COTHURNUS AND LYRE

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Cothurnus and Lyre by Edward J. Harding

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BY

EDWARD J. HARDING.

NEW YORK:
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1878.

INTRODUCTION.

The contents of this little volume are the work of a young English book-keeper at present residing in New York, and were composed in the scanty leisure of his evenings and early mornings.

New York, *November* 23, 1877.

CONTENTS.

PROLOGUE.

THIS is my heart, O Sybaritic world!
Will't please you to behold it, masters mine?
Marry, 'tis not so luscious as a peach,
Nor hath it the fine flavor of your pippin—
'Tis in the wrong for that; I cry you mercy!
But these same cursèd Muses, look you, friends,
When they do love a man, why, they will use him
(Saving your presence) as the vampires would;
And many a time beneath the stony stars
When you, fair sirs, are sleeping sound abed,
They circumcise his heart and quaff his blood,
And lash him with a scourge of knotty rhymes
About his garret until morning bares
Her bosoms rosy-budded, golden-girt,
That you, sweet souls, may have a simple song
Served with your breakfast. He nor peace of mind
Nor woman's love, nor necessary friends,
Nor any hope of mortal happiness
May long enjoy; the Furies at his hearth
Sit uninvited; to his grave he goes,
Hanged with a halter of his own harp-strings!
Wherefore it comes, good friends, this heart of mine
Hath lost his early bloom and springtide smell;
'Twill none the less serve for a little sport.
So please you, I will be your worships' guide
Over the surface of this microcosm:
I am familiar with it—give me leave.
This ugly hole was cloven by a girl

To fill the leisure of a summer's day;
It aches a little sometimes even yet:
'Tis at your service—probe it with your fingers—
Ay! ay! you hurt me!—you are welcome, sirs;
I wait upon your pleasure—spare not me!—
Here is another seam, black as a coal;
That is your work, my fair and gentle world;
And this long fissure like a scarlet thread
My proper hands did rend, and not another's.
  Puny and paltry, scarred and marred, you see;
The worms have pierced it like your honeycomb;
But yet it hath one virtue; mark, my masters!
We poets groan in music; crush our hearts
(As you would crush the roses for their scent)
And they shall pour you a full flask of song:
Now try the spell upon this rusticoat;
Squeeze it—an ode!—pray you, again,—a satire!
'Mass, and I told you true! would for your sakes
That I could wail you more melodiously;
But pray content you! what I can, I will;
I'll go acquire the true Italian measure
To antic my despair in better time;
Till when, forgive me of your courtesy.
  Now throw the bauble to the whistling winds!
You are aweary, and it is not meet
That you should soil your excellent white hands
With such a butcher's toy; pah! the blood reeks!
Out on't—the dogs will find it soon enough!

MAY 28, 1877.