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## ' WHO LASTS WINS.'

The following lines were suggested to me in the studio of the late Edgar George Papworth, Esq., of 36 Milton Street, Dorset Square, in the winter of 1864-5.

Captain Burton had recently returned from Africa. The annual meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science had just taken place at Bath, and poor Captain Speke's sudden death was still fresh in our memories. We had been invited by the artist to look at Captain Speke's bust, upon which he was then employed. Mr. Papworth said to Captain Burton, 'I only took the cast after death, and never knew him alive; but you who lived with him so long can surely give me some hints.' Captain Burton, who had learnt something of sculpturing when a boy in Italy, took the sculptor's pencil from Mr. Papworth's hand, and with a few touches here and there made a perfect likeness and expression. As I stood by, I was very much impressed by this singular coincidence.

A MOULDED mask at my feet I found,  
 With the drawn-down mouth and the deepen'd eye,  
 More lifeless still than the marbles round—  
 Very death amid dead life's mimicry;  
 I raised it, and Thought fled afar from me  
 To the African land by the Zingian Sea.

'Twas a face, a shell that had nought of brain,  
 And th' imbedding chalk showed a yellow thread  
 Which struck my glance with a sudden pain,  
 For this seemed alive when the rest was dead;  
 And poor bygone raillery came to mind  
 Of the tragic masque and no brain behind.

But behind there lay in the humblest shrine  
 A gem of the brightest purest ray:  
 The gem was the human will divine;  
 The shrine was the homeliest human clay,  
 Self-glory—but hush! be the tale untold  
 To the pale ear thinned by yon plaster mould.

Shall the diamond gem lose her queenly worth,  
 Though pent in the dungeon of sandy stone?  
 Say, is gold less gold, though in vilest earth  
 For long years it has lurked unprized, unknown?  
 And the rose which blooms o'er the buried dead,  
 Hath its pinkness paled, hath its fragrance fled?

Thus the poet sang, 'Is the basil vile,  
 Though the beetle's foot o'er the basil crawl?'  
 And though Arachne hath webbed her toil,  
 Shall disgrace attach to the princely hall?  
 And the pearl's clear drop from the oyster shell,  
 Comes it not on the royal brow to dwell?

On the guarded tablet was writ by Fate,  
 A double self for each man ere born,  
 Who shall love his love and shall hate his hate,  
 Who shall praise his praise and shall scorn his scorn,  
 Enduring, aye to the bitter end,  
 And man's other man shall be called a friend.

When the spirits with radiance nude arrayed  
 In the presence stood of the one Supreme,  
 Soul looked unto soul, and the glance conveyed  
 A pledge of love which each *must* redeem ;  
 Nor may spirit enfleshed in the dust, forget  
 That high trysting-place, ere time was not yet.

When the first great Sire, so the Legends say,  
 The four-rivered garden in Asia trod,  
 And 'neath perfumed shade, in the drouth of day,  
 Walked and talked with the Hebrew God,  
 Such friendship was when it first began ;  
 And the first of friends were the God, the man.

But *we* twain were not bound by such highborn ties;  
 Our souls, our minds, and our thoughts were strange,  
 Our ways were not one, nor our sympathies,  
 We had severed aims, we had diverse range ;  
 In the stern drear Present his lot was cast,  
 Whilst I hoped for the Future and loved the Past.

'Twixt man and woman use oft hath bred  
 The habits that feebly affection feign,  
 While the common board and genial bed  
 And Time's welding force links a length of chain ;  
 Till, when Love was not, it has sometimes proved  
 This has loved and lived, that has lived and loved.

But 'twixt man and man it may not so hap  
 Each man is his own and his proper sphere ;  
 At some point, perchance, may the lines o'erlap  
 The far rest is far as the near is near—  
 Save when the orbs are of friend and friend  
 And the circles' limits perforce must blend.

But the one sole point at which he and I  
 Could touch, was the contact of vulgar minds  
 'Twas interest's forcible feeble tie  
 Which binds, but with lasting bonds ne'er binds ;  
 And our objects fated to disagree,  
 What way went I, and what way went he ?

And yet we were comrades for many years  
 And endured in its troth our companionship  
 Through a life of chances, of hopes and fears ;  
 Nor a word of harshness e'er passed the lip,  
 Nor a thought unkind dwelt in either heart,  
 Till we chanced—by what chance did it hap ?—to part.

Where Fever yellow—skinned, bony, gaunt,  
 With the long blue nails and lip livid white;  
 With the blood-stained orbs that could ever haunt  
 Our brains by day and our eyes by night;  
 In her grave-clothes mouldy with graveyard taint  
 Came around our sleeping mats—came and went:

Where the crocodile glared with malignant stare,  
 And the horse of the river, with watery mane  
 That flashed in the sun, from his oozy lair  
 Rose to gaze on the white and the wondrous men;  
 And the lion, with muzzle bent low to earth,  
 Mocked the thunder-cloud with his cruel mirth:

Where the speckled fowls the Mimosa decked  
 Like blue-bells studded with opal dew;  
 And giraffes pard-spotted, deer-eyed, swan-necked,  
 Browsed down the base whence the tree dome grew  
 And the sentinel-antelope, aëried high,  
 With his frightened bound taught his friends to fly:

Where the lovely Coast is all rank with death,  
 That basks in the sun of the Zingian shore;  
 Where the mountains, dank with the ocean's breath,  
 Bear the incense-tree and the sycamore;  
 Where the grim fierce desert and stony hill  
 Breed the fiercest beasts, and men fiercer still:

Where the Land of the Moon with all blessings blest  
 Save one—save man; and with name that sped  
 To the farthest edge of the misty West  
 Since the Tyrian sailor his sail-sheet spread,  
 Loves to gaze on her planet whose loving ray  
 Fills her dells and fells with a rival day:

Where the Lake unnamed in the Afric wold  
 Its breast to the stranger eye lay bare;  
 Where Isis, forced her veil to unfold—  
 To forget the boast of the days that were—  
 Stood in dusky charms with the crisp tire crowned  
 On the hallowed bourne, on the Nile's last bound:—

We toiled side by side, for the hope was sweet  
 To engrave our names on the Rock of Time;  
 On the Holy Hill to implant our feet  
 Where enfaned sits Fame o'er the earth sublime;  
 And now rose the temple before our eyes—  
 We had paid the price, we had plucked the prize;

When up stood the Shadow betwixt us twain—  
 Had the dusky goddess bequeathed her ban?—  
 And the ice of death through every vein  
 Of comradeship spread in briefest span;  
 The guerdon our toils and our pains had won  
 Was too great for two, was enough for one;

And deeper and deeper grew the gloom  
When the serpent tongue had power to sting,  
While o'er one of us hung the untimely doom—  
A winter's night to a day of spring,  
And heart from heart parting fell away  
At the fiat of Fate by her iron sway.

It seems as though from a foamy<sup>1</sup> dream  
I awake, and this pallid mask behold,  
And I ask—Can this be the end supreme  
Of the countless things of the days of old?  
This clay, is it all of what used to be  
In the Afric land by the Zingian Sea?

ISABEL BURTON.

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<sup>1</sup> Träume sind Schäume.

