

FIRMILIAN.

No more was needed to confirm my mind !
That stanza blows all thoughts of pity off,
As empty straws are scattered by the wind !
For I have been the victim of the Jews,
Who, by vile barter, have absorbed my means.
Did I not pawn—for that same flagrant stuff,
Which only waits a spark to be dissolved,
And, having done its mission, must disperse
As a thin smoke into the ambient air—
My diamond cross, my goblet, and my books ?
What ! would they venture to baptize the Jew ?
The cause assumes a holier aspect, then ;
And, as a faithful son of Rome, I dare
To merge my darling passion in the wrong
That is projected against Christendom !
Pity, avaunt ! I may not longer stay.

[Exit into the vaults. A short
pause, after which he reappears.

'Tis done ! I vanish like the lightning bolt.

ORGAN AND CHOIR.

Nicholai sacerdotum

Ducus, honor, gloria ;

Plebem omnem, clerum totum—

[The Cathedral is blown up.

Haverillo, a rapid but popular poet, has lent Firmilian certain ducats, for the repayment whereof he waxeth importunate. The student, who is both envious of the bard's fame, and unable to answer his demand, makes an appointment to meet him on "the summit of the pillar of St. Simeon Stylites." Poor Haverillo joins his debtor accordingly at the dizzy trysting-place, but the latter begins ere long to play such unwholesome antics, that the creditor wishes himself safely on the bosom of mother earth again. The parties shall now speak for themselves:

HAVERILLO.

Firmilian !

You carry this too far. Farewell. We'll meet
When you're in better humour.

FIRMILIAN.

Tarry, sir !

I have you here, and thus we shall not part.
I know your meaning well. For that same dross,
That paltry ore of Mammons' mean device
Which I, to honour you, stooped to receive,
You'd set the Alguazils on my heels !

What, have I read your thought ? Nay, never
shrink,

Nor edge towards the doorway ! You're a
scholar !

How was't with Phœton ?

HAVERILLO.

Alas ! he's mad.

Hear me, Firmilian. Here is the receipt.
Take it. I grudge it not. If ten times more,
It were at your sweet service.

FIRMILIAN.

Would you do

This kindness unto me ?

HAVERILLO.

Most willingly.

FIRMILIAN.

Liar and slave ! There's falsehood in thine eye.
I read as clearly there, as in a book,
That, if I did allow you to escape,
In fifteen minutes you would seek the judge.
Therefore prepare thee, for thou needs must die.

HAVERILLO.

Madman, stand off !

FIRMILIAN.

There's but four feet of Space

To spare between us, I'm not hasty, I !
Swans sing before their death, and it may be
That dying poets feel that impulse too ;
Then, prythee, be canorous. You may sing
One of those ditties which have won you gold,
And my meek audience of the rapid strain
Shall count with Phœbus as a full discharge
For all your ducats. Will you not begin ?

HAVERILLO.

Leave off this horrid jest, Firmilian !

FIRMILIAN.

Jest ! 'Tis no jest ! This pillars' very high ;
Shout, and no one can hear you from the square.
Wilt sing, I say ?

HAVERILLO.

Listen, Firmilian !

I have a third edition in the press,
Whereof the proceeds shall be wholly thine.
Spare me !

FIRMILIAN.

A third edition ! Atropos !

Forgive me that I tarried !

HAVERILLO.

Mercy ! Ah !—

[Firmilian hurls him from the column.

The scene changes to the square below
the pillar, and we are introduced to "Apol-
lodoros, a Critic," alias "the gifted Gilfil-
lan," the most unmitigated empiric of our
quack-teeming age; This flatulated gent
thus soliloquizes:—

Why do men call me a presumptuous cur,
A vapouring blockhead, and a turgid fool,