

Sat est scripsisse

By Austin Dobson

To E. G., with a Volume of Essays

WHEN you and I have wandered beyond the reach of call,
And all our works immortal are scattered on the Stall,
It may be some new Reader, in that remoter age,
Will find this present volume, and listless turn the page.

For him I write these Verses. And "Sir" (I say to him),
"This little Book you see here—this masterpiece of Whim,
Of Wisdom, Learning, Fancy (if you will, please, attend),
Was written by its Author, who gave it to his Friend.

"For they had worked together, been Comrades of the Pen ;
They had their points at issue, they differed now and then ;
But both loved Song and Letters, and each had close at heart
The dreams, the aspirations, the 'dear delays' of Art.

"And much they talk'd of Metre, and more they talked of Style,
Of Form and 'lucid Order,' of labour of the File ;
And he who wrote the writing, as sheet by sheet was penned,
(This all was long ago, Sir !) would read it to his Friend.

"They

“ They knew not, nor cared greatly, if they were spark or star,
They knew to move is somewhat, although the goal be far ;
And larger light or lesser, this thing at least is clear,—
They served the Muses truly, their service was sincere.

“ This tattered page you see, Sir, is all that now remains
(Yes, fourpence is the lowest !) of all those pleasant pains ;
And as for him that read it, and as for him that wrote,—
No Golden Book enrolls them among its ‘ Names of Note.’

“ And yet they had their office. Though they to-day are passed,
They marched in that procession where is no first or last ;
Though cold is now their hoping, though they no more aspire,
They, too, had once their ardour :—they handed on the fire.”