

TWO SONNETS IN PRAISE OF A PUBLISHER

WHO SOUGHT TO INFECT OUR YOUTH WITH HIS
NOXIOUS WARES

The ordure of this goat, who is called "Master Leonard."—ELIPHAS LEVI.
He's the man for muck.—BROWNING.

I.

SMALL coffin-worms that burrow in thy brain
Writhe with delight ; thy rotten body teems
With all infesting vermin, as beseems
The mirror of an obscene mind. In vain
Thy misbegotten brutehood shirks the pain
Of its avenging leprosies : death steams
In all thy rank foul atmosphere : the gleams
Of phosphorescent putrefaction wane

Thy sordid hands reach through the filth to snatch
The offal money of a prurient swarm.
Thy liar's tongue licks liquid dung to hatch
From fetid ulcers with its slimy warm
Venom some fouler vermin, in their nest
Thy rotten heart and thy polluting breast !

II.

Egg of the slime ! Thy loose abortive lips
Mouth hateful things : thy shifty bloodshot eyes
Lurk craftily to snare some carrion prize,
The dainty morsel whence the poison drips
Unmarked : the maskéd infamy that slips
Into an innocent maw : corrupter wise !
Sly worm of hell ! that close and cunning lies
With sucking tentacles for finger-tips.

Earth spits on thee, contagious Caliban !
Hell spits on thee ; her skin is spiritual.
Only the awful slime and excrement
That sin sheds off will own thee for a man.
Only the worms in dead men's bowels that crawl
To lick a loathlier brother are content.