

BALLADE OF BAD VERSES

THERE be songs of surrender and sighing,
 Of sentiment noble and just,
Of lovers deserted and dying,
 Of langour and lilies and lust.
There be visions of when we are dust ;
 There be sonnets and rondels enough
To break the terrestrial crust—
 Lord, keep us from reading the stuff !

When Ajax, the lightning defying,
 Was rude, his impertinent bust
Was shattered. The Editor, trying
 To write (as an Editor must
Though his faculties rapidly rust)
 Will speak in a manner that's rough :
“ You poets deserve to be trussed !
 Lord, keep us from reading the stuff ! ”

My own little scheme of supplying
 With fuel the realms of the cussed
Is to stoke all the fires with the flying
 MSS blown that way by a gust

Of wind, which I honestly trust
 Will be quick and flamboyant and bluff
And leave me to satisfy Fust :—¹
 Lord, keep us from reading the stuff !

L'ENVOI

Prince Printer, in wait you are lying
 For copy, and I'm in a huff.
You see even me versifying—
 Lord, keep us from reading the stuff !

¹ R. Browning's Works, vol. xvi. A pet name for Mr. Spalding.