## EPPS

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### ROBERT BROWNING

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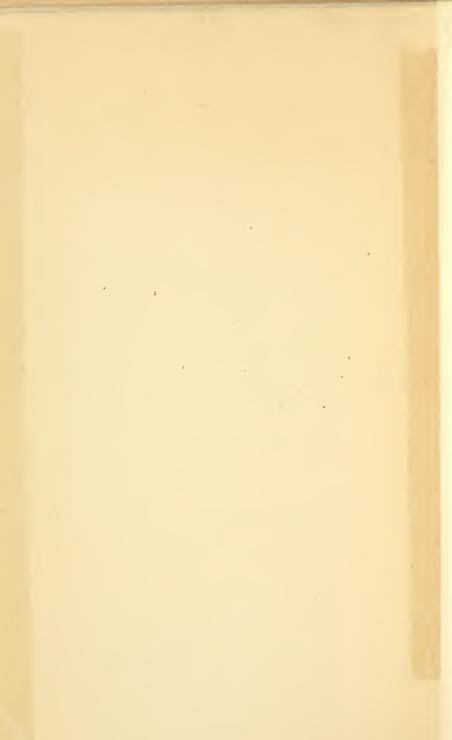
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ASOLANDO

20	EPPS.   Asks anyone — "Waiting its time   Till somebody versed in the English tongue   Shall start at the challenge, cry 'unsung   Till now, and all for want of a rhyme,   Is the prowess of Kentish Epps?"   Two hundred and eighty years ago   Befell the seige of Ostend;   Epps soldiered it there: and, hew or hack   At his breast as the cnemy might, his back   Got never a scratch: yet life must end   Somehow, — Epps ended — so !   He had lost an eye on the walls, look out   No longer could Epps: said he —   "Give me Saint George's cross — our flag   To carry: I can't see them — foes brag:   At all events they shall soon see me,   Knight and knave, lord and lout !"   "Epps got loose again !" yelped the curs:   "At all events they shall soon see me,   Knight and knave, lord and lout !"   "Epps got loose again !" yelped the curs:   "At all events they shall soon see me,   Knight and knave, lord and lout !"   "Epps got loose again !" yelped the curs:   "At all events they shall soon see me,   So the bare, swirl stript   On bannerman Epps: as staunch   The drowned rock stands, but e	To him her which game — "I hear Lpps laugh — "Stick, flag, to a new staff — here !" And off in a trice from the staff that's wood. And on to a staff that's flesh, Tears Epps and { ties } me { tight about his breast The flag in a red swathe. "Here's the vest 40 For my lifelong wear; at the foe afresh "Elagstaff show your hardihood !" Whereat, in a twinklinz, man and horse Went down — one, two and three, And how many more? But they shot and slashed. Two { bullets } have riddled, two 'sword blades gashed The staff through the flag, — { leave heft free To despoilers, — you think, — a corse? No! Back from his slayers, staggeringly 50 But, staff-like stout to the last, Up to his mates — of the checked ad- vance — Reels Epps, his soul in his countenance, As he falters "See! Flag to the staff sticks fast, And, flag saved, staff may die !" And die did Epps, with his English round Not so the fame of the feat: For Donne and Dekker, brave pacts and rare, Gave it honour and praise: and I joir the pair With heart that's loud though my voice compete As a pipe with their trumpet-sound! R. B. Jan. 6, r886.



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