

TO A LOW COMEDIAN.

Across the garish stage, in painted guise,
I watched thee frolic forth thine antic part,—
As if forgetful save of thy strange art,—
And, serpentining, earn the jaded eyes
Of men thy specious spectacle supplies
With gilded, gay grotesqueries to start
The Hours' leaden feet. But in my heart
I wept: for I had caught with swift surmise
The sad, self-slaying mystery of thy mirth
And riotous revelry. While sons of Earth
(Their high-born hopes laid low) fall faint, or hate
The longing Life that knows no sweet respite,
Thou flauntest thy rollicking in the gruesome face of
Fate
And teachest men blithely to brave the blackest Night.