

STRAFFORD.

BY E. H. HICKEY.

MICHAEL VILLIERS, IDEALIST, AND OTHER POEMS.
SMITH, ELDER & CO.

VERSE-TALES, LYRICS AND TRANSLATIONS.
ELKIN MATHEWS.

A SCULPTOR, AND OTHER POEMS.
ELKIN MATHEWS.

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STRAF FORD:

A TRAGEDY.

BY ROBERT BROWNING.

WITH NOTES AND PREFACE BY

E. H. HICKEY,

AUTHOR OF "MICHAEL VILLIERS, IDEALIST, AND OTHER POEMS;" "VERSE-
TALES, LYRICS, AND TRANSLATIONS;" "A SCULPTOR, AND OTHER POEMS."

AND AN INTRODUCTION BY

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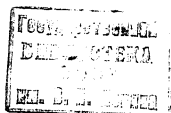
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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

It was in 1835 that Mr. Browning was introduced to Macready the tragedian, and it was out of this acquaintance that the production of "Strafford" came. Macready saw in "Paracelsus" the work of a true tragic poet, and suggested that Browning should write a play for him. Macready wrote in his journal in 1836: "Browning said that I had *bit him* by my performance of *Othello*, and I told him I hoped I should make the blood come. It would, indeed, be some recompense for the miseries, the humiliations, the heart-sickening disgusts which I have endured in my profession, if by its exercise I had awakened a spirit of poetry whose influence would elevate, ennoble, and adorn our degraded drama. May it be!"

A little later, Macready said to Mr. Browning, "Write a play, Browning, and keep me from going to America!" Mr. Browning replied, "Shall it be historical and English? What do you say to a drama on Strafford?"

In March, 1837, the play was put in rehearsal, and produced at Covent Garden Theatre on the 1st of May. To quote Mr. Edmund Gosse's account in "The Century" for December, 1881, from which I have taken the above details:—

"It is time now to deny a statement that has been repeated *ad nauseam* in every notice that professes to give