and bend thee calm and still,
 O'er him lovingly.

Mortals deem him sleeping here,
 While with gentle sigh,
 With fervent thought and upward glance,
 He woos thee from the sky.

And thou comest with gliding step,
 From thy radiant throne;
 'T is love's triumph, for his queen
 Seeketh him alone.