

KING SAUL: A TRAGEDY

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King Saul: A Tragedy by Byron A. Brooks

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BYRON A. BROOKS

**KING SAUL:
A TRAGEDY**



Back to the shades of death, thou perjured ghost ;
Thou liest ! Go breathe damnation on the lost.

Act IV, Scene III, p. 122.

KING SAUL.

A TRAGEDY.

By BYRON A. ^{Allen} BROOKS.



NEW YORK:
NELSON & PHILLIPS.

CINCINNATI:
HITCHCOCK & WALDEN.

1876.

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TO MY READERS:

TO ONE WHO ASSISTED IN ITS INCEPTION AND
PROGRESS ;

TO THOSE FRIENDS TO WHOSE CRITICISM IT WAS FIRST SUBMITTED ;

AND TO YOU WHO NOW READ ;

This Volume is Respectfully Dedicated,

IN THE HOPE THAT ITS PERUSAL MAY MAKE US ALL FRIENDS,
UNITED BY THE UNSEEN BONDS OF THOUGHT
THAT LINK CONGENIAL MINDS.

THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

THIS is not an historical drama, merely illustrating the Scripture narrative, nor a dramatic poem. It is a tragedy. The essence of tragedy is the will of man at war with a supreme will—the tragedy of life. This is powerfully shown in the Greek tragedy, as in “*Œdipus, the King*,” of Sophocles. But there is this difference between the Greek and the modern tragedy. The former shows the human will struggling against fate—often a blind and unjust fate. In the modern tragedy the Supreme Will is not less powerful, but always good; while man is not less willful, but always wrong. The lesson of the former is to submit to the inevitable; that of the latter—the lesson of all history and revelation, not contradicted by modern science—is God’s rule over nations and in the affairs of men. This is strongly exemplified in the life and death of the first king of Israel, who towers above all other monarchs, as his form was “head and shoulders” above all common men.

Says an eminent critic in a recent review of Alfieri’s “*Saul*,” “His is a royal and regally-poised nature, that has first been undermined by sin and the consciousness of sin, then crazed by contact with the spirit-world, and by a nameless dread of the impending anger of an offended God.”

I have also chosen this subject, that in so remote a period in the history of man we may find him untrammelled by the artificial conditions of modern society, and behold the natural and spontaneous expression of the emotions, which in modern life are concealed and suggested only by the efforts made to suppress them. I have also wished to avoid the old classic mine for subject and illustration, and have thus confined myself for ornament to the great field of external nature as an expression of human nature, and to such a use of it as would readily occur to strong though untutored minds familiar with her various aspects. It is also a period in which man was near to the spirit-world, and thus the introduction of the supernatural in the drama will not appear unnatural. I have not hesitated to sacrifice portions of the history to dramatic unity, and to introduce other elements, such as the plots of Abner, and some of the scenes between David and Saul's younger daughter, which, I trust, will be found consistent with the spirit of the original, and also contributive to the end as well as the interest of the drama. I know well that the subject demands an abler hand, but I humbly add my page to the great volume portraying man to man.

B. A. B.

NEW YORK, *October 10, 1876.*